

PRESS RELEASE

Flooding of first section of the newly excavated lock lanes on Pacific Side of Panama Canal

20 October 2011

On 19 October 2011, a first milestone in the construction of the new locks in the Panama Canal was reached. At 9.40 am, the Autoridad del Canal de Panama (ACP) flooded the first section of the newly excavated lock lanes on the Pacific Side. The excavation works close to the Centenario Bridge are executed by Jan De Nul Group and are 4.5 months ahead of contractual schedule.

In the presence of Mr. Alberto Aleman, Canal Administrator, and Mr. J.P.J. De Nul, CEO of Jan De Nul Group, the Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli had the honour of starting the flooding process by literally turning the tap on.

Phase 1: Dry excavation works

Until present, 2.4 million m³ of previously blasted rock has been excavated in a record time. This represents 60 % of the total volume to be excavated. The dry excavation works will continue until end January 2012. Jan De Nul Group mobilised its largest earthmoving equipment for the dry excavation, such as 21 pieces of A40 Volvo articulated dump trucks and Hitachi EX1200 Excavators.

Phase 2: Dredging works

After the flooding of this first section, and once the water reached the same height of the water level in the existing Panama Canal, Jan De Nul Group will start the dredging works by mobilizing its large Cutter Suction Dredger 'Marco Polo' and Backhoe Dredger 'Il Principe'.

The completion of the works is foreseen for March 2012.

The contract

The PENAC Project or the Pacific Entrance North Access Channel dredging project, concerns the excavation of the future access channel to the new third set of locks. This contract is part of an ambitious Expansion Program of the Panama Canal Authority to enable Post-Panamax vessels to sail through the Canal by 2014, 100 years after the opening of the Canal.

Jan De Nul Group was awarded this contract on 16 August 2010. The works started mid November 2010 and will be completed by the end of March 2012, 7.5 months before the contractual end date.

In order to create the new access channel, 4,000,000 m³ of material of which 2,000,000 m³ of rock is to be excavated. The hard rock needs blasting before excavation.

The PENAC contract employs 180 persons, of which 167 Panamanians and 13 expatriates.

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Milestones

- 30% volume removed achieved on 03.06.11 (Contractual obligation was 15.07.11 i.e. 43 days ahead of schedule);
- 60% volume removed will be achieved end of October 2011 (Contractual obligation is 14.03.12 i.e. 4.5 months ahead of schedule).

Equipment used

Dry excavation works (+/- 3,000,000 m³):

Excavators: 1 Hitachi EX1200, 2 Hitachi ZX870, 1 Hitachi ZX 470, 1 Caterpillar 336;
21 A-40 Volvo Articulated dump trucks;
2 Caterpillar 988 wheelloaders;
Bulldozers: 3 Caterpillar D6, 2 Caterpillar D8;
Graders: 1 Volvo 930, 1 Volvo 940;
2 BOMAG compactors BW211;
2 Furukawa drill rigs for blasting operations

Dredging (+/- 1,000,000 m³):

Cutter Suction Dredger 'Marco Polo', Backhoe Dredger 'Il Principe', Splithopper Barge 'Le Guerrier', the 3,000 ton flat top barge DN145

Other activities of Jan De Nul Group in Panama

1. Design and construction of the third set of locks

The consortium GUPC, of which Jan De Nul Group is part, won the contract, by far one of the most prestigious infrastructure projects in the world. It is mainly a civil construction project. Dredging works represent less than 5% of the scope. The works entail the construction of two lock complexes, one on the Atlantic Ocean side and another on the Pacific Ocean side. This is to enable large ships to sail through the Panama Canal. After the works, the vessel capacity of the Panama Canal will be increased by about 50 %. The 6 locks will be 6 times the lock of Berendrecht in Belgium, currently the largest lock in the world.

2. Deepening works at the Port of Cristóbal

In the Port of Cristóbal, Jan De Nul Group executes the deepening dredging works by order of the Panama Ports Company. The project entails the dredging of 750,000 m³ in order to enable the port to receive Post-Panamax vessels.

3. Deepening and Widening of Atlantic Entrance

In 2005, Jan De Nul Group was awarded the first contract for the deepening and widening of the Atlantic access channel of the Panama Canal. In 2009, thanks to the award of the Panama Locks Contract and to the experience in the previous Atlantic deepening works, Jan De Nul was awarded its second Atlantic contract.

4. Three other contracts for dredging activities along the Canal

All contracts are part of the Panama Canal Expansion Program.

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About Jan De Nul Group

People and vessels. This is the driving force behind Jan De Nul Group. Thanks to the skilled employees and the ultramodern fleet, Jan De Nul Group ranks at the top of the international dredging industry as well as being one of the largest civil engineering and environmental contractors.

The supporting services of the dredging, civil and environmental division enable Jan De Nul Group to perform large-scale projects to its clients' satisfaction, whether this concerns a Palm Island in Dubai, a new port facility in Australia or the construction of the new locks for the Panama Canal.



Additional Information

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