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New contract for Anglo-French Innovation Technology Partnership

MBDA has been awarded a contract by France's Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA) and the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to lead the new Complex Weapons Innovation Technology Partnership (CW ITP).*

The new four-year contract follows on from the work of the Materials and Components for Missiles Innovation Technology Partnership (MCM ITP) over the last 13 years to continue developing generation-after-next missile technology.

The Governments of both France – through its Defence Innovation Agency - and the UK – with the Integrated Review – have shown a commitment to harness the opportunities innovation can present for the benefit of their Defence capabilities. The CW ITP enables both countries to co-operate in that endeavour and solve the challenges future capabilities will need to overcome.

The CW ITP's new framework will see it focus on five enduring technical areas (ETAs) identified as unique and critical to the field of complex weapons:

- Materials, Structures & Electronics;
- Mission Systems & Algorithms;
- Seekers;
- Propulsion; and
- Lethality.

The development funding provided by CW ITP in these areas will help sustain France and the UK's industrial and scientific base.

A renewed group of French and UK companies, split equally across the two countries, will lead these ETAs.

CW ITP will also introduce greater collaboration across these areas through 'Dynamic Challenges' that will look at technologies with applications across them, as well as any new potential technology areas.

It will also look to fund more 'Disruptive Innovation' through short, three to six month, technology projects that whilst at the smaller end of funding, carry a high risk of not being successful but high reward if they are.

Additionally, CW ITP has increased the funding to research activities of French and UK SME's and academia through efficiency savings on costs of managing the projects.

Éric Béranger, CEO of MBDA, said: *"I am delighted that a new of era of the Innovation Technology Partnership is beginning with this contract. MCM ITP was an excellent example of Anglo-French co-operation, and the CW ITP will no doubt continue in this endeavour, showcasing that our countries remain committed to working together on future defence technologies."*

Ed Dodwell, the Head of CW ITP, said: *"The importance of CW ITP's cross defence collaboration is its facility to match up the evolution of ideas with their exploitation. Technology on its own, without a concept for use becomes redundant. Concepts that never materialise beyond that are opportunities missed. CW ITP addresses this by having the best experts, working together, linking up the technology push of innovation with the market pull of complex weapons."*

CW ITP will have an annual budget of 12m euros - 50% from Dstl/DGA and 50% from Industry - to fund up to 30 projects every two years. These research activities will focus on developing technologies with a low readiness level (up to TRL 3 or 4).

* Dstl signed the contract on behalf of the two nations.

Notes to Editors:

The announcement that of the CW ITP was to follow on from the MCM ITP took place at the last conference in Birmingham in 2019.

Launched in 2007, the first MCM ITP contract ran from 2008 to 2013. A contract renewal saw MCM ITP research activities continuing through to the end of 2021 (extended from 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The final year running in parallel with CW ITP.

MCM ITP funded over 200 research projects involving over 150 different industry and academic organisations.

MBDA is the only European defence group capable of designing and producing missiles and missile systems that correspond to the full range of current and future operational needs of the three armed forces (land, sea and air).

With a significant presence in five European countries and within the USA, in 2020 MBDA achieved revenue of 3.6 billion euros with an order book of 16.6 billion euros. In total, the group offers a range of 45 missile systems and countermeasures products already in operational service and more than 15 others currently in development.

MBDA is jointly owned by Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%), and Leonardo (25%).

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