

# There's only one way to go: offshore

A company with a reputation for peerless customer service and the ability to locate craft that will fulfill the most demanding situations, German Renewables Shipbrokers GmbH is a shining light in the offshore industry. We put the questions to the company's Matthias Mroß.

**PES:** Welcome to PES magazine. Would you like to introduce the company to our readers and explain how you serve the wind industry in Europe?

**Matthias Mroß:** German Renewables Shipbrokers (GRS) is an independent ship broker for chartering and sales and purchases tailored to the offshore renewable energy market. GRS provides its clients with a bespoke support that reaches far beyond traditional shipping issues and solutions.

A comprehensive service provider, GRS combines knowledge from two very different worlds; a ship broker with excellent contacts in the international offshore shipping industry, together with a command of the technical aspects of building and operating special-purpose vessels.

**PES:** When did you decide to begin targeting the wind industry, and has it been a successful diversification?

**MM:** The company was founded in 2011 as one of the first offshore ship brokers purely concentrating on the renewables market. Today, a team of 12 employees/ brokers have excellent contacts with all major clients, projects and owners within the renewables industry and draws on in-depth technical expertise at the same time.

**PES:** We see that you're involved with WINDTIME. Can you tell us a little about this?

**MM:** GRS was one of the first brokers to specialise in using the Bimco's WINDTIME. Up until now the industry had been using Bimco's SUPPLYTIME standard charter

party. However, this was primarily intended for the oil and gas sector and therefore needed to be amended.

GRS is set to further increase its use of the specialised time charter party called WINDTIME, designed and tailor-made for the offshore wind industry. WINDTIME mainly addresses the requirements of the small high-speed vessels or crew transfer vessels used to transfer technicians to and from shore and within the wind farms. In close collaboration with charterers and owners, we adjusted the SUPPLYTIME for each charter party, and now these adjustments have been largely incorporated into the new WINDTIME contract. We expect that WINDTIME will gradually become the new standard form of contract for CTVs in the offshore wind industry.

**PES:** Your customers are located all over the world, while you manage your business from Hamburg. What made you opt for Hamburg as your headquarters?

**MM:** Hamburg has developed into the capital of Europe's wind offshore energy market and has attracted main suppliers, like Siemens, leading manufacturers and other companies involved in this industry to settle here. Hamburg also has a strong onshore wind energy background and in 2014, the onshore and offshore wind industries will be meeting at the international exhibition WindEnergy Hamburg. Another advantage is that the city is located between the North and the Baltic Sea, and we are involved in offshore renewables projects in both.

**PES:** Similarly, do you have any plans to expand into new territories?



Matthias Mroß

**MM:** We focus on Northern Europe and are involved within all neighbouring countries surrounding the North Sea and the Northern Europe involvements, where we plan to invest an even stronger set up, perhaps with site offices in any of these countries. In Germany, we have been and are involved in every wind farm; eight currently under construction with others under development.

**PES:** What sort of technical challenges does offshore wind present you with?

**MM:** Here we see various different challenges from our clients, sometimes requirements which cannot be fulfilled by means of the current existing fleet. However we ask always for the task the client wants to conduct, and thereafter we can provide him an excellent solution, which our vast experience gained and developed with other clients, leads to a very satisfying solution.

**PES: Are your vessels equipped to meet these challenges?**

**MM:** There might be cases where the market has no availability for the client's demands at that particular time and location. This puts the clients in an even more urgent need for a good, flexible solution. Until now, we have succeeded with most clients to arrange a solution combining various suppliers in order to upgrade the vessel with specialised equipment for reaching the required flexibility of the client.

**PES: Can you explain how the process works with regards to initiating and carrying through a project? What stages would a client expect you to complete?**

**MM:** Whenever a client has a particular demand and asks us for a suitable vessel we request all necessary information for a most detailed description of the task the client demands. We evaluate with the client together the various possibilities and look beyond the normal supply of vessel for alternative solutions. With this information,

GRS searches for suitable tonnage and solutions in our large database.

The clients gets a detailed summary of the options including hire indications, after further consultation, the hire indications become firm and the client can then make their decision. Through all the stages of a project – from planning and project development all the way to selecting the right tonnage for development, construction and operation, setting up and guiding through the charter party or sales contract between client and ship owner as well as providing the clients with current market overviews – we support our clients. Doing so, we stay focused on the interests of our clients and strive for the highest level of quality at highly competitive prices.

**PES: Regarding the services you offer, does GRS have any quality standards?**

**MM:** GRS is one of the pre-qualified service providers at the Achilles Group, incl. Connexio, Sellihca and UVDB.

Recently, standards and processes, familiar from the oil and gas market, have



increasingly become common practice in the offshore wind industry. A case in point is Achilles, one of the most popular platforms for pre-qualifying suppliers and service providers. This enables energy companies to screen their contract partners regarding their safety and quality standards at an early stage. This saves time and ensures the project is successful.

**PES: Why should a client choose a broker or why GRS?**

**MM:** GRS can provide the client an overview of all availabilities within a very short time, based on our huge data base of over 70,000 vessels. We trek the vessels on their availability and price indications and through our professional expertise we find optimum solutions for our clients. We are not only positioned excellently to bring charterers or ship owners, those interested in buying or chartering tonnage, together, we are also familiar with the services required for offshore projects, which enable us to support any venture in this field with our comprehensive shipping and service know-how. Further advantages for our clients are that GRS is independent – because we don't have own vessels or any contracts with ship owners – and our service is for free of charge to our clients.

**PES: Looking to the future, is it likely that wind turbine installation projects will face greater competition from oil and gas projects for chartering specialist vessels?**

**MM:** We think that in the future the availabilities of some vessels could be limited due to the increased demand from oil and gas. But at the same time we could

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imagine that more ship owners will be prepared for more demands regarding specialised tonnage and will upgrade their fleet and their vessels with the necessary equipment regarding to the requirements and regulations.

**PES:** We're primarily a wind magazine, but note that you're involved with wave and tidal power. How healthy are these sectors of the energy mix from your point of view?

**MM:** The wave and tidal sectors are very slowly coming, and we have been only involved with some few projects which are out there. At the moment, the UK is the undisputed leader in this energy market. We expect however, that like the market itself these technologies are currently developing, various devices and approaches have been featured in the last months. Nowadays, we have already gained the experience from this highly specialised market in order to be well-prepared for upcoming demands.

**PES:** What are your thoughts about prospects for the coming year with regard to your organisation, and the wind industry in general?

**MM:** GRS is still growing; we are looking positively to the future and therefore we needed to increase our team with some more brokers. We consider the offshore wind market as being at least stable if not increasing continuously. Germany's Federal elections in September will hopefully show



soon how the politicians will proceed with the support for the renewables offshore energy market. But if you don't want any more nuclear and if you want to meet the CO2 targets, you won't find a way round it. There is still a bit of potential for onshore wind farms, but Germany, like the UK, is pretty crowded. So there's only one way to go – and that's offshore. ■

[www.german-shipbrokers.de](http://www.german-shipbrokers.de)

