

SAPS rotorcraft and UAV acquisitions in Armscor supply chain queue



SAPS AS350 B3. The service is looking to acquire a large rotorcraft troop carrier.

When it comes to feet on the ground, Minister Bheki Cele’s SA Police Service (SAPS) can successfully point to recruiting thousands, while he and National Police Commissioner, General Fannie Masemola, are depending on Armscor for the acquisition of helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Armscor is managing three tenders for the SAPS, with one – ECAC/2023/117 – for a “troop carrier” helicopter and the other two – ECAC/2023/116 and ECAC/2023/118 – for unmanned aerial vehicles.

In February defenceWeb asked for more information on all three including load capacity, service and repair for the rotorcraft as well as flight endurance and equipment, for example infrared cameras, to be fitted on the UAVs and the number sought. Was training for future SAPS UAV operators also part of the tender was a further question.

This publication was informed Armscor cannot respond on any of these tenders in view of the currently underway supply chain management processes.

The closing date for the troop carrying helicopter bid was 5 March 2024. Armscor has overseen the procurement of multiple new helicopters for the SAPS Air Wing, with Business Day reporting seven are being acquired for R400 million. So far, three Airbus Helicopters H125 light utility rotorcraft have been delivered to the SAPS.

One who took a closer look at the SAPS tenders was James Kerr of Pretoria-based Orion Consulting. He is of the opinion the three-week timeline for submission of bids is short when taking the complexity of the tenders into account.

On the proposed helicopter acquisition he notes it is an opportunity for “some newer SMMEs (small, medium and micro enterprises) to get some alliance with an international OEM (original equipment manufacturer)”. This is in line with Armscor’s stated intent of advancing broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) via SMMEs with the time factor making it difficult to prepare as a compliant commercial off the shelf (COTS) based proposal.

Securing single rights for any product submission as well as DIP (defence industrial participation) and NIP (national industrial participation) need corporate approval, which takes time, more so if a foreign entity is involved, the specialist market entry strategy and proposal service supplier to the South African aerospace and defence industries said.

The SAPS, meanwhile, has a number of its own tenders out. One of those, issued on 10 May, is for the armoured conversion of Nissan Patrol 5.6 V8 LE Premium or similar vehicles for a period of two years for the Special Task Force. Bids close on 10 June.

Armscor continues to focus mainly on tenders for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and has a number out at present, primarily for the Navy. Tender ENLS/2024/19 calls for the procurement of maintenance spares for the support vessel SAS Drakensberg for the 2024/25 financial year. Closing date is 23 May. Tender EARO/2024/22 seeks alternator and maintenance spares for SA Navy frigates, with a closing date of 28 May. Further frigate work will come in the form of new exhaust flaps for the frigates, under tender EARO/2024/23, which has a closing date of 28 May.

For the Army, tender EWSD/2024/18 seeks the conversion of Toyota Land Cruisers to armoured 6x6 configuration for the Special Forces (closing date 14 May). Tender ELWS/2024/10 was issued on 29 April and seeks the procurement of E-Class spares for Olifant MK1A and armoured recovery vehicle systems, with a closing date of 20 May.

Source: <https://www.defencweb.co.za/aerospace/aerospace-aerospace/saps-rotorcraft-and-uav-acquisitions-in-armscor-supply-chain-queue/>