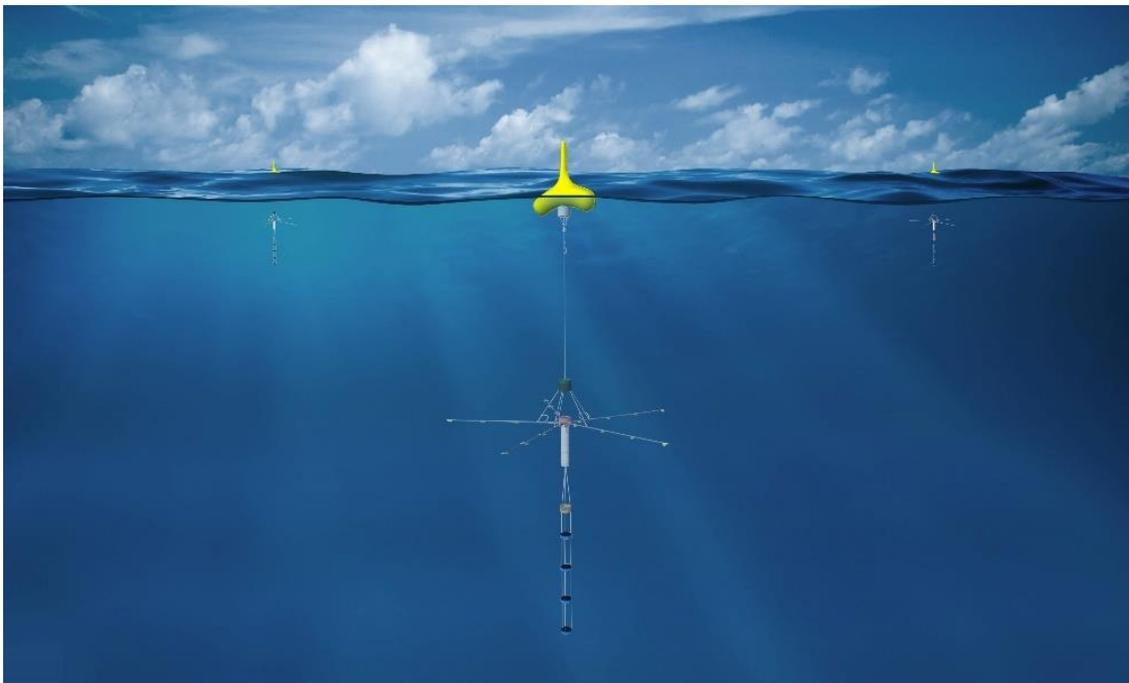


French Navy strengthens anti-submarine warfare capabilities with SonoFlash sonobuoy from Thales

- The French defence procurement agency (DGA) has awarded Thales a contract to develop, qualify and manufacture the *SonoFlash* air-droppable sonobuoy.
- Complementing the other anti-submarine warfare systems in service with the French Navy, this new-generation sonobuoy is a strategic asset that allows France to have a sovereign solution in high-performance sonobuoys.
- Manufactured in France with local SMEs, the *SonoFlash* buoy features an innovative design and advanced technology to bring naval aviation units best-in-class performance.



Artist's impression of a SonoFlash sonobuoy at sea © Thales

The French Navy has selected the *SonoFlash* new-generation sonobuoy from Thales. Unveiled at the Euronaval show in October 2018, *SonoFlash* will enable France to reach its strategic capability goal for acoustic sensors.

The threat posed by submarines is evolving rapidly. Three decades ago, only the superpowers had a true undersea warfare capability, but numerous countries now deploy modern submarine fleets. At the same time, forces increasingly operate in littoral waters, which are much more complex for sonar systems, rather than in the relative certainty of open-ocean environments.

Responding to this evolving threat environment, Thales developed the *SonoFlash* buoy, a new-generation sonobuoy with an unequalled performance-to-mass ratio that builds on decades of expertise in sonars and acoustic sensors to offer an ambitious new solution.

Its innovative design and advanced technology include a number of key features to deliver unrivalled performance. Today's sonobuoys are either passive or active. By contrast, the *SonoFlash* buoy offers the best of both modes, combining a powerful, optimised low-frequency transmitter with a high-

directivity passive receiver. With the combination of these two capabilities, and the added advantage of long endurance, the *SonoFlash* buoy is suitable for a wide array of deployment scenarios.

Fully compatible with the other families of Thales sonars, the *SonoFlash* buoy offers high tactical flexibility and opens up promising new opportunities for multistatic operation. Coupled with the *FLASH* dipping sonar, for example, the *SonoFlash* buoy enables an aircraft to expand its coverage area and respond with greater agility to evasive manoeuvres by a submarine. Thanks to its digitised signal and optimal communication range, the *SonoFlash* buoy data can be readily exploited by any piloted or remotely piloted aircraft, naval vessel or shore centre equipped with a sonobuoy processing system.

The French Navy will be the first operational user of the *SonoFlash* buoy, which will be deployed by the modernised *Atlantique 2* maritime patrol aircraft and *NH90 Caiman* tactical transport helicopters. It will be delivered to the Navy from 2025 and could be available in export markets to equip all modern maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters as well as all types of unmanned platforms, including autonomous surface vehicles and rotary-wing (VTOL) and fixed-wing UAVs equipped with a suitable multi-sonobuoy dispenser.

Manufactured in France with a network of SMEs such as TELERAD, SelhaGroup and Realmeca, the *SonoFlash* buoy relies on Thales's expertise in acoustic sensor technology to contribute to France's desire for independence in strategic industries.

"Thales has packed 10 years of innovation in hardware and digital technologies into a tube measuring 91.4 cm long and 12.3 cm in diameter. SonoFlash extends the range of a naval force's anti-submarine warfare operations, outclassing all other sonobuoys in the market today and offering a versatile and easy-to-deploy solution for tracking submarines from any piloted or remotely piloted aircraft, frigate or unmanned surface vehicle. We are grateful to the DGA and the Navy for the trust they have placed in us and delighted to be working with French partner SMEs to bring this project to a successful conclusion and restore France's sovereign capabilities in sonobuoys." **Alexis Morel, VP Underwater Systems, Thales.**

About Thales

Thales (Euronext Paris: HO) is a global leader in advanced technologies, investing in digital and "deep tech" innovations – connectivity, big data, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and quantum computing – to build a confident future crucial for the development of our societies. The Group provides its customers – businesses, organisations and governments – in the defense, aeronautics, space, transport, and digital identity and security domains with solutions, services and products that help them fulfil their critical role, consideration for the individual being the driving force behind all decisions.

Thales has 81,000 employees in 68 countries. In 2020 the Group generated sales of €17 billion.

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