

Platform News – NGO Shipbreaking Platform works hand in hand with Dutch ship owner Boskalis for sustainable ship recycling in Mexico

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Best practice example for clean and safe ship recycling an inspiration for responsible owners Brussels, 15 April 2015 – NGO Shipbreaking Platform board member Merijn Hougee has collaborated with Dutch dredging and marine expert Boskalis over several months to develop a comprehensive ship recycling policy. Boskalis has decided for clean and safe dismantling of its obsolete fleet in a Mexican ship recycling facility with which the ship owner has established a close partnership. Boskalis, which [has been recognized by the NGO Shipbreaking Platform](#) as an industry leader, [reported about its progress in its Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\) report 2014](#). “This is a best practice example”, says Patrizia Heidegger, Executive Director of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform. “Boskalis has shown how a ship owner can quickly improve ship recycling practices by taking the matter in one’s own hands. Other shipping companies should follow suit. We hope Boskalis will continue to lead by example and live up to the standards they have set for themselves. We are looking forward to continued collaboration and welcome further proposals by other shipping companies looking to improve their practices.” According to NGO Shipbreaking Platform board member Merijn Hougee, Boskalis’ approach to dismantling is a testimony to how serious the company is about applying the international conventions to its recycling activities. “The Boskalis technical superintendents on site showed passionate commitment to the clean and safe recycling of the vessels,” he says. “They took abstract principles and turned them into practical applications and invested time to find a dry-dock facility on the other side of the world which clearly has the potential to meet the highest international standards. I encourage Boskalis to keep sharing their knowledge to help the yard progress and to communicate transparently about their recycling practices since this sets a positive example in the maritime industry. Ultimately, this approach will help to transform a historically ‘dirty’ shipbreaking industry into a recycling industry with a positive image.”

Case study

When the need arose for the sustainable dismantling of three dredgers in Mexico, Boskalis found a local yard that was willing to change its working methods in order to meet Boskalis’ strict requirements for clean and safe ship recycling. At first, Boskalis could not find a suitable yard on the Pacific coast of the American continent which was ready to dismantle a ship in a sustainable way in line with the Hong Kong Convention and Boskalis’ own standards. The dilemma was shared with the NGO Shipbreaking Platform, and it was decided that Boskalis would seek a yard that had the potential to become compliant with Boskalis’ standards. After visiting several possible yards, ISP/Amaya Curiel yard located in Ensenada on the Baja peninsula was chosen by Boskalis’ local experts. “Our yard was only two years old when we were approached by Boskalis in 2013 to dismantle their vessels,” says Roberto Curiel, owner of ISP/Amaya Curiel. “We were interested in new opportunities and were willing to make improvements. The first prerequisite for Boskalis was that the yard had to have a large hard surface. We already had a concrete dry dock for repairs. The second requirement was that the yard had to be willing to allow Boskalis experts to supervise the dismantling process.” An independent audit was instructed by Boskalis and was carried out by classification society Germanischer Lloyd. Subsequently, in 2014 the pilot project to dismantle the ships “Para” and the “Mercurius” was carried out. Based on the lessons learned from these two vessels, the dismantling procedures were further improved. In December 2014, during the scrapping of the cutter suction dredger “Amstel”, Merijn Hougee, a board member of the NGO Shipbreaking Platform, visited the yard with representatives from Boskalis and met with yard owner Roberto Curiel and experts from the University of Baja California. “A thorough preparation of a vessel is critical to sustainable dismantling,” says Alberto Prado, Fleet Manager at Boskalis. “No one knows our equipment better than Boskalis and by sharing the know-how we contribute to the success of the dismantling. As a standard policy, we make an Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) on all vessels. In the case of the Amstel, we also decided to remove hazardous materials ourselves and cleaned all the oil and fuel tanks before the ship was towed to Ensenada. We also removed parts from the vessel that could be reused on other ships within the Boskalis fleet. Once the ship was in dock, we had two of our own technical superintendents on site to monitor the progress. During this time, we made suggestions on how the dismantling could be improved which frequently was of a procedural nature.” Roberto Curiel explains: “Boskalis wanted third party certification of the work. Although we are used to working with certification from local authorities, the Boskalis demands were stricter. As a result, scientists from the Marine Science department at the University of Baja California were brought in to monitor air, water and soil quality and the disposal of hazardous materials.” Boskalis also sent two engineers to supervise the work. “They were very dedicated and had a high regard for compliance with international principles,” comments Roberto Curiel. “Sometimes in the beginning that was stressful for our employees. But the Boskalis people were willing to discuss and explain why certain things had to be done. These discussions were constructive. Working with Boskalis has raised our awareness about the environment. It gave us the experience to work in a different, more responsible way. The whole world is moving in the direction of environmental responsibility. We want to be in the forefront in our country. I see the industry going in that direction over time, with more oversight and restrictions, and that is how it should be. Boskalis gave us the opportunity to improve our operations by sharing their knowledge and showing us what is going on in the wider world.” Martijn Schuttevaer, Director Corporate Communications at Boskalis, adds: “When we decided to have our vessels dismantled at the Amaya Curiel yard, we knew that the yard did not meet all of our requirements. The decisive factor was the potential of the yard and the commitment from the owner. I am pleased we were able to share what we accomplished in Mexico with the NGO Shipbreaking Platform.”