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GRIPEN INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES ISSUE OF AUSTRIAN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR NEW FIGHTERS

Gripen International, the company in which Saab of Sweden and the United Kingdom's BAE SYSTEMS have equal shares, has welcomed receipt of a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) for up to 30 new fighters from the Austrian government.

The company, which is responsible for the international marketing, contract management and support of the Gripen new-generation swing-role fighter, is confident of submitting a fully compliant response to the Austrian government tender. This will be based on the supply of Gripen, the world's most capable and cost effective combat aircraft in operation today, supported by a longterm program of industrial cooperation and offset.

"Gripen is a truly international fighter, containing the latest technologies from a team of major European and American defense suppliers," states Roger Lantz, Gripen director Austria. "We look forward to the competition process and are confident that our industrial and financial proposals will make Gripen the most affordable choice for Austria."

The Gripen team's industrial program will meet the specific strategic needs of the Austrian government and provide technology, export promotion, job creation and inward investment among others.

Gripen International has already launched its first Austrian industrial cooperation projects, including a medical research project involving scientists from both Sweden and TU Wien in Austria and a project to develop and manufacture advanced high technology aluminum products in partnership with the Austrian company Alulight International GmbH.

"These initial projects are early examples of the broad program of industrial cooperation, which will help create jobs and long-term growth in a wide range of industrial sectors" comments Roger Lantz. "Gripen partners Saab and BAE SYSTEMS are world leaders in the delivery of economic compensation to support defense sales. To date, programs in more than 30 countries have been implemented with a total value in excess of US\$22 billion."

(more)

Notes to editors:

Gripen is the first new-generation multi-role fighter in service world-wide, designed to meet the demands of all current and future threats, while at the same time meeting strict peace-time requirements for flight safety, reliability, training efficiency and low operating costs.

Already in service with the Swedish Air Force, which has ordered 204 aircraft (including 28 two-seaters), Gripen has also been ordered by the South African Air Force which has a requirement for 28 and has been selected to meet the national, NATO and European defense needs of Hungary.

On 31 May, the Gripen team was the only bidder to submit a fully compliant response to the Czech government's tender for 24 or 36 supersonic, multi-role fighters. Last month it began negotiations with the Polish government, which is looking to procure up to 60 new fighters.

Gripen partner Saab has an excellent record in offset agreements in Austria. The Austrian government has confirmed that 70 Austrian companies have profited from industrial cooperation and offset agreements associated with the purchase of the Saab Draken and that, in the same period, business benefits well exceeded the agreed targets.

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