**PRESS RELEASE**

AECOM puts finishing touches on Tema Port Expansion in Ghana

**25 May 2021:** Premier infrastructure delivery company [AECOM](http://www.aecom.com) is on track to complete its work on the Tema Port Expansion Project in Ghana, on behalf of [Meridian Port Services](http://mps-gh.com/) Ltd. (MPS), in September 2021.

“It has been a very successful project for all stakeholders, especially the client. The project team has managed to deliver the port facilities ahead of the programme, within budget and with a great safety record,” comments **Craig Thackray**, AECOM MEA Ports & Marine Director.

“We are now operationalising the fourth berth and have just completed supervising the marine works for our client,” reports **David Simpson**, AECOM Senior Resident Engineer, who has been involved with the project since its inception in 2016. This mainly involves heavy-duty paving and underground utilities.

The ship-to-shore (STS) crane infrastructure is already in place and the port is fully operational at present. “MPS is an incredibly supportive and focused client. All those working on the project had a common goal and knew this was not going to be a straightforward project to deliver, but by working together, the team delivered this major infrastructure project,” highlights Thackray.

Located about 30 km from the capital city Accra, the Port of Tema accounts for 70% of Ghana’s containerised volume. The containerised volume represents less than half of the port tonnage which includes general cargo, bagged commodities, dry and liquid bulk cargo. The container terminal (Terminal 2) has been operated by MPS since 2007. Building on its success in Operating Terminal 2, MPS and Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA) extended the concession to include the Tema Port Expansion Project.

The Tema Port Expansion Project (Terminal 3) is adjacent to the existing Tema Port and has been designed to provide enough draft and modern container-handling equipment to accept and service the largest container vessels operating on global trade routes. It can accommodate vessels with a capacity of 22 000 TEUs, a marked increase from the 5 000 TEUs at Terminal 2. The new terminal will significantly increase Ghana’s container-handling capacity to around 3.7 million TEUs a year from 800 000 TEUs at Terminal 1 & 2.

A hallmark of this massive project has been how smoothly it has run from start to finish. “This is a complex mega project in West Africa with a very compressed timeline, so it has been quite an achievement for everyone involved to have delivered as much as we have,” highlights Simpson.

“For us, the Covid-19 pandemic did not create significant disruption as most of the staff required to deliver the project were already on-site. Additionally, from a procurement perspective, the bulk of the logistics and materials were largely in place or on site,” adds Thackray. Much of this preparedness was due to the excellent working relationship established with MPS.

All construction packages were completed on or ahead of schedule and in line with MPS’s operational needs. The marine works commenced in late 2016 and the land works in early 2018. The first parts of the quay and rear crane rail were completed in December 2018, allowing for the STS cranes to be commissioned.

An initial challenge was mobilising international contractors to West Africa that had successfully undertaken work there before. The logistical challenge alone was formidable, with AECOM growing from a single employee in Ghana at the outset to 85 at the peak of the project.

As Ghana is a seismically active zone, special attention had to be paid to the design of the marine and land infrastructure. This needed to address liquification of marine sediments and the reclamation materials and the structural stability of the breakwater, quay wall and buildings. Solutions included the removal of liquefaction-prone materials, consolidation of marginal foundation materials and detailed analysis and structural design of major elements.

To support the construction schedule, certain aspects were altered. The quay wall was originally conceived as a conventional gravity blockwork wall, but after detailed planning was undertaken, it was found that the required number of blocks to be placed would delay the schedule. To address this, it was decided to design and construct the quay wall using 2 700 t caissons, which played a major role in keeping the marine works on schedule.

For several months, Ghana experiences unsuitable sea conditions for marine construction. In order to place the caissons safely and carry out the hard-rock dredging, the advance of the breakwater was carefully planned and constructed. The breakwater provided enough sheltered water for year-round marine operations.

Full-time environmental specialists were provided by AECOM to ensure International Finance Corporation (IFC) compliance. This relates to environmental and social performance standards that define responsibilities for managing environmental and social risks. For example, within the project site there was a turtle hatchery that required careful handling. Environmental management plans and procedures and regular engagement with the local community ensured minimal impact on the surrounding area.

The project recorded over 16 million hours with only three Lost-Time injuries (LTIs). Specific health and safety measures instituted included weekly management safety walks, safety rewards and recognition, integration of the construction and safety teams and limiting the use of divers during works checks when using eco-scopes and bathymetric surveys.

The first major milestone was the handover of a portion the project works. This was the first commercial operation for two container berths (700 m), to the operator in June 2019. The second milestone, commercial operations for three container berths (1 000 m), was achieved in April 2020. The marine works for the fourth berth were completed significantly ahead of schedule during June 2020.

Over 4 000 staff worked on the project, of which over 90% were Ghanaians. “Having been exposed to international construction standards, health, safety and environmental systems, this project will certainly leave a legacy. The staff returning to the Ghanaian labour market have gained skills and training to further develop themselves and contribute to the growth of the economy,” concludes **Darrin Green**, AECOM Africa MD.

***Ends***

**Notes to the editor**

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