

France launches the development of new capabilities for the A400M

Paris, France – 16 June 2026 – Airbus Defence and Space has signed a contract with OCCAR (Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation), acting on behalf of the French Directorate General of Armaments (DGA), for the development of new capabilities for the A400M. These upgrades, known as the “Parallel Mission System” (PMS), aim to equip French A400M with multi-mission capabilities in the fields of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

“The A400M is a true Swiss Army knife for the armed forces that use it. It has the capabilities and potential to continue expanding the scope of its missions,” said Jean-Brice Dumont, Executive Vice President Air Power at Airbus Defence and Space. “With this development, the French Air and Space Force is acquiring an aircraft capable of becoming a tactical command and control (C2) tool in the air.”

The PMS developments focus on the integration of a new mission system on board, as well as tactical situational awareness consoles installed in the cargo hold to monitor various sensors and coordinate missions. They also aim to integrate an optronic sensor onto the aircraft.

This new mission system is designed to integrate additional sensors and communication systems, as well as to manage drones and missiles launched from the aircraft’s cargo hold. Ultimately, the aircraft crew will be able to coordinate missions involving ground troops, helicopters – notably the Tiger and Caracal H225M – and fighter jets in a collaborative combat mode.

Following a development phase, the new equipment will be installed on board the first French A400M in 2027 and tested in flight in 2028. A number of aircraft in the Air and Space Force fleet will then be retrofitted to accommodate a PMS kit.

Furthermore, Airbus Defence and Space is already exploring the development of other capabilities for the A400M, such as long-range jamming, a mother-ship function for the in-flight release of drones and missiles, an increase in payload capacity to 40 tonnes, and finally firefighting capabilities. All these developments will further expand the capabilities and missions of the A400M, which are essential to meeting the current and future global needs of armed forces.

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