FOBEX10: Evaluation of the Forward Operating Base (FOB) as a System

MOD teams in the process of building a Forward Operating Base

A Forward Operating Base (FOB) is any secured forward military position that is used to support tactical operations. Here, MOD DCB looks at a forthcoming exercise from the Programmes and Technology Group (PTG) at DE&S that offers industry a unique chance to make a difference to the FOB of the future.

In operational theatres such as Afghanistan, the Forward Operating Base (FOB) can have many functions, all of which are essential to the success of UK Armed Forces. It may or may not contain an airfield, hospital, or other facilities such as living/dining quarters, and it can even stay in place for an extended period of time, giving troops greater operational effectiveness due to reduced reaction times and increased time on task.

FOBEX10

The Programmes and Technology Group (PTG) within DE&S has an important remit to help defence teams deliver projects right first time. Their role includes fostering and communicating excellence in programme, project and technology management and providing assistance and assurance, as well as investigating new technology and concepts.

In line with these objectives, the PTG is planning to conduct an exercise called FOBEX10, in late 2010/early 2011.

FOBEX10 is seeking to identify potential enhancements to the Tactical Base (TB) capability, specifically in the establishment of a '30-person Patrol Base (PB)' and Control Points (CP) from 'green field' to levels 1 and 2, and the subsequent removal/disassembly.

"What we are seeking to do with this exercise is to look at how we might do things differently by considering the FOB as a system or platform," said James McMenemy, Project Manager within PTG. *"FOBEX10 is an open invitation to industry, and represents an opportunity for them to come forward with their ideas as to how we can do things in a different way in terms of FOBs in future operational theatres."*

30-person patrol base

FOBEX10 could provide a specific experimentation opportunity for interoperability and infrastructure rationalisation around ground-based ISTAR and 'Sense and Warn' equipment. The exercise will allow the PTG and wider MOD customer to evaluate industry alternatives to the systems currently in place.

The FOB as a platform

As Mr McMenemy points out, FOBEX10 is an attempt to consider the FOB as a platform. *"PTG is trying to conduct an exercise that will treat the FOB as a platform, and allow industry to apply a systems engineering approach to it. For instance, the Land Systems environment has developed a Generic Vehicle Architecture (GVA) and an associated Defence Standard, so that a 'plug and play' element can be used in future procurements of kit for a vehicle.*

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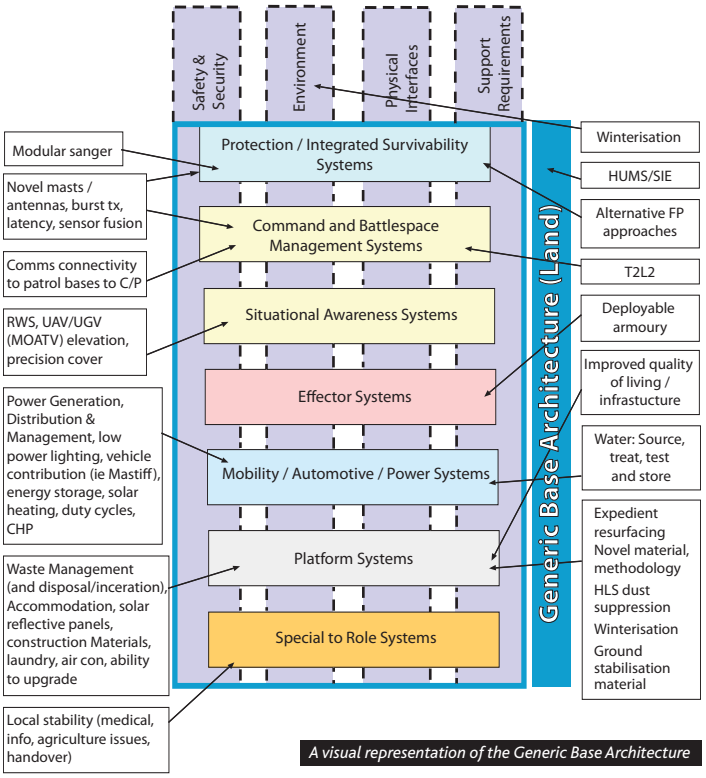
"Translating that idea into the FOB is the drive behind FOBEX10," said Mr McMenemy. *"If we apply a systems engineering approach to a '30-person patrol base' format, we can better understand its operation and identify ways to improve. An ultimate aim is to produce a standard, similar to the GVA."*

It is hoped that industry will come forward with ideas on how things could be done differently in a number of areas.

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Improved quality of infrastructure
- Waste disposal
- Power supply and distribution, including vehicle delivered power
- Water management, including treatment testing and bottling, recycling and storage
- Alternative Force Protection Engineering approaches
- Precision air dispatch



A visual representation of the Generic Base Architecture

- Immediate medical support
- Integrated Survivability Systems
- Helicopter Landing Site (HLS) dust reduction
- Expedient resurfacing
- Laundry
- Winterisation
- Cover from view capability

Suppliers who can either provide a complete system (PB and CP), or sub-component parts (Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 or better), are requested to contact the PTG, giving system/product details and supporting information on indicative system costs and availability for trials. Following that, a Military Judgement Panel (MJP) will conduct the down-selection. Companies selected by the MJP will be invited to demonstrate their construction in comparison with an established TB construction.

There are currently two windows of opportunity, November 2010 and February 2011.

An information pack relating to FOBEX10 is being compiled and will be distributed to interested parties.

Further information

For further information or to register your interest, please contact:

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