



Tiago FERREIRA
Country Manager
TLC

Position of strength

The Energy Year talks to Tiago Ferreira, country manager of TLC in Angola, about future prospects in Angola's oil and gas market, the company's strategy for capturing new business and the impact of its partnership with Pentagon Freight Services. Switzerland's TLC Group provides oil and gas logistics in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

Do you see good prospects in Angola's oil and gas market for the next five years?

It's hard to predict because of the pandemic. For the time being, I'm very optimistic. We have a very positive outlook regarding what is coming for us this year. It will all depend on the global economic situation. If the oil price is stable, we will have more investment and development. If it goes down, we will see clients shut everything down and minimise cost, and that will have an impact. The prospects look quite good if the trends continue. Offshore prospects look positive and there are opportunities in Angola, not just for the next five years but for longer.

What is your view on the opportunities the Angolan market represents for TLC's services?

TLC is present in West Africa, around the coast. We have three main segments of business: first, a transit department, which includes freight forwarding and Customs brokerage for cargo. Second, we have the husbandry, which entails personnel assistance, airport assistance and transport of people from vessels to hotels, etc. Lastly, our shipping unit works as a vessel agency. We have also recently developed bunkering as well as chartering activities, which are steered from our headquarters.

We are moving forward into a very interesting year in terms of results and participation in projects. We are very positive about 2021. I see potential for us in all of the new oil and gas developments. If it is related to oil and gas, it interests us. We want to position ourselves to take part in all of the opportunities that are coming.

What is TLC's strategy for capturing this new business?

We believe we have now reached the position where TLC has the people and the tools to service any operator in Angola. We already perform for several operators in other countries where the TLC Group is present, and we have the maturity and experience to handle any of them in Angola.



Actually, we are already working for all of them, via their subcontractors, and TLC is an approved agent at all production terminals of Angola. We are therefore well-known to all operators and to step in and start providing our services directly to the oil companies is only a logical step for TLC. We have progressed to sell our logistics services directly to the operators and we are confident that our efforts will pay off. Throughout our 20 years of business, it has always been our goal to work for all actors from upstream to downstream.

What is your involvement with large-scale oil and gas companies?

We provide integrated services from A to Z and have experience managing large projects, extending over numerous sites and years. Looking towards the future, TLC is working on a dedicated carbon neutrality plan adapted to its line of work, locations and customers, as well as on various ISO certifications. Finally, our compliance programme, which has been in place since 2009, is very strict and is a guarantee to support and protect our clients' operations.

What is TLC's main competitive advantage?

Our quality of service makes the difference. We have a very experienced team, with some key personnel having more than 15 years of experience. Our main added value is expertise and guidance.

Also, and in addition to our great experience, we have developed a unique ERP [enterprise resource planning] system, of which we are very proud. With TIS (the brand name of our ERP) we have complete control of operations, administration and finance, supporting our robust compliance policy and giving transparency to our client. We are able to provide KPIs and critical financial information to our customers with

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tailor-made reports. We close administration and invoicing of large projects within a very short period of time, allowing our customers to have strict control over their operations.

To date, we are also interfacing our ERP with one of our exclusive partners, Pentagon Freight Services, which enables door-to-door tracking of any shipment. The application is already available to select customers and we look forward to fully deploying this innovative solution to a wider portfolio of customers.

How will TLC's new partnership with Pentagon Freight Services impact your operations?

Clearly, this strategic alliance enables us to leverage and complement our two companies' unique strengths, delivering a superior service offering to our clients on a global scale.

Forming the core of this alliance is an alignment on a set of shared principles, such as ethics, bespoke logistics solutions and an absolute commitment to customer satisfaction.

TLC's position of strength in West Africa, Mozambique, South America and the Caribbean combined with Pentagon's well-established network in Europe, Australasia, the Middle East and the Americas enables us to offer an unprecedented level

of coverage to clients, achieving a presence in almost every industry-relevant part of the world.

For customers in Angola, it means seamless end-to-end solutions, from worldwide to Angola, cemented by fully integrated IT systems.

Will the new local content legal framework change your operations?

Our local content rate is 93.3%. TLC is committed to providing structured, regular training for its Angolan citizen staff. Training and development range from on-the-job training under the supervision and guidance of experienced management staff to advanced formal skills training programmes provided by recognised

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third-party providers and institutions. Retention of staff is key for us as well, and I think we have been successful because people stay with us for years.

Of course, I am happy when I see one of our employees going on to work for an oil operator or a ministry. However, we are also providing for career progression within the company in Angola and at the group level. This is one reason our employees remain satisfied and choose to stay with us.

What are the lessons to be learned from navigating the pandemic?

The goal was to minimise risk. First, we defined a code of conduct that we called "Combat Covid-19," an internal regulation that combined measures and directives we received, with our own internal rules – for example, limiting staff to 50% in the office and keeping a distance. This compelled us to look at our operations while thinking outside the box, and we realised that for specific jobs, it was actually possible to work from home.

We may maintain certain measures after the pandemic. Even from a QAPC [quality assurance programme co-ordination] point of view, we will keep plenty of procedures and processes we applied in 2020 in the future. For the husbandry, we are in direct contact with people so we had to be strict with PPE and masks. ■



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