

## News story: Welsh company wins £82M contract on global stage

The deal with Qioptiq in St Asaph, North Wales, will see battle-winning handheld equipment – including night-vision goggles and day and night weapon sights – maintained over the next six years, to ensure they are available to our personnel around the globe.

This good news for Wales, as the UK prepares to celebrate St David's Day, follows the recent announcement that North Wales will be a global repair hub providing maintenance services for F-35 components, in a move worth millions for the region.

Speaking at the IDEX trade show, Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

It's a pleasure to announce this £82 million contract here at IDEX. This deal will provide our troops with the equipment they need to stay safe, while also delivering £47 million of savings.

This contract is made possible by our £178 billion equipment plan, supported by a Defence budget that will rise every year until the end of the decade.

Work under the new Surveillance Target and Acquisition Support (STAS) contract will create eight new positions at the company, which employs around 560 at its St Asaph and Bodelwyddan sites. By merging 20 individual support contracts into one deal, the MOD will save £47 million for the tax payer over the next six years.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This massive contract for Qioptiq underlines Wales' reputation as a world leader in the defence technology sector, coming hot on the heels of the choice of DECA Sealand as the global repair hub for the F35 aircraft.

This enormous vote on confidence in the Welsh economy demonstrates that we offer the highly skilled workforce and facilities that investors need. It is also clearly great news for employment in the region.

The contract covers equipment used right across the Armed Forces, from frontline infantry and Royal Marine soldiers, to military specialists such as bomb disposal experts, including infantry periscopes, laser aimers and target locating equipment.

Chief Executive Officer of the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, Tony Douglas said:

This new deal with Qioptiq has reduced costs by a third, demonstrating how we are constantly striving to build innovation and value into Defence procurement and support. Crucially, the STAS contract, will deliver improved support to Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

IDEX is a biannual international defence exhibition and conference dedicated to unmanned systems held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The United Kingdom has supported IDEX since its inception and this year a Royal Navy Mine Counter Measure Vessel, HMS Penzance, will be attending.

Mrs Baldwin and the UK team will be working to develop closer links with a range of Governments and industrial partners in the Gulf. British companies are promoting a range of innovative world leading technologies, many suitable for armed forces in the region.

They are keen to share technology, offer value for money solutions supported by training and logistical support, and build joint venture partnerships on land and maritime border security; maritime mine detection and countermeasures; and chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear and biological and chemical defence.