The new fields of expertise in Fougères

The FELIN<sup>*</sup> program is wrapping up and Sagem Fougères, a Safran site specializing in electronics, is embarking on a new redeployment drive. Patrice Pérodeau, Fougères' plant manager told us how this production plant will reorganize.

**How are you preparing to shut down the FELIN program so soon?**

The program was scheduled to phase out in 2015 and that was what we had been preparing to do. The December 2013 French military planning law, however, terminated that program one and a half years before schedule, canceling production orders for 5,000 FELIN systems. This means production will effectively dry up this fall and we will be delivering the very last orders by the end of the year. We are getting ready to redeploy the site once again by setting up new operations to offset that drop in our workload, which accounts for 25% of our business.

**What projects is the plant going to start working on?**

We are going to be producing more printed circuit board models in Fougères, to build up and expand that business at the plant. We are meeting the Industrial Department on a regular basis to discuss progress on programs that could require our expertise in this area.

We are also looking at opportunities to tap into our thriving range of logistics services by leveraging our supply chain expertise. While we were working on the FELIN contract, we showed that we had the skills to handle large volumes, manage them meticulously and react fast. Several Group companies have shown interest in our digital and physical flow management expertise. The plan to transfer Snecma (Safran) military engine part **kitting**<sup>**</sup> to Fougères has been green-lighted. This new operation will involve receiving parts, running them through acceptance checks and storing them, and then preparing component kits to order and delivering them to customers that integrate them. These parts are used to build, service and repair the M88 (Rafale), M53 (Mirage) and TP400 (A400M) engines.

We have also been managing a stock of spare parts, modules and complete turbines for Turbomeca (Safran) since 2009.

**This isn't the first time Fougères is redeploying. What's the secret to its ability to reshuffle its human resources and industrial capacity for new markets?**

The successive redeployments mainly reflect industrial agendas. During the redeployment in 2008, the teams did not have all the skills they needed. But we had the industrial capability on-site and the teams were totally involved in the drive to continuously improve production tools, so Safran decided to take the leap, banking on us to pull together in the same direction and adapt successfully to new business lines, and that was exactly what we did. Safran invested about €9 million over a couple of years and the project was a success.

* Short for Fantassin à Equipements et Liaisons Intégrés, a soldier integrated equipment suite that enhances infantryman protection and action capabilities.

** A sourcing method that involves grouping components that will be assembled.

**From teletypewriters to state-of-the-arts electronics**

Sagem’s plant in Fougères (Ille-et-Vilaine, Brittany) was built in 1970 to manufacture teletypewriters. It later branched into automotive electronics and then facsimile machines. It is one of the very few French sites that manufactured mobile phones (under the Sagem brand), and production there reached 100,000 units a day in the 2000s. When Safran withdrew from the mobile phone business in 2008, this site specialized in electronic equipment logistics and production for aeronautics and defense (airplane and helicopter engines, sights, missile and drone guidance and control systems, etc.).