

OSI VOL. 9 ISSUE 2 | 2016

# Offshore

i n d u s t r y

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A PREVIEW

**BORSSELE I AND II**

A WIN-WIND SITUATION

*Remote Welding Habitat*

NEW REPAIR CAPABILITY FOR OFFSHORE PIPELINES







HIGH-TECH WELDING WITHOUT FUSS

# *Schelde Exotech* GETTING THE JOB DONE

SCHELDE EXOTECH, BASED IN VLISSINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS, DESIGNS, MANUFACTURES, TESTS AND SERVICES SOPHISTICATED PRODUCTS MATCHING THE EXACT REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS OF CLIENTS IN NUMEROUS HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES. FOUNDED IN 1998, Schelde Exotech arose through the mergers of AKF Goes, Schelde Boiler Division and Schelde MT-Products. The specific knowledge of these three companies accommodates a wide range of established customers in the chemical and petrochemical industries, electrical power plants, uranium enrichment facilities and research institutes.

During the last few years, the oil and gas industry has become increasingly significant for Schelde Exotech. After successfully completing several audits, qualifications and projects, they are now an approved vendor for companies like FMC, Cameron, Total, Worley Parsons and Technip. For the oil and gas sector, Schelde Exotech manufactures pressure vessels, for instance knock-out drums for the Martin Linge project, filtration vessels for the Hebron project (titanium), titanium piping for a Heerema jacket, and welding and overlay welding of riser piping for several subsea projects.

Offshore Industry's Ron van Uum talks with Jos Mols (Managing Director) and Willem Konings (Technical Director) of Schelde Exotech.

### Investments

To comply with the high demands of the oil and gas industry, Exotech invested in new equipment and personnel training. For example, for the majority of the overlay welding the GTAW hot-wire process is used.

For overlay welding this has been qualified according to international standards and client specification with a recent investment in four GTAW (HW) welding stations to be used for overlay welding. Besides the TIG hot-welding process, submerged arc welding, electro slag welding and manual welding processes are commonly used for a wide range of materials. The next few years will see an increasing demand for special equipment, both for the traditional chemical and petrochemical market and for the oil and gas (offshore) industry. Technical staff includes an NDT engineer, a metallurgist and welding engineer, who inspect and test according to ASME and EN standards (visual, liquid penetrant, ultrasonic, X-ray, positive material identification, and helium leak testing). The overall process is certified according to international and national standards including ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ASME.

### What exactly does Schelde Exotech do?

**Mr Mols:** "We are working in several branches of the industry. In 1998 we started as a merger >>

Jos Mols (left) and Willem Konings







Glowing process of riser

– WILLEM KONINGS,  
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR –

“

*A Statoil inspector referred  
to our work as  
'the best I've ever seen'.*

of three different companies. We now have a staff of 80 working for us. Our main business was – and still is – the petrochemical industry, and traditionally we have been working in the nuclear industry. But we went further, specializing in materials that are difficult to weld, such as titanium. We also started performing repairs and replacements of complex equipment and installations.

Our philosophy is to make our knowledge and experience suitable for other industries, for instance for scientific research and the experiments industry. A few years ago we started in the oil and gas industry when a Dutch machining company requested us to do a special welding job for them. This gave us our first oil and gas experience. After that, our business in oil and gas steadily increased. We started going to offshore trade shows and approached customers in the business. This resulted in several orders, in particular for building knockout drums and titanium filter vessels for topsides. Although the oil and gas market is quiet now, we think that this will change in the near future. So, our priority now is to make sure that we have a solid position in the oil

and gas market when it starts up again.”

**Mr Konings:** “What’s also important is that there are differences within the oil and gas business. For us the offshore market has two different facets. First, there are the topsides. Topsides are in fact small petrochemical plants. The vessels that we produce are practically the same everywhere; only the offshore quality requirements are stricter than elsewhere. The topside market is slumbering right now because of the offshore crisis. Secondly, we have the subsea and deep-sea projects, which for us means the welding of riser systems. This branch is doing fine – we don’t see a perceivable setback because deep-sea projects fall within the long-term vision of the oil companies. Here, the amount of orders has slightly reduced, but the projects are still continuing. We started mid-2012 with this part of the offshore business and it has been steadily going on. As Jos just mentioned, we entered this business at the request of a client to carry out overlay welding on riser joints. This path has been going on for almost four years now. First you have to make qualifications, you have to prove yourself. Now we carry a global works >>

approval for special welding and heat treatment processes and performing weld overlays for sealing surfaces and girth welding in riser specialty joints for the offshore subsea industry.”

#### Where does the welding take place?

**Mr Konings:** “Everything happens here in Vlissingen. We’re currently working for the Statoil B and the Shell Malikai projects.”

#### What would you say are your strong points?

**Mr Konings:** “I’d say it’s the combination of our technical expertise and our no-nonsense attitude of getting the job done. We have a lot of drive and for us a deal is a deal. We noticed that our competitors are often unable to get the job done. They are not always capable of realizing their own scheduling. However, a Statoil inspector referred to our work as ‘the best I’ve ever seen’. Our solid organisation and our open communication, typical Dutch characteristics in international business, are apparently highly appreciated by our clients.”

**Mr Mols:** “And if there is a problem, we mention it. And at the same time, we present a possible solution.”

**Mr Konings:** And of course there’s our in-house technical know-how, which is pretty diverse – we have welding experts, a metallurgist, an NDT specialist, etc. The technical level of welding riser systems is very high and our clients regard us as a strong business partner, which is highly appreciated by them. Welded seams are inspected with the most advanced techniques. During the kick-off meetings that we attend we are able to partake in the talks on a high level and we offer technical solutions. Our offshore business is going steadily, also when it comes to new developments and new challenges.”

**Mr Mols:** “We have experienced a strong growth in offshore since 2013, and since 2015 it has been a solid pillar for Schelde Exotech.”

#### How do you see the future?

**Mr Konings:** “We hope for a further expansion of the deep-sea branche of offshore oil and gas. We’ll continue to gain the trust of the client and keep it. It is a lengthy path – you start doing small jobs and you’re building on that.”

**Mr Mols:** “It’s all about building up



Riser being welded



Riser waiting to be treated

references and proving that you can do the job. And that’s what we intend to keep on doing.”

i. [www.exotech.nl](http://www.exotech.nl)