

Airbus Helicopters accelerates industrialisation in the UK

- First UK Government-funded R&D projects for Airbus Helicopters
- UK blade research supported by Aerospace Technology Institute
- Light armour project supports Defence Growth Partnership through Dual Use Technology Exploitation cluster

Oxford, 17 November 2015 – Airbus Helicopters, the UK’s leading turbine helicopter company, has received funding from the Department for Business Innovations and Skills (BIS) for two separate projects: one supported by the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) and the other through Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain Initiative (AMSCI). These projects, the first time Airbus Helicopters has participated in UK Government-led industrial development, demonstrate the company’s growing commitment to the UK and its ambition to increase its UK-based research and manufacturing activities.

The first project, worth £2 million and part-funded by government through the ATI, will partner Airbus Helicopters with Cranfield University, BHR Group and SME Helitune Ltd. With the aim of developing technologies to measure blade deformations in flight, the project will create a unique tool for future research into rotorcraft blade dynamics and will allow engineers to actively monitor rotor blade performance during flight tests. This will have a major impact on flight safety, operations and maintenance, and will contribute towards reductions in point-to-point travel time (one of ACARE’s Vision 2020 goals). It will also support the UK’s skills and capability in the field of advanced aerodynamics, an area where the UK is a global leader.

The second project, worth £1.2 million and supported by BIS’ AMSCI, will see Airbus Helicopters partner with project lead NetComposites under the Dual Use Technology Exploitation (DUTE) cluster, to help develop and produce lower weight, lower cost helicopter armour at an increased rate and enable more flexibility in military helicopter design. This project will help bring maturity to existing technologies, shortening the time to market from up to 15 years down to three. The technology will also have the potential to be used more widely in areas such as personal protection and body armour, a global market estimated to be worth \$2.4 billion in 2013.

Business Minister Anna Soubry said, “Airbus Helicopters is the largest turbine helicopter manufacturer in the world and these innovative projects backed by government can only strengthen our capabilities in this field. The government will continue to back our world leading aerospace sector to keep driving innovation, economic growth and creating skilled jobs.”

Colin James, Managing Director for Airbus Helicopters in the UK said, “Unlike the rest of Airbus Group which has a balance of core business activities spanning France, Germany, Spain and the UK, Airbus Helicopters still has, by comparison, an underdeveloped industrial presence in Britain and we mean to change this.”

Gary Elliott, Chief Executive Officer of the ATI, said, “The UK blade research programme with Airbus Helicopters is a good example of how a major global prime can be attracted to locate its R&D in the UK because of the strength of our research centres, supply chain and the Government’s support for innovation”.

Both these projects will provide significant value to the UK industrial and academic base by helping position the UK at the forefront of global rotor blade research and support advanced defence equipment manufacturing. This paves the way for potential future collaboration leveraging Airbus Helicopters' pedigree in design, engineering and manufacturing with the UK's advanced aerospace skills and capabilities.

Aerospace Technology Institute (www.ati.org.uk)

The Dynamic Measurement of Rotor Blade Deformation research programme received funding from the *Building UK's Leadership in Aerospace Technology* competition, shaped by the ATI and delivered by Innovate UK, which awarded investment of up to £25 million for collaborative research and development.

The ATI was created to guide the joint government-industry investment of £2.1bn over seven years into research and technology projects that will sustain and enhance the UK's competitive advantage in civil aerospace. Its Technology Strategy, launched in July 2015, defines the best combination of capabilities, technologies and products to advance next-generation civil aircraft, enabling industry to exploit anticipated global growth, and deliver value to the UK economy through the sector's high productivity and skills.

Dual-Use Technology Exploitation (DUTE)

DUTE is a £10 million project supported by Government and Industry, created to identify and leverage technologies from adjacent sectors such as rail and civil aerospace, and put them to dual use. Supported by an Innovation Cluster, It harnesses the UK's vibrant community of SMEs, recognising the trend for greater investment in the civil domain, and augments it as a way to stimulate growth for defence exports.

The £10.3 million project includes £6.5 million of government funding from the AMSCI (Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain Initiative) 2014 competition and will create 142 new jobs, safeguarding a further 192. The 15 partners involved in DUTE are Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group, Agility Group, Airbus Helicopters, Cranfield University, C-Tech Innovation, Haydale Composite Solutions, Horsebridge Network Systems, KS Composites, NetComposites, Pro 2 Pro, Rinicom, SHD Composites, Sheffield Hallam University, TWI and XeraCarb. For more information visit: [Customer ready: innovative and tailored solutions for customers around the globe](#)

About AMSCI

AMSCI supports manufacturing supply chains in England to reshore in the UK and improve global competitiveness by encouraging innovative, collaborative projects which establish strong, sustainable and balanced growth. Complementing the Regional Growth Fund, AMSCI offers flexible funding support for R&D, skills, training, capital finance and leveraging private sector investment.

Innovate UK (www.gov.uk/innovateuk)

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. It works with people, companies and partner organisations to find and drive the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy - delivering productivity, new jobs and exports and keeping the UK globally competitive in the race for future prosperity.

About Airbus Helicopters in the UK

Airbus Helicopters has been present in the United Kingdom for 40 years and is the UK's largest civil helicopter company with 440 aircraft operating in civil, military and emergency services roles. The company's site at Oxford Airport is home to Britain's Civil Helicopter Hub, while sites at Aberdeen, Belfast and Hawarden provide support to customers across the breadth of the British Isles.

About Airbus Helicopters (www.airbushelicopters.com)

Airbus Helicopters is a division of Airbus Group. The company provides the most efficient civil and military helicopter solutions to its customers who serve, protect, save lives and safely carry passengers in highly demanding environments. Flying more than 3 million flight hours per year, the company's in-service fleet includes some 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in 152 countries. Airbus Helicopters employs more than 23,000 people worldwide and in 2014 generated revenues of 6.5 billion Euros. In line with the company's new identity, fully integrated into Airbus Group, Airbus Helicopters has renamed its product range replacing the former "EC" designation with an "H".

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