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Future French nuclear aircraft carrier: the Minister of Defence inaugurates the industrial design platform

The Minister of Defence inaugurated yesterday in Lorient (Britanny, west of France) the design platform for the new generation aircraft carrier, which brings together teams from Naval Group, Chantiers de l'Atlantique and TechnicAtome, and announced the notification of the Avant-Projet Sommaire (brief preliminary design) contract. The Minister also attended the signing by the CEO of Naval Group and the General Manager of Chantiers de l'Atlantique of the agreements creating a joint company they propose to the contract authority in order ensure the project management of the armed vessel (excluding the boiler rooms).

After the announcement made on December 8, 2020 by the French President of the Republic on the launch of the design of the French nuclear aircraft carrier, Naval Group and Chantiers de l'Atlantique proposed to the French State an industrial organization in co-contracting with TechnicAtome.

Thus, Naval Group and Chantiers de l'Atlantique have decided to create a joint company dedicated to the PA NG (Aircraft Carrier New Generation) program, the project management of which is ensured by DGA, the French Defence Procurement Agency, and CEA, the French Atomic and Alternative Energies Commission.

The choice of this industrial organization to ensure the project management of the armed vessel (excluding the boiler rooms) was aimed to maximizing synergies and capitalizing on the strengths of each partner. It relies on the accountability of its mother companies and their solidarity with their common company. This organization, aiming at the best efficiency, will make it possible to meet the major challenges of such a complex program.

This future nuclear aircraft carrier is indeed an iconic and unique ship due to its mission of implementing an on-board fighter aviation, its combat and command capabilities, the high level of safety required by its nuclear heating systems and its strong requirements in cyber security.

Within the framework of this common company, the responsibilities and interfaces between the two companies are perfectly defined, thus helping the two partners to make the best use of the complementarity of their skills. The relations with Technicatome, which has the status of a co-contractor, are being finalized for the design, fabrication and integration.

Naval Group is the overall architect of the nuclear aircraft carrier and transverse systems. In particular, the company will ensure the integration of the combat system, navigation and aviation systems, catapults and arresters, the production of nuclear boiler subassemblies, and the integration of these boilers into the ship.

Chantiers de l'Atlantique for its part will be the construction and integration site of the ship and will provide the architecture of the powered platform. For all phases from design to construction, its activity relates to large platform systems such as: structure, electric propulsion, life function, maneuvering and auxiliary installations and transversal activities such as hydrodynamics, while ensuring control of industrial coordination.



Thus, the joint venture will make it possible to apply, for the relations with TechnicAtome, the processes developed for the SNLE 3G (3 G nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarine) program and to benefit from the feedback from this major program.

Pierre Eric Pommellet, Chairman and CEO of Naval Group said: *"The nuclear aircraft carrier is one of the most complex systems there is. This joint venture will make it possible to unite the industrial forces of two European leaders in the naval and maritime sectors and to create the conditions for virtuous cooperation in co-contracting with TechnicAtome around a common ambition: to succeed together in the design and development and the realization of this unique vessel. "*

Laurent Castaing, General Manager of Chantiers de l'Atlantique, stated : *"We are delighted with the creation of this company which will allow, alongside Naval Group and in co-contracting with TechnicAtome, to bring the experience of Chantiers de the Atlantique in the management of large complex projects, by making the most of the experience acquired in the design of large civilian and military vessels and the performance of our exceptional industrial tool "*.

This company, 65% owned by Naval Group and 35% Chantiers de l'Atlantique, was incorporated on March 10. It is now in the capacity to start its activities and to carry out the brief preliminary design and risk assessment contract, whose responsibility will be transferred to the joint venture once the contract authority will have given its agreement The preliminary draft will define the reference architecture of the ship, integrating high performance requirements, in response to the operational needs of the Navy and covering the best possible scalability for this building which will be the flagship of the French Navy until in 2080.

It is a titanic project which will mobilize the expertise of the entire naval, nuclear and maritime sector. This federative project will mobilize more than 2,000 direct jobs in France each year during the construction phase.

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