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Saab Announces Managing Director for the Aerostructures Plant for Gripen in São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo

Defence and security company Saab announces Marcelo Lima as Managing Director for Saab Aeronáutica Montagens (SAM), the plant supplying aerostructures for the Gripen fighters acquired by the Brazilian Air Force (FAB). The plant will be located in São Bernardo do Campo, a city in the São Paulo metropolitan area. The selection of the property is in the final phase and the recruitment of professionals has already started.

Marcelo Lima is an engineer with over 23 years of experience in implanting and managing manufacturing operations in the automotive, energy and major appliance industries.

“Mr. Lima is a highly-experienced professional with deep expertise in projects similar to our new plant. He will add local and international knowledge to this project, which is key in the Gripen programme”, says Mikael Franzén, Head of business unit Gripen Brazil, within business area Aeronautics.

“The Gripen programme is a historical watershed for the defence sector in Brazil. I am honoured to be part on such an important project for the Brazilian industry”, says Marcelo Lima.

The plant, Saab Aeronáutica Montagens (SAM), will be responsible for producing aerostructures, such as tail cone, airbrake, wingbox, front fuselage (for both the one- and the two-seat versions) and rear fuselage for the Gripen fighters to the Brazilian Air Force. Operations will start after selecting the property and preparing the site infrastructure.

“The investment in the new plant is another step in the long-term partnership between Saab and Brazil. The first two years of the programme focused on the development of the aircraft and on the start of the technology transfer programme. According to schedule, we are now establishing production in Brazil to support the continuity of the Gripen programme in the country, create new jobs and support the development of the local defence industry”, adds Franzén.

SAM will launch its operations employing 55 direct professionals, a number that is expected to grow over the coming years.

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“The employee recruiting process for SAM has already started. After the selection process, the professionals will be trained at Saab’s facilities in Linköping, Sweden, for up to 24 months. When returning to Brazil, they will be ready to start working at the Brazilian plant. Both the plant and the training programme are part of the broader technology transfer programme from Saab to Brazil launched in 2015”, says Marcelo Lima.

Saab chose São Bernardo do Campo because of its long tradition in hosting Swedish companies. The city is known for the quality of its manufacturing labour force and is close to universities, manufacturers and research centres. The region is also strategic in terms of logistics, given the city's access to ports, airports, highways, the aeronautical hub of São José dos Campos and the Gripen Design and Development Network (GDDN) in Gavião Peixoto, São Paulo, where the Gripen fighters to Brazil will be assembled.

Facts about the Gripen programme in Brazil

On 27 October 2014 Saab announced the conclusion of a contract with the Brazilian Federal Government for the development and production of 36 Gripen aircrafts. The contract came into effect on September 2015 when all required conditions were fulfilled. Deliveries to the Brazilian Air Force will be undertaken from 2019 to 2024.

After two years since the start of the programme, Saab has already delivered substantial technology transfer to Brazilian partners such as Embraer, Akaer, AEL Sistemas, Atech and Atmos.

The Gripen Design and Development Network (GDDN) was inaugurated in November 2016, in Gavião Peixoto, in the State of São Paulo. The GDDN is the hub for the Gripen technological development in Brazil for Saab and Embraer, jointly with other partner Brazilian companies and institutions.

The technology transfer programme to Brazil includes four areas that will provide the Brazilian airspace industry with the necessary technology and knowledge to support the development of Gripen in Brazil:

- Theoretical training
- Research and technology programmes
- On-the-job training in Sweden
- Development and production

Today, about 60 Brazilian engineers from partner companies are being trained at Saab’s facilities in Sweden, and more than 100 professionals have already returned to Brazil. Most of them are working on the aircraft’s development at the Gripen Design and Development Network (GDDN) in Gavião Peixoto, in the State of São Paulo.

By 2024, more than 350 Brazilian professionals, including engineers, industrial workers, technicians and pilots of the partners of Saab and the Brazilian Air Force, will participate in

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courses and on-the-job training programmes in Sweden. Skills and knowledge will be acquired by the Brazilian industry, enabling comprehensive development and production of Gripen, including the aircraft's final assembly in Brazil. The technology transfer programme is composed of more than 50 key projects, each lasting up to 24 months.

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