



## Press release

### SKF and INSA Lyon renew 40-year partnership with new research Chair

Gothenburg, Sweden, November 17 2025: SKF Group, a global leader in bearing technologies and lubrication systems, and INSA Lyon, a major player in engineering education and research in France, are extending their four-decade collaboration with the launch of a new research chair: **“Reimagining Lubrication – Advanced Bearing Lubrication for a Better Tomorrow.”**

This collaboration began forty years ago at LaMCoS (Contacts and Structures Mechanics Laboratory - UMR CNRS 5259) and has evolved into a strategic partnership that includes 12 years of dedicated research through two previous chairs. The third chair, which was officially inaugurated on November 6, builds on this strong foundation to drive innovation at the intersection of academic research and industrial application.

The first chair, “Lubricated Interfaces for the Future,” established in 2013, became a cornerstone for advancing tribology and lubrication science under extreme conditions. Jointly led by, initially Philippe Vergne, Senior CNRS Research Director and now led by Prof. Nicolas Fillot at LaMCoS, and Guillermo E. Morales Espejel, SKF Principal Scientist and Chair Professor at INSA Lyon, the Chair has delivered significant breakthroughs in lubricant modeling, bearing performance, and simulation tools. Under the newly signed agreement, the partnership will run until April 2031, focusing on real-world industrial challenges in fundamental tribology particularly in aerospace, where performance, safety, and reliability are critical.

“We take great pride in partnering with universities that are world leaders in their field. INSA Lyon is a proven centre of excellence in tribology and rotating machines. Renewing this Chair with INSA Lyon is a testament to the strength and impact of our collaboration. This next phase will further strengthen SKF’s long-term competitiveness by deepening our scientific understanding and accelerating the development of sustainable, high-performance solutions,” **Annika Olme**, CTO and SVP Technology Development at SKF.

“With this new agreement, SKF Aerospace and the INSA Lyon will continue their excellent collaboration in key areas of cutting-edge technology. This is especially critical for our aerospace business unit, where

## Press release

stringent safety standards demand the highest levels of performance and reliability. The Chair enables us to deepen our research in tribology and improved lubricant behavior in aerospace systems, helping us meet regulatory requirements while pushing the boundaries of innovation. This partnership also serves as an entry way for those students looking to join the aerospace industry, as we have a long history of achieving SKF placement as a career path,” Gregory A. Zimmerman, Director of SKF’s Aerospace Business Unit.

The Chair will continue to address key technological, environmental, and economic challenges, including extending component lifespans, reducing energy losses, minimizing the use of fossil-based materials, and lowering the cost of mechanical system design and operation. Research topics will include friction, rheology, lubrication with mixed oils and media, surface physical effects, and optimization of contact geometries in aerospace and space applications.

“The renewal of this agreement rests on a fruitful and excellent research collaboration, based on a relationship of long-term confidence and the combination of skills of the highest standard of INSA Lyon and LaMCoS in response to the needs of the SKF Aerospace. This partnership allows us to tackle complex, fundamental and technological problems, to develop unique expertise focused on those highly specialized topics, to create optimal conditions for innovation and knowledge generation in the topics of tribology and lubrication while accounting for the environmental impact. It also secures a continuous source of cutting-edge innovation and talents in their field for SKF Aerospace”, Marie-Christine Baietto, Vice President for Research and Valorisation at INSA Lyon.

Beyond research, the Chair plays a vital role in talent development, supporting PhD and post-doctoral researchers, internships, and end-of-term projects, while fostering close collaboration between SKF engineers and academic researchers. This renewed Chair continues SKF’s tradition of partnering with leading academic institutions to push the boundaries of bearing and tribology research. With a team expected to include a dozen researchers, including four PhD students, it will remain a hub for innovation, knowledge transfer, and industrial application.

**About INSA Lyon:** National Institute of Applied Sciences of Lyon - INSA Lyon is a leading engineering school with strong humanist values that have formed engineers to meet the socio-ecological and digital challenges of an ever-changing world. Each year, INSA Lyon welcomes more than 6,000 students, 600 doctoral students and graduates more than 1,000 engineers and 150 doctors. A school open to the world, INSA Lyon has formed a network of more than 200 academic partners on 5 continents and has nearly 100 different nationalities on its campus. Committed to social openness and diversity, INSA Lyon leads a very active policy in this area through its Gaston Berger Institute. The School also develops research of excellence, responsible and united, based on 22 laboratories. Created in 1957 by philosopher Gaston Berger and Rector Jean Capelle, INSA Lyon is the oldest and largest of the 7 schools making up the INSA Group and 5 partner schools in France.



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Read more: [The journey of Guillermo Morales-Espejel, a Tribology expert at SKF](#)

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*Since 1907, SKF has been making some of the world's most innovative bearings, seals, lubrication systems, condition monitoring solutions, and services to reduce friction. Less friction means more energy saved and by reducing it, we make industry smarter, more competitive, and more energy efficient, building a more sustainable future where we can all do more with less. SKF is represented in approximately 130 countries and has around 17,000 distributor locations worldwide. Annual sales in 2024 were SEK 98,722 million and the number of employees was 38,743. [www.skf.com](http://www.skf.com)*

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