

Integrated Shut a huge success

By Hendrik De Villiers

During September various machine centres were shut down for planned maintenance and upgrades. These shuts were called “integrated”, since they were of such long duration that they impacted severely on the metal flow to and from other machine centres. This necessitated careful planning of the timing and duration of the shut on each machine centre so that the overall impact on Hulamin throughput could be minimised, hence the term “integrated” shut.

There are various reasons for having these huge shuts, including the need to replace equipment that has become obsolete and can no longer be maintained, to implement new designs for improved reliability, to install new equipment that improve quality or throughput, to do normal maintenance tasks of long duration, to implement process changes like new gas sources or improved emulsion packages etc...

In total, approximately 80 projects were completed during this period. The largest cost project as well as the longest duration, was the replacement of the obsolete HRM cyclo drives that took 12 days. The rest of the shuts were planned around this project, which took 2 years of planning and preparation.

In order to be able to say the integrated shut was a huge success, several factors have to be considered. Firstly, there was only one very minor first aid case recorded during the entire shut. Secondly, all major projects that were targeted, were actually completed. Thirdly, all major projects were delivered on time, which is the evidence of great teamwork and many hours spent in planning and preparation. Fourthly, there were no major unforeseen events that necessitated emergency change of plans. These evidences of success deserves a great big to every team member involved in any of the shut activities. Hulamin has much to be thankful for in terms of maintenance and engineering team members pulling out all the stops, production and procurement teams that worked together, and our vendors that made much of this performance possible. This shut was also managed to success by our Management team that provided great leadership and support during the preparation and execution phases of the whole process.



Hulamin operates in the heavy engineering manufacturing sector, and as such we are all intimately involved in the different aspects of asset management. Some of us are involved in the most efficient way in which to operate these assets (like rolling mills and slitting lines etc...), which implies that we have to have a skilled and competent operations team, working together with an equally skilled and competent technical team. This of course requires a marketing team that sells the most profitable products suitable to our asset capabilities and a Planning team that takes care of the material flow. Others are involved in the financing and investment side of our assets while others are involved in the procurement and cost management of our assets. These all have to be integrated with good equipment maintenance and project management principles in order to deliver a bright future for Hulamin. It is therefore a great opportunity to look back at what we have achieved, and recognise that we have done well. Now we can move forward and focus on getting the best out of the investments we have made.