FAQs – Navigation Survey Rodeo: Evaluating Autonomous and Uncrewed Hydrographic Surveying Solutions

Last updated November 3, 2026

For the Autonomous/Semi-Autonomous Survey Vessel technical area, may a mission team's modular sensor package include non-bathymetric survey sensors alongside the bathymetric payload, specifically magnetometers for detecting debris, unexploded ordnance, pipelines, and cables in or near navigation channels? If so, will those sensors be evaluated in Phase 1 scoring and Phase 3 data verification, and against what baseline? Separately, may a sensor provider participate as a payload partner on more than one ASV team's submission?

Mission teams may integrate non-bathymetric sensors such as magnetometers alongside bathymetric payloads; however, primary scoring and Phase 3 verification will be baselined against hydrographic bathymetric benchmarks. Sensor providers are explicitly allowed to partner across multiple team submissions.

Are academic programs (universities) able to participate?

Academic institutions are eligible to participate.

Will topobathymetric LiDAR systems be considered appropriate for this RFP?

Topobathymetric LiDAR systems are considered appropriate technologies provided they meet the required hydrographic depth penetration, accuracy, and resolution standards.

This seems to be targeted more towards ASV etc. manufacturers than service providers. Would that me a correct assumption?

Submissions from service providers will be evaluated on the total integrated survey solution, including vessel control, line-keeping, data workflow, QA/QC speed, and compliance with USACE hydrographic standards.

Could you please advise whether foreign-manufactured vessel platforms are eligible for Phase 3 and whether any domestic-source restrictions would apply to subsequent acquisition actions?

Foreign-manufactured vessels may participate in the Phase 3 demonstration provided the prime applicant is registered in SAM.gov.

I'm wondering if we can demonstrate this capability using a crewed platform, with the understanding that we will develop a dedicated USV in the future. Our demonstration vessel already supports remote control, and adding an autonomy stack would be feasible. However, this system's advantage is that it is already more efficient than a mothership/daughtercraft and can operate in busy shipchannels and locations unsuitable for autonomous vessels.

A crewed vessel cannot be demonstrated as a substitute for an autonomous system; however, an optionally crewed or remote-controlled vessel operating in semi-autonomous mode with an onboard safety operator is compliant for Phase 3.

Does this solicitation include any development or is it only demonstration of existing capabilities?

Demonstration is structured to evaluate existing, deployable systems and technology.

For the satellite-derived bathymetry track, can a software and data integration team respond on its own, or should it team with a sensor or platform provider for the Phase 3 field demonstration?

Phase 3 requires synchronized, concurrent data acquisition across all demonstrated capabilities to ensure equitable evaluation of participant solutions. When deploying Satellite-Derived (SDB), Publicly available information (PAI), commercially available information (CAI), & Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry (CSB), vendors may only use data collected within an allowable time range during the Phase 3 field demonstration. It is optional for SDB, PAI, CAI, or CSB solutions to partner with a sensor or platform provider. The solicitation requires a data report for a final deliverable for Phase 3. We're not evaluating the Phase 3 for a 'winner' but for completeness/usefulness.

Does this solicitation include advanced survey planning tools for setting up a mission for uncrewed vessels?

Included as part of an integrated system, not standalone. Technical Area 1 seeks integrated, deployable survey vessels with remote tasking capabilities, modern communications, and documented interfaces.

Does this solicitation include QA tools for evaluating collected data quality across different sources?

USACE will evaluate entries on post-processing requirements, processing time, and integration with Army decision-support tools, rather than procuring standalone QA software.

For the Satellite-Derived Bathymetry (SDB) / Publicly Available Information (PAI) / Commercially Available Information (CAI) / Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry (CSB) technical area:

- **In Phase 3, may a participant in this technical area demonstrate by processing satellite imagery and other data over the two test sites remotely, with no personnel or equipment on site?**

- **Will entries in this technical area be scored against the crewed-vessel ground truth at the turbid inland river site (Scenario A) and the high-energy coastal inlet site (Scenario B), or against a separate baseline suited to remote sensing?**
- **May a down-selected participant present at the Phase 2 workshop virtually, and is attending the workshop required to advance to Phase 3?**
- **Which Army-designated decision support tools and data formats must outputs from this technical area be portable into?**
- **When will the Phase 3 test site locations for Scenario A and Scenario B be announced?**

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All data collected by participating systems during Phase 3 will be compared directly against baseline ground-truth information gathered by conventional crewed USACE survey vessels, evaluating data resolution, accuracy, and collection speed.

Selected Phase 1 white paper participants will be notified by December 1, 2026, to advance to the December 2026 workshop prior to Phase 3 down-selection.

Locations have not yet been selected. The solicitation requires portability into Army-designated decision-support tools, typically standard USACE hydrographic/GIS enterprise formats such as eHydro-compatible XYZ/GeoTIFF/LAS/BAG formats, but additional requirements are not specified. The specific geographic locations for Scenario A (turbid, high-current inland waterway) and Scenario B (coastal/inlet location with waves and traffic) had not yet been selected and will be determined following the Workshop (Phase 2).

Would an integrated package, with an ASV as the primary bathymetric platform plus an uncrewed underwater vehicle (UUV) that reacquires and verifies contacts flagged by the ASV, be compliant under the ASV technical area and eligible for Phase 3?

Phase 3 specifies "autonomous or semi-autonomous survey vessels equipped with hydrographic or bathymetric sensors" so the tethered UUV reacquisition sub-system enhances survey capability may be eligible.

Is the Government interested in surveys of areas surface vessels cannot reach, such as under wharves, piers and bridges, at lock approaches and in berth pockets? If so, would this be assessed in Phase 3 and count towards "coverage improvement"?

Demonstrations will evaluate increasing overall survey coverage to support the USACE Navigation Mission.

Would UUV bathymetric data be scored against the same USACE hydrographic standards as the ASV data?

All data collected by participating systems during Phase 3 will be compared directly against baseline ground-truth information gathered by conventional crewed USACE survey vessels, evaluating data resolution, accuracy, and collection speed.

What is the expected duration of each Phase 3 demonstration?

While the exact number of on-water days per vendor is not specified in public summaries, the operational field demonstrations are scheduled to occur during the March–April 2027 window.

Are you looking for GNSS Anti-Jam antenna along with high accuracy GNSS receivers?

USACE is seeking fully integrated, deployable survey systems.