

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Semcon chosen again - to develop the world's fastest boat!**

*Semcon has been chosen as the official technical and IT partner for ASSA ABLOY's attempt in the Volvo Ocean Race 2001/2002. In conjunction with the development and production of ASSA ABLOY's competition boat for the Volvo Ocean Race, Semcon, with its wide, comprehensive range of technical skills, will play a key role as technical adviser during the important design and development phase, starting in England, in October. Two boats will be built to test for the fastest start in Southampton on 23 September 2001. A number of Semcon's chief technical specialists will be present throughout the whole development and construction phase in England.*

#### **Semcon's role in the project – A massive consultancy investment**

Semcon will be responsible for IT support and helping to develop the boats' computerised communications systems. The crew will be able to send e-mail, photos and videos via satellite throughout the race to tell the outside world about their progress. Speed, course and stress factors are a few examples of data to be gathered and evaluated to reach optimal performance.

Furthermore, Semcon's R&D department will carry out a comprehensive calculation, by analysing and evaluating different materials. The right combination of materials and manufacturing methods will be extremely important for the final result. A vital part of the competition boat is the electronics system, where Semcon will see that high level functionality coupled with high level reliability ensures everything works in all weathers. This is a prerequisite for maintaining navigation and communication. For quality assurance, Semcon's consultants will be analysing and guarding against quality problems from an early stage. A whole range of tests on materials, sails and all other equipment will be undertaken.

"In total it's all about an advanced product development project, where a holistic view and co-ordination between different technical areas is crucial," says Semcon's CEO, Hans Johansson. "In other words it's exactly what Semcon's consultants do every day for leading industrial companies, but a little more extreme!"

#### **Built the winner of the 1997/98 Whitbread Round the World Race**

"In the last Whitbread competition, Semcon had the task of developing and building the world's fastest sailing boat for Team EF. And we did it," says Hans Johansson proudly. "This meant that many of the large syndicates in the Volvo Ocean Race contacted us. We have chosen to be part of the ASSA ABLOY project, which we believe has the greatest chance of success."

#### **What are the technical challenges?**

Developing a WO60 boat is a hi-tech project, where extreme stresses and small margins put high demands upon design, construction, IT and technical solutions. And demands increase for each competition, not least when new materials and technologies are developing so quickly. Some of the technical challenges that will be deciding factors during the Volvo Ocean Race are:

#### The IT and communications systems

The amount of information required for a WO60 boat is huge. It is crucial that the crew can access and use information via a well thought out and developed information structure, that all information is gathered in one database, that it can be stored, that information handling is quick and easily understandable.

#### The mast

Carbon fibre masts and booms will be permitted in the coming competition, and rule changes have allowed the use of larger sails. This will mean that stresses will be far greater on the rigging. The challenge lies in finding the optimal solution that will hold under all conditions, which means a considerable number of calculations and tests.

#### The material

Material development has rapidly progressed and it will therefore be very important to try out and verify strength and fatigue.

#### **Semcon's aim with the investments**

“Extreme technical solutions appear first in sport and that is why we have chosen the most noticeable hi-tech project within Sports Technology to show our wide ranging expertise,” says Hans Johansson.

By taking part in ASSA ABLOY's efforts in the Volvo Ocean Race, Semcon will have a unique opportunity to spotlight itself in a large international project from conception to development, and then follow it through over a long period. It is also the right time to do so because Semcon is now making a major international investment to become the world's leading design and development company. The fact that one of the Volvo Ocean Race stages is in Göteborg makes the competition that bit more interesting.

The Volvo Ocean Race, previously the Whitbread Round The World Race, is the world's most difficult and longest yacht race. Over a nine-month period the boats and crew cross four oceans and visit five continents. It is all about adventure, high technology and excitement and attracts both Semcon's customers and staff.

“By taking part we create a wonderful platform for underpinning team spirit at the company, creating commitment and gathering staff around an internationally attractive development project,” says Hans Johansson. “It provides greater opportunity for activities and investment in recruiting more skilled employees.”

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*Semcon is one of Scandinavia's leading design and development companies. Turnover during 1999 amounted to SEK 863.5 million and the number of employees currently exceeds 1600. Semcon is active within four business areas: Semcon Technology Management, Semcon e-Design, Semcon Industrial Design and Semcon Competence Development. Semcon AB (publ) is listed on the Stockholm Exchange's O-list.*