



The plant that Pan Mixers installed at Zango.



Product handling using chain conveyor and gantry system.

Into Africa

Although they have been supplying products into Africa for eight years, every project Pan Mixers does is still a challenge, such as the latest one in Angola.

PAN MIXERS HAS just supplied, delivered and installed two VB4X block plants for construction giant Odebrecht's operation in Luanda. Africa is a rugged continent that requires rugged equipment, and Pan Mixers' ability to provide first world technology, while still maintaining third world resilience has won the company several contracts around Africa.

Odebrecht is a Brazilian business conglomerate in the field of engineering and construction, as well as chemicals and petrochemicals. The company was founded in 1944 and has operations in South America, Central America and the Caribbean, North America, Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

Pan Mixers director Robert Ebeling says that Odebrecht approached them two years ago regarding expertise and equipment to fulfil some of its needs on large housing contracts in Luanda. "The order for the first of the two VB4X plants was met in record time, with one machine shipped off within 12 weeks of the order being placed," he says.

"The VB4X is a highly-efficient piece of equipment for the manufacture of hollow blocks, as well as bricks and paving," says co-director Walter Ebeling. "The machinery has aggregate bin and weigh belt batching systems, as well as allowing for the weighing of both bulk and bagged cement." Each plant comprises a 1 500 l counter current rapid pan mixer. The benefit of two individual plants is that they can run two different product ranges simultaneously.

Fitted with high performance electronic control systems and hydraulic control systems, the VB4X offers fast and smooth running, with a high product capacity. Robert Ebeling says that the control systems reduce wear and tear. "This is vital in outlying areas in Africa where equipment or parts can take months to reach sites. Even though we met a tight deadline, and shipping from Johannesburg to Luanda took another three weeks, and the equipment could not be delivered to site for eight months."

"You cannot underestimate the challenges that some African locations provide," he says. "This is the reason why it is important for overseas concerns to ensure that their equipment and personnel can stand up to conditions here."

"We also take into account that many of the operators will not be highly skilled, or there may be language issues. Product quality has to withstand both the terrain and the

personnel, and we believe that we take care of that," continues Walter Ebeling.

Pan Mixers sent six staff members to the site to install the equipment. "There was a lot of rain, and the site is not developed. Transportation is a massive challenge, and in order to meet our deadline, we sent the machinery in pieces for reassembly on site. Nothing can be taken for granted and one has to deal with challenges such as where to find a welding machine in a hurry."