Boeing establishes links with Italian aerospace research center

Boeing (NYSE: BA) and Centro Italiano Ricerche Aerospaziali (CIRA), the Italian aerospace research center, today signed a memorandum of understanding to investigate and develop technology projects of mutual interest.

As a first step, during the next four months, representatives from Boeing, an established leader in aerospace technology development, and CIRA, one of the leading aviation and space technology research organizations in Europe and a key member of the Campania Aerospace Research Network in Italy, will discuss technology projects for possible collaboration.

"Boeing and CIRA both desire the continued development of the global and Italian aerospace industry and wish to investigate together how we might be able to collaborate in the development of technologies that are beneficial to both parties," said Rinaldo Petrignani, president of Boeing Italy.

"Italian participation in major aerospace programs will inevitably grow in depth and importance as the country's scientific and engineering centers of excellence increase their interaction with companies such as Boeing," Petrignani said. "This is a win-win opportunity for Italy and Boeing."

The initial focus will be on exploratory studies for technology projects associated with a number of Boeing initiatives including the Boeing 7E7 Dreamliner, a super-efficient airplane that is under development, as well as technology projects involving the use of CIRA test facilities, including an icing wind tunnel and a plasma wind tunnel.

In addition, Boeing and CIRA will work together to define possible technology projects related to the development of Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV) systems and the interoperability of UAVs within existing aviation infrastructure. Also, there will be a focus on technology projects that support Boeing's requirements for industrial participation in Italy stemming from the Italian 767 Tanker Transport program.

"As rich in intellectual capital as Boeing is, we are not relying exclusively on our own resources to generate new ideas and innovative solutions," said Miller Adams, vice president of Boeing Ventures and the technology planning and acquisition group of Boeing Phantom Works, the advanced research and development unit of the company that spearheaded the memorandum of understanding.

"We are reaching out globally to find the best talent and technologies that can be applied to aerospace applications," said Adams, who signed the agreement for Boeing. "We are very much looking forward to working with CIRA to not only help us meet the challenges of the future, but also to shape the future."

The Italian Space Agency and National Research Council own the majority of the shares of CIRA, while the regional government (Regione Campania) and major Italian aerospace companies also hold shares.

As Boeing's advanced research-and-development unit, Phantom Works is the catalyst for innovation for the Boeing enterprise. Phantom Works collaborates with Boeing business units, as well as with external customers and suppliers, universities, venture capital funds, and other R&D agencies, to provide a broad base of innovative and affordable technologies not only for developing future Boeing systems and services but also for improving current ones.

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