

Dstl awards £300 million weapons research contract

A contract for the accelerated development of disruptive weapon technologies has been awarded by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to QinetiQ.

The £300 million Weapons Sector Research Framework (WSRF) contract will run for five years with the aim of providing the armed forces with the battle winning technology to fight future conflicts. It succeeds the Weapons Science and Technology Centre (WSTC) contract, and offers a broader range of research activities including directed energy, complex and conventional weapons technologies.

The contract will run as an Enterprise Approach collaboration between Dstl, industry and academia. Stakeholders will work together, planning, tasking and delivering accelerated weapons science and technology (S&T) research.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

“The Weapons Sector Research Framework will give top researchers in industry and the public sector more opportunities to innovate. As we continuously refine our response to rapidly evolving threats, we must be disruptive and strategic: exploiting technology and ensuring our armed forces are prepared.

“I am pleased that this contract will also build industry relationships, making our innovative research work fuller and more collaborative.”

The WSRF will work with the supply base to encourage innovation and growth throughout the contract’s lifespan. A Community of Interest (COI) across the supply chain of industry, academia and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will also spur the development and maintenance of essential UK technical capabilities, weapons critical expertise and facilities.

Chief Executive of Dstl, Gary Aitkenhead said:

“As the science inside UK defence and security Dstl’s research delivers clear military and strategic advantage for our armed forces. We reduce risk to our forces by delivering technology with increased effectiveness and range. We have seen a growing demand from customers for our advice, assurance and research which create new game changing capabilities for defence. We are proud to have delivered affordable and effective solutions to our customers that have saved lives and money, as well as supporting the growth of the UK economy. The WSRF brings together our key partners, SMEs and academia to develop the solutions defence and security need in a fast-evolving world.”

Steve Fitz-Gerald, Group Managing Director for Maritime and Land at QinetiQ said:

“We are immensely proud to be supporting Dstl and the wider defence

enterprise to deliver a framework that ensures the UK benefits from the best thinking and innovation. The enhanced scope of the WSRF will allow the generation of new capability, getting battle winning equipment and technology into the hands of the warfighter at pace, and enable the UK to counter the evolving threats to our sovereignty and prosperity.”

QinetiQ and Dstl are now progressing to the mobilisation phase of the new framework.