

mini copper workshop for ISASMELT™ licensees



From Smelters to Beer in Brugge

Representatives from all operating copper ISASMELT™ plants (and one that is under construction) met in Brugge, Belgium for a licensees' workshop recently. The workshop, held from 11th to 13th of June, was an opportunity for staff from the various smelters to meet and present operating data and related information to their peers while exchanging ideas on improvements and problem solving.

Licensees from such diverse countries as Peru, China, Kazakhstan, India, USA, Germany, Australia and Zambia met together with Xstrata Technology (XT) staff and Umicore representatives, who are based in Belgium. The workshop followed the Cu2010 conference held in Hamburg the week before.

Presentations by the licensee companies were followed by a series of tutorial style workshops where subjects identified as providing potential for operating improvements were discussed in more detail. This type of workshop is one way in which XT encourages licensees to learn from each other and thereby continue to improve their operations long after they have been commissioned. In typical fashion of the global industry today a number of attendees have moved between companies. For example the representative from Mopani in Zambia had commissioned the original Sterlite plant in India in 1996. Similarly one of the representatives from Chambishi in Zambia had helped commission the Yunnan Copper smelter after training in Mount Isa in 2000. While each plant is different, certainly the operating principles between the ISASMELT™ plants are similar and their robust design enables their operation to be picked up easily by new operators.

All representatives agreed it was a valuable opportunity to gather and network so that they could improve their operational knowledge and exchange ideas on ways to improve their plant efficiencies. In addition to the long hours in discussions, the attendees found time to take a cruise around the scenic canals of the old town of Brugge and visit one of the oldest breweries in Belgium for an entertaining lesson on how to make good beer and sample one of Belgium's finest brews. Everyone seemed to agree that making and sampling beer is more enjoyable than making copper!

A big thankyou to all the participants – their input and insights were invaluable and made the workshop a big success.

