

NMDC's Al Mirfa to Receive Upgrades



Image source: Thordon Bearings

After ten years and more than 100,000 operating hours dredging up silt, sand, rocks and stones, the Thordon Composite bearing installed on the Al Mirfa's dredge cutter head shaft has emerged unscathed.

The information was revealed by the Thordon Bearings' Dubai-based distributor, Ocean Power International during the recent dry-docking of the NMDC-owned dredger.

Maarten Jansen, Thordon Bearings' Regional Manager, said: *"The water-lubricated composite bearing was installed in 2007 to the Royal IHC-built vessel, a 97m heavy duty cutter suction dredger. These dredgers operate in*

some very tough environments, which require a tough, durable bearing capable of withstanding the excessive wear and tear encountered during dredging operations."

"The Thordon solution didn't need replacing after ten years of heavy duty service is indicative of the durability and robustness of the materials we use in all our polymer bearings," he added.

Craig Carter, Director of Marketing and Customer Service, Thordon Bearings, said: *"Since their market introduction in the 1970s, the Thordon Composite bearing has consistently outperformed rubber in dredge cutterhead bearing applications."*

According to the company, the actual bearing surface is a black homogeneous material called GM2401 which is fused to a stiff, high strength polymer sleeve to provide unprecedented performance and environmental safety.

Overall, Al Mirfa will be upgraded with the latest versions of the IHC Dredge Profile Monitor and Automatic Cutter Controller along with the installation of a dredge fleet monitoring system. NMDC opted to install the most recent versions of these automation systems to ensure its vessels are fully up-to-date and to enhance the efficiency of its operations.

Work is scheduled for completion in the first half of 2017.

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