

**SPECIAL WORKSHOP**

**“CHEMICAL EXPANSION OF CONCRETE IN DAMS  
& HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECTS”**

**October 18 & 19, 2007**

**Granada, Spain**

**Session 2: Chemical Reactions and Processes**

**Thursday, October 18- 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m**

**Expansion Effects of Pyrite in the Rock  
Matrix of the Rio Descoberto Dam**

***Francisco R. Andriolo, - Andriolo Ito Engenharia Ltda, São Carlos***

**Brazil**



CONGRESS DES  
GRANDS  
BARRAGES  
*MONTREAL, 2003*

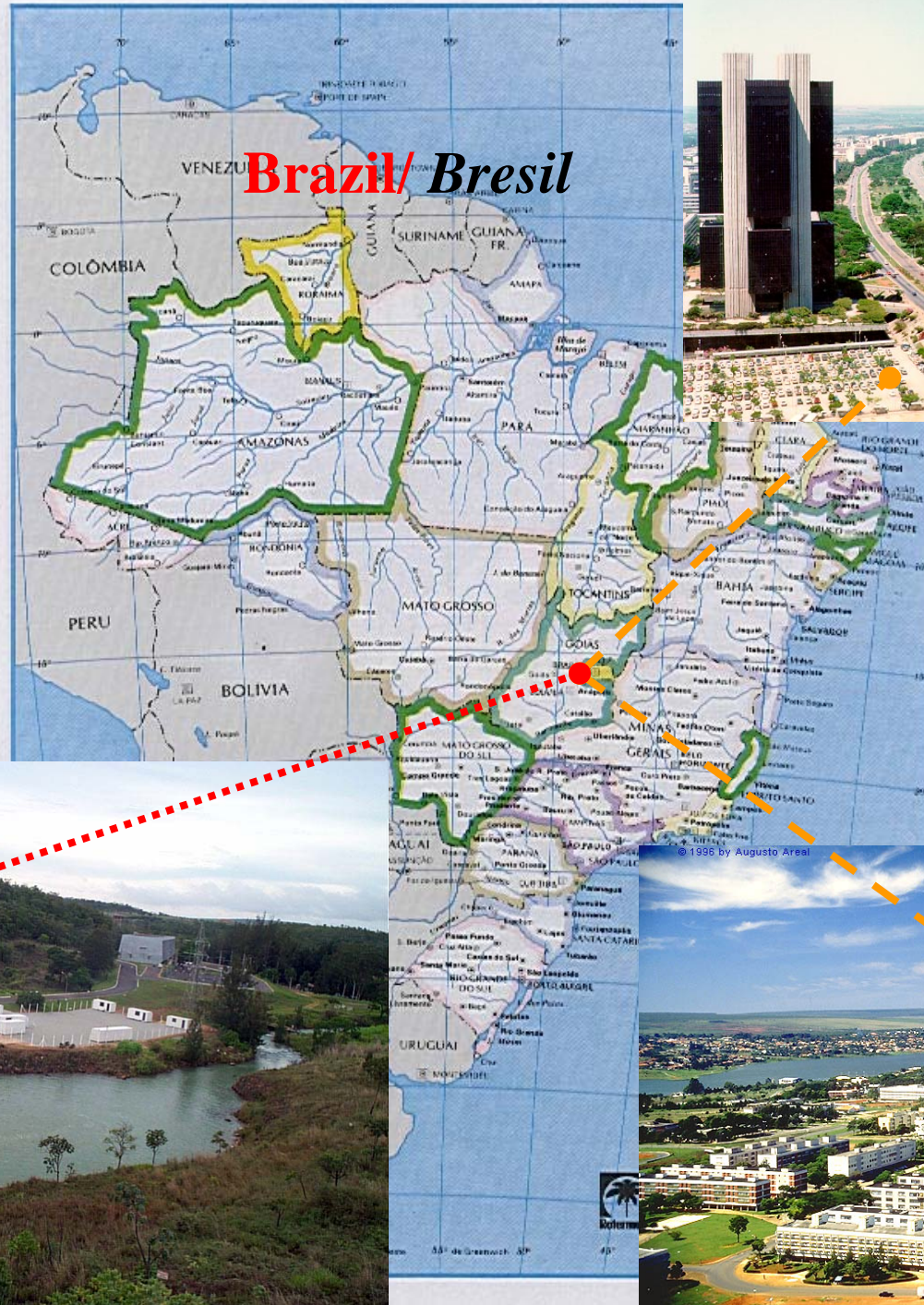
# RIO DESCOBERTO DAM: WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM FOR BRASÍLIA CITY- BRAZIL- REHABILITATION AND PERFORMANCE [1; 2; 3]

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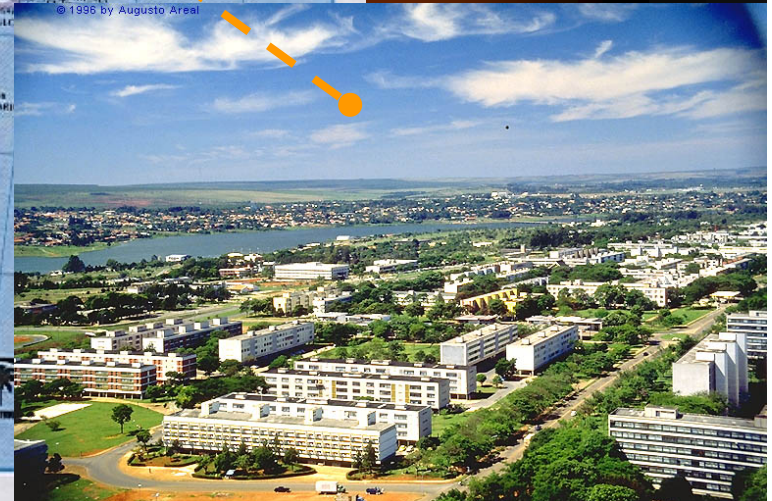
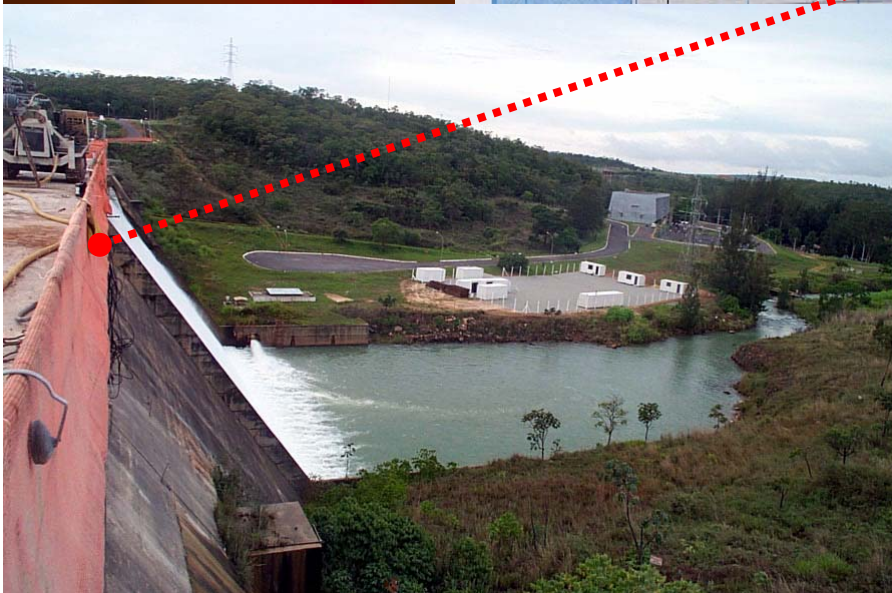




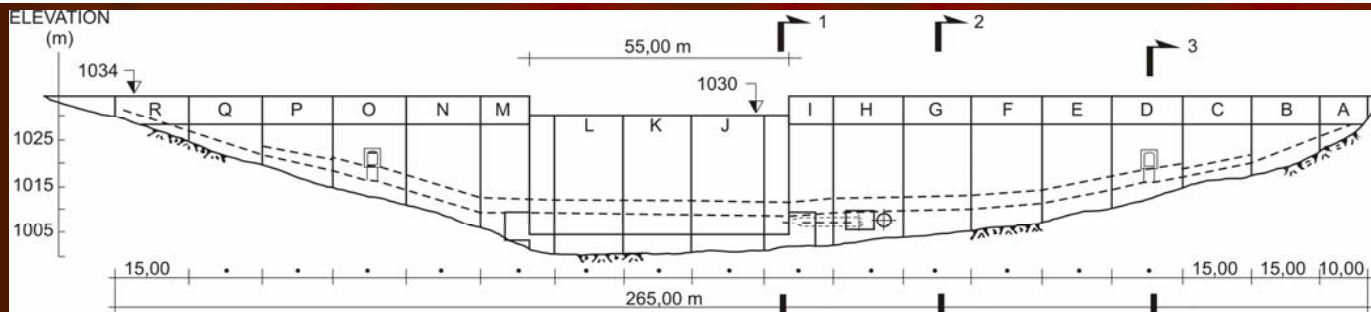
The Rio  
Descoberto Dam  
is located about  
35 km West side  
from Brasilia.  
The Dam is used  
as a reservoir for  
the Brazil's  
Capital (Brasília  
City) water  
supply.



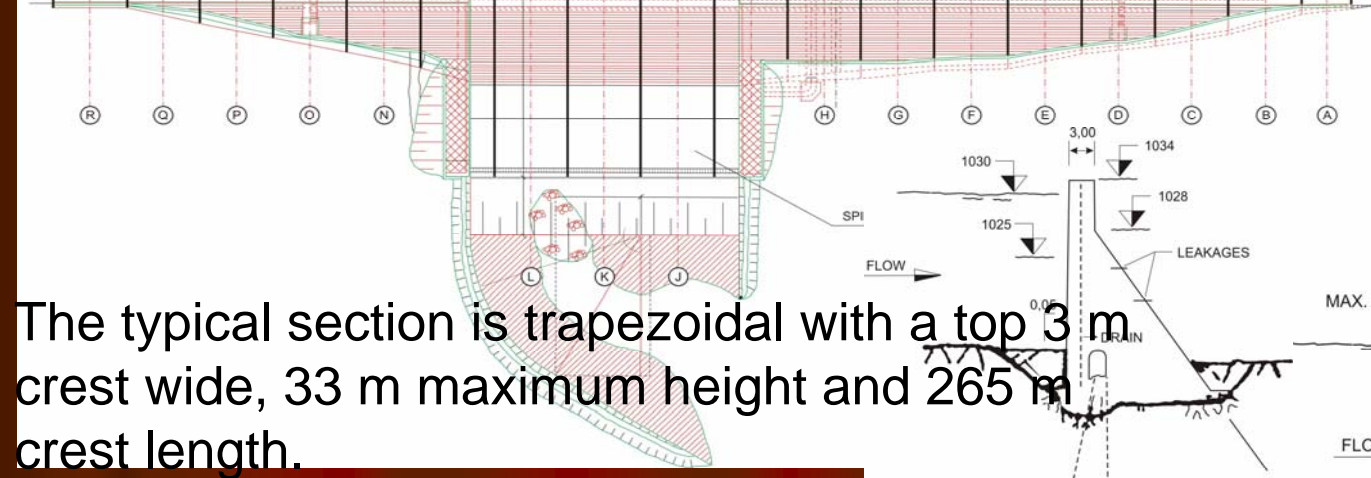
The dam, mass  
concrete gravity  
type, was  
constructed  
during the  
years 1971 and  
1974.



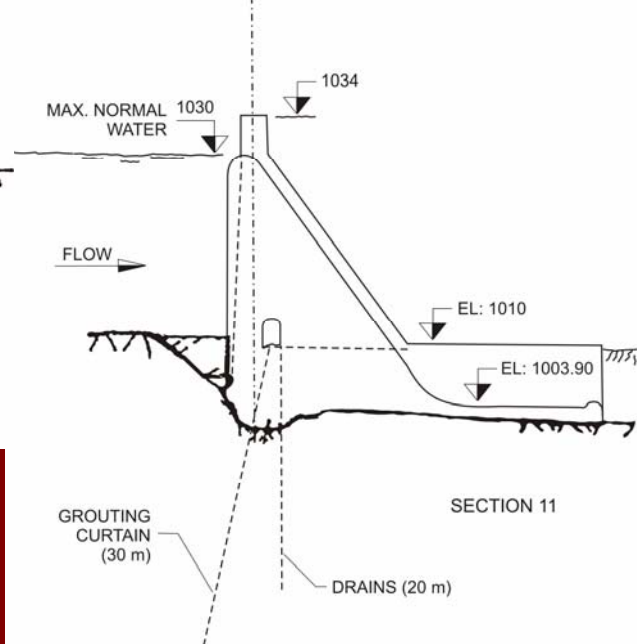
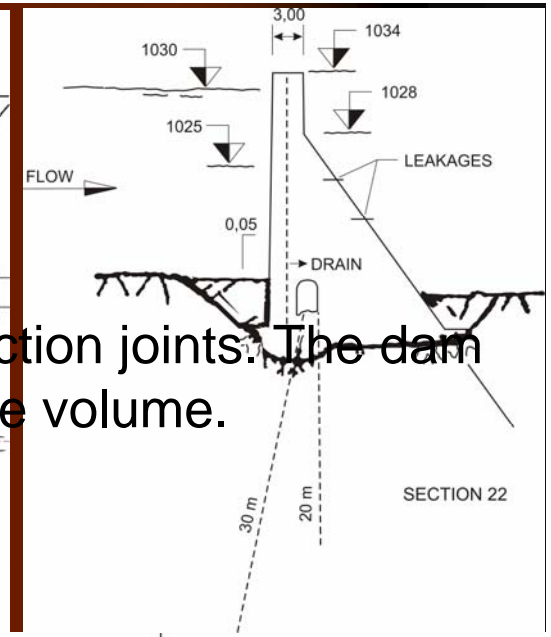




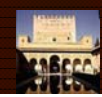
The dam was constructed by blocks, separated by contraction joints. The dam is concrete gravity mass type with 54,500m<sup>3</sup> total concrete volume.



The typical section is trapezoidal with a top 3 m crest wide, 33 m maximum height and 265 m crest length.



At the spillway level the reservoir capacity is 1,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> and approximately 60% of the local population water consumption is supplied by the Descoberto reservoir, serving up to 1,200,000 people.



## OPENING REMARKS

Some leaching water started to be observed at the downstream face few years after the end of the construction, and filling the reservoir.

Some remedial works were adopted in different periods, as grouting and drainage systems, with no remarkable success. After these remedial works **CAESB** have adopted a new approach looking for the origin of the problems, to adopt a definitive solution. After several analyses, the problem origin diagnosis was the presence of pyrite in the concrete aggregate (detected by petrographic analysis) combined with the acidic water action (pH < 7).

The consequences of pyrite composed concrete aggregate was known by the Descoberto Dam designers by the time of construction <sup>[01]</sup>, but the pale local experience with that kind of problems allowed the use of a low level pyrite concrete aggregate in this construction work.

Posterior happenings including the pathologies observed at this dam, and the Fonsagrada Dam <sup>[02]</sup> report from Spain, demonstrated however, that even very low pyrite levels on hydraulic structures concrete aggregate might cause serious problems



Period		1970	72	74	76	78	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	00	01		
<b>Activities</b>																				
Dam Construction		█																		
Initial Seepage Remarks					█															
Interventions	First							█												
	Second											█								
	Third													█						
Diafragm Wall																			█	

### ***First Intervention***

Since the mid 70's decade leakages were observed at the "I" block's downstream face. In 1981, as usual in leakage dam treatment method, the first intervention was performed. The solution was based in epoxy injections applied from the downstream face.

### ***Second Intervention***

Between 1989 October and 1990 July, the second intervention was performed. The works were guided by a preliminary diagnosis report made in 1988. This report indicated construction joints failures as the origin of the problem. These works consisted in the combination of grout injection filling at the upstream face with internal drainage holes near the downstream face.





Unfortunately, just three years after the completion of these works, the dam structure was worse than it was before. Right after the completion of these works dam appearance was satisfactory, without leakages at the downstream face and only some weak moisture spots could be observed at the upstream inspection gallery's walls. The inspection gallery was satisfactory and the foundation drains of the dam were operating well.







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& HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECTS**



**ICOLD COMMITTEE ON CONCRETE DAMS,  
SPANISH COMMITTEE ON CONCRETE FOR DAMS, and  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON HYDROPOWER & DAMS**



**Andriolo Ito  
Engenharia**





## ***Third Intervention***

In 1993 the Descoberto Dam was presenting serious problems. Moreover than the leaching horizontal planes at the downstream “E”, “I”, “G” and “O” block’s face with significant flow, the fissure problem had also increased. At the leaching blocks, new percolating horizontal planes raised. The inspection gallery was flooded and full of carted material from the rock bottom drains.

During the course of this intervention the Owner of the Dam, **CAESB**, decided to adopt a new approach in order to reach the cause of those chronic problems.

At this time a Consultant Committee was, formed by the ***Prof. Dr. Victor de Mello, Eng. Francisco Andriolo*** and ***Eng. Walton Pacelli de Andrade***. The Committee recommended <sup>[03]</sup> the collection of samples from the inspection gallery drains sediment, dam’s concrete, reservoir and drain water analyses.





The analyses indicated [04, 05] the presence of **pyrite** in the concrete aggregate and foundations. The combination of the presence of that mineral with the action of acidic (pure) water, was contributing to the degeneration of the concrete structure of the Descoberto Dam. The main pathologies observed were pyrite reactions [02, 04 to 10].

The adequate solution was to implant a **waterproof barrier, avoiding the contact between the reservoir water and the body of the dam.**

The injection works were suspended and **a 4.2m long pilot drive of the diaphragm secant piles wall was built for testing and experience purposes.**



# OWNER CONDITIONS - SITUATION ANALYSIS

## GENERAL

After the three interventions with no successful results, now with a deeper research of the problem developed by the Committee, **CAESB** decided to fully rehabilitate the Descoberto Dam. Starting from the conclusions of the Committee, observing the increase of the structural problems, **CAESB** started to search alternatives for the dam rehabilitation in order to bid the best options.

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Five basic requests were imposed by the owner for the rehabilitation techniques:

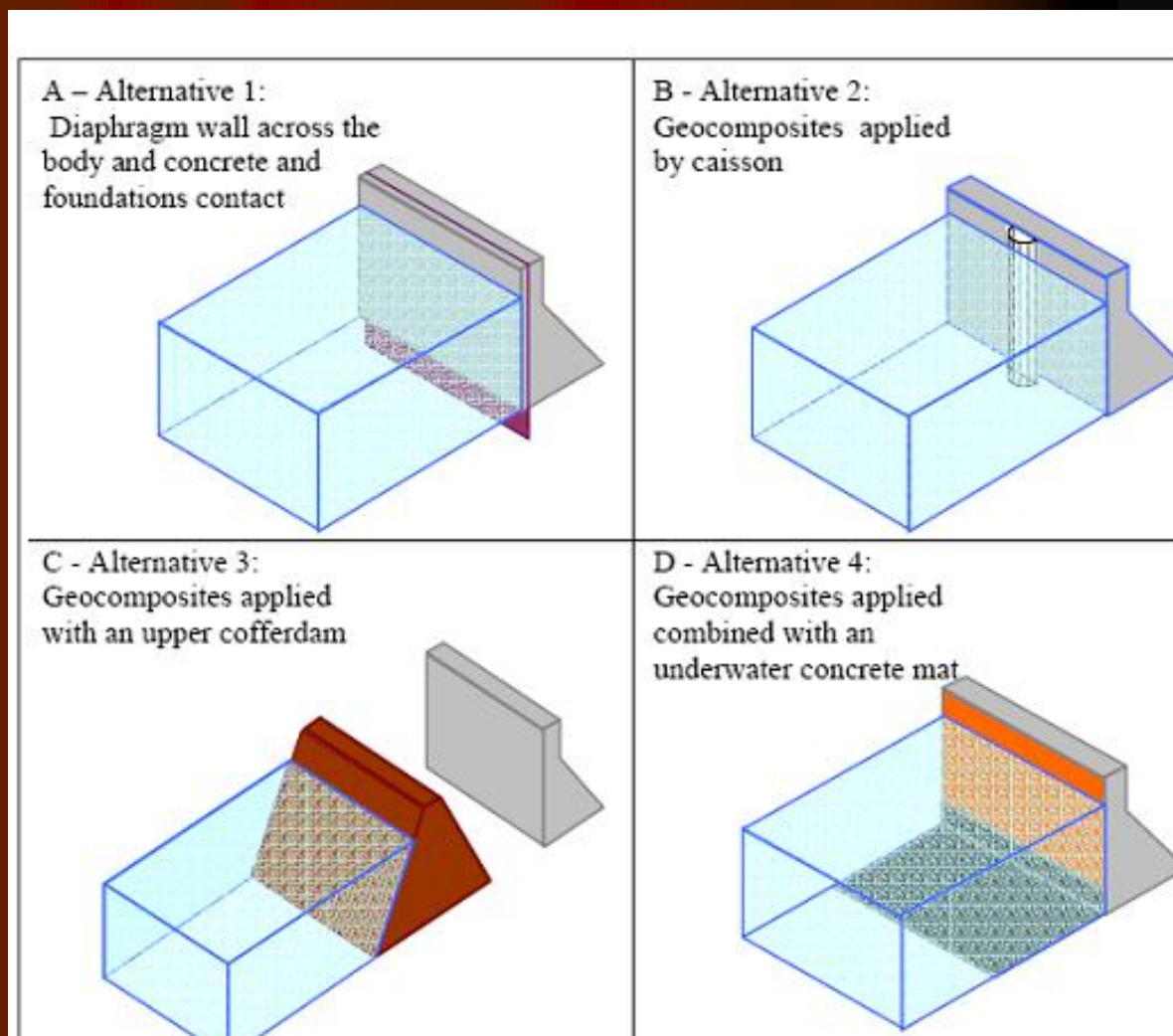
- I.* The rehabilitation method must prevent the water access to the dam concrete body and foundations;
- II.* The water supply must be fully maintained during the rehabilitation works;
- III.* The water quality must be fully maintained during the rehabilitation works;
- IV.* The method efficiency must be possible of being tested by sections during the performance of the rehabilitation works;
- V.* Grouting based impermeabilization solutions wouldn't be accepted.





## AVAILABLE METHODS

After the definition of the owner conditions, four main rehabilitation methods were initially selected. One of these methods was based on the secant pile diaphragm wall experience from 1993 and the three remaining were solutions based in geocomposites barriers application, with some variations, as illustrated below.



# ADOPTED METHOD

## GENERAL

The alternatives of application by caissons (**B**) and with the cofferdam (**C**) were excluded, due to the fact that with these two alternatives was impossible to guarantee that the water supply and quality would be fully preserved during the works and these alternatives didn't contemplate the foundation treatment and protection.

After this selection CAESB bid the diaphragm wall and the underwater application geocomposite barrier alternatives. The ECL Engineering Ltd. Contractor won the bid offering the method described by this paper. The cost of that option was much lower than the underwater application geocomposite barrier option.

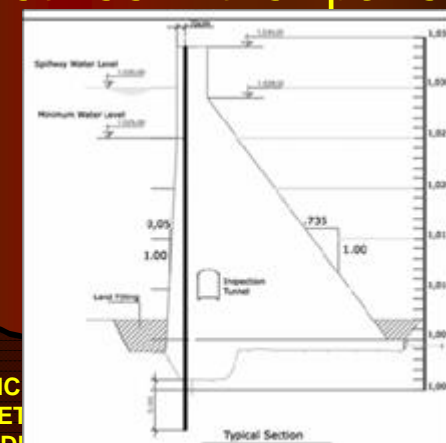
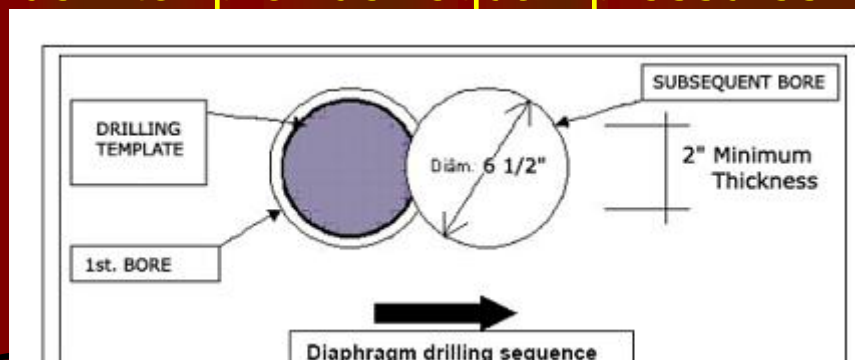




## CONCEPT

The process concept is based on the construction of a waterproof secant pile diaphragm wall inside the body of the dam, 70cm far from the upstream face. The diaphragm was performed from the dam crest without any interference with the reservoir water, need of water level drop or intake obstruction. The secant bores were performed in sequence by drilling equipment with the use of a special guiding template. A drilling sequence composes an up to 2.60m long panel. The minimum acceptable thickness of the diaphragm panels was 2".

The minimum thickness was mechanically tested and recorded by a VHS underwater system. After the completion of a drilled panel, it was filled by mortar using "tremie" system. After the mortar filling of a panel, the last bore of the filled panel is drilled again and this bore starts the next sequence (see Figure bellow). During the drilling process the panels are always filled with water in order to provide equal pressures between the panel and the reservoir.



## FIRST EVALUATION

Before the beginning of the diaphragm wall rehabilitation works, several additional tests, analyses, and stability calculations were performed. The scope included permeability, capillarity, compression and shearing tests at samples of the pilot drive of the diaphragm drive built in 1993, collected with rotary drilling probe extractors. Shearing tests at samples extracted from the contact between the diaphragm mortar and the concrete of the dam were also performed, in order to check the adherence between these different materials. Additional stability analysis were made considering the extreme hypothesis of break of the small dam's body part between the diaphragm and the upstream face. These calculations were made attending to a **CAESB** concern about the aggressive soluble effects of the soft water of the reservoir, with very low solid suspensions, on the upper part of the dam that would be in contact with the water.

That concern was also dissipated by the evidence that even being in contact with the water, that part has the reactive effects severely decreased after diaphragm insert as a consequence of the end of the reaction renovation and leaching. Laboratory tests have also been made with the mortar mixture indicated by the project designers and performance tests simulating the underwater mortar application conditions, in order to verify the possibility of

segregation





## PERFORMANCE AND LOGISTICS

The works were performed by two main groups of activities, drilling teams and mortar underwater application team:

### DRILLING

The drilling activities were performed with drilling equipments using DTH (down the hole) hammers, guided by a special alignment template developed for this project. The drilling machinery had to be adapted specifically for the project in order to have the drilling equipment tower aligned at the diaphragm axis.

The project included 70,000 meters of 6" and 6 ½" drilled bores in 18 months of work in two shifts. Midsize drilling equipments were used in the project (with weight between 6 and 11ton). At the peak of production the job site had five drilling machines working at the same time, four at the dam crest and one at the spillway top.

The deepest hole reached 38 m depth, at block "I", and 22 meters was the average drilling depth of the project.

Boring deviations caused by flexion were minimized by the use of 4" masts.







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## MORTAR PLACEMENT

The mortar filling was made underwater with “*tremie*” type tube. The work was done from the dam crest. The “*tremie*” pipe was connected directly to the mortar pumping line. The mortar pumping was made from pumps positioned beside the drum mixer parking area at the abutments outside border. In occasions when the pumping distance was longer than 100 meters, two serial disposed pumps were used.



# QUALITY CONTROL

## WATER QUALITY CONTROL

The water supply for Brasília City, by the Rio Descoberto Reservoir system is made from an inlet at the “H” block upstream face. The water is pumped through a 48” welded steel sewer straight for a Water Treatment Plant approximately 5 Km farther. At the Water Treatment Plant inlet the turbidity, coloration and colliform rates at the water are continuously controlled. Those indexes were kept stable during the works. Samples of the reservoir water had also been collected during the project performance and analyzed, including the determination of solid particles in suspension rate. This rate was, in fact, very low, as it is normal in high altitudes. These analyses (performed on samples from different reservoir levels) showed that the quality of the water was not affected by the construction works





Table with 13 columns: Date, E-Conn, Cor, T-Conn, pH, C-Conn, Alcat, C-C, D-C, C-Conn, N-H-S, E-C, Cor, C-Conn, I-C, C-C. Contains data points for various dates from 07/01/1992 to 10/12/2002.

Table with 13 columns: Date, E-Conn, Cor, T-Conn, pH, C-Conn, Alcat, C-C, D-C, C-Conn, N-H-S, E-C, Cor, C-Conn, I-C, C-C. Contains data points for various dates from 07/01/1992 to 10/12/2002.

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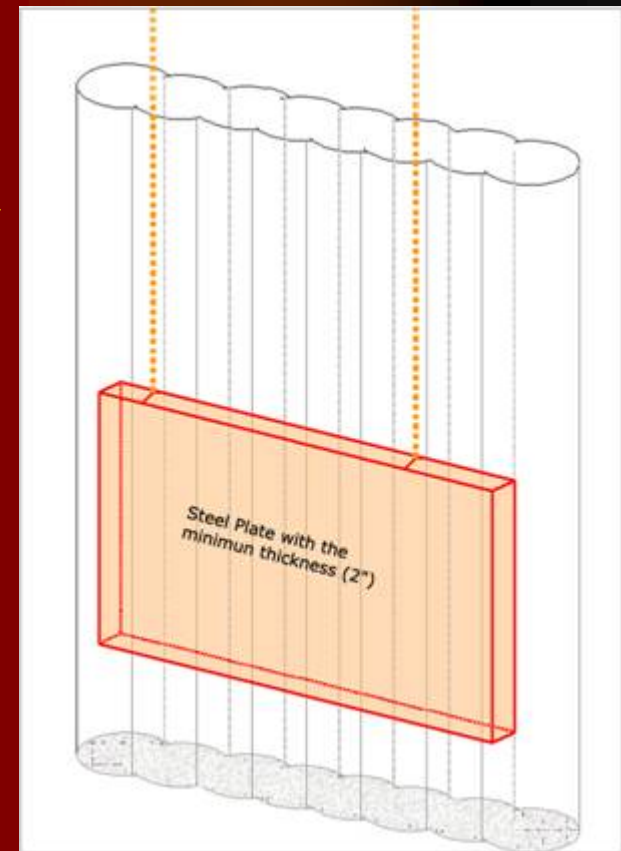
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## PROCESS CONTROL

### *Diaphragm Continuity*

The continuity of the diaphragm panels was controlled by mechanical testing and underwater VHS video system. The mechanical test was made by letting down a steel plate with the minimum diaphragm thickness allowed. In case of persistence of doubt after the mechanical test, the VHS underwater camera was used to inspect the suspect drive. This video system was also used to check and register the contact between different drives



### *Water Losses Flow Control*

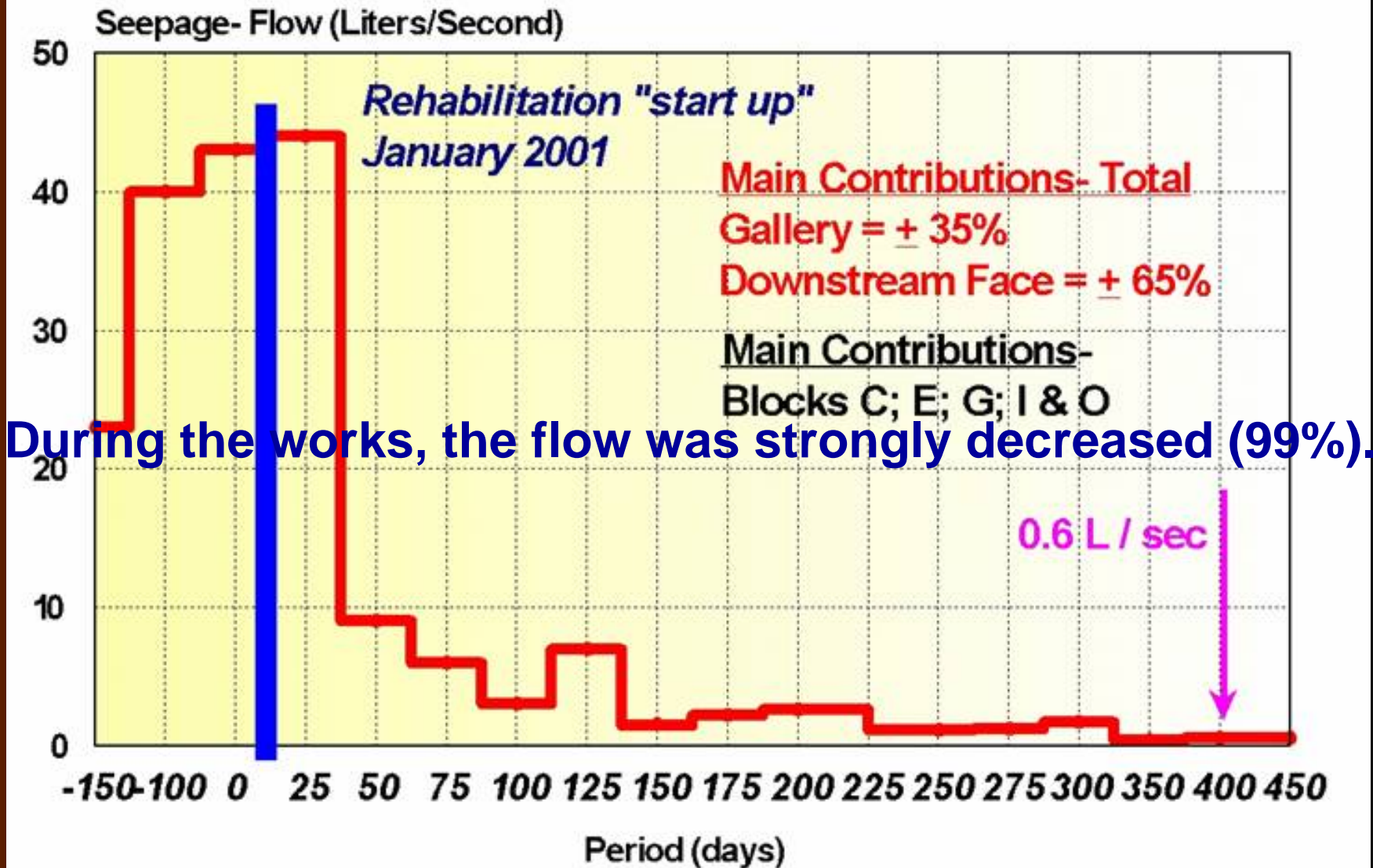
Since the beginning of the works, the downstream face and inspection gallery water loss flows were controlled.





# Rio Descoberto Dam - CAESB - Brasilia- Brazil

Water Seepage (liters/sec)= Gallery + Downstream Face





## Mortar Drilled Cores Tests

Cores were drilled from the mortar placed in the diaphragm and tested. The following statistical data were obtained:

<i>Property</i>	<i>Mortar (diaphragm)</i>	<i>Interface Concrete (dam)- Mortar (diaphragm)</i>	<i>Concrete (dam)</i>
Absorption (%)	1.22		
Specific Weight (t/m <sup>3</sup> )	1.97 – 2.08		2.52
Permeability (m/s)	10 <sup>-11</sup> – 10 <sup>-10</sup>		
Compressive Strength (MPa)	12.7 – 31.1		25.7
Splitting Tensile Strength (MPa)	1.87	1.14	4.51
Direct Tensile Strength (MPa)	1.07 – 1.80		2.32
Shear Strength (MPa) under Normal Pressure: 2.0 MPa	2.77 – 5.57	2.05 – 3.77	5.03 – 5.14
Shear Strength (MPa) under Normal Pressure: 4.0 MPa	3.92 – 6.63	3.10 – 3.66	6.43 – 6.76
Shear Strength (MPa) under Normal Pressure: 6.0 MPa	5.57 – 8.38	4.50 – 6.10	12.42

Figure 21- Statistical data from drilled cores

The methodology adopted for the Rio Descoberto concrete dam rehabilitation was successful to reach the following purposes:

- 😊 Less expensive offer;
- 😊 Guarantee the water supply in terms of quantity (no interruption) and quality;
- 😊 Reduce the water leakage to a normal-accepted amount;
- 😊 Rehabilitate the dam structural safety



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# Muchas Gracias y Buena Suerte a TODOS !!!



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