The magazine of Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV

GC

GROUND CONTROL

Issue 27 Spring 2019 www.hitachicm.eu

HITACHI

Reliable solutions

Expertly engineered

- New forestry machine in Norway
- Vineyard construction in Italy
- Quarrying in Portugal

The magazine of Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV

GC

GROUND CONTROL

Issue 27 Spring 2019 www.hitachicm.eu

CONTENTS

04 News
Bauma preview, product updates and dealer news from across Europe and beyond.

12 Higher ground
On tough terrain with the ZX135USL-6 forestry excavator in Norway.

14 Perfect match
How this ZX250LC-6 medium excavator benefits from a Hitachi bucket and ground engaging tools.

16 Ready for take-off
A ZX300LCN-6 medium excavator gets to work on a vital project at Porto Airport.

18 Hitachi for life!
Why Northern Irish customer RB McGeary Contracts stays loyal to Hitachi.

20 Living the dream
A Norwegian entrepreneur shares his enthusiasm for Hitachi machines.

24 Productive partnership
Extracting aggregates from a river in Romania, Hitachi excavators maintain high levels of productivity.

26 The best in the business
Meet the family who have been developing the Tuscan landscape for three generations with their Hitachi fleet.

30 Thriving in a competitive market
Why one of the largest contractors in the Republic of Ireland relies on Hitachi construction equipment.

34 Rising to the challenge
Two ZW-6 wheel loaders are making a positive impact in Portugal.

38 The demolition experts
Highlighting the reliability, power and speed of Zaxis medium excavators.

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C051146

Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV, Siciliëweg 5, 1045 AT Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Telephone: +31 (0)20 44 76 700
E-mail/website: info@hitachicm.eu/www.hitachicm.eu
Editor: Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV: Ghislaine Jonker
Editorial and design: Red International Communication, www.redmarketingagency.com
Photography: Glenn Blackburn, Jon Brown, www.glennblackburn.co.uk
Translation: UvA Talen, www.uvatalen.nl
Coordination, printing and circulation: Holzer Druck und Medien Druckerei und Zeitungsverlag GmbH + Co.KG, www.druckerei-holzer.de
Please note that images may include modifications/attachments, which were provided by the local dealer.

© Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV (HCME). All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with the written permission of HCME. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information published in *Ground Control*, HCME is not responsible for inaccuracies or omissions. All views expressed are not necessarily those of HCME. The manufacturer is not responsible for non-compliance to industry-standard health and safety measures by third parties, nor for any damage or loss resulting from anyone's reliance on editorial and photography in *Ground Control*.

24
HITACHI
ZX 300

34
HITACHI
ZW 310

18
HITACHI
ZX 130 LCN

26
HITACHI
ZX 210

20
HITACHI
ZX 300

NEWS

Connect with Hitachi at Bauma

The European construction industry will once again gather in Germany when Bauma 2019 is held from 8 to 14 April. The renowned international trade fair for construction machinery, building material and mining machines, construction vehicles and equipment is held every three years at Messe München.

The last event held in 2016 attracted a total of 3,425 exhibitors (1,272 from Germany and 2,153 from abroad) from 58 countries, who covered 605,000m^2 of exhibition space. Over 583,000 visitors from 219 countries visited the fair, setting a new attendance record.

Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV (HCME) will be among the leading manufacturers at this year's event with a wide range of products and services at stand number FN/718. Included in the line-up are: nine ZX-6 mini and compact excavators; five medium excavators including the new ZX210X-6; two wheeled excavators; two ultra-large EX-7 excavators; six wheel loaders; and five special application machines.

The 6,495m^2 display – designed around HCME's "Connect with Hitachi" theme – will illustrate how customers access a world of connectivity when they purchase a Hitachi machine. They benefit from not only the connective technologies incorporated in Hitachi equipment, but also the connection to people within our dealer network through comprehensive after-sales support.

New this year

Top of the bill will be a broad selection of the latest Zaxis-6 mini

and compact excavators, from the ZX17U-6 to the ZX85USB-6. Two electric excavators produced by Hitachi's joint venture with Kiesel Technology Entwicklung GmbH (see page 7) will be unveiled to the general public for the first time. The first Hitachi ICT hydraulic excavator to be launched in Europe, the ZX210X-6, will also be on display.

Among the largest exhibits at this year's Bauma will be two of Hitachi's new market-leading mining machines. The EX1200-7 and EX2600-7 excavators will be sure to attract tens of thousands of visitors to the HCME stand.

In addition, the ZX145W-6 and ZX170W-6 wheeled excavators will be on show, and completing the excavator line-up are several special application machines including: the ZX135US-6 with telescopic arm; ZX135US-6 with sliding arm; ZX225USRLC-6 2-piece boom demolition; and a ZX210-6 super long front.

Sharing the stage with the excavators will be six Hitachi ZW-6 wheel loaders: the ZW75-6 and ZW95-6 compact machines; ZW180-6, ZW250-6 and ZW310-6 medium models; and the large ZW370-6.

Visitors will enjoy testing their skills on the dump truck simulator and getting a virtual view of a selection of Hitachi machines. They can also download a dedicated Bauma app in advance to ensure that they have the best experience on the Hitachi stand.

"Our team has worked hard to create an engaging and stimulating environment on our stand this year at Bauma, so that we can really connect with visitors at the event," says HCME President Makoto Yamazawa. "With more than 30 Hitachi construction and mining machines on display, we hope that there will be something of interest for everyone."

NEWS

Hitachi launches EX-7 mining excavators

Hitachi Construction Machinery Co., Ltd. (HCM) has announced the development of its EX-7 series, a new generation of mining excavators that is scheduled to be ready for the global market from April 2019. The machines will be on display in Europe at the Bauma 2019 trade fair and exhibition in Munich, Germany.

The EX-7 series is engineered towards safety, productivity and connectivity, and will include six models ranging in size from 100 to 800 tonnes, as with the previous EX-6 range. The release marks the beginning of an exciting time for both HCM and the wider mining industry as it embraces the 'industrial internet of things'.

"We have continued to innovate since the release of our EX-6 models, and the result is Hitachi's safest and most efficient mining machines to date," says Sonosuke Ishii, President of Mining Group.

"The EX-7 excavators will be able to connect to online servers that collect valuable data and turn it into actionable insights. This will help our customers to optimise the safety, production and efficiency of their operations. EX-7 excavators will also feature Cummins or MTU engines*, and Tier 4 final or fuel consumption optimisation environmental configurations."

*For EX1200-7 and EX1900-7, only Cummins engines will be available.

Remote monitoring made easy

A new app has been developed by Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV (HCME) to enable customers to manage their machines remotely using their smartphones or mobile devices. Designed to complement Hitachi's Global e-Service monitoring system, the ConSite Pocket app has been created with owners in mind, and features a user-friendly interface and easy navigation.

Customers can use the new app to download monthly ConSite reports for their Hitachi machines, including data on daily working hours and fuel consumption. You can compare previous months' reports, and keep up to date with your machines' operational performance.

The new app can pinpoint the exact location of every Hitachi excavator and wheel loader in your fleet using Google Maps. You can also keep track of your machines' status on site from anywhere at any time – real-time alerts are sent to you and your local dealer, who can act immediately if a situation requires urgent attention. The app supplies manufacturer recommendations on what course of action to take and step-by-step guides to follow for certain issues.

"The ConSite Pocket app is fast, convenient and easy to use," says Tom van Wijlandt, HCME Manager Business Development. "Our aim is to make life easier for our customers, and this latest development helps to put the Hitachi remote monitoring system at their fingertips."

You can download the ConSite Pocket app from Apple or Google Play stores.

Hitachi dealer opens new Dublin depot

TBF Construction Machinery (TBF) has opened a new depot in Dublin following its appointment as the official dealer for Hitachi Construction Machinery (UK) Limited (HCMUK) for all of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in 2018. This latest development further strengthens its position in the former market. The company also celebrated its 60th anniversary and 25 years in partnership with Hitachi last year.

"We were appointed as the dealer for the east of Ireland at the end of 2017 on the proviso that we would open a branch in the capital," says TBF's Director Seamus Doherty. "Our vision is also to set up a branch in Galway to cover the west of the country too."

The company still trades as TBF Thompson in Northern Ireland with two established construction branches in Garvagh and Newtownabbey. The Dublin depot was officially opened last July, with the capacity for the direct supply of parts and technical support, as well as pre-delivery inspections.

"We have confidence in the market after three record years of growth and with our flexible approach to support our customers in house building and road construction, as well as other significant one-off projects, such as the new Facebook campus," he adds. "Our best-selling models range from three- to 20-tonne excavators and we work with a full-time dedicated finance representative from Hitachi Capital to keep up with demand."

TBF Director Seamus Doherty

From left, Toni Kiesel and Hideshi Fukumoto

New electric excavators for Europe

Hitachi Construction Machinery Co., Ltd. (HCM) has set up the European Application Center GmbH (EAC) in a joint venture with Kiesel Technologie und Entwicklung Gesellschaft (KTEG). Based in Stockstadt am Rhein, Germany, the EAC will develop electric excavators and special application machines for demolition and civil engineering projects that will comply with Europe's stringent environmental regulations.

The joint venture combines Hitachi's extensive expertise in developing high-quality special application and electric construction equipment – the first of which was the ZX70B in 2006 – with KTEG's experience in developing and producing customised special application machines specifically for the European market. As a result, there will be an even wider range of Hitachi-branded special application machinery and electric construction equipment.

HCM has a 49.9% stake in the new company and KTEG has the remaining 50.1%. It will be led by CEO Toni Kiesel, who is Managing Partner of the German Hitachi dealer. He signed the joint venture agreement last September with Hideshi Fukumoto, Vice President and Executive Officer of HCM.

"We are proud to announce the establishment of the EAC, as it will strengthen our special application business throughout Europe," says Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV President Makoto Yamazawa. "By joining forces with KTEG, we will be at the forefront of the industry to meet the demands for zero-emissions regulations and the requirements of tomorrow's job site."

NEWS

On the road with the ZX190W-6

In Mohawk, Michigan, USA, the Keweenaw County Road Commission (KCRC) has extended its machinery fleet with the addition of a Hitachi ZX190W-6 wheeled excavator. Serviced by Hitachi's authorised local dealer McCoy Construction & Forestry, KCRC primarily provides winter and summer maintenance for over 480 miles of state and county roads.

The community of Mohawk is situated on the Keweenaw Peninsular and is flanked by Lake Superior on either side. Known as Michigan's 'Copper Country', the area is noted for its heritage of copper mining. KCRC originally built the county's road system and the majority of Michigan's state highways that extend throughout the county between the 1910s and 1960s.

The Hitachi machine has tackled a variety of tasks since its delivery in spring 2018, as KCRC's Maintenance Foreman Chris Cronenworth explains: "The Hitachi ZX190W-6 is our 'go-to' machine whether we're ditching, replacing culverts, backfilling or undercutting. We chose the wheeled excavator because of its versatility and ease of transportation between jobs."

The decision to invest in the ZX190W-6 has been met with positivity by its operator David Kaura who enjoys running the machine on a day-to-day basis: "The controls are effortless, and the cab is pleasant. I also like features such as the temperature control and the heated seat."

A ceremony was held to announce the new dealer, Eurasion Machinery LLP

New dealer for central Asia

Eurasian Machinery LLP is now the official distributor for Hitachi construction machinery across Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Founded by Hitachi Construction Machinery Co., Ltd. (HCM) in order to further expand its interests in central Asia, Eurasian Machinery LLP is authorised to sell Hitachi equipment, as well as provide after-sales support.

Hitachi delivered its first machine to Kazakhstan in 2004. Since then, it has taken a leading position in the supply of hydraulic excavators and rigid dump trucks to the mining and construction industries, and has now delivered over 1,000 units. Through Eurasian Machinery LLP, Kazakhstan will become a central hub for the supply of Hitachi construction and mining equipment to regional markets.

"Traditionally we sell our equipment through dealerships, but this time, we decided to create an entirely new company," says Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hitachi Construction Machinery Co., Ltd. Tatsuro Ishizuka. "Our goal is to maximise the performance of our customers' equipment."

The head office of Eurasian Machinery LLP is located in Almaty, and the company currently employs over 800 people at its 50 branches and 10 service centres. It plans to invest additional resources to further strengthen its sales and service network, as well as enhance regional industries.

An official ceremony to mark the announcement was held in Astana in October 2018. Over 300 guests were invited to attend the event, including political and business dignitaries such as the honorary ambassadors of Japan and Turkey.

Enhancing safety and durability with Hitachi

To meet the needs of customers specialising in recycling, demolition and forestry applications, Hitachi has introduced a waste handling package for its versatile ZW180-6 and ZW220-6 wheel loaders. This comprises additional features that provide extra protection for the operator and key components.

To prevent damage caused by falling debris, the medium wheel loaders are fitted with durable guards for headlights and taillights. Seal guards for the wheels prevent material from wrapping around the axles. Steel spiral hose guards protect the hydraulic hoses of the boom and lift arm cylinder.

A lift arm cylinder protector prevents damage of the lift arm cylinders, hoses and tubes, when material is trapped between the cylinders and the front frame. An articulation area guard protects critical components, such as the transmission and parking break, from damage due to fallen debris.

To enhance the reliable performance of the machine in waste handling and dusty environments, a dust protection screen with fine mesh and automatic reversible cooling fan prevent the radiator from clogging.

The waste handling package includes an engine pre-cleaner to eliminate dust and dirt, which will also extend the lifetime of the air filter. For added durability and safety, owners can choose from a range of optional guards for the front windshield, bucket cylinder, and the driveshaft and powertrain.

HCME Wheel Loader Product Manager Vasilis Drougkas says, “We introduced this package to meet the specific needs of any application in which there is a high risk of falling debris. It enhances the durability of the standard models for dusty environments, and prevents damage to components. As a result, it ensures a reliable performance, reduced downtime and lower maintenance costs.”

Durable guards prevent damage from falling debris

Perfect fit for Portuguese quarry

A limestone quarry near the town of Fátima in Portugal is benefitting from the arrival of a new Hitachi ZX490LCH-6 large excavator. Delivered in October 2018 to Eurocálcio SA by Hitachi’s authorised local dealer Moviter, the machine is helping to produce approximately 30,000 tonnes of crushed material per month for the Vale de Ourém-based company.

Established in 1989, Eurocálcio is currently operating the 40-hectare quarry in the community of Giesteira. The ZX490LCH-6 is being used to extract the raw stone material, which is subsequently crushed into smaller pieces. The aggregates are then prepared for use in the construction industry as well as animal feed, and are predominantly exported to Spain.

Manager Miguel Neves Oliveira is clear on the reasons for choosing the Hitachi machine: “At Eurocálcio, we are defined by our high standards. My father likes Hitachi equipment and I know that the company represents quality. In selecting the ZX490LCH-6, we took advice from Moviter’s salesman, Moisés Mendes, and when we saw it in action we were delighted. The Hitachi excavator is perfect for the type of work we’re doing at the quarry due to its size and power. It is quick, strong and offers excellent fuel consumption.”

Miguel is also using Global e-Service to monitor the performance of the Hitachi excavator: “Our engineers have told me that they find ConSite incredibly useful when checking the fuel consumption, as well as assisting them with maintenance. Overall, my operators are more than happy with our decision to select the ZX490LCH-6 and we can completely rely on it to get the job done.”

NEWS

Safety for city projects

Two Hitachi ZX145W-6 wheeled excavators have been chosen by NCC, a Nordic civil engineering company responsible for infrastructure and groundwork projects. The Zaxis-6 machines, supplied by the Danish Hitachi dealer, H.P. Entreprenørmaskiner A/S, are working on urban applications such as district heating, water supply and sewerage.

A recent project involved digging a 10km ditch through the city of Copenhagen, which was scheduled to take nine months. Kristian Andersen, NCC Fleet Manager, says the two new Hitachi models are important for safety on sites such as this.

"Thanks to the short-tail swing and small turning radius, they stay within the road barriers and do not disturb traffic," he says. "Space is limited on these projects, and we are close to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. So, it is important for safety reasons that the machines are compact and have a two-piece boom."

Another advantage is the flexibility offered by the two wheeled excavators: "You can quickly drive 100m down the street, everything goes faster than with crawler excavators, and we also protect the paving," he adds.

Bringing construction to life

The official Hitachi dealer in Germany, Kiesel GmbH, celebrated the opening of Coreum in October. Located in Stockstadt, near Frankfurt, it is a unique institution that combines three aspects: a centre for construction and handling machinery; a forum for technology and innovation; and a focal point for training and further education.

The forum offers 5,500m^2 of space for training, workshops, conferences, meetings and events, including an indoor excavation square. An 80,000m^2 outdoor area provides space for demonstration construction sites. Next year, it will be extended to include a 40,000m^2 recycling park.

Hitachi is one of several premium brands that will present its products and solutions at Coreum. Kiesel's Managing Partner Toni Kiesel says: "The goal of Coreum is to bring the fascination for construction machinery to life. It offers a unique mix of consulting, training, events, products and special solutions. Together with our partners, we want to turn Coreum into the think tank of the industry in order to meet the new challenges of the future."

The opening of Coreum coincided with the 60th anniversary of Kiesel, the diamond wedding anniversary of founders Christa and Helmut Kiesel, and the handover of 60 new machines to their owners. An estimated 2,500 visitors from 25 countries attended the event, which was held over five days.

Emma Armstrong, Director of Armstrongs Aggregates

Hitachi Capital support for English quarry

Armstrongs Aggregates operates from five quarries in the north west of England, and supplies a variety of stone products to customers across the country. Owned by the family-run Armstrongs Group, based in Lancashire, it provides aggregates for road and residential construction, materials for coastal defences, bespoke stone items, and ready-mixed concrete. Since 2014, it has also been exporting stone to be used in the construction of Gaudi's Basilica de la Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

The company relies on a 50-strong fleet of Hitachi excavators, from seven to 70 tonnes, to work in its demanding quarrying environments. It began using Hitachi construction equipment in 2015 – the first model purchased was a 70-tonne excavator supplied by Hitachi Construction Machinery (UK) (HCMUK).

Director Emma Armstrong says: "We like the strong residual values of Hitachi machines, as we always look to sell the machines on. And the after-sales service we receive from HCMUK is solid."

The company orders 10-12 Hitachi machines per year on hire purchase, arranged through Hitachi Capital. It has developed a close working relationship with both HCMUK and Hitachi Capital over the years. "We are always looking for new quarries and are expanding our Amix plant, so we will continue to renew and replenish our fleet of construction equipment," says Emma. "Hitachi will be there when we need them."

Norwegian dealer celebrates 90th anniversary

Nasta AS, Hitachi's authorised dealer in Norway, celebrates its 90th anniversary this year. The company was founded in 1929 as a gas station when Søren Røed started to sell products from Standard Oil in Nanset. Since then, the original Nanset Standard Station has grown to become one of Norway's leading suppliers of construction equipment.

In 1939, the company began sales of Austin automobiles. Nanset Standard later became a dealer of agri-products and construction machinery. After the Second World War, Nuffield tractors entered the portfolio, and in 1960 the company became the official dealer of the Norwegian excavator brand Brøyt, as well as other machinery brands.

1982 was an important year in Nanset Standard's development, when it became the exclusive Norwegian dealer for Hitachi construction machinery. In 2005, Nanset Standard decided to concentrate solely on the construction industry. Today, Hitachi Construction Machinery (Europe) NV is by far its main supplier.

In 2011, the company changed its name to Nasta AS and moved into new facilities in the city of Larvik. Nasta has eight other locations across Norway to support its sales, rental and after-sales activities. The company has 170 employees and reached a turnover of approximately €120 million in 2018.

To mark its anniversary year, Nasta invited 300 employees and spouses to the island of Svalbard in March, celebrating the historic event with a range of activities. CEO Tom Johansen says: "During 36 years of partnership, Nasta and Hitachi have enjoyed great success in Norway. The main reasons are the hard-working and customer-focused people working at Nasta, and quality machines from Hitachi. This has proved to be an unbeatable combination. Together, we're looking forward to supplying state-of-the-art machinery to our valued customers in Norway for a long time to come."

Nasta became the Norwegian dealer for Hitachi construction machinery in 1982

Higher ground

The ZX135USL-6 has been designed and engineered specifically for the needs of the European forestry industry. Norwegian company Fageraas Skogsdrift DA is among the first contractors to test the machine in its natural habitat.

Forestry contractors need specialist, reliable machines for their work that is often carried out under the toughest conditions and most challenging locations. Hitachi's modified short-tail swing excavators are ideal for making access routes, as well as a wide range of other tasks.

The ZX135USL-6 supplied by the national Hitachi dealer Nasta to Fageraas Skogsdrift DA is a perfect example. The forestry excavator has a heavier counterweight for greater stability, reinforced parts – such as the undercarriage – for added durability, and a window in the roof of the cab for a better view.

It also has a higher ground clearance than the standard model for a smooth travelling performance over uneven and rough forest terrains, such as those found in Hadeland in south-east Norway. Equipped with additional safety features, such as a fixed laminated front window and OPG level 2 front guard, it offers further protection for the operator, Ole Henrik Fageraas (the father of owner Ståle Fageraas).

Fageraas Skogsdrift bought the ZX135USL-6 in May 2018 to replace a three-year-old ZX135USL-5 from the same family of Hitachi special application machines. Nasta supplied the medium excavator with a five-year, 6,000-hour service contract. It also has additional lights and has been fitted with joysticks for track steering, a central lubrication system, and heaters for the engine and cab.

Complete solution

"Nasta looks after all of our maintenance and service requirements," says Ståle. "Our contract offers the complete after-sales solution, with fixed costs and the peace of mind of knowing that everything is covered. I'm really happy with the amazing technical support we receive, including Hitachi Genuine Parts."

Ole Henrik was formerly a Nordic Combined skier, who won a bronze medal in the individual event at the 1962 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Zakopane, Poland. Since then, he has perfected the art of clearing a different kind of obstacle with the ZX135USL-6.

"Overall, this is an excellent machine that has the perfect specification for this tricky terrain," explains Ole Henrik, who started

off working with horses in a forestry environment in 1956. “It works really well due to the ground clearance, good visibility from the cab and of course it’s lightweight for soft ground.

“The power at my disposal and the precision from the hydraulics are ideal for a machine of its size and this type of work on such uneven ground. It’s a really different operating experience to a standard machine.”

The project is being completed on behalf of Viken Skog SA, Norway’s largest forestry cooperative with approximately 10,000 shareholders in eastern Norway. These represent around 10.5 million acres of forest, and usually contribute one quarter of the total timber deliveries in the country.

On this two-week job, Fageraas Skogsdrift has been hired to supply 3,000m^3 of timber from the pine trees. The wood is then transported to a factory (the largest one is also located at Sokna), where it is used to prepare timber for construction projects.

The ZX135USL-6 has two main tasks on this typical forestry site for Fageraas Skogsdrift, which was founded 30 years ago in Sokna. It clears the undergrowth after the trees have been felled and prepares the ground for the new trees to be planted.

Ståle is delighted with the latest addition to his fleet of forestry equipment: “Hitachi has the best solution for a forestry machine with a short-tail swing. It is ideal for negotiating narrow spaces and avoiding such obstacles as tree stumps and protruding rocks – we don’t have to worry about damaging the machine.”

To see a movie of the ZX135USL-6 in Norway, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

Perfect match

SUPPORT CHAIN

Hitachi buckets and Genuine GET (ground engaging tools) have been designed to enhance the performance of Hitachi construction machinery in a wide range of working conditions. Following the purchase of a ZX250LC-6 medium excavator, a Romanian construction firm has been reaping the benefits of this state-of-the-art equipment on a demanding project in the south of the country.

Romanian construction company SC Agremin Transcom 99 Srl (Agremin) was founded by Marcel Pruiu in 2006. From its early days selling mineral aggregates, Agremin has grown steadily to now include other services, such as machinery rental. Marcel's career in construction began a decade before that in 1995, and according to his friends and colleagues, he has been a long-time 'Hitachi fan'.

His first Hitachi machine was a ZX210-3 (purchased in 2005), which is still performing reliably for the company. More recently, Marcel has invested in a new Hitachi ZX250LC-6 medium excavator to help him complete a number of projects around the city of Piteşti. Delivered in October 2018 by authorised local Hitachi dealer Utirom Invest Srl, the machine was also equipped with a Hitachi bucket and GET.

The first project for the Hitachi ZX250LC-6 is taking place in the town of Mioveni, where automobile company Dacia is expanding its manufacturing plant. On site, the medium excavator is helping to expand the 62-hectare facilities, which mainly comprise a car assembly plant, a mechanical and chassis plant, and a central logistics unit.

Work began in September, with activities set to be completed by mid-November 2018. The ZX250LC-6 is being primarily used for earthmoving, which begins with the precise excavation of topsoil. Trenches are subsequently created adjacent to the existing Dacia plant in order to lay foundations for the new buildings. Once each channel has been excavated, a crane carefully lowers the supporting steel structures into place.

Thanks to its versatility, the Zaxis-6 excavator is also being used to load trucks (every 30 minutes on average), level the ground, and perform grading when required. Among the biggest challenges on site are the narrow spaces in which the ZX250LC-6 has to work, as well as the dense material it has to handle. This predominantly consists of rubble and other concrete debris.

Nica Cornel, operator

An excellent package

The Hitachi bucket and GET are helping to improve productivity of the ZX250LC-6 still further. "The size of the Hitachi bucket is 1.53m^3 and I have been impressed by the high fill rates," says Marcel. "When compared to local manufacturers, it is clear that the Hitachi bucket is of a superior quality. Its configuration is perfectly matched to the ZX250LC-6's capabilities and the digging force is excellent."

However, the overall performance of the Hitachi equipment comes as no surprise to Marcel, who was already aware of the company's commitment to quality: "I am a fan of the Hitachi brand and in particular its medium excavators. A few years ago, I was lucky enough to visit the company's production facilities in Amsterdam and was impressed by the combination of high quality and productivity.

"One of the most satisfying aspects about Hitachi ownership is the overall package it provides. I have been highly satisfied with the bucket, GET and the ZX250LC-6 itself. I insist on using Hitachi Genuine Parts to uphold the high performance of the machine, and Global e-Service to check the fuel consumption. I was pleasantly surprised by the value of ConSite to me as a business owner – it's phenomenal!"

The ZX250LC-6's operator, Nica Cornel, also believes that the Hitachi bucket and GET are positive features of the new machine: "For me, it has most definitely passed the test! The bucket is ideally suited to the work we are doing in Mioveni, because the breakout force and level of penetration are terrific. This is helpful when handling the tough materials. In terms of maintenance, the teeth are straightforward to change and the wear is consistent.

"I have been an excavator operator for 32 years, and I have to say that Hitachi machines are my favourite. The cabin of the ZX250LC-6 is so comfortable, it feels as though I am working in a hotel room! In addition, the visibility is excellent and I can see easily thanks to the safety features such as the camera. Hitachi excavators are unique because they are set apart by their power, low fuel consumption and reliability."

For more information on Hitachi GET, please visit our website:
www.hitachicm.eu

Agremin's Hitachi ZX250LC-6 is proving versatile at the demanding construction site

Ready for take-off

Following positive experiences with Hitachi machinery over the past three decades, a Portuguese construction firm has opted to purchase a new ZX300LCN-6 medium excavator to help it complete an important project at Porto Airport.

Now in its 70th year, Construções Gabriel A.S. Couto S.A. (Gabriel Couto) has a strong pedigree in Portugal's construction industry. Continually involved in major civil engineering projects since 1948, the company has developed an excellent reputation through the delivery of major projects to governmental agencies.

In recent times, the family-owned firm has diversified and is now involved in residential properties and infrastructure. Director Tiago Couto is keen to continue his grandfather's vision from seven decades ago. To support him, his father is also the Chairman of the company, which is based in the Braga town of Víla Nova de Famalicão.

"We have been successfully expanding our reputation outside of Portugal," says Tiago. "For example, we are currently helping to construct a new airport at an LNG facility in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique." Alongside its first-ever project in the city of Dakar (Senegal), the company has won projects in Zambia, Cape Verde and Angola. It has also been commissioned to construct two 84-kilometre-long highways in Honduras.

A busy operation

Closer to home, Gabriel Couto has recently begun constructing a new taxiway and other access points at Porto Airport in the north of Portugal. At the time of *Ground Control*'s visit, operations had been underway for two months, with an expected completion date of March 2020.

Twenty years ago, Gabriel Couto was involved in the development of the airport's only taxiway. Over the past two decades, Porto Airport has since grown to become the second-busiest in the country.

The latest construction project is happening in two phases. The first involves excavating and earthmoving to prepare the area,

where a tunnel is being extended underneath the track. Other miscellaneous pathways are also being diverted while the airport continues live operations.

Phase two will see Gabriel Couto move to the airside where the taxiway will be wholly connected to the runway and other facilities completed. Afterwards, the taxiway will be able to transfer 32 planes per hour, rather than the current total of 20.

To support its operations at the busy 250,000m^2 site, Gabriel Couto has invested in a new Hitachi ZX300LCN-6 medium excavator. The machine was delivered in October 2018 by authorised local Hitachi dealer Moviter and joins another of the company's longer-serving Hitachi excavators on site, a ZX850-3.

While the newer machine is being used for general earthmoving and levelling activities at an elevated position, the ZX850-3 works below ground level to load a rigid dump truck every five minutes.

The ZX300LCN-6 medium excavator was not Gabriel Couto's only Hitachi purchase last autumn. Moviter also supplied a ZX170W-6 wheeled excavator, which is being utilised on another project nearby. The company currently has 20 Hitachi models in its fleet and Tiago has long been convinced of their reliability: "We purchased our first Hitachi machine (a 30-tonne excavator) 28 years ago and it worked productively for over 20 years.

"This year, we needed to increase our fleet in order to execute this important project. Therefore, I was looking for the best possible package of equipment from Moviter and Hitachi machines played a key role in my decision. Ultimately, we have to satisfy our client's wishes, so the equipment we select is crucial in setting a benchmark and further improving our performance.

"I have long been involved with Moviter and we purchase a significant number of machines from them. They are a strong partner and we share a good relationship. Moviter has been able to match the growth of our company and we have come to appreciate the high standard of the Hitachi machines."

"Hitachi excavators simply deliver the best productivity and the highest level of reliability"

Tiago Couto,
Director, Construções Gabriel A.S. Couto S.A.

Positive feedback

Due to the reliable support from Moviter and the high performance of the Hitachi ZX300LCN-6, Tiago is happy to continue their productive partnership: "I hope to make further investments, especially in Africa where we are expanding our fleet. I always strive to use Hitachi machines, especially on projects abroad, because we can depend on their reliability, durability and fuel efficiency.

"The resale value also remains strong, which keeps their total cost of ownership competitive. In addition, the maintenance on the ZX300LCN-6 is one of the best aspects about the excavator and this gives me confidence that the machine will keep on performing to a high standard. The positive feedback I have from my operators and maintenance teams also supports this.

"The fuel consumption is continually improving with the newest Hitachi machines and the engines are more efficient than ever. Compared to others on the market, Hitachi excavators simply deliver the best productivity and the highest level of reliability."

To see a movie of the ZX300LCN-6, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

Hitachi for life!

RB McGeary Contracts is an invaluable support to the Graham Farrans Joint Venture (GFJV) on an important road construction project in Northern Ireland. The subcontractor has a fleet of Hitachi construction machinery at its disposal for some of the specialist, intricate work involved on the upgrading of the A6.

The A6 Dualling Scheme is improving 14.7 kilometres of the North Western Transport Corridor between the M22 at Randalstown and the Castledawson roundabout. This route is used by 18,000 vehicles each day, which often results in congestion at key times.

In 2016, GFJV was awarded the contract to build a high standard dual carriageway and work began in 2017. Once completed in 2021, it will bring long-term social and economic benefits to the area north of Lough Neagh.

The £160 million (€180 million) investment will strengthen the links between Northern Ireland's two largest cities (Belfast and Derry/Londonderry). It will also reduce journey times and improve road safety for the local community.

The main works will include: major earthworks; drainage and culverts for existing watercourses; environmental and ecological mitigation measures; the new dual carriageway with numerous bridges, culverts and underpasses; and accommodation works for landowners.

The proposed route of the new A6 also skirts the south of Lough Beg, which is an important bird habitat with EU protection. The authorities had to ensure that any development would not adversely affect the site, which supports 46,000 wetland birds in winter. These include a number of Whooper Swans that migrate from Iceland and spend the winter in the wetland around Lough Beg.

An area to the west of Moyola River between the existing bypass around the local village of Toome and Deerpark Road has been

Robin Kirkpatrick (left) and Ronnie McGeary (right)

designated as a restricted working zone. From October each year until the following March, no work will take place within the restricted wetland area in which the swans are present.

Safety and reliability

GFJV appointed RB McGeary Contracts as the main subcontractor on the A6 Dualling Scheme for existing and new utility work (telephone, electricity and water). "We use RB McGeary Contracts for their specialist skills and good safety management," says Robin Kirkpatrick, Project H&S Manager.

"It's also good to see their fleet of new and well-maintained Hitachi machines on site. We obviously have a big emphasis on safety when it comes to working near pedestrians, so 360-degree vision around the equipment is vital to safeguard them."

The owner of RB McGeary Contracts, Ronnie McGeary, is also keen to promote safety. "There is an element of risk in our work, but we follow a safe working practice and run Hitachi zero-tail swing machines. These are very precise, and for example have motion sensors, flashing beacons and hose rupture valves – and as a result we have an excellent safety record."

Based in Donaghmore with 14 employees, RB McGeary Contracts has 12 Hitachi machines at its disposal: two ZX33U-5s, two ZX38U-5s, two ZX65USB-5s, one ZX130LCN-6, three ZX135US-6s, one ZX210LC-6 and one ZX225USLC-6.

"There is a shift towards the more favourable fuel consumption of compact machines due to increasing diesel costs," explains Ronnie. "The ZX33U-5 and ZX38U-5 are perfectly suited to our work. They provide the optimum digging depth and can be easily transported on our 7.5-tonne truck.

"These mini excavators average between 1,000 and 1,200 working hours per annum. I also like the ZX65USB-5, due to its power, reach and versatility in combination with the standard buckets and breakers we use."

Value for money

The company's medium excavators average 1,500-2,000 annual working hours and the last machine sold had nearly 5,000. "We usually change our machines every three years – about three or four a year – and we benefit from the strong second-hand values of Hitachi excavators.

"My favourite machine is the ZX210LC-6, which is very smooth, and especially suited to profiling and finishing work. In my opinion, this model and the minis can't be beaten in terms of value for money."

Ronnie prefers to stick to one brand of excavator, and finds that Hitachi is honest and treats his company with respect. "The Hitachi brand is all about reliability," he adds. "They even look after smaller customers like us – and that's important in a small country like Northern Ireland!"

Ronnie also appreciates the importance of routine maintenance and high-quality service. "We have experienced very little downtime with Hitachi machines. If there is a breakdown, our local Hitachi sub-dealer, TBF Thompson, is extremely helpful. They always send one of their service vehicles to us within an hour of our initial call. I know that I can reach Service Manager Mark Bennett at any time from 6.30am until 11pm – and this makes a huge difference!"

The operator of the ZX130LCN-6 on the A6 project, Seamus Loughran, has worked with Hitachi excavators and RB McGeary Contracts for four years. "This is a comfortable and solid machine, and very good in confined spaces. It's also incredibly precise, smooth, and easy to handle and control – it really does make the work easy for me!

"In addition TBF Thompson offers a first-class service. They are forward-thinking in terms of the maintenance schedule and excellent at working around our needs. Hitachi offers a different level of excavator, with better capabilities than the other brands that I have experienced. Reliability is another strong point and I could drive them for the rest of my life!"

To see a movie of the RB McGeary Contracts fleet, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

Living the dream

Ground Control **travels to Norway and meets entrepreneur and Hitachi enthusiast Wiggo Rønningen. We explore the inspiration behind his life in the industry and how he has pursued his dreams with the support of his local Hitachi dealer, Nasta.**

HITACHI
300

Wiggo Rønningen was born in Osen, approximately 100km from the Swedish border, to the north west of the capital city of Oslo. As a practically minded child, he worked during school holidays at the local quarry, where he was able to try out some different types of machines – and he was hooked! After leaving school at 18, he worked full-time role at the site and a year later, he was proud when promoted to the role of "rock blaster".

"As a result of my career path, I believe that school is not always the most important aspect of life," Wiggo admits. "Indeed, it is possible for 'drop-outs' like me to achieve so much by following their dreams.

"My ambition was to have my own company, so that I could buy the machines I used to try out in the quarry. Nowadays, I have so many visions and plans, usually to build or make something better. I always need to have a project on the go."

His past projects around Osen include: conversions of a former schoolhouse (now a restaurant); the school principal's home (now a lodge for visitors to stay); and a remote farmhouse with a barn and outhouses (now a holiday let).

Early days

"I started to work full-time with construction machinery in Oslo in 1981, but I missed the woodland and soon returned home," explains Wiggo. This was the opportunity to found his own company (in 1983) as the owner/operator of a solitary bulldozer.

He worked by himself for over three years, before his brother Geir Arne joined Wiggo Rønningen Maskin AS. The company started to expand with multiple projects and more personnel to manage.

The company's first excavator was purchased in 1985 and the first Hitachi machine was bought by chance, as Wiggo explains: "My wife, Elin, preferred the orange colour over yellow, and I had no further say in the matter! And now, even my three-year-old grandson likes the orange machines."

Since then, he hasn't looked back with a strong loyalty and passion for Hitachi construction machinery. In 2003, he bought a ZX210 medium excavator – his first Zaxis model from Nasta (then known as Nanset Standard).

"I still have the ZX210, although it has been 'retired' for a few years with around 10,000 working hours," confides Wiggo. "It works with the ZW220 wheel loader in our quarry and I care for it as if it was an old-aged pensioner."

Wiggo Rønningen Maskin hit its peak in 2012 with 20 employees, but the amount of paperwork led to a change of strategy. "At this point, I decided that it was time to downsize," Wiggo admits. There is now a team of six, including Elin and a seasonal worker. "The staff have worked here for many years. They are responsible people and really look after their machines. They are also very loyal and work well together."

The company's main areas of business include: earthmoving and groundworks; masonry and concrete supplies; drilling and blasting; and transportation; as well as road construction and snow ploughing.

Wiggo has a number of other business interests surrounding his construction company activities, including a share in the Furutangen ski resort, and part-ownership of a company that manufactures, builds and sells cabins as holiday homes.

Wiggo Rønningen Maskin is responsible for the groundworks, foundations and utilities of the cabins (more than 600 units have already been built). The type of work varies by season, for example in warmer weather the operators dig out the sites for the cabins and the foundations. When the climate is colder, they concentrate

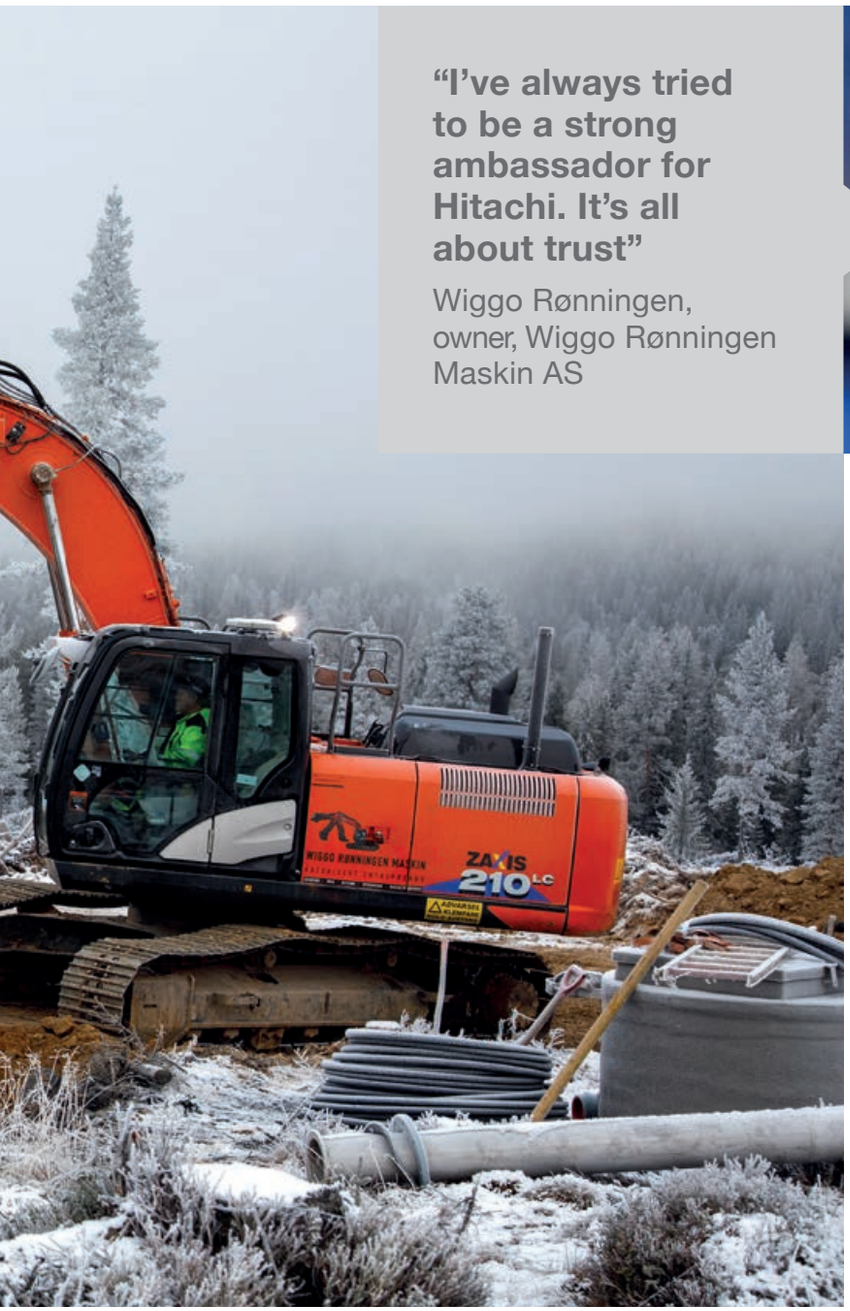
on the road network and other infrastructure work throughout the tree-covered landscape.

The quarry provides an invaluable source of gabbro rock, which is commonly found in this part of Norway. The company blasts and extracts the materials, before they are crushed and screened for use in Wiggo Rønningen Maskin's projects.

"It's non-stop work for us all year round," explains Wiggo. "The team averages an eight-hour day, depending on the project. It's very busy and I have never worked as hard as I do now. My only holiday every year is when I go moose hunting locally for a week in September – but I've even been too busy for that in 2018!"

In addition to the older machines in the quarry, the company owns a ZX25 mini, and ZX160LC-5, ZX210LC-3, ZX210LC-5, ZX210LC-6, ZX280LC-3 and ZX300LC-6 medium excavators. "Last year I told Elin that I would stop 'shopping' for machines, but I've been busier than ever with buying and selling in the past 12 months – it's one of my passions!"

The ZX160LC-5, ZX210LC-6 and ZX300LC-6 are covered by the extended warranty and service contracts provided by Nasta. The dealer's local mobile technician, Arne Kristian Dahli (based at



“I’ve always tried to be a strong ambassador for Hitachi. It’s all about trust”

Wiggo Rønningen, owner, Wiggo Rønningen Maskin AS

Løten), looks after the maintenance and service of these machines. “He’s fast and efficient, and always just one phone call away,” says Wiggo.

Flying the flag for Hitachi

His passion for Hitachi machines started with his local Hitachi dealer: “It’s never been about just one person, but the whole organisation. I know that the Hitachi/Nasta partnership works – and that’s good enough for me!

“I’ve tried other dealers and manufacturers, but I always come back to Hitachi and Nasta. I’ve never had any problems with the machines or the level of service. There’s not even been one hour of downtime over the years.

“My favourite machine was the ZX210LC-6, because of its versatility. However, it’s now the ZX300LC-6, due to its production capacity. I’m already a good salesman for Nasta. And I’ve always tried to be a strong ambassador for Hitachi. It’s all about trust.

“After buying the first Hitachi in the region, I’ve noticed how many Zaxis machines have moved into the area now. I’ve actually been an advisor to other contractors and even accompanied some of them to look at buying used machines.”

Wiggo is also aware of the importance of relationships: “I always buy high-quality machines, but this has to be balanced against the after-sales service we receive – it’s all about the total package.

“Nasta’s headquarters at Larvik [over 350km from Osen] seemed so far away when I went there for the first time, but the relationship with Nasta worked well right away. I soon felt at home and I now know their telephone number off by heart.”

More than a job

Like many Norwegian contractors, Wiggo is an operator as well as the owner of Hitachi machines. From an owner’s perspective, he rates “stability, reliability and operator comfort” as the most important benefits to his business.

As an operator, he says, “I like the precision of the hydraulics on Hitachi excavators and this is my favourite type of machine. The biggest improvement to the excavators in recent years has been the comfort.

“There’s so little noise in the cab and the control panel is so user-friendly. The Zaxis range is versatile and fun. I really enjoy sitting in a machine, and working on a busy and productive site.”

His experiences reveal how he feels about the Hitachi brand. “It’s really close to my heart,” he confides, “because this is not just my job, it’s also my hobby. The Hitachi name has stuck with me and I’m even loyal when buying a power tool for example.”

Wiggo clearly values the support and service he has received from Hitachi and Nasta, and is proud of his company’s association with the brand. “They are a strong combination of creativity and excellent machines for stability and reliability.

“Due to constant availability of the fleet, I rarely have to talk to Nasta. That’s what I like about Hitachi machines, they only need to be supported remotely by telephone!”

Wiggo’s business card displays a picture of two distinctly orange excavators, and in the centre of his home office he has created a floor tile with the outline of two Hitachi excavators on it. This is a daily reminder of his continued loyalty to the manufacturer and shows his regard for Hitachi machines as the foundation of his business.

To see a movie of Wiggo Rønningen Maskin’s fleet, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

Productive partnership

On the banks of the majestic Argeş River in southern Romania, a supplier of high-quality aggregates is using a ZX300LC-6 medium excavator to maintain maximum productivity.

Aggregates are continually replenished by the Argeş River

Rising from the Făgăras Mountains to the north – commonly referred to as the 'Transylvanian Alps' – the Argeş River weaves through Romania on a 350km journey. It eventually joins the famous Danube, before leaving through the city of Sulina, its last stop before draining to the Black Sea. Carried by the river from the mountains, mineral-rich sediments can often be found along its route.

One company taking advantage of these naturally occurring deposits is NBG Srl (NBG) – a member of the NBG Group. Founded in 1991, the company primarily worked in the construction industry, but soon expanded into roadworks, utilities and now aggregates. Near the town of Bolintin-Vale (around 30km west of capital Bucharest), NBG is harvesting sand for concrete production on the banks of the Argeş.

A new Hitachi ZX300LC-6 medium excavator has been quickly put to good use by NBG at the busy 150-hectare site. Delivered in October 2018 by Romania's authorised local Hitachi dealer, Utirom Invest Srl (Utirom), it joins a ZX250LC-3 excavator (delivered in June 2017). The pair work steadily to meet the high demand for the materials. Due to the specialist nature of the work, NBG had to obtain a special permit from the local authorities before activities commenced.

"The aggregates extracted from the river are used in the construction industry by local businesses and concrete plants near Bucharest," explains NBG's Machinery Manager, Razvan Vişan. "We started the project in August 2018, but feasibly have

“It is a luxury machine in terms of the comfort levels inside the cab, for example the air conditioning system and heated seat”

Marin Florinel,
Operator, NBG Srl

no end date as the aggregates are continually replenished by the river. We selected the ZX300LC-6 because we needed a strong machine with a high ground clearance, and that was capable of increasing productivity.”

On site, the two Hitachi medium excavators dredge and stockpile material from the riverbed, often interchanging positions. However, at the time of *Ground Control*’s visit, the ZX300LC-6 took a leading role in the process. Sitting in the shallows of the Argeş, the medium excavator works continuously to gather the high volume of aggregates required to fulfil demand.

It then leaves the river to load the third-party trucks that will take away the aggregates. Over 1,900 tonnes of material are removed from the site every day. Due to its robust features, the ZX300LC-6 is highly suited to the work. For example, its three track guards help to protect the track link from potential damage in the water and enhance the machine’s durability. In addition, the thick travel motor cover protects the excavator against damage.

Powerful and cost-effective

Razvan has been highly satisfied with the performance of the two Hitachi machines: “The medium excavators can work comfortably in the river, which can often plunge to temperatures of -3°C during winter before freezing over entirely. They form a productive partnership and do an excellent job. I have worked with other brands in the past, but have found that the Hitachi machines are easy to maintain, offer low fuel consumption and are exceptionally durable.

“With the arrival of the ZX300LC-6, our operators have noticed a positive difference in terms of the overall quality. In fact, I was convinced to invest in the new machine, due to the strong relationship we have with Utirom. The reliability of the ZX250LC-3 was also a contributing factor and it has now worked productively for over 11,000 hours.

“In terms of maintenance, I insist on using Hitachi Genuine Parts and servicing the machines myself, but Utirom offer a quick response if I need them. We share a strong relationship and they are helpful people. Using ConSite also helps me to monitor fuel consumption, which is an essential aspect in our industry.”

NBG was so pleased by the performance of its Hitachi machines that it has invested in two more: a ZX33U-5 mini and a ZX85USB-5 compact excavator, both delivered in 2018. “Hitachi manufacture the very best excavators,” concludes Razvan. “They are more powerful than others on the market and offer the most cost-effective option to a company such as ours.”

For operator Marin Florinel, it is also difficult to find fault with the ZX300LC-6: “The excavator is ideal for the type of work we are doing here in the Argeş, and more than capable of handling the materials. Without question, it is a luxury machine in terms of the comfort levels inside the cab, for example the air conditioning system and heated seat. The excavator is also easy to manoeuvre, and I enjoy working with the user-friendly and intuitive controls.”

To see a movie of the ZX300LC-6 in Romania, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

HITACHI

The best in the business

A popular tourist destination, gastronomic hub and renowned wine region, Tuscany is also home to a company that has helped put the Chianti area on the map. *Ground Control* meets the Fronti family, owners of Agrichianti and a fleet of Hitachi construction machinery, who have pioneered the development of the famous Tuscan landscape across three generations.

The charming hill-covered region of Chianti is in the heart of Tuscany. Between the cities of Florence and Siena lies Radda in Chianti (Radda), a medieval town enclosed in large defensive walls. Radda has had a turbulent past, in which it was the headquarters of the Chianti League, founded by Florence in the 13th Century to protect it from Siena.

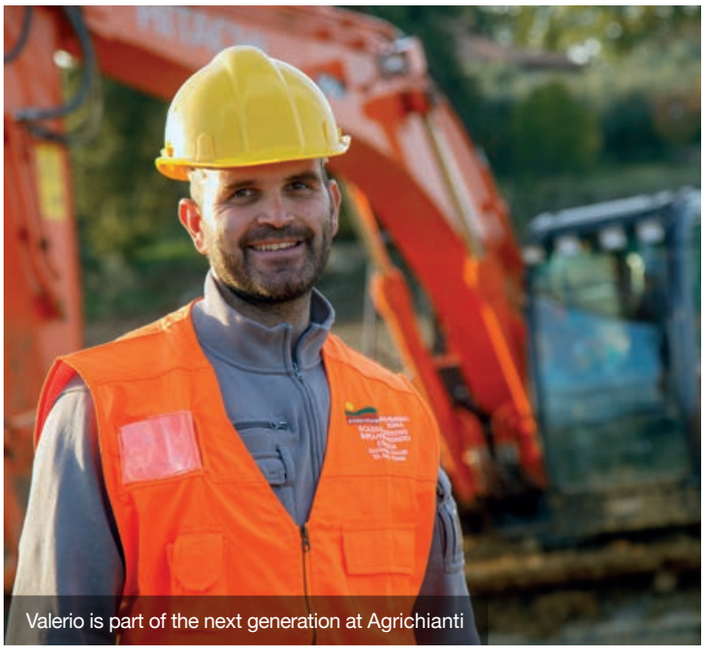
The town is now at the centre of the Chianti Classico wine territory, and a perfect place to explore the region's famous wineries, vineyards and olive groves. Set against this beautiful backdrop, Agrichianti specialises in earthmoving and landscaping, as well as preparing the ground for vineyards and planting vines.

The company was founded in 1959 by Bruno Fronti, who had two sons, Fabio and Stefano. Bruno was passionate about machines and had a pioneering spirit, purchasing his first excavator in 1975.

In the late 1980s, Bruno took a step back, and Fabio and Stefano took over the business. They became directors and had an equal partnership (although Stefano has since passed 25% on to his son, Nicola).

The brothers have always worked together around Radda. At first, they were both practically minded and enjoyed operating their father's machines. Then their roles changed as the company expanded and the number of employees grew. Fabio took more responsibility for customer contracts, as well as the finance and administration of the company, while Stefano spent the majority of his time on job sites.

"My first working memories are of learning to drive a tractor when I was 12," says Fabio. "The first 20 years of my working life were tough. It was hard work and there was little reward for our


Valerio is part of the next generation at Agrichianti

efforts. This upbringing helped to make us all the stronger as we became more successful."

Agrichianti's fortunes changed when the European Community provided funding for the conversion of land into vineyards in the 1970s. In the following decade, the wine industry also underwent a transformation. The 'big brands' emerged and helped to shift the perception of wine away from being just an accompaniment to food, to a special drink that is appreciated and loved.

These trends enabled Agrichianti to help the wine industry to expand, improve and keep pace with the demand for Chianti Classico. "It is satisfying to look around the countryside and reflect upon the key part that our company has played," says Fabio. "Like my father, I am passionate about machines and working in agriculture. I enjoy renovating the sites, so that everything is as natural as possible.

"I am so proud of our family and how our situation has improved. We are honest, cooperate well and complement each other perfectly. We always work hard and hope to continue developing as many new ideas as possible."

Stefano's first involvement with his father's business was when he started operating machines at the age of 14. "The biggest change since those days is the revolution in technology that has taken place in the machines," he says. "Our Zaxis excavators are so fast and precise… In fact, I spend more time with Hitachi equipment than I do at home!"

Agrichianti has been buying Hitachi excavators from Italian dealer SCAI since the delivery of a ZX210 in 2004. However, the two companies started dealing with each other as early as 1991, when Giancarlo Pais joined the sales team at SCAI.

The number of excavators owned by Agrichianti has grown with the success of the company. The family operates the machines for up to five years with the benefit of the correct maintenance and service programme in place.

The current line-up of 14 Hitachi machines includes: the ZX33U-5 and ZX65USB-5 mini excavators; with the ZX85USB-3, ZX130-6, ZX160LC-5, three ZX210LCN-5s, ZX210LCN-6, two ZX240LCN-3s, two ZX240LCN-5s and ZX300LCN-6 medium excavators.

Next generation

The team at Agrichianti numbers 18 personnel, with the next generation of Frontis already serving their time under the guidance of their respective fathers. Nicola's shareholding reflects his level of involvement within the company and he is joined by Fabio's son, Valerio.

The business has now come full circle with two other family-run companies. Fabio's eldest daughter, Angela, runs a wine company, Istine, with four staff, while Agriservice Chianti manages vineyards, prunes vines and harvests grapes. Its team of up to 40 seasonal workers work in close cooperation with Istine.

Nicola likes to operate the machines, but he is also in charge of all technical matters. "I learnt many things from my grandfather and started working with him in 1989," he says. "Now I am involved with every aspect, from driving the trucks to the finance and administration. It's great to work with my fathers, uncle and cousins, and we are one big happy family."

Valerio was also born into the industry and is learning the business from his father. He works in the office and helps with the admin, IT-related work and preparing contracts. In addition, he drives a tractor with a vine-planting machine, and specialises in drainage work.

He remembers digging his first hole with a machine at the age of five. "The following morning I went back to the hole and a wild boar had fallen into it!" he reminisces. "I studied agriculture at university and officially started working with the company in 2012.

"We have a close working relationship with a university in Florence and local high schools. The students come here for experience or research, and they share their findings and results with us – we like to help each other."

Agrichianti's speciality is preparing soil for planting vines and installing drainage systems. This process involves excavating 1.2m-deep trenches, laying the drainage pipes, and then covering them in stones and soil. At the same time, another machine digs the soil on each site and removes the larger rocks with the aid of a special bucket.

"We are renowned for our landscaping work and preparing the ground for the wine companies," says Nicola. "We also build the wine cellars and reclaim the authentic local stone to build walls and paths that help to give the countryside its unique charm."

Agrichianti focuses on the most famous areas of Chianti Classico wine production from its base in Radda. "The owners of the great wineries wish to invest in their facilities and vineyards," Nicola adds. "They want high-quality work from us, so that they can have the best quality grapes and landscape for their customers to taste and admire."

The company is usually working at around 20 different sites in the area and has at least three machines allocated to each project. The busiest time of year is usually between February and July.

The bottom line

With so many projects, sites and machines to manage, it is vital that Agrichianti has reliable suppliers to meet its needs. "There are three reasons why we buy Hitachi excavators: we like the machines; we have a strong working relationship with SCAI; and we receive an excellent level of support," concludes Fabio.

"We bought our first Hitachi due to the quality of the brand and the machine. Hitachi excavators are the fastest and most precise for the work that we do, and we consider the Zaxis-5 mini

excavators to be our best machines.

"In addition, we trust Giancarlo, and our relationship doesn't just exist when we are buying a machine, but throughout the whole year. He has given our children scale models since they were babies and we know that he is genuinely happy for us when we have a new machine delivered.

"We've tried out other excavators and dealers, but have always come back to Hitachi and SCAI. Since the beginning, SCAI has always made us feel important. Many of our agreements have been signed directly with the Cesaretti family, who own SCAI – and this is a strong consideration.

"And finally, the reliability of the machines is vital, especially for the environment in which we work. The service contracts on the new machines and technical support we receive from SCAI are first class. We also have an excellent working relationship and friendship with their service technicians. Hitachi machines are perfect for our work, but in this niche of the market the most important benefit is the service we receive."

To see a movie of the Agrichianti Hitachi fleet in Italy, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

Thriving in a competitive market

Shannon Valley has grown over the past three decades to become one of the Republic of Ireland's largest contractors. As the number and size of the company's construction projects have developed, so has its fleet of Hitachi construction machinery.

The 224-mile (360.5-kilometre) River Shannon is the longest river in Ireland. It's fitting that one of the country's most significant construction companies takes its name from the famous waterway. Shannon Valley hails from Drumshanbo, County Leitrim, which is close to where the river flows into Lough Allen.

The company was founded by Michael English in 1991 and celebrated its 25-year anniversary in 2016. The large team of over 400 employees is headed by Michael's three sons and equal partners, Mick, David and Dermot. With up to 40 projects in operation around Dublin and further afield, Mick and Dermot take responsibility for the sites while David looks after the maintenance of the construction machinery.

The company is based at the Shannon Valley Centre in Donabate, County Dublin, which was built in 2005. The spacious yard, workshop, warehouse and office are a hive of activity, especially as these facilities are used to help maintain and service its fleet of construction machinery.

The business provides an array of solutions, ranging from demolition and road construction, to bulk excavation and drainage. As well as construction-related activities, it also offers plant hire, haulage and quarrying services.

"Despite the financial crisis, we were busy up to 2010 and then it was very quiet for two years following the collapse of the Irish construction market," says David. "So, we had no option but to do some work in Poland for three years. We carried out major earthworks and haulage of materials for the construction of a motorway and other roads.

"Thankfully, the situation has now improved at home and we're back working here on a full-time basis. Dublin is buoyant and we have other site development work being carried out in the south of the country."

One of Shannon Valley's high-profile projects was earthworks on the M50 (Dublin's orbital motorway) Upgrade Scheme. With a €1 billion investment over four years, this was one of the largest

road construction schemes in the history of the Republic of Ireland.

To have the flexibility to manage so many and such large-scale projects, Shannon Valley has a large fleet of construction machinery at its disposal. It currently operates around 100 excavators (from one to 80 tonnes), as well as dump trucks, tipper trucks, articulated trucks, bulldozers, and crushing and screening equipment (among others).

Loyal to Hitachi

Michael purchased his first Hitachi excavator (a UH063) in 1989 and now there are approximately 50 Zaxis excavators and ZW wheel loaders in the fleet. “We still have the UH063,” says David, “and it has more than 30,000 working hours. After my father started the company, the market grew and our business developed quickly in the second half of the Nineties.

“During that period, we bought many Hitachi EX220s, EX300s, EX400s, EX600s and other models. These machines worked hard and clocked up many hours. We have continued to buy Hitachi machines, because the whole range is strong, particularly the large excavators for their durability and reliability.

“Some of our operators prefer Hitachi excavators, because they are smoother to operate and more precise than other brands. We have also found that Hitachi wheel loaders are trouble-free and have developed well over the years.

“Currently we have more demand for 8-, 13-, 20- and 30-tonne machines for our projects. We have bought more than a dozen machines this year, including the ZX33U-5, ZX48U-5, ZX225USLC-6 and ZX250LC-6.

“Hitachi equipment is easy to maintain and we have an excellent relationship with our dealer TBF Thompson [a sub-dealer of Hitachi Construction Machinery (UK)]. I speak directly to the Parts Manager John and Service Manager Mark at the Mallusk branch, and I’m very happy with the service that they provide.”

“We have continued to buy Hitachi machines, because the whole range is strong, particularly the large excavators for their durability and reliability”

David (left) and Dermot English, owners, Shannon Valley Ltd

Versatility on the job site

David took *Ground Control* on a tour of four sites in and around Dublin to demonstrate the versatility of the Shannon Valley operation. The first stop was a new housing development site where Glenveagh Properties is building 148 houses at the small seaside town of Rush.

Shannon Valley was engaged for the full development of the site, including foundation work, utilities and roads. A ZX225USLC-6 medium excavator was digging trenches for the foundations with operator Tom Reilly at the controls.

“This is an incredibly well-balanced machine for its size – even with a full bucket,” he says. “It has a long reach and is very accurate. The cab is spacious and the zero-tail swing means that I can work quickly in confined spaces.”

David adds, “The house-building sector is strong at the moment and therefore we have invested in more compact machines, such as the ZX225USLC-6. This is a highly competitive market, in which every penny counts and the deadlines are always tight. All of this means we have a basic need for reliable machinery.”

On the second site, property development company Twinlite is constructing up to 800 apartments at Clongriffin on the northern fringe of Dublin. Shannon Valley was contracted to excavate the basement, carry out the foundation work for the columns and install the drainage. Among the Hitachi machines on site was a ZX48U-5, which was backfilling under the control of operator Damien Harte.

“This mini excavator is very stable, and has strong digging power

and a good reach for a machine of this size," he says. "It is also comfortable, spacious and offers excellent all-round visibility. I feel safe and confident working in tight spaces, which is perfect on a site like this."

In addition, David explains, "We will complete this job within six months, then the concrete work will be ready to start. In the early stages, we had our ZX690LCH-6 large excavator working here for the bulk excavation. It loaded 5,500 eight-wheeler trucks during this part of the project!"

The ZX690LCH-6 had since been moved to a demolition project in Shanowen Road in the Dublin suburb of Whitehall. The structure had been part-built before the Irish market collapsed and the original site was abandoned.

Shannon Valley was hired by the new developer, Comer Group, to fully demolish, separate, clear and recycle the materials, including a 600mm-thick concrete slab. Although this was a relatively small job for the contractor – with one month of demolition and six weeks of groundworks – it was utilising one of its largest excavators fitted with a huge eight-tonne pulverising attachment.

In addition, Shannon Valley is responsible for the blasting, excavating, crushing and screening of L Behan Aggregates & Recycling Ltd's quarry at Rathcoole, which lies to the south west of Dublin. Windmill Hill Quarry is an invaluable source of high-quality, low-sulphur limestone that is used as aggregates for foundations and drainage work.

Among a wide range of medium and large Hitachi Zaxis excavators, the company is using two ZW310-6s to load the aggregates on to the trucks. One of the medium wheel loaders is operated by Michal Wrobel.

"I like the joystick steering, especially when I am operating in tight spaces," he says. "There is more than enough space in the cab, and I also like the air conditioning and other hi-tech features. The automatic gearbox is great and the loading cycle is fast, which keeps the productivity high in such a busy site."

Shannon Valley, TBF Thompson and Hitachi have combined to develop and maintain a highly durable and reliable fleet of construction equipment. The incredible work ethic of the English family, the versatility of their Hitachi machinery and the tri-partnership's commitment to invest in the latest technology will ensure that they will continue to thrive in a highly competitive marketplace.

To see a movie of Shannon Valley's fleet, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

Rising to the challenge

Hitachi's ZW-6 range of wheel loaders has been designed to be highly productive, fuel-efficient and easy to maintain. *Ground Control* pays a visit to Portugal to see how two machines are making a positive impact at their respective companies.

Following the financial storms of 2008, a number of Portuguese industries are thriving once again. The country's construction and quarrying sectors are enjoying fresh optimism and are also benefitting from renewed international confidence in their exports. Two companies in particular are setting new standards and are using Hitachi construction machinery to support their interests.

An important member of the Saint-Gobain group, Leca (which stands for 'lightweight expanded clay aggregates') has operations right across Europe, including Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Poland. At its Portuguese plant, near the community of Avelar, Leca has been mixing and exporting clay since 1969. In its quest to secure a new fleet of technologically advanced equipment, Leca (through Saint-Gobain) recently issued an international tender.

Hitachi successfully won the contract and subsequently distributed 10 different machines to Leca around Europe. As part of the package, a Hitachi ZW220-6 wheel loader was delivered to the site in Avelar in June 2018. "At the time, Leca was looking for a central supplier," explains Industrial Manager Bernardo Mendonça.

"We made detailed specifications with precise technical requests and Hitachi presented the most appropriate and cost-effective solution. Moviter (Hitachi's authorised local dealer) worked hard to help us capitalise on the opportunity and our operators were also involved in the selection process. They were delighted with the performance of the Hitachi wheel loader."

A demanding quota

At the 10-hectare site, the ZW220-6 is being used to mix three different types of clay, as well as feed the main chute that leads to Leca's central processing plant. Whereas the 'black' clay is delivered from a site only two kilometres away, the 'amber' deposit arrives from the city of Leiria to the south. The final 'brown' mix has to be transported from the north of Portugal. The wheel loader is tasked with mixing the piles to a pre-defined ratio in order to achieve the desired consistency.

To help meet demand, Leca's ZW220-6 must load 600m^3 of mixed material into the system per 20-hour shift. Once inside the processing plant, the clay is pulverised and sliced into smaller pieces. Water is then added, before the mixture is weighed and sent to the kiln where it is heated to 1,200°C and expanded to the required mass. The end result is five different types of porous clay that are exported for use in construction and agriculture.

According to Bernardo, the Hitachi wheel loader is perfectly suited to the task: "One of the biggest challenges we face in Avelar is the 24/7 operation, which means that the wheel loader is required to work constantly. For this reason, the high availability and reliability of the Hitachi machine makes it the ideal solution, and our operators have been highly satisfied with the overall performance of the ZW220-6."

Having spent 28 years at Leca, Production Manager Helder Alves has the highest standards when it comes to construction machinery. The demands put on the ZW220-6 are intense, as he explains: "The wheel loader works continuously for most of the day, so it must be productive. In fact, our entire production cycle relies on it, because all of the clay material is initially handled by the ZW220-6.

"This job site is an extremely difficult place to work and it is vital that we meet our quota. However, my experience of the Hitachi wheel loader so far is that it is better than other machines and performs favourably in all technical areas. The dimensions are ideal for this site; it is user-friendly and the cab is comfortable. In short, we know that we can expect reliability from a Hitachi machine."

“We know that we can expect reliability from a Hitachi machine”
Helder Alves,
Production Manager, Leca

Helder’s colleague, Adelino Silva, has also been happy with the introduction of the ZW220-6: “It is a fast, strong and well-balanced machine, and the superior traction is a feature that is unique to Hitachi wheel loaders. The 360° visibility is a positive, while it delivers an outstanding digging force when driving into the piles. For me, it does the same work as a larger machine while achieving higher fill rates and using less fuel.”

A family affair

Located 80 kilometres (50 miles) to the south of Avelar, sits the town of Fátima. Although it is more commonly associated with being a site of pilgrimage, to the edge of the town lies a thriving limestone quarry owned and operated by Filstone Natural SA (Filstone). Established in April 2002 by CEO Ricardo Jorge, the creation of Filstone was a special moment as he recalls: “Six generations of my family have been involved in stone production so it was a dream come true for me.

“When I set up Filstone, I went into business with my father and grandfather as partners. I have spent my entire life in this industry and we initially started out as a cooperative, in which we bought materials as a collective from other sites. In 2008, we purchased the quarry here in Fátima (Casal Farto) outright and have since embarked on a period of internationalisation in which we have opened offices in Shanghai to access the Chinese market.”

In a fast-changing industry, Filstone has a comprehensive vision on the supply chain, in which limestone blocks are cut according to customer specifications and continually analysed to assess their quality. The company’s approach involves looking to the latest technology, which also incorporates machinery.

With this in mind, Filstone has invested in a Hitachi ZW310-6 wheel loader to help it maintain high productivity at the 30-hectare quarry, which yields 900,000 tonnes of limestone per year. At the current time, reserves are anticipated to last for 100 years. “I first learned about Hitachi on a visit to Japan in 1997 and I know that the company is associated with quality,” confirms Ricardo.

“The wheel loader is like a Porsche! Rapid, agile and smooth”
Humberto Miguel de Jesus Santos, Operator, Filstone

“In addition, I was aware that Hitachi manufactured excavators, but was new to its series of wheel loaders. Many of my friends in the industry own Hitachi machines and I have always heard positive statements about the servicing and maintenance. In time, we began discussions with Moviter to gauge what they could offer and agreed to invest in the ZW310-6.”

On the challenging site, the Hitachi wheel loader works on the second level of the quarry and is being used to load trucks, move limestone between different stockpiles, and feed the crushing and screening equipment. The material being handled by the ZW310-6 is a secondary commodity created by activities on the quarry floor, in which 13-14 tonne limestone blocks are cut. The limestone is used for building materials such as mortar, plaster, rendering, concrete and whitewash.

For Ricardo, the Hitachi wheel loader is essential to Filstone’s output, especially in a market in which limestone can sometimes be more lucrative than marble. “Japanese companies such as Hitachi are forward-thinking and the ZW310-6 has undoubted quality. We had high expectations for the wheel loader, but were surprised by its low fuel consumption. In addition, the machine is stable and compact, and still performs as effectively as a larger machine.”

At the family-owned company, it is no surprise to see Ricardo’s cousin, Humberto Miguel de Jesus Santos, operating the ZW310-6. He is in agreement with Ricardo about the merits of Hitachi ownership: “The wheel loader is like a Porsche! Rapid, agile and smooth. Inside the cab there is near 100% visibility and it is very quiet. In terms of maintenance, it has well-positioned access points and is easy to clean. I really enjoy using Hitachi machines.”

To see a movie of the ZW-6 wheel loaders in Portugal, please visit **www.youtube.com/user/HitachiConstruction**. To receive a digital version of *Ground Control* with new movies, please register online at **www.hitachicm.eu/iground-control**

The demolition experts

A Romanian contractor relies on its Hitachi Zaxis medium excavators to complete its demolition projects on time. One of the recent additions to its fleet, a ZX350LC-6, is living up to expectations for reliability, power and speed.

“Hitachi manufactures the best-performing excavators on the market”

Robert Comandaru (left), Owner, EuroMetalColect SRL with Alex Moise, Utirom Sales Manager

Founded by co-owner Robert Comandaru in 2015, EuroMetalColect Srl has rapidly established itself as a strong player in the Romanian demolition and scrap metal market. In the beginning, the Trifeşti-based company was primarily involved in metal collection and scrap only. However, in recent years, Robert has been quick to explore the opportunities in the country’s demolition sector.

“Our company has a unique proposition,” he says. “This is because we are not only able to demolish industrial buildings, but also remove the rubble and metal that are left over. Due to our experience, we are capable of overseeing the demolition, as well as exporting the materials to the rest of the world.”

Although the market is healthy, the company faces strong competition. To help him achieve his objectives, EuroMetalColect has invested in a fleet of six Hitachi medium excavators, which have been supplied by Romania’s authorised local Hitachi dealer, Utirom Invest Srl (Utirom). These include three Zaxis-6 models – the ZX250LC-6, ZX300LC-6 and ZX350LC-6 – which were delivered in August and September 2018.

At a demolition site near the city of Ploieşti, the ZX350LC-6 is making a positive impact. EuroMetalColect has been commissioned to demolish an old factory near the village of Moara Nouă. In its place, a new facility will be constructed. Here, expanded polystyrene will be manufactured for various applications, including cavity insulation for residential properties.

Demolition began in September 2018 at the demanding 30,000m^2 site, with an expected completion date of mid-November. EuroMetalColect is using three Hitachi medium excavators to meet the deadline. Alongside the new ZX350LC-6, a ZX280LCN-3 and ZX250LC-3 are also helping to keep productivity as high as possible.

The process begins when the ZX280LCN-3 fitted with a breaker attachment splits apart the concrete structures. The ZX350LC-6, equipped with a concrete crusher, then carefully picks out the pieces of iron and steel that once formed the internal framework of the building. It also stockpiles the materials into separate piles.

Afterwards, the ZX250LC-3 excavator loads a steady stream of container trucks for onward transportation. Around 20 vehicles are filled in this way on a daily basis. EuroMetalColect primarily exports the metal (approximately 20 tonnes a day) to Turkey for use in the country’s car manufacturing market.

Renowned for reliability

Given the tough conditions on site, only the most reliable equipment will do according to Robert: “We have to work quickly, so it’s essential that our machines can keep pace with demand. It’s a harsh environment, which means that our most important considerations are the safety of our operators and productivity.

“The reason I purchased the Hitachi ZX350LC-6 medium excavator was because I knew that there would be no downtime. I’ve worked with several other brands, but for me, Hitachi manufactures the best-performing excavators on the market – they are renowned for their reliability.”

EuroMetalColect is also operating a similar site in the town of Copşa Mică. “We are demolishing a 700,000m^2 smelting plant, the Sometra works,” explains Robert. “There, we are using the ZX300LC-6 and ZX280LC-3. At both sites, we are relying on the power, speed and low fuel consumption of the Hitachi excavators.”

The excellent service from Utirom has been a source of great satisfaction for Robert. All the Hitachi machines are covered under a two-year/4,000-hour service contract, and ConSite – Hitachi’s remote fleet monitoring service – is a particular highlight for him.

“I am happy when I receive the email, because I can instantly see how well the Hitachi machines are performing,” he says. “Above all, we enjoy a productive relationship with Utirom and the proactive support they give to us is fantastic. They are like-minded people and take the time to understand our needs.”

Utirom’s Sales Manager, Alex Moise, recalls the beginning of the partnership: “I am responsible for sales across Romania, which means that I travel regularly. Interestingly, I met Robert on board a flight a number of years ago. We got into a conversation and I was delighted to hear that he was a Hitachi fan! From there, the first sale quickly followed and we’ve been firm friends ever since.”

Dreams of Hitachi

For the ZX350LC-6’s operator, Gheorghe Vacaru, the machine is ideally suited to the rigours of a demolition site: “The excavator is powerful, reliable and fast. Our work is demanding so we cannot do it without a strong machine. Having worked with other excavators, I have definitely noticed a reduction in the noise levels inside the cab.

“In terms of manoeuvrability, the joystick controls offer a quick and smooth response, while the low fuel-to-power ratio is second to none! However, the number one advantage of operating the ZX350LC-6 is its stability. I can genuinely feel the difference with the new Zaxis-6 range. Beforehand, I used to dream about working with Hitachi machines, so I’m delighted that I now get to operate them.”

Model performance
HITACHI
HITACHI
HITACHI
HITACHI
HITACHI
Buy Hitachi scale models at
www.hcmewebshop.com