Thales, ATNS SA improve SA's air traffic systems

Thales and Air Traffic Navigation Services (ATNS) Company of South Africa, long standing partners in Air Traffic Management (ATM) systems, recently signed several major contracts.

Thales has undertaken to replace the legacy ATNS ATM system with the Thales TopSky-ATC and to install the newest Thales 970s Radars at the Wakkerstroom, Potgieterus and Rhodes sites. The contract also provides for a support and maintenance agreement for all existing ATNS radar sensors and TopSky-ATC systems.

A landmark contract

This is a landmark contract for Both Thales and ATNS. Over the past decade African air traffic has increased exponentially, with South Africa being one of the busiest airspaces in the continent. As a result, improved air space management, advanced technologies and system modernisation are needed to meet future challenges of scalability and operational costs faced by both ANSPs and their industrial partners.

Commenting on the strategic importance of the project, Patrick Oszczeda, VP Southern Africa and CEO of Thales South Africa, said, "South Africa is emerging as one of the fastest growing and complex ATM regions in the continent. This technology acquisition will allow ATNS to deploy a truly future-proofed technology capable of not only dealing with the issues and challenges of Africa today, but also capable of growing and adapting as the airspace becomes more complex. We are proud to be associated with ATNS, especially as we explore new partnership strategies, which we believe will unlock ATNS's full potential for growth and other avenues of development."

Co-operation for development

Thabani Mthiyane, ATNS CEO (acting) added, "ATNS remains committed to the delivery of safe and efficient operations to the ATM community. In delivering services to our customers and stakeholders, technology infrastructure and innovation play an important role in ensuring that we are able to do so. It was therefore important for ATNS to select a partner that will not only provide enabling technology, but will work with ATNS in ensuring that internal technology innovation capacity and capability is strengthened for the purpose of long-term joint development and co-operation. This will further benefit the know-how and skills related to Air Traffic Management in South Africa as a whole, especially in the area of technology transfer and management.

"Thales has been instrumental in the transfer of technology within the aviation industry in general. We are indeed proud to be partners with Thales, in the critical dual-use of air traffic management technology. Air transport infrastructure is made up of a plethora of complex and diverse technologies, and the transport industry is heavily involved in the production of high-specification, safety-of-life products which drive research and development in a number of areas. We are therefore confident that this investment will furthermore help to build research capacity and skills across society, in partnership with Thales."