

## Media release

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### **Safety enhancing drone earns innovation award for AkzoNobel partnership**

A drone developed to improve maritime safety has earned an innovation award for a partnership comprising AkzoNobel's Marine Coatings Business, the supplier of International® coatings. The Plimsoll Award for Innovation, awarded by Professional Mariner magazine, recognizes the efforts of the group including Barrier Group, DroneOps Ltd., Safinah Ltd. and a major oil tanker operator, to develop an unmanned aircraft to carry out remote inspections.

The project, called RECOMMS (Remote Evaluation of Coatings and Corrosion on Offshore Marine Structures and Ships), uses virtual reality technology and semi-autonomous operation of a drone to remotely inspect ballast tanks, and other difficult to access areas on vessels and offshore structures such as wind farms.

"We're proud to be part of a project that aims to significantly improve the accuracy, efficiency and safety of routine maintenance, and delighted that this contribution is being recognized," said Michael Hindmarsh, a spokesman for RECOMMS and business development manager at AkzoNobel. "Surveys of enclosed spaces and ballast water tanks are essential and increasingly critical for ship and offshore asset owners. However, inspecting these areas thoroughly can require working at height, entering poorly lit or confined spaces and negotiating slippery surfaces, all of which are high-risk activities that the maritime industry is keen to address. Drone technology is the ideal solution for mitigating the risks involved."

The Plimsoll Award is presented each year to individuals and organizations that embody the spirit of Samuel Plimsoll, the founding father of the award. Plimsoll (1824-1898) was a Member of Parliament in Britain who dedicated his career to fighting against unsafe maritime industry practices.

"The award recognizes the project for developing a drone capable of taking on the potentially hazardous work now done by crew, surveyors and independent inspectors", says Rich Miller, editor of Professional Mariner. "This worthy initiative has a significant impact on safety and deserves the support of maritime interests around the world," he said.

RECOMMS has been fully funded by AkzoNobel, Barrier Group, Drone Ops Ltd, a major oil tanker operator with part funding from Innovate UK and additional expertise provided by Marine Technical Limits Ltd.

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#### **Not for publication – for more information**

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