

News story: £260M job-sustaining contract for advanced identification system

The system, called Mode-5 and developed for the MOD by UK-based company Leonardo, uses advanced cryptographic techniques and world-leading electronic technology to allow UK land, sea and air units to quickly identify friendly forces and operate safely alongside NATO allies across any battlefield.

Mode-5 IFF has been designed to give UK units a clear and secure view of potential threats and targets, providing a powerful cyber shield against jamming and interference intended to reduce vital situational awareness.

The contract will allow Leonardo to install the system in more than 350 units ranging from Royal Air Force's Sentry aircraft to the Royal Navy's Type 45 anti-air destroyers and the British Army's High Velocity Missile (HVM) multiple launcher system.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

This £260 million contract for battle-winning technology builds on decades of operational experience to keep UK pilots, soldiers and sailors safe on operations.

It is yet another example of the jobs and skills-sustaining impact of the Government's £178 billion equipment plan to supply the UK's armed forces with the best possible kit.

Less-advanced IFF systems have been used by nations all over the world since the 1940s. Mode-5 uses the same basic 'call-and-response' method as earlier systems, but significantly improves on them. Crucially, the system can easily interface with allied forces, reducing the risk of 'friendly fire' incidents between UK units and the units of other allies.

Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) Chief Executive Officer Tony Douglas said:

Advances in digital and cyber warfare mean that it's never been more important for UK military forces to have the kind of confidence in their situational awareness that Mode-5 IFF instils.

The installation of this world-leading system will continue to give our fighting men and women a decisive edge on operations.

The new contract will cover the installation of Mode-5 on pieces of equipment that are in service already with the UK. New platforms coming into service in the future, including the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, F-35 Lightning II combat aircraft and the new Apache AH64E Helicopters are being fitted with Mode-5 under separate contracts over the course of their construction.