CEDA British Section Committee held a half-day free training seminar focusing on planning, consenting and carrying out navigation dredging activities in the UK. This was the first time such an event was delivered in the UK by CEDA. The intention was to not only provide a training opportunity for those with an interest in dredging but also to raise the profile of CEDA in the UK industry.

Payam Foroudi, from Halcrow Group Ltd and a member of the British Section Committee, chaired the event which was recorded for future web access. More than 50 people from a range of organisations including dredging contractors, consultancies, port authorities, NGOs, regulators and government agencies (delegate list appended) attended this event.

The presentations covered a brief introduction to planning and consenting requirements and implementation of marine navigational dredging projects from the clients, contractors, consultants and regulatory authorities perspectives.

John Brien of Harwich Haven Authority and CEDA kicked off the meeting by presenting a client’s perspective on the need for dredging. He explained that ideally a client would want to avoid dredging because it is expensive, disruptive, could have potential environmental impact and obtaining consents is a length process. However, the need for navigation dredging is always driven by commercial and facilities requirements to provide navigational access and so it is important to plan properly and to get the contract right in the first place. He explained what needs to be included in a good contract to enable the contractor fully understand the requirements, assess his risks and price the job accordingly. Passing all the risks to the contractor will always lead to higher prices but never high enough to avoid disputes.

Richard Cope of Boskalis Westminster talked about the role of a dredging contractor in planning a dredge. He identified some of the key activities that need to be undertaken for planning a dredge at pre-tender, tender and contract stages. He emphasised the importance of obtaining as much information as possible about the site and site conditions at the pre-tender stage. He gave examples of non-intrusive and intrusive site investigations, which will help a contractor to classify the material and its dredgibility. To prepare his tender, the contractor has
to decide how and with what equipment he is going to do the dredge. In order to select the method and equipment for dredging he will need to consider factors such as the site conditions, water depths, area available for manoeuvring, tides, current, disposal area, etc. For implementation of the contract, the contractor also needs to take into consideration other factors such as licence restrictions and requirements, weather, site and plant availability, operational and health and safety requirements.

Frank Weston of Boskalis Westminster focused on dredging and reclamation techniques and equipment. He commenced his presentation by showing three videos which were a good introduction to large scale dredging and reclamation operations and the type of equipment that are deployed. He then provided more detailed information, photographs and diagrams on various components and operation of trailing suction hopper dredgers, cutter suction dredgers and backhoe dredgers.

Andy Birchenough of Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and CEDA described the current regulatory requirements for dredging permits and licenses. He began his talk by giving a definition of maintenance and capital dredging, as defined by Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the current regulations under the Marine and Coastal Act (2009) – MCAA for licensing of dredging activities in tidal waters of England and Wales. He then described various environmental legislations that can apply to dredging activities, which include Environmental Impact assessment (EIA) Directive, Habitats Directive and Birds Directive and Water Framework Directive. Other legislations such as Section 48a of Harbour Act 1964, Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and Waste Framework Directive were also mentioned. Other topics that were covered during this presentation included alternative use of dredged material in the context of the permitting process and an update on the application of MCAA and the current processes and guidelines for dredging licensing applications.

Nicola Clay of Royal HaskoningDHV and CEDA elaborated on what needs to be considered for environmental assessment of dredging projects in order to meet the regulatory requirements. She recapped the various legislations and regulations that can apply to dredging works and how an environment assessment relates to them. She elaborated the potential impacts of dredging works which need to be considered in an environmental assessment and covered areas such as loss of habitation, effects of dredge plume and sedimentations, changes in dissolved oxygen and water quality impacts. She described the requirements with respect to Water Framework Directive and Habitats Regulations Assessments and how other assessment such as fishing activities, impact on archaeology and cultural heritage as well as other operators and liability issues need to be considered. She also briefly described the process in deciding management of dredging impacts. She illustrated the above through a case study of a dredging project at Canvey Island, UK.

Finally, Michael Fitzsimons of Jan de Nul and John Brien of Harwich Haven Authority and CEDA presented their respective perspectives on the relationship between the client and the contractor during the operational stage of a dredging project. Michael Fitzsimons illustrated his points by describing the key steps that need to be taken in the first few days of any dredging contract. These included fully understanding the contract and the requirements of the project and most importantly establishing the lines of communication and protocols with the client and other stakeholders. He presented an example of the dredging works for Tyne Tunnel, as a case study to demonstrate how a major change in the scope of dredging was dealt with through early
involvement by all parties and good communication. These points were also emphasised by John Brien who presented a client’s check list, amongst which cooperation, transparency, flexibility, early involvement of stakeholders to solve problems and clarity on who is bearing what risk were considered as important.

The presenters answered questions from the audience after each session, followed by a final discussion at the end of the seminar.

The Central Dredging Association (CEDA) is an independent, international, professional society for all those involved in activities related to dredging, maritime construction and dredged material management. CEDA British Section provides members with a valuable platform for regular networking and knowledge exchange by organizing national events and convening working groups to address specific issues. For more information and details on how to join visit the CEDA website: http://www.dredging.org/