

BULLETIN

ROBIT PLC CUSTOMER MAGAZINE 2 / 2020

Record-breaking piling project in Helsinki

World's #1 copper
producer chooses Robit

Robit & BIA: a powerful
partnership

Robit

DEAR READER,

at the time of writing, the coronavirus pandemic continues to plague the world, but a faint light is gleaming at the end of the tunnel. From a pure business point of view, Robit has not been significantly affected by the virus. The restrictions have not significantly slowed down the construction and mining industries, which has kept demand for our products and services fairly stable.

Profitability has continued to develop positively, giving us a strong basis for developing the company towards our financial targets. In the third quarter, Robit grew by 16% at fixed rates – a decent performance. We also managed to increase our market share, especially in the mining and piling segment.

Our distributors' role in the development of our sales has grown more important year by year, and 2020 has been no exception. I would especially like to tip my hat to our Chilean distributor, Full Safety, who reached a supplier agreement with Codelco, the world's largest copper producer. Full Safety and Robit worked closely together without sparing efforts, finally convincing the customer of the quality of our products and services. A tremendous performance! More on this on pages 4–5.

For obvious reasons, 2020 has been a year of remote meetings and virtual events. We organised both the autumn kick-off and our annual distributor event online, and the feedback has been positive. It has been encouraging to see that things can work out fine remotely too. I do hope, though, that 2021 will see us getting back to normal, meeting our customers and distributors face to face on-site.

I wish you all a successful and safe New Year!

Tommi Lehtonen, CEO



IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	2
World's #1 copper producer chooses Robit	4
Record-breaking piling project in Helsinki	6
MIPL and Robit improving infrastructure in India	8
Robit and BIA - A new power duo for West and Central African markets	10
Test Report: Robit C51-102 mm dropcenter spherical bit	12
Robit management kick off went hybrid	13
Get to know	14

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*Photo:
Matti Tikkanen, Fingeo*

The mighty Cerro el Plomo summit on the central Andes, a few kilometres south from the Andina mine.

WORLD'S #1 COPPER PRODUCER chooses Robit

Copper mining has been a key driver of Chile's economy for centuries. Among the country's mining companies, the state-owned Codelco is the crown jewel. It's the world's leading copper producer with immense mineral reserves, and a driving force for the entire country's development.

Codelco's major mining sites include El Teniente, "the Lieutenant", the world's largest underground copper mine which has been in operation for 200 years and currently has a capacity of 400,000 tonnes.

The second largest mine is the century-old Chuquicamata, or "Chuqui", as the locals call it. Since its open pit operations had grown increasingly uneconomic over the last years, Codelco made a huge investment switching to underground cave

mining in 2019. Chuqui's current capacity is 377,000 tonnes. Andina, the third largest mine nestled at the dizzying height of 3,700–4,200 metres on the Andes, consists of the Rio Blanco underground mine and the Sur Sur open pit.

As of late 2020, Robit will be the main supplier of Top Hammer and Down-the-Hole drilling tools for Codelco's three largest mines. This is a result of decisive cooperation between Robit and their Chilean distributor Full Safety.

Founded in 2010, Full Safety had focused on dealing in clothes and footwear for special target groups such as armed forces, law enforcement, health professionals – and the mining industry. The last-mentioned seemed like a promising sector for new business opportunities, and in 2015 they contacted Robit.

From left: Alberto Castillo (Sales Manager, Full Safety), Rafael Rojas (Drillmaster, Full Safety), José Antonio Rodríguez (Sales Manager, Robit), and Cesar Cornejo (General Manager, Full Safety).



“We were looking for new strategies, and we met Robit at the right time. After consulting with them we restructured our business model over the next few years by opening a new office and recruiting sales personnel as well as drillmasters for field support. In turn, Robit offered us training and technical-commercial support on client visits, and participated in mining fairs with us”, recounts **Cesar Cornejo**, General Manager of Full Safety.

Getting a foot in the door of a global giant like Codelco is not a simple thing. Despite persistent efforts, discussions on arranging a comparison test to prove the quality of Robit’s consumables led nowhere. As a change of plan, Full Safety approached Astaldi, the main contractor at El Teniente – and they agreed to a head-to-head test between Robit and their then-current brands.

The February 2020 tests, involving bits, drifter rods and couplings, did not disappoint: Robit outperformed the competition by some 30% in terms of lifetime and penetration rate. A letter of certification by Astaldi opened the door to participate in a tender for Codelco. Full Safety and **José Antonio Rodríguez**, Sales Manager for Robit SAC, then carefully fine-tuned an offer that proved the most competitive.

This major achievement, however, is just the tip of the iceberg. The Chilean mining sector has vast growth potential for the Robit-Full Safety partnership, and several other tenders and product tests are already underway across the country.



From left: Matti Tikkanen (Fingeo),
pilot bit after drilling 8 km,
a brand new pilot bit,
Sami Paavola (Robit).
Photo: Tuomas Perkiö



RECORD-BREAKING PILING PROJECT IN HELSINKI



*The piling project in Verkkosaari continues into the second half of 2021.
Photo: Matti Tikkanen, Fingeo*

In the late 19th century, Helsinki was growing and industrialising rapidly. This was particularly evident in the seaside district of Sörnäinen, which became the largest industrial area in the city after the construction of a cargo port and a railroad track. Now the port and factories are history, but the neighbourhood – now called Kalasatama or “Fish Port” – will remain an integral part of the Helsinki maritime cityscape in the future. That future is now being built in Verkkosaari, at the northern end of Kalasatama.

While the southern Kalasatama has been under reconstruction for years, Verkkosaari was sitting idly for a long time. Its 13 hectares are now zoned for a residential area for 3,600 people, a large daycare centre, and a marina. To start with, more than 200,000 tonnes of contaminated soil had to be removed. Before construction work can begin, the soil needs to be reinforced. New land is also being built on top of the sea, where some of the buildings will arise.

At this moment, work at Verkkosaari is in full swing with excavations, earthfilling, pile drilling, and other groundwork. Drilling contractor Fingeo is drilling micropiles for road base support, in cooperation with the main contractor GRK Infra. The jobsite is demanding.

“Most of the challenges are caused by the old structures, concrete piles, wooden piles and other materials buried in the soil. It’s former seabed that had been gradually filled since the early 1900s”, says Tuomas Perkiö, supervisor for Fingeo.

The jobsite is also exceptional in scope. “This is the largest micropiling project ever in Finland. We have a drilling contract for 6,000 piles, 110 km altogether”, Tuomas recounts.

Fingeo started the pile drilling work at the beginning of 2020 with one drill rig. By November they were operating five drill units and had laid down some 3,800 piles, which equals to 63 kilometres. The remaining 2,200 piles will be drilled by autumn 2021.

Fingeo uses Robit’s pilot bits and reamers in the drilling work, which has progressed without a hitch. “Robit’s pilots and reamers are doing a great job. At best, we have drilled more than 8 kilometers with a single bit. Cooperation with our Robit contact Sami Paavola has also been excellent: deliveries run smoothly, and Robit reacts quickly to our requests and provides support whenever needed”, says Tuomas Perkiö.

The remaining infrastructure works in Verkkosaari are scheduled to be completed in 2022, allowing the actual construction phase to begin. Kalasatama as a whole is one of the largest construction areas in Helsinki, and it will keep taking shape well into the 2030s.

Karnaprayag is situated at a picturesque spot at the confluence of the Alaknanda and Pindar Rivers.

MIPL and Robit IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA

Machino International (MIPL), headquartered in Delhi, is a leading supplier of construction and tunneling products in India. Over the past years, Robit and MIPL have developed a fruitful partnership serving the mining and infrastructure industries in the country. Here's just a little sample of our recent success stories in the northern states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Rishikesh–Karnaprayag Railway tunnels
Badrinath is a holy town and a major Hindu pilgrimage site in the Himalayas, near the mighty Nanda Devi peak. The towns of Rishikesh and Karnaprayag are important waypoints for millions of pilgrims visiting Badrinath each year. Typically, the travel time from Rishikesh to Karnaprayag is seven hours by road.



The state-owned railway company RVNL has started a massive project to build a railway connecting the two cities. The 125 km stretch will have 12 stations, 17 tunnels and 35 bridges. Once finished, the rail line will cut the Rishikesh–Karnaprayag travel time down to two hours.

The construction project is divided into several “packages”. Package 5, constructed by Navayuga Engineering, includes two tunnels, one from Lachmoli to Maletha (2.8 km) and one from Maletha to Ranihat (4.1 km).

RVNL approved the Robit forepoling system with MIPL casings for use in Package 5. The geology in the tunnels is mostly riverbed material, i.e. soft rock, sand, and gravel, while the most challenging sections are big boulders of phyllite and quartzite. Navayuga has used the system with great success, advancing approximately 6 metres per day.

National Highway 21 upgrading

The National Highways Authority of India (NHA) is responsible for managing a network of over 50,000 km of National Highways (NH). An important part of NHA’s tasks is the upgrading of highways to four lanes. One of these projects, started in March 2018, concerns the old NH 21 (now part of the new NH 3) and consists of four-laning the stretch from Pandoh Bypass to Takoli Section in Himachal Pradesh.

This project includes ten tunnels with a total length of 21 km, the geology consisting mainly of Site

Class D (stiff soil). As of November 2020, 15 km of tunnel is already completed. The contractor Afcons Infrastructure has been using Robit forepoling systems with MIPL casings. The work has progressed very smoothly and is expected to be completed by early 2021.

Machino International also arranged face drilling tests for Robit’s consumables for the project. The tests proved successful, outlasting competitors in terms of cost per metre. As a result, the happy customer is now using mostly Robit rock drilling consumables in the project.

Bhanupali–Bilaspur–Beri New Rail Line tunnels

The Bhanupali–Bilaspur–Beri New Rail Line project is a high priority of the Himachal Pradesh state government. The construction of the 63 km railway includes viaducts, bridges, and seven tunnels.

The tunnelling work has been awarded to Max Infra India. The total length of the tunnels is 3.5 km, the geology consisting mainly of sand, stone, and soft rock. Using six drill jumbos, the contractor has completed 1,200 metres of tunnel as of November 2020, mainly depending on the Robit forepoling system with MIPL casings.

The contractor reports daily advancements of three meters. The project is running smoothly without any trouble.



From left: Tommi Lehtonen (CEO, Robit Group), Kari Alenius (VP EMEA, Robit Group), Vincent Bia (CEO, BIA Group), Alain Vandenplas (General Manager ESB and ACCB, BIA Africa), Eric Perben (General Manager, BIA Africa), Jorge Leal (Director of Global Sales, Robit Group) and Rasmus Sokura (Sales & Distributor Business Manager, Robit Group).

ROBIT AND BIA

A new power duo for West and Central African markets

2020 saw the beginning of a strategic partnership between Robit and the Belgium-based BIA, which has served mining, quarry, and construction customers in Africa for over a century.

The story of BIA begins in 1902, when a young Belgian mining engineer named Georges Bia opened a small sales office for mining tools in Brussels to cover the Belgian and Congolese markets. Over the following years, however, something else started to intrigue Georges: news had begun to come in from America about first-ever successful flights on a powered aircraft, by a pair of brothers called Wright.

Europeans remained extremely skeptical of this news and the Wright brothers were called “bluffers” by many – until Wilbur Wright arrived in France in 1908. He performed a series of successful flights, charming the crowds and turning critics into admirers. Georges Bia, too, was impressed. He even became Wright’s representative in Belgium and published an illustrated book of his flights in 1909.

In a few years however, the Wright Brothers craze waned, and Georges went back to business as usual, dealing in mining tools. By the 1930s, he had gained a dominant position in the Belgian market and started operations in Congo.

In the 1940s, Georges Bia’s son Jacques took on and expanded the family business by founding new companies for distribution and mechanical repair. By the 1950s BIA was catering to the equipment needs of several sectors in Belgium and Congo: public works, mines, quarries, agriculture, transport, and engineering workshops.

Building on this solid foundation, BIA consolidated its position over the last decades as the preferred distributor for most mining companies and contractors across West and Central Africa, with operations in more than 20 countries. The BIA Group, still a family business, is currently led by **Mr. Vincent Bia** – the fourth generation in the family.

The BIA Burkina team, one of the technical competence centers of the BIA Group.



For the last few years, Robit had been aiming for a stronger foothold in West and Central Africa. “We had long been looking for a partner who could meet our wishes and ambitions for growth. A major player with a solid reputation and the resources to cater to end-user needs and boost growth quickly”, says **Kari Alenius**, VP EMEA South for Robit. For this goal, BIA was the go-to company.

“Negotiating business during the coronavirus pandemic was something unusual. Me and **Rasmus Sokura** had only one face-to-face meeting with BIA in the summer. Already in that first meeting we seemed to ‘click’ really well, and we soon had a preliminary action plan for the region”, Kari recounts.

But that is only the start. “We worked together, arranging tests at various jobsites, negotiating pricing, terms and sharing other details until our exclusive distribution contract was ready for signing”, says Robit’s Sales & Distributor Business Manager, EMEA Rasmus Sokura. “I’m guessing this new partnership will be the largest distribution agreement in Robit’s history, considering the coverage of countries, a market full of opportunities and great expectations for growth by both parties”.

From BIA’s point of view, the timing was also right. “We consider rock tools to be an integral part of our offer for our mining, quarry, and construction customers, and we decided to look for a premium partner to develop the business further”, says **Aymeric Manteca**, Group Marketing Manager, BIA Group.

“We look forward to going further than a basic manufacturer/distributor relationship. We believe in a real partnership: aligning strategic objectives and goals, developing joint action plans where both parties are actively taking part and playing a key role consolidating respective strengths.”

“We share the passion and the willingness to strive for enhancing customer satisfaction with the best products. To reach this goal, we will need to work closely with Robit teams and learn from each other’s experience and benefit from respective expertise”, Mr. Manteca concludes.

BIA is now representing Robit in 17 countries across West and Central Africa: Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Mauritania, The Republic of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Republic of Congo.

TEST REPORT

Tested tools:	Robit: C51-102 mm dropcenter spherical bit Same gauge consumables from another well-known brand
Test location:	Özkoyuncu Open Pit Iron Mine, Kayseri, Turkey
Test date(s):	July 2020
Test objective:	Measuring performance of Robit C51-102 mm bit vs. competitor
Reported by:	Ahmet Oguz Dikmen , Mining Equipments Service Engineer, GÜRİŞ İş Makinaları Endüstri James Keenan , Distributor Business Manager, Middle East and Turkey, Robit

Report:

Last July, Robit's Turkish distributor GÜRİŞ İş Makinaları Endüstri A.S. organized a head-to-head drilling test between Robit and globally well-known brand at Özkoyuncu's open pit iron mine.

The test was conducted on a Sandvik DX800 Ranger with an HL700 drifter. The testing conditions were identical for both brands. The ground conditions were quite difficult and abrasive, containing mostly quartzite with a high percentage (90%) of silica, as well as fragmented rock and water.

The procedure was a simple wear test: to measure how deep each tool will be able to drill without sharpening or replacing.

Our customer confirmed the following result: the Robit C51-102 mm drop center spherical bit reached **a drill bit lifetime of 1,269 metres**, which was **300 metres better** than the competitor's bit of similar design – an excellent result in the given conditions.



Robit management kick off went HYBRID

Robit's annual Management Kick Off took place on September 10th, 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, gathering the whole Robit Family physically together was not an option.

For this reason, the Management Kick Off was organized as a hybrid event: some 30 attendees were present on-site at the Vapriikki Museum Center, Tampere, Finland, while about 50 participated online.

The occasion, now called "Robit Hybrid Event 2020", gathered Robit Management and Sales Teams from all around the world together in an open forum to discuss the company's key priorities for the near future.

"It was a long day, lasting from 11 a.m. till 9 p.m. local time. Despite the extremely tight schedule, an intensive program and long physical distances, the Robit Family managed to create a powerful, valuable,

and fruitful dialogue to help drive our growth and brand further. A big hand to all participants for their dedication, active participation, enthusiasm, and positive energy. Our special thanks also go to the speakers for their excellent presentations!", says **Violetta Silver**, IR & Communications Manager.

Dealer event also goes online



Due to coronavirus restrictions, Robit's annual dealer event also took place online, now under the name "Robit Family Goes Virtual 2020". The two-day December event was attended by some 200 distributors around the world. Stay tuned for more info in the next issue!

Get to know

GEORGE APOSTOLOPOULOS

Appointed VP, Global Sales

George Apostolopoulos has been appointed VP, Global Sales for Robit as of December 2020. With more than 20 years of managerial experience in the heavy equipment and mining industries across Europe, West Africa, and Central Asia, George comes with an impressive track record of sales success.

What made you say yes to the job offer? Well, I wanted to have a global, more strategic role. I had met Tommi (Lehtonen, Robit CEO) in Ghana, a few months before he took the CEO role on. I guess we appreciated each other, and the timing just became right!

Furthermore, Robit's approach was professional, solid, and speedy. I sensed a dynamism that intrigued me. I must say that I'm very excited for this opportunity and also keen to be based in Tampere and get to know the Finnish people and culture!

What are your key goals as VP for Global Sales? We definitely want to maintain a certain momentum that already exists. We do have a strategic target to be growing 15% per year at a minimum and this is a realistic goal! In other words, gain market share through expanding our distributors' network.

How would you describe yourself as a leader? I give space, encourage initiatives, allow for mistakes, and prefer to build relations based on trust; shall we call this a 'liberal' leader? At the same time, I expect commitment, professionalism, and results. If 'common sense' exists, then I want it!

Geographically, where do you see the greatest future sales potential for Robit? Honestly speaking, everywhere. Obviously, there are priority markets where we could do a lot more than we currently do. Kazakhstan, Ukraine, West Africa, North America, Australia to name a few.

How do you see the overall outlook for the industry? What are the biggest challenges? The mining industry, except for a couple of months as well as some countries that were hit hard by the pandemic, has shown extreme resilience. Similarly, the construction sector did not perform badly. Overall, given the unprecedented circumstances, the situation is good and I'm optimistic that it will improve fast in 2021.

The biggest challenge going forward is called uncertainty and it will be the new norm; therefore companies, industries, and economies must learn to live with it and become more agile than ever.



Get to know New faces in our Australian sales team



ANNEMAREE HOLMAN

Annemaree Holman took on the job of Business Development Manager in Perth, Australia in December 2020. Annemaree has over 20 years of experience in similar jobs in the industry. She has two talented and beautiful adult daughters and three grandchildren that light up her life. She also adores Mr. Binx – her mischievous American Shorthair cat. Annemaree enjoys running, SUP boarding, bike riding, hiking, as well as a nice quiet time with a good book.

As Business Development Manager, what are your key responsibilities? Growing and retaining the drilling consumables business, with main focus on DTH.

You only recently joined the company; what are your first impressions? If the onboarding process is anything to go by, I will be very happy. Working remote and especially setting up working tools can be challenging. Robit has been one of the most professional and supportive onboarding I have experienced during my working life. My appreciation to all for a seamless level of helpful support and professionalism from HR, management, IT, and all systems setup.



JOANNE CANCI

Joanne Canci became Customer Service Representative at Robit's Perth office in June 2020. She has more than 20 years of experience in similar jobs in various industries. Joanne enjoys spending time at the beach, bush walking and gardening. She has been a member of the Fremantle Docker Football team for many years.

How did you end up working for Robit? Before Robit I worked in the family business Freo Group doing sales work and general administration. After the business was sold, I eventually followed my passion for travel to Flight Centre group where I worked for three years. Since then, I was looking for a change and found myself at Robit where I was offered a three month contract which turned into a full time position.

As Customer Service Representative, what are your key responsibilities? Supporting the sales team, and day to day running of the office. I also support the store department will freight and logistics.

How would you compare Robit with your previous companies? It has been very different as I have never work for such a global company with such diversity. We have a great team at Robit Australia who are always willing to help each other.



LAWRENCE DUNSTALL

Lawrence Dunstall joined Robit as Technical Support Specialist in February 2020. He has more than 20 years of experience in the industry, including hands-on experience in the field. Both his children grew up with exposure to the drilling and mining world – he even named his son Dion after a bulldozer (D10N)! Lawrence enjoys problem solving and inventing things with Raspberry Pie and Arduino. He's also keen on growing roses – which his Kelpie dog loves destroying whenever Lawrence is not home.

As Technical Support Specialist, what are your key responsibilities? Short answer: helping drillers get the maximum life out of the machines and drill consumables. My interest is for all things drilling related; my passion is for using and caring for the safety of drillers and for drills and drill consumables. Often, I find in this modern computerised world we forget about the basics of drilling and drill bit care. Drill consumable handling safety will be a major concern for drilling companies in the next few years. Far too many drillers are still hurt transporting and handling drill bits. The company that designs and implements a total drill bit system from box to drill to automated bit sharpener and back will redefine the drill consumable industry.



Let's face it: 2020 was a pretty dark year. There were some highlights though.
In Top Hammer drilling, the brightest star born was the Robit Rbit™ Series button bits.
Read about it in the next issue.

In the meantime:
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Robit

Robit Plc, Vikkiniityntie 9, FI-33880 Lempäälä
Tel. +358 3 3140 3400 // robitgroup.com