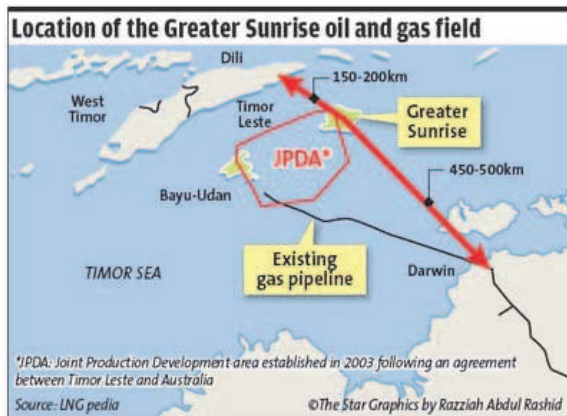


Petro-Mekong set to finalise tie-ups for Timor-Leste pipeline



PETALING JAYA: Malaysian firm [Petro-Mekong Corp Sdn Bhd](#) said it is set to finalise a technical collaboration with its international partners for the multi-billion ringgit deep sea gas pipeline project in Timor-Leste.

Petro-Mekong's executive director [Datuk Seri Dr Shafiq Sit Abdullah](#) said in media release to *StarBiz*: "With the assistance of our local Timorese partner [Nexus Meridian LDA](#), Petro-Mekong and its technical partners from China, Europe and the United States have now frequently travelled to Timor-Leste over the past year to conduct technical evaluations and studies and we are satisfied with the findings."

StarBiz had reported in May that the Timor Leste government had inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to partner with Germany's [Europipe GmbH](#) to supply a crucial gas pipeline from its offshore gas field to the country's planned liquefied natural gas (LNG) processing plant on its mainland. Petro-Mekong is co-managing the project and is the sole representative of [Europipe GmbH](#) of Germany for Malaysia and Timor-Leste.

Shafiq added: "Our relationship with [Europipe](#) goes back over thirty years, when [Europipe](#) began supplying the pipeline from the offshore B-11 gas field to Malaysia's first LNG plant, [MLNG Satu](#), in Bintulu. So I have full confidence in our team's technical capabilities in managing this project, together with [Europipe](#)."

The media release also stated that at the launch of the prototype pipeline in May 2012, the Secretary of State for Natural Resources Alfredo Pires had highlighted “the comprehensive and detailed analysis conducted by the government over the past three years in order to reach this point of prototyping the Timor-Leste pipeline.”



The unveiling of the specimen of the deep-sea pipe air-flow from Germany by Europe in Timor Leste.

The deep-sea pipeline and LNG plant, together with an integrated supply base and petrochemical refinery, is part of Timor-Leste's critical Tasi Mane Project on the country's southern coastline, which will form the backbone of its oil and gas industry.

Shafiq added: “To enhance the technical capacity of the Timorese engineers in the near future, Petro-Mekong and Nexus Meridian have signed on Nov 28 an agreement to launch a scholarship programme for Timorese students to take up technical courses in the areas of oil and gas and related science-based degrees. “

[Victor Alves](#), the chairman of Nexus Meridian said: “Timor-Leste is focused on growing its petroleum industry, which currently is dependent heavily on foreign technical expertise. The same goes for the medical profession. Greater technical expertise among Timorese will prompt us further to greater economic growth.”

The media release highlighted the fact that Australia had 366,600 engineers in 2010 alone, from a total population of 21.5 million people. In comparison, the cumulative total of graduates from Timor-Leste universities up to 2011 is only 7,995 from a population of 1.2 million people.

Shafiq, who himself was a recipient of the Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University, understands the importance of such a programme. He added: “This scholarship initiative is our own way of doing our part for the long-term prosperity of Timor-Leste. We would of course like to see the students that we sponsor eventually return to work in the oil and gas industry that will emerge from this deep-sea pipeline.

“Our group's experience in technical capacity building in other countries such as China, Thailand and Papua New Guinea clearly shows the importance of such efforts. In China's Hainan island, we built a large community hall and housing to facilitate a focus point for technical education and presented it to the community.”