



## BELGIUM NAVAL & ROBOTICS

### PRESS RELEASE

#### The Belgian Defence notifies Belgium Naval & Robotics the supply contract for 12 minehunters equipped with their drone systems

Today, the Belgium Naval & Robotics consortium, composed of Naval Group and ECA Group, was awarded the contract to supply twelve mine-hunting vessels to the Belgian and Dutch navies. Equipped with around 100 drones, constituting approximately ten drone systems (toolboxes), six ships are destined for the Belgian Navy, while the other six will be delivered to the Dutch Navy.

The contract, worth nearly two billion euros, will last ten years. After a three-year design phase, Belgium Naval & Robotics will launch the production phase of the ships and drone systems with a first delivery expected in 2024.

The Belgium Naval & Robotics consortium as well as the Naval Group and ECA Group teams are honored by the confidence of the Belgian and Dutch navies and look forward to this upcoming collaboration.

#### An innovative solution for robotic mine warfare

Belgium Naval & Robotics, thanks to Naval Group's recognized expertise, offers a 2800-ton militarized ship specialized in mine warfare with military characteristics (acoustic and electromagnetic discretion, shock resistance) perfectly adapted to the operational use targeted by the Belgian and Dutch navies. In particular, this vessel incorporates an implementation and recovery system for ECA Group's Inspector 125 unmanned surface vehicles (USV). This innovative, robust and reliable system ensures the safety of operators and maneuvers to protect the ship, the USV and its payloads, while offering a high level of mission availability.

The drone systems on board these innovative vessels are the latest generation of drones developed by ECA Group over the past four years. They are integrated into the C2 MCM Umisoft system connected to the Naval Group's I4drones® system to form the mine-warfare mission system integrated into the ship's combat system.

The solution includes A18-M autonomous underwater vehicles (AUV), T18-M towed sonars and Mine Identification & Destruction Systems (MIDS) composed of SEASCAN and KSTER-C remotely operated vehicles (ROV). All these drones can be operated autonomously from the USV Inspector 125. The drone system also includes unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and dredgers.

The program provides for the supply of drone systems that can also be projected. Containerized and equipped with handling and communication

systems, mine-hunting drone systems can be airlifted and deployed directly from the coast without a ship.

### A vast cooperation plan with the Belgian industry

Belgium Naval & Robotics will carry out a significant part of the contract in Belgium, in particular the production of certain equipment for the ship and all naval drones. Ship maintenance will be carried out in Zeebrugge in partnership with Flanders Ship Repair (FSR). The maintenance of naval drones will also be carried out in Zeebrugge according to the needs of the customer, who already has maintenance facilities on his naval base.

The cooperation plan already includes 39 Belgian partners and the notification of the contract will make it possible to finalize the last ones and reach some 50 agreements.

The contract should thus generate an average of 350 jobs per year in the three regions of Belgium.

### A reference on export markets

The Belgian and Dutch navies being a reference in mine warfare within NATO, the choice of our consortium is a major asset for export.

The tripartite mine hunter program at the time had generated sales of self-propelled PAP robots in several dozen navies, as well as the export of mine-hunting vessels.

This new success in Belgium should generate many export trade benefits in the coming years. The drones for these customers will be produced by ECA Group in Belgium. Similarly, Naval Group expects a significant number of additional sales of mine-hunting vessels in the near future.

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### BELGIUM NAVAL & ROBOTICS

BELGIUM NAVAL & ROBOTICS is the name of the Naval Group-ECA Group consortium as a part of the response to the Belgian-Dutch consultation for the replacement and initial support of their mine warfare capability.

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