



St. Maarten commissions new harbour crane Investments in cargo handling paying dividends



CEO Mark Mingo

The most significant development in St. Maarten in 2015 was the acquisition and commissioning of a new port crane – the largest mobile crane in the north eastern Caribbean. The Terex Gottwald Model 6 mobile harbour crane arrived at the Dr. A.C. Wathey cruise and cargo facility at the end of August, and the commissioning process was completed on October 15th. The purchase was financed by RBC (Royal Bank of Canada). The 14-year old HMK 260E Gottwald (referred to as Crane 1), which the Model 6 replaced, was sold to a group in Mexico by broker Pacific Handling Systems Inc.

The new crane and the additional Bromma spreaders will bolster Port St. Maarten's 24/7 operations, allowing continued expansion of cargo-related activities. With a reach of 51 metres and load capacity of 125 tons, the new crane will provide the capability needed to achieve growth targets. The cargo section at Port St. Maarten provides a large part of its revenues and the port's CEO, Mark Mingo, has indicated that the emphasis for 2016 will be on efficiency in port operations.

"More focus will be placed on operational excellence and finding the right balance between operational costs and revenues," Mr. Mingo stated. "In 2016 Port St. Maarten will be placing more focus on the transshipment segment and closing strategic agreements with the cargo principals. More investments will be made to enhance the transshipment segment and improve vessel turnaround time."



ABOVE: Port St. Maarten's new Gottwald Model 6 crane in its first operation, working the CMA CGM vessel, *mv Marfret Guyane*, on October 15, 2015.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Port St. Maarten's joint inauguration with CMA CGM on December 5, 2015 introduced both the Gottwald model 6 crane and CMA CGM's new 2,100-teu class vessels. Port St. Maarten's recently acquired Gottwald Model 6 crane was incorporated in a spectacular acrobatic performance that gave the audience an unforgettable show.

If efficiency and cost savings are his priorities, then the new crane will certainly facilitate the process. The Terex Gottwald Model 6 is a high-performance unit. It can work ships up to post-Panamax and Capesize Bulker class and is equipped with the technical and ergonomic features required to improve productivity. Port St. Maarten crane staff is already trained in using the new crane.

In recent years, Port St. Maarten has made significant investments in the cargo side of its business. Infrastructure development, dredging, equipment upgrading and staff training have been its main focus. It now has six nationals certified as operators and supervisors. These investments have produced steady growth in container business making the port a regional sub-hub for the north eastern Caribbean.

The year in review for 2014-15 saw an increase in cargo vessel calls of 7%, (from 1,120 in 2014 to 1,198 in 2015); while container throughput increased by over 15%, (from 82,648 teu in 2014 to 95,190 teu). Port St. Maarten serves Anguilla, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Antigua and Barbuda. The port is also in the process of developing what has been described as "a special relationship" with Saba and St. Eustatius to include port handling, operations, economic development and sustainability. Both those Dutch islands presently receive cargo shipments and port services from St. Maarten.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Beginning this year, Port St. Maarten will continue to place emphasis on operational excellence, as

indicated by Mr. Mingo. This will require additional investments. A revised Cargo Master Plan (for better property/asset utilization), that will further improve the flow of cargo and overall efficiency, is already being developed.

A spare parts module is to be launched as part of the port's Global Logistic System. This will allow the cargo facility management to have better control over parts, purchasing and record-keeping.

The recent acquisition of the latest model Terex Gottwald Model 6, and the phasing out of the old crane, is an important element of the development plans now being implemented.

At the start of 2016, the port of St. Maarten was already reporting higher levels of productivity. ●