

Lockheed Martin To Offer Korean 'Golden Eagle' for USAF Advanced Future Trainer (T-X)

This jet trainer delivers the fighter-like performance and capabilities needed to eliminate 5th Generation training gaps and inefficiencies.

Defense-Update

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T-50A trainer delivers the fighter-like performance and capabilities needed to eliminate 5th Generation training gaps and inefficiencies. Photo: KAI/ Lockheed Martin

Lockheed Martin announced today that it will offer the T-50A in the U.S. Air Force's Advanced Pilot Training (APT) competition (also known as T-X). The T-50A was developed jointly by Lockheed Martin and Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) to replace the T-38 and train the next generation of pilots to fly 5th Generation aircraft. If the Korean trainer will win the tender the T-50As will be assembled in Greenville, South Carolina, following the selection of Greenville Operations facility by Lockheed Martin as the preferred Final Assembly and Checkout (FACO) site for the T-50A. The US Air Force plans to acquire 350 advanced trainers, to replace the +50 year old T-38 Talon in service.

"The T-50A is production ready now. It is the only offering that meets all of the APT requirements and can deliver those capabilities on schedule," said Rob Weiss, executive vice president and general manager, Lockheed Martin Advanced Development Programs (Skunk Works). "We carefully studied a clean-sheet option for the [Advanced Pilot Training] competition and determined that it posed excessive risk to the APT cost and schedule requirements." Last month KAI unveiled the first of two T-50s built in an advanced

configuration designed to compete for the US tender. The two production-standard T-50As will be flown to Greenville by the end of the 2016 to be used for flight evaluation by the Air Force, scheduled to commence in 2017.

The T-50A is the US designation reserved for the Korean T-50 Golden Eagle. The aircraft is equipped for inflight refueling, and the cockpit instrumentation included large-area display, similar to the F-35. Its avionics utilize open systems architecture, enabling the user on organic sustainment and upgrading of the aircraft without independent of the Original manufacturer(OEM).

These capabilities will enable the T-X to deliver the fighter-like performance and capabilities needed to eliminate 5th Generation training gaps and inefficiencies.

As part of the training package that will come with the T-50A Lockheed Martin will provide Ground-Based Training System (GBTS) that Lockheed Martin describes as 'an immersive, synchronized ground-based training platform'. "The agile T-50A GBTS applies lessons-learned from decades of training with leading-edge technologies to deliver a cost-effective advanced pilot training solution." the company said in a statement.

Four companies are competing on this opportunity – In addition to Lockheed Martin with KAI offering the T-50A, Northrop Grumman plans to submit a new aircraft based on a new-built and redesigned T-38; Boeing, teamed with SAAB will also offer a newly designed aircraft and Alenia Aermacchi plans to offer its M-346 as T-100 for the USAF. Alenia and Raytheon are expected to formally announce their teaming for the T-100 by February 22.

The 227-acre Greenville site selected by Lockheed Martin for the APT has 13 hangars, 1,200,000 square feet of covered space optimized for APT and 8,000 feet of runway. Greenville is also home to a highly-skilled, flexible workforce of Lockheed Martin aviation technicians, engineers, program managers and other experienced personnel.