

ECA Group awarded Belgian-Dutch naval contract

The Belgium Naval & Robotics consortium, composed of Naval Group and ECA Group, a Groupe Gorgé company, were today awarded the contract to supply twelve mine-hunting vessels to the Belgian and Dutch navies. Equipped with a total of approximately 100 drones, constituting approximately ten drone (toolbox) systems, six ships are destined for the Belgian Navy, while the other six will be delivered to the Dutch Navy. 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 partnership.

An innovative solution for robotic mine warfare

Belgium Naval & Robotics, with 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 a launch 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 among others A18-M autonomous underwater vehicles (AUV), T18-M towed sonars and Mine Identification & Destruction Systems (MIDS) composed of SEASCAN and K-STER 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 influence sweeps.

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 transforming contract for the group

ECA Group's share of this program represents approximately 450 million euros. The 10-year program will start with a design phase that will last approximately 3 years before the production and delivery phases of the drone systems. The turnover recorded by ECA Group should be above 5 million euros by 2019, reach between 15 and 20 million euros in 2020, be around 40 million euros in 2021 and eventually reach between 50 and 100 million euros per year over the following 5 years. This contract is the largest ever won by ECA Group. However, it does not include any maintenance services that the customer may subsequently entrust to ECA Robotics Belgium, nor any sales of consumables. ECA Group's order book is currently at a historic

level of well over half a billion euros. ECA Group has sufficient equity and financial resources to deliver it. Its objective of a turnover growth of 5% in 2019 should thus be significantly exceeded.

As the Belgian Navy is a reference in underwater mine clearance within NATO, this contract is a major asset for export. As with the tripartite mine-hunter program 40 years ago which generated sales of self-propelled PAP robots in several dozen navies in 20 years, this success in Belgium should generate many commercial export benefits in the coming years. ECA Group is already in discussions with several navies for the supply of robotic mine-hunting systems.

Next release:

Second-quarter revenue to be published on 25 July 2019

About Groupe Gorgé

Founded in 1990, Groupe Gorgé is an independent group that specializes in high-tech industries. Today, the Group is active in the fields of security and protection in extreme environments, as well as in the 3D printing sector. In its more than twenty-five-year history, Groupe Gorgé has always developed and driven the latest technological and industrial innovations.

Smart Safety Systems:

Developing complete, innovative technological solutions for complex missions in hostile and confined environments.

Protection of High-Risk Installations:

Protecting people and ensuring the active and passive protection of installations for energy markets and industrial and tertiary sectors in France. Ensuring the maintenance of these protection systems.

3D Printing:

Enabling major industry players to find new routes to successful innovation and production processes by providing 3D printers, premium material, software and 3D printed parts.

In 2018, the Group reported revenue of €296 million. It is backed by 2,000 employees and operations in six countries.

More information available on www.groupe-gorge.com

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