

Les Abeilles International announces the launch of a major project for the transformation of future emergency towing vessels under contract with the French Navy

Le Havre, 3 September 2021, Les Abeilles International is launching the conversion of two vessels. This industrial challenge consists of transforming offshore Anchor Handling Towing Vessels (AHTS) into Emergency Towing and salvage Vessels (ETV), thus confirming the commitment of Les Abeilles International and the Econocom Group to the sustainable modernization of the maritime sector.

Following the recent call for tender won by Les Abeilles International to provide consultancy and services for intervention and salvage at sea with the chartering of two dedicated ETV, Les Abeilles International has launched a major transformation project.

Two powerful offshore supply vessels have been purchased from the Norwegian company Siem Offshore, the world leader in offshore services. Francized under the provisional names of Garnet and Diamond, they will replace the Abeilles Flandre and Languedoc, in service for 43 and 42 years respectively.

The choice was made for these latest generation vessels, in particular because of their great technical and manoeuvring qualities integrating speed, power and traction (> 17 knots, 91 meters long, bollard pull > 280 tons). Their hybrid propulsion and their low emission rate of polluting gases were a determining factor in their choice.

After a strict selection process with more than ten European shipyards consulted, Les Abeilles International chose German Naval Yards Kiel (GNYK). This yard has a high-performance industrial infrastructure that meets the most demanding environmental criteria and provides the solid guarantees of a world leader.

When completed, these two vessels will be among the most powerful salvage tugs in the world. Their qualities will improve the level of service for other missions such as large-scale castaways recovery, firefighting, water ingress response, and toxic response.

Samira Draoua, President of Les Abeilles International, says: "This transformation project is a real industrial challenge that we are proud to take up. Our choice of second-hand vessels was motivated by the availability of very high-quality vessels, combining advanced technical and environmental specifications, which exceed the specifications issued. As a major player in the circular economy, both at the level of the Econocom Group and at the level of Les Abeilles International, extending the life of vessels is a priority issue that is fully in line with our strategy. Among the many high-quality offers we received, our choice was GNYK, whose industrial capacities, guarantees in terms of deadlines and quality, as well as environmental commitments, were preponderant. We are thus pursuing our priority strategy of modernizing the fleet to create a leader in digital innovation in the maritime sector."

The commissioning of these two vessels will enable Les Abeilles International to continue to develop its historical salvage and towing activities and to ensure the protection of the French coastline for the next 10 years, while diversifying its activities to preserve the oceans and coasts.

Les Abeilles International, alongside its shareholder Econocom, is committed to the action of the French government at sea (*Action de l'Etat en Mer*) and to the players in the maritime sector to build a digital, secure, and sustainable transformation.

ABOUT LES ABEILLES INTERNATIONAL

Founded in Le Havre in 1864, Les Abeilles International is a French shipowner specializing in deep-sea towing. For more than 40 years, it has been protecting the 3,120 km of French coastline with 4 salvage tugs (Emergency Towing Vessels) and 1 chartered salvage and assistance vessel (BSAA) for the French Navy and maritime prefectures. With the expertise of 140 employees, Les Abeilles carries out towing missions on the high seas, assistance, and salvage of ships in distress, oil pollution response and assistance and salvage consultancy missions for the French Navy.

Les Abeilles joined the Econocom group in September 2020. As a major player in the Digital sector, the group has been designing, financing, and facilitating the digital and responsible transformation of large companies for over 48 years. With a presence in 18 countries, Econocom has 9,000 employees, generates revenue of €2,559 million and is listed on Euronext in Brussels (Bel Mid and Family Business indices).