

Press release

TNO & Airbus DS NL sign MoU to bring terabit Optical Ground Station (OGS) to market

Leiden, 4 December 2020 - TNO and Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands (Airbus DS NL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). It confirms their commitment to work together to commercialise the ground-breaking Terabit Optical Communication Adaptive Terminal (TOMCAT) technology that will enable high-throughput laser communication between ground stations and satellites. By offering broadband connectivity via space, TOMCAT provides a secure and efficient solution for the fast-growing demand for data.

Commitment to collaborate

With the signing of the MoU, TNO and Airbus DS NL have now officially committed to continuing their partnership in the TOMCAT project currently in development. Once the technology is proven effective in the demonstrator project, for which the two project partners are working together closely, the designs will be ready for the ground terminal's system architecture. Airbus DS NL will use these designs to produce commercially available ground stations that will enable the telecommunications industry to make use of this cutting edge, high-throughput technology. The recently signed MoU confirms the partners' plan to continue their collaboration until a marketable product is available.



Render TOMCAT product

Confirmation of leading position

TOMCAT is an opportunity to establish the Netherlands as a leader in cutting-edge Optical Communications technology. TNO's ongoing relationship with Airbus DS NL helps solidify that position. 'I'm very glad we can continue our trusted relationship with Airbus DS NL and bring TOMCAT technology to the market together,' says Erik Fritz, Programme Manager at TNO. 'Making this highly complex technology commercially available will ensure that the Netherlands continues to be at the forefront of the next generation of communication. As one of the few countries in the world working on this technology, we are proud that we have another Dutch player with whom to share our knowledge and applied innovation.'

Alex Mendes, Product Line Manager at Airbus DS NL adds: 'We have a very strong optical communications industry and technology cluster in the Netherlands. Together with our Dutch

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partners, we will develop the products that the market needs. We are very happy with this milestone. It is a reflection of the excellent collaboration between Airbus DS NL and TNO.'

Preparation for the future

TOMCAT will help support the growing demand for data, and increase communication efficiency – which are shared goals of TNO Space and Airbus DS NL. Although still in the development phase, the end-to-end Optical Feeder Links and Terabit Optical Ground Stations that make up TOMCAT are showing tremendous promise and potential to reach these goals. Once the technology is proven to be effective, the jointly developed knowledge, expertise and system designs will be used in commercially available, high-quality products.

TNO Space helps stimulate economic growth in the Netherlands and Europe by enabling companies to realise new products, generate new business and improve their competitive position. TOMCAT is one example of these goals in practice.

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About Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands

Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands B.V. is a supplier of high-tech products and services for the international aerospace industry. Since its founding in 1968, the company contributes to noteworthy space programs and has build-up broad expertise in space technology in areas such as Earth observation, telecommunications and science. The portfolio of Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands B.V. includes solar arrays, launcher structures, instruments & services, thermal-mechanical products and communication & control systems. The Leiden-based company employs more than 350 experienced professionals.

About Airbus

Airbus Defence and Space Netherlands B.V. is part of Airbus, a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2019, it generated revenues of €70.5 billion and employed a workforce of around 135,000. Airbus offers the most comprehensive range of passenger airliners. Airbus is also a European leader providing tanker, combat, transport and mission aircraft, as well as Europe's number one space enterprise and the world's second largest space business. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions worldwide. www.airbus.com