

# DE&S-led expertise set to revolutionise development of UK military robotics

The Expeditionary Robotics Centre of Expertise (ERCoE) has been launched by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) in collaboration with the British Army.

The ERCoE will bring together robotics and autonomous systems experts from across defence, government, academia and industry and aligns with DE&S' strategy to deliver the edge through people, technology and innovation.

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Adopting a collaborative and agile-by-design approach ERCoE will operate from MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol and from the Army BattleLab in Dorset, an innovative technology project announced in August 2020.

The ERCoE will act as a focal point for current innovative projects, and also assess unexplored, high-risk but rapidly maturing technologies.

Projects to be investigated at the outset include Remote Platoon Vehicles, nano Unmanned Air Systems, autonomous resupply of forward troops and how defence forms Human Machine Teams.

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Open access to information and fresh ideas will ensure Defence can exploit the benefits this key disruptive technology could present, whilst also facilitating the rapid growth of expertise in this area.

The centre sits under the Future Capability Group (FCG) at DE&S, the procurement arm of the Ministry of Defence. FCG has a direct line to market, ensuring ideas can be rapidly developed.

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FCG Head James Gavin said:

The CoE concept was borne out of the need and opportunity to bring together separate projects and people into single groupings to be more efficient and effective.

Being more effective means a razor-sharp focus on exploitation and operational Advantage as the goal.

Co-teaming between the Army and DE&S will put the customer at the heart of what we do, exploring and delivering iteratively under an 'Agile by Default' mindset. DE&S personnel will work alongside industry experts at the Army BattleLab within the Defence Innovation Centre, allowing new ideas and concepts to be quickly developed and put into practice.

The ERCoE has been jointly launched with Future Force Development in Army HQ and is aligned to their Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Strategy. The hub will initially focus on projects for the British Army, but there is optimism that as the group expands and matures, it will become a central hub of advice for expeditionary robotics across Defence.

Lt Col Iain Lamont, S01 Robotics and Autonomous Systems at the British Army, said:

The Army's Future Force Development team are delighted to be entering into a fast-paced and exciting new partnership with the ERCoE.

Driven by the Army's RAS Strategy, this new agile approach will enable the delivery of several exciting new developments and ensure game-changing technology enters into service as early as possible as we look to accelerate Army transformation.

The ERCoE launch is a pathfinder within the recently launched DE&S Strategy 2025 and will pave the way for future delivery teams to maximise advantage from this novel capability.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

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Caption for all photos: The ERCoE will continue to exploit existing projects such as Robotic Platoon Vehicles, as well as examining new and emergent technologies. (Pictures by Jack Eckersley, MOD Crown Copyright)