

EUROCOPTER: HIGH-PERFO

By making Sogitec prime contractor for the maintenance documentation of some of its types of helicopters, Eurocopter chooses durable quality services.



D. B. Stevenson - Eurocopter

AS355N Écureuil.

Rotary winged aircraft are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Due to the ever increasing complexity of their equipment and the stringency of operating conditions and maintenance, they must be provided with the most thorough technical documentation to accompany them throughout their life. The documentation has to evolve along with the helicopters themselves, as and when they undergo repairs and refurbishment.

Until now, Eurocopter – the world's No. 1 helicopter manufacturer (1998 sales: 11.16 billion FF, out of which 64% export) – produced the technical documentation for all its products by itself (see inset).

Concerned about improving the production and management of its technical documentation, Eurocopter is asking Sogitec to produce the servicing and maintenance documentation for the Écureuil/Fennec and Dauphin/Panther families.

CUSTOMISATION, THE DECISIVE FACTOR

Sogitec has proposed establishing a long term collaboration with Eurocopter for the several-year maintenance (package) of the legacy documentation and documentary database and the production of the documentation for new customizations. Depending on the helicopter's intended role, Eurocopter adds and adapts the sub-assemblies necessary for the navigation systems, the telecommunications, and the winching equipment, and with major customization of military versions, for weapon systems, an area offering the company extensive scope for development.

A Sogitec team is going to be set up near the Eurocopter premises in Marignane to provide the services for the Écureuil and Dauphin helicopter families. The project team needs to be close to the customer for three major reasons.



Labo Photo Rennais

The Tiger as viewed by Apogée 3.

PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

First, to facilitate the task of gathering the information from Eurocopter (texts/illustrations/lists of spare parts).

Second, to rapidly validate the work done on the written documentation, and to ensure total quality control.

Third, the project being carried out in partnership with Sonovision-Itep which already produces the Dauphin documentation and has in-depth knowledge of it, Sogitec is the prime contractor, providing its technology, methodology, and mastery of documentary database management tools.

FULL MIGRATION TOWARDS SDI OPEN



One of the priorities is to migrate the management of the 400,000 or so pages of the documentary database currently managed by a

data processing system dating from the beginning of the 80's, towards an application built around SDI Open* (see *Interactions* No.15), after replacing hardware and software, and by managing the tree-structured SGML (Standard Generalized Mark-up Language) documentary database. It will still be possible to bring the actual documentary database to SGML later and write the future documents under the same format.

This migration will give the documentary database a structure that will facilitate use and consultation. Pages will be associated with each node of the manual tree-structure (the DTDs – Document Type Definition), and these pages will themselves be accompanied by an application layer allowing them to be consulted.

Thus, a documentary unit, associating the description of the assembly of a mechanical element with its illustration, can be selected for consultation and the



P. Penna – Eurocopter

AS365N3 Dauphin.

pages containing the information can be printed in as many copies as required.

The user will be able to appreciate the overall improvement in the documentation in terms of support medium quality and ease of consultation.

Going beyond the printed documents, the final user may also be provided with the documentation on CD-ROM.

Each customer will be able to receive the servicing and maintenance documentation along with his helicopter. The organizational set-up means that any necessary updates and corrections will continue to be issued very quickly, including on CD-ROMs.

Helicopter owners will receive an annual update and the service bulletins.

A FULL RANGE FOR CIVIL AND MILITARY REQUIREMENTS

From ferrying between dry land and oil platforms to American Coast Guard surveillance missions, Eurocopter's helicopters fly at all latitudes to accomplish civil and military tasks. The great extent of its offer has led the European manufacturer to group its entire production in product ranges:

- the old range comprises Alouette 2 and 3, Lama, Super Frelon, Puma, Gazelle and Lynx;
- the range of light helicopters currently in production comprises the Écureuil/Fennec and Dauphin/Panther families and the EC120B Colibri, EC135 and BK 117 helicopters;
- the range of heavy helicopters: Super Puma/Cougar;
- the range of military helicopters under development: the Tiger HAP (tactical support), the Tiger HAC (anti-tank) and the NH90, a future tactical transport and anti-submarine warfare helicopter.

* SDI Open is a stand-alone documentary database authoring and publication system which is completely independent of operating and consultation tools. The user has complete freedom to enrich or modify this base and output a publication on various types of media: paper, CD-ROM, electronic file.