


LEADING THE WAY IN GAS COMPRESSION

Swiss-based Enerproject SA is a leading gas compressor packager for applications in the power generation, oil & gas, and refrigeration sectors, and is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Sarah Pursey hears from Mr Vito Notari, General Sales Manager, about the company's comprehensive range of gas compressor packages, its network of strategically located offices and agents around the world, and the strong technical background that has contributed to its success over the past two decades. Written by Gemma Carter. 



Mr Vito Notari, General Sales Manager



Enerproject was established in 1995 as a family-owned business and it remains so today, wholly owned by the Feretti family. By the early 2000s the company was installing around 10–15 units per year, then it entered the Russian and Asian markets and upped its capacity to 40 units per year. “Today, we have around 70 employees in Switzerland,” Mr Notari reports, “in addition to all the people employed by our subsidiaries and agents around the world: we have had subsidiaries in Russia and Thailand since 2008 and Germany since 2012, while we have agents in strategic locations worldwide, either in markets that we want to enter or those where we have some units already installed. These subsidiaries and agents are focused only on sales and after-sales activities – all manufacturing is carried out in Switzerland.”

Gas compression solutions

The company focuses on three different fields of application with its products and solutions, namely power generation, oil & gas, and refrigeration. Mr Notari tells us more about the roles of Enerproject’s equipment: “Our main line of products is gas compressors, and in the power generation sector these are used as a fuel booster to increase the pressure of the gas, in order to achieve the pressure required to run a gas turbine. In the oil & gas industry, a gas compressor can be used to recover

the flare gas produced while extracting crude oil: the gas is compressed and then gathered for specific needs, such as the production of electricity. Compressors are also used in coal bed methane (CBM) gas applications to collect and compress the gas. This is a low suction pressure gas gathering application, where CBM gas is compressed and then sent into the main gas pipeline or used in the production of electricity – for the latter, mixing with natural gas is required.


“With respect to refrigeration, the applications are slightly different,” he continues. “Gas compressors are generally used to move heat in refrigerant cycles, specifically to cool down ethylene and other refrigerant mediums. The main difference between refrigeration and other applications for our gas compressors, however, is that in refrigeration the unit is always based on a closed-loop circuit.”

One of the company’s recent developments, in terms of its product portfolio, is a

small compressor for biogas applications, which is easy to install and maintain, and can be used for a wide range of gas types. “This is still quite a new product for us,” Mr Notari remarks, “having only been launched on the market about two years ago, yet it is proving popular and demand for the solution is growing.”

In-house design & engineering

At its headquarters in Mezzovico-Vira, in southern Switzerland, Enerproject has departments for administration, sales, ▴



assembly, and project management and logistics, as well as a technical department that also incorporates R&D functions. “Our assembly workshop covers an area of 4,000 square metres,” states Mr Notari, “and there are clearly defined areas of the facility where we assemble different types and sizes of compressor. With respect to machinery, the workshop is equipped with four cranes with capacities of 12, 15 and 40 tonnes.

“Although we are not a manufacturer, we do all our own engineering in-house, and we invest substantially in IT, R&D and the technical department in order to enhance our engineering capabilities,” he affirms. “Moreover, we provide all drawings and designs for our component suppliers, which deliver all the materials necessary for our projects, and we assemble everything in our workshop, in accordance with our designs. While the components inside a gas compressor are relatively standard, the performance of the product can be customised according to the size and number of filters, cooling system requirement, ventilation control system, and any other type of configuration changes – we take our lead from our clients.”

As an international company, Enerproject can design, engineer and build packages that comply with all major standards, including API (American Petroleum Institute), ASME (American Society of

Mechanical Engineers) and GOST (for Russia and Belarus), and the company’s quality management is certified in accordance with ISO 9001:2008. In addition, Enerproject readily complies with the relevant local standards when installing and commissioning units in various countries across the globe.

Global reach with a local touch

“Our client base mainly comprises EPC contractors that procure our products for implementation in their projects,” Mr Notari informs us, “as well as the direct end-users of those solutions, which tend to be customers that are investing in their facilities by replacing an old compressor or increasing the capacity of their plant, for example – including major oil & gas companies, such as Gazprom. In some cases, we also supply our products to gas turbine manufacturers or packagers – such as Kawasaki, Turbomach or Centrax – that have received a request from the end-user

to provide a complete turbine and gas compressor package.

“We are very happy with our success in Thailand, this past year,” he notes, “where we have won three orders for a total of seven large units. Each order is with a different contractor, all of which are well known in the Asian market – namely Jurong, Toyo-Thai and Thai Shinryo. On top of that, we have succeeded in selling to important new customers within Europe, while we have also sold two units for solar gas turbines. These fuel boosters are due



to be used in a new test bench in the Czech Republic.”

Aside from the assembly, installation and commissioning of gas compressor packages, aftersales support also forms a very important part of the company’s business, with services ranging from spare parts and field servicing to training courses and remote monitoring. “In every country where we have sold or installed a unit, one of our priorities is to find a local representative that can provide aftersales services on our behalf,” asserts Mr Notari. “Once we have found a suitable partner, we train them at our workshop in Switzerland and support them directly, and if necessary we also travel to their market in order to assist them with their first installation or commissioning of one of our units. Local aftersales capabilities are vital because we need to speak the same language as the customer – in some markets we can speak English and so can many of our customers, but having a local team that speaks the native language keeps our customers happy and ensures a faster response.”

In addition to the partnerships that Enerproject enjoys with its agents around the world, the company also has some strategic partnerships with other firms and suppliers, including a strategic collaboration with a supplier of different technologies that Mr Notari hopes will enable the company to enter other new markets. “On top of that, we recently made an invest-

ment to acquire a new company in Europe,” he discloses. “The objective behind this investment was to enlarge our market by selling more and a wider range of compressors, to a wider market area – this company also supplies gas compressors but in different sizes and in different markets around the world. As a result of this investment – and by the end of this year, when the acquisition process has reached full completion – we will have automatically increased our product range, particularly with regard to oil & gas and biogas applications. Some of our clients are already aware of this new development, but we will make an official announcement by the end of the year.”

Building on a technical background

Asked to pinpoint the factors that have played a vital role in ensuring Enerproject’s growth and success over the past 20 years, Mr Notari explains that one of the company’s greatest advantages is the fact that

all members of the management team come from a technical background that is specific to the energy sector, having worked with gas turbines and gas turbine packages. “Now, as a provider of compressors for gas turbines amongst other applications, we know the market extremely well and we are aware of customers’ various needs,” he reflects. “We are not just saying that we can deliver gas at a certain pressure, we also know what the requirements are on the other side. This enables us to pay close attention to certain features within our

packages, which, in turn, helps to differentiate us from other vendors.

The configuration of the company has also been a contributing element, as Mr Notari points out. “The fact that Enerproject is family-owned, and the management team has a strong technical background, has resulted in the development of a business that is highly flexible with a significant level of internal collaboration between departments, as well as a company-wide desire to move forward and enter new markets. Furthermore, we really care about the quality and reliability of our products, and we appreciate their importance – it is one thing to assure a customer of the high standard of our products during a sales pitch, but if those products do not perform as expected we will not win a second order from that client. While our products may sometimes be in a slightly higher price bracket than those of our competitors, the price reflects the level of quality, and this is one of the reasons why our customers choose to work with us.”

Going forward, Mr Notari has his eyes set firmly on new geographical markets for the business, which, as always, will involve seeking local partners in order to facilitate the company’s continued growth. “The next challenge for us is to push forward into the Middle East market,” he reveals. “We know that there is significant potential there for our products, and we are now investing in

various resources that will help us get to know the clients and the market dynamic, in order to gain a footprint in that market. We have worked in the Middle East before but our presence is not particularly strong, and we would like to enter the market a little more aggressively – perhaps even by establishing a regional office there in the future,” Mr Notari concludes. ○

