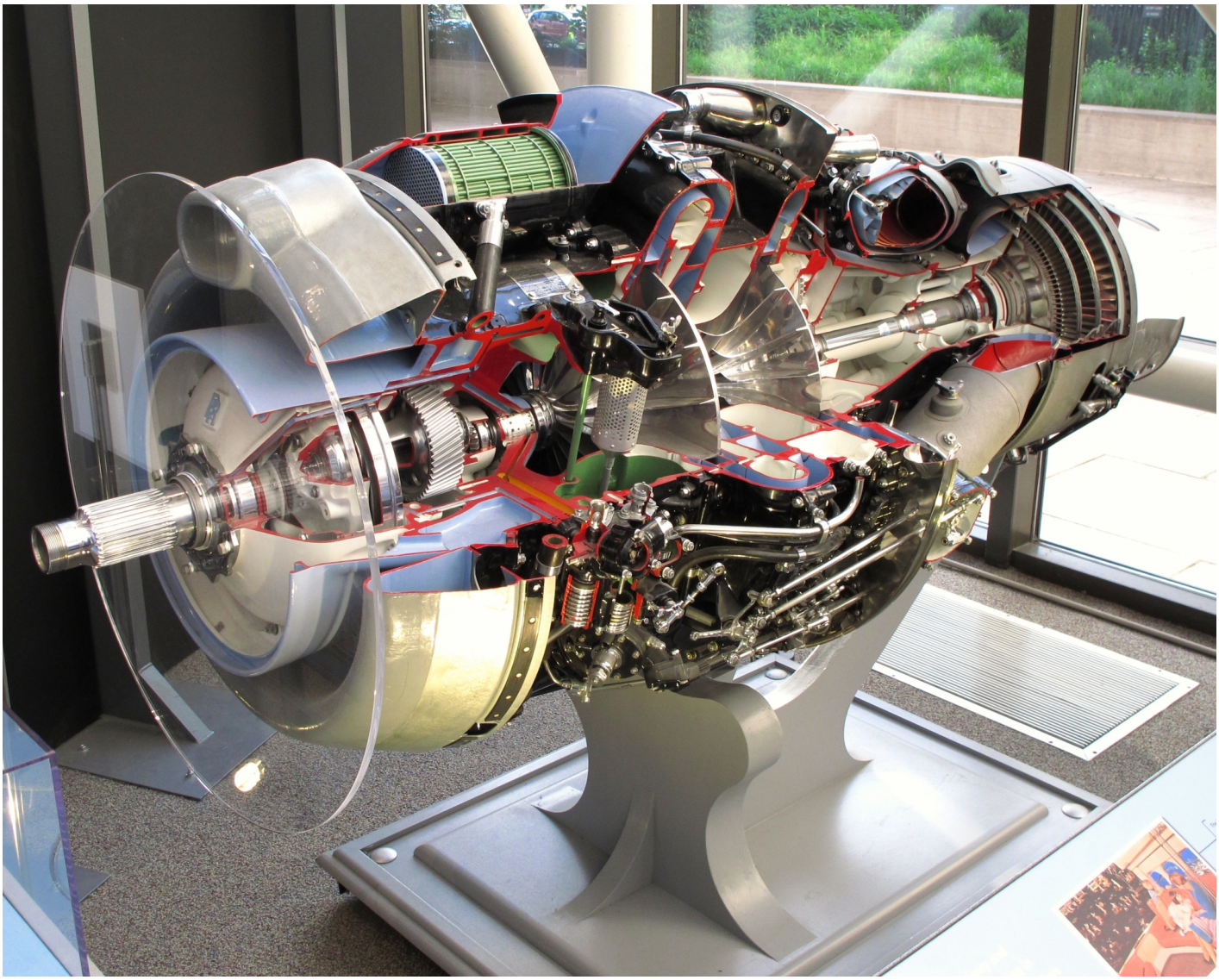
LHTEC AIMS FOR TURKISH ASSEMBLY OF CTS800 ENGINE

News / Manufacturer



Helicopter engines joint venture LHTEC is negotiating with Turkish industry as it attempts to localise production of its CTS800 engine to support the nation's developmental light utility helicopter programme.

LHTEC – a partnership between Honeywell and Rolls-Royce – was selected by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) as the propulsion supplier for its twin-engined Turkish Light Utility Helicopter (TLUH) in October.

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As a result, LHTEC has embarked upon a 24-36-month effort to secure local involvement in the 1,300shp (969kW)-class CTS800, including final assembly and inspection, parts manufacture, and maintenance, repair and overhaul services.

Matt Thraen, director of technical sales for Honeywell and an LHTEC board member, says it has been working with Turkish Engine Industries (TEI) and other suppliers to explore options for local content in the programme.

TEI builds low-pressure turbine modules for all CTS800s, an agreement driven by its use of the -4A variant on the TAI T129 ATAK helicopter.

“We have proved that we can have parts made in Turkey by local Turkish companies,” says Thraen.

No agreement has been signed but Thraen says it is “working very actively to secure those goals. We are committed to making it happen.”

Turkey also has an ambition to develop an indigenous high-output turboshaft engine, and LHTEC has already held discussions with the nation's SSM defence industries under-secretariat about its potential involvement, says Thraen.

“The national engine project is very interesting to us and we definitely have an interest in getting involved in that and supporting it in some way,” he added.

TAI intends to produce military and commercial variants of the TLUH, with the latter to be sold globally. As a result, LHTEC needs to develop two distinct variants of the CTS800: the -4AT military model and an unnamed ITAR-free civil version.

LHTEC has previously secured US government approval for a separate commercial model, the LH1300, but that will not be used on the TLUH, stresses Thraen.

However the sanction from Washington will stand it in good stead, he adds. “At the time we were talking to TAI and SSM we didn’t have the engine configuration defined, but we went forward to prove that we could get a civil version approved by the US government. It’s a good precedent for a future version.”

TAI intends to begin deliveries of the TLUH in around 2021; ground and flight tests of the engines will take place over the next three years.

The Turkish manufacturer forecasts sales of around 400 helicopters over the life of the programme.

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