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Hubel Marine

Hubel Marine B.V. was founded in 1997 by Erik de Koning as a consultancy firm to assist ship owners with the registration of their vessels and prompt delivery of seafarer documentation. Its head office is located in Schiedam, Netherlands, where the company offers a complete package of services.

'In 1988 my father Jacques de Koning started to perform Annual Safety Inspections for the Panama flag state,' says Erik de Koning. 'Some flag states can be very bureaucratic requiring complicated legalisation or translation procedures. That was the reason why we started our specialised vessel registration department.'

Hubel Marine has seven surveyors based in Dubai, Lebanon, United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, Belgium and Holland, all 'accustomed to flying all over the world to perform their surveys,' says de Koning. 'Most of our clients know us for giving service on a 24/7 basis,' he explains. 'We receive inquiries as far as Australia to process applications for crew endorsements because we act faster than the nearby Consulate.'



Erik de Koning

The seafarer department annually processes approximately 3,500 applications for three different jurisdictions, he says adding that the firm is like a medical doctor for its clients, taking their headache away. 'We had once a Norwegian customer who had been trying for two weeks to obtain an authorisation from the flag

for the Class to issue Certificates as the vessel had to leave the shipyard rapidly. We solved it the same day.'

Hubel Marine works with a pool of lawyers that are selected by the firm for each client's needs according to the services required and 'we select the best suitable for the ship owner or bank,' comments de Koning.

With comprehensive services, Hubel Marine has a wide range of ship owners including big liners, new buildings, bulk, tankers and the offshore market 'where Hubel Marine is very strongly represented.'

The firm's flag registration department sees use by customers from Norway, UK, Spain, Italy, Turkey and more, but 'our strength is that we provide the best service and we do it ourselves,' he explains.

'We give a personal and customised service and talk directly with the decision makers,' says de Koning who spends about four to five months of the year on the road visiting flag states and clients. 'We don't charge by the hour because we are not reinventing the wheel. It is our daily job.'

Since then the company has seen consistent work in dredging and land reclamation works in Panama, amongst others for the cruise port Colon 2000, container terminals of Manzanillo International Terminal (MIT), Colon Container Terminal (CCT) and for Panama Ports Company (PPC).

'Just recently we completed the works under contract since May 2007 by Hong Kong-based Hutchison Ports Holdings' subsidiary Panama Ports Company, for the extension of the container port of Balboa, Panama, at the Pacific entrance of the Panama Canal,' says CIMS regional manager, Bernard Bezemer. The works included the construction of additional port area by means of land reclamation, a retaining rock dike and a link structure to existing berths 16 and 17, removal of the 'Diablo Island' outcrop and an additional extension to the berth 17 of around 320mtr.

The civil works (the rock dyke), which is the concrete structure between the existing pier, the landfill and the new extension to berth 17, are underway and almost finished at time of press by Coastal's Panamanian partner Intercoastal Marine Inc.

C.I.M.S. has not only executed a large variety of contracts and works for private port concessionaries and port operators in Panama over the last few decades, but has also executed a couple of maintenance dredging works in the past for the Panama Canal Authority (ACP).

'And in 2006, it completed a mayor contract with the ACP to deepen the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal to 14.2mtr,' said Bezemer.

In July this year C.I.M.S. was awarded a further contract by the ACP for the charter of a mechanical dredge and two dump barges for the period of a year. This equipment will specifically be deployed in the Gaillard Cut and Gatun Lake for the Panama Canal Expansion Programme.

The company Boskalis holds an ISO



CIMS regional manager, Bezemer

9001 certificate following its implementation of a quality system and is certified with ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 for health, safety and environment. The company also operates its vessels according to the International Safety Management code (ISM), Bezemer added.

As a worldwide operator, Boskalis is strongly active in the regions like Mexico,

the US, the Caribbean and in South America. For the company, the Panama Canal expansion means a potential amount of dredging work and furthermore, opportunities for port expansion and infrastructural development projects.

Belgium's Dredging International/DEME Group (DI) was awarded the contract to dredge the Pacific entrance for the Canal expansion project in April 2008. DI offered \$177.6m to widen the Canal's approximate 14km navigation channel to a minimum of 225mtr and deepen it to a maximum level of - 15.5mtr Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS). 'This project, the first in Panama for Dredging International, is indeed our largest project currently under execution in the Americas,' says Dredging International de Panama's Central America area manager, Hugo de Vlieger.

The scope of work includes dredging 9.1m cu mtr from 14.2km of the canal (some of it hard rock) from its entrance at the Amador Causeway up to the Miraflores and new lock sites, making DI's scope a vital part of the \$5.25bn expansion programme. In conjunction with the Panama Canal Authority (ACP), DI has taken the various challenges into account and split the project into eight sections that, each of which will be dredged over two phases: first removal of the relatively soft overburden, and then, removal of the rock. The contract is to be executed over four years but DI says it might finish the works several months earlier. There are five disposal sites that will

be used to dispose of the material - three at sea and two on land.

DI has deployed nine new and proven units equipped with the latest technology for the job, including DI's 28,200kW cutter flagship, self-propelled heavy-duty vessel D'Artagnan that has 6,000kW cutter power and the drillship Yuan Dong 007. Additional vessels are 9,000cu mtr trailer Breydel and the backhoe Samson, a clamshell and a couple of self-propelled 2,000cu mtr hopper barges.

Drilling and blasting were initiated with the chartered-in Yuan Dong 007, a pioneering vessel designed and built specifically for the Panama Canal expansion project. Built at Ningbo shipyard for \$25m by Chinese blast company Yuan Dong, the vessel has 10 integrated towers and the capacity to blast up to 60,000cu mtr of rock per week. In the first two years of the contract, DI finished 55% of the total job and accordingly foresees an early finish in the 2nd half of 2011.

In addition to the ACP expansion, DI

started dredging at the PSA Panama International Terminal as subcontractor to Alvarado Et Durling and Vergel Et Castellanos, which is building the facilities. Works are executed with Cutter Suction Dredger Vlaanderen XIX pumping ashore, and are planned to be completed by mid 2010. There was some land-based dredging in addition to the 1m cu mtr increase in depth to 14.5mtr at MWLS. PSA Panama International Terminal plans to begin operating in the last quarter of 2010.

In June 2010, the ACP awarded DI its second Panama Canal contract to dredge Gatun Lake. This was because the Belgian company offered the lowest price of \$39.98m to widen and deepen the existing navigational channel by dredging approximately 4.6m cu mtr in the northern most reaches of the Lake. This contract is one component within the ACP's Fresh Water Dredging and Excavation Project for the Canal expansion, which includes the dredging and/or excavation of about 30m cu mtr in Gatun Lake and Gaillard Cut. The Gatun Lake dredging project is vital to

ensure that larger, wider ships can reach the new Atlantic locks.

DI is also looking at other opportunities in the region where most of the Central American ports have expansion projects says De Vlieger, who came to Panama in 2007 to open Dredging International's office.

Besides Panama, Antwerp-based DI is executing projects in over 40 countries at present. These include the \$300m-plus dredging and reclamation for site preparation for ADNOC in Ruwais, UAE; the \$400m plus contract to construct the London Gateway container terminal on the River Thames for DP World; the extension of the Ust Luga port in Russia and the extension of the coal terminal of Newcastle in Australia. It is also undertaking a major site remediation contract prior to the construction of a container terminal for the account of Brasil Terminal Portuario in Santos, Brazil. Moreover, in August 2010 a major contract worth \$155m was awarded to DI to deepen and widen the access channel and harbour basin of



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