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Rheinmetall to modernize the Bundeswehr's fleet of logistic vehicles: major order worth around €900 million for over 2,200 new trucks

Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles has entered a framework agreement with the Bundeswehr to supply over 2,200 state-of-the-art trucks. In embarking on this major project, Rheinmetall will play a leading role in modernizing the German military's fleet of thousands of logistic vehicles.

Awarded by the Federal Office for Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support (BAAINBw) and structured to run seven years, the framework contract covers a total of 2,271 HX2 family vehicles with a gross value of around €900 million (€760 million without VAT). As a first step, an initial lot of 558 trucks with a gross value of roughly €240 million (€200 million without VAT) has been taken under contract, including special tools and training support. Most of the key components – the engines, axles, transmissions and build-ons – will be produced in Germany, though the vehicles will be assembled at the Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles (RMMV) plant in Vienna. Delivery of the first lot will take place during the 2018-2021 timeframe.

Particularly in multinational operations, the worldwide presence of RMMV vehicles offers major advantages in terms of interoperability and logistics. Among others, the current list of user nations includes the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Denmark. Norway and Sweden have both placed substantial orders with RMMV as well.

This new Bundeswehr order underscores yet again Rheinmetall's status as one of the world's foremost suppliers of systems and equipment for ground forces, with an extensive portfolio of tracked and wheeled tactical and logistic vehicles.

Modern HX2 trucks to replace aging KAT I vehicles

Under the Bundeswehr's Unprotected Transport Vehicle (UTF) programme, new vehicles from the Rheinmetall HX2 family are set to replace the old KAT I generation of trucks made by MAN, some of which have been serving faithfully for forty years. Owing to their advanced age and the associated spare parts and lifecycle costs, however, the KAT I vehicles no longer meet current standards.

In operations both at home and abroad, modern armed forces depend on assured, round-the-clock mobility and reliable logistics. Robustness, versatility and functionality are the most important performance criteria – no matter how bad the roads or how difficult the terrain. Increasingly important, too, are flexible add-on protection solutions, crucial for keeping crews safe during deployed operations.

The latest generation of HX2 vehicles from RMMV meets all of these criteria. It is the outcome of decades of experience in developing, building and – by no means least – servicing military vehicles. With some 10,000 vehicles now in service around the globe, the HX2 numbers among the world's most widely used military trucks, with abundant operational experience.

Tried-and-tested mass production technology, tailored to meet military requirements

The HX2 family comes in variants ranging from 4x4 to 10x10, configured for a multitude of different missions: cargo trucks and heavy-duty recovery vehicles, tankers and system platforms as well as folding-road and bridge-laying systems. The engines that power these trucks are designed for outputs of up to 680 HP.

The vehicle family concept results in largely identical modes of operation, maintenance and repair as well as spare parts, leading in turn to lower lifecycle costs. Moreover, RMMV also offers full service support, all from a single source.

Adhering to a strict military-off-the-shelf (MOTS) approach, RMMV uses proven, reliably modified mass production components in the HX2 family, specially designed to meet military requirements. This results in made-to-measure military vehicles that deliver maximum cost-effectiveness.

A crucial characteristic of these vehicles is the robust chassis design, enabling inclusion of add-on protection elements. Featuring the heaviest front axle load in its class, the vehicle can handle a heavily protected driver's cab large enough for three people. Furthermore, the cabs can also be equipped with an optional NBC ventilation system, integrated command and control systems, connections to soldier systems, remotely controlled weapon stations, jammers, active defence systems (ADS) and fast-acting smoke/obscurant dispensers.

From the outset, these trucks are designed not just for maximum robustness, payload capacity, mobility and an all-terrain capability, but also to operate at temperatures ranging from -32°C to +49°C. They can also be adapted to operate in all other climates: an arctic kit is available for several vehicles that enables them to operate at temperatures as low as -46°C. It is also possible to fit them with C4I systems without major conversion work, while their electromagnetic compatibility exceeds that of all other trucks on the market.

Other special capabilities include a standard fording depth of 1.5 metres without prior preparation. Moreover, the state-of-the-art engines that power these trucks feature full F34 compatibility in accordance with the NATO single fuel concept.

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