

Airbus led consortium committed to UK prosperity agenda

Targeting 30% SME engagement and committed to diversifying and growing the UK's space industrial footprint

Airbus led consortium unites more than £5.8 billion spend in UK

Call for SMEs still open via 'Open Innovation - Space'

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[@NorthropGrumman](#) [@QinetiQ](#)

Stevenage, 18 March 2021 – The Airbus led space industry consortium in competition to support the future operations of military satellite communications to the UK MOD is focusing on the UK's prosperity agenda with a target of 30% SME (small and medium sized enterprises) engagement. The consortium, comprising KBR, Leidos UK, Northrop Grumman and QinetiQ spends more than £5.8 billion annually in the UK supply chain.

Richard Franklin, Managing Director, Airbus Defence and Space UK said: "We have listened to the government closely and support not just the MOD's programme objectives, but also the wider prosperity agenda. Yes, we must deliver the best, most agile and innovative future milsatcoms for the UK, but we also need to incorporate a wider supply chain, and by targeting 30% SMEs in our proposal we feel we can make a definitive contribution that will help create long-term value and benefit to the wider British economy."

In December 2020, the consortium saw more than 100 SMEs take part in a virtual event to see how they could contribute. Richard Franklin continued: "Our initiative "Open Innovation – Space" is actively calling for companies to sign up to see how they can contribute to the future of secure communications for the UK's armed forces. We are looking across the piece for future capabilities - everything from quantum technologies to real-time ISR and enhanced cyber security. We encourage those interested to visit www.openinnovationspace.uk."

Airbus in the UK is recognised as a global leader in the design and manufacture of advanced telecommunications satellites and is a trusted prime contractor for some of the most complex space science and exploration missions in the world. Airbus provides a range of space-based services to customers worldwide including the support of the UK Armed Forces, and its NATO Allies, by delivering and operating the Skynet military communications system, providing 24/7 services across the world for more than 15 years.

The consortium which as a whole spends more than £360m a year on R&D in the UK, counts more than 22,000 employees across the country, of which more than 10,000 are scientists and engineers.

Open Innovation - Space – Portal www.openinnovationspace.uk

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Note to Editors:**Consortium**

The UK's space industry champion Airbus, has teamed with KBR, Leidos UK, Northrop Grumman and QinetiQ to bring new thinking to future space solutions including the UK's future miltatcom requirements. At the heart of the UK's space and technology sector for more than 50 years, the consortium has developed leading edge design, manufacturing and services across the entire space domain.

The consortium has a shared vision of the future which will address new threats and future user requirements effectively. Building on its unique experience, the group will seamlessly transition from current technology to enduring innovation underpinned by a diverse UK supply chain. With service excellence and continuity as the focus, the solution will propel UK defence to the forefront of future space, to deliver choice, sovereignty and value for money.

Airbus Defence and Space

The Skynet 5 programme, managed by Airbus, has provided the UK MOD with a suite of highly robust, reliable and secure military communications services, supporting operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans. The programme commenced by using the legacy Skynet 4 satellites and then augmenting them with a fully refurbished ground network before launching the Skynet 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D satellites between 2007 and 2012. Through the many years of Airbus delivering an exceptionally reliable Skynet service the programme has reduced or removed many of the technical and service risks for the MOD, whilst ensuring unrivalled secure satellite communications to UK forces delivering both operational and information advantage at the greatest time of need.

KBR

KBR is a global provider of differentiated professional services and technologies across the asset and program lifecycle within the Government Solutions and Energy sectors. Our global Government Solutions business, serves government customers globally, including capabilities that cover the full lifecycle of defense, space, aviation and other government programs and missions from research and development, through systems engineering, test and evaluation, program management, to operations, maintenance, and field logistics. Its Government Solution business within EMEA is a key partner to the UK Government supporting strategic, long term programmes such as Army basing and operations, nuclear decommissioning, military flying training and overseas contingency support. It also acts as a delivery partner integrating technologies and designing systems into solutions to meet client needs.

Leidos

Leidos is a global science and technology company delivering innovative solutions and services for mission and safety critical applications in Space, Defence, Intelligence, Civil Government and Health. With over 37,000 professionals, many with advanced qualifications and prior military service, we field the broad range of capabilities essential to deliver advantage in the information age. From enterprise digital modernisation and at-scale systems integration through development of maritime autonomous technologies and provision of military ISR as-a-service to deployed logistics and operations support. Whether it be system support in a local service-centre or providing life sustaining logistics at the ends of the Earth, Leidos personnel are deployed 24/7 in support of our customers - wherever their mission takes them.

Northrop Grumman

Northrop Grumman solves the toughest problems in space, aeronautics, defense and cyberspace to meet the ever evolving needs of our customers worldwide. Our 90,000 employees define possible every

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day using science, technology and engineering to create and deliver advanced systems, products and services.

QinetiQ

QinetiQ is a leading science and engineering company operating primarily in the defence, security and critical infrastructure markets, with the breadth and depth of more than 6,000 people, including more than 3,000 scientists and engineers. We work in partnership with our customers to solve real world problems through innovative solutions delivering operational and competitive advantage. QinetiQ and its predecessors have a long history of support to the UK Ministry of Defence on numerous complex and demanding programmes, including over 60 years of support to UK Government Space programmes such as Skynet. QinetiQ are trusted providers of research, technology, advice, products and services to civil, military and national security customers for secure satellite communications, secured navigation, Space weather and Earth observation.

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