DASA awards £2.3m to develop novel sensor technology

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) has awarded 13 contracts worth a total of £2.3 million to develop improved Electro-Optics and Infrared (EOIR) sensor capability, it was announced today .

The Advanced Vision 2020 and Beyond competition, run on behalf of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), sought innovation and novel approaches from industry, including small and medium-sized enterprises and academia.

Electro-Optic and Infrared (EOIR) sensors are a key military capability used for surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition, threat warning, target detection and more.

Potential use cases of the innovative approaches being developed include:

- Imaging in difficult environments such as through clouds or smoke, low or no light, and through foliage or camouflage
- Detecting and identifying small targets such as drones, snipers, people, weapons, and vehicles
- Identifying objects more than 20km away and classify friendly or adversary vehicles

Additionally, EOIR sensors offer a complementary approach to radio frequency sensors, being able to detect objects in environments where radar is challenged or to operate against objects that have a naturally lower radar signature so are harder to identify.

Andy Cole, Dstl project manager, said:

> The ever evolving nature of military operations means that we wish to invest in novel and resilient technologies that can function in contested and congested environments, that will extend the range, lower the cost and size, and expand the range of targets that can be addressed by EOIR sensors.

DASA associate delivery manager Katy Violet said:

> DASA finds and funds the best innovative ideas and solutions from the brightest minds in science, technology, academia, and research to give our Armed Forces and security services advantage over our adversaries, while supporting brilliant UK companies from start-ups, small and medium-sized businesses, academia right through to major employers.

Those awarded contracts are:

- Thales
- Teledyne e2v
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Exeter
- QinetiQ (2 funded proposals)
- University of Stirling
- Heriot-Watt University
- University of Bristol
- Iceni Labs
- Frazer-Nash Consultancy
- Living Optics
- Spectra Medical