

# An interview

with the **General Manager LPG**  
of **Oryx Energies** by **WLPGA**



**WLPGA:** BLAISE, PLEASE COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT ORYX ENERGIES AND ITS KEY ACTIVITIES?

**Blaise Edja:** Oryx Energies was formed from the merger of AOG's trading and downstream activities, and is one of the largest and longest-established independent providers of oil and gas products and services in sub-Saharan Africa.

We began in trading in 1987 and quickly realised the importance of taking products to the end user. Today, we are a fully-integrated energy platform, managing the value chain from product sourcing (through our trading arm), to storage and distribution to consumers, industry and maritime operations across over 20 countries in Africa.

Our trading arm sources the products, including for third parties, and operates a dedicated bunkering service for offshore customers. We have seven strategic storage terminals in West and East Africa, with a major new terminal under construction in Las Palmas on the main commercial route between Europe, West Africa and the Americas. And we are focusing on speciality products, including LP Gas, lubricants (with our own blending plants) and more recently bitumen.

Oryx Energies has been promoting LP Gas as a cleaner, more affordable and ecological energy alternative in sub-Saharan Africa for almost 15 years. We plan to invest over \$400 million in the next five years to expand our energy platform and a large proportion of that will be spent on developing LP Gas.

Oryx Energies is leveraging over 25 years of experience to help serve the energy needs of one of the world's fastest growing regions. Energy and infrastructure are fundamental to that growth.

**WLPGA:** WHAT IS YOUR ROLE WITHIN ORYX ENERGIES AND HOW DID YOUR CAREER PATH BRING YOU HERE?

**Blaise Edja:** As General Manager LPG, I am responsible for defining the global strategy of Oryx Energies' LP Gas business. This includes steering new businesses and agreeing on locations. I also support our affiliates in the development of their LP Gas businesses, particularly in the areas of marketing & sales, operations and competency development.

I have been involved in the LPG industry for eighteen years. I started as head of Total's LP Gas department in Côte d'Ivoire, before moving to Shell as General Manager Shell Gas (LPG) Côte d'Ivoire. I joined Oryx Oil & Gas (AOG's former downstream division) in February 2005, a few months after it purchased Shell's LP Gas business and assets in Côte d'Ivoire, which I was managing. I spent over six years as Managing Director of the three affiliates Oryx Oil & Gas had in Côte d'Ivoire, before moving to Geneva in 2011 to occupy the position of General Manager LP Gas for what has become Oryx Energies.

**WLPGA:** ORYX ENERGIES RECENTLY JOINED THE WLPGA INDUSTRY COUNCIL – COULD YOU EXPLAIN A LITTLE YOUR DECISION TO DO THIS AND THE BENEFITS YOU HOPE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP WILL BRING?

**Blaise Edja:** Oryx Energies' total LP Gas sales represented approximately 10% of total LP Gas consumption in sub-Saharan Africa last year. We plan to make substantial investments to further develop LP Gas in the region, with the objective of covering at least 30% of total LP Gas consumption in sub-Saharan Africa by 2017.

This is an ambitious program, which requires that the issues related to the development of LP Gas in Africa are properly addressed. Within this context, we believe that our membership of the Industry Council will give us the opportunity to interact closely with other leaders in the LP Gas industry and to promote the allocation of resources for the development of the industry in sub-Saharan Africa. Most LP Gas markets in the region are still at an early stage, despite the huge potential. We hope that the Industry Council will be able to influence the activities of the WLPGA to support LP Gas growth on the continent.

In addition, the Industry Council represents the highest level of membership in the WLPGA and is restricted to a limited number of organisations that are considered to be leaders in the sector. Oryx Energies is one of those leaders and we feel therefore that we should take an active part in the development of the LP Gas industry.

**WLPGA:** WE HEAR THAT ORYX ENERGIES RECENTLY ACQUIRED THE LP GAS BUSINESS OF BP SOUTH AFRICA – COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THIS AND LET US KNOW WHAT YOUR PLANS ARE FOR THIS IMPORTANT ACQUISITION?

**Blaise Edja:** Yes, Oryx Energies recently agreed to buy the LP Gas business of BP South Africa. We expect to complete the deal during the third quarter of 2013. As we are between signing and completion, I cannot say too much, but I can say that the business has national coverage with annual LP Gas sales of approximately 60,000 tonnes and represents over 45 employees in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and Durban.

We are very happy to have been selected as the preferred buyer of this major LP Gas business in a key market like South Africa. It is an important step in the roll out of our LP Gas strategy and we plan to invest strongly to meet the energy demand across the South African economy.

**WLPGA:** WHAT MAIN CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU SEE IN THE VERY EXTENSIVE REGION YOU COVER?

**Blaise Edja:** I believe that there is an enormous potential for LP Gas consumption in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The safety and environmental issues surrounding the continued and extensive use of firewood, charcoal and kerosene in the region need to be addressed in a sustainable and affordable manner, and I am convinced that LP Gas is one of the solutions.

The main challenges we face are: lack of infrastructure, product availability, affordability and the lack of awareness of LP Gas as simple and clean energy alternative. Find competent people for business of LP Gas in some countries may also be a challenge. We need to overcome these challenges to succeed in any market. This is why we carry out in-depth market surveys before entering a market and we are always prepared to manage the challenges I described above. Things don't always work out the way we planned, but our LP Gas business is growing well and these are exciting markets.

For more details please visit [www.oryxenergies.com](http://www.oryxenergies.com)  
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