

Fuelling the continent's leading uranium mine

When it comes to an open-pit mining operation the magnitude of Husab in Namibia, you are going to require a lot of fuel-driven equipment such as drill rigs, excavators, rock breakers and trucks.



Engen is responsible for the fuel supply and logistics at the Husab Mine in Namibia

In 2014, CGNPC's Namibian unit, Swakop Uranium invited tenders for the supply of essential goods and services to its Husab project. Following a considered evaluation process, the contract for the provision of facilities, fuel, lubricants and services was awarded to Engen.

Special requirements

Engen's commercial services manager, Paidane Henrique, says the contingent requirements upon each tendering supplier were typically complex. "The mine will move 150 million tonnes of rock and 15 million tonnes of processed ore, per year and consume 80 million litres of diesel in doing so."

"For example, a broad range of heavy vehicles each carried stringent specifications, based on the original engine manufacturer's 50ppm diesel and lubricants requirements. These included low sulphur fuels with low water content and superior cleanliness to ensure operations and fuel system longevity. Engen products fitted this perfectly," adds Henrique.

"Supplying these fuels requires optimum supply chain quality and monitoring at various stages in the supply process together with the necessary best available technology and operating practices."

Full responsibility

In addition, general manager of Engen's international business division, Drikus Kotze says the company has been involved in the design, procurement and construction of the fuel storage and dispensing facility, and will assume full responsibility for the day-to-day management and reporting."

Naturally, to establish an operational fuel facility for a mine the size of the Husab, and which is located approximately 60km from Swakopmund, is no easy task.

“We are currently operational from a temporary facility with the permanent facility nearing completion,” explains Kotze. “Construction of the permanent facility commenced in May 2015 and should be completed and commissioned in late March 2016,” he adds.

Background

Discovered in 2008 and located 45km from Walvis Bay, the Husab deposit contains a high grade of uranium hosted in a type of granites called alaskites. When it is in full production, Husab will be one of the biggest uranium-only mines in the world.

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