GMS: creating a green path in the ship recycling industry

Through the Hong Kong Convention, the IMO has developed a set of guidelines that are explicitly geared towards improving the ship recycling industry. These guidelines are the first of their kind to be specifically aimed at increasing safety and environmental quality standards throughout this niche industry. These commonly accepted practices have afforded recyclers the ability to recognise and understand the process that has to be followed in order to conduct safe and environmentally sound ship recycling. It also enables shipowners to practice their corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives when selling ships for recycling.

The GMS “green” recycling team works vigorously to ensure compliance of not only local and international regulations, but also of rules and standards established under the Hong Kong Convention. GMS has created a proprietary list of ship recycling facilities worldwide that recycle ships in accordance with the requirements of the Hong Kong Convention and more.

GMS-GSRP
GMS is the most quality conscious cash buyer for “green recycling” projects. The company has developed a Green Ship Recycling Programme (GSRP) that provides shipowners with a one-stop solution for their green ship recycling needs.

The GMS-GSRP process provides sellers with an option to conduct an Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM), vetting of yards and the development of a ship recycling plan. Through well-established relationships and exclusivity agreements with responsible ship recycling facilities worldwide, GMS carefully chooses the right ISO and OHSAS certified yard for the recycling of each vessel. It is mandatory under the GMS programme that the facility holds ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 3000 and OHSAS 18001 certification.

GMS-GL programme
Another green option that GMS has developed is the GMS-GL programme, which is an alternative to the GMS-GSRP. This programme has been developed in collaboration with the world-renowned IACS Classification Society, Germanischer Lloyd (GL).

The GMS-GL programme follows the same basic tasks outlined in the GMS-GSRP; however, it is carried out under the supervision of GL inspectors. GL monitors the recycling procedures and makes relevant recommendations for improvements along the way. In addition, GL certifies the SRP and other relevant processes that are necessary for green ship recycling. GL also produces regular reports for the client.

Response from the industry
The GMS Green Ship Recycling Programme has been very well received by major owners who believe in exercising best practices and making CSR a strong priority. Regrettably, green ship recycling options have been employed by only a handful of owners. For example, even though in 2012 the ship recycling industry reached a new milestone by recycling about 59 million DWT, less than 2% of this capacity was recycled within “green terms”.

As an environmentally conscious company, we hope to see a greater interest from owners for green ship recycling. Japanese shipowners are at the forefront of this positive trend. At GMS, we encourage the rest of the world to follow their example and implement responsible green recycling initiatives—now available from GMS at a fraction of the cost.

Vagelis Chatzigioriannis, Amit Malhotra and Evan Sproviero of GMS with several yard workers during a recent visit to an Alang recycling facility.