





Goro Nickel, New Caledonia

“No-one ever said it would be easy... **but they said it would be worth it**”

The first exploration of the site for the multi-billion-dollar Goro Nickel project on the South Pacific island of New Caledonia, a territorial community of France, was in 1969. Forty years on, nickel and cobalt are about to be produced on a commercial scale, with the plant expected to produce 60,000 tonnes of nickel and up to 5,000 tonnes of cobalt annually.



Goro Nickel, New Caledonia



But it hasn't taken us forty years to build the plant! We were involved in the early development and engineering of this world-scale project. In 2004, together with our JV partner and the client in an integrated team, we started work on the EPCm phase. Today, construction of the processing plant is almost complete.

Getting there has been no easy task and the weather has not always helped. The first half of 2008 saw total rainfall exceeding 2.4 metres! Accommodation space was another challenge, alleviated by the introduction of floating accommodation, known as 'The Flamenco', moored at the project jetty.

The focus on site is now turning to commissioning. The multi-cultural team, growing to 500 people, is busy testing the various systems and sub-systems using a five-stage approach: construction testing undertaken by the construction team, pre-commissioning, systems commissioning, plant/process commissioning and production ramp-up. Start-up of the plant is expected in the first half of 2009 with a phased ramp-up to full production.

When production starts, there will be a lot of people who will be proud to have been a part of the Goro Nickel success.



Images (clockwise): The Flamenco moored at the project jetty; the sulphuric acid plant; the team at site; overview of the plant and the primary solvent extraction area.

Images: Courtesy of Vale Inco.

"No-one ever said it would be easy... but they said it would be worth it"

