



AMIIS

GLOBAL AMBITIONS



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Specialists in non-destructive testing and heat treatment, the company is beginning to diversify into the oil and gas sector and looking for growth outside South Africa

WRITTEN BY: ALAN SWABY
RESEARCH BY: WILL KIRBY



What would you do if you won the lottery? In the case of Nelson Mahadeo, he went into business for himself. A win of a couple of million rand in 2003 enabled him to say au revoir to his employers and set up Associated Marine & Industrial Inspection Services. By hiring a good team, he was able to get the business up and running in a short time.

AMIIS provides non-destructive testing (NDT) and heat treatment services – the two going hand in hand where any critical welding is being carried out. As the name implies, the original intention was to concentrate on the marine industry, in the company's home city of Durban. The business has its main office in the harbour and a dry dock operates from there for ship repairs. Since then, though, the company has widened its scope of interests and diversified into the other main business activities in Kwazulu Natal – namely paper & pulp and petrochemical refining. It's now a member of SAOGA and is gearing up for a greater involvement in the soon to be developed Mozambique and West African oil & gas fields.

“The marine industry is still important for us,” says Raj Kistiah, national manager of the non-destructive testing wing of the business, “but the reality is that very few new boats are ever built in South Africa, which means that the marine business is all about repair work. To get a more stable business base, AMIIS decided to develop interests in other areas of industry.”



MT Technician



AMIIS Staff

On the face of it, heat treatment and NDT seem poles apart but traditionally they are often found together. They are both concerned with ensuring the integrity of joints and materials and the notion of AMIIS being a one stop shop is at the heart of its marketing approach.

The company is a specialist in all conventional and high tech forms of NDT such as radiography, magnetic particle

inspection, penetrant testing, gamma rays and ultrasound, from which it selects the right procedure to satisfy the codes prescribed by clients. “On the heat treatment side,” says Kistiah, “we feel there is no single company that can outperform us in terms of speed and capacity. With all providers of these services essentially singing to the same hymn sheet, the points of difference centre not around the work itself but on how

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quickly and reliably they can be performed.”

AMIIS, as with other heat treatment companies, employs two distinctly different approaches – using electrical induction or gas as the heat source. The gas division provides high velocity gas units for drying and curing refractories, and post-weld heat treatment of large fabrications by direct firing, with satisfied clients including Sasol, Alstom, Chevron, Engen, Shell and BP, Eskom Power Stations, Exxaro Resources and Elgin Engineering.

What makes the difference is the number of heating modules at the company’s disposal. Speed and price are at the heart of

2003

AMIIS business founded

contractor selection, and for AMIIS there is no such thing as a job too large. With its comprehensive resources it can respond to a job within a couple of days where some of its competitors might take a couple of weeks to draw

together the equipment they need.

The two sides of the business are distinctly different in their demands, however. The heat treatment is capital intensive but has less need for highly skilled operatives. NDT, on the other hand, needs less in the way of capital but requires huge investments in labour.

Apart from the usual cry amongst South African businesses that the demand for

“THE COMPANY HAS DIVERSIFIED INTO PAPER & PULP AND PETRO-CHEMICAL REFINING”

skilled labour outstrips supply, the biggest problem that AMIIS faces is the extent of competition in the NDT arena, however, where the market in South Africa is saturated. “So we are taking steps to get more business from our neighbouring countries where there are fewer indigenous contractors,” explains Kistiah.

As well as its marine activities in Kwazulu Natal at Durban and nearby Richards Bay, AMIIS already has a chain of offices around South Africa linked to key clients in the petrochemical industry at Sasolburg and power generation plants located in South Africa’s coal belt to the east of Johannesburg. Serving existing clients in Mozambique but in particular helping to develop the oil and gas business there, AMIIS has an office in Maputo. In addition, AMIIS is easing itself into the West African oil & gas fields where the demand is high for inspection and testing services that are currently being met by US and British contractors. **BE**

For more information about AMIIS contact:
amiis@amiis.co.za



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amiis@amiis.co.za

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