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SHIP MANAGEMENT



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Lay-up services group aims at market of 5,000 vessels

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, writes *Tony Gray in Oslo*.

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, Bibby Ship Management business development director Stephen Blaikie said: "Estimates vary, but almost all point to a figure of over 5,000 vessels requiring lay-up."

"Clearly, demand for lay-up services will depend on 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 DehuTech covers the dehumidification aspect of lay-ups, including the 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 share. "We are convinced 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.



Sjödoﬀ: alliance offers 'total concept'

"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) 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 Sjödoﬀ 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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