



For immediate release

Next stage of trinational fighter jet programme takes off with £4.6 billion contract

READING, UK – 03/07/2026: The second joint international contract has been awarded for the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), the next-generation fighter aircraft development programme between Italy, Japan and the UK.

The £4.6 billion contract will enable completion of the advanced concept and assessment phase of the programme, and further joint detailed design and development. The 18-month contract has been awarded by the GCAP Agency, which manages GCAP on behalf of the three Governments, to Edgewing, the trinational prime contractor and design authority for the GCAP aircraft.

This contract award marks another significant milestone for the programme, underlining the pace of progress and reinforcing GCAP as a flagship example of innovative defence collaboration. Jointly funded by the three nations, the contract will drive the next phase of key design and engineering activity for the programme. This long-term investment reflects confidence, unity and forward momentum in this highly important defence partnership.

This is the second joint international contract awarded by the GCAP Agency to Edgewing, following an initial £686 million contract that was placed in April 2026.

Masami Oka, GCAP Agency Chief Executive, said: “I am delighted to sign this international contract on behalf of the three GCAP nations – Italy, Japan and the UK. It will enable the GCAP Agency and Edgewing to continue making huge progress in all areas of delivery. The programme is vital for global security and defeating future threats, while sharing costs, technological advantages and creating highly skilled jobs in all three nations. With this long-term funding, the future of GCAP has never been more assured. I am excited about what we will achieve over the next 18 months and the opportunities we can create to grow the programme further.”

One year on from its creation, Edgewing is uniting world-class expertise across nations to drive rapid progress and provide a powerful, unified engine for GCAP delivery.

Marco Zoff, Edgewing Chief Executive Officer, said: “This contract represents the trust placed in us by all three nations and our GCAP Agency partners, trust fostered by the rapid progress made under the first international contract. This momentum is being driven by our disruptive new model of defence collaboration: the first time that three countries have come together to create a single engineering prime, working on behalf of our national industries, with a single empowered customer. As we continue

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to ramp up operations and execute this next phase of the programme, I look with pride at the strides we have already made and with confidence at the future still to come.”

Wider delivery is supported by tri-national industrial collaborations bringing together leading Italian, Japanese and UK companies. This includes the GCAP Electronics Evolution (G2E) consortium, developing GCAP’s advanced sensing and communications system, and the power and propulsion consortium, working to equip the GCAP aircraft with extended range and persistence.

With teams across all three nations, GCAP will strengthen industrial capability, drive advanced design and manufacturing, and generate high-value jobs, intellectual property and economic growth.

GCAP, launched in 2022, aims to deliver an innovative next-generation stealth fighter equipped with cutting-edge technologies, supporting sovereign industries across the partner nations. The aircraft is expected to be delivered by 2035 and will have the capabilities required to secure advantage in the most demanding operating environments.

Ends

Contact / social media

GCAP Agency

Email: communications@gcap.int

X: @GCAP_int

Edgewing

Email: Media@Edgewing.com

X: @EdgewingLtd www.edgewing.com

Notes to editors:

- The international contract was awarded today, 03 July 2026 for the period 01 July 2026 to 31 December 2027.
- The GCAP Agency assumes the management, coordination and execution of all phases of GCAP. It is directed by the Steering Committee of the GCAP International Government Organisation (GIGO), which was established in 2024 to oversee delivery of the programme on behalf of Italy, Japan, and the UK.
- Edgewing is an international joint venture established by BAE Systems, Leonardo, and Japan Aircraft Industrial Enhancement Co. Ltd. (JAIEC). Headquartered in the UK and ramping up to operate in all three nations, the company

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is accountable for the design and development of the GCAP next-generation combat aircraft and will remain the design authority throughout the life of the product. Edgewing people will carry out highly skilled work in the delivery of the programme, including aircraft engineering, airworthiness and certification.