Dstl SME Searchlight Announces New Webinar Programme

New opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to engage with the defence industry have been announced by Dstl (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory) SME Searchlight.

The first series of webinars, which are free to attend, are scheduled for October and cover the separate areas of air systems and policing. Dstl SME Searchlight is driving an increase in defence collaboration from non-traditional defence suppliers for Dstl, the science inside UK defence and security.

Air Systems Advanced air systems are key to achieving freedom of action and control in the air environment, which is critical to the UK Armed Forces' success. Dstl's Air Systems Programme is the Science & Technology focal point and integration hub for air related S&T, for all UK armed services. Areas covered include the development and evaluation of future air systems and associated technologies, and S&T solutions for air systems survivability.

Electro-optic broadband scene projection – Tuesday 6 October 1100 to 1200 Modern sensors can concurrently process information from many parts of the electromagnetic spectrum. Dstl aims to more accurately project a scene in multiple wavebands for use in lab based sensor testing and development. Applicable commercial technologies may include laser test, fibre-coupled arrays and LED technology.

Very high power reserve batteries – Thursday 8 October 1500 to 1600 Dstl is researching the next generation of off-board countermeasures for use in the Air domain and is looking for developments in high power, rapid discharge battery technology to power them, including novel solutions and the latest advances in technology from chemical solutions through to super-capacitors.

Policing The future will be challenging for policing with trends like rising inequality and social fragmentation, technological developments and the role of non-state actors all converging and increasing the complexity in which they operate. Recent work by the College of Policing (Future Operating Environment 2040) identified the most relevant trends to policing and Dstl subsequently captured the views of Police Officers and Staff, from across the UK, to identify the most significant future challenges. Many of the challenges identified could be mitigated by science and technology.

Data, information, disinformation, communication and automation – 13 October 1100 to 1200 Dstl seek to address challenges around exploiting the volume and complexity of data, the increasing sophistication in disinformation, the need to demonstrate trustworthiness, implications from increased use of social care devices and 'deep' surveillance and sensors.

Human augmentation and behavioural adaption to the changing operating

environment – 15 October 1300 to 1400 This session will discuss use of synthetic biology and biotechnology, augmented and virtual reality and human-machine interfaces. Implications of the future operating environment lead to challenges for recruitment and training, operating in environments where moods, emotions and intentions are more apparent, and maintaining moral.

Dstl SME Searchlight is offering the chance to hear more about these challenges and how SMEs, innovators and academia might contribute to the science and technology required to address them. At each event attendees will hear about the challenges directly from a user's perspective and from Dstl's commercial team about how to get involved in the research phases. Searchlight will provide information on how it is working with the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) to seek out innovative solutions to some of these challenges.

The events will be hosted by Team Defence Information and are free to attend. Registration is with Eventbrite using the following link: https://searchlight.eventbrite.co.uk

In 2019 Dstl highlighted its commitment to working with a wide range of innovative SMEs. The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has set an ambitious target that 25% of its procurement spend will go to SMEs by 2022. Dstl previously announced a substantial increase in spend with SMEs in the past Financial Year (FY) 2019-20, from £72.6m to £86.1m, meaning that over 27% of its external spend on science and technology (S&T) went to SMEs , either directly or via a prime supplier.