

**Australia calls for tenders for 'MH370 recovery**  
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MH370 The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) today called for expressions of interest in the recovery of missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 from the bottom of the Indian Ocean - should the aircraft be found.

Months of searches have failed to turn up any trace of the Boeing 777 aircraft, which disappeared on March 8, carrying 239 passengers and crew shortly after taking off from the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, bound for Beijing.

The ATSB said preliminary tenders would allow it to assess which organisations are able to supply the equipment and expertise required. Any recovery of the aircraft is likely to cost millions of dollars and be technically difficult given the remoteness and depths of the Indian Ocean.

The current phase of the search is focusing on a previously unmapped 60,000-sq-km patch of sea floor some 1,600km west of the Australian city of Perth.

Expressions of interest are due by Feb 18. The ATSB will use those to draw up a shortlist. A final decision on any recovery operation will be made jointly by the Australian, Malaysian and Chinese governments.

Depths in the search area range from around 600 metres to 6,000 metres, which is at the limit of technological capabilities for both search and recovery operations.

France's Alcatel Lucent SA operates the Ile de Sein salvage ship, which can drop cables to a depth of 6,000 metres and lift up to 10 tonnes at a time. US naval contractor Phoenix International is the manufacturer of the Remora 6000 robot, which lifted the wreckage of an Air France airliner from a depth of 3,900 metres in the Atlantic Ocean.

Dutch engineering firm Fugro is carrying out the current search, using four vessels and sophisticated underwater drones.

- Reuters

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