**PRESS RELEASE**

Successful Tema expansion shows value of investing in port infrastructure

**17 February 2022:** Investment in ports is always positive, as it drives trade and creates opportunities for both social and economic growth. “A perfect example is the recently completed port facility in Ghana at Tema,” comments [AECOM](http://www.aecom.com) Africa MD **Darrin Green**. The global trusted infrastructure consulting firm won the ENR Global Best Projects Awards 2021 – Best Airport/Port for Tema Port Expansion Project Phase One in Ghana in conjunction with China Harbour Engineering Company Limited (CHEC).

“The economic benefits generated for the country and businesses surrounding the development has been immense,” highlights Green. After the first two berths went operational on 28 June 2019, a week later the first ship had berthed. Within days, the berths were at full capacity and the terminal was lined with TEU containers. The new road networks adjacent also performed well in moving goods for onward distribution. “There was just a positivity and a new energy that was clearly visible,” points out Green.

As an engineering consultancy, AECOM supports this growth by providing port master planning, environmental studies, transportation studies, design services (marine, infrastructure, and buildings), tendering and contractor engagement, programme management and cost consulting and, finally, site supervision services. It also has specialist global expertise in Terminal Operating Systems (TOS), Gate Operating Systems (GOS) and equipment procurement such as Ship-to-Shore (STS) cranes, Mobile Harbour Cranes (MHC) and Rubber-Tyred Gantry (RTG) cranes and forklifts.

Located about 30 km from the capital city Accra, the Port of Tema accounts for 70% of Ghana’s major container and port-handling traffic. The new project is adjacent to the old port and was 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 the old port. The new terminal significantly increases Ghana’s container-handling capacity to around 3.7 million TEUs a year from 800 000 TEUs at present. “This nearly fivefold increase in capacity has had a knock-on and multiplier effect on economic activity and, as such, will contribute massively to Ghana as a whole. Any infrastructure development on the scale of the Tema Port Expansion project is bound to have an impact on its surrounding environment and communities,” stresses Green.

From an environmental perspective, AECOM was at the forefront of mitigating, offsetting, and ensuring environmental compliance to the highest standards. Full-time environmental specialists ensured 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 to the surrounding area.

Other positive impacts of the port implementation included the improvement of the Tema stormwater system. Discharge from the city was previously discharged directly onto the beach and into the sea. The sea water is typically polluted with industrial discharge, hydrocarbons, and significant quantities of plastic waste.

The project diverted the existing stormwater outfalls from the city around the port and through a macro element and hydrocarbon separator structure to improve the quality of effluent and capture plastics and waste. Programmes to monitor fish catch, marine mammals, marine turbidity, lagoon sediment and water quality, air quality, noise pollution, shoreline impacts, and onshore environmental monitoring were implemented to ensure compliance with Ghanaian environmental laws and conditions imposed by permits, owners, and funders.

Aside from the long-term positive impact and employment opportunities afforded by a port of the scale of Tema, there was also a positive impact on the surrounding communities during construction, which will have long-term benefits. 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,” notes Green.

However, any project of this scale is bound to encounter challenges. On this project, these included contractual, weather, technical, logistical, social, and even language barriers due to Chinese, Ghanaian and French contractors being on-site, aside from the multinational client and consulting teams.

Nonetheless, a hallmark of this massive project was how smoothly it ran from start to finish. “This was a complex mega project in West Africa with a very compressed timeline, so it was quite an achievement for everyone involved to deliver as much as we have,” says Green. Fortunately, Covid-19 only really impacted the demobilisation phase, as marine contractor CHEC still had marine equipment on-site.

“Despite the tough challenges, we worked with the client and the contractors from the outset so that by the time the completion deadlines and staged handovers came to the forefront, we were well placed and in retrospect could advise on these being achieved comfortably, as the planning, risk mitigation, coordination and progress really paid off to ensure all objectives were met as per the contractual programme delivery,” says Green.

**Mohamed Samara**, CEO of client Meridian Port Services (MPS), says: “AECOM was proficient and professional in technical delivery as well as open and respectful when discussing contractual and scope issues with any of the contracts and demonstrated agility when needing to adapt. AECOM’s approach ensured the entire project was delivered within the constricted confines of time, safety, quality and budget, while ensuring excellent stakeholder relations and engagement throughout the period.” This active involvement ensured unprecedented safety records, culminating in the project’s ENR win.

AECOM Senior Resident Engineer **David Simpson**, who has been involved with the project since its inception in 2016, best sums up the key to its success: “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.”

***Ends***

**Notes to the editor**

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