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Saab and ETPS sign new multi-year agreement for continued Gripen training

Defence and security company Saab and the Empire Test Pilots' School (ETPS), operated by QinetiQ, have strengthened their unique test pilot training partnership with the signature of a new multi-year cooperative agreement. Saab will support ETPS flight operations with the Gripen D fighter over a four-year period, from 2015 to 2018.

ETPS and Saab have signed a new, multi-year framework agreement for the provision and use of Gripen D fast-jet aircraft and associated requirements, for the ETPS fixed-wing European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) compliant Test Pilot and Flight Test Engineer courses. The original agreement has been in place since 1999 and, under the terms of the new framework, Saab will support ETPS from 2015 until 2018. Ongoing Gripen activity for 2014 is already covered by the existing agreement between the two organisations.

Earlier this year ETPS transitioned from Gripen B to Gripen D which provides access to a very advanced fast jet platform with a unique systems testing capability. The use of this smart fighter aircraft is cemented in the new framework agreement and underlines the long-term commitment by ETPS to the Gripen platform.

“Since 1999 Gripen has trained more than 70 test pilots and provided more than 800 hours for the ETPS. Saab has a record of 100 per cent on-time delivery with a jet that is totally reliable. The relationship between Saab and the ETPS is something really unique. This new framework agreement streamlines our future work together, and affirms the commitment both sides have to our relationship. I see it as an important link between companies, and between countries, says”, Håkan Buskhe, Saab’s President and CEO.

“Professional flight test training delivered by ETPS is an important part of the Long Term Partnering Agreement with the UK MoD. ETPS provides a global customer base with world-class flight test training that underpins the increasingly complex nature of air test and evaluation”, says Leo Quinn, CEO of QinetiQ Group.

ETPS has been training test pilots and flight test engineers with Gripen since 1999. The Gripen aircraft gives students invaluable experience with an advanced, agile, fly-by-wire aircraft for handling and evaluation purposes. Flight operations are conducted at Saab’s Flight Test Department in Linköping, with ETPS instructor pilots flying under Saab supervision. Campaigns typically last for one week in May and four to five weeks in August and September. Saab provides

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ETPS with supervisory pilots, the Gripen aircraft, logistics, ground support and facilities. Additional Saab SK 60 aircraft are also provided to act as radar targets for training.

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