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PRESS RELEASE

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Drivers of dredging remain valid; investments in R&D remain steady

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When questioned about “the outlook for the dredging industry in the coming years given recent economic developments” and “the impact of the economic downturn on project investment decisions”, Koos van Oord, President of the Board of the International Association of Dredging Companies, answered with clarity: “Focus on the underlying drivers of dredging – population growth, energy needs, expanding global trade, tourism, ecology and climate change – and recognise that these drivers remain valid regardless of the short-term economic prognosis”.

Dredging is a pragmatic, hands-on business geared to problem-solving, an industry that involves investigation and experimentation to determine what works and what doesn't and why. To succeed requires long-term investments in new technologies. This is the essential strength of the major international dredging companies. They are accustomed to conducting exhaustive studies to find the best design, the best piece of equipment, the best method of providing quality work suited to the specific client. They are used to assessing the risks and benefits of particular methods, with the goal of ensuring the best possible outcome for their clients, economically, socially and environmentally.

The articles in the current issue of *Terra et Aqua* cover subjects ranging from the coast of France to the Black Sea coast to the United States, and reflect this entrepreneurial ability to “think outside of the box”. They include a pioneering method of processing contaminated dredged material at the Port of Dunkirk in France by building a treatment facility for naturally dewatering sediment; an unusual technique for building a more secure breakwater at the Port of Poti, Georgia, which required detailed design and preparation for the rehabilitation; an innovative on-the-job safety programme that calls for integrated and personal responsibility throughout the organisation and far exceeded governmental regulations; and a novel system of estimating soil properties, a process essential to cost-effective dredging. This last is part of an ongoing research project conducted by one of the dredging industry's many young researchers.

This commitment to investments in Research & Development is the backbone of the international dredging industry and contributes to finding optimal solutions for clients. Also crucial is the industry's belief in investing in people – young professionals with expertise in engineering, management, finances and law as well as officers and crewmembers onboard dredging vessels.

The drivers of dredging are constant: Infrastructure needs do not disappear because of an economic downturn. And the dredging industries commitment to investment and innovation is also constant. It is part of the industry's long-term vision aimed at helping clients find the best solutions to their infrastructure needs.

To read more about these recent innovative solutions and research, see the December 2009 issue of *Terra et Aqua*, which is available on request in hard copy and online at www.terra-et-aqua.com and www.iadc-dredging.com.

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The current issue is available online at www.terra-et-aqua.com. Photographs are available upon request. Back issues of Terra et Aqua to 1995 are also available at the website.

Terra et Aqua is a technical journal published quarterly in March, June, September and December for professionals and others interested in “maritime solutions for a changing world”. The infrastructure projects and the technologies presented aim to inform port authorities, developers, engineers, the offshore industry and government agencies about the state-of-the-art possibilities offered by dredging and maritime construction.

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