

Camcopter UAS for Navy



Defence has awarded Austrian company Schiebel a contract for the supply of its Camcopter S-100 System and three years of follow-on Contractor Logistics Support.

The Commonwealth released an international Request for Tender (RfT) in late February 2016 for a UAS capability under Navy Minor Project 1942 (Maritime Tactical UAS – Interim Capability).

According to Schiebel, after thorough proposal evaluation and negotiations, the contract was signed at the end of December 2016.

The Vertical Takeoff and Landing (VTOL) UAS needs no prepared area or supporting launch or recovery equipment and can operate day and night, under adverse weather conditions, with a range out to 200 kilometres, both on land and at sea.

According to Schiebel, the S-100 navigates automatically via pre-programmed GPS waypoints or can be operated directly with a pilot control unit. Missions are planned and controlled via a simple point-and-click graphical user interface. High-definition payload imagery is transmitted to the control station in real time.

Using “fly-by-wire” technology controlled by redundant flight computers, the UAV can complete its mission automatically in the most complex of electromagnetic environments. Its carbon fiber and titanium fuselage provides capacity for a wide range of payload/endurance combinations.

In April 2016, director Unmanned Systems Australia and representative for Schiebel of Austria Phil Swinsburg told ADM the Camcopter S-100 system is a proven, low risk, and already in service with a number of navies and land forces in nine countries.

“The system has been in production for ten years, and it’s in service with a number of armed forces, including the French and Italian navies,” Swinsburg said.

Late last year the UAS successfully completed search-and-rescue (SAR) missions in the Mediterranean for global charity organisation Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS). The UAS and a team of on-board operators were provided by Schiebel to support missions from MOAS ship MY Phoenix.

In 2016, MOAS partnered with the Italian Red Cross to conduct the humanitarian efforts starting from Valetta, Malta. More than 19,000 men, women and children were saved from drowning in the sea while attempting to cross the Mediterranean. MOAS founder Christopher Catrambone said: “The use of drones has been instrumental to MOAS’ successful humanitarian efforts.

The system has also been flying in the Ukraine for the past two years on a lease based option with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), monitoring the security situation in the Ukraine.

“That’s a high threat, heavily congested jamming environment, with a GPS-denied airspace coupled with small arms and rocket fire,” Swinsburg said. “The hostile environment of operations is a proven capability for us and it’s something that’s certainly lacking in other competitors.”

With a fuselage only 60 cm wide Swinsburg said the S-100 was a complementary asset to a manned aviation system and it could easily share space set aside for its manned counterparts if required.

“It’s the only VTOL system that will fit beside a MH60R Seahawk in the single ANZAC hangar – from there we can then substantially enhance the surveillance capability of that manned asset.”

Schiebel owner Hans Georg Schiebel said the company was sure the S-100 will prove to be an effective asset that will set a new benchmark for UAS capability.

“As the experience of the company’s diverse maritime customers shows, the S-100 improves the situational awareness of ship-borne operations substantially, making it the number one short-range tactical unmanned aircraft for naval applications.