All responses are considered pre-decisional and for market research purposes only.

Industry Questions:

1. Will the AFLCMC/WLY accept classified submissions in a Classified Annex?

> **USG Response: The USG will accept in a classified annex. Please see updated RFI, section 4.6, for instructions.**
>
> **Additionally, there may be an opportunity to discuss classified details in subsequent industry engagements.**

2. Should NGAL candidate solutions follow the Airlift Recap Strategy memo (15 Oct 2025) dates for IOC and first aircraft delivery requirements? Or will AFLCMC/WLY provide other target development and delivery dates?

> **USG Response: Yes, the Air Mobility Command Airlift Recapitalization Strategy memo provides accurate information about the strategic airlift recapitalization plan. It was signed 18 November 2025.**

3. Does a response have to include a response for an aircraft concept?

> **USG Response: The priority of this NGAL RFI is aircraft platform concepts. The government will accept information from all Industry partners.**

4. Are NGAL RFI responses only desired from airframers, or would AFLCMC like responses directly from engine OEMs?

> **USG Response: While this RFI does not seek individual engine component submissions as standalone solutions, propulsion technology is a critical design element. Propulsion OEMs are highly encouraged to either submit responses showcasing their relevant technology bounds/advancements, or partner directly with prime airframe integrators to ensure their propulsion concepts are represented in the platform-level responses.**

5. Is the Government interested in responses to Section 3.2 questions that address mission system capabilities independent of any specific NGAL concept and that could be applied across multiple or all NGAL concepts?

> **USG Response: To maximize the utility of this market research, the government prefers that mission system capabilities be presented as part of an integrated platform concept. Industry partners specializing in mission systems are highly encouraged to collaborate with prime airframe integrators. That said, the government will accept independent submissions from mission system providers**

that clearly outline advanced capabilities, open systems architectures (MOSA), or technology boundaries that could realistically scale across multiple potential NGAL configurations.

6. Is there a requirement or desire for a specific takeoff and landing distance for NGAL? If so, is this at a particular payload point?

USG Response: There is no set requirement for specific takeoff and landing distance for NGAL at this time. The requirement will be set based on the results from the AoA. Respondents are encouraged to detail how their proposed platform concepts optimize airfield performance, runway requirements, and associated payload capacities. It is highly recommended that respondents explicitly document any assumptions made.

7. Should industry expect additional forthcoming RFIs for specific technology domains, such as Mission Systems, and if so, what is the expected timing?

USG Response: The USG is only inquiring about aircraft within the trade space defined by the RFI. There is no current plan to release additional RFIs for specific technology domains, such as Mission Systems, at this time.

8. Is there an objective airlift mission profile the USAF would like to use to guide aircraft designs to meet an unrefueled range of 2,500 NM caring a 160,000 lbs payload? Offering the following representative flight (fuel) profile to be used to standardize performance assessments between NGAL offerings: Start, taxi, and takeoff (STTO) at standard day; climb to 30,000 feet, cruise at 30,000 feet, descend, and 45 minutes of reserves, holding at 15,000 feet.

USG Response: There is no specific mission profile for the range v. payload requirements set by this RFI.

Respondents have the flexibility to utilize their own standard airlift mission profiles. All performance calculations must be baselined to Standard Day conditions (Standard Temperature and Pressure).

To ensure the Government can accurately normalize and evaluate performance assessments across all industry submissions, it is highly recommended that respondents explicitly document all flight profile assumptions and conditions utilized in their calculations (e.g., Start, Taxi, and Takeoff (STTO) fuel allowances, cruise altitudes, speed schedules, step-climbs, and reserve fuel policies).

9. Does the USAF have an NGAL maximum critical field length (CFL)?

USG Response: There is no set requirement for CFL for NGAL at this time. The requirement will be set based on the results from the AoA. Performance calculations should assume Standard Day (STP) conditions, and respondents are encouraged to

explicitly document all associated airfield assumptions, thrust management settings, and payload configurations in their submissions.

10. For semi-prepared and austere runways, would it be possible for the USAF standardize the runway friction coefficients, as well as desired California Bearing Ratio (CBR), in order to standardize performance assessments between NGAL offerings?

USG Response: The USG acknowledges the question and may explore standardization of runway friction coefficients in the future. When responding to the NGAL RFI, please state any assumptions and conditions used in the generation of concepts.

11. Is the NGAL aircraft required to be assault zone landing capable? If so, please provide environmental conditions to standardize performance assessments between NGAL offerings.

USG Response: Trade space for landing requirements will be studied during the AoA. When responding to the NGAL RFI, please state any assumptions and conditions used in the generation of concepts.

12. Is the NGAL aircraft required to be low-level capable? If so, please provide environmental conditions to standardize performance assessments between NGAL offerings.

USG Response: A formal requirement for low-level flight capability is undergoing evaluation and will be informed by the Analysis of Alternatives (AoA); however, operational assessments strongly indicate this capability will be required for NGAL. All performance modeling should utilize Standard Day (STP) conditions, and submissions should explicitly state the assumed altitude, speed, atmospheric turbulence models, and structural constraints used to evaluate low-level performance.

13. Is participation in this RFI required for participating in a future NGAL AoA? And is that AoA tracking for release later in '26?

USG Response: No, participation in the RFI is not a prerequisite to participating in the NGAL AoA. Pre-planning is already underway, but the USG does not have the specific milestone dates finalized to share at this time.

14. Section 3.2.5 requests information on defensive systems, and Section 2.0 references survivability as a desired advancement. Could the Government please provide additional guidance on the threat environments and survivability standards envisioned for NGAL operations? For example, whether the platform should be designed to operate in contested or anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) environments, and to what degree survivability features (e.g., signature management, threat warning, countermeasures) should be integrated into the baseline design versus accommodated as future growth?

USG Response: There may be opportunity to discuss classified details such as threats and anticipated countermeasures in subsequent industry engagements. At this time the USG is only inquiring about the trade space defined by the RFI.

15. As industry evaluates crew concepts and levels of automation for NGAL, could the Government clarify its vision for crew composition and autonomous operations?

USG Response: The Government's goal is to gather a broad, unconstrained view of the trade space regarding crew concepts, automation, and certification. For all the sub-questions below, respondents are heavily encouraged to provide detailed explanations outlining the technical and operational rationale (the "why") behind their proposed approaches.

a. Are there existing DoD or DAF policy positions on optionally crewed airlift platforms that should bound industry proposals?

USG Response: The Government does not intend to bound industry proposals with specific policy constraints regarding optionally crewed platforms at this stage. Industry is encouraged to submit their vision for optimal crew composition. Respondents proposing optionally crewed concepts should provide an explanation of the operational benefits, technical feasibility, and assumed risks associated with their approach.

b. How should respondents address FAA certification considerations and challenges?

USG Response: At this time the USG is only inquiring about aircraft within the trade space defined by the RFI. Respondents are encouraged to identify and detail any anticipated certification considerations, challenges, or limitations relevant to their specific platform concepts.

c. Does the Government envision NGAL operating under military-only airworthiness authority, or should concepts anticipate dual civil/military certification pathways?

USG Response: NGAL will comply with existing DAF policy for military airworthiness certification. However, the Government is open to industry's recommendations. If a respondent's concept benefits from, or assumes, a dual civil/military certification pathway, please detail those assumptions and associated benefits.

Does the Government envision NGAL eventually operating fully-autonomously?

USG Response: The RFI deliberately leaves the trade space open regarding levels of autonomy. If a respondent envisions a platform designed with a pathway to fully autonomous operations, they should outline that capability evolution within their submission. Please explicitly state all assumptions, conditions, and technology maturity milestones required to achieve your proposed level of autonomy, accompanied by a detailed justification.

16. Section 3.1.10 requests information on the ability to operate from semi-prepared or austere runways. To help industry optimize design trades, could the Government provide additional specificity on:

    a. The range of airfield surface types and conditions (e.g., CBR ratings, unpaved/matted surfaces) NGAL should be designed to operate from

    USG Response: While formal airfield surface and CBR requirements have not been finalized, the Government's primary infrastructure focus is maximizing the utility of existing and austere airfields. Respondents are encouraged to detail how their proposed landing gear and structural configurations accommodate various surface tolerances.

    b. Whether there are threshold and objective takeoff and landing distance requirements, and if so, at what payload and environmental conditions?

    USG Response: There is no set requirement for specific takeoff and landing distance for NGAL at this time. The requirement will be set based on the results from the AoA. Performance calculations should be made assuming standard day conditions (STP conditions). Submissions should explicitly document all associated airfield assumptions, thrust management settings, payload configurations, and any other assumptions utilized in their calculations.

    c. How the Government prioritizes the trade space among cargo capacity, short-field performance, and cruise fuel efficiency, recognizing that optimizing for austere-field capability may impose weight and drag penalties that affect payload-range and operating cost?

    USG Response: The Government has not established a rigid prioritization matrix among cargo capacity, airfield performance, and cruise efficiency at this early stage. The primary purpose of this RFI is to allow industry to participate in the definition of the trade space itself.

If available, respondents are encouraged to submit trade-off curves and sensitivity analyses showing how optimizing for austere-field capabilities (e.g., high-lift systems, ruggedized landing gear) impacts aerodynamic drag, structural weight, overall payload-range performance, and operating costs.

17. To support industry planning for technology maturation, production readiness, and supply chain development, could the Government please share any target dates or planning windows for key program milestones? e.g., Milestone B, Engineering & Manufacturing Development (EMD) contract award, Early Operational Capability (EOC), and/or Initial Operational Capability (IOC)? Additionally, is there a desired initial production quantity or rate that respondents should consider in their whitepaper responses?

    USG Response: Definite program milestones and initial production quantities have not yet been established and will be determined post-AoA. For strategic alignment and general capability timelines, industry should refer to the "Air Mobility Command Airlift Recapitalization Strategy" memorandum (dated 18 Nov 2025).