

Denel Awarded Another Multi-Million Rand Tender For Airbus A400m

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Denel Aerostructures has been awarded a fourth multi-million rand contract to manufacture and produce key parts on the Airbus 400M the world's most advanced military airlifter.

The company will, in future, manufacture "ISO locks" – a combination of aluminium rails and cross tracks – to be fitted into the cargo hold of each of the giant aircrafts which are to be delivered to international clients over the next six years. The contract is valued at more than R260-million.

"The new work package confirms Denel Aerostructures' reputation as an emerging player in the global aerospace environment," says the company's Group CEO, Riaz Saloojee. "It is a vote of confidence in the South African engineering and high-tech manufacturing sectors."

The tender was won through a bidding process against international competitors. "It is quite clear that Airbus Defence and Space is satisfied with the quality of work we have delivered on other contracts over the past nine years and decided to place another work package with Denel," says Mr Saloojee.

The contract will cascade down to other companies in the aerospace and high tech sectors with some of the manufacturing processes being sub-contracted to Denel's Aerostructures' local supplier base.

Ismail Dockrat, the CEO of Denel Aerostructures (DAe) says the ISO locks are manufactured at the company's facilities in Kempton Park according to the designs received from Airbus Defence and Space. Each Airbus A400M has a system of rails and cross tracks inside the cargo hold to guide the effective movement of massive ISO containers.

There are four parallel sets of aluminium rails and 32 cross tracks within the aircraft's giant cargo hold. The transported equipment is packed inside the containers which are then loaded along the rails into the fuselage of the aircraft. An intricate system of locking mechanisms keeps the containers secured during flight.

DAe will manufacture and deliver the ISO locks to be fitted to each of the 174 aircraft already ordered from Airbus Defence and Space by international customers. The process of industrialisation has already started and the first ship set will be delivered to Airbus' fuselage assembly facility in Bremen, Germany, by September.

The serial production will be ramped up in 2015 and DAe will deliver at least 20 ship sets a year over the six year contract period. Mr Dockrat says Denel will also manufacture a different rail system for the loading of smaller containers as required by some of the international customers. The Central Guide Vehicle Restraint System (CGVRS) will facilitate the movement of

emergency supplies which are dropped from the air by the A400M. The smaller containers are usually filled with humanitarian aid, food and emergency supplies. This contract is valued at more than R70-million.

According to Mr Saloojee, Denel Aerostructures is one of a select few companies outside Europe that manufactures critical parts for the A400M. The company is also responsible for the airlifter's wing-to-fuselage fairing, the top shells that protect the wing section and the "ribs, spars and swords" which form the internal structures of the aircraft's tail section.

"The new contract strengthens our relationship with Airbus Defence and Space, but also sends a signal to the global aerospace sector about the know-how and experience that are available within the South African manufacturing industry," he says.