

Rolls-Royce Reaffirms Bid to Co-Develop India's AMCA Jet Engine



Rolls-Royce, the British aerospace giant, is continuing its pursuit to partner with India on the engine for the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), India's indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter jet. Despite recent reports suggesting that France's Safran may be a frontrunner, Rolls-Royce has reaffirmed its commitment, stating that it remains "in the game" and is actively engaged in discussions with the Indian government.

The British firm, with a long history of powering Indian military aircraft, is vying for a crucial role in one of India's most ambitious defense projects. The AMCA, which is currently in its prototype development phase, requires a powerful and advanced engine capable of sustained supersonic supercruise flight without afterburners for its Mk II variant. While the initial AMCA Mk I will be powered by American-made GE F414 engines, the future of the program hinges on a co-developed engine for subsequent variants.

According to a statement from Alex Zino, Rolls-Royce's Executive Vice President for Business Development, the company's offer to India is a comprehensive one, centered on co-design and co-development. This approach, he noted, aligns with India's "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India) initiative by focusing on the transfer of capability, knowledge, and experience. Rolls-Royce's proposal includes giving India full Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for the engine, a critical point of negotiation for New Delhi as it seeks to achieve genuine self-reliance in aerospace technology.

Rolls-Royce's bid is backed by the UK government under its Defence Partnership-India (DP-I) initiative, showcasing a unified industry and government approach. The company is leveraging its experience from the UK-led Tempest program, a sixth-generation combat aircraft project, to bring new engine architectures and cutting-edge technologies to the table. While a recent report from the Indian Defence Research Wing cited Safran's shorter development timeline as a key advantage, Rolls-Royce's continued engagement underscores the competitive nature of this high-stakes project and the UK's desire to deepen defense ties with India. The final decision is expected to be a strategic one, balancing technical capabilities, technology transfer, and geopolitical alignment.