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ATM history in the making: FREQUENTIS sets new standards with the ground-breaking FABEC N-VCS contract

When a project establishes new technology standards for the next generation of ATM, there is only one company to turn to. Frequentis confirmed its position as the technology leader in ATM by winning the contract to supply the new N-VCS voice communication system for the FABEC programme. The international high-tech company will define the future of ATM with a slew of ground-breaking technology innovations that provide a model for the rest of the world to follow.

DSNA (the French air navigation service provider) and EUROCONTROL's Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre (UAC) have entrusted Frequentis with the development, deployment and maintenance of their future voice communication systems, to be developed in line with the Functional Airspace Block Europe Central (FABEC) common specifications. The FABEC N-VCS project will drive the next generation of communication in air traffic management in the European airspace, implementing new technology standards for the global ATM industry.

Agreement sets a new agenda for ATM

In May 2011, the three organisations signed a framework agreement and the first two so-called instantiation (system delivery) contracts to set a new agenda for 21st century air traffic management. To meet the requirements regarding back-up facilities and on-site support in France, Frequentis will entrust the French company CS with the main tasks in France. The multi-year project will allow Frequentis to supply next-generation voice communication systems to the EUROCONTROL MUAC and, in partnership with CS, to five key French area control centres as a core part of the FABEC project.

New ATM milestone brings the SES vision nearer

The FABEC-compliant N-VCS product will incorporate a number of technological innovations designed to address the ever-more complex and demanding safety and efficiency needs of tomorrow's airspaces. As such, the signed contracts represent a key milestone for both Frequentis and the wider ATM industry.

The new system will provide first-of-its-kind, modern Air Traffic Service Units based on specifications defined within the FABEC task force to implement the FABEC operational concept. The underlying theme of FABEC is interoperability at both operational and technical levels, at an affordable cost, enabling members to enhance their ATM communications infrastructure and move towards the Single European Sky vision.

New vision + ground-breaking technology = next generation ATM

The following technical highlights will ensure the system implements the required technology standards:

- Smooth transition from existing legacy systems to IP-enabled communication services, leveraging IP technology to enhance air/ground and ground/ground ATM communications

for facilities of all sizes: from a single site to networked multi-site operations (based on EUROCAE ED-137A, also referenced by ICAO's Manual for the ATN using IPS Standards and Protocols DOC 9896 Edition 2.0)

- Sharing of FABEC-wide communication assets and activities, such as workload (e.g. persons/roles), physical resources (e.g. radios) and delegation of management responsibilities (e.g. sector delegation). The project will offer the technical possibility to standardise procedures and technical interface protocols between ANSPs, based on EUROCAE ED-137A and laying grounds for further development of it.
- Technology insertion on many levels to ensure best performance (e.g. network-wide dynamic audio delay compensation) and full functionality (e.g. interworking with radar systems for MUAC) with highest quality, safety and interoperability (e.g. software assurance as per EUROCAE ED-153 SWAL 3 to satisfy EC regulation 482/2008 , ESARR6 and EC regulation 552/2004) for future harmonised air traffic control operations.

New contract sets the standard for years to come

The contract offers a template for future ATM projects related to FABEC and other cross-border initiatives that demand a common solution addressing the different needs of multiple air navigation service providers in various regions. Controllers and engineering staff alike will benefit from the combination of operational efficiency with technical flexibility and easy-to-use human-machine interfaces.

Frequentis confirms position as ATM technology leader

The contract also confirms, once again, the status of Frequentis as the global market leader for communication systems in air traffic control. The project is one of the most important and challenging in ATM history, given its standard-setting role and tough technological requirements: Frequentis won the contract in the face of many bids from major European and US competitors. This success not only reflects the company's long history of technology and innovation leadership, but also its commitment to long-standing, cooperative partnerships with clients and its determination to deliver state-of-the-art, highly reliable systems that account for specific customer needs.

"The partners in the FABEC project are embarking on one of the most significant ATM developments of all times," says Hannes Bardach, CEO of Vienna-based Frequentis. "We're thrilled that our proven expertise, innovation and ability to meet the most demanding technology and project challenges have led EUROCONTROL and DSNÄ to entrust us with such an important, standards-setting task."

About Frequentis

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