

Maritime Holland



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Working together yields success



The Netherlands Maritime Academy (NMA) is an initiative set up by seven companies and a branch association to create a platform to offer training courses for companies involved in the maritime sector.
Photo by Alewijnse Marine

Working together yields success

The benefits of cooperation within the Dutch maritime sector are well known. In fact Dutch government Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management Cora Van Nieuwenhuizen highlighted a number of them in her recent speech at the signing of the so-called 'Work Programme Maritime Strategy and Sea Ports 2018-2021'.

According to the Minister, cooperation will give the sector the means to accomplish more innovations and experimentation, a sound financial footing, a global level playing field, and a seamless transport network. All in all, the programme strategy has the aim to make the Dutch maritime cluster smarter and greener.

However, this is not the only scheme that promotes cooperation in the Dutch maritime sector; there are already some underway. An example is the Netherlands Maritime Academy (NMA): an initiative set up by seven companies and the branch association to create a platform to offer training courses for companies involved in the maritime sector. The group, comprising Alewijnse Marine, Damen Shipyards,

'NMA HAS A TRULY COOPERATIVE SET-UP'

Feadship, Huisman Equipment, Royal IHC, Netherlands Maritime Technology, Pon Power, and Wärtsilä Netherlands, started its cooperation in May 2017.

Flexible contribution

"This initial period has been used to assess what the different parties have to offer, and how we can guarantee consistent quality throughout," says Annette Opstal, Human Capital Manager at Netherlands Maritime Technology. Subject matter is diverse: taking in broad subjects such as Risk Management and Project Communication, to more specialist topics like Linear Vibration Analysis and Basic Hydrodynamics. The major difference between the NMA and conventional training providers is that it is a truly cooperative set-up. "Courses are given by member companies to other member companies. It is not a prerequisite that members offer courses. For example, one of our members doesn't offer any courses, while others offer one or two, and others even more."

2018 is the year that the NMA expects to see significant growth. "At our New Year's reception we were in the position to invite new members to the NMA," Opstal adds. This action resulted in 18 new companies showing interest. "While we are still in the early stages, it is exciting to see such interest. This is a unique cooperation - and as we grow, it will be important to maintain the quality and keep the broad scope of training courses available."

Broad network

The initial idea for the NMA arose from a situation experienced by some of the founding companies. "The maritime world is a small specialist world where companies do a lot to train their staff," explains Peter Wemmers, Manager Learning & Development at Royal IHC. "We also have many technical training courses, but we are not a party that generates a substantial number of students. Due to this lack of volume, full classes were often not reached and training sessions were cancelled due to the shortage of candidates. To solve this



As well as technical courses like Fundamentals of Ship Propulsion, non-commercial courses such as the Zero Injury Workshop, the NMA platform is also an opportunity to develop and test new training courses. Photo by Damen

problem, we started working with Damen to boost class sizes so that trainings could continue. It was from this cooperation that the idea arose to share a broader network of maritime training through the sector. NMT proved to be the ideal partner for this."

Things start to happen

Damen's HR director Arold de Vries takes the story further: "It's about sharing information and increasing efficiency while contributing to the branch as a whole," he says. "We have an excellent shipbuilding and ship repair industry here in the Netherlands, which includes all our suppliers. This comprises a lot of knowledge - so let's share that knowledge wherever possible. Not only is meeting people from other

companies interesting, it is also very important - when people meet, exciting things start to happen."

Both De Vries (Damen) and Wemmers (Royal IHC) point out the important role played by equipment supplying companies, which represent half of the NMA's founding members. "Yes, Damen is a good ship builder," De Vries notes. "But there are always areas where we can improve; with processes or technical aspects, for example. At the end of the day we are the project managers, and it's the equipment suppliers that help us be successful. It is crucial that they are involved too."

The contribution by the equipment suppliers brings greater advantages too, as Wemmers explains: "They deliver the



The contribution by the equipment suppliers brings greater advantages too. They deliver the most up-to-date technologies. Photo by Wärtsilä

most up-to-date technologies. Their participation in the NMA makes it easier for the larger companies to cooperate - which will significantly increase the Netherlands' competitive advantage in international markets."

No time for complacency

As well as technical courses like Fundamentals of Ship Propulsion, non-commercial courses such as the Zero Injury Workshop, the NMA platform is also an opportunity to develop and test new training courses. One of these is Knowledge Transfer Training: "This is now being organised by NMT and is a good example of how we can unite within the maritime branch to develop applicable trainings," De Vries says. "It involves employees who are approaching retirement - and therefore have built up a wealth of skills and experience over the course of their careers - relaying their knowledge to younger colleagues."

A look at the status quo of the NMA reveals an impressive rate of progress for a new initiative that is less than a year old. At the time of writing there were 27 courses available,

'LET'S SHARE THAT KNOWLEDGE WHEREVER POSSIBLE'

and the original membership of eight founding companies looks set to increase as the year goes on. As De Vries points out, however, it is not yet time for the members to rest on their laurels: "Yes, this is a breakthrough idea, but we can't be too happy with ourselves because there is still a long way to go. Traffic is still too low - we need more parties involved."

Tom Scott

Eight 'Founding Fathers' of NMA:

Alewijnse Marine
 Damen Shipyards Gorinchem
 Feadship
 Huisman Equipment
 Royal IHC
 Netherlands Maritime Technology
 Pon Power
 Wärtsilä Netherlands

The Shanti Sagar from Royal IHC. The company started working together with others to boost class sizes so that trainings could continue. Photo by Royal IHC

