Sagem and Thales strengthen joint subsidiary Sofradir's infrared technopole

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Sagem (Safran group), Thales and Sofradir have signed an agreement for Sofradir to acquire Sagem and Thales' infrared (IR) detector technology development and manufacturing facilities. Sagem and Thales bring to Sofradir IR technologies originally developed for their internal purposes.

IR detectors are advanced technology components at the heart of multiple military, space, commercial and scientific applications: thermal imagers, missile seekers, surveillance systems, targeting systems or observation satellites. Their performance and price are key for the competitiveness of optronics systems.

Under the agreement, Sagem will transfer to Sofradir the Indium Antimonide (InSb) technology. The Quantum Well-Infrared Photodetector (QWIP) and Indium Gallium Arsenide (InGaAs) technologies will be transferred to Sofradir from the GIE III-V Lab, an economic interest group with partners Alcatel Lucent, Thales and research institute CEA (the French nuclear energy and alternate energies commission).

By consolidating these IR technologies under one roof, Sofradir joins a very small circle of IR detector manufacturers with expertise in all the cooled and uncooled IR technologies. The acquisition will reinforce Sofradir’s leading position in Europe and pave the way to a global leadership position in the imaging market. Sofradir is currently ranked number one for volume deliveries of IR detectors based on its Mercury Cadmium Telluride (HgCdTe) technology.

Serge Adrian, senior vice president of Land Defence at Thales, and Philippe Petitcolin, chairman and CEO of Sagem, praised the agreement that strengthens a key technopole and further enhances years of research initially carried out by Thales, and then by the III-V Lab and Sagem: "We are confident that Sofradir will take these IR activities to the next level and benefit from the synergies between
"The technologies from Sagem and the III-V Lab enable Sofradir to have from this point forward the complete portfolio of infrared technologies. These assets consolidate Sofradir’s leadership position," said Philippe Bensussan, chairman and CEO of Sofradir. "With the new technologies, Sofradir along with its subsidiary ULIS will be able to select the technology best-adapted to our clients’ applications. We are in a fortified position to offer IR products with more innovation, performance and compactness in order to respond to any IR market need."

Sagem a high-tech company in the Safran group, holds world or European leadership positions in optronics, avionics, electronics and safety-critical software for both civil and military markets. Sagem is the No. 1 company in Europe and No. 3 worldwide for inertial navigation systems (INS) used in air, land and naval applications. It is also the world leader in helicopter flight controls and the European leader in optronics and tactical UAV systems. Operating across the globe through the Safran group, Sagem and its subsidiaries employ 7,500 people in Europe, Southeast Asia and North America. Sagem is the commercial name of the company Sagem Défense Sécurité.

For more information, www.sagem-ds.com

Thales is a global technology leader for the Defence & Security and the Aerospace & Transport markets. In 2011, the company generated revenues of €13 billion with 67,000 employees in 56 countries. With its 22,500 engineers and researchers, Thales has a unique capability to design, develop and deploy equipment, systems and services that meet the most complex security requirements. Thales has an exceptional international footprint, with operations around the world working with customers as local partners.

For more information, www.thalesgroup.com

Sofradir is the number one developer and manufacturer of a key class of infrared (IR) detectors for military, space and industrial applications. It specializes in cooled IR detectors based on a sophisticated high performance technology, Mercury Cadmium Telluride (MCT) to which the InSb, InGaAs and QWIP technologies are now added. Its vast product portfolio of scanning and staring
arrays covers the entire infrared spectrum.

Sofradir’s headquarters are located in Châtenay-Malabry, near Paris, France. Its manufacturing facilities and those of ULIS, its subsidiary that manufactures mass volume uncooled IR detectors, are located in Veurey-Voroize, near Grenoble, France. Sofradir EC, the company’s US subsidiary, operates in Fairfield, NJ. In 2011, annual sales for the Sofradir Group, which includes subsidiaries ULIS and Sofradir EC, reached EUR 150M, two-thirds in exports around the world. Sofradir, ULIS and Sofradir EC employ more than 650 people.

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