

NEWS

'Back-up' engine for emergencies

A Swedish player aims to plug a gap with its new propulsion system.

Geoff Garfield London

An increasing number of the world's oil majors are calling for emergency propulsion systems on tankers they charter, according to Marininvest of Sweden.

The company fitted an in-house design to four 75,000-dwt long-range-one (LR1) products-tanker newbuildings from Croatia and says it is now working with a Greek owner to retrofit a chemical tanker.

Marinvest has yet to name the owner but says the redundancy requirement was requested by the charterer, Italy's ENI. The 7,000-dwt vessel will trade in the Mediterranean.

Patrik Mossberg, vice-president of Gothenburg-based Marininvest, says a similar requirement is being put forward by US and Scandinavian oil companies. The shipping and investment group is currently working to finalise a second project for a ship operating on the Norwegian coast, he says.

TradeWinds reported last year on Marininvest installing its power take-in system on its Brodosplit-built panamaxes, since when it has made a breakthrough in marketing to outside owners.

The so-called Marininvest Alternative Propulsion System is designed for use on slow-speed engines used widely on tankers and bulkers. Developed by Marininvest Engineering, it links during emergencies, for example, the main

shaft to the vessel's hydraulic system normally used to power the cargo/ballast pumps and mooring equipment.

Dubbed a "take me home" solution, such equipment has the potential to avert a major disaster by maintaining propulsion in the event of a main-engine breakdown.

This has not been necessary with any of the company's panamax newbuildings but testing is said to have delivered speeds of 10 knots, albeit in relatively calm waters.

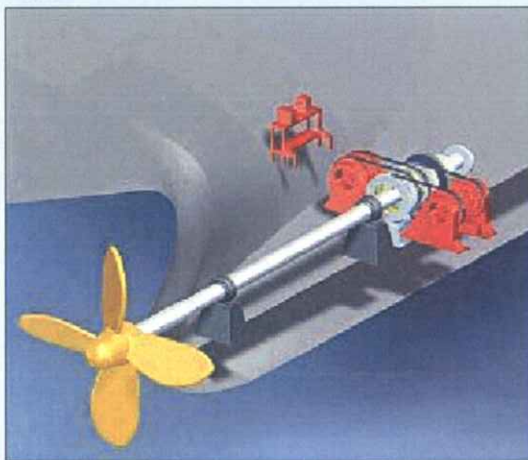
Mossberg says programmes have been run showing that full manoeuvrability can be maintained through 3.5-metre waves in winds of 17 metres per second for a panamax with a 2,400kW power input.

The system, claimed to be the first for slow-running diesel main engines, is in the final stages of alternative propulsion classification by Det Norske Veritas (DNV).

Mossberg said: "The whole area of alternative emergency propulsion is something that is quite new for the classification societies, so the requirements differ from society to society."

Privately owned shipping and investment group Marininvest claims its system, which works also with electrical power and has at its heart a shaft-line disconnect, has huge potential for use in environmentally sensitive areas such as Sulphur Emission Control Areas (Secas).

Main engines can be switched off while diesel carried for the auxiliary engines is used to power the alternative propulsion system. The problem vessels otherwise face is having enough tanks to hold marine diesel as well as both



ALTERNATIVE PROPULSION: Top, an illustration of the system and above, a main shaft in production

Photo: Marininvest

low-sulphur bunkers and normal fuel oil.

Mossberg says Marininvest has been discussing the issue with various owners, including for the area around California where since 1 January 2009 the California Air Resources Board have enacted new regulations requiring the use of marine diesel with 0.5% or less sulphur content. By 2012 the figure falls to 0.1% or less.

Another spin-off Marininvest is pushing is the ability of owners to press ahead with engine maintenance at tanker terminals while still having an emergency back-up.

On cost, it is claimed that to equip an LRI tanker of 75,000 dwt with a second engine for redundancy would be an extra EUR 4m to EUR 4.5m (\$5.7m to \$6.4m), as against EUR 1m for Marininvest's solution. This includes equipment, piping to connect up the hydraulic or electrical system and the chain arrangement needed to operate the shaft. Torque may be transferred also using ribbed belts, a gear or even friction to a wheel on the shaft for electric drive.

Although the company's alter-

native propulsion system has yet to be used in a real-life emergency, Mossberg says that on its panamaxes it runs monthly trials and tests to ensure both the crew is properly drilled and "functionality is up to standard". He said: "This continuous trialling and testing is why we dare to go out, even though we are a relatively small company, and promote this."

The system is fitted to Marininvest's *Marilee* and *Maribel*, both with Lukoil International Trading & Supply Co (Litasco), as well as its *Mari Ugland* and *Mariann*, which trade in Torm's LR1 Pool. The ships were delivered by Brodosplit between 2006 and 2008.

Marinvest's fleet includes two other 75,000-tonners from the same yard, the *Marika* and *Mari-nor*, as well as the 83,600-dwt oil/chemical tankers *Northern Bell* (built 1990) and *Kirsten* (built 1988) and the 31,200-dwt chemical tanker *Marinex*, which is trading methanol.

The company's two time-charter ships with Torm are the 74,000-dwt *Eternal Diligence* and *Eternal Pride* (both built 2006).

Stolt-Nielsen to step down after 50 years

Andy Pierce London

Jacob Stolt-Nielsen has stepped down as chairman of Oslo-listed shipowner Stolt-Nielsen after 50 years in the top seat.

Stolt-Nielsen, who founded the company in 1959, will be replaced by director Christer Olsson.

Stolt-Nielsen says he leaves with great sadness but is confident the company is in good hands. He will continue as a director of the tanker owner.

Olsson has been a director of Stolt since 1993 and is also vice-chairman of Wallenius Lines.

He said: "Jacob's remarkable achievements speak for themselves. I enthusiastically look forward to the opportunity to carry forth his legacy of success."

K Line signs new 10-year iron-ore deal

Dale Wainwright Singapore

K Line has sealed a new deal to ship iron ore from Australia to China for Anshan Iron & Steel Group.

The 10-year contract will involve the annual transport of about 1.5 million tonnes of iron ore to Liaoning Province in north-east China. K Line says it will use its fleet of capesize bulkers to fulfill the contract, which is due to start in October 2009.

Anshan Iron & Steel Group, thought to be China's second-largest steel producer, had an output of 23.4 million tonnes of crude steel last year.

MISC offloads tanker quartet

Andy Pierce London

Malaysian owner MISC has pocketed \$14m from the sale of four single-hull tankers.

It says the 29,900-dwt *Kvarven* (built 1991), *Varden* (built 1989), *Skarven* (built 1990) and *Stolzen* (built 1990) have been sold over the past two weeks. MISC explains the en bloc deal is in line with its strategy of phasing out single-hull vessels.

Earlier this month, the owner reported a slump in profitability during the first six months of 2009.

Net earnings to 30 June were MYR 271.4m (\$76.9m), down from MYR 549.51m in the same six months of 2008 due to lower profit from its tanker business and losses from containerships.

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