

JOINING THE CLUB

Supported by a growing number of Middle Eastern members, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) has ambitious plans to support the latest chapter of the industry's growth, explains regional director Alex Borg.

What is the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT)?

We're a global trade association that was established in 1919 for professionals in the supply chain and transport industry. There are currently 30,000 CILT members around the world, with our headquarters in the United Kingdom and branches in 30 different countries, including the likes of North America, Australia, Hong Kong, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

What are the core objectives of CILT?

The primary focus is providing our members with relevant and valued services, which also lead to higher standards within the supply chain and transport industry. It's important for people to adopt leading-edge thinking and best practice to push the industry forward, especially in these times of global uncertainty.

When did you establish a presence in the United Arab Emirates?

We launched a branch in Dubai around seven years ago to support a growing number of members that were based in this part of the world. The response was very encouraging, with industry figureheads such as Maurice Flanagan from Emirates Group and Jitendra Misra from Emarat Maritime offering their support. Later, in 2007, Emirates Group agreed to sponsor our main activities and provide a central office at Emirates Aviation College.



How many members have you attracted?

Since our launch in 2002, we have welcomed around 150 members in the United Arab Emirates, although this number continues to increase on a monthly basis. We have attracted a diverse collection of people from the shipping, transport and logistics industry and CILT is particularly proud to have His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and CEO of Emirates Group, as our patron in this country.

What are the advantages of CILT membership?

Our members have a unique source of support, knowledge and networking to assist their personal and professional development. We have four categories of membership and encourage people to progress from student membership to chartered fellows, which requires at least seven years of management experience.

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Are you working in competition with other trade associations?

On the contrary, we're planning to align our activities with other trade associations, such as the Supply Chain and Logistics Group (SCLG) and National Association of Freight Logistics (NAFL). A successful partnership has already been formed with Emirates Supply Chain Forum (ESCF) and we have entered discussions with the other groups too, so watch this space for updates.

Do you think the global recession will have an impact on your growth plans?

I am confident about developing our presence in this region, although it's important to have realistic expectations for the future. The Dubai Department of Economic Development (DED) hosted a seminar last month, where delegates were informed that the logistics industry is contributing 9% of Dubai's GDP at the moment. The government is pushing for this figure to reach 13%, which reinforces

the opportunities that lay ahead, both in the short-term and long-term. CILT wants to support this initiative and has embarked on a challenging programme to enhance its membership portfolio in the UAE and other Middle Eastern countries. We have also

launched a practical training programme, with short courses being offered to logistics professionals that are looking for recognised qualifications.

Does CILT have other development plans?

Yes, there are basically four stages in our future development strategy. At the first stage is a membership drive to attract more professionals from this field and make them a part of the CILT family. Second, we want to boost our range of professional courses, which are really needed in this market. Third, we will arrange a larger number of programmes and network groups. And finally, we want to expand into other countries within the GCC. In addition to Dubai, we have accredited a branch in Abu Dhabi and Oman, which are both functional. We are looking at Libya and Kuwait next, following by countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia. ■