



# IHC MINING B.V.

## MAKING WAVES



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*Converting a dry mining operation into a wet or dredge mining operation can renew the life of a mine. IHC Mining is able to facilitate this change by supplying equipment, educating and training local crew, and offering life-cycle support*

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**A**s the Mining division of IHC Merwede, IHC Mining focuses on integrated solutions for mining houses in onshore, near shore and deep-sea mining. It offers advisory services to determine overall technical and economic project viability. It designs, builds and supplies innovative mining vessels and advanced equipment. During operations the company provides its clients with life cycle support.

With roots that can be traced back to the 18th Century, and origins that lie with six Dutch shipyards that joined forces to build six sea-going tin dredgers for the Billiton Company, IHC Merwede is a Netherlands based company delivering integrated solutions to the dredging, offshore and mining industry.

From its locations in the Netherlands, South Africa, Australia and Singapore, IHC Merwede's Mining Division works closely with its customers to deliver an integrated service offering that it feels is proven to bring optimum results to any mining operation.

The company's innovative vessels and advanced equipment are typically utilised in the extraction of mineral sands, diamonds, gold, copper, nickel, tin, iron ore, phosphate, rare earths and rock salts from depths of ten metres or less up to 300 metres. Meanwhile it is also working to develop equipment specifically designed to operate in even deeper waters.

Unlike a number of the players that exist within the wet mining industry today, IHC Mining is able to point to its long history of operating in such environments. In the many decades in which it has built up



Mining dredger  
attached to floating  
processing plant

# 72%

.....  
Of the world's surface is covered in water

an unmatched level of experience it has also collected countless references from satisfied clients.

The roots of the business are very much entrenched in dredging. "It is this background," highlights Marcel Boor, Product Director of Near Shore and Onshore Mining Equipment, "that the company has leveraged in order to develop its core mining technologies over the years. We have long been a well-respected and recognised player in the dredging industry, and we hope to earn a similar status in the mining sector."

"We anticipate the onshore, near shore and deep sea market segments will continue to gain momentum, particular as dry mining becomes more difficult to develop and head grades continue to fall," explains Managing Director, Martijn Schouten. "While wet mining is by no means a new phenomenon, it is one that is being increasingly recognised as an attractive alternative to dry mining."

"Geographically," Schouten continues, "we are currently seeing growth in each of our specific market segments. In terms of our onshore activities, these are being driven largely by the strong levels of exploration on-going in places like Russia, Southern Africa and South America, while a particularly attractive area at present for near



Mining wheel

shore mining exists between Indonesia and the Philippines. Deep-sea mining activities continue to be spread much further across the globe with companies heading to wherever deposits may be found."

"At the end of the day," states Product Director for Near Shore and Onshore Mining, Kees Jan Verkaik, "what these mining clients are most interested in what they can get from the ground beneath the water in terms of minerals. One of the primary reasons why

such clients turn to us is because we possess the technology and skills required to get down to these mineral deposits and do so efficiently and effectively in almost any environment."

"One of the major benefits of wet mining in a lot of cases," Verkaik highlights, "is that the development of large scale deposits becomes a much less logistically challenging undertaking. Whereas such an operation on land would require countless trucks for example to transport the material, the

**"IHC MERWEDE'S MINING DIVISION WORKS CLOSELY WITH ITS CUSTOMERS TO DELIVER AN INTEGRATED SERVICE OFFERING"**



Dredge miner at work

transport of a product through say a hydraulic pipeline would not only allow you to move it greater distances in less time, it would also have a significant impact when it comes to cost savings. The trend towards developing larger mines has certainly helped shine the spotlight on such alternatives and that is a good thing for us.”

The reality however is that in many instances, when faced with a choice

between land-based and wet mining, a higher percentage of companies still choose to go with the dry option simply because they are less aware of the benefits and advantages of the alternative. The same lack of understanding and acknowledgement is one challenge that IHC Mining is working to overcome. Despite being lauded as being one of the leading figures within the Dutch-Belgian dredging cluster it is not yet seen as

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Dredge equipment for overburden removal



Onshore mining

a leading solution or equipment provider to the mining community.

IHC Mining’s mission to increase awareness in not only itself, but the whole concept of wet mining, saw it travel to Cape Town in early February for the Mining INDABA event. “Appearing at such industry gatherings is so important if we are to achieve our ambition of being recognised as the leader player in dredge mining,” Schouten enthuses. “It is at such events that we are able to share our ideas, thoughts and ambitions with potential clients, particular those that are keen to develop new concessions in the future.”

From a deep-sea perspective meanwhile, the fact that on average product grades found here are greater than those found on land is certainly something that in the future will

encourage more and more people to get their feet wet, as it were.

As Schouten goes on to conclude, with more than 70 percent of the world’s surface covered in water it is only logical that there will be an increase in wet mining going forward as the industry continues to follow a similar pattern to that which saw the oil and gas sector move offshore. “In order to facilitate this growth, as well as the needs of our customers, we will continue to increase our regional presence in core markets as we strive to grow as a leading business in our field of expertise.” **BE**

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