



Servicing an Arriel 1D engine on an Ecouvill helicopter.

**MRO.** Turbomeca, the world's leading maker of helicopter turbine engines, is also No. 1 in the growth market of engine MRO (maintenance, repair & overhaul). Its leadership is driven by technical expertise and close customer support.

## TURBOMECA NETWORK: COMPETITIVE EDGE

**N**ew helicopter sales have grown 13 percent annually since 2006. The helicopter MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) market is enjoying sustained growth. "The growth rate will slow down in 2009 because of the global economic crisis, but there is still a basic upward trend, at least for civil helicopters. However, the military helicopter market seems stable," notes Serge Maillé, head of operator support and sales at Turbomeca (Safran group).

There is also major growth headroom in countries such as Russia, China and India, where helicopters are still relatively scarce. Of course, an uptick in sales is inevitably followed by the development of MRO business.

The helicopter market is extremely diverse, as Serge Maillé explains: "The civil sector is characterized by a wide variety of customers and use rates, from offshore helicopter fleets logging over 1,000 flight-hours per year, often

with a range that spans nearly all rotorcraft power requirements. The company naturally developed support services dedicated to each segment and customer.

"We created 40 service centers dedicated to on-site repairs, meaning those where the engine does not need to be removed," notes Serge Maillé. "We also have 24 industrial repair centers, offering more in-depth servicing for both civil and military customers. Eleven of these centers are Turbomeca-branded, and they are responsible for 85 percent of all world-

wide repair services for our turbines."

Seeking to capitalize on this global presence, a clear competitive edge in the market, Turbomeca also deploys some 40 Field Representatives. Working closely with customers and ready to support their operations, these Field Reps are capable of quickly finding solutions to technical problems. "Our guys are real specialists," enthuses Maillé. "In fact, they offer recommendations that go far beyond the engine itself, since their end-goal is to keep their machines in the air as much as possible."



Engine evaluation managers study turbine parts under repair.

under very difficult conditions, to VIP-corporate clients who have a single machine and rarely fly more than 100 or 200 hours a year. The military market, which generates 40 percent of our service business, is more homogenous. Most of the time we're dealing with highly structured organizations, and a far more organized approach to maintenance."

The helicopter market demands both local presence and quick responsiveness. The most highly organized operators, with fleets exceeding 30 machines, account for 15 to 20% of all customers, but 70% of MRO business. "Each of our strategic customers expects us to be a real partner, fully aware of their requirements and totally involved in their operations," emphasizes Serge Maillé.

### Capitalizing on global presence

Turbomeca is almost exclusively dedicated to helicopter turbine engines,

## markets

Field Reps work in tandem with Customer Support Managers, who are in charge of the contractual and sales aspects of the relationship. "Setting up this dual network required heavy investments," admits Maillé, "but it also enabled us to establish real personalized relations of mutual trust with our customers."

### Taking the market's pulse

Turbomeca also revised its approach to services in 2008. Before changing anything, however, Turbomeca surveyed its customers to find out what type of "value-added" they expected from their engine supplier. Serge Maillé summarizes the conclusions: "Major operators want us to work more closely with them to optimize their maintenance management, by sharing feedback and suggesting improvements or helping them deploy new solutions. To meet their demand, we revised our training programs to make them more modular, and thus more easily adaptable to each customer's specific needs. That was also the thinking behind our 'power by the hour' support solutions, again with the aim of completely personalizing each contract. A number of customers also shared their concerns about electronic equipment, so we'll be working with them in the coming months and years to simplify these components and subassemblies."

### Shaping the future

Another major concern for customers is durability. Turbomeca is of course working in this direction: for example, the time between overhauls for the Arrius 2B2, powerplant of the Eurocopter EC135 light twin, has been increased from 3,500 to 4,000 hours.

This improvement reflects the reliability and proven technology of the Arrius 2B2, of course, but it was also made possible by gathering feedback in the field, and by customers following the operating recommendations issued by Turbomeca.

Insurance companies also have certain demands. In 2005, considering the growing risk of insuring a



Maintenance operation on Arrius 2K1 engine in an Agusta A109 Power.

helicopter-based business, they convened all stakeholders in the sector to emphasize the necessity of reducing the number of accidents, especially given the growth in the overall fleet. Insurers recommended focusing on human factors, which are the cause of virtually all accidents.

Three years ago Turbomeca launched a project called "BASIS", designed to reduce human error and

prevent certain accidents. The aim of this project is to consolidate and centralize all information concerning a fleet of engines, and to support more efficient maintenance scheduling. "By automating data management and limiting human involvement as much as possible," says Serge Maillé, "we are paving the way for innovative services and extra value-added for our customers." ■