

SMS Enters Into a World-First Military Helicopter In-flight Pilot Programme

Structural Monitoring Systems plc (“SMS”) (ASX:SMN) is pleased to provide an important update concerning a pivotal “pilot” programme (“the Programme”) involving the installation of SMN’s CVM™ sensors on military Apache AH-64 attack helicopters being operated by one of the world’s sovereign defence forces. SMS has partnered with a third party providing an optimal platform with which to install, assess and progress the expanded use of CVM™ across the full helicopter fleet. Further, specific Programme details may be provided in the coming weeks, but only if the necessary approvals from the Programme partners for release of sensitive information to the public become available.

The Programme does, however, involve an application with a very high suitability and practicality for CVM™. The “pilot” phase of the Programme will see sensors installed on one or two test Apache rotor-craft – following which an evaluation period, anticipated to be 8-12 weeks, will be employed to assess the data provided by the installed sensors monitoring the application area. Subsequently, the ultimate objective of the Programme is to have CVM™ sensors installed across the entire fleet, to monitor this “hot spot” area, and dramatically reduce inspection time and costs (both of which are very material) has a very frequent inspection requirement involving considerable man-hours and an extremely intrusive “dismantling” process to gain access for visual inspection. CVM™ has the potential to play an extremely valuable role in materially impacting the commercial issues associated with the Programme application. Currently, there are over 2,000 Apache AH-64 helicopters in operation deployed by major defence forces all over the world.

To support this Programme, SMS and our manufacturing/engineering partner, AEM, developed a cutting- edge, highly innovative sensor design to monitor the application area. The sensor, a first for SMS/AEM engineers, will be installed in a 90 degree corner of a bracket to monitor cracking on the two adjacent faces of that bracket. The space surrounding the monitored area was very tight, and adjacent faces on the bracket made repositioning of the sensor difficult. To address this, AEM designed a specialised sensor that installs as four separate components – this sensor has now been fully developed, tested and approved for use.

United Kingdom

4 Elwick Road,
Ashford, Kent TN23 1PF,
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1233 666795
Fax: + 44 (0) 1233 646840

Australia

Suite 39, 1 Freshwater
Parade Claremont WA 6010
Australia
Tel: +61 8 6364 0899
Fax: +61 8 9467 6111

United States

1999 Avenue Of The Stars
Suite 1100
Century City, CA 90067
United States
Tel: +1 424 253 1277

Toby Chandler, SMS's Managing Director, commented – “We are very pleased to team up on this application and look forward to being intimately involved with this groundbreaking Programme. While SMS has focused on the increasingly relevant and attainable opportunities existing for our technology in the fixed-wing and civilian aerospace sectors, it is becoming increasingly clear that the potential that exists in the rotor-craft and military sectors is perhaps, in many ways, as important for SMS commercially. This Programme will be a pivotal pre-cursor to opening up a number of commercial possibilities in the global military sector, and serves as a timely, and very important, adjunct to the Company's upcoming Sikorsky programme, further details of which will be released foreseeably. Further, it is highly satisfying to witness the value that our partnership with AEM has created. The level of innovation and precision that AEM delivers is a dramatic leap forward from the operational model that the Company operated under for years prior.”

For further details please contact:

Sam Wright

Company Secretary

T: +61 8 6364 0899

E: sam@straightlines.net.au

W: www.smsystems.com.au

United Kingdom

4 Elwick Road,
Ashford, Kent TN23 1PF,
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 1233 666795
Fax: + 44 (0) 1233 646840

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