

KOLWEZI

Worldwide Orders Make For Bullish Mood

Condra has received an order for a further overhead crane from Kamoto Copper Company, the copper and cobalt mine in the south of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It is the eighth machine to be ordered by Kamoto Copper from Johannesburg-headquartered Condra in just over a year and, like its predecessors, is earmarked for workshop duty in the ongoing development and expansion of the mine being overseen by Senet consulting engineers.

Kolwezi Lifting Solutions, Condra's authorised agent for the DRC, is managing crane installation and servicing, and Kamoto Copper Company has additionally ordered spares worth R1,5-million to facilitate this. These spares will also be used to maintain the existing large installed base of Condra hoists.

Kamoto Copper's new crane will be a 3-ton, 9-metre span, single-girder workshop crane with a five-metre lift.

Its seven predecessors include a 10-ton double-girder overhead crusher maintenance crane with a 20-metre span and a very high lift of 19 metres, which added to Condra's reputation as Africa's acknowledged leader in the design and manufacture of these specialised high-lift machines.

The six remaining cranes comprise two 3-ton, 9-metre span machines and four 3,2-ton, 17-metre span single-girder electric overhead travelling cranes, the latter completed on schedule in April of this year despite a very short lead time of less than two months.

All these machines have short lift heights of about 4 metres.

Total value of the eight cranes together is some R6-million.

Recognising the need for rapid and effective service at Kamoto Copper Company, Condra appointed Kolwezi Lifting Solutions at the beginning of 2017. The relationship between management at the two companies stretches back decades.

Asked to comment on its DRC agent, Condra's managing director Marc Kleiner said that rival crane suppliers in Africa do not have agencies in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Ours is the only one, so this gives us a competitive advantage in terms of the best and most cost-effective service, and the quickest response times to Kamoto Copper and our other customers in that country," said Kleiner.

Kleiner said that Kolwezi Lifting Solutions consistently delivered all the necessary agency benefits expected by crane customers.

“At the moment we have other formalised agencies in Zambia, Namibia, Kenya and Botswana, and our qualified technicians based in Zambia, in Kitwe, travel to the DRC and Tanzania when needed,” he explained.

“But we would of course ideally like technicians based in other African countries as well, and we are currently establishing service relationships with representatives in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Angola with a view to formally appointing agents in those countries as soon as possible.”

The eight cranes ordered by Kamoto Copper Mine all feature motors and control panel enclosures built to IP65 standard to allow for periodic hosing down of the workshops.

There are also solid brass rope guide nuts on the rope drums, travel warning lights and sirens, and rail sweeps on all machines to counter the dusty environment.

Condra fitted striker limit switches to the horizontal travels as well to the hoists, and applied a special paint finish to cope with the demands of a generally aggressive working environment.

Exposed galvanised iron parts were also entirely excluded from one of the machines because of the acidic environment in which it has to work. Unpainted brake plates, nuts, bolts, C-track systems and other exposed parts on this crane were all made either from stainless steel or aluminium.

Kleiner said that he expected the flow of orders from sub-Saharan Africa to continue to increase.

“We are building a new workshop in Cape Town with easier port accessibility to allow us to ship further up the African coast from there, in preparation for the increase in business which we anticipate.

“Our Bulgarian, South American and Canadian operations are also expanding steadily.

“The general mood here at Condra is bullish,” Kleiner concluded.

ENDS

PHOTOGRAPHS SHOW:

1. Three overhead cranes (finished in yellow) for Kamoto Copper Company, nearing completion in Condra's Johannesburg factory.
2. Condra's managing director, Marc Kleiner.

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