

TAIWAN PORTS GROUP SETS TOUGH ECO TARGETS

Taiwan International Ports Corporation (TIPC) is one of Asia's port sustainability front-runners. **Sam Whelan** finds out what's behind its success

Not content with achieving the European-led EcoPort certification for all of its ports in Taiwan last year – a qualification achieved by just one other gateway in all of Asia – in 2018 the state-owned port group embarked on a Greening Ports Action Plan to further advance its environmental goals.

According to Tsung-Hsun Tsai of TIPC's Occupational Safety Department, port sustainability is a long-running policy priority for the group. "The action plan covers all seven of TIPC's international commercial ports: Keelung, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Hualien, Taipei, Suao and Anping," he says. "It aims to improve port environment quality and hopes to elevate the quality of passenger cruise experience and the efficiency of cargo operation."

Indeed, TIPC's seven ports cover the full spectrum of commercial port activities, from container and bulk terminals to cruise and ferry operations. Last year TIPC handled 7.45 million TEU, 132 million tons of bulk cargo, and 1.4 million cruise and ferry passengers. Mr Tsai says the main environmental issues for TIPC are air quality, vehicle emissions, ship emissions, waste disposal, noise pollution and soil pollution.

"In order to avoid the occurrence of fugitive pollutants during loading and unloading operations, various air pollution prevention measures in the port area are being implemented, such as closed or covered loading and unloading facilities, sprinkler installations, the usage of fog guns, and establishment of free public car washing pools in the port area," he explains.

Noise pollution, on the other hand, is being tackled by establishing dedicated access roads to avoid overlapping traffic lanes between the TIPC port terminals and urban areas, as well as constructing isolated green belts and soundproof walls.

Energy saving is another key pillar in TIPC's sustainability action plan. The port group complies with government policies to implement energy savings in all office buildings, for example. Mr Tsai says this includes conserving water, electricity, fuel, and paper, and has resulted in annual savings of at least 3%.

However, perhaps the biggest sustainability issue facing TIPC at the moment – and ports worldwide – is helping shipping line



Photo: TIPC

“TIPC actively communicates with Taiwan EPA and strives to achieve a win-win situation for environmental protection and the interests of the industry

■ TIPC's seven ports cover the full spectrum of commercial port activities

customers manage the transition to lower vessel emissions, with the new IMO regulations on low-sulphur fuel coming into effect on 1 January 2020. TIPC's approach is to encourage ship deceleration during port entry and exit, installing shoreside Alternative Maritime Power (AMP) systems for harbour service ships, and aiding shipping lines with the early adoption of low-sulphur fuel.

This became a matter of urgency after Taiwan's Ministry of Transportation and Communications announced in July that from January 2019, foreign ships in Taiwan would be required to either use fuel with less than 0.5% sulphur by weight, or use an emission reduction device (such as scrubbers) with equivalent effect when entering Taiwan's ports – effectively bringing the IMO regulation forward by a full year.

In addition, Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) introduced the Air Pollution Prevention Act in August, which includes an air pollution control fee for ships. "The cost derived from the usage of low-sulphur fuel plus the air pollution control fee is expected to increase the operating costs for port related industries," says Mr Tsai. "TIPC proactively makes an effort to consult with the EPA so that the added fees can be reduced or exempted for ships using shore power facilities, thus encouraging the use of shore power and easing the financial pressure on liners. We also proposed that the funds raised from the collection of the new EPA ship fees should be invested exclusively for air pollution reduction measures within ports."

■ All of Taiwan's state-owned ports hold EcoPorts certification



Photo: TIPC