

TRACTEBEL ENGINEERING

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Tractebel Engineering and Compagnie Nationale du Rhône join forces to assist the Panama Canal in evaluating a new set of locks under study

The Panama Canal Authority (*Autoridad del Canal de Panama* or ACP) has awarded a one-year contract to conduct additional studies and provide technical assistance in preparing engineering specifications for development of a new set of Post-Panamax locks currently under consideration pending approval of Canal expansion in a referendum by the Panamanian people.

The consortium includes Technum, Tractebel Development Engineering, Coyne et Bellier (all three Tractebel Engineering affiliates) and Compagnie Nationale du Rhône. The consortium gets support from partners such as IMDC (International Marine Dredging Consultants N.V.), APEC (Antwerp Port Engineering Consultants), the Port of Zeebrugge, FITA (Flanders International Technical Agency), the SBE consultancy and BAW (Bundesanstalt für Wasserbau).

The consortium was founded in January 2002 for developing conceptual designs for a potential third set of locks at the Pacific entrance of the Panama Canal. This project is being evaluated by the ACP as part of the development of its Master Plan to increase Canal capacity and allow for the transit of Post-Panamax vessels, with the objective of maintaining the activity of this route that is of vital importance to marine traffic.

After being awarded a public tender for developing conceptual designs for the new locks, the consortium developed a series of missions or conceptual designs, including: single and triple lift locks, double lift locks, a system for water recycling of the future locks, a harmonization study of the Atlantic locks based on the solutions recommended for the Pacific locks, and studies of alternatives including the use of two or three water saving basins. These various studies are being evaluated by the ACP to select the most appropriate type of locks in technical and economic terms.

Among the technology the consortium recommended to the ACP was the use of multi-lift locks with rolling gates, lateral water supply and water saving basins. This new concept of locks, unique in size, is the outcome of a very close collaboration between the consortium and its partners. All consortium members developed advanced expertise that makes them world-wide recognized players in their specialized areas: marine and harbour civil works; design and management of large construction projects such as dams, hydro-power schemes and special structures; design of hydraulic and electromechanical equipment; and know-how of optimized management of hydraulic flow. By combining their multidisciplinary skills, they were able to come up with a particularly original design proposal for the locks.

The new contract entrusted to the Post-Panamax consortium has options for two additional one-year extensions and covers the development of additional studies of the locks and technical assistance to the ACP in preparing engineering specifications.

Note to the writers

One of Europe's major engineering companies, **Tractebel Engineering**, offers energy and infrastructure solutions to private and public companies, as well as to national and international institutions.

By taking part in this project which is of strategic importance to the future of the Panama Canal, Tractebel Engineering reinforces its position in the field of large transport infrastructure.

Technum, Tractebel Development Engineering and Coyne et Bellier, which are Tractebel Engineering affiliates, are players in the infrastructure sector.

- Technum is specialised in harbour and waterway hydraulics, and in urban development (www.technum.be)

- Tractebel Development Engineering is specialised in complex structures, transport infrastructure, buildings (www.tde.tractebel.com)

- Coyne et Bellier is an engineering firm specialised in large infrastructure structures (dams and hydro-power schemes, civil works for nuclear power stations, tunnels ...) (www.coyne-et-bellier.fr).

Tractebel Engineering is part of **SUEZ Energy Services** together with Axima, Axima Services, Elyo, Endel, Fabricom GTI, GTI and Ineo. As the European leader in installation and multi technical services, SUEZ Energy Services develops global solutions for its clients in the industry, the infrastructure and the tertiary sectors as for design, realization and maintenance of technical installations along with energy, utility and long-term multi-technical management. SUEZ Energy Services employs 66,000 people and achieved revenues of € 9.7 billion in 2004. SUEZ Energy Services is one of the four business lines of the quoted international industrial group SUEZ.

The **Compagnie Nationale du Rhône**, part of the Electrabel-SUEZ group, is now France's second largest electricity producer and the only one with a 100% renewables certificate for its total production (TUV EE-02). The CNR was founded in 1933 and was given a government concession in 1934 to develop and operate the Rhône with respect to three historical missions: electricity production, navigation, irrigation and other agricultural ends. The CNR carries out studies and provides engineering services in all fields of river engineering. The company is a recognised river expert in France and abroad. With the support of its test, measurement and monitoring laboratory, the CNR can meet all demands related to the physical and mathematical modelling of complex hydraulic flows, river flows or torrential flows. (www.cnr.tm.fr)

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