COLOMBIAN AIDS TO NAVIGATION INVESTMENT

It was announced on 4th June that the Colombian Ministry of Defence and Navy have improved the operational conditions and safety in the country of two most important ports: Buenaventura on Colombia’s Pacific coast and Cartagena in the Caribbean.

DIMAR (Colombia’s National Maritime Authority, responsible for safety at sea and on inland waterways) has carried out an investment of more than a hundred new buoys equipped with the latest technology in self-contained LED lights. These buoys are equipped with a new generation of satellite monitoring allowing real time status tracking, maximisation of service levels and placing the two Colombian ports at the forefront of aids to navigation infrastructure worldwide, it is claimed.

Almarin, leading a consortium of Spanish, Portuguese and Canadian companies, together with collaboration of local experts, Iner Consultores, supplied and carried out the turnkey installation of the type 106 Guia W buoys (illustrated).

Buenaventura is a technically complex port with more than 25km of navigable waters, four metre tides and 200 metre narrow sections that generate strong currents. The marking of hazards and channels in this port has been a challenge due to the increased volume of goods attracting larger vessels with restricted manoeuvrability. Buenaventura holds a strategic role as Colombia’s main channel for trade with Asia positioning it as the nation’s most important port on its Pacific coast.

Cartagena, an iconic port in the Caribbean, had a relatively well-developed infrastructure of aids to navigation primarily composed of high maintenance steel buoys. The change reported has provided for buoys with a greater daytime visibility and nominal night range as well as lowered maintenance costs. These new buoys have an impact resistant, unsinkable foam elastomer body and stainless steel superstructure.

This project helps the transformation of these ports into a main channel for Colombian trade, with safety as a fundamental element for the development, prevention of disasters and improvement to the country’s competitiveness.

DIMAR has announced that this is the first stage in a medium term project to improve aids to navigation in all Colombian ports. In conjunction with Colombia’s Navy its ultimate goal is to raise the standards of safety in Colombian navigable waters, an unprecedented project that includes the implementation of the national system of Vessel Traffic Management and national oceanic monitoring, guaranteeing the best navigation conditions for
international trade, fishing, recreational boating and marine exploration for minerals and hydrocarbons offshore.

Picture captions

Colombia 1
*Buoy assembly in Cartagena.*

Colombia 2
*Type Guia W buoy in the port of Buenaventura.*

Colombia 3
*Type Guia W buoy in the port of Cartagena.*