

SESAR injects €1.9 billion into ATM research to avert congestion of European sky

Brussels, 12 June – The SESAR Joint Undertaking, a unique public-private partnership in air traffic management (ATM) research and development founded by the European Commission and EUROCONTROL, signed 16 contracts totalling €1.9 billion today, for the creation of Europe’s future ATM system. These contracts mark the beginning of the execution of the SESAR programme. As it serves its vital long term objective – ensuring the sustainability of European air transport – the SESAR JU is also providing continued support for the ATM sector in the short term.

“In the context of a global recession, the financing and timely development of SESAR has become literally vital,” commented Antonio Tajani, Commission Vice-President in charge of transport. “Public-private funding kicks in to support ATM research & development at a time when global economic uncertainty is prompting businesses to manage their cash with extreme caution. On top of green and safety objectives, SESAR will also contribute to the viability of the entire sector, as it will cut air transport operating costs in the longer term.”

Based on the Single European sky legislative package, the mission of the SESAR Joint Undertaking (SJU) is to ensure the modernisation of the European air traffic management system by coordinating and concentrating all relevant research and development efforts in Europe. Unless these efforts deliver their results on time, the European ATM system will be unable to face the projected growth of air traffic. By 2020, SESAR aims to creating the capability to handle a threefold increase in traffic in Europe, while improving safety by a factor of ten. The programme also seeks to reduce by 10% the environmental impact per flight thanks to significant fuel reduction. The modernised air traffic management system in Europe should cut ATM-related expenses by half.

Kick off of the SESAR programme

The SESAR Joint Undertaking signed agreements with 16 partners in the Air Traffic Management sector for a total amount of €1.9 billion (European Commission: €700 million, EUROCONTROL: €700 million and €500 million from the members) over a period of seven years:

- air navigation service providers: AENA (Spain), DSNA (France), DFS (Germany), ENAV (Italy), NATS (En Route) Limited (United Kingdom) and NORACON (Northern Europe and Austria);
- ground and aerospace manufacturing industry: Frequentis, Indra, NATMIG, SELEX Sistemi Integrati and Thales;
- aircraft manufacturers: Airbus and Alenia Aeronautica;
- airports: AENA, SEAC (a consortium of six airport operators: ADP, BAA, Fraport, Munich, Schipol & Unique) and NORACON;
- airborne equipment manufacturers: Honeywell and THALES.

The SESAR Programme comprises 16 work packages and 295 projects to be undertaken in the 2009-2016 timeframe under the supervision of the SESAR Joint Undertaking. These packages will develop and deliver the necessary operational and technical materials (specifications, procedures, prototypes, validation activities, etc) for the progressive deployment of the new European Air Traffic Management system.

Marking the occasion, EUROCONTROL's Director General David McMillan said *"As a founding member of the SESAR Joint Undertaking, EUROCONTROL has a particular responsibility to work with the 16 partners with which agreements were signed today and ensure the programme's successful development. SESAR's innovative work to build the future European air traffic management system and*

to fit it within a global context is well underway and will deliver important benefits to society and airspace users alike”.

Main conceptual change in a modernised sky: the business trajectory

Taking full advantage of existing and newly developed technologies, SESAR’s target concept relies on a number of key features:

- the notion of “trajectory-based operations”, which will dramatically improve the predictability and precision of operations;
- a rolling network operation plan, taking into account real-time situations including weather and traffic evolution;
- the introduction of an air traffic management intranet, including aircraft, which will enable all actors to have full access to the right information at the right time;
- the full integration of airport ground activities into the air traffic management processes;
- increased automation support for air traffic controllers and pilots, enabling them to concentrate on high-added-value activities;
- increased environmentally friendly operations at airports, allowing greener trajectories whilst maximising the use of existing runways.

SESAR new components and operational procedures will be gradually implemented from 2012 to 2020. *“But it is essential that we can also identify and develop quick wins for implementation from 2010.”* insisted Patrick Ky, Executive Director of SESAR JU.

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or directly one of the 16 members of the SESAR Joint Undertaking