

Innovation fund launches to support Ukrainian armed forces

Press release

The brightest minds in the UK Defence industry are being encouraged to continue developing more battle-winning ideas to help Ukraine



- Campaign launched to bolster Defence innovation in support of Ukraine's Armed Forces
- At least £25 million of funding available for successful proposals to tackle specific needs
- Focus on rapidly delivering from innovation to battleground

Defence Ministers are calling on UK industry to accelerate the development of equipment for the Ukrainian armed forces, launching a £25 million campaign fund for the design and delivery of equipment to the country across the coming months.

The competition will be focused on bolstering the existing provision for artillery, coastal defence and aerial systems.

The Government believes drawing on UK expertise across the defence industry, including from innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), could provide battle-winning solutions for the Ukrainian forces.

Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

Since Russia's brutal invasion UK defence suppliers with active support from MOD and DE&S have taken equipment from desktop ideas to the front line. This £25m plus fund is designed to capture ongoing work and support innovative ideas to meet Ukrainian defence requirements.

Recent months have shown the ingenuity and innovation of the UK defence sector. We want to ensure ongoing creativity is harnessed and directed at key requirements and all companies with a

capability that can help are aware of the challenge.

Working closely with industry we have already seen innovative ideas quickly reaching Theatre. This includes capabilities such as heavy lift Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and anti-tank loitering munitions, as well as adapting existing weapons systems such as integrating Brimstone for use as a ground launched weapon.

The requirements fall into four categories:

- Artillery – Procurement and manufacturing proposals to support the resupply of ammunition and the maintenance of Soviet calibre 152mm and 122mm weapon systems.
- Coastal defence – Supporting the deterrence of hostile naval forces, persistent surveillance, and delivery of attacks at range, including from autonomous or remotely-controlled vehicles.
- Military logistics and resupply – Maintenance and development of infrastructure for supply lines by sea and land, including waterways, overbridging and general Ukrainian engineering capability.
- Unmanned aerial systems (UAS) – The provision of UAS capabilities across a broad spectrum of capabilities, from lethal effects to surveillance, electronic warfare and heavy lift.

The UK has already committed more than £2.8 billion to support Ukraine through humanitarian aid and grants, as well as military kit including 120 armoured vehicles, air defence systems and more than 6,500 anti-tank missiles.

Industry organisations will need to submit proposals by June 10th, when a sift will take place to access the funding, with at least £25 million available.

The initial focus is on equipment that can be sourced and supplied in the next four months, with longer-term capability development in scope where applicable.

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[Civil news: changes to immigration advice in police stations](#)

News story

A new service to provide immigration advice to individuals detained in police

stations launched on 1 June 2022.



Individuals detained in police custody under immigration powers have a new service to access legal advice, starting on 1 June 2022.

The Immigration Police Station Advice (IPSA) service is replacing the Immigration Telephone Advice (ITA) service.

What does this mean for providers?

The change is likely to mean more work for face to face immigration providers.

Providers calling the Defence Solicitor Call Centre (DSCC) will need to listen carefully to the options they are presented with before connecting to an operator as these have changed.

Why is this happening now?

We need to ensure there is a new service to continue helping individuals detained in police custody under immigration powers. This is replacing the ITA contract which came to an end on 31 May 2022.

How will the new service work?

Detainees will be entitled to call-backs under the IPSA service to help them understand:

Clients will then have the option of contacting a solicitor for legal advice. They may decide to do that while still in detention or following release from police custody.

If the client has special needs, such as translation services, the operator will be aware of this in advance of the call-back. They will be able to arrange translation on the call.

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Last updated 1 June 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 1 June 2022

Further clarification that providers calling the Defence Solicitor Call

Centre need to listen carefully to the options as these have changed.

2. 1 June 2022

Clarification of menu options for providers calling Defence Solicitor Call Centre (DSCC) to log police station immigration work.

3. 30 May 2022

First published.

[350 EU rules to be ditched, creating simpler, more flexible and transparent procurement](#)

- New Procurement Bill will focus on making more government contracts open to small businesses, replacing 350 EU laws with a simple and flexible system
- The Bill was debated in Parliament on Wednesday and is expected to become law next year
- New figures show public sector spending with small businesses rose to a record £19.3 billion in 2021/22

New procurement rules which will level the playing field for SMEs and drive economic growth across the UK have moved a step closer to becoming law this week.

The Procurement Bill, which was debated at Second Reading in the Lords on Wednesday, is expected to become law next year. The Bill will tear up hundreds of complicated and bureaucratic EU rules and replace them with a single, simple and flexible framework for securing public sector contracts.

The reforms will slash costs and make it easier for businesses bidding for contracts, particularly smaller companies with less experience of procurement processes. This will result in more SMEs benefiting from contracts for everything from catering for public buildings to digital services and infrastructure projects.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay visited the London offices of Manchester-based SME Informed Solutions on Thursday (26 May) to discuss how the changes will accelerate record levels of government spending with small businesses.

Informed Solutions, often at the forefront of developing new ideas and systems, will benefit from additional flexibility in procurement, with the

Bill enabling public sector buyers to test innovative products and prototypes before making a contract decision.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Steve Barclay said:

We are introducing reforms through our Procurement Bill that will do-away with bureaucratic rules that are both complicated and time-consuming for firms to navigate.

Our departure from the European Union means we are free to streamline these rules on who wins taxpayer contracts.

This will give small businesses a better chance of landing public sector contracts and allow the Government wider access to the first-class skills, innovation and ideas that many agile, creative smaller firms offer. In turn this will allow us to improve the services we provide to the public.

Brand new digital infrastructure will make it easier and cheaper for organisations of all sizes to bid for public contracts, with a single digital platform that will hold all of a supplier's credentials.

Publishing pipelines of procurement opportunities will also allow small companies to make more competitive bids, including forming consortia, while a commitment to prompt payments for a wider range of contracts will level the playing field for SMEs and help reduce the reliance on the same group of large companies.

Liz Crowhurst, CBI Deputy Director for Policy, said:

Businesses are excited to seize the opportunities presented by this once-in-a-generation Procurement Bill.

From the streamlining of complex procurement processes, to the new digital supplier registration system that will slash the administrative burden facing suppliers, the Bill sets out proposals to cut red-tape, promote transparency, and encourage great public-private collaborations.

The new regulations will make working with government easier and more attractive to businesses of all sizes, and industry stands ready to help translate the benefits from paper into practice.

Elizabeth Vega, Group CEO of Informed Solutions said:

Transformational procurement reforms such as these haven't been enacted in the UK in more than 50 years.

As a scaling business, we are excited and optimistic about how

these changes will support the development and growth of our business.

They will make it easier to commercialise our innovative solutions and services, offer greater access and fewer barriers to public sector contracts, and facilitate our international ambitions because we can evidence the benefits, value, and success of our innovation.

The reforms are expected to accelerate government spending with SMEs, which new figures reveal increased for the fourth consecutive year to a record £19.3 billion in 2020/21.

Spending through SMEs grew by £3.7 billion on the previous year, with £10.2 billion of the total spent with SMEs directly and a further £9.1 billion through supply chains.

Notes to editors

- The changes outlined in this Bill will apply to all public sector bodies, including local authorities and central government departments. Read more about the Bill [here](#).
- The new regime will maintain compliance with our international obligations including the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Government Procurement, which gives British businesses guaranteed access to £1.3 trillion in public procurement opportunities overseas.
- Data on SME spending can be found [here](#). An SME is generally defined as an organisation with fewer than 250 (FTE) employees and a set limit for annual turnover or balance sheet totals on their company accounts.

[Intercontinental Ballistic Missile test by North Korea: G7 foreign ministers' statement, 30 May 2022](#)

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, condemn in the strongest terms the test of yet another Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) conducted on May 25, 2022, by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Like a number of ballistic missile launches the DPRK has conducted since the beginning of 2022, this act constitutes a further blatant violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and undermines international peace and security as well as the global non-proliferation regime.

We are very concerned by the unprecedented series of ballistic missile tests with increasingly versatile systems across all ranges, building on ballistic missile tests conducted in 2021. Together with the evidence of ongoing nuclear activities, these acts underscore the DPRK's determination to advance and diversify its nuclear capabilities. These reckless actions flagrantly breach the DPRK's obligations under relevant UN Security Council resolutions, which the Security Council most recently reaffirmed in resolution 2397 (2017). They also pose a danger and unpredictable risk to international civil aviation and maritime navigation in the region.

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers and the High Representative of the European Union, reiterate our urgent call on the DPRK to abandon its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to fully comply with all legal obligations arising from the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We deeply regret that the Security Council has failed to adopt the draft resolution aimed at condemning the series of recent ballistic missile launches by the DPRK and strengthening measures against it despite support from 13 members. We urge all UN Member States, especially Security Council members, to join us in condemning the DPRK's behaviour and reaffirm its obligation to abandon its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. These acts demand a united response by the international community, including a united stance and further significant measures by the UN Security Council.

We reiterate our call on the DPRK to engage in diplomacy toward denuclearization and accept the repeated offers of dialogue put forward by the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan. By diverting its resources into weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs the DPRK further aggravates the already dire humanitarian situation in the DPRK. We urge the DPRK to facilitate access for international humanitarian organizations and for independent assessment of humanitarian needs such as food and medicines as soon as possible.

We also call on all States to fully and effectively implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, and to address the risk of weapons of mass destruction proliferation from the DPRK as an urgent priority.

The G7 remain committed to working with all relevant partners towards the goal of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and to upholding the rules-based international order.

[Robotic snake solves fusion energy](#)

pipework challenge

A new laser-welding 'robotic snake' developed by the UK Atomic Energy Authority has demonstrated its capability to operate inside of fusion energy powerplant pipework and is now patented technology.

The novel trials at Culham Science Centre are another step forward on the roadmap to delivering safe, sustainable, low carbon fusion energy to the grid.

The £2.7 million, seven-year project by UKAEA's RACE (Remote Applications in Challenging Environments) was delivered as part of EUROfusion's flagship DEMO programme, expected to be ITER's successor.

The DEMO snake will be deployed and operated remotely inside a hazardous environment without being touched by humans. It can also work effectively in pipes packed together, with little space for access.

Tristan Tremethick, Lead Mechanical Design Engineer, UKAEA, said: "In fusion machines, pipework has to be connected and disconnected remotely because of the hazardous environment. Pipework in DEMO is extra challenging because of the limited working space. We've been looking at different ways of tackling this and I'm delighted our new snake has passed its first set of trials.

"The bespoke laser welding tool takes a novel approach and operates inside of the pipework to make best use of the cramped space available. At RACE, we pride ourselves on providing complete solutions to enable operations and protect people in challenging environments, and this is another exciting result on our path to delivering fusion energy."

The project also involved creating an ultrasonic sensor-system to move the snake up and down the pipe to identify each precise working location. A separate launch system gets it inside the pipework remotely.

The work shown in this [video](#) is the trial of the whole set of equipment working together for the first time.

Tristan Tremethick added: "Ultrasonic sensors enable the snake to find the correct position, where it then clamps to the pipe and performs the weld from the inside. After the weld, the tool retracts and is removed from the pipe where it can be redeployed."

"Robots are a key part of our mission to deliver low carbon fusion energy, and we need to become skilled in controlling machines like this one remotely. That's because they will be used to maintain fusion energy power plants. We won't be able to send people in, robots will keep them running – it's the future."

RACE has also developed a laser cutting tool operating on the same principles as the snake and both can potentially be used for other industry applications.

EUROfusion consortium consists of experts, students and staff from across Europe collaborating to realise fusion energy, co-funded by the European Commission.

ITER is a fusion research mega-project, based in the south of France, to further demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy.