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GNG to work closely with Naval Dockyard

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GERMAN Naval Group (GNG) will work closely with its local partner, Naval Dockyard Sdn Bhd, to build six offshore patrol vessels for the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN), senior project leader Dimitri Edward Dasberg said.

Under the tender, the group will build six offshore patrol vessels in six years for the RMN.

GNG is a German consortium comprising Thyssen Rheinstahltechnik, Howaldtswerke Deutsche Werft AG, Blohm + Voss AG and Ferrostaal AG.

The well-established group of naval shipbuilders has 100 years of experience in shipbuilding. It has collaborative efforts with Turkey, Argentina, Greece and Australia.

Naval Dockyard in Lumut, Perak - the biggest shipbuilding and shipyard privatization contract in Malaysian history - is owned and operated by Business Focus Sdn Bhd.

GNG managed to secure the tender amid stiff competition from four other contenders, to become the foreign shipyard partner for Naval Dockyard Sdn Bhd in a patrol vessel project for the RMN.

It was awarded the tender last month.

Newspaper reports quoted Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar as saying that the German consortium was chosen because its proposal was seen as the "best in the interest of the country".

The others vying for the 15-year new generation offshore patrol vessel project - the core of the RMN's fleet modernisation programme - were Transfield Defence Systems from Australia, Danish Naval Group (Denmark), Vosper Thornycraft (UK) and Luerksen (Germany).

GNG will build six vessels of the Meko 100 class based on German technology.

The Meko design concept has served as the basis for 43 Corvette and frigate orders, including German navy class 123 and 124 frigates.

Under this concept, the advanced modular warship designs entail the installation of major hull machinery, weapon and electronic systems in the form of standardised modules and standardised interfaces.

Dasberg told Business Times that the group was very grateful to the Malaysian Government for its selection as Naval Dockyard's foreign partner, and that it would endeavour to work hard for the development of the local maritime industry, in accordance with government objectives.

"The GNG is committed to the Government of Malaysia. Together with Naval Dockyard, we will fulfil our obligation in the construction of the patrol vessels on the principles of time, cost, performance and quality," Dasberg said.

He declined to talk about costs, saying it was too early yet. He added that GNG is not playing a leading role, as Naval Dockyard is the main contractor in the project.

"GNG will ensure other commitments related to local content and activities, transfer of technology and offsets will be successfully undertaken."

Dasberg said Malaysian participation in the project will see 50 per cent of the materials and services being sourced locally.

The manufacturing centre will be at the Lumut dockyard, which incidentally was also constructed by two GNG members.

Dasberg also said the new Meko "A" 100 class vessel will be displayed at this year's Langkawi International Maritime Aerospace exhibition.

"This is an advanced ship with special features and one which employs both stealth and hotspot technology to reduce the chances of being detected by radar and road sensors respectively," he said.

GNG will share the Lima booth with Naval Dockyard.

The contract for the order proper is expected to be signed at Lima next month, and will be witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

(END)