**Boskalis and Van Oord response to “Dredging in the Dark”**

*Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited companies involved in the Challenge Consortium to respond to a report by SOMO, “*[*Dredging in the Dark*](http://www.somo.nl/publications-en/Publication_4279)*”. The response by Boskalis and Van Oord is below.*

*Additional responses* [*are available here*](http://business-humanrights.org/en/dredging-in-the-dark-report-calls-for-human-rights-due-diligence-from-firms-that-were-involved-in-suez-canal-project-companies-respond)*.*

13 April 2016

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre has invited Boskalis and Van Oord, as part of the Challenge Consortium responsible for dredging part of the Suez Canal expansion, to respond to a report published by SOMO. Since the report focuses on the Dutch dredging companies, we have chosen to respond together.

Boskalis and Van Oord were part of a consortium responsible for the dredging activities of lot 2 through 5, for the creation of a new 35 km parallel canal. In line with the response given to this project in September 2015, we do not recognize the allegations made in the SOMO report.

Boskalis and Van Oord endorse the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and apply these guidelines in their CSR-policies (please refer to Boskalis’ website and  [CSR report](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3a%2f%2fannualreports.boskalis.com%2fannual-report-2015%2fcsrreport2%2fimpactonlocalcommunities2%2fimpactofouractivities2%2fa1079_default&data=01%7c01%7crobert.debruin%40vanoord.com%7c507400e2979d419f93e508d36224ef28%7cd62ada1bca424fe2b9e7ceb843af0ad2%7c0&sdata=EX2fBIZUp6rAwstQX0SBiW048iCi5pp2NFDuzHWACN8%3d) and Van Oord annual report for specific references). The project was executed according to these principles and we took our responsibility as demonstrated by taking additional steps to establish the environmental and social impact of the project by commissioning an environmental impact assessment executed by a reputable independent international engineering company.

We would like to point out that the research methodology underlying the SOMO report is ‘normative-empirical analysis based on desk research’. SOMO never visited Egypt or the project location as part of their research. Both the engineering company appointed by Boskalis and Van Oord, as well as export credit agency Atradius visited the project site for their own inspections. The canal section dredged by the consortium runs through the desert and this area was empty without traces of civilization when the project commenced. Allegations regarding the supposed relocation of local inhabitants, which would have taken place before project was awarded to the consortium, are solely based on limited third party online articles whereby it is unclear in which stretch along the entire Suez Canal the supposed relocations would have taken place.