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Volvo Trucks has just signed a landmark agreement with Brønnøy Kalk AS in Norway to provide its first commercial autonomous solution transporting limestone from an open pit mine to a nearby port.

The solution for Brønnøy Kalk AS consists of limestone being transported by six autonomous Volvo FH trucks on a five kilometer stretch through tunnels between the mine itself and the crusher. Tests of this solution have been carried out successfully and will continue throughout 2018 to become fully operational by the end of 2019.

The agreement follows recent successful automation projects involving mining, sugar cane harvesting and refuse collection. Yet this commercial solution represents an exciting first for Volvo Trucks. Rather than purchasing autonomous trucks, Brønnøy Kalk is buying a transport solution - specifically the transport of the limestone between the two hubs.

"This is an important step for us," says Raymond Langfjord, Managing Director of the mine. "The competition in the industry is tough. We are continuously looking to increase our efficiency and productivity long-term, and we have a clear vision of taking advantage of new opportunities in technology and digital solutions. We were searching for a reliable and innovative partner that shares our focus on sustainability and safety.

Going autonomous will greatly increase our competitiveness in a tough global market."

"We are proud to be able to present an autonomous solution which will meet the challenges of our customers both in terms of safety, reliability and profitability," says Claes Nilsson, President of Volvo Trucks. The global transport needs are continuously changing at a very high pace and the industry is demanding new and advanced solutions to stay ahead. Our aim is to be the leader of the development of products and services to respond to these demands", continues Claes Nilsson.

"It is exciting to reach this point where we introduce autonomous solutions, says Sasko Cuklev, Director Autonomous Solutions at Volvo Trucks. By working in a confined area on a predetermined route, we can find out how to get the best out of the solution and tailor it according to specific customer needs. This is all about collaborating to develop new solutions, providing greater flexibility and efficiency as well as increased productivity."

The agreement involves a deal whereby the customer buys a total transport service and pays per tonne delivered.

Facts: Volvo Trucks first autonomous commercial solution

- The deal covers an autonomous hub-to-hub solution transporting limestone at Brønnøy Kalk in Velfjord, Norway.
- Partners are Brønnøy Kalk AS and Volvo Trucks.
- The autonomous Volvo FH trucks are managed by the operator of a wheel loader.
- The route includes driving in both tunnels and outdoor environment.