

US Navy seeks to accelerate LST-100 construction



THE US NAVY (USN) has issued a request for proposals for a vessel construction manager (VCM) to oversee the acquisition of the new Medium Landing Ship (LSM).

Announced by Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), the strategy is designed to maximise commercial practices to accelerate ship delivery, improve cost discipline and expand the US shipbuilding industrial base, with a contract award anticipated in mid-2026.

For initial production, the Navy will direct the VCM to manage LSM construction at two shipyards: Bollinger Shipyards and Fincantieri Marinette Marine. Bollinger Shipyards was awarded a contract to support LSM long lead-time procurement and lead ship engineering design activities in September 2025; Fincantieri will execute work to build four LSMs. The VCM will then have the ability to decide the best strategy for awarding the remaining three ships authorised under the base contract.

The VCM approach reflects a change in how the USN traditionally contracts and oversees ship construction. This will see the VCM held responsible for

ABOVE: The lead LST-100 for Nigeria, now in service as the NNS Kada, under construction by Damen at its UAE yard.
Image: Damen

managing the entire construction program, from the design phase through to vessel delivery and post-delivery support. To this end, VCM services are expected to include: award of contracts for LSM construction, oversight and management of all aspects of vessel construction, including planning, scheduling, budgeting and quality control. The VCM will also monitor shipyard performance against the contract requirements, and be responsible for reporting of production status and metrics, providing technical expertise and guidance to shipyards, performing configuration management of the vessel design across multiple construction yards and negotiating pricing for long lead-time and economic ordering quantity materials.

“Business as usual is over,” Secretary of the Navy, John C. Phelan, said of

the new approach. “We’re streamlining oversight, leveraging commercial best practices and using proven designs to deliver capability faster. The VCM model drives accountability and performance.”

The VCM will hold the prime contract with the Navy and, in turn, issue and manage its own sub-contracts directly with the shipyards. This places the VCM in direct contractual control of shipyard performance and creates a buffer that, along with a proven design, is expected to reduce cost and schedule risks for the USN.

“The VCM approach not only accelerates construction timelines but also strengthens our industrial base by engaging multiple shipyards,” said Rear Admiral Brian Metcalf, program executive officer, ships. “By providing a mature, ‘build-to-print’ design and empowering a VCM to manage production, we are streamlining oversight for this acquisition. This approach accelerates the timeline and strengthens our industrial base, ensuring we have the capacity and expertise needed for sustained maritime advantage.”

Damen’s Landing Ship Transport 100 (LST-100) was selected in early December 2025 as the baseline LSM design in a program that will deliver at least 18 and up to 35 ships to provide littoral manoeuvre and sustainment of US Marine Corps units in contested environments.

Previously known as the Light Amphibious Warship, each LSM is expected to take 32-36 months to build, according to NAVSEA, with contracts to be awarded for construction of an initial eight ships.

Separately, the second LST-100 for the Nigerian Navy was launched on 2 March at the Damen shipyard in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The new vessel will join sister ship NNS Kada which is homeported in Lagos. **DTR**

- Ian Bostock