

Document Details: Clarification Q&A in response to the call for proposals**Challenge: DNA removal to cut cross-contamination risk**

Deadline for questions: 29/08/2025

#	Question	Answer
1.	How complete does the product need to be at the end of the 12 weeks? Proof of concept or the finished product?	Proof of concept will be sufficient.
2.	How will we be asked to evidence that it works? Can this be from our collected data, or will we need to do a live demonstration?	HMGCC will need to take samples from the cleaned items and test them to prove it works. The sampling and testing of the items will be arranged by HMGCC.
3.	What level of success is appropriate? Zero quant score or are we needing to profile our results?	HMGCC is happy to do all the testing as we go along. We are not expecting the candidates to necessarily have DNA profiling capabilities etc.

4.	Can you provide a target for the desired level of DNA decontamination, such as a specific log reduction?	HMGCC will assess the decontamination levels and compare to our current processes. Ultimately, complete decontamination is the desired level.
5.	What method will you use to validate the effectiveness of DNA decontamination (e.g. qPCR, capillary electrophoresis, DNA profiling)?	Yes, all of those.
6.	Open areas: Is there any requirement for the system to sterilize open environments like whole laboratories or lab bench surfaces, or is the focus solely on equipment?	The focus is on equipment at this time.
7.	Is there a requirement for the sterilisation cycle? Would 2 hours be appropriate?	Yes, that would be fine. There is no specific requirement on cycle. Obviously, quicker is always better, but not at the cost of effectiveness.

8.	Please can you clarify the point about not wanting us to use current solutions. Can we use current materials and substances if we use them in a different way that is successful?	The challenge is about exploring ideas new to forensics but if that involves previous techniques or chemicals being utilised in a different way, then that will be considered too.
9.	What size of samples are required to be decontaminated?	Generally, the size of most tools. The largest item cleaned to date was around 50 x 50 cm. However, it would be useful to be able to clean as large an item as possible.
10.	Are powered solutions appropriate?	Yes
11.	Is a battery-operated system a hard requirement, and if so, how many full decontamination cycles must it perform on a single charge?	Battery operation is not a hard requirement at all. We are content for it to run off the mains.
12.	Should devices be powered off or can they remain powered on during the decontamination cycle?	We'd expect most items to be powered off during the cycle.

13.	What research has already been conducted?	Limited examination into standard decontamination techniques such as ETO and bleach. Likewise, ultra-sonics have also be considered but not tested.
14.	What UV wavelength has been tested?	Whatever is in a standard UV cross linker.
15.	Can an amalgamation of different methods be proposed?	Absolutely
16.	Are international companies allowed to participate in this challenge?	Yes
17.	Is the project to be completed over 12 working weeks or 12 calendar weeks?	12 working weeks. We will accommodate the Christmas holiday period.
18.	Will the sampling and profiling happen after the 12 weeks has finished or does the prototype need to be ready for such testing before the project's end to allow time for HMGCC to complete it? If the latter, how	The testing and sampling can happen after the 12 weeks. It would not eat into the 12 weeks. However, it may be that there is a need to do ongoing testing throughout a development, which HMGCC would be able to support.

	much time should be allowed for that testing?	
19.	Regarding Clause 2.3 of the HMGCC Terms and Conditions please clarify what Cranfield policies are relevant for the purposes of this clause?	No additional Cranfield policies apply to the delivery of services required for this Challenge.
20.	Is there opportunity to discuss some minor amendments to the HMGCC Co-Creation Terms and Conditions?	The Co-Creation Terms & Conditions are not open to negotiation or amendment. They have been carefully developed to ensure accessibility for a broad range of suppliers. Should the successful solution provider have any concerns at the contracting stage, we will be happy to provide clarification and assurance, but no changes will be made. Please note that in submitting a proposal, you acknowledge acceptance of the Co-Creation Terms & Conditions in their entirety.