



PARIS PICKS PATROLLER FOR UAV REQUIREMENT

News / Manufacturer



France appears to have selected Sagem's Patroller for its army's tactical unmanned air vehicle requirement, defeating the rival Thales Watchkeeper system.

If the deal goes ahead, Paris will be the first customer for the Patroller, under a reported €300 million (\$324 million) contract, according to French news outlet *Air & Cosmos*.

In June, Boulogne-Billancourt, France-headquartered Sagem told *Flightglobal* it was confident that its home country would be the initial operator of the Patroller, which has struggled to secure a launch customer. Its predecessor, the Sperwer, which the Patroller will now replace, was exported several times before it was adopted by the French army.

Reports suggest the contract is for 14 aircraft to be delivered by 2019, although both Sagem and France's DGA procurement agency decline to comment.

Asset Image type unknown

Sagem

Thales has long attempted to sell the Elbit Systems Hermes 450-derived Watchkeeper to France, but its sole operator remains the British Army. The UAV was developed for the UK programme, but has seen a number of challenges resulting in late service entry and a missed deployment to Afghanistan.

The manufacturer is still pitching it for a Polish tactical UAV requirement, however, where it is teamed with local manufacturer WB Electronics. That tender is currently the only publicly-known competition being contested by Watchkeeper.

A joint Textron Systems/Airbus Defence & Space bid using a modified Shadow M2 was earlier eliminated from the French contest.

23 JANUARY 2016

SOURCE: FLIGHTGLOBAL

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