

## NEW INVESTOR ROUND FOR CLS

Ardian and Ifremer  
sell their shares to CNP,  
CNES remains a significant  
shareholder



*CLS, for Earth, from Space*

### 3/02/2020 press release

CLS, a company that develops solutions used to study and protect our planet and manage its resources sustainably, will benefit from renewed investment.

Ardian, a world leader in private investment, and Ifremer (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea), have officially announced the sale of their minority shareholding to CNP (Compagnie Nationale à Portefeuille), a Groupe Frère investment company. CNP thus acquires a majority stake in CLS, while the group's founding institution, CNES, retains a significant minority interest.

CNES, Ardian, and Ifremer can be pleased with this outcome. With their support and the hard work of the teams at CLS, the company has pursued a robust development strategy over the last six years based on innovation, geographic expansion, five new acquisitions, and the creation of Kinéis, now Europe's leading operator of a constellation of nanosatellites, bringing the group to 720 employees and nearly €135 million in turnover and doubling its profitability.

This European governance marks the start of a new chapter for CLS. Both CNES (now a 34% shareholder) and CNP (a 66% shareholder) are positioned for the long term and share the group's vision and philosophy. Together, they will guide CLS in its development and help the company meet the ambitious challenges of putting the space sector to work for our planet.

The transaction was completed on January 30, 2020.

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Ifremer – Sofia Nadir +33 6 44 30 23 26

## Testimonials



**Christophe Vassal, Chief Executive Officer, CLS:**

*"I'd like to thank the Ardian, CNES, and Ifremer teams for their support. They have really been there for us, playing a major role in developing new expertise and supporting our international expansion. Their strategic and practical guidance has helped strengthen our leadership and broaden our portfolio of solutions. We are delighted to welcome CNP, an investor that shares our vision and corporate philosophy. CNP, together with CNES, will help us grow and take on new challenges for a sustainable planet."*



**Caroline Pihan, Director, Ardian Expansion:**

*"We are very proud to have helped space industry star CLS and its management team pursue their development strategy. What we've done reflects our ability to support international growth projects and—in the case of CLS—to do so alongside public players. I would like to thank CNES and Ifremer, which have done an outstanding job developing the company, and especially CNES, which will continue to support it in future projects."*



**Antoine Seillan, Chief Financial Officer, CNES:**

*"CNES is proud to have established CLS nearly 35 years ago and to have watched it become a world reference in satellite solutions for Earth observation. The partnership with Ardian and Ifremer has been tremendously successful, and I thank them for the strong ties we have forged. I welcome CNP and look forward to the next chapters in this ongoing success story. In the years to come, we will continue to support CLS, in particular in its areas of excellence such as Altimetry. Together, we will accompany the growth of Kinéis, our joint subsidiary and France's leading operator of a constellation of nanosatellites that is the legacy and amplification of the Argos system, now equipped with unprecedented IoT capabilities."*



**Xavier Le Clef, Co-CEO, Groupe Frère, and CEO, CNP:**

*"CLS's technological expertise and the commitment of its historical shareholders have enabled the company to build solid leadership positions in the global Earth observation satellite ecosystem. Groupe Frère is particularly pleased to enter into this new partnership with CNES and the CLS management team and to support CLS over the long term in its continued growth and international efforts to protect the planet and its resources."*



**Patrick Vincent, Assistant Managing Director, Ifremer:**

*"We are proud to have helped CLS grow and use space to better understand, protect, and make sustainable use of our seas and oceans. I would like to thank CNES for joining us in creating this wonderful venture. Thanks again to CNES and to Ardian, who joined us in supporting its growth. We are leaving CLS but will reconnect with it around Kinéis. We are investing in a young company, a CLS subsidiary, that will write the future of the Argos system and in 2022 will launch the first constellation of nanosatellites dedicated to the Internet of Things. We have a promising future together, continuing to serve our planet."*

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## ABOUT CLS

Founded by CNES in 1986, CLS is a global company and a pioneer in providing Earth monitoring and surveillance solutions. Its mission is to develop and deploy innovative solutions to understand and protect our planet and manage its resources sustainably.

CLS employs 720 people at its headquarters in Toulouse, France, and its 24 other sites around the world. It operates in five strategic areas of activity: environment and climate monitoring; sustainable management of fisheries; fleet management; energy, mining, and infrastructure; and maritime security.



## CLS: FOR EARTH, FROM SPACE

In recent years CLS has developed new expertise drawing on innovative technologies such as drones, optical satellite imagery, modeling, big data, and artificial intelligence.



### DRONES

CLS's expertise in drone technology has led to increased business and noteworthy contracts with the European Maritime Safety Agency. In 2019 CLS completed 100 missions and 300 flight hours, investigated more than 200 ships, and flew over more than 230,000 NM<sup>2</sup>.



### OPTICAL IMAGING

With the 2017 acquisition of SIRS, a company specializing in the production of geographic data from optical and aerial images, CLS rounded out its offerings and has since provided enhanced solutions for land-based applications.



### BIG DATA & IA

CLS has developed superior services using big data and IA technology. The MAS system is one example. This ultra-powerful maritime surveillance system merges massive amounts of data and automatically interprets and analyzes certain situations. This tool popular in a number of jurisdictions is highly effective in ensuring sovereignty at sea and combating illegal activity, trafficking, and environmental crime.

Follow CLS on Twitter [@CLS\\_Group](#) - [LinkedIn](#) [www.cls.fr](http://www.cls.fr)

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## ABOUT ARDIAN

Ardian is a world-leading private investment house with assets of US\$96 billion managed or advised in Europe, the Americas, and Asia. The company is majority-owned by its employees, holds entrepreneurship as a core value and focuses on delivering excellent investment performance to its global investor base. Through its commitment to shared outcomes for all stakeholders, Ardian's activities fuel individual, corporate, and economic growth around the world.

Holding close its core values of excellence, loyalty, and entrepreneurship, Ardian maintains a truly global network, with 640 employees working from 15 offices across Europe (Frankfurt, Jersey, London, Luxembourg, Madrid, Milan, Paris, and Zurich), the Americas (New York, San Francisco, Santiago), and Asia (Beijing, Singapore, Tokyo, and Seoul). It manages funds on behalf of more than 1,000 clients through five pillars of investment expertise: Fund of Funds, Direct Funds, Infrastructure, Real Estate, and Private Debt.

Follow Ardian on Twitter @Ardian

[www.ardian.com](http://www.ardian.com)

## ABOUT CNES

CNES (Centre National d'Études Spatiales) is the government agency responsible for shaping and implementing French space policy in Europe. It designs and puts satellites into orbit and invents the space systems of tomorrow; it promotes the emergence of new services useful in everyday life. Founded in 1961, CNES has developed major space projects, launchers, and satellites and is the industry's natural partner for promoting innovation. The agency has nearly 2,500 employees passionate about space and its infinite, innovative fields of application. They work in five areas: the Ariane project, science, observation, telecommunications, and defense. CNES is a major player in technological innovation, economic development, and France's industrial policy. It also forges scientific partnerships and is involved in many international cooperative endeavors. France, represented by CNES, is the main contributor to the European Space Agency (ESA).

[www.cnes.fr](http://www.cnes.fr)

## ABOUT CNP

CNP is an investment firm founded by Mr. Albert Frère and exclusively controlled the Frère family. CNP invests its permanent capital for control or joint-control of European industry leaders and acts as an active partner to drive sustainable value creation alongside the founders, management and families it associates with. Together with GBL, CNP is one of the 2 pillars of Groupe Frère that manages net assets of approximately € 5,5Bn.

[www.cnp.be](http://www.cnp.be)

## ABOUT IFREMER

Recognized worldwide as a leading institute in ocean science and technology, Ifremer is grounded in both sustainable development and open science. It conducts research, innovates, and advances expertise to protect and restore the ocean, use its resources responsibly, and share marine knowledge and data in order to create new opportunities for economic growth that respects the marine environment.

Ifremer operates the French Oceanographic Fleet for the benefit of France's scientific community. It designs its own state-of-the-art devices and equipment to explore and observe the ocean, from the coastline to the open sea and from the depths to the water's surface. Ifremer's 1,500 scientists, engineers, and technicians are advancing knowledge on one of Earth's last unexplored frontiers, helping to shape public policy and innovation for a sustainable blue economy. They are also raising public awareness of maritime issues. Founded in 1984, Ifremer is a state-controlled industrial and commercial entity (EPIC) with an annual budget of close to €240 million.

[www.ifremer.fr](http://www.ifremer.fr)

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