



DEME

Dredging, Environmental
& Marine Engineering

PRESS RELEASE

Flemish Minister-President Geert Bourgeois lays foundation stone of new DEME office building and puts high-tech dredging simulator into operation

Zwijndrecht, 15 January 2015 – Today, the Flemish Minister-President Geert Bourgeois has laid the foundation stone of the new DEME office building in Zwijndrecht. The Minister-President also put into operation the brand-new high-tech dredging simulator.

The **new office building** is going to be built on the premises of DEME's head office, located on Scheldedijk in Zwijndrecht, with a surface area of 5,600 m², and will be a continuation of the existing office buildings. The two lower levels will house technical rooms, meeting rooms, a fitness centre and an expansion of the existing kitchen and the restaurant. The remaining five floors offer space for around 250 new workplaces.

The building will meet the strict EPB (Energy Performance of Buildings) requirements through an optimal use of insulation, external blinds, smart lighting and ventilation. In addition, cold/heat storage will provide the sustainable energy that is needed for heating and cooling the building. The total investment for these new facilities amounts to 15 million euros.

In recent years, DEME has constructed many new buildings. The reasons for these expansions are the strong growth of the group and the further expansion of its fleet. The increasing complexity of its projects worldwide also requires proper support from the head office in the areas of project preparation and site supervision.

With this project, DEME is also clearly confirming **its ambition to consolidate its presence in Belgium**. The group employs 4,500 people, of whom 700 in Zwijndrecht and Ostend, 250 at Belgian sites and 60 at its workshops in Zeebrugge and Zwijndrecht. The consolidation of its presence in Belgium is feasible on condition that all political authorities and administrations in Belgium implement the European guidelines for support to maritime transport as much and as efficiently as possible. A three-yearly study shows that the support policy for this maritime sector is successful in economic terms and in terms of employment. Over the past ten years, the growth of the maritime sector has mainly been achieved by the marine engineering industry.

DEME attaches great importance to innovation when it comes to energy provision. An example of this is the latest initiative that contributes to the promotion of ground-breaking Flemish green technology. To this end, DEME is now also making available a testing ground at its premises –

subject to obtaining the required licence – for an **innovative small-scale wind turbine of the 'XANT' type** (= Vyncke, 3E and Participatie Maatschappij Vlaanderen). The energy generated can be used directly to power its own facilities.

The dredging industry, and the related niches, are high-tech sectors. They require highly specialised workers, both on board the vessels and at sites and offices. The company is prepared to do all it takes to provide them with this specific industry knowledge. 'Learning on the job' remains important. This can be accelerated and solidified by using simulators, which allow for learning without risks. In the past years, DEME has invested in a network of simulators: a navigation simulator and an engine room simulator at the VDAB training centre in Zeebrugge, a cutter simulator at the offices in Lambersart (France), and now – the crowning glory – a **hopper dredger simulator at our offices in Zwijndrecht**, which was put into operation by the Flemish Minister-President this morning.

About DEME

*The Belgian dredging, environmental and marine engineering group **DEME** has earned itself a prominent position on the world market in a number of highly specialist and complex hydraulic disciplines. Having started out with dredging operations and land reclamation, the group diversified into marine engineering projects at sea, services for oil and gas companies, the installation of offshore wind farms, environmental activities such as soil remediation and sludge recycling, and revalidation of brownfields and wreck clearance. Its multidisciplinary know-how and experience, project synergies and integrated business structure allowed DEME to grow into a global solutions provider. The group owns one of the most modern, high-tech and versatile fleets for dredging and marine engineering activities. DEME employs 4,500 people. In 2013 the group realised a turnover of EUR 2.53 billion.*

Press contact:

Ann Wittemans - Communications Manager

T +32.3.210.67.94 - M +32.470.88.04.71