The UK Branch of D-Orbit Signs a Contract with ESA for the Development of Debris Removal Technology

The scope of the contract is the development and in-orbit demonstration of a "Deorbit Kit", a self-contained suite of equipment that enables space vehicles of any size to perform propulsive decommissioning maneuvers

Harwell, UK, September 8th, 2021: **The UK branch of D-Orbit signed a €2,197M contract with the European Space Agency (ESA)** for phase 1 of the development and in-orbit demonstration of a **"Deorbit Kit" as part of ESA's Space Safety Programme (S2P)**.

The decommissioning kit proposed by D-Orbit is a self-contained suite of equipment that can be tailored to space vehicles of any size to enable them to perform a propulsive decommissioning maneuver at the end of their mission or after a failure, even if the spacecraft has become unresponsive. The kit and the know-how developed are also foundational capabilities that can be used in the future as part of active debris removal mission concepts.

"*We believe that the development and in-orbit demonstration of this system will pave the way for the development of several other applications of autonomous deorbiting systems for future LEO missions,*" commented **Simon Reid, COO of the UK branch of D-Orbit**. "*In addition, the work performed in this activity will define a foundational capability that can be adapted in the future for active debris removal mission concepts, such as on-orbit installation of de-orbit kits on satellites already in space*".

D-Orbit will lead a consortium to develop the multi-purpose kit, which will be installed initially on a Vega Rocket payload adapter called Vespa (Vega Secondary Payload Adapter). This type of equipment is traditionally left in a 'gradual disposal' orbit, which although compliant with current international guidelines, represents a contribution to the growing debris problem. The kit will be installed before the launch to perform a propulsive direct re-entry maneuver over a designated uninhabited area shortly after the rocket has deployed its payload.

The design reference mission for the first phase of development for this new device is the VESPA Upper part, which is currently foreseen as the launch adaptor for the ESA ClearSpace-1 mission, scheduled for 2025. The final target application for the device will be confirmed at the start of phase 2 of the program.

"*This contract is an important milestone for D-Orbit group and for the entire space sector*" says **Luca Rossettini, CEO of D-Orbit**. "*We, space pioneers in the space industrial ecosystem, shall stand up and act to preserve the future of our business and the entire humankind. The first product we launched on the market long time ago was a decommissioning device: today we are working to make sure the space debris problem turns into a commercial opportunity and a resource for the future development of space*."

Besides D-Orbit, **the consortium includes Airbus Defence and Space, ArianeGroup, GMV Innovating Solutions, and Optimal Structural Solutions**. The kickstart meeting is scheduled for today, September 8th, 2021.

About D-Orbit

D-Orbit is a market leader in the space logistics and transportation services industry with a track record of space-proven technologies and successful missions.

Founded in 2011, before the dawn of the New Space market, D-Orbit is the first company addressing the logistics needs of the space market. ION Satellite Carrier, for example, is a space vehicle that can transport satellites in orbit and release them individually into distinct orbital slots, reducing the time from launch to operations by up to 85% and the launch costs of an entire satellite constellation by up to 40%. ION can also accommodate multiple third-party payloads like innovative technologies developed by startups, experiments from research entities, and instruments from traditional space companies requiring a test in orbit.

D-Orbit is a space infrastructure pioneer with offices in Italy, Portugal, UK, and the US; its commitment to pursuing business models that are profitable, friendly for the environment, and socially beneficial, led to D-Orbit becoming the first certified B-Corp space company in the world.

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About Airbus
Airbus pioneers sustainable aerospace for a safe and united world. The Company constantly innovates to provide efficient and technologically-advanced solutions in aerospace, defence, and connected services. In commercial aircraft, Airbus offers modern and fuel-efficient airliners and associated services. Airbus is also a European leader in defence and security and one of the world's leading space businesses. In helicopters, Airbus provides the most efficient civil and military rotorcraft solutions and services worldwide.

About ArianeGroup
ArianeGroup develops and supplies innovative and competitive solutions for civil and military space launchers, with expertise in all aspects of state-of-the-art propulsion technologies. ArianeGroup is lead contractor for Europe's Ariane 5 and Ariane 6 launcher families, responsible for both design and the entire production chain, up to and including marketing by its Arianespace subsidiary, as well as for the missiles of the French oceanic deterrent force. ArianeGroup and its subsidiaries enjoy a global reputation as specialists in the field of equipment and propulsion for space applications, while their expertise also benefits other industrial sectors. The group is a joint

venture equally owned by Airbus and Safran, and employs approximately 7,500 highly qualified staff in France and Germany. Its 2020 revenues amounted to 2.7 billion euros.

About Optimal Structural Solutions

Optimal Structural Solutions Lda (OPTIMAL) is a Portuguese SME, founded in 2008, with headquarters in Cascais, near Lisbon. OPTIMAL is 100% owned by Portuguese private investors and focused on the design, development and manufacturing of advanced composite and metallic structures, and associated tooling and MGSE, for applications in space, aeronautic, defence and automotive. In 2021, the company employs about 50 people for an estimated turnover of about €5Million. OPTIMAL performs its space activities in a dedicated business unit, OPTIMAL SPACE, that is in deep synergy with the rest of the company and thus combining: A dedicated team composed of engineers, product assurance and project managers with a Space mindset. This team manages all the specificities (namely space requirements, design rules, procedures, ECSS standards, etc.) related to the Space market sector. Ample access to the production resources, Manpower and unique industrial facilities. Full support of the procurement, storage & logistics, IT, test and quality control staff.
This unique combination provides all assurance of reliability, adherence to the highest aerospace standards, and responsible commitments to customer requirements.

About GMV Innovating Solutions

GMV is a privately owned technological enterprise group with an international presence. Founded in 1984, GMV mainly operates in eight large sectors for both public and private organizations: Aeronautics, Space, Defense, Health, Security, Transportation, Telecommunications and Information Technologies.
Currently, GMV employs more than 2200 staff. Its Space business generates about 62% of the total turnover and employs over 1100 people. GMV has a history of continuous success and sustained growth over the past years. In 2020 the group turnover is nearly €240M.