

Dstl trials innovative solutions to 'wet gap' military challenge

Amphibious vehicles, bottom-crawling robots and drones with autonomous control.

It is hard to believe that these diverse and incredible feats of innovation are all potential solutions to the same military challenge.

The Map the Gap competition, run by Dstl on behalf of DASA, aims to find new ways to help UK Armed Forces cross a body of water, or 'wet gap', safely and covertly while increasing the tempo of operations.

Dstl Senior Principal Analyst Nicole Beaves said:

The scientific and technological knowledge we provide gives commanders more options and our military a critical advantage.

This competition has brought together some of the top minds in industry and led to a diverse range of cutting-edge solutions.

These impressive prototypes show incredible creativity and innovation combined with top-level technical expertise.

Map the Gap

Five suppliers received a total of £1.2m in funding to complete [phase 1 of the Map the Gap competition](#).

A bottom crawler by Wight Ocean was developed, and Digital Concepts Engineering demonstrated their teamed bottom crawler and drone.

Nordic Unmanned AS and Scytronix used advanced drone technology and Foundry Cube in collaboration with Ultrabeam Hydrographic made an amphibious vehicle.

The competition started in February 2020 and trials took place earlier this year. [Phase 2](#) offered £2 million to fund multiple projects.

The prototypes are expected to retrieve vital information such as the depth and flow of the water, the distance between both banks and their respective heights, and the ground-bearing capacity of the nearby land.

Robert Hammond-Smith, DASA Delivery Manager said:

The international reputation of Dstl helped attract proposals from as far away as America and Norway, as well as the UK.

We had about 20 proposals and we took forward five of these with

different approaches to the problem and different expertise.

Our competitions attract the top minds in industry, academia and the military. Often we are key in turning an SME concept into a reality.

Potential suppliers and partners can find out about [competitions being run by DASA on behalf of Dstl](#) and other [ways to work with us](#), as well as our [current priorities for funding and research](#).

[Support for those arriving from Afghanistan](#)

Work is underway across the whole of government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with the UK in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK. Further information on the UK governments [Operation Warm Welcome](#) can be found on GOV UK.

We are also very aware of the large number of UK nationals who were also evacuated from Afghanistan in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government on 15 August 2021, who needed to leave Afghanistan suddenly.

Those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan, either as part of the repatriation efforts, or under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes have arrived under difficult circumstances. In response to this, departments have legislated to exempt those arriving from Afghanistan from the usual residency tests which restrict access certain benefits for new arrivals to the UK, including Universal Credit.

Individuals arriving from Afghanistan under a relocation or resettlement scheme

The Home Office has put in place schemes to relocate individuals from Afghanistan. These include:

- the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Programme and Afghan Locally Employed Staff scheme for those who worked alongside UK forces in Afghanistan
- the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme for those considered at risk in Afghanistan

Further information on the [relocation and resettlement schemes](#) can be found on GOV UK.

The changes ensure that individuals arriving under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes are exempt from the residency tests for:

- DWP means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit
- disability and carer benefits
- child Benefit
- homelessness assistance
- social housing

This means that individuals who arrive under one of the Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes will meet the residency requirements, and be able to access these benefits and services when they arrive in the UK. An exception to this is the provision for immediate eligibility for housing assistance in Wales, where this will be the case from mid-October 2021.

The Department for Work and Pensions is providing tailored support through our Jobcentre Plus work coaches to help those on these schemes access the support available for them.

Other individuals who have recently arrived in the UK from Afghanistan, including UK nationals

DWP, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have also legislated to ensure we can provide support for those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan as quickly as possible. Those arriving in the UK from Afghanistan in connection with the recent collapse of the Afghan government will be exempt from the residency tests for:

- DWP means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit
- Child Benefit
- Homelessness assistance
- Social housing

This means that individuals will be able to access these benefits and services when they arrive in the UK, where they meet all other eligibility requirements.

This applies to UK nationals, those arriving under an Afghan relocation and resettlement scheme, and anyone else with a qualifying immigration status who left Afghanistan, in connection with the collapse of the Afghan government on 15 August 2021.

Those who have arrived from Afghanistan should contact their local [Jobcentre Plus](#) to see what help is available for them.

Further support DWP is providing

DWP are working with other government departments to provide support to help Afghan nationals integrate into the UK, using our network of Work Coaches to

provide tailored support. Personalised employment support will be offered to all those arriving from Afghanistan through our network of local job centres.

DWP is committed to supporting Afghan nationals who are looking to rebuild their lives in the UK, while being sensitive to the trauma these groups have experienced. DWP will adopt a supportive and flexible approach, ensuring that we are mindful of the complex needs and recent experiences of those arriving under the Home Office relocation and resettlement schemes.

We are offering individual, step by step, clear guidance on benefit applications and routes into work. For example, English language classes will also be made available through Jobcentre Plus.

We will continue to look at how best to support people during this time.

Individuals still in Afghanistan

Individuals who are currently still in Afghanistan and unable to return to the UK should check the [guidance](#) from the FCD0.

If you are currently in receipt of a benefit and unable to return to the UK, then you should contact your [Work Coach](#), the relevant [disability benefit helpline](#), or the relevant [Local Authority](#) for housing benefit.

DWP will look to take a flexible and understanding approach where individuals are currently unable to return to the UK from Afghanistan.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

Follow DWP on:

[Cambrian Mountains Lamb and Watercress officially register as latest UK Geographical Indications](#)

The new, independent Geographical Indication schemes were launched after the end of the transition period to ensure popular and traditional products from across the country are recognised for their authenticity and origin.

This means that shoppers can buy their favourite food and drink with confidence, and producers benefit from intellectual property protection, so that others cannot imitate them. There are 91 GIs registered from across the UK – 81 agricultural products, 5 wines and 5 spirit drinks.

Wales' Cambrian Mountains Lamb derives its characteristics from lambs born and reared in the Cambrian Mountains area of Wales. The animals grow at a

naturally slow pace, whilst grazing hills and mountains during the summer and autumn.

The meat is produced using a traditional 'Hafod a Hendre' system of farming, which dates back to the Middle Ages. The succulent and delicate lamb matures slowly over more than 16 weeks, before being sold to customers.

Watercress has been granted its special status thanks to its unique and traditional character, enshrined in its production methods, which have been associated with steadily flowing water for thousands of years. Historically, this crop has remained unaltered by selection and breeding – meaning that its unique flavour has remained largely unchanged for generations.

Today's announcement means that only specific plants grown in flowing water can bear the name Watercress when commercially sold in Great Britain.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

Our new GI schemes ensure that traditional products, like Cambrian Mountains Lamb, have a special status to mark their authenticity and provenance.

It is great to see these new GIs registered today, taking us to a total of 91 GI products registered from across the UK. I hope that we will continue to build on this success, and ensure that our produce is enjoyed at home and abroad.

Wales' Cambrian Mountains Lamb is now officially registered as a Protected Geographical Indication, while Watercress has gained the Traditional Speciality Guaranteed status.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

Following the awarding of protected status to Gower Salt Marsh Lamb during the Summer this latest announcement highlights, once again, the quality of Welsh lamb and is testament to the skill of those who produce it.

Wales' range and quality of food and drink is renowned across the world and the UK Government continues to protect and promote our iconic produce with the new GI schemes.

Guaranteeing the authenticity of Welsh food and drink helps cement our reputation for quality both at home and in new international markets.

Protected Geographical Indication status guarantees a product's quality and confirms that at least one production step takes place within a specific geographical area. It also certifies that a product's quality, reputation or

characteristics are linked to its geographical origin.

The Traditional Speciality Guarantee status ensures that traditional characteristics of a product, such as production methods or recipes, are fully protected.

[Next steps taken to support trade between UK nations](#)

Press release

Guidance published to support functioning of UK Internal Market.



- New guidance published to help businesses and enforcement authorities navigate trade between all 4 nations of the UK
- The Office for the Internal Market, a body supporting the smooth running of trade between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is established today by the Competition and Markets Authority

The UK government has today (21 September) published [guidance](#) aimed at helping the public, businesses and authorities with a role in enforcement to understand the day-to-day functioning of the UK's internal market system.

The system is set out in the [UK Internal Market Act 2020](#) to protect businesses, jobs and livelihoods by ensuring there are no harmful new barriers to trade across the United Kingdom.

Regulations introduced to Parliament support today's launch of the [Office for the Internal Market](#) (OIM) by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). These will enable the OIM to carry out the independent advisory, monitoring and reporting functions to support the operation of the UK Internal Market Act 2020.

These regulations also set limits on the financial penalties the OIM may

issue if an organisation fails to comply with an information notice. This follows a public consultation earlier this year.

In addition, the CMA has [set out how the OIM will operate](#) and will use its information-gathering powers.

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[UN Human Rights Council 48: UK statement on Enforced Disappearances](#)

World news story

The UK delivered this statement during the interactive dialogue with the working group on enforced disappearances.



Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom would like to thank the Working Group for the presentation of its report today, and its continued work to assist families in determining

the fate of those disappeared.

Enforced disappearances are clear violations of human rights and we cannot allow these practices to continue unchecked. This issue deeply affects the families of victims and leaves a lasting impact on their communities, as well as damaging the effectiveness of and undermining the rule of law.

The UK Government strongly condemns any instances of enforced disappearances. We urge states to fully investigate any allegations and prosecute those responsible, in order to provide justice to victims and their families.

The UK works through the multilateral system to address these crimes, highlighting concerns and working with others to end these abhorrent practices. Through our diplomatic network, we engage bilaterally to promote awareness, raising individual cases where appropriate, in order to enhance cooperation on this pressing issue.

Members of the working group,

How can States improve our practices in how we work together and build on existing progress?

Thank you.

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