

Armed Forces Telecommunications – Decision made on the model/supplier for the replacement of mobile radio devices, on-vehicle intercom systems and headsets

Bern, 29.10.2019 - The evaluation of the two candidates for the replacement of mobile radio devices as well as on-vehicle intercom systems and headsets for the Swiss Armed Forces has been completed, with a decision having been made on the model and supplier. Elbit Systems Ltd (Israel) has been selected as the supplier. A request will be made to parliament for the purchase of the devices to be included as part of armaments programme 2020.

As part of the Armed Forces Telecommunications project, some of the obsolete radio devices and the associated accessories will be replaced. Specialists from armasuisse and the Swiss Armed Forces have tested the radio devices, on-vehicle intercom systems and headsets from two providers under identical conditions, evaluated the submitted costs and made their recommendations to the project oversight board. In consultation with the Chief of the Swiss Armed Forces, the National Armaments Director has now followed this recommendation and accepted the tender from Candidate Elbit Systems Ltd. from Israel. The contract was awarded to Company Elbit Systems Ltd. due to its quote being the best value for money. The better price/performance ratio can be attributed to a slightly better fulfilment of performance and a considerable difference in the commercial sphere. The Material Competence Centre (MKZ) for the maintenance and repair of the devices will be established within RUAG MRO. It has been planned that the Swiss Federal Council will put the procurement of these devices to parliament as part of the armaments programme 2020.

The second provider was Company Roschi Rohde & Schwarz AG, Ittigen. Other procurements in the Armed Forces Telecommunications project will not be prejudiced by the choice of Company Elbit Systems Ltd.

Background

Many of the telecommunication systems in use will reach the end of their service lives between 2018 and 2022 and will have to be replaced. This shall not, however, be a system-for-system replacement while maintaining the numerous interfaces to the neighbouring systems. Instead, the new systems will be integrated into an overall concept and will thus function as elements of an information and communications technology platform. This course of action will allow for the consistent exchange of data and will make the requisite data bandwidths available. The Armed Forces therefore intends to transform the currently diverse system landscape into a uniform telecommunications platform in several procurement steps staggered over several armaments programmes. This is the purpose of the Armed Forces Telecommunications project. The project will be carried out in several different procurement phases.

With the additional armaments programme 2015, the procurement of 400 units of directional beam equipment with extended functionality in the first procurement phase has been approved by parliament. 320 of the units have been purchased. The contractor is Thales Schweiz AG. This purchase can be successfully completed in 2019.

In the second procurement phase, the radio devices being used by the Armed Forces will be replaced. The “Replacement of mobile communications components” project was started in 2015. The evaluation was successfully completed in autumn 2019, with a decision having been made on the model and supplier.

The Armed Forces Telecommunications project is one of the three projects in the FITANIA programme. The two other projects in the FITANIA programme involve the construction of a new data centre and the construction of the Swiss command and control network.

How was this done?

The project focused on replacing these radio devices was launched in 2015 and the military requirements and the military functional specification were drawn up in an important step. Subsequently, more than 15 different companies were contacted as part of an invitation to tender procedure and were also asked to participate in the submission of a quote. An initial evaluation of the submitted quotes was carried out, with a first selection being made. This was ultimately reduced to two applicants.

The radio devices of both foreign companies were then evaluated by a mixed team of specialists from the Swiss Armed Forces and armasuisse (the Federal Office for Defence Procurement). The radio devices underwent a rigorous evaluation with respect to the award criteria of “technical testing”, “troop trials”, “future potential” and “commercial evaluation”. A score was awarded for each of the criteria mentioned above, with all of these scores being added up to create an overall score.

The system provided by Elbit Systems Ltd. received the best evaluation and was proposed for procurement.