

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.

[China criticizes several cities' response to air pollution](#)

China's Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) on Sunday named and shamed several cities in north China for not doing enough to cope with air pollution.

In an inspection on 18 cities in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and neighboring areas, the MEP found several problems in their response to air pollution, including inadequate planning and poor implementation.

Cangzhou city in Hebei province was criticized for failure to draw up a detailed list for business shutdowns on heavily polluted days, which made it hard to achieve desired emission-cut effects.

Local authorities in Dezhou city did not revise emergency response schemes in time, and Jiaozuo city did not initiate traffic controls when the city was on red pollution alerts, according to the ministry.

The inspection also found a county under Baoding city was lagging far behind in its task to upgrade coal-fired boilers, and several companies in Beijing, Dezhou and Zhengzhou were criticized for breaching emission rules.

China is intensifying efforts to fight pollution and environmental degradation after decades of growth left the country saddled with problems such as smog and contaminated soil.

A total of 720 people were detained and 6,454 held accountable in China for environment-related wrongdoing in 2016, according to earlier official information.

China has a four-tier color-coded warning system for air pollution, with red being the most serious, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

President of India Condoles the Passing Away of Shri Altamas Kabir

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee has condoled the passing away of former Chief Justice of India, Shri Altamas Kabir.

There is a renewed and more focused effort to give a dynamic impetus to our relations with African nations: Vice President

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has said that after the India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) conference in India

Greenhouse vegetables harvested on S.

China Sea islets

Chinese staying on a group of islets in the South China Sea have lately harvested tomatoes and leafy vegetables they grew from a new greenhouse.

The authorities of Sansha City, Hainan Province, announced over the weekend the first harvest of Yongle islets greenhouse farm. Yongle, composed of 13 islets, lie some 40 sea miles southwest to the Sansha municipal government seat on the island of Yongxing.

Yongxing built its own greenhouse farm last year.

The Yongle harvest ended the area's shortage of vegetables, which used to be supplied by ferries. In time of tropical storms or rough waves, ships were halted and the people on the islets might go days without eating vegetables, an important part of the healthy Chinese diet.

The greenhouse, covering 567 square meters, was built with materials that can withstand heat, storms, gales, and erosive seawater. The ceiling is equipped with solar panels absorbing excessive sunlight to produce electricity.

Inside the greenhouse, a cooling and moisturizing system runs by the hour during the day to make the environment favorable for vegetables to grow.

The first few harvested vegetables include tomatoes, red spinach and water spinach. The farm's managers expect output to reach 200 kilograms a week after they expand the farming scale.