

# Leonardo sells five O&G helicopters to Weststar Aviation

BY ALEX BALDWIN · MARCH 28

Leonardo Helicopters has signed a contract with Weststar Aviation services to sell five new helicopters to the operator – the deal is valued at approximately Eu50 million.

The deal will see Leonardo provide three new-generation AW169s and two AW139s for Weststar's offshore operations in West Africa and the Middle East.

The three AW169s will fly offshore transport services for Weststar's ExxonMobil & Noble's contract in Equatorial Guinea and the two AW139s are for the Al-Khafji joint operations between the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) and Aramco Gulf Operations.

Tan Sri Dr. Syed Azman Syed Ibrahim, group managing director of The Weststar Group said: "This procurement further strengthens the partnership between Weststar Aviation Services and Leonardo and is a key factor in Weststar's overseas business expansion. The AW169 and the AW139 twin-engine helicopters are the most successful new generation models in their class worldwide, and the most demanded helicopter types in the Oil and Gas industry.

"We are pleased to purchase yet more helicopters from Leonardo to support our offshore helicopter operations and we will use the newly purchased helicopters for our operations in West Africa and the Middle East."

Weststar Aviation Services operates 33 AW139, AW169 and AW189 helicopters out of its bases in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Weststar has clocked more than 100,000 flying hours on its AW139 fleet.

Earlier this March, LCI leased two helicopters – an AW139 and AW189 – to serve on Weststar Aviation Services offshore Malaysian fleet. The Malaysian-based operator offers offshore transport services in Kota Bhar, Kereth, Kuala Terengganu, Kota Kinabalu and Miri.

Gian Piero Cuttillo, managing director of Leonardo Helicopters, said: "Weststar is one of our most important helicopter customers worldwide and we are happy to confirm our leading position in the offshore market in the region.

"There are now over 60 Leonardo helicopters in Malaysia, where we have our regional Customer Support and Training hub, and we plan to increase our presence even further in the future by expanding the services we offer."

According to the Asian Sky Group end-of-year fleet report, 159 helicopters were in civil operation in Malaysia as of the end of 2018. Whilst the Australasian market is growing, Malaysia only added two helicopters to its fleet in 2018. Most of the helicopters in the country are flown on oil-and-gas missions, but last year, the country as a whole retired a substantial nine percent of its oil-and-gas fleet.

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