

Shelde-Natie's new E-Crane successfully unloads Panamax rapeseed cargo

A common question is "does size matter?" For Shelde-Natie in the Port of Antwerp in Belgium, the answer is now "no". Shelde-Natie can now offer efficient and immediate high-quality unloading of rapeseed using its new E-Crane. The first Panamax vessel to be unloaded using the new crane arrived on 8 October last year. Unloading the cargo gave the 1000-series E-Crane a full workout.

With an outreach of only 32 metres, and limited space on the dock and only 200 metres of crane rails along the quay, E-Crane engineers had to work closely with Schelde-Natie management to arrive at the optimum unloading solution, with the help of 3-D simulations.

All went smoothly unloading the giant vessel. Crane driver Stan started the 24/24 unloading operations at 0600hrs on Sunday. Service engineers from E-Crane were on standby to assist if necessary. By noon that same Sunday the first 2,000 tonnes had been offloaded and it became clear that the plan had come together nicely. The combination of careful planning by Schelde-Natie management, the dedication of the dockside team leaders Chris and Luc, the excellent communication with the ports longshoremen and above all the skilled E-Crane drivers Stan and Paul, all contributed to a job well done.

This complex exercise showed, once again, the versatility and potential of the E-Crane concept.



Port of Ploce development plan soon to get under way

A major development plan for the Croatian port of Ploce is set to get under way in early 2007.

The €19m (US\$115.5) project foresees a substantial expansion of bulk cargo-handling capacity of the Adriatic port, Croatia's second largest, from 3.1mtpa (million tonnes per annum) to 8.2mtpa by 2010. It also includes construction of a new container facility expected to handle up to 50,000teu (twenty-foot equivalent units) by the ends of the decade.

The need to expand and modernize the south Croatian port stems from a surge in throughput directly related to post-war industrial restructuring in nearby Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly foreign investment in post users

involved in the metals trades.

Work on the bulk terminal would likely commence in mid-2008 with completion expected by the end of 2010.

The terminal will handle largely iron ore, coal and bauxite for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but, said Ploce port authority executive director, Tomislav Batur, there is also potential for development as a transshipment port for Italian power plants.

The Ploce project will be financed largely by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, with respective loans of €58.8m and €11.2m. The Croatian government and local port authority will also contribute.

Steel handling operations to expand at UK Port of Cardiff

Associated British Ports (ABP) recently signed a term agreement with customer W E Dowds (Shipping) Ltd ('Dowds') to establish a dedicated steel-handling facility at the UK Port of Cardiff's Queen Alexandra Dock. The facility will handle thousands of tonnes of imported steel coil and other steel products from across the globe.

The agreement will see ABP and Dowds, a steel-handling specialist and private port-services company, invest approximately £200,000 to establish the facility. The investment will finance the provision of a 25-tonne overhead-gantry crane, other steel-handling



equipment and a wireless data-logging system that will be able to locate steel coils stored in the facility's 9,000m² dockside warehouse.

The facility will also feature a state-of-the-art 'port-management' system that has been developed by Dowds. The web-based system permits customers to track their product orders from the point of manufacture through to the final receiver and end user.

Dowds and ABP have worked in close partnership over the past 15 years to develop the region's steel-handling capacity. In 2005, over three-quarters of a million tonnes of steel passed through Dowds' facility at ABP's Port of Newport, Wales's premier steel-handling port. To facilitate these volumes and to improve the efficiency of Newport's steel-handling operations, ABP recently invested £1.4 million to extend the port's Number 7 Shed and relocated two Stothert and Pitt 40-tonne-capacity cranes from ABP's Port of Swansea to Newport's South Dock.