

Press Release

Tawazun and MBDA to cooperate on SmartGlider development

Abu Dhabi, 22 February 2021 - Tawazun and MBDA have signed a head of terms agreement with the intent to cooperate in the field of smart guided weapon systems.

Matar Ali Romaithi, Chief Officer of the Economic Development Unit at Tawazun and Florent Duleux, Group Export Sales Director at MBDA, signed the document during this year's IDEX exhibition in the presence of H.E. Tareq Abdulraheem Al Hosani, CEO of Tawazun and Eric Béranger, CEO of MBDA.

The aim is to create a long-term partnership between Tawazun and MBDA, enabling the development of the SmartGlider weapon systems from design to production phase.

A joint team of engineers from both sides, the majority from Tawazun, will be in charge of development studies. They will be operating from MBDA's first regional Missile Engineering Centre established in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Following the signing, Matar Al Romaithi stated: "We are pleased with our significantly growing relationship with MBDA. This agreement allows us to extend and increase our areas of co-development and co-production of technologically advanced defense products. Collaborating with MBDA will reinforce our commitment to contributing to the development of defense and security industries in the UAE, to building national capabilities, and to supporting the growth of local supply chains."

During the pre-development phase, the two entities will study several concepts before reaching a development phase. The intention being to offer an optimal system at the right price and with the right performance, leveraging the capabilities of the UAE defense industry.

Éric Béranger, CEO of MBDA, said: "We are delighted to begin this unique cooperation with one of our long-standing customers, supporting their ambition to grow their domestic defense industry and enabling the development of an outstanding next generation weapon system."

This head of terms is part of the bilateral cooperation agreement signed between France and the UAE.

Notes to editors:

The new SmartGlider family of guided weapons is optimised to counter anti-access strategies and other emerging battlespace threats. Designed to complement newest and future fast jets, SmartGlider forms a family of all-up-round glider weapons, with folding wings and a range of over 100 km allowing the combat platform to stay at safe distance from the enemy defences. This new generation of air-to-ground weapons is designed to counter new short and medium range surface-to-air threats, as well as moving/relocatable targets or hardened fixed targets.

For general-purpose missions, the SmartGlider Light can be engaged against a wide spectrum of targets, from hardened and defended fixed targets such as hangars, to relocatable targets that can only be destroyed from a standoff distance with significant lethal effects while minimizing collateral damages.

SmartGlider will integrate new technologies in their guidance and navigation functions, as well as multi-purpose warheads. Thus, they will be able to reach and destroy the best-defended targets, notably enemy air defences, thanks to sensors that make them robust against anti-access measures.



About Tawazun Economic Council

Founded in 1992, Tawazun Economic Council (Tawazun) has enabled the creation of more than 111 companies and investment vehicles within 12 sectors, and now serves as the catalyst for both economic growth and the development of the UAE defense and security industry.

Tawazun drives economic value through the Tawazun Economic Program and the Strategic Development Fund, facilitating ecosystem growth and human capability development through global and local partnerships, and empowering technology & innovation through the defense and security R&D ecosystem.

Tawazun - towards an agile future

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About MBDA

MBDA is the only European defence group capable of designing and producing missiles and missile systems that correspond to the full range of current and future operational needs of the three armed forces (land, sea and air).

With a significant presence in five European countries and within the USA, in 2019 MBDA achieved revenue of 3.7 billion euros with an order book of 17.5 billion euros. In total, the group offers a range of 45 missile systems and countermeasures products already in operational service and more than 15 others currently in development.

MBDA is jointly owned by Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%), and Leonardo (25%).

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