

THE HANSJE BRINKER SAFETY AWARD

Each and every one of the International Association of Dredging Companies (IADC) member companies has made on-the-job safety a top priority. At Van Oord this attention to safety is recognised in the annual Hansje Brinker Safety Award, an in-house safety award for projects and yards of the worldwide-operating Van Oord group. Mythically renowned as the young boy who put his finger in a hole in the dike and saved Holland from being flooded, Hans Brinker has become Van Oord's symbol for safety, health and the environment. Accordingly, each year the Hansje Brinker Award is presented to honour excellence in the implementation of the Van Oord Management System during the execution of the works on projects, vessels and yards with respect to safety (main criteria), health and environmental issues.

The QHSE (quality, health, safety and the environment) policy at Van Oord has been codified in very elaborate and detailed inspection lists to determine the award winner. For each category - vessels, projects and yards - a specific list has been collated that includes questions concerning the availability of the Management System and Safety Awareness as well specifics

relating to the site office, workshop and crane, the yard office, the vessel's bridge and engine room, to name just a few categories.

These lists clearly define the spearheads and the safety levels to be achieved, and they are based on several national and international standards, such as:

- ISO-9001 - International Organisation for Standardisation: a quality standard regarding customer satisfaction, process management and experience.
- VCA - A Dutch safety system for contractors focused on safety aboard ships and on project sites, accident prevention and protection of the environment.
- ISM Code - International Safety Management Code: the international standard for ships' management aimed at safeguarding safety at sea and prevent damage to property or the environment.
- ISPS Code - International Ship & Port Facility Security Code: a code to identify and eliminate safety risks on board and in ports.

Above: Cutter suction dredger *Calabar River* at work in Tinapa, Nigeria, where a world-class multipurpose resort is being developed.

- ISO-14001 - Environmental Standard: a guideline applicable in certain countries that have prioritised environmental matters and encourage possibilities to improve the environment.
- OHSAS-18001 - Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series guideline: a guideline that safeguards the safety of personnel and visitors on a project site and at the same time focuses on possible improvements.
- Van Oord is also certified for ISO-9001, VCA, ISM and ISPS, and several of local branch offices also hold ISO-14001 and OHSAS-18001 certificates.

THE AWARD WINNER

Work safety is thus completely integrated in the execution of all Van Oord projects and the safety policy is firmly embedded in the management system. Reducing the number of accidents and incidents as much as possible and reducing the risks for both people and the environment alike is the objective. Managers and crew have an important role to play in the field of safety, as it is their job to motivate their people to work safely and monitor the implementation of the company safety policies.

Progress in the execution of safety policies is monitored on a quarterly basis. Because of the large amount of work, a safety officer is appointed on every sizeable project. This inspector safeguards a high safety level. In the past few years, while turnover has been growing, the number of accidents has been declining.

All Van Oord ships over 500 GT are certified according to the ISM Code in compliance with international legislation. This means that these ships meet the international standards for ship management safeguarding safety at sea and preventing damage to property and the environment.

These vessels are frequently inspected by Van Oord auditors as well as auditors from an external agency. Given this close attention to safety standards, choosing one project over another for an award takes careful consideration.

In 2006, acknowledging the maximum effort put into safety and security measures while working in an extraordinarily challenging environment, Van Oord Nigeria Ltd was presented with the Hansje Brinker Award for its overall achievements (Figures 1 and 2).

The award recognised three Nigerian project sites, a well-equipped maintenance yard in Port Harcourt and the branch office in Lagos. One of the projects was the dredging for the creation of an artificial lake, "Lake Tinapa", which is part of a world-class integrated business resort complex being constructed on the banks of the Calabar River. Tinapa is located north of Calabar, eastern Nigeria's main port. Some 885,000 m³ soil has been removed with a cutter suction dredger and the soil has been efficiently reused to create new land for future leisure development.

A second project is at Calabar, eastern Nigeria's main port, which is situated 83 km up the Calabar River in the Niger Delta. Nestled in the far southeast of Nigeria, Cross River State is Nigeria's frontier to Cameroon, Sao Tome, Equatorial Guinea and beyond. The seaport, named



Figure 1. At the awards presentation, Safety Officer J. Ogbo accepts the Hansje Brinker Award from Koos van der Geer on behalf of Van Oord Nigeria, Ltd.

Calabar New Port, has an array of modern facilities for the export and import trade. Between 1976 and 1995 Van Oord carried out several projects in the vicinity, including recently the maintenance of the Calabar Channel for National Ports Authority.

The award-winning project involved the upstream dredging of the access channel to Calabar New Port being done by two trailing suction hopper dredgers, which are deepening the channel from -7 m to -10 m over a width of 150 m and a length of 46 km. This will allow vessels with a length of 170 m and a deadweight of between 10,000 and 15,000 tonnes to safely reach the port. The estimated volume of sediment to be dredged is 12,750,000 m³. The dredged material is placed in allocated disposal areas.

All these projects have been supported by the yard at Port Harcourt. Generally speaking, Nigeria is not an easy country to work and so winning this award was a significant accomplishment.

The standards of health and safety management demanded in Nigeria were no different than those required by other Van Oord projects. In fact, the difficult circumstances created an optimum awareness by all employees both national and expatriate staff. Oil and gas standards also enhanced a high level of safety and security morale.

Amongst the safety measures considered were the Toolbox meetings which occur almost daily somewhere in Nigeria. Toolbox

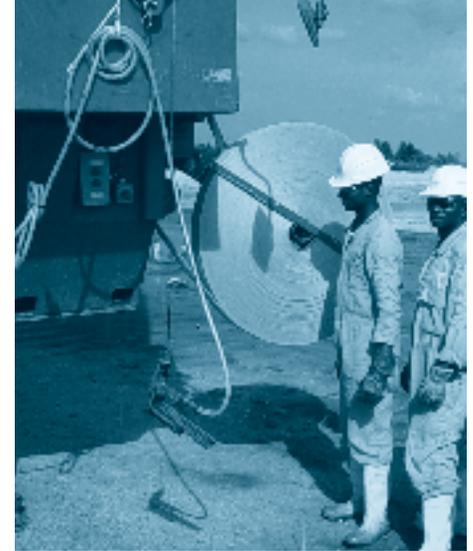


Figure 2. A Toolbox meeting in progress: They are an essential aspect of the stringent safety measures and occur almost daily somewhere in Nigeria.

meetings are brief meetings at which (near-) accidents, HSE (health, safety, environment) news and special subjects, are discussed in relation to relevant activities (vessel-specific, project-specific or yard-specific). Safety walks, audits and implementation of consequential measures are a day-to-day activity. Van Oord Nigeria Ltd. also regularly undergoes external audits.

The Van Oord Community Relations Plan safeguards a good relationship with the indigenous host communities at worksites and offices throughout the country. In addition, a major focus is on medical care. The high safety standard within Van Oord Nigeria features the presence of an ambulance, a doctor and clinic from SOS International at all project offices.

The healthcare standards and Medivac arrangements are optimised through an SOS International contract whereby helicopter service can be rendered on demand and present at site within a minimum time frame. The SOS clinic in Port Harcourt renders service for the expatriate staff, while two audited retainer hospitals provide care for the Nigerian staff.

In a brief overview: Van Oord Nigeria had 459,000 work-hours, with 310 toolbox meetings, 23 safety inspections and/or audits, 5 safety checks by independent organisations and only 1 accident that resulted in absence. The LIFR, number of Lost Time Injuries per 1,000,000 work hours, was a minimal 2.18. All in all these numbers testify to the heightened safety awareness at Van Oord Nigeria.