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# PONANT's polar explorer reaches North Pole with ABB technology, setting new standards for cruise

- Le Commandant Charcot makes history with ABB's Azipod® propulsion as the first exploration cruise vessel to reach the North Pole
- The vessel is built with respect to environment and features the largest energy storage system ever installed on a cruise ship for maximum sustainability

The hybrid-electric exploration cruise vessel Le Commandant Charcot became the first vessel of its kind to reach the geographic North Pole on September 6, 2021, as it was completing the sea trials in preparation for welcoming guests for the maiden voyage later this year.

Equipped with Azipod® propulsion technology, the luxury cruise ship produces minimal noise and vibrations to provide a comfortable passenger experience. Moreover, the ship's energy storage system, supplied and integrated by ABB, is the largest ever delivered to a vessel of its kind at almost five megawatt hours, allowing the engines to be switched off for silent, emissions-free cruising.

Le Commandant Charcot will also be available to the scientific community contributing to the global efforts in the study and preservation of the Poles and oceans. The vessel is equipped with measurement instruments, and features science labs as well as a moon pool for taking samples, with all of the equipment designed to meet the requirements of academic research. With that, Le Commandant Charcot offers a platform for observation, research and analysis to scientists around the world, enabling them to study remote areas by regularly collecting data in these zones.

"ABB designed both the Azipod® propulsion units and the energy storage system to meet the precise operational requirements of Le Commandant Charcot," said Mathieu Petiteau, Director, Newbuilding and R&D, PONANT. "As well as ensuring a high level of passenger comfort, the vessel is capable of cruising in zero-emissions mode while exploring remote locations. Thanks to the Azipod® system's maneuverability, the ship will also be able to navigate smoothly and safely through icy waters."

"Azipod® propulsion has become the preferred solution for exploration cruise vessels operating in highly sensitive and demanding marine environments. We are proud to have been chosen by PONANT and look forward to seeing Le Commandant Charcot in action for the years to come," said Dick Björkqvist, Global Segment Manager, Cruise, ABB Marine & Ports.

With the electric drive motor situated in a submerged pod outside the ship hull, the Azipod® system can rotate 360 degrees, significantly increasing maneuverability and operating efficiency of a vessel and cutting fuel consumption by up to 20 percent compared to conventional shaftline systems. Since its

launch 30 years ago, Azipod® propulsion has saved a total of over 1,000,000 tons of fuel in the passenger cruise segment alone. Options for Azipod® propulsion range from 1 to 22 megawatts, and its technology plays a key role in ABB's strong position for environmentally friendly electric propulsion.

Le Commandant Charcot is the first cruise ship with the ability to sail in 'double-acting mode', meaning it can navigate stern-first in ice conditions to improve safety and complete cruises in a timely and efficient manner. In addition, the Azipod® system allows the vessel to be brought to a complete stop in 50 percent less time than a ship with a traditional shaftline set-up.

The vessel's emphasis on safety is further reflected in its connectivity to the ABB Ability™ Collaborative Operations infrastructure. With round-the-clock access to a worldwide network of ABB experts, Le Commandant Charcot will benefit from remote equipment monitoring and diagnostics for enhanced passenger and ship safety – services that are particularly important for vessels operating in the farthest reaches of the globe.

ABB's scope of supply for this pioneering vessel also includes power generation and distribution technology, propulsion-control and remote-control systems and a Power and Energy Management System (PEMS™). Through the PEMS™, Le Commandant Charcot will optimize the use of its hybrid power supply – comprising the main power source, liquefied natural gas, and the energy storage system – to ensure optimal engine load with reduced fuel consumption and emissions. The ship also features ABB's Power2 two-stage turbocharging solution, further increasing fuel savings by up to five percent.

“With yet another high-spec passenger vessel delivered to its owner featuring ABB integrated power and propulsion technology, we are rapidly expanding our portfolio in this segment,” says Juha Koskela, Division President, ABB Marine & Ports. “Le Commandant Charcot perfectly demonstrates the benefits of our electric, digital and connected solutions for this kind of ship, offering a blueprint for other expedition vessels to follow.”

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