

St Helena

Airport project

The Basil Read St Helena Airport Project (BRSHAP) is a design, build, operate and hand back contract for an international airport in St Helena.

Situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, St Helena is one of the most remote islands in the world – 2 000 km from the nearest mainland. It has with limited infrastructure, no major construction equipment, few construction materials, not even sufficient sand and no harbour – presenting a unique challenge for Basil Read.

The only way to travel to St Helena is by sea, and a round trip between Cape Town Harbour, or Walvis Bay and St Helena (weather permitting) is roughly 20 - 22 days. This makes logistics a key issue for BRSHAP.

Basil Read set up bonded forwarding facilities in Walvis Bay and Cape Town to consolidate materials and plant from all around the world. A temporary jetty in Rupert's Bay was built to a depth of five metres with six mooring points to accommodate a modified ship that was sourced from Thailand – the NP Glory 4.

The project required a diverse range of expertise in the different disciplines of project management, design, blasting, logistics, road and civil construction, open cast mining, steelwork, crushing, concrete technology and commercial building.

The project design had to be practical, giving careful consideration to St Helena's unique geology, logistical challenges, limited specialists on the island, materials supply and was adapted to maximise flexibility of resources.

The design and construction of a permanent wharf for ships up to 100 m long will be of great benefit to the island, as ships will be able to dock for the first time in the island's history. The wharf comprises a rock breakwater using 1 600 concrete 7 t Core-loc armour units and 400 concrete 27 t main block units, which are being manufactured in a precast yard in Rupert's Valley. Two 200 tonne crawler cranes will place these precast units in position via GPS. The placing is tricky due to their weight and the sea conditions and currents.

The project is divided into two phases: Phase I: design and construction of the airport (December 2011 – February 2016) and Phase II: operation of the airport (February 2016 – February 2026).

The value of the entire project is R4,6-billion and it is on schedule and on budget.

With two operating batch plants on the island, Basil Read set up a local labo-