

Press release: MOD launches £2m fund to counter drones threat

The [competition](#), run by the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), the MOD's innovation hub, will seek robust and cost-effective next-generation solutions to the risks posed by hostile UAS.

The MOD is looking to develop new defensive capabilities which draw upon autonomous decision-making mechanisms and networked sensing systems capable of detecting, tracking, identifying and defeating hostile UAS over complex and varied environments.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

As the security threats from hostile drones are evolving at pace, it's critical that our armed forces benefit from the very latest technology to stay ahead.

This competition will draw on the brightest and best of our defence industry to find innovative solutions that will ensure we are protected in the years to come.

The competition is the latest stage in Defence Science and Technology Lab's (Dstl) ongoing research programme into Countering UAS which has been running for ten years.

This programme has included the extensive research, testing and evaluation of the counter-UAS technology currently employed by the MOD, including the landmark series of ['Bristow'](#) trials with industry in 2013, 2015 and 2018.

Dstl's Principal Engineer, David Lugton said:

Hostile UAS is a challenging threat in many different ways and requires cutting edge technology and well-thought-out system approaches to counter it effectively. Through this competition we are looking to inspire and develop a range of solutions to mitigate the threat posed by UAS now and in the future.

Among the technologies we're looking for, we'd be interested in those which can detect and track multiple threats simultaneously, with minimal human oversight, and against a broad spectrum of UAS types.

We're also interested in Counter-Unmanned Air Systems which can overcome the challenges posed by line of sight blockages, collateral, and ones which can link systems together to improve understanding of the local "drone air picture".

Today's call is focused on tackling the challenges of current and future UAS capabilities, in particular:

- Next-generation Counter-UAS technology – new technological solutions to provide robust and cost effective sensing and defeat options.
- Flexible Counter-UAS technology – programmes capable of bringing counter-UAS technologies together and linking with other surveillance systems and cooperative drone awareness systems.
- Countering Future UAS Systems – developing capability to detect and mitigate threats from UAS acting autonomously, in swarms and in highly congested airspace.

Phase 1, which will deliver proof of concept of the proposals, will be worth approximately £800k and is scheduled to take place from July 2019 to March 2020. The total funding for the competition is expected to be at least £2m, split over multiple phases.

The full competition document can be found [here](#).