



Iv-Groep

Helicopter Landing Grid

VDL KTI also produces Helicopter Landing Grids, known as HLG's, which are high-tech, niche products. An HLG is a large, round platform measuring nearly 3 metres in diameter that you see on the stern of Navy frigates or supply ships. When at sea, helicopters are able to land quickly and safely by clamping onto the HLG. These specific HLG's were engineered and developed together by VDL KTI and Iv-Groep, a Dutch engineering firm based in Papendrecht. These two companies have established a global and far-reaching cooperative partnership over the past 10 years.

VDL KTI manufactures and delivers HLG's for all types of ships. During the landing procedure, the helicopter shoots a harpoon – a kind of hydraulic clamp suspended underneath the helicopter – into the top plate of the

HLG, where it remains fixed. This top plate resembles an inverted honeycomb profile and is completely milled from premium-grade stainless steel. In combination with the harpoon, it ensures that the helicopter is anchored to the stern of the ship. "With our HLG's, a helicopter is always able to land safely on a ship, even under the most extreme weather

conditions," says Simon Jacobs of VDL KTI. "Particularly in heavy seas (sea state 6 or higher), it can be challenging for helicopters to land and attach themselves to the ship in one attempt. By anchoring quickly, landing in rough

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seas becomes much easier and safer. The principle applies for taking off as well. It guarantees a higher degree of safety because the helicopter gains altitude quickly without the need for extra personnel on deck that

conventional decoupling requires." Iv-Groep has been supplying HLG's to the Royal Dutch Navy since 2004 and first joined forces with VDL KTI in 2010. "The quality and delivery of the HLG's became much more reliable after we started working with VDL KTI," says Rick de Jong of Iv-Groep. "We no longer have any unforeseen delays and the quality is considerably higher than other engineering factories that we worked with in the past. Another advantage of working with VDL KTI is that the delivery time becomes much shorter. "In the past, delivery would take more than six months, partly because we use a special stainless steel material," says Rick de Jong. "Since working with VDL KTI, the total lead time has been reduced significantly. The fact that VDL KTI has a good working relationship with steel suppliers, is a major factor. An open communication style and technical knowledge of VDL KTI have definitely also helped. Our collaboration has contributed to long-lasting and stable relationships that we build with our customers. We have supplied HLG's to the Belgian and Dutch navies and we also sell and deliver HLGs outside of Europe." Rick de Jong looks back with satisfaction at his many years of working with VDL KTI. "It has always been a pleasure to work with them. We have collaborated on several exciting projects over the years, which has forged a close bond between our two companies. Through innovative design and quality production, you can keep the manufacturing industry closer to home." VDL KTI and Iv-Groep are always seeking new opportunities, and the two companies complement each other perfectly. "We are considering to use HLG's on buildings, such as skyscrapers and hospitals which could be potentially a major market," says Rick de Jong. "Air ambulances aren't always able to land with strong winds. HLG's could then offer the solution for them to land patients safely on hospital roofs under all weather conditions. These civilian helicopters are generally much lighter than military ones, which means we can provide lighter HLG's at a more affordable price. Currently we are also working on developing a super-light version of HLGs for drones and unmanned aircraft."