

# The sky's the limit

Anglo-Italian helicopter company AgustaWestland, part of the Finmeccanica Group, is on course to become the world leader in manufacturing the most technologically advanced helicopters, with the help of a multi-million pound investment by the Technology Strategy Board.

AgustaWestland in Yeovil designs and develops state of the art helicopters for both the commercial and military markets.

Following more than £4m of investment by the Technology Strategy Board, the company is working alongside three British universities to manufacture high technology rotor blades that could achieve a 90% reduction in vibration and 10% improvement in helicopter top speed.

The Rotor Embedded Actuator Control Technology (REACT) project was launched in mid 2008 with a total of £8.8m investment. Active rotor technology is being pursued by helicopter manufacturers around the world including France, Germany and the US.



# Technology Strategy Board

Driving Innovation

If this UK company can develop it first on a commercial scale, it will significantly improve its market share as well as the UK's share of the product. It also has the potential to create a number of high value manufacturing jobs.

The new rotor has tabs that are modulated at several times as fast as the rotor itself is turning, which helps to reduce vibration and improve performance. The technology will also significantly reduce noise and air pollution. This technology could be used across all types of helicopter platforms and within other industries such as energy generation.

Twenty people are currently working full time on the project in Somerset alongside partners at the universities of Bristol, Leicester and Liverpool.

AgustaWestland provides a wide range of integrated platform systems delivering high performance, cost-effective helicopters and leading edge solutions. The products range from the innovative AW119 2.8-ton helicopter to the BA609 tilt rotor, to the AW 101 16-ton three engine helicopter. AgustaWestland provides a global offering with partnerships that span the world and invests heavily in Research and Development (R&D).



‘We are tremendously excited by this project which could leapfrog the UK into a market in which it had previously lagged behind. This would not have been possible without funding from the Technology Strategy Board.’

Malcolm Foster, Programme Manager, Research and Technology, Westland Helicopters Ltd.

Collaborative research and development projects are one of the tools that the Technology Strategy Board uses to drive innovation in the UK. The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the Government. Its role is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life. It is sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

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#### Project number

Q2035J

#### Project duration

Started February 2008 –  
due to end May 2011

#### Technology Strategy Board funding

£4.48m

#### Total project cost

£8.85m

#### Project partners

Westland Helicopters Ltd  
(Agusta Westland)  
University of Bristol  
University of Leicester  
University of Liverpool