

NEWS

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Belmet And 3c Metal Formalise A Shareholding Relationship

Following a long history of successful collaboration and joint ventures between Belmet and 3C Metal, the French-based head office of 3C Metal has officially taken the decision to invest in a shareholding percentage of Belmet Namibia and Belmet South Africa.

The shareholding agreement is effective as of January 2016 and will formalise the current working relationship shared by the two companies.

"We have been talking for many years about initiating a more formal structure to our collaboration," says Pieter Kroon, Managing Director of Belmet, who adds that the investment will help drive their commitment to future and long-term expansion plans in South Africa and Namibia.

Philippe Boy, Managing Director of 3C Metal adds: "We have the same type of clients, but service them differently around the world. Together we can cater for a wider range of services and not be limited to one company's expertise and service offerings."

The shareholding agreement is likely to create opportunities for

employees too as the prospect of movement and training within the wider context of the two entities can be realised.

"Clients will benefit from cost savings through the mobilisation of shared resources and personnel," says Kroon who explains how the ability to deploy local employees from Belmet Namibia to a rig in Walvis Bay recently saved the rig owner the cost of bringing in personnel from overseas.

"We will cater for a wider range of services, more collaboration between the two companies and a clearer marketing strategy," says Boy adding that there is scope to develop and expand the current footprint.

The two companies currently operate facilities in France, Dubai, Malaysia, Cape Town, Namibia and Ghana. "Together we have a very good footprint to service clients," says Kroon adding the full range of services can now be marketed within these regions.

Describing the strategic nature of the agreement between 3C Metal and Belmet, Boy says: "I don't think there is any other company in Africa that can actually offer the full scope of what we can do at the moment: site surveys with 3D laser scanning; engineering (calculation notes, design including 2D and 3D modeling); sourcing and procurement; prefabrication from six strategic locations; inspection services, installation on site (offshore and remote onshore locations). In addition, as privately owned companies, we can react quickly to market forces to develop the skills and services that are required."

"Both entities believe in long term commitment and reinvesting into the facilities, employees and equipment. We want to offer a better solution to the client," says Kroon.

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Reinvesting for expansion in Namibian facility

Investing in tooling for Cape Town

The installation and commissioning of a new generation MPC CNC pipe cutting machine from HGG is underway at the Belmet Cape Town facilities in Bellville.

The new machine is set to replace an older generation system that was purchased in 2005 specifically for the Subsea 7 manifold contract, but which cannot handle rectangular or square tubing.

Pieter Kroon explains that the added flexibility provided by the new machine will meet the needs of the company's fabrication projects.

The MPC allows for several possible configurations making it a versatile and multi-purpose machine that is capable of cutting pipes, box sections as well as flat bars.

In preparation for the arrival of the new system, Belmet fabricated a base for the 15 x 20 x 6 m machine and will undertake commissioning, testing and training before dismantling the older machine, which will eventually be shipped to their facilities in Namibia.

"We have had a need for this machine for quite some time," says Kroon explaining that rectangular tubing was being cut by hand. "This machine will really help us with efficiency, accuracy and save on labour costs," he adds.

The MPC is equipped with a laser measuring system to compensate for distortions across a variety of materials.

With a strategy of reinvesting profits into the company, Belmet Namibia is currently finalising plans for the expansion of their facilities to capacitate growth in both the marine and industrial sectors.

The company will consolidate the purchase of an additional three properties into their existing facilities to accommodate a new factory that will provide between 1,600 to 1,700 m² of under-roof fabrication area.

According to Pieter Kroon, the new factory will include 15m under crantage with two 30-ton overhead cranes as well as a 5-ton auxiliary hoist unit. In addition, the existing factory will be increased by a further 900 m² and two 5-ton overhead cranes installed.

"We have already started with the first phase of the extension, which includes additional office space as well as new cloakroom facilities for the staff. This will prepare us for the second phase, which will include the actual factory extension," he says.

Investment in Namibia extends to the employment of additional personnel. "We want to supplement the current staff and increase capacity," adds Kroon who confirms that preference will be given to Namibians where possible when hiring. The company is investing in skills training to ensure that this objective can be met.

The Namibian entity is also undertaking DNV ISO 9001 and 18000 accreditation with the second stage of the process scheduled for August this year.

Rig work still viable

"We hope that, with this investment in capacity, should there be a turnaround of the oil and gas industry as well as the mining sectors, we will be very well-equipped to cater for these markets," says Kroon.

"We are committed to Namibia with these long term expansion and investment plans that tie into the Namibian port plan of the future. In addition, we are in close proximity to West African oil and gas markets," he adds.

Having undertaken a number of rig jobs over the course of this year, Belmet Namibia is still pursuing the rig repair and fabrication market.

"Walvis Bay is a full five days closer to the oil fields in West Africa (than Cape Town). This is a definite advantage for us in Namibia and I am sure that the current expansion projects will help us attract this sector," says Kroon, adding that port expansion by the Namibian government is also making Walvis Bay a more viable stop.

Recent rig visits from Sea Drill (*West Eclipse*) saw the company undertaking some prefabricated steel work at the Namibian facilities as well as additional work on the quayside.

Industrial mining sector

The industrial mining sector also represents an opportunity for Belmet Namibia's range of expertise and Kroon confirms that more effort is being placed on marketing their services to this sector with some good initial results.

"We have managed to secure our first contracts with Dundee Precious Metal," says Kroon who believes that by visiting the mines on a more regular basis they have been able to secure more fabrication work from the sector in general.

"We are committed to Namibia with these long term expansion and investment plans that tie into the Namibian port plan of the future. We are in close proximity to West African oil and gas markets."

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Gantry system and sampling tool for De Beers Marine

Having successfully undertaken a variety of work for De Beers Marine in the past, Belmont's Cape Town facility was pleased to secure the complete launch and recovery gantry system as well as sampling tool for the diamond mining company's new vessel which is due in the port in July.

The gantry structure consists of two main legs of 22-tons each and a 86-ton top structure plus auxiliary items including the cursor frame, the gravity compensation system as well as the maintenance access platforms.

The sampling tool and main frame have already been delivered to De Beers Marine's Paarden Eiland workshop where final assembly and testing is being undertaken by De Beers Marine prior to shipping to the vessel for load out.

The sheer size of the separate pieces of equipment has provided some transport challenges for the team.

Working with DFM and Apec Civil Engineering, complex design and calculations were undertaken to take into consideration the heavy weight, wind forces, terrain and soil compaction as well as bearing capacity for the concrete bases in order to do final site assembly, which forms part of Belmont's scope.

Describing the process of transporting the abnormal load, Pieter Kroon highlights how the structures had to be offloaded from the trucks onto the road 20 metres before encountering any transmission lines to be skidded on 70 mm Teflon on the tar before being reloaded onto the truck on the other side.

"This was actually a fairly quick process, but we had to undertake it between 2 am and 4 am in the morning; and needed a crane to lift the structures onto and off the trailer," explains Kroon.

Once the top structure is delivered to the harbour, the team will assemble the gantry structure on K and L berth and undertake testing prior to the final lift onto the vessel. A 750-ton crane is being commissioned by De Beers Marine to undertake the substantial lift.

Welding training undertaken in Ghana for new projects

Significant training has been undertaken in Ghana where Belmet 7 secured additional contracts that represent an extension of the existing TEN project as well as a new contract for the yard.

After an assessment of the skills of the current welders, a supervisor from South Africa selected the best candidates to undergo a three-month training programme that resulted in six welders being qualified for working with super duplex steel.

“The regulations for welding super duplex are far more stringent and welders need to control exact parameters such as pressure and heat – so it is a lot more complex than your usual carbon steel welding,” says Pieter Kroon.

The extension of the TEN project included a Gas Export Manifold (GEM) and associated pile. The GEM mainframe was fabricated using carbon steel tubing and beams, whereas the piping inside the GEM structure was fabricated from X65 high pressure carbon steel and super duplex stainless steel piping.

The first material was cut in October 2015 and the project is due for delivery to Subsea 7 in July. A total of over 220 tons of steel completed the scope of the project which included structural fabrication, CS piping, SSDX piping, control tubing, painting and FAT.

The second contract for Yinson included the delivery of six suction piles with a completed tonnage of almost 800 tons.

Kroon confirms that the yard is confident of their ability to attract additional business and is currently tendering on projects for various clients in the offshore industry.

Belmet is a diversified steel fabricator operating in the oil and gas, diamond mining, mineral processing and marine industries, in both local and international markets. Our ability to meet all delivery deadlines; to manufacture to stringent international specifications; and the business philosophy of honesty, integrity and transparency sets Belmet apart from other companies.