

[Press release: Defence sector supply chain to bring new opportunities for Welsh businesses](#)

An industry event will be held in south Wales next month with the aim of connecting companies and organisations across the nation with the UK's lucrative defence supply chain.

The Ministry of Defence announced earlier this year that the UK will re-join the Boxer programme and explore options to equip the Army with the 8x8 troop carriers to modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Army's Mechanised Infantry Vehicle requirement.

The assessment phase for the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle programme, which is due to conclude in 2019, will consider the comparable benefits of manufacturing locations and different supply chains for Boxer, as well as value-for-money. Any deal will be subject to commercial negotiation and assessment. The aim is to have the first vehicles in service with the Army in 2023.

In an effort to ensure that Welsh companies can compete for the manufacture and supply of many of the vehicle sub-systems, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns is leading the clarion call for organisations to sign up to Artec's industry event at the University of Wales' Treforest Campus on 10 September.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

We cannot underestimate the valuable impact the defence sector has on our security and on the Welsh economy, supporting thousands of jobs and millions of pounds of investment across the country.

The Artec industry day provides a significant opportunity for Welsh businesses to capitalise on the supply chain opportunities presented by the Boxer programme and the wider defence sector.

The experience they will gain from it will provide them with the additional credentials needed to help springboard them into other markets and I encourage them to take full advantage.

The UK played a major role in the original design, development and testing of the Boxer, and would reassume the rights it had as a project partner if a deal was to go through – allowing the option for the vehicle to be built and exported from the UK. The deal could see the Boxer fully assembled in the UK with at least 60% of the manufacturing with British industry, sustaining and developing UK industrial capabilities, facilities and skills.

Defence Minister for Defence Procurement Stuart Andrew said:

Wales plays a massive part in ensuring our armed forces have the finest military equipment to defend us, and is already assembling the Army's new Ajax vehicles in what is the biggest order of its kind in three decades.

We spent £945m with Welsh businesses last year, supporting over 6,000 jobs, as the industry continues to thrive. A possible deal for new Boxer armoured vehicles could mean at least 1,000 more British jobs, and I hope local companies seize this opportunity to understand how there could be even more defence work up for grabs for Wales in the future.

Artec, the consortium who manufacture the Boxer vehicle, already have an established UK footprint. Their planned investment in the UK is estimated to secure or create at least 1,000 jobs across the UK, including Wales. As part of the programme, the UK is also expected to see substantial inward investment from Rheinmetall, one of Artec's parent companies, who signalled their intention to launch a production and integration centre for armoured vehicles in the UK. This would represent a significant commitment which would lead to long-lasting armoured vehicle capability in the UK.

Supplier engagement events are an excellent opportunity to share knowledge, compare capabilities and link-up organisations across the supply chain.

Artec, Rheinmetall and KMW are very much looking forward to the event on the 10th September to continue our engagement with the UK industrial base, and develop our supply network to satisfy the MOD's Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV) requirements.

We recognise the level and diversity of capability, skills and know-how within the UK supply chain, and look forward to meeting many more organisations that we can work with to deliver the best solutions to the British Armed Forces.

Wales plays an important role in UK defence providing over 3,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces and supporting over 6,000 industry jobs. The country benefits from Ministry of Defence (MOD) expenditure of £300 per person each year and a huge investment in local industry and commerce worth £945 million.

To sign up to the event, click [here](#)

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