

# First Tranche 3 Eurofighter takes shape

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The Eurofighter consortium is on track to deliver its first Tranche 3 production aircraft next year, with BAE Systems having completed work on the front fuselage for the programme's lead example.

The structure, which rolled off the production line at the UK company's Samlesbury site in Lancashire in late August, will soon be integrated with the remaining sections of Royal Air Force aircraft BS116. The single-seat fighter will undergo final assembly at BAE's nearby Warton site.

"The Tranche 3 front fuselage includes over 350 modified parts designed, engineered and assembled ready to incorporate the most advanced capability enhancements," says BAE. These will include the ability to accommodate an active electronically scanned array radar that is in development, with the associated provision of extra power supply and cooling capacity for the sensor, which should be available for operational use from 2015.

Eurofighter partner nations Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK will receive a combined 112 aircraft via a Tranche 3A production deal signed in 2009, with the RAF to get 40 of this total.