

Pleuger pumped up with Collahuasi copper mine contract win

Posted by Daniel Gleeson on 13th May 2019



Germany's Pleuger Industries has installed six robust high-performance pumps at the Anglo American- and Glencore-owned Collahuasi copper mine in Chile, helping the operation continue to produce more than 5,000 tonnes of fine copper every year.

At Collahuasi, two open-pit mines, Rosario and Ujina, provide the necessary copper ores, which are smelted on site into copper concentrate and cathodes. Pleuger's 10 in pumps come in during the flotation process at Collahuasi, where they help dewater the copper sludge for copper concentrate extraction.

The acceptance of the six pumps, for which the technical management of the mine together with the pump distributor Wellford had travelled from Chile to Hamburg, took a week. "This is not unusual when one considers the significance of the new submersible motor pumps for the processing of copper sulphide," Pleuger said. "If the pumps fail, the production process comes to a standstill until the pumps are repaired. Reliability, therefore, has top priority.

"The decision in favour of a pump manufacturer is, therefore, less a question of one-time costs than of confidence in the technical know-how of the engineers."

Wellford, from Chile, Collahuasi's pump supplier, brought Pleuger into play because the German pump manufacturer has decades of experience in designing pump units for the special requirements of the mining sector, the Germany-based company said. "Pleuger's engineers have acquired their expertise in various customising projects around the globe, which the Hamburg-based company continuously uses in the construction of its engines."

Process pumps like the ones used at Collahuasi are placed under extreme operating conditions, Pleuger said.

"Copper... quickly oxidises the materials from which pumps are usually made. In order to counteract this process, the engineers at Pleuger Industries rely on a corrosion protection concept specially adapted to the customer when designing the pumps," the company said.

"In addition, the new pump systems must be energy-efficient, because Collahuasi's copper production follows an energy management system based on international standards."