

## Offshore Wind Validation Centre – Technology Transfer project case study: WD Close

Family-owned engineering company WD Close has achieved ISO 3834 certification with support delivered through the Offshore Wind Validation Centre Technology Transfer (OSWVC-TT) project.

With a turnover exceeding £10 million and more than 100 full-time staff at its facility in Newcastle, WD Close was already enjoying considerable success when it contacted the project for the first time in 2014.



The company, established in 1982, specialises in heavy steel fabrication and repairs, regularly supplying fabrications to the offshore, subsea and power generation industries, and carrying out repairs, conversions and modifications for the marine industry.

Its focus on quality fabrication means welding plays a critical role in WD Close's work. The company employs methods including metal active gas, submerged

arc, flux-cored arc and manual metal arc on a daily basis.

To expand its business into new sectors, such as the offshore wind industry, WD Close was keen to achieve certification to ISO 3834, 'Quality requirements for fusion welding of metallic materials', the standard for companies involved in metal fabrication. The standard's exacting requirements can make achieving compliance tough, demanding a thorough, quality-oriented approach to application and coordination of welding, so the company reached out to the OSWVC-TT project for advice and support.

TWI, a company that has been at the forefront of welding development and expertise throughout its 70-year history, was ideally placed to deliver this guidance. Although an initial visit to the company in 2014 found the quality of the company's welding to be excellent, it also quickly identified a number of key areas where WD Close was falling short of the requirements of the standard.



The Offshore Wind Validation Centre – Technology Transfer project is part of the Teesside Advanced Manufacturing Park/Offshore Wind Validation Centre programme, which is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund Programme 2007–2013 and Middlesbrough Council.





To help the company achieve ISO 3834 compliance, TWI committed to providing a variety of support. It would carry out a review of the company's newly written welding control manual; it would conduct a mock ISO 3834 audit to highlight issues that required addressing, and provide support focusing on any such areas; and it would carry out a review of in-house practices to help the company produce revised welding procedure specifications as needed.

Through a series of visits, reviews, recommendations and knowledge transfer sessions between its experts and staff at WD Close, TWI placed the company in a position where it was able to apply for and achieve ISO 3834 certification through the Welding Fabricator Certification Scheme (WFCS) with TWI Certification Limited. With this new demonstration of its commitment to quality, the company is in a position to win more contracts from across industry.



The support provided through the OSWVC-TT project is estimated to have led to the creation of around 10 jobs, and the safeguarding of a further 50.

The OSWVC-TT project, funded by the European Regional Development Fund



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and Middlesbrough Council and delivered by TWI, provides free in-depth technical consultancy services to engineering and manufacturing companies in the North East of England. WD Close is one of dozens of businesses to have taken advantage of the free support, which takes the form of up to 12 days' one-to-one consultation with TWI specialists.



For more information on the OSWVC-TT project or TWI's other technology transfer activities, contact Project Manager Nick Elbourn on 01223 899299 or 07765 403465, or by emailing [nick.elbourn@twi.co.uk](mailto:nick.elbourn@twi.co.uk).

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