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## **ADVANCEMENT NOTE NO. 7 – October 2006**

### **Dredging in an Environmentally Aware World**

**Anders Jensen<sup>1</sup> on behalf of the Environmental Steering Committee of CEDA**

Environmental policy in Europe and other industrial countries has traditionally been focused on protection. Areas of special nature value have been protected by laying down restrictions on land-use, effluent loads, traffic, etc. Human pressure on nature in the developed countries is becoming so intense that the surviving natural ecosystems becomes isolated islands in a sea of urban, industrial or farming areas. The dredging industry operates in river, estuarine and marine ecosystems where the human environmental pressure is especially large and where conflicting land-use interests are strongest.

The economical and political competition between the traditional industry including the dredging world and the recreational use of ecosystems is already fierce and it will sharpen even more in the future. The competition is further intensified by the change from industrial society to a knowledge based society where more, in many of the most advanced societies the majority of people, see traditional industrial activity as an annoyance. Dredging projects will be on the frontline of this conflict and will suffer from the most severe public criticism.

Integrating environmental considerations in every aspect of dredging projects will be increasingly important in order to obtain permits and to secure a smooth and trouble free completion of contracts. Below is listed a number of aspects and recommendations which shall be considered as early as possible in the course of a project.

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#### Design and planning phase:

- Think environmental sustainability into every aspect of the project right from the beginning.
- Be proactive about the issues instead of passive
- Involve the public and the authorities at an early stage
- Consider beneficial use of dredged material to restore or create new habitat
- Can we clean up a hot spot or do something else to improve the local environment when we anyway have our equipment mobilized on the site
- Use suitable equipment which can do the job without excess or damage to the environment

#### Construction:

- Create environmental awareness among staff and crews
- Effective operation of equipment means less spill and less fuel consumption
- Keep information level high – invite the public to come and see
- Clear up the construction area as soon as possible after end of construction.

#### Monitoring and control:

- The contractor shall only monitor emissions which he can control
- Monitoring objects shall be relevant, measurable with sufficient accuracy and have clearly defined threshold values
- Actions to be taken in case threshold values are exceeded must be defined and agreed upon during the planning phase.

#### After project completion:

- Follow up also at local level, - what was good and was not so good
- Document the experiences
- Publicize results

In summary, careful project planning and responsible project execution, based on the state of art techniques and procedures, with early and open involvement of all stakeholders, will facilitate sustainable development of economic interests, while safeguarding and even promoting social and environmental development.