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Boeing is teaming up with more than 20 international systems suppliers to develop technologies and design concepts for the Boeing 7E7.

As the technology development work concludes later this year, the same companies will compete to become ongoing suppliers to the program.

"Just as we brought the world's best materials and aircraft structures experts together to help evolve materials and aircraft structures technologies, we have assembled a team of systems experts to help us understand the possibilities and best choices for systems on the 7E7," said Walt Gillette, vice president of Engineering, Manufacturing and Partner Alignment for the 7E7 program.

Members of the Systems Technology Team include: ECE Zodiac, Messier-Bugatti and Thales from France; Diehl and Liebherr-Aerospace Lindenberg from Germany; Teijin Seiki from Japan; FR-HiTemp and Smiths Aerospace from the United Kingdom; and BAE SYSTEMS (also United Kingdom), Connexion by Boeing, Crane Aerospace, Fairchild Controls, Goodrich Corporation, General Dynamics, Hamilton Sundstrand, Honeywell, Matsushita Avionics Systems, Moog, Parker Hannifin Corporation, Rockwell Collins, and Triumph Group from the United States.

"This is the right team to help Boeing select the best systems technologies for the 7E7," Gillette said. "These companies bring great experience, skill and enthusiasm to this effort."

Gillette has challenged the systems team, led by Mike Sinnett, director of Systems Integration for the 7E7 program, to create systems approaches that are "open and elegant."

An open-systems approach is one that will easily allow systems updates over the life of the program.

"We expect to deliver 7E7s well into the 2030s and 2040s," Gillette said. "The pace of technology improvements is increasing year after year. Anticipating the need to incorporate improvements, even if we don't know specifically what they will be, means we design the airplane to be flexible and adaptable. This will make it a more valuable asset."

An elegant-systems approach will provide simplification and increased functionality.

"Our driving focus on the program is efficiency," said Gillette. "That means the airline's systems have to perform new tasks but not add complexity, cost or weight."

Systems enhancements may include an airplane health management system and advanced environmental controls. The 7E7 also will include the Connexion by Boeing system to provide communications.

Gillette said the team is eagerly taking on these challenges and finding innovative solutions.

"Team members have engineers on site with us as well as teams at home working on systems technologies that will help us meet our objectives," Gillette said. "Many have been working with us for a number of months, but this is the first time we've announced their participation."

The 7E7 is being developed as a 200- to 250-seat airplane that will fly between 7,000 and 8,000 nautical miles at speeds similar to today's fastest twin-aisle commercial airplanes -- the 777 and 747. It will be the most advanced and efficient commercial airplane in its class and will set new standards for environmental responsibility and passenger comfort.

The market potential for a new airplane of this size is forecasted at up to 3,000 units over the next 20 years. The company expects to formally offer the new airplane to customers in early 2004.

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