

Defence Projects

Nuclear Weapons

<http://www.armedforces.co.uk/projects/raq40ffa654a346b> The Nuclear Weapons Integrated Project Team (NW IPT) has an important part to play in the procurement and support of the UK national nuclear deterrent. Special responsibilities include delivering a safe, available and affordable nuclear warhead programme.

The NW IPT also ensures the necessary level of continued availability and capability of the MOD owned, but contractor operated Atomic Weapons Establishment and is responsible for the management of the MOD's nuclear liabilities on BNFL and UKAEA sites.

The Nuclear Weapons IPT is responsible for maintaining the United Kingdom's Nuclear Warhead Capability. It achieves this through its Prime Contractor AWE ML who manages the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) facilities at AWE Aldermaston providing and maintaining the warheads for the UK's nuclear deterrent. The business covers the whole life cycle of nuclear warheads from initial concept and **design**, through component manufacture and assembly, to in-service support and, finally, decommissioning and disposal.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS / TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE

The NW IPT through AWE ML maintains the UK Nuclear Warhead stockpile numbers required to meet the UK Government's Deterrent Policy for deployment in the Trident II D5 missile carried by the Royal Navy's Vanguard Class Strategic Missile Submarines.

The NW IPT also maintains a programme:

Of research to underpin the capability to **design** a new weapon, should it ever be required.

To complete the dismantling and disposal of redundant warheads replaced by Trident.
To develop the skills, technologies and techniques that could underpin future arms limitation treaties.

COSTS / QUANTITY / IN-SERVICE DATE (ISD)

The UK's Trident Nuclear Warhead has been in-service since 1994.

COMMERCIAL ASPECTS

Since 1993 AWE has been managed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence under a Government-owned/Contractor-operated arrangement enabling the MOD to bring commercial best practice to the operation and management of strategic Government assets.

Following their successful bid in a contract competition a new management contract was awarded to AWE Management Ltd for a initial period of ten years from 1 April 2000, with an option to extend to 25 years. AWE ML is a consortium comprised of an equal partnership between British Nuclear Fuels plc (BNFL), Serco Group and Lockheed Martin Corporation. In January 2003 the contract was extended to a 25-year term with access to private finance.

The Nuclear Weapons IPT also manages contracts with BNFL for the decommissioning of MOD's historic liabilities. Legislation in passage through Parliament will enable the transfer of the MOD's Historic Liabilities to transfer to the Department of Trade and Industry Nuclear Decommissioning Authority during 2005.

Further information can be found at the following web sites:

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

The 1958 US/UK Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) underpins all exchanges between the US and UK on nuclear weapon and nuclear propulsion matters. It covers, inter alia, the arrangements under which information, materials and equipment can be exchanged

... requirements for the transmission and control of information.

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