

When Engineering Becomes *Excellence*

With approximately 170 employees and a consolidated turnover of around €17 million, Italy-based engineering company SIMECO, falls under the family-run SME category, and over the years has proven itself to show the necessary financial strength, skills, know-how and experience to move forward. Filomena Nardi reports

Headquartered in Milan, Italy's business capital, SIMECO is a medium size engineering and contracting company that is as good as, if not better than any of its fellow larger competitors.

According to Commercial Director, Mr Lorenzo Tagliabue, no matter what engineering service your company requires, SIMECO can provide it.

"We offer competitive services such as: feasibility studies and economical evaluations, consulting, project management, basic engineering, process engineering, project planning, estimating and scheduling, risk analysis and HSE reports, detail engineering, procurement activities, expediting and inspections, construction management and supervision, plant start-up assistance and operations. You name it, we've got it," he said.

SIMECO offers its extensive engineering and contracting expertise to the service of companies working within the oil and gas, chemical, petrochemical, power generation and renewable sectors.

"We are very strong within the onshore market, but recently we have been progressing and increasing our activities also in the offshore segment."

Leading Through Generations

The company's history dates back to 1984, when three work colleagues - Roberto Gasperini, Pierfranco Forlani (current president) and, just a few years later, Ivo Guarinoni - who met during the construction of an oil pipeline in Argentina 20 years earlier, joined their forces, experience and ideas and gave life to SIMECO.

Before long, this small electro engineering company began to gain ground in the domestic and international markets and by the time the 1990s rolled up, became a multidisciplinary engineering company with the capability to provide engineering, civil, mechanical, piping and process technology solutions.



Kerosene stripper tower erection

"It is in this period that our company started delivering its first turnkey systems, thus registering an internal transformation and an increase in size," explained Mr Lorenzo Tagliabue.

SIMECO's race to the top continued over the years and the arrival of the second generation between 2007 and 2008 gave new life to the business.

If the first generation built the business, the second is definitely contributing to making it a further success," commented Mr Tagliabue. "Today Gianluca Gasperini is the current Director of Process Technologies, Marco Forlani is the Operations Director and I take care of the commercial direction," said Mr Tagliabue.

The contribution of the new generation of managers brought a sharp increase in demand and SIMECO began to realise that they are no longer a small local entity, but a growing company able to conquer the international market.

Making it Through

"Unfortunately, our steady growth was partly offset with the outbreak of the global economic crisis in 2009," added Mr Tagliabue. "However, thanks to our cooperation with major international clients, the blow for us was not as hard as for some of our competitors."

Armed with tons of skills and knowledge, over the past years SIMECO has managed to maintain its revenue and despite the drop in oil prices and the consequent slump of upstream activities, the Italian company is expecting this year results to be in line with those of previous years. ▴



Distillation tower for FCC slurry oil



Construction for EPC contract



Construction for EPC Contract

“Although upstream activities are currently stagnant, our expertise on downstream has proven to be a valuable and essential skill to survive these very difficult times for the oil and gas industry,” continued Mr Tagliabue.

“Our customers not only can count on the extreme competence of our engineers, but they are also guaranteed competitive prices, full commitment and outermost flexibility. I believe that without these distinctive elements our business would not be as successful as it is today!”

Keeping it Busy

Owing to its excellence, SIMECO has now earned the trust of many important customers and is involved in a plethora of exciting projects.

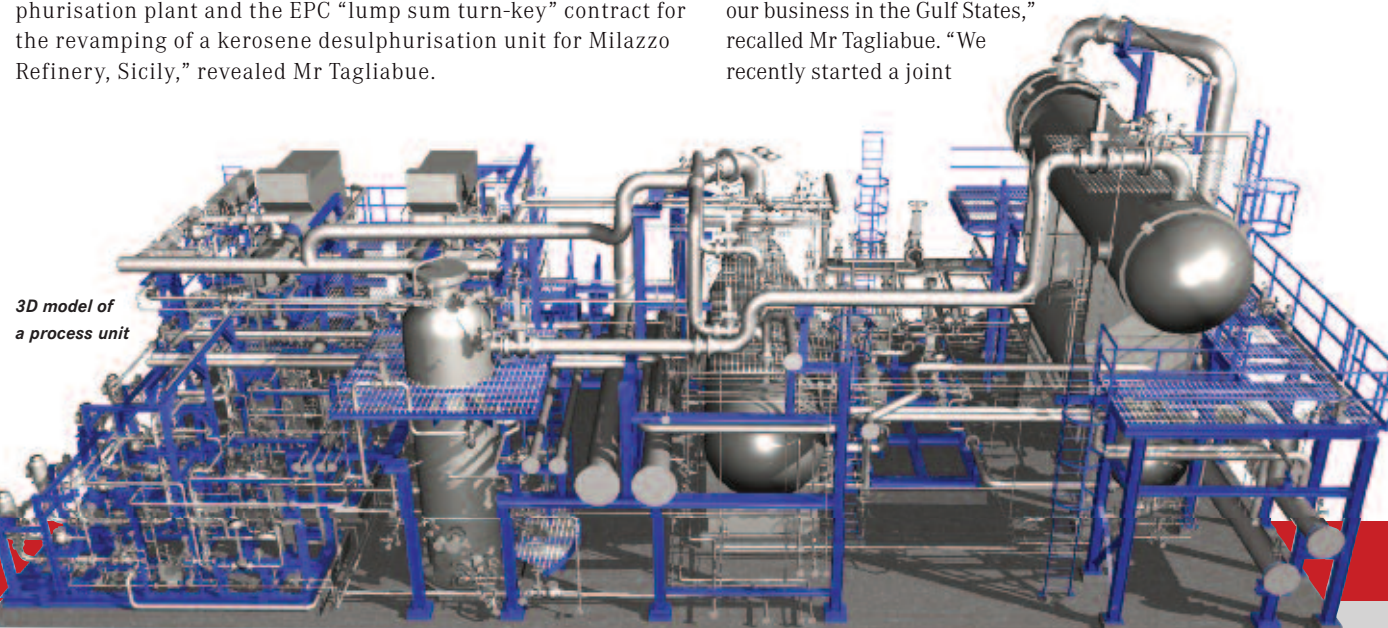
“We just completed the basic design of a new naphtha desulphurisation plant and the EPC “lump sum turn-key” contract for the revamping of a kerosene desulphurisation unit for Milazzo Refinery, Sicily,” revealed Mr Tagliabue.

“We are also engaged on several energy efficiency projects at Sarlux, one of Europe's largest refineries located in Sardinia; and we are also cooperating with SAIPEM for the front end engineering of the gas processing facilities at the Zohr field in Egypt, one of the largest offshore gas fields that Eni has recently discovered.

“These are only a few of the projects we're currently working on. In fact, thanks to our increased involvement in downstream activities, we can happily say that this is a fairly busy period for our company.”

Although these are eventful times for SIMECO, the company knows to never rest on its laurels and continues to work in search of new and exciting opportunities.

“A couple of years ago we opened an office in Bahrain to oversee our business in the Gulf States,” recalled Mr Tagliabue. “We recently started a joint



3D model of a process unit



Construction Management Team



Vacuum Tower Erection



Kerosene stripper tower erection

venture with SARI Consulting, a company specialised in the infrastructure sector with a good distribution network in some African countries which will allow us to weigh new opportunities in this specific market. Additionally, we are also keeping an eye on the new business that Iran could bring us in future.”

Building a Lasting Legacy

SIMECO's exploitation of new opportunities within local and international markets is supported by two spin-offs: Simeco Systems d.o.o., Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - a company established in 2000 specialised in consulting, engineering and procurement for the oil, gas and power industries; and Streamline - founded in 2010 and focused on oil and gas pipeline and design services. SIMECO recently opened its GCC regional office based in Bahrain.

“We may be not as big as some of our competitors, but we have a very strong organisation that allows us to exceed in this ever-changing market,” commented Mr Tagliabue.

“Moreover due to the high technical content of our services and experience of our staff, we can provide excellent support to our customers during the entire development of each project. We offer constantly improved solutions and we regard ourselves as a ‘full service supplier’.

“I hope that in the coming years we will become more of a main contractor rather than an engineering subcontractor and provide services of even higher technical and technological contents. Whilst working towards reaching our future goals we are also focused on building a lasting legacy for future generations.” ■



Construction for EPC Contract