



- > COLAS SA
- > FRANCE
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# A63 Motorway Upgrade, SW France

**A €1.1bn upgrade project of a 105km major border route, involving financing, design and construction, and completed 7 months ahead of schedule as JV partners.**

**As part of project company Atlandes, Colas operates within a highways concession contract involving the financing, design, construction, widening and maintenance of the A63 motorway in South West France.**

The widening and upgrade project of an existing 105km secondary road linking the towns of Salles (Gironde) and St-Geours de Maremne (Landes) from a two to a three-lane highway, also comprised the construction of two cross-lane toll barriers and parking facilities for 1,200 HGVs.

Journey time for drivers and the transfer of goods between Europe and the Iberian Peninsula has been improved by this efficient route, while increased traffic fluidity helps to reduce pollution and noise.

## Challenges and Innovation

Improving safety was key. The expansion to three lanes includes a dedicated light vehicle lane which HGVs are barred from using. In addition, parking created for over one thousand HGVs provides drivers at risk of fatigue with a secure place to rest, reducing the number of accidents since the upgrade.

In line with our expertise in renewable energy, we carried out the world's first solar motorway trial installing skid-resistant solar panels along a stretch of the road. The energy generated from this section of solar panels is sufficient to power all the equipment of the Saugnacq-et-Muret toll plaza. The initiative has seen strong support among regional stakeholders.

We worked with partners on environmental aspects. To protect biodiversity and not impact negatively on local fauna, bridges were put in place to help animals such as deer to cross the motorway. Monitoring of local habitats and wildlife populations is ongoing.

Fire prevention in the pine forests bordering the motorway was vital, reducing risk to the environment and also mitigating the safety hazard and potential operational disruption that a blaze in the vicinity of the motorway would cause. Innovative awareness campaigns aimed at drivers, highlight the actions to avoid inadvertently starting fires, via motorway radio, flyers in service stations and also making non-flammable ash trays available. Working with a local haulage company, we use trucks as billboards to display campaign messages.



The infrastructure team had a wealth of experience in the development, financial structuring and operation of long-term, concession-style Public Private Partnerships (PPP). The A63 motorway project was a complex and high profile European PPP project. The philosophy of partnering with similarly-minded top-tier developers and operators was shared by all.

As partners in the Atlantes consortium we joined early in the development period with a team that had an in-depth understanding of traffic revenue forecasting. This helped underpin the viability and success of the project alongside assembling a fantastic bid team.

The project was eligible for EU funding while the construction and operation of a toll system provides income throughout the 40-year concession. In addition, an innovative financing structure, rarely seen in traffic infrastructure projects, has helped to provide stability and certainty over the long-term concession. In June 2015, the project was successfully refinanced on a long term basis, with no residual refinancing risk, at very attractive conditions.

- > €480m investment - project capital cost
- > Completed November 2013 - 7 months ahead of 42 month schedule
- > 40 years' operating concession for French government
- > 105km - 2x3 lanes between Bordeaux & Bayonne
- > Construction of bridge over railway and 2 full lane tollgate areas
- > Reconstruction of 4 service stations and 8 rest areas
- > 1,600,000m<sup>3</sup> of cut, including 800,000m<sup>3</sup> for runoff water catchment
- > 1,000,000t of aggregates for asphalt mix
- > 100Ha of environmental compensation areas

### Creating Real Value

The shortened timeframe of successful completion, a remarkable seven months ahead of schedule, was due to two notable components in the process. Firstly, the collaboration fostered between the project partners enabled quick and efficient decision making and secondly, the contracts and incentives we put in place with subcontractors ensured timeframes were met on, or ahead, of schedule.

