

Indra to Supply Rigel ESM for Saudi MMSC

By Richard Scott

Indra (Madrid, Spain) has been contracted by Lockheed Martin to supply electronic support measures (ESM) equipment for four Multi-Mission Surface Combatants (MMSCs) being built for the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) under Project Tuwaiq.

Being procured by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under a Foreign Military Sales case signed in May 2017, the MMSC – a multi-mission derivative of the Freedom variant Littoral Combat Ship already in US Navy service – is intended to form the backbone of a recapitalized RSNF eastern fleet. The design is the first US-built surface combatant to be exported to another nation in more than 40 years.

Lockheed Martin is prime contractor for the Tuwaiq program, with Gibbs & Cox (part of Leidos) responsible for MMSC functional design activities. All four MMSC vessels are being built at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin.

According to Indra, each MMSC ship will be equipped with the company's Rigel ESM system. Covering the 2-18 GHz frequency range as standard (with options to extend to 0.5-40 GHz), Rigel uses wideband digital receiver technology to provide high sensitivity detection, analysis, classification and identification of radar signals, as well as high accuracy direction finding.

Indra will deliver the project with the support of SAMI-AEC (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia), a subsidiary of SAMI. The two companies have previously worked together on the RSNF's Avante 2200 corvette program (Project Al Sarawat).

Whereas the Avante 2200 corvettes also feature the Rigel EA electronic attack system, the MMSC EW suite is limited to passive ESM only. However, the MMSC ships will also be delivered with Lockheed Martin's ALEX 130mm decoy launching system.