

RV BELGICA II

A NEW OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSEL TO REPLACE THE EXISTING A962 BELGICA

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INTRODUCTION

In 2009, a feasibility study was ordered by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO) to assess the best future options for the existing A962 Belgica:

1. **Replacement by a new oceanographic research vessel:** best and only option
2. **Modernizing the existing vessel:** financially, technically and statutory not feasible

STATUS A962 BELGICA

- The present-day Belgian oceanographic research vessel A962 Belgica is a **28-year-old research platform**. The lifetime of a research vessel is approximately 30 years;
- **Obsolescence** of certain equipment;
- (Hidden) **corrosion**;
- **Lack of space and comfort** in comparison with modern research vessels.



RV BELGICA II REQUESTED CAPABILITIES

- The ship time demand in terms of researcher units (8 hours) expressed by the Belgian scientific community (questionnaire 2008) would lead to a total of **10 000 units compared with the current 4 000/5 000 units**. The current vessel operated by 1 crew can certainly not accommodate for this demand;
- The scientific community insists the new ship should be a **multipurpose research vessel** (for hydrography, geology, biology, oceanography, fisheries, environmental sampling, etc.);
- **Dynamic positioning capabilities**;
- An **autonomy of 4 weeks**;
- With more space and ideal for **large-scale equipment** (AUV, ROV, coring, etc.);
- With a minimal **ice class**.



COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER RVs

In Europe:

Multipurpose oceanographic research vessels belonging to **the regional/ocean class will be lacking in Europe** in the near future. The new RV Belgica II can fill in this gap.

In Belgium:

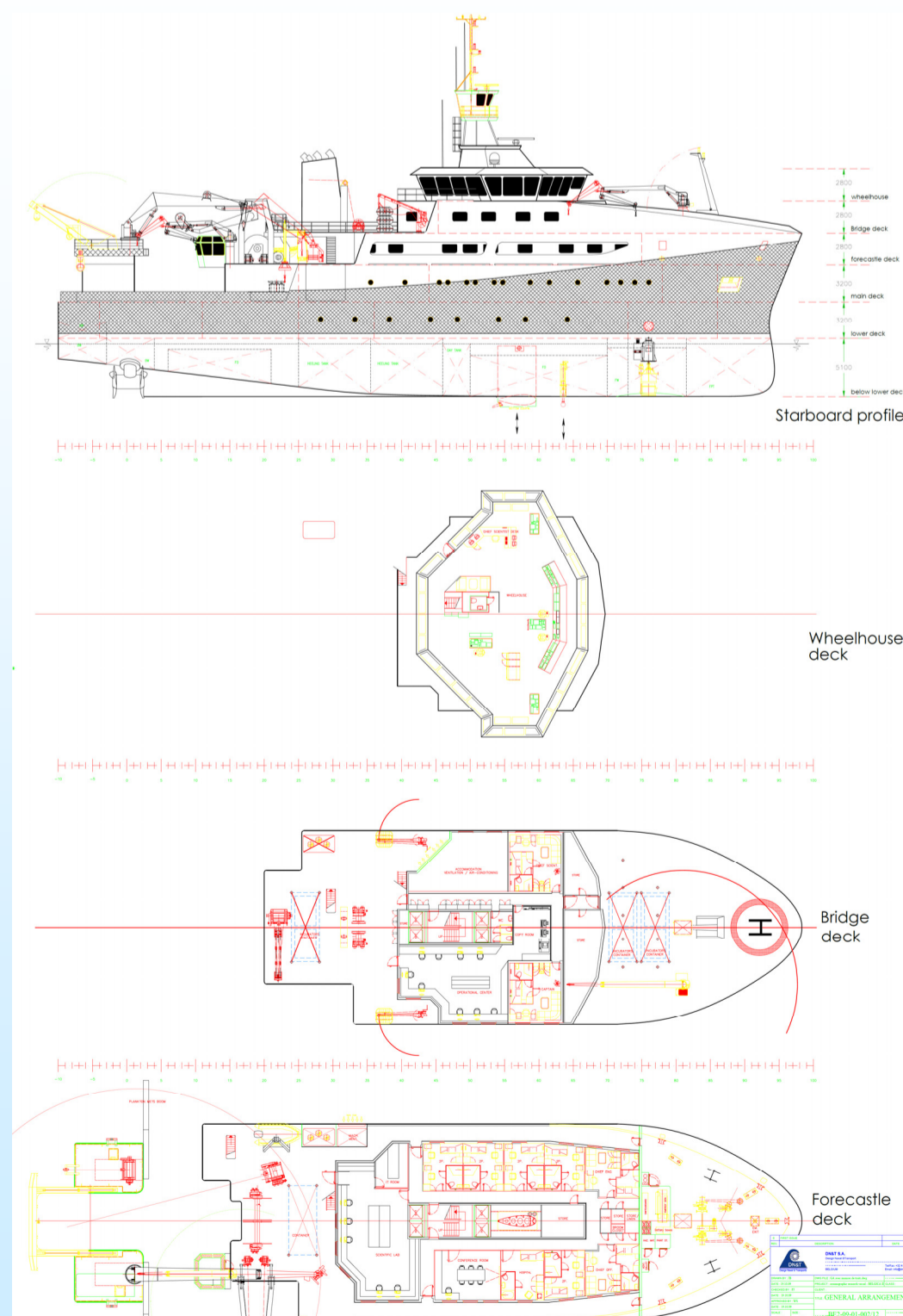
The RV Belgica II and the RV Simon Stevin will be **fully complementary**:

- Working area: "open sea" (BPNS + Atlantic) vs. coastal (BPNS)
- Expedition duration: week(s) vs. day(s)
- Vessel size: 65 * 17 * 4.6 m vs. 36 * 9 * 3.5 m

TIME SCHEDULE & BUDGET

- a. **5-7 years** needed to finalize new build
- b. **> 50 M€ (excl. VAT)**

...THE TIME IS NOW!!



References
• Binot J. Danobeita J. Müller Thomas J. Nieuwejaar P.W. Rietveld M. Stone P., eds., 2007. European Ocean Research Fleets: Towards a Common Strategy and Enhanced Use; European Science Foundation, Marine Board: Position Paper, ESF, Strasbourg, pp.62.
• Belgian Science Policy Office, Techmar International, 2009. Feasibility study on the purchase options for a new oceanographic research ship aimed at replacing the A962 Belgica or modernizing the existing oceanographic research ship: summary. Belgian Science Policy Office, pp. 10.

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