
PRESS RELEASE

A First Step reached for the VBAE

Montrouge, December 6, 2023 – The consortium between Arquus and Nexter, a company of KNDS; and the Organisation for Joint Armaments Co-operation (OCCAR) have signed the pre-design contract for the VBAE (Véhicule Blindé d'Aide à l'Engagement).



From left to right: Emmanuel Levacher, Arquus President ; Joachim Sucker, OCCAR-EA DIRECTOR; Alexandre Dupuy, KNDS Senior Vice President Public Affairs, Communication & Domestic Sales.

OCCAR, the European intergovernmental procurement agency responsible for cooperative defense contract management, has been entrusted with setting up and managing the program. This signing marks the first step towards converging of the operational requirements and architecture of this future armored vehicle, whose development and production are expected within the French and Belgian armies as of 2030.

The VBAE is the result of a close collaboration between industry, OCCAR and the customer nations in order to replace, for France, the VBL (Light Armoured Vehicle) which is in service within the French forces since the late 1980s. For Belgium, the VBAE represents an additional step in the development of its motorized capacity by reinforcing its reconnaissance and command and control capabilities. The VBAE will be a versatile system suitable for many types of missions. A strong emphasis will be placed on essential performances of mobility, stealth, protection, and fire function. It will combine compactness and optimized payload capacity.

The project's realization will be ensured by the Consortium consisting of the lead contractor Arquus and its co-contractor Nexter, which will subcontract some of its activities to the Belgian company John Cockerill Defense (JCD). This partnership, initiated from the pre-design phase, marks the desire for Franco-Belgian industrial cooperation on a major armaments program.

The VBAE program is perfectly consistent with the FAMOUS project sustained by European Defence Fund (EDF) financed by the European Commission. FAMOUS (Future highly mobile Augmented ArMOUred Systems) covers the development of innovative technological blocks common to future European armored vehicles. Arquus, Nexter, and JCD are major partners in this FAMOUS project.

The launch of the VBAE project marks the advent of an ambitious and innovative cooperation. The Arquus, Nexter and JCD teams are fully committed and confident in the success of this project.

Arquus is a French defence company and a leader in ground mobility solutions. As a long-standing partner of the armed forces, Arquus has almost 25,000 vehicles of all types in service with the French Army, including 20,000 supported by the company. Arquus is involved in the production of the new generation of Army vehicles, the VBMR Griffon and EBRC Jaguar, produced by the temporary consortium. In particular, Arquus is responsible for supplying the drivelines and the remotely operated self-defence systems for these two vehicles. Arquus also provides all the logistics for replacement parts and units for the VBMR and EBRC vehicles under the Scorpion programme through its logistics platform at Garchizy. As a support specialist, with almost 20,000 vehicles supported on a routine basis, Arquus offers complete solutions, drawing on the company's historic competencies. These solutions rely on an international logistics network supported by the network of the Volvo Group, of which Arquus is a member. Arquus is an innovative company, investing in major projects such as architecture, survivability, mobility, energy, robotics, fire support and support. As a complete systems integration manufacturer, Arquus also offers remotely operated turrets (Hornet range, developed for the Scorpion programme), avionics solutions (Battlenet) and mobility solutions (4x4, 6x6 and 8x8 chassis). Arquus exports to more than 60 countries.

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KNDS (KMW+NEXTER Defense Systems) is the result of the association of Krauss-Maffei Wegmann and Nexter, two of the leading European manufacturers of military land systems based in Germany and France. KNDS forms a Group of around 9,000 employees, with a 2022 turnover of 3.2 billion euro, an order backlog of around 11 billion euro and incoming orders of 3.4 billion euro. The range of its products includes main battle tanks, armored vehicles, artillery systems, weapons systems, ammunition, military bridges, customer services, battle management systems, training solutions, protection solutions and a wide range of equipment. The formation of KNDS represents the beginning of consolidation in land defense systems industry in Europe. The strategic alliance between KMW and Nexter enhances both groups' competitiveness and international positions, as well as their ability to meet the needs of their respective national army. In addition, it offers to its European and NATO customers the opportunity of increased standardization and interoperability for their defense equipment, with a dependable industrial base.

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