



## PRESS RELEASE

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# DragonFire laser achieves another UK first

*Trials by MBDA, Leonardo and QinetiQ with Dstl deliver first high power firing against aerial targets*

The DragonFire laser directed energy weapon (LDEW) system has achieved the UK's first high-power firing of a laser weapon against aerial targets during a trial at the MOD Hebrides Range.

The latest trial, delivered by Dstl and the DragonFire partners - MBDA, Leonardo and QinetiQ – builds on a series of highly successful trials, including the first static high-power laser firing of a sovereign UK capability and demonstration of the DragonFire system's ability to track moving air and sea targets with very high accuracy at long range.

The UK DragonFire collaboration brings together the best of UK industry and leverages decades of weapon system manufacturing expertise to deliver enhanced layered air defence capabilities in the land and maritime domains.

The DragonFire weapon system is the result of a £100 million joint investment by industry and the UK Ministry of Defence, and together the companies involved are supporting highly skilled UK jobs in new cutting-edge technologies that are delivering a significant step-change in the UK's capability in LDEW systems.

**Chris Allam, Managing Director, MBDA UK, said:** *“Together, the DragonFire partners and Dstl are demonstrating exceptional UK capability in laser directed energy weapons. The DragonFire system has been successfully proven to date and we are now closer than ever to having a unique weapon that will enable frontline commands to meet the rapidly changing threats they face.”*

**Mark Hamilton, Managing Director Electronics UK, Leonardo said:** *“UK Dragonfire is a great example of how a partnership-based UK enterprise approach can be successfully applied to a major national research and technology challenge. Leonardo is drawing on decades of laser technology heritage at our Edinburgh site in our work on the project: Our beam director technology is delivering ultra-precise tracking/pointing accuracy and stability, at long range, and whilst handling such high-power laser energy passing through it. We're pleased to have successfully tested the system against a representative aerial target at varying ranges, altitudes and speeds, supporting the first UK High Energy Laser (HEL) firing against aerial targets across its operational field of regard.”*

**Steve Wadey, Group Chief Executive Officer, QinetiQ said:** *“Achieving the UK's first high-power firing of a laser weapon against aerial targets at the QinetiQ-managed MOD Hebrides range is a significant milestone. Our world-leading science and technology capabilities have been applied to the continued development of our advanced coherent beam-combining technology, which is delivering enhanced performance and scalability. I'm proud of the*



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*critical role we are playing in collaboration with industry partners and Dstl to support the development, test and evaluation of this sovereign capability.”*

### **Notes to Editors:**

For the DragonFire laser directed energy weapons system, MBDA is responsible for the command and control, and target tracking systems, Leonardo provides the advanced beam director and optics technologies, and QinetiQ provides the precision laser source.

### **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](http://www.QinetiQ.com). Follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter @QinetiQ. Visit our blog [www.QinetiQ-blogs.com](http://www.QinetiQ-blogs.com).

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