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PRESS RELEASE

Strategic partnership between CNN MCO, Thales and CS Group to modernise three amphibious helicopter carriers of the French Navy, under the project management of the Fleet Support Service

As part of the French Navy's programme for the maintenance in operational condition (MCO) of its vessels, CNN MCO, an Equans France company, has announced a strategic partnership with Thales and CS GROUP, a subsidiary to Sopra Steria, to equip the amphibious helicopter carriers (AHC) with a new, highly resilient inertial navigation system designed for electronic warfare environments. Together, the three companies form a 100% French and sovereign industrial consortium dedicated to naval performance.

Following successful tests confirming the effectiveness of the selected solution, deployment has just been successfully completed aboard the *Mistral*, during its technical maintenance period at the Toulon naval base.

The French Navy's Fleet Support Service (SSF) is leading this initiative to upgrade navigation systems on the PHA-type amphibious helicopter carriers and has tasked CNN MCO as its fleet support contract holder with completing the work. Awarded in 2022 for a period of eight years, CNN MCO's contract covers all onboard systems on the three PHA vessels: Mistral, Tonnerre and Dixmude. It also includes in-service support of the Somme BCR-type command and underway replenishment vessel. The objective is to ensure the availability at sea and full operational capability of these platforms in an increasingly demanding strategic environment.

To address the progressive obsolescence of certain critical systems, the contract includes more than 40 modernisation studies. Conducted across three separate vessels, these studies have already resulted in 50 upgrades in the last two years. CNN MCO is managing these phases in close coordination with the SSF, from preliminary design studies through to shipboard integration.

Autonomous, reliable navigation in the face of new threats

In a context of hybrid conflicts and widespread jamming of radionavigation systems, the French Navy is strengthening the autonomy and resilience of its navigation systems. The [TopAxyz inertial navigation system](#) developed by Thales relies solely on internally controlled data with no dependence on external sources. Using shipboard sensors such as accelerometers and

gyroscopes, TopAxyz measures the vessel's movements to continuously calculate its position, speed and heading, without the need for external signals such as GPS.

The result of over 40 years of expertise and experience, these systems have logged more than 50 million hours of operations across a wide range of applications, from space to civil and military aviation and land platforms. With this technology, enhanced by spoofing and jamming detection functionality, the Navy is strengthening its ability to navigate reliably with a high degree of precision and discretion, even in the most sensitive areas.

A tailor-made navigation system

Within the consortium, CS GROUP, a subsidiary of Sopra Steria, brings its leading expertise in navigation systems. The Thales inertial navigation units will be integrated into CS Group's global navigation system. As the navigation system forms the backbone of a warship — ensuring positioning accuracy and manoeuvring safety — this technological partnership guarantees precision, resilience and service continuity in the most demanding maritime environments.

With over 15 years of experience, CS GROUP has mastered the integration of all navigation sensors, the development of resilient and cyber-secure navigation data distribution systems, and the serial production of rugged embedded systems for harsh environments.

The integration of these new systems, carried out by CNN MCO, complies with stringent safety requirements and leverages existing infrastructures. To date, the retrofit studies have required nearly 1,500 hours of engineering by CNN MCO's in-house design office, in partnership with Thales and CS Group.

Phased rollout coordinated with scheduled maintenance

Installation of these navigation systems and related equipment is aligned with the SSF's vessel maintenance schedule through to 2027. The *Mistral* will be the first to benefit from the new system, followed by the *Dixmude* and *Tonnerre*. Once the Thales inertial units have been integrated into the navigation modules by CS Group, the systems will be installed by CNN MCO across the three vessels, with a progressive ramp-up aligned with this timeline.

CNN MCO is responsible for integration, test supervision and equipment maintenance, working directly with the SSF teams. The aim is to optimise installation windows in order to ensure the operational availability of the systems at sea.

“This programme confirms CNN MCO's ability to carry out complex upgrades in shipboard environments. We're proud to contribute to the modernisation of sensitive equipment on these vessels as part of an all-French initiative, working with the SSF, Thales and CS Group.” – **Céline Barazer, Deputy Director of CNN MCO, an Equans France company**

“With 40 years of experience in inertial navigation systems for aircraft, space launchers, air defence systems and artillery, Thales is now bringing this know-how to naval operations. We're proud to play a part in providing resilient navigation solutions for France's naval vessels as a prerequisite for ensuring freedom of action by armed forces at sea.” – **Florent Chauvancy, Vice-President, Flight Avionics, Thales**

“By contributing alongside CNN MCO and Thales to a 100% French solution, we reaffirm the importance of sovereign expertise serving the French Navy. A long-standing partner of the naval forces, CS GROUP is proud to support the fleet’s performance and safety, and to ensure the coherent and resilient integration of the entire navigation chain.”
— **Frédéric Dussart**, Director, Defence & Security Activities, CS Group

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About CNN MCO

Founded in 2005, when in-service support contracts for French Navy vessels were first opened to competition, CNN MCO has continually expanded its know-how in the management, maintenance and in-service support of all types of naval platforms. Drawing on an extensive network of national and international expertise, this Equans France company — which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary — supports all players in the maritime sector, including the French Navy, the naval forces of other nations and civilian and state-owned ship operators. As its customer base has grown, CNN MCO has expanded its network of local facilities to serve vessels as close as possible to their home ports. In addition to its sites in Brest and Toulon, the company has built up a strong presence across France’s overseas territories, including Réunion, French Guiana, Martinique, New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

<https://www.cnn-mco.fr/en/>

About Thales

Thales (Euronext Paris: HO) is a global leader in advanced technologies for the Defence, Aerospace and Cyber & Digital sectors. Its portfolio of innovative products and services addresses several major challenges: sovereignty, security, sustainability and inclusion. The Group invests more than €4 billion per year in Research & Development in key areas, particularly for critical environments, such as Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, quantum and cloud technologies. Thales has more than 83,000 employees in 68 countries. In 2024, the Group generated sales of €20.6 billion.

About CS Group

As a designer, integrator and operator of critical systems, CS GROUP, a subsidiary of the Sopra Steria Group, operates in demanding markets including defence and security, space, aerospace, energy and cybersecurity. With 3,000 employees combining deep technical expertise and industry knowledge, CS GROUP is a trusted partner to its clients for the integration and deployment of operational systems that ensure the control and safety of their missions.

About Sopra Steria

Sopra Steria, a major Tech player in Europe with 50,000 employees in nearly 30 countries, is recognised for its consulting, digital services and solutions. It helps its clients drive their digital transformation and obtain tangible and sustainable benefits. The Group provides end-to-end solutions to make large companies and organisations more competitive by combining in-depth knowledge of a wide range of business sectors and innovative technologies with a collaborative approach. Sopra Steria places people at the heart of everything it does and is committed to putting digital to work for its clients in order to build a positive future for all. In 2024, the Group generated revenues of €5.8 billion.

The world is how we shape it

Sopra Steria (SOP) is listed on Euronext Paris (Compartment A) – ISIN: FR0000050809 For more information, visit us at www.soprasteria.com