



French defence ministry awards innovative availability contract for Thales equipment on board Rafale fleet

10 January 2012 – The French defence ministry's integrated structure for through-life support of aeronautical equipment (SIMMAD) has awarded Thales the contract to support its equipment on board the Rafale aircraft in service with the French Air Force and French Navy. The ten-year contract, known as MAESTRO, is a renewal of the current through-life support contract and broadens the scope of responsibility to ensure that Thales works more closely with operational personnel to guarantee fleet availability.

Under the terms of the contract, Thales is responsible for supporting the Rafale's phased array radar, electronic warfare system, avionics (displays, onboard computers, etc.), optronics (OSF front-sector optronics, cameras, etc.) and communication systems.

To guarantee fleet availability, Thales will optimise replacement parts management, logistics management and information flows between government agencies and Thales services, streamline equipment repair processes and deploy technical and logistics advisers to work directly with users on French military bases.

The fixed-price availability contract represents a major innovation in through-life support delivery and coincides with an increase in Rafale flight hours and the need to comply with tougher military airworthiness standards.

Merry Michaux, Vice-President, Military Aerospace Customer Support and Services Managing Director at Thales said: *"Thales is particularly proud to have been awarded this new contract, which we see as a sign of renewed confidence in a trusted partner and an endorsement of our continuing commitment to drive efficiency gains in aeronautical equipment support. The innovative concepts and collaborative working methods that we are putting in place on military bases and shared platforms will make a significant contribution to optimising availability of the Rafale fleet and bringing down the aircraft's cost per flying hour."*

The Smart Care concept implemented in the MAESTRO programme is the basis of a modular approach to availability contracting that Thales also proposes for other equipment types and other aircraft.

* MAESTRO : **MA**intien en condition opérationnelle des **E**quipements B et des moyens de **S**outien Thales du **R**afale **O**ptimisé (Optimised through-life support for Thales Class B equipment and support systems for Rafale)

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About Thales

Thales is a global technology leader for the Defence, Security, Aerospace and Transportation markets. In 2010, the company generated revenues of €13.1 billion with 68,000 employees in 50 countries. With its 22,500 engineers and researchers, Thales has a unique capability to design, develop and deploy equipment, systems and services that meet the most complex security requirements. Thales has an exceptional international footprint, with operations around the world working with customers as local partners. www.thalesgroup.com

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