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SHIPMANAGEMENT

New lay-up venture targets more than 5,000 ships

Tony Gray, Oslo - Tuesday 9 June 2009

A NEW strategic alliance in lay-up services, which includes the UK's Bibby Ship Management and Dubai-based GAC Group, says it will have a target market of more than 5,000 vessels.

The partnership, whose third member is Swedish dehumidification specialist DehuTech, has been established to capitalise on the growing number of vessels being banished into lay-up as freight markets become unprofitable.

On the potential size of the market, Stephen Blaikie, business development director at Bibby Ship Management, said: "Estimates vary, but almost all point to a figure of above 5,000 vessels requiring lay-up."

"Clearly, the level of demand for lay-up services will depend upon the scale and length of the global recession, but we should see interest from car carriers and tanker operators, among others."

The partnership broadens the range of services provided by GAC Ship Lay-Up Solutions (GLUS), which was launched in March.

Under the alliance, Bibby Ship Management handles technical management and crew management, while Swedish DehuTech covers the dehumidification aspect of laying-up of vessels, including sale and rental of dehumidifiers.

These services are designed to enhance the existing GLUS portfolio which also includes ship agency, supply services, fire, rescue and safety, logistics and a range of lay-up specific services from lay-up preparation and documentation to maintenance and inspection.

Mr Blaikie said the alliance was not looking at a specific target for market

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share.

"We are convinced that GLUS will be popular as it offers a level of service, advice and reach unavailable elsewhere."

"We aim to respond to the needs of the market and meet and exceed our customers' requirements and expectations."

GLUS' services would be available worldwide through GAC's existing network of hubs, he said.

"We have the operational and technical ability to service almost all types of vessel, although lay-up requirements will obviously increase for those vessel types suffering the biggest fall in demand globally."

Mr Blaikie believes banks and insurance companies will be among the customers approaching the alliance for advice.

"These companies do not always have large amounts of maritime expertise and a one-stop shop for lay-up services and advice will appeal to them."

GLUS is offering more than just hot and cold lay-up services, he said.

There were tailored packages from hot (for three months or less) through to warm (up to one year), cold (up to five years) and long-term (more than five years) with appropriate reactivation times.

"Owners can find the best fit for their needs, protecting their assets and reducing running costs, while allowing quick reactivation at minimal cost."

GAC Solutions vice-president Christer Sjødoff said the alliance promoted "a total concept where everything required for secure, safe and cost-effective ship lay-up around the world" could be found under the GLUS umbrella.



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