

OHB ITALIA SIGNS ESA CONTRACT FOR POSEIDON AS PRIME CONTRACTOR: A PROJECT SUPPORTING MARITIME SAFETY AND SURVEILLANCE WITHIN IRIS² LOW-LEO ACTIVITIES

OHB Italia will lead a consortium bringing together some of the most prominent players in the Italian and European space sector

Madrid, September 17, 2026 – OHB Italia today signed a contract with the European Space Agency (ESA) for the consolidation phase of **Poseidon**, a project dedicated to the development of innovative satellite services for maritime surveillance, safety and resilience.

The contract was signed by Roberto Aceti, CEO of OHB Italia, during a ceremony held at the European Space Astronomy Centre (ESAC) in Villanueva de la Cañada, Madrid.

As **Prime Contractor**, OHB Italia will lead an European industrial consortium comprising **Alén Space, DWave, e-GEOS, GMV, Leonardo, MBI, SkyLabs** and **Thales Alenia Space Italia**.

The team brings together complementary expertise in satellite systems, Earth Observation, telecommunications, data processing and security-related services.

Poseidon was selected by ESA within the **Consolidation Phase of IRIS² Low-LEO Pre-operational and De-risking Activities, part of the Agency's Programme Related to EU Secure Connectivity**, an initiative involving several European consortia in the development of new mission concepts and services of interest to the European IRIS² programme.

The project targets service-oriented solutions dedicated to the maritime domain, integrating:

- VDES: AIS vessels tracking system, maritime safety and two-way narrowband communications;
- Visible and Thermal Observation;
- Radio-frequency awareness.

Poseidon is designed to use IRIS² secure connectivity as a **Space Data Relay Service**. This architecture will reduce data delivery times and enable satellites to receive new tasking instructions more rapidly, supporting near-real-time awareness even in remote maritime regions, including polar areas.

The proposed “used cases” include dark vessels; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities; maritime border surveillance and anomaly detection; Search and Rescue operations; environmental monitoring and the protection of critical offshore infrastructures.

“The future of secure connectivity will not be defined by a single technology or a single orbit. It will come from combining complementary capabilities and having the flexibility to adapt as Europe’s needs evolve. Through its Low-LEO activities, ESA looks forward to working hand-in-hand with the European Commission and European industry to explore what comes next for IRIS²; to shape the capabilities that will support Europe’s future connectivity needs” said **Laurent Jaffart, Director of ESA’s Resilience, Navigation and Connectivity**.

“With Poseidon, OHB Italia is placing its expertise in the design and management of complex space systems at the service of a European strategic priority: improving our knowledge of what is happening across Europe’s maritime domain and enabling a rapid operational

response,” commented **Roberto Aceti, CEO of OHB Italia**. “The combination of observation, detection and secure satellite connectivity could provide European authorities with an independent, resilient and scalable capability. The strength of the project also lies in its consortium, which brings together leading industrial and technological expertise from across Italy and Europe.”

About OHB Italia

OHB Italia S.p.A. is part of the European Space and Technology Group OHB SE, one of the three leading space companies in Europe, employing 3,500 people worldwide and reporting total revenues of EUR 1,200 million in 2025.

Established in 1981, OHB Italia S.p.A. is today one of the two major satellite system integrators in Italy, with a backlog of EUR 412 million and revenues of EUR 172 million in 2025.

Building on more than four decades of experience in space systems, the company is a recognized national leader in the fields of Satellites & Missions, Earth Observation, Space Situational Awareness (SSA), Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST), Science, Equipment and Scientific and Planetary Instruments.

Headquartered in Milan, OHB Italia S.p.A. also operates in Rome, Turin and Benevento. Its facilities host specialized laboratories, including a shaker, a X-Ray Machine, a climate chamber, and a thermal vacuum chamber, together with high-capacity ISO 5, ISO 7 and ISO 8 clean rooms covering more than 1,000 square meters, suitable for the integration of large satellites. The company employs over 350 highly skilled professionals, approximately 85% of whom hold degrees in aerospace engineering, mathematics, physics, electronic engineering, and information technology.

With around 70 satellites, payloads, and instruments successfully flown or currently operating in orbit, OHB Italia S.p.A. acts as Prime Contractor for major missions of the Italian Space Agency (ASI) and the European Space Agency (ESA), which are the main customers along with Research Institutes, Universities and all the industrial key players in the global space market, with a strong focus on export activities.

For further information:

Camilla Menescardi – camilla.menescardi@ohb-italia.it – (+39) 340 7343679
www.ohb-italia.it

About ESA Programme Related to EU Secure Connectivity

Under the overall responsibility of the European Commission, IRIS² is a bold endeavour to build a space-based secure and resilient connectivity network that elevates Europe’s strategic autonomy and competitiveness, where and when it matters most. ESA acts on behalf of the European Commission as the qualification and validation authority for the governmental infrastructure of the Union Secure Connectivity Programme. It manages development and validation contracts supporting the initial space and ground segments, verifies end-to-end system, service, and security performance against EC requirements, and coordinates these activities with ESA’s own programme.

Within this programme, the IRIS² Low-LEO Pre-Operational and De-Risk Activities components provide a rapid and recurrent mechanism for validating potential new governmental services and associated mission concepts in orbit up to a pre-operational level, subject to successful maturation and later programme level decisions of integration into the operational EU IRIS² baseline.

Ultimately, these activities aim at contributing to the continued evolution and enhancement of IRIS² services and capabilities, supporting Europe’s long-term leadership in space in an ever-changing world.

Learn more at:

<https://resilience.esa.int/esa-programme-related-to-eu-secure-connectivity-and-iris%C2%B2>