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## ECA GROUP's AUV A18D underwater drone evaluated by the French Directorate General of Armaments, French Navy and Naval Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service

The A18D Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) was evaluated recently by the French Directorate General of Armaments (DGA), the French Navy and the Naval Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service (Shom) as part of the Future Hydrographic and Oceanographic Capacity (CHOF) programme. The aim of this armament programme is to update and develop France's current capacity for oceanographic and hydrographic data acquisition and processing.

Embarked on the French Navy's Offshore Support & Assistance Vessel (BSAM) Rhône, the A18D AUV performed a large variety of missions to precisely map the relief and sea beds down to 3000m depth, in the currents and swell of the Atlantic.

The example of the A18D tested showed a high level of reliability and proved to be easy to install and operate, thanks to its optimised size-to-weight ratio (5.7m-780kg) and its intuitive user interface.

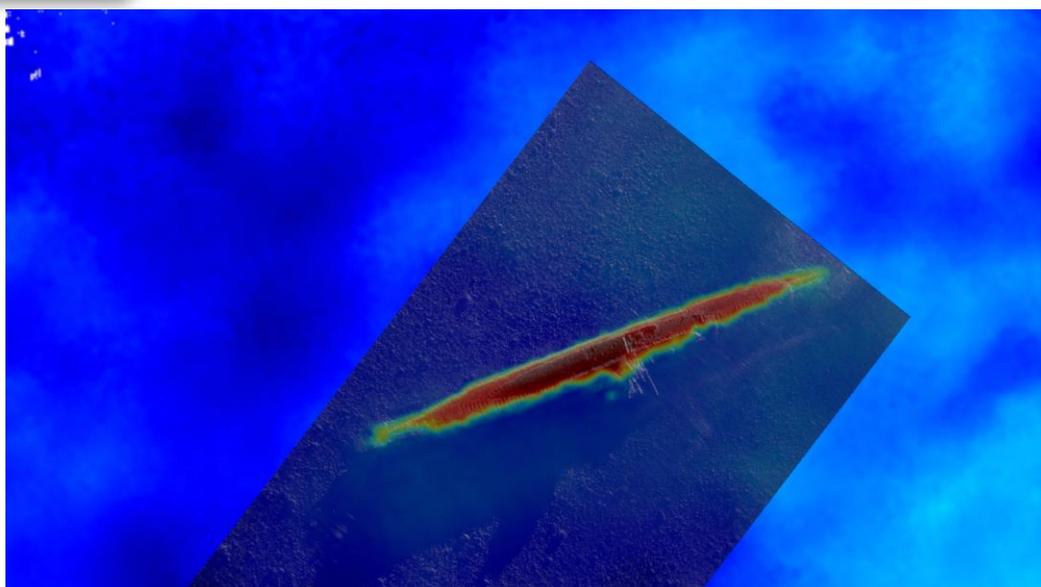
With ECA GROUP's supervision, the onboard crews of the DGA, the French Navy and the Shom were able to take charge of the AUV and be autonomous at all stages of the mission: from the preparation, launching, supervision of the measurement campaigns, up to recovering the vehicle and the data obtained.

These trials have allowed the A18D's maturity to be measured. Moreover, the richness of the feedback allowed the teams to evaluate the potential of using a drone to accompany and enrich hydro-oceanography missions.

The quality of the very high resolution images acquired by the A18D was recognised.



SAS tile mosaic, resolution 3cm



SAS tile mosaic (5cm resolution) transparently merged with a multibeam echosounder (MBES) digital terrain model (20cm resolution)

#### The A18D AUV, a contribution for Seabed Warfare

Surveying seabeds is of prime importance to ensure the integrity of the equipment laid on them (communication cables, pipelines, etc.) and through which 95% of the world's information flows. Its purpose is to search for debris or wrecks and to locate possible malicious systems.

The A18D offers a balance between compactness, endurance, performance, modularity, data quality, innovation and competitiveness. It can provide a sectorial solution for these missions.

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#### ECA GROUP

Recognized for its expertise in robotics, automation systems, simulation and industrial processes, ECA GROUP has been developing complete, innovative technological solutions for complex missions in hostile and confined environments since 1936. Its product offering is designed for an international client base that is demanding, both in terms of safety and effectiveness. The Group's main markets are in the defense, maritime, aeronautics, simulation, industrial and energy sectors.

ECA GROUP is a Groupe Gorgé company.

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