

News story: Accelerator Innovation Network Event

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The Defence and Security Accelerator is holding an event in London on 23 February 2017 to provide information on the first Innovation Fund challenge

Suppliers attending the event will be able to hear presentations about the Innovation Fund challenge which is aimed at revolutionising the human-information relationship for Defence.

If you cannot attend the event, sign up for our [webinar](#) which will take place on 27 February 2017.

[The competition](#) is seeking new technologies, processes and ways of working to improve the way we analyse and exploit data. With the relationship between human and information at the centre of war-fighting we need Defence leaders to have access to the right information on critical issues to enable decision making that outpaces our adversaries.

The challenges of this Accelerator competition are to:

- free up personnel through the application of innovative use of machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence to maintain military advantage
- allow for the rapid and automated integration of new sensors
- improve operator cognitive capacity and greater human machine teaming

Up to £6 million is available in total across phase 1 and 2 of this Innovation Fund competition.

NE China province reports two H7N9 cases

Northeast China's Liaoning Province on Monday reported two human H7N9 avian flu cases.

The two patients, from cities of Shenyang and Chaoyang, respectively, are

being treated and in stable conditions, the provincial health authorities said in a statement.

In response to the disease, authorities in the two cities have taken disease control measures.

In addition to Liaoning, human infections have also been reported in the provinces of Guangdong, Guizhou, Hubei, Henan, Hunan, Jiangxi and Shandong, as well as in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macao.

The public are advised to avoid direct contact with poultry and see doctors timely when developing symptoms including headache, fever and coughing.

At least ten people have died from the virus since the start of the year, according to disease control centers in Henan, Guangdong and Hunan provinces.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in March 2013 in China. It is most likely to strike in winter and spring.

[News story: Presentation slides from the Accelerator Enduring Challenge launch event](#)

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A launch event for the Enduring Challenge was held for science and technology providers on 26 January 2017.

At the event in London, Harriett Baldwin MP, Minister for Defence Procurement, launched the Innovation Initiative's £6 million Accelerator Enduring Challenge, in her keynote speech.

The Enduring Challenge is run by the MOD's new Defence and Security Accelerator and will fast-track the best ideas by funding their development, matching suppliers with expert Innovation Partners, and boosting supplier access to defence. The competition will run regularly, with up to 12 rounds a year.

Enduring challenge overview

In the [opening session](#), the Accelerator's Rob Solly introduced the Accelerator and gave an overview of the Enduring Challenge and how it differs from the previously-run Centre for Defence Enterprise enduring competition.

This was followed by the Accelerator's Jim Pennycook, who explained the transition to the Accelerator and gave an overview of proof-of-concept research funding opportunities for innovative science and technology providers.

Further detail was then provided by the Accelerator's Bruce Hardie, who explained the specifics of the challenge, how the competitions would work and the practicalities of submitting a proposal.

Defence and Security perspectives

In the [second session](#), military advisers and technical experts from the security services, air, land and sea sectors gave their perspective of how the Enduring Challenge will meet the defence and security challenges.

[Top auditor: US\\$2.6 bln environment funds not effectively used](#)

China's top auditor has found that 17.6 billion yuan (about 2.56 billion U.S. dollars) of fiscal funds earmarked in 2016 for pollution control and resource management was not used effectively.

The finding was part of the results released after the National Audit Office (NAO) sent inspection teams to 18 provincial regions to review the use of fiscal funds for water pollution prevention and control.

The NAO inspectors also found that a total of 397 water pollution protection projects had failed to achieve desired effect, and some environment funds were not distributed in accordance with special protection plans.

The NAO noted increasing pressure from regional water environment protection, adding that in some regions, environment protection laws were not enforced strictly.

In response to the audit, local authorities in the 18 provincial regions have improved the distribution and use of more than 3 billion yuan of environment funds, and pushed forward the progress of 77 water pollution control projects.

Meanwhile, the NAO urged local auditors in 31 provincial regions to audit the

funds meant for water pollution prevention.

Chinese authorities have punished 3,229 government officials for fiscal violations found when auditing the central government's 2015 budget.

[News story: Iraq Afghanistan Memorial to be unveiled in London](#)

The memorial honours both the UK Armed Forces and civilians who served their country in the Gulf region, Iraq and Afghanistan, and who supported them back home, from 1990-2015. Around 2,500 invited guests will attend a service of dedication from a specially conducted Drumhead on Horse Guards at 11am, to include prayers, music and readings. A small ceremony will then be held in the gardens for the unveiling itself. It will be displayed on screens on Horse Guards.

The guests will be representatives of the many groups – military and civilian – whose efforts in those countries over a 25-year period are recognised, including current Service personnel, veterans, civil servants and charity workers.

They will be joined by The Queen, other members of the Royal Family, Secretary of State for Defence Sir Michael Fallon and other senior politicians.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The memorial will stand as a permanent reminder of the contribution and sacrifice that so many members of our Armed Forces, aid workers and civilian personnel made towards the security of the United Kingdom and the interests of Iraq and Afghanistan. Their efforts underline our on-going commitment to support the people of this region in building a more stable future which will help keep Britain safer and more secure.

Union Jack flag on British Military base, Crown Copyright.

The memorial commemorates the duty and service of British citizens who voluntarily put themselves in harm's way, protected our nation's interests far from the security of the UK, helped those in danger and worked to improve the lives of those in Iraq and Afghanistan. UK Citizens, from a vast breadth of organisations across Government, charities and non-governmental organisations worked tirelessly over many years to help the citizens of both countries. Some made the ultimate sacrifice during their efforts to lay the

foundations for peace and stability.

Importantly, it honours all those who worked on the humanitarian side of operations, whether in a military or civilian role including areas such as aid distribution, education, healthcare, infrastructure and governance. The memorial recognises, praises and remembers with gratitude the unstinting and selfless commitment of all those, military and civilian, who served their country in support of both Iraq and Afghanistan.

The distinctive memorial has been designed by sculptor Paul Day and gives equal prominence to the civilian and military contributions. It consists of two large stone monoliths supporting a bronze medallion. The two-sided medallion has sculpted reliefs depicting the memorial's theme of "duty and service".

The memorial project is run by a board of trustees, whose chairman is former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Stirrup, and The Sun newspaper ran a fundraising appeal for the memorial. The unveiling is being organised by the MOD, on the trustees' behalf, in partnership with The Royal British Legion, which is co-hosting a reception after the service.

After the unveiling, the public will be freely able to visit the Iraq Afghanistan Memorial in the Victoria Embankment Gardens.