

expertise and innovation in this sector. Ian Giddings FNI, Technical Advisor of IMCA, provided the opening address which largely focused on equipment changes, the updating of MSC 645 at the IMO next year, and work to revise three IMCA Guidance documents (103, 117 and 166). IMCA 117 is particularly relevant to the Institute as it covers training and competency aspects for DP operators, both in terms of initial training and thereafter. The revision will aim to cover all training schemes and define competency levels after initial training as well as full competency.

Training and certification

Suman Muddusetti, Principal Marine Operations Manager for Shell International, explained the process and content of the MTS Guidance which is produced by a forum of volunteers from leading industry companies. He also looked at an analysis of IMCA's incident reports which showed 21% due to human error, 35% sensors, etc failures, 32% power and propulsion problems, and 9% environment factors. He appealed for more understanding of other departments' role in operations rather than just the DPO. The Institute's presentation on the revised DP training scheme generated the most questions, particularly concerning the criteria for revalidation for the DP certificate every five years and what the Institute will do to combat competition from other certification providers as they emerge. It was explained that the Institute's role is to help the industry set and implement the required professional standards for safe operations and that we currently manage the resultant training and certification scheme on the industry stakeholders' behalf. It is therefore up to the stakeholders whether they wish to engage with competing schemes if/when they come into being. In the meantime the Institute will continue to manage the only full training and certification Scheme and promote the advantages of industry self-regulation to flag states and the industry players in general.

There were interesting presentations on DP operations in polar regions which identified that being stationary in ice ie in DP operating mode, seriously increases the risk to the ship, so ice management knowledge is crucial, as is regular and thorough tank testing. The final presentation before the training forum was on driving projects through leadership which borrowed the six tenets of nuclear power management to apply to maritime projects:

- Level of knowledge;
- Questioning attitude;
- Forceful backup;
- Integration of systems and people;
- Formality of processes;
- Procedure compliance.

The dynamic ex-US Navy speaker emphasised that leadership of people and good management of deviation from plans are essential to successful project management.

Many of the points made in this presentation were referred to in the following panel discussion on training which included the Institute, a training provider, a DP supervisor for a major owner, and the classification society DNV-GL, which provides a Recommended Practice of DP training as well as a competency testing/certification process. The Institute made the following points:

- The industry is fragmented with a lack of a team mindset and a variety of views, even within the same membership.
- Leadership within representative bodies is essential with proper consultation of the membership but this is often lacking.
- Clear proposals from staff papers ensure that consultation bodies have a better chance of making effective decisions.
- Maintenance of a solution seeking mindset is necessary to make progress.

Maintaining standards

The discussions revolved around the benefits of training on board and how it can be more formalised. The Institute maintains this will be achieved by the enhanced task book within the industry's scheme but it was questioned whether the Master or Senior DPO have the necessary experience and expertise to sign off the trainees. There was concern that DP training will be proposed for inclusion in the mandatory Part A of the STCW Convention and that this may reduce the current standards and/or make it difficult to keep the standard up to date to meet the industry's changing needs in an era of evolving technology. It was felt that a compelling need for such a change in STCW would need to be proven. Given the Institute's promotion of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), it was encouraging to get a question on how people in this sector can do CPD. This gave scope to the Institute to promote its products and the CPD web portal provided to members. Inevitably, there were those who advocated bringing the various schemes together. While this is conceptually possible, the Institute reiterated its answer regarding the earlier question on competition and the need for the industry stakeholders to give a clear lead on acceptable standards. It is also necessary for people in the industry to understand what the other providers are actually requiring/offering in terms of training, examination, limitations to vessel type, and costs. These questions will doubtless continue for some time yet. In the meantime the demand for the NI DP Certificate continues to grow unremittably with more training providers seeking accreditation.

Philip Wake FNI

4TH DP ASIA CONFERENCE

➔ The return trip from Sydney allowed the CEO to attend the first day of this conference to provide a presentation on the revised DP training and certification scheme managed by the Institute for the industry and to take part in a discussion forum on training at the end of the day. In between there were a number of technical presentations which again tended to be purely about the company's latest product development but spoke volumes about the