



Defence and Security
Accelerator

DASA

INNOVATION
FOR A
SAFER
FUTURE

Annual Review 2022-2023



www.gov.uk/dasa



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Welcome

Introduction from Anita Friend, Head of DASA



Welcome to the Defence and Security Accelerator Annual Review 2022-23.

This last year saw the world shift dramatically following Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and increased pressures on finances across the globe. This means that innovation has never been more of a priority – be that in the need for innovation to tackle new threats or being more innovative with what we have and the way we do things.

For us here at DASA, innovation remains at the heart of what we do and a key priority for me over the past year has been ensuring that our approach to innovation is as broad and inclusive as possible.

We know that non-traditional suppliers – those who have no experience of working in defence and national security – can

face challenges when engaging with government. If we want the best ideas, support is needed to help level the playing field for these suppliers.

Turning ideas into impact relies not just on the innovation itself, but on commercial readiness and a fusion of expertise from innovators, end users, those that procure the innovation and many more.

In 2021 we published our strategy – Innovation for a Safer Future, which laid out our plans to reinforce our position as an exemplar innovation organisation. The strategy focused on broadening our reach to innovators and ensuring pull-through into capability. Our focus on these objectives means that there are now numerous examples of DASA-funded innovations making an impact for defence and security and helping to keep the nation secure.

This Annual Review looks back on our activity from 2022-2023 and shows just how far we've come in delivering the objectives we set for ourselves two years ago. I trust you will find it an inspirational, insightful and enjoyable read.



DASA in 2022-2023



133 Innovations making an impact in the real world



12 Themed Competitions
2 Market Explorations
5 Open Call Cycles



882 Proposals assessed
£49.1m Competition funding awarded
£8.65m Other funding awarded



249 Number of innovations funded
83 New to DASA funded
56% Awarded to SMEs



OBJECTIVE 01

Be an exemplar innovation organisation that promotes best practice across Government, and seeks to build on its experience and learning

DASA selected to support new NATO Accelerator

In April 2022, the Ministry of Defence announced that the UK will partner with Estonia on the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA).

The programme will enable innovators from across NATO member countries to accelerate, test, evaluate and validate new technologies that address critical defence challenges and contribute to Alliance deterrence. DASA is delivering the new UK accelerator, which will partner closely with an accelerator in Tallinn, Estonia.

"The UK and Estonia are two of the most innovative countries in NATO and our hosting of DIANA will harness that innovation for the benefit of all Allies tackling future military threats."

Ben Wallace
Former UK Defence Secretary



Image: Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace (centre) visits DASA stand at DVD

Driving innovation at DVD

Defence Vehicle Dynamics (DVD) 2022 was an exciting event that brought together industry and Defence organisations in the land equipment sector to develop ideas and generate greater understanding of technologies, capabilities and requirements.

We took the opportunity to showcase a range of groundbreaking projects from DASA-funded suppliers that ranged from an autonomous "smart hitch" for trailers, to prototype drones. Our stand was visited by former UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who took time to speak with our funded innovators, QUICKBLOCK, and learn more about their work with DASA.



Brick by Brick

Innovative building blocks for Force Protection

Funded through the DASA Themed Competitions Take Cover: Phases 2 and 3, Scotland-based QUICKBLOCK's innovative building block system enables the Armed Forces to build defensive structures rated for ballistics and blast protection.

QUICKBLOCK's solution started its life as a civilian product, made from a resilient plastic, for use cases such as light construction, agricultural applications, dividing walls and humanitarian aid structures.

With DASA funding, QUICKBLOCK was able to streamline the design for military use and incorporate armoured materials into the system. Extensive ballistic and blast trials have proven the overall effectiveness of the system, leading to the development of additional solutions like hostile vehicle mitigation barriers, which go beyond the original vehicle checkpoint requirement.

QUICKBLOCK CEO Andrew Vincent said:

"We are incredibly grateful for the support from DASA. The project rapidly accelerated the development of our product for the Defence market and allowed us access to end-users that we would otherwise not have had. Its beauty is its simplicity, yet it has the potential to save many lives.

"We have developed a system which can act as a single resource to solve a variety of problems. It can flex to meet varying threat levels and also can be deployed in short-term temporary and/or longer-term semi-permanent scenarios."



QUICKBLOCK: End-user feedback



“The product will be incredibly useful for troops whilst operational in the field.”

--
Regimental Sergeant Major, Royal Marines



“I see implementation of QUICKBLOCK as a potential force multiplier to MACA tasks, Force Support Engineering Regiments and basic Combat Engineer tasks, releasing vital tradesmen to other tasks.”

--
SO3 Engr.Recce



“QuickBlock has market potential because of its combination of aesthetics, configurability and deployability. The latter two in combination will enable people to anticipate and respond to the different approaches that hostile vehicle drivers are starting to take – such as surreptitious approaches and marauding raids.”

--
Consulting Engineer specialising in counter-terrorism and Hostile Vehicle Mitigation.



OBJECTIVE 02

Strengthen and broaden links to innovators across the UK and elsewhere, attracting the best innovative ideas for Defence and Security

Helping Innovators connect with the Defence and Security Community

DASA's team of Innovation Partners are located across the UK and offer guidance and support to innovators who are interested in working with Defence and Security. Regionally based across England, as well as in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, our Innovation Partners are well connected; they know and understand their local areas and ecosystems.

They establish local relationships with academic institutions, industry, Local Enterprise Partnerships and trade bodies, and work to grow their networks across all sectors.

The work of our Innovation Partner team is enabling DASA to attract a more diverse range of organisations and ideas into Defence and Security. Over the last year, our Innovation Partners have engaged with over 2000 new organisations, 50% of which are new to Defence and Security.



This work is also having an economic impact in local regions and communities by creating job opportunities and promoting innovation, while enabling the development of cutting-edge technologies and solutions.

Their efforts are positioning DASA as a leader in innovation and a key player in the global defence and security community.

In FY 2022/23, we provided funding for
249 projects,
awarding a total of
£49.1 million.





Collaboration is key

In July 2022 we launched the [Ideas Marketplace](#) - an online networking platform where UK innovators can discuss, collaborate and share ideas with like-minded users to overcome defence and security challenges.

The Ideas Marketplace is an innovation multiplier; suppliers can connect with potential customers and showcase their innovative ideas, leading to more opportunities for collaboration and growth. This enables DASA to have a greater impact on the suppliers and ideas it funds.

It also helps our Defence customers find and connect with potential innovators, providing them with a wider range of solutions and improving their ability to meet Defence and Security challenges. By leveraging this solution, DASA is able to facilitate more impactful partnerships and drive innovation in the Defence and Security sector.

£5 million funding to innovators in Wales

Wales is home to thriving industries in semiconductors, life sciences, cyber security, optics, and space technology; with a rich tradition of tech innovation. To date, 31 novel Welsh innovations have received funding totalling over £5 million through DASA's Themed Competitions and Open Calls, all with the goal of creating technologies that will help address the major security challenges facing the UK today and in the future.

Examples of funded projects in Wales include:

- **Smallspark Space Systems:** An innovation to accelerate the design of Solid Rocket Motors using Artificial Intelligence.
- **Awen Collective:** An innovation to enhance cyber resilience on military industrial control systems.
- **Compound Semi Conductor Catapult:** A low size, weight and power (SWAP) efficient power amplifier for semiconductor architecture.
- **Mikota Ltd:** A device for first responders to use in the field to treat knife wounds.
- **Trauma Simulation:** A modular and highly realistic simulation model to aid training for surgical haemorrhage control.



Cutting-Edge

Welsh SME helps trauma teams sharpen their skills

Funded through the Open Call, DASA has helped Wales-based SME, Trauma Simulation develop a whole-body model for trauma training, from the point of wounding to damage control surgery.

The training model offers Combat Medics and Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) a highly realistic, low-cost and repeatable training solution that is more representative of trauma control procedures. This advancement means that more lives can potentially be saved with better training.

Following their first round of funding in 2017, they acquired a second round of funding to develop modularity components and enhance the model's authenticity.

More recently, in 2023, the SME obtained a third round of DASA funding to create a whole-body model centred on female physiology. By creating a female model, teams will be better prepared for female patients, while allowing greater relevance and flexibility in existing simulation exercises.

Trauma Simulation has also been highly successful in gaining valuable feedback from users who have participated in trials, such as during a deployment to Mali and aboard RFA Argus. The innovation has also been adopted into the Military Operational Specialist Team Training course (MOSTT).

Trauma Simulation founder, Professor Ian Pallister, said:

"The support I have received through DASA has been game-changing. In close cooperation with Defence Medical Services colleagues, this support has enabled me to develop a system of advanced damage control surgical simulation models, which are currently being used both in military and civilian education courses."



Trauma Simulation: End-user feedback



“I found the model immediately allowed the team to gel, know our strengths and weaknesses while allowing for ongoing training and in often difficult surgical procedures such as junctional haemorrhage and pelvic injury. As a vascular surgeon, junctional haemorrhage is often a difficult thing to manage.

“The high-fidelity simulation the model provides allows for teams to train together in a more realistic scenario. It gave me confidence and comfort that the team onboard could respond and assist appropriately.”

—
Surgeon Commander, Mike Robinson



£10 million milestone for innovators in the North East

In 2023, innovators in the North East, Yorkshire and Humber region hit a key milestone, receiving over £10 million in funding for defence and security related projects. In total, DASA has now funded over 70 innovators in the region including developments in novel amphibious craft, fingerprint imaging software and telexistence.

Bettering Our Worlds Ltd, a supplier located in Sheffield, has achieved success by receiving DASA funding on four separate occasions for its innovative work in robotics and software development.

At a recent demonstration event, the SME showcased a telexistence technology that aims to address both nuclear decommissioning use cases, such as handling radioactive materials, and medical use cases, like performing casualty triage on the battlefield.



Levelling Up

In 2022, DASA launched the Regional Partnering Fund to help support SMEs outside the Greater South East region grow their businesses and gain further investment. The Fund is available for innovation projects, providing SMEs can demonstrate additional financial support from private investors.

To date, we have committed over £1.8 million of Regional Partnering Fund monies, which has helped leverage over £5 million into those businesses from private investors. For every £1 of DASA investment through this fund, an average of a further £2.77 has been leveraged by regional SMEs to help grow and be better prepared to commercialise the results of their R&D as a consequence.

In strengthening and broadening our links, we not only focus on finding and funding innovation, we also help innovators increase the pull through of their ideas towards commercialisation.

Alongside our network of Innovation Partners and our Access to Mentoring and Finance Partners, our Business Relationship Managers have made great strides in supporting innovation organisations across the length and breadth of the UK. The funding we provide at DASA not only helps good ideas come to fruition, but it also generates new jobs and investment opportunities for businesses.



OBJECTIVE 03

Collaborate with customers across HM Government to find innovative solutions to national security challenges

It's all about Impact

DASA's innovation finding services are a unique offering that provide a two-way approach for government and innovators to pull and push innovation into Defence and Security, enabling new ideas to make an impact on the front line and for the UK to develop and retain a strategic advantage.

Last year, we launched 12 Themed Competitions, covering 10 completely new themes, and two Market Explorations on behalf of a variety of government and military customers including: the [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory](#), [Office for Veterans' Affairs](#) and the [British Army](#), with themes spanning from space technologies and robotics to human augmentation, engineering biology, directed energy weapons, submersibles and more.

This is in addition to our Open Calls for Innovation in Defence and Security.

It is not the sole preserve of government to develop the next big idea. To find the best new products, processes and technologies, we need to look more broadly.

DASA competitions, run on behalf of government customers, enable the discovery and development of a more diverse range of innovations.

As a result of DASA activities, there are now over **945 projects banked for the future** and around 133 examples of innovations that are already having an impact in the real world.

Over **40%** of our funding is awarded to organisations who are new to DASA



Serving those who served

The Veterans' Health Innovation Fund, run by DASA on behalf of the Office for Veterans' Affairs, has awarded £5 million worth of contracts to support the development of ground-breaking solutions that enhance the healthcare of veterans.

Twenty-two exceptional innovations were selected to advance healthcare technologies, interventions, and treatments, spanning a variety of fields, including digital and data, bioengineering, surgical technology, and pain management.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer visited NuTissu, one of the winners, to speak with staff. NuTissu's project aims to develop E-Plasters that can be wirelessly and intuitively activated via a patient's smartphone or laptop. This technology aims to enable self-management of rapid and complete wound healing.

"I'm delighted that we're providing funding to these projects today. Utilising the latest developments in research and clinical care, these initiatives will spur innovation and new techniques to treat veterans – both with physical and mental health conditions – who have been injured in the line of duty."

Johnny Mercer
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

A helping, robotic, hand

DASA recently partnered with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) on two Telexistence competitions. The first competition focused on developing a complete telexistence system for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), Defence and Security Medical applications, and other related use cases.

The second competition sought telexistence solutions specifically for nuclear decommissioning tasks. Innovative telexistence solutions were recognised and rewarded at both competitions, with a total of £3 million being invested in 13 different projects.

Visit our YouTube channel to see the projects in action.

<https://www.youtube.com/@DASAccelerator>



Rocketing to the top

Defence Innovation Loan helps commercialise data capture and analysis technology

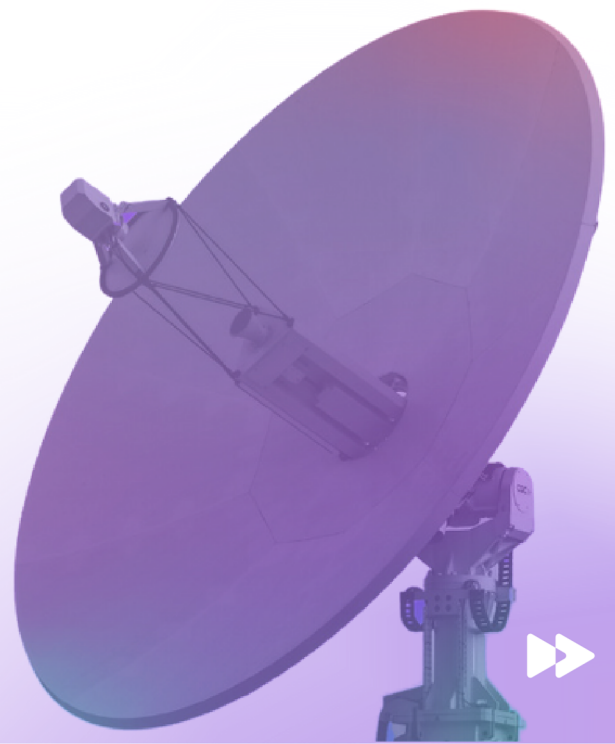
The Space to Innovate Campaign, a joint effort by DASA, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the UK Space Agency, awarded £1 million in contracts to support the advancement of technologies aimed at improving the UK's safety for space operations.

Five organisations secured the funding, helping to develop technologies across two challenge areas:

- **Challenge 1:** Novel sensing and Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR) technologies
- **Challenge 2:** Novel approaches to improve signal-to-noise performance of space-related communications, sensing, identification or tracking capabilities

Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, Commander, UK Space Command, said:

“This is an exciting time for the UK’s space sector. It’s great to see companies across the union continuously challenging the norms and improving the UK’s ability to operate effectively and safely in space through innovative technologies.”



Safety in numbers

Trilateral's artificial intelligence web application helps organisations better understand and respond to crime

Funded through the DASA Security Rapid Impact Open Call, Trilateral's artificial intelligence web application helps organisations better understand and respond to crime.

Engagement with DASA helped Trilateral steer the direction of their product to achieve a faster route to market through the defence and security sector.

The testing and trialling section of the project saw a collaboration with a UK police force to help combat child exploitation.

The technology helped the make better use of police data, successfully showing how the tool can be used to implement safeguarding measures months ahead of their standard timelines.

Dr Hayley Watson, Director, Sociotech Innovation at Trilateral Research, said:

“DASA provided us the space and time to innovate and co-design with defence users, which enabled our development of sociotechnical methods for building ethical AI to combat complex societal problems.”



Trilateral Research: End-user feedback



“The opportunities that funding supplied through DASA afford ourselves in the public sector cannot be underestimated. The challenge remains how we remain current and keep up with such technological advancement, whilst also identifying opportunities to create our own new technologies to keep people safe, protect vulnerable people, and bring to justice those who prey on them.

“Working with a company such as Trilateral Research and with the added support of them being a DASA funded supplier, means we have been able to secure external specialist support from data scientists and the wider research element such a company have access to, whilst ensuring we can meet our own funding constraints. This has truly been a ground breaking endeavour in co-designing CESIUM and such developments are simply not possible without funding support from such specialist areas as DASA.”

--
**Detective Chief Superintendent Jon McAdam,
Head of Crime Directorate, Lincolnshire Police**



OBJECTIVE 04

Focus effort on the pull-through of innovative ideas, supporting the exploitation and commercialisation of solutions into capability

Through Partnerships and Impact

Through our Partnerships and Impact team we offer a unique golden thread for our Defence and Security Government partners, funded suppliers and potential funders or investors.

Our offer continues to mature as we address the needs of Government organisations. We are committed to building a better understanding of these challenges as they continue to evolve.

Through our DASA Partners we provide strategic and tactical advice to address these challenges working inside Front Line Commands, which we have recently expanded to piloting within National Security.



Through our Defence and Security Exploitation Managers, we ensure our innovators/suppliers are ready to do business with Defence and Security – by building their understanding of relevant Government organisations, procurement routes and the key things they may need to do to secure business.

Through our Access to Mentoring and Finance (A2MF) team we help businesses become investor- and funder-ready and have the right business plans, strategy and structure to scale the company and product as necessary.



Keeping sailors on course

DASA support accelerates personnel tracking technology from concept to service in the Royal Navy

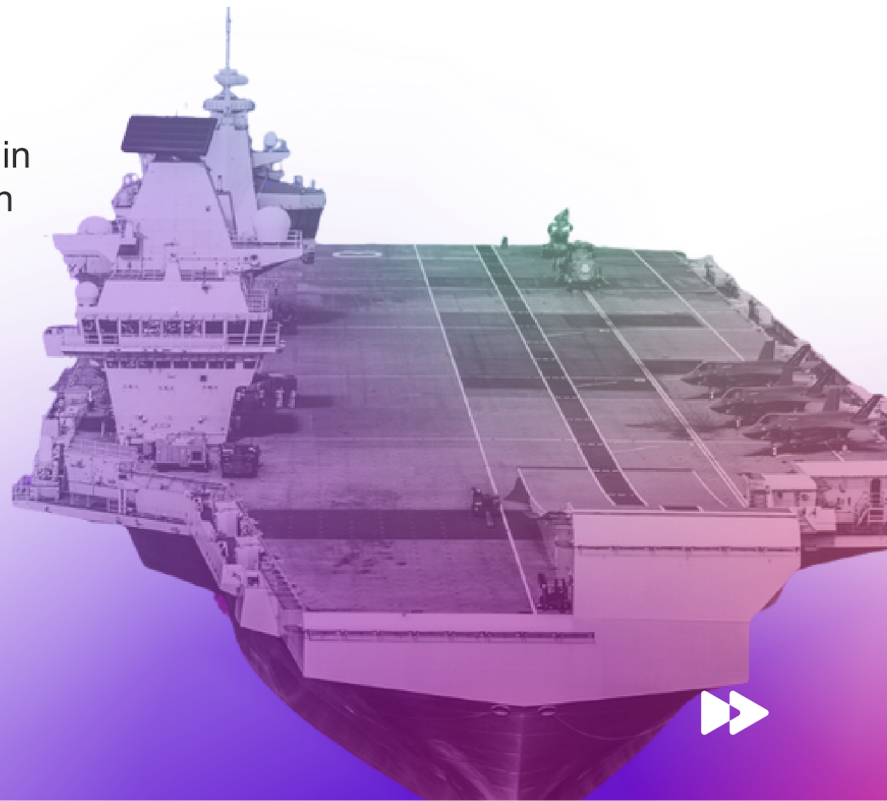
Kinsetsu, a Belfast-based SME, was funded in 2019 through the Get the Ship in Shape Themed Competition.

Kinsetsu's innovation comprises a network of ruggedized deckhead and bulkhead-mounted terminals, placed at ingress and egress locations and high-traffic areas throughout a ship. The crew use their ID card at a terminal when they enter or leave the ship. Visitors are provided with a visitor card to capture arrival and departure, providing traceability of their visit.

Awarded an MOD commercial contract in 2022, their K-Track technology is now in service on HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

Jackie Crooks, Co-founder of Kinsetsu said:

“DASA has been invaluable in raising our profile and enabling access to the Defence and Security sector, which we could never have achieved on our own.”



Kinsetsu: End-user feedback



“DASA’s funding of Kinsetsu is an excellent example of how SMEs can offer innovative technologies to Defence and Security. In this example Kinsetsu were able to implement their technology, already utilised in the NHS and Commercial Sector, to HMS Queen Elizabeth. The application of technology to the complexities of a large warship rapidly improved awareness of crew movement but also reduced the risk to life of souls on board.

“The work of DASA benefited Defence but also enhanced the profile of Kinsetsu, which had not previously considered application of their technology to the Defence and Security Sector.”

—
Rear Admiral Andrew Betton



The Sky's Not the Limit

Defence Innovation Loan helps commercialise data capture and analysis technology

Newcastle-based SME, VRAI, have developed a solution to enable the Royal Air Force (RAF) to better measure and predict trainee pilot performance, using a combination of virtual reality and data capture technology, called HEAT.

The innovation was implemented at three RAF stations within a three-month timeframe, gathering nearly one billion data points from 40 RAF pilots, across the RAF 22 Group, and positive feedback from users.

With an eye towards the future, VRAI secured additional DASA funding through Defence Innovation Loans, to further develop their innovation and market readiness.

VRAI will apply machine learning (ML) to the innovation in order to generate more robust actionable insights to further develop trainees.

Niall Campion, Founder of VRAI, said:

“Without DASA funding it would have been impossible for us to bring this product into the UK defence supply chain. By providing vital working capital while we demonstrate the value of the product in the defence industry, the Defence Innovation Loan will help us grow our business and deliver measurable improvements to training across both defence and other simulation markets.”



VRAI: End-user feedback



“Through its work supported by DASA funding, VRAI – in collaboration with the Royal Air Force – have developed leading technology that can be used to transform simulation data into actionable insights. This technology could, in future, be used to accelerate the training time of military pilots and we are excited to build on this through our work on Project OdySSEy.

BAE SYSTEMS

“We are working collaboratively with VRAI and DASA to harness the value of the data, which can be drawn from simulation, to deliver a tailored training solution which will revolutionise the way military forces train in the future.”

--

Lucy Walton
Head of Training, BAE Systems Air



Tunnel Vision

Defence Innovation Loan helps commercialise tunnel and bunker detection technology

Cambridge-based Silicon Microgravity identified the need to radically shrink, and lower the cost and power consumption of underground structure detection systems to enhance their effectiveness for Defence.

Drawing inspiration from the civil environment and the current use of conducting gravity surveys to detect buried infrastructure, the SME sought to adapt this technology for defence. The Cambridge-based SME was granted a Defence Innovation Loan, which they will use to further develop the underground detection technology in preparation for field trials in the first half of 2024.

The funding will also help commercialise the product for potential use in applications such as security, border control, defence, cartography, civil engineering and infrastructures/utilities.

Francis Neill, CEO of Silicon Microgravity, said:

“DASA have been absolutely fundamental in helping to get Silicon Microgravity to the stage where we will shortly be commercialising what is becoming recognised as world-leading technology in gravity sensing and inertial navigation.

“Not only does our technology have defence applications but it is very much in line with the UK’s strategy of creating an international technology superpower. DASA have provided both market and fund-raising assistance, in addition the project specific funding.”



A change in the air

DASA partners with DESNZ to enable the co-existence of offshore windfarms and Air Defence radar

While offshore wind energy is a crucial part of the UK's plan to achieve Net Zero goals, installing windfarms may have a negative impact on the quality of data collected from surveillance radars, which are critical for air defence detection capability.

To tackle this issue, the Windfarm Mitigation for UK Air Defence Programme was created, with funding from the government's £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio and in collaboration with the Royal Air Force, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, and DASA.

This programme has been working on finding solutions to this challenge for several years, with the latest phase awarding £3.2 million in funding in August 2023.

After the successful completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2, Stream 1 of Phase 3 was launched earlier this year. The primary objective of Stream 1 is to support prototype demonstration of the technologies that could mitigate the impact of windfarms on UK Air Defence.



Windfarm Mitigation: End-user feedback



“Complementing existing RAF work to mitigate the impacts of large-scale offshore windfarms on our current radars, this exciting innovation competition is a significant step to help find the future solutions that will enable the long-term co-existence of windfarms and the UK’s airspace radars.”

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**Wing Commander Kevin Walton,
Co-Chair of the Ministry of Defence/Offshore Wind Industry
Council Air Defence Mitigation Task Force**



Defence Technology Exploitation Programme

What is DTEP?

July 2022 saw the launch of the Defence Technology Exploitation Programme (DTEP), a joint initiative between DASA, Innovate UK and the MOD Directorate for Industrial Strategy and Exports (DISE) with support from ADS.

DTEP is a £16 million programme to boost small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) defence innovation.

DTEP offers Individual grants for collaborative projects between SMEs and larger suppliers, supporting the integration of novel technologies, materials and processes into MOD's supply chains.

Head of the Defence and Security Accelerator, Anita Friend, said:

“For an SME, DTEP offers not only funding but also the opportunity to deliver new innovations into the UK defence supply chain and a way to develop and scale up their business. DTEP is also beneficial for larger companies, offering early access to new technologies or processes that they may be able to help commercialise.”

Five projects have received DTEP funding so far:

Space Forge, partnered with Northrop Grumman, is building the world's first in-space manufacturing platform that can be returned back to Earth.

Filtronic Broadband is partnering with a higher-tier organisation to manufacture and test plastic encapsulated Transmit Receive Modules (TRMs) for electronically scanned radar systems.

ISS Aerospace, with Marshall Futureworx, is developing a heavy-lift Unmanned Aircraft System that will use a hybrid electric turbine generator power plant instead of rechargeable battery packs.

NquiringMinds is working with BAE Systems, to develop advanced analytics for BAE Systems' combat system in the marine domain.

Kognitiv Spark, supported by Serco, is deploying a Mixed Reality (MR) platform as a service on a defence network, initially for Equipment Support and Medical Support uses.





Looking forward

DASA is committed to finding and funding innovation and supporting innovators to commercialise their solutions to make an impact for the defence and security of the UK and this will remain our number one priority.

As an exemplar organisation within the innovation enterprise, we will continue to work with our government customers and innovators alike to ensure that we are supporting them both to deliver innovation for a safer future. Be that when it comes to finding, funding or exploiting innovation.

Over the coming year, we will be reviewing and refreshing our new strategy for 2024-onwards, which will focus on how we can further increase engagement and promote collaboration, all supported by equality, diversion and inclusion.

We will also progress with our pioneering work around outcome metrics to demonstrate the value and impact of DASA, as well as activity to support the pull-through of science and technology innovation into service.

The rate of technological change remains exponential and, going forward, it is clear that the only constant will be change. Innovation will play a critical role in helping the UK adapt to change and maintain strategic advantage. DASA stands ready to support by finding and funding innovation that can be developed and realised to have a positive impact for Defence and s Security.

If you are an innovator, we can help you develop your innovation for a safer future, and if you are working in government we want to support you to find innovation to tackle your most pressing Defence and Security challenges.



Get in touch



Defence and Security Accelerator



@DASAccelerator



www.gov.uk/dasa



accelerator@dstl.gov.uk



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