

Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability (NGRC)

Letter of Intent ¹ signed	Memorandum of Understanding ² signed	Delivery
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Participants



The NGRC aims to replace medium multi-role helicopters currently in service, like the AW-101.

What is the NGRC?

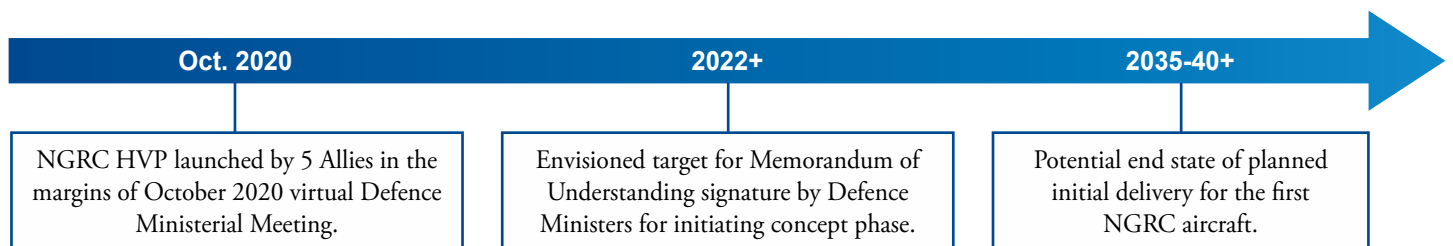
The Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability initiative creates a multinational framework under which its participants can combine efforts to work on design, development and delivery of a medium multi-role helicopter.

A significant amount of the medium multi-role assets currently in service by Allies will reach the end of their life cycle in the 2035-40 period and beyond, with the subsequent need for replacements. These existing inventories are all based on designs dating back to the previous century. The aim of the NGRC initiative is to respond to this upcoming requirement, in a timely and cost-effective manner while concurrently leveraging a broad range of recent advances in technology, production methods, as well as operational concepts.

NATO differentiates between three different classes of vertical lift – or generally known as helicopter – capabilities: light, medium and heavy. The difference lies in the payload that can be carried. The NGRC concept phase will focus initially on medium multi-role capabilities, taking into account the speed of the technological evolution and participants’ future requirements.

Multinational effort

Following preliminary discussions about future requirements, Defence Ministers from France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom decided to launch the multinational NGRC initiative, through signature of a Letter of Intent in the margins of the October 2020 Defence Ministerial Meeting. Following this agreement, the five Allies will start working on defining a robust Statement of Requirements for informing an envisioned concept phase and a multi-phase cooperation plan for defining, developing and fielding of the NGRC capability.



Why is it important?

Vertical multi-role capabilities play a crucial role in the force structure of NATO Allies. Within this context, medium multi-role helicopters offer a large degree of versatility. Their operational use incorporates a wide range of missions including tactical operations such as insertion and extraction of Special Operation Forces (see also: [MSAP initiative](#)), transport of small and medium sized cargo and troops into, out of, and within operational theaters, medical evacuation, search and rescue, and anti-submarine warfare. Their size allows them to take-off and land in topographically restricted areas such as forest glades or mountain ranges, adding to their operational flexibility.

By fielding a shared helicopter design, the NGRC initiative aims to increase interoperability amongst participating Allies.

1 Initial non-binding document outlining participants’ will to explore the area in question further.
 2 Legally binding document specifying details of cooperation.

How does it work?

The NGRC High Visibility Project³ provides a structured approach under which the participants can step-by-step decide to design, develop and eventually acquire the next generation of medium multi-role capabilities.

Did you know?



1. “Vertical Lift Capabilities” do not only include helicopters but also tiltrotor aircraft such as the US operated V-22 Osprey, a hybrid between a fixed wing and a rotary wing aircraft.
2. There are two different types of aircraft: fixed wing and rotary wing. The NGRC initiative focuses on rotary wing, which means lift is provided by rotating wing-blades or rotor-blades and not by air streaming over a fixed wing.
3. Some of the current medium lift helicopter capabilities in service by Allies are based on airframe developments from the 1950s and 1960s. Constant updates over the last decades, such as the introduction of glass cockpit or new avionics, have ensured the capabilities remain operationally relevant.

3 Multinational initiative tailored to address key capability areas, usually launched on the Defence Ministers’ level.