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## **SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS GRIPEN KEY TO BRITISH INVESTMENT IN CZECH ENGINEERING COMPANY**

SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen, manufacturer of the NATO interoperable Gripen new-generation, supersonic multi-role fighter, has played a key role in securing a British investment in a Czech manufacturer of metering equipment used in the water, chemical, food, pharmaceutical, power, and mining sectors.

Arkon Flow Systems, a division of RTM Group Limited, a British engineering company that manufactures a wide range of precision measuring and metering systems, industrial and laboratory furnaces, and specialist steels, has acquired a 12% stake in ELA spol. sro, a Brno-based manufacturer of high quality electromagnetic flowmeters. The Gripen team in Czech Republic provided ELA with assistance and guidance on local procedures, banking arrangements and business contacts facilitated this deal.

As a direct result of this new investment, the ELA range of flowmeters, already exported to Poland and Slovakia, will be introduced and marketed in the United Kingdom and other EU countries.

David Bennion, a director of RTM Group and the marketing director of Arkon Flow Systems, said: "SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen were key to opening this investment opportunity for us."

"To date, we have exchanged technologies and information with ELA with regard to modifying their products to suit European Union requirements. The next stage will be for ELA to move into new premises, and then to get their excellent range of products into the EU."

RTM Group is an approved supplier to NATO and the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence. Many of the company's products have NATO stock numbers. The company also supplies a large number of industrial and laboratory ovens to AVX, a Czech producer of miniature Tantalum Capacitors used mainly in the telecommunications industry.

Steve Jackman, SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen vice president economic strategy, said: "RTM Group's investment in ELA Brno is a good example of how the Gripen offset programme for the Czech Republic is bringing economic benefits to small- and medium-sized companies in the Czech Republic and helping to generate important export revenues for the national economy."



The SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen offset programme for the Czech Republic has been specifically targeted to benefit business sector and regional priorities in line with Czech Government economic strategy, as outlined in the Request for Proposals (RfP) for new fighter aircraft issued in January last year.

On May 31 of this year, SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen submitted a fully-compliant response to the Czech Government's tender for the modernisation of the Czech Air Force to meet national, NATO and European defence needs.

In accordance with the requirements of the Czech Government, as stated in the tender issued 9 January 2001, the Gripen team's bid documentation was delivered in the Czech language. It provided comprehensive details of a 150% offset programme, a 100% long-term structured finance package, full technical specifications of the Gripen fighter, and a delivery schedule starting in 2004 for either 24 or 36 aircraft.

The response is the culmination of four years preparatory work in the Czech Republic. SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen has had a team working on the Gripen project for the Czech Republic continuously since the Czech Government first expressed interest in purchasing new aircraft in 1997.

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#### **Notes for editors:**

Gripen is the world's only fourth-generation multi-role/swing-role fighter in active service. It is produced and marketed internationally by a joint venture company owned equally by Sweden's Saab and BAE SYSTEMS of the United Kingdom.

Gripen is unique as an operational fighter that combines high performance and outstanding manoeuvrability with a fully integrated digital information system, precision engagement weapons and advanced reconnaissance capabilities for the future war.

#### **For further information please contact:**

John Neilson, vice president communications, SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen  
Tel: + 44 1252 384795 e-mail: [john.neilson@baesystems.com](mailto:john.neilson@baesystems.com)

**[www.gripen.com](http://www.gripen.com)**