

World project group organises founding conference

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ing energy, oil and gas, water treatment, mining and other industries, organised its founding conference here last month.

Given the high market complexity of the projects of WPG member companies, they require special handling. Hence the formation of this group.

In attendance at this first annual meeting were more than 30 companies representing 50 countries and employing close to 1,000 professionals.

All member companies of WPG are screened for their professionalism, experience and understanding of customer expectations. Each of the selected members can be considered as the "best in class" in their field of competence in their region of operation where they enjoy an exclusive membership.

As to the need for the creation of a network of this nature, Mr Robert J. Vermetten, Managing Director of TPL, Antwerp, who heads the Board of Directors, explained: "Indeed, as an old saying goes 'the flag follows the trade'. We feel that the need for such a network can be justified by looking at the change where projects are being controlled—in the recent past, 85 per cent of the control of projects was from Western Europe and the US.

"Today, this figure is only 54 per cent, with the rest being distributed primarily to Asia, Central Europe and the Middle East. These markets have all matured and become more directly involved in many parts of what was viewed as the traditional break-bulk market".

WPG intends consolidating members' project management experience to develop a formal method of cooperation between them and, thereby, serve its customers more effectively. As a result, WPG customers can expect the flexibility and speeds associated with a smaller company and the global reach of a much larger company.

Board member Mr Michel G. Fuchs, Managing Director of Garnett Group, US, explained, "WPG is complementary to future development of its members".

With customers having embarked on a process of global sourcing to fulfil their activities, it calls upon WPG, as service providers, to give them the required territorial coverage.

"It is not enough to just have agents, but to demonstrate

a strong network that is visible to the customer. In essence, this means that we have to position ourselves whereby we can offer our customers a network of trusted members", elaborated another board member, Mr Ronan Leray, President of Celtic Global Services, France.

There are many positives to be taken from these changes, and the WPG is intended to provide a network that assists members in adapting to them. Capt. Ramesh Gulati, Managing Director of Crystal Shipping, Mumbai, and board member, states: "The Indian Subcontinent today represents every industrialist's 'dream territory' to do booming business and has been established universally as the fastest-emerging market".

The members of the WPG benefit through a formal link with like-minded companies which have complementary experience and can provide assistance as needed. "As such, WPG will develop a list of the skills or experience of each mem-

Expert services of WPG

WPG member companies control by themselves all critical parts of the project transport operations, thereby ensuring total organisation of complicated and strategic projects requiring professional attention:

- ★ Out of gauge hoisting, transport and engineering analysis.
- ★ WPG operates in all major ports of the world and can access inland vessel terminals.
- ★ Pre-shipment surveys by sworn surveyors or own cargo superintendents.
- ★ Industrial packing, L/S/D and all warehouse-related activities.
- ★ Chartering (by air and sea).
- ★ Several WPG members have their own stevedoring facilities.
- ★ Organisation of heavy lift transport.
- ★ Project freight forwarding.
- ★ Door-to-door operations (multimodal).
- ★ Inland transportation.
- ★ Global sourcing logistics.

ber in a searchable database, and the ultimate goal is to offer a 'knowledge-creating environment' to shipping industry and members", said Mr John Higgs, Managing Director of ITAC, Australia, a company that specialises in oil and gas projects.

Mr Michael P. Ellsworth, Managing Director of Althus Holdings, Singapore, and board member, puts it as follows: "If we are going after business that has a European content, then we will contact the relevant member to assist us in the marketing in that market. Joint marketing to me will be decided between members as and when necessary".

WPG is actually owned by its members and not by a person or group of persons with their own agenda. The board members are elected every two years by the membership and are tasked with securing qualified members, maintaining the website, settling member disputes, facilitating enhancement of new business for members, organising the annual meeting and additional activities as directed by the membership.



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Aims to consolidate project management experience, serve customers more effectively

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THE Worldprojectgroup (WPG), a group of independent companies with special focus on projects for a wide range of industries, includ-



AT THE WPG FOUNDING CONFERENCE ARE (from left) Mr Robert Vermetten, Mr Ronan Leray, Capt. Ramesh Gulati, Mr Michel Fuchs and Mr Michael Ellsworth

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