

# Press release: Dragonfire: Laser Directed Energy Weapons

In January of this year, 2017, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), awarded a contract to the Dragonfire consortium, worth £30million to UK industry, to demonstrate the potential of Laser Directed Energy Weapons (LDEW).

Dstl supplies high-impact science and technology for the defence and security of the UK. Scientists from Dstl, working with industry partners under contract to Dstl, have been working on laser technology since the 1970s, with the intent of realising the benefit of an affordable and precise weapon for the UK military.

Testing of the demonstrator will begin on UK ranges in 2018, culminating in a major demonstration in 2019. The Dragonfire solution is based on unique technical approaches developed in the UK under MOD and industry funding centred on high energy lasers and will address the challenges associated with engaging aerial targets safely. It represents the major element of the Dstl led LDEW project, which draws on expertise across Dstl and contributes to internal collaborative programmes.

UK Dragonfire, led by MBDA in the UK under contract to Dstl, has brought together the best of relevant UK industry expertise to deliver the highly challenging and complex programme. The team capitalises on the strengths of the individual companies involved, which include QinetiQ, Leonardo, GKN, Arke, BAE Systems and Marshall Land Systems.

The LDEW technology provides operational advantage to the UK military and the potential to export such systems in support of the Prosperity agenda, as advocated in the UK's 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, by developing on-shore industrial capability.

Peter Cooper, Dstl's Project Technical Authority for Dragonfire, said:

Dragonfire is the culmination of many years of work in the area of laser directed energy weapons. We are looking forward to the 2019 demonstration and, working with our industry colleagues, we aim provide the UK Armed Forces with innovative, effective and affordable solutions to the emerging threats they face.