

Another Made-in-Brazil Submarine is Sea Ready

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The fourth submarine built in Brazil will be set to sea on Wednesday, March 9, in Rio de Janeiro. The Tikuna started being built in 1996 at the Navy Yard in Rio de Janeiro and, according to information by Agência Brasil, used company and third party labour, resulting in the generation of 2,100 jobs.

The event is going to count on the presence of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and of Vice President José Alencar, who is also the Minister of Defense.

According to the Navy, Tikuna is 61 meters long and six meters wide and may operate at depths of over 200 meters. The vessel is an adaptation of the German IKL-209 model, but it "includes various technological innovations developed by Brazilian engineers, especially regarding electrical energy generation, in the shot guidance system and in the sensors."

According to information published by newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo, Tikuna, or S34, is the fifth submarine of the Tupi class. The first was built in Germany by the Howaldtswerke Deutsche (HDW) consortium.

The other three units, Tamoio, Timbira and Tapajós, all bearing Indian names, were produced at the Navy Yard in Rio de Janeiro, through an agreement that forecasts total technology transfer.

"Brazil is the only country in the Southern Hemisphere capable of building submarines. This technology was acquired over the last 26 years, through a Navy program for purchase, maintenance and construction of submarines in the country. Worldwide, only 15 nations have this technology," according to a statement published on March 3 by the Navy.

Tupi class submarines may carry a crew of 30 and over 1,400 tons under the water. The maximum speed is 21.5 knots when submerged. The vessels have eight torpedo launchers and transport 16 torpedoes or mines.

However, according to O Estado, the Tikuna has been improved. The vessel may have a crew of up to 42, among them sailors, technicians and officers, with a capacity for transport of 1,550 tons under water, and reaches a top speed of 25 knots. The vessel may spend up to 50 days in operation. The submarine is powered by diesel-electric engines.

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