

Doing Business in Defence - Factsheet

The UK Defence sector is a strategically important market, offering long-term opportunities for innovative Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It is complex, regulated, and relationship-driven – but also open to new ideas and technology and can be a strong source of revenue once established.

We have thus compiled this factsheet to support your engagement & onward journey in engaging with the sector and navigating the commercial pathways across the MoD's supply chain.

Key Fact: Defence spends around £32Bn per year with industry – 90% of which takes place in the UK.

Key Stakeholders:

MOD - Ministry of Defence. Sets policy and owns capabilities

DE&S - Defence Equipment & Support. Procures and supports equipment

DSTL - Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. Research and innovation

DASA – Defence and Security Accelerator

Defence Primes – E.g. BAE Systems, Thales, General Dynamics, Babcock, QinetiQ, Leonardo, etc.

SMEs – Small and Medium Enterprises. Bring agility, innovation, and niche expertise

FLCs – Front Line Commands: Army, Navy, Air Force & Space Command.

SDA – Submarine Delivery Agency

EDP – Engineering Design Partnership. Framework for engineering projects.

DIO – Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Oversees Defence real estate and Infrastructure

RDSCs – Regional Defence and Security Clusters

Common Acronyms:

DSP – Defence Sourcing Portal

ITT – Invitation to Tender

PQQ – Pre-Qualification Questionnaire

BPSS / SC / DV – Security Clearances (BPSS – Baseline Personnel Security Standard, SC – Security Check,

DV – Developed Vetting)

CCS – Crown Commercial Services

SDR – Strategic Defence Review

DIS – Defence Industrial Strategy

IOSCAR – Joint Supply Chain Accreditation Register

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SPIRE – The UK export licencing online system

OGEL – Open General Export Licence

Key Routes to Market:

Defence Sourcing Portal (DSP) – Main MOD procurement platform (see link below)

Subcontracting via Primes or Tier 1 & 2 suppliers

Innovation Pathways – DASA open and themed calls, DSTL (R-Cloud)

Frameworks – Crown Commercial Services (CCS), FATS, Engineering Design Partnership (EDP), NATO

DIANA, NVFi (see useful resources links below)

Useful Resources:

The Defence Office for Small Business Growth: <https://www.digital.mod.uk/sme-dosbg>

Working with the MoD: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/procurement#the-ministry-of-defence-supply-basehttpswwwgovukguidancethe-ministry-of-defence-supply-base> (includes list of frameworks)

Finding contracts with the MoD: [Find contracts in technology and research and development with the Ministry of Defence - GOV.UK](#)

Neutral Vendor Framework (NVFi) - <https://www.constellia.com/solutions/public-sector-solutions/neutral-vendor-framework-for-innovation-nvfi/>

Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

Find a Tender: <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search/Results>

Defence Sourcing Portal: www.contracts.mod.uk

Crown Commercial Services: <https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/start-supplying>

DASA Innovation Calls: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-and-security-accelerator

ADS Group: www.adsgroup.org.uk

MakeUK Defence: <https://www.makeuk.org/defence>

Team Defence Information: <https://www.teamdefence.info/about/>

Cyber Essentials: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberessentials/overview>

Export Support: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-defence-and-security-exports>

JOSCAR Providers portal: <https://hellios.com/joscar-suppliers/>

Defence Battlelab: <https://defencebattlelab.com/>

Defence Ideas: <https://def-ideas.wazoku.com/discover?entities=community&sort=-relevancy&page=1&pageSize=15>

Knowledge in Defence (KID): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/knowledge-in-defence-kid>

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Innovate UK Innovation Exchange (iX) funded opportunities: <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/programme/innovation-exchange/>

Futures Lab: <https://www.qinetiq.com/en/what-we-do/services-and-products/edp>

UK defence Export (UKDE) Export Faculty: <https://www.business.gov.uk/campaign/ukde-export-faculty-968ccef2/?lang=en-gb>

UK Defence Innovation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-defence-innovation>

Accreditation requirements / considerations:

Cyber Essentials (or Plus) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-essentials-scheme-overview>

JOSCAR – Hellios SME Portal (<https://hellios.com/sme-portal>)

Security Clearances (BPSS as a minimum – ADS can assist with this)

Export Licensing – SPIRE & OGELs

(<https://www.spire.trade.gov.uk/spire/fox/espire/LOGIN/login#:~:text=Using%20SPIRE%2C%20you%20can%20apply,paramilitary%20goods%2C%20radioactive%20sources%20and>)

Top 10 Tips for SMEs:

1. Define your Value Proposition / Unique Selling Point(s) relevant to the target sector
2. Understand the target sector capability needs (demand signals) / programmes of focus / strategic policies (SDR, DIS & SME Action Plan are useful reference documents) & develop focused BD Campaigns around these
3. Prepare relevant marketing materials (Defence sector slide deck, case studies, A5 capability handout etc.)
4. Start small – early trials/feasibility studies build credibility and end customer relationships
5. Engage early – don't wait to see a published opportunity before contacting target customers, relationships matter and take time to develop in this sector
6. Consider Cyber Essentials, JOSCAR and BPSS as minimum entry standards for the Defence sector
7. Review what frameworks and supplier registrations you think are appropriate for your product/service offering and start gathering information required for their completion
8. Obtain DSP registration and monitor DASA calls (register for email updates)
9. Attend Defence trade shows (DSEI, DPRTE, DVD, Eurosatory etc.) and other relevant networking events to gain further information on requirements/trends and build network

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10. Consider what trade bodies may be beneficial to you – ADS, Team Defence Information, MakeUK, TechUK

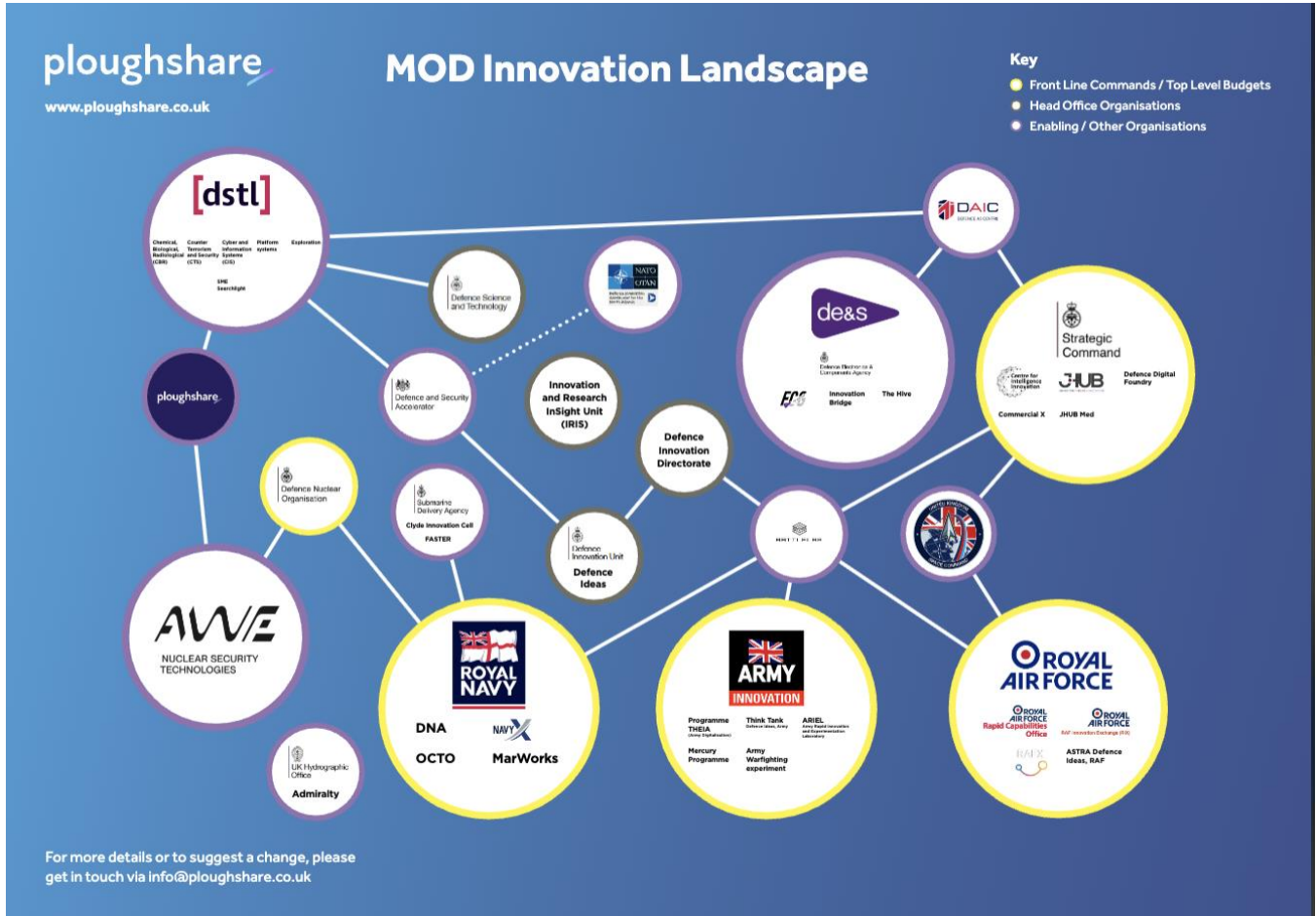
Defence rewards persistence, innovation, and trust. Build the right network, understand the language, and clearly communicate your value proposition.

For further information and advice on doing business in the Defence sector, please contact:

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LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sdo-associates>

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Stakeholder map showing different stakeholders & entry points in the Defence sector