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Vale announces research partnership with USP and Swiss engineering school

Today (28 October) in Switzerland, Vale signed a memorandum of understanding with the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and the University of São Paulo (USP) to undertake structural studies of bridges and track along the Carajás (EFC) and Vitória-Minas (EFVM) railways.

The two-year project, which will be coordinated by Vale's Logistics area, aims to study the current maximum capacity of the railroads.

The document is the first fruit of a partnership between Vale, USP and EPFL to carry out research into mining, ports and railways. The partnership, which will last for six years, is the result of an initiative led by the Vale Technology Institute (ITV).

"As well as bringing about technological solutions and operational improvements, the initiative will develop Vale's links with the academic world, contributing to knowledge transfer between Brazilian and Swiss researchers, which is undoubtedly of benefit to the academic communities of both countries," said the director of ITV, Luiz Mello.

According to the memorandum of understanding signed today, technicians will assess loads that bridges, track and sleepers are able to bear and point out any structural reinforcements required to cope with increased movements of iron ore from 2013 onwards. The study is part of the Logistics Capacity Raising Plan for Vale's North and Southeast Systems.

The intention is to practically double the volume of iron ore transported on the EFC, which links the Carajás mines complex in Pará state to the Port of Itaqui, in Maranhão, from the current figure of 130 million tons per year to 230 million tons per year. The EFVM, used to transport iron ore from the Southeast System in Minas Gerais state to the Port of Tubarão in Espírito Santo state, will have its capacity expanded by 20%, from 100 million to 120 million tons per year.

This is not the first time that Vale's Logistics area has established partnerships with universities and research institutes in Brazil and abroad in order to develop projects focused on efficiency and safety. Currently there are seven projects under way in operations across the whole country, as well as two abroad, in Australia and the United States.

More information



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