The R4A Airborne AIS applications:

- Monitoring of Surface Traffic; to be able to keep track of AIS equipped vessels and their destinations.
- Maritime Surveillance/Coast Guard Patrol; together with a radar system, coast guards can find vessels without AIS or faulty AIS parameters, thus increasing security.
- Search and Rescue (SAR); helps locate vessels in distress and communicate help is on the way etc.
- Homing for Maritime Helicopter Operations; find the ship that the helicopter is supposed to land on.
- Fleet Management; to keep track of a fleet of helicopters serving oil-rigs, for example.
- Mission Control and Coordination; in SAR and military operations involving several helicopters and vessels.

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SMD Telecommunications CC

Head Office:
53 Paardeneiland Road
Parden Eiland
Cape Town 7405
Tel: +27-21-5110556
Fax:+27-21-5112886

336 Umbilo Road
Durban 4001
Tel: +27-31-2051122
Fax: +27-31-2050999

7 Moonfish
Meerensee
Richards Bay 3901
Tel: +27-35-7534911
Fax: +27-35-7534271

sales@smd-marine.co.za
www.smd-marine.co.za

Saab TransponderTech Supplies Automatic Identification Systems for Helicopter Fleet in Mexico.

Saab TransponderTech has announced that it completed the installation of its airborne automatic identification systems (AIS) on 17 Bell 412 helicopters operated by Aeroservicios Especializados S.A. de C.V. (ASESA) in Mexico.

The Saab R4A AIS provides automatic tracking of the helicopters using a unique self-organizing time division multiple access (SOTDMA) protocol that derives precise timing data from GPS satellite signals to synchronize multiple data transmissions on a single narrowband channel. Saab has been a pioneer in the development and deployment of AIS technology in the maritime and aviation industries. The airborne AIS transponders are being used to broadcast the helicopters' position, heading, speed and performance data to ground monitoring and control stations.

ASESA is operating the fleet of Bell 412 helicopters under a five-year contract from Mexico's national oil company, PEMEX, to transport personnel and supplies to offshore oil platforms. The helicopters operate from a base at Ciudad del Carmen and service the PEMEX offshore platforms in the Bay of Campeche region.

"PEMEX has established a requirement that all contractor helicopters must be equipped with AIS transponders, and has constructed a number of AIS base stations in the region for monitoring the helicopters' positions, movements and status in real time," said Gunnar Mangs, business director for mobile systems at Saab TransponderTech. "The AIS installations provide an important margin of safety for the helicopters, which are flying long distances over open water," he added.

"As the largest offshore helicopter operator in Mexico, we are proud to be at the forefront of this exciting new technology, which enables us to control and monitor our large fleet of helicopters more efficiently," said Mr. Humberto Lobo De La Garza, ASESA chief executive officer.

The Saab R4A is a second-generation product that meets RTCA and ITU specifications for operation on a wide range of fixed-wing and helicopter platforms. It can be used for a variety of applications such as coastal surveillance of shipping, vessel traffic control, environmental monitoring and search and rescue operations.

About Saab TransponderTech

Saab TransponderTech AB (www.transpondertech.se), a company within the Saab group, is recognized as one of the leading suppliers of AIS equipment for the maritime industry, and AIS base stations and infrastructure solutions for land-based applications. Saab is one of the world's leading high-technology companies with its main operations focusing on defense, aviation and space.

Saab TransponderTech products are marketed in Southern Africa by SMD Telecommunications CC.