

DC Dredging uses the SDM density meter after a successful trail of two months.



CASE STUDY – DC DREDGING

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INTRODUCTION

DC Dredging, a dredging and transport company, did a two-months trial with the Rhosonics Slurry Density Meter (SDM) at their dredging ship RIO. The SDM was used during a beach filling project in front of the Belgium coast in early 2017 (see figure 1). Originally the ship RIO was equipped with a nuclear density meter, however, for this specific project in Belgium there was no permission to use a nuclear device. DC Dredging decided to replace the instrument and start the trial period with the non-nuclear SDM density meter. The test at the RIO was positive, thus the company continued using the SDM at their dredging ship RIO during beach nourishment and shore protection projects throughout Europe.

STI was taking care of this project. This Dutch company is specialized in services for the maritime industry and is the official distributor of the SDM for the dredging industry worldwide. Albert de Jonge, director of STI about the test at the Rio: *“The commissioning of the SDM at the Rio was easy and successful. We calibrated the SDM and were satisfied with the shown accuracy. We are happy to work with Rhosonics and have much confidence in this product”.*

APPLICATION

Application:	Behind the discharge pump
Average density:	1450 g/l
Solid content:	45 wt%
Pipe dimension:	558 mm (21 inch)

Figure 2 shows the RIO, the slurry enters the ship through the drag head (1) and suction pipe (2), the sand particles are settled down in the hopper (3) and are discharged for beach nourishment. The SDM was located behind the discharge pump at the back of the ship (4). The exact point of installation was based on the flow rate and the slurry properties. The most homogeneous slurry was found right after the discharge pump. The nuclear density meter used to be located at the same place as the SDM which made it possible to compare the results of both instruments.

INSTALLATION

STI installed the SDM using a Weldolet (see figure 3). This custom-made metal piece was welded onto the pipe and was customized to match the specific pipe dimensions at the RIO. During the years, the pipe thickness at the RIO was affected by the abrasive sand slurry.



Figure 1: RIO in front of the Belgium coast



Figure 2: RIO combined with a ship drawing



Figure 3: Example of a Weldolet installation

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STI took into account the wear profile of the pipe and checked the current pipe thickness to guarantee a flush mounted installation. The SDM was welded onto the pipe in a position between eight and ten o'clock. This position is recommended by Rhosonics to get the most reliable results.

CALIBRATION

The calibration was also done by STI. The company drilled a hole in the pipe close to the SDM sensor and used this as a reference point. A direct sample was taken from the slurry and a reference value was measured using a density scale. The measured reference value was directly set into the instrument as a correction for the shown density value on the screen of the SDM which is based on factory calibrations. The sea water had a density of 1,018 SG, this low density value was set into the SDM and a high density calibration was done using a density value between 1,550 and 1,650 SG. For the high density value STI used the reference point and the former reference measurement values of the nuclear density meter.

OPERATIONS

During validation of the SDM at the RIO, Rhosonics achieved an accuracy of +/- 5 g/l. The instrument was tested together with a flow meter to calculate the mass flow of the sand slurry. Furthermore, the output of the SDM was connected to a cross meter (see figure 4). This cross meter gives the dredger the possibility to control the efficiency of the dredging process real-time during its operations and could result in saving time and costs during the beach filling project in Belgium.

Example of ROI

As mentioned above, by working more efficiently, the filling process of the hopper will take less time. On the assumption of reaching a ½ to 1 production cycle a day less, the ROI or payback time will be 2 or 3 weeks.

OTHER DREDGING PROJECTS

After the successful application at the RIO, STI sold a couple of other density instruments to big players in the dredging industry. The Rhosonics density meter is sold for dredging operations all over the world. However, most of the successful applications are located in Europe thanks to the expertise and performances of STI. The map in figure 6 shows all locations where Rhosonics density meters have been sold for dredging projects.

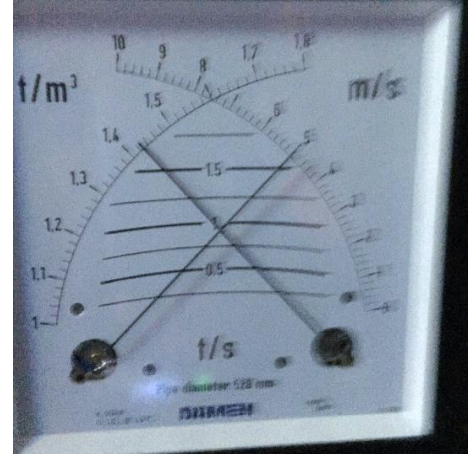


Figure 4: Cross meter at DC RIO



Figure 5: The SDM density meter with a metal weldolet piece

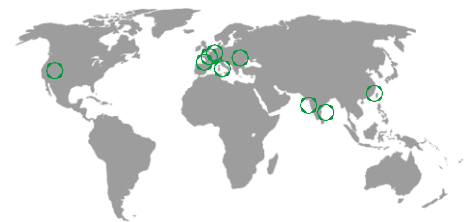


Figure 6: Other locations where Rhosonics density meters are used for dredging.

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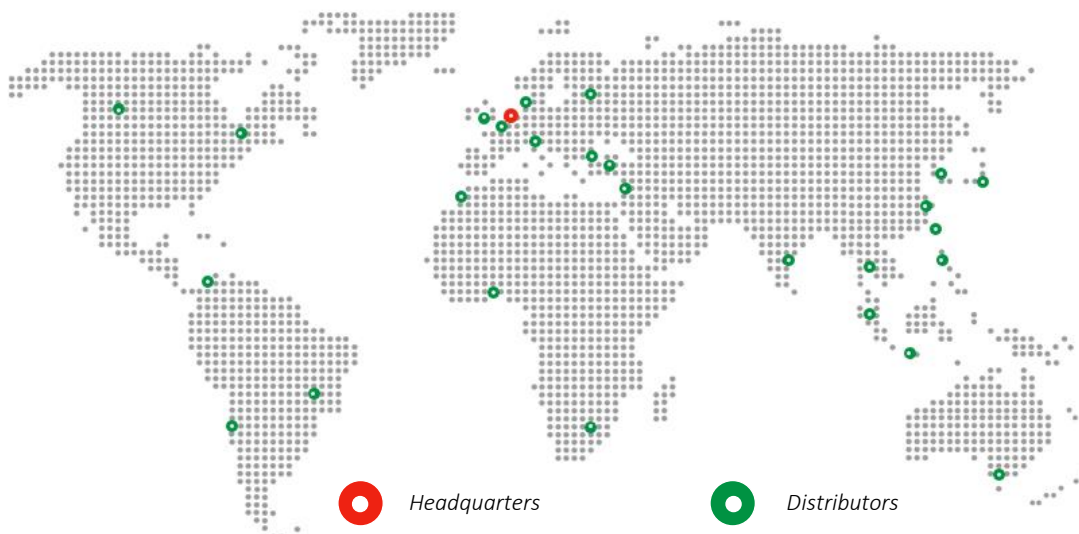
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