

Vale makes major investment in simulation training

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Johannesburg, South Africa

Brazilian mining heavyweight Vale has underlined its commitment to recruiting and training local people at its major new Moatize coal project in Mozambique with a significant investment in advanced equipment simulator technology.

Immersive Technologies is supplying Vale with three Advanced Equipment (AE) Simulators, which are expected to be commissioned on site at the end of May 2009. The training simulators will support the Caterpillar 793D haul truck, Caterpillar 992G wheel loader, and Hitachi EX5500 shovel/excavator. Immersive Technologies is also supplying a Custom Mine Site, which accurately replicates the Moatize mine to enhance the realism and value of the training.

The sale of advanced training simulators to Vale is part of a larger 'turn-key' training solution provided by Immersive Technologies, who will supply complete training and development plans within which the training simulators will be part of a total holistic training solution for Vales' equipment operators.

Vale operator trainers will also undertake the unique Trainer*Advantage*[™] simulator training. This global certification program delivered by Immersive Technologies, provides comprehensive training on the use and application of equipment simulators.

The Rio de Janeiro-based company has operated in Mozambique since November 2004, when it received the green light to explore and develop one of the world's major untapped coking and thermal coal deposits at Moatize, in Tete province, 1700km north of Maputo. As part of its long term investment in the district, and province, Vale is undertaking work aimed at delivering education, culture, health, infrastructure, agriculture and social benefits across the Moatize (population 35,000) and Tete communities.

The Moatize project, forecast to produce up to 11 million tonnes per annum of coal from 2010, will generate about 900 direct mine jobs and some 3000 construction related jobs.

With the aim of breaking first ground early next year, Vale intends to identify, screen and train a world class operator workforce before its mining fleet arrives on site. The process will see the company screen about 1000 local people over the coming months with a view to training 125 vehicle drivers for next year's operational start-up.

A Vale spokesperson said simulator training would play a vital role in the company's haul truck, excavator/shovel, dozer, loader and dragline operator training at Moatize, both before and during the operational phase.

"Health, safety and respect for life are part of Vale's core values," she said.



Image: Simulator for the Hitachi EX5500 Excavator

"With this [simulator] technology, the company can refresh the skills and aptitude of operators in order to improve their performance in the operation. The primary rationale for investing in simulator training at Moatize is the efficiency and efficacy of the process and methodology of teaching through simulators. We expect that the trainees will achieve good performance levels from the start of our operations."

The Vale spokesperson said Immersive Technologies holistic training approach suited its major greenfields project.

"Immersive Technologies is providing distinctive training methods," she said.

"With the Immersive simulator, the trainees can familiarise themselves with the mine and mining approach in a realistic learning environment."

Immersive Technologies business development manager, East and Southern Africa, Anthony Bruce said this latest significant simulator order within Africa emphasised the value and benefits seen in the advanced training technology.

"Immersive Technologies' simulators are a measurable, sustainable, business improvement tool that allows world class benchmarking and trend analyse of driver performance over time. They highlight the impact operators have on business productivity and their ability to effect the cost per tonne of operations," he said.

"Our continued simulator sales during this economic downturn, demonstrate the technologies' ability to provide a reliable means of reducing training and maintenance costs, while improving productivity and safety levels."

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About Immersive Technologies

Immersive Technologies is the world's leading supplier of operator training simulators used in the mining and earthmoving industries. We have 450 advanced mining equipment simulator modules in 25 countries.

Our Advanced Equipment (AE) Simulators are considered vital to many of the world's leading mining companies. From the Congo to northern Canada, mines are increasing safety and reducing their cost per tonne by using our simulators daily to train and test their operators.

We have exclusive licensing and technical information alliances with the leading Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM), including: Caterpillar, Hitachi, Komatsu and Liebherr.

Our customer support offices are located in Perth and Brisbane Australia, Salt Lake City USA, Johannesburg South Africa, and Santiago Chile.

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