



DIRECT MAINTENANCE COST

Eurocopter: Still the One to Beat

The Fall 2009 figures published by Conklin & de Decker (see inset) couldn't be clearer: The maintenance costs associated with Eurocopter helicopters are more competitive than those of their direct competitors—by as much as 34% in some cases. Read on to see the figures.

Direct Maintenance Cost (DMC) is a fairly good yardstick for determining the average costs of helicopter maintenance. It offers a solid basis for comparison, although of course it may be slightly skewed by a helicopter's operating environment (e.g. intensive use or extreme weather conditions) or by the number of equipment options installed on the aircraft. DMC represents the total costs for overhauls, repairs and part replacements over the entire life cycle of a helicopter, expressed in cost per flight hour.

Twice a year, the independent aviation information company Conklin & de Decker conducts a comparative study of the DMCs for different helicopters in the industry. In its most recent findings published in November 2009, 11 of the 12 Eurocopter helicopters included in the study had DMCs well below those of their direct competitors.

In a Class of Their Own

To cite just a few examples, helicopters in the Ecureuil family (EC130, AS350 B2, AS350 B3, AS355 NP) offer DMCs that are 25 to 34% (Ecureuil AS350 B3) below those of direct competitors. Eurocopter's medium-lift helicopters (the EC135 and EC145) have DMCs that are respectively 31.2% and 17.5% lower, while the members of the Dauphin family boast DMCs that are 12.4% less than those

of the equivalent products manufactured by Agusta and Sikorsky. And let's not forget the EC225, already a popular choice in the oil and gas segment, which offers a DMC nearly 8% less than its U.S. competitor.

Operating Cost Manager Stephan Domenge talks about the reasons behind this continuing success: «Through its on-going product improvement process, Eurocopter has made countless efforts to improve the DMCs of its helicopters. The Design Office takes DMC aspects into consideration right from the design phase, and the use of modern materials, new avionics systems and newly developed maintenance policies have also played a big part in reducing DMCs for all the products in the Eurocopter range.»

Conklin & de Decker

Twice a year, the U.S. company Conklin & de Decker publishes an economic report covering all the different financial aspects of aviation products (helicopters and airplanes). The company works independently of manufacturers and gathers its data directly from operators, its goal being to provide the aviation industry with impartial data concerning products and services. The report is an excellent decision-making tool for customers looking to purchase or operate an aircraft.



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