

'We Are Building A Legacy'

Brade Oil&Gas Limited's Chief Executive Ese Avanoma is bullish on the Ghanaian oil and gas industry. He spoke to Africa Oil+Gas Report's Paul Kelechi. Excerpts:

You say your company, BRADE West Africa, will domicile considerable skill in Ghana?

BRADE West Africa Limited intends to develop local capacity that will grow to become not just a strong brand, but a first choice Ghanaian company that delivers projects to customers. Also, we want to repeat business with our customers, and we can only achieve this by ensuring that our customers see value in our service quality. Our key staff have many years of oilfield experience from the world's leading oil and gas service companies like Schlumberger and NOV. Our work culture is world class. We believe in not just doing it right, but getting it right the first time and every time. These are core values we instill in our local staff. Team work is celebrated. No one is left behind.

Despite the severity of the current oil industry downturn, we have gone ahead, investing in our people through trainings and without waiting for positive cash flow. The first training session was held in Lagos, the first week of April, less than a month after setting up in Ghana. The training was aimed at establishing core values and Leadership across the BRADE Group (BRADE Consulting Limited, BRADE Oil & Gas Limited, BRADE West Africa Limited, Ghana & Stefan & Kevin West Africa Limited). It was also an 'onboarding' exercise for new ones coming into the Group. Thereafter new engineers embarked on a four-week Drilling Technology and Completions Engineering programme in Lagos. This prepared them for still another experience – attending the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC), Houston USA, in May 2016. The feedback received from both attending the trainings and conference was impressive!

Some of these engineers have/will return to the USA for additional courses before the end of 2016, to acquire additional skills in Project Management (PMP), Steel pipe technology and OCTG specialty. Arrangements have also been concluded with Academy Leadership USA for a three-day Leadership boot camp in Accra in January 2017, for most of BRADE Personnel. These trainings are coming at a great cost. But they underline our belief in people. Investing in local content, our people, is key to success, and in delivering superior profits in business.

Ultimately, we are building a legacy. We are grooming Ghanaians to become industry professionals working on different projects both locally and hopefully, globally, in a few years from now. We champion the need to



identify with local companies so as to deliver professional services. If we set and focus on our objectives, we will become the 'go to' Ghanaian company of choice.

So what particular area of expertise are you looking at?

Our focus is offshore engineering services. This is the market in Ghana. Currently, we are exploring subsea engineering opportunities, as well as FPSO-related maintenance work (Valves, Actuation and Automation, Repairs, Overhaul Calibration, Testing and Certification, Electronics, Instrumentation & Control). We are also engaging the companies to provide production chemicals and solutions, using strong brands like DOW Chemicals.

Are you looking at competing with the Technips of this world?

Our strategy is to work with the likes of FMC (which has merged with Technip). There are other API companies that we can collaborate with and execute projects together. This will also bring about technology transfer. There are new technologies belonging to niche companies that may not be known to the International Oil Companies (IOCs). Our aim is to identify suitable, valuable technologies and localize them, as we use them to execute projects. This is a currently a gap that we intend to close through credible and healthy partnerships.

What aspect of subsea engineering would you be looking at?

Subsea inspection, repairs and maintenance. Technip does not do these. While they are heavily involved in the capital intensive construction phase, the operators require companies like us to provide inspection, repairs and maintenance services. This is our

primary focus and want to be known for that.

Is that what MODEC does?

MODEC as a company builds Floating Production Storage and Offloading vessels (FPSO). Their Workscope is in the region of US\$500Million. BRADE West Africa workscope is in the region of US\$50Million. That being said, our advantage is obvious - there will always be work despite the low oil price, as against fewer or no companies venturing into new/major investments like building FPSO. Already existing facilities will need to be maintained. Operators will always carry out inspections, repair works and other general maintenance. This will sustain our company and keep our people busy for as long as it production does not stop.

You will soon be inviting the Americans to train your Ghanaian workforce, how soon will that be happening?

Third week in January 2017.

Will the trainers be the same kind of guys that you worked with to deliver the same service quality you already have in Nigeria?

Yes.

But you have never mentioned these your partners on your website. It is bare.

We have four of them: Dow Oil & Gas Limited, Plant Engineering Limited, Gate Incorporated USA and Epoxy Oilserv Limited. We also have alliances with our Nigerian counterparts – BRADE Consulting Limited, BRADE Oil & Gas Limited and Stefan & Kevin West Africa Limited. These are Nigerian companies providing different services. BRADE West Africa Limited Ghana, on the strength of these alliances, can offer all their services put together.