



Fact Sheet

Boeing World Headquarters
100 N. Riverside
Chicago, IL 60606
www.boeing.com

Future Combat Systems

What is it?

The Future Combat Systems (FCS) program is a joint (across all military services) networked (connected via advanced communications) system of systems (one large system made up of 14 individual systems plus the network, plus the soldier). FCS enables ground combat forces to be highly agile and versatile, capable of conducting a variety of missions.

FCS uses advanced communications and technologies to link soldiers with both manned and unmanned ground and air platforms (a platform can be anything from a tank on the ground to an unmanned aerial vehicle) and sensors (a sensor is a device that collects data). Soldiers who are linked to these platforms and sensors have access to data that can provide a much more accurate picture of what's going on around them. This capability is called situational awareness – knowing where you are, where your friends are and where your foes are.

Over time, the Army plans to equip several Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) with FCS capabilities. These basic deployable units will be the Army's future tactical warfighting echelon. Although optimized for offensive operations, the FCS (BCT) will be capable of executing full spectrum operations – to include offensive, defensive, stability and support operations. The FCS BCT will improve the strategic deployability and operational maneuver capability of ground combat formations without sacrificing lethality or survivability.

Why do we need it?

FCS, the materiel solution for the future force, is the fastest and surest way to modernize the Army. FCS will provide soldiers with leading edge technologies and capabilities that will allow them to dominate in complex environments. Today, the U.S. Army has the world's best "light" forces. These are forces that can get to a conflict quickly, usually through fast airlift. The light forces are generally made up of infantry soldiers who often use "boots on the ground" to move from place to place, meaning they do not have mobility equal to a force with ground vehicles, which can transport troops quickly over long distances. Light forces also lack the firepower and protection provided by the "heavy" forces with their Abrams tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

Operation Iraqi Freedom showed the overwhelming strength of "heavy" forces. However, the time it takes to get these vehicles to the fight is often long in duration. They must be shipped by land and sea because they are too big for easy airlift. What the Army seeks is a combination of both heavy and light forces – combining the

strength, lethality and survivability of the heavy forces and their on-the-ground mobility with the speed and agility of the light forces – a capability that FCS will provide.

Key to FCS' power is the fact that it is a networked system of systems – all designed to maximize the strength of each individual system by linking it to all other systems in the network – including systems that are part of the FCS family and those considered “complementary systems” that work with FCS. These complementary systems, which are outside the purview of the FCS program, include weapons like the Apache attack helicopter and communications systems such as the Joint Tactical Radio System. The network that binds these systems together is designed to be *Joint* (multi-service-friendly), *Interagency* (connects the military with other government agencies) and *Multi-national* (FCS can talk to/work with the systems of our allies).

When will FCS be ready?

FCS is on a very aggressive development path. The FCS acquisition program was approved by the Pentagon's Defense Acquisition Board in May 2003. The program is currently in the System Development and Demonstration phase, the contract for which spans a period of performance from 2003 through 2014. By 2015, the Army plans to begin equipping the first FCS BCT with all 14 FCS systems plus the network, and additional BCTs with embedded FCS capability.

Three early “Spin Outs” – or incremental deliveries -- of FCS technologies will be infused into the current force in two-year increments beginning in Fiscal Year 2008. The benefit of Spin Outs is two-fold: 1) provides key FCS capabilities to our Joint ground forces sooner than 2015, 2) reduces operational risk to the current force while incorporating lessons learned back into the FCS program as a dramatic risk reduction measure.

How much does it cost?

The contract for the System Development and Demonstration phase of the program is valued below \$21 billion for the complete period of performance spanning 2003 through 2014. Because FCS is designed as an integrated system of systems, the aggregate SDD contract cost is not broken out by either individual pieces or platforms. One of the most innovative and essential elements of the program is that all of the systems have been designed from the outset to work together seamlessly.

What is unique about the Army's approach to FCS?

FCS is a revolutionary approach to warfighting, and revolutionary in its approach to developing this networked system of systems. Instead of a traditional “prime contractor”, the program utilizes a Lead Systems Integrator (LSI) for FCS. The LSI functions much like a general contractor on a house – seeking out the best “experts” in each area. The LSI team consists of The Boeing Company and partner Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), who oversee a best-of-industry team comprising 25 Tier 1 partners and more than 600 suppliers across the nation.

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Contact: FCS External Communications, Tel: 703-647-1469