Neuilly-sur-Seine, 29 January 2014

Thales wins study contract to define architecture of future network-centric operations by French forces

The French defence procurement agency has awarded Thales a strategic study contract to define the overall system architecture for future network-centric operations by the French armed forces. The study will be conducted by the CATOD, the Defence procurement technical and operational analysis centre. Known as ETO AGORA, it will contribute significantly to the definition of all the theatre networks that will be deployed by French forces in 2020–25.

With the development of expeditionary missions and a growing operational need for effective in-theatre communications, commanders and deployed forces must be able to access and share information quickly in order to maintain information superiority. The armed forces need secure, resilient networks offering high data rates and value-added services in order to fulfill their critical operational and public security roles.

The ETO AGORA study will build operational scenarios using the various networks to be deployed by 2020–25 to define an interconnection model that ensures effective delivery of future operational services, taking into account the progressive migration of these networks to IP\(^1\) technology.

The study will define how the services currently offered by the French

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1 IP: Internet Protocol
Army’s ASTRIDE theatre network will be delivered in the future, and how theatre networks will remain coherent with the COMSAT NG and COMCEPT joint forces satcom networks and the RIFAN naval fleet network, while also taking into account the new technology standards for the timeframe under consideration, such as LTE\(^2\) / 4G in particular.

The objective for the armed forces is to have fully converged joint forces and NATO-interoperable communication networks in place by 2020–25.

The ETO AGORA study will provide the factual basis needed for the French Ministry of Defence to draw up roadmaps to achieve the following key objectives:

- Identify the necessary technologies for integration into the target architectures and the associated development plan (by analysing priorities and related risks, depending on their level of maturity)
- Identify the advanced research, modelling, prototyping, operational demonstrators and change management needed to support the transition to new procedures so that the AGORA network-centric architecture and converged networks can be developed and delivered by 2020–25
- Identify the work needed under enhancements to current programmes or as part of new programmes in order to obtain the expected and achievable capability improvements.

Thales is the lead contractor for the study and will work with COGISYS, DCNS and ThalesRaytheonSystems. The consortium partners bring to the project a thorough understanding of the operational and technical context for the French Army’s networks (ASTRIDE), satellite communication networks (SYRACUSE/COMSAT NG), soldier radio networks (CONTACT), air command and control networks (SCCOA) and naval networks (RIFAN), as well as extensive experience in large-scale programmes for the French Ministry of Defence.

Thales was chosen to lead the study based on its previous projects helping Armies express their operational requirements, and its expertise in secure communication systems and networks for joint forces, radiocommunication products and technologies, as well as infrastructure security and protection systems.

Thales’s selection for this strategic study is a further endorsement of its leadership and know-how in the field of military communications. From hand-held tactical radios to satellite communication solutions, Thales plays a central role in meeting the network capability requirements of the armed forces and maintains a high level of expertise in all the key

\(^{2}\) LTE : Long Term Evolution
Technologies involved.

Thales and military communications

Thales is a leading provider of military communication solutions, including tactical radio systems, resilient networks, secure satellite communications and professional mobile radio (PMR).

Thales is responsible for project management and implementation of France’s SYRACUSE ground segment and network, and is also responsible for convergence of the ASTRIDE/SYRACUSE theatre networks.

Thales is a global leader in military radiocommunications for land, naval and air forces, with experience spanning 70 years and over 800,000 radios sold in more than 50 countries around the world. Thales designs and integrates radio solutions for a wide range of platforms and operational units, including armoured vehicles, fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, surface ships and dismounted soldiers.

About Thales

Thales is a global technology leader in the Aerospace, Transportation and Defence & Security markets. In 2012, the company generated revenues of €14.2 billion with 65,000 employees in 56 countries. With its 25,000 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 and local partners.

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