

# Constructing ‘The World’™



Established in 1868 by Govert van Oord, Van Oord is, today, a conglomerate of Dutch dredging companies. Recently, the company has become best known for constructing Palm Island, the ‘Eighth Wonder of the World’™, and the archipelago ‘The World’™ in Dubai.

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The Netherlands is shaped predominately by the rivers Rhine and Meuse, and

fighting floods has become a natural habit of the Dutch. Sometimes, flood water arises from the rivers, but on other occasions the rivers join forces with the North Sea, causing high tides and strong winds to send huge waves smashing across the Delta area. Their centuries-long fight against the water has turned the Dutch into specialists in constructing dykes and reclaiming inundated land. Keeping rivers navigable and harbours open means continuous dredging. A specialist in this arena is Van Oord, with headquarters in Rotterdam (the Netherlands).

## Innovative Approach

Today, with branches around the world, Van Oord is an independent private company whose shareholders are deeply committed to its future. Van Oord states that their innovative approach has made them leader in dredging and marine contracting. Their experts and modern fleet of production vessels enables them to embark on challenging marine engineering projects. The company constructed the famous Palm Jumeirah and the archipelago ‘The World’ in Dubai, where over 300 islands form a map of the continents. Van Oord works day in and day out on dredging, offshore and marine engineering – from the design table all the way to project completion, conscious of the environment and anticipating local circumstances. The company’s priority is to ensure long-term continuity in all they do.

## On-the-job Training

Surveyors are involved in almost all projects. They determine the precise position of the vessels and continuously monitor changes in the ocean bed. Today, about 60% of Van Oord’s surveyors come from outside the Netherlands. Being an international company, Van Oord tries to find talented people from around the world. One method for this is on-the-job training. Van Oord launched a pilot project that was aimed at training non-European surveyors on-the-job. Thanks to efforts on both sides, the results have been extremely positive. “The on-the-job training programme is a good way of teaching people without the work grinding to a halt”, commented Vincent Riekerk, senior surveyor at Van Oord. “Working on international projects means that it isn’t always possible to send people to the head office to train. So we fit training into the work situation. It takes a lot of planning and flexibility, but it appears to be an effective method. Ultimately, the aim is to allow talented trainees to grow into all-round surveyors and, finally, chief surveyors”, Riekerk added. “That’s good for the trainee and it’s good for Van Oord. We are going to keep working with this programme so that we can train even more international surveyors in the future.”