

OSSA

TUNNEL VISION



TUNNEL VISION

Technical director, Íñigo Núñez Blanco discusses how international expansion and the adopting of innovative technologies have been key to OSSA's growth

WRITTEN BY: **WILL DAYNES**
RESEARCH BY: **GARY SMITH**





Hydro Power
Plant tunnel

Founded as a family owned mining company in Spain in 1952, OSSA is today active across the globe and recognised as being a leading figure in the underground construction sector specialising in three core business segments, those being construction, energy and mining.

Over the last six decades the company has been responsible for the excavation of more than 700 kilometres of underground tunnels, 75 kilometres of shafts and more than 500,000 cubic metres of caverns on behalf of clients such as Rio Tinto, Southern Perú Copper Co, CODELCO, Narcea Goldmines, Somincor, Pizarras Expiz, Iberpotash, Hullera Vasco-Leonesa and Hunosa.

Today the mining segment accounts for around ten percent of OSSA's total activity, with further growth expected as investment in the industry continues in line with the rising price of metals such as copper and gold. Considering this, you might well say that the OSSA of 2013 is starting to return to its mining roots. It is doing so by carrying out projects in Chile, Peru and Brazil, while also tendering for new opportunities in other Latin American countries.

"The international expansion of our operations has certainly been one of the main drivers of our growth in recent times," explains technical director, Íñigo Núñez Blanco. "In that sense our focus is very much on Latin America, due to our cultural influence and

established connections, and also booming economies such as Asia, where underground infrastructure continues to develop rapidly."

The company's most important goal is to transform OSSA into a globally recognised tunnelling brand. Meanwhile, as Blanco goes on to highlight, another crucial aim for OSSA is to become what he refers to as a global reference in the market for its high quality standards and reliable solutions. "Our commitment to investing in research and development has allowed us to remain at the cutting edge of new technologies and this in turn has resulted in increased productivity."

While global expansion is vital to the company's long-term strategy, it does continue to value its mining operations in Spain, where it currently holds two contracts, one with León's Santa Lucia coal mine and the other with Huelva's Aguablanca nickel mine.

Further afield, OSSA has recently been awarded a contract from Anglo American in Brazil. "This particular contract, which involves digging a tunnel around 250 metres in length, while not the biggest we have ever received, represents our first foray into Brazil," Blanco enthuses. "This provides us with a great opportunity to further establish OSSA as an important global mining company."

Elsewhere, OSSA is to participate in a large joint venture project on behalf of CODELCO in the Andina sector of Chile's mining sector. Work on this particular project is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2014 and OSSA is very keen to contribute its experience

1952

The year that OSSA
was established



Construction at the Hydro Power Plant, Cortes de Pallás

700 KM

Total tunnel length OSSA has excavated over its 60 years

to what may well turn out to be one of the region's more significant undertakings in the years to come.

The last 12-to-18 months have also seen the company make a number of important internal moves, namely the preparation of its first Communication of Progress statement, something that will result in the company adopting a more comprehensive social responsibility governance framework when it is completed around July of this year. In addition to this, 2012 also saw OSSA develop an Ethics Code of Conduct, which encompasses critical issues such as safety, labour and the environment, and will be published on its website in the weeks to come.

Looking ahead to what the future holds for the business, Blanco is aware that while the high price of minerals is currently the driving force behind the mining boom in many countries, such a situation is not sustainable in the long-term, meaning a downward trend in mineral prices is all but inevitable. When such a situation does arise it will result in new project investment falling and will create a scenario where new developments in the sector will be analysed according to a more demanding set of criteria.

"With this in mind," Blanco concludes, "it is



Bifurcation at the Carrasconte Mine for Minero Siderúrgica

"THE COMPANY NEEDS TO CONTINUE ITS LEGACY OF BETTING ON INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT"

clear to all of us within OSSA that the company needs to continue its legacy of betting on innovation and investment in research and development, which we see as the best way of creating a sustainable company that has the ability to succeed in the long-run. One of the ways we will look to do this is by adopting new technologies, including those from other industries, particularly those related to the monitoring and automation of processes, to

increasing productivity and of course further guaranteeing worker safety. In turn we hope this improves the overall efficiency of our mining operations and our contribution to a more sustainable sector in general." **BE**

For more information about OSSA visit:
www.ossaint.com



OSSA

Street Aragoneses 2-A, 3rd floor. Pol.
Industrial Alcobendas
28108 Alcobendas, Madrid. Spain.

T +34 902 678 808

www.ossaint.com

Produced by:

ACHIEVING BUSINESS EXCELLENCE ONLINE

BE Business Excellence

www.bus-ex.com