

PRESS RELEASE

Wolffkran takes stock: 4.5 years of crane operation at the Grimsel Pass successfully completed

Spitallamm Dam, Grimsel Hospiz – September 2025. **There is nothing routine about a high-Alpine crane deployment at almost 2,000 meters above sea level, even for an experienced team. In June, the newly constructed replacement Spitallamm Dam at the Swiss Grimsel Pass was officially inaugurated. For project manager Ralph Stump and the six crane operators, this marked a special moment after four and a half years of challenging construction work. Over the years, the project attracted considerable international attention. Following the Alpine deployment, the two XXL luffing cranes were shipped directly – halfway around the world – to their next mega construction site.**

An overview of this Alpine deployment is, first and foremost, one of impressive figures: Wolffkran's largest luffing crane, the Wipper WOLFF 1250 B, moved around 500,000 tons of concrete over the course of roughly 32,000 lifts. Due to the high operating frequency, each crane's hoist rope had to be replaced twice per season.

For the Grimsel Pass project, Wolffkran specifically developed the XXL tower element TV 60 with six meter side length. It formed the solid basis for the nearly 100-meter-tall cranes, both of which stood on pile foundations weighing over 1,500 tons each – on average ten times heavier than a conventional foundation anchor. "Standard towers and foundations would not have withstood the extreme weather conditions. With the TV 60, the WOLFF cranes could operate free-standing," says Ralph Stump, Managing Director of Wolffkran Schweiz AG.

Operational Readiness Around the Clock

"Behind all these superlatives stands a unique team effort," emphasizes Stump. The short construction season from May to October made it necessary for the crane operators to work 24/7 in a three-shift system. "Seven days on, three days off, eight hours per shift in the crane – a truly demanding assignment."

On top of all this comes the special challenges of operating in the mountains: dense fog within minutes, meters of snow overnight, avalanches and storms. Nevertheless, all WOLFF employees remained highly motivated. "If the call came at 10:30 am that a rope had to be replaced, our installers had the spare part up on the crane by noon. By 5:30 pm operations were running again," says Stump.

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“Replacing a 120-kilo bolt at over 90 meters height on the crane – here, too, our team was on site. Despite the demands, interest in this job was high, and all of the six crane operators – two women and four men – are proud to have been part of this special project. Dismantling began in October 2024, and by June 2025 the last parts were transported down into the valley. A total crane volume of 4,205 cubic meters with a total weight of 1,281 tons was distributed over more than 60 truck journeys, some with oversize loads.

Next stop: Saudi Arabia

In addition to team, technology and logistics, the sophisticated overwintering concept also proved invaluable. Each crane was automatically moved three times a day during the winter season, i.e. the hoist winch, luffing gear, and switch cabinet were wrapped with special insulation mats. This colossal effort really paid off, as the WOLFF cranes were able to proceed directly from their Alpine assignment to their next construction site: the Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Stadium in Qiddiya in Saudi Arabia, for which the contract was recently signed. On this construction site as well, located on an exposed cliff with harsh weather conditions, the TV 60 will enable freestanding tower heights of around 100 meters.

A project with impact both outwardly and inwardly

With the completion of the Spitallamm Dam, Wolffkran concludes a project that has set benchmarks – technically, logistically and for the team involved. “For us, this was more than just an assignment. It was a milestone that underscores what our technology and our team are capable of,” says Stump.

Chances are high that the experiences gained at the Grimsel Pass will also feed into future construction projects. “Interest in our crane concept was very strong throughout the entire construction period,” says Ralph Stump. “Numerous experts and representative of renowned construction companies, planners, and engineers – many from abroad as well – visited the construction site and were impressed by our red giants in operation. We are already exploring potential follow-up projects.”

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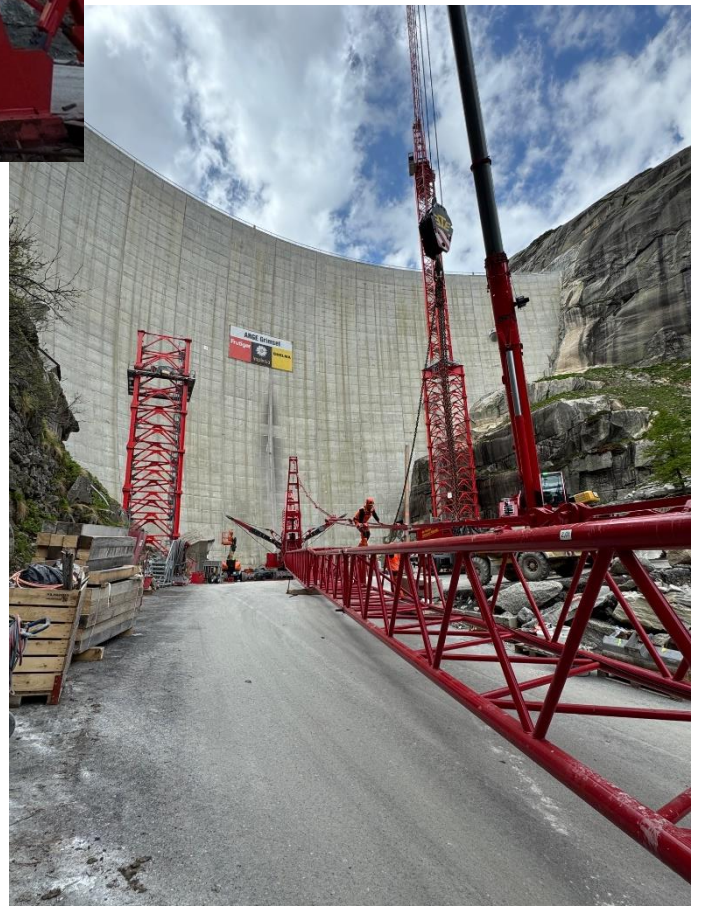
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WOLFFKRAN is a leading manufacturer of premium quality tower cranes with a tradition spanning over 170 years. With its own rental fleet of around 800 tower cranes it is also one of the largest crane rental businesses in the world. WOLFFKRAN is headquartered in Zug, Switzerland and has manufacturing sites in Heilbronn and Luckau, Germany. It currently employs a global workforce of approx. 870 people in its two manufacturing sites and its sales and service subsidiaries located across Western and Central Europe, the Middle East and the United States.

PRESS RELEASE – Pictures and captions



The dismantling took place in two stages. In fall of 2024, the upper, narrower tower of the first WOLFF was dismantled. This summer, the lower tower and the complete second crane followed. Altogether, the dismantling with a 650-ton mobile crane took around three and a half weeks.



PRESS RELEASE – Pictures and captions



Source: grimselfoto.ch

On 3 September 2024, the final concrete bucket was spectacularly placed into the dam with pyrotechnics and coloured smoke, marking the end of the approximately six-year construction period of the new Spitallamm dam.



Source: grimselfoto.ch

The completed new dam in late September 2024, shortly before the dismantling of the first WOLFF crane.