

Walk To Work (W2W) - Helping To Enhance Safety and Extend The Economic Life Of Offshore Infrastructure

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“Walk to Work” (W2W) gangway transfers of personnel to and from offshore facilities has the potential to play a significant and increasing role in the offshore wind and oil & gas industries.

A W2W solution can be a sole or supplementary method of transferring offshore personnel. It provides an alternative manning approach to methods such as helicopter, basket transfer or boat landing.

A W2W solution is the integration of a vessel, gangway, offshore facility and onshore support base.

A W2W vessel can take many forms ranging from a simple crew ferry to a large, integrated, multi-role vessel with helideck, accommodation, subsea inspection, fabrication and crane facilities. It may be assigned to a single offshore facility such as a floating oil production and storage unit or multiple facilities such as those in a wind farm.

A W2W solution can offer a safe, cost-effective, means to man offshore facilities on a regular, fixed term, ad-hoc or exceptional circumstance basis. Appropriately selected, optimised and implemented, a W2W solution can offer significant opportunities including reduction in major hazard risk, reduction in manning costs and increased manning flexibility.

This paper presents a brief overview of the Joint Industry Project (JIP) initiated and managed by DNV GL to develop a comprehensive industry guidance document to exploit the potential prize that can be unlocked by W2W solutions.

At the time of writing this paper the W2W guidance document was under development with confidentiality restricting publication of its content. The W2W guidance should now be publicly available, being released in April 2015. Readers of this paper are invited to download a copy of the W2W guidance for information and use.

The download details will be given at the conference. Alternatively, a Google search for “DNV GL JIP W2W Guidance” is likely find a Press Release giving download details.

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W2W JIP Overview

A “Walk to Work” (W2W) joint industry project (JIP), led by DNV GL, was set up in 2014 to develop guidance on gangway transfer of personnel to and from offshore oil, gas and wind facilities. The initiative aimed to build on experience to improve the selection and implementation of W2W approaches.

Fifteen companies, including operators of offshore oil & gas and wind facilities, gangway system developers, vessel operators and turnkey offshore service providers, signed up and collaborated in this project. In addition, health and safety and maritime regulators were involved as ‘invited guests’. The JIP sought to capture input from both the oil and gas, and offshore wind industries, as they have a common goal of safe and efficient manning of offshore facilities.

W2W can take many forms ranging from a simple and relatively small crew ferry between land and an offshore facility, to a large, multi-role vessel, moored semi-submersible or jack-up accommodation facility. The W2W approach is being increasingly considered to replace or supplement traditional manning methods such as via helicopter.

W2W manning can offer many significant benefits such as accident risk and cost reduction; increased productivity; greater and more flexible man-hour delivery; additional bed space; improved resource utilisation and sharing. The ability to use W2W also provides an alternative to helicopters should, for example, there be exceptional circumstances that impacts helicopter availability.

The W2W manning approach is not appropriate for all offshore facilities. The JIP guidance helps operators understand the main factors and variables that need to be considered when deciding if W2W is a potential manning option. The location of the facility, whether it is fixed or floating, size and hull shape of available vessels, capability of gangways, location of gangway on the vessel, number of personnel to transfer, what other activities the vessel could perform, along with human factors as well as many other areas, all need to be considered.

To successfully select and implement a W2W solution usually needs considerable time and effort to work through the wide range of aspects. During operation it requires effective alignment, integration and collaboration between the facility operator, a vessel operator and a gangway provider, on a 24-hour basis in a dynamic environment heavily influenced by operational need, sea and weather conditions. Most importantly, it also requires buy-in from the W2W workforce as well as from industry regulators. To date, there has been a mixed response from both the workforce and regulators to some aspects

of W2W. By providing clarity around known issues, the JIP guidance should help minimise challenges during implementation.

The W2W JIP initiative captured, collated and further developed existing experience and material from the participating companies and other sources. The resulting industry guidance covers all the main aspects of W2W, creating a non-prescriptive reference source that supports decision-making and delivery of safe, efficient and cost-effective W2W manning solutions.

The developed W2W guidance should also assist offshore operators gain regulatory and statutory compliance in a timely manner.

The guidance developed through the JIP may form the basis for a future DNV GL Recommended Practice to further assist industry involved in offshore operations.

The project ran for approximately nine months with the release of the W2W industry guidance during the first quarter of 2015.

Aspects covered in the W2W JIP guidance include:

- Facility suitability assessment
- Locating access locations on facility
- Manning model development
- Ship specification & selection
- Gangway specification & selection
- Locating gangway on ship
- Gangway safety assurance
- Manning availability modelling
- Risk assessments
- Interface management
- Roles & responsibilities
- Ops, emergency resp. & other procedures
- Training & competence management
- Safety management
- Human factors
- Workforce engagement
- Port requirements & interfaces
- Personnel tracking & control
- Facility & vessel security
- Regulatory compliance

Details of how to download the W2W guidance will be presented at the conference. Alternatively, a Google search for “DNV GL JIP W2W Guidance” is likely to find a Press Release giving download details.