BRISTOW ON BOARD FOR NEW IRISH COAST GUARD CONTRACT

Bristow Ireland Limited will operate six specialised search-and-rescue-configured AW189 helicopters from four dedicated bases in Sligo, Shannon, Waterford and Dublin Weston.

The Department of Transport has signed a new ten-year contract with Bristow Ireland Limited to provide helicopter and fixed-wing aviation services for the Irish Coast Guard. Selected as the preferred bidder, following a comprehensive procurement project, the new aviation service will become fully operational by July 2025.

Under the new contract, Bristow Ireland Limited will operate six specialised search-and-rescue configured AW189 helicopters from four dedicated bases in Dublin Weston Airport, Sligo, Shannon and Waterford.

For the first time, the Coast Guard's aviation service will also have fixed-wing aircraft capability available on a 24/7 basis to support the delivery of these essential services.

In an expansion to the current aviation service for the Coast Guard, two King Air fixed-wing aircraft, based at Shannon Airport, will provide support for search and rescue operations, and environmental monitoring.

The fixed-wing element will provide highly sophisticated aircraft mission management and communications systems (in co-ordination with the helicopter fleet). The fixed-wing aircraft will also be available to provide 'Top Cover' support to helicopters

"Bristow Ireland Limited will implement Bristow's globally recognised and industry-leading 'Target Zero' safety culture in Ireland, to ensure safety is at the forefront of every flight we take, and each decision made," he added.

The company is a subsidiary of US-based Bristow Group Inc., a global provider of innovative and sustainable vertical flight solutions. It will begin transitioning to the new aviation services contract in the fourth quarter of 2024.

The range of essential state services to be provided include Maritime and Inland Search and Rescue, Environmental Monitoring, Helicopter Emergency Medical and Air Ambulance Services, with enhanced mission control and communications systems.

engaged in long range medical evacuations.

Bristow will deliver nationwide all-weather 24-hour coverage, 365 days a year. Under the new contract, the company will create or sustain more than 150 jobs ranging from specialist ground support, engineering, flight operations and in-country maintenance and support capabilities. This is to ensure its teams and aircraft stand at full readiness to respond to tasking from the Irish Coast Guard.

'TARGET ZERO' SAFETY CULTURE

"The entire team at Bristow Ireland Limited is honoured to be chosen to deliver this critical and life-saving public service for the people of Ireland," noted Alan Corbett, Bristow's Chief Operating Officer, Government Services.

"We look forward to collaborating closely with the Irish Department of Transport, Irish Coast Guard and all stakeholders as we prepare to deliver this critical public service. We will provide a safe, dependable and innovative service that will deliver world-class search-and-rescue across the country.

OPTIONS TO EXTEND CONTRACT

The new contract will run for ten years in the case of the helicopter service and five years in the case of fixed wing aircraft element of the service, with options to extend both elements out to 13 years.

The contract makes provision for the possibility of the Air Corps assuming responsibility for the fixed wing element of the service after five years. The new IRCG aviation service will be introduced by Bristow Ireland Limited gradually on a phased basis and will be fully operational by July 2025.

The Department of Transport noted that "the preferred bidder was selected following a comprehensive procurement project". Having accepted a recommendation from the Minister of Transport Eamon Ryan and Minister of State Jack Chambers, the Department will now work with Bristow Ireland Limited to finalise contracts over the coming weeks.

CHC, one of the largest global operators of rotary wing aircraft which employs 141 in Ireland, was awarded the current contract by the Government in 2012 for 10 years and the company has exercised options to extend it up to July 2025.

(All images courtesy of Bristow Group)