

# Excellence in offshore steel

PES talks to Markus Hummel, managing director of mh<sup>2</sup> offshore GmbH, about this new steel construction company in the offshore wind sector...

**PES:** Welcome to PES Wind. Would you like to introduce your company and explain a little about how you serve the offshore wind industry?

**Markus Hummel:** The mh<sup>2</sup> offshore GmbH is a small offshore service provider for steel construction work, welding and inspection. We have a substantial portfolio offering a wide range of services including regular inspections and testing, welding work, repair welds, maintenance/repairs on offshore steel structures as well as rope access and NDT testing.

**PES:** What challenges did you face when setting up your business and then as a new company in the offshore market?

**MH:** mh<sup>2</sup> offshore GmbH was founded on the 1st April 2015 after the bankruptcy of WeserWind, a big steel manufacturer. Most of our staff and I were employed in the headoffice of the offshore service department. We were looking for a possibility of keeping our team together and avoiding unemployment. So we decided to start up mh<sup>2</sup>!

There was only a narrow time frame, between the bankruptcy, founding of mh<sup>2</sup> and the start of the first contracts, to set up the new company. One of our advantages was that we were able to negotiate a number of contracts during the setting up phase. Of course, there were challenges at the beginning but thanks to our good network we were able to set everything up just right.

*“Our focus is on steel work and welding offshore and we provide a wide range of services in this area.”*

Markus Hummel

**PES:** We see that you are involved in installation, maintenance, inspection and repair, which is your main focus, if any, and why?

**MH:** Our focus is on steel work and welding offshore and we provide a wide range of services in this area.

Our core business is construction and welding work, a fast growing department in our company is inspection and testing (regular inspections, expert inspection, NDT).

**PES:** What would you say are your principal strengths at mh<sup>2</sup>?

**MH:** The mh<sup>2</sup> team is made up of highly qualified engineers and specialized steel construction workers, experienced in offshore wind-energy. Apart from offshore qualifications, our employees are rope access trained, capable of operating cranes and qualified to carry out expert inspections on fall arrest systems, ladders and so on.

A great strength of the team is that it has been working together for many years and we know each other well. Thanks to the lack of rigid hierarchy in the company, we are

able to react very flexibly and quickly. The combination of white collar (engineering and inspection) in close contact with blue collar (welding, steel work) personnel offers a wide range of possibilities.

**PES:** Your team sometimes has to work at a considerable height, this must be dangerous, what precautions do you take for this kind of work?

**MH:** Each of our employees is trained to ‘work at height’ in compliance with German law and GWO once a year.

The majority of our staff are rope access certified according to FISAT level 2 & 3 in order to conduct special installation and inspection jobs.

We are able to work in any height.

**PES:** Flexibility is important to you, can you explain the reason for this and the advantages that this approach offers your customers

**MH:** One reason is that offshore work is strongly dependent on weather. For example in bad weather periods we have to be ready as soon as the weather allows (warning time is less than 3 days). Another reason is that a lot of our jobs are pretty

urgent (e.g. repairs of ladders or fall arrest systems). The customer needs to be sure these kinds of jobs are done quickly to avoid extremely expensive offshore waiting time for ongoing projects.

**PES:** Can you tell us about any recent or current projects that you are involved in?

**MH:** Currently we are involved in regular inspections of tripods (steel and coating) and regular inspections of legs and helicopter landing deck at Global Tech One.

Furthermore we carry out regular mechanical work on OSS Meerwind Süd/Ost and Borkum West 2. As well as this we have several imminent inspection and mechanical repair jobs.

**PES:** Where is your core market and do you have any plans for expansion in to other areas?

**MH:** Our core market is the German offshore wind industry. We are planning to work onshore during bad weather periods in the future, especially in rope access and welding services. In addition to the German market the Benelux market is of interest to us. There are some interesting potential projects for us.

**PES:** Which aspect of the industry provides the most satisfaction for you right now?

**MH:** The offshore wind industry is a modern industry with extremely motivated people. A lot of practical oriented people, with a hands on mentality, are working in our industry. This is something very satisfying for us.

**PES:** And conversely, what presents you with the biggest challenges?

**MH:** The biggest challenge for mh<sup>2</sup> is that procurement processes of big companies don't really take in to consideration smaller companies like ours. This can be quite hard and frustrating sometimes! In addition it means that opportunities on both sides can be missed.

**PES:** What are your predictions for the coming year both as a company and for the market as a whole?

**MH:** The market is growing again after some rather slow years. There will be a continuous growth in the offshore wind business within Germany and in Northern Europe. mh<sup>2</sup> will be the reliable partner for offshore wind farm owners and operators for all areas of offshore steel! ■

For more information please go to [www.mhquadrat.de/](http://www.mhquadrat.de/)

