LOCKHEED, EXECHON AND INJAZ IN JOINT VENTURE FOR ADVANCED MACHINING TECHNOLOGY

News / Manufacturer

Lockheed Martin has teamed up with Abu Dhabi-based **Injaz National** and the Swedish technology company Exechon to create a machine technology joint venture, the US defence and aerospace company said yesterday.

It is the latest such collaboration between a global defence industry major and local players.

Exechon Enterprises will set up an engineering and manufacturing centre for parallel kinematics machining (PKM), a process which combines the flexibility of robotic manufacturing with the accuracy of machine tools. It will target the aerospace, defence and automotive sectors.

“The PKM technology is positioned to meet increasing demand for flexible manufacturing of components made with advanced materials,” said Karl-Erik Neumann, the chief executive of Exechon Enterprises.

The emirate of Abu Dhabi has been leading efforts to create a local aerospace and defence

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industry as part of plans to diversify the economy from oil and create more jobs for nationals.

For example, Strata, the Al Ain-based maker of airplane parts, is building components for the world's two dominant aircraft manufacturers – Airbus and Boeing.

Strata has ambitious plans to triple sales to Dh1 billion by 2020 and is weighing up expansion into North Africa.

The UAE is boosting its defence sector through the creation of a new state champion, Emirates Defence Industries Company (Edic), and offset agreements with major international arms companies to help develop sector-specific expertise. Edic was formed in a merger of business units from Mubadala, Tawazun and Emirates Advanced Industries in December.

The government's Offset Programme Bureau (OPB) rates defence contracts in terms of their contribution to the local economy, either through technology transfers or the establishment of joint ventures with local companies.

Defence contractors that increase employment for Emiratis and increase skills and capacity in key industries are preferred, according to guidance published by the bureau.

The OPB credits its offset policy with having created "thousands of job opportunities for Emiratis in knowledge-intensive and value-added projects, speeding up the transfer of technology and providing expertise through various joint ventures with foreign investors".

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