

Leonardo lands major helicopter deal with Canadian government

Defence giant Leonardo has secured a £610m helicopter upgrade contract with the Canadian government.

The firm, which has a base in Yeovil, Somerset for its UK-based helicopter business, will upgrade 13 in-service Cormorant search and rescue helicopters for Canada's Department of National Defence. It will also support the addition of three further aircraft to the fleet.

Leonardo said it would enhance the Cormorant's systems and technologies as part of its work to extend the life expectancy of the fleet to beyond 2042.

The firm will be supported by its principal Canadian subcontractor IMP Aerospace and Defence together with General Electric Canada, and Collins Aerospace Canada. The majority of the work will be performed in Canada, primarily at IMP's facilities Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Leonard said the project would help move the Cormorant fleet to the standard currently being delivered for search and rescue helicopters in Norway, which it said was "arguably the best" in the world.

A new glass cockpit, more powerful digitally-controlled engines, wireless in-cabin communications, the latest SAR sensors including Electro Optical Infra-Red device and Mobile Phone Detection Location System – will be installed on the helicopter as part of the upgrade.

Leonardo chief executive Alessandro Profumo, said: "Leonardo is proud to lead with our Team Cormorant partners the

AW101/CH-149 "Cormorant" Search and Rescue helicopter fleet upgrade as announced by the Canadian government.

"With the Cormorant helicopter the government is getting the right equipment for the Canadian Forces, at the best price for Canadians, with the right benefits for Canadian industry."

Managing director Gian Piero Cutillo added "The AW101/CH-149 "Cormorant" Search and Rescue helicopter fleet will provide the Royal Canadian Air Force with the sustainment of a robust, high-tech all weather SAR capability across Canada.

"The CMLU programme through Team Cormorant will reduce the cost of fleet ownership, while further increasing reliability, capability and safety for Canadian people."

The deal is the latest secured by Leonardo this year, after it landed [a £360m contract with the UK Ministry of Defence](#) to deliver a support and training programme for the British Army's Wildcat helicopters, an agreement it said that would sustain 340 jobs across the South West.

The firm is currently building [a vast £30m logistics hub at its Yeovil base](#), which will help support its global fleet of helicopters by housing components and tools.

Read next:

- [Military jet developer lands £9m MoD deal, supporting 250 jobs](#)
- [Defence firm Babcock maintains 'good progress' with Covid turnaround](#)
- [Royal Navy support ships to be built at Devon's Appledore shipyard](#)
- [Cyber security firm Immersive Labs announces MoD partnership](#)

Like this story? Why not [sign up](#) to get the latest South West business news straight to your inbox.