

PRESS RELEASE

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Naval Group sets up a new research and development partnership with the Belgian company Space Applications Services.

Within the framework of the industrial cooperation plan linked to the mine hunter programme for the Belgian and Dutch navies, Naval Group has concluded a collaboration agreement with Space Applications Services (SpaceApps). The company based in Brussels will conduct a one-year study for Naval Group in the field of multi-UAV planning.

An ambitious industrial cooperation plan accompanies the programme supplying the Belgian and Dutch navies with twelve mine hunters, a contract awarded in 2019 to Belgium Naval & Robotics, the consortium set up by Naval Group and ECA Group. The two companies have implemented a centre of excellence in Belgium, in partnership with players in the industrial and research sector and universities. This centre is called MCM Lab and is dedicated to innovations in the field of mine countermeasures.

In this context, Naval Group has concluded a collaboration agreement with Space Applications Services (SpaceApps). The company based in Brussels conduct a one-year study for Naval Group in the field of multi-UAV planning.

Through this study, Space Applications Services applies its aerospace expertise to the naval sector. All technical skills and teams are deployed to make mine hunters even more efficient in their missions.

The expertise of SpaceApps with regard to augmented reality, real-time classification, communication between different UAV's, identification of the degree of autonomy, management of communication problems in an underwater environment, is a valuable contribution to multi-UAV research and rescue missions, optimal planning and allocation of resources and the set up of communication relays to coordinate data between the operator centre and each UAV. This initiative also allows to progress in the detection of elements navigating in an underwater environment.

"This direct cooperation between Naval Group and our Belgian partner Space Applications Services is one of the first embodiments of our MCM Lab; it is part of our commitment to the cutting-edge innovation that we offer our customers in the field of artificial intelligence. This initiative will be applied to the use of multiple research and rescue UAV's. Space Applications Services will contribute its expertise in real-time constraint multi-agent planning and replanning", explains Grégory Bartoli, head of the architecture, people and systems department at Naval Research.

"The collaboration between Space Applications Services and Naval Group within the framework of the MCM Lab, will allow Space Applications Services to deploy and improve its robotic

software solutions based on AI with regard to multi-agent planning solutions and advanced control centres. The cooperative multi-robot fleets have always been a very attractive concept in marine robotics, particularly for defence applications, but the associated challenges had up until recently proved to be too ambitious. Space Applications Services is very proud to be at the forefront of progress in the field of multi-robot planning in the real world and will continue to improve its in-house designed solutions and to offer the latest developments with regard to cutting-edge technology, explains Jan Depauw, head of marketing and business development at Space Applications Services.

Press contact:

Klara Nadaradjane

Mobile phone: +33 6 95 48 06 33

Email: priya-klara.nadaradjane@naval-group.com

About Naval Group

Naval Group is the European leader in naval defence. Naval Group meets the needs of its customers thanks to its exceptional know-how, its unique industrial means and its capacity to set up innovative and strategic partnerships. As system integrator and prime contractor, the group designs, manufactures and services submarines and surface vessels. It also provides services for naval shipyards and bases. Naval Group is conscious of its corporate social responsibility and therefore adheres to the United Nations Global Impact. The group generated a turnover of 3.3 billion Euro and has 15,798 employees (data 2020).

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