

“Long and trustworthy partner of India”

VAYU Interview with Pierre Dickeli, CEO, Safran India Pvt Ltd



VAYU: Please update us on Safran's 'Make in India' initiatives and collaborations with the DRDO and BEL.

Safran: Safran has been a long and trustworthy partner of India for more than 60 years in many aeronautical fields of activity such as space propulsion (Vikas engines), helicopter engines, military engines for the Jaguar, Hawk, Mirage 2000 and Rafale, as well as inertial navigation systems and optronics solutions, engines and equipment for civil aircraft. Currently employing more than 600 employees at eight companies and a maintenance training centre in Hyderabad for CFM engines, Safran has continuously expanded its footprint in India and will continue to offer design, production and support services in aerospace and defence space. We are the largest provider in India for turbo-shaft engines for helicopters and have the unique distinction of powering 100% of helicopters manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). India is also the largest installed base worldwide for Safran with more than 1,200 INS (Sigma family) in use and being the reference of India's Armed Forces.

In line with Indian government's 'Make in India' initiative, Safran is building up an Indian supply chain for LEAP engines, through which it has already secured approximately 200 million euros of offset. Our current Indian supply base includes JV SHAe, Godrej & Boyce, Maini, Reaero India, Mach Aero India, SQUAD (JV with AEQUS and A&D), SESI (Safran Engineering Services India). We are also working on giving India access to air, land and sea applications through transfer of technologies that have been conducted with HAL for more than 30 years in various applications such as transfer of production for gyro mechanical navigation systems (ULISS) and Sigma-95N for fighters, AFCS (Automatic Flight Control System) and AHRS (Attitude Heading

Reference System) for helicopters or co-development with DRDO/BEL of local inertial navigation systems (Land-INS and Air G3-INS).

We have also started developing a local supply chain in India, through Indian suppliers that have been qualified and integrated in our global supply chain and the creation of production centers such as the HAL/Safran JV based in Bangalore and Hyderabad cluster.

Under the Shakti engine cooperation with HAL, we have provided more than 70% transfer of technology for manufacturing and have set up a helicopter engine MRO JV. Once operational, this would help improve the turnaround time to repair and overhaul military helicopter engines. In addition to this, we have offered to collaborate with DRDO on the development of a military engines for their Indian fighter programmes including transfer of technology.

VAYU: Could you please elaborate on Safran's role in partnering India in achieving self-reliance

Safran: At Safran, we believe achieving self-reliance means dealing with design, development, production as well as support and that is why we are willing to address all these activities, when it comes to working in India.

The production concerning development of a supply chain in India has already started and we are aiming to develop an MRO shop in India to support the civil engines as well at the appropriate time. The objective is to entail a significant foreign investment, create numerous highly skilled jobs, promote local MSMEs to act as a supplier to MRO shop, while also improving logistics efficiency and overall turnaround time (TAT) of engines availability to the airline operators in India.

We are already working to achieve design and development through our current activity with HAL on helicopter turbines. Safran's relationship with HAL

dates back to early 1960s with the transfer of licence for the Artouste engine to HAL. Since then, the engines for the Dhruv and Cheetal helicopters from HAL have been added to the portfolio. Initiated by HAL and powered with the support of Safran, the two extremely prestigious helicopter programmes: Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and the Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) are close to entering service in the coming months.

Currently, Safran Helicopter Engines has about 1,700 engines in service within India, of which about 1,500 are flying with the military operators. Jointly with DRDO, we have proposed to build the capability to design, develop, certify and produce engines in India for all the Indian platforms in order to make India sovereign in the strategic domain of military aerospace engine and join the only 3 other countries in the world that have this capability.

Safran Electronics & Defense has strengthened its partnership with HAL on helicopter autopilots providing state-of-the-art development and integration capabilities to replace existing test benches and set up a software workshop to develop and validate control laws necessary for the use of AFCS on ALH Navy, LUH and the LCH.

Safran Electronics & Defense is also completing a ToT of Navigation Complex System with BEL for submarines which will become the reference and indigenous solution for all future Indian submarines programmes.

We can confidently state that we are in India for the long run and are seeking more local partnerships to build an entire ecosystem and contribute to Prime Minister's 'Aatmanirbhar Abhiyan'