

# Our corporate history

## COMPANY HISTORY

## GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

**1837**  
Arie van Hattum works on the lock at Lillo, near Antwerp.

**1841**  
Cornelis Blankevoort carries out his first contracting work in Mönckendam.



The Arnhem, Volker's first bucket dredger.

**around 1863**  
Adriaan Volker is one of the first private individuals to buy a steam-powered bucket dredger (for 30,000 guilders).



Govert van Oord with his family.

**around 1868**  
Govert van Oord (from Werkendam) becomes independent softwood entrepreneur.



Moerdijk Bridge (photo Pieter Oosterhuis, 1871).

**1868 - 1872**  
Adriaan and his nephew Dirk Volker construct the substructure of the Moerdijk Bridge, Europe's longest railway bridge (1400 metres).

**around 1875**  
Gerard van Hattem establishes a dredging company in Sliedrecht.

**1870**

**26 November 1868**  
Excavation Nieuwe Waterweg canal

**1861**  
The Department of Public Works begins regularising the rivers. In the second half of the nineteenth century, 23 canals are also excavated and railways and railway bridges are constructed throughout the country. Dredging companies combine this hydraulic engineering work with the construction of public buildings such as lighthouses, prisons, post offices, and churches.

**1868**  
Excavation of the Nieuwe Waterweg canal at Hoek van Holland. Unexpectedly, natural scouring of the canal came to a standstill, so that the Department of Public Works had to call in private contractors with their own equipment to deepen it. Up to that time, the contractors leased equipment from the State.



Jan Christiaan van Hattum, an enterprising, internationally oriented dredging contractor (photo 1875).

**1878**  
For construction of the Handelskade quay in Amsterdam. Van Hattum is one of the first to use the new electric lighting, so that operations can continue in the dark.

**1884 - 1890**  
K.L. Kallis Wzn dredging company established in Sliedrecht, later part of the Hollandische Aanwinning Maatschappij (HAM).

**1877 - 1896**  
Volker and Bos partnership deepens the Nieuwe Waterweg canal.

**1877**  
Amsterdamsche Ballast Maatschappij (ABM) founded.

**1880**  
Volker and Bos take on first dredging work abroad, at Dunkirk Harbour. They prove that the 'superb self-loading suction dredgers' can work better and more cheaply than French dredgers.

**1880**

**1878**  
Financed by Pieter Adriaan Bos, Adriaan Volker and Arij Vermaes (Sliedrecht), a suction dredger is developed, based on elements of the British Hazen dredger and the French Bazin dredger. The first Dutch suction dredger is named Adam I. Between 1879 and 1883, Volker and Bos order thirteen self-loading suction hopper dredgers from the shipyards of J. & K. Smit and L. Smit & Zoon (Kinderdijk) (later IHC).



Suction hopper dredger Adam III.



Construction of Fort De Kwakel (photo 1906).

**1887 - 1897**  
Blankevoort involved in construction of forts in the Defence Line of Amsterdam.



Portrait between 1875 and 1899 of Adriaan Volker by Jan Toornje.

**1886**  
Adriaan Volker joins the Zuider Zee Commission.

**1889**  
W. Blankevoort Czn's Aanwinningmaatschappij established.

**1884 - 1890**  
Working with an Argentinean contractor, Van Hattum constructs the harbour at La Plata (Argentina).

**1884 - 1888**  
Partnership of Van Hattum, Bekker, Van Seeters & Co, becomes subcontractor for part of the Panama Canal.



The lumber, a barge unloading dredger belonging to K.L. Kallis (photo L.J. Smit, 1906).



The Humber, a barge unloading dredger belonging to K.L. Kallis (photo L.J. Smit, 1906).

**1896**  
Volker and Bos work with K.L. Kallis Wzn to carry out dredging in Dublin. Kallis later becomes part of HAM.

**1896**  
Volker and Bos establish a subsidiary in Germany: Volker, Bos, Ficke & Co.

A timber by Govert van Oord (1888).

**1888**  
Softwood entrepreneur Govert van Oord is contractor for raising and strengthening a dike at Slikkeveer.

**1890**

**1888**  
Founding of the Vereeniging ter bevordering van de Uitvoering van Werken in het Buitenland. This body organises study trips for contractors to potential new markets in remote places like China. Adriaan Volker is one of the board members.

**1895**  
National Zuider Zee Federation established.



The main points of this draft plan (1891) by Cornelis Lie for reconstruction of the Zuider Zee work later implemented.

**1900**

**around 1900**  
Many dredging companies work nationally and internationally on the construction of harbours.

**around 1900**  
The buckets of bucket dredgers can now hold as much as 600 litres. At the time, the Netherlands has the biggest fleet of bucket dredgers and suction hopper dredgers in the world.

**1902**  
Hollandsche Beton Maatschappij (HBM) established.



Construction of harbours in Rotterdam remains important for several major dredging companies right into the 21st century. This photo shows Maasvlakte 2 (photo 2013).

**1901**  
Rotterdam's Maashaven is one of the city's many harbours constructed by Volker.



Dredging companies play an important role in the construction of railways, for example in the Haarlemmermeer polder (photo 1909).

**1905**  
Van Hattum and Blankevoort start collaboration on construction of a railway line to Amsterdam. All the work would be carried out jointly within five years.

**1910**

**1909**  
Introduction of concrete for harbour construction is a crucial change in hydraulic engineering.



Dredging works in the harbour of Surabaya (photo 1911).

**1911 - 1916**  
Electrically powered drainage pumping is used for the first time in construction of the lock at Hansweert.



The suction hopper dredger H.A.M. II, built by the L. Smit & Zoon shipyard in Kinderdijk, in 1911 for the harbour works in Surabaya.

**1911**  
HAM and HBM start work on constructing the harbour at Surabaya. Until 1924, the firm works exclusively in the Dutch East Indies.

**1909**  
HAM established in The Hague as a sister company of the Hollandische Beton Maatschappij (HBM). The dredging equipment belongs to the Sliedrecht firm of Van Hattem.

**1906 - 1914**  
Together with contractors Bos and Heijblom, Volker works on part of the Suzes Canal.

**1915 - 1930**  
Construction of locks complex at Den Oever, with Broekhoven and ABM involved. This large-scale concrete construction means the Netherlands has the biggest lock in the world.

**1920**

**1918**  
The Dutch Parliament passes the Zuider Zee Act after the area around the Zuider Zee is affected by severe flooding in 1916.

**1922**  
Prof. C. M. van Wijngaarden is appointed the first professor in dredging equipment at the Delft Institute of Technology.



Dredging becomes the subject of scientific study.



Afsluitdijk (photo 1932).

**1927-1932**  
Construction of the Afsluitdijk causeway dike as part of the Zuider Zee Works.

**1925**  
The first diesel-electric dredging machine for a Dutch company, the cutter suction dredger HAM 203.



An ABM excavator at the locks in IJmuiden (photo 1926).

**1919 - 1929**  
Broekhoven and ABM are involved in construction of the locks at IJmuiden.



From the left: Govert Jr, Jacobus Gerrit, Martin Jan and Jan Jasper van Oord (photo 1952).

**1919**  
Four sons of Govert van Oord set up the firm of Gebroeders Van Oord in Werkendam.

**1924**  
HAM moves its operations to South Africa and remains active there until 1946.



Softwood products workers constructing shield protection for the Afsluitdijk causeway dike (photo W. Verkerk, 1929-1932).

**1926**  
Establishment of the Maatschappij tot Uitvoering van Zuiderzeewerken (M.U.Z.). This involves only the 'big four' from the wet contracting sector: Van Hattum and Blankevoort, HAM, Volker and Bos.



For a long time, construction of national roads (here at Zaandam) remained a source of employment for dredging contractors (photo André van den Houwel, 1967).

**1936**  
ABM takes over the entire fleet of the bankrupt contractor Bos (of the former Volker and Bos) and starts dredging work.

**1932**  
Broekhoven buys its first suction dredger. The firm is also involved in construction of national roads.

**1938**  
For new construction at the French Port de Bouc, HAM constructs the HAM 908 rock crusher. The firm operated in this field until 1983.

**1937 - 1942**  
With three 'cow' contractors, Van Hattum and Blankevoort form the Maas Tunnel Company joint venture. Tunnel construction is a new domestic field for contractors. The Maas Tunnel is the first underwater tunnel in the Netherlands.

**1933**  
Establishment of the Waterloopleuwendig Laboratorium in Delft for research in connection with the Zuider Zee Works.

**1935**  
Vereeniging Centrale Baggerbedrijf (CB) established.

**1937**  
Six dredger shipyards commence joint research on sand pumps. From 1941 on, the shipyards assign research on dredging equipment and soil types to the MTI Mineral Technology Institute, which is still the research institute of Royal IHC.

**1940**

**1948**  
The four Van Oord brothers go their different ways. The result includes the firms of **Van Oord Utrecht** and **Van Oord Werkendam**.

**1947**  
The brothers **Leon and Piet Paans Lzn** (Werkendam) buy their first softwood-growing fields and self-harvested softwood. In 1951, the firm takes on its first work from the Department of Public Works and gradually grows into a thriving contractor.



Foundation of the island of Walcheren after World War II.

**1944 - 1946**  
Reclamation of Walcheren by M.U.Z. Bos and Kallis is responsible for closing the gap in the Helderijk. **HAM** deals with Westkapelle, **Volker** closes the gap at Veere, and **Van Hattum and Blankevoort** work at Rammekens. **Gebroeders Van Oord** deal with the softwood revetment and seabed protection companies.

**1 July 1948**  
**Founding Aannemings- en Handelsbedrijf Jac.G. van Oord en Zonen in Utrecht**

**1959**  
**Aannemers Combinatie Zinkwerken (ACZ)** established.



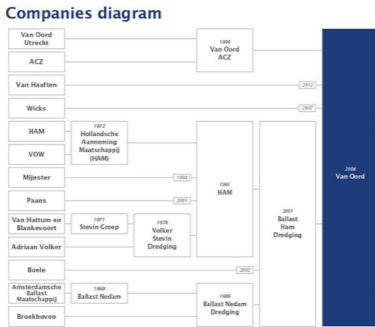
Construction of Velsertunnel (photo Olof Kruger, 1957).

**1957**  
**ABM** constructs the Velsertunnel.



Sign showing contractors involved in work at the Oosterschelde sluizen. Aart Klein, 1964.

**1962 - 1965**  
Construction of Oosterscheldebrug (Zeeland Bridge). **Van Hattum and Blankevoort**, **ABM**, and **Broekhoven** are involved.



**1968**  
**ABM** merges with the Nedam construction company to form **Ballast Nedam**.

**1967**  
Combinatie Havenmond Hoek van Holland (CH3) starts work on the Nieuwe Waterweg canal. For this work, **Volker**, Bos and Kallis, and **Van Hattum and Blankevoort** jointly construct equipment: two large stone dumping vessels (Cetus and Taurus) and two block crane vessels (Norma and Libra).

**1971**  
Van Hattum and Blankevoort, and other construction companies merge to form the **Stevin Group**.

**1971**  
**HAM** takes over **Van Oord Werkendam**.



Volvox Hollandia.

**1969 - 1984**  
**Van Oord Utrecht** purchases trailing suction hopper dredgers, contributing them to a joint venture with the Van Omeren shipping company: Dredging VOZ.

**1974**  
**Broekhoven** sold to Internatio Müller.

**around 1974 - 1979**  
A variety of work in the Middle East. In 1974, **Volker** carries out dredging and rainbowing work in Iran and Volker and HAM work together in Abu Dhabi between 1974 and 1977. In 1975, together with an American partner, **Van Oord Utrecht** constructs the new Mina Saqr port in the emirate of Ras al Khaimah. In 1975, several companies are involved in the construction of a port in Jubail (Saudi Arabia) with a contract value of over a billion guilders.

**1979**  
ACZ becomes fully owned by **Van Oord Utrecht**. In addition to dredging, seabed protection and stone dumping, becomes the second component of Van Oord Utrecht. In the course of time, coastal engineering becomes the third basis of the company's work.

**1979**  
HBC purchases Koninklijke Nederhorst Bouw, of which the **Koninklijke Maatschappij voor Havenwerken** had become part in 1968. That dredging company was set up in Amsterdam in 1912.

**1978**  
Joint venture with **HAM** will carry out the 1965 plan for widening and deepening the Suez Canal. There will also be a parallel canal at Port Said, for which **Van Hattum and Blankevoort** constructs the breakwaters.

**1978**  
Merger of Volker and the Stevin Group to form **Volker Stevin**.



Launch of Simon Stevin (photo Delta Parc, 1978).

**1977 - 1981**  
Construction of the walking cutter platform Simon Stevin, designed by Van Hattum and Blankevoort in the **Stevin Group**. The huge monster never actually dredged and was broken up in 1988.



The Trulness, a flexible fallpipe vessel.

**1984**  
**ACZ** introduces stone dumping using flexible fallpipe vessels. These allow stone to be dumped in deep water very precisely.

**1981**  
Internatio Müller sells **Broekhoven** to Hochtief.

**1980**  
**Volker Stevin** carries out rainbowing in the Beaufort Sea to create islands and underwater embankments for oil and gas drilling.

**1989**  
Van Oord Utrecht and ACZ merge to form **Van Oord ACZ**.

**1989**  
Ballast Nedam takes over **Broekhoven** from Hochtief.

**1991**

**Volker Stevin** sells all dredging work to **HAM**.



Jameson bridge.

**1995 - 1997**  
In Bangladesh, **HAM** and **Van Oord ACZ** are involved in regulating the Jamuna River so that a bridge can be built.

**1994**  
**HAM** takes over **Mijnter Zand-en Grinthandel** (Zwijndrecht).

**1993**  
Van Oord Werkendam and HAM (already merged in 1971) henceforth operate as **HAM-VOW**.

**2000**

Land reclamation at Penny's Bay (Lantau), the site of a future amusement park. The work is carried out by **HAM**, Dredging International, and **Ballast Nedam**.

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Land reclamation at Penny's Bay (Lantau), the site of a future amusement park. The work is carried out by **HAM**, Dredging International, and **Ballast Nedam**.

**19 December 2003**  
**Van Oord ACZ and BHD merge to form Van Oord**



Trailing suction hopper dredger Van Minne working at the Maasvlakte 2 project.

**2008-2013**  
Joint venture with Van Oord is constructing **Maasvlakte 2** as part of the Rotterdam port expansion.

**2012**  
Van Oord moves into new **headquarters** on the Nieuwe Maas in Rotterdam.

**2014 - 2016**  
Van Oord realises one of the largest offshore wind projects in the world: the **Gemini Offshore Wind Park**.

**2003**  
With the coming into service of the Rocknes (a bulk carrier converted into a flexible fallpipe vessel), **Van Oord ACZ** - in combination with Jøbsens - becomes the cost price leader in the flexible fallpipe market.



Palm Jumeirah.

**2002 - 2008**  
Large-scale rainbowing work in Dubai. Until the end of 2003, Palm Jumeirah (2002) and The World (2003) were joint venture projects involving **Van Oord ACZ** and **HAM**. Later **BHD**. They were followed in 2005 by Palm Deira, exclusively involving Van Oord. This project was not completed because the economic crisis of 2008 put an end to the Dubai construction work.

**2002**  
**Van Oord** and Mammoet become joint venture partners for the construction of offshore wind farms. This is the basis for Van Oord's subsequent involvement in constructing offshore wind farms.

**2001**  
Merger between HAM and Ballast Nedam Dredging to form **Ballast Ham Dredging (BHD)**, with HAM's parent company owning two thirds of the shares.

**2001**  
**HAM** takes over the contracting firm of **L. Paans & Zonen** (Werkendam).



In 1932, J.H. Telders (director of Van Hattum en Blankevoort) had this inscription installed on the *Alphonside* monument: "Een volk dat leeft, bovent aan zijn toekomst" [A living nation works on its future].

**2018**  
The 1868 excavation of the Nieuwe Waterweg canal lead to several of Van Oord's legal predecessors starting out as independent contractors and marks **150 years of Van Oord entrepreneurship**.

**1950**

**1944 - 1946**  
The use of **caissons** for constructing barriers makes reclamation of Walcheren highly significant technically. The use of large caissons is perfected even more to close off the Brielse Gat estuary (1950) and Braakman tidal inlet (1952).



Caissons were also used after the catastrophic North Sea Flood of 1953. Here at Oostwijk (photo K.L.M. Aerecaerts, 1953).

**1953**  
**Stichting Sociaal Fonds voor het Baggerbedrijf in Nederland** established.

**1954**  
At the instigation of the government, the **Nederlandse Vereniging van Kust- en Deverwerken (NVKD)** is set up, with Jac.G. van Oord chairman until early 1965. Within this association, the softwood revetment and seabed protection contractors cooperate so as to develop into a more modern sector.

**1955**  
Introduction of the **trailing suction hopper dredger**, with HAM and ABM as the pioneers.

**1953**  
The **Delta Commission** is set up in response to the catastrophic North Sea Flood of 1953.



The contractors are represented within the Delta Commission by HAM's partner C.L.C. van Kretschmer van Veer (photo J.D. Nolske, 1953).

**around 1960**  
Own **research departments** within the dredging companies, headed by engineers. ABM already had such a department in the 1950s, with Volker and HAM following in the early 1960s. One of the first effects is the introduction of the **underwater pump** by various companies independently of each other.

**1963**  
Prof. W.A. Bos appointed to the chair of Earth-moving equipment at the Delft Institute of Technology. Two years later, he sets up the **Laboratorium voor Werktuigen voor Grondverzet**.

**1963**  
As the **Zuigclub**, the big dredging companies - with IHC Holland, the Laboratorium voor Grondmechanica and the Waterlooplekantie Onderzoekslaboratorium - carry out joint research on suction hopper dredgers.

**1964**  
Twenty-two Dutch contractors, including the big dredging companies, set up **NABU**, the Netherlands Association of International Contractors.

**1970**

**1969**  
The "Zuigclub" continues as the **Combinatie Spierwerk Baggertechniek (CSB)**. The Waterloop and/or Laboratorium Spierwerk is the research and development facility. A dredging test setup (1971) and a dredging test setup (1974).

**1972**  
**Works Councils** become mandatory in the dredging sector.

**around 1974 - 1979**  
The **Middle East** becomes an important market for dredging companies.



Along major suction hopper dredgers were installed for the work in the Middle East. Hong Kong's 'Suisunoh 12' is shown while the cutter is being changed (photo 1972).

**1978**  
Prof. J. de Koning appointed to the **chair of Earth-moving Technology** at Delft University of Technology. Attention thus shifts from equipment to earth moving.

**1980**

**1990**

**1986**  
The Oosterscheldekering is realized as part of the Delta works. The nine-kilometre-long barrier was initially designed as a closed dam, but later huge sluice-gate type doors are installed. As a result the saltwater marine life behind the dam is preserved and fishing can continue. This barrier is an example of the start of **concern with environmental aspects in dredging**.



In joint ventures, competitor Jumbo trailing suction hopper dredgers work amicably side by side.

**1988 - 1991**  
A **process of consolidation** in the dredging sector reduces the number of frequent dredging companies that operate internationally to six: DME, Jan de Nul, Boskalis, HAM, Ballast Nedam Baggeren, and Van Oord ACZ.

**1991 - 1997**  
Man-lifter barrier in the Nieuwe Waterweg canal as the **final component of the Delta Works**.

**1992 - 1995**  
Expansion of Chek Lap Kok island in Hong Kong for airport construction. This project - which needed to be completed in 1995 so that the airport could open in 1998 - **involved most of the trailing suction hopper dredger capacity in the free world market**.



In joint ventures, competitor Jumbo trailing suction hopper dredgers work amicably side by side.

**1994**  
Prof. W. Vlasblom appointed **'dredging professor'** in Delft.

**2000**

**around 2004**  
A **new wave of consolidation** means that from now on the Western dredging market is dominated by four companies, including Van Oord.



Malaysian offshore installation project, the Philippines.

**around 2000**  
**Offshore projects** are important for international contractors.

**2007**  
Prof. C. van Rhee becomes **professor of dredging** in Delft.

**2010**

**around 2010**  
The scaling up of projects, especially in Hong Kong and Singapore, leads to an increase in the hopper volume of trailing suction hopper dredgers, from approx. 20,000 m³ in 2000 (jumbo hoppers) to approx. 46,000 m³ in 2010 (**mega hoppers**).

**2010 - present**  
Involvement in dredging, offshore, and wind energy activities requires investment in **new and sometimes specialised equipment** such as the offshore installation vessel Aulos (2014), the shallow water pipe laying barge Stingray (2012), the cable laying vessel Nexus (2015), and the very heavy cutter suction dredgers Athena (2011) and Artemis (2013).



Offshore installation vessel Aulos.

**2020**

**26 November 2018**  
**150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the excavation of the Nieuwe Waterweg canal**