



# HEAVY LIFT

& PROJECT FORWARDING INTERNATIONAL

Issue: 92

May/June 2023

## Projects pressing ahead

- Chinese economy at pivotal moment
- USA braces for breakbulk bonanza
- Addressing SPMT operator standards



  
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# Projects pressing ahead

**T**has been stimulating to get out and about the industry once again with conferences and exhibitions aplenty taking place over the past two months. JOC's Breakbulk and Project Cargo conference in New Orleans was an illuminating event, and the mood about the rooms was certainly upbeat.

For heavy lift and project cargo specialists at transport logistic in Munich, the attitude was similar (albeit tempered by European sensibilities); however, I would hasten to add that volume and rates slumps seen in the container and air cargo spheres appeared to have knocked the confidence of those markets. To think we operate in a bubble beyond the influence of these industries is fanciful, and those concerns are surely being factored into risk analysis going forwards.



Those operating in the US project logistics market remain bullish about the prospects – although there are concerns about high inflation rates ultimately resulting in a sharp market correction. However, project business should carry on strong; infrastructure works, oil and gas and offshore wind are conflating to create an incredibly buoyant market. If only there were enough people available to actually perform the work... The past years' developments – and the speed at which things seem to change – have prompted us to launch a regular column focused specifically on offshore wind energy hubs, which you can see on p121.

For those specialising in the Chinese project logistics business, there is certainly an improved mood over 2022 given its gradual reopening to international markets and the fact that Covid-19 is no longer considered a major global health emergency (according to the World Health Organization). However, China's stuttering economy (by its lofty standards) is at a pivotal moment. A healthy China is good for project logistics activity but restructured trade lanes and governance concerns have tempered foreign investments, while a declining population is creating longer-term concerns. Learn more on p114.

The SPMT, meanwhile, has celebrated its 40th birthday since our last issue. Few could have thought that the innovation between Scheuerle and Mammoet would proliferate to such an extent and, ultimately, reshape the entire transport engineering market. The latest innovations in trailer technology can be seen on p133. Notably, some concerns about SPMT operator standards – or lack of them – are outlined on p30.

I would also like to thank all of you who submitted entries for the Heavy Lift Awards 2023. I appreciate that this is a time-consuming undertaking, and there is always disappointment from those that fail to scoop a trophy at the main event (October 25, London). Still, I believe that you all make a valuable contribution to raising both the profile and the standards of excellence in the heavy lift and project logistics business by showcasing your abilities. Judging is well under way.

This industry's leading exhibition, Breakbulk Europe, takes place in Rotterdam on June 6-8. The HLPFI team will be present and we look forward to reconvening with our friends and colleagues. If you would like to arrange a meeting with the team, please get in touch.

**David Kershaw,**  
**Editor**

**THE FRONT COVER:** Volans' MV Condor Bilbao handling wind turbine components in the Port of Brownsville. Volans is a shipping line dedicated to the ocean transportation of breakbulk and project cargoes from North Europe to the West Coast of South America. With a fleet of three multipurpose vessels and over 35 years of experience, Volans provides a regular monthly service to cover this trade. If you need more information, please visit [www.volans-lg.com](http://www.volans-lg.com) or contact [chartering@volans-lg.com](mailto:chartering@volans-lg.com)



# QATAR WAVES TO THE WORLD

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## NEWS in BRIEF

### TGP expands in Scotland

Trans Global Projects (TGP) has opened a second office in Scotland to offer increased support and expertise to the global energy and renewable sectors. TGP anticipates a growing demand for project forwarding services as the drive for energy security reignites interest in North Sea gas. With an increasing number of energy companies fuelling the rejuvenation of activity in North Sea exploration and production, TGP decided to expand its global presence with an office in Aberdeen.

### Blue Water in Beijing

Blue Water Shipping has opened an office in Beijing, China and James Che was named director for energy, ports and projects China. He anticipates further growth in the wind energy, solar and other green energy industries. Jason Goh, regional director, energy, ports and projects Asia, said: "With the opening of our Beijing office, we are strengthening our service, especially towards the oil, gas and wind sectors. At the same time, we continue to focus on new opportunities within solar, chemical and mining."

### SGL expands in Romania

Scan Global Logistics (SGL) has opened an office in Bucharest, Romania, to support the region's developing market. SGL will focus on industries in which Romania offers significant potential, such as automotive, technology, pharma, oil and gas, and aid and relief.



# CMA CGM places offer for Bolloré Logistics

CMA CGM has moved forward with the acquisition of Bolloré Group's transport and logistics activities and committed to purchase Bolloré Logistics for an enterprise value of EUR5 billion (USD5.5 billion).

Bolloré Group said that it received a put option from CMA CGM on May 8 following the exclusive negotiations announced in April. Bolloré has accepted the put option strictly

as an offer. The consultation procedures with the relevant staff representative bodies of the Bolloré Group will now begin.

The decision on whether to exercise the put option will be taken at the end of these procedures. If the option is exercised, the sale will then be subject to the approval of the relevant authorities and could be completed in the course of the first half of 2024.

According to CMA CGM, with the addition of Bolloré Logistics it would become a top five global logistics player.

Bolloré said: "By joining the complementary strengths of Bolloré Logistics and CEVA Logistics within the CMA CGM Group, Bolloré Logistics will be ideally placed to offer its clients even more efficient and competitive integrated transport and contract logistics solutions."

## ADNOC L&S launches integrated platform

ADNOC Logistics & Services (ADNOC L&S) – the shipping and maritime logistics arm of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) – has unveiled its integrated logistics services platform (ILSP).

According to ADNOC L&S, it is one of the largest turnkey

offshore logistics offerings, which enables coordinated end-to-end management of logistics and maritime operations at its base in Mussafah, Abu Dhabi.

ADNOC L&S added that it created the ILSP as part of its ongoing commitment to

support the continued growth of the region's energy sector.

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# Sarens family takes back full ownership

The Sarens family has regained 100 percent of the shares of the Sarens Group after reaching an agreement with minority shareholder Begoos (Group Luc Tack).

Begoos took over a 22 percent stake in Sarens that was previously held by Waterland investment fund in 2021.

Wim Sarens, ceo of Sarens, said: "With all shares in the hands of the family, we are now armed to profile ourselves even more strongly in the future as the global reference in crane rental, heavy lifting and engineered transport."

The company added: "Sarens is proud to demonstrate through this development its robust standing in the global heavy lifting arena, especially as the said change occurs in a time when key contributors in the sector are experiencing an



opposite evolution, looking for new shareholders, away from the stable long-term shareholding they have enjoyed in the past."

## Blue Water takes full control of Danwind Blue Water

Blue Water Shipping has taken full ownership of its joint venture Danwind Blue Water, which provides wind turbine installation and related services.

After 18 months as a joint venture, Danwind Blue Water will become a fully integrated part of the transport and

logistics company, operating under the Blue Water brand.

With the acquisition, Blue Water said it will be better positioned to offer installation and maintenance services to the increasing number of onshore and offshore wind energy projects.

## Egytrans to acquire NOSCO

Egytrans has agreed to acquire 99.9 percent of the share capital in Egyptian specialised transport provider National Transport and Overseas Services Company (NOSCO).

Abir Leheta, ceo of Egytrans, said: "We will strive to leverage NOSCO's capabilities, especially

its extensive fleet and technical experience to achieve maximum operational growth and target larger logistics opportunities and projects, in addition to expanding geographically and operationally across local, regional and global markets."

## NEWS in BRIEF

### ESTA internships

The European association of abnormal road transport and mobile cranes (ESTA) has launched an internship scheme. The scheme will enable all ESTA member companies to send a young employee with management potential to ESTA or a member association for an agreed period of time. The intern will be given a research assignment and will have their board, lodging and travel costs paid by ESTA. Their salary will still be paid by their parent company or organisation.

### Omega acquires Walker

USA-headquartered transport engineering specialist Omega Morgan has acquired California-based Walker Brothers Machinery Moving.

### Crowley opens in Eureka

USA-based maritime and logistics company Crowley has opened a wind services office in Eureka, California, as part of its plans to develop an offshore wind terminal at Humboldt Bay.



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## NEWS in BRIEF

### Grimaldi newbuild delivery

Grimaldi Group has taken delivery of its first G5-class ro-ro multipurpose vessel, Great Antwerp, at the Hyundai Mipo Dockyard in Ulsan, South Korea. The second in the series of six, Great Lagos, has since been launched.

### MPV construction begins

India's Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) has started construction of six multipurpose vessels for German shipowner HS Schiffahrts. The 7,000 dwt vessels, according to CSL, will have an overall length of 110 m and breadth of 16.5 m, equipped for the carriage of project and heavy cargo, steel coils, containers, dry cargoes, timber and bulk cargoes.

### FALLine picks C. Steinweg

Fednav Atlantic Lakes Line (FALLine), a division of Fednav International, has selected C. Steinweg (Süd-West Terminal) in Hamburg for its service to the North American Great Lakes. FALLine will offer monthly sailings from C. Steinweg's terminal to the Great Lakes during the regular season, calling at Hamilton (Canada) and Cleveland (USA).

### dship partners with Ilyy

dship Carriers has appointed Selçuk Arkin and Görkem Övül from Ilyy Shipping as agents in Türkiye.

### Amasus keel laying

Bogazici Shipyard in Türkiye has held a keel laying ceremony for the first in a series of four newbuild multipurpose vessels for Amasus Shipping. The Eems B-type vessels have been engineered in cooperation with DEKC Maritime, classed by LR, and have a length of 89.95 m.

### KOGA fleet expansion

KOGA Shipping has expanded its fleet with the addition of the heavy lift vessel Industrial Royal. The 10,500 dwt vessel will be renamed KOGA Royal and will join sisterships KOGA Revolution, KOGA Ruby and KOGA Ranger.

### UECC connects in Europe

Ro-ro operator UECC has established a direct link between the port of Pasajes, Spain, and the port of Cuxhaven, Germany. The vessel, Autostar, will sail on a nine to 10-day rotation.

# Spliethoff christens Brouwersgracht

The Netherlands-headquartered Spliethoff has held a christening ceremony for its DP2 B-type vessel Brouwersgracht in the Cacaohaven in Amsterdam.

Spliethoff took delivery of Brouwersgracht – the first of two DP2 B-type vessels – from the Mawei shipyard in China earlier this year.

According to Spliethoff, Brouwersgracht and its sister ship Bloemgracht combine the capabilities of an ice-strengthened multipurpose vessel with a DP2 system, which makes them suitable for offshore delivery of large volumes and heavy cargoes.

The 12,500 dwt ships have been equipped with an automated crane system and two Huisman 500-tonne capacity heavy lift mast cranes.

To comply with the strict regulations regarding SOx and NOx-emissions, the propulsion and power generation systems have been equipped with scrubbers and SCR systems. Combining this with their fuel-efficient design makes the vessels environmentally friendly and in line with the Spliethoff Group's continuous pursuit of greener business operations.

Bloemgracht is slated for delivery later this year.

## Lakeway Link for Sweden and Poland

Greencarrier and Wallenius Marine have established Lakeway Link, which will offer a regular service for ro-ro and high and heavy cargoes moving between Sweden and Poland.

The company will connect the Polish cities of Gdynia and Gdansk with Sweden's Söderläje and Västerås via Lake Mälaren.

"With the founding of the company, a more sustainable

regular service will be opened with fixed departures twice a week from Sweden and Poland, starting at the end of the year," Greencarrier explained.

The service will be operated by new vessels capable of connecting the Baltic Sea with the shallow Lake Mälaren.

Göran Söderdahl, global senior commercial manager at Wallenius Marine, said Lakeway Link would

strengthen Swedish shipping: "We will design and build new vessels based on the latest technology, contributing to more sustainable logistics in both the Baltic Sea and our inland waterways where Lake Mälaren plays a major role."

"The ships will be designed to handle different types of cargo as well as socially beneficial missions, such as sea rescue."

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# Schmidbauer boosts its modular fleet

Germany-headquartered specialised transport provider Schmidbauer has expanded its fleet with 32 THP/SL-L heavy-duty modular axle lines manufactured by Goldhofer.

The THP/SL-L is suited to heavy-duty on-road transport thanks to a low deadweight and high bending moment.

Schmidbauer has been aggressively expanding its fleet recently having purchased six Liebherr mobile cranes at bauma 2022, a Tadano GTC-2000 telescopic crane with a maximum lift capacity of 181 tonnes, and a Spierings SK597-AT4 eLift mobile hydraulic tower crane.

The company is playing a



central role at the Provence Grand Large pilot floating offshore wind project in France. Schmidbauer will be responsible for the assembly of plant components and logistics within

the port area in Fos-sur-Mer.

For this, Schmidbauer will deploy a new 1,350-tonne capacity Liebherr LR 11350 crawler crane, equipped with a power boom.

## NEWS in BRIEF

### Cometto updates range

Cometto has released its latest range of SPMTs for transport jobs up to 25,000 tonnes. The units come in either standard or heavy-duty configuration. The MSPE (standard or heavy-duty) has a 48-tonnes per axle line payload. The MSPE EVO3 (standard and heavy-duty) pushes the limit further to 70 tonnes per axle.

### RSS adds Birmingham depot

UK-based Rope and Sling Specialists (RSS) has opened a depot in Minworth, Sutton Coldfield, near to phase one worksites for HS2 – a new, high-speed railway line that will connect London to the West Midlands.

### Goldhofer drum solutions

Goldhofer, in cooperation with Germany-based Energieanlagen Ramonat, has developed a cable drum transport system that includes integrated unreeeling equipment with synchronised drive for jerk-free operation at the destination.

### ZTZ Logistics trailer delivery

The Netherlands-based ZTZ Logistics has taken delivery of a 3+5 VarioMAX trailer with an extendable excavator deck and a 1+3 GigaMAX lowbed trailer from Faymonville.

### Rhenus progresses

Rhenus is progressing with the construction of its fleet of low-emission inland waterway vessels powered by a combination of a hydrogen fuel cell, the latest stage VI engines and electric batteries.

## European road freight rates decline

Both spot and contract road freight rates in Europe have dropped in the first quarter of 2023, according to an index produced by Transport Intelligence, Upply and the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

Spot and contract rates registered a quarter-on-quarter drop of 7.5 and 2.8 index points respectively. Spot rates in the

European road freight market have experienced their second consecutive quarter of decline – the first time rates have fallen for two consecutive quarters since Q2 2020.

Additionally, the spot market index has fallen below its Q2 2022 level, a time when cost increases following the war in Ukraine first became clear.

Despite this, spot rates

remain up by 8.9 points year on year, standing at 132.5 points.

Freight rates are expected to continue to soften in the second quarter but will remain elevated in comparison to historic norms as supply side pressure keeps costs high.

Towards the end of the year, volumes are expected to start recovering, applying upward pressure on rates.

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# All-cargo airline One Air takes to the skies

**O**ne Air has been awarded its air operators' certificate (AOC) by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), marking the launch of the UK-based all-cargo airline.

The airline has dry leased its first Boeing 747 freighter, with plans to add a second B747F during 2023. One Air expects initial demand for flights from the UK to Europe, the Middle East and Asia. It intends to offer freighter services to China and the USA in the future.

Headquartered in Kingston, close to London Heathrow, One Air has recruited a team of 90 air cargo and aviation professionals for its launch, including ground operations, engineering and maintenance, crew training, crew management, finance and HR specialists, plus a 40-strong air crew with pilots from Cathay Pacific, Emirates Airline, Norwegian Airlines and other



David Tattersall, chief technical officer; Chris Hope chief operating officer; Paul Bennett, ceo; and Jon Hartley, chief financial officer.

major carriers, it said.

Chris Hope has joined the board of One Air as chief operating officer and accountable manager, bringing 35 years of experience with the forerunners to TUI as well as easyJet and Flybe. Jon Hartley

and David Tattersall have also been recruited as chief financial officer and chief technical officer respectively.

The airline said it will review its fleet plans, including the potential for other aircraft types, later in the year.

## Former Antonov director charged over AN-225 loss

The former head of Antonov has been charged with alleged "negligence" following the destruction of the Antonov AN-225 Mriya aircraft at the start of the Ukraine-Russia war, reports HLPFI's sister

publication *Air Cargo News*.

State-owned Antonov Airlines was based at Kyiv-Antonov airport in Hostomel, but the airline's freighter fleet came under attack as the conflict spread throughout Ukraine.

Serhii Bychkov, the former general director of Antonov, is alleged to have not taken "appropriate" action to ensure the aircraft was transported safely out of the country, according to the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU).

## NEWS in BRIEF

### Record year for Cargolux

Freighter airline Cargolux has reported record results for 2022. Revenues of USD5.1 billion represented an increase of 14.7 percent over 2021, while profit after tax totalled USD1.6 billion – up 21.9 percent year on year. Strong yields and high volumes during the first half of the year contributed to the company's strong financial performance. A decline in demand in the second semester led to lower volumes and a virtual absence of peak season in 2022, the carrier added.

### ACS opens in Mexico City

Air Charter Service (ACS) has opened an office in Mexico City and appointed Marco Circosta to head up the operation. Circosta joined ACS nine years ago and has worked in multiple offices around the world, while also focusing on the Mexican market for the past two years.

### Strategic partners launch

CMA CGM Air Cargo and Air France-KLM Martinair Cargo – part of Air France-KLM – have officially launched their 10-year strategic partnership. The partnership, first announced in May 2022, will see the carriers jointly operate the full-freighter aircraft capacity of their respective airlines, initially including CMA CGM's six freighter aircraft.

### Silk Way joins cargo.one

Silk Way West Airlines, one of the leading cargo airlines in the Caspian and Central Asian region, has partnered with air cargo booking marketplace cargo.one.

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# TIPC starts Taichung wind energy wharves

Taiwan International Ports Corporation (TIPC) has allocated approximately USD114 million for the construction of two heavy lift wharves at the port of Taichung.

TIPC commenced construction work at wharves 37 and 38 at the end of April, attended by senior port and government officials. When complete, the infrastructure will have a combined length of 580 m and a ground-bearing capacity of 40 tonnes per sq m.

Hsien-yi Lee, TIPC chairman, said that since 2019, the port of Taichung has completed reinforcement work at several existing wharves (2, 5A, 5B, 36, 106, and 107), all of which are now used for wind turbine component manufacturing and assembly. Once this next stage of the works is complete in 2026, the port of Taichung will have three major pre-assembly sites for offshore wind energy projects. These areas will each benefit from 30 ha of redeveloped land for component storage.

## PSA Breakbulk invests in Antwerp hub

PSA Breakbulk – a joint venture between PSA and Felbermayr – is investing in a heavy lift logistics hub at the Churchill Dock in the port of Antwerp-Bruges.

Described as “a complete project cargo ecosystem”, the EUR10 million (USD10.9 million) investment is designed to create facilities that can serve as a one-

stop-shop for large-scale project shipments and industrial projects.

The investments included sustainable energy infrastructure, flooring for the heavy lift quay and a new crane with a lifting capacity of 750 tonnes.

Customers loading and unloading goods here can use

services on and around the concession, said the port of Antwerp-Bruges. Adjacent companies like Deufol or Aprojects offer value-added services, such as packaging services or warehousing.

Aprojects started building its logistics centre next to PSA Breakbulk’s terminal earlier this year.

## NEWS in BRIEF

### Jaxport issues terminal RFP

The Jacksonville Port Authority (Jaxport) in the USA has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a long-term lease of up to 79 acres (32 ha) at its Talleyrand Marine Terminal. The facility will be available in 2025 and has direct access to a berth alongside Jacksonville’s federal shipping channel, on-dock rail by multiple providers, and a port-designated roadway. Proposals are due by June 21, 2023.

### Pangea to buy terminals

USA-based Pangea Logistics Solutions has agreed to acquire marine port terminal operations in Port Everglades, the port of Palm Beach, and the port of Baltimore from Host Terminals, a wholly owned subsidiary of T Parker Host.

### ABP invests in Lowestoft

Associated British Ports (ABP) is expanding the port of Lowestoft with the acquisition of a 1.5 acre (0.6 ha) former retail site, as it aims to increase the role that the port will play as a centre for companies servicing the offshore energy industry.

### US wind operations

The New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal in Massachusetts, USA, is set to begin operations this summer. The terminal will support the construction of the USA’s first commercial offshore wind project, Vineyard Wind.

### Welsh freeports confirmed

The UK and Welsh governments have confirmed that Anglesey Freeport and Celtic Freeport have been successful in their bids to establish freeports in Wales.

### Forth Ports sets goals

The UK’s Forth Ports group has outlined the actions it is taking to achieve a net-zero carbon operation by 2042. The company also set an interim target of achieving carbon neutral emissions (Scope 1 and 2) by 2032, while creating an infrastructure platform to help decarbonise the UK economy. The group is overhauling and electrifying equipment and machinery, switching to low-carbon fuels, increasing onsite renewable energy generation, and promoting greener delivery alternatives such as rail and barge.

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A large industrial photograph serves as the background for the slogan. It shows a massive cylindrical metal component, possibly a pipe or a large wheel, being hoisted by a heavy-lift crane. Two workers in high-visibility vests and hard hats are standing on a dock, looking up at the crane. In the background, there are several shipping containers stacked along a quay, and other port equipment like cranes and railcars are visible under a clear sky.

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# Mammoet invests in electric heavy lift ring

**H**eavy lift and engineered transport specialist Mammoet is building a 6,000-tonne lift capacity ring crane that can be operated using electric power entirely, with delivery scheduled for 2024.

The first parts of the ring crane will soon be delivered to Mammoet's engineering centre in the Netherlands.

According to Mammoet, it will serve the growing energy markets and set new standards in heavy lifting capacity, allowing customers to construct heavier and larger components.

To be named SK6000, it shares similar design principles and lifting techniques as its predecessor, the SK350.

"Much of the crane's technology has been working successfully – and safely – on project sites around the globe for many years," said Mammoet.

Like earlier models, the SK6000 is containerised, which enables swift mobilisation and onsite assembly. It has been designed with next-generation offshore wind farms in mind and will serve all global energy markets where additional lifting capacity is needed – both onshore and at sea.



"Our latest innovation will enable customers to integrate higher and bigger turbines, and launch heavier foundations, be they fixed or floating," Mammoet added. "In the conventional energy sector, the SK6000 allows offshore and floating production projects to reduce integration time by building even larger topside modules."

"On land, it helps refineries to reduce downtime by removing and installing larger components with minimum disruption."

## Roll Group purchases adjustable gantry system

Roll Group has purchased a large gantry system to better serve its clients in their heavy lifting activities.

The system consists of several components that can be fitted together in various configurations, meaning the final construction can be

adjusted to suit clients' projects.

For its first project in the petrochemical industry, the gantry will be used to install tall reactors measuring over 100 m in length and over 2,000 tonnes in weight, without the use of external guywires.

## NEWS in BRIEF

### Modulift redesigns CMOD

Modulift has redeveloped its CMOD modular spreader frame, with an updated corner unit design that is stronger and up to 40 percent lighter. An additional benefit, Modulift explained, is that the updated design is also 50 percent less expensive, which means it is "an ideal solution for cost-conscious projects without compromising on safety or performance".

### Cleland buys Hydra-Slide

Mark Cleland, former management consultant and General Electric (GE) business leader, has acquired Canada-based skidding system manufacturer Hydra-Slide.

### Liebherr delivers LR 1400 SX

Al Jazeera Shipping has expanded its fleet with a Liebherr LR 1400 SX crawler crane. According to Liebherr, it is the first 400-tonne capacity LR 1400 SX in the Middle East. It will be put to work on several projects with Bapco.

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# PPG professionals to meet in Singapore

**M**embers of the Project Professionals Group (PPG) will gather in Singapore at the Orchard Hotel from September 6-7 for the network's 13th annual conference.

PPG founder and general manager Kevin Stephens said: "Singapore is the ideal international hub for project cargo industry professionals to meet and explore how best to strengthen heavy lift supply chains.

"There is considerable ongoing discussion across the project cargo forwarding industry globally about the pace of change in the post-covid



world and the outlook for our industry," he continued.

"This conference is an opportunity for PPG members, shippers and other third-party service providers to collaborate

and collectively focus on optimal growth opportunities."

The event will include presentations from the port of Portland, Global Group as well as several new PPG members.

## NEWS in BRIEF

### Network additions

Project Cargo Network (PCN) has gained Trinity Solutions Burkina as a member in Burkina Faso; Transcon Indonesia as a member in Indonesia; DSG Transit Reipquet as a representative in Réunion; JWQ European as a member in Ireland; ISS Global Forwarding as a member in Nigeria and Sierra Leone; Seabourne Forwarding as a representative in the UK; ATS Netherlands as a representative in the Netherlands; CELERO as a member in Mauritius and Madagascar; MPK Freight as a member in Malawi; Asian Worldwide Logistics as a member in Peru; Acciona Forwarding as a member in Spain; PNS Networks as a representative in South Korea; Global Logistics Projects as a member in Switzerland; B-FLEXEE as a member in France; and Founder Air & Sea Cargo as a member in Taiwan.

XLProjects has expanded with Cargo World as a representative in Callao, Peru; Sino Projects as a member in Shanghai, China; Access World (Peru) as a representative in Lima, Peru; and Fortune Global Shipping as a member in Nigeria.

Project Partners has welcomed Integrated Freight & Logistics (IFL) as a member in the UAE; Cory Brothers as a representative in Rotterdam; S&P International Logistics as a member in Burkina Faso; Wijngard Natie as a member in Antwerp; Floro Transport as a member in Koper, Slovenia; and EIMSKIP Poland as a member in Gdynia.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
01/06/2023 - 03/06/2023	WCA Projects Annual Conference	Antwerp, Belgium
03/06/2023 - 05/06/2023	GPLN AGM	Rotterdam, Netherlands
06/06/2023 - 08/06/2023	Breakbulk Europe	Rotterdam, Netherlands
16/06/2023 - 19/06/2023	Project Partners Conference	Berlin, Germany
03/09/2023 - 06/09/2023	WWPC AGM	Toronto, Canada
06/09/2023 - 07/09/2023	PPG annual conference	Singapore, Singapore
26/09/2023 - 28/09/2023	Breakbulk Americas	Houston, USA
01/11/2023 - 03/11/2023	transport logistic Southeast Asia	Singapore, Singapore
12/11/2023 - 14/11/2023	PCN Annual Summit	Pattaya, Thailand
28/11/2023 - 29/11/2023	Offshore Energy	Amsterdam, Netherlands
28/11/2023 - 30/11/2023	AntwerpXL	Antwerp, Belgium

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## NEWS in BRIEF

### Sarens methanol delivery

Sarens has transported and installed 48 modules for the Sarawak Petchem methanol project in Bintulu, Malaysia, on behalf of Samsung Engineering. Sarens began with the load-in of the 1,571-tonne modules at the jetty, where they had arrived from Vietnam on barges. Sarens then transported the modules approximately 1 km using a transport configuration of three 36-axle Kamag SPMTs.

### Mammoet hauls turbines

Tasked with transporting gas turbines weighing up to 517 tonnes from the port of Bautino, Kazakhstan, to the Sirdarya combined-cycle power plant in Shirin, Uzbekistan, Mammoet called upon THP/SL heavy-duty modules from Goldhofer. The 2,200 km journey had to contend with hilly terrain, tight curves, narrow roads and bridges with limited load-bearing capacity.

### Protranser tank shipment

China-based Protranser has coordinated the delivery of three tanks from Zhangjiagang to a hydrogen plant project in Leipzig, Germany. Each tank weighed 103 tonnes and measured 31.9 m x 4.45 m x 4.5 m.

### Military cargoes at Jaxport

The Jacksonville Port Authority (Jaxport) recently facilitated the movement of nearly 2,500 pieces of US military cargo, including almost 100 aircraft, at its Blount Island Marine Terminal. Split into two shipments, the cargoes were loaded onboard two vessels with the help of terminal operator SSA Atlantic.

### Denholm handles ladles

Denholm Project Forwarding, on behalf of Tata Steel, has transported seven ladles from China to Port Talbot in Wales. The shipment weighed 584 tonnes in total, with a volume of 1,650 cu m. It included two hot metal ladles and five teeming ladles that were manufactured in Wuxi, China.

### Antonov Airlines soars

Antonov Airlines has transported a Maxar-built satellite to the NASA Shuttle Landing Facility in Florida using one of its AN-124-100s.



# Engineered Rigging lifts UPS hangar truss

**U**SA-based Engineered Rigging has deployed its strand jacks to support the construction of an aircraft hangar for United Parcel Service's (UPS) Northwest Aircraft Maintenance Complex in Louisville, Kentucky.

The 275,000 sq ft (25,548 sq m) hangar will house two Boeing 747-8F aircraft. Engineered Rigging was tasked with providing lifting equipment to handle the 380 ft (115.8 m) box truss which forms part of the door side.

Weighing 771 tonnes it needed to be raised 80 ft (24.4 m).

Engineered Rigging provided four 300-ton (272.2-tonne) HSL30006 strand jacks, four SLPP15E hydraulic power units and a unique above jack strand managing recoiler system. An operator – on the ground and positioned safely outside the lift zone – then used computer controls to execute the lift, which took 10 hours to complete in 0.4 m increments.

## deugro delivers Long Son A1 olefins parts

deugro has moved 280,000 freight tons of petrochemical equipment from over 35 worldwide seaports and airports for the Long Son A1 olefins plant project on Long Son Island near Vũng Tàu, Vietnam.

On behalf of its client TPSK – a consortium of TechnipFMC and SK Engineering & Construction – deugro handled more than 1,400 breakbulk, container and airfreight shipments, with nearly 37,000 packages and a total weight of almost 68,510 tonnes.

The cargoes originated from Singapore, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, South Korea,



Thailand, the UK and the USA.

Nearly 178,300 freight tons of the most critical components were transported on 55 chartered heavy lift vessels.

To keep to the project budget

for the client, at an early stage deugro secured the required cargo space and contracted, in collaboration with its partner Roll Group, six semi-submersible multipurpose vessels.

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US Ocean

## Preparing for another surge

**Capital expenditure in projects of all varieties is surging in the USA. David Kershaw speaks with carriers and forwarders to determine how they are managing capacity and planning for another surge in activity.**

US Ocean maintains a fleet of six multipurpose vessels with lifting capacities in excess of 700 tonnes, plus one with flo-flo, ro-ro and lo-lo capabilities. The fleet is well utilised, even if the market is not quite as hot as it was in 2022, according to Will Terrill, president and ceo.

"Business has certainly changed from last year, but it is good. While the general cargo market has come off the historic highs experienced in the middle of last year, we expect that business is good for many carriers that operate in specialised markets or maintain specialised capacities," said Terrill.

The carrier provides services to both US government and commercial customers, moving a mix of military, aid, US government-financed equipment and commercial cargoes around the world.

"While we have worked on projects that are not US-flag impelled, particularly when demand outstripped tonnage supply in 2021 and 2022, our



**While the general cargo market has come off the historic highs... we expect that business is good for many carriers in specialised markets.**

– Will Terrill, US Ocean

area of focus remains US government impelled cargoes.

"[This] market has been strong in 2023 and our activities have ranged from US government charters to Antarctica for the re-supply of

the McMurdo Station to the carriage of cargoes that are financed by US government loans and grants for alternative energy projects."

Nevertheless, the sector's swift shift downwards was something of a shock. "From September to December 2022, the Toepfer Multipurpose Index (TMI) was dropping at an average rate of about 6 percent on a month-over-month basis. What was surprising to us was when we started this year and the TMI index decline increased to more than 10 percent in January. Since January, the decline has continued, albeit at a slower pace. We are optimistic that the slowed pace is an indicator that we are close to the bottom."

If we have reached, or are approaching, the bottom of the market for multipurpose tonnage charter rates, the sector should be relatively content. The market is still significantly above where it was pre-covid when rates were to all intents and purposes, completely unsustainable.

And there is optimism about a potential uptick, with capacity projected to tighten towards the end of the year. For instance, in the USA, conventional and renewable energy projects are taking off at a rapid rate of knots – including LNG export terminals, offshore wind energy developments, battery storage plants and hydrogen production facilities, to name a few.

### Chips Act

Funding from infrastructure relief packages signed in 2022 is being released and creating work in the power transmission and civil infrastructure sectors, in particular. Moreover, the Chips Act has seen the country try to take back control of its microchip industry and factory developments are being fast-tracked.

Speaking at the JOC breakbulk and project cargo conference in New Orleans in April, Dea Chincuancio, vice president strategy and commercial management at dship Carriers, said that as a project carrier it is vital to strike a balance between servicing long-term clients and potential new customers. "It is important to retain the potential or current client base, which is in oil and gas. But we have to prepare for these new projects that are going online."

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She said three inputs need to be considered: visibility and understanding when the developments are scheduled to come online; what types of cargo can be expected; and understanding how freight forwarders select their carriers. To do this, she said there must be more dialogue between parties in the supply chain and a greater understanding of the different scopes in the business.

She added that dship would prefer to have some level of security and lock-in shipments ahead of time, but with the degree of fast-tracking seen in the market, it has to be able to respond quickly. Managing expectations of both existing and new clients was described as a challenge.

### Speed of change

Katherine Koppe, global director, business development at freight forwarder Geodis, highlighted the speed at which projects are kicking off in the USA. "Even with some of the larger capex projects that have the experienced companies involved, they are also saying things are happening at a really fast pace; we did not expect them to take off quite as quickly as they did."

She too cited the Chips Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), as catalysts for a flurry of activity. "Everybody is moving as fast as they can to participate," she said. "It is happening so quickly that sometimes we have to struggle to catch up and work with a lack of detail."

Offshore wind projects are expected to be a positive driver for US Ocean. "There has been a lot of anticipation and excitement about US offshore wind for many years, but now we are finally getting to the point where it is really happening," Terrill stated.

"With our mix of experience with the carriage of wind equipment and providing transportation services to customers receiving US government financing for projects, we do expect to be involved in the carriage of



equipment and components for US offshore wind projects in the near future."

Oil and gas remains part of the overall energy portfolio and there are certainly cargoes moving to support these activities as well, he added.

Nevertheless, Terrill exercised some caution about forward-looking prospects. "The negative outlook of the container sector

is concerning. At least as far as general cargoes are concerned, we learned over the past couple of years that the container sector is an important leading indicator for the multipurpose sector."

### Sustainability demands

Moreover, "owners and operators are not only dealing with government regulations, but also with increasing customer and investor demands regarding sustainability."

"For the multipurpose sector, we see that there will be material changes and major strategic decisions for those in the sector, largely around fuel, over the next three to 10 years."

In 2019, there was considerable excitement about the restoration of the US Export

Import (EXIM) Bank's board quorum, which enabled it to write larger loans for projects that require export credit agency support. This has not quite materialised as planned but Terrill remains sanguine on the prospects – and US Ocean's fleet is well placed to capitalise on any uptick.

"The bank is working hard and making progress, but the cargoes have been limited. We are hopeful that there is now a better understanding by our political leaders about the importance of EXIM, the role that the bank plays in supporting US jobs, manufacturing capacity and US exports, and that there will not be a repeat of prior mistakes that hurt the bank." 

**It is happening so quickly that sometimes we have to struggle to catch up and work with a lack of detail.**

– Katherine Koppe, Geodis

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## Precise planning is key to Felbermayr hydroliser transport

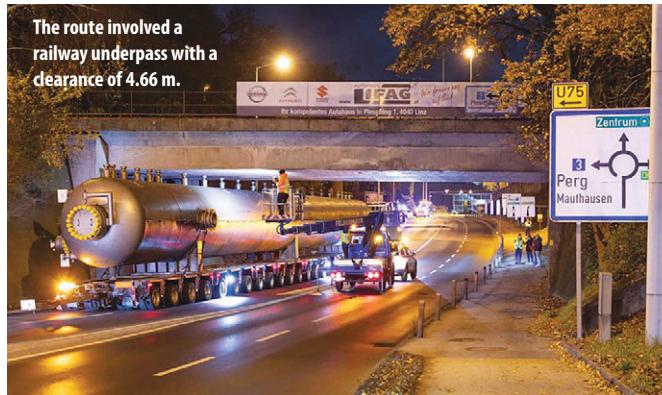
Austrian heavy transport specialist Felbermayr has delivered two large components for the Borealis Agrolinz Melamine plant – a project for which planning started two years ago, in close coordination with chemical company Borealis.

Borealis tasked Felbermayr with the transport of two hydrolisers, each weighing 180 tonnes and measuring 38 m long, from its port site in Linz to the company's facility producing plant nutrients.

After careful planning, the project kicked off with the discharge of the components from the vessel onto Felbermayr's transport equipment using the port crane at Linz. The Felbermayr team then began the transport of the 60 m-long combination to the Borealis site – a route that involved a railway underpass with a clearance of 4.66 m.

### Extensive preparations

Armed with its extensive preparations, Felbermayr knew exactly how to rise to the challenge. "We had the entire bridge and road areas measured in 3D beforehand," explained project manager Berat Ibraimi. "With this data and the dimensions of our low-loader, we were then able to simulate



The vertical lift from the low-loader onto the foundations using a hydraulic gantry system.

what maximum height we could reach in order to drive through there safely."

The maximum values determined during the simulation – such as a total

height of 4.6 m for the transport and a height of 3.6 m for the hydroliser – were incorporated into the detailed transport design and the 180 tonnes of each unit was distributed across 23 axle lines. With the low-loader, which has a hydraulically adjustable platform height, the underpass was cleared within about 20 minutes thanks to the precise preparation.

Felbermayr then had to tackle setting the units on to the foundations. According to the company, handling the components in the client's industrial area and placing them on the foundations was the greatest challenge for this job.

The tight site conditions made the use of two truck-mounted cranes impossible. Ibraimi said that the solution was a cooperation with its subsidiary Wimmer Maschinentransporte and its heavy lift handling department: a vertical lift from the low-loader onto the foundations using a hydraulic gantry system.

The hydrolisers were then lifted and moved sideways by 5 m. This was achieved by a specially built shifting track on heavy girders. "The horizontal shifting with hydraulic cylinders was a tight affair, we only had 25 mm of clearance in the width," Ibraimi continued.

### Second hydroliser

After dismantling the shifting track, the second hydroliser was lifted onto the concrete foundations and fixed in place, about a week after the first.

"Every project undertaken by our transport and lifting technology team has its own peculiarities and must be considered specifically and individually. It is important that it is planned very carefully from the beginning and that we can implement it as safely as possible," said Ibraimi.

"If you go through the checklist after precise planning, and all the staff know exactly what to do and have been trained, then it works."





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# Why minimum standards are needed for the use of SPMTs

**As the SPMT market matures, Mammoet believes trailer operator accreditation must be introduced to avoid serious accidents occurring.**

The SPMT celebrated its 40th birthday this year and the technology has undoubtedly enabled megaprojects to be executed that otherwise would have been impossible.

SPMTs have proliferated and today thousands of axle lines are in operation around the world. They are capable yet complex machines, but it might surprise some to learn that there is no universal standard to operate this machinery.

When the SPMT market was in its infancy, the trailers were operated by specialists that had longstanding experience using hydraulic trailers – Mammoet was the first mover, followed by the likes of Sarens and Fagioli. Training and operating standards were developed and maintained in-house.

Today, the SPMT market is mature, operations have been digitised, and ultimately the

technology has been commoditised. Anyone can buy and operate this equipment. This, naturally, brings about concerns regarding safety and some are pressing for the introduction of universal operator standards.

## Best practice

ESTA recognises the need for best practice in the lifting and transport industry, and it has achieved success with the European Crane Operator Licence (ECOL). Four years ago, Mammoet's Ludo Mous approached the association to consider the development of similar accreditation for trailers – in particular SPMTs – where

there is presently no minimum standard for use.

ESTA launched a SPMT best practice guide in 2016. Version 2.0 will build on this early success and is scheduled for publication later this year. Industry executives have welcomed the steps taken, but some are pushing for more to be done.

Mous believes the matter is pressing: "With a simple SPMT combination of 24 axle lines we have a minimum of 120 hydraulic valves that all need to be set-up correctly. When this is not done, it can result in an unstable situation or damage to the trailer. We want to create awareness about the complexity of an SPMT."

**I think it easily takes a year of training before we [at Mammoet] have an operator that we would want to send to a job and still sleep nicely.**

– Ludo Mous, Mammoet

He added that, unlike a crane, an SPMT does not have an integrated control system mounted onboard, or multiple safety systems guarding the user – the knowledge and skill of the operator is critical to safe performance.

He cited reports of operators receiving just four days of training before being let out into the field. "I think it easily takes a year of training before we [at Mammoet] have an operator that we would want to send to a job and still sleep nicely."

Mous wants to see the introduction of a minimum standard for SPMT use, even if that means sharing proprietary experience and expertise. "We could just keep our mouth shut and wait for the accidents. There is so much competition but we have to act."

## Setting objectives

He believes the industry leaders are willing and prepared to come together and set down a minimum standard level for SPMT use.

"We do not want to see accidents happen. Why do we accept this as an industry? Why do our clients accept that there are people without experience or proper knowledge driving their transports?"

Other issues include a lack of standardised terminology for trailer components, unlike the crane sector that is governed by ISO norms. Concurrently, more and more SPMTs are entering and circulating around the market.

Mous is not under-estimating the difficulty of the task at hand. "We are stepping onto a moving train... we have set some guidelines with this best practice guide-plus, where we go into more detail. But always in the back of our minds, at a certain moment we will want to lift this up to a norm."

Ultimately, he feels there is a lack of basic awareness around the industry of the risks of SPMT use, and more needs to be done to promote best practice.





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# Finding tranquility – in a tempestuous career

**Justin Archard joins Lars Bonnesen, managing director of United Heavy Lift (UHL), at his home in Denmark to catch up about his life in multipurpose and breakbulk shipping.**

I am an hour early and I pull into a layby just shy of Naestved, Denmark, and settle down to while away some time. But no sooner had I found the podcast I was looking for when Lars Bonnesen calls to see how my journey up from Hamburg is progressing. “I have arrived a bit early Lars so I’m killing some time. I don’t want to intrude”. “Rubbish” he says – “stay there, I will come and get you.”

Moments later a flame red Ferrari arrives, and I am greeted by a smiling Lars who offers his apologies for the car being so dirty. “Looks to me that it has been well driven,” I say, “isn’t that why you have it?” And then he is off like a whippet and I am left behind in 2 tonnes of diesel SUV gamely trying to keep up.

We roll into his driveway 10 minutes later, an unfinished gravel track that leads up to a series of farm buildings. A 130 ha farm is where Lars calls home. Spring barley is growing in nearby fields and a tractor a short way off is tilling and sending up clouds of dust. The orchard is in blossom and ducks contentedly paddle around the pond. It is the personification of farm life.

## Country life

“I like to be in the fields,” he says. “It is very tangible. If you spend 2 hours in the tractor you can see what you have been doing.” This is offered as a contrast to shipping where there is almost no lasting physical imprint of one’s efforts.

“I bought this farm after having been looking for more than 10 years. It was a childhood dream to own a farm, but I have no idea where the dream came from. I get my eggs from down the road, and I pay for them in grain for the chickens.

“The farm at the top of the road has 3 ha of grassland that has to be cut for the government subsidy. The owner is a vet, and she has no time. So, I cut her grass and she vaccinates my dogs. We are all trading something with each other.”



**At home, Lars is accompanied by two enormous Hungarian Vizslas.**

We go into the Hunting Shack – a couple of out-buildings that are adorned with hunting trophies, photos and memorabilia. This is where Lars works, accompanied by two enormous Hungarian Vizslas.

As we sit and mull on our coffee for a while, I look out over the fields and hear only nature’s silence. I sense this could be what Hygge is (a widely used Danish word that does not have a real meaning but is used to express a feeling of cosiness and

contentment). When I ask him later what more he wants from life he answers: “I like it like this. I want more of the same.” But ‘this’ has not come easily, he says with an edge. “I have a lot of scars on my back from a career in shipping.”

Born in Korsør, Denmark in 1969, Lars, together with his two older siblings, was raised by his late father Ole Peter Bonnesen. By his own admission Lars was a hopeless student. “I played football more than I studied.”

**I like it like this. I want more of the same. But ‘this’ has not come easily. I have a lot of scars on my back from a career in shipping.**

– Lars Bonnesen, UHL

## Island origins

Ole was from a small island near Skaw where expectations of him were of becoming a farmer or a fisherman. He wanted neither and joined the merchant navy as a deck hand on the DFDS liner service between Europe and the Far East at a time when cargoes could have been



**Everyone was heading to Germany and I wanted something else. I dreamed of the USA, Singapore... Marseille. Don't ask me why Marseille. I have no idea.**

– Lars Bonnesen, UHL

anything – wet/dry – bulk/breakbulk. He stayed with it until his late 20s, and then for the rest of his career serviced the public on the Korsør ferry.

“My father had hoped that my brother would follow him to the sea, but my brother didn’t want that and instead went off to become a technician with Siemens.”

On leaving school and quite by chance, Lars landed an apprenticeship with the J. Poulsen shipping company in Korsør, which got him started in the shipping business. Soon after he turned down a place with SAL Heavy Lift in Hamburg. “Everyone was heading to Germany and I wanted something else. I dreamed of the USA, Singapore... Marseille. Don’t ask me why Marseille. I have no idea. It is a weird thing.”

### Broking desk

Instead, he headed off to Mobile, Alabama, together with his girlfriend to start with a small family agency called Stiegler Shipping – who still seem to be around today. They wanted to start a broking desk but had little more to offer than two files– positions and cargoes. The positions files were not much use so instead he got onto the phone as by now he had connections with Danish shipping companies that were operating vessels in the Caribbean region. This brought him into early contact with the venerable Svend Andersen of BBC Chartering renown and now the ceo at the new incarnation of Intermarine – who at the time had his own shipping company, Queen Shipping. “We fixed a lot of 2,000 to 4,000 tonners, 30-50-tonne derricks, in and around the Caribbean and that is how I got my start in chartering.”

But in 1993 aged 24, and finally arriving in Singapore, life changed forever. Having accepted a job with Lars Juhl at Elite Shipping’s Singapore agent’s office, a clash between Elite and Juhl resulted in Juhl resigning. Lars had yet to take up his place so instead, together with Nortrans and TP Shipping, the two Lars’ founded what became one of the biggest success stories in breakbulk shipping in the late 1990s and early 2000s – Scan-Trans.



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The business plan was pure broking. Vessel owners did not have offices all over the world as they do now. The whole industry was smaller, and Scan-Trans was perfectly positioned. Vessels arriving in the region needed backhauls and this was where they could start to make their mark.

"One day we were called to attend a meeting with JGC in Japan to whom we had offered some rates for cargoes from China to South Asia and they wanted to book. We knew how to calculate but we didn't have any ships. So, they said to us 'go and find the ships'. With the support of our main shareholder, we took some ships on time charter trip (TCT) and that is how we got into operating," said Lars.

Hard work and a supportive market helped the company to grow quickly. By 2007, it had close to 20 offices worldwide – including Marseille – and upward of 30 vessels on charter.

"We had taken an earlier decision to sell the company" – he tells me – "to a Danish investment house. Everything was agreed." And then came the global financial crisis. "We had had a good 2008 but I came into the office on January 2, 2009, and the market was collapsing. The buyers wanted to see the projections for the first quarter 2009. Once they saw them the offer was halved, so we decided not to sell."

### Setbacks

This left them with a problem. The market was in chaos, and with nearly 30 ships on charter at top-of-the-market rates, the outlook was ominous and eventually it took its toll. During a phone call Lars Juhl suffered a stroke. He was 43 years old and although he recovered well enough to return several months later, he decided he had had enough. So, they decided to see whether they could find a buyer.

Juhl recounts these moments and the life leading up to it in his brutally honest 2015 memoir *I'm Lars Juhl and I Fucked Up My Life* (translated from Danish). The title alone points to the naked sincerity found between its covers. I suggest to Lars that there is little point in writing a memoir if it is not an honest account. "Yeah, but sometimes I think too much honesty is not always helpful," he says.

Lunch arrives. A typical Danish Smørrebrød selection – rye bread with cold cut toppings of paté, egg, fish and liver sausage. We segue into the subject of hobbies while we are eating, and I am surprised to learn Lars is a competitive table tennis player as well as playing in two veterans' football teams – "I play the matches but never train."

A 130 ha farm is where Lars calls home.



They are activities that help him disconnect. "I used to do triathlon, but with the swimming and the cycling I could never switch off. When I step over the white line of the football pitch, I am in the game and it is the same thing with table tennis."

I mention that I recall reading somewhere that Scan-Trans once had a ship hijacked off the Somali coast. "True," he says. "We were not going to Somalia, just passing when we were boarded by pirates and taken to an anchorage at Eyl. It was scary for everybody."

**I remember going to a company function and I was used to everyone talking to me and me talking to everyone. But no one talked to me. It was as if everyone knew what was going on except me.**

– Lars Bonnesen, UHL

Fortunately, we had ransom insurance, and the insurance company sent a negotiator, an ex-SAS officer, and we had to pay USD1 million cash to get the ship and crew back. But getting USD1 million in cash to the ship was a real problem. We eventually found an old tugboat captain – you cannot make this up – who with his little tugboat was willing to sail the five days from Mombasa to the ship and hand over the money. He got USD500,000 for his trouble and I won't tell you how we got the money to Mombasa, but that was really crazy."

### Scan-Trans sale

Scan-Trans was sold to Intermarine in 2012, which at the time was a US-flag shipping company. Acquiring Scan-Trans gave Intermarine an international footprint and Lars continued as a director. But carrying too much debt through the winter years of MPP's great recession forced Intermarine into Chapter 11 insolvency, only to be bailed out in 2018 by the new kid on the block, Zeamarine, at which Lars survived a month.

"I remember going to a company



function and I was used to everyone talking to me and me talking to everyone. But no one talked to me. It was as if everyone knew what was going on except me.”

Offered the role of key account manager, it was a technical firing.

Only a month earlier, the 25th anniversary of Scan-Trans had passed by and now he had been forced out. As a silence passed between us, the pain of it was still very evident.

### **Implosion**

Then, in 2020, Zeamarine imploded. “I had no idea what I was going to do. I was not ready for it all to end. But out of nowhere Lars Rolner calls me and asks me to come to Hamburg – which I did. I was offered a role with UHL, but instead I asked to become a shareholder which Lars eventually agreed to. I paid a good price for the shares.” In April 2019, when Lars joined UHL, the company had five vessels on commercial management but the collapse of Zeamarine opened up an opportunity to acquire the nine-vessel F-900 fleet. Deftly and not without considerable risk, UHL succeeded. Today, there are 19 x F-900s in the UHL fleet and they are the most modern and fuel efficient MPP/heavy lift ships in the world.

So how does Lars Bonnesen see the

future, I ask? “Change is inevitable,” he says. Like many companies that have pivoted away from being seen as service providers to the oil and gas industry, Lars sees UHL as an energy transport company. “Nearly 50 percent of all the cargoes we carry are related to renewables and alternative power and this is going to grow in the coming years. Only last week a customer asked us how much capacity they could secure from us in the future. It was not a question of price. They know a big bottleneck is coming.”

The question could well be asked that if the future market looks so good, why are more ships not being built? According to Lars the answer is less ‘why’ and more ‘where.’

“Every year we have a meeting to evaluate the risks in the company and how to be prepared in case the worst should happen. For instance we expect to have to be

**Only last week a customer asked us how much capacity they could secure from us in the future. It was not a question of price. They know a big bottleneck is coming.**

– Lars Bonnesen, UHL

far more alert in future of the consequences a fast changing geopolitical landscape could have on where we source ship finance.”

The cost of building new ships in China remains lower than elsewhere but with yards full of containerships and tankers, they have little appetite for fussy MPPs. So, the problem remains, where in the world can an owner build ships that offers yard access at a low enough price together with a financial framework that is attractive to a volatile industry like MPP? The search is on.

### **Family matters**

I ask about his daughters, of which I know he has two with his former wife. Both are in Copenhagen. The elder is an accountant and the younger training to become a lawyer. “They are both developing useful skills for your business,” I suggest. As well as the farm, Lars has a property portfolio and building developments under way, all in the Naestved area. “That is the plan,” he says. “Both daughters will likely come into the business when they are ready. But it has to be their choice. I think they are willing.”

We have missed the Teams meeting Lars was scheduled to have by more than an hour. But when you have Hygge, time does not seem to matter.



In its **Freight Service Awards 2022**, the British International Freight Association recognised **deugro** as the '**best in industry**' for the **Project Forwarding** category.



## Flexibility and coordination are key to deugro's success



Flexibility and coordination were key to the successful delivery of 280,000 freight tons of petrochemical equipment from over 30 points of origin to a petrochemical plant construction site in Vietnam while Covid restrictions were in force.

Freight forwarder and project logistics specialist deugro arranged 155 breakbulk shipments of critical oversized and heavy lift components on 55 heavy lift vessels, as part of a contract that covered over 1,400 breakbulk, container and air freight shipments.

deugro faced numerous challenges in completing this complex project – not least, the widespread, ever-changing Covid restrictions in place at the time, which

created a "dynamic" project logistics landscape with sudden schedule changes, deugro UK branch manager Mark Riley noted. Other difficulties included high freight rates and severely limited vessel capacity.

To surmount such obstacles, close collaboration between deugro's project lead office and branches in 16 countries, was essential.

### The biggest challenge

The most challenging components, weighing over 778 tonnes each and nearly 100 m long, had to be moved from Malaysia to Vietnam at a time when suitable vessels were in short supply, but deugro managed to contract six semi-submersible ro-ro heavy lift ships, strengthened for heavy cargo.

The 800-tonne, 93 m-long C3 tower was transported by road 6 km from the fabrication yard to Kuantan Port, which took 11 hours to safely complete, and required removal of obstacles, arrangement of permits and police escorts, levelling and compacting of pinch-points, power and telephone cable lifting, and trailer technical checks and regular equipment maintenance.

To meet the ground-bearing capacity of the route, hydraulic axles were used to ensure adequate load distribution; additional trailers were shipped from the USA, and deugro imported transport beams from the UAE and Asia to ensure sufficient support of the cargo saddles during transportation and offloading.

### Loading and unloading

Some units were loaded at Kuantan Port by tandem lift using the vessel's cranes. In order to position the 338-metric-ton C2 tower and the 600-metric-ton quench water tower on board, a crane boom support had to be temporarily removed.

On arrival at the Phu My construction jetty, most of the components were stored at the Customs area before on-carriage. This saved time and costs; and increased flexibility in the delivery schedule of components in accordance with

the construction site's required sequences.

SPMT and hydraulic trailers were used for the transport to the construction site and the trailer configuration for the C3 tower required a reduction in the gradient of several areas of the job site, as well as the removal of street furniture and ground protection where there were underground services such as water pipes.

The pipe rack area on the construction site was extremely tight for manoeuvrability, needing detailed inspections and civil engineering works to design a safe transport path.

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Vying to become Europe's  
**energy powerhouse**

**Rich in natural renewable energy resources, the Iberian Peninsula is well positioned to be at the forefront of the European energy transition, while a strong cluster of manufacturers and EPCs based in the region continue to provide project cargo opportunities. Sophie Barnes reports.**

The solar energy sector in Spain has been strong for many years and the country currently has the largest solar pipeline in Europe. It is expected to install 4 GW of solar capacity this year alone.

An ongoing court case in London, however, could have widespread ramifications for clean energy financing in the country, as well as across the EU.

The case concerns a decade-long dispute by renewable energy investors who poured millions into a solar plant in southern Spain in 2011. The Spanish government offered subsidies to encourage the development of renewable energy only to slash the payments back in 2013 to cut down public spending.

### Court rulings

According to reports, Spain has been sued internationally more than 50 times over the retroactive changes, with more than 20 of the cases favouring the investors. So far, Spain has refused to pay any outstanding amounts from those cases – something investors will certainly take into consideration when deciding on future project destinations.

Currently, however, solar plant projects continue to be a source of domestic project cargo activity, according to Jimmy Jaber Bringas, ceo of Bilbao-based project logistics specialist Sparber Group. His company has also been involved in handling cargoes for car manufacturing plants, including heavy machinery, transformers and presses.

With the National Integrated Energy & Climate Plan, Spain aims to source 74 percent of its power from renewables by 2030. The acceleration of solar PV installations will play an important role in that, with the potential to make up more than half the region's renewable energy by 2030.



Terminales Marítimos de Galicia (TMGA) saw positive development of its project cargo handling during 2022, with double-digit growth in Spain.



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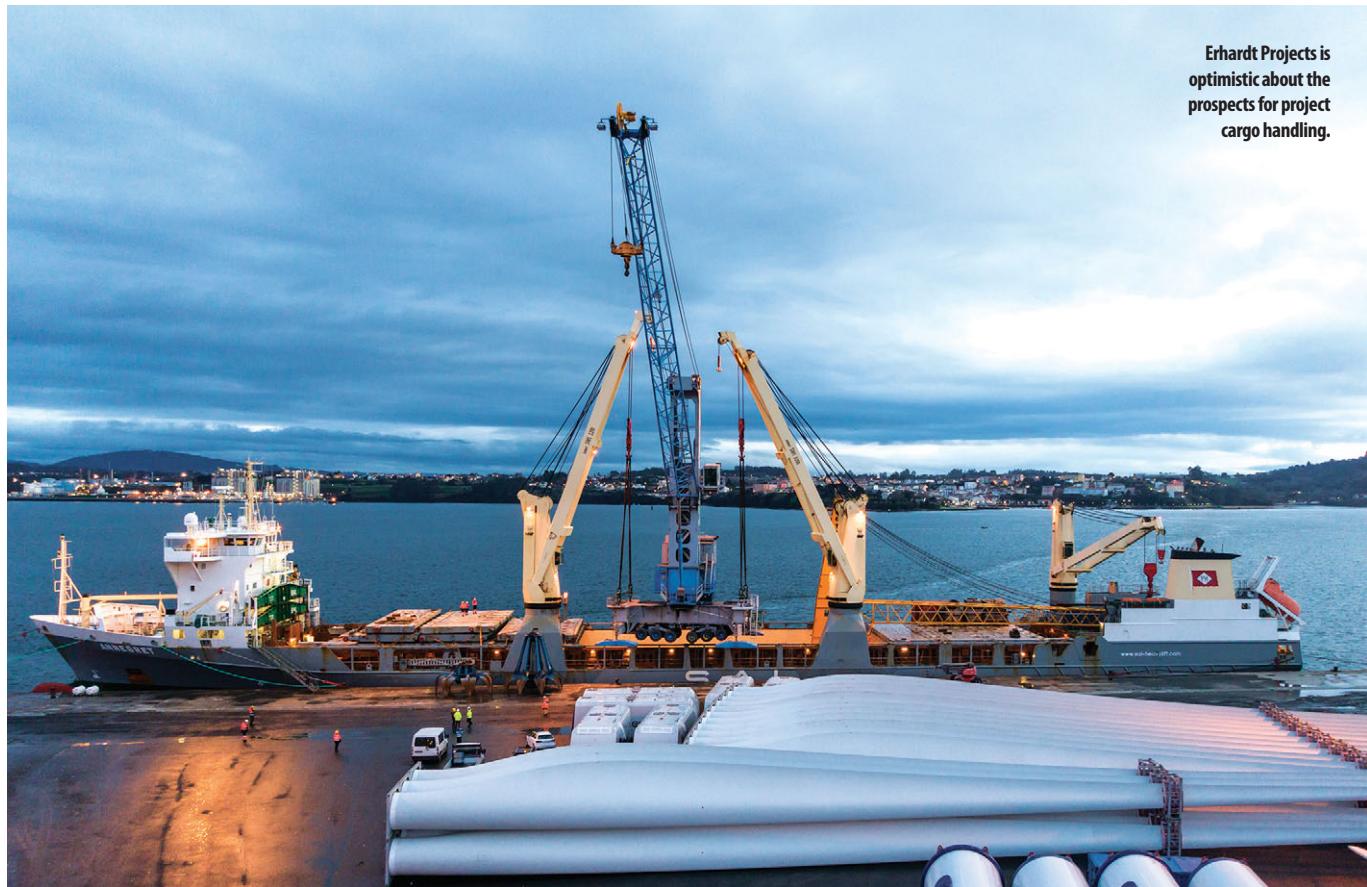
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Erhardt Projects is optimistic about the prospects for project cargo handling.

Between 2022-2025, the country should see 19 GW of new capacity come online, according to a report from industry group SolarPower Europe. Research from Rystad Energy, meanwhile, showed that there were over 100 GW of projects with grid approval in October 2022 and a further 23 GW awaiting permission.

Renewable energy development on the Iberian Peninsula will get a boost in the coming years. Currently, it has more than 50 GW of installed renewable energy capacity – 60 percent coming from onshore wind – and it has ambitious plans to increase the share of renewables in the power mix from 48 percent in 2021 to

64 percent in 2025 and 79 percent in 2030, putting the region at the forefront of the European energy transition.

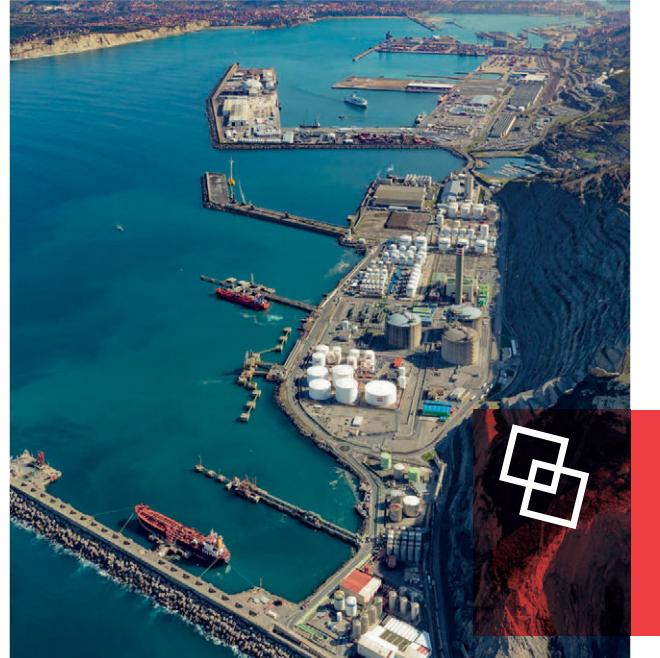
#### Offshore wind

In Portugal, offshore wind will lead the way. The government announced last year that it will boost the country's offshore wind target from 6 GW to 10 GW by 2030. The country is also on track to host the world's first subsidy-free commercial scale floating offshore wind project following BayWa's permit application for a 600 MW development off the Portuguese coast.

The abundant sunshine along with strong winds and mature gas infrastructure means

**With reliable gas supply from North Africa, lower power prices compared with the rest of Europe, and a renewable energy pipeline ... Spain and Portugal have the potential to evolve into a new European energy powerhouse.**

– Rystad Energy



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the Iberian Peninsula is well positioned to compete with – or even replace – Northern Europe's existing energy industrial hub, according Rystad Energy. It said: "With reliable gas supply from North Africa, lower power prices compared with the rest of Europe, and a renewable energy pipeline that stands out on the continent, Spain and Portugal have the potential to evolve into a new European energy powerhouse."

According to Spain-headquartered Erhardt Projects, however, "the national market can be hampered by economic uncertainty and a lack of legal certainty." Nevertheless, a spokesperson for the company was optimistic about the prospects for project cargo handling: "Spanish companies, production and logistics services providers are working in an international market that will surely help to mitigate the worst omens for the domestic market."

### Driving demand

Despite the difficulties facing the project cargo supply chain all over the world, the energy transition, investments in industry and public works are driving demand for a considerable number of projects. The Spanish market, in particular, is prepared to support those developments with a strong cluster of project logistics specialists, manufacturers and heavy lift-capable ports based there.

Terminales Marítimos de Galicia (TMGA) is a stevedore based in the ports of A Coruña and Ferrol. It saw positive development of its project cargo handling during 2022, with double-digit growth in Spain driven by the export of capital goods through both ports. This year has also started strongly and the company is confident that it will maintain the current growth trend, despite fears of a slowdown in the second half.

"It is the energy industries that are pulling hard," said a spokesperson for TMGA. "Offshore and onshore wind power, solar photovoltaics, as well as capital goods for automotive and mining industries." The typical destinations for these cargoes from Spain include the Middle East, Australia, the USA and some countries in South America. European destinations are "booming" too, mainly for current offshore wind energy and LNG projects, and foreseeable green hydrogen developments.

Bringas echoed this outlook. His company has been involved in the export of machinery to Africa, the Middle East and some South American countries – primarily wind turbines, solar plants, machinery and components for thermoelectric plants.



These types of development were described by Erhardt Projects, as "country projects" – large infrastructures on which the future development of a country will be sustained". As such, the company believes that project cargo activity has not yet been affected by the broader slowdown in consumer spending, given the importance of those types of projects and that they operate in sectors that require "a high dose of investment capacity." The company noted that geopolitics continues to be a challenge that can reconfigure commercial relations in the future, however.

The spokesperson at Erhardt Projects also said that energy infrastructure stands out, with renewables, oil and gas and nuclear projects ongoing around the world, in addition to other projects such as public roads and bridges and petrochemical plants.

"Renewable energy projects are destined for developed regions (Europe, North America, etc). Public infrastructure projects are more focused on developing regions, and petrochemicals in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, who are investing in their traditional fossil industry," the company explained. "The forecast for the first half of 2023 continues to be very positive. Making estimates for more distant horizons would be risky on our part, considering geopolitical

**Spanish companies, production and logistics services providers are working in an international market that will surely help to mitigate the worst omens for the domestic market.**

– Erhardt Projects

and economic variables and uncertainties, such as high interest rates, inflation, fuel prices or the evolution of freight rates."

These issues are not exclusive to Spain, Bringas noted. "Different countries in the world where we handled projects had the same problems, some cases even worse than Spain. We believe – or hope – that at some stage of 2023 this will stop. This situation is causing extremely high costs for the whole project."

He noted that some companies have had great difficulties facing the increasing costs, with some withdrawing their project cargo services.

While some suffered, those who were able to weather the storm have been able to prosper. Sparber, for instance, has increased its turnover on the project side of its business, "discovering African markets where we can handle huge projects, as well as handling projects in European countries".

### "Remarkable year"

It was also a "remarkable year" for Erhardt Projects. "We have taken partnerships with our customers to a new level, strengthening their end-to-end supply chains in highly disruptive times. It turned out to be a year of consolidation for the brand in the Spanish and European markets, and a leap towards international markets, mainly in the Middle East and North America."

For example, Erhardt Projects launched operations in Abu Dhabi in the UAE during 2022 and this year will open in Saudi Arabia. "We want to be present in one of the regions with the highest investment in sectors such as oil and gas, refineries, renewables and civil infrastructure, and with the highest growth expectations worldwide."

Along with the expansion, Erhardt



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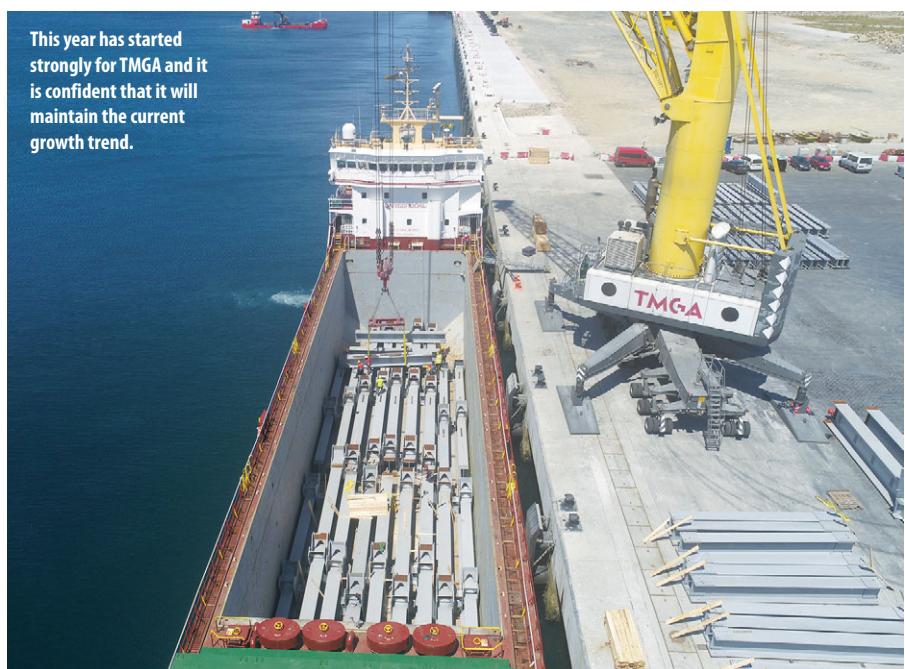
Projects has increased its staff and areas of specialisation, the spokesperson said. "The people who work at Erhardt Projects are the key to our transformation and we are preparing ourselves for a new generation of executives who will be in charge of driving the company's growth in the medium term.

"We must not forget that we are facing a new energy frontier, which is committed to clean energy or decarbonisation in production processes. There are many 'country' projects and business initiatives in this sense and that has a positive impact on the demand for project cargo logistics services."

While Erhardt Projects was positive about the prospects of domestic project cargo handling activity, the spokesperson noted that the lack of investment in large infrastructure projects in Spain is accelerating the internationalisation of Spanish manufacturers, EPCs and freight forwarders that specialise in projects, "in order to be close to energy benchmarks and their decision centres... and thus to be able to access the large turnkey projects planned between 2022-2025".

"This phenomenon," the spokesperson continued "is attracting Spanish companies (manufacturers, engineering and clients)

This year has started strongly for TMGA and it is confident that it will maintain the current growth trend.



from the driving sectors of the Spanish economy (renewables, infrastructure and transport) that generate project cargo opportunities."

In a similar vein, TMGA said that the "great concern of the port sector is the revitalisation of the industry that surrounds the Spanish ports. Without industry, there are no ports. We are concerned about the proper development of the industry in our area of influence."

Other issues include the rising operating costs as a result of energy price hikes and environmental regulations that will require investment in the near future. "Within the European recovery plans, Next Generation public funds represent an opportunity to modernise the port sector although, for the moment, they are not reaching our sector," TMGA said.

Nevertheless, the spokesperson

continued: "At TMGA we continue to bet on the development of our activity in the ports of A Coruña and Ferrol. In A Coruña, in the outer port of Punta Langosteira, we are developing a plan that has resulted in more than EUR25 million (USD25.4 million) of investments aimed at the construction of new warehouses, equipment expansion with high-capacity mobile cranes and the development of a horizontal transport circuit (in this case for agrifood cargo)."

### Bullish outlook

Overall, Erhardt Projects is bullish about the year ahead. "The project cargo industry is no stranger to market instability. In addition to the crisis caused by the pandemic, maritime congestion and the lack of ships on the market, inflation, the rise in energy prices, the climate crisis and a war in Ukraine were added.

"Some of these factors, such as the energy crisis and the drive to decarbonise the planet, are accelerating investments in the energy industry, especially renewable energies, which translates into an increase in the project cargo contracts."

"After an intense 2022, with a high demand for services in the project cargo sector, 2023 started with the same intensity, with growing productive activity at a global level that will materialise in a good first semester of activity."

"Recession forecasts continue for some time in 2023 but, to date, the reality is that new projects continue to be contracted that augur a prosperous year for our sector, although surely with potholes and uncertainties along the way."





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A huge slip on State Highway 5 between Napier and Taupō (visible in the background) has required a temporary bypass to be laid. The bypass is one of the key emergency works which has enabled the opening to general public of the crucial piece of state highway network.

# Cyclone Gabrielle leaves battered New Zealand with years of reconstruction



**Dave MacIntyre,**  
our regional correspondent in  
**AUSTRALASIA**



**Cyclone Gabrielle wrought devastation across New Zealand's North Island earlier this year. The region was already reeling from extensive flooding and states of emergency in Auckland and the Coromandel were extended. The reconstruction efforts will require specialised logistics services.**

**A**s the cyclone Gabrielle raged down North Island on February 12-16, the situation escalated into a national state of emergency. The damage to roads, bridges, housing and other infrastructure extends from the top of the North Island down into Hawkes Bay – a distance similar to that from the north of Scotland to Yorkshire in the UK. Roads and highways were blocked by landslides or the road surface dropped out,

**Months if not years of reconstruction lie ahead. The cost of damage is estimated to be around NZD13 billion (USD8.3 billion)... the government quickly announced extra funding for emergency works.**

the earth underneath having been washed away. Some communities effectively became islands, with little or no road access.

Months if not years of reconstruction lie ahead. The cost of damage is estimated to be around NZD13 billion (USD8.3 billion), according to finance minister Grant Robertson; the government quickly announced an initial injection of NZD250 million (USD159 million) of extra funding for Waka Kotahi (the road authority) for emergency works to get lifeline routes open and reconnect isolated communities. Rail lines have also been badly affected.

## Labour shortage

One question that faces the country is where the labour and trades skills needed for the work will come from? Part of the answer is immigration. A new fast-tracked visa category to help with recovery efforts will enable the country's civil construction companies to ramp up their efforts, without the significant barriers that have prevented the industry from overcoming its critical

shortage of workers – previously identified as the industry's number one challenge.

With such a massive civil construction task facing New Zealand, the demand for steel, construction materials and machinery will be huge and will flow on to a high demand for multipurpose and project space on inbound shipping. The dearth of such space in the region has been well documented but cyclone Gabrielle adds a new dimension to it.

AAL Shipping, a specialist in the region, has dual-fuel newbuilds on order, which may provide a lifeline when they are deployed into New Zealand. The first of six Super B-class heavy lift multipurpose vessels, AAL Limassol, is scheduled to come into service in 2024.

### **Renewable energy**

While the recovery effort from cyclone Gabrielle will drive a surge in demand for project cargoes, New Zealand also has a stack of renewable energy projects that will require specialised logistics management and transport services.

An immediate project opportunity could be coming up in the North Island where NZ Windfarms has lodged applications with the environmental protection authority to repower the Te Rere Hau wind farm above Palmerston North. It wants to replace the 97 small twin-bladed turbines with 30 three-bladed giants up to four times higher.

The project has the potential to generate 1.2 percent of New Zealand's current overall electricity generation. The application has been made under the fast-track consent process set up as part of the country's Covid-19 recovery plan. A decision on whether the project could go ahead, with or without conditions or amendments, is expected by the end of June.

Contact Energy, meanwhile, has just had new consents granted to operate on the Wairakei geothermal field for the next 35



The Waikari River Bridge on State Highway 2, between Napier and Wairoa, was totally swept away. New Zealand faces a huge infrastructure rebuilding programme.

years. This enables the company to proceed with replacing the 1950s-built Wairakei A and B power stations with a new station of up to 180 MW at Te Mihi – known as the GeoFuture project. A final investment decision is expected around December.

GeoFuture will be the third major development in five years for Contact's geothermal development pipeline, with Tauhara and Te Huka Unit 3 well on track for completion in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

Contact also signed a joint venture

**New Zealand has a stack of renewable energy projects that will require specialised logistics management and transport services.**

partnership with global solar developer Lightsource bp to deliver the first stage of a renewable energy precinct, Kowhai Park – an estimated 150 MW solar power plant – in Christchurch. Subject to a final investment decision, construction is expected to start in 2024.

### **Solar farms**

Lodestone Energy, an unlisted company backed by an array of wealthy investors, is looking to build five solar farms around the North Island, generating 350 GWh of electricity. Another solar project in Taupo, headed by Nova Energy, is expected to generate 650 GWh. Several other companies are also looking at suitable sites around the country to enter the solar generation market. The industry is clearly in a growth phase.



## **Alevro lands Pluto Train 2 heavy lift and haul services**

Alevro – a joint venture between Australian engineering services provider Monadelphous and Italian heavy lift and transport specialist Fagioli – has secured a contract with Bechtel for the Pluto Train 2 project in Karratha, Western Australia.

The project includes the expansion of the existing Pluto LNG facility, enabling gas to be processed from the Scarborough gasfields through a second processing train, as well as plant modifications and the installation of additional domestic gas infrastructure.

Alevro is tasked with providing heavy lift and heavy haul services, including all associated engineering, receiving modules from ships and barges at port, alternative transport solutions utilising more than 150 axle lines of SPMTs and alternative lifting techniques to support the installation of modules utilising a bespoke tower and jacking system.

According to Fagioli, the project will require modules weighing up to 4,500 tonnes.

Early engineering has commenced, with the

scope of work expected to be completed towards the end of 2024. "A project of this magnitude requires unique capability and Alevro has been called upon to deliver just that. Our approach re-imagines the way construction is undertaken and integrated with heavy lifting, incorporating global methodologies for the delivery of Pluto Train 2," said Cristiano Cavallini, Alevro executive committee member.

Alevro was formed last year to bring "more lift and shift expertise and capability to Western Australia".



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# Civil sector drives the post-pandemic recovery



An ever-growing worldwide requirement for new and upgraded basic infrastructure is set to continue driving investment in major civil engineering projects. That trend is further fuelled by the fact many countries are making such projects a key element of their post-pandemic economic recovery. *Phil Hastings* reports.

**C**ivil engineering projects have become a cornerstone of many countries' post-pandemic economic recovery plans. However, a drawback for the civil engineering industry and its logistics service providers is that various external developments could inhibit new investment in construction activity, at least in the short term. Those negative factors include fears of a general global economic recession, high interest rates, volatile

energy costs and the Ukraine/Russia war.

A mix of positive and negative influences is also apparent in the civil engineering industry itself. On the upside, many of the supply chain problems over the last couple of years now appear to be easing. On the downside, labour and skills shortages are reportedly becoming an increasing challenge in some parts of the world.

Atradius, a Netherlands-based provider of credit insurance, debt collection and information services worldwide, published

*Construction Industry Trends 2023* earlier this year. It said: "The short-term outlook for the global construction industry is clouded by high levels of uncertainty. With a looming economic recession in major markets due to soaring energy prices and high interest rates, prospects for growth will be muted in 2023."

"Tighter monetary policy and lower household purchasing power will weigh on demand for new buildings. Aggressive policy tightening by central banks in 2022 has lifted borrowing rates and thereby reduced the



Mammoet working on the installation of twin viaducts across the Bolintxu valley in Spain.

demand for building construction work."

More positively, the report also suggests that a large backlog of work will help to "mitigate somewhat" the impact of those factors on construction work done during 2023. Additionally, it said that investment in infrastructure will drive growth in construction activity.

### Boosting economies

"Governments worldwide continue to champion major infrastructure projects to boost their economy's productive potential and drive the post-covid economic recovery. This will see civil engineering be the fastest-growing sector in the construction market," said the report.

However, Ruedi Reisdorf, ceo of Swiss global forwarder Fracht which works on

metro, railway, road, tunnel and airport projects worldwide, said the global requirement for better infrastructure is currently being overshadowed by developments relating to energy supplies.

"Globally, the big volumes of present and upcoming projects are in the power and oil and gas sectors rather than infrastructure.

**Governments worldwide continue to champion major infrastructure projects to boost their economy's productive potential and drive the post-covid economic recovery.**

– Atradius

Reasons for that include power shortages practically all over the world, the drive towards renewable energy and the fact that the Russia/Ukraine war means all oil and gas resources outside Russia are suddenly more valuable," he explained.

### Government priorities

"Infrastructure projects are last in terms of government priorities, plus in many countries it is difficult for governments to get the necessary permits to build new infrastructure, even where it very much needed. The situation is even worse when it comes to the maintenance and renewal of existing infrastructure – there is no lobby for such work so it is an easy area to target when governments are looking at ways to save costs."

Eslam Salah, projects director for

Egytrans, an Egyptian integrated transport and logistics provider whose present activities include transporting steel and concrete beams of up to 60-70 m in length for bridge construction projects in that country, also suggested the civil engineering market is generally quiet at the moment. "Due to the global economic situation, it is not so good," he reported.

Emre Eldener, managing director of Turkish logistics service provider Kita Logistics, said the current picture in its markets is mixed. It is presently involved with major civil engineering projects including the construction of a subsea tunnel underneath the Bosphorus Strait and the mobilisation of equipment for road construction schemes across a region extending from Moldova to Afghanistan.

### Downward trend

"We are seeing a downward trend in terms of the number of shipments and also a slowdown when it comes to the financing of major projects in our region," he stated. However, with the Ukraine/Russia war affecting many transport corridors, Türkiye has become a major gateway for moving cargo between east and west. "For example, we have been transporting earthmoving machinery between Europe and the CIS via a bonded warehouse and Turkish port," he commented.

Other logistics industry executives are more upbeat, however. One of those is Rafael Martinez, sales manager for Mammoet, the Netherlands-based global heavy lift services provider involved with a range of urban infrastructure projects, notably bridges and other civil engineering work worldwide.

Recent examples include executing lifts for the Merchants Bridge rehabilitation project in St Louis, Missouri, USA; the removal of the Lek Bridge near Vianen in the Netherlands; the refreshment of a terminal at Portland Airport, USA; and the construction of twin viaducts linking road tunnels on either side of the Bolintxu valley near Bilbao, Spain.

"Over the last few years, we have seen a constant stream of civil engineering projects relating to the renovation of ageing infrastructure, especially road and rail bridges," stated Martinez. "That sector is now being further fuelled by government investment designed to stimulate economic growth after the Covid-19 pandemic."

Additionally, he continued, many pieces of infrastructure in some developed countries are now at the end of their lifecycle – just this year, for example, the US government launched a USD27 billion



**Omega Morgan believes the civil engineering sector will be further boosted by a demand for new manufacturing plant.**

project to renew around 15,000 bridges nationwide. "As populations grow and urbanise, infrastructure must keep pace to support continued economic growth. For this reason, I am optimistic and convinced that this growing trend will go on in the coming years," concluded Martinez.

Erik Zander, chief operating officer for Omega Morgan, a North American heavy rigging and transportation provider whose current activities include hauling components for the construction of large chip-manufacturing facilities, suggested the civil engineering sector will be further boosted by a demand for new manufacturing plant. "We are continuing to see the onshoring of complex manufacturing facilities in the USA and I believe demand for supporting project logistics services in that market will stay strong," he reported.

"Even if manufacturing activity slows,



**We see upcoming projects in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia, and in Africa, for example in Tanzania and Ghana.**

– Emre Eldener, Kita Logistics

there is going to be significant investment in maintenance projects because so many factories have been running all out to catch up post the covid pandemic."

Long term, the value of the global construction/civil engineering market is widely projected to see a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4-6 percent over the next five to six years, at least, suggesting a picture of overall steady growth. Zander goes along with that view. "There is a tremendous amount of work to be done just to maintain current infrastructure. Assuming funding is in place, there are definitely going to be projects to complete," he commented.

### Upcoming projects

Kita's Eldener is also optimistic about the longer-term picture, at least as far as the markets serviced by that company are concerned. "In addition to projects in Türkiye itself, Turkish contractors make up the second-largest number in the global civil engineering/contracting market after the Chinese, so it is a strong market for us. We see upcoming projects in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia, and in Africa, for example in Tanzania and Ghana."

Egytrans' Salah is similarly positive about longer-term civil engineering sector project prospects in Egypt. "There are ambitious plans for future major projects relating to general construction, transportation and green energy all over the country," he commented.

Globally, growth in heavy and civil engineering construction activity over the next few years will be driven by technological development. That, at least, is the prediction made in a *Heavy And Civil Engineering Construction Global Market Report 2023* published by the Business Research Company, a multinational market research and intelligence provider.

"Areas of rapid technological change



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include smart highways, 3D concrete printing, drone surveying, kinetic roads, 'tiny houses' and solar roads. Due to the advancement in technology, the demand for better infrastructure will increase and positively impact the demand for heavy and civil engineering construction," it states.

However, Fracht's Reisdorf is more cautious about prospects for the next few years. He questions where the suggested overall 4–6 percent CAGR for the worldwide construction/civil engineering market will come from. "It is feasible in some countries but globally it will be very difficult to achieve," he commented.

"Governments are spending money but more on areas like defence rather than infrastructure. Meanwhile, rising interest rates will cause problems for both governments and the private sector. Global investment in infrastructure is likely to see some big ups and downs."

### Remaining problems

Within the civil engineering industry itself, while many of the more acute issues with construction material supplies over the last couple of years now appear to be easing, some problems remain. "Due to the global economic situation, there are still some shortages of materials and resulting supply chain challenges," confirmed Egytrans' Salah.

The scale of such issues worldwide over the last couple of years has already prompted many civil engineering companies to re-evaluate the structure of their international supply chains.

The background to that trend was outlined by Yannick Sel, group commercial director for Sarens, a global provider of heavy lift, transport and rigging services for a wide range of civil engineering projects, notably bridge construction/replacement.

"Recent worldwide issues with supply chains are leading governments and companies to look at derisking those operations and sourcing more locally. Governments are also looking for more local content in projects. Taking those aspects into account, we have also had to change our views on where we source from, although quality remains a key driver," he stated.

Reisdorf confirmed that "everybody is checking on their supply chain and building up alternative suppliers, if possible closer to them and/or the customer, so-called near shoring".

Specific factors driving this trend, he continued, include the need for Western countries, in particular, to find alternative sources for products previously supplied by Russia and a more general move away from



Mammoet executed lifts for the historic Merchants Bridge rehabilitation project in St Louis, Missouri, USA.

seeing China as the sole manufacturing hub for the world.

"Previously niche sources of construction materials and equipment supplies are getting bigger, making the market more global. Managing the logistics for such projects is therefore also becoming more global, which is where companies like Fracht that already have that experience can offer an advantage," he explained.

Meanwhile, labour and skills shortages are reportedly becoming an increasingly serious issue for many civil engineering projects, particularly in some more developed parts of the world.

One result of that trend, reported Omega Morgan's Zander, is an increasing push

towards modular construction, with resulting reduced onsite labour requirements.

However, he also said the overall labour market in North America might see a change over the next 18 months. "The technology sector seems to be slowing and I wonder if we will see a transition of some of those employees into other industries."

As far as the specific provision of logistics for civil engineering projects is concerned, Reisdorf suggested there are ways around labour challenges for service providers with the right sort of organisational set-up. "There is still a need for 'feet on the ground' at the project location, but a lot of the management can now be done remotely. One of the keys to doing that is global teamwork, but you need to have the right company culture for that to work."

### Shortages challenge

Sel said his company's response to the challenge of labour and skills shortages includes a training centre designed to develop local workforces. "That proved to be a key aspect of being able to continue executing projects during the pandemic as we had locally trained staff, minimising the need to mobilise staff from overseas," he noted.

Mammoet's Martinez also played down the issue of labour and skills shortages as far as his company's operations are concerned. "We have been a global service provider for many years and these fluctuations are not new to us," he stated. He claimed Mammoet's international structure puts the company in a good position to tackle such challenges.

However, Salah said that in Egypt, for example, labour and skills shortages are "a serious problem which needs more attention from the government and a focus on 'technical education', especially for drivers and technicians".



**Governments are spending money but more on areas like defence rather than infrastructure. Meanwhile, rising interest rates will cause problems for both governments and the private sector.**

– Ruedi Reisdorf, Fracht



## Rebuilding infrastructure after disaster strikes

**The earthquakes in Türkiye/Syria and the cyclone that hit New Zealand caused massive damage to infrastructure. A wide range of new civil engineering projects will be required, creating substantial unplanned additional business over the next few years for construction companies and their supporting logistics service providers, writes Phil Hastings.**

Emre Eldener, managing director of Kita Logistics, outlined the situation in southern Türkiye following two major earthquakes there in February. "Thousands of buildings collapsed during those earthquakes. In addition to residential homes, a series of hospitals and government buildings also collapsed," he reported.

### Major rebuilding activity

"That damage is going to require major rebuilding activity. Equipment such as excavators, cranes and all kinds of earthmoving machinery will need to be moved to that region over the next couple of years. There will also be a need to



**We do not foresee a direct impact of those sad events on global capacity.**

– Rafael Martinez, Mammoet

construct modular buildings, for example, to replace collapsed hospitals."

Commenting on the more general impact of natural disasters, Rafael Martinez, sales manager for Mammoet, pointed out that such events have a clear direct impact on basic infrastructure. "In the short term, that usually translates into emergency projects to resolve critical situations, while the renovation of key infrastructures takes a bit more time," he said.

### Disaster preparation

Erik Zander, chief operating officer for Omega Morgan, agreed that disasters "definitely have an impact on near-term work" and also highlighted another way they influence that market.

"In the USA, we often see a tremendous amount of work associated with preparations for disasters. Utility companies, for example, develop redundancy in their grids, while states and cities work on upgrading their infrastructure to better accommodate some disasters," he said.

However, Ruedi Reisdorf, ceo of Fracht, played down the scale of the impact natural disasters generally have on the overall civil engineering sectors in the countries concerned.

"Such disasters do require a subsequent huge rebuilding effort but viewed in the context of the size of the countries affected and their civil engineering industries, it tends to be still relatively insignificant in terms of the resources needed," he commented.

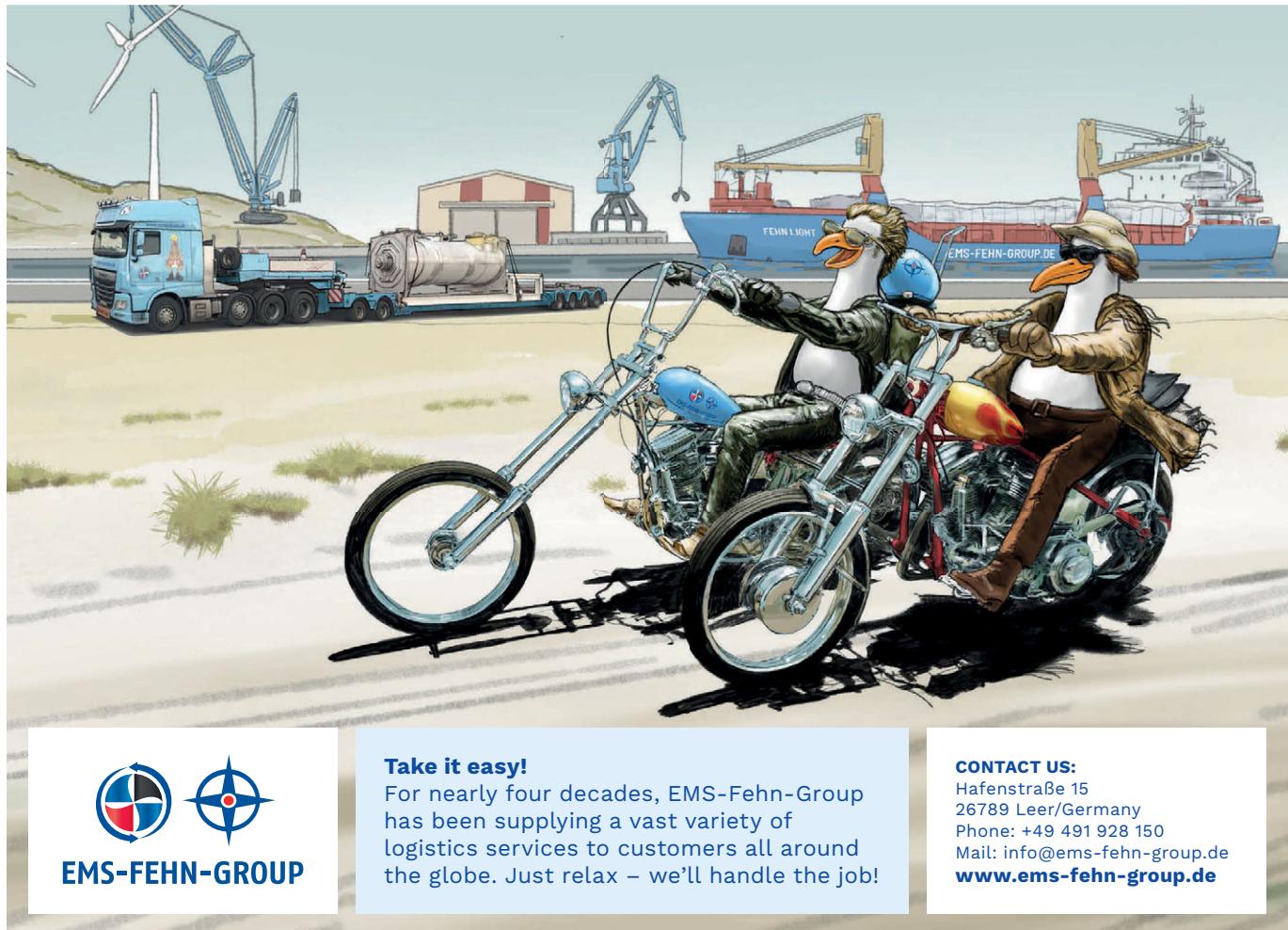
Martinez voiced a similar observation regarding the impact of this year's natural disasters in Türkiye and New Zealand on the wider global civil engineering industry. "Those disasters will certainly affect local governments and industries but we do not foresee a direct impact of those sad events on global capacity," he said.

Yannick Sel, group commercial director for Sarens, made the point that in some instances a shortage of finance can delay disaster-recovery civil engineering projects, while the pace of the work is influenced by the location of the event.

"Sadly, the impacted areas sometimes have to wait quite a while before they see the infrastructure being built up again as it requires the necessary funds," he said.

"However, people react faster if the areas hit have a large impact on the global supply chains for resources which are already scarce."





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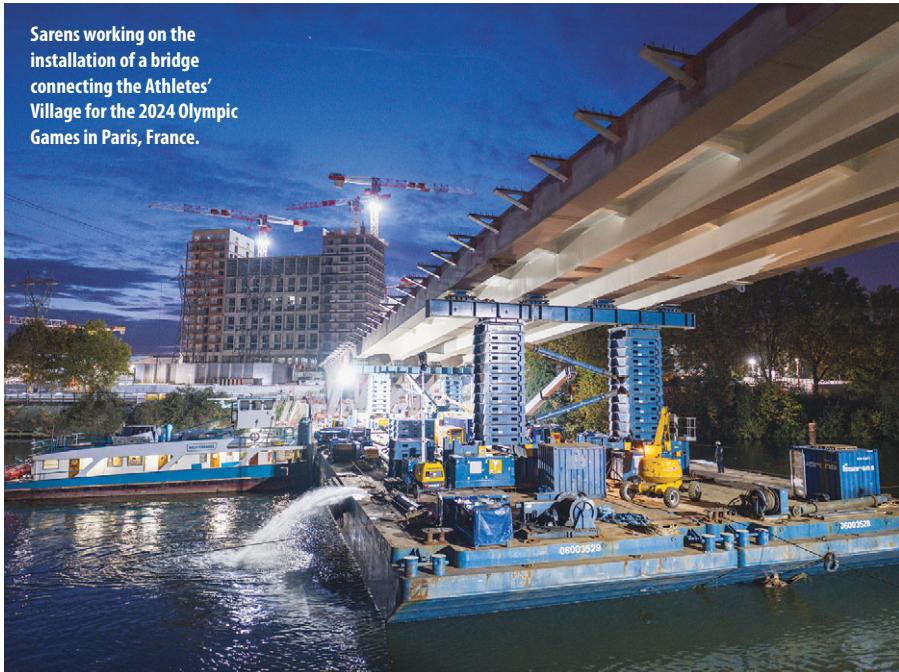


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**Sarens working on the installation of a bridge connecting the Athletes' Village for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France.**



# The greening of civil engineering

**Sustainability is now a clear trend across all industrial activity – and civil engineering is no exception, writes Phil Hastings.**

**E**nvironmental influences are having an increasing impact on civil engineering projects around the world and in a range of different ways. Those factors include the types of project being commissioned, their design, how construction work is carried out, and the requirements demanded of supporting heavy lift and forwarding service providers.

## Green interest

For example, Eslam Salah, projects director for Egytrans, said the company is “increasingly more interested in working on green projects”, while Rafael Martinez, sales manager for Mammoet, said sustainability is now a clear trend across overall industrial activity and civil engineering is no exception.

“We are seeing targets relating to reductions in the use of environmentally harmful materials and the carbon footprint of projects; an increase in the energy efficiency of buildings and facilities; and the gradual but consistent search for ways to reduce the use of fossil fuels to power



**We see this [sustainability] as a core responsibility and use our techniques to find better solutions which minimise the impact – direct and indirect – on the environment.**

– Yannick Sel, Sarens

machinery,” Martinez stated.

Ruedi Reisdorf, ceo of Fracht, said all civil engineering projects now undergo much larger environmental studies than in the past, with the main focus usually being on the running of that project and its environmental impact when operational rather than the actual construction work, although that does depend on the project concerned.

“From a logistics perspective, it is clear that every land transport move, whether for a project or not, now requires an additional consideration – how it can be performed in a more environmentally friendly way. Railways or waterways are often the preferred mode of transportation, if they fit in with other requirements,” added Reisdorf.

## Core responsibility

Yannick Sel, group commercial director for Sarens, agreed that the environment and sustainability are increasingly important in how projects are executed. “We see this as a core responsibility and use our techniques to find better solutions which minimise the impact – direct and indirect – on the environment. That includes getting involved early with clients so such solutions can be studied and engineered.”

Erik Zander, chief operating officer for Omega Morgan, said that while he was not sure project construction methods have changed much yet due to environmental influences, that factor is becoming apparent in relation to some of the materials being used and building specifications.

“I do believe we will start seeing requirements relating to carbon emissions in the bid specifications for projects in the coming years across different parts of North America,” he stated.

He also reported that one of the central themes to emerge from a major North American construction industry trade show, ConExpo 2023, held in Las Vegas earlier this year, is a move towards electrically powered equipment.

Mammoet’s Martinez provided further evidence of that trend, pointing out that his company had recently developed – and is now using – purely electric-powered self-propelled modular transporters, aiming for a “zero emissions onsite” future.

“Our innovations department is always working hard on ways to drive down the carbon emissions from our work, in recent times including prototype hydrogen skidding systems and real-time carbon monitoring technology,” he added.





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# Energy accelerates as a global maritime business

**Gregory DL Morris** reports that a surge of energy developments worldwide and the redefinition of supply chains is creating a wealth of work for legal professionals, as is a notable uptick in cargo theft.

International law firm Squire Patton Boggs has significantly expanded its commodities and shipping industry group in the past two years to more than 40 lawyers worldwide. Most recently it hired maritime attorney Michael Wray as 'of counsel' in the litigation practice group resident in the Houston office.

Another aspect of the growing maritime presence for the firm is a new partnership with the Baltic Exchange for vessel sales agreements.

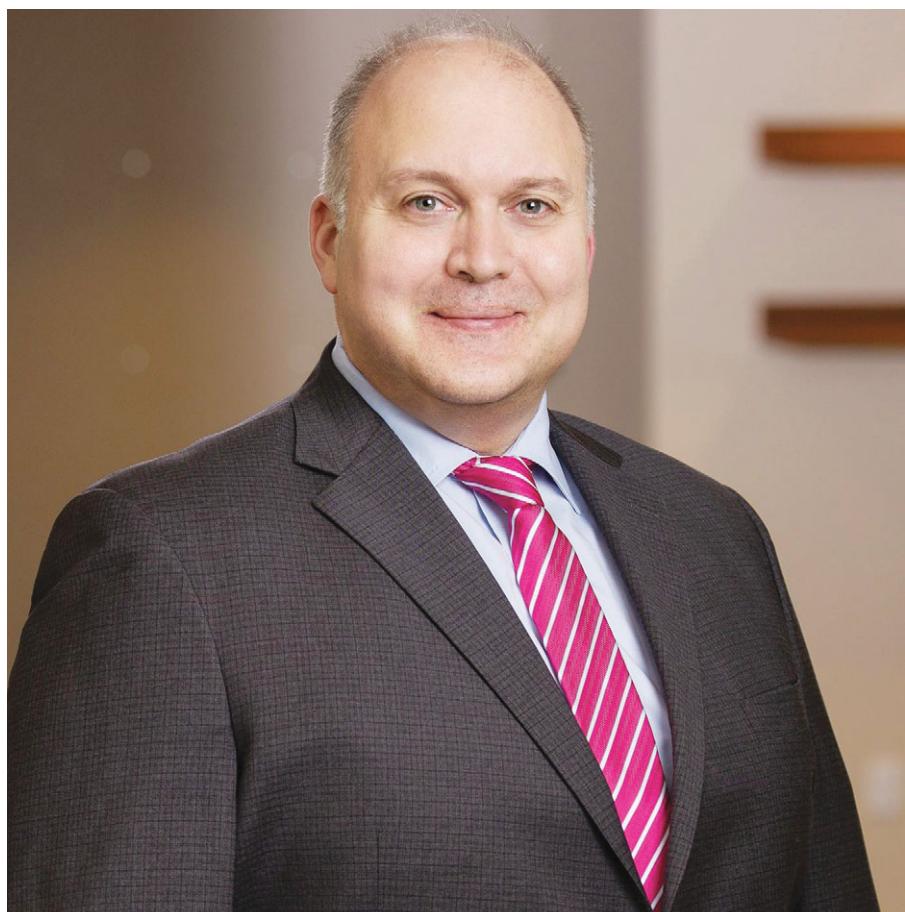
Wray is an experienced maritime litigator with extensive experience handling shipping litigation and arbitration cases in multiple jurisdictions, as well as energy disputes, commercial litigation, marine environmental matters, and maritime insurance. He is also experienced in advising clients on transportation regulatory compliance, and in responding to investigations involving various federal and state agencies. The title 'of counsel' varies among firms, but generally means a senior attorney and subject-matter expert who is not on the partner track and so is free from management responsibilities to focus on practice.

## Evolving global commerce

The growth of the shipping group at his new firm, and others, is an indication of how global commerce is evolving rapidly, Wray explained, especially in commodities and both conventional and renewable energy. Wray was previously in the Houston office of English law firm HFW.

While the oil industry has been a maritime market from inception in the 1850s, the natural gas sector has only recently become a global market with the huge expansion of deepsea LNG trade. Wind energy is also booming worldwide, requiring complex project-cargo logistics to move blades, tower components and nacelles.

"A lot of clients with energy and commodity interests have to manage transportation in general and shipping in



**People are expanding and changing their supply chains, which means whole new logistical agreements. We are working with many freight forwarders worldwide. And not surprisingly, lots of Jones Act issues.**

– Michael Wray, Squire Patton Boggs

particular," Wray told *HLPFI*. "Our practice in offshore areas is growing in all sectors: oil and gas, wind energy, and carbon capture and sequestration. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has a lot of accommodations for port development."

Wray observed that current workflow reflects those macroeconomic and policy trends. "People are expanding and changing

their supply chains, which means whole new logistical agreements," he said. "We are working with many freight forwarders worldwide. And not surprisingly, lots of Jones Act issues. The firm has broad experience in truck and rail, so these are natural extensions of that expertise."

The collaboration between Squire Patton Boggs and the Baltic Exchange is to provide



## CargoNet's 2022 Supply Chain Risk Trends

# 1,778

Theft Incidents Reported

Top Targeted Location Type



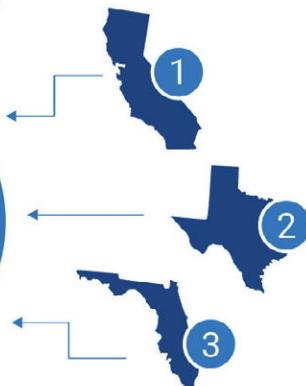
1. Warehouse/  
Distribution Centers



2. Parking Lots

### Top 3 Targeted States

Represent 46% of all theft in 2022  
California | Texas | Florida



### Top Targeted Commodity Type



1. Household Goods



2. Electronics

### Total Loss Value

# \$223,096,368



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vessel sale & purchase (S&P) transaction closing services. The service will be led by the law firm and underpinned by the Baltic Exchange's independent Singapore-based escrow operation. That escrow business is already used for a wide range of transactional work, including the sale and purchase of vessels.

"We are launching this as a one-stop service for shipowners, with support for every aspect of a vessel sale or purchase," said SPB partner Brian Gordon. "Those include preliminary negotiations, inspection and due diligence on the vessel, advising on and preparation of documents, as well as closing of the transaction."

### Cargo theft soars

Supply chain risk events rose 15 percent across the USA and Canada in 2022, according to CargoNet — a commercial

**Project cargo often involves multiple associated container shipments. Those are at risk of theft because they contain high value components or equipment.**

theft prevention and recovery service that is part of Verisk.

Supply chain disruptions were one of the main concerns of the year because of their effect on inflation. Scarcity and cost drove illicit market demand for goods that were most affected, like computer graphics cards and raw meat. Available capacity eased in the later months of 2022, but theft remained a prominent threat.

While heavy lift shipments are rarely subject to theft, which is driven by ease of

taking and a ready clandestine market, project cargo often involves multiple associated container shipments. Those are at risk because they contain high value components or equipment. Also, overall theft rates drive insurance and operating costs higher for all shippers and forwarders.

CargoNet's 2022 data indicates that events that involved theft of at least one heavy commercial vehicle, such as a semi-truck or semi-trailer, increased by 17 percent year-over-year, while events that involved theft of cargo increased by 20 percent year-over-year. Note that a single event record could involve theft of one or more vehicles or shipments. The average value of cargo stolen in an event was USD214,104. CargoNet estimates that USD223 million in cargo was stolen across all cargo theft events in 2022.

Increases in theft activity around major intermodal hubs were significant. California remained the top state for reported events in 2022 with theft in the state increasing 41 percent year-over-year. Computer and green energy components were some of the most frequently stolen items of the year and California is a major logistics hub for these items. Theft in Georgia increased by 34 percent year-over-year, due in part to organised crime groups that took advantage of increased traffic to the port of Savannah. Georgia shut down a state task force to investigate cargo theft in 2020.

## Ince saved by AxiomDWFM

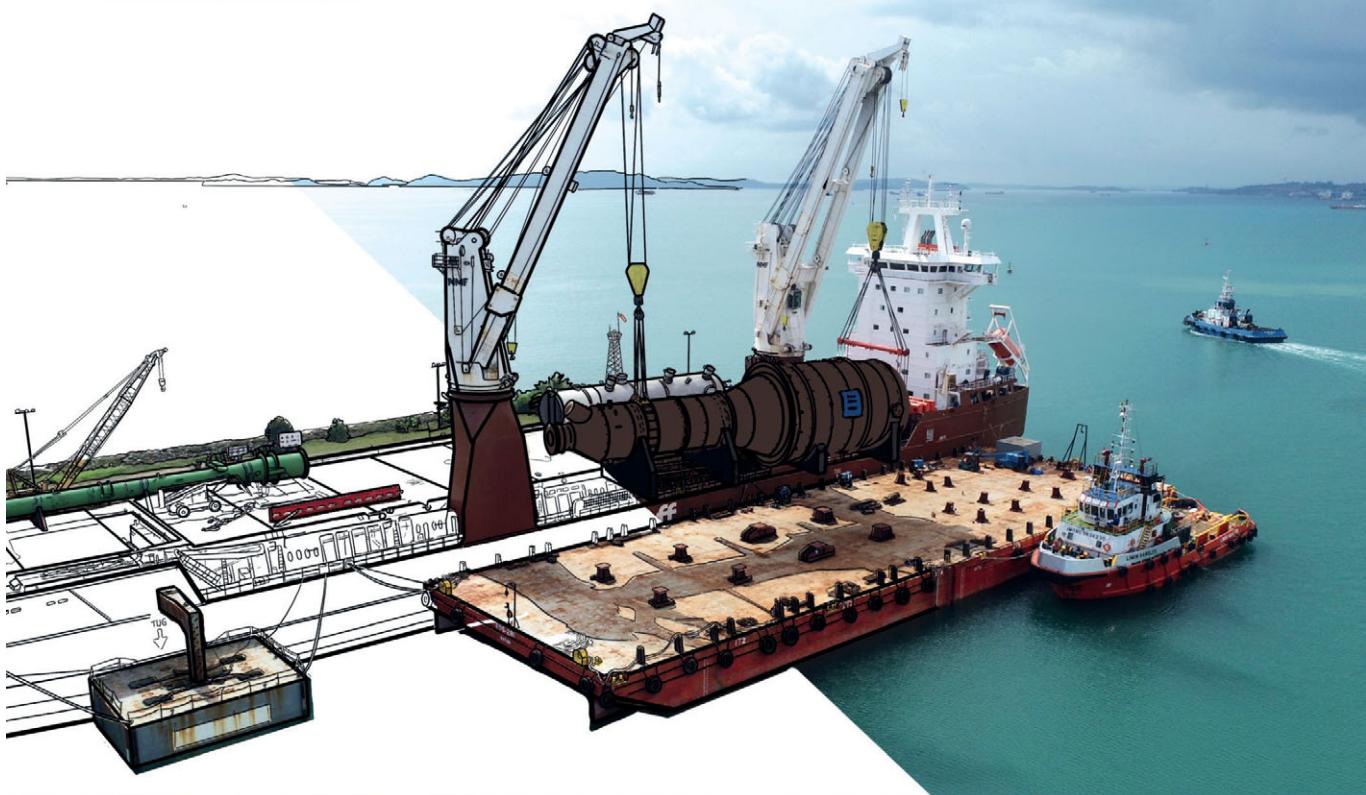
The large and historic UK law firm Ince, a major presence in maritime law, was put into administration in April. The firm had been under pressure from several quarters, including a cyber-attack a year ago. There have also been questions about complex legacy accounting.

Sources told HLFP that there does not seem to have been much disruption to global maritime business, noting that attorneys at all levels, including partners, had been leaving the firm over the past year or two, diffusing much of the shock to the system. As this issue went to press, AxiomDWFM confirmed that it would acquire the business.

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# Energy projects galvanise Canada's logisticians

**Hydropower and LNG are the highlights for Canada's project logistics professionals, with mining, oil and gas, and infrastructure also accelerating. Meanwhile, a suite of tax credits look set to boost the renewable energy industry, writes Gregory DL Morris.**



The project cargo logistics business in Canada is booming, and by all accounts that is likely to continue for several years. One of the largest developments in North America, the Site C hydroelectric dam project in the western province of British Columbia, is nearing completion, with heavy haul deliveries winding down this summer.

The other global-scale project is also in British Columbia, the nation's first LNG export terminal under construction at Kitimat, 400 miles (644 km) north of

Vancouver. In addition to those big jobs, there are numerous mining, petrochemical, pipeline, electrical expansions, upgrades and greenfield projects. Canadian project cargo companies, as well as global firms with a presence in the country, are expanding to meet the demand. That includes hiring new staff and opening new offices.

Canada is the second-largest country in the world by area, with only 40 million inhabitants, most of whom are clustered in urban areas. As a result, "there are not a lot of asset owners of heavy lift and project

cargo equipment that operate coast to coast in Canada," said Erik Hemphill, managing director at freight forwarder Conceptum Canada. "We work coast to coast, and to do that we have developed relationships with local and regional operators."

He explained that while there is a great deal of project cargo into and around Canada, it tends to be widely scattered. "It is not as simple as shipments for the west coast coming into Vancouver and shipments for the east coast coming into Halifax. A lot has to do with the number and type of ships calling at

Fracht coordinating the handling of a transformer at Squamish.



each port. Halifax gets a lot of ro-ro work, as does Tacoma (Washington, near Seattle), while Montreal is the main port of entry in the east for containers. Hamilton (Ontario, just north of Buffalo, New York) is absolutely a project cargo port.” Hamilton is the centre of the Canadian steel industry and as such has long been a heavy lift gateway simply to support that industry.

For shipments to the country’s interior, notably for the refining and petrochemical clusters in Alberta, “Houston has an advantage because of the volume of ships

calling there”, said Hemphill. There are also plenty of asset operators and well-known routes north.

#### Irregular services

“Thunder Bay (Ontario, the western-most port on the Great Lakes) would be a great option for project cargo going to Alberta, but it does not get regular vessel service.”

While it is always good to have options, many variables in the equation also make for complex calculations. “That is where logistics companies provide their value,” said

Hemphill. “That is true internationally, but especially in Canada. This country calls for expertise in routing and particular attention to the shipper’s or project manager’s priorities. Do they want it done fast? Do they want it done as economically as possible? How much time flexibility do we have?”

As an example, specialist forwarder Ambercor recently had a big project to move concrete pipe to British Columbia. “Most of it we brought in through Halifax and transloaded to rail,” said Christian Wagner, vice president at the company. “Some we

brought into Montreal. Separately we brought in some boilers for a refinery. We expect a few larger items out of Italy into Canada later this year."

Ambercor has added a new business development person in the USA, who will be based in central Florida. He comes to the company with expertise in heavy haulage and rigging. "We would love to move more project cargo through the Great Lakes and even into the West Coast, but there just are not the carriers," said Wagner. "We recently moved a 60-tonne transformer through the Great Lakes, but most of the time it just costs too much to bring cargoes that way. The West Coast would be ideal for shipments into Western Canada, but timing and routes are an issue, especially through the mountains."

Ambercor is moving a similar transformer as the one brought in through the Great Lakes to Ontario for repairs over the summer. That will be a road move back along some of the same route.

Project forwarding specialist Fracht has been one of the main logistics subcontractors for the Site C hydroelectric project in northern British Columbia from the start of that development. Voith Hydro supplied much of the rotating equipment and runners, with Fracht handling movements for Voith since 2020. "Our most challenging moves were the [big water turbines called] Francis runners," said Benjamin Liewald, executive vice president for Fracht; he is based in Houston, where most of the large North American projects are coordinated.

"The Francis runners were 200 tonnes each," said Liewald. "They were carried on heavy lift vessels from the port of Santos, Brazil, to Prince Rupert. That is a small container port, so we had to discharge the runners onto a barge for the transfer to shore where they were moved by trailer. [Heavy transport specialist] Omega Morgan handled that haul. Everything went well."

### Hydropower and hydrocarbons

The Site C project will have involved 80,000 freight tons of cargo from inception to the expected completion this summer. In addition to the major components shipped from Brazil, others came from Europe, primarily Italy. Prior to the Site C development, Fracht handled project cargo for the Keeyask Dam development in northern Manitoba from 2016 to 2020.

"We have been very active in Canada," said Liewald, "including power stations, converter stations. We have delivered about 60 transformers ranging from 50-350 tonnes.

"Canada's economy reopened later than



**The fundamental change away from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources creates enormous potential, said Rhenus Group.**

USA's after the pandemic, but when it did it was a strong recovery in all sectors. There are lots of plant upgrades in mining and oil and gas. There are also projects being planned in carbon capture and in hydrogen."

Fracht Group, headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, is also involved in the other headline energy project in Canada, the nation's first LNG export terminal under construction at Kitimat. Mammoet has handled some of the project cargo for the liquefaction facility itself, while Fracht has moved most of the compressors for the pipeline that will transport natural gas to the terminal.

"We do a lot of high/wide rail in Canada," said Liewald. "The country is so vast that rail is very important. We have our own fleet of 23 railcars and a good partnership with the railroads."

Fracht has had an office in Vancouver for



**We have been very active in Canada. We have delivered about 60 transformers ranging from 50-350 tonnes.**

– Benjamin Liewald, Fracht

more than a decade and an office in Toronto for several years. The company is planning to open more but has not yet disclosed where or when.

Conceptum Logistics, meanwhile, has hired a new operations manager in Quebec and will be adding another position there "to support the growth we anticipate, especially in the mining sector", said Hemphill. "At least 80-85 percent of our work in Canada is heavy lift. Historically Conceptum has been big in mining and cement, also in hydropower and more recently renewable energy."

### Opportunities continue

The growth in Canada has been part of a global expansion for Conceptum, which is based in Hamburg, Germany. In the last two years the company has opened new offices in Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Peru and Colombia. It has also reopened its office in Spain.

"We handled some of the early-stage components for the Site C dam project, including runners and shafts from Brazil," said Hemphill. "We have done several other deliveries in hydropower, in Quebec, including runner crowns and shafts as well as some electrical equipment."

The latter has included transformers of 60-80 tonnes. "It has been a good business," said Hemphill. "But then we have been doing well in all sectors: renewable energy, traditional energy and mining. The mines are renewing their equipment. Recently we moved some shipments for a long conveyor belt. We also moved lots of heavy electrical cable."

That is a big part of the growth that has prompted the new staff in Quebec. "It is a combination of equipment for new projects and also replacement of existing equipment," said Hemphill. "I see these opportunities continuing. The replacement cycle at existing



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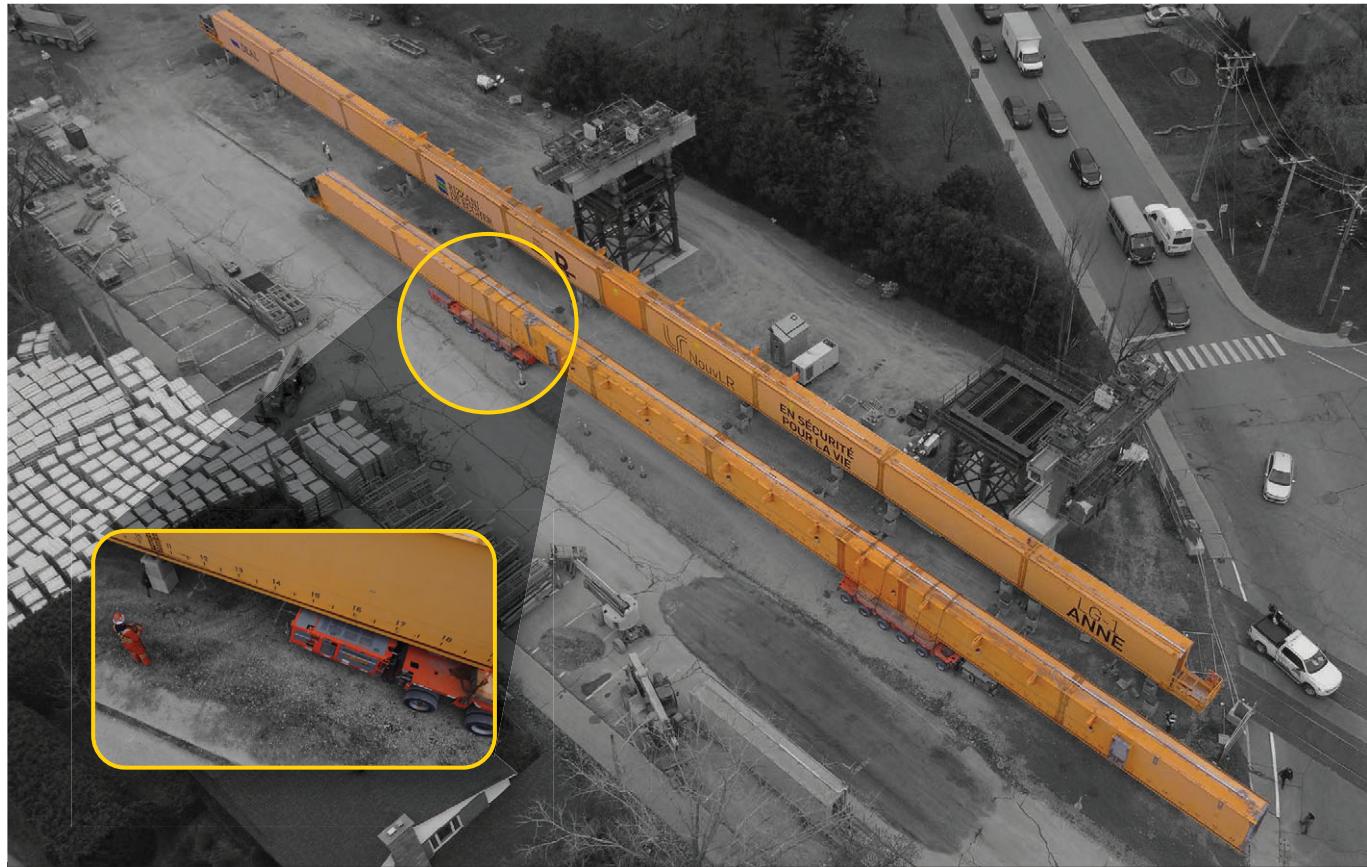
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mines is coming to a close and there are more expansions and new facilities."

In 2022 there was a surge in project cargo shipped by ro-ro vessels. That mirrored global trends. "Mostly it was because of the displacement of the market as many types of vessels were taken up in container trade," said Hemphill. "Now things are swinging back. Ro-ro is getting more expensive and finding spots on vessels can be difficult. It has definitely been tougher to book ro-ro in 2023 so far."

All of that comes back to Hemphill's point about the role of logistics providers. "In project cargo it is all about adjustment. That goes for modes of transportation as well as routes."

For most project cargo, said Wagner at Ambergcor, "the most important thing for the customer is a reliable delivery time from which they can make other plans. There are problems in scheduling from Europe to the west coast of North America. For example, we have called for a ro-ro quote from Europe into Tacoma, and they can give us a price but not a date."

"Overall, we are doing well," he continued. "We are up to 19 people in our Edmonton office, including a new sales person in oil and gas who is handling shipments between Canada and the USA, and also between Canada and Australia. We have opened a new office in Calgary, where I am based, and the rest of the staff are in Toronto, with some operations people in Houston. We have developed a classic portfolio of heavy lift supplemented with container moves and routing."

### Wind across the prairies

Wind power has been a growing presence in the Canadian prairies, with offshore wind planned as well. So far, little of that has been handled by Canadian logisticians. "The wind OEMs tend to go directly to the ships and truck lines," said Wagner. That is not to say that logistics firms are not active in renewable energy. "We just finished moving containers for a big solar project out of New Jersey," said Wagner. Wind, not solar, jumps to mind in terms of renewable energy project cargo, he explained. But even though panels fit nicely into containers, every big solar array needs transformers and other heavy electrical equipment. "We do move some wind nacelles for repairs," he added.

Among more traditional sectors of the economy, Ambergcor recently handled sizers brought in from Türkiye for a mine and moved overland by rail. "There may be some more of that type of equipment, sizers



Growth in Canada has been part of a global expansion for Hamburg-based Conceptum.

and crushers," said Wagner. "We are seeing more projects pop up."

Unusual projects also arise too. Ambergcor recently moved three big, prefabricated components for a mega-yacht being built in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. They were brought in by ship to Milwaukee and transloaded to a deck barge for the last leg to

the shipyard for final assembly.

At the end of March, Rhenus Logistics announced plans for two new offices in Halifax (Nova Scotia) and St John's, (Newfoundland) to support "the strongly growing onshore and offshore markets in Canada. Rhenus will be focusing primarily on the emerging renewable energy sector in Newfoundland."



**I see these opportunities continuing. The replacement cycle at existing mines is coming to a close and there are more expansions and new facilities.**

– Erik Hemphill, Conceptum Canada

our offshore services in Europe and the Far East as well. That is across multiple sectors, including oil and gas, wind and tidal energy development, as well as crew changes and fisheries." Rhenus already has offices in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

Onshore, Rhenus has been handling some wind energy projects in Western Canada since spring 2022 and continuing through the first half of 2023. "We have been handling marshalling, chartering and containers," said Haley. "We have not been handling blades and nacelles, but we have been responsible for the return of the cradles for those components." That is consistent with reports from other Canadian project logistics firms.

### Traditional sectors

Also consistent is the overall rise in work for traditional sectors. "We handled some pipe out to Western Canada," said Haley, "with lots of regular work in mining, wastewater treatment and nuclear. There are a lot of renewables projects, but the permitting process is very long. The government has recently announced an effort to streamline that, so we may see some pickup."

Looking ahead, Björn Wittek, managing director of Rhenus Offshore Logistics, added: "We are in detailed discussions with several offshore clients from both the renewables and oil and gas sector for short and long-term projects. The recent announcement of an upcoming offshore wind framework with auctions expected within the next two years, as well as the apparent exploration successes in Atlantic Canada, confirm to us that the market holds vast potential for us."

Elsewhere, Montreal-headquartered terminal operator Logistec has set its sights on expansion with the acquisition of the Canadian and US marine terminal assets of Fednav, including Federal Marine Terminals,



Fracht discharging runners in Prince Rupert for Site C.



**We already have project teams across the country. We are expanding our offshore services in Europe and the Far East as well. That is across multiple sectors...**

– Jeffery Haley, Rhenus

Inc and the logistics division, Fednav Direct (collectively, FMT) for USD105 million.

### Major expansion

The deal with FMT, which has operated terminal facilities in Canada and the USA for more than five decades, represents a major expansion for Logistec's presence in both countries, adding 11 terminals to its network.

"As part of Logistec's ambitious strategic plan to expand its marine services both geographically and operationally, this acquisition will allow us to gain a footprint in new markets in Canada and the USA," explained Rodney Corrigan, president of Logistec Stevedoring. "Our customers will benefit from a large and efficient network, as well as strong expertise from the FMT team, and together, we will continue to offer quality service to contribute to a safe, reliable supply chain." The combined network comprises 90 terminals in 60 ports across North America.



## Canada budgets billions for offshore renewables

As opportunities and interest in Canada's marine renewable energy sector increase, the government's 2023 budget, released at the end of March, outlines measures that will support growth in the offshore wind, tidal, wave and river energy sectors, as well as green hydrogen.

The budget included several measures for which the inter-industry association Marine Renewables Canada has been advocating, including CAD20 billion (USD15 billion) to support green energy investments, and CAD3 billion (USD2.25 billion) for the recapitalisation of the Smart Renewables and

Electrification Pathway that should assist the development of offshore wind projects on the east coast.

There will also be a refundable 15 percent clean electricity investment tax credit for eligible investments in wind, wave and tidal, as well as other clean electricity technologies. A refundable 30 percent clean manufacturing investment tax credit will be made available for new machinery and equipment used to manufacture or process key clean technologies and extract, process, or recycle key critical minerals, including renewable energy equipment.

Moreover, the government will introduce a

refundable clean hydrogen investment tax credit up to 40 percent for eligible clean hydrogen project costs.

"The investment tax credits in conjunction with new funding will play a significant role in catalysing Canada's first offshore wind to green hydrogen projects," said Elisa Obermann, executive director of Marine Renewables Canada, "as well as spurring development of other marine renewable projects across the country. We have watched federal funding be a critical catalyst for the US offshore wind market and are encouraged to see the government of Canada taking real action to support the industry."

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## Entering an energy supercycle?

**Analysts are predicting that the market for oil and gas contractors will hit a peak of USD1 trillion by 2025 and remain at high levels for years afterwards, writes David Kershaw.**

Demand for gas shows little sign of abating. For example, our analysis shows 17 LNG import terminals being fast-tracked for development in Europe alone. Corresponding export infrastructure is being developed in the USA and in the Middle East, with positive final investment decisions aplenty in the past few months.

### High levels

Industry analyst Rystad Energy expects the global market for oil and gas contractors to rise to a peak of USD1 trillion in 2025 and remain at high levels for several years thereafter. It attributes the strong growth to those aforementioned midstream LNG developments; overall oil and gas spending will stay above USD920 billion annually on average for the 2022-2028 period.

Of course, energy markets are cyclical and there is a potential risk of a downturn in the forecast period, but the

service suppliers should be able to cushion any blows by diversifying into parts of the wider energy market, particularly those in support of the energy transition. The key for suppliers is to continue chasing obvious opportunities within geothermal energy, hydrogen, offshore wind, and carbon capture, utilisation and storage.

While Rystad expects the next seven years to provide a strong market for energy services, companies still have to improve their economics to make it a feast. Luckily, overall utilisation is improving rapidly as suppliers are careful not to over-invest in more capacity as rigs, vessels, plants and other

units in the supply chain are affected by natural wear and tear. The result is better pricing for suppliers – the past 12 months have driven up prices for offshore rigs, land rigs, frac fleets, proppant, OCTG, vessels and subsea infrastructure to levels not seen in a decade.

### Biblical story

"Global oil and gas suppliers look set to echo the biblical story about the Egyptian pharaoh's dream of seven years of feast and seven years of famine – only in the opposite order. All signs point towards 2022 being the start of another super cycle for the energy services sector," said Audun Martinsen, partner and head of

energy service research at Rystad Energy.

Last year was a turning point with the post-pandemic recovery, record high gas prices and strong oil prices allowing oil and gas companies to lift their capital investments by 20 percent. Energy security concerns prompted petroleum producers to raise production and contract goods and services from suppliers; the oilfield service industry quickly sold out of fracking fleets, rigs, and casing and tubing steel, Rystad observed.

The prices that suppliers could charge surged by double-digit percentages, allowing EBITDA margins to climb. "After the rebound in 2022 we are entering a very promising 2023, with potential for 13 percent growth both for oil and gas investments and 10 percent for low-carbon investments," said the analyst.

Such a trend will certainly be welcomed by heavy lift service providers and the project logistics supply chain, which has been waiting patiently for oil and gas cargoes to return to market in force.



**Global oil and gas suppliers look set to echo the biblical story about the Egyptian pharaoh's dream of seven years of feast and seven years of famine – only in the opposite order.**

– Audun Martinsen, Rystad Energy

## OIL & GAS NEWS

### FID for Plaquemines LNG

**Venture Global LNG** has made a final investment decision (FID) on the second phase of its 20 million tonnes per year Plaquemines LNG facility in Louisiana. The first phase was approved in May 2022. Together, the two development phases constitute a total investment of USD21 billion.

### TPAO strikes onshore

**Turkish Petroleum (TPAO)** said that it has discovered 1 billion barrels of oil in a field in the southeast province of Sirnak. The Sehit Aybuke Yalcin-1 well, which is located 20 km northwest of Cizre, currently produces some 10,000 barrels of oil per day. TPAO said a full field development plan will be ready by the end of the year.

### Baker Hughes contract

**Black & Veatch**, a subcontractor to the **JGC** and **Samsung Heavy Industries** consortium, has selected **Baker Hughes** to deliver two compressor trains for the **Petronas** nearshore LNG facility in Sabah, Malaysia. Baker Hughes will provide two LM9000-powered compressor trains of 1 million tonnes per annum.

### Petrofac wins EPC work

**Petrofac** has secured a EUR200 million (USD221.1 million) EPC lump-sum contract from **ORLEN Lietuva**, to support the continued modernisation and expansion of the Mažeikiai refinery in north-western Lithuania. Petrofac has been active at the site since 2021, where among others, it added a new residue hydrocracking unit. The latest contract will enhance the plant's capability to meet requirements for cleaner fuels.

### NFS EPC award

**QatarEnergy** awarded a USD10 billion EPC contract for the North Field South (NFS) project to a consortium of **Technip** and **Consolidated Contractors Company**. The scope covers the construction of two 8 million tonnes per year gas liquefaction trains, associated facilities for gas treatment and natural gas liquids (NGL) recovery, as well as helium extraction and refining within Ras Laffan Industrial City.



# ExxonMobil takes FID decision on Uaru block

**E**xxonMobil has made a final investment decision for the Uaru development offshore Guyana after receiving required government and regulatory approvals. The company expects Uaru, the fifth project on Guyana's offshore Stabroek block, to add approximately 250,000 barrels of daily capacity after a targeted start-up in 2026.

The USD12.7 billion Uaru project plans to include up to 10 drill centres and 44 production and injection wells aimed at developing an estimated resource of more than 800 million barrels of oil. **MODEC** will build the FPSO vessel for the project, which will be called the Errea Wittu.

Two FPSOs, Liza Destiny and Liza Unity, are currently operating offshore Guyana and produced an average of 375,000 barrels of oil per day in the first quarter of 2023. A third FPSO,

Prosperity, is expected to be operational later this year and will add 220,000 barrels of daily capacity from the Payara development.

ExxonMobil made a final investment decision on the fourth offshore project, Yellowtail, last year. The company is targeting having six FPSOs online by the end of 2027, bringing Guyana's production capacity to more than 1.2 million barrels per day.

**TechnipFMC** has been awarded a large contract by Esso Exploration and **Production Guyana** to supply the subsea production system for the project. TechnipFMC will deliver the overall subsea production system. The award covers 44 subsea trees and associated tooling, as well as 12 manifolds and associated controls and tie-in equipment. TechnipFMC valued the contract at between USD500-million and USD1 billion.

## OIL & GAS



### ADNOC to double LNG export limits

**ADNOC** has confirmed that its LNG growth project will move forward in the Al Ruwais Industrial City, more than doubling its LNG production capacity to meet increased global demand for natural gas. The plant, which is designed with electric-powered processing facilities, will run on renewable and nuclear grid power and will leverage existing ADNOC infrastructure, synergies, and pipeline network.

### FID for Port Arthur LNG project

**Sempra Infrastructure** has made a positive final investment decision (FID) for the 13.5 million tonnes per year Port Arthur LNG Phase 1 project in Jefferson County, Texas.

Sempra Infrastructure said the project has secured USD6.8 billion in non-recourse financial financing, as well as the issue of the final notice to proceed under EPC agreement.



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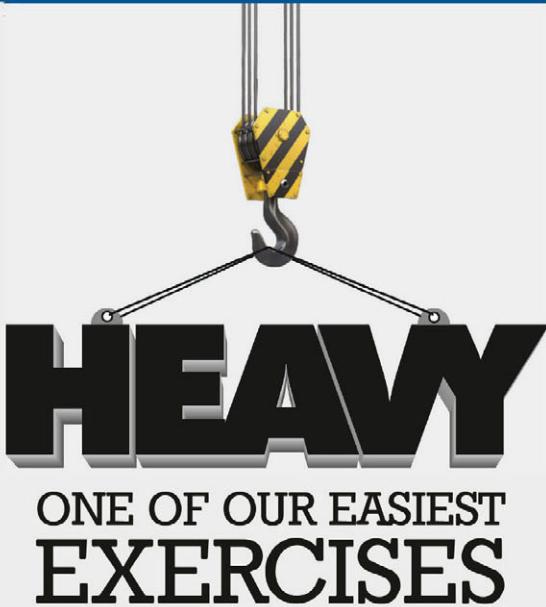
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## POWER NEWS

### Vestas in wind farms win

**Red Rocket** has placed a 373 MW order with **Vestas** for the Brandvalley, Rietkloof and Wolf wind farms, which will be developed in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, South Africa. The contract includes the supply and installation of 64 V150-4.5 MW wind turbines, 12 V163-4.5 MW units, and five V162-6.2 MW Enventus wind models. Turbine delivery and commissioning are expected by 2024.

### He Dreiht given go-ahead

**EnBW** has made a positive final investment decision (FID) on the 960 MW He Dreiht offshore wind project located in the German North Sea. From the end of 2025, 64 wind turbines will be installed 90 km northwest of the island of Borkum. The project will feature 15 MW turbines from Vestas and is being built without subsidy.

### Italy floating wind plans

**GreenIT** and **Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP)** will develop three floating offshore wind farms in Italy with 2 GW capacity. Three new projects are located approximately 30 km off the coasts of Latiun and Sardinia. The agreement involves the development of a project in Latiun, off the coast of Civitavecchia, with a total capacity up to 540 MW, and two other wind farms located off the coast of Olbia (Sardinia), with an output of 500-1,000 MW.

### Monsoon work starts

Construction has started at the 600 MW Monsoon wind energy project, being built onshore in southern Laos. The USD1.5 billion project is being built by **PowerChina** on an EPC basis on behalf of **Impact Energy Asia Development (IEAD)**. It is Laos' first wind energy project.

### La Pinta planned

The **IberBlue Wind** joint venture is planning a 990 MW floating offshore wind project (La Pinta) valued at USD2.7 billion off the coast of Granada and Almeria, southern Spain. The development would comprise some 55 wind turbines.

# Siemens Gamesa wins Baltica 2 contract

**P**GE Group and Ørsted have selected **Siemens Gamesa** as wind turbine supplier for the 1.5 GW Baltica 2 offshore wind project in the Baltic Sea. A total of 107 14 MW wind turbines will be supplied to the project, which is located around 40 km from the northern coast of Poland between Leba and Ustka.

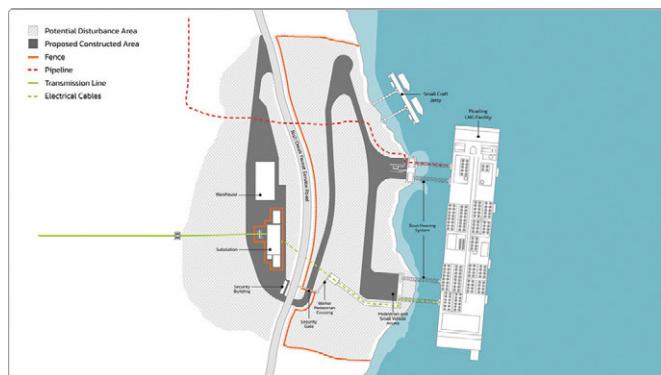
A five-year maintenance contract to ensure the turbines will operate to maximum capacity has

also been signed. The project is expected to come online in 2027.

Poland is fast emerging as a key country for offshore wind ambitions. The country set a target of awarding 10.9 GW in capacity by 2030, with installations from the first round expected to begin in 2026. The second set of auctions are due to start in 2025, with installations closer to the end of the decade.

### Cedar LNG lands environmental certification

The British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office has granted **Cedar LNG** – a joint venture between Canada's **Pembina Pipeline** and the **Haisla Nation** – an environmental assessment certificate (EAC) to develop the Cedar LNG project. The proposed 3 million tonnes per



year floating LNG facility is located on Haisla Nation-

owned land in Kitimat, British Columbia (western Canada).

## POWER GENERATION & TRANSMISSION

### Rosatom eyes Congo hydro

Russia's **Rosatom**, through its partner **Rusatom Automated Control Systems (RASU)**, intends to develop small hydropower plants (1-10 MW) with a combined output of 500 MW in the Republic of the Congo. A total of 37 sites have been identified initially. If this phase of the project is successful, up to 1,500 MW of capacity could be installed.

for transmission infrastructure investments by 17 percent to EUR21 billion (USD23.2 billion) over the next 10 years.

development is expected to require a capital investment of over USD1.87 billion.

### Coire Glas gets SSE backing

**SSE** is providing a USD124 million investment boost to the Coire Glas project, which if approved would be the UK's first pumped hydropower project in 40 years. The project, which received planning consent from the Scottish government in 2020, would more than double Britain's total current electricity storage capacity. Located on the shores of Loch Lochy, between Fort William and Inverness, the

### Dutch offshore hydrogen plan

The Dutch government is proposing the country's first large-scale offshore hydrogen project at the Wadden Islands wind farm. The wind farm, which is projected to be operational by 2031, will have an electrolysis capacity of around 500 MW. This location was chosen for a hydrogen plant because a wind project was previously planned for the region, an existing natural gas pipeline may be repurposed, and it can be connected to the onshore hydrogen network.

### Terna ups investment

**Terna**, Italy's electricity transmission system operator (TSO), has increased its budget

# Rolf Riedl ends 2022 on a high with energy transport for Antonov Airlines

In cooperation with Antonov Airlines and Kita Logistics, international freight forwarder Rolf Riedl played an important part in the transport of a power supply skid from Turkey to Germany – the largest single piece of cargo transported by the Germany headquartered company in 2022.

Siemens Energy built an E-house – a prefabricated substation used as a power distribution centre – destined for a floating LNG terminal at the Elbe port of Brunsbüttel. The oversized container measured 19 m long, 4.24 m wide and 4.01 m high.

The LNG terminal, which is scheduled to go into operation this year, is a high-priority project that will help contribute to independent and low-emission energy supply to Germany. According to Volodymyr Goncharov, commercial executive at Antonov Airlines, the cargo delivery was utmost urgency due to the significance of the project.

He added that the transport of the equipment required specialised handling and expertise, which is why Antonov Airlines was chosen for the task.

Within just four hours, Rolf Riedl prepared transport of the oversized unit for pre-carriage, airport handling in Turkey and Germany, and oncarriage to the site in Brunsbüttel.

## Challenging transportation

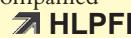
Rolf Riedl successfully performed the challenging transportation of the container from its factory premises in Turkey to Tekirdag Airport, where the cargo was loaded onto an AN-124-100-150 aircraft and flown to Germany's Hamburg Airport. From there, the cargo was transported overland to its final destination.

"The major task was the precise installation of low-profiled ramp equipment employed especially for this mission," explained Andrii Nazarenko, flight manager for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines. "Thanks to a professional approach, the Antonov team ensured safe loading and unloading at airports under the



supervision of a Siemens Energy representative."

Iris Müllejans, managing partner and director at Rolf Riedl, commented: "We thank our customer for their trust to perform this challenging project without incident and in-time, as well as our partners. For us it goes without saying that this important project was accompanied personally."



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## About Rolf Riedl

Headquartered in Hagen, Germany, international freight forwarder Rolf Riedl specialises in heavy haulage and oversized cargo transportation worldwide, including the shipment of smaller accessories, by sea, air and road.

Founded in 1987 and operating as a family-owned business for over 35 years, the Riedl Group boasts two rigging companies complementing its logistics services.

Its owned assets include specialised lifting and transport equipment, such as strand jacks, skidding systems, a hydraulic gantry and self-propelled trailer.

Rolf Riedl is also a founding member of the international association of specialised heavy transport companies, The Heavy Lift Group (THLG).

# Heavy Lift Awards: The judging begins



**25 OCTOBER 2023**  
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**Entries have been submitted and the judging process is under way for the Heavy Lift Awards 2023.**

Once again, the Heavy Lift Awards attracted a staggering number of entries demonstrating the depth and breadth of excellence in the project logistics sector. Our esteemed panel has now begun the process of reviewing the entries to decide upon a shortlist for this year's event, which will be announced this summer.

Keep your eyes peeled on the *HLPFI* website for this year's shortlist announcement.

Also be on the lookout for the opening of this year's Readers' Vote Awards, which gives you the opportunity to decide upon the best pictures and video from the sector.

With attention now turning to the ceremony at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London on October 25, make sure you

secure your space and book a table today. All details can be found at the dedicated awards website – [www.heavyliftawards.com](http://www.heavyliftawards.com) – with the early bird rate available until June 26.

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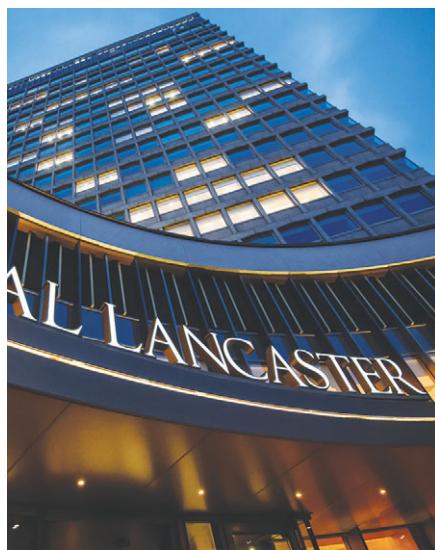
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Industrial Projects, Fracht Group, Goldhofer, Hareket, Sarens, Trans Global Projects (TGP), and UTC Overseas – as well as our judges who have dedicated their time and expertise to help make the awards a success.

Thank you to all that submitted an entry this year – we wish you the best of luck!





# Constraints hinder a busy railfreight market

In North America, capacity constraints and derated infrastructure are hindering high and heavy railfreight deliveries. Nevertheless, demand is strong and the business fundamentals point to a growing market in the years ahead. In Europe and Asia, the war in Ukraine has forced operators to read up on legal requirements and develop alternative routes. *Ian Putzger reports.*



**deugro has seen rail transport going strong, chiefly as a result of the thrust of the power business.**

**H**igh and wide railfreight demand has been solid and is expected to grow, according to project logistics specialists active in this market. However, there are constraints relating to capacity and routing options, as well as longer wait times to put their shipments on the rails.

"Demand for rail has been steady, and it has been increasing in some areas," said Benjamin Liewald, executive vice president projects at Fracht USA. He cited a convergence of factors that are keeping up demand – from challenges and escalating costs associated with moves on the road to rising interest among customers in rail transport as a greener, more environmentally

sustainable option. His company's ESG department has been busy working with clients.

Fracht has a few projects in the works, including a large-scale shipment planned for October that will involve two railcars. A new contract to support the development of three power plants also involves rail transport to one of the locations, Liewald added.

For logistics group deugro, rail transport has been going strong, chiefly on the thrust of the power business, said Stefan Welch, head of specialised transport. "deugro's core rail customers are transformer OEMs, for whom deugro moves medium-sized to large transformers. After implementation of the USA's infrastructure bill in 2021, which



**We have seen a substantial increase in the volume of bids for transformer moves, starting in late 2021 and during all last year.**

– Stefan Welch, deugro

includes the modernisation of the ageing electricity grid as well as the transition to alternative energy, we have seen a substantial increase in the volume of bids for transformer moves, starting in late 2021 and during all last year," he explained. This trend promises strong demand for years to come, he added.

"Now we are seeing these proposals turning into actual orders; presently the transformer OEMs' own orderbooks are full for 2023/24. The outlook for this market is that this trend is going to continue to head in the same direction, at least in the mid-term and likely extending into the next 36 to 48 months, or even beyond," he explained.

### Power generation equipment

To a lesser extent, power generation equipment such as generators, diesel engines and wind energy components are generating demand for railfreight services. The petrochemical sector and heavy industry (e.g. steel presses) have also been increasing too, he added.

While demand looks promising, there have been issues on the supply side of the equation and several project forwarders have reported problems; the congestion that snared-up traffic at major US ports has largely disappeared but rail networks are still constrained, notably at major inland hubs.

These bottlenecks have been exacerbated by limited chassis availability. The shortage has eased in recent months, but a surge in traffic would quickly deplete available stocks, according to some reports. Even today it is not plain sailing. Willy Hoffmann, vice president project sales of Ambercor



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Shipping USA, noted that there are still problems getting hold of chassis.

Welch said: "Dealing with railroads and services in a 'world of their own' continues to be challenging at times." Standard intermodal moves at the core of their business essentially have priority over indivisible loads in terms of train schedules, affecting overall transit times, he noted.

This has been worsened by the deterioration of the US rail network, which has manifested with containers piling up at railheads, leaving importers unable to pick up shipments, long wait times, and shippers struggling to get their goods to markets. There has been a chorus of complaints from rail customers since the winter of 2021/22 concerning delays of 11 days or more.

### Embargo anger

In the first half of last year, BNSF's on-time record was down in the 50-60 percent range. Union Pacific raised the most ire. Between January and mid-November last year it declared more than 1,000 embargoes, up from just 27 in 2017. This prompted the US Surface Transportation Board to summon the railway's top management to Washington for a two-day grilling in December in which it was reminded that embargoes were supposed to cope with emergencies like fall-out from a natural disaster, not to manage congestion.

Two weeks later the carrier issued another embargo in three US states citing extreme weather, which was set for 14 days and subsequently extended for another fortnight.

The slump in performance has been widely blamed on the railways' pursuit of a precision scheduled railroading concept, which has been characterised by large cost

cuts, longer trains and massive staff layoffs. The outbreak of the pandemic triggered another spate of layoffs, which left the carriers short of personnel when freight volumes surged.

"Most furloughed too many people too quickly," said Lee Klaskow, senior transport and logistics analyst of Bloomberg's Intelligence unit. Moreover, the carriers have struggled to recruit enough people to bring staffing back to pre-pandemic levels, let alone increase their workforce.

Public anger at the carriers reached a nadir after the derailment of a Norfolk Southern train in early February, in which 38 of the 150 railcars came off the rails, including 11 cars that were carrying hazardous materials. The ensuing fire damaged another 12 railcars and the area had to be evacuated.

This triggered a spate of legislative bills



**There are still some locations where heavy cargo cannot be transported by rail because bridges have been downgraded.**

– Colin D'Abreo, Rhenus Project Logistics

aimed at boosting rail safety, which include a mandate for train crews to consist of at least two people, scuppering management plans to reduce crews to just one. Even investors have lost patience with the precision railroading strategy and forced the ousting of Union Pacific's ceo.

### Investment pledges

Today, railways are presenting a less confrontational approach to labour and are pledging investment in safety and performance, as well as a change in strategy to focus less on operating ratio, which has been the holy grail of precision railroading. It remains to be seen how far this extends to infrastructure investments, which are sorely needed.

"There are still some locations where heavy cargo cannot be transported by rail because bridges have been downgraded," noted Colin D'Abreo, ceo of Rhenus Project Logistics. "The infrastructure needs improvement."

Liewald said that railway staff have been collaborative but agreed that due to the downgrading of bridges, corridors for high-and-wide cargo have shrunk. "It is getting tighter rather than the opposite."

Judging from their balance sheets, the large carriers should have some money available for infrastructure upgrades. All four US Class I railways reported net earnings in excess of USD1 billion for the fourth quarter of last year, despite poor service records.

Project forwarders also decry the ravages of job cuts in the carriers' planning departments. "Experienced staff like clearance managers are getting more and more rare. There is not enough talent coming behind," Liewald warned.

"The amount of qualified people in rail

needs to improve. Getting initial approvals takes a long time," D'Abreo agreed, adding that Rhenus has had to keep resubmitting plans.

The problem is also affecting field operations. Liewald pointed out that a lot of switch yards do not have the right resource allocation and too few staff. If a large piece of cargo comes in, local staff may not be sure what to do with it and set it aside to wait for further instructions. To combat this "we talk to yards and train crews so they are prepared", he said.

Besides downgraded infrastructure, the supply of specialised rail equipment can be a challenge. Welch cautioned: "This is where we expect to encounter potential bottlenecks because of a very limited amount of such equipment. The increase in transformer moves, especially large and/or heavy units, will lead to increasing demand for specially designed railcars. At the moment, the amount of fitting equipment is limited, so this could lead to bottleneck problems. This is why deugro extended the lease of a 16-axle railcar that we have been successfully operating since 2020."

Fracht boosted its fleet of special railcars two years ago with the acquisition of 12 units. "We are still renting cars from the market. Prices are going up in the rental market. There is growing demand," said Liewald.

### Mexican growth market

Another driver of demand may well come from the growing number of manufacturers establishing production plants in Mexico (see our dedicated report on the market in Mexico and Central America on pp 90-97). The USD31 billion takeover of Kansas City Southern railroad by Canadian Pacific should be a major beneficiary of this development, as it creates the first Class I carrier with a network that spans the USA, Mexico and Canada. The merger, which was first announced in 2021, was approved by US federal regulators in April 2023.

Another development of note is the proposed 'T Mec Corridor', a plan spearheaded by Caxxor, a Mexico-based international conglomerate. The USD3.3 billion project has three major components – the construction of a new port at Mazatlán, the development of over 300 km of rail infrastructure in Mexico, and the establishment of a string of logistics centres along the route, which will go from Mazatlán via Monterrey, Laredo, Dallas, Tulsa and Chicago to Winnipeg.

Caxxor estimates that the first stage of the port should be ready in three years, while work on the railway – comprising the



A BNSF blade unit train.

construction of 180 km of new lines plus the rehabilitation of 167 km of existing track – could be completed by 2027. The supporting infrastructure will consist of eight logistics and industrial centres in Mexico along the corridor, plus at least four north of the Mexico-US border.

For Latvia-based Eleven Danir 19, the war in Ukraine affected a large part of its activities, as the company has organised a lot of moves to Central Asia. Coping with the disruption caused by the war meant considerable work, but the firm has maintained its level of service and the stability of its performance, said group managing director Valds Stunzha. "It was hard to plan. All our operational plans, our short-term plans, were lost. We had to switch and change processes," he said.

Eleven Danir 19 has diversified and opened an office in the UAE, but Central Asia remains its focus and demand has continued to be strong. "Western countries want to work with this region and invest there," he said, pointing to a spate of agreements for development signed between France and Uzbekistan last November. "There will be lots of opportunities for logistics. General cargo is already showing a huge increase. Project cargo will grow," he explained.

Using rail to move cargo to sites in Central Asia has remained a priority for many clients, although the most direct route in many cases – going via Russia – is challenging. To begin with, insurance for

**There will be lots of opportunities for logistics [in Central Asia]. General cargo is already showing a huge increase. Project cargo will grow.**

– Valds Stunzha, Eleven Danir 19

transit through Russia can be an issue. "Not every insurance company covers this region," Stunzha noted, adding that premiums tend to be high but not an insurmountable obstacle.

### Compliance slalom

Compliance is a slalom through a minefield, however. "There are no restrictions but we have a lot of regulations about what types of cargo are not permitted. You have to understand what can be transported and what not, and then the cargo may stay at the border and you get charged demurrage when it is unloaded," he said. "It is a lot of hard work to make sure you comply with all the rules. There are lots of situations when everything stops because no proper research for this cargo has been done," he added. The situation changes day by day, with new conditions and regulations being introduced.

In some cases, it is outright impossible to move a shipment, so it is important to have various options in the plan. "No one can focus on just one route," he warned.

Rates have been relatively stable, but processing fees have risen as a result of the increased effort and cost associated with compliance. "We added people in our legal department to check compliance and avoid any possibility that cargo may not be allowed or stopped at the border," he said.

Some shippers categorically avoid rail transits through Russia. For Eleven Danir 19, moving project cargo via Türkiye and Azerbaijan has been the main alternative routing. This combines a marine leg and rail.

Stunzha is looking forward to the Rail Baltica project, which aims to integrate the Baltic states into the Continental rail network with a European-gauge track. This is supposed to be completed in 2026, but it is not clear if this goal can be met. For now, his company's focus for rail transport remains firmly on Central Asian markets.



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Port Atlantique La Rochelle and three ports in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region have established Aquitania Ports Link to meet the challenges of upcoming floating wind projects.



## La Rochelle prepares for floating wind

Following the completion of France's first commercial-scale wind farm, St Nazaire, Port Atlantique La Rochelle and Maritime Kuhn are positioning themselves as long-term players in the marine renewable energy sector.

**L**a Rochelle in France hosted the inaugural Shipping Days exhibition from March 23-24, attracting stakeholders from the maritime transport and breakbulk industry. Organised by an association of the Port Atlantique La Rochelle, Maritime Kuhn and Union Maritime La Rochelle, Shipping Days welcomed 37 exhibitors and 450 visitors.

### Positive feedback

"We had very positive feedback from visitors and exhibitors, and we are getting ready to host the event again next year," said Julie Cosneau, strategic marketing manager for Port Atlantique La Rochelle. In addition to individual meetings, the exhibition saw a packed conference programme focusing on decarbonisation; the digital skills that ports need to improve; and renewable energy.



Shipping Days provided an ideal platform to promote the recently established non-profit association called Aquitania Ports Link.

With an eye to the upcoming projects in the floating wind energy sector, Shipping Days provided an ideal platform to promote the recently established non-profit association called Aquitania Ports Link.

Comprising Port Atlantique La Rochelle and the Atlantic coast ports of Bordeaux, Bayonne and Rochefort-Tonnay-Charente – four ports in France's Nouvelle-Aquitaine region – the aim of the association is to work to meet the challenges for the

upcoming floating wind projects.

Jean-Baptiste Goüin, marketing director for Port Atlantique La Rochelle, said: "The aim is to work together to help develop floating offshore wind through the sharing of knowledge and work on different technical studies, as well as working together operationally."

### Storage solution

"For floating wind farms, the four ports altogether can propose a storage solution for the first step of building the floating structure, to the assembly of the floating turbine, through to installation. With the four ports, the whole scope is covered – each port is able to bring its own set of skills to the sector, and the storage. Combined, the ports can provide up to 90 ha of storage area for these kinds of heavy projects."

The port of La Rochelle and its logistics partners demonstrated their skill in handling such large-scale

**Wind energy cargoes at the port of La Rochelle.**



projects through its work on the St Nazaire offshore wind farm – the first commercial-scale wind farm in France.

Francois-Georges Kuhn, general manager of Maritime Kuhn and ceo of AMLP Agency of La Rochelle, explained: "We managed two hubs: one to handle the machinery for the wind turbines and one to handle the foundations. We were in charge of all of the operations, from storage to unloading, load-ins and load-outs, as well as providing agency services.

"The contract spanned a year-and-a-half on behalf of DEME, which was contracted by EDF. We hit all the targets and finished the operations one month ahead of schedule. And now, we are holding further conversations with DEME for upcoming wind farms."

## Transferable skills

While it was the first offshore wind operation for Maritime Kuhn and the port of La Rochelle, he was confident about the transferable skills gained from the company's extensive experience in handling other large projects. "We already have the engineering knowledge and the way of working on those kinds of projects... you just have to adapt. We have been handling onshore wind energy cargoes for many years at the ports of



Brest, Cherbourg, St Nazaire, and others.

"At La Rochelle, we handle between 80-100 onshore wind turbines a year – mainly for Nordex, Vestas and Siemens Gamesa."

He highlighted the port's road access. "An important point is our relationship with the port authority; we can say that it does not have any limits for unloading goods from the sea. To deliver the cargoes inland, we work with the port authority to make sure that the transport or

trucking company can have authorisation to collect the cargoes and work on modifications on the road to be sure that the port area is suitable. This is why we sometimes have cargoes coming through La Rochelle but going very far away."

With St Nazaire completed, attention is turning to the future floating wind projects. Goüin anticipated that floating wind projects would require around 30 ha more port space than fixed-bottom wind farms "to be

able to provide a real offer for customers" and ongoing expansion at the port of La Rochelle will deliver just that. Slated for completion around 2025/2026 – which Goüin said is "the perfect time for the first round of floating projects" – the new facilities will have a dedicated 5 ha waterfront, with a 250 m long quay and a heavy-duty section with a load capacity of 20 tonnes per sq m.

A 38 ha yard will also have direct access to the quay, with no overhead structures and nearby road and rail access.

## Assembly yard

The facilities will be suitable for accommodating all necessary components for a 500 MW floating wind farm comprising 15 MW generators. It will include an assembly yard for floaters, a consolidation yard, an area for wind turbine generator components, circulation schemes that account for the necessary clearances associated with the largest 15 MW generator components, a new quay to load floaters onto semi-submersible vessels, and adjacent quays for component deliveries.

With so much development under way, there will certainly be lots to talk about at the second edition of Shipping Days, taking place in La Rochelle from April 4-5, 2024.



**At La Rochelle, we handle between 80-100 onshore wind turbines a year – mainly for Nordex, Vestas and Siemens Gamesa.**

– Francois-Georges Kuhn, Maritime Kuhn

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# Investment required for potential to be achieved

**M**exico is a highly trade-oriented country that benefits from substantial reserves of natural resources. The economies of its southern neighbours in Central America are lagging behind, although that could well change as nearshoring increases, writes Megan Ramsay.



The Mexican economy grew by 3.1 percent in 2022, is the second-largest economy in Latin America, and shares a land border with the world's only economic superpower. Clearly, there are project cargo opportunities for the taking.

Mexico's main exports include cars, vehicle parts and petroleum oils. Its principle imports include parts and accessories for vehicles, petroleum oils and gas, and electronic integrated circuits.

The country participates in numerous free trade agreements, including the United

States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Mexico's main trading partner is the USA, which purchases over 75 percent of its exports (mostly vehicles, machinery, medical instruments and mineral fuels) and supplies 44 percent of its imports (chiefly machinery, mineral fuels and vehicles). There is significant foreign direct investment by US manufacturers in Mexico.

## Project cargo opportunities

Mexico's oil and gas industry is key, as is its varied industrial sector. It is a leading steel producer in the region, for instance, and

Houston-headquartered carrier Intermarine recently transported some steel structures from Baha California to New Orleans, for the canopy of the National WW II Museum.

"This was the first time we had carried something like this," said Mac Bruton, vice president of business development at the carrier, pointing out that usually this type of cargo would be trucked over Mexico's 2,000-mile (3,218-km) border with the USA.

"We have liner services to South America and the Caribbean, but not to Mexico," he added. "Although we have between three and six ships every month into Mexico, we



**Mexican heavy haulage company Pesado Transport has delivered a 218-ton (197-tonne) gas compressor on a 16-axle Goldhofer THP/SL heavy-duty combination from the port in Veracruz to the Miguel Hidalgo refinery in Tula.**

cannot establish a liner service there because demand is unpredictable, largely because of competition from trucking."

Currently, several large projects are taking place in Mexico, such as the construction of LNG facilities on the west coast (including Sempra's plant in Baja California, which is expected to come online in 2024) and in the Gulf of Mexico (for example, the Lakach deepwater field being developed by state-owned Pemex and USA-based New Fortress Energy, again slated to begin production in 2024).

Mexico is a big importer of cheap natural gas from the USA, but since the invasion of Ukraine, it has shifted towards re-exporting LNG to Europe and Asia that used to rely on Russian supplies. Some analysts predict that if all eight of Mexico's planned LNG facilities come to fruition, it could become the world's fourth-largest LNG exporter.

The Gulf of Mexico is also home to drilling campaigns by companies like Australia's Woodside and there are big fabrication yards supporting them.

DHL Industrial Projects is "in the peak of logistics activities and out-of-gauge shipments for an LNG project in Ensenada. In addition, we are heavily involved in oil and gas shipments for refineries in the Gulf of Mexico as well as several rig movements," said Jake Swanson –

### We are heavily involved in oil and gas shipments for refineries in the Gulf of Mexico as well as several rig movements.

– Jake Swanson, DHL Industrial Projects

regional head Americas, DHL Global Forwarding – Industrial Projects.

The company is also involved in movements for automobile, life science and manufacturing production plants, he added.

### Reducing fuel imports

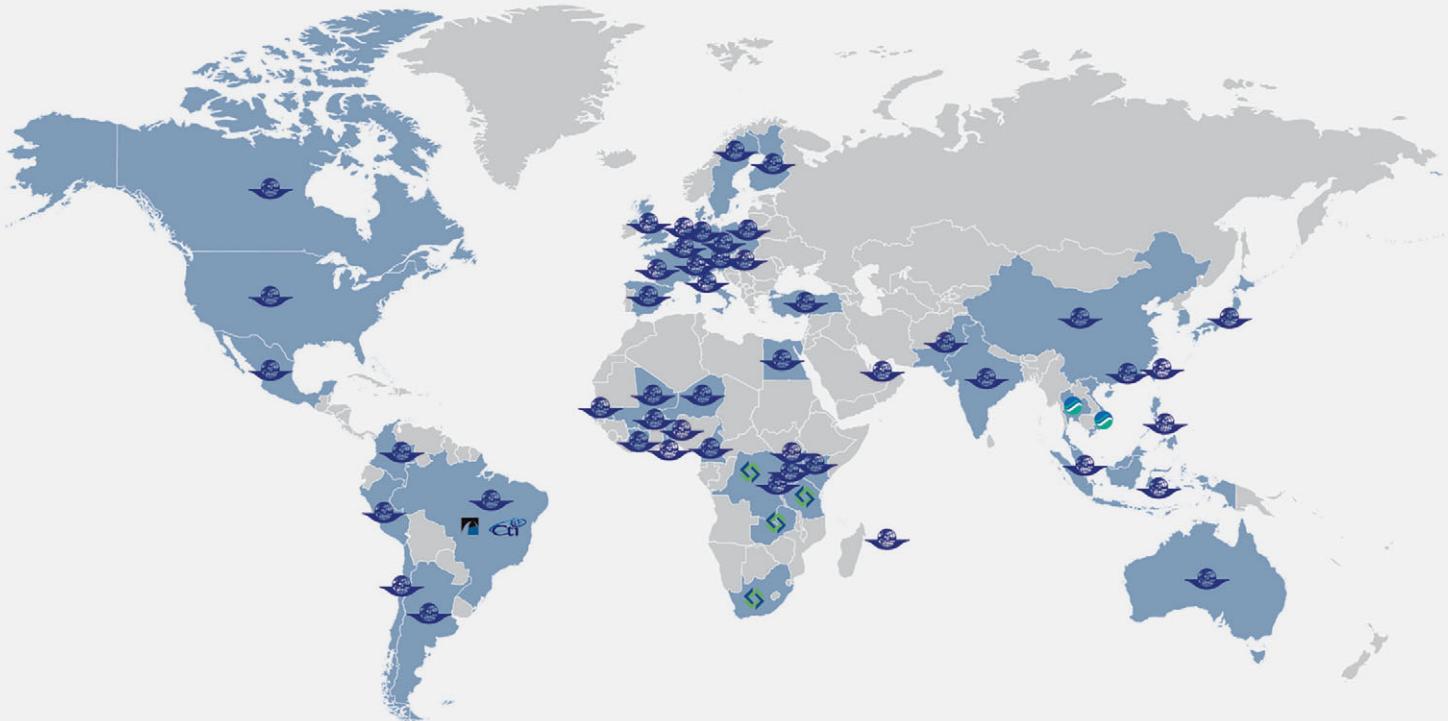
As for Pemex's Dos Bocas refinery, part of president Andrés Manuel López Obrador's plan to reduce Mexico's dependence on imported fuel sources, transportation requirements for the project have more or less been fulfilled and Intermarine has been demobbing cranes and other equipment from the site.

Bruton added: "We are still bringing in turbines and generators to Veracruz and Altamira for power projects. All of these projects need ocean support, some through Gulf ports and some through west coast ports. We expect a lot of growth and project



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activity to come. As they say, 'if the US sneezes, Mexico catches a cold'; with the USA doing well, Mexico will do the same."

This positivity is despite the social and political environment in Mexico, which hardly inspires confidence. It suffers from high rates of crime (97 percent of which goes unpunished, according to Bertelsmann Stiftung's latest BTI Transformation Index), drug trafficking, violence, human rights violations, corruption and political instability.

The deployment of the military not just to combat drug cartels but also in civilian spheres represents a threat to democracy, the index noted. During the last two years, for instance, the government has even made the military responsible for operating the country's ports – which, according to Bruton, it does very well.

### Role of armed forces

Indeed, according to Human Rights Watch, Mr Obrador has "greatly expanded the scope of the armed forces' activities, deploying them for law enforcement and Customs enforcement, and to control irregular immigration, run social programmes, and build and operate megaprojects".

The president has made noises to the effect that past actors in corruption will be investigated and that the military will become less of a presence, but progress in these areas has been limited if not backward. And funding cuts that were apparently intended to fight corruption have resulted in a decline in public services, including healthcare.

Furthermore, the BTI Transformation Index said: "[The president] has also attacked and threatened the autonomous institutions that ensure a certain level of transparency and vigilance over the government's actions. The president has cut funding to these institutions, as well as to the National Electoral Institute, which organises elections. His actions have eroded democratic life in Mexico."

As for the environment, Mr Obrador is focused very much on traditional fuel sources as opposed to renewable energy, despite Mexico's commitment to reduce its carbon emissions by half by 2050.

The BTI Transformation Index observed: "Mexico is on a path to recarbonising its economy, insisting on using oil and gas from national production. The government has channelled resources to the carbon sector and classified renewable energy projects as damaging to the national economy. It has also radically cut the budget of the Ministry of Environment."

**The energy secretary's plan for the next 10 years suggests that renewable energies will be the next target for investment and government support but this will include strict regulation and control.**

– Carlos Matthey de los Santos,  
Tradelossa

As such, Mr Obrador has been good for the oil and gas industry. Big projects like Dos Bocas were his doing, and those enormous investments would not have happened without him, Bruton pointed out.

Some of the president's pet projects are controversial, though. The ongoing construction of the new Tabasco refinery, for instance, has been criticised for its impact on the area's ecology.

### Promoting non-renewables

Besides oil and gas projects, the government has also been promoting other non-renewable energy supplies. In 2022 it reactivated investment in combined-cycle plants, said Carlos Matthey de los Santos, managing director of Mexican heavy haul company Tradelossa. He noted that the transmission and distribution needs of the combined-cycle plants that the government has placed so much emphasis on in the last two years represent something of a challenge, though.

He continued: "The energy secretary's plan for the next 10 years suggests that renewable energies will be the next target for investment and government support but this will include strict regulation and control by the energy regulatory commission, which will limit the attraction for investors to some extent."

Another stumbling block for investors is the president's penchant for state involvement in the economy – which means state involvement in projects. "He wants Pemex to lead in oil and gas, as opposed to

the private sector leading; that is not a traditional development model, and it has resulted in conflict,” Bruton concluded.

As BTI Transformation put it: “Although the current government is not a threat to the market economy, it has reserved some sectors of the economy, such as energy, for the state and expressed criticism of business sector actions in the previous ‘neoliberal period’, undermining the confidence in its success that this sector needs to invest. As a result, private investment was already very low in 2019. Since the pandemic, the situation has become more acute.”

There have, though, been some large investments on the Pacific coast, led by the public sector but with private sector involvement, the aforementioned Lakach LNG project being one example, as well as some power generation developments.

Mr Obrador has about 18 months left of his six-year term and under Mexico’s laws he cannot be re-elected, but his party appears to be leading in the polls – perhaps owing to increased pre-election spending on healthcare, education and public works – and his policies may continue under his successor.

### Nearshoring

There is optimism despite the challenging backdrop. The tendency for many sectors to diversify manufacturing locations in order to reduce dependence on China has been growing for some years, and gained momentum during the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the political tensions between China and the USA, Mexico and South America are ideally positioned to benefit from the trend.

Mexico is a particularly attractive manufacturing option for those selling their products in the nearby US market. The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that investment in nearshoring could reach USD35 billion, with more than 400 new businesses interested in investing in Mexico. Industries include food production, metals, automotives, surgical products, chemicals and machinery.

“We have been observing an increase in nearshoring for various manufacturing industries, including expansions and new production lines at existing facilities,” Swanson said. “Most global companies in various sectors seem to be pursuing a ‘China plus one’ strategy by establishing additional manufacturing or sourcing sites in South America, Southeast Asia or India.”

In addition, Mexico and South America are supplying each other more, as opposed to the US supplying South America. For example, Bruton observed: “Pipes and other

Tradelossa transported a compressor from the port of Ensenada to a gas storage plant in El Sauzal in Baja California.



oil and gas equipment that would typically come out of Houston is being fabricated in Mexico, and also in Brazil.

“South Korean and Japanese companies are building factories in northern Mexico, and the Chinese have been investing heavily as well in the last two years. These companies are manufacturing anything that can be trucked – things like televisions or refrigerators – because of the trend for nearshoring.”

Indeed, Armando Lee, commercial and logistic services director at Tradelossa, said



**We have been observing an increase in nearshoring for various manufacturing industries, including expansions and new production lines at existing facilities.**

– Jake Swanson  
DHL Industrial Projects

there is “greater openness to Chinese products for the combined-cycle plants, boilers, transformers and EPCs of Chinese origin that are beginning to establish a broader presence in Mexico”.

The nearshoring trend could be fleeting as container shipping rates fall. Also, at the time of writing the peso was 10-15 percent stronger than it had been a year ago, making Mexico more expensive.

Nevertheless, establishing new plant and supply lines is a complex, large-scale undertaking for companies and is unlikely to be reversed quickly.

Moreover, while China’s importance as a production and sourcing location for many global industries is by no means diminished by nearshoring, the growth of new manufacturing sites elsewhere does present an opportunity for more project shipments, as these facilities require various equipment and the movement of cranes and steel and other construction-related material that is usually shipped as breakbulk and handled by project teams.

### Infrastructure challenges

The challenge, in Swanson’s view, is accommodating the growth in volumes of project cargo using Mexico’s limited capacity in terms of ports, airports, equipment and roads.

The main logistical issues for both Mexico and Central America lie in their ports and terminals, the majority of which lack the necessary draught, docks, storage areas, shore cranes and roads (among other things) to handle project cargo.

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# Trade route opportunities

Project cargo traffic is by no means limited to movement between Mexico and the USA. Significant volumes of transformers, wind turbine blades and towers are manufactured and delivered within Mexico itself, for example.

Brazil also produces large quantities of transformers and hydroelectric turbines, with Central America providing both overland and maritime links for the transport of such goods to Mexico and beyond.

Much mining equipment moves between Chile, Peru, Brazil and Mexico. Other project cargo comes from OEMs located in the USA, Europe and Asia.

Historically, the main cargo routes have been those connecting Mexico's largest cities, principally in the



north in areas like Baja California, which has enjoyed a boom in power generation recently.

"With scenarios like nearshoring, there is an opportunity to develop new routes towards the

centre of the country; it will be necessary to modernise and adapt, but each day the potential of this scenario grows," said Carlos Matthey de los Santos, managing director at Tradelossa.

With regard to the absence of heavy lift shore cranes in Mexico, Bruton said: "You typically have to be self-sustaining for anything over 50 tonnes. Shore gear would mean cheaper freight rates because there would be no need for self-sustaining tonnage."

The country's ports, while well operated by the military, are also congested and – with nearshoring on the up – only becoming more so. Altamira, Manzanillo, Mazatlán and Lázaro Cárdenas are all congested and Intermarine has tried to promote the port of Tuxpan as an alternative to Veracruz, with varying degrees of success.

Also, the movement of freight through port cities is subject to restrictions and requirements that can change frequently and without prior notice.

## Road network

Another area that needs attention is the road network itself, including bridges. This infrastructure is ancient; it has been neglected over the years and, in any case, it was initially intended for tourist, commercial and industrial traffic, none of which is particularly heavy or large.

"More investment is definitely needed to improve the region's infrastructure, but without a plan from the government it is hard to attract investment," Lee said.

The challenge for supply chains and logistics services ahead of the anticipated wave of nearshoring investment, he continued, will demand that the country develop its infrastructure and that the private sector create integrated logistics solutions.

Currently, Central America is more limited than Mexico in terms of project

cargo for several reasons. Bruton explained: "Central American economies are relatively small. Countries like Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have fragile economies that were deeply affected by Covid-19, so there is not much large capital investment there."

There is perhaps a little more in Costa Rica, with its steel and fertiliser industries. Nicaragua has developed oil and gas somewhat, and Panama has established a large copper mine in the last few years (the USD10 billion First Quantum Minerals mine that went into operation at the start of the pandemic).

Looking further back, Bruton



**Countries like Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have fragile economies that were deeply affected by Covid-19, so there is not much large capital investment there.**

– Mac Bruton, Intermarine

highlighted the expansion of the Panama Canal (completed in 2016). The proposed Nicaragua Canal, of course, never took off – although the Nicaraguan president José Daniel Ortega Saavedra spoke of reviving the China-financed project in 2022, so the possibility remains, however remote that may be.

"Our experience, and what studies have shown, is that logistics and transport obstacles limit Central America's trade potential," Swanson stated. "What we have seen is that a lack of quality secondary roads, poor quality of the roads, detours to avoid bridges in poor conditions and the traffic in urban areas, costly land transport services and lengthy Customs clearance procedures are the main obstacles to project logistics."

## Central America

These logistics factors negatively affect the competitiveness of Central America. Other significant challenges in the region include a lack of specialised heavy lift trucking providers and suitable port facilities. All of these factors combine to limit the viability of large-scale capital projects.

Nevertheless, DHL Industrial Projects has been handling project shipments for Central America's semiconductor sector as well as for mining and the oil and gas industry. Since the start of 2023, it has worked in Panama, Costa Rica and El Salvador.

Tradelossa's de los Santos believes that if Mexico can revamp its infrastructure and take full advantage of nearshoring, such developments and opportunities could well be replicated in Central America.



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## Rotra newbuilds scheduled to hit the water in 2025

**deugro, Siemens Gamesa and Amasus Offshore are expanding their range of Rotra vessels. Two newbuilds are scheduled to hit the water in 2025, which have been designed to accommodate the increasing size and weight of the next generation offshore wind turbine components.**

**d**eu gro and Siemens Gamesa have entered into a long-term charter agreement for two newbuild vessels – Rotra Futura and Rotra Horizon – in cooperation with Amasus Offshore.

The vessels will be built at Jiangsu Zhenjiang Shipyard in China and are scheduled for delivery in spring and summer of 2025.

They will build upon the existing Rotra concept (Rotra Mare and Rotra Vente) that is customised for transporting offshore wind turbine components.

The Rotra concept, according to deugro, has proven to be successful in reducing risk, loading time and costs by utilising a unique ro-ro

and gantry system when transporting offshore wind turbine components.

### Design aims

The new vessels have been designed to accommodate the increasing size and weight of the next generations of offshore wind turbine components and, at the same time, to ensure best-in-class cargo intake and operational flexibility.

Rotra Futura and Rotra Horizon will measure 167.6 m x

26 m, with the deckhouse and accommodation placed forward to ensure optimal cargo intake without any line-of-sight limitations. The vessels will be fitted with a stern ro-ro ramp, three Liebherr cranes and a unique gantry system, allowing stowage of blades in three tiers.

Reducing the overall carbon footprint was one of the main drivers in the design phase and conceptual development of these new vessels. Energy consumption has been

**In Rotra Futura and Rotra Horizon we have the right assets in place to meet future challenges and to perform essential operations.**

– Hans Henrik Groen, deugro Denmark

reduced thanks to an aerodynamically and hydro-optimised hull shape, a low-resistance hull coating, and a Wärtsilä diesel engine with a 15 percent lower consumption and carbon footprint compared with today's standards.

In addition, an efficient power train with hybrid propulsion system and an exhaust gas cleaning system, which meets IMO Tier 3 standards, have been integrated into the new vessels, with special attention also being paid to waste heat recovery.

"The aspect of reducing the carbon footprint will be even more important in the future of the offshore wind industry," said Hans Henrik Groen, branch manager and managing director of deugro Danmark. "Being and staying at the forefront of wind energy industry requirements builds the base of our joint success."

### Meeting challenges

Thomas Mortensen, head of offshore project transportation at Siemens Gamesa, added: "In Rotra Futura and Rotra Horizon we have the right assets in place to meet future challenges and to perform essential operations. With the expansion and development of our cooperation, we are looking forward to welcoming these two new vessels.

"Alongside strategic partnerships with other key suppliers, this new combined fleet will ensure that we have a strong foundation from which we can execute and deliver in line with our operational expectations."

According to Christian Johansen, global commodity manager for ports and transportation in Siemens Gamesa's offshore business unit, the company has a record order backlog and will be installing a significant number of wind turbines at sea with increasingly larger and more complex components.



The wash tower, weighing 827 tonnes, was the largest unit in the package.



## AsstrA completes delivery of giant wash tower to Poland

Earlier this year, AsstrA-Associated Traffic completed its largest project to date – the delivery of an 827-tonne wash tower and its components from Spain to Gdansk port in Poland, for an oil and gas project in Plock.

**P**KN Orlen is pressing ahead with a multi-million euro investment project to expand its petrochemical manufacturing capabilities.

One of these developments required AsstrA Industrial Project Logistics (IPL) to deliver seven units, with a total weight of 1,032 tonnes, from ports in Spain to Poland.

The wash tower, weighing 827 tonnes and measuring 94.43 m x 8 m x 7.7 m, was the largest unit in the package.

### Shipment components

The shipment also included three deaerator storage tanks, which measured 21.57 m x 5.09 m x 4.75 m and weighed 61 tonnes each, as well as three deaerator heads, which measured 4.7 m x 2.95 m x 2.98 m and weighed 7.34 tonnes each.

According to Miguel Salas Rey, head of AsstrA IPL's Spain division, after being awarded



AsstrA IPL secured Jumbo's heavy lift vessel Fairmaster for the work.

the transportation contract, numerous studies were conducted, prepared and coordinated with all

interested parties.

"Due to the dimensions and especially the weight of the 827-tonne piece, there are only two

**Due to the dimensions and especially the weight of the 827-tonne piece, there are only two shipowners in the world with vessels capable of lifting it.**

– Miguel Salas Rey, AsstrA IPL

shipowners in the world with vessels capable of lifting it," he explained. "And the biggest difficulty and challenge was finding a free and available vessel on the dates required and needed by the client."

AsstrA IPL secured Jumbo's heavy lift vessel Fairmaster for the work. The storage tanks and deaerator heads were loaded onto the vessel from Mafi trailers using the ship's gear. The vessel then called at the port of Gijón to pick up the wash tower, which was loaded from SPMTs in a tandem operation.

After that, the items made a five-day journey to the port of Gdansk where the wash tower was discharged and loaded onto a river barge. The remaining six items were loaded onto two further barges ready to be shipped to the final jobsite.

"A special challenge turned out to be time," said Patrick Richardson, global head of business development.

"The AsstrA team needed to discharge all items within one day to avoid delay on the ship. Despite worsening weather during the day, operations were commenced at 09:00 and concluded the same day at 19:45."

### Coordinating deliveries

Angelique Lhotel, project manager, said that AsstrA IPL will be handling more cargoes for the project and is currently in the process of coordinating the deliveries. She is also confident about the opportunities emerging from the oil and gas sector: "The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has made many countries realise the risk of depending on energy resources from a third party or from a specific or major energy source.

"Therefore, many countries will invest in developing and building upcoming power plants, modernising or increasing the production of the existing ones. These developments in the industrial project logistics industry are very good news."



# FLEXIBLE







In general, 2022 was a turbulent but interesting year for Holleman Bulgaria.

# Opportunity knocks at southern Europe crossroads

**Mining projects, a long-standing generator of project logistics activity in the Balkans, may be starting to tail off. Nevertheless, new industries are stepping in to fill the void.**

**Chris Lewis reports.**

The Balkan region is facing renewed economic challenges, despite a recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2022.

The war in Ukraine, higher energy prices and the global economic slowdown have weighed on the region's economies.

Inflation is at high levels thanks to surges in energy and food costs, while once booming exports have started to lose pace in the face of slowdowns in Western Europe and other advanced economies.

Unemployment, which recently fell to record low levels, is beginning to tick up again too. GDP in most Balkan nations is

expected to be at best static, or possibly enter negative territory during 2023.

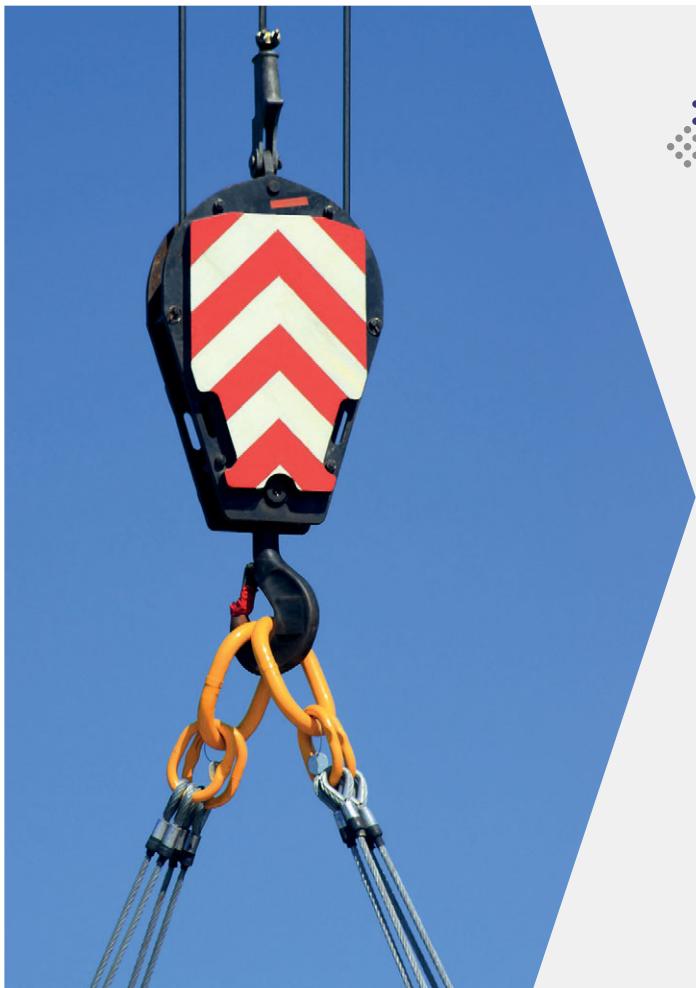
## Short-term pressures

However, while soaring prices have put local economies under pressure, they do highlight the importance of moving away from fossil fuels to greener alternatives and this is fostering capital expenditures and creating work for project logisticians. While such projects have long-term promise, all the Balkan nations have many short-term pressures to contend with.

In general, 2022 was a very turbulent but interesting year, said Mladen Ganchev,

manager at heavy transport specialist Holleman Bulgaria. "Even at the end of 2021 we felt the pressure of rising inflation and fuel and energy prices pushing rates up. But the period between February 24 and October-November 2022 was really hard for everybody. Driven by the record-high energy and oil costs, the spot market was booming and seeing sky-high rates."

Concurrently, it proved difficult to renegotiate rates for most long-term contracts as costs were rising rapidly. Luckily, at the end of the year and the beginning of 2023 the situation returned to something like normal, with decreasing energy and fuel



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Rijeka in Croatia is one of the ports that has been taking advantage of its location to handle cargoes that would previously have used north European hubs.

costs as well as falling inflation.

Ganchev explained: "During this period a lot of changes happened. Ongoing projects in Ukraine have been completely stopped – for example the wind turbine work that we had. Meanwhile, a huge volume of Ukrainian cargoes, mainly grain, were redirected to Romanian and Bulgarian ports. As a result, the port of Constanta was completely congested, and it was the same for Varna in Bulgaria."

### Resilient business

Croatia's R&B Global Projects celebrated its 10th anniversary this year and Dave Roosen, director/sales/projects, said that business, at present, is proving resilient. "We were lucky to book some really nice contracts in

October and November 2022 that are being realised now," one being the demobilisation and relocation of an entire ammonia factory from Slovakia to Brazil. The scope included dismantling the plant, packing and lifting onto barges.

Traditionally, the mining industry has been a major generator of project logistics activity in the Balkans. Roosen said this sector is starting to fade but new projects are coming in.

Croatia and the Balkans, famous for their shipyards, have seen their business shift to Asia and the Far East. While there is still some shipbuilding activity in the region, the yards are planning to diversify their activities. "What we are seeing here is that in the next five to 10 years, they will start

building huge, massive steel structures for the offshore wind industry," Roosen explained. With massive developments lined up in the UK, the North Sea, Biscay Bay and Scandinavia, there is projected to be "a big bottleneck of suppliers and builders for all the steels that they need for the offshore platforms and all the accessories they need to put wind turbines into the sea."

### Strong performer

Landlocked Serbia is the region's strong performer. "They are what we often call here in our office 'China 2.0', because China is investing billions in that country," said Roosen. Mining has been a strong market for some time, "but what we see now also in Serbia is three or four new bridge building projects. There is going to be a new railway connection between Serbia and the neighbouring countries in the north. There is a new car tyre factory being built. There are new highways being built, mostly in the south." There will be "quite a lot of heavy transport opportunities", although truck and trailer capacity is extremely tight – often up to one months' lead time is required, said Roosen.

He also cited Croatia as a strong performer. Bosnia is developing slowly, and prospects are good in Montenegro and Balkan neighbour Slovenia. For instance, onshore renewable energy projects are being developed in Montenegro, Bosnia and in the mountainous areas of southern Croatia. While the region certainly lags behind its Western European compatriots in terms of installed capacity,

Dave Roosen and Ilse Blockx of R&B Global Projects.



Roosen believes the EU is pushing for more.

Longer term, the Adriatic could play host to large offshore wind developments similar in scale to those of the North Sea, said Roosen, although it is unlikely any such projects would be realised before 2030.

### Central hub

With its position at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the Balkans should be an important logistics hub. Rijeka Split and Ploce in Croatia, Bar in Montenegro, and Koper in Slovenia have lately taken advantage of their location to handle cargoes that would previously have used north European hubs. Only their relatively limited infrastructure has held them back.

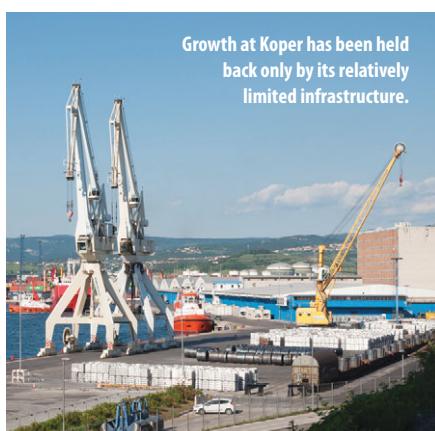
Holleman's Ganchev said: "A lot of cargoes to and from Ukraine have found new routes via the Balkan countries, giving a lot of options for the forwarders and transport companies. However, this did create problems with waiting time at borders and ports, and higher transport and handling rates as well."

For instance, rates for moving Ukrainian grain from the Danube ports of Reni or Izmail to Constanta in Romania went up to EUR80-100 per tonne, a record high, said Ganchev, who added: "It was the same for all other rates on the Danube, for example up to EUR80 per tonne for fertilisers from Constanta to Serbia. All these factors were reflected in the project cargo market with a lack of capacity and a big increase in freight costs even for long-term transport contracts such as those for agricultural and construction machinery."

Roosen highlighted disruption at Croatia's port of Rijeka in the past year, which is in the final stages of modernisation. "You almost literally could not find space inside the port," he said, although the works could position it as a major regional gateway in five years' time. He would, however, like to see some heavier shore cranes installed – the maximum capacity is presently approximately 120-140 tonnes.

On top of all these difficulties was the lack of materials and electronic components for the automotive, agricultural and construction machine industries. Many machines could not be produced due to the lack of components, which led to a dramatic decrease in the number of machines to transport.

But it was almost impossible to buy new trucks and trailers as the delivery terms surged to as long as 15 months, completely destroying plans for fleet increases or entering new markets. However, said Ganchev: "Thanks to our good relations with the producers of such equipment and our advanced planning, we



**Growth at Koper has been held back only by its relatively limited infrastructure.**

received all the trucks and trailers needed, even the custom-made ones."

Another positive last year for Holleman and the wider industry was a high level of investment, just as seen in 2007-2008, said Ganchev. "Many companies have invested as a hedge against inflation in order to keep the value of the money, so the spot market was quite significant, driven by high demand for equipment and large pieces of freight. A major portion of the fleet was kept busy by various military projects, which were also at a record level compared with previous years.

"Despite the prognosis for a recession at the end of 2022 and beginning of this year, all activities continue and we are unexpectedly busy for this period."

However, 2022 brought little positive news for Bulgaria with never-ending changes in parliament and government, as well as a lack of clear vision for the coming

**Despite the lack of state support for our business and big government investments, we are very positive for the year ahead.**

– Mladen Ganchev, Holleman Bulgaria

years. As a result the country has missed the chance to enter the Schengen passport area and join the European monetary union.

Both are likely to be reflected in Holleman's work, especially the major traffic flows between Bulgaria and Romania, including many Ukrainian trucks. "This will cause further delays and losses to companies as sometimes we are spending 24-48 hours to cross a single border between these two countries, or between Romania and Hungary [as neither Romania nor Bulgaria are a member of the Schengen area].

"Thanks to the lack of stable government, no major investments in ports and infrastructure were made or are planned for the current year. The situation might change after April when fresh elections take place, but this does not seem very likely," Ganchev surmised. "This means that also the old and well-known problems will continue to exist – bureaucracy, the old permit system and a lot of illegal transports because of missing controls and corruption."

### Danube recovery

Nevertheless, he said: "Despite the lack of state support for our business and big government investments, we are very positive for the year ahead. It started very well with the fleet being busy almost all the time. The Danube transports are almost back to normal as well. We see a record number of enquiries for the first two months which keeps us optimistic for another good year."

Holleman also expects to see plans to restart renewable energy projects in Romania and Bulgaria soon, if not this year, then certainly in 2024. Agricultural machinery dealers also have machines in stock, which means the specialised trailer fleet will be quite busy as well. Provided there is no escalation of the war in Ukraine, a very good year lies ahead, said Ganchev.



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# XXL Consolidation service addresses flatrack inefficiencies

**Germany-based start-up XXL Consolidation is trying to tackle inefficiencies in moving out-of-gauge (OOG) cargo on flattracks. The company has developed a digital tool to consolidate cargoes, filling empty space aboard vessels while reducing the carbon footprint of shipments.**

Timo Wittmann, ceo for XXL Consolidation, said: "The focus has always been on project cargo... some cargo is too big for a container but a flatrack would be half-empty. For many years we saw this situation day-to-day on different lanes. All these transports are ultimately inefficient, extensively expensive, and above everything else – less than sustainable."

XXL Consolidation decided to develop a system to consolidate several crates onto a flatrack, enabling "lost space" to be filled with paying cargo, creating price advantages and a better ecological footprint for shippers. The booking party pays only for the space it needs.

Founded in 2019, the product was brought to market in 2021 with a container freight station (CFS) in the port of Hamburg. Oversize cargo consolidation is being offered on three lanes – India, the

Middle East and China.

"Core carriers ensure space and equipment based on weekly schedules. For emergencies, we have SOC equipment on hand as well," said Wittmann.

## Free-on-truck

"After arriving in the port of discharge (POD), our partners pick up the consolidated flatracks from the terminal, destuff the goods at their CFS, and provide the shipments to their specific consignees for pick-up on a free-on-truck (FOT) basis."

Wittmann said XXL

Consolidation is at the start of a long journey. Demand has been volatile – sometimes it can see 35 crates per trade, and at other times just 10-15. "As a small, flexible company, we can handle that. In terms of scaling up, we plan to establish our service globally."

XXL Consolidation acts as a NVOCC and works only with forwarders. "We have no direct clients and offer 100 percent neutrality. That is the backbone of our business model. To prove this kind of service on a regular basis we need get each and every freight forwarder on board," said

Wittmann. "We provide weekly sailing schedules and clients can book online, via email, app or EDI. Of course, over-dimensional cargo needs a bit more organising and administrative efforts... 10 days before sailing is our LCL closing for OOG cargo at our CFS in Hamburg."

## Simple and transparent

He described pricing as simple and transparent. "Clients have to consider just three cost items: local charges in the port of loading (POL) – currently EUR100 per flatrack metre (FRM) in Hamburg; the ocean freight on a lump-sum basis; and local charges at the POD, currently USD200 per FRM at each destination port."

On the buying side, XXL Consolidation deals directly with the core carrier and buys the space on a full void basis. "Due to the fact that we operating as an NVOCC we are signing an XXL Consolidation bill of lading and for the booking party we are responsible as a carrier, so we bear the risk."

Further benefits come in the form of sustainability, something that has come into sharper focus for carriers and shippers alike. Wittmann said that consolidating OOG cargoes in this fashion can create CO<sub>2</sub> emission saving of up to 50 percent in some cases.



**We have no direct clients and offer 100 percent neutrality. That is the backbone of our business model. To prove this kind of service on a regular basis we need get each and every freight forwarder on board.**

– Timo Wittmann, XXL Consolidation



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dteq's team of engineers developed an entire logistics plan at a major pulp and paper project in Central Uruguay to avoid using fragile and sensitive infrastructure.

# Paving the way for oversized cargo

**Arlan P. Baylon** is regional director transport engineering, APAC, at dteq Transport Engineering Solutions. He has 27 years of professional experience in civil and structural engineering, more than 11 years of which have been in heavy lift engineering and transportation management. Here, he shares his views on civil engineering and its relevance to oversize transportation.

Civil engineering – both the infrastructure itself and the discipline as a whole – is a decisive component in the transport and installation of complex turnkey projects and oversized and heavy lift (OSHL) components. It is always a close interaction between infrastructure, the cargo components to be moved and the transport equipment to be used – making simultaneous planning, simulations,

calculations and procedural instructions essential at all levels.

For this purpose, an engineer should therefore not only be familiar with pure civil engineering, but also have experience in the field of transport engineering, the design of cargo components, the capacities and limits of transport equipment and the flow of logistical processes.

In recent years, we have observed many large projects being carried out in

increasingly challenging and remote regions without infrastructure, or whose infrastructure is not designed for OSHL transports. This applies, in particular, to the extraction of mineral resources in the mining or oil and gas industries, the creation of power plants and distribution infrastructure to supply energy to entire and often remote regions, to name just a few examples.

## Logistics plan

In regions where infrastructure is lacking, civil engineering encompasses the design and construction of temporary jetties or bridges or building and expanding roads. One example is a major pulp and paper project in Central Uruguay, where dteq's team of engineers in Houston, Texas, USA, developed an entire logistics plan to avoid using fragile and sensitive infrastructure. The plan involved the construction of new roads, two new berths and several bypasses of old bridges.

In regions with existing infrastructure, activities relate to the widening of roads and the increasing of ground-bearing capacities, the removal of street furniture, the dismantling or relocation of pipes and lines underground, and even the reconstruction of entire buildings along the transport routes.

Many challenges arise when there are



dteq constructed new roads, two new berths and several bypasses of old bridges at a major pulp and paper project in Central Uruguay.

existing structures in the path of complex OSHL cargo, as these are often old and built based on outdated codes, regulations and guidelines. This usually affects their capacity, which is the determining factor for the calculations.

Designing complex cargo with extraordinary dimensions and weights to be imposed on these existing structures requires a thorough engineering study, re-evaluation of their capacity, and time-consuming planning and evaluation to ensure safety during transportation and execution.

Furthermore, to be able to carry out all the measures required for the transports, close coordination with local authorities, institutions and ministries is also required in order to comply with building, safety and emissions regulations, as well as environmental requirements, including the subsequent approval procedures for obtaining all transport permits on time.

### Prefabricated construction

What makes the field of civil engineering increasingly important today is the growing demand of many clients for the transport of large, prefabricated cargo components. In this area, we at dteq see strongly increasing demand.



**What makes the field of civil engineering increasingly important today is the growing demand of many clients for the transport of large, prefabricated cargo components.**

– Arlan P. Baylon, dteq Transport Engineering Solutions

Prefabricated construction of entire plant components allows shippers to save costs, reduce risks and shorten the overall project schedule, while optimising quality.

Large components can be built at the most suitable location with the greatest technical competence and the appropriate resources and equipment.

This not only increases quality but also minimises the need to send highly qualified engineers to the construction sites or to coordinate and, if necessary, train suitable experts against the background of a worldwide shortage of personnel.

### Time and cost savings

Timely delivery of larger prefabricated plant components also reduces installation and coordination efforts, as well as storage and disruptions at the construction site, resulting in significant time and cost savings.

At the same time, the transport of these components makes better use of freight capacities and reduces many smaller individual transports.

This not only leads to a reduction in transport costs and time savings, but also reduces the number of interfaces and leads to a reduction in transport risks.



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# A reviving economy faces 'pivotal' moment



**Since the start of its reform in 1978, China has seen average annual GDP growth of over 9 percent. It became the second-largest economy in the world by 2011 – a position it holds to this day. A healthy China is good for the project cargo market but there are various factors complicating its recovery from the pandemic-induced shutdown, writes Megan Ramsay.**

**C**hina's economy continued to develop in 2022 with economic output increasing despite the challenges of "high winds and choppy waters in the global environment" as well as "arduous tasks to advance reform, promote development and maintain stability at home", according to the National Bureau of Statistics of China.

A statement said that according to preliminary estimates, the gross domestic

product (GDP) was USD17.6 trillion in 2022, an increase of 3 percent over 2021 at constant prices. That figure represents quite a drop compared with the 8.1 percent year-on-year GDP growth recorded for 2021. The World Bank attributed this to widespread Omicron outbreaks and extreme weather, not forgetting external factors such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has resulted in a global economic slowdown and high inflation around the world.

Nevertheless, the total value of China's imported and exported goods was USD6.1 trillion – an increase of 7.7 percent over the previous year and a record high, despite what Iris Sang, Access World commercial manager, termed "the pandemic-depressed global demand".

"Foreign trade remains a driving force for economic growth in China. To further boost this sector, the Chinese authorities cancelled registration requirements for businesses



Protranser coordinated the export of wind turbine blades from Taicang to Rostock, Germany.

engaged in foreign trade activities from December 30, 2022, onwards," she said.

This means individuals and companies no longer need to file and register with their local commerce department before applying for an import or export licence. The move is intended to streamline trade with China and thereby help growth return to pre-covid levels.

### Economic assessment

The statement from the National Bureau of Statistics of China concluded: "Generally speaking, positive results have been achieved in effectively coordinating the Covid-19 prevention and control and the economic and social development in 2022, with stabilised macroeconomic performance, continuously expanded economic output

and steadily improved development quality.

"However, the foundation of domestic economic recovery is not solid as the international situation is still complicated and severe, while the domestic triple pressures of demand contraction, supply shock and weakening expectations are still looming."

Over the medium term, the World Bank said China's economy is facing a structural slowdown caused by "adverse demographics, tepid productivity growth and rising constraints to a debt-fuelled, investment-driven growth model". The bank recommended a structural shift towards a more sustainable economic model.

Whether this will happen is uncertain. "This is a pivotal moment for China's economic growth after its re-emergence from the recent pandemic lockdown," said

Jack Zhou, AAL Shipping general manager and chief representative (China).

### Normalising situation

"As the Covid-19 pandemic is brought under control, the global trade situation will gradually normalise and the global shipping trade volume is expected to grow at a compound rate of 2.7 percent from 2023 to 2026."

That level of growth is far lower than in previous years and it is also likely that some sort of 'new normal' in terms of trade flows will establish itself in the wake of the pandemic, rather than simply a return to previous patterns.

One reason is that supply chains that were once totally reliant on China have diversified and there is no reason to suppose

that they will automatically shift back to where they were.

Leo Liu, marketing manager at freight forwarder Protranser, explained: "During lockdown, production schedules were disrupted and regular cargo flows stopped. In order to reduce risk, some companies decided to build factories outside China, in Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam and India.

"These companies face new challenges in other locations. Compared with China, things such as infrastructure (road, power, etc) are limited, there is a lack of relevant suppliers and there are different cultures. All this means cost increases. So, the world will find a new balance," Leo Liu believes.

As a result of the relocation of some industrial supply chains to Southeast Asian and other countries, AAL has selected the main ports of Thailand and Vietnam as its base ports for both its Asia-USA and Asia-EU semi-liner services.

Currently, AAL is engaged in the shipping of bridge sections from China to Australia and had successfully completed 10 shipments at the time of writing.

"With the improvement of the relations between the governments of China and Australia and the alleviation of the pandemic in both countries, the transportation of the West Gate Tunnel began in the third quarter of 2022 after several years' suspension," Zhou said.

China is "an infrastructure giant", he remarked, highlighting the country's "rich experience, competitive pricing, and high efficiency in constructing bridges, high-speed rail, power plants and green energy projects such as wind turbines and photovoltaic energy," – all areas of focus for AAL in the next few years.

## Decarbonisation

China accounts for nearly a third of annual global CO<sub>2</sub> (31 percent in 2021) and a third of the world's overall greenhouse gas emissions. It is also the largest energy consumer in the world, the largest producer and consumer of coal, and the largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> today.

Sang said that in recent years, Beijing has intensified the shift towards non-fossil fuels and invested large sums into renewable energy, turning the country into a global leader in hydroelectric, wind and solar energy.

"For instance, Sinopec has taken the lead to explore collaboration in decarbonisation technologies in China with other multinational corporations," Sang said.

At the 2020 Climate Ambition Summit,

**AAL Pusan delivering four Chinese-made rubber-tyred gantries to Oslo, Norway, from Taicang.**



president Xi Jinping announced that by 2030, China's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of GDP will have dropped by over 65 percent over the 2005 level; non-fossil energy will account for about 25 percent of primary energy consumption; forest stock will increase by 6 billion cu m over the 2005 level; and the total installed capacity of wind and solar power will reach over 1.2 billion kW.

"China has estimated that it will require an additional 1,200 GW of solar and wind capacity to meet its target of generating 25 percent of its energy from non-fossil fuels, so these two sectors will undoubtedly gain momentum in the coming years," explained Churchill Liu, Trans Global Projects (TGP) managing director – China.

Meanwhile in 2022, the 20th National

Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to "actively yet prudently promote carbon peaking and carbon neutrality", something it described as an "extensive and profound systemic reform of the economy and society".

## Green goals

Zhou describes this as "a definite goal". He observed: "The use of green energy like wind power and photovoltaic energy is increasing everywhere, both offshore and on land. These days wind turbine suppliers such as Goldwind and Envision are producing blades over 90 m long for the domestic market."

Despite India, Vietnam and the USA absorbing significant shares of wind turbine production, China is still the major player in this arena. Exports are mainly to South America, Vietnam and the Middle East, and outbound volumes of these components continue to increase. Shipments of solar and other green power generation equipment are also picking up, helping China's project cargo market to regain its vibrancy.

In 2023, particularly in the second half of the year, the shipping of wind turbine parts is expected to reach record levels; key destinations include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Australia, Peru and Chile.

Protranser is among the China-based forwarders involved in exporting components for the wind energy industry overseas, from hubs, flanges and blades to towers.

However, TGP's Churchill Liu noted that many such shipments are for older contracts that were signed before or during covid times, while the number of new contracts is declining.



**The use of green energy like wind power and photovoltaic energy is increasing everywhere, both offshore and on land.**

– Jack Zhou, AAL Shipping



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However, he is sure that the renewable energy industry is the best bet for project forwarders active in China. "Green energy has been booming in Vietnam for the last two to three years, even during the pandemic," he said.

For instance, TGP China has been shipping project cargo for two waste-to-energy power plants located in Vietnam, on a port-to-door basis. It has also been moving wind turbine blades from China to wind farms overseas.

TGP has been working to secure more wind energy work, but Churchill Liu observed: "Market competition has become fiercer as several carriers have offered their forwarding services as a way to compete directly with local and global project logistics companies, and major suppliers have their own logistics teams contacting carriers directly. This makes the already niche market even more opaque."

### Project prospects

It seems likely that the ongoing green energy transition will be an important factor in China's recovery in the wake of Covid-19; forecasts for the country's future in general vary, though, making it difficult to define the outlook for project cargo there.

Some commentators indicate a degree of hesitancy among investors, despite the Chinese government rolling out policies to encourage privately owned companies to invest. Others are confident that the country's economy will rebound now that covid restrictions have been lifted; it is just a matter of how much, how quickly and against what odds.

"There is a clear pattern of continuous growth," Zhou said. "China recently set itself a 5 percent economic growth target for this year, close to the 5.2 percent predicted by Morgan Stanley, 5.2 percent by PwC, 4.9 percent by Bloomberg, 4.9 percent by JP Morgan and 4.5 percent by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)."

However, he cautioned: "Given the



TGP China has been shipping project cargo for two waste-to-energy power plants located in Vietnam.



**Market competition has become fiercer as several carriers have offered their forwarding services as a way to compete directly with local and global project logistics companies.**

– Churchill Liu, TGP

economic slowdown in the USA and Europe, the grim external relations and cost increases in China, which have led to the relocation of the industrial chain to ASEAN and other countries, China's export prospects in 2023 indeed face many challenges."

### Challenging factors

Geopolitical turbulence or uncertainty will be the most challenging factor in Churchill Liu's view. President Xi Jinping's relations, not only with the USA but also with Russia and Middle Eastern nations, are sure to be top of the mind for anyone doing business in or with China.

Interestingly, Leo Liu pointed out that more countries are "starting to try to accept RMB for settling business, instead of via US dollars. And finance is very important in big projects. Considering this, I think the current balance is changing," he said.



## BRI rolls on with multiple international projects

China's huge Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) continues to progress, with numerous projects under way across the world.

"One of the important projects of the BRI is the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway, which will connect China with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Iran, Türkiye and Europe. Construction is expected to begin in the autumn of 2023," said Leo Liu, marketing manager at freight forwarder Protranser,

noting that Protranser's branch office in Xinjiang province, in western China, is focusing on work in Central Asia.

"It is reported that the railway will save 900 km – or seven to eight days – on transit times from China to Europe. This will have a long-term effect on countries along the route," Leo Liu said.

There are also reports of approval for a new railway linking Mohe, China, with Dzhalinda, Russia,

to provide an overland route for Russian antimony as well as other raw materials sourced in the Sakha region.

During the second half of March, the total value of new BRI projects was estimated at USD9.8 billion, with Southeast Asia seeing the highest number of new projects. The largest new transaction during this period was USD2 billion for a steel processing plant in Egypt.

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A computer-generated image of the first US-flagged turbine installation vessel, Charybdis, which is being built by Dominion Energy at the Keppel AmFELS shipyard in Brownsville, Texas.



# North American offshore wind prepares for storm force growth

The USA and Canada are planning to pop the clutch on offshore wind energy. Both federal governments, as well as coastal states and provinces, local governments, port authorities, developers and investors have announced ambitious plans. This column is the first in a series from *Gregory DL Morris* detailing the quickfire steps being taken by ports and developers to advance the sector in North America.

In the USA alone, the goal is to have 30 GW of fixed offshore wind generation online by 2030 and a further 15 GW of floating wind capacity by 2035. The initial fixed projects are scheduled to start in the next year along the Atlantic coast; proposals stretching out for several years could expand to the Pacific Coast, the Great Lakes and even the Gulf Coast.

All of this represents an unprecedented boon for heavy lift vessel operators, transport and installation specialists, and the project logistics supply chain. Significant investments in

domestic manufacturing are being made, but the first wave of projects will rely on imported blades, tower sections, nacelles and foundations.

Significantly, there are no existing port facilities to serve as marshalling yards or assembly hubs for offshore wind construction, but more than a

dozen ports are in various stages of development. There are also no US-flagged installation vessels specifically for offshore wind energy projects – the first of those is due to be completed later this year.

"The initial assumption that we [in North America] would be able to import everything [to

build offshore wind generation] from Europe is simply not viable," said Adrienne Downey, principal engineer and country manager for the US and Canada at Hexicon, a Stockholm-based developer of floating offshore wind power. Speaking at The Future of US Offshore Wind, produced by Reuters, she said: "Europe is already groaning under the weight of its own needs. We cannot build offshore wind without transmission infrastructure, or without ports."

## Port infrastructure

Jocelyn Brown-Saracino, offshore wind lead at the US Department of Energy (DOE), estimates that spending of at least USD8 billion on port infrastructure is necessary for the country to reach the 30 GW goal.

"We are not at scale in the USA with any [offshore wind] infrastructure to speak of,"

**The initial assumption that we [in North America] would be able to import everything [to build offshore wind generation] from Europe is simply not viable.**

– Adrienne Downey, Hexicon

concurred Wesley Jacobs, project director at Chicago-based Invenegy for the Leading Light Wind development off New York. Sanguine in the face of that situation, Jacobs added: "It is exciting to be part of the establishment of a new industry within an already established economy."

Expanding on this, he and the other presenters noted that the wind port developments along the Atlantic seaboard are mostly taking advantage of existing, often disused, facilities; at the same time, port redevelopment for wind energy is also limited by existing infrastructure, notably bridges and other obstructions.

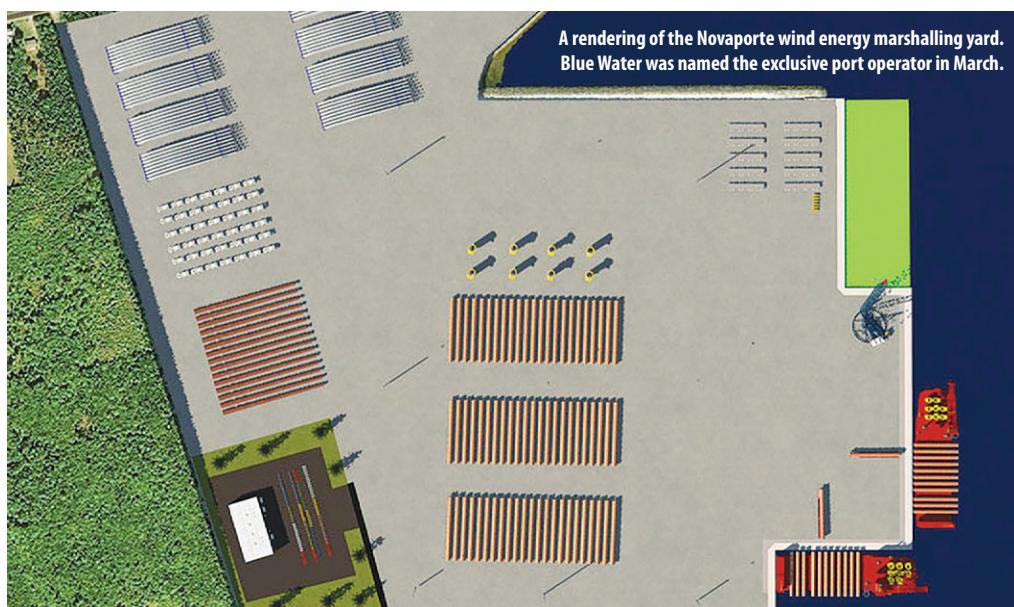
Leading Light plans to use the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal as an assembly and marshalling yard. Across New York Harbor there are also plans for port redevelopment on Staten Island. Up the Hudson River, there are plans for manufacturing of wind tower components near the port of Albany.

In the long term, Jacobs predicted a day when North America would flip the script and become an exporter of wind power components. "We have an opportunity to be an exporter to the global market as European companies are the leaders today."

## Installation vessel

The largest single complication for US offshore wind development is the lack of any US-flagged turbine installation vessels. The first such ship, Charybdis, is being built by Dominion Energy at the Keppel AmFELS shipyard in Brownsville, Texas, and is scheduled to be "ready for sea by late this year," according to the company. Cabotage laws, known as the Jones Act, restrict foreign-flagged vessels from carrying tower components from port to the construction sites.

Charybdis will first be deployed out of New London, Connecticut, to support the construction of Revolution Wind



and Sunrise Wind, both under joint development by Ørsted and Eversource. The terms of that charter will allow the vessel to support construction of Dominion's own 2.6 GW Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project off Virginia Beach, which is expected to be completed in 2026.

Dominion formed a consortium of naval engineering and fabrication firms to build Charybdis.

Hampton Roads, Virginia, will be the home port for the USD500 million vessel, which is designed to handle turbines of 12 MW or larger. It will also be capable of the installation of

foundations for turbines.

Swedish engineering and construction company Skanska was awarded the contract to redevelop Portsmouth (Virginia) Marine Terminal as a wind port in July 2022, and began field work the following month. The first phase of construction is to be completed this summer. The second and third phases are scheduled to be completed in the first quarters of next year and 2025.

## Canadian ports

Between the Jones Act and the lack of port facilities in the USA, some of the wind energy demonstration projects in US waters were built out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. For commercial scale wind developments in Canadian and northern US waters, several Canadian ports have taken up the baton.

Late in March Novaporte, a transportation, logistics and green energy development in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, announced a concession agreement with global logistics company Blue Water Shipping to develop a major marshalling hub in Sydney, Nova Scotia, to support wind energy off the northeast Atlantic US and eastern Canada coasts.

"We are launching the first major offshore wind port development in Canada," said

Thomas Bek, chief operating officer for energy, ports and projects at Blue Water. The company, based in Denmark, describes itself as "the pioneer of offshore wind with more than 25 years of experience".

When completed, the Novaporte multi-use port facility plans to accommodate offshore wind marshalling, containers, bulk and ro-ro cargo, as well as logistics, hydrogen and marine services.

The near-term market will be US projects. Beyond that, Nova Scotia has recently announced an ambitious offshore wind and hydrogen strategy, with the initial target to build and produce 5 GW of offshore energy by 2030.

Novaporte drew attention to its 16.5 m harbour depth, no air draught restrictions, significant laydown area and flat geography. In addition to marshalling, it said the site is suitable to accommodate offshore operations and maintenance facilities quayside, as well as manufacturing and assembly facilities less than 1 km away from the waterside terminal.

Separately, the port of Argentia, Newfoundland, revealed two contracts for service as a marshalling yard for US projects, but did not disclose any details of the counterparties or projects.



**We are launching the first major offshore wind port development in Canada.**

– Thomas Bek, Blue Water

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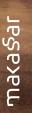
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Rollit Cargo said the constant construction of wind turbines is continuing to generate a lot of cargo handling opportunities.



**Leading players in two of Europe's largest project cargo hubs – Antwerp and Rotterdam – are confident about the market prospects for the years ahead, boosted by several sustainability initiatives. Efforts to reduce nitrogen emissions, however, could hamper those developments. Sophie Barnes reports.**

In the Netherlands and Belgium, intensive livestock farming and the use of fertilisers, as well as traffic and construction, have resulted in nitrogen in the soil and water exceeding thresholds set by the EU. All nitrogen-emitting industries will need to re-evaluate their practices.

After decades of insufficient action to tackle nitrogen emissions, both countries are now moving forward with emission restriction strategies. Last year, the Dutch government announced plans to slash nitrogen emissions in half by 2030. Belgium is proposing a regional plan with the Flemish government putting forward a package of measures to cut pollution.

Both decisions were met with protests from the agricultural sector – one of the main contributors to the nitrogen issue. In early March, for instance, a convoy of tractors brought traffic in Belgium's capital Brussels to a halt in protest over the regional government plan.

#### Difficult choice

The concern is that the planned cuts place a heavier burden on agriculture than industry (another key contributor to emissions). In the Netherlands, the country is facing the difficult choice between building infrastructure or backing agriculture.

While drastic reductions of livestock have been proposed in the Netherlands, other contributing sectors have not been unaffected. All polluting sectors will have to participate in the effort to reduce nitrogen emissions; earlier this year, the government set a target for a 38 percent cut by 2030, compared with 2019, for the energy and industrial sectors, and a 25 percent cut for transport.

# Leading the way to net zero



For the construction sector, some building projects are either on hold or at risk of being scrapped. Transportation, meanwhile, will have to adapt to new standards for fuel efficiency and electrification, while specific initiatives also include speed limits on motorways.

Last year, as stakeholders searched for clarity on the implementation of the new measures, permits for new infrastructure developments were paused, farms were refused expansion, building projects stopped and the construction of new roads denied.

Twan Romeijn, business manager, breakbulk and offshore industry at the Port of Rotterdam Authority, noted that the growth of industry, particularly projects that would convert fossil fuel production to green/sustainable fuels such as hydrogen, “risk being slowed down due to the nitrogen discussions. That is a large risk,” he said.

### Growth area

The upgrade or conversion of industrial facilities, and the preparations for hydrogen production, have been a growth area for the Dutch port in recent years, attracting project cargoes to the gateway. And, despite the volumes of containers and breakbulk cargoes registering a drop in the first quarter of 2023 compared with 2022 (11.6 percent and 6 percent, respectively), Romeijn is positive about the years ahead for the project cargo market.

He said that the project cargo market has grown over the past years, attributing this to strong growth in offshore/onshore wind activities as well as the stable growth in oil and gas-related projects, with high

commodity prices encouraging investment in new infrastructure and the upgrade of existing facilities, among other industry verticals.

Rotterdam also continues to facilitate the movement of casco barges thanks to a high demand for new capacity, as well as the mobilisation and demobilisation works for offshore-related vessels due to the port’s “strong link with the maritime cluster”, Romeijn explained.

The outlook for the offshore and onshore wind market is particularly promising, he continued, “as sustainability targets have to be met”. This is not restricted

to projects in the North Sea, but also developments in Asia and the USA, which require foundations, tower sections, blades, nacelles, cables and generators.

Within this, however, there are concerns. Romeijn pointed to the offshore wind industry’s desire to achieve even greater economies of scale with ever larger components. The next generation of turbines, for instance, will fall between 12-15 MW, standing over 200 m tall and with blades measuring over 100 m long.

### Serious impact

“This will have a serious impact on the required infrastructure,” said Romeijn. “What if it is getting too big?” He believes that “offshore wind will grow even faster in the upcoming years, and more and more wind farms will be constructed”. With projects and products increasing volumes even further, that too will “put more stress on the required infrastructure”.

Rotterdam is well placed to handle those stresses, however, with Romeijn noting the port’s deepwater quaysides, large project areas and heavy lift specialists such as RHB Stevedoring & Warehousing, Bonn & Mees Floating Cranes, Rhenus Logistics, HEBO Maritiemservice, Broekman Logistics, SIF Group and C. Steinweg.

Wind energy cargoes are also a mainstay at Belgium’s leading project cargo gateway, the port of Antwerp-Bruges.

Arthur Mahieu, ceo of Rollit Cargo, which has its own quay concession in Antwerp, noted that “the constant construction of wind turbines” is continuing to generate a lot of cargo handling



**Offshore wind will grow even faster in the upcoming years, and more and more wind farms will be constructed.**

– Twan Romeijn,  
Port of Rotterdam Authority



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**PROJECTS IN MOTION**

opportunities. "The port of Antwerp plays a very important role in this, as it is perfectly situated to distribute cargoes, also to neighbouring countries.

"With blade lengths exceeding 80 m, it is not easy to depart from certain terminals but specialists/handlers – such as Rollit Cargo – take these limitations and obstacles into account. Needless to say, handling this cargo is very specific and sensitive to damage so you can only handle it with experienced, specialised teams," he explained.

Much like the port of Rotterdam, Antwerp-Bruges saw throughput drop slightly in the first quarter of this year, down 4.5 percent compared with the same period last year with 68.7 million tonnes passing through the port.

According to the port, the decline is due to the still complex geopolitical and macroeconomic context, which has led to a decline in the container segment and significant shifts in cargo flows.

Last year, the high container freight rates and disrupted sailings had a knock-on effect for one of the port's multipurpose terminal operators, Zuidnatie. Marc Van Aken, chief commercial officer at the company, noted that during 2022 it handled large volumes of commodities that would normally be shipped via box carriers – "big bags, plywood, steel bars, as well as full and empty containers were being shipped on multipurpose vessels".

Those volumes (both export and import), he said, "affected the availability of free storage areas at our terminals". He recognised that it is difficult to predict the future of the breakbulk market, commenting: "We simply do not get any guarantees regarding volumes and so have to be very flexible during peaks and troughs". He did, however, note that during the first quarter of 2023, "business went back to normal, with normal volumes of main commodities – iron, steel and general cargoes".

### Niche market

Looking ahead, he said: "In my personal opinion, the breakbulk market will become niche very soon. A lot of cargo will be containerised, resulting in less breakbulk cargo. At Zuidnatie, we can rely on long-term partnerships, investments in state-of-the-art infrastructure and sustainable relationships with both our own people and other stakeholders."

Investments from Zuidnatie include the modernisation of its breakbulk infrastructure as well as the electrification of heavy lift cranes and forklifts.



Mahieu believes that "the project cargo market has held its own, despite the current difficult global situation". He said: "The port of Antwerp is still one of the most important project cargo hubs in the world and consequently generates a lot of exceptional handling." In addition to renewable energy cargoes, he referenced large projects in the Antwerp chemical and petrochemical sectors as key generators of project cargo traffic. "Both in terms of exports and imports, a lot of cargo passes through the port of Antwerp."

Albert Pegg, a veteran of the Antwerp project logistics scene and director of the Atlas Breakbulk Alliance (ABA), added that the project cargo market in the Benelux countries has had its ups and downs. "The petrochemical clusters are making huge efforts to become more sustainable and that comes with investments in new/renewed production facilities. The circular economy also bodes well for the future and certain incubators have set up test labs; others are already more mature and have moved into commercial operations," he said.

While he, too, recognised wind energy – both on and offshore – as a big driver of activity, he warned that there are still hurdles. "Especially onshore, the 'not in

**The petrochemical clusters are making huge efforts to become more sustainable and that comes with investments in new/renewed production facilities.**

– Albert Pegg, Atlas Breakbulk Alliance

my backyard' syndrome is still hampering a number of projects."

In Antwerp, he pointed to the Ineos Project ONE – the largest investment in the European chemical sector for a generation that will see the construction and operation of the most environmentally sustainable cracker in Europe. "That will get up to speed pretty soon and will for sure boost volumes," said Pegg.

### Green hydrogen pipelines

Pegg also noted the development of green hydrogen pipelines in Europe. For instance, Gasunie is building a network in the Netherlands that will link five industrial clusters to foreign countries and to hydrogen storage facilities. Current plans call for the first parts of the national network to be available in 2025.

To decarbonise energy-intensive industries as well as heavy and maritime transport, the Belgian government, meanwhile, rolled out the federal hydrogen vision and strategy, which includes a plan to pursue the development of hydrogen transport infrastructure by an open-access pipeline. A first phase will start with the commissioning of a minimum of 100 to 160 km pipelines by 2026. By 2030, Belgium has the ambition to connect to neighbouring countries via the open-access hydrogen network to realise its international positioning as an import and transit hub for renewable energy in Europe.

A big benefit for logisticians in Belgium is the cluster of manufacturers that build or develop project cargo. According to Mahieu, this ranges from high pressure vessels, engines, reactors and generators to columns and storage tanks.



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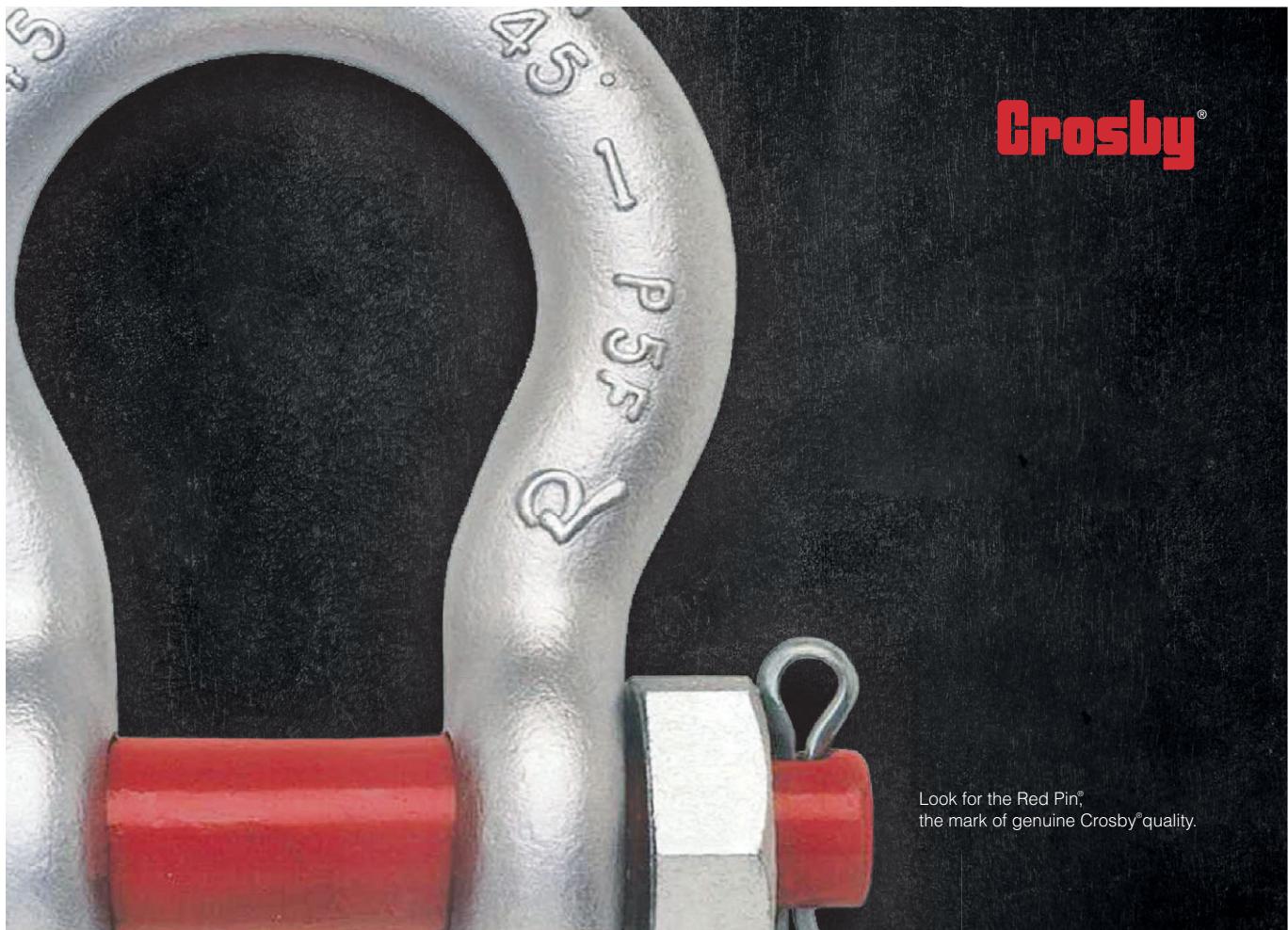
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Operating in Belgium is not without its challenges, however. Mahieu explained: "In terms of infrastructure, Belgium is always changing, both on the road and on the water. Bridges are being raised on canals to allow river vessels (with container heights) to pass more easily, locks are being enlarged and the road infrastructure is also constantly being modified.

"All things that benefit heavy, exceptional transport but also things that make existing routes and permits subject to changes, adjustments and complexities.

"Belgium is also a very complex country that is divided into regional governments, each with their own competences. There is often a lack of affinity between these entities to map all aspects. Is an adaptation to the road infrastructure specific to daily (private) transport, is it specific to exceptional transport or is there a consideration to combine both options? Matters that seem structural and obvious to project cargo handlers (transporters, among others) are often not for the legislative executive/initiative authorities," he commented.

### Inland waterways

An added issue is the push to move away from road transport, notably to inland waterways. Pegg noted that while this is a logical move, "one still needs to cover the first and last mile delivery, and not every OEM or heavy lift/out-of-gauge producer is next to a waterway".

He also noted that legislative issues can hinder the go-ahead for projects in the country. "When a project has proven it is in all aspects (scientifically, economically, ecologically, financially) best for the common good, it should not be stopped in court anymore, which still happens from time to time – although a law in Belgium has at least already made it more difficult for individuals to do so."

He referenced a number of proposed LNG power plants in Belgium that would have compensated for the reduction in nuclear power plants. "[They] did not get the green light for a variety of reasons, but the ecological footprint certainly played a massive role."

Another issue is the high labour costs and the fact that legislation in Belgium makes the market accessible to foreign transport firms that often operate at lower rates. "This trend is worrying and not negligible," Mahieu warned.

Overall though he is confident about the prospects for the sector. "From my personal experience, with more than 25 years in the heavy segment, I dare say that the project



cargo market will keep moving.

"As the world keeps turning, people will always need essentials, factories/large plants will always keep producing. These are largely built with project cargo. At the same time, this cargo is usually well distributed among



**Logistics handling is always an additional cost but often fractional compared with the cargo value. From this perspective, the port of Antwerp is and remains a world player...**

– Arthur Mahieu, Rollit Cargo

existing logistics handlers who derive added value from their expertise and/or their many years of collaboration with manufacturers. Not unimportant here is the expertise of the handler, who often uses his own equipment and often offers specific solutions. Logistics handling is always an additional cost but often fractional compared with the cargo value. From this perspective, the port of Antwerp is and remains a world player with specialised handlers and terminals."

### Big projects

Van Aken at Zuidnatie is buoyed up by the positive development of current volumes as well as big heavy lift projects that are in the market for the port of Antwerp and Zuidnatie, starting from the summer of 2023.

Moreover, stable breakbulk volumes, he said, are required to address an ongoing concern for the sector: keeping the experts on the job. He noted: "We suffer from the 'war for talent', so we do our utmost best to attract the right people for the right position".

This was also a concern for Romeijn, who believes that the upgrade and build of new facilities to meet sustainability targets in the port, European hinterland and beyond will have a positive impact on project cargo. He warned that a big challenge facing the sector is the "availability of human capital to execute, accelerate and re-invent the heavy lift/project cargo business".

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Some of the options available to owners of Faymonville's HighwayMax All-In-One, as seen in the company's online configurator.

# A technology that has made the modern world

The past year has seen many chances for transporter manufacturers to show off their ranges, with IAA Transportation, a delayed bauma, and ConExpo all taking place. At the same time, one company was celebrating an important anniversary. *Will North* reports.

**S**elf-propelled modular transporters (SPMT) have been a vital enabling technology for the modern world. Their modularity allows them to be used together to move loads of virtually any size.

They are themselves easy to transport, allowing them to be deployed anywhere in the world they are needed. As such, they have sped up the construction of very large structures, allowed for complex systems to be built in controlled environments, and have reduced the need for work at height as well as other construction risks.

The heavy transporter industry had been developing throughout the post-war period. In 1956, Willy Scheuerle designed a hydraulically supported oscillating axle; in 1972, he developed electronic

multidirectional steering. The key breakthrough for the company that bore his name came in 1983, when Mammoet asked Scheuerle to supply transporters with container

width dimensions of 2,430 mm. That development, Scheuerle's current owner TII noted, allowed the transporters to be shipped in flatracks, making them available

anywhere in the world. This, it could be argued, both allowed for the development of very large, internationally deployable, special transport fleets, and for those foundation industries that rely on the modular construction of large facilities, often in hard-to-reach locations.

## Middle-aged spread

As the SPMT segment reaches its fifth decade, it has bulked out considerably. Axle loadings have increased significantly, manufacturers have developed transporters that optimise rigidity and vehicle weight, and they have implemented



Scheuerle's PowerHoss targets long-term use in industry.

advanced control and monitoring systems.

TII marked the anniversary at ConExpo with two new technologies: the PowerHoss 330, an SPMT targeting indoor industrial moves, and its telematics system TII Connect.

The PowerHoss range focuses on internal logistics, such as in plant manufacturing heavy machinery to move loads along production lines. One of the characteristics that marks it out from 'traditional' SPMTs is that at 3 m wide, it is more stable than the container-width transporters Scheuerle developed for Mammoet four decades ago.

## Single-location SPMTs

However, unlike those SPMTs, and others used today for heavy cargo around the world, these transporters are not targeting hire fleets who will want to move them frequently. Rather, they are designed to be used at a single location.

The latest version of the PowerHoss, the 330, launched in late 2021 and was shown at bauma. The 330-tonne, six-axle unit joins the two-axle PowerHoss 80, and the four-axle PowerHoss 180.

All of the models can be connected electronically or mechanically, with a simple plug-and-play loose coupling system, or can be coupled laterally and longitudinally. The platform's power pack unit (PPU), is integrated with the transporter, allowing operators to get to work quickly after a short familiarisation. Together, four of the six-axle units can move loads of up to 1,320 tonnes.

The transporters offer a vertical stroke of 700 mm. Combined with their pendulum axles, this allows them to move easily from inside a factory, without reloading, to the yard and loading facilities for onward transport. At bauma, the company also



Andreas Kahl (third from left) joined Goldhofer CEO Matthias Ruppel (second from left) at bauma to announce his purchase of 38 units of FT trailers.

## The PowerHoss range focuses on internal logistics, such as in plant manufacturing heavy machinery to move loads along production lines.

showed two trailers for the European market, the EuroCompact U7 and the EuroCompact FL02. The first model, which TII describes as 'semi-modular', is for heavy equipment movers. It is available in a wide range of configurations able to carry loads at axle loadings of 13.4 tonnes on the road, at speeds of up to 80 km/h. At the jobsite, the trailer can carry higher loads, of up to 17.4 tonnes per

line, at speeds up to 10 km/h.

At ConExpo, Faymonville paid attention to local on-road transport requirements. The company launched a new entry in its North American HighwayMax line, the HighwayMax All-In-One. The new trailer draws on the CombiMax concept offered elsewhere in the world, allowing owners to use a single trailer in many different configurations and then reduce it down to optimal dimensions for unladen journeys.

## Five configurations

The company said that the system allows one trailer to be configured in five different ways, allowing for its use on many different jobs.

The trailer is offered in single and double-drop variants. In the double-drop trailer (with a drop at front and rear), the trailer is suitable for taller loads. The gooseneck and front bogie can be removed, allowing the trailer to be loaded from the front.

There are separation points on both front and rear bogies, allowing a variety of decks and wind tower adapters to be fitted. The decks themselves have coupling points, allowing inserts to be added to increase the length. The front bogie can be independently loaded, allowing for a reduced length on the return journey.

In single drop configuration, with a flatbed running from the gooseneck, the trailer is



Goldhofer's FT series is designed to be used in combination with trailers and transporters from across the manufacturer's range.

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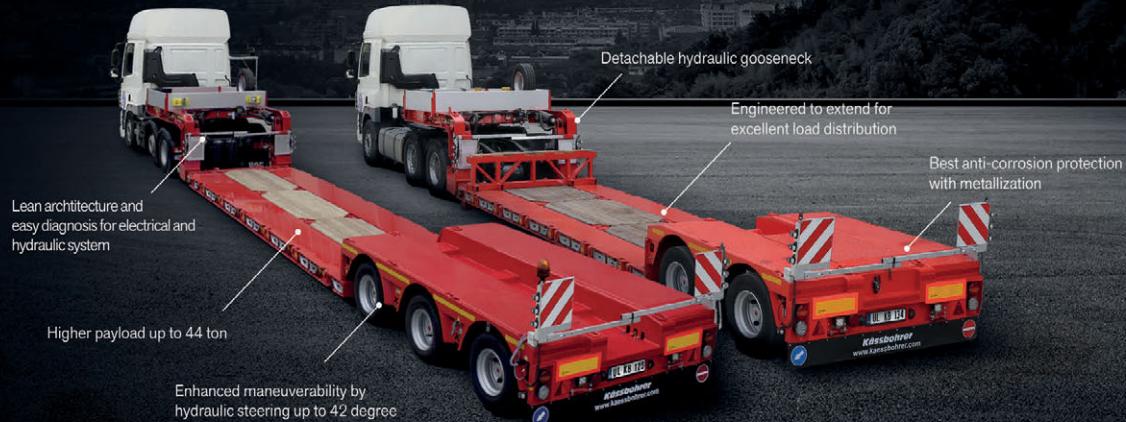
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suitable for longer loads of up to 100 ft (30.5 m) with a telescopic add-on and removable rear bogie. The trailer's robust frame allows it to be used for heavy, compact, loads. With a three-axle nitro booster added, the trailer can carry loads of up to 200,000 lbs (90.7 tonnes). The trailer's Hatz diesel engine, and electrical and air systems, are designed to relevant US environmental and Department of Transport regulations.

The trailers feature pendle axles, with a steering angle of 60 deg, and a vertical stroke of 24 inches (60 cm). Front and rear axles can be steered through the kingpin, or using a remote. Faymonville said that the trailer can carry, on an axle loading of 20,000 lbs (9.07 tonnes), a legal payload of 150,000 lbs (68 tonnes) in a 3 + 6 double drop configuration; 160,000 lbs (72.6 tonnes) as a nine-axle single drop trailer; and up to 207,000 lbs (94 tonnes) as a 12-axle single drop trailer with nitro booster.

## Sales appointment

The trailer launch came as Faymonville announced a new US sales manager, Matthew Schattgen, who joins existing US sales manager Paul Hönen. Ahead of starting work, Schattgen visited Faymonville's facilities in Luxembourg, Poland and Italy. Faymonville and Cometto trailers are available in the US through distributor Hale Heavy Haul, which also offers parts and aftersales support.

As well as showcasing other trailers in the Faymonville line, including the 3+3 axle single-drop ModulMax and double-drop MegaMax, the company displayed three of its Cometto transporters. The six-axle Eco1000, launched in 2020, integrates its power pack unit under the loader deck. This is available using traditional propulsion, hybrid or electric power. Transporters in the range can be coupled together side-to-side and end-to-end, or connected together with loose couplings.

The new Eco1500 increases



the transporter's capacity to 1,500 tonnes. Both transporters can be configured with different axle spacings, with two, four or six axles on the smaller unit, and four or six axles on the larger.

At bauma, Goldhofer was equally focused on on-road flexibility and modularity. The

company revealed a new addition to its line-up, the FT series. These modular trailers are designed to be used in combination with almost all Goldhofer chassis, regardless of their basic width or tyres. Existing accessories such as decks or goosenecks can also be

With its three central axles (top), adjustable ramps and beavertail (above), and foldable rear support leg (left), the Nooteboom ASDS-33-03(EB) targets equipment movers delivering to compact sites.

used. The system combines the benefits of – and can be used in combination with – heavy semi-trailers and modular transporters, said Goldhofer.

The company points out that this not only offers flexibility within fleets, with the FT series easy to use in conjunction with so many other trailer and transporter types, but also in terms of the overall business. The trailers' modularity makes it easy for owners to work with their peers on cross-hire jobs.

When owners wish to release the value of their assets for a fleet replenishment, or for other reasons such as a retirement, the

trailers are designed for easy sale. Axle compensation cylinders are designed for easy removal and replacement, improving compatibility with other Goldhofer equipment. This increases the pool of potential buyers, making a quick sale at a good price easier.

And the same is true for owners looking to add to their fleet. The trailers are designed for easy adaptation, allowing them to be used for example, with second-hand load bridges. An owner could, for example, purchase a bridge on the used market to complete a long-term project in its area, and then, when that job is over, sell it on again to a peer who has spotted a similar opportunity.

Andreas Kahl, managing director of Kahl Schwerlast, showed his enthusiasm for the new concept, joining the manufacturer in Munich to announce his purchase of 38 units of the FT series. The company has a large fleet of specialist transport equipment, with its own trimodal storage and transhipment facilities in Duisburg and Dresden. It already owns hundreds of Goldhofer trailers and transporters, and plans to add around 200 of the FT series.

The units come in basic widths of 2,550 mm, 2,750 mm and 3,000 mm, and feature standard or reinforced frames. The trailers can be used with five different sets of single or double tyres, allowing the trailers to be fine-tuned to the owner's desired balance of axle load and loading heights; axle loads can vary from 22-45 tonnes and load height from 760-940 mm, depending on tyre selection.

At IAA, Goldhofer launched a new entrant in its Star line, the air-suspension Trailstar. The

## With the Star family, we have developed a straightforward, robust and economical product line that offers our customers meaningful advantages in terms of the versatility of their fleets.

– Robert Steinhauser, Goldhofer

trailer was shown alongside one of the company's Stepstar semi low-loaders, with which it shares many characteristics. The new trailer has been designed with flexibility in mind.

It is available in three-, four- and five-axle versions. It includes a range of loading and lashing features, which make it suitable for both equipment moves and general cargo. Form-fit pocket stakes run across the trailer, allowing small or long loads to be secured, using temporary attachments. All along the edges of the trailer deck, recessed lashing points, using 10-tonne RUD Optiflash Fix lashing rings, can be used to secure loads. These can be retracted, removing obstructions, and are designed for easy replacement.

### Low approach angle

The trailer's loading ramp has, Goldhofer said, an extremely low approach angle, making it suitable for equipment with low ground clearance. The company offers a wide range of loading ramp options. These are easily removed with a forklift and more options can be added over time.

This, the company said allows users to add to their investment over time as they, for example, look to move increasingly hard-to-handle or specialised loads.

Users who wish to move excavators with large arms

can select a version of the trailer with a wide, deep and long boom recess. This has no cross-members and is open to the rear of the trailer. For those moving more standard loads, the trailer also features recessed container latches, suitable for 10 ft containers. Optionally, the ramps can be controlled using a remote.

### Consistent components

As part of the wider Star line, the trailer uses a consistent set of components. "With the Star family, we have developed a straightforward, robust and economical product line that offers our customers meaningful advantages in terms of the versatility of their fleets. The common parts strategy adopted for the Star family delivers economies of scale in fleet management for our customers for increased profitability," added Robert Steinhauser, sales manager, Europe/North Africa at Goldhofer.

The company has focused on reducing the deadweight of the trailer. Compared with its earlier TU 4 Expert, the TrailStar offers 1 tonne higher payloads. The loading platform is extended

towards the front of the trailer, allowing longer loads to be accommodated, and to allow users to select an optimal centre of load that best spreads axle loadings.

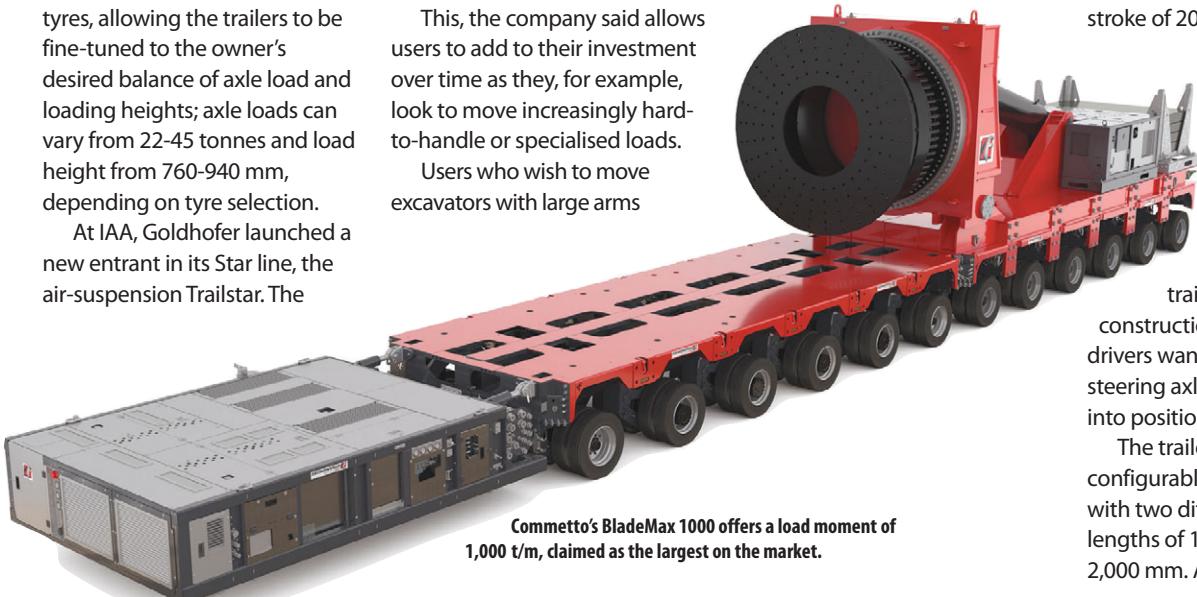
Nooteboom also looked to the equipment movement sector with its new entrant to its drawbar semi low-loader range, the ASDS-33-03(EB). This trailer has three axles, positioned at the centre. The Dutch company said that trailers like this, focused on small- and medium-weight equipment, are commonly used in Western and Northern European countries like France and Belgium, and in Scandinavia.

The trailer shares a lot with other trailers in Nooteboom's Smart range of OSDS self-steering low loaders (most similar to the ASDS) and MCOS hydraulically steered trailers. Those trailers are available in three- and four-axle versions, with deadweights from 7.5-11.2 tonnes, and gross vehicle weights of 41-50 tonnes.

The manufacturer remains committed to a competitive balance of deadweight and capacity with the new trailer. When fitted with 3 m long hydraulic loading ramps, the trailer's deadweight is 6.4 tonnes. At low speed, it can carry loads of up to 33 tonnes; at motorway speeds of 90 km/h, it can carry loads of up to 25.8 tonnes. The trailer's air suspension allows for a height stroke of 200 mm and smooths the driver's ride.

The positioning of the axles at the centre of the unit, and a steerable rear axle, make it easier to manoeuvre the trailer on compact construction sites. When drivers want to reverse, the steering axle automatically locks into position.

The trailer is highly configurable. It can be fitted with two different drawbar lengths of 1,750 mm and 2,000 mm. An interchangeable



Committo's BladeMax 1000 offers a load moment of 1,000 t/m, claimed as the largest on the market.

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Goldhofer demonstrating the FTV 850 at Bauma.



towing eye, with diameters of 50 mm, 57.5 mm, or 68 mm, meets the requirements of different countries. It can be attached to the drawbar at heights of 825-975 mm.

Further customisation and adaptation options include a removable headboard, lift axle, width enlargement, stake pockets, a storage rack under the loading floor, width marker boards and more.

## Reduced gradient

When it is time to load and unload equipment, the sloping rear section of the bed, the beavertail and long hydraulic ramps, reduce the gradient onto the trailer. Optionally, the width of the ramps can also be hydraulically adjusted allowing the trailer to accommodate a wider range of equipment types.

A folding rear support leg, mounted on the drawbar, improves stability during loading. Lashing points are installed as standard along the edges of the trailer and, optionally, along the central beam of the load floor.

The wind energy sector continues to drive the development of specialist trailer attachments. Blade handling attachments, which hold a turbine blade by its base and allow it to be raised and turned to avoid roadside obstacles, are perhaps some of the most visually striking systems on the market today. They certainly draw crowds at trade shows.

At ConExpo, Goldhofer showed off its FTV 850 blade handler. Like others in the range, this unit takes its designation from its load moment: 850 tonne/metres on this version. The deadweight of the handler is 19 tonnes and its ballast weighs 18 tonnes. Different connecting adapters, weighing 4.4-6 tonnes, can be used to accommodate different blade base diameters of up to 3.7 m. Blades can be raised to an angle

of up to 60 degrees and can be endlessly rotated.

Turbine blades are designed to do one thing: to catch the wind. That is great when they are installed on a turbine; it is not quite so useful when you are trying to move them safely across the country.

## Blade handling

To make the blade handler easier to use, particularly when wind speed or gusting is a worry, a wind monitoring system can be mounted on the blade tip. A remote control can be used and includes axle loading and wind monitoring. When the blade handler is used onsite – where it will invariably be subject to high winds – in self-propelled mode, this will allow the operator precise control while keeping out of harm's way.

Cometto offers three options

in its BladeMax range. Like Goldhofer's FTVs, these are designated by their lifting moment: the BladeMax 650, 800, and now the BladeMax 1000, which the Italian special transport manufacturer says is the largest on the market.

The two smaller units can raise blades to an angle of almost 90 degrees, the company said, and can rotate them by 360 degrees. On these two models, a third vertical rotary axis is optionally available, allowing blades to be swivelled laterally by up to 20 degrees.

The newest, biggest, handler, the BladeMax 1000, can raise blades to an angle of 60 degrees, comparable with the FTV 850, and rotate them through 360 degrees. Cometto has developed a patented stability control system, or SCS, which incorporates data from multiple sensors. Like the LMI on a crane, this alerts the operator if the blade approaches its tipping point. This allows even the biggest blades to be handled from a trailer width of no more than 3 m.



**The newest, biggest, handler, the BladeMax 1000, can raise blades to an angle of 60 degrees, comparable with the FTV 850, and rotate them through 360 degrees.**



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**NEWS in BRIEF****Geodis selects Alonso**

Geodis Spain has appointed **Juan Antonio Alonso** as national sales manager for its freight forwarding and contract logistics divisions. He has over two decades of experience in the logistics industry and will be based in Valencia.

**Helsinki names Marttinen**

Finland's port of Helsinki has appointed **Vesa Marttinen** as vice president of its cargo traffic business, succeeding **Jukka Kallio**.

**PD Ports boosts team**

The UK's PD Ports has appointed **Liz Law** as its chief financial officer and **Andrew Crowe** as its chief commercial officer.

**Seahorse bolsters board**

The Seahorse Freight Association has welcomed **Pressiana Naydenova**, corporate communications manager at Associated British Ports (ABP), as a member of its committee. As a board member, Naydenova will help the organisation raise awareness around careers in trade journalism and the work it does to recognise media excellence, including its journalist awards.

**BIFA expands senior team**

The British International Freight Association (BIFA) has appointed **Denise Hill** as member engagement director. The appointment is part of the association's strategy of enhancing engagement and further raising its profile with its members.

**Chapman appoints Collier**

Air charter broker Chapman Freeborn has appointed **Scott Collier** as president – aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance (ACMI) leasing. Collier has 30 years of experience in the airline industry, including working in airline operations, commercial sectors, tour operating and running an aircraft leasing company.

**KOGA expands**

Multipurpose shipping line King Ocean Gulf Alliance (KOGA) has welcomed **Enrique Rodriguez Perdomo** to its team as chartering manager based in Bogota, Colombia.

# IN MEMORIAM: Manfred Müller

**M**anfred Müller, ceo of EMS-Fehn-Group, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, May 2, at the age of 56.

"Manfred Müller's sudden death shook us all," said **Heiko Luikenga**, founder and main shareholder of EMS-Fehn-Group. "We are not only losing an outstanding entrepreneur, but first and foremost an extraordinary person. He had clear convictions, pursued his goals with determination, and had a modest demeanour. Manfred Müller was kind, generous and always eager to lend a helping hand. EMS-Fehn-Group in its current state is his work and legacy. He leaves behind a stable and healthy business that we will continue in his spirit."

A private ceremony will be held with his immediate family only.

Müller joined EMS-Fehn-Group in 2008 as partner and managing director, expanding the business into one that provides a range of logistics services worldwide. The company's roots lay in shipping and the group is now active in a variety of fields including project logistics, chartering, shipmanagement, crewing, yacht



Manfred Müller.

transport, port handling and warehousing. EMS-Fehn-Group operates its own seagoing vessels, heavy-duty trucks, heavy lift cranes and port terminals.

Everyone at HLPFI expresses their condolences to Manfred's family and the EMS-Fehn-Group. He was an obliging, modest gentleman and great supporter of the magazine.

## Rhenus Projects LATAM boost

Rhenus Logistics has expanded its project portfolio in Latin America (LATAM) with two key appointments.

**Jorge Duarte** has joined Rhenus in Bogotá, Colombia, while **Mario Acalli** has joined in Mexico City.

**Colin D'Abreo**, president of Rhenus Projects USA, is leading the LATAM projects expansion.

He added: "With our robust project teams in the USA and Canada, LATAM is a natural complement to strengthening our presence in the region."



Tim Kopfensteiner and Alexander Fürst.

## BBC makes senior appointments

**Tim Kopfensteiner** will step up as president of BBC Chartering USA later this year, succeeding **Per Petersen**. **Alexander Fürst** will take over Kopfensteiner's role of chief chartering officer in Leer, Germany.

Petersen is retiring from the role of president of BBC Chartering USA towards the end of 2023, with Kopfensteiner relocating from Leer to Houston in July. Fürst, meanwhile, is relocating to Leer from Singapore, where he served as chartering manager.

## Red Wolf welcomes Singh as projects team leader

Thailand-headquartered Red Wolf Global has appointed **Nilesh Vikram Singh** as its projects business development manager and industrial

projects team leader.

Singh has extensive experience in international project freight forwarding, shipping and industrial

project logistics.

He joins Red Wolf Global from Rhenus Project Logistics. Prior to that, he worked with KOG Logistics and Projects.

# Maul promoted to regional director role

**A**nders Maul has taken on the role of regional director, Europe and Africa for energy, ports and projects at Blue Water Shipping. Maul has held various positions at Blue Water since joining the company in 2012. Most recently, he served as head of strategic development for the energy, ports and projects division.

The appointment is part of the division's global expansion and supports the aim of ensuring it provides the highest level of service and quality to clients across Europe and Africa.

"I am pleased to take on this new role. There are many opportunities in both Europe and Africa within our energy, ports and projects activities. We aim to diversify and expand our client portfolio in line with our ambitious growth strategy. This is, of course, not a task I take on alone, it is in close cooperation with our strong and committed teams



Anders Maul.

in offices all around the world," said Maul.

He joins energy, ports and projects regional directors: **Jason Goh** in Asia; **Steven Lofaro** in Oceania; **Peter Erhorn** in the Middle East and CIS; and **Lucas Strom** in the Americas.



## Sander steps up at Tschudi

Tschudi Logistics has expanded its Danish team with the appointment of **Lars Sander** as head of projects and logistics. Sander is based at Tschudi's office in Aarhus. He has more than 15 years of experience in the project logistics industry.

## SC&RA elects new leaders

The Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association (SC&RA) has appointed its leadership team for 2023-2024, headed up by president **Scott Bragg**, of Bragg Companies.

The SC&RA has selected **J Rozum** from MSA Delivery Service as vice president; **Michael Vlaming** of Vlaming & Associates as treasurer; **Jim Sever** of PSC Crane & Rigging as assistant treasurer; and **Ed Bernard** from Precision Specialized as chairman.

The board of directors includes **Mike Connolly**, Connolly Crane Rental Corp; **Tony Fastuca**, Python America; **Ray Morgan**, Morgan Resources; **Rob Simon**, Bennett International Group; **Rob Weiss**, Cranes1 Consultants; and **Danny Wells**, ProMiles Software Development.

## Ivanisevic takes on role at TGP

**Ilija Ivanisevic** has joined Trans Global Projects (TGP) as business development manager for the east coast of Australia. He has over 30 years of experience in shipping and project logistics and has held senior roles at leading global logistic providers, as well as oil and gas companies.



Gyrid Skalleberg Ingerø.

## Ingerø joins Höegh board

Höegh Autoliners has appointed **Gyrid Skalleberg Ingerø** to its board of directors. She joins Höegh Autoliners from her previous role as executive vice president and chief financial officer of Kongsberg Gruppen.

## Havelka to drive Ambercor sales

New York-based Ambercor Shipping USA has appointed **Josh Havelka** as US project business development manager. Havelka will drive overall logistics sales and expand Ambercor's project product portfolio further.

## NEWS in BRIEF

### Tadano picks Strader

Tadano America has appointed **Hutton Strader** as its product manager for all-terrain cranes throughout the Americas. He will focus on supporting the company's Pan American customers and sales teams with product knowledge and technical expertise for Tadano's all-terrain products.

### ABP appointments

Associated British Ports (ABP) has appointed **Andrew Harston**, formerly regional director Wales and shortsea ports, as its strategic adviser, effective July 1. **Julien Walker**, ABP's chief commercial officer, will take up the role of regional director Wales and shortsea ports, in addition to his current position.

### Maxim names three

USA-based crane rental and lift solutions provider Maxim Crane Works has expanded its leadership team with three appointments. **Rebecca Bolchalk** joins the company as chief human resources officer; **David Reed** has been named vice president of IT; and **Nick Oldfield** has been promoted to vice president of digital and marketing.

### Coplen heads wind unit

USA-headquartered Crowley has appointed **Mark Coplen** as its vice president of project management for Crowley Wind Services.

### Hutchins promoted

Oldendorff Carriers has appointed **Patrick Hutchins** as its president and ceo. He succeeds **Peter Twiss**, who has decided to step down after having served the company for nearly 28 years.

### Long Beach names Delgado

The port of Long Beach's board of harbour commissioners has appointed **Rafael Delgado** as director of tenant services and operations.

### Duo joins DNV

DNV has appointed **Torgeir Sterri** as its offshore classification director for DNV Maritime. **Lucas Ribeiro**, former area manager for Iberia, Italy and Malta, will succeed Sterri as regional manager for West Europe.



**HLPFI columnist Evie Aufheben delivers another collection of updates from the world of project cargo logistics.**

## LEEA picks MND charity

The Lifting Equipment Engineers Association (LEEA) has chosen the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association as its charity to support this year.

The charity increases awareness of the devastating disease, raises crucial funding to support its research work and improve access to care, research and campaigning for those people living with or affected by MND in the UK.

You can donate on the dedicated Just Giving page or by scanning the QR Code .



## Milestone for StormGeo

Congratulations are in order for StormGeo, which has celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The vision of StormGeo was developed in 1997 when meteorologist and weather presenter Siri Kalvig, in cooperation with the largest Norwegian commercial broadcaster TV2, established the Storm Weather Center. The following year, on April 1, 1998, StormGeo became operational and delivered its first weather services to the media. Since then, it has developed its weather intelligence services and now serves more than 3,000 customers globally.

## NYK helps save sea turtles

Evie was pleased to see NYK sponsor the Kishu Minabe sea turtle research project, conducted by the NPO Earthwatch Japan, for the seventh consecutive year.



## Dinosaur shipment travels through time – to Germany

Our attention was piqued when we saw Scan Global Logistics' recent project – transporting a half-tonne dinosaur skull from Canada via the USA to Germany.

The Triceratops skull – the largest among land animals of its time – was destined for an exhibit at the Museum of Natural History in Berlin.

The Scan Global airfreight team in Los Angeles coordinated with teams in Canada and Germany to transport the skull (dating 66-68 million years old) to France, before it was trucked to Germany, earning its spot as one of the company's most peculiar Customs clearance procedures to date.



Minabe-cho in Wakayama Prefecture is where most loggerhead sea turtles lay their

eggs on the main island of Japan. The research project started in 2016 to study sea turtle behaviour patterns and keep the turtles free of danger by mapping them as they migrate through the vast ocean.

This year, for the first time in two years, NYK employees volunteered at Minabe-cho, assisting in the identification of loggerhead turtles that had

come ashore to lay eggs, and measuring the length and width of their shells.

## 40 years of SPMT success

Germany-based TII Scheuerle will mark the 40th anniversary of the SPMT this year. Developed in collaboration with its long-time customer Mammoet, the company's engineers designed an SPMT with a container width of 2.43 m. Its design opened up the opportunity for factories to produce and transport heavier and larger modules – marking a permanent change to the heavy transport sector.

Today, there are approximately 10,000 of its axle lines in use worldwide. Going from strength to strength, Scheuerle's customers now utilise its SPMTs to move valuable luxury yachts, industrial plants, mining vehicle components, offshore wind turbines, complete hotels and historical cultural assets.



## Mammoet's need for speed

As fans of Formula 1, the HLPFI team was thrilled to hear that Mammoet extended its current contract with the Heineken Dutch Grand Prix for a further two years, meaning we can

continue spotting the company's mobile cranes at the events until 2025.

The next race is scheduled to take place on August 27 and we will be keeping a close eye.



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