



Ministry  
of Defence

# The UK Defence Innovation Initiative

Captain Richard Blackwell Royal Navy  
British Defence Attaché Athens

# Scope

- **Background**
  - Why an Innovation Initiative?
  - SDSR commitments
- **Advantage through Innovation**
  - Defence Challenges
  - The Innovation Research InSights Unit (IRIS)
  - The Defence and Security Accelerator
  - The Innovation Fund and Disruptive Capabilities
- **Progressing the Initiative**

# Why an Innovation Initiative?

- **SDSR describes...**
  - A world of rapid and fundamental change
  - Technology creating greater opportunities...
  - And risks
- **The private sector is driving change**
- **We must adapt to stay ahead and maintain strategic edge**
- **SDSR commitments**
  - A Horizon Scanning function (IRIS)
  - Innovation Fund
  - Defence and Security Accelerator
  - Skills Development

# The Defence Innovation Initiative – Vision and Principles

- **Vision:**
  - ‘A Department that enables the Armed Forces to maintain military edge into the future’
  
- **Principles:**
  - Broad and systematic approach
  - A culture that is ‘innovative by instinct’
  - The ability to accelerate promising innovations from idea to solution
  - A strategy-driven approach

# Component Parts

- **IRIS (Innovation Research InSights Unit)**
  - Work with new external partners to understand the external innovation landscape
  - Fuse this understanding with the most pressing Defence challenges
  - Identify threats and opportunities
- **Defence and Security Accelerator**
  - Innovation hub
  - Novel ideas to solutions
  - Acting as an 'ecosystem' to exploit collaboration
- **Innovation Fund & Disruptive Capabilities**
  - Around £800 million over 10 years
  - Broad in scope and will include 20% of S&T funds dedicated to Disruptive Capabilities
- **External Challenge**
  - Looking to partner Defence leadership with some of the UK's leading innovators to provide external challenge to the initiative

# Moving beyond technology...

- **The main line of effort is to change culture**
  - Behaviour supported by training and networks
  - Entrepreneurship and incentives
  - Risk – fail fast, learn early
- **Organisation**
  - Agility across the Department and Armed Forces
- **Processes**
  - Inculcating innovation into our business processes
  - Working with allies and partners
- **Workforce**
  - Optimised for future needs
- **Strategic Planning**
  - Policy development, concepts and doctrine, force exploration

# International By Design

- **Building bilateral and multi-lateral relationships**
- **Interoperability between current and future capabilities**
  - NATO remains the primary interoperability vehicle for the UK
  - Combined organisations and formations
  - Promoting entrepreneurial intent in a culturally diverse enterprise
  - *Greek companies can bid!*

# Conclusion

- Formally launched 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016
- Defence and Security Accelerator at IOC by December 2016
- Initial Funds dispersed April 2017

The initiative is about the journey as well as the destination

**Search - 'Defence Security Accelerator Gov UK'**