AUSTRALIA PICKS SUPACAT VEHICLE FOR SPECIAL FORCES

April 17, 2012

LONDON — Australian special forces are to be equipped with Supacat’s Extenda high mobility vehicle, the British-based company announced.

Supacat said it had been selected by the Defence Materiel Organisation in Canberra as the preferred bidder for the special operations vehicle element of Australia’s wider JP2097 Ph1B Redfin vehicle program.

The deal covers the project definition and evaluation phase of the program. Supacat’s Australian subsidiary has already been awarded an initial contract for this phase of the work. Acquisition of a fleet of vehicles is expected under a separate contract.

Last month, Supacat acquired design services provider Unique Solution Partners of Melbourne to enhance the company’s ability to support its design and engineering activities locally.

Sources estimate the likely eventual size of the deal at between 50 and 100 vehicles. Force Protection, Thales and General Dynamics are thought to be among the losing bidders.

Australian special forces already operate Supacat’s HMT 400 vehicle under an earlier contract. Named the Nary in Australian service, the vehicle is a variant of the six-wheel-drive Jackal widely used by the British military in Afghanistan.

The Extenda is similar to the Jackal but uniquely has the ability to be converted to either four-wheel- or six-wheel-drive configuration by inserting or removing a third axle unit.

In a statement, Nick Ames, the managing director of Supacat in the U.K., said the Redfin award was pivotal to Supacat’s expansion, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

“With our development of an in-country design and engineering capability, it positions Supacat to access future opportunities in the expanding Australian defense market, as well as diversified industry sectors in the Asia-Pacific region,” Ames said.

Defense News