

Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) Information Management & Exploitation Training Solution

In Jul 10 Defence Reserve (Def Res) allocated funding to support an Urgent Operational Requirement to provide a Counter Improvised Explosive Device Information Management and Information Exploitation (C-IED IM/IX) Training Solution to enable pre-deployment training (PDT) for personnel deploying on Op HERRICK.

The urgent nature of this requirement dictated that the chosen partner was capable of providing design and implementation of some 36 IT networks, fixed and transportable, providing in excess of 900 client machines, capable of meeting security requirements and hosting multiple applications to replicate the application set hosted on the Afghanistan Mission Network (AMN). The timeline for this project was short with installations required at multiple sites in the UK and Germany over a three month project rollout.



It is worth noting that from the outset doubts were voiced as to whether the aggressive timescales of the requirement were achievable. The initial installations were delivered by 27 Aug 10 and the initial training events for 3 Commando took place in the first week of September 10.

In all a total of 36 Local Area Networks were designed, procured, configured, delivered and installed in a 12 week period. Akhter's Project Management team controlling all aspects of the project from Quality to Procurement, from Configuration Management and Application Hosting to Installation, Training and Support.

The project required two fundamentally different requirements to be fulfilled:

1. Fixed installation Train the Trainer type Lans capable of supporting at least 70 clients each (4 separate defence sites in the UK & Germany)
2. Transportable Field Based (Theatre Operations) capable of supporting a minimum of 15 clients each (32 transportable LAN's in total)



Akhter's design teams were faced with extremely diverse requirements for the operating environments of the two types. For example the fixed LAN's required no encryption as they were deployed within secure Defence establishments, however the Transportable LAN's by the nature of their deployment in theatre operations required a wide spectrum of encryption up to Top Secret. Furthermore the extreme environment and rough handling meant that the transportable systems would require to be fully ruggedized in many circumstances.

Performance capability was essential for the Fixed Operation LAN's due to the complex and demanding applications, to this end Akhter's System Architects designed the LAN's around 5 high performance, multi-processor HP Servers running in total 17 Virtual Machines (VM's) to provide the performance required. In contrast to this the Transportable LANS had to be as easily mobile as possible, resilient & robust and have the same performance characteristics – albeit for a smaller number of clients. Here also Akhter provided a high performance, multi-processor, HP server finally configured to act as 17 Virtual Machines (VM's) to deliver the application performance required.

The staffs at Akhter are security cleared and know exactly how to support Defence. All hardware and related services provided by the company are delivered with an appropriate service wrap to provide support functions which are needed for this type of solution. The project team at Akhter have delivered on time, provided competent and effective staff and solutions for the Project and have overcome many obstacles without incurring time delays. In addition to the network integration Akhter has worked in close collaboration with the Command and Control Battle Lab (C2BL) in the integration and configuration of server applications.

Kevin Burns – BAE Systems (Contractor Logistic Support commented:

Akhter delivered and installed a high profile UOR – Project C-IED recently to the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer (CATT) in Germany. The requirement from us was for Akhter to deliver week commencing 20th September, reassuringly they delivered the goods one week in advance together with a contingency allowance to ensure the capability would move forwards without complications, all the boxes were clearly marked, the serial numbers and descriptions etc. were precise and clear to all, the packaging was undamaged and Akhter staff kept us informed at all times when the delivery was going to appear and by whom, as with all MoD sites security and the knowledge that a lorry/van is going to appear makes the whole process easier for us.

Akhter pre built at their factory all the hardware and related images including powerful servers, they ensured that all fibre connectivity from servers to the clients were tested and worked and all were signed off by a member of my staff on a full and accountable asset tracking list, which was passed to us, the contractor for reference and to the Military representatives on site, for action, in both electronic and paper format.

Akhter provided initial introduction training to members of staff both civilian and military to ensure that the procedure was fully approved by the users. The CATT programme is one of the British Armies biggest training and simulation centres, where security and working knowledge of the services provided was a prerequisite for delivery of this important and needed IED solution.

The Akhter staff were all security cleared and worked well with our team, their knowledge and understanding of the MoD and "how to react to a call of IT help" was, I am pleased to say, professional. I only knew of Akhter because of their hardware it is obvious to me that they deliver a full audit trailed solution and can work well within the MoD environment. I would have no hesitation in recommending this organisation for working together in the future."