

PRESS RELEASE

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March 26, 2026**New Polarstern: Majority of supplier contracts have been awarded; icebreaking trials successfully completed**

- ◆ The project to build the new research icebreaker Polarstern has reached two important milestones.
- ◆ Majority of contracts for the procurement of propulsion systems, ventilation systems, hydro-sensors, and key functional and operating systems have been awarded.
- ◆ All icebreaking tests were successfully conducted at the Hamburg Ship Model Basin (HSVA).

Kiel, March 26, 2026 – TKMS has concluded the majority of contracts on behalf of the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), for the procurement of innovative propulsion technology as well as other functional and operational systems for the new Polarstern. In December 2024, the AWI awarded TKMS the contract to build the new icebreaking research and supply vessel.

In terms of volume, the two largest contracts are the one awarded to Aerius for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, and the one to Kongsberg in Norway for the hydroacoustic systems.

In addition, TKMS has ordered two Airbus H145-D3 onboard helicopters for the AWI, offering outstanding cost per flight mile, low noise and vibration levels, and the use of sustainable fuel. To date, a total of more than 30 contracts have been awarded to nearly 20 companies.

Already in 2025, TKMS signed contracts for the entire propulsion unit with Wärtsilä, Steerprop, and Aker Arctic, covering the supply of generator sets, propulsion units, and systems such as methanol processing and exhaust gas aftertreatment.

“The awarding of the majority of contracts for relevant components and systems is a significant step toward the new Polarstern. Through our selection of partners, we are ensuring that we meet the high customer requirements for quality and operational performance,” explains Oliver Burkhard, CEO of TKMS.

In parallel with the awarding of contracts, the final icebreaking tests at the Hamburg Ship Model Basin (HSVA) were successfully completed, incorporating all measures from previous tests. Specifically, a full-scale, 5.66-meter-long model of the new Polarstern was used to test the hull shape and final configurations of the ship while traveling at three knots through approximately

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1.80-meter-thick ice with a 20 percent snow cover. The model also broke through thicker ice, such as simulated pack ice ridges, without any problems.

Detlef Wilde, project director for the new Polarstern at the AWI, reports: "The model tests at the Hamburg Ship Model Basin enabled us to find the optimal ship design thanks to the realistic simulation of the conditions in the operation areas – both for icebreaking and for open water navigation and scientific research. The successful completion of the model tests, which have been ongoing since last summer, marks an important milestone on the way to building the new Polarstern."

About the Polarstern New Construction Project

The new Polarstern will be the flagship of German marine, polar, and climate research. The new vessel is being funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology, and Space (BMFTR), enabling the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research, to award the contract for the new vessel to the TKMS shipyard in December 2024. The icebreaking research and supply vessel is being built at the Wismar shipyard. It will succeed the Polarstern, which has enabled groundbreaking research in the Arctic and Antarctic for over 40 years. This ensures that Germany will continue to have one of the most modern and sustainable infrastructures for polar research at the highest scientific and technical level.

More information at: polarstern.awi.de

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About TKMS

TKMS is one of the world's leading naval companies with more than 9,100 employees (including temporary workers) at three shipyards in Kiel, Wismar and Itajaí (Brazil), and with locations worldwide. The company is active as a systems supplier for submarines and naval surface vessels as well as for maritime electronics and security technologies. Around 3,300 employees work at the Kiel site, making it the largest shipyard location in Germany. 185 years of history and the constant striving for improvement allow the company to set new standards time and time again. TKMS offers its customers worldwide tailored solutions to meet the highly complex challenges of a changing world. The driving forces behind this innovative energy are the company's employees, who shape the future of TKMS with passion and commitment every day.

More information at: www.tkmsgroup.com

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