

BCM GROUP

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CORPORATE BROCHURE




Setting the

standards

Allan Morrison, Central Asia operations manager of BCM Group, West Africa's longest established surface mining and civil earthworks contractor, talks to Jayne Alverca about what it takes to become the partner of choice to some of the mining industry's biggest players

BCM

Group came to life as a family firm in Western Australia more than half a century ago. International expansion came in the 1990s—first to Ghana and soon after to Mali, Tanzania, Guinea and Niger, with Burkina Faso, Senegal and Sierra Leone coming a few years later. By the turn of the century, BCM was established as one of the leading mining and civil earthworks contractors in sub-Saharan Africa. Central Asia then beckoned; and BCM became the first Western-style mining contractor to develop a presence in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, beginning operations in Uzbekistan in 2003.



“ We were the first mining contractor to establish a presence in West Africa and with such a long track record we have proved our ability to enter new countries with isolated remote sites and difficult conditions ”



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The group has now worked with some of the biggest mining companies in the world, including AngloGold Ashanti, Ghana Australian Goldfields, Goldfields Ghana, Randgold Resources, Afrika Mashariki Gold Mines and Newmont Ghana Gold.

BCM employs 50 expatriate staff and over 600 national employees in Africa, with 10 expatriates and over 100 national employees in Central Asia. Operations manager Allan Morrison sees their unparalleled depth of experience as the lifeblood of the company. “We were the first mining contractor to establish a presence in West Africa and with such a long track record we have proved our ability to enter new countries with isolated remote sites and difficult conditions,” he states. “At BCM, we have learned to mobilise fleets of equipment and people at a speed and magnitude that far exceeds most other contractors in the region.”

Morrison explains that contractors have a critical role to play in the mining industry because of the high capital outlay associated with earth moving operations. Shifting thousands of tonnes of rock and sand efficiently

JA Delmas

As an active partner to BCM’s international operations in West Africa, JA Delmas and its subsidiaries have supported BCM with its Caterpillar and Bucyrus equipment alike. Our continued support includes ‘on call’ field service operations, component repair facilities, parts delivery and logistics, and general customer advice & support. JA Delmas has a long standing relationship with BCM as with many other mining operators in West Africa. Our company values and objectives are all aligned to ensure uncompromising customer satisfaction—and with BCM this is exactly what we endeavour to achieve.

requires a specific equipment set dependent on the local conditions and a high level of expertise if the operation is to be carried out in a safe and environmentally aware manner.

“A medium size mine will demand a \$20 million outlay on fleet and associated plant

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Sustainable Productivity



and equipment,” he explains. “Because the resources are finite and mining operations may only last a few years, direct investment is rarely viable. Also, earth moving is our core business, whereas mining companies often have a focus on geology and mineral processing. Financially and intellectually we free up our clients to concentrate on what they do best.”

For BCM, creating value for clients begins with procuring the best equipment on the market, never the cheapest. Morrison says BCM prefers recognised global brands like Atlas Copco who have supplied 20 drill rigs, with Caterpillar another favourite. “We frequently opt to purchase Caterpillar equipment because it is of a very high quality in the first place and the company has an extensive dealership network across the African continent. This means there is much better availability of parts and support when we need it,” he says. The value of BCM’s current fleet of plant and equipment is presently around \$65 million.

Plant and equipment maintenance is strictly controlled through an integrated inventory and maintenance system. Workshop repairs, overhauls and other preventive and predictive maintenance are carried out at each major remote site by BCM staff in conjunction with in-country manufacturers’ representatives. There is also a dedicated workshop in Accra with a team of 70 technicians.

The business model evolved by BCM relies on a network of wholly owned subsidiaries in each of the countries where it has established operations. The company has amassed a wealth of knowledge in dealing with local cultural and business practices and requirements, workforce management, tax and corporate compliance matters and the myriad of logistical issues involved in getting the right equipment to where it’s needed, and ensuring its optimum performance.

“When we enter a new market, we prefer to hire our own people and create our own business entities,” Morrison continues. “We have often heard that it is impossible to operate in the countries where we work without local partners, but we are proof that this is not

Atlas Copco

Atlas Copco is an industrial group with world leading positions in compressors, construction and mining equipment, power tools and assembly systems. The Group delivers sustainable solutions for increased customer productivity through innovative products and services.

Atlas Copco Ghana Limited was established in 1992 to serve the country’s mining industry. The company is a leading supplier of mining equipment, compressors and road construction equipment (Dynapac), as well as aftermarket services in the country.

Atlas Copco Ghana is committed to sustainable productivity and this requires the responsible use of resources in ensuring reliable and lasting results for customers and stakeholders.

the truth. One hundred per cent control means that we can fully leverage our knowledge and expertise and deliver a better project.”

Most of BCM’s clients are large international companies who prefer a Western-style contractor because of the emphasis placed on adhering to safety and environmental protocols. Major mining houses have become far more aware of their role and contribution as corporate citizens and want to work with partners who can reflect these values. BCM has adopted the South African NOSA system for safety management, and every operation is subject to a stringent safety and environmental management plan.

Morison has been working with BCM for 20 years and has witnessed first hand the evolution of new safety and environmental metrics while tackling a variety of operational and technical challenges. Since 2003, he has been based in Uzbekistan and is currently demobilising operations at the Amantaytau Gold Fields project in the Kizulkum Desert region, which is owned jointly by AIM-listed



Oxus Gold and the Uzbekistan government. The project has comprised contract mining works and associated drill and blast works and is one of the operations he is most proud of. "From the outset, operations have run very smoothly despite the negative commentary that is heard about the difficulties of establishing a local entity and doing business in Uzbekistan. There were additional logistical challenges because it is also a land-locked country, but we believe we delivered an excellent level of productivity and achieved on-time and on-budget completion of the task we set out to achieve," he states.

Meanwhile, work continues in Kazakhstan at the Shaimerden open-cut zinc project in northern Kazakhstan.

"We believe our performance in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will pave the way for many more operations in this exciting region, including Russia, where we see great future potential.

"Our operations in Africa are also expanding all the time and we have already announced two important new contracts in 2011 at the Tonkolili Iron Ore Project in Sierra Leone. The other is a horizontal drilling contract awarded by Newmont Ghana Gold, who we have worked with before. Choosing to deepen their relationship with BCM shows their level of satisfaction with our performance to date," he concludes. www.bcmgh.com

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