



HEAVY LIFT

& PROJECT FORWARDING INTERNATIONAL

Issue: 80

May/June 2021

Volatility sparks market recalibration

- Civil engineering gets a boost
- Setbacks for Mozambique LNG
- Vietnam leads regional rebound

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An aerial photograph of a large offshore oil platform in the middle of a deep blue ocean. The platform is a complex of steel structures, including a large derrick and various pipes and tanks. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, and the sky is not visible. The platform is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image.

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REGULARS:

5 COMMENT

Volatility sparks a market recalibration.

6-23 NEWS ROUND-UP

24 INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Mozambique's LNG future threatened.

26 PROJECT FOCUS

Blue Water delivers turbines.

28 INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Mammoet rethinks wind approach.

40 PROJECT FOCUS

RSL Shipping coordinates reel export.

52 IT

Bridging technological gaps in logistics.

62 CAPITAL PROJECTS

Aramco focuses on China.

66 INDUSTRY INSIGHT

New joint venture to set high standards.

76 AWARDS

Entry deadline extended.

86 TRANSPORT ENGINEERING

Railfreight: safer, faster, greener.

102 RISK

Repercussions mount after Suez fiasco.

104 INDUSTRY INSIGHT

The driving force behind Hareket.

114 INDUSTRY INSIGHT

How the UK's freeport model will work.

126 APPOINTMENTS

OMA Group boosts West Africa team.

128 DIARY

The lighter side.



30 MEXICO & CENTRAL AMERICA

The project logistics industry in Mexico and Central America is certainly exciting and dynamic. While some areas flourish, complicated political situations are contributing to a slow and subdued market.



42 CIVIL ENGINEERING

Project logistics work in support of the civil engineering sector is set to get a significant boost this year.

54 THE BALKANS

The region is not only a major market in its own right but an increasingly important location for the global project supply chain.

68 HEAVY LIFT RAILFREIGHT

Heavy railfreight operators have been upgrading their fleets after strong results in 2020, with promising prospects ahead.

78 CANADA

A range of large-scale capital projects continued across Canada despite the pandemic.

89 AUSTRALASIA

Heavy vehicle operators are pushing for a national operating standard to improve both safety and productivity.

94 SOUTHEAST ASIA

After a tough 2020, project cargo specialists in the region are optimistic about the future, with Vietnam taking a starring role.

106 SPAIN

Covid-19 hit Spain hard, with the project cargo community suffering – but now optimism is returning.

116 EQUIPMENT: TRAILERS

Trailer manufacturers have reported strong demand for their products over the past 12 months.


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Volatility sparks a market recalibration

The heavy transportation industry finds itself under pressure presently as a result of volatile shipping markets. Port disruption is harming productivity and high demand for container shipping services is resulting in general cargoes moving back to the multipurpose sector; the supply of all tonnage types is increasingly tight. Rapid rate rises, welcomed by shipowners/operators, are causing a few sleepless nights for forwarders and cargo owners.

Reports of shipping lines failing to honour pre-agreed contracts and commitments has forced some forwarders and shippers to consider calling force majeure. The pressure will dissipate when supply-side disruption comes back into balance – whether that is in one month, or one year, is hard to predict.

The containment and eradication of Covid-19 will be central to the return of stable conditions. The early success of the UK's vaccination programme gives some comfort that this disease can be brought to heel. Still, there is little joy to be had as we see the coronavirus ripping through the likes of India and Brazil. The herd can only move as quickly as the slowest in the pack and in this interconnected, international business, we need everybody moving together in the same direction of travel to truly recover.

Nevertheless, there are reasons for some positivity. Project freight forwarders and heavy transport engineers remain busy despite persistent travel restrictions, quarantine protocols and pricing pressures. The renewable energy industry continues apace, and positive markers for the oil and gas business suggest an influx of cargoes from this sphere in the next 12 months or so. However, the developers of the massive Mozambique LNG project calling force majeure, due to a dangerous insurgency in the north of the country, makes for unpleasant reading (p 24).

In a bid to seize control of today's and tomorrow's market, we saw DSV sign an agreement to acquire Agility's Global Integrated Logistics (GIL) business. The combination of DSV Panalpina's air and sea divisions with the forwarding and project forwarding revenues of GIL would result in a EUR12.6 billion (USD15.3 billion) entity – the world's largest forwarder by revenue – no doubt further increasing its buying power over shipping and airlines (p 6).

Also aiming to strengthen their respective positions are Jumbo and SAL Heavy Lift, which launched their joint venture, the Jumbo-SAL-Alliance. Together they will market 30 highly versatile project cargo vessels with lifting capacities up to 3,000 tonnes – the fact that both own their entire fleets offers shielding from present volatility. Shippers are also likely to benefit from better scheduling (pp 66-67).

Alongside this bumper issue, which covers some of the key markets and the industry verticals generating cargoes for this sector, you will find our annual ships and shipping lines supplement. I hope the contents of both assist you in navigating the choppy waters ahead. Stay safe and healthy.

David Kershaw,
Editor



The front cover of this issue shows Goldhofer heavy-duty transport modules in their daily operation. Last November Truck Service, on the order of RTL LLC, used specially designed combinations of Goldhofer THP/SL 24 axle lines to transport two maleic anhydride reactors, weighing 333.4 tons and with a diameter of more than 6 m, from Nizhnekamsk to Almet'yevsk for RTL LLC.

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NEWS in BRIEF

Rhenus adds RMS Projects

Rhenus Maritime Services has taken over Arkon Shipping's shares in Arkon Shipping & Projects. As a result of the deal, Arkon Shipping & Projects will be rebranded as RMS Projects. The company's co-founder, Thomas Cord, will continue to lead the business as managing partner and will be joined by Thomas Ullrich as co-managing director.

OFCO-Mammoet MoU

Abu Dhabi Ports' Offshore Support and Logistics Services Company (OFCO – Offshore International) and Mammoet UAE have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that will see the two companies collaborate on turnkey transport and installation solutions.

Agility in Mozambique

Global logistics provider Agility has opened a logistics park in Maputo, Mozambique, to serve key African markets.

DSV expands with Agility GIL purchase

Two years after acquiring Swiss rival Panalpina, DSV has once again set its sights on major expansion with the purchase of Agility's Global Integrated Logistics (GIL) division.

The acquisition will be an all-share transaction and closing is expected in the third quarter of 2021. Agility will become the second largest shareholder in DSV with an approximate 18 percent stake in the combined company.

"This deal creates significant shareholder value and marks a new milestone in Agility's journey," said Tarek Sultan, Agility vice chairman. The company, "will be exploring opportunities



between DSV and its other businesses, with promising areas of future cooperation potentially including Agility's Logistics Parks business, Shipa group of companies, and technology ventures. Agility will remain an emerging markets leader, invest or in emerging technologies and champion of sustainable business."

The combination of DSV and Agility GIL is expected to increase DSV's annual revenue by approximately 23 percent, according to the Danish forwarder. The combined company will have its own operations in more than 90 countries.

Jens Bjørn Andersen, group CEO of DSV, said: "GIL's presence in fast-growing emerging markets in Asia-Pacific, as well as Europe and Americas, will be a strong

addition to DSV's network."

According to Transport Intelligence (TI), the deal will cement DSV as the world's largest freight forwarder by revenue; using 2020's results as a guide, the combination of DSV Panalpina's air and sea divisions with the forwarding and project forwarding revenues of GIL would result in a EUR12.6 billion (USD15.3 billion) business.

Another big boost to DSV will be its increased buying power over shipping and airlines, sectors that are currently thriving in a buoyant market where demand for their services is exceeding capacity, with rates skyrocketing.

In early May, DSV Panalpina completed the previously announced acquisition of South Africa-based courier Globeflight Worldwide Express.

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Northwest Competence emerges from rebranding

Northwest Crewing has rebranded as Northwest Competence following an internal restructuring and an increasing demand for its ISO certification services.

The EMS-Fehn-Group

company has adjusted its organisation to separate its two business areas – the recruitment of qualified seafarers for shipowners and managers, and preparing other companies for ISO certifications – more clearly.



Hansa Meyer sells shares in US units

The shareholders of Hansa Meyer Global Transport USA and Hansa Meyer Heavy Haul & Rigging USA have agreed to sell all shares of both USA-based companies. The asset-based businesses will continue to operate under the branding ATLAS Heavy Projects and ATLAS Heavy Transport, respectively.

ATLAS Heavy and its employees will take over all contractual responsibilities from Hansa Meyer Global Transport USA and Hansa Meyer Heavy Haul & Rigging to continue existing business, local contracts and ambitious asset-based growth plans.

Germany-headquartered Hansa Meyer Global Transport, with its network of 22 offices, will continue its international business in the USA and plans to further expand its project logistics activities in the country

with a group of longstanding industry partner companies.

By the fourth quarter of this year, Hansa Meyer Global Group will open a separate USA-based project logistics entity with a core focus on international capital investment cargo and EPC project business.

Jan-Dirk Schuisdzara, managing director of Hansa Meyer Global Holding, said: "We thank our partner, friend and ceo Frank Scheibner for his outstanding contribution and technical, asset-based unique solutions as well as a decade of growth for our network in the USA. We are happy to continue our successful work on unique, technical based end-to-end solutions with ATLAS Heavy."

Scheibner added: "We appreciate the longstanding relationship and partnership with the Hansa Meyer Group. ATLAS Heavy Transport will

continue to invest in heavy haul and rigging equipment such as SPMTs, heavy-haul trailers, gantries, etc. ATLAS Heavy Projects will continue to focus on global project forwarding and logistics."

Royal Cargo expands its footprint in Southeast Asia

Philippines-based project logistics specialist Royal Cargo is expanding its operations into Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Papua New Guinea.

Key services include project transportation and

management, turnkey projects, transport engineering, tariff consultancy, Customs brokerage, heavy haulage and trucking, barging, rigging, packing and crating, and ship agency.

NEWS in BRIEF

Liburnia opens in Prague

Liburnia Maritime Agency has opened an office in Prague, Czech Republic, which will operate as Liburnia Projects & Chartering. It will provide chartering and brokerage; project forwarding; port agency; as well as technical and commercial consultancy services.

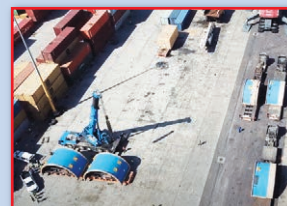
NPT Brasil rebrands

NPT Brasil (NPT) – part of the Trans Global Projects Group (TGP) – has been renamed TGP Brasil Projetos & Transportes Internacionais to match the parent brand. Bringing the subsidiary under TGP's Brazilian banner is part of the group's efforts to streamline commercial activities and strengthen its global presence.

HA deal for Egytrans

Egypt-headquartered project freight forwarder Egytrans has conditionally agreed a deal with HA Utilities Holding that will see the two companies integrate their businesses.

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Höegh Autoliners to build 'greener' ships

Höegh Autoliners has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Xiamen Shipbuilding Industry to build what it claims to be the world's largest PCTC, featuring engines capable of running on various environmentally friendly fuels.

The Aurora-class vessel comes equipped with engines that can run on conventional fuels, including LNG and biofuels. With minor modifications it can transition to use future zero-carbon fuels, including green ammonia, said the carrier.

The vessels are designed to have a capacity of 9,100 car equivalent units. They will feature strengthened decks and enhanced internal ramp systems, allowing electric vehicles on all decks

while providing more flexibility for heavier project cargo.

"It will be the largest and most environmentally friendly car carrier ever built," said Andreas Enger, CEO of Höegh Autoliners, adding that the series would allow the carrier to accelerate its decarbonisation efforts to meet its net-zero goal by 2040.

Hans Eivind Siewers, segment director passenger ships and ro-ro at DNV, added: "With the multi-fuel engine and DNV's new ammonia-ready notation, Höegh Autoliners is bringing the segment and work to decarbonise the maritime industry to a new level."

The first vessel is scheduled for delivery by the end of 2023.

Damen delivers mega barge Tomsk

Damen has delivered the 111 m-long mega barge Tomsk to Combi Lift.

The barge will be used in the construction of Gazprom's Amur gas processing plant near Russia's eastern border, transporting some of the largest

components to the site. With a deadweight of 5,700 tonnes, it is almost twice the size of other barges in the company's fleet.

AAS Amur Assets Shipping – a joint venture set up by Combi Lift to support its role in the construction of the Amur plant –

will operate the barge, which has been designed to navigate the very shallow inland waters in which it will operate. This involved minimising the weight while maximising the length and beam to increase buoyancy and reducing the draught.

InterManager works to source seafarer vaccines

The international trade association for in-house and third-party shipmanagers, InterManager, has pledged to source Covid-19 vaccinations for its members' seafarers.

Mark O'Neil, InterManager

president, said: "The international efforts have not been sufficient in recognising the importance of the vaccination of seafarers."

"We will now work on sourcing vaccinations

separately through legitimate channels to enable our members to vaccinate their seafarers as soon as possible and to support others within the maritime industry to do the same".

NEWS in BRIEF

Jumbo-SAL-Alliance launch

German breakbulk and project cargo carrier SAL Heavy Lift and Dutch maritime heavy lift transport and installation contractor Jumbo Shipping have commenced operations under their joint venture banner – Jumbo-SAL-Alliance (read more on pp 66-67).

Geest Line acquired

Seatrade Group and Jamaica Producers Group (JP) have come together to acquire Geest Line, which provides shipping services connecting the UK and the Caribbean.

Eco Savona's maiden call

Grimaldi's fourth hybrid ro-ro unit in its GG5G series has made its inaugural call at the port of Savona, Italy.

MSC introduces eBL

Following a successful pilot phase, MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) is introducing an electronic bill of lading (eBL) on the independent blockchain platform WAVE BL.

MACS appoints Cosulich

MACS has appointed Fratelli Cosulich as its agent in Italy.

Imperial Logistics divests

Imperial Logistics has agreed to sell its South American shipping business to logistics provider Hidrovias do Brasil.

Cadeler to buy newbuilds

Cadeler will acquire two newbuild X-class vessels for installation, services, operation and maintenance work on offshore wind farms.

Meriaura's 'green' concept

Finnish shipping company Meriaura Group is developing a carbon-neutral vessel concept designed specially for lake, canal and sea feeder traffic.

Vessels reactivated

During the third quarter of this year, Wallenius Wilhelmsen will reactivate the last three of its vessels that were placed in cold layup. The reactivated vessels will replace capacity sourced through short-term charters.



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Scheuerle expands PowerHoss series

Scheuerle – a subsidiary of TII Group – has expanded its SPMT PowerHoss series with the addition of a six-axle version (pictured).

Scheuerle's SPMT PowerHoss series previously consisted of two and four-axle versions that offered payloads of up to 85 tonnes and 174.9 tonnes, respectively. The six-axle vehicle – SPMT PowerHoss 330 – now offers up to 330 tonnes of capacity.

The modules can be coupled together for even greater payloads. Four units in tandem can move loads weighing as much as 1,320 tonnes.

The SPMT PowerHoss is also equipped with a power pack unit (PPU) integrated into the transport platform.

With a width of 3 m, the module offers 40 percent more stability than comparable container-wide solutions, according to Scheuerle.



The trailer manufacturer added that the highly manoeuvrable vehicle is an all-rounder that can be used on a wide range of indoor and outdoor surfaces.

It is particularly suited for use in shipyards, the construction industry, power plants, mining projects and steel industries, as well as in the petrochemical sector.

Goldhofer adds features to Stepstar range

Goldhofer is offering its Stepstar range of semi low-loader trailers with wheel recesses and a mega gooseneck.

The three to five-axle semi-trailer range was launched in 2020 and can handle payloads up to 70 tonnes.

Robert Steinhauser, sales director at Goldhofer Europe and North Africa, said the latest modifications to the range make them suitable for a wider range

of applications. The upgraded series comes with a choice of one or two pairs of wheel recesses. Goldhofer said this enables taller construction machines to be transported where maximum height regulations would otherwise be a problem.

The wheel recesses have a low entry angle and cross-ribs for safe loading with wheeled vehicles with a low approach/departure

angle. The depth of the wheel recesses can also be adjusted to the ground clearance of the machine to be loaded.

The optional mega gooseneck reduces the height difference between the loading area and the gooseneck; this permits transportation of divided loads, general cargoes, and a 40 ft container or two 20 ft containers for a total rig length of 16.5 m.

Laso acquires escort vehicles in Germany

Laso Transportes has purchased escort vehicles with variable message sign (WVZ) systems for its German operations.

The BF4 vehicles, which feature the message signalling system, are used on controlled and previously studied routes, said Laso.

The company added that these vehicles, with prior authorisation from the relevant authorities, could replace police escorts on some routes.

NEWS in BRIEF

Seeland boosts green fleet

Gustav Seeland has added three environmentally friendly hydraulic cranes to its fleet. The company said that the cranes operate emission-free, almost silently and without exhaust gases. This brings Gustav Seeland's hybrid fleet from four to seven vehicles.

Schrefler picks Broshuis

Austria-based Manfred Schrefler has taken delivery of a Broshuis pendle axle trailer. The semi low-loader features a 0.8 m-wide and 3.5 m-long crane arm recess and ramps. The multifunctional trailer is capable of transporting a range of construction vehicles, said Broshuis.

Faymonville delivers trio

Jan De Nul Group has taken delivery of three TeleMAX flatbed trailers from Faymonville. Two of the vehicles will be used to transport dredging pipelines that measure up to 19 m and the third will be utilised by the company's subsidiary Soetaert to transport sheet piles and milling machines.

Mielke opts for Kässbohrer

Germany's Mielke Logistics has added a Kässbohrer lowbed K.SLL 2 trailer to its fleet. The two-axle K.SLL 2 has a low loading height with a ground clearance of 0.1 m. According to Vincent Koel, Kässbohrer's region manager for north Germany, this provides the maximum height for heavy haulage transportation.

Drake loader innovation

Australia's Drake Trailers has developed double-acting suspension rams for its series of low loaders. The rams enable the axles to be quickly retracted to reduce tyre wear.

ESTA's French rule fears

Both ESTA and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) have raised concerns over new rules on blind spot safety stickers for road transport vehicles in France. Talks are under way between the European Commission and the French authorities; ESTA and the IRU have argued that the rules are "impossible to implement".



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Dedicated airfreight arm set up by Samskip

Samskip has established a dedicated airfreight business based in Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, the Netherlands.

Samskip Air will be tasked with handling the company's growing airfreight volumes, establishing new routes and developing opportunities for cooperation with Samskip's pan-European multimodal network. The company said that its 'one-stop shop' logistics options generate 850,000 teu in container traffic each year, as well as sizeable general, breakbulk and project cargo volumes.

Hans Blauw has been named airfreight manager at Samskip Air. He has held executive positions with KLM, Hellman Worldwide, FedEx, TNT and Aircraft Load Management (ALM). He joins Samskip from Fairways Group and will report to Mon Verstegen, general manager freight forwarding at Samskip Logistics.

Blauw said: "With 47 offices in 35 countries, Samskip has the network, the local staff, the Customs know-how and the digital booking systems to flourish in offering airfreight services for high-value cargoes, peer-to-peer and door-to-door."



Martijn Tasma, director global forwarding at Samskip Logistics, added: "Schiphol is a global gateway for airfreight business with China, the USA, South America, Russia, the Middle East and Africa, and provides a European gateway to Samskip's multimodal network of trucks, trains, barges and shortsea vessels."

Humanitarian hub planned for Leipzig/Halle

Volga-Dnepr Airlines and Leipzig/Halle Airport have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the aim of setting up an emergency logistics/humanitarian hub at the German airport.

Both parties have agreed to strengthen their services in the humanitarian sector, and will

jointly promote the airport as a hub for emergency logistics through specialised educational workshops.

The companies are aiming for disruption-free cargo transportation to deliver essential commodities, medical supplies, sophisticated equipment and pharmaceutical

products. They will streamline their cooperation with international non-governmental organisations, the international intergovernmental organisations of Germany, major equipment manufacturers, freight forwarders and other stakeholders in the sector.

NEWS in BRIEF

Silk Way West buys B777s

Silk Way West Airlines will purchase five Boeing 777 freighter aircraft, with delivery planned between 2023 and 2027. The B777F has a range of 9,200 km and a maximum payload of 102 tonnes.

Airbus adds SAF site

Broughton, UK, has become Airbus' second European site to introduce sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) into its cargo activities. A Beluga super-transporter aircraft, partially fuelled by SAF supplied by Air bp, departed the Welsh Airbus site.

Etihad joins CargoWise

Etihad Cargo has partnered with WiseTech Global to utilise the latter's logistics execution platform, CargoWise.

AN-124 mining move

Chapman Freeborn chartered AN-124s from Antonov Airlines' fleet to transport 370 tonnes of mining equipment from Melbourne, Australia, to Brazil.

ABC lifts museum cargo

AirBridgeCargo Airlines (ABC) has delivered over 200 museum exhibits onboard its regular Boeing 747-8F flights from Moscow to Hong Kong. ABC worked in partnership with ART-Courier to deliver museum showpieces.

Magma charts capacity

Magma Aviation is expanding its fleet with an additional Boeing 747-400F through a partnership with Plus Logistics Solutions.

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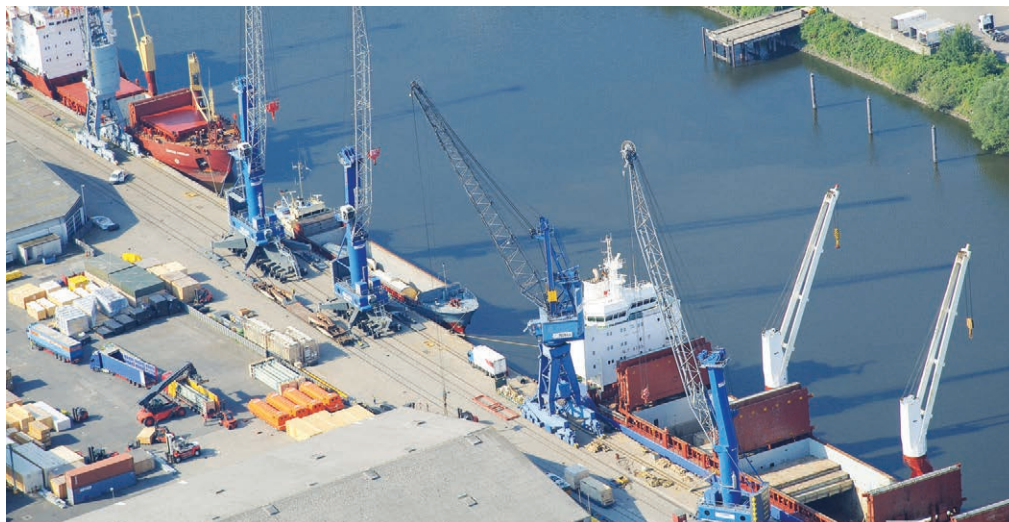
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Deufol acquires Wallmann Terminal

Deufol has acquired Wallmann Terminal at the port of Hamburg, Germany, as it continues the expansion of its global network.

"We are convinced that the port of Hamburg, including the Wallmann Terminal, is the most suitable consolidation platform and the best performing location for industrial goods packaging in Germany," said Deufol.

Deufol said that it would offer its customers heavy lift packaging, assembly, consolidation and shipping from the location. With four mobile cranes, each with a lifting capacity 400 tonnes, the terminal is prepared to handle a range of heavy goods.

Like its other production sites, Deufol said it would also fully digitalise its Hamburg operations.

Heavy invests in Albert Canal terminal

Heavy – part of the Gosselin Group – has taken delivery of a Konecranes Gottwald Model 5 mobile harbour crane at its terminal on the Albert Canal, Belgium.

The 125-ton (113.4-tonne) lifting capacity mobile crane has a 51 m radius and will be

deployed primarily for the handling of containers and breakbulk cargo, supplementing the company's existing crane.

Marc Smet, CEO of Gosselin Group, said: "The widening of the Albert Canal and the expansion of our quay wall have a positive impact on our activities.

"We want to apply inland navigation and multimodal solutions as often as possible to ease the pressure on local and other roads, and to offer certainty to our clients.

"After all, the number of containers being processed continues to rise."

Construction gets under way at Paulsboro

Construction of the EEW monopile manufacturing facility at the Paulsboro Marine Terminal in New Jersey, USA, has begun.

Ocean Wind – a joint venture between Ørsted and PSEG and developers of New Jersey's first offshore wind project – said that the start of construction marks a significant milestone in

delivering the largest industrial offshore wind manufacturing facility in the USA to date.

The facility, when completed, will manufacture monopiles to supply the 1,100 MW Ocean Wind farm off the coast of southern New Jersey.

EEW's facility will create as many as 260 jobs during the first phase of construction and manufacturing.

Construction activities include the clearing and grading of the 70-acre (28.3 ha) site, reinforcement to increase quayside bearing capacity to accommodate the 2,500-ton (2,268-tonne) monopile foundations, and the construction of two large buildings that will support circumferential welding, sandblasting and painting.

NEWS in BRIEF

FMT expands in Itawamba

Federal Marine Terminals (FMT) has signed an operating agreement with Port Itawamba, increasing its presence in the southern region of the USA. The facility is located in northern Mississippi on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and has connections with destinations along the US Gulf Coast and into the Midwest. With the multi-year lease agreement, FMT will handle a variety of commodities including steel, bulk, forest products and projects cargoes.

Indiana set for heavy loads

Ports of Indiana-Jeffersonville in the USA will receive more than 30 barges carrying cargoes for Lehigh Cement's facility in Mitchell. More than 350 pieces of equipment will arrive by June 30 to support Lehigh's USD600 million expansion project in Mitchell, which is nearly 50 miles (80.5 km) from Indiana port. Some of the cargoes will weigh up to 100 tons (90.7 tonnes).

Baltimore dredging ends

The port of Baltimore in Maryland, USA, has completed dredging operations to create a second 50 ft (15.2 m) deep container berth at its Seagirt Marine Terminal. The project, completed as part of the public-private partnership between the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) and Ports America Chesapeake, will enable the port to accommodate two ultra-large ships simultaneously.

ABP spends at Garston

Associated British Ports (ABP) plans to invest around GBP4.5 million (USD6.2 million) to enhance recently acquired facilities at the port of Garston. The project will see ABP invest to enhance the facilities, providing additional bulk and breakbulk storage facilities.

Felixstowe berth upgrade

Hutchison Ports has enhanced Berth 7 at its Trinity Terminal in the port of Felixstowe, UK. Berth 7 – one of the port of Felixstowe's nine container berths – has been dredged from a depth of 15 m to 16.5 m, and the berth box widened from 55 m to 70 m.



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The Northwest Seaport Alliance is now a major American shipping gateway formed through the collaboration of the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma.

Tadano expands rough-terrain series

Tadano has expanded its series of rough-terrain cranes with three models for the European market – the GR-700EX-4, GR-900EX-4 and GR-1000EX-4.

The cranes, which offer lifting capacities of 70, 90, and 100 tonnes respectively, have a compact design with a low overall height. They are suited for work in congested construction sites, for maintenance operations, and in the industrial and energy sectors, Tadano said.

All models are equipped with the Tadano View System, which combines cameras and sonar to support the crane operator during handling.

The right front and rear-view cameras help to increase work area visibility for the operator, according to Tadano. Camera feeds are displayed

on the multi-function display touchscreen, which can display lift charts, crane configuration and operating settings.

Later this year, the company will also lose the Demag, Tadano Faun and Tadano Mantis brands as it aims to standardise its product portfolio.

The company plans to harmonise all branding, category names, model names and colouring schemes.



Modulift adds to spreader beam range

Below-the-hook equipment manufacturer Modulift has expanded its range of modular spreader beams with the MOD 1100/2000.

The Netherlands-based heavy lifting rental company Safe Lifting Europe contracted Modulift to design and manufacture a beam capable of lifting 2,000 tonnes, with a span of 33 m.

As it was the first time the company manufactured a beam capable of lifting 2,000 tonnes,

Modulift's in-house compression test rig had to be upgraded to facilitate the proof load test, which was witnessed by DNV. After securing type approval, the beam was painted in Safe Lifting Europe brand colours ready for its first lift later this year.

Modulift said that as a result of this project, the company will be able to proof load test any spreader beam up to this size for future customers.

The company has also formed a strategic partnership with chain manufacturer pewag group, and Aberdeen-based Load Monitoring Systems (LMS).

Sarah Spivey, managing director of Modulift, said: "[By] combining forces to strengthen our products and markets around the world, we will be increasing our global distribution network while continuing to offer unrivalled levels of customer service."

Tutt Bryant and Cranecorp form joint venture

Australian crane contractors Tutt Bryant and Cranecorp have formed a joint venture that will provide a single source of supply for cranes, heavy lifting, heavy transportation and alternative lift and shift solutions.

The combined fleet includes crawler cranes with a capacity up to 1,600 tonnes, mobile cranes up to 500 tonnes capacity, and specialised transport vehicles.

Services offered by the

Cranecorp Tutt Bryant joint venture include design and engineering; project planning and project management; turnkey heavy lifting and transportation; equipment hire; and specialist labour hire.

NEWS in BRIEF

Enerpac adds upgrade kits

Enerpac has added split-flow pump upgrade kits that are able to network multiple pumps and lift points for higher accuracy synchronisation – the SFP Network Kit, Single SFP Synchro Kit and the Multiple SFP Synchro Kit. The updated kits allow operators to combine units to accommodate up to 32 individual lifting points.

Bigge opens Houston base

USA-based Bigge Crane and Rigging has opened a maintenance facility in Houston, Texas. It features a 130,000 sq ft (12,077 sq m) shop set on 25 acres (10.1 ha), as well as 12 overhead cranes ranging in capacity from 10-30 tons (9.1-27.2 tonnes) and 10,000 sq ft (929 sq m) of office space.

Ainscough invests in fleet

UK-based Ainscough Crane Hire has taken delivery of a 700-tonne lifting capacity Liebherr LTM 1650-8.1 mobile crane. Ainscough said that the new arrival would enable it to play an instrumental role in key infrastructure projects, such as construction work for the UK's HS2 railway project.

ALL buys Manitowoc kit

The ALL Family of Companies has purchased a package from Manitowoc that includes five crawler cranes and an assortment of jibs, boom attachments and other accessories. The package comprises two Manitowoc 14000 series 3 and three MLC300 VPC series 3 cranes.

Samson offers bio-ropes

Samson Rope is offering several of its products – AmSteel-Blue, AmSteel-X, Saturn-12, EverSteel-X, and Turbo-RC – with the options of sustainable, bio-sourced fibre. The company said that all bio-sourced Samson products have the same characteristics, performance, and product certifications that customers demand in diverse industries and applications.

Crosby ups tech offering

Crosby Group acquired BlokCorp and launched a technology solutions unit. BlokCorp produces BlokCam and BlokAlert – camera and alert systems for tower and mobile cranes.



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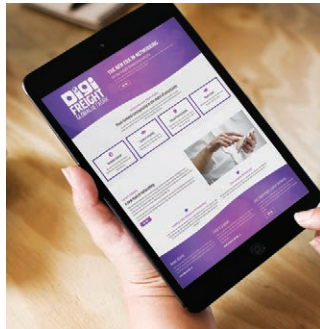
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DigiFreight assists digital networking

A shift to digital ways of working is well under way and, in a bid to serve this growing market, the DigiFreight network has been launched.

Created by Rachel Crawford – founder of the Universal Freight Organisation, Freightbook, Project Cargo Network (PCN), and Cargo Connections – the DigiFreight platform aims to foster virtual connections between freight forwarders globally.

The platform enables forwarders to connect with one another instantly through mobile devices across several



communication platforms including Skype, Zoom, Google Meet and WhatsApp. The system has been built specifically around mobile functionality with no slow, clumsy database

to sift through, DigiFreight said.

The interface enables members to quickly schedule meetings with global partners.

DigiFreight is also arranging virtual meeting weeks, whereby members are invited to participate in online meetings. Meeting week will take place every six months.

From 2022, DigiFreight will organise annual physical events, with the first due to take place from May 29-31, 2022, in Croatia.

In order to foster a close network of agents, DigiFreight will only accept two members per country.

QCN plans 2022 membership conferences

Quality Cargo Networks (QCN), which comprises the Worldwide Project Consortium (WWPC) and Priority Cargo Network, has outlined its 2022 conference plans. The 20th WWPC membership conference will

take place in Vienna, Austria, from May 10-14, 2022.

This will be followed by the ninth Priority Cargo Network membership conference, which is scheduled for May 16 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

A network dinner, arranged by QCN, will also take place on May 16. The events will line up with the 2022 Breakbulk Europe exhibition, which is taking place from May 17-19 at the Rotterdam Ahoy.

PCB Future Projects expo moves event dates

The Project Cargo Breakbulk (PCB) Future Projects exhibition and conference in Houston, USA, has been postponed to November 3-4, 2021.

The event was originally scheduled to take place during June this year but the organiser, Comexposium, decided to push back the dates until domestic

and international travel is more widely available.

The exhibition will take place at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston.

NEWS in BRIEF

Network additions

The Heavy Lift Group (THLG) has welcomed Star Shipping as a member in Pakistan.

XLProjects (XLP) has welcomed Martin Bencher as member in Surrey, Canada; Invicta Project & Shipping as a member in Genoa, Italy; Noatum Project Cargo as a member in Mexico and South Korea; Compass Global as a representative in Hong Kong; along with Phoenix Shipping as its representative in Bahrain.

The Project Cargo Network (PCN) has gained Freighters as a representative in Lebanon; Trade Desk Trading as a member in Ethiopia; Velogic as a member in Mauritius, and Wide World Corporation as a representative in Uruguay.

OOG Network has gained Rhenus Logistics as a member in Japan; Gianti Logistics as a representative in Georgia; and CTO Global Logistics and Global Soluções Em Logística as members in Brazil.

Overseas Project Cargo Association (OPCA) has welcomed Balmer Lawrie & Company as a new member covering the Indian market.

EPN network established

Jürgen Weyhausen and Marcello Saponaro have established Exclusive Project Network (EPN). The group will operate on a one member per country basis.

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NEWS in BRIEF

Megalift moves in Klang

Megalift has assisted with the transport of a produced water treatment (PWT) skid in Port Klang, Malaysia. Measuring 11 m tall and weighing 60 tonnes, the move – although only a small distance – was no easy feat and required months of preparation.

Sarens loads for Tyra East

Sarens has loaded out two heavy structures – the Tyra East G (TEG) jacket and the Tyra East H (TEH) jacket – in Cadiz, Spain, for Total's Tyra East redevelopment project. For the TEH jacket, which weighed 5,081 tonnes, Sarens deployed 190 axle lines of SPMTs and 12 power packs. For the 7,513-tonne TEG jacket, 224 axle lines and 12 power packs were used.

Lift & Shift hauls columns

Lift & Shift India has transported 15 over-dimensional cargoes for Indian Oil's (IOCL) petroleum refinery in Paradip. All Cargo Logistics contracted Lift & Shift to transport the equipment from Larsen & Toubro Hydrocarbon Engineering's (LTHE) fabrication facility in Hazira to Adani Hazira port, India. Lift & Shift said that two columns, each measuring 100 m long, were particularly challenging to transport.

Total coordination

Total Movements has managed the transport of six heavy transformers and their accessories from China to Australia.

GALA handles turbine

German Albanian Logistics Agency (GALA) – part of the EMS Fehn Group – has handled Nordex wind turbine components at Albania's port of Durres. The turbine parts arrived at EMS Albanian Port Operator's (EMS APO) terminal in the port of Durres from Vlissingen, the Netherlands, onboard the general cargo vessel Northern Rock.

Laso pulls locomotive

Laso Transportes has moved an 80-ton (72.6-tonne) locomotive from Guadalajara in Mexico to Ciudad Real, Spain. The locomotive measured 4.7 m x 3.1 m x 4.4 m.



deugro transports chemical project parts

deugro has transported a 485-tonne column and other petrochemical refinery equipment from South Korea to the USA for a chemical expansion project.

deugro oversaw the planning and transport in partnership with dteq. The C6 column measured 91.9 m x 7.7 m x 7.55 m. The shipment, which also comprised a lights tower and a primary

fractionator, was loaded directly from a trailer onto a general cargo vessel in Ulsan, South Korea.

Upon arrival in Houston, a 79.2 m-long barge was brought alongside the vessel and prepared for loading. Once the cargoes were secured, the barge began its 20 nautical mile journey through Buffalo Bayou to Scott Bay, where it was received for a chemical expansion project.

Al Faris shines at UAE power development

Al Faris deployed a Demag CC 3800-1 lattice boom crawler crane to lift and install 16 heat recovery steam generators (HRSG), which measured 28 m long and weighed up to 80 tonnes, at a power plant in the UAE.

For the lifts, the 650-tonne lifting capacity crane was assisted by another 250-tonne crawler crane from Al Faris' fleet, which picked up the HRSGs from one end so that the CC 3800-1 could then bring them to a vertical position.

The smaller crane then "unhanded" the load and the CC 3800-1 placed it into the



desired position.

The project took a total of six months and consisted of transporting and positioning

various components including condensers, boilers, generators, tanks, in addition to the HRSG modules.

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NEWS in BRIEF

Allelys installs machines

Allelys has offloaded and manoeuvred some of the largest aluminium die cast machines in the UK and installed them onto their final positions. Two of the installations included a fixed plate weighing 57 tonnes and a moving plate weighing 87 tonnes.

C.H. Robinson delivers

C.H. Robinson has transported 24 trucks from Houston, USA, to the port of Dammam in Saudi Arabia. The seismic vibrator vehicles measured 10.2 m x 3.3 m x 3.4 m and weighed 30.4 tonnes each.

Stator leaves Heidenheim

A 105-ton (95.3-tonne), 8.2 m-wide stator departed Voith Hydro's Heidenheim, Germany, facility as part of the expansion of the Töging am Inn power station. TSB Transport-Service-Beitinger handled the move, which is the widest component ever to leave the Heidenheim premises.

Rig parts arrive in Oman

Khimji Ramdas Shipping and Multimodal Logistics (KRSML) has delivered fully assembled oil rig equipment from Jebel Ali port in the UAE to the Bahja region in Oman. The equipment consisted of six packages with a total weight of 1,744 tons (1,582.1 tonnes). The largest unit measured 38 m x 14 m x 11 m and weighed 470 tons (426.4 tonnes).

MSC ships ballast wagons

MSC has transported 11 ballast wagons from Antwerp, Belgium, to Montevideo, Uruguay, onboard its container vessel MSC Sofia Celeste. The breakbulk cargo was loaded on MSC's NWC String I service. Each wagon measured 14 m long, with a width and height in excess of 3 m. The shipment had a combined weight of 290 tonnes.

Tower transport

Van der Vlist has delivered the final tower components to the Windfarm Geefswere and Oosterhorn in the Netherlands. In total, Van der Vlist executed 384 exceptional transports, with loading locations in Eemshaven (the Netherlands), Esbjerg (Denmark) and Lauchhammer (Germany).



Wagenborg supports Windpark Fryslân

Wagenborg has been transporting blades and tower sections for the Windpark Fryslân, which is under construction off the Netherlands' coastline.

The wind farm will consist of 89 wind turbines in Lake IJsselmeer. During September last year, Van Oord Offshore Wind completed the installation of

the foundations. Wagenborg has deployed a variety of tugs and pontoons to execute this final stage of the project, which concludes in June 2021.

The three rotor blades are being assembled in Oude Zeug ahead of transport to the wind farm site. The tower parts and the nacelle are being delivered to IJsselmeer via Amsterdam.

Faymonville VarioMAX moves machinery

Martlé Exceptional Moving & Lifting deployed a Faymonville VarioMAX lowbed semi-trailer, in combination with an 8x4 tractor unit, to transport a 90-tonne pile driver and a Liebherr LRB355 drilling machine in Belgium.

The equipment, to be used for the erection of a new housing complex, was transported 20 km from Bruges to Knokke in Belgium.

Serge Martlé, managing director of Martlé Exceptional Moving & Lifting, said that the route was examined closely prior to the move and signs had to be removed and drive-over plates put down.



Fuel tanks in the port of Matola,
Maputo neighbourhood,
Mozambique.



Growing insurgency threatens Mozambique's LNG prospects

The deteriorating security situation in the north of the Cabo Delgado province has prompted Total, as operator of the Mozambique LNG project, to declare force majeure.

Capital projects in Africa's energy arena have risen to prominence after a long period of stagnation, with Mozambique's LNG developments being of great interest to the project logistics sector.

Northern Mozambique is home to huge Total and ExxonMobil-led projects that were slated to propel Mozambique into becoming one of the world's largest gas exporters and transform the nation's economy, providing the project cargo supply chain with ample opportunities in the process.

In preparation for the anticipated opportunities, a number of leading project logisticians set up shop closer to

the action, while several multipurpose and heavy lift shipping lines expanded their operations to service the growing market.

Hopes and setbacks

For many years though, the potential of African projects has caused sparks in the market, only to leave companies that had opened up branches disappointed by setbacks and delays.

With regard to LNG

prospects, the cycle could be happening once again as an air of uncertainty has descended upon both projects.

Doubts had already been raised about ExxonMobil's planned Rovuma LNG project, owing to the fact that the developers have once again delayed the final investment decision (FID).

Total's Mozambique LNG project had more hope. The French energy major had anticipated that it would

produce its first LNG from the approximately USD20 billion project in 2024.

A major obstacle, however, has been the region's deteriorating security situation. The ongoing insurgency in Cabo Delgado continued to escalate over the last year with attacks in the main port town of Mocimboa da Praia – limiting access on the main road connecting to the project – and ambushes on subcontractors.

Total withdrew most of its workforce and suspended construction work from the site during January after the insurgents carried out an attack nearby. Preparations were under way to resume construction during March but another siege in Palma put paid to hopes that work could continue. In late April 2021, Total confirmed that all personnel at the project had been withdrawn as it declared force majeure.

The company said that it "expresses solidarity with the government and people of Mozambique and wishes that the actions carried out by the government of Mozambique and its regional and international partners will enable the restoration of security and stability in Cabo Delgado province in a sustained manner".

Outlook

While the project has not been abandoned, declaring force majeure implies a longer suspension of activities and enables the developers to renegotiate their contracted obligations. Contracts for site activities have been temporarily suspended, including that of the CCS joint venture between McDermott International, Saipem and Chiyoda.

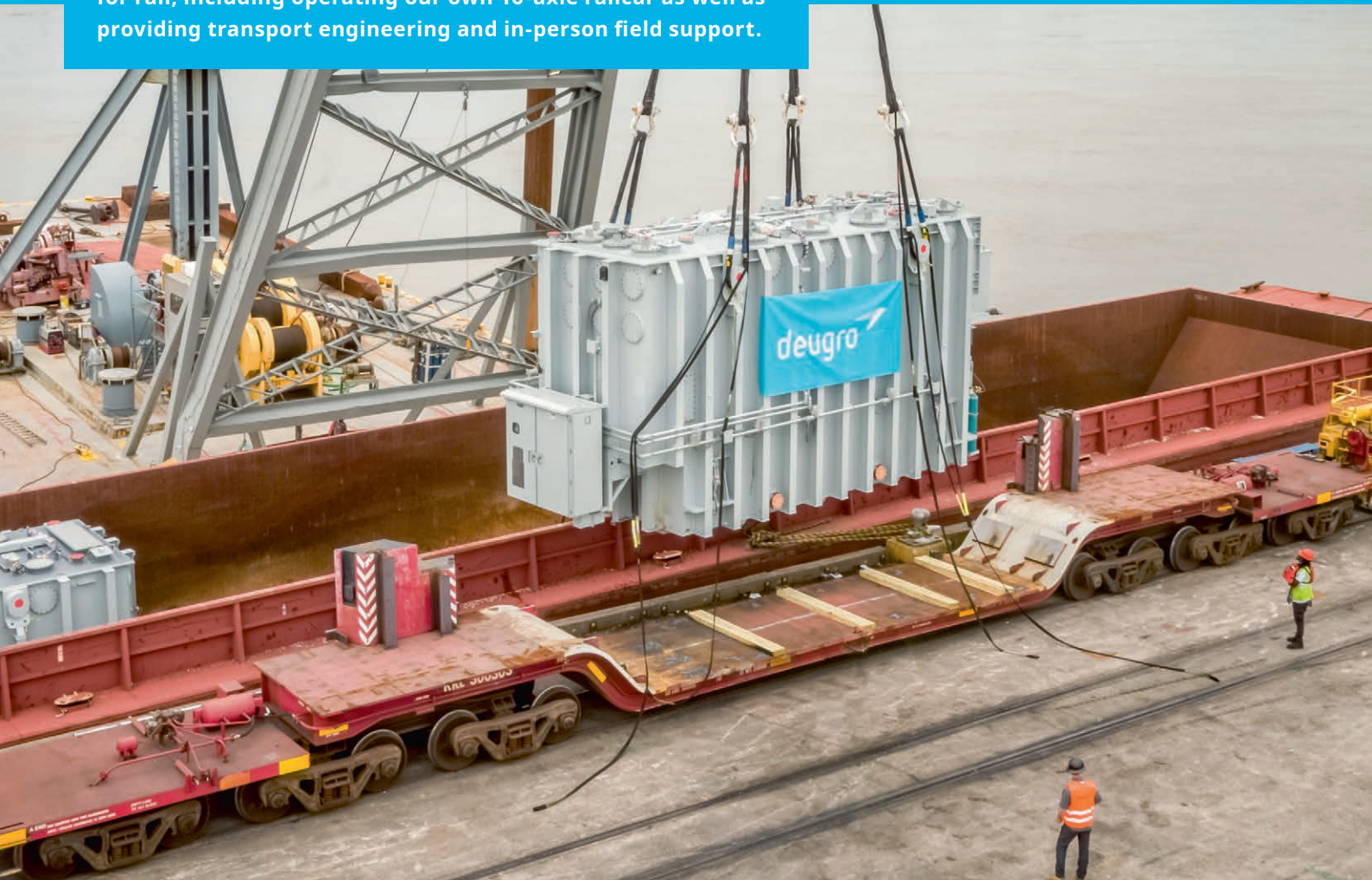
The news, while not entirely unexpected given the insurgency that has been swelling in the area since 2017, is certainly a blow to Mozambique and will be felt acutely by project logisticians and heavy lift service providers that were hoping to support the developments. **HLPFI**

While the Total project has not been abandoned, declaring force majeure implies a longer suspension of activities and enables the developers to renegotiate their contracted obligations.

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Blue Water Shipping delivered turbine components to one of the largest onshore wind energy projects in Europe – the Fosen Vind complex.

Blue Water delivers turbines for energy transformation

Over the course of three years, Denmark-headquartered Blue Water Shipping oversaw the transport of 278 turbines to the Fosen Vind onshore wind farms in Norway. *Megan Gildea reports.*

Blue Water Shipping has delivered 2,246 turbine components originating from Spain, Germany and Denmark to one of the largest onshore wind energy projects in Europe – the Fosen Vind complex comprising six wind farms in central Norway with a total capacity of 1 GW.

Speaking of its involvement in the project, Blue Water said: “The demand for renewable energy is increasing year by year, and Blue Water Shipping is proud to take part in the transformation of the global energy sector.”

The components

Blue Water’s terminal in Esbjerg served as the main base for the components, including the towers, nacelles and hubs. Here, the company’s stevedoring teams oversaw the unloading, storage, servicing and finally the loading of all pieces onto the vessels for onward sea voyage to

Norway. The turbine components measured up to 67 m long and weighed up to 126 tons (114.3 tonnes).

In Norway, Blue Water set up a temporary terminal dedicated to handling the turbine components. All 73 shipments were unloaded and handled here.

Brian Sørensen, commercial director wind at Blue Water, explained that the Norwegian terminal managed and coordinated the shipments with all partners, subcontractors and the client, together with the company’s office in Esbjerg.

The terminal was equipped with Blue Water’s own specialist equipment and personnel, including large reachstackers,

Mafi trailers, special-purpose trailers, lifts, forklifts and work containers.

Compass Wind

Blue Water’s quality and project management system – Compass Wind – aided the smooth and efficient handling of the project, the company said. The IT solution was developed in house and ensures an efficient workflow, providing business partners with the opportunity to monitor the status, quality and location of all the components during the project.

“It gave a unique overview of the overall project – what was the status of the components, what services were needed,

what was the position of the goods,” Sørensen explained.

The IT solution can be accessed by clients from a computer, tablet or smartphone, and provides real-time, detailed information about shipments and cargo with its track and trace function. Moreover, the system is not confined to wind energy shipments as it can be customised to any industry, product, and market.

Sørensen added that the Compass Wind heat mapping system allowed the project team to discover and reduce damage to components in the early stages.

Blue Water said that the final hurdle was the road transportation from the terminal to the various project sites in Roan, Storheia, Kvenndalsfjellet, Harbaksfjellet, Geitfjellet and Hitra 2. The heavy and oversize components had to be carefully transported, navigating the mountainous terrain of the Norwegian landscape.

Sørensen explained how the Blue Water team tackled this challenge. “Test runs were performed early, to make sure that all components could be transported safely from the ports to the sites and also to get an overview of all the road modifications needed to be done prior to project start,” he said.

HLPFI

The IT solution gave a unique overview of the overall project – what was the status of the components, what services were needed, what was the position of the goods.

– Brian Sørensen, Blue Water Shipping

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Mammoet has concluded that combining transport, craneage and installation is not the ideal approach.

Mammoet changes strategy for wind energy projects

Wind energy developments – both on and offshore – have been a pillar of the project logistics sector for many years now. The sector shows no sign of slowing down and the time is ripe to step away from a lump-sum approach, according to global engineered heavy lifting and transport specialist Mammoet.

Mammoet is stepping up its focus on the renewables sectors and implementing organisational changes to take full advantage of these growing markets.

It is establishing a global onshore wind group that will support the company's regional set-ups, optimise wind-specific assets, and liaise with the innovations department to find the right solution to serve the market. Offshore wind energy projects will still be coordinated through Mammoet's regional set-ups, with the support of the company's global segment lead Francisco Rodrigues.

The company's CEO, Paul van Gelder, believes there also needs to be an improved

approach toward renewable energy projects.

Lessons learnt

He explained: "I am not ashamed to say that we have certainly learned our lessons in the past. It should not be a secret to the industry that there are challenges coming with lump-sum projects – both for the developers but also the sub-

contractors in heavy lifting and transport. The lesson that we have experienced is that combining transport, craneage and installation (TCI) is not the ideal approach.

"In onshore wind, work takes place in an area that can by definition cause delays, thanks to windy conditions, geographic remoteness or other factors. This makes lines of

We are promoting a model where the scope is divided with transport and craneage in one hand and installation on the other hand, whereby it is clear for the developers who holds the responsibility.

– Paul van Gelder, Mammoet

responsibility blurry if the entire TCI scope is undertaken by one sub-contractor. We are promoting a model where the scope is divided with transport and craneage in one hand and installation on the other hand, whereby it is clear for the developers who holds the responsibility and it is clear in which direction they need to turn if things are not running as they should be."

He said that the key is to have focus and clarity of roles. "We feel comfortable and have undoubted capability in transport and craneage, but installation and commissioning are not part of our core services, so it is better that these scopes are undertaken by specialists in these disciplines.

"If you take out this blurring, you also remove much of the risk of a project.

"It is like building a house: whenever you have a delay with the carpenters, the carpenters will start to complain and point at the bricklayers, and the bricklayers will potentially blame the team that laid the foundations. Making sure there is clarity in the roles will help developers or EPCs to manage projects better. Installation, commissioning, controlling the full logistics supply chain – these are activities that require completely different expertise."

Different model

Jan Kleijn, Mammoet chief operating officer, agreed: "In the past, in wind, the market has operated under a different model, where due to our position as a very knowledgeable provider of heavy lifting and transport we took responsibility for the full scope.

"However, we are the specialists in heavy lifting and heavy transportation; we want to play that role. We should be honest to ourselves and to the industry: we do not want to undertake commissioning and installation scopes, because they are not what we are best at; they are not our cup of tea."

HLPFI

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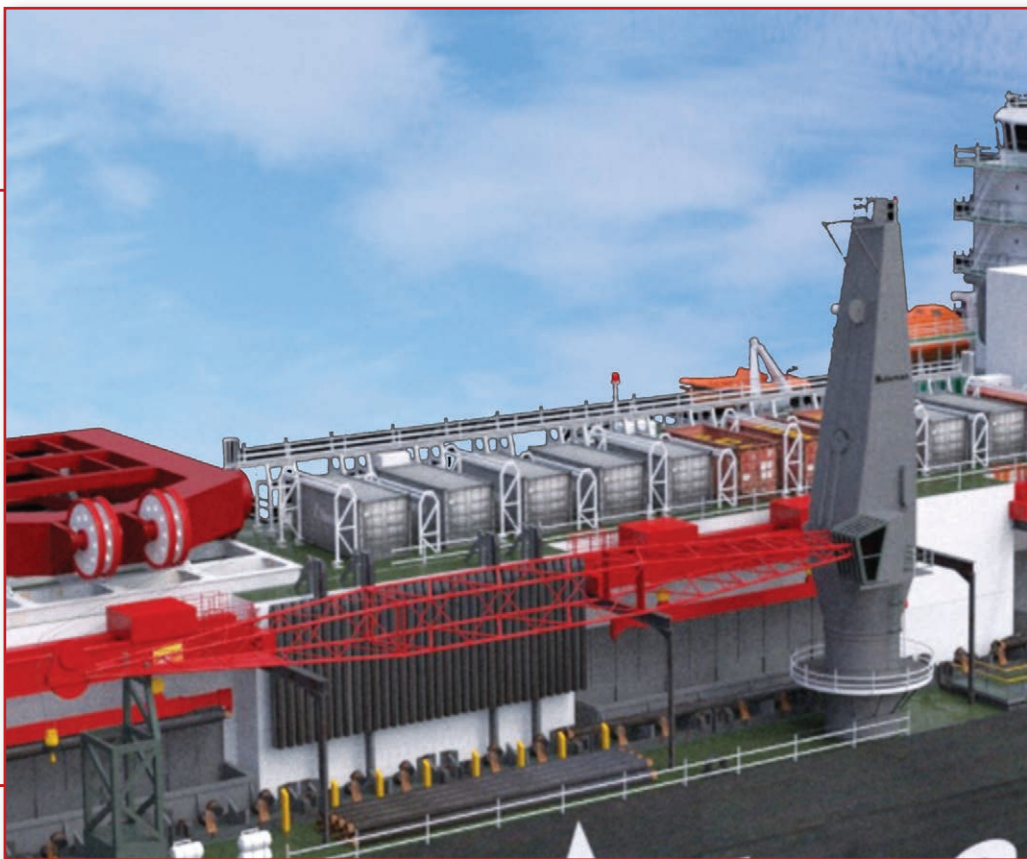
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26 tons Huisman

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- 38.5 meters max working radius
- 70 meters working depth
- SWL 26 tons @ 31 meters
- Crane fully operational
- Location Rotterdam



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Multi-dimensional operating challenges

The project logistics industry in Mexico and Central America is certainly exciting and dynamic. While some areas flourish, complicated political situations are contributing to a slow and silent market, writes *Sophie Barnes*.

The current state of the project cargo sector in Central America was perhaps best summarised by Martin Roest, vice president at Daco Heavy Lift, which is based in Guatemala but whose operations span the majority of the region including Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the Caribbean islands. He said: "With our work area and all the challenges you have, it is like you are playing chess on several boards at the same time... it keeps it interesting."

He referenced a project executed last year in Guyana that involved the delivery of five 150-tonne generator sets for Guyana Power & Light. The cargoes arrived in Georgetown onboard a BBC Chartering vessel and were loaded directly on to a barge that Daco Heavy Lift then moved upriver. Here, Daco Heavy Lift built a jetty to facilitate a roll-off operation before delivering the generators to the power plant.

"You are working in a jungle," said Roest, "and because Guyana is basically all



swampland, everything you build there you need to pile – often up to 30 m deep. This also applies to temporary storage – we had to make special foundations for the generators with piling and cover.”

Adding to the complexity of this project was Covid-19. “We had to get a guy in the country to not only receive these generators but also to oversee the jetty construction, ground studies, analysis of the draught, etc. We could not do this from Guatemala, so we looked into sending somebody with a private plane... it took about three weeks to find a route because some of the islands in the Caribbean were closed completely, even to private planes. Some were open but then you had to quarantine for two weeks, which was not feasible. Our poor engineer had to take roughly ten PCR tests on the way and it took about seven days,” explained Roest.

Longer term implications

Aside from the immediate challenges that Covid-19 presented, the longer-term implications are also becoming more apparent for the project logistics industry in Central America and the Caribbean.

“It is becoming a bit quiet,” commented Roest. “We had an excellent 2020 where we had a lot of work in the pipeline and so we were busy with jobs that we had already

Servygru has adapted its equipment so that it is able to serve the wind energy sector.





R.H. Shipping believes political uncertainty hinders big companies' interest in investing in the region, but some major upstream and downstream projects are continuing.

started, but it has been a year where all decisions were put on hold.” As the projects that were already on the move dry up, Roest forecasts a year or maybe two where nothing new comes to market.

“There has been a lack of investment. The market is based on new projects that are imported from Europe, the USA or China and these have long lead times. So while I think a lot of our customers are thinking about projects again, one year ago they were not and we will feel that... it will be two or three years before what they decide upon now results in cargo on my trailer,” explained Roest.

Also commenting on the “slow and silent” market in Central America was Marc Mahle, international manager at Continental Link (Contilink), which has offices in Germany, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico and Costa Rica. However, he did pinpoint El Salvador as a country that is providing several opportunities for its project cargo services, with a wind power project and a diesel engine delivery keeping Contilink’s teams busy.

Covid delays

Anabell Cortés Alvarez, project cargo team leader at Mexico-based Europartners Group, added that there have still been delays in recent months as a result of Covid-19.

Across the company’s operations in the Americas, Europartners said that Mexico, the USA and Brazil are performing well, with increasing demand coming from the energy, technology, automotive, aerospace, pharmaceutical, food and beverages sectors.

“These sectors merge and diversify their supply chains to seek greater sustainability,” said Alvarez, “so we can see an upcoming industrial revolution that will lead us to new ways of doing logistics”.

Alvarez also acknowledged Mexico’s strategic relationship with the USA. “Both have worked on commercial policies that allow the smooth exchange of goods,” she said. “If we also add the rest of the free trade agreements that Mexico has, we get the perfect joint venture that will attract industrial clusters.”

Felipe Melchor, sales manager at Mexico-based Servygru, likened the impact of Covid-19 to the recent blockage of the Suez Canal. “Covid has felt just like that. It happened out of nowhere, limiting our manoeuvring capacity, and is still having a domino effect.

“The pandemic snowballed to the closure of the border with the USA, economic slowdown, breakouts at project sites, the need for quarantine, new work procedures, scarcity of qualified workforce, port congestion from other industries, and

While I think a lot of our customers are thinking about projects again... it will be two or three years before what they decide upon now results in cargo on my trailer.

– Martin Roest, Daco Heavy Lift

great backlogs along the supply chain that postponed, disrupted ongoing projects, or even cancelled most major projects,” said Melchor.

However, he reported that projects are slowly restarting and will continue to do so until 2022.

Prominent uptick

One company that has noted a prominent uptick so far this year is R.H. Shipping & Chartering. Handling all manner of projects, but with a particular foothold in the region’s oil and gas sector, the company’s ceo Rudolf Hess outlined: “2019 for us was a great year, and then it went down a little bit in 2020 because of Covid-19 and various political situations. In terms of projects, we have almost reached 50 percent of what we made in 2019 during the first quarter of 2021 alone.”

The figures have set the stage for a successful year, creating a solid foundation for the company’s future expansion plans. “On the project side of our business, we handle the door-to-door delivery no matter the country of origin or final destination. We have ten offices – nine in Mexico and one in the USA, in Houston. During the next one to two years, we plan to expand in the USA and open five offices there. Our plan is to clone what we have built in Mexico over in the USA,” said Hess.

Looking at the oil and gas sector in the coming year, Hess believes that Brazil and Guyana will lead the charge in Latin America. Comparatively low production costs in Latin America make breakeven prices more achievable than in other parts of the world. “Even when the oil price is low, we can still be making a profit or at least be at the breakeven zone,” Hess explained.

R.H. Shipping & Chartering has also been bidding for Mexico’s flagship Dos Bocas refinery project in the country’s southeastern state of Tabasco. Slated for completion in 2022, it will be the biggest refinery in Mexico, capable of producing 170,000 bpd of petrol and 120,000 bpd of ultra-low sulphur diesel.

Reyna Margarita Plascencia, R.H. Shipping & Chartering’s project cargo manager, said: “At this time, the engineering part has been concluded and the transportation of big equipment should start in two or three months.” Cargoes will originate in Italy, South Korea and China. R.H. Shipping & Chartering aims to secure some of the various cargoes built domestically too.

Plascencia added that there have also been opportunities borne out of the pandemic. “One of our main customers is responsible

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Contilink recently handled the transport of a 52-tonne stone crusher from the USA to Guatemala.

for the production of oxygen and other gases, and because of the crisis they decided to build two new plants for oxygen production in Mexico. We have been part of these projects and have been responsible for the transportation of equipment during last year and will continue to support these developments this year.”

Covid-19 may have delayed projects but, according to Plascencia, greater issues come from the Mexican government. Hess elaborated: “In Latin America, political uncertainty hinders big companies’ interest in investing here.”

As an example, Hess pointed to Mexico’s President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), who cancelled a number of projects, even before he was sworn in. “When he was President Elect, for instance, he put the construction of the airport in Mexico City to a populist vote. That project was going to be great and create a hub for the world here in Mexico. There was already huge amounts of investments and contracts awarded to private companies, but he put it to a public vote and suddenly it was cancelled.

“Then we saw another project cancelled – a big beer factory that was due to be constructed in Mexicali at the border with the USA. Constellation Brands had invested more than USD900 million in equipment and we were very active in that project. Then suddenly people started thinking that the beer factory would deplete the city’s water reserves and create problems. AMLO again invited people to vote for or against the project, and this ended up being cancelled.”

For R.H. Shipping & Chartering, the company ended up being tasked with the relocation of the equipment to Ciudad Obregon in the north of the country. However, this too has been beset with

challenges. Plascencia explained that the local population in Mexicali is blocking the removal of the equipment as a bargaining chip to push the government to tackle other issues in the city. She is hopeful that the equipment will move by the middle of this year but the situation highlights a key issue for projects in Mexico and Central America: they are all at the mercy of politics.

Mexican concerns

“These are just some examples of the risk that investors may have to face in our country,” said Hess. “People are afraid of investing in Mexico because they cannot guarantee that their projects will not be cancelled within the first year.”

Nevertheless, where there is risk there is reward and Hess believes that many investors will be undeterred: “Others see it as an opportunity. If you dare to invest in a country like that, you can have much higher returns than investing in a politically stable country elsewhere.”

Servygru’s Melchor said: “It is well known that foreign investors have had a high level of distrust in Mexico due to criminality rates, poor and unsafe infrastructure, corruption, bureaucracy and other issues, although there has been an improvement. But this new administration has made it challenging for our industry.”

He cited the country’s wind energy

industry, which after a solid 2018 came to an abrupt halt under the new administration. “Mexico lost foreign investment considerably,” he said.

“There was the temporary closure of wind park developments that we were already assigned, and some that we had even started some actual transport movements for. The impact on the whole supply chain and the companies that would operate these wind farms resulted in big losses.”

David Nava Pastrana, sales engineer at Mexico’s Grupo Industrial Tellería, said those rule changes created “mistrust and uncertainty in the environment” but projects are continuing. “The Fenicias and Dolores wind projects in Nuevo León, El Retiro in Oaxaca, the Don Diego and Border photovoltaic parks in Sonora and Chihuahua, respectively, are a sample of the path that is being taken,” he said.

“In Mexico there are 60 hydroelectric plants and the main problem is their modernisation and profitability, since most of them were built more than 50 years ago. President López Obrador has repeatedly insisted on the maintenance of these generation plants, as they are part of the Mexican heritage and the budget allocated in 2020 for this task was USD116 million,” said Pastrana.

He added that Mexico remains highly dependent on fossil fuels and the country’s national electricity system development programme projects that an additional 66,912 MW of capacity is needed to satisfy electricity demand in the 2018-2032 period.

This, he said, will require investments in the region of USD66 billion, with wind and solar power taking on greater importance in the mix. “With more efficient turbines and generators and along with the modernisation of hydroelectric plants, the

If you dare to invest in a country like Mexico, you can have much higher returns than investing in a politically stable country elsewhere.

– Rudolf Hess, R.H. Shipping & Chartering

opportunities for logistics projects might be innumerable,” he believes.

Still, AMLO has implemented several barriers that could prevent the development of the country’s clean energy sector; the Senate recently agreed to a measure that could give the state power utility priority over private firms in supplying power to the grid, even if output is dirtier and costlier.

Renewables postponed

Jose Garza, managing director of Latin America for Logistics Plus, and Thanya Ramirez, the company’s projects manager, explained that a business plan from the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) for 2021 to 2025 contemplates investments to renew part of its energy transmission and distribution infrastructure. They said the plan includes gas and steam combined-cycle projects as well as two turbo-gas plants, but leaves renewables as options for the future. “These projects are kind of on standby but we continue bidding for new wind and other energy projects,” they said.

Looking to the future, Servygru’s Melchor said: “As a project cargo company, we hope that our government will change its mindset... The most important challenge will be that our government realises that renewable energies mean innovation, jobs, climate change fighting and a brighter future for all Mexican people.” He referenced June’s legislative elections. “These will impact future decisions that will weigh on the administration of our current president.”

Pastrana drew attention to Mexico’s long-running battle against corruption. “One of the biggest decisions of the government has been to entrust the secretary of the navy with the operation of the ports. This action is focused on monitoring the entry/exit of



Grupo Industrial Telleria
moving submarine cable reels
in Dos Bocas, Tabasco.

narcotics, illegal trafficking of fuels, merchandise and corruption in Customs. This has led to new operational rules of ports, and also longer times in the logistics of import/export of merchandise and new processes for accreditation of companies that can enter the ports,” he explained.

Elsewhere, recent elections in El Salvador saw the Nuevas Ideas (New Ideas) party win with a landslide. Party leader and President Nayib Bukele controls two branches of the state – the legislature and the executive – and the latest win only served to increase his power. Despite an incredibly high approval rating in the country, Bukele does cut a controversial figure – on the one hand he has been lauded for his “get things done” approach, but on the other he is someone that seemingly disregards traditional institutions and has been criticised for his authoritarian tactics.

His and the Nuevas Ideas party’s impact on the country’s project sector is unclear. Roest reflected: “Independent of political views, it is a government that has its hands free to do something. We have seen in the past that this can definitely lead to quick decision-making and more projects.

“Perhaps the best example is Nicaragua, which previously found itself in a similar situation where the president also had power over congress – there were a few years where everybody was extremely happy, with greater investment and things going on.

Policy changes

“But,” warned Roest, “suddenly it was over and the country was closed. I just hope El Salvador does not go in the same direction. At the moment we know that some projects that have been on the table for many years now are being discussed again and have the

Industrial activity keeps project pipeline moving

Jose Garza, managing director of Latin America for Logistics Plus, and Thanya Ramirez, the company’s projects manager, put forward an optimistic view regarding the Mexico’s project pipeline.

“Besides the government-driven infrastructure projects, the private sector keeps moving in Mexico,” they said. “New plants are being constructed, and the existing ones are being renovated. All kinds of machinery of varying sizes are usually imported from different countries, as well as spare parts for the machinery already installed in the different regions. This equipment is mainly for automotive and manufacturing industries, but also aerospace,

cement, and other industries.”

Many Mexican manufacturers are also exporting, according to Garza and Ramirez. “Considering the situation with the raising ocean freight levels, we are having a certain advantage as freight levels are lower outbound than inbound. We are doing everything possible to get good rates to boost the manufacturing industries in Mexico, studying our best logistics solutions so they can win the international bids where they are participating.”

The Mexican government has also published its infrastructure investment portfolio consisting of 68 projects that represents an investment of more than

MXN500 billion (USD25 billion), backed mainly by private funds.

According to Garza and Ramirez, these projects cover various sectors including energy, communications, transport and water.

However, they noted: “From the total number of projects, only about 30 percent have already started, and from the second package just one is to start in 2021.”

The flagship projects include the Mayan Train, the Dos Bocas refinery, Felipe Angeles International Airport, Mexico-Toluca interurban train, and the development of the isthmus of Tehuantepec. “From these five projects, we are participating through their different vendors in the Dos Bocas refinery and in the Felipe Angeles International Airport, and we expect to increase our participation as the projects progress,” said Garza and Ramirez.



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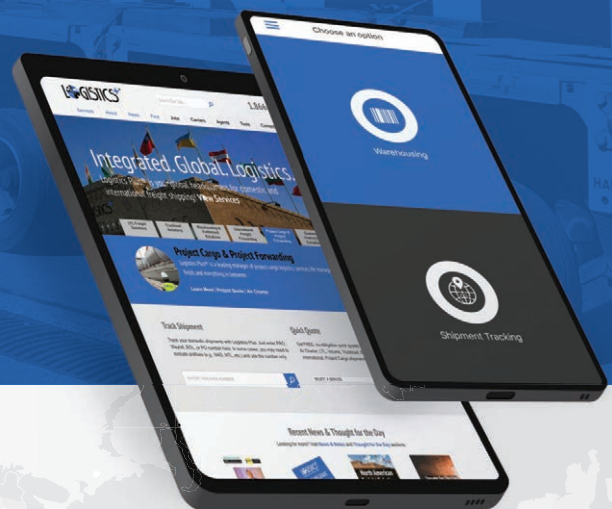
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Daco Heavy Lift barged five 150-tonne generator sets upriver to a power plant in Guyana for Guyana Power & Light.

potential to move ahead quickly, but in the long term who knows what that may lead to.”

He added: “In Guatemala, you have the opposite situation, nobody is really in power and nothing has happened in years.”

Government involvement in projects does not necessarily expedite the process, however. In Panama, there is a government driven initiative to construct a new metro line and supporting bridge. With the government’s involvement, the project has slowed, as Roest explained. “Instead of going faster, it is the other way round. A company won a tender for the project, but then with a change of government, they declared that tender invalid and so it has gone out to tender again... It is moving really slowly.”

Running through some of the countries and islands in which Daco Heavy Lift is active, Roest said: “In Guatemala, we are working on things that were already in pipeline, not really anything new. We would usually always see work for the sugar industry, but they are not doing anything at the moment because sugar prices are very low. And in El Salvador, we just finished an LNG project and a wind energy project. But now, it starts to become quiet.”

Geothermal project

A USD700 million, 300 MW geothermal power plant project is moving ahead in the south west of Nicaragua, according to Mahle at Contilink. His company, along with its partner Schryver, will import more than 6,000 cu m of project and heavy lift cargo from Ecuador, the USA, Europe and Asia.

On the Caribbean islands, there could be some power plant projects. Roest noted that St Thomas, St Kitts and the Bahamas would potentially move ahead with extensions or newbuilds. Of course, Guyana and Suriname

also have good prospects owing to their oil reserves, but Roest warned that these projects are not only at the mercy of Covid-19 but also complicated political situations.

For the forwarders and logisticians active in the area, political unrest also brings operational obstacles. Hess recalled a project where R.H. Shipping & Chartering was tasked with moving cargoes to support the construction of a pipeline. The initial plan involved delivering the pipes by both truck and rail to Chihuahua – this would have avoided stowage charges at the port of destination. However, due to blockages by the local community all cargoes had to be moved by rail instead.

Similarly, Roest outlined how these types of disputes have had an impact on the development of the wind energy sector in Central America. “Many previous wind energy projects had to deal with conflict with the social community, where in some cases they blocked the routes and so you could not take the components to the project site.” Project owners are instead looking toward solar as a less risky alternative, said Roest.

Wind farms do still generate some work. “The projects that were completed in 2008 – in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Panama, etc – now consist of fairly old wind

towers and need maintenance and repowering, so that is providing a somewhat steady flow of income,” explained Roest.

Certainly, infrastructure issues do depend on where you work, but Roest pinpointed it as another problem area for many countries the company operates in. Daco Heavy Lift was the first company to use a blade lifter in Latin America back in 2014, said Roest, simply because the landscape necessitated it.

‘Everything is possible’

“There is a characteristic in our region that in some ways everything is possible. We do not have a lot of the big, developed territories you see in Europe and the USA where you can either get a permit or not; it is a matter of ‘you do not have a permit now, but if you rebuild you can get it’. We regularly rebuild bridges, make bypasses through rivers or use flyover bridges.

“We have completed road surveys in a small airplane just to find a possible spot in a river where you can see that the water is lower or more adequate to build a bypass. Basically we do not really accept ‘no’ as an option. So on the one hand infrastructure is a big challenge, but that is what makes our region a little more fun to work in – we do a lot of crazy things.”

Servygru, meanwhile, has adapted its equipment so that it is able to serve the wind energy sector. According to Melchor, the upgrades to the fleet mean that “even when a route is extremely complicated we have been able to deliver in record time and with little civil work – without our engineering that would not have been possible.”

Wind energy projects in Mexico include developments in Sierra Juárez and Corumuel in Baja California Sur; and Mesa de Morenos in Zacatecas.



Even when a route is extremely complicated we have been able to deliver in record time and with little civil work – without our engineering that would not have been possible.

– Felipe Melchor, Servygru

RSL Shipping coordinates reel export

Tasked with the export of an oversized steel hose from Singapore to South Korea, RSL Shipping had to overcome tidal constraints and changing timelines of cargo readiness, all while providing expert coordination with the various stakeholders.

RSL Shipping began coordinating the ro-ro loading of an oversized steel hose onto a barge at the fabricator's berth in Tuas-Pioneer, Singapore.

This involved pre-setting the barge deck with steel plates to distribute the weight of the load. SPMTs were used to drive the cargo onto the barge, with the move taking place during a two-and-a-half hour window resulting from tidal constraints and restrictions imposed by the maritime authority.

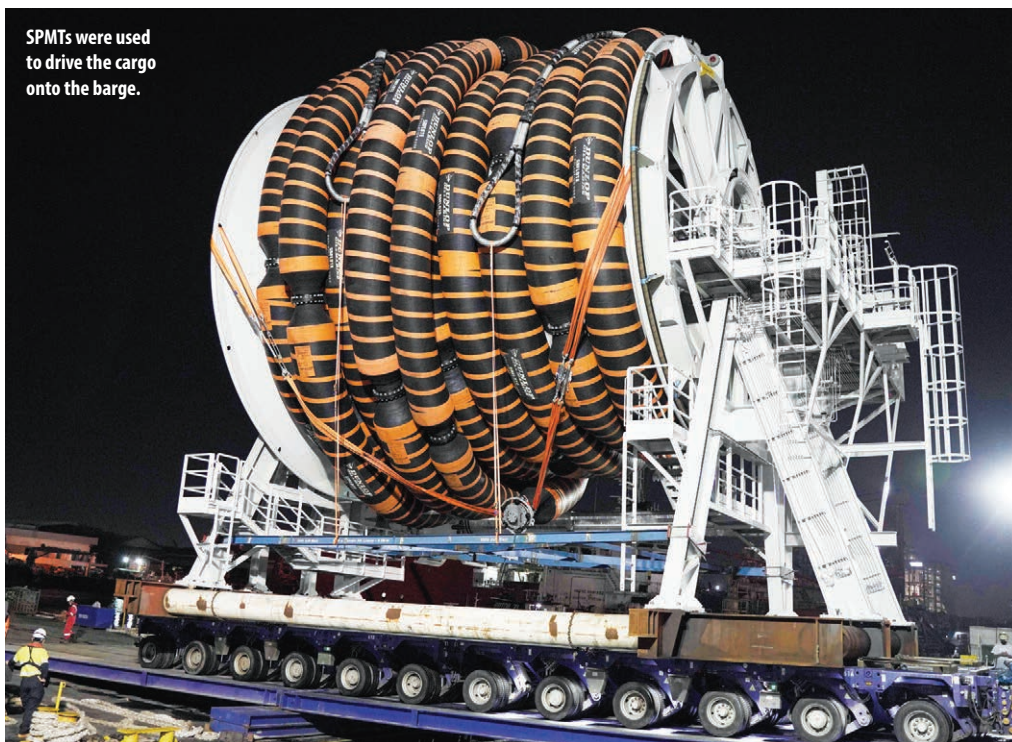
With the roll-on completed, lashing with steel wire ropes and turnbuckles commenced. The laden barge then made its way to a nearby private waterfront facility where it waited for final confirmation of the time of arrival of the oceangoing vessel at Jurong port in Singapore, from where the hose reel would be shipped to Geoje, South Korea.

Arrival time

With the vessel's arrival time confirmed, the barge moved to Jurong to tie up alongside the ship. This, according to RSL Shipping, avoided berthing separately in Jurong port to await the vessel's arrival, minimising the costs of barge detention, extra dockage and tugs.

RSL Shipping said that with

SPMTs were used to drive the cargo onto the barge.



limited daylight remaining and impending rain, cargo unlashng commenced immediately.

During the pre-setting of dunnage on the vessel's deck to distribute the load's weight, the ship's crew began ballasting operations in preparation for the loading.

RSL Shipping added that this

was completed concurrently to save time. A single crane, with a maximum lifting capacity of 400 tonnes, then began the overside direct loading.

Once the reel was placed on the ship's deck, some re-balancing work was completed with extra dunnage as the cargo's centre of gravity was

slightly off-centre, said RSL Shipping. With the extra dunnage in place, the lashing and welding commenced before the ship departed the port.

Project challenges

Some of the project challenges included changing timelines of cargo readiness, tidal constraints at the fabricator's berth in Tuas-Pioneer, and delays to the estimated time of arrival of the vessel at Jurong port. All the while, RSL had to meet the requirements of the port authorities and various stakeholders.

The company provided a marine surveyor to check on each movement and provided the ship's representative, consignee's agents and the shipper with a method statement; roll-on/SPMT transport plan for the barge loading; barge deck stowage/lashng plan; intact and damage report; ballasting stability calculations; slings and shackles certificates; an overside lifting/stowage plan; as well as tug and barge certificates.

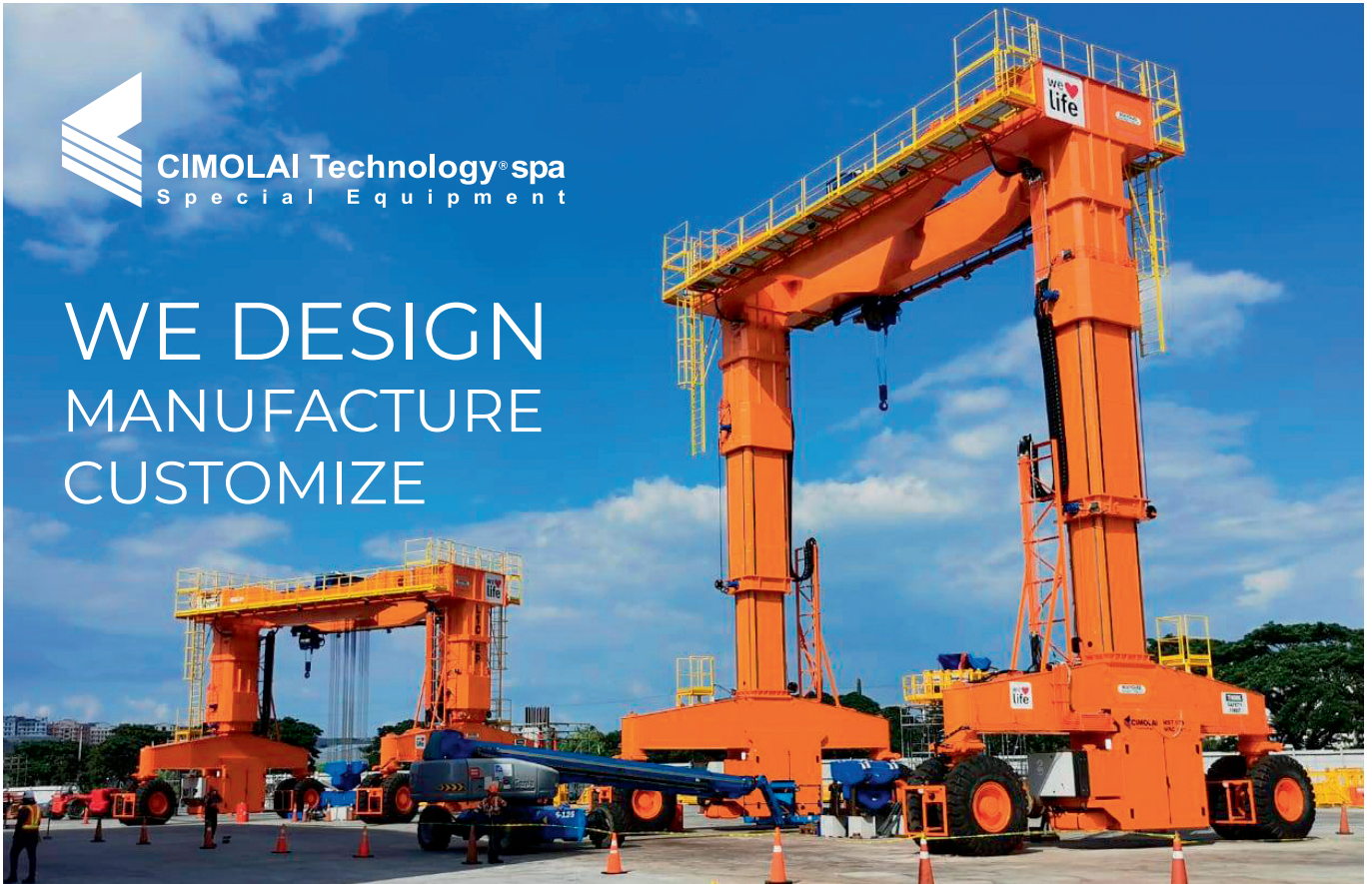
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The move took place during a two-and-a-half hour window resulting from tidal constraints and restrictions imposed by the maritime authority.



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Bullish sentiment on recovery prospects

Project logistics work in support of the civil engineering sector is set to get a significant boost this year. Economic recovery will be stimulated by the resumption of developments delayed by Covid-19 and anticipated additional investment in infrastructure by many governments. *Phil Hastings reports.*



Omega Morgan hauls a tunnel boring machine. However, the company said it is not yet seeing an increase in construction activity.

The scale of any anticipated upturn in civil engineering work looks likely to remain at least partially constrained by continuing uncertainty over how long the world will take to get Covid-19 under control and resume normal industrial activity, according to some project logistics providers.

There is also the related issue of how much finance will actually be available from cash-strapped governments and the private sector for investment in infrastructure projects.

The net result is that the current overall demand for global civil engineering project logistics services is patchy, with some industry markets and geographical areas doing better than others.

Austria-headquartered transportation

group Felbermayr has 27 operational subsidiaries providing transport/lifting technology and civil/structural engineering for infrastructure projects throughout Europe and worldwide.

Reluctance to invest

Wolfgang Schellerer, the company's general manager, said: "There are some projects happening in the infrastructure sector but at the moment there is a reluctance to invest in private industry projects because people remain uncertain about the further impact of Covid-19."

Ruedi Reisdorf, ceo of Swiss global forwarder Fracht, which is involved in civil engineering projects in Asia, Australia, North and South America, and Africa, highlighted a few specific examples of the

present variations in activity levels across different parts of the market.

"Sectors such as infrastructure, utilities and industrial plant are seeing more or less steady demand in all regions of the world. However, with leisure activities hit hard by Covid-19 and most existing facilities empty, now is not the right moment for new projects in that sector," he reported.

"Geographically, Africa is generally currently a bit slow when it comes to new infrastructure and other civil engineering projects, which is a surprise when you consider the predictions for growth there as recently as 18 months ago. That is because everyone is now first looking to invest 'at home' in more creditworthy industrial nations, so reducing the availability of overseas finance for projects in Africa."

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A senior executive with Omega Morgan, a North American heavy rigging and transportation provider currently engaged in several accelerated bridge construction projects, also expressed a mixture of caution and optimism.

“We are not seeing an increase in construction activity yet. We are, though, noticing an increase in requests for quotation (RFQ) and requests for proposal (RFP) from companies in the civil engineering industry which we hope will translate into work in the coming years,” reported Erik Zander, the company’s chief operating officer.

On another positive note, Zander also played down the suggestion that governments and the private sector might be short of finance for investment in infrastructure projects, at least as far as his company’s key geographical market is concerned.

“Here in the Pacific Northwest [of North America], the funding is available – it is just a question of getting the designs completed and putting projects out to the market. Anything the US federal government brings to the table in that context will be the icing on the cake,” he stated.

Generally, logistics providers servicing the worldwide civil engineering industry appear increasingly optimistic that basic infrastructure projects will, over the next few years, form a key part of the economic recovery from the impact of Covid-19 in many parts of the world.

Projects resuming

The Netherlands-based global heavy lift services provider Mammoet, which is involved in many civil engineering projects worldwide – most of them related to the renewal of urban infrastructure – shared this view.

Its recent projects have included the decommissioning of the Samuel De Champlain bridge in Montreal, Canada, and the installation of new landmark bridges such as the Donaubrücke over the Danube River in Linz, Austria, and the new bowstring bridge access to Madrid Airport’s T4 terminal in Valdebebas, Spain.

“The fact that we seem to be starting to see the light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel is indeed triggering the resumption of delayed projects,” commented Rafael Martinez, branch manager in Madrid – one of Mammoet’s core engineering centres for civil projects.

“Moreover, it is presumed that the global impact of the pandemic in all economic sectors may induce the appearance of stimulus investment packages by



governments worldwide, which in many cases are expected to be related to infrastructure and other civil engineering projects, including structural modifications, renewals and newbuilds.”

Gert Hendrickx, sales director projects for Belgium-based Sarens, expressed similar optimism. The company’s activities in support of the civil engineering sector include an average of one bridge installation a week, ranging from smaller bridges weighing a few hundred tonnes to megastructures of 3,000 tonnes or more, and other infrastructure works.

“We have not really had a downturn in



There are some projects happening in the infrastructure sector but at the moment there is a reluctance to invest in private industry projects...

– Wolfgang Schellerer, Felbermayr

infrastructure-related projects globally,” he reported. “What was booked and planned for execution continued, mostly as per planning, although sometimes with small delays because of Covid-related travel restrictions for our crew. Looking ahead, we are now seeing increased demand for the preparation of quotations for civil construction works, mainly in Europe and the USA.”

Change in perspective

Stuart James, chief commercial officer for UK heavy/abnormal load transport and logistics service provider Osprey, also shared insights about potential government-backed infrastructure investments. “Here in the UK, we believe the government’s response to Covid-19, in addition to its ambitious commitment to climate change, could impact some civil engineering programmes. Rebuilding the economy and stimulating growth will require a change in perspective regarding which projects should now take priority.”

In that context, he continued, access to data that identified the most-needed scenarios might help. “Understanding what needs to be built, where and why, is a science in its own right, although private and public sector finance will always be found for the right projects,” he added.

Osprey’s recent involvement in the civil engineering sector includes working on a wide variety of national infrastructure projects – one, for instance, involved transporting a 5,200-tonne, single-span concrete portal to take a rail line over a road.

Fracht’s Reisdorf echoed positive sentiment about the likely impact of increased government investment in infrastructure. “Governments all around the



Governments ... will invest heavily with borrowed money to get their economies up and running again – and what better areas for that investment than infrastructure and renewable energy.

– Ruedi Reisdorf, Fracht

world will invest heavily with borrowed money to get their economies up and running again – and what better areas are there for that investment than infrastructure and renewable energy,” he stated.

Emre Eldener, managing director of Kita Logistics, a Turkish international logistics service provider, was also bullish about the prospects ahead. “Covid-19 has slowed down levels of activity in the civil engineering sector over the last 12 months but some large infrastructure projects have continued regardless of the pandemic – for example, here in Turkey we have the Dardanelles suspension bridge [officially named the Çanakkale 1915 Bridge] in the north-west of the country which when completed will be the one of the longest suspension bridges in the world,” he commented.

Kita’s involvement with major infrastructure projects includes the Marmaray tunnel underneath the Bosphorus linking the European and Asian sides of Istanbul, the mobilisation of equipment for major road-building schemes across Eastern Europe/Central Asia, and supporting Turkish construction contractors operating in various parts of the world,



particularly Russia and the CIS region.

“Looking ahead, we believe there will be a more general increase in civil engineering industry activity in Turkey and internationally



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Sarens transports and installs bridge sections across the Albert Canal in Merksem.

during the second half of this year as the effects of Covid-19 hopefully diminish.”

When it comes to identifying specific industry sectors where demand for heavy

lift/forwarding services to support civil engineering projects is expected to be particularly strong over the next few years, Mammoet’s Martinez suggested urban

infrastructure renewal and replacement is likely to be an “interesting” market.

“Many transport infrastructures are either reaching the end of their lifecycle or require significant upgrades or enlargements to accommodate the necessities of current population growth and increasing transport demands,” he commented.

Crumbling infrastructure

“That trend is already evident in the USA, for instance, where about 10-15 percent of transport infrastructure like bridges is reaching the end of its service lifespan. Former US administrations were focused on that issue and so is the current government, which has made a clear statement that fixing America’s infrastructure is a priority.”

In addition, continued Martinez, “we are noticing an important increase in civil engineering project demand in Central and North Europe, including Scandinavia, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, focused on transport infrastructure”.

“Another potential interesting market is that associated with new high-speed train developments taking place in several countries such as the UK and USA, for example.”

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Mammoet said Covid-19 has resulted in a massive increase in the use of digital working environments.

Cost-control pressure continues to intensify

In addition to the immediate challenges created by Covid-19, civil engineering industry suppliers, including heavy lift and project forwarding service providers, are contending with a range of other longer-term trends. Phil Hastings reports.

Suppliers to the civil engineering sectors are having to negotiate a further tightening of the construction sector's already strong focus on cost control, alongside a potential Covid-19 inspired rethink of the way some multinational supply chains are structured.

The well-established trend towards modularisation and prefabrication of components continues, while the rise of smart project management, including the adoption of emerging digital technologies, is also growing in importance.

Ruedi Reisdorf, ceo of Fracht, confirmed that the pressure on civil engineering project costs is extreme. "As we have previously stated publicly, such pressure can lead to lower quality, which is very dangerous in all respects," he said.

Similarly Gert Hendrickx, sales director projects for Sarens, commented: "We are noticing that there is less attention on the technical solution and that it is all very price driven."

Wolfgang Schellerer, general manager for



The overall supply of materials [for civil engineering projects] over the last year has been challenging. We are seeing delays in such supplies affect project schedules and costs.

– Erik Zander, Omega Morgan

Felbermayr, suggested: "There are always cost pressures and in times of lower utilisation, especially, you have to pay more attention to keeping costs under control and making the right decisions."

One specific challenge right now affecting logistics costs for civil engineering projects and many others, reported Reisdorf, is a recent "dramatic" increase in ocean freight rates for all heavy lift/breakbulk cargo, combined with a shortage of space. "A lot of budgets calculated last year will have to be redone when it comes to shipping," he warned.

More generally, he argued that the best way to control overall logistics costs for civil engineering projects is for one player to manage the complete supply chain. "Instead of trying to get the lowest costs for each and every part of that chain, and then lose on all the interfaces, the aim should be to have a smooth 'one touch approach', with as few interfaces as possible all along the line."

Stuart James, chief commercial officer for Osprey, suggested that tighter cost control requirements present logistics providers with opportunities as well as challenges, particularly with international movements.

Opportunities and challenges

"There is an enormous opportunity for upstream thinking that can deliver substantial downstream savings. When it comes to super-sized critical assets, manufacturers are focusing on producing components with the right tolerances and build quality, but their exposure to the international supply chain is minimal," he commented.

As an example of where a logistics provider can help, James pointed out that once components leave the factory, all the risks associated with marine transport come into play. Those risks have to sit with someone – at the most practical level, for example, in providing an insurance policy for the party concerned.

"The right supplier can reduce the risks associated with using third parties that are not invested in an end-client's complex and time-sensitive construction programme," claimed James.

Regarding other major trends likely to have an impact on civil engineering industry projects, logistics providers voiced differing views. For example, when asked whether there are any signs that Covid-19 is encouraging civil engineering companies to re-evaluate the structure of their international supply chains, Erik Zander, chief operating officer for Omega Morgan, commented: "Yes and no. Most US public



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work jobs have a ‘buy American’ clause which is limiting any impact of Covid-19 in that respect.”

However, he also added: “The overall supply of materials [for civil engineering projects] over the last year has been challenging. We are seeing delays in such supplies affect project schedules and costs.”

Sarens’ Hendrickx made a similar point: “As travel for both materials and people remains a challenge, our customers are trying to work more locally. However, as a global player present in over 65 countries worldwide, that is not making too much of a difference for us.”

Rafael Martinez, branch manager in Madrid, Spain, for Mammoet, also played down the suggestion that Covid-19 is causing any significant restructuring of infrastructure/civil engineering project supply chains.

“Covid-19 seems not to have significantly disrupted the supply chain for raw goods, which are usually the basic source for the civil sector,” he said.

Felbermayr’s Schellerer said his company, too, had not yet seen any sign of Covid-19 causing companies in the construction/civil engineering sector to reassess the structure of their international supply chains.

He also suggested that there does not appear to be any acceleration in the use of modularisation and prefabrication of components for major projects “although if that does occur, we will be happy to provide our temporary production areas near the river ports of Linz (Austria) and Krefeld (Germany) and look for transport solutions”.

Modularisation limits

Fracht’s Reisdorf, too, played down suggestions that civil engineering could see a significant increase in the modularisation and prefabrication of components for major projects. Specifically, he said further modularisation would be limited by the ability of existing infrastructure to handle very large pieces.

“There is already modularisation, of course, wherever that is possible and when it makes sense. However, the opportunities to modularise are limited by space considerations and transport restrictions – and those restrictions are getting tougher all around the world as governments seek to keep their infrastructure intact,” he argued.

Other logistics providers, though, voiced different views. Mammoet’s Martinez, for example, said that although modularisation had been apparent in civil engineering projects for a number of years prior to



Sarens said that as travel for both materials and people remains a challenge, its customers are trying to work more locally. Here it is seen at work on FC Metz Football Stadium.

Covid-19, “it is likely that the consequences of the pandemic may contribute to it”.

More generally, Osprey’s James suggested the civil engineering sector is likely to see increased use of modularisation to help reduce the cost of moving components to project sites, which will require different logistics.

“Modularisation will certainly deliver bottom-line savings. It will also change the

nature of the supply chain as larger, heavier and more unwieldy critical assets become the norm,” he stated.

Demand for innovation

“The concept of modularisation may result in fewer people onsite and more people working in controlled production environments – but it also means additional opportunities opening up in the logistics area. We are seeing a greater demand for the innovation side of our services and modularisation could be an area where there is more activity generally.”

Emre Eldener, managing director of Kita Logistics, agreed there is likely to be an increase in the use of modularisation for civil engineering projects, driven in part, he suggested, by resulting improvements in the area of health and safety for the people working on them.

“The move to increase the modularisation of components for such projects is a logical approach, even though it may drive up some transport costs due to the need to move extra out-of-gauge parts. However, when it comes to health issues, cost becomes a second factor,” he stated.

Omega Morgan’s Zander suggested that the acceleration in the deployment of modularisation for civil engineering projects was going to happen “with or without Covid-19”. “The supply chains are ready for modularisation and I believe there is the



Covid-19 seems not to have significantly disrupted the supply chain for raw goods, which are usually the basic source for the civil sector.

– Rafael Martinez, Mammoet



existing concepts such as 3D CAD modelling are experiencing a significant acceleration in development and use due to the current situation of pandemic-induced constraints.”

As an example, he pointed to Mammoet’s current implementation of its new Move3D software – “an engineering platform that combines business intelligence with client data and our own equipment data”.

“With Move3D, we can integrate in one single platform different inputs such as point clouds, satellite maps, etc, to obtain accurate visualisations. Move3D data can be exported to building information modelling tools, a 3D model-based process that is more and more often used by civil engineers these days for design, planning and

construction purposes,” said Martinez.

However, Fracht’s Reisdorf said that while the tools for achieving smart project management in the civil engineering sector are getting “better and better”, the key to a successful logistics operation is the organisation and timing of the service provider’s involvement where it is a case of “the earlier the better”.

Sarens’ Hendrickx also played down the impact of new digital technology for managing civil engineering project logistics.

“Obviously, we are implementing new technology in relation to project design, preparation, offer and execution but it is more a case of evolution rather than revolution,” he stated.

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capacity available to handle an increase in such operations,” he added.

Regarding other significant trends, Felbermayr’s Schellerer agreed with the suggestion that the civil engineering industry’s increasing deployment of smart project management, based on the adoption of emerging digital technologies, is prompting action by logistics providers.

“In fact, that trend is having a great influence on our activities in almost all the sectors we serve,” he commented. “There are countless requirements for digital connections to the clients and for new digital technologies. As a result Felbermayr is making significant investments in information technology.”

Mammoet’s Martinez agreed with the suggestion that Covid-19 could further accelerate the use of emerging digital technologies to help manage civil engineering projects. “It is clear Covid-19 has changed our lives in many ways and the massive increase in the use of digital working environments is here to stay, as we see, for instance, with virtual meetings or cloud-based information-sharing tools,” he stated.

“Besides that, some previously



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Bridging the technological gaps in logistics

Technology allows organisations to collaborate and establish efficient, safer and greener ways of working. While its implementation is easier for uniform, repetitive processes, things get trickier when working at a size and scale seen in the project logistics sector. However, technology exists that can simplify planning and expedite execution.

deugro started the roll out of WiseTech Global's integrated logistics platform CargoWise One during March in a bid to optimise its processes and boost efficiencies across the organisation.

Thomas Fuchs, corporate vice president business processes and IT at deugro, said: "The main target is to streamline operational processes on a global level and to increase our operational excellence. The eFile functionality of CargoWise One will enable us to establish a paperless office environment step by step while we are rolling out the software."

Platform integration

Starting with its Madrid (Spain) office, deugro said the platform would be integrated across its international network. A total 900 users across 70 offices will use the CargoWise One platform by the end of 2022.

The system provides one database for logistics service providers to execute transactions in areas such as freight forwarding, Customs clearance, warehousing, shipping, tracking, land transport, e-commerce and cross-border compliance.

"CargoWise One provides a 'one-file concept,' which is unique in the market," said Fuchs. "This means that shipment data has to be entered only once and will then be available for all offices throughout the organisation. This eliminates double entries and increases data quality, both internally and for our clients."

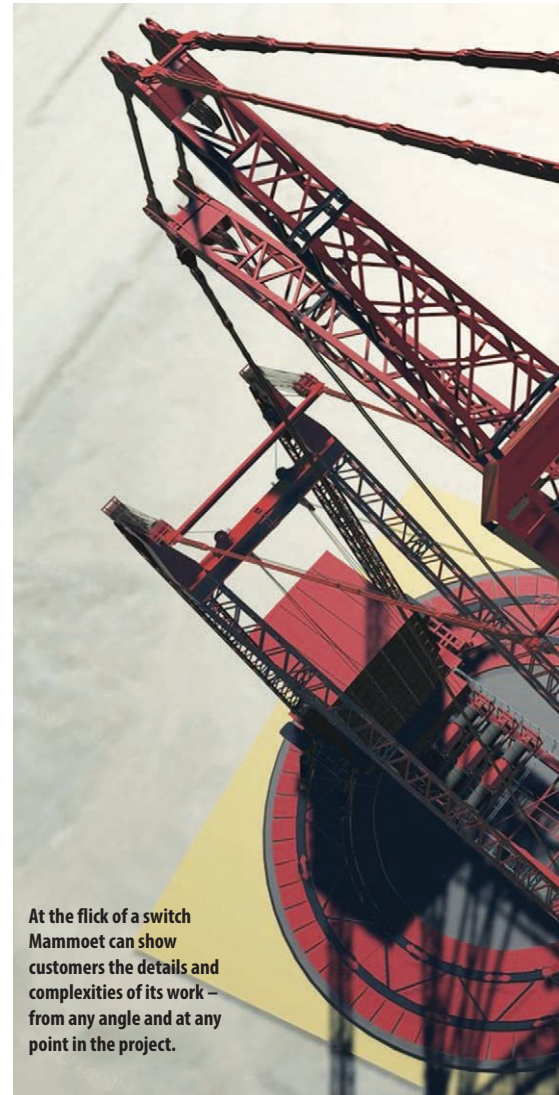
This step is an integral part of deugro's global digital transformation programme – dubbed the United Strategy – that aims to combine people, processes and technology across the entire organisation. "Full integration and harmonisation between different systems will provide a digitalised platform for our organisation, including the best tools and technology for our users, irrespective of whether they work from home or from our offices," Fuchs explained.

Digitalisation is afoot in the engineered transport and lifting sector and modern engineers have many tools at their disposal, according to Leon van Tiel, Mammoet Europe's director of engineering. "Any heavy lifting or transportation project requires thorough, expert planning before equipment gets anywhere near to the project site. This planning stage is an important opportunity to discuss client requirements in detail in order to develop the most effective solution for the task in hand."

At present, Mammoet is exploring how the latest 3D technology – moving beyond

The eFile functionality of CargoWise One will enable us to establish a paperless office environment step by step while we are rolling out the software.

– Thomas Fuchs, deugro



At the flick of a switch Mammoet can show customers the details and complexities of its work – from any angle and at any point in the project.

computer-aided design (CAD) modelling – could help in communicating project plans and align more closely with its customers' digitalisation work. The processing power required to visualise complex heavy lifting and transportation work to a high standard, in real time has not been widely available until recent years.

Move3D launch

In 2018, van Tiel led the launch of Move3D, "a 3D engineering platform that combines business intelligence, such as crane charts, with Mammoet equipment and client data. It is independent from crane manufacturers and has been developed with the end-user in mind."

The system complements customers' own digital systems and methods. Information including LIDAR scans and point clouds, or third-party data such as satellite maps, can be easily incorporated into visualisations for accuracy and consistency with wider project planning. Data from the Move3D system can be



exported for use within, for example, building information modelling (BIM) tools, and can be communicated in a variety of forms.

“Offering this practical method to give our customers 3D visualisations of projects is an important way to present and discuss our plans in the simplest, clearest format possible. At the flick of a switch we can show them the details and complexities of our work – from any angle and at any point in the project,” said van Tiel.

The Move3D system has already been used across a number of projects, including for BASF in Germany, with considerable success. The system is now being rolled out across Mammoet’s global operations, and the current version will adapt to customers’ requirements.

“It was important to us that Move3D offered the right compatibility with how our clients are using digitisation in their own work. An exciting aspect of the system is the ability to offer visualisations in virtual reality. This means that a client can ‘walk’ around

the project and see for themselves how we will perform a move. There is even the possibility to put yourself in the cab of the crane to simulate the specific actions involved.”

Emissions IQ

April 2021 saw C.H. Robinson launch Emissions IQ – a free digital tool for customers to measure the green credentials of their transport operations.

This latest innovation from C.H. Robinson’s tech incubator Robinson Labs automatically calculates the emissions of a transport operation, providing a visualisation of a shipper’s carbon output. In its pilot phase, Emissions IQ helped 125 companies reduce their carbon emissions by a total of 350,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalents, said C.H. Robinson.

There has been a concerted push from all sides of the logistics sector to adopt new technologies and realise both cost and environmental efficiencies. As C.H. Robinson’s chief human resources and environmental, social and governance (ESG)

officer, Angie Freeman, explained: “A more efficient supply chain is by nature a more sustainable one.”

Shipping line G2 Ocean launched an online platform at the end of last year to improve the effectiveness of its logistics management – MyG2. The platform gives customers full visibility and access to live data and information related to various business activities, which the company hopes will foster collaboration and improved efficiency.

Reducing paperwork in the supply chain has been long championed by those wishing to expedite the logistics process. Following a successful pilot phase, MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) is introducing an electronic bill of lading (eBL) on the independent blockchain platform WAVE BL.

The blockchain-based system uses distributed ledger technology to ensure that all parties involved in a cargo shipment booking can issue, transfer, endorse and manage documents through a secure, decentralised network. WAVE BL’s communication protocol is approved by the International Group of Protection & Indemnity Clubs, and meets the highest industry standards for security and privacy, added MSC.

“MSC has chosen WAVE BL because it is the only solution that mirrors the traditional paper-based process that the shipping and cargo transportation industry is used to,” said André Simha, global chief digital and information officer at MSC. “It provides a digital alternative to all the possibilities available with traditional print documents, just much faster and more secure.”

Simha, who is also the chairman of the Digital Container Shipping Association (DCSA), added: “While there have been attempts to create an eBL solution in the past, we are now in a position to introduce a solution that can pave the way to mass eBL adoption, which will mean significant savings for the shipping industry.”

DCSA research indicates that by achieving just 50 percent eBL adoption by 2030, the industry could potentially save more than USD4 billion per year. The solution also enables faster document transfers, which in turn, leads to a shorter payment cycle – and electronic processes are far less susceptible to forgery, fraud, loss or human error.

The WAVE BL platform can be used free of charge throughout 2021 by exporters, importers and traders. MSC said that users only pay for issuing the original documents, and they do not need to invest in any IT infrastructure or make operational changes in order to use the service.



Coming of age

EMS has strengthened its position as a full logistics supplier in the Balkans, handling a total of 145,000 tonnes of project cargo in Durrës port for the Trans Adriatic Pipeline programme.

The Balkans region is not only a major market in its own right but an increasingly important shipping location for the global project supply chain. Despite Covid-19, there is still plenty of business to be had, writes *Chris Lewis*.

The project and heavy lift freight industry in the Balkans has come of age. Not only is the region generating a significant amount of business in itself, but it has also become a linchpin of the shipping and logistics industry. Adriatic ports have developed to the point where they are now important outlets for shipments heading to the Middle East and beyond.

For many years inadequate and outdated quaysides, cranes, roads and railways, as well as an equally archaic regulatory framework, have hamstrung transport operations. These issues are starting to be addressed as modernisation gathers pace. In fact, some operators say that getting large loads from landlocked Central Europe across the likes of Serbia and Croatia and onto ships can be quicker and easier than taking the traditional route northwards across Germany and onwards to Antwerp or Rotterdam.

The region must first surmount the Covid-19 crisis. To a greater or lesser extent, all the Balkan countries' economies have been affected by the pandemic, although this has not necessarily led to an immediate effect on activities such as fabrication, mining or energy projects that tend to be long term in their outlook. The pattern, in most countries, was of a fall in gross domestic product of 5-7 percent in 2020, with analysts predicting a bounce-back during 2021 and 2022.

Of course, any recovery is predicated on a successful rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine and an end to lockdown measures, especially in countries such as Croatia that are heavily dependent on tourism.

Logistics potential

At least the Balkans conflict of the 1990s is consigned to memory, though it has cast a long shadow that manifests itself in relative under-development compared with Northern Europe. Not that this should deter anyone in the logistics industry from considering the Balkans as a potential market – far from it. Dave Roosen, managing director of Croatia-based forwarder R&B Global Projects, believes that it is maturing not only as a major project market in itself but as a maritime gateway for the wider region.

Until recently, ports such as Antwerp or



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Freight and shipping activity was maintained to a remarkable extent in Bulgaria during 2020, according to Holleman.



Hamburg were the preferred outlets for major shipments from the region's landlocked countries, despite the longer distance to travel compared with ports on the Adriatic and Mediterranean. More recently, said Roosen, large project shipments in and out of the area have started to use gateways such as Rijeka in Croatia and Koper in Slovenia, not just for the Balkans as such but even countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Obtaining permits

Road and rail links across the Balkans have been improved and the process of obtaining trucking permits for abnormal loads is actually quicker and easier than in Germany, for example – a market that has tightened up its processes, Roosen believes. In Croatia, it takes as little as two weeks, and no more than about four in the most complicated cases. The only issue is negotiating the region's many tunnels with cargoes that infringe the 4.5 m maximum height.

Motorways in Croatia are now very high quality, although this is less true of Bosnia or Serbia, and there is also the option of using the Danube River all the way to Romania and the Black Sea. A few of the river ports have been improved, in particular Smederevo, near Belgrade in Serbia, which has been privatised and has received upgraded cranes.

Hiring in mobile cranes is an option for some of the other ports where these are lacking.

One example of regional port capabilities was provided DHL's Industrial Projects arm, which is using Koper in Slovenia to move a shipment of 676 rail carriages to Egypt on behalf of Hungarian rolling stock company Dunakeszi Járműjavító.

The 48-tonne, 24.5 m-long carriages are being moved by rail to Koper from where they are delivered by DHL-chartered heavy lift vessels to Egypt. The first batch arrived at the port of Alexandria on February 23, 2021;

coach production in Hungary will ramp up to 25 vehicles per month by mid-2021.

Viktor Arany-Szabo, industrial projects manager at DHL Global Forwarding Hungary, explained that Koper was selected for this shipment, as it was "the smoothest connection inside the Schengen zone of the European Union". He added that DHL has been using Koper for Hungarian imports and exports since 2006.

Improved capabilities

He added that Koper and many other Croatian ports "are very well equipped" and that while there may have been difficulties with heavy cargo in the past, these no longer persist. "Indeed, the Balkan ports are cheaper compared with Antwerp, for example. However, another very important aspect is the distance to the origin or final destination, as it is shorter compared with Antwerp," he said.

Nevertheless, he believes that Antwerp will always have priority for really heavy and oversized shipments to and from Hungary, as it is easy to reach via the Danube-Main-Rhine inland waterway, compared with the road network system to the Balkan ports "which is much more limited".

The local project market in Croatia and the wider Balkans region is also quite strong, Roosen said. So far, it has been less affected by the Covid-19 crisis than many others, although the general paralysis of government and civil service may yet lead to a slowdown.

However, Chinese money for major



The Balkans region is maturing not only as a major project market in itself but as a maritime gateway for the wider region.

– Dave Roosen, R&B Global Projects

Albania's pivotal location for EMS growth

Manfred Müller, CEO of German-owned EMS-Fehn-Group – which has offices in Riga, Rijeka, Durrës and Skopje – is convinced that the Balkans region has considerable economic prospects. This, he explained, is the rationale for the group's investment in a terminal operator in Durrës and in numerous other activities in Albania some years ago.

"The course these enterprises have taken since then has proven us right," Müller said.

While the number of potential investors in Albania is on the rise, "the still high level of corruption and crime and weak rule of law hinders them from actually putting their money into projects in the country," he warned. Nevertheless, Albania is a pivotal location for the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) programme, in which several of the group's companies have been involved since 2015.

EMS Albanian Port Operator (APO) took care of handling TAP cargo at its East Terminal in the port of

Manfred Müller of EMS-Fehn-Group believes the Balkans has considerable economic prospects.



Durrës, with sister company German Albanian Logistics Agency (GALA) providing agency and logistics services. EMS Chartering also lent its expertise and personnel during the five years it took to complete the project.

Müller said the experience gained on the biggest

project of its kind in Albania helped EMS strengthen its position as a full logistics supplier in the Balkans, handling a total of 145,000 tonnes of project cargo in Durrës port, of which 135,000 tonnes was pipes. Zero damage to the delicate cargo was recorded during port operations and intermediate storage in the port.

Durrës-based GALA provided agency and logistics services to more than two-thirds of the vessels involved in building the pipeline – in total 36 ships and 87 port calls. GALA even chartered a special boat to supply the vessels out on the Adriatic Sea.

In other ongoing projects, EMS Chartering is shipping wind turbine sections from Germany and Spain to Durrës, again with EMS APO in charge of handling and storage and GALA providing vessel agency services.

Group companies EMS Shipping and Logistics Agency and EMS German Balkan Logistics also offer full logistics services, while EMS Shipping and Trading has been named Global Husbandry Service Provider to the US Sixth fleet, which includes providing agency services in Rijeka, Croatia. It will also shortly start stevedore and terminal services on behalf of US forces in Europe at Zadar, Croatia.

projects continues to flow into the Balkans and there are numerous green energy, transport infrastructure and metals mining developments. Shipbuilding and repair is also a significant driver of business, and there are some LNG developments in Croatia.

Freight and shipping activity has been maintained to a remarkable extent during 2020, but in Bulgaria there was no escaping Covid-19, said Mladen Ganchev, manager of heavy transport specialist Holleman.

He explained: "The first official case in our country was on March 8 and the date of the first lockdown was March 13. It was quite a big shock for all of us."

Despite that volatility, Holleman pulled through. "Thanks to our company's good organisation we succeeded in switching quickly to home working with just a few people physically in the office. But keeping in mind the business we are involved in – transportation – a big part of the work cannot be done from home and a physical presence is required."

Ganchev added that the old-fashioned system of having to physically order and obtain permits in Bulgaria does not make life easier. But the biggest issues are the ever-changing rules and increased requirements involved in crossing international borders and the big queues that result – simply because officials are unsure of the procedures to be followed.

There is also widespread confusion. International drivers are exempt from new

Holleman was involved in almost all the Balkanstream scheme projects.



rules, but sometimes they are included. In some cases tests are needed, in others not. "Instability is the biggest problem in general," Ganchev explained.

Curiously, though, business in 2020 "was not bad at all". The main reason was one of the biggest projects in Bulgaria during the

last few decades – the now completed Balkanstream scheme to build a pipeline connecting the country's gas infrastructure with Turkey and Serbia.

Gas pipeline

Ganchev said: "As the construction works were performed mainly by foreign companies, they also brought the equipment from abroad – a lot of construction, pipe-bending and welding machines. Luckily, Holleman was involved in almost all the projects, giving local assistance for trucking and transshipment at river and Black Sea ports, plus some waterway transport on the Danube. After successful completion of the project, we transported the equipment back to its original locations or to new projects."

Thanks to our company's good organisation [when the lockdown began] we succeeded in switching quickly to home working with just a few people physically in the office.

– Mladen Ganchev, Holleman

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Albania was a pivotal location for the Trans Adriatic Pipeline programme



However, the traditionally strong agricultural machinery logistics sector was quite weak last year. “Unofficially the drop is 30–40 percent compared with 2019,” said Ganchev. “Unfortunately, together with the Covid-19 issues, the harvest in the biggest agricultural areas in both Romania and Bulgaria was bad because of drought. Luckily, for the moment the situation looks better and we hope to have a better season this year.”

Political weakness

During April general elections Boyko Borisov, Bulgaria’s prime minister, saw his grip on the country weaken as he secured just 26 percent of the vote; it seems unlikely that his rival parties will be able to come together and form a lasting government, suggesting a new poll being held during June.

Disruption of this nature is often of little benefit to the project logistics sector, with activity and new project approvals during such periods grinding to a halt.

Also, with the legislative machine at a standstill, it means that Bulgaria will remain one of the few countries in EU with no permanent yearly permits for loads below specific dimensions or weight – and existing regulations are generally old and outmoded.

Currently, the only ongoing projects are the construction of a few highways, but these are of little interest to the specialist logistics sector as the construction companies move their machinery using their own assets. “Otherwise, there are no big projects on the horizon, which means that

most of the work will again be on a spot basis,” Ganchev concluded.

Despite the Covid-19 crisis, Croatia-based Liburnia Maritime Agency managed to deliver all its contracted projects, said ceo Marin Skufca. “We have an ongoing project in the UK, where we also have to face Brexit, but no obstructions are expected. Production has not stopped and our key clients have managed to contract new projects for years ahead.”

Current market conditions, a lack of service in the container segment and sky-high freight rates, are not helping. “However, we still manage to deliver, without passing the pressure on to our clients,” said Skufca.

Rijeka port has started a major infrastructure refurbishment and improvement programme with some old warehouses being demolished and replaced by new, modern storage areas.

Skufca added: “We still see new investment by Chinese companies, mainly in Serbia and Bosnia, and it will be interesting to see who will take on the

concession for a new container terminal in Rijeka; a new tender is coming out soon. We also see a heavy involvement of container liner carriers on the shoreside, globally and in the Balkans as well, but experience says that it does not always end successfully.”

Permit problems

Rok Strukelj, managing director of Slovenia-headquartered shipping and project freight company Centralog, said that most projects are on track and most operations are running smoothly, despite Covid-19. However: “Some delays are occurring on the road permits side, and we also expect this to worsen due to the forthcoming announced lockdowns in most countries in the region.”

The major obstacle remains travel restrictions for staff who in some cases require frequent Covid-19 tests. Nonetheless, Strukelj said: “The market in general is looking extremely positive for the time being with various terminals in the area hitting records throughout” – though for no apparent reason. Most of the container terminals in the region have reached their maximum capacity and are struggling to cope with additional volumes. Combined with equipment shortages, this has led some shippers to look for alternative modes of transport like general cargo or breakbulk vessels, thus also increasing freight rates in that segment.”

But he added: “Such peaks can sometimes be a sign of an upcoming collapse; therefore we remain very cautious about developments in the next months.”

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The market in general is looking extremely positive for the time being with various terminals in the area hitting records throughout.

– Rok Strukelj, Centralog



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Saudi Aramco reaffirms Chinese focus

Saudi Aramco is aiming to participate in every phase of China's energy development as the country's economy changes and transitions to net-zero emissions by 2060, writes David Kershaw.

Saudi Aramco reported a 44 percent slump in full-year 2020 results but maintained its USD75 billion dollar dividend payout. It reported net income of USD49 billion in 2020, down from USD88.19 billion in 2019.

The firm also said it expects to cut capital expenditure in the year ahead, and lowered its guidance for spending to around USD35 billion from a range of USD40-45 billion previously.

Highest priority

China's energy security will remain the highest priority for Saudi Aramco for the next half century at least, the company's ceo Amin Nasser said during the annual China Development Forum. "Ensuring the continuing security of China's energy needs remains our highest priority – not just for the next five years but for the next 50 and beyond."

Aramco's ambitions in China go beyond shipping crude and products. The company is



looking for new opportunities for further investments in "integrated downstream projects to help meet China's needs for heavy transport and chemicals, as well as lubricants and non-metallic materials", Nasser said.

Aramco has a 25 percent stake in the 280,000 barrels per day (bpd) Fujian refinery in south China through a joint venture with Sinopec and ExxonMobil; in 2018 it agreed to buy a 9 percent stake in private sector firm Rongsheng's 800,000 bpd ZPC refinery. However, other downstream investments, such as a stake in state-run PetroChina's Anning refinery and a greenfield refinery and petrochemical project with state-controlled Norinco, have not materialised.

Aramco aims to participate in every phase of China's development as the country's economy changes and it transitions to net zero by 2060 – "everything from the 14th five-year plan, dual circulation and Belt and Road to peak greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, 2035 goals, the second centennial goal by 2049, and net carbon neutrality by 2060," Nasser added. **HLPFI**

OIL & GAS NEWS

ExxonMobil plans Houston CCS project

ExxonMobil is seeking support to develop a public-private, multi-user carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) project in the Houston Ship Channel, which could cost USD100 billion.

It will need government and private-sector funding, as well as enhanced regulatory and legal frameworks that

enable investment and innovation, ExxonMobil said.

tank for an import and regasification terminal, under construction in Batangas.

CB&I wins AG&P gas storage deal

CB&I Storage Solutions won a contract from **Atlantic Gulf and Pacific Company of Manila** for the EPC of an LNG storage

Aker signs Lol

Aker Solutions has signed a letter of intent (Lol) with **Heerema Marine Contractors** for decommissioning work related to the Heimdal and Veslefrikk fields, offshore Norway.

Construction costs of solar dent uptake

The cost of building solar farms has been declining for several years. The tide is now turning, however, as new utility PV projects are starting to become more expensive due to increasing costs for modules, shipping and labour, said

Rystad Energy.

Rising commodity prices and shipping costs are eroding

utility PV project margins, potentially leading to delays for developments nearing financial close.

Modules account for the largest single capex item of utility PV projects, which means even modest changes in costs can lead to significant challenges for project economics.

OIL & GAS



Total declares force majeure

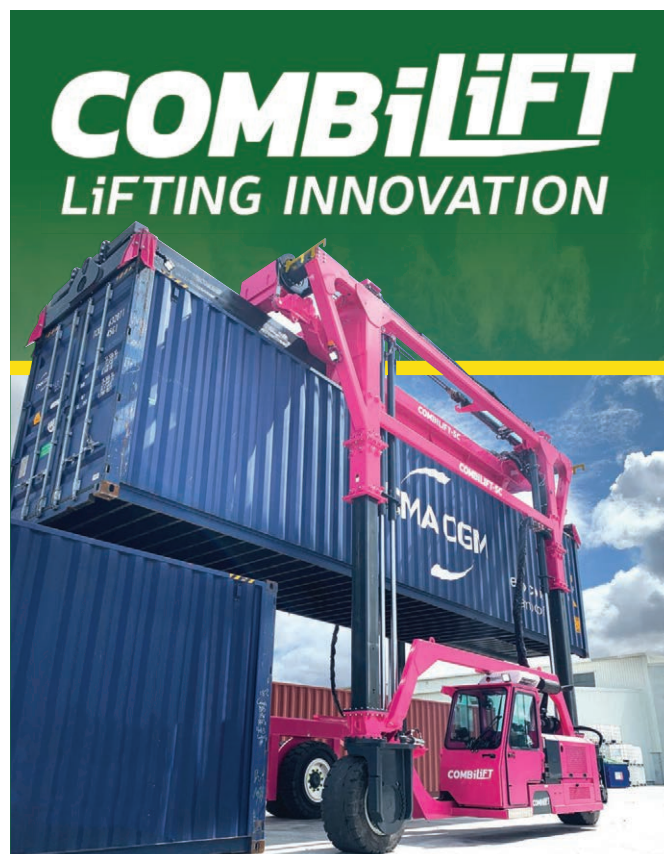
The deteriorating security situation in the north of the Cabo Delgado province has prompted **Total**, as operator of the Mozambique LNG project, to declare force majeure. Total has confirmed that all personnel at the USD20 billion project have been withdrawn. (Read more on p24)

East African pipeline plan

France's **Total** and China's state controlled **CNOOC**, in partnership with the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments, will invest USD3.5 billion on a 1,445 km pipeline running from western Uganda's oilfields to the Tanzanian port of Tanga.

Woodside's existential fear

Woodside Petroleum's outgoing chief executive Peter Coleman said his replacement will face two existential threats: replacing its ageing assets and managing the transition to cleaner energy. He said that meant choosing between becoming sustainable by managing emissions or by investing in other types of energy, such as hydrogen.



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MINING NEWS

Southern Copper invests

Peru's La República newspaper reports that **Southern Copper** will invest USD8 billion in its various projects in the country, including Tía María. In October 2019, construction of the USD1.4 billion Tía María project in the southern Ilay province was allowed to proceed. Southern's director of operations, Jorge Meza, said it is now working on a reviewed, basic conceptual engineering plan for the mine. The company is also working on the USD2.5 billion Michiquillay and USD2 billion Los Chancas projects, among others.

Jwaneng mine extension

Debswana Diamond plans to invest USD6 billion to build the world's largest underground diamond mine at Jwaneng. The new mine section includes 360 km of tunnel development, coming online by 2034.

Solwezi exploration starts

Rio Tinto has started its initial 2021 exploration campaign on **Midnight Sun's** Solwezi licences in Zambia.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Webuild wins Sicily deal

The **Webuild Group** has won a contract worth just over EUR1 billion (USD1.18 billion) to double the high-capacity railway between the cities of Messina and Catania in Sicily. It also won a contract worth about EUR80 million (USD110 million) to build a 4 km access tunnel at the north end of the Gotthard Base Tunnel, Switzerland.

Nucor to build tube mill

Nucor will build its new tube mill on the site of its Nucor Steel Gallatin sheet mill in Kentucky. The USD164 million investment project is expected to be in operation by the middle of 2023 and create more than 70 new full-time jobs.

Third order for Valmet

Valmet will supply a third tissue production line including stock preparation, automation system and a rewinder to Aktül Kagit Üretim Pazarlama, Turkey.

Saipem secures North Field contract

Saipem has received a letter of award from **Qatargas** for the North Field production sustainability pipelines project.

The USD1 billion contract includes EPCI of offshore export trunklines and related onshore tie-in works, and is part of the development of the North Field production plateau, which also includes the EPCI of offshore facilities previously awarded to Saipem in February. Project completion is expected by mid-2024.

Qatargas also exercised a USD350 million option and Saipem will carry out the construction of two additional riser platforms, two additional connecting bridges with existing wellhead



Saipem's North Field production complex.

Qatargas

platforms, two corrosion resistant carbon steel clad intra-field pipelines with a length of 13 km overall and decommissioning of existing pipelines.

POWER GENERATION

JV targets Japan offshore wind

DEME Offshore and Japanese marine contractor **Penta-Ocean Construction** have set up a joint venture targeting the offshore wind construction market in Japan. New regulations concerning wind power energy generation at sea, as well as in port and harbour areas, have been introduced in the country and the first wind farm auction round is expected to take place this year. Japan has ambitious targets to develop 10 GW of offshore wind power by 2030. While the country has very favourable wind conditions, it also has challenging subsoils, which can be a mixture of sand and rocks.

Green hydrogen plant for UK

ScottishPower has submitted plans to build the UK's largest green hydrogen production facility on the outskirts of Glasgow. A 20 MW electrolyser will be developed next to the wind farm at Whitelee. Surplus renewable electricity, as well as

power from a proposed new 40 MW solar farm and a 50 MW battery storage project, will be used to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.

Amazon invests in green plans

Amazon has announced nine new utility-scale wind and solar energy projects in the USA, Canada, Spain, Sweden and the UK. This includes a 350 MW wind farm off the coast of Scotland.

Bids for energy island contracts

Ørsted and **ATP** have joined forces to submit a bid in the upcoming tender for Denmark's North Sea Energy Island.

Pumped storage pact

EDF has signed preliminary agreements with the **Uzbekhydroenergo (UGE)** to build a 200 MW pumped-

storage hydropower plant in the Tashkent region in Uzbekistan.

Wärtsilä lands Able deal

Wärtsilä will supply its advanced energy storage technology for two major projects in southern Texas, USA. The standalone systems will have a combined capacity of 200 MW. Wärtsilä has also signed ten-year guaranteed asset performance agreements for the installations. The order was placed by **Able Grid Energy Solutions**.

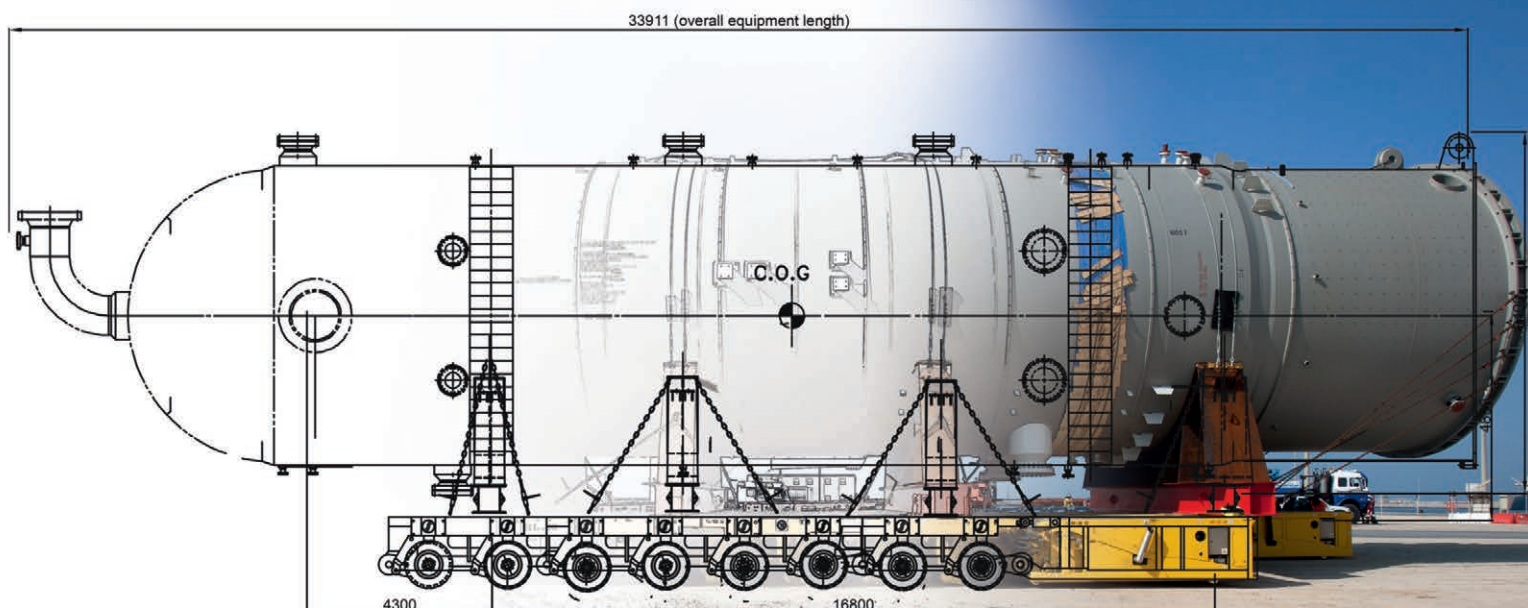
bp plans blue hydrogen plant

bp is developing plans for the UK's largest blue hydrogen production facility, targeting 1GW of hydrogen production by 2030. The project would capture and send for storage up to 2 million tonnes of CO₂ per year, equivalent to capturing the emissions from the heating of 1 million UK households.

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New joint venture aims to set highest standards

German breakbulk and project cargo carrier SAL Heavy Lift and Dutch maritime heavy lift transport and installation contractor Jumbo Shipping have commenced operations under their joint venture banner – Jumbo-SAL-Alliance. *HLPFI* spoke with the managing directors of both carriers on its establishment, early successes and long-term outlook.

Jumbo-SAL-Alliance will act as the single commercial entry point for its joint sales network of offices and agents in 20-plus countries. The alliance will handle the marketing of 30 project cargo vessels with lifting capacities up to 3,000 tonnes, marking it as the largest fleet in the 800 tonne-plus sector.

Michael Kahn, managing director of Jumbo, and Martin Harren, managing director of SAL and the Harren & Partner Group, said that an official joint venture has been several years in the making. Having been mooted in the past but failing to materialise, a two-year, bottom-up approach led by the respective organisations' commercial teams bore fruit. That process formalised trust between the two shipping lines that have 30-40 years of competition behind them.

Careful negotiations

Kahn explained: "We formed a squad with two commercial people from both sides. When they agreed on something, they would send it up. Then, of course, we shot it down but – step by step – over two years the alliance was built from the ground up."

Jumbo Shipping is a specialist in project shipping, boasting vessels with some of the highest lifting capacities on the market and a proven track record. Nevertheless, Kahn conceded that there was room for improvement. "I think that when you are a niche player, you strive to be the best. In certain

fields, we found that we are not. We got into this with the intention to set all egos aside," he said, adding that both teams have been identifying who is better in their field – be it commercial, IT, value adding, project engineering and all the sub-bases – and switching to the best system.

"We got so much goodwill on both sides within the departments. Whether it is QHSE, engineering, operations, they are all talking to each other to see where and how each side can improve. It will be a continuous item on our agenda to look for further synergies... this is the start of an inter-commercial set up but it will move forwards."



I think that when you are a niche player, you strive to be the best. In certain fields, we found that we are not. We got into this with the intention to set all egos aside.

– Michael Kahn, Jumbo

Martin Harren echoed those sentiments, stating that it was a privilege to have what felt like a new family member aboard, with the company's staff energised under the new alliance.

Positive reception

The reception from the market has been positive, too, he said. "Everybody was delighted that now they can get a service from 30 highly qualified heavy lift ships. Every ship is privately owned. If you talk about the large-scale projects in the future, clients can book almost everything with us... There is a strong resilience against any external factors – be that technical, delays or otherwise – because of that big base."

That fully owned base of ships will likely prove advantageous in both the short and long term. "For our clients it is a huge advantage. [If I were planning] transport and engineering solutions, say three years ahead, I would be extremely confident with our set-up of 30 ships, privately owned by the families, and with a combined history of 90 years," said Harren.

Kahn added that the Jumbo-SAL-Alliance would approach the market with a client-centric attitude. "Instead of focusing on filling up vessels, which is inward looking, a solutions provider is outward looking. We will always have the solution, and we will adopt a mentality of 'what is best for the project.' When necessary, the alliance will call

on vessels from within the Harren & Partner Group – including Intermarine, Combi-Lift, SAL Renewables – and the wider shipping market.

Aiming to improve

Harren added: "Our self-image is that this with this set up we can provide the best, widest, most stable solution to our customers but, of course, we will not stand still. Our ambition is to improve and if we can add something, it does not matter what organisation it comes from."

Jumbo is no stranger to establishing partnerships with other carriers, but Kahn explained that this alliance is "more structured and integrated" than anything it has





established in the past. "There is no way back... we are integrating the commercial offices worldwide. It is a one-stop shop, one window. Whether we arrive with the blue or the grey ships, it should not matter for the clients – they should get the best service from us both. It is up to us to make that equal."

Harren also highlighted the depths of integration between the two lines. "If there is a conflict, you simply have to agree on something because divorce is something you cannot afford. Commitment will be the stabilising factor [in the alliance], per se, and that is good in the sense that it will discipline all of us involved."

With regard to the market

prospects, Kahn was understandably cautious. "I do not even dare to say the words. We have come through 12 years of market doldrums. There seems to be a bit of an uptick, which started with the container and bulkers throwing out their lower-end MPP cargoes."

Wind market

"We still have a strong wind market – transition pieces and monopiles. The market is still a way off from any newbuilding plans, but of course, if it would happen, it would be market driven and we are the first to talk to each other. It does not make sense to start a joint venture like this then as soon as some things recover, think by yourself."



If there is a conflict, you simply have to agree on something because divorce is something you cannot afford.

– Martin Harren, SAL and the Harren & Partner Group

Harren added: "We are owners. This is in our blood and we always have plans for newbuildings. These plans are always developing and if we stopped those plans then something is somehow missing but, right now, I would like to see the market stabilise a little more."

He conceded that some of the vessels in the SAL fleet are ageing but said the time is not right to pull the trigger on new additions.

"Annemieke is 23 years old now, she is in still in very good shape, can still do project work and is still accepted by clients. But, it is also true that we want to do something."

HLPFI

Beefing up capabilities

Increasing rates across all modes are posing serious questions of forwarders moving heavy cargoes contracted months ago. However, in the USA and Europe heavy railfreight operators have been strengthening their fleets, reported strong performances in 2020, and believe the prospects going forwards are promising. *Ian Putzger reports.*



Fracht is gearing up for more business on the rails in North America. The company's top management has given its blessing to the acquisition of 12 railcars. "We are expanding our fleet. We still see strong demand, and we see a strong benefit in owning and controlling our equipment," said Benjamin Liewald, executive vice president projects.

One of the new cars is a caboose – a locomotive – the rest being heavy-duty flat cars. "We have a nice variety of depressed-centre cars. The flat ones will be great for anything long, tall and heavy – compressors, boilers, vessels, etc. We have a move coming up with a 120 ft (36.6 m) vessel that we will spread over two cars. We will use bolster plates," said Liewald.

The first three units are joining Fracht's existing line-up of nine railcars during the spring; the rest will follow over the summer. "We were not looking for 12 new cars, maybe five or six, but the opportunity came up," he added.

Over in Europe, Spedition Kübler is

boosting its heavy rail and road equipment and capabilities. It has taken control of Daher's heavy transport department in Germany. Essentially this gives Kübler the former heavy transport division of Deutsche Bahn, which Daher had acquired in 2007. Through the agreement, which was announced in November 2020, Kübler has gained some 40 employees in the four locations of Daher Projects Germany, as well as its road and rail fleets, which include about 110 special railcars that can carry up to 454 tonnes.

For Kübler, the acquisition marks a large step forward in the rail logistics segment, which the company has been developing in

We are expanding our fleet. We still see strong demand, and we see a strong benefit in owning and controlling our equipment.

– Benjamin Liewald, Fracht

recent years. According to Thomas Hoffmann, coordinator worldwide transport and projects, the full integration will take about one year but the bulk of the work has already been more or less completed. "We knew the company before and worked together with it," he said, noting that expansion in this arena is important as the company is presently quite busy.

Record year

Other operators also have their hands full. For BNSF Logistics, 2020 was a record year, according to Robert Sutton, executive vice president innovation.

Bill Taylor, managing partner of Colossal Transport Solutions, also noted: "Our rail business has been busy." He has not seen any shifts in the make-up of Colossal's business, nor any changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Others reported some slowdown. A lot of projects were put on hold or postponed, but long-term projects have gone ahead, observed Hoffmann. Gerald Hess, president of Ambercor Shipping in Canada, said: "I



Fracht is acquiring 12 more railcars.



Spedition Kübler has taken control of Daher's heavy transport department in Germany.

think major investment has slowed down a bit because of Covid-19. Some projects have been postponed.”

Repercussions from the pandemic are being felt in transport costs, which have increased significantly across all modes. “A lot of projects were budgeted 12 months ago. Clients are struggling with the existing rates,” remarked Liewald.

While some projects are in limbo, the outlook is strong. Taylor is bullish about the prospects. “As of right now, it looks like everything is going to stay pretty much the same. Everything seems to be clicking.”

Hoffmann, meanwhile, sees no shortage of work for Kübler – which specialises in covering the European markets. “The whole German electricity network needs to be changed,” he noted. Kübler is also preparing for some large power cable projects that will connect the North Sea to Germany. That project is still in the approval phase and should hit the market in one or two years at the earliest, he believes.

Renewables focus

In the USA, the new administration's focus on renewable energy promises plenty of work in that sector, particularly on wind energy. “There are dollars on the horizon because of green initiatives,” said Liewald. “Wind is certainly an area where we are trying to expand.”

Ambercor also has the sector in its sights, but Hess remains cautious. “There is going to be more activity in wind, but it is a difficult market to break into. There are a limited number of manufacturers and they often have their connections with forwarders and truckers. We have not made

big inroads in that market,” he explained.

The US government is particularly eager to develop offshore wind energy generation but this is unlikely to have much bearing on the rail segment, as the size of blades used in offshore wind farms are often too large for rail transport, noted Sutton. Wind components for onshore installations are also getting larger, he pointed out.

“We spend a lot of time on R&D to be able to leverage our North American rail network,” he said. “The changes we have seen created some unique challenges, especially the length of blades.”

The port of Vancouver, Washington, which has established itself as the premier gateway for wind energy shipments on the West Coast, received blades last year that were nearly 250 ft (73.2 m) long. Moving those out of the port by rail would have been challenging without a new gate for wind traffic that was completed earlier in 2020. According to the port authority, it was the only way to move these blades and avoid any sharp turns.

BNSF Logistics has been using special fixtures that it developed in-house to carry longer blades. These ‘Blade Runner’ devices

have been used to move blades of 73 m in length. The company's engineering department has also come up with another solution called ‘Blade Controller’, which was devised for one particular client to move cargoes around bends with large wing-outs. Sutton thinks this can be marketed to a broader audience.

Wind energy traffic

Fracht is looking to its flat railcars to move wind energy traffic. “They are very suitable for wind components – for tower sections, turbines and blades. We can use two railcars,” said Liewald.

In the future, Fracht and Ambercor expect to see a reduction in wind energy shipments coming through the ports. “We hear about a push to more domestic production. Clients want to source locally because of the volatile shipping market. They do not know when they can get things from Asia with all those delays. Part of the industry is looking for more domestic production,” Liewald noted.

International moves are also down for Kübler with export and import activity diminished, observed Hoffmann. He attributes this primarily to the impact of Covid-19, as companies have put investment plans on hold.

Wind energy traffic used to be lively for Kübler, but this has slowed down considerably over the past year. “In Germany, wind energy is not going strong at the moment. Wind farm development is on hold. There is a big discussion about getting permits to build wind farms,” he reported.

In North America, Hess is expecting to see activity around the US administration's

There is going to be more activity in wind, but it is a difficult market to break into. There are a limited number of manufacturers and they often have their connections with forwarders and truckers.

– Gerald Hess, Ambercor Shipping

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BNSF Logistics' engineering department has devised the 'Blade Controller' for moving cargoes around bends with large wing-outs.



drive to invest in infrastructure, although he does not anticipate a lot of opportunities for Ambercor itself, as it does not own the transportation equipment, he said.

In Canada, Ambercor recently coordinated the movement of two 110,000 lbs (50-tonne) reactor units by rail from the port of Halifax to Ontario. It has also used rail to bring some transformers that landed in Halifax to the interior.

"We do some rail business in Canada and the USA, mostly transformers," Hess said. This business has been steady, but margins are thin, as a lot of forwarders are competing in this space, which makes it difficult to build up market share.

"Transformers and generators are a fairly stable market," added BNSF Logistics' Sutton, noting that gas turbine moves have also been quite steady.

Power focus

For Kübler, transformers and power stations have been the main focus recently with business activity continuing. Hoffmann sees a trend for multimodal moves, which may involve barge, rail and road. "I think there is more need for trimodal shipments going forward. Real heavy stuff goes trimodal," he reflected.

In North America, equipment availability has not been a problem but when it comes to highly specialised gear, sometimes it is necessary to order three or four months in advance, according to Hess. For more

common types, three weeks in advance usually suffices.

The USA's rail system has been under heavy strain from high volumes of container traffic that have clogged up ports and rail yards, creating massive delays. Nevertheless, Colossal's Taylor said that the impact on moving outsize cargo has not been dramatic. "There are some challenges with performance with rail, but in our business there are always challenges anyway," he commented. "Railroads are up and down. Some are fine, some are

absolute messes right now. It goes in cycles."

Hess drew attention to the understanding that railways are still not overly keen on moving heavy cargoes on the rails. "It disrupts their regular schedules. They are busy with containers and bulk traffic," he said, adding that pricing is high, so many clients avoid rail if possible. "If we can avoid it, we often find other solutions that are less expensive. In most cases the final mile is by truck anyhow," he said.

Rail preferences

In some cases avoiding rail requires some formal steps, though. The authorities in Ontario and Quebec will not issue permits for road moves of heavy loads unless the applicant can produce a letter from a rail provider that the cargo cannot be moved by that mode, Hess reported. There is also more resistance from local authorities to trucking heavy equipment through their areas, noted Sutton.

In Germany, fees for road permits have gone up. A permit to move a machine that weighs 50, 60 or 70 tonnes over the road now can cost between EUR800 (USD962) and EUR900 (USD1,082), reported Hoffmann. "It may be cheaper on rail," he said.

Still, with continuing volatility and uncertainty about delays, buffers are called into schedules. "We have to consider these things when we plan. We also have to consider what the rail companies prioritise," remarked Liewald.



Transformers and generators are a fairly stable market.

– Robert Sutton, BNSF Logistics

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Thinking outside the box

DB Schenker scooped the 2020 BIFA Project Forwarding Award with an entry that highlighted its ability to find more efficient routing options that cut costs, save time and improve environmental performance.

The project involved transporting built-up railcars and flat-pack panels from Hitachi Rail Europe's manufacturing facility in Kasado, Japan, to the company's facility in Newton Aycliffe, UK, for welding and eventual deployment on the UK West Coast Main Line.

To date, these railcars and panels had been moved via inland barge from Kasado to Kobe or Yokohama for onward shipping via ro-ro carrier or charter vessel. Hitachi wanted to reduce the 60-day journey time and bring costs down, and approached DB Schenker for help.

The chosen solution was to alter both the route and type of vessel used.

Ben Cunnington, key accounts manager – global projects at DB Schenker, explained: "The main reason for switching from traditional ro-ro transport to using container vessels was to have more control over where the goods were and exactly when they would arrive in the UK. Container vessel schedules



are more predictable, whereas breakbulk vessel sailings can shift by several days, or change to include extra stops.

Flexibility and speed

"There was also the flexibility and speed of regular weekly sailings. Ro-ro transport takes around 56 days and those vessels only sail once a month, at most."

Another factor in choosing container vessels was their lower carbon footprint. Plus, the decision to barge the railcars from Kasado across the Korean Strait to Busan (which is better equipped than Yokohama for lifting trains onto container vessels) removed the Yokohama leg from the journey, reduced the time, cost and environmental impact of the project.

The transit time from Busan to Southampton was 32 days.

Cunnington noted that manufacturing schedules are subject to change; this was especially true during the pandemic. But the weekly sailing schedule afforded a great deal of flexibility.

Hitachi built ten railcars at a time and DB Schenker collected each batch using a chartered barge, timing its arrival in Busan to coincide with the loading window of a container vessel. Thus, the cargo could be dispatched as it was ready in Japan (pictured).

Cunnington said: "We work via a combination of flexibility and transparency. For the West Coast project we gathered all stakeholders in one room – the shipping line, haulier, storage

company, Hitachi and ourselves. Everyone involved, not just the forwarder, needs to have input from the customer.

Tracker system

"Hitachi had direct contact with the shipping line throughout the project, and we used a vessel tracker system so that Hitachi could find out exactly where the cargo was at any point."

Cunnington added that project forwarding "is not a one-man band". The West Coast project drew on the expertise of DB Schenker's land division, for moving the 26 m long trains once they arrived in the UK; contract logistics, to manage storage; Customs in Felixstowe; accounts; and of course the project team.

"The project team acts like a control tower for solution design and coordination," he said.

The West Coast project was a good example of how teamwork pays off, Cunnington added. "Between all the stakeholders, there was no silo thinking. That transparency builds trust."

Following the success of the West Coast project, which involved 135 railcars, Hitachi engaged DB Schenker to move 165 rail cars from Italy and Serbia to the UK for the larger East Midlands rail project.

Four other companies made the final shortlist



The BIFA Freight Service Awards competition has been running for 32 years and is open to all full trading and probationary members of the UK trade association for freight forwarding companies. The Awards comprise eight main categories, plus

Young Freight Forwarder (YFF) and Apprentice of the Year (AOTY) categories. The event has long been sponsored by eminent companies, and is recognised as one of the most prestigious in the industry. <https://awards.bifa.org/awards>

More time to enter the Heavy Lift Awards 2021

Preparations are under way for the Heavy Lift Awards 2021 and there is now more time to gather your entries, with the deadline for submissions extended to June 7, 2021.

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The logo graphic consists of a large, stylized arrow pointing upwards and to the right. The arrow is composed of two main shapes: a blue triangle on the left and a white triangle on the right, which together form a larger, irregular shape. The text 'HEAVY LIFT AWARDS 2021' is overlaid on the left side of the arrow.

There are myriad reasons to enter this year's Heavy Lift Awards and chief among them is the international recognition your company deserves – a prestigious award can set you apart from your competitors, while promoting your business to new customers through brand exposure across *HLPFI* magazine and heavyliftpfi.com.

Entries can be submitted on the Heavy Lift Awards website – www.heavyliftawards.com – where you can also find the criteria for each of the categories. The deadline for entries has now been extended to June 7, 2021, to give you more time to put together your submissions.

For those of you yet to decide upon what categories to enter, this year's line up includes: Airfreight Solution of the

Year; Environment Award; Excellence in Engineering; Innovation Award; Lifetime Achievement Award; Network/ Association of the Year; Overland Transport Provider of the Year; Port/Terminal Operator of the Year; Project of the Year; Project Logistics Provider of the Year; Safety Award; Ship Operator of the Year; and Training Award.

Judging

Once all entries have been submitted, the Heavy Lift Awards 2021 judges will then decide on the shortlist, which will be revealed later that month.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London on October 19, 2021.

HLPFI is excited to once again return to a live, in-person event this year with

a gala dinner, awards ceremony, after-show party and entertainment; the Heavy Lift Awards will provide the perfect opportunity to host clients, network with industry professionals and reward the hard work of your staff.

HLPFI would like to thank our confirmed 2021 sponsors – AAL Shipping, Barrus Projects, Blue Water Shipping, DHL Industrial Projects, Fesco Projects, Goldhofer, RTL, Sarens, and Trans Global Projects Group (TGP). Without their support this event would not be possible.

If you would like to find out more about sponsorship opportunities at the awards this year, or have questions about entering any of the categories, please contact the awards team on info@heavyliftawards.com or visit our website at www.heavyliftawards.com

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Safety Award

Ship Operator of the Year

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Training Award

Infrastructure investment drives recovery

From a massive natural gas liquefaction complex on the Pacific coast, to wind farms on the prairies and nuclear energy upgrades in Ontario, large-scale capital projects have continued across Canada despite the pandemic. Once operators had clear direction from federal and provincial authorities, they were able to get back to work. *Gregory DL Morris reports.*

Project logistics activity in Canada held up well during the past 12 months despite the upheaval caused by the pandemic. There is a bit of a lull now because owners held off planning new projects. Nevertheless, most operators say they are getting requests for, and are bidding on, lots of work.

“Construction was deemed an essential service last year,” said Richard Forbes, senior economist for the Canadian Conference Board. “That meant that many projects were

able to continue after some short closures in the spring.”

More broadly, Forbes noted that the Canadian economy suffered a deep recession in the second quarter of 2020, followed by a surprising bounce back in Q3. “Then the pandemic worsened again in the autumn, especially in Ontario and Quebec. That shut retail commerce and offices. We saw a mild recession in the first quarter of this year.”

Canada is behind the USA in terms of the rate of vaccination across the population,

although that is expected to accelerate through the spring and summer.

“The industrial and manufacturing sectors are leading the way out [of the recession], especially those tied to consumer spending” said Forbes. “They have benefited from the demand created by the stimulus programmes in the USA.”

In a small irony, the way the pandemic and recovery are playing out, construction may be one of the weaker sectors this year, Forbes noted. It may struggle to recover, he said, for two reasons: one is, as noted, that



Apex has been able to press ahead with most projects, including a good deal of work in power upgrades and infrastructure retrofits.

many projects already under way were pushed through last year, but there was not as much planning of new projects. At the same time, it is expected that millions of people will continue to work from home at least part of the time. That may have an effect on demand for office space.

LNG export terminal project

One of the largest LNG export terminal projects internationally can be found in Kitimat, British Columbia. LNG Canada, the Shell-led joint venture behind the USD31 billion project, said progress was hampered by the pandemic in 2020 but work continues to ramp up.

The Mammoet-Haisla joint venture was awarded heavy lift and heavy haul contracts for the project last year by the joint venture between JGC Corporation and Fluor.

Mammoet recently completed the pipe-



We hauled more than 6,000 piles from several shipments. We completed the final shipments this spring without delay or disruption...

– Cian Dorman, Mammoet

pile handling portion of LNG Canada, said Cian Dorman, the company's Americas northern and west sales director. "We hauled more than 6,000 piles from several shipments. We completed the final shipments this spring without delay or disruption despite the Covid-19 provincial health order, which restricted personnel deployment and affected mobilisation and schedule planning."

Pandemic delay

That effort notwithstanding, the overall project has been delayed because of the pandemic. "Mammoet is looking forward to commencing the main heavy haul work this fall," said Dorman. "We are now absorbed in the planning for the mobilisation of potentially more than 400 axle lines of SPMTs to the project for the onshore handling of all pipe-rack and process



Pinnacle Logistics said Alberta and Saskatchewan are the key Canadian provinces for wind projects.

modules, which are expected to weigh upwards of 10,000 tonnes.”

Mammoet was involved in developing the IPPL Heartland petrochemical complex – Canada’s first integrated propane dehydrogenation and polypropylene complex project, in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. Mammoet was engaged in the heavy lift, module handling and transportation, specialised engineering, crane supply and logistics. Recently, the Heartland Complex was selected for the Alberta Petrochemicals Incentive Program, which aims to enhance the province’s position as a major global producer of petrochemicals and polymers.

Maintenance programmes

In addition to those high-profile projects, Mammoet has continuing maintenance programmes and longstanding master service agreements in Western Canada. “Expected activities have not changed so drastically compared with common inclinations of forecasting,” Dorman noted.

“For example, there were notable declines in the oil sands during 2016 and 2017; however production, capital projects and ongoing activities have since stabilised. The oil sands activities are not likely to experience any significant growth, which again is no major surprise. Nevertheless, there may be future pressure on the industry due to the nature of the extraction process and energy requirements when considering global decarbonisation goals.”

However, there is increased activity related to the energy industry as a whole. Changing fuel preferences from coal to natural gas have resulted in growth in activities related to LNG production, gas extraction and pipeline work.

“Similarly, we see power plant optimisations, combined heat and power projects and waste heat recovery projects continue to grow,” Dorman said.



The transportation industry is taking heavy blows from the impact of a volatile shipping market with shipping lines no longer honouring contracts or commitments...

– Kelly Merath, deugro

“Upgrading and overhauling nuclear power plants in Eastern Canada is also an area where we see an increase. Mammoet is heavily engaged [in that sector, including in] optimised construction planning, increased safety approaches and reducing downtime.”

Shipping volatility

Starting in 2019 and continuing through 2020, deugro moved into oil and gas supply chain management and developed entire teams and systems to support that, notably establishing a global operations hub in Edmonton, Alberta, in April 2020; the company already has offices in Calgary. The facility handles cargo for inspection, consolidation, packing and export.

“The transportation industry is taking heavy blows from the impact of a volatile shipping market,” said Kelly Merath, country manager for Canada at deugro, “with shipping lines no longer honouring contracts or commitments and project freight forwarders and shippers having to consider force majeure. This is a major concern now and an end does not appear to be in sight.”

Nevertheless, she hastened to add that her team was involved in a transit project in Eastern Canada that was awarded in the first quarter of 2020. It involves three deugro offices and the transport of almost 300 railcars over the next two to three years.

“Just as planning was under way for the first shipments, the global pandemic was

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declared and everything stopped,” said Merath. Recalibrating to include public health protocols, “the entire deugro and client teams were able to recommence shipments by mid-2020 and the project has been progressing successfully since”, she explained.

In addition to the pandemic, Canada felt the impact of an uncertain future in the Canadian oil and gas industry, said Merath. “That was seen through asset sell-offs and mergers, with project casualties from Alberta to Newfoundland.”

Canada is a resource-driven economy, Merath noted. “The projects developed here are closely related to resource extraction such as oil and mining, or to harnessing the power of resources such as wind and water. The mining sector has remained strong, and for the most part work has continued. There are always potential issues and delays related to permits, and in some cases those delays were exacerbated during 2020; for the most part, we see work forging ahead. That includes EPC companies and owners based in Canada using their mining expertise and knowledge to support, develop and move ahead with mining projects in regions outside Canada.”

Power sector

Another consistent industry for heavy transportation has been the power sector, with some existing projects already under construction and new developments starting to get going. At the same time, a regular flow of equipment and materials to support various maintenance and repairs is generally taking place as provincial utilities continue to make upgrades to their electrical grids due to ageing infrastructure.

“Other industries such as LNG are exciting and seem promising,” said Merath, “but the conditions for them to move forward are uncertain. Most of the LNG developments currently proposed in Canada require either new pipelines or the expansion of existing pipelines, and those are challenges. Considering that many of those projects require approvals federally and provincially, the more than 15 proposed LNG terminals on the east and west coasts appear to have an uphill climb.”

Convoy Logistics Providers (CLP), based in Oakville, Ontario, recently won a contract for 20,000 tonnes of trusses and related cargo that will be shipped on six vessels from southern Italy to the USA and transloaded to barges for final delivery. “We see a lot of business into the USA,” said Dona Asciak, owner and ceo. “A lot of shipments into Canada arrive in on the US East Coast.”



CLP usually handles everything from vessel chartering to cranes and rigging and landside delivery.

CLP also scored a coup by securing use of some specialised railcars to handle a shipment for the energy sector that is arriving on the West Coast bound for Alberta. Asciak noted that wind power has come back strong from the pandemic, although her company is not active in that segment.

As a third-party logistics firm that primarily works through turnkey commissions, CLP usually handles everything from vessel chartering to cranes and rigging and landside delivery. “After chartering rates were stagnant for years, there has definitely been an increase for project cargo charters,” said Asciak.

Unlike most other project cargo operators, Apex Specialized Rigging &

Moving, along with sister company Pro-Tech Industrial Movers, is also active in demolition and other industrial services as part of the diversified NorLand Group. While the individual operating companies are self-contained, the group often keeps work in-house, offering package projects to clients.

“There were some delays in project schedules in 2020,” said Gary Klynsoon, vice president and general manager for Apex and Pro-Tech, based in Delta, British Columbia. “Mostly that was due to provincial health restrictions that did not enable us to ramp up as we had planned.” That said, the group was able to press ahead with most projects, including a good deal of work in power upgrades and infrastructure retrofits. For example, work on the SkyTrain public transport system in Vancouver and the baggage handling system at the same city’s international airport.

LNG Canada initiative

Apex and Pro-Tech have also been active in the LNG Canada initiative in Kitimat. The larger components of that massive project are being handled by the global project cargo companies. “We are handling some of the other components, the ones that are going from the manufacturers direct to the site,” said Klynsoon.

Another of the group’s niche services is storage. “Last year was very busy,” said Klynsoon. “Things are now moving out, but we are now feeling the lag in the manufacturing supply chain. There is still a lot of caution, but we are bidding for work this year and feeling some optimism. There is still plenty of retrofitting and upgrading work to do in the power and hydro sectors.”



After chartering rates were stagnant for years, there has definitely been an increase for project cargo charters.

– Dona Asciak, Convoy Logistics Providers

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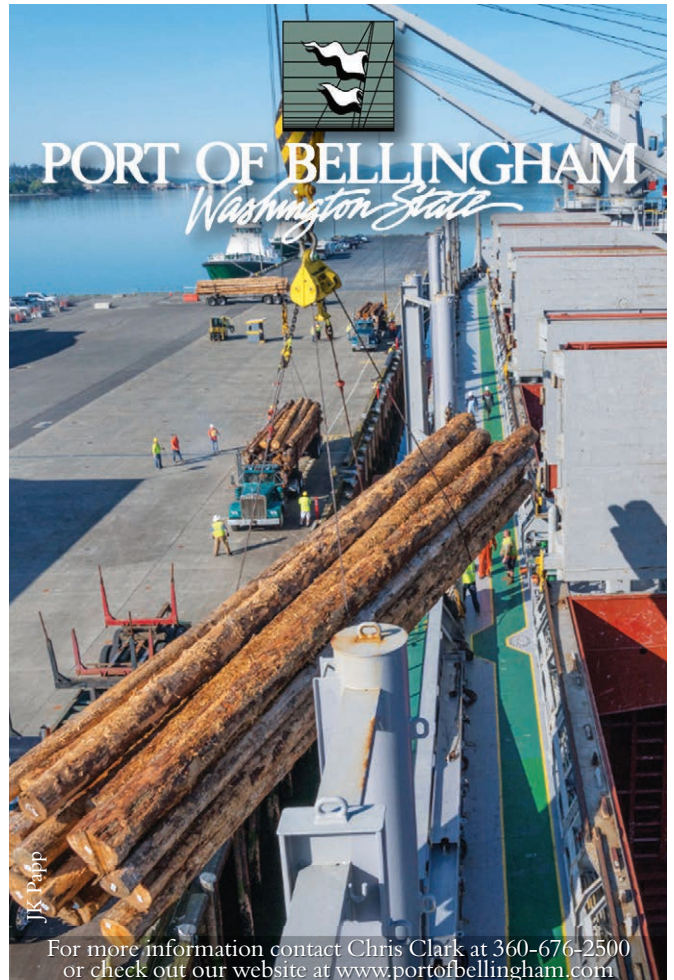
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Pinnacle Logistics has supported transportation and rigging for 15 wind farms in several Canadian markets.

There are also greenfield projects in northern British Columbia, which due to topography, tends to be more connected to Alberta than to southern British Columbia.

Avoiding panic

NorLand Group has been on a growth programme from 2017 through 2019, with plans to continue through this year. “We did not panic,” said Klynsoon. “We kept all our personnel on and held tight. We ended up having a solid second-half of last year, and now have our people in place for resumed growth in 2021. We are gearing up, including adding SPMs for the second half of this year. We get a sense that business is going to take off once it does turn around.”

Looking ahead, the provincial and federal governments intend to spend more on infrastructure. Power generation and transmission is already going strong. The lagging sector, Klynsoon noted, is construction unrelated to infrastructure.

Pinnacle Logistics, based in Cambridge, Ontario, has been active in wind energy too. “We supported transportation and rigging for 15 wind farms in several Canadian markets,” said Aaron Gerber, vice president of sales. “Alberta and Saskatchewan are the key Canadian provinces for wind projects. There are some in Quebec, but not in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, or the Maritimes. There are a great deal of projects slated for this year, but there are no dramatic penalties for delay, so it is possible that some of those schedules could slip.”

Gerber also noted that larger components are the trend in wind energy. “We can look to Europe for a glimpse of the future six or eight years from now, in terms of the size of blades, nacelles and towers.

“For example, we handled some of the first 72 m blades to touch ground in North America; now 72 m blades are becoming the norm. We have already invested in a blade dolly to supplement the traditional extendable booms,” he explained.

As a result, nacelles have to get larger, and towers higher. “Towers, at least, are divisible,” said Gerber. “They just add more sections.” However, longer blades and bigger nacelles naturally mean more complex route planning. “The market is very much in flux. We are trying to accommodate all sizes of components.”

One area in which service companies can standardise is in training. “We have formalised and expanded our safety training,” said Gerber, “to include escort drivers and steersmen. By the end of 2021 we will have 250 employees and third-party contractors fully trained.”

We can look to Europe for a glimpse of the future six or eight years from now, in terms of the size of blades, nacelles and towers.

– Aaron Gerber, Pinnacle Logistics

He concurred that power, including generation and transmission, are the lead growth areas for Canadian project moves, along with infrastructure. “There are two major nuclear upgrade projects in Ontario, and also some hydroelectric projects around the country. The governments are the ones with the money these days. The quotes we are doing for bridge work have significantly increased in the last two months, and are at a peak relative to the last 14 months. Mining is hit and miss. Oil and gas are lagging.”

Bidding on work

As several project cargo operators in Canada have done, Pinnacle was able to expand some operations during the pandemic year. “We have been mostly business as usual,” said Gerber. “We opened a new office in Montreal last year and will be opening a new office in Western Canada in a few months. We were long known for our work in over-dimensional loads in trucking, but since 2017 we have actively expanded our operations in marine, and more recently in rail. That has enabled us to focus on project and risk management, irrespective of the mode.”

Overall 2020 was not a bad year, “actually pretty decent,” said Christian Wagner, vice president of Ambercor Shipping. “We have had work in all the usual areas – power generation and even oil and gas. There have been quite a few machinery moves for heavy industry.

“Most projects have been on time and on budget despite the upheavals. Manufacturing schedules have been delayed, but once we are able to get our hands on the cargo, we have been able to keep on schedule. That is what our European customers expect. We do not try to be the cheapest, just the most reliable.”

One of the most difficult challenges in ocean transport has been rising rates and declining availability of containership space. “The ro-ro vessels are still interested in project cargo,” said Wagner, but we did see some issues among container carriers. In particular, Asia to Europe and Asia to North America rates have just been horrendous. We have been able to switch carriers in most cases, to find the niche carrier.”

Given how Ambercor was able to keep rolling through most of the pandemic, it is not surprising that there is a bit of a lull in the first quarter because owners held back on planning projects. “There are a few things on the horizon,” said Wagner, “nothing firm yet but we are into the late stages of some tenders for projects going out several years.”



Railfreight: safer, faster, greener

Drew Roberts (pictured), head of specialized transport at deugro, USA, discusses the international heavy lift rail freight sector. Where feasible, the mode is a reliable and environmentally friendly way of moving large cargoes both domestically and internationally, standing it in good stead for future growth.

Hheavy lift cargo transported by rail continues to be the backbone of many industries' supply chain, driven largely by the continual investments and infrastructure improvements under way in many of the world's countries.

Rail in North America is no different, as evidenced by the USD3.7 billion Transforming Rail in Virginia initiative, along with large-scale mergers such as the recent announcement that Canadian Pacific

and Canadian National intend to acquire Kansas City Southern.

Despite Covid-19's global impact on countless industries, rail transport for heavy lift cargo – also known as a 'dimensional load' in North America – has remained largely unaffected by the pandemic, although railfreight as a whole experienced a sharp decline in the second quarter of 2020 due to reduced spending in many segments and an overall timid economy.

However, the advantages of transporting





Transformer unloading operations
at the port of New Orleans

large cargo by rail still clearly dominate the market whenever and wherever feasible.

On the international stage, last year saw an uptick in railfreight overall between Europe and Asia – attributed particularly to China's USD900 billion New Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative), which led to increased volumes for many Eurasian railways.

Examples of these increases include the UTLC ERA reaching over 500,000 teu shipped in 2020; China Railways was able to increase its number of trains by 3,000, up to 12,000, for 2020; and DB Cargo Eurasia doubled its revenue compared with 2019.

Heavy lift railfreight in North America also held steady, devoid of the shutdowns that airlines experienced during the pandemic last year, and still offered and continues to offer essentially unaffected service schedules and performance.

Furthermore, despite the lingering presence of Covid-19, the world has for the most part adapted quickly, particularly when it comes to the supply chain, with rail no exception here. With 2020 behind us, 2021 appears finally to be seeing a sense of normalcy in the supply chain, with most companies already having been through the teething pains of dealing with a pandemic.

This comes with lessons on how best to mitigate exposure to the virus and what to

do when employees may have been exposed. One specific example is the guidelines issued by the American Association of Railroads (AAR) on how to reduce employee exposure through education, screening for symptoms prior to starting a shift, and reducing employee density where possible, among other recommendations.

So, while Covid-19 may still endure, so too does industry's fortitude and ability to adapt and overcome.

Focusing on the long-term advantage of moving large cargo by rail, it becomes clear that rail's native advantages will likely exist for the foreseeable future. These exist as a basic trifecta of strength in feasibility, pricing and being environmentally friendly.

Besides secure schedules, the first and most immediate advantage of rail when moving heavy lift cargo comes with the mostly standardised rail network across North America, with its inherent high weight capacity. That weight-bearing capacity virtually eliminates shippers' fears of multi-state permitting, costly and timely bridge engineering requirements, and dreaded construction re-routes that can strike right before a shipment.

Employee and cargo safety

This same standardisation also benefits the safety of cargo and employees, with rail having a lower employee injury rate than trucking, airlines and even grocery stores. Since 2000, America's Class 1 railroads have spent USD429 billion on network maintenance and capital expenditures while train accident rates have fallen by 30 percent.

While there are always exceptions, experienced logisticians can quickly ascertain whether a particular cargo size can move from Point A to B by rail. After all, while pricing and environmental considerations are important in any heavy lift transport, feasibility is nearly always the paramount driver. For instance, many times the Department of Transportation will require proof that heavy lift cargo, such as super loads, cannot be moved by any other means such as rail or barge prior to permit approvals for road transport.

The first and most immediate advantage of rail when moving heavy lift cargo comes with the mostly standardised rail network across North America...

– Drew Roberts, deugro

Beyond the obvious feasibility benefits of rail, the cost savings on a shipment can be quite high. Railfreight typically has a somewhat steep starting rate when loading and securing are considered, as well as the reverse at the destination. From there, however, railfreight increases only incrementally in price the longer the distance, whereas other transport methods tend to become excessively expensive the greater the distance.

Environmental benefits

This brings us to the third part of the trifecta, where those long rail transport lanes offer major benefits in preserving the environment. There are countless studies and initiatives on improving the efficiencies of moving cargo by rail. For some hard facts, we need to look no further than the Environmental Protection Agency's reported numbers: rail accounts for 40 percent of US freight movements, but only 2.1 percent of US transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Combine this with the fact that a single train can carry the same freight as hundreds of trucks and it is clear why the US railways' many upgrades to new technology successfully reduced projected fuel needs between 2000 and 2019 by 656 million gallons, with CO₂ emissions lower by 7.3 million tons.

While heavy lifts by rail may involve only one, or just a few, cars at a time, they are moving on one of the 'greenest' modes of transportation currently available.

Rail technology is also still being continually improved upon. Despite current rail technology being far ahead of that in commercial trucking industry – with, for instance, electric and alternative-fuelled locomotives – innovation is often overlooked in discussions about rail transport. Yet, railroads use drones and have advanced inspection technology installed on locomotives and some cars to scan tracks as they pass over them for any signs of defects or required maintenance.

Specialised cameras are installed that scan entire trains as they pass by, which is then paired with data analytics to effectively inspect trains autonomously. All of this and more leads to rail infrastructure being robust, dependable and environmentally friendly.

Ultimately, it seems obvious that rail is here to stay, and I firmly believe that we will see heavy lift cargo shipped by rail for a long time to come. The benefits are numerous, the technology is relatively cutting edge and, in essence, most railroads across the world were built from the ground up with freight in mind.

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Heavy vehicle maintenance would be included in a national operating standard.



Heavy vehicle operators push for national operating standard



Dave MacIntyre,
our regional correspondent in
AUSTRALASIA



The development of a national standard as part of Australia's Heavy Vehicle National Law would lead to both safety and productivity improvements, according to the Australian Logistics Council.

A big push is under way to improve safety and efficiency for heavy vehicle operators in Australia through the adoption of a national operating standard, which is being promoted by the Australian Logistics Council (ALC).

The council is calling on Australian authorities to consider the development of a national standard as part of a review of the

First would be creating a list of operators in the heavy vehicle industry, with operators identifying who is operating a heavy vehicle and where it is garaged.

Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), being undertaken by the federal government.

The ALC has consulted with industry stakeholders who believe that the reforms are missing a national operating standard which should have four critical elements.

List of operators

First would be creating a list of operators in the heavy vehicle industry, with operators identifying who is operating a heavy vehicle and where it is garaged. Among other things, this would help monitor and control the incidence of 'phoenixing' in the industry – situations where operators with patchy compliance records have simply moved locations and recommenced work.

Typically, a heavy vehicle garaged in a particular jurisdiction has to be registered in that jurisdiction. Under the national operating standard it would be necessary to provide the actual location at which the

vehicle is ordinarily garaged and operates from. If a business chooses to relocate interstate, without proper notification to the regulator, it may commit an offence.

The second element would be making safety management systems (SMS) mandatory, with operators meeting specified standards contained in the HVNL. SMS, appropriately scaled to business needs, are designed to manage workplace risk and improve safety.

Productivity gains

Operators would reap productivity gains through a reduction in audit duplication. Currently, they are subjected to multiple audits, whereas having a baseline standard has the potential to reduce the types of evidence required to be collected.

A qualified auditor would analyse an operator's SMS using common standards, creating a clear chain of information that could be relied on by all parties in the supply chain and strengthen chain of responsibility requirements.

Third would be ensuring operators have the capital required to properly maintain their heavy vehicles. Maintenance has been found to be one of the discretionary expenses cut by some operators to make ends meet, thereby disadvantaging other operators who diligently keep their fleet up to standard. Therefore, ALC believes it is imperative that heavy operators show they have funds available to undertake regular and appropriate vehicle maintenance to ensure safety standards.

Fourth would be the mandatory collection of data using equipment that is compatible with standards under the national telematics framework. This would allow road owners to fully understand the volumes of heavy vehicle traffic on their networks, and collect accurate data on vehicle speed and the amount of time a vehicle has been in operation. This data would help operators comply with legal obligations and help road owners make quicker decisions on road access.

Election policy

Rachel Smith, ALC director of policy and advocacy, told *HLPFI* that the creation of a national operating standard was requested in the 2013 and 2016 federal elections, on the basis that it would deliver key safety and productivity outcomes for operators. In the five years to 2016, more than 1,000 people were killed in truck crashes in Australia, underlining the need for action.

Smith said the ALC recently surveyed its members and recorded that the advantages



The national operating standard is about ensuring not only are safety outcomes maximised for the community but also ensuring that there is a baseline standard of operation across the industry.

– Rachel Smith, ALC

of adopting the national operating standard include:

- Introduction of disciplines such as the creation of real-time data reports to allow for the monitoring of speed, chain of responsibility compliance, fitness for work requirements and driver fatigue
- Development of maintenance management programmes to minimise the chance of breakdowns and maximise productivity levels
- Creating productivity gains through a reduction in audit duplication
- Encouragement of a 'just safety culture' that actively engages workers, manages risks and ensures safety through

evidence-based risk assessments and, when necessary, changes to policies and procedures.

Industry feedback also pointed ALC to fears that there are some fly-by-night operators getting business at the expense of bona fide businesses, which could be addressed by applying national minimum standards.

"The national operating standard would require an operator to have access to capital to undertake maintenance," said Smith.

"This could be demonstrated by a line item in an annual budget and/or a letter from the operator's accountant stating the business is solvent. The national operating standard is about ensuring not only are safety outcomes maximised for the community but also ensuring that there is a baseline standard of operation across the industry which also minimises cost cutting at the expense of bona fide operators."

Telematics benefits

The push towards telematics in the national standard is also considered important, from an operator's viewpoint. The Australian Productivity Commission reported that telematic equipment enables operators to achieve safety, productivity and commercial benefits.

The report concluded: "Used effectively, telematics can positively influence drivers' behaviours, attitudes and the safety culture of an organisation. Telematics data reports can highlight trends in unsafe behaviours such as speeding and harsh braking, which can then inform data-based and targeted driver training programmes."

This data would enable owners to improve the efficiency of their business and allow road owners to plan more effectively for heavy vehicle traffic on their network, including making decisions on whether a particular vehicle should access a road.

ALC members advise that for around AUD2,500 (USD1,900) for hardware plus around AUD30-50 (USD23-38) a month service fee, a compliant unit can be obtained that would provide the necessary data in areas such as maintenance and fatigue requirements, transport/freight management systems, fuel tax credits, location and speed monitoring, trailer tracking and driver navigation services.

ALC is now emphasising to the authorities that the opportunity should be taken to make these amendments to the national law while a review is under way, so that the legislation is fit for the 2020s and beyond.

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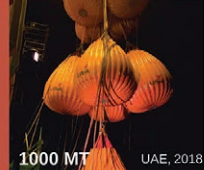


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Vietnam leads a regional rebound

With projects cancelled, delayed or just plain difficult, last year was a tough one for the Southeast Asia region – in that, it was not alone of course. However, heavy lift and project cargo specialists in the region are optimistic about the coming months, with Vietnam taking a starring role in the bounce back. *Felicity Landon* reports.



Royal Cargo moving and lifting girders in Manila for a light rail transport project.



Pressure will be on the service providers to meet these requirements [for restarting projects]. We are investing in new equipment to meet these demands.

– Elmer Sarmiento, Royal Cargo

In fact, he said, as the delayed projects that have built up start to move again, “pressure will be on the service providers to meet these requirements. We are investing in new equipment to meet these demands.”

Felix Chen, business coordination assistant manager at Dimerco Express Group in Taiwan, said: “Our base scenario is that Covid-19 is contained globally over the next few months. This allows the global economy and dry cargo demand to rebound in 2021.” After a dip last year, it is hoping to see a 7.4 percent rebound in multipurpose shipping activity in 2021, depending on further Covid-19 waves. “Generally, bulk shipment imports and breakbulk – mostly produce and equipment related to manufacturing – look to be increasing in the second half of 2021.”

Chen said recovery in individual Southeast Asian countries would remain weak and incomplete as long as the domestic spread of the virus was not under control. On the positive side, he said: “Southeast Asia’s electric vehicle and battery industries are quickly building momentum, as manufacturers in Thailand and Vietnam scale-up production and high-profile foreign investors such as Tesla and Nissan show increasing interest. There is likely to be a continued strong pick-up in global demand if major economies are able to remain on the recovery path.”

Demand from the USA will be particularly important, boosted by President Biden’s USD1.9 trillion fiscal stimulus, he said. Meanwhile, a notable trend, said Chen,

The economic impact on Southeast Asia from Covid-19 has been huge and comparable to the region’s 1997 financial crisis, according to Elmer Sarmiento, president and ceo of Philippines-based Royal Cargo.

Unsurprisingly, the pandemic also impacted the company’s project cargo and heavy lift business. “Industries temporarily halted their operations due to selective lockdowns, workers partially stopped reporting for work, financial closures to fund constructions were postponed, ports have operated partially, and contracts and the execution of signed contracts were delayed,” he said.

“Several projects were cancelled, postponed and delayed due to the pandemic.

A wind farm project was cancelled in the Philippines, partly because of the pandemic, a hydropower plant was delayed in Vietnam, a railway project in Indonesia was postponed.”

Uptick expected

However, while 2020’s work was basically around existing contracts, he said, the project business is building up and an uptick is expected soon. “I expect a better and an improved business situation by the second half of 2021 and in 2022. Delayed contracts will push through, cancelled contracts will be renegotiated and reviewed, and new projects will be envisioned. We have seen railway, road and bridges, LNG and renewable energy projects being undertaken now having an upswing.”

is for more Chinese companies to establish offices in Singapore, apparently to hedge against any further deterioration of relations between China and the USA, while there are also cases of Chinese companies moving entire production lines to Southeast Asia.

The USA-China trade war continues to deliver changes, said Christophe Grammare, commercial director of AAL Shipping. "According to a study conducted by Boston Consulting Group, in the next few years two-way trade between the USA and China and the EU and China will shrink by USD128 billion and USD30 billion respectively."

The global trade map not only changed exponentially during the height of the USA-China trade war, but it may be changing for the long term. China-USA and China-Australia tensions have forced EPCs to consider alternative sources for their manufacturing. "As a result, we have seen increased manufacturing of modules or project cargo in Thailand in 2020/2021. Vietnam has also been an expanding producer and exporter of wind tower components all over the world – indicative of a geo-shift in the sourcing of renewable energy components away from China."

Grammare added: "It is fair to say that the Southeast Asia region has the potential to be one of the biggest winners arising from the China-USA trade war."

Sanctions

Trade relations issues always have an impact on the project freight forwarding sector – some more, some less – but the industry has had to deal with those issues for years, said a spokesman for BBC Chartering. "Cargoes will still have to be moved and if one country is sanctioned, another country will pick it up. With our any port, any cargo service, we have worldwide coverage and we can steer our fleet to meet any changing demands or trade lane patterns. On an Asian perspective, we have over the past 24 months especially seen Vietnam evolving into a major exporter of structural steels, power-related modules, heat recovery steam generators (HRSG), wind towers and the like – sectors that previously have been dominated by China, Thailand and South Korea."

BBC Chartering is expecting a healthy 2021 and strong demand for 2022. "The wind energy sector – in particular in Vietnam – is and will remain very strong. In addition to renewables, small and medium-sized projects such as fossil fuel power plants, geothermal energy, smelters, refineries, LNG and mining are poised to increase," said the spokesman.

AAL transporting two giant 'cyclone vessels', each weighing over 500 tonnes, to Petronas' USD27 billion RAPID project in Malaysia.



There was uncertainty in the market when Covid-19 emerged, he said, but a mixture of contracts signed pre-pandemic, already under way, and new deals kept BBC busy. "After an initial short dip, projects gained momentum in the second half of 2020."

Not all countries in the region have been affected by Covid-19 in the same way, said Grammare. "Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia are still under strict quarantine measures (at the time of publication), whereas Vietnam has from the very start managed to keep Covid under control. As a consequence, we still have subdued markets in Southeast Asia, apart from Vietnam which is booming."

Markets in the region are expected to



It is fair to say that the Southeast Asia region has the potential to be one of the biggest winners arising from the China-USA trade war.

– Christophe Grammare, AAL Shipping

grow again this year but Vietnam was the only one to achieve a positive GDP, of 2.9 percent, in 2020 and it is targeting 6.5 percent growth for 2021.

"We are currently seeing a significant growth in the number of wind energy projects in Vietnam – especially in the last few months – with cargo components mainly produced and shipped from China. How this cycle develops going forward and affects cargo flows very much depends on the country's renewable energy targets and ongoing fiscal support for producers," said Andrew Mangan, AAL chartering manager.

Stimulus policies

Grammare pointed out that to keep their economies afloat during the pandemic, most Southeast Asian countries have adopted aggressive fiscal and monetary stimulus policies – and in some cases rather protectionist and trade-restrictive measures. "A key determinant of continued success will be the actual follow through with sufficient monetary and fiscal stimulus measures. As the region moves into the next phase of recovery and trading fortunes, local governments will be forced to reconsider their appetite for debt and confront hurdles to efficient distribution of recovery funds. This has compelled companies to overhaul their supply chain strategies – some seeking to reduce reliance on China."

At Royal Cargo, Sarmiento noted that the Chinese presence has increased in the region in terms of financial assistance and investments, particularly in the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand. "In Vietnam, the investment of Intel, an American company, has positively



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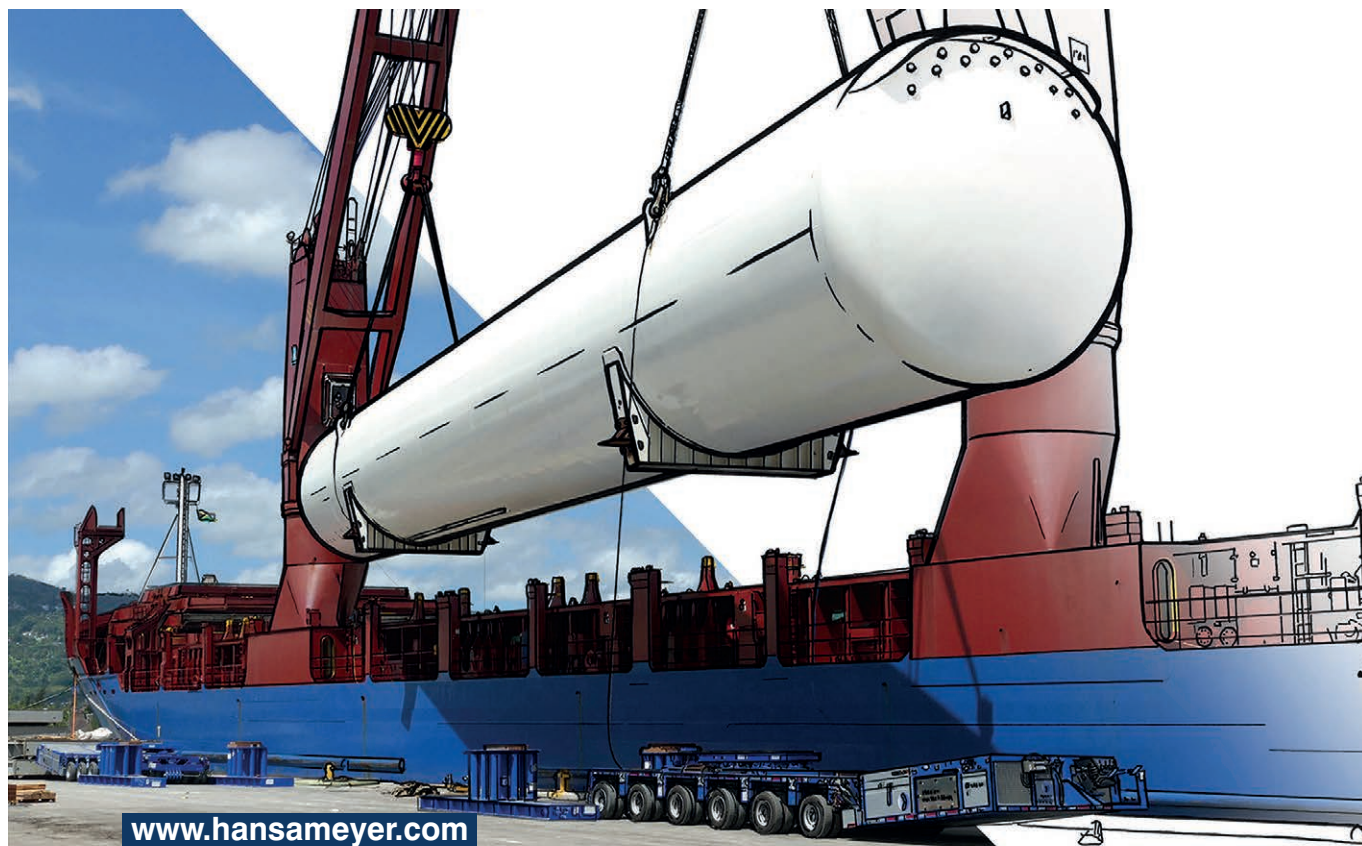
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BBC Rushmore in Port Kembla where it discharged a ship unloader, transported from Zhangjiagang for Seaway.

contributed to the economy of the country – but in general the USA has not made its presence felt in the region, unlike China.”

Whatever the ups or downs in the coming months, all are having to adapt to new ways of working.

Perfect storm

The perfect storm of Covid-19, financial market collapse and ultra-low oil prices may have been a year ago but the impact is still clear to see, said transport engineering and heavy lift company Mammoet.

“Mammoet is very closely connected to the capital expenditure side of oil and gas, among other sectors – we work for refineries and in the oil and gas business. What we have seen is a very cautious approach in the contracts and project development side of this sector,” said John Halfweeg, Mammoet’s managing director, Asia Pacific. “For those projects that we did contract, we saw them slipping in the broader sense – it has been very difficult for all parties to stick to schedules.

“For our part internally, planning was and still is very difficult, especially on the people side. Usually when we send out equipment, we have people on the ground ready to receive it. Now the people are following the equipment, and it is especially difficult getting work permits and staffing various locations. In Asia, whatever border you cross you most likely have to do two weeks’ quarantine on arrival and two weeks coming back. Adding this time required for people movement altogether makes the planning of our manpower extremely challenging, as does responding to rapidly changing situations. We have been in that ‘firefighting’ mode for a year now – and sometimes still are.”

When Covid-19 closed down construction yards in China last year, the

ripple effect quickly spread and was magnified across the region, said Halfweeg. “However, thanks to the way we are organised, we were able to rely on our local organisations, including in Thailand and Indonesia, where we could continue running projects and even saw some growth.”

Mammoet benefited from having a presence in several sectors, including renewables, power and mining, he said.

Michel Booden, sales director APAC at Mammoet, said: “We are very spread out through the region and market segments. However, the travel restrictions and quarantines have created a lot of inconvenience and additional operational expense. We have had different colleagues serving stay-home notice in hotels for two weeks – while we still have to keep these projects ongoing.”



In Asia, whatever border you cross you most likely have to do two weeks’ quarantine on arrival and two weeks coming back.

– John Halfweeg, Mammoet

Covid-19 led to a dramatic stop in a lot of negotiations and commercial discussions while people waited to see how the situation would develop, but over the past few months Mammoet has seen further traction in the market, said Booden. “People have got used to the new way of working and organised their modus operandi for future projects, so we are in discussions with several clients to finalise new work for the future. That is very positive. We are getting contracts over the line, although that in itself is challenging – typically we would fly to see the client to make sure all is tied up. Using Zoom and Teams makes it a lot easier for people to say they will get back to you, but because of this it is more difficult to get conclusive responses from them.”

Regulation changes

As Halfweeg said, the ever-changing regulations and border closures are no longer a surprise but the new normal at least for now. “Our clients are facing the same problems, including permit issues because government offices can be shut, so close cooperation is crucial for any job to be executed in the right way.”

However, companies’ flexibility is being tested. “We have seen projects signed, the ink is just dry, then we get a phone call that the client needs to discuss details. Perhaps the equipment is coming in later, is heavier or lighter – so there is a constant requirement to remain connected with the client. However, we have our own planning and schedules and there is only so much we can accommodate and absorb. Ultimately it trickles down through the entire supply chain; if a construction yard is late or the modules are not built but the equipment from our side is locked in, how do you deal with it?” Halfweeg said.

A lot is about relationships, he added. “We would say, if a client is willing to share openly its schedule, that makes it a lot easier for us to plan. At the same time, we do realise that we are in a very volatile world and things are still changing even with vaccine rollout at the moment.”

Productivity in ports is slower due to Covid-19 restrictions, leading to congestion, and more pressure is put on crews to perform jobs on board during port calls, said BBC Chartering. “Of course, more measures have been put in place to ensure the safety and health of crew on board and to avoid quarantine restrictions. Good communication with all parties involved – owners, crew, vendors, BBC colleagues around the world – is essential and has helped to tackle those issues,” said the spokesman.

Some cargoes are being delayed due to port congestion, lack of tonnage and space, and “shippers getting to grips with the new freight rate levels that impact their budgets”, he said. “Any delays will put more pressure on 2022 since tonnage and space availability will remain tight for the coming two-to-three years.”

For BBC, the cargo portfolio remains almost the same but with strong demand from the wind energy sector. “The Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore continue to invest heavily in rail transport systems ranging from commuter trains to subways and LRTs. A new airport in Manila with rail connection into the city is on the drawing board and airport upgrades are under way in Indonesia.

“The high demand in batteries for cars is increasing the demand for nickel, which in turn has a strong impact on clean mining and nickel smelters. The power generation sector – hydro/gas/oil/coal/geothermal – will also continue to play an important part in continuing the efforts to build uninterrupted grids in Southeast Asia countries.”

Battery demand

He added: “The increased demand for clean battery-powered vehicles will also significantly increase power demand in developed countries like Singapore or Malaysia, fuelling the need for further power generation facilities. That said, renewables are certainly the sector that looks most promising, but also the oil and gas sector is coming back. And yes, from a carrier’s perspective, we are optimistic for the coming two years.”

Royal Cargo’s current work is different to its normal portfolio, said Sarmiento. “There is more intra-ASEAN trade – trains and transformers from Indonesia, wind turbine blades from Vietnam, semi-conductors and car parts from the Philippines and Malaysia, for example – more Chinese investments and projects and more ad hoc and medium-sized projects. We have yet to see the usual big ticket industrial projects, although we are working on some right now.”

The company is heavily involved in the railway and construction of elevated highway in the Philippines’ ‘Build Build Build’ programme, and has signed contracts for heavy lift transportation and lifting of girders and coaches. It is also working on loadouts of modules to Japan, a petrochemical plant job, along with LNG, solar and wind energy transport projects.

“The challenges are the rising freight rates, the selective lockdowns forcing port workers and Customs employees to have



Mammoet transporting heavy gas turbines in Indonesia.

skeleton forces, travel restrictions and strict permitting,” said Sarmiento.

“The promising sectors are in LNG, renewables and infrastructure, mainly due to the needs of our region being composed of developing countries. The shift to LNG away from coal, the trend towards renewables and the construction of roads, airport, ports and bridges, are marks of the focus of the region.”

Royal Cargo is investing USD40 million in its new South Hub in Manila as well as trucks, trailers, cranes, refrigerated warehousing and equipment. It has also boosted its coverage to the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia – this also includes its new office in Papua New Guinea which is focused on LNG and mining projects in the country.

AAL said it is running shipments of mining components out of Southeast Asia for the USD2.6 billion Iron Bridge magnetite project and its mine-to-port pipeline south of Port Hedland, Western Australia. It also transported South Korean-engineered petrochemical plant components from Pyeongtaek to Map Ta Phut. The units, installed at one of Thailand’s largest integrated producers of olefins and polyolefins – for industries like agriculture,

automotive, building and infrastructure, and medical – comprised more than 15,000 cu m of items, the largest of which was a pressure vessel measuring 86 m in length and weighing close to 360 tonnes.

AAL also transported heavy lift project cargo from Taiwan to Tanjung Setapa in Malaysia for installation at the RAPID project in Pengerang, southern Johor.

“Even for more general cargo commodities, such as steel, we have seen an emerging pattern of Australian or US customers sourcing within Southeast Asia – away from China – mostly Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia,” said Mangan.

Clean fuel project

One of the bigger contracts signed by Mammoet last year was for the Thai Oil clean fuel project, now under way. Others include the transportation and lifting for the Linde gasification plant on Jurong Island, work that has included bringing a giant crawler into Singapore and carrying out road modifications on the island.

Halfweg said: “I do think Asia is on the rebound, assisted by the higher price on the oil and gas side. But also the industry at large is realising that this is the new normal – let us deal with it and look for regular business again. A lot of things that have been put on ice are now being defrosted and we are busy on tendering and asset planning.”

Asia has always been competitive but the pandemic has made everyone even more eager to get some work and keep busy, said Booden. “So prices are still under a fair amount of pressure. But overall, we are optimistic that it is still looking positive for the region.”

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Any delays will put more pressure on 2022 since tonnage and space availability will remain tight for the coming two-to-three years.

– BBC Chartering



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Repercussions pile up after Suez blockage

The massive containership *Ever Given* fell stranded crosswise in a narrow section of the Suez Canal on March 23, blocking all traffic for a week. The ensuing disruption to global trade has left all parties to the supply chain considering their options, writes *Gregory DL Morris*.

Starclass reflects on Eemslift Hendrika's traumatic rescue

The heavy lift vessel *Eemslift Hendrika* ran into trouble approximately 60 nautical miles west of Ålesund in early April. The Norwegian Coastal Administration said that the ship, loaded with vessels, sent out an emergency message on April 5 stating that the cargoes on board had shifted in rough seas causing the ship to list.

The crew evacuated the vessel and a salvage operation was initiated by the Norwegian Coastal Administration in cooperation with Starclass Yacht Transport and Amasus Shipping. Salvage crews managed to get on board the drifting vessel and connected it to two tugboats. The ship was successfully towed safely to the port of Flatholmen in Ålesund.

Starclass Yacht Transport founder Jan te Siepe reflected on the narrowly avoided disaster. "When I started my company – Starclass Yacht Transport – in 1987, I was the captain of my own vessel. Back then I also experienced heavy storms and high waves, but I never experienced a situation like the *Eemslift Hendrika* did. When the first visuals of the *Hendrika* in distress started coming in, I could not believe my eyes.

"The images/clips of her struggling against the storm and high waves under the angle of 45 degrees were being broadcasted all over Europe. It was rough, to say the least. Our thoughts went out to the crew who were rescued by helicopter. It was clear the cargo [the boats] was exposed to the extreme forces of nature. For a long time we were not sure whether or not they would hold."

The deck cargo consisted of a motor yacht, sailing yacht, two smaller fishing catamarans and a 280-ton (254-tonne) boat used for salmon fishing. Below deck, another fishing catamaran was stowed. The ship was also loaded with four heavy machines that were booked as extra cargo.

Due to the storm, two of these machines broke loose and hit the ballast tank, said Starclass. This caused a major flood in the hold, which in turn, caused the *Hendrika* to lose her balance and start to list.

Te Siepe continued: "In the days that followed the wind did not ease down and the waves were still 12-15 m high. In the meantime the last three crew members and the captain were taken off the ship. They programmed the autopilot to keep the *Hendrika* on course, hoping to save the ship and her cargo. But after a few hours the main engine gave in. The ship became adrift and it seemed she was losing her battle against these forces of nature. It was hard to stay positive and keep on hoping for a safe and positive ending."

The larger fishing boat had slid overboard, taking the crane arm and the chains that had kept it in place with it. The boat had floated close to *Eemslift Hendrika* with hardly any damage, said Starclass. The company added that the boat owner organised a salvage company to tow the unit to the port of Florø.

"During all of this we were in close contact with the owner who is relieved, impressed, and happy that it turned out this way after all... It is incredible that, except for the fishing boat, the rest of the cargo endured these extreme circumstances successfully," said te Siepe. "The whole crew, led by our loadmaster, did an excellent job regarding lashing the yachts."

Meanwhile, the tugboats arrived to salvage *Eemslift Hendrika*. At this point, the ship had been adrift for over 48 hours. Te Siepe continued: "We were extremely relieved when we received confirmation that the connection of the lines were made and she was being towed. To stabilise her, the hold was emptied by use of pumps on route to the port of Ålesund."

He added: "We are grateful and relieved that the crew and cargo made it all in good health and that it ended the way it did."

Evergreen, the charterer of the containership *Ever Given* that blocked all trade through the Suez Canal for a week, issued a statement on April 14 saying the shipowner had "received a claim from the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) for USD916 million on April 7, including USD300 million for salvage and USD300 million for loss of reputation, and so on.

"During the meeting between the shipowner and the SCA on April 12, no consensus was reached as the SCA's claims are largely unsupported and lack any detailed justification. The following day, the SCA filed an application to arrest the vessel and this has been granted by the court."

In turn the owner of the vessel, Kisen Kaisha, declared general average, putting shippers on the hook. At the time of publication, crew members remained onboard and were reported to be in good health and fair spirits.

Backlog cleared

On April 3, five days after the *Ever Given* was dislodged, the last of the roughly 400 vessels that had been delayed by the blockage had cleared the canal. In a curt announcement Lt Gen Osama Rabie, chairman of the SCA, stated simply that, "all waiting ships crossed the shipping course today".

Even so, the repercussions have grown to affect global maritime, supply chain, insurance and risk management. The impounding of the ship and declaration of general average have had vessel owners and operators, as well as shippers and freight forwarders, digging out their insurance policies and calling their brokers to reassess their coverage – or lack of the same.

More broadly, shippers, forwarders,

Lawsuit filed after lift boat lost off Louisiana

The US Coast Guard (USCG) in New Orleans reported on April 13 that it “and multiple good Samaritan vessels rescued six people from a capsized 129 ft (39.3 m) commercial lift vessel and are searching for more, 8 miles (12.9 km) south of Port Fourchon.

“Coast Guard watch standers received an emergency position indicating radio beacon notification at 4:30 pm of a distressed vessel,”

during a heavy storm. USCG suspended the search on April 19; five bodies have been recovered, leaving eight crew members of the Seacor Power still missing.

On April 22 the first lawsuit against Seacor Marine was filed by the spouse of one of the victims. Salvage work continues.

A lift boat is a work boat that supports offshore

energy platforms. It has a conventional workboat hull with cranes and open space for large equipment, and also three vertical legs that can be used to jack the vessel clear of the water at the work site. Seacor Power could work in water 195 ft (59.4 m) deep. The legs tower over the vessel when it is floating, raising the center of gravity and making it vulnerable to high winds and waves.



consignees and third-party logistics managers are reassessing their route planning and supply chains for both flexibility and resilience.

General average

“General average is a longstanding principle of maritime law that requires all parties to a sea venture – the shipowner and its customers – to share a proportionate amount of the costs associated with saving a ship after a major casualty,” explained the International Federation of Freight Forwarders (FIATA).

The principle was codified in the York Antwerp Rules of 1890, which states three conditions for such a declaration: the danger to the ship must be common and imminent; there must be a voluntary jettison of a portion of the cargo to save the rest; and the attempt to avoid the danger must be successful.

“General average losses are commonly included in standard marine insurance policies and this situation highlights the importance of ensuring that appropriate insurance cover is taken out,” FIATA stressed. “Shippers without appropriate insurance cover will be vulnerable to losing their cargo altogether if they do not pay the required cash bond.

“Where no insurance is in place,” FIATA continued, “the cargo owner will need a cash deposit to obtain the goods. In some cases, as seen in the 2018 case of the Maersk Honam, that can be a substantial sum, exceeding more than half of the value of a shipper’s original cargo interest.”

The Ever Given incident has become a catalyst for broad reassessments of route planning and supply chains. For example, “the Suez Canal blockage provides an opportunity to... explore ways to improve coordination to reduce congestion and delays at shared infrastructure like canals and ports,” according to a paper written by Mikael Lind, Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE) and Chalmers University of Technology and eight other shipping sector experts.

Efficiency proposals

The authors presented their statistical analysis of wait times and queueing in the Suez Canal, and extrapolated some ideas for more efficient procedures at any maritime bottleneck.

“The Suez Canal blockage should make the global maritime and broader supply chain community reflect on the need to become more agile through a higher level of visibility on the situation at capacity-

constrained chokepoints,” the authors wrote.

“The first-come, first-served basis is the modus operandi applicable for many capacity-constrained zones, especially ports and canals. This leads to ‘hurry up, then wait’ practices and consequently a wastage in fuel and unnecessary emissions. This should change in the interest of the industry, its customers and the environment, with due consideration to contractual provisions.”

The authors went so far as to suggest, “there might even be possibilities to establish processes and services to ‘jump the queue’ if agreements are established for passage slots to be exchanged between different parties planning to utilise a canal or other chokepoints. The same holds true for destination ports.

“This would then form the foundation for enabling the shipping industry to inform subsequent actors in the value chain about arrival times.

“Ports and terminals would be better able to plan unloading and loading times and inform transport coordinators, trucking companies, barge and railway operators as well as importers and cargo owners.”



The driving force aiming to make Hareket a global leader

Ahmet Altunkum (pictured), the chairperson of the board of directors of Turkey's Hareket Heavy Lifting and Project Transportation, stepped into the world of heavy transportation in 1997. *Sophie Barnes* discusses the company's journey.

At the end of the 1990s Hareket foresaw that demand for heavy lifting and project logistics services in Turkey would increase. The company, and chairperson Ahmet Altunkum, recognised that the country lacked the equipment to meet these demands and invested accordingly. In lockstep, both Altunkum and Hareket made their first strides in the industry.

Significant milestones

Since then, there have been many significant milestones in Altunkum's 24 years in the business. He pinpointed an important crawler crane project in Azerbaijan in 2005 – activities at an offshore fabrication yard lasted for two-

and-a-half years and marked Hareket's first long-term heavy lift project.

Another turning point for Altunkum came in 2009. "We made an important investment in equipment for wind energy projects, in addition to my decision to establish a wind assembly team."

Looking back across his experience in the industry, Altunkum considered how the sector has changed over time: "In today's world, the industries

have had to establish facilities in uniquely large sizes to reduce unit costs and enhance efficiency. This obligation has required larger modules and sections to be transported, lifted and installed, which resulted in creative and innovative solutions for lifting, transportation and installation services."

But in any career spanning more than two decades, there are also lows to accompany the highs and the events of 2020

certainly threw up challenges for every part of the supply chain. "2020 was a challenging year for the entire world," reflected Altunkum.

A silver lining, however, was that ongoing projects both at home and abroad – including power plant projects in Turkey – meant Hareket "spent 2020 working intensely".

Low capacity usage

Nevertheless, "since some large projects were suspended, our heavy transportation works were suspended. Therefore, we had to use our capacity at a very low rate," noted Altunkum.

Remaining confident, Altunkum said: "As long as energy and large infrastructure investments are made, heavy lifting and project transportation will continue to serve the business opportunities in our country and neighbouring countries."

"Thanks to their capacities, experiences and geographic proximity, Turkish firms operating in these fields have great advantages in offering services to the large investments that are being made in neighbouring

Turkish firms operating in these fields [energy and large infrastructure] have great advantages in offering services to the large investments that are being made in neighbouring countries.

– Ahmet Altunkum, Hareket



Hareket was involved in the launch of Damen Shipyards Group's first Fast Crew Supplier (FCS) 7011 at the manufacturer's facilities in Antalya during January.

Our goal is to be among the top five largest companies in our industry worldwide within the following five years.

– Ahmet Altunkum, Hareket

heavy lifting and project logistics fields. We are known for our capacity to offer the projects that we have undertaken on time, at reasonable cost and through high service standards, as well as our innovative approaches."

Leading position

"We will continue to work non-stop to maintain our leading position in the industry and to get the same position in the target countries."

This includes Central Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries. "Our goal is to be among the top five largest companies in our industry worldwide within the following five years. We want to go beyond being a regional power and become a global leader," Altunkum asserted.

Altunkum's advice for anyone at the beginning of his or her career in the world of heavy lift and project logistics is: "Fully embrace your work, concentrate on constantly improving yourself and keep your shoulder to the wheel."

HLPFI

countries. We anticipate that we will further increase our business volume in our region, where large-scale investments are being made."

Hareket stands to benefit and Altunkum believes that there are a number of reasons that the

company will be able to maintain its leading position in the sector. "We are a company that prioritises customer satisfaction under any condition, and we aim to complete the works safely and on time.

"With our creative

engineering, professional project management system, state-of-the-art heavy lifting and transportation fleet and the contributions of our professional team, we produce turnkey solutions in line with the customer demands in

A company in strong demand

Despite the difficulties of the past 12 months, Hareket was able to execute a number of important projects. It handled the mechanical and electrical installation of 63 turbines at the Syvash RES power plant in Ukraine; continued assembly work at the Oman Duqm refinery; has been actively involved in the nuclear power plant sector; and completed many wind energy projects in Turkey.

Outside of the energy arena, Hareket has also been active in Turkey's shipbuilding sector; in the latter half

of 2020 the heavy transport specialist moved two passenger ships, weighing 6,200 tonnes each, to floating docks at the Tersan Tersanecilik's shipyard in Yalova. Each passenger ship measured 124 m long by 22 m wide and needed to be moved 250 m from the shipyard area.

According to Hareket, the move required 200 axle lines of SPMTs and conventional hydraulic modular trailers. It took four days to move the ships, which will be named Havila Capella and Havila Castor, and

delivered to Havila Kystruten.

Work from this sector continued into 2021 when Hareket was involved in the launch of Damen Shipyards Group's first Fast Crew Supplier (FCS) 7011 at the manufacturer's facilities in Antalya during January.

Measuring 73.6 m long and weighing 410 tonnes, Damen said that it is the largest vessel to be launched in Antalya Free Zone.

Hareket deployed conventional trailers and SPMTs to move the unit from the building shed – the hydraulic trailers were used in a 2 x 24 axle line combination, as were the SPMTs. Two crawler cranes, with a tandem lifting capacity of 600 tonnes, were then utilised to gently place the FCS 7011 in the water.

Market hotspots indicate strong **bounceback**

The pandemic turned project cargo activity "into a spot market", according to Erhardt Projectos.

Covid-19 hit Spain hard last year with many industries suffering as a result. There were, naturally, consequences for the project cargo community – but more than 12 months since the pandemic took hold, optimism is returning. Megan Ramsay reports.

The pandemic, and the containment measures necessary to minimise its impact, altered the evolution of the global economy during 2020. In Spain, it resulted in a sharp fall in GDP, a significant and persistent increase in public debt and the unemployment rate, and a general reduction in activity – mainly affecting the hotel, catering and transportation industries, observed Igor Muñiz, general manager at Erhardt Proyectos. The pandemic also affected project cargo activity, “turning it into a spot market”, he added.


Indeed, the virus and countermeasures have had an impact on the planning and execution of projects across Spain since last March. The situation created “a very complicated environment for the development of projects”, said José Luis Salamanca, sales director Spain at Mammoet in Madrid.

Activity levels

However, he noted: “By a daily follow-up of this crisis we have been able to succeed in keeping every project active and on time, providing our standard level of service to our clients even in such difficult circumstances. That meant that our level of activity has not been deeply affected.

“Of course there are more day-to-day challenges such as the technical complexity of a civil project, the sea transportation of an oversized item, or the logistical challenges of a power plant located in a remote area in Africa – but these are the challenges we are prepared for and willing to face in our daily activity,” he said.

Several trends have driven Mammoet’s activity in Spain over the past year: “The works performed in ports and port infrastructure have been one of the main segments for us in Spain, constituting a



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The port of Bilbao has a great opportunity to act as a logistics and manufacturing hub for supporting structures and other components used in offshore wind energy generation.

significant portion of our activity. Renewable energy has also been a field of increasing demand, especially for us in the offshore wind industry, while the civil construction market has been a significant part of our activity abroad.”

Salamanca also mentioned the assembly and installation of ship-to-shore cranes at the ports of Cádiz and Tangier, and the load-out of floating foundations for offshore wind turbines (floaters).

Sarens has also long been active in the Spanish market and has executed a number of projects in the country recently. It mobilised a Terex CC9800 to a Navantia shipyard to support an offshore wind energy project, and a Liebherr LR11350 was stationed at the Astican shipyard for another heavy lifting operation. It was also called on to assist with the installation of a new hangar roof at Barajas airport.

Kleopatra Kyrimi, group marketing and communications manager at Sarens, believes that 2021 will be negatively impacted by a lack of oil and gas activity. The country’s onshore wind energy market, which has been a hotbed of activity for the company in preceding years, might also start slowing down. “The peak seen during the last years is now gone and local crane suppliers are covering the market,” she explained.

Spain currently ranks sixth among the world’s greenest nations, behind Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark and Slovenia. It has become a leading player in the

renewable onshore and offshore industries, which (alongside oil and gas refinery, power generation, nuclear infrastructures, rail, mining and port equipment) are key sources of business for Erhardt Projectos.

Green growth

In 2020, Spain’s renewable industry grew more than ever before – 12 percent more than in the previous two years, according to Muñoz. He is confident that 2021 will bring further growth for the sector as both businesses and governments continue to push for the development of green energies.

For instance, major energy multinationals such as Siemens Gamesa, Acciona, Iberdrola and Naturgy are promoting renewable energies through investments in photovoltaic plants and wind farms.

Examples include Iberdrola’s development of more than 1,800 MW of wind and photovoltaic power generation in the Velilla region of Castilla y León over the coming years. Iberdrola is also installing

1,300 MW of photovoltaic power in Extremadura and intends to double its renewable capacity in that region to 5,500 MW by 2023.

Furthermore, it has plans for new photovoltaic plants in Valencia and Alicante, and is leading a project in Aragón to produce ‘green’ hydrogen for heavy road transport vehicle fleets, buses, light private and industrial vehicles, and the railway sector, as well as projected airport use.

Iberdrola said it is “certain that the energy transition can be a driving force in the transformation of the industrial sector and for a green recovery in the economy and the job market”. To achieve this, it has launched an unprecedented investment plan worth EUR75 billion (USD89.3 billion) for the 2020-2025 period, of which EUR14.3 billion (USD17 billion) will be spent in Spain.

Rising renewables

According to Iberdrola chairman Ignacio Galán, the company’s renewable energy capacity will rise from 32 GW in 2019 to 60 GW in 2025, with 26 GW of onshore wind, 16 GW of solar and 14 GW of hydro. The remainder will be offshore wind.

Galicia-based Greenalia, meanwhile, announced in September 2020 that it had submitted planning and environmental applications for four new floating wind farms to the southeast of Gran Canaria, in addition to its nearby 50 MW Gofio project

It is certain that the energy transition can be a driving force in the transformation of the industrial sector and for a green recovery in the economy and the job market.

– Iberdrola

– taking its total capacity in the Canary Islands to 250 MW.

Greenalia said it is “endorsing its commitment to floating wind energy as one of the renewable energy sources that will lead the green growth in Europe over coming years, where 80 percent of the offshore wind resource is located at depths of more than 60 m”.

In January, the company won 13.5 percent of the total capacity allocated for wind technology in an auction held by Spain’s Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge. Greenalia will have nine onshore wind farms under construction in Galicia during 2021.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Jaber Bringas, managing director of Sparber Transport, affirmed that Spain is, and will remain for some time, one of the world’s top exporters of cargoes relating to the wind energy sector.

“30 years ago ships were filled with steel products; today they are full of wind energy equipment,” he said. “This will last for a few more years – until the market is saturated. Regular container lines have got squarely into this type of traffic, as well as the usual breakbulk ships.”

Wind turbine exports

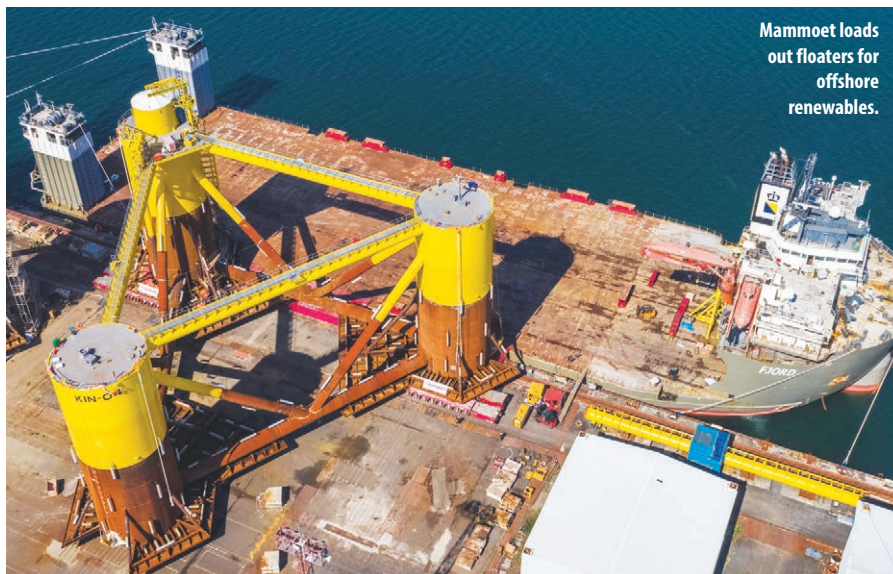
According to data from the Spanish Wind Energy Association (Asociación Empresarial Eólica – AEE), in 2019 Spain was the third-largest exporter of wind turbines in the world. A significant proportion of the components are manufactured in the hinterland of the port of Bilbao.

“Currently, Spain has a strong industrial and business fabric focused on offshore wind energy,” confirmed Inmaculada Ugarteche, director at UniportBilbao. “Spain’s presence in this market is indisputable: it has positioned itself as one of the main European hubs of knowledge and international supply.

“In this context, for the port of Bilbao the production of large fixed and floating structures, and of various wind turbine components, represents a great opportunity to act as a logistics and manufacturing hub for supporting structures and other components used in offshore wind energy generation... especially when the dimensions of such items make their transport to the port over land impossible.”

Haizea Wind, Navacel, Siemens Gamesa and Acciona are just a few examples of manufacturers that use Bilbao.

There are also new sustainable energy projects under way within the port. For instance, Petronor (the Basque subsidiary of Repsol) is constructing a hydrogen plant on



a 46,700 sq m plot that will produce synthetic fuels from ‘green’ hydrogen – created using renewable energy.

“The scope of this project will broaden in the future to produce gas from urban waste products such as paper, cardboard, plastic and textiles. This gas will be used as fuel for the refinery itself,” Ugarteche said.

Given the continuing evolution of the green energy sector, project cargo service providers cannot afford to stand still. Muñiz said that in order to keep up with the pace of development and growth of those companies that require project logistics services, Erhardt Projectos is progressively adapting its capabilities and services.



Despite being a difficult time for everyone, 2020 was a year of opportunities for Erhardt Projectos.

– Igor Muñiz, Erhardt Projectos

The strategy appears to be successful. “Despite being a difficult time for everyone, 2020 was a year of opportunities for Erhardt Projectos,” Muñiz continued.

Explaining in more detail, Muñiz said: “Erhardt Projectos reinforced its ‘Boutique & Unique’ strategy to offer a tailored response to this new scenario. Our strategy has allowed us to become a supplier and/or business partner at an extremely difficult time for everyone.

“We have reinforced our freight and engineering division with multifaceted and flexible professional profiles to pre-empt and adapt to each customer’s operational and business needs, providing them with customised logistics solutions that give a timely and year-round response to an unstable market.”

Digitisation opportunity

Like many others in the logistics community, Erhardt has made the most of a disrupted year to digitise its in-house processes. It has refreshed and extended its digital presence to ensure ongoing contact with customers through videoconferencing, its website and social media. It has also launched a ‘customer area’ to facilitate and streamline the monitoring of the progress of any operations that clients have contracted.

Muñiz said: “We are boosting our new business line involving digital solutions for supporting our customers as they digitise their key business processes (procurement, sales and operations) to become more competitive in today’s environment and guarantee their future sustainability.”

Noting that “customers have to adapt and we have to adapt with them” in order to survive, he continued: “We want to be recognised as a global yardstick in the

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Bilbao plans for brighter future

Last year was a difficult time for the port community at Bilbao, owing to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic and the ongoing stevedoring negotiations, explained Inmaculada Ugarteche, director at UniportBilbao.

As a result, conventional (breakbulk) cargo dropped by some 20 percent. Machinery alone fell by 12 percent, on the back of an 18 percent decline in steel production across Spain.

Businesses are still looking to the future, though, and projects are under way to improve operations at the port. One example is the expansion of Consignaciones Toro y Betolaza's concession by about 70,150 sq m for its ro-ro and conventional cargo activity at Pier A-6.

The Port Authority of Bilbao, for its part, will expand one of its piers to create an extra 231 m of berthing line and almost 50,000 sq m of new surface area, in addition to the 340,000 sq m first-phase urbanisation of the Central Breakwater.

"All of this will enable us to welcome new strategic projects," Ugarteche said.

In parallel with these developments, both highway and rail intermodal connections are being improved. One project will be a siding for goods trains, which will increase the capacity of the rail network.

Another development relates to the Mediterranean–Cantabrian corridor (N-240) in the province of Bizkaia. Falling within the framework of the Port Accessibility Fund, it will create sidings for special transport combinations.

Overall, Ugarteche said: "The outlook for 2021 will happen through the gradual recovery of confidence and growth in demand – the latter depending on the development of the pandemic and the economy in Spain, Europe and globally."

She also believes that Brexit, with all the additional Customs requirements and complexities it has brought for trade with the UK, could be an opportunity for breakbulk maritime transport in that the port of Bilbao already has in place paperless procedures that streamline imports and exports.

As expected, the first quarter of 2021 has been somewhat atypical due to the instability caused by the increase in charters, whereby our operations have been experiencing something akin to a rollercoaster ride.

– Igor Muñiz, Erhardt Projectos



Sources of business for Erhardt Projectos include renewable onshore and offshore industries, oil and gas refinery, power generation, nuclear infrastructures, rail, mining and port equipment.

development of digital solutions through our digital platform, which customers can use to access digital micro-services that will help them to strengthen their competitiveness, optimise their operating costs and generate more value for their own customers through logistics.

"Digitisation is a must; no company that is not digitised will be in the market in the future," he emphasised.

On the rise

While there are signs of a return to normality, the growth of the Spanish economy in 2021 is still likely to be slower than initially expected; the recovery of the country's GDP to pre-Covid figures will take a while yet.

According to Muñiz: "This will mean that there will be fewer opportunities in our local market. As expected, the first quarter of 2021 has been somewhat atypical due to the instability caused by the increase in charters, whereby our operations have been experiencing something akin to a rollercoaster ride," he added.

But overall, Muñiz feels that the project cargo market is on the rise. He added that Erhardt Projectos intends to continue consolidating its position and growing in various sectors over the course of this year.

At Mammoet, the company expects its activity to remain at its current level for the rest of 2021, satisfying ongoing demand from the renewable energy, power generation and infrastructure sectors.

The company will continue to carry out the assembly of ship-to-shore cranes and port relocations in which it is presently involved. Various transport and installation projects in North and West African countries are also among the projects it is set to undertake this year.

Salamanca said: "Civil, port activities and offshore renewables will continue being the main field for opportunities in Spain in the short and medium term – with potential growth of projects linked to public and governmental initiatives, given the circumstances and need for stimulation of the local industry and economy."

"I believe we all expect that in the medium term the current uncertainty related to big projects will be cleared and the level of activity, mainly in terms of oil and gas-related project cargo, will recover," he added.

There is no doubt that Covid-19 has dramatically altered not only the global economy but also the way business is done – the acceleration of digitisation being one example of that. Bringas believes acknowledging the new reality of the project cargo market, without undue optimism or pessimism, is a must.

Looking ahead, he said: "In my humble opinion, the rest of 2021 has a lot to do with the enormous efforts that were made during 2020. It will not be easy, but the hope of a vaccine for Covid-19 brings in turn the hope of a shot in the arm for the global economy."

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How the UK's freeport model will work

The UK's freeport model may not offer a 'big bang' of changes for Customs processes but, in the long term, could improve ease of doing business and be used as a vehicle to support energy transition and decarbonisation. *Sophie Barnes reports.*

The UK government has confirmed the location of eight freeports that will be established in England – at East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe and Harwich, Humber, Liverpool City Region, Plymouth, Solent, Thames and Teesside.

Speaking on a Multimodal Connect webinar, James Patterson-Waterston, head of cities and infrastructure at Vivid Economics, explained that the UK's "unique model" was borne out of the government's analysis of what works at other freeports around the world, as well as the success and failures of various other UK policies, such as enterprise zones.

The hybrid model that

emerged combines Customs zones with tax reliefs, planning freedoms and a primary focus on regeneration and innovation.

There has been some criticism, however. Robert Keen, director general of the British International Freight Association (BIFA), said: "To date, BIFA has been indifferent to this proposed development and queries whether freeports will provide new advantages compared with the existing Customs Special Procedures, which from January 1, 2021, no longer need a guarantee to operate."

Certainly, Patterson-Waterston noted that, from a Customs perspective, "the

incentives offered are not dissimilar to the types of incentives you [small and medium-sized enterprises] can already make use of".

Gradual change

He elaborated: "I do not think people should assume there is some kind of big bang just around Customs that will make things immediately easier. This will be a process by which we gradually improve ease of doing business and facilitate things in a quicker and more efficient way."

He added that there will not suddenly be a new type of mechanism for these incentives, but the critical difference will be

that they will be more accessible.

"So whereas the types of existing incentives mechanisms are overwhelmingly used by large businesses or specialist businesses – partly because of the costs and complexity – the whole point of freeports is that you can access these mechanisms purely by the fact you are located in the freeport. So we expect some of the barriers, especially for SMEs, to fall."

The big bang, continued Patterson-Waterston, comes from tax and investment incentives. These are "extraordinarily generous for those firms that will be investing within tax sites within freeports", he explained.

There is also a big push from the government for the freeports to support the energy transition and decarbonisation.



The UK is the world's largest market for the development and deployment of offshore wind and Freeport East sits right at its heart.

Courtesy of the Port of Felixstowe

Tim Morris, ceo of UK Major Ports Group (UKMPG), explained that in addition to the green initiatives that the port deploys itself [the electrification of port equipment, for example], the port can act as a location for green energy infrastructure in its own right.

"That might be renewable generation, hydrogen generation or processing, or it could be battery storage", he said.

The UK's renewable energy industry is already well developed, and it looks set to benefit further from the regulatory changes. One of the successful bids – Freeport East,

which combines the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich – demonstrated this clearly in its ambition to become a strategic hub that serves the offshore wind industry.

Wind prospects

Speaking at the end of February 2021 George Kieffer, chairman of the Freeport East project board, explained: "The UK is the world's largest market for the development and deployment of offshore wind and Freeport East sits right at its heart.

"The southern North Sea is the most densely populated area for offshore wind projects, home to 52 percent of the UK's entire operational fleet with more developments planned. Securing freeport status will help attract additional investment in this vital sector, helping to regenerate an area in need of levelling-up and delivering on government's targets for net-zero emissions."

However, critics of the freeports concept argue that

There are legitimate fears among ports in many of the devolved administrations that they will miss out and be left behind.

– Richard Ballantyne, BPA

instead of levelling-up, they will only encourage a relocation of activity or jobs, rather than providing a boost to the economy or a generation of new opportunities.

At the moment, the devolved nations of the UK – Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – have not moved ahead with freeports to the same extent as seen in England. Nevertheless, panellists on the Multimodal Connect webinar noted that the concept is very much in the pipeline.

As it stands, it is not clear what iteration of the freeport concept will be deployed in Wales and Northern Ireland, however. Morris said that there are ongoing discussions between Westminster, Cardiff and Belfast, with the governments keen to explore the potential role freeports can play in these nations.

In Scotland, progress has been made with a 'green port' model that will adapt the UK's freeport proposal, offering a package of tax and Customs reliefs, with requirements to commit to adopting fair working practices and contribute to the country's transition to a net-zero emissions economy.

Although, concerns have been raised about the UK's hesitancy to approve a number of the Scottish government's key criteria.

The British Ports Association (BPA) noted: "The industry is market led and a level playing field for ports across the administrations to compete with one another is critical. Unless timescales are aligned, there could be a greater risk of economic displacement away from areas waiting for a freeport

designation. This would be to the detriment of UK ports and the coastal communities in which they operate."

Richard Ballantyne, BPA ceo, commented: "There are legitimate fears among ports in many of the devolved administrations that they will miss out and be left behind."

The more immediate concern for ports across the UK is the issue of congestion. Trading platform Container xChange noted in March that post-Brexit trade disruption and ongoing congestion are causing critical build-ups of containers at the country's ports.

Port congestion

"The UK's leading gateway terminals for container traffic suffered congestion for much of 2020, prompting carriers to cut some calls and ship cargo in from European hubs via the Channel Tunnel, ferry services and feeder services instead," said Dr Johannes Schlingmeier, ceo of Container xChange.

"Based on the build-up of containers at ports in 2021, it seems the situation has further deteriorated. We are now seeing critical levels of boxes building up at Southampton and Felixstowe. Post-Brexit cross-Channel shipments are more complicated under dual-Customs regimes and this could be a factor in logistics bottlenecks."

Critics of the Brexit deal have argued that the cooperation agreement with the EU does little to streamline border processes compared with no agreement, meaning traders now face more friction than they did under EU membership.

To ease some of the Customs formalities, however, the UK government decided to phase-in requirements for imports from the EU, and many phases have now been delayed until January 2022. The move came in early March amid reports that Border Control Post infrastructure in key ports was not ready for the previous deadline.

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The whole point of freeports is that you can access these mechanisms purely by the fact you are located in the freeport.

– James Patterson-Waterston,
Vivid Economics

Recovering markets fire up demand for trailers

Trailer manufacturers have reported strong demand for their products over the past 12 months. The route ahead looks promising, too, owing to energy and construction sector growth, although concerns have been raised over raw material costs. *Megan Gildea reports.*



Johan van de Water, manager marketing and communications at Nootboom, expressed concerns over component availability at present; the manufacturer is building its inventory of scarce components to ensure it meets client obligations.

"We are also seeing a strong increase in prices for components. For instance, steel prices have risen already by 15 to 30 percent," he added.

Despite the disruption over the past year, van de Water said that Nootboom experienced a strong fourth quarter in 2020, which continued into the first quarter of this year. "For us, demand for almost all products was good."

In February this year, Nootboom unveiled the OSDS-48-03V(EBW) extendable lightweight semi low-loader with wheel wells. The three-axle semi low-loader with self-tracking axles has a payload of

up to 39 tonnes at 80 km/h and is designed with construction machinery in mind.

Transport efficiency

"Now you can transport machines where you normally have to use a more expensive low-bed trailer. But besides that, it also offers much more transport efficiency and also advantages in respect of transport regulations," van de Water explained.

The wheel wells allow for

larger types of wheel loaders and articulated dump trucks to be transported. The asymmetric shape of the wheel wells also makes them easier to unload. In addition, the short distance between the first and second axles boosts manoeuvrability.

Nootboom added that the OSDS-48-03V(EBW) can also handle divisible loads, containers, and tracked construction machines. The wheel wells can be closed, creating a flat loading floor.



Nootboom's EURO-119-35.



Scheuerle has enhanced its UltralightCombi trailer line.

Carsten Karkowski, global marketing director at Germany-based TII Group, said that 2020 proved to be a good year. "We increased sales and profit considerably versus 2019, so demand for our products increased on an already high level," he added.

Early in 2021, Scheuerle – a TII Group subsidiary – enhanced its UltralightCombi trailer line. The manufacturer's U10/U11/U12 modular platforms now offer higher payloads and can be configured in 5 + 7 axle lines, thanks to a significantly increased bending moment.

The U11 version, with a permissible axle load of up to 13.4 tonnes at 25-80 km/h, allows for particularly high payloads to be transported. Away from public roads – for example, during internal logistics operations – axle loads of 14.8 tonnes at a maximum of 25 km/h and 17.4 tonnes at 10 km/h are possible, said Karkowski.

Available in two, three, four and six-axle variations, Karkowski said the Scheuerle UltralightCombi series is particularly suited to the transport of large and heavy loads on public roads, including the transport of construction machinery and components for wind turbines, containers, transformers and crawler cranes.

Easy handling

Another advantage of the UltralightCombi series is easy handling. For example, when using a deck with a hook-coupling adapter, the front bogie unit can be removed for loading operations so that self-propelled machines can drive onto the low-deck trailer at the

front by means of a flat ramp.

The Faymonville Group, which includes the brands MAX Trailer and Cometto, described 2020 as a "special year" with sectors not facing the stresses equally. "But as we are active in such a wide field of activities, when one sector went through a difficult phase, another one could compensate this," it said.

The construction sector provided a key source of demand for Faymonville's MultiMAX low-loader and the MAX100 low-loader from the MAX Trailer range.

Faymonville boosted its ModulMAX vehicle range with the addition of a self-propelled trailer with electronic steering. "The Faymonville ModulMAX is a series of combinable

transport modules with two to six-axle lines for off-road and on-road operations," said the company. The modules can be used in three available modes: trailer mode, assist mode and self-propelled mode. The steering system varies between the electronic and the mechanical principle.

Strong demand

Also proving popular last year were its MegaMAX, VarioMAX and GigaMAX low-beds. Likewise, the MAX510 low-bed vehicle launched by MAX Trailer last year with pendle axles also experienced strong demand. Faymonville also introduced the HighwayMAX Dolly&Booster for the North American market.

The extendable super-heavy haul trailer is composed of nine hydraulically steered pendle-axles, a three-axle jeep dolly and a three-axle nitro booster. Faymonville said its "King of the Highway" saves time and money for operators with its quick and

As we are active in such a wide field of activities, when one sector went through a difficult phase, another one could compensate this.

– Faymonville Group



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The K.SLA R 4 was one of a number of new models launched at the beginning of the year by Kässbohrer.

easy assembly and disassembly. Including the truck, this unit creates a 19-axle combination and achieves a legal payload capacity of about 108.9 tonnes at 9.1 tonnes per axle.

"Payload to deadweight always plays an important role in any inquiry. As a manufacturer, we try to make our vehicles as light as possible, but also as robust as necessary," said Rainer Auerbacher, head of transport technology at Germany-based manufacturer Goldhofer.

For example, Goldhofer's THP/SL-L and THP/SL-S heavy-duty modules enable an axle load of up to 26.1 tonnes at a speed of 20 km/h, despite their low deadweights. The series offers a range of variants, including split modules and a choice of wheelbases, and is also suited to transporting heavy loads with a high bending moment.

"With the low deadweight and the drop deck variants of these lightweight vehicles, the shortest routes can be used,

including motorways and bridges with load limits, which would possibly not be allowed to be passed and therefore necessitate detours when working with heavier equipment," Auerbacher explained.

Low loading height

Karkowski said that in the past 12 months, TII Group has experienced an increase in demand from the construction industry, particularly for its EuroCompact FL02/03 low-bed semi-trailer. Karkowski said the low-bed semi-trailer series caters to "demanding and cost-conscious customers". It is available with two or three-axle pendulum axle rear bogie for technical payloads of up to 37 or

48 tonnes, depending on the fifth wheel load, with speeds of 80 km/h.

Heavy-load logistics provider Spedition Kübler took delivery of the first EuroCompact FL02/03 trailers in July 2020.

Felix Mangold, technical manager at Spedition Kübler, spoke highly of the series. The FL02 is capable of handling loads of up to 37 tonnes, "which is an outstanding level of payload in this segment", he said.

"Especially in vehicles with only two axles, every kilo of payload counts and the new EuroCompact is up to 20 percent lighter than comparable models," Mangold said. Moreover, Karkowski said that because heavy-load logistics

providers are "fighting for every inch of loading height", the FL02 boasts a low loading height for its flatbed deck of only 300 mm.

Construction industry

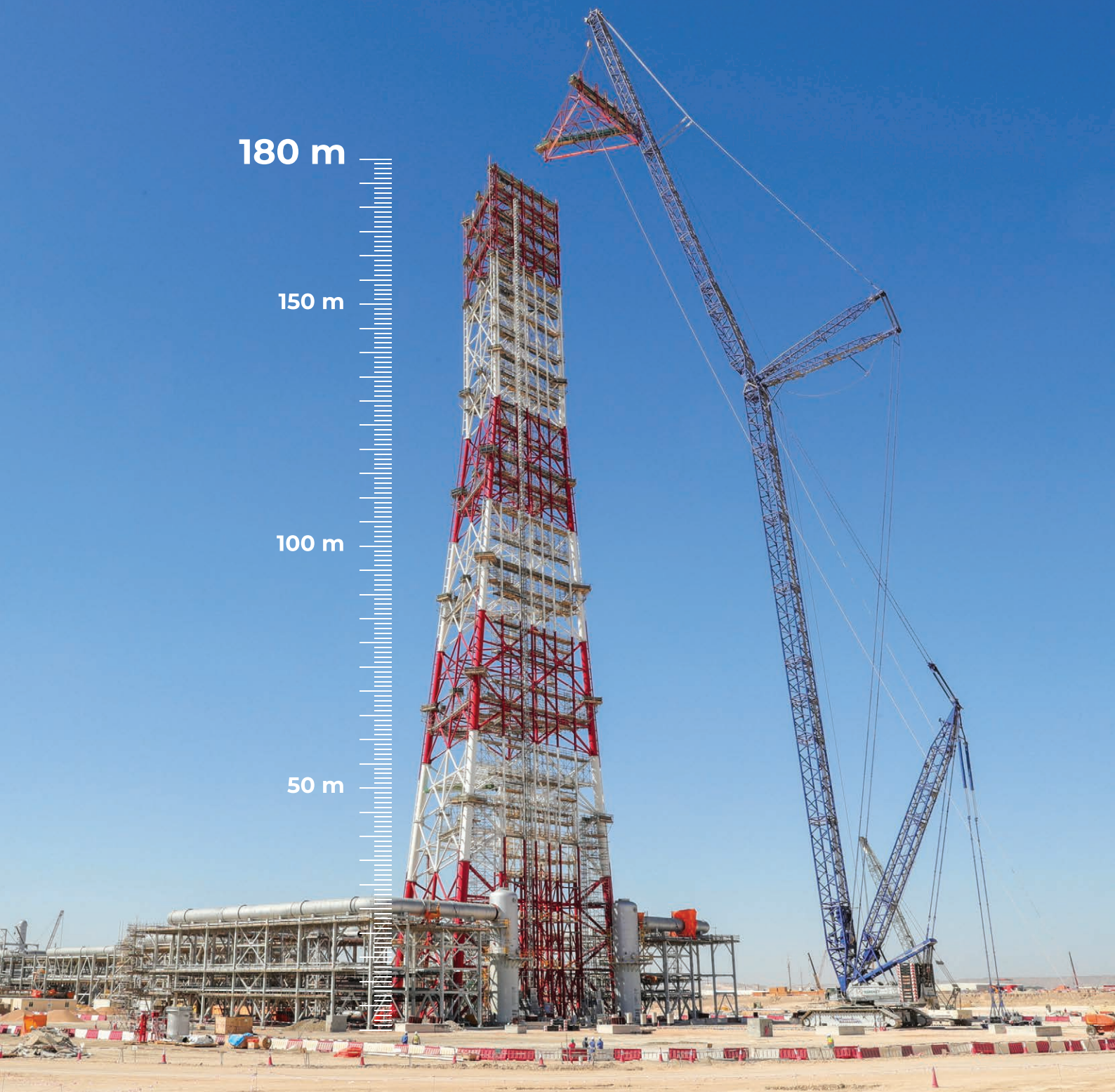
Germany-headquartered Kässbohrer said that to meet the needs of customers active in the forestry and construction sectors, it launched new models at the beginning of the year: the K.TAN P 1+2, K.SPA MR 3, K.SLA R 4 and K.SLH 4.

The K.TAN P 1+2, part of the K.TAN series, offers multi-functional and flexible transportation capabilities with lashing rings with 8 or 10 tons (7.3 or 9.1 tonnes) of capacity. For the transportation of larger loads, the K.SPA MR 3 three-axle extendable lowbed semi-trailer is the best fit. It features a robust chassis and a low tare weight of 10 tonnes, which enables higher payloads while realising fuel-saving on unloaded journeys.

Kässbohrer said it developed the K.SLA R 4 for the transportation of construction

Especially in vehicles with only two axles, every kilo of payload counts and the new EuroCompact is up to 20 percent lighter than comparable models.

– Felix Mangold, Spedition Kübler



FLARE INSTALLATION AT WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Hareket working as the Heavy Lift Contractor for the Petrofac Samsung J.V. in EPC 2 Area has successfully completed the installation of 13 flare stack modules at the height of 180 meters.

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The extendable low-bed semi-trailer on four axles has a tare weight of 13.25 tonnes and is available with wheel recesses as standard. It can be offered with lashing rings of 5-10 tonnes capacity, 3 x 2 rows of vertical pillar pockets, and pillar pockets on side rails, for added flexibility.

Responding to a demand from its customers for greater manoeuvrability on narrow curves, Kässbohrer developed the K.SLH 4. The trailer is geared towards heavy and ballast loads, and features a flat chassis with a low platform height of 0.88 m.

Unique concepts

Germany-based Greiner manufactures a range of lifting devices and heavy-duty trailers. According to company president Michael Greiner, it has developed a wind tower transport concept utilising a scissor lifting technique. It is capable of moving towers 6.5 m in diameter and weighing up to 140 tonnes.

"The stroke via the scissor lifting element is possible up to a maximum of 1.5 m," he said. "All flange points can be mechanically adjusted laterally. With a multifunctional adapter plate, existing turntables can be used if necessary.

"Depending on the weight of the towers, or rather the required number of axles, the pivoting radius of the adapter can be quickly and easily

adjusted with socket pins.

"With a fewer number of axles, protruding parts of the adapter can be removed, which reduces the weight.

"The optional front turntable is equipped with rocker hydraulics and the system can be 'pre-tensioned' with the Greiner hydraulic-prestressing-system (HPS) to stabilise the system or prevent the load from swinging up," he explained. Two main girders, instead of one, are used to provide greater stability. The system is currently being built.

One of the company's top sellers is the SEFIRO SPMT system. "In the last months we have provided it in different configurations for unique requirements, for example, for US and Chinese power plants to move nuclear casks, and for a well-known aircraft manufacturer to move huge aircraft components," said Michael Greiner.

Each compact unit features pendulum axles, electronic-hydraulic all wheel steering, hydraulic axle compensation, and hydraulic lifting capabilities. It is available with diesel, electric and/or hybrid power packs.

The trailer can be configured with a "steer-lift-gear" system with full 360-degree capabilities,

he added. The standard version has a load height of just 630 mm and lift/axle suspension of 220 mm or 410 mm. "Special versions with alternative tyres, dimensions, as well as partially autonomous drive and control systems, complete our portfolio," he stated.

In December 2020, Scheuerle upgraded its Z180 and Z390 power pack units (PPU), which are used to drive SPMT modules. The units now feature a user-friendly touch display screen which is neatly arranged in a clear, modern design that showcases the most important information on hydraulics, engine functions and fill levels at a glance via the start page of the main menu.

Important performance data, control data, and filling levels are graphically displayed in a clear and easily understandable manner, while control icons indicate special operating conditions as well as other essential information such as Adblue and fuel levels.

The upgrade of the Z180 and Z390 series is based on a comprehensive overhaul of the PPU electronics, said Scheuerle. This is accompanied by significantly improved diagnostic functions.

Furthermore, this information allows the service technician to remotely guide the vehicle operating unit when troubleshooting. Scheuerle explained that this saves time and money.

Wind energy transport

The renewable energy sector will go from strength to strength in the coming years as the battle is waged against CO₂ emissions. Goldhofer's Auerbacher said that the wind energy sector has been a significant driver of demand in the heavy-duty trailer market.

"When transporting very long rotor blades for wind power plants, safety, flexibility and speed are the key," he said. Goldhofer's FTV 550 blade lifter can be used as a flexible haulage tool for rotor blade transportation, in both towed and self-propelled modes.

On the road, the turbine blade can be rotated around its own axis and erected at an angle of up to 60 degrees.

The blade lifter can be set up and removed without the use of a crane, the desired configuration can be prepared at relatively short notice, requiring less planning, labour and financial resources, according to Goldhofer.

Goldhofer has also been upgrading its RA series of tower adaptors. "We have been finalising the new tower transport system RA 2-110 as an accessory for wind tower transports," said Auerbacher.

We have been finalising the new tower transport system RA 2-110 as an accessory for wind tower transports.

— Rainer Auerbacher, Goldhofer

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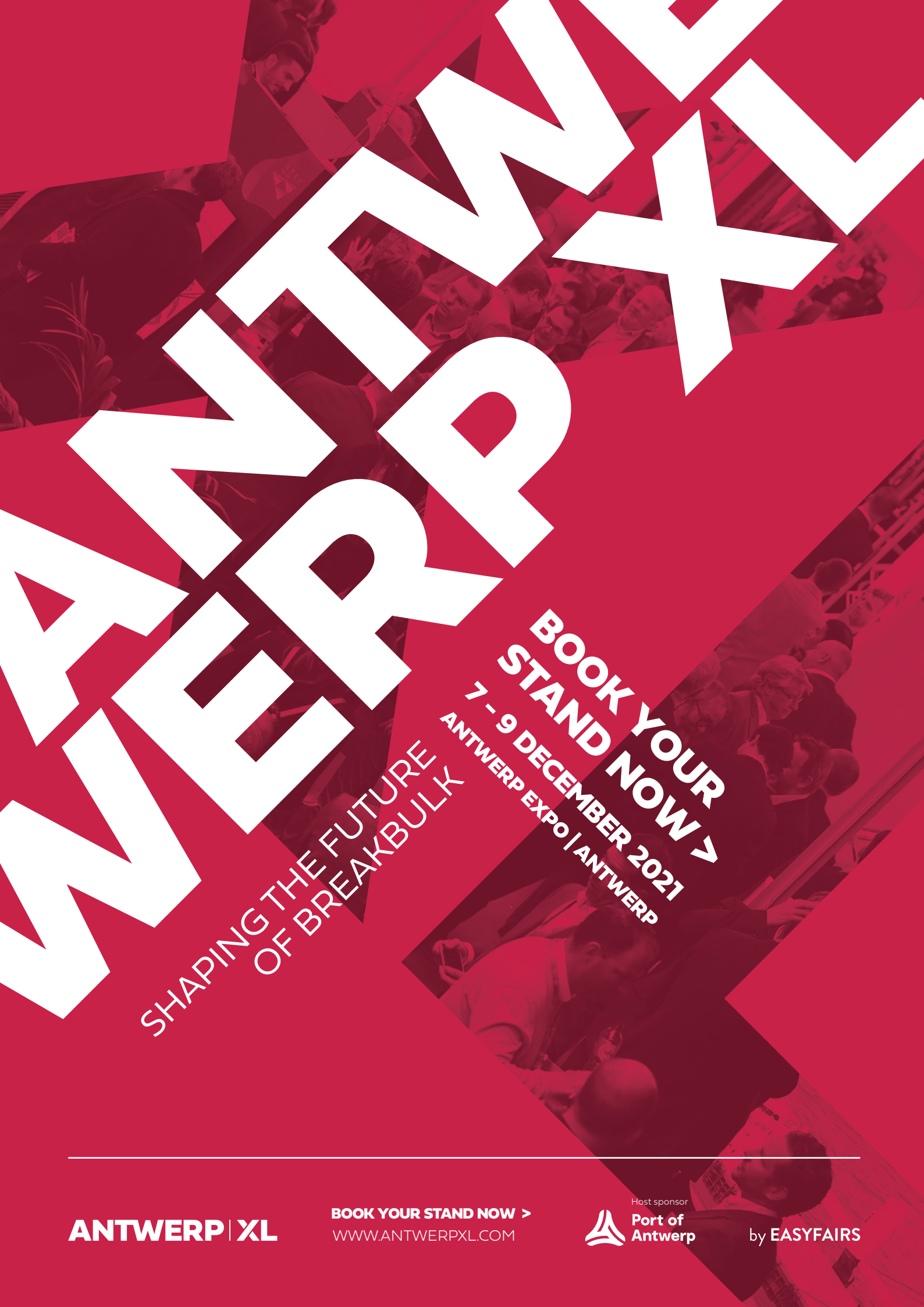
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In June 2020, Faymonville unveiled WingMAX, a three or four-axle semi-trailer for the transportation of wind turbines measuring 70 m or more.



Offering a payload of up to 180 tons (163.3 tonnes), the concept was developed to meet needs for additional stability during transport. Goldhofer added that the RA 2-110, with its free turning device, is based on the same operational concept as its Blade S transport solution to transport wind blades.

With Blade S, the load becomes the connecting element of the configuration; the gooseneck is coupled to the tractor by a rocking buck with hydraulic locking.

After that, the root frame of the rotor blade can be mounted on the hydraulically adjustable free-turning device.

As towers and blades are often transported in convoys, Goldhofer said, the similar operation of the Blade S and the RA 2-110 is user-friendly, saves time and increases safety.

In June 2020, Faymonville unveiled WingMAX, a three or four axle semi-trailer for the transportation of wind turbines measuring 70 m or more.

Key features include a large

gooseneck stroke and a long loading platform with fourfold extension. The hydraulically operated gooseneck raises itself up to 1.7 m, with the pendle axle technology allowing for steering angles up to 60 degrees.

Long and manoeuvrable

Rainer Noe, product manager, said that the vehicle is not only long and easy to manoeuvre but also stable and safe to handle.

Designed for use with four and five-axle trucks, WingMAX features sliding load supports for

the blade tip frame, enabling the semi-trailer to be shortened even under load. These allow winding road sections to be transitioned with greater ease.

Hydraulic support legs simplify the extension or retraction of the telescopic loading platform, said Faymonville. Double-sided locking of the telescopic stages ensures increased driving stability, while the 2,000 mm track width of the axle bogie provides maximum lateral stability.

Faymonville also observed

continued interest in the Cometto BladeMAX – boasting a payload capacity of 650 tonnes – which was launched in 2019.

Similarly, Nootboom's van de Water said its Super Wing Carrier – a semi-trailer for the transport of turbines 50 m or longer – is in high demand, particularly from its customers in Europe.

He believes that international growth in demand for special transport solutions in the renewable energy sector will continue in the coming years.

HLPFI

NEWS in BRIEF

MAX510 lowbed capabilities upgraded

MAX Trailer expanded the capabilities of the MAX510 lowbed semi-trailer, in September 2020, configuring it with 60-degree steering angle pendle axles suitable for use on uneven terrain, with 12 tonnes per axle line.

Scheuerle adds to PowerHoss series

Scheuerle expanded its SPMT PowerHoss series in April 2021 with the addition of a six-axle version. The SPMT PowerHoss 330 now offers up to 330 tonnes of capacity. Four units can be combined to move 1,320-tonne payloads

Drake unveils double-acting suspension

Australia's Drake Trailers in March revealed its double-acting suspension rams for its series of low-loaders, which enable the axles to be retracted quickly to reduce tyre wear.

Byron Foss, trailer sales, explained: "The biggest benefits of double acting suspension rams is the ability to lift any axles whether or not you are empty or loaded."

"This makes it quicker, easier and safer for the operator to change tyres or to carry an axle when you want lift axles for empty travel."

NEWS in BRIEF

Lozano steps up at Airpes

Airpes – a manufacturer of lifting, weighing and below-the-hook equipment – has appointed **Alex Lozano** as technical director for the Americas. Lozano transitioned from the company's headquarters in Barcelona, Spain. As the pandemic eases, his role will evolve into a site-based, customer-facing position.

LG promotes Sperling

Logisticus Group (LG) has promoted **Ashley Sperling** to commercial operations director.

Harvey to lead Windship

UK-based Windship Technology has appointed **Graham Harvey** as its CEO.

Board role for Thomsen

Denmark-headquartered Martin Bencher has appointed **Jan Thomsen** as a board member.

Ye takes AAL China role

Raphael Ye has joined AAL Shipping's commercial team in China as a senior sales manager.

Fracht names Hřebeček

Fracht has appointed **Václav Hřebeček** as airfreight and sea freight manager of its office in Prague, Czech Republic.

Harmstorf heads Fairplay

Fairplay Towage Group has appointed **Philip Harmstorf** as managing director, effective April 1, 2021.

WSC appointments

The World Shipping Council (WSC) has appointed **John Bradshaw** as technical director for environment and safety, and **James Corbett** as environmental director, Europe.

ACS announces Dinsdale

Air Charter Service (ACS) has appointed **Ben Dinsdale** as global director for humanitarian and government services.

Wilzbacher leaves Indiana

Phil Wilzbacher has stepped down as port director of the US Port of Indiana-Mount Vernon, effective April 20.



OMA Group boosts West Africa team

OMA Group has made a trio of appointments to strengthen its operations in West Africa.

Samad Osman has been appointed as group chief operating officer. He is responsible for the group's business development strategy as well as the successful execution of growth plans.

Charles Sugden was named country manager

for the Ivory Coast, effective May 1. The group said that Sugden has been running the office in Senegal for the last year, and his move to the Ivory Coast comes at the "perfect time to push forward ambitious logistics plans in this fast-growing market".

Meanwhile in Senegal, OMA Group appointed **Kurven Monien** as country manager, effective May 1.



Frandsen joins Bertling in USA

Bertling Logistics has appointed **Rasmus Frandsen** as director of business development in Houston, USA, effective April 12, 2021. Frandsen joins the company from shipping line Intermarine and brings extensive chartering and project experience to the role.

MOL makes senior changes

Japan-based Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) has appointed **Katsumi**

TGP strengthens management

Trans Global Projects Group (TGP) has appointed **Andreas Menzel** as managing director of its German subsidiaries. Menzel's responsibilities will include the strategic and operational management of TGP Germany and Natco Germany. He has held senior management positions with numerous European logistics companies, most recently at ATS International Projects Europe and deugro group.



Nagata as chief representative of the USA, and **Kenji Yokota** as chief representative of Russia, effective April 1, 2021. MOL said it has expanded its base in the USA. The shipping company has a focus on the automobile industry, which has a broad range of supporting industries, as well as the energy sectors. In Russia, the company has supported the Arctic LNG project and moved ahead with the use of Arctic shipping routes

as a shorter link between Europe and East Asia.

Elgaard and Zander at UHL

United Heavy Lift (UHL) has appointed **Rasmus Elgaard** as chartering manager based in Aarhus, Denmark. The carrier also appointed **Jan Zander** as tender manager in Hamburg.

Aden takes helm at Harren & Partner

Nils Aden has been appointed managing director of Harren & Partner, effective May 1, 2021.

Aden will have a focus on the group's global shipmanagement services and strategic developments.

In his previous roles, he oversaw the merger of V.Ships and Norddeutsche Reederei H. Schuldt as managing director; led Zeaborn as ceo; and transformed E.R. Schifffahrt into an international shipmanagement player.

Commenting on Aden's appointment, **Martin Harren**, managing director of Harren & Partner, said: "He has tremendous experience in the shipping industry and will bring enormous creativity and drive to this role. We are convinced that getting Nils on board will put us in a very good position for the future. Together, we want to set new standards and develop our group further."



Nils Aden.

Liburnia opens in Prague

Liburnia Maritime Agency has opened an office in Prague, the Czech Republic. **Petronela Galambošová** will lead the office, which will operate as Liburnia Projects & Chartering. The office will provide chartering and brokerage; project forwarding; port agency; and technical and commercial consultancy services. Liburnia said the office is a "major milestone" for the company and that it will cover the central European market, with the support of its offices in Croatia and the Netherlands.

Service, will lead the maritime services segment that aims to grow the group's of marine products, ship agency, and ship management services over the next three to five years. A third business segment – strategic and financial investments – includes shareholdings in Wallenius Wilhelmsen, Treasure ASA/Hyundai Glovis, Qube and the group's liquidity portfolio.

Crosby Group names Fabricius



Wim Fabricius.

The Crosby Group has appointed **Wim Fabricius** as managing director for the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region.

Eyvin takes role at Wilhelmsen

Wilhelmsen has established its New Energy business segment as part of plans to grow in the fields of renewable energy and decarbonisation. **Jan Eyvin Wang** will head up the division. **Bjorge Grimholt**, current president of Wilhelmsen Ships

IN MEMORIAM:

Sander Splinter

Sander Splinter, a highly respected figure in the heavy lift and abnormal transport industry, sadly passed away on April 30, 2021.

At the time of his death, Sander served as managing director of ERIKS Nederland. Before that, he had worked for Mammoet for almost 18 years, including as managing director for Europe.

For six-and-a-half years, Sander was a board member and the president of section cranes for industry association ESTA. In this time he ensured that improving safety in the industry was the main focus of debate. He also stressed the importance of good cooperation with the crane manufacturers on environmental and safety standards, and successfully stimulated wide-ranging and productive debates.

ESTA said: "Sander was a highly respected figure in our industry. He combined excellent people skills with technical knowledge, a strong strategic vision and a deep commitment to safety."

NEWS in BRIEF



Eric Wilson.

Amerijet appoints Wilson

Eric Wilson joined Amerijet International Airlines during February as chief commercial officer. Wilson became a member of the executive team leading Amerijet's commercial division. His core focus areas include sales, pricing, marketing, network development, commercial and strategic alliances and new product development. He will be based at the company's headquarters in Miami, Florida, USA. As a senior aviation executive, Wilson joins Amerijet with over 25 years of experience in the aviation industry.

Pippingsköld joins Finnlines

Finnlines has appointed **Tom Pippingsköld** as vice president and deputy ceo. Pippingsköld has served as cfo of Finnlines since October 2013. He will continue in his current position, overseeing the group's finance, administration, legal, human resources, communications and IT functions.

Crowley names Skoglund

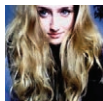
Crowley Maritime Corporation has appointed **Trish Skoglund** as corporate director of mergers and acquisitions.

Nass to lead Gulfport

Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA) has appointed **Jon Nass** as ceo and executive director of the port of Gulfport, USA. Nass joins the port of Gulfport from the Maine Port Authority, where he helped develop northern New England's only container terminal and large-scale funding for port and rail infrastructure.

Wickler lands at Cargolux

Cargolux has appointed **Christianne Wickler** as chairperson of the board of directors.



HLPFI gossip columnist Evie Aufheben delivers another collection of lighter news, anecdotes and amusing facts from the world of project cargo logistics.

A pledge to lift women's voices

Change Horizon and Meantime Communications' Women in Aviation and Logistics Pledge is calling upon event organisers in the air cargo and logistics industry to invite more women to speak at their events.

The call is aimed at organisers, private businesses, media companies and international organisations.

"We are pulling together a database of women who are experts in their field and we invite event organisers to make use of this unique resource as a solid starting point to begin making a change," said Celine Hourcade, founder and managing director of Change Horizon.

Emma Murray, ceo and founder of Meantime Communications, said that although some organisers have been making progress, Meantime Communications estimates that on average only around 18 percent of speakers at events in the aviation and logistics industry are women.

"We need to change that quickly, not only because we are missing out on valuable insight, but also because we must have visible role models to encourage the next generation of talent to join a vibrant and inclusive industry," Murray said.

BIFA fosters young talent

The British International Freight Association's (BIFA) Young Forwarder Network (YFN) has hosted 50 events in the two years since its launch.

In the past 12 months alone, 1,222 participants have attended 23 online gatherings,

Chipolbrok hits 70 years

June 15 marks a momentous occasion for Chipolbrok as the multipurpose shipping line celebrates 70 years of operation.

Chinese-Polish Joint Stock Shipping Company was established in 1951 by the ministry of shipping of the People's Republic of China and the ministry of communication of the People's Republic of Poland. In the early days, the company took on the role of a broker as



a result of restrictions with regard to investments into China and as such the name Chinese-Polish Ship Broker Company – now more

commonly known as Chipolbrok – came to life.

All at HLPFI would like to congratulate Chipolbrok on 70 years of success!

including a virtual port tour of DP World London Gateway.

Carl Hobbs, BIFA executive director, who has management responsibility for the association's training and development services, said: "The young people who are participating in the events are improving their knowledge of

the sector, trends within it, as well as building their skillsets and learning from others."

Robert Keen, director general of BIFA added: "50 events in two years is a remarkable achievement and a clear sign of the attraction of the YFN to the younger generation within the freight sector."



Cooking for the community

C.H. Robinson and Austal brought their employees together in Western Australia for a charity cooking session. The team cooked a delicious meal for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House and gained a greater understanding of their community and the important work the Ronald McDonald House Charities carry out across Australia.



Combilift scores with shirt deal

Irish material handling solutions provider Combilift is giving the Monaghan Ladies Gaelic Football Team a lift.

The company has committed to a three-year sponsorship deal with the team, as well as sponsoring the Monaghan senior club championship. The home and away jerseys and training gear for the team will feature the Combilift logo.

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