Aiming for the sky
Country’s aerospace industry set to receive a shot in the arm thanks to collaborations

THE SIGNING of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Strand Aerospace Malaysia and Dassault Aviation, which took place at Lima 2013 recently underscores the commitment of Rafale International to Malaysia.

Dassault Aviation, together with Snecma (Safran Group) and Thales form the joint-venture group that developed the Rafale.

The agreement with Strand follows closely on the heels of another agreement that was inked between Snecma and Mara to build a centre of excellence at Mara institutions of higher learning, that was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on the first day of Lima.

The collaboration aims to contribute to the development of Malaysia’s capabilities in the global aerospace industry’s supply chain, through the development of human capital, technological skills and entrepreneurship. It also aims at building a strong aerospace ecosystem.

“Human capital and technological development is a primary concern of Rafale International. It is critical to the success of the transfer of acquired technology and co-development of future technologies. Rafale International is focused on developing long term strategic partnerships that are sustainable.

“Projects that contribute towards the development of human capital in the country are of particular interest to Rafale International. We believe in planning, commitment and investment as the key driver of our relationship with Malaysia,” said Dassault Aviation and Rafale International CEO Eric Trappier.

The group that developed the multi-role Rafale aircraft has a dedicated cooperation team that is continuously hard at work to identify new partners and work with local organisations. The projects that are ongoing represent Rafale’s long-term commitment to Malaysia. Rafale International is not waiting for the awarding of Malaysia’s fighter contract before starting concrete collaborations.

Rafale International now has more than 10 ongoing active collaborations in Malaysia. Besides Strand and Mara institutions, Rafale International is working closely with CTRM Group and its subsidiaries, Zetro Aerospace, Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Teknologi Mara as well as with a host of agencies such as Malaysian Investment Development Authority, Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology, Matrade and SME Corp.

There are new agreements in the pipeline and the group expects to ratify them in the coming weeks. The partner organisations and projects are also anticipated to contribute towards the National Key Economic Areas of the Economic Transformation Programme.

To further expedite the identification of local partners that will form the Rafale Network of Excellence, the group co-organised a seminar with SME Corp in January 2013 which was attended by more than 120 Malaysian participants.

The human capital development theme was also extended to the future generation of leaders and workforce of the aerospace industry via the UAV Siswa Challenge.

The challenge, for system integration and development of smart autonomous behaviors applied to unmanned aerial vehicles, was organised by Dassault Aviation and CTRM in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education and with the support of Might.

This challenge opens the door for students of institutions of higher education to learn from industry and commercial companies. This nurturing of local talent through an opportunity to turn their ideas into reality, has received an overwhelming response with 162 students forming 42 teams, from 13 universities registering to vie for a place in the finals.

For more information on the Rafale, please visit www.rafalemalaysia.com
State-of-the-art aircraft: Trappier in front of the Rafale fighter jets.