

## SMDM: SURVEY Copter's Aliaca maritime UAS qualified by the DGA

**Pierrelatte, September 1st 2022** – The Aliaca maritime mini-UAV system from SURVEY Copter, an Airbus subsidiary, has been certified and qualified by the French Defence Procurement Agency (Direction Générale de l'Armement - DGA).

- This qualification, issued by the DGA, will allow the French Navy to deploy the SMDM system in France and in operations on a permanent basis.
- The SMDM will equip various French Navy vessels, such as the Patrouilleurs de haute mer (High Seas Patrol Vessels - PHM), the new Patrouilleurs d'Outre-Mer (Overseas Patrol Vessels - POM) and surveillance frigates. Integration on Projection and command vessel (BPH) is also under study.
- The SMDM programme has thus reached an important milestone, result of a successful collaboration between SURVEY Copter's team, the DGA and the French Navy in the service of innovation.
- Capabilities of this UAS make it suitable for monitoring all illegal activities at sea and conduct maritime surveillance missions

### **SMDM stands for "système de mini-drones aériens embarqués de la Marine"**

SURVEY Copter, the light tactical UAS subsidiary of Airbus Defence and Space, and the French Defence Procurement Agency (DGA), signed a contract in the last quarter of 2020 to supply to the French Navy 11 systems (22 air vehicles) of Aliaca fixed-wing electric UAVs in a maritime version (named SMDM / "Systèmes de Mini Drones aériens embarqués de la Marine" by the French authorities), as well as the associated training and maintenance in operational conditions.

The contract covers eleven SMDMs, to be delivered by 2023.

The SMDM is made of two Aliaca UAVs from SURVEY Copter and will equip the various units of the French Navy, such as the Patrouilleurs de haute mer (High Seas Patrol Vessels - PHM), the new Patrouilleurs d'Outre-Mer (Overseas Patrol Vessels - POM) and surveillance frigates. Integration on Projection and command vessel (BPH) is also under study.

*"The operational uses envisaged for the SMDM in the service of the permanent maritime safeguard posture (PPSM) have proved to be numerous: identification and taking pictures of unknown vessels, discreet detection vessels of interest, or even searching for shipwrecked persons. Several experimental flights aimed at characterising the limits and potential of its operational use have been conducted" the French Navy said ([source](#)).*

## ALIACA, a light tactical UAS adapted the French Navy's requirements



*ALIACA a few seconds before its automatic net recovery - credit SURVEY Copter.*

The Aliaca maritime UAS is a high endurance system able of carrying out 3-hour missions within a 50 km (27 miles) range. Perfectly suited for maritime missions thanks to its high-performance gyrostabilised electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) payload, it is also operable in severe environmental conditions.

Launched by a catapult, the Aliaca maritime UAV ends its flight with an automatic net recovery deployable on ships with or without Helicopter platforms. With a maximum take-off weight of 16 kg and a wingspan of 3.6 m and a length of 2.2 m, it is propelled by a powerful and silent electric propulsion. The system can easily and quickly be deployed by just two operators.

User-friendly, the ground control station allows the operator to monitor the automatic flight of the drone at all times, while receiving images and AIS (Automatic Identification System) data collected by the on-board sensors in real time, day and night.

### **SURVEY Copter: Who are we?**

Based in the south of France, SURVEY Copter is an expert in light tactical UAS since 1996. The company became a subsidiary of Airbus in 2011 and offers a wide range of products perfectly suited to perform ISR, protection or surveillance missions, for military or civilian purposes.

The company rely on a wide range of competencies such as the development of vectors, ground control stations, autopilots - via its subsidiary weControl, data transmission, encryption, EO/IR payloads, RVT (Remote Video Terminal) and offers a range of services including spare parts, training and operational maintenance.



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