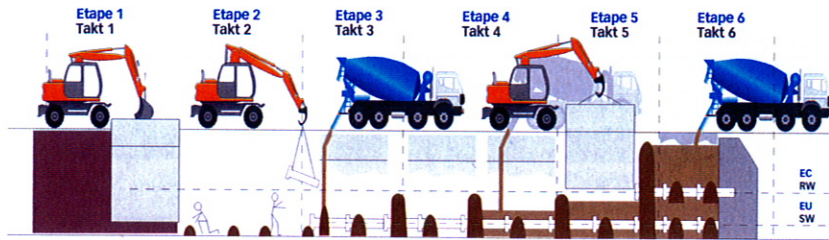


Burying pipes with liquid earth



How AJS pipeline laying is done using liquefied earth – from start to finish

A revolution in the way pipelines are laid beside roads has been quietly taking place in Switzerland. The process, called RSS[®], takes the excavated earth, processes it and later pours it back into the trench using traditional cement mixer lorries. Switzerland's AJS ingénieurs civils SA is at the cutting edge in the use of this new civil engineering technology.

AJS's scope ranges from civil engineering work on road and railway systems to factories and commercial and residential buildings. Its diverse clients include regional and city councils, which commission pipe laying, road maintenance, geothermal central heating pipe laying, water mains, drainage and sewage pipeline laying. "Our company handles everything, from conception, through the planning stages to complete project realisation," says Ms. Séverine Scalia Giraud, joint director of AJS.

Started in 1960, this pioneering civil engineering company is led by Görgé Blendermann, Jean Marc Jeanneret and Séverine Scalia Giraud – the original founders are now retired. There are three branches in addition to the headquarters in Neuchâtel, in Saint-Blaise, Le Locle and Brügg respectively. AJS has partnership agreements with

companies in Solothurn, Yverdon and Bucharest in Romania. AJS employs 40 staff and turns over 2.6 million EUR (4.4 million CHF) annually, currently coming from contracts in Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Hungary.

"Our success stems from the bringing together of expertise from a variety of civil engineering fields and the use of advanced techniques," says Ms. Scalia Giraud. AJS's use of 'Sols fluides', or liquefied earth, speeds up the backfilling of earthworks caused by trench cutting, reducing costs and speeding up contract execution.

Recent contracts include work on Switzerland's A5 between Cornaux and Neustadt East between 2006 and 2007 and work on the A12 between Bern Bümpliz and Flamatt, which is being carried out with partner contractors TMP and Aegerter and Bosshardt between 2007 and 2008.

"We have 40 staff and this makes AJS one of the major civil engineering contractors in Switzerland," says Ms. Scalia Giraud. "Our size means that we can take on even the largest international civil engineering projects and carry out several at the same time. We take our responsibilities to our clients very seriously and offer them the very best service and advice from our many fields of competence. We have the very best of advanced technology that civil engineering has to offer. Our continuous training programme means that our engineers are always up to date on the latest innovations." And with an archive of construction projects going back to the 1960s containing 30,000 documents, AJS has a rich source of experience on which its engineers can draw. "We educate the engineers of tomorrow," concludes Ms. Scalia Giraud. ■

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