



PRESS RELEASE

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DragonFire laser programme accelerating to equip Royal Navy

The UK DragonFire laser programme – led by MBDA, with partners Leonardo UK and QinetiQ – is accelerating following a decision from the UK Ministry of Defence to install the weapon system on Royal Navy ships.

The decision, announced by Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, will see the DragonFire laser weapon system rapidly develop from a demonstration programme to an operational capability for the Royal Navy. The next stages of this development will include further live firings and the manufacture and installation of weapon systems onto Royal Navy platforms.

The UK DragonFire programme is a flagship example of the Government's new Integrated Procurement Model, designed to reform defence procurement and drive increased pace in the delivery of military capability.

The UK DragonFire programme brings together the best of UK industry. It leverages MBDA's decades of weapon system manufacturing expertise, Leonardo's position as a world leading authority in laser technology, electro-optics and advanced targeting and QinetiQ's experience as the only UK company to successfully develop and safely operate high-energy laser sources in the UK and coherent beam-combining technology.

The latest announcement follows a series of highly successful firing trials that demonstrated the capability of the DragonFire laser weapon system.

DragonFire has been developed through a £100 million joint investment by industry and the UK Ministry of Defence, working with Dstl. The decision by the UK Ministry of Defence to progress the programme ensures that the companies involved can retain, maintain and grow the critical hi-tech skills, knowledge and jobs that contribute to the UK economy. Future exports of DragonFire to the UK's allies will further support these benefits.

Chris Allam, MBDA UK Managing Director, said:

"MBDA are proud to lead this laser weapon programme that will give the UK Armed Forces game-changing operational advantage to protect and defend themselves, and the UK's strategic assets."

Mark Stead, Leonardo UK SVP Radar and Advanced Targeting, said:

"Leonardo welcomes the commitment to UK science and engineering represented by today's announcement. The development of DragonFire is securing vital skills and security capabilities onshore in the UK, keeping them available to support our Armed Forces and generate world-class, readily exportable products."

Steve Wadey, Group CEO, QinetiQ, said:



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"Today's announcement is a positive endorsement of UK industry and government working together, to deliver equipment to the front line.

"Our team of scientists and engineers who have developed this world leading capability have played a unique role in developing a technology that will provide real operational advantage."

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Notes to Editors:

About MBDA:

MBDA is a unique multi-national European group, a world-leader in the field of complex weapon systems, playing a key role in keeping nations safe. Created in the spirit of international co-operation, MBDA and its 14,000+ employees work together to support the national sovereignty of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, and their allies worldwide. As an accelerator for innovation, MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and manufacturing complex weapons to meet the full range of current and future operational requirements of the three armed forces (land, sea and air). Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%) and Leonardo (25%) jointly own MBDA.

About Leonardo:

Leonardo is a leading global Aerospace, Defence and Security (AD&S) company. With 51,000 employees worldwide, it operates in the fields of Helicopters, Electronics, Aircraft, Cyber & Security and Space, and is a key partner in major international programmes including Eurofighter, NH-90, FREMM, GCAP and Eurodrone. Leonardo has significant industrial capabilities in Italy, the UK, Poland, and the US and also operates through subsidiaries, joint ventures and stakes, including Leonardo DRS (72.3%), MBDA (25%), ATR (50%), Hensoldt (22.8%), Telespazio (67%), Thales Alenia Space (33%) and Avio (29.6%). Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (LDO), Leonardo reported new orders of €17.3 billion in 2022, with an order backlog of €37.5 billion and consolidated revenues of €14.7 billion. The company is included in the MIB ESG index and has been part of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI) since 2010.

About QinetiQ:

QinetiQ is an integrated global defence and security company focused on mission-led innovation. We employ more than 8,500 highly skilled people, committed to creating new ways of protecting what matters most; testing technologies, systems, and processes to make sure they meet operational needs; and enabling customers to deploy new and enhanced capabilities with the assurance they will deliver the performance required. Visit our website www.QinetiQ.com. Follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter @QinetiQ. Visit our blog www.QinetiQ-blogs.com.

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