

Airbus Helicopters will join with Korea Aerospace Industries in developing two 5-ton class rotorcraft that meet South Korea's requirements for its next-generation Light Civil Helicopter (LCH) and Light Armed Helicopter (LAH).

As the LCH and LAH competition winner, Airbus Helicopters will continue its highly successful relationship with Korea Aerospace Industries, including the joint program that developed Korea's Surion twin-engine utility transport helicopter.

"We would like to express our deep gratitude to Korea Aerospace Industries and the South Korean government for entrusting us with this major helicopter program," said Airbus Helicopters President Guillaume Faury. "We are committing our full support in ensuring the LCH and LAH projects will be completed on time, on cost and to specification."

Both the LCH and LAH will be based on Airbus Helicopters' H155 (formerly known as the EC155) - the latest evolution of its best-selling Dauphin family, which includes the Panther military and parapublic variants that have demonstrated their capabilities in operation around the world.

As part of the new commitment, Airbus Helicopters will transfer the company's technical know-how - as already demonstrated in the Surion program - to ensure Korea is able to develop its newest indigenous products, which will become leading next-generation light rotorcraft in the 5 metric ton weight category.

"The LCH and LAH programs will build on our collaboration with Korea Aerospace Industries on the Surion, which has become a reference in successful rotorcraft collaboration. By continuing our relationship, we will significantly reduce the risks of these two new development programs, while meeting all of the mission requirements," added Faury.

The LCH version is expected to enter service in 2020 while the service introduction of the LAH is targeted for 2022.

Norbert Ducrot, Airbus Helicopters' Head of North Asia, expressed confidence of the program's success, which will see parallel development of both the civilian and military versions. "Not only do we have a strong partnership with Korea Aerospace Industries, we have also a proven track record of continued civil and military developments on which the two partners will capitalize for these two programs," he stated.

Airbus Helicopters' Dauphin family rotorcraft - on which the LAH and LCH are based - have been delivered to more than 60 customers, with over 1,000 of these helicopters logging nearly five million flight hours in service. The H155 features the same digital four-axis autopilot that Republic of Korea pilots have come to appreciate when flying the Surion, and ensures outstanding hover performance in extreme conditions, along with highly accurate settings for altitude, speed and heading.