

QE Class: supporting suppliers

The Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers will be the biggest ships ever built by the Royal Navy. The project involves a large chain of suppliers working together to achieve success. In this feature, MOD DCB looks at some of the latest sub-contracts awarded.

In January 2010, the MOD announced that contracts worth £333 million had been awarded by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance (ACA) to companies across the UK to help build the Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

Five sub-contracts were awarded to suppliers across the country, from Glasgow to Portsmouth, for equipment to be installed on the ships and services for their assembly, bringing the total value of sub-contracts awarded so far on the programme to almost £1.1 billion.

These contracts and sub-contracts represent the vast majority of the equipment orders for the Queen Elizabeth Class carriers. The two future aircraft carriers will form the cornerstone of the UK's naval capability and will be the largest, most capable and powerful warships ever constructed in the UK. They will be a highly versatile and potent joint defence asset, able to meet the widest range of tasks around the world throughout their expected service life of around 50 years.

Announcing the new batch of contracts Minister for Defence Equipment and Support Quentin Davies said: "This news should reassure those who doubt this Government's commitment to the programme.

These sub-contracts will contribute thousands of jobs throughout the supply chain in addition to the thousands of jobs at the main shipyards which are building the ships. The build phase of the carrier programme is now well underway. The first units have already been delivered to Rosyth where these ships – the cornerstone of the Royal Navy of the future – will be assembled."

Sub-contracts have been awarded by the ACA to:

- Imtech Marine and Offshore Ltd in Billingham, Teesside; and Portsmouth for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning, worth £120million
- Ship Support Services Ltd based near Rosyth for paint and scaffolding for the build process, worth £105million (SSS Ltd is a joint venture formed between Pyeroy in Gateshead and Cape in Wakefield)
- Henry Abrams in Glasgow for transport of sections of the ship from the yards across the UK to Rosyth for final assembly, worth £85million
- Tyco in Manchester for fixed fire-fighting systems, worth £15million and
- AEI Cables in Birtley, County Durham, for much of the 2,500km of cabling to be installed, worth £8 million.

Head of Capital Ships at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support Tony Graham said: "The award of these contracts is evidence that the project is progressing well and momentum continues to grow. The project is successfully hitting

its construction milestones and these contracts will help us meet our overall delivery plan. This work is particularly important for sustaining jobs and growing skills."

ACA Programme Director Geoff Searle said: "I am delighted to announce these substantial contracts for work on the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carrier programme, covering the vital services that run throughout the ships, as well as essential elements of the actual shipbuild process itself. Most of these contracts, placed for the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, will support local economies and jobs throughout the UK regions.

"The ACA has achieved many substantial milestones in the last 12 months, including commencing work on the build of HMS Queen Elizabeth in four UK shipyards and completing work on the huge

Number One Dock in Rosyth where the ships will finally be assembled. Continuing this level of momentum is essential and the signing of these contracts is testimony that it will continue through 2010 and beyond."

The contract to build the two new aircraft carriers was signed on 3 July 2008. Funding for these new equipment contracts forms part of the existing financial commitment by the MOD announced under this original contract.



The Aircraft Carrier Alliance

The innovative Aircraft Carrier Alliance is a single integrated team formed from BVT Surface Fleet (which became BAE Systems Surface Ships on 30 October 2009), Babcock, Thales UK, and the MOD (which acts as both partner and client). It is responsible for delivering the Queen Elizabeth Class ships to time and cost.

Alliancing allows for the collaborative delivery of the aircraft carriers by bringing together all interested parties with a vested financial interest to make decisions to achieve what is best for the project, as well as providing the most effective way of managing risk and reward.

Further information

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