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Mark van Kalles
Contracts Director
Hargreaves Industrial Services

Constructing Further Growth in Asia

As business soars, British industrial services company Hargreaves launched a subsidiary in Hong Kong to meet the rising demand for scaffolding and construction projects

Hargreaves, a comprehensive industrial services company listed in the UK, came to Hong Kong in 2012 and since then the company has been exposed to enormous opportunity in the city. With the business growth over the last six years, Hargreaves recently established Access Services HK Ltd, a subsidiary that specialises in construction and scaffolding projects.

According to Mark van Kalles, Contracts Director, Hong Kong as Hargreaves' first foothold in Asia has provided them a secure and promising environment for business growth. “The market in Hong Kong is very compatible; the legal system and contract law are also comparable with that of the UK,” he said.

“There is a large degree of familiarity of how business is done here compared to the UK,” van Kalles continued, “it makes setting up in Hong Kong very easy and we are looking to using Hong Kong as a hub to expand in Asia.”

He added that the transparency of tendering and licensing procedures with bilingual details makes it easy for foreign companies to bid for projects.

In Hong Kong, Hargreaves mainly offers engineering and maintenance projects. Van Kalles remarked that all of the services they offer in the UK headquarters such as property development, logistics and renewable energy projects are potential opportunities that they can bring to Hong Kong.

In shortly seven months since its launch, over 70 staff have been employed for the projects by Access Services, which includes management staff, engineering project managers as well as general labour. Most of the staff are recruited locally. “We are fortunate that there is a really good talent pool in Hong Kong,” van Kalles said, “when we have new projects, we can be confident that we can recruit people here without relying too much on our headquarters.”

Hargreaves' next goal is to diversify their offerings in Hong Kong and expand regionally. “We have already established a good portfolio here to prove our project quality and capability,” van Kalles said, “we will use this as a base to explore other markets and industries.”

He added, “the Belt and Road Initiative is going to make an impact in the industry, especially when we are looking at exporting our services to Mainland China and Southeast Asia.”

Since Hargreaves was set up in 2012, InvestHK has provided assistance in different levels such as publicity and advice on visa application. “We started talking to InvestHK six years ago, and we are still talking today. There is a role of them not just during the set up stage, but also helping along a company's growth,” van Kalles concluded.

Hargreaves Industrial Services

- Headquartered in Durham in the UK, the company has over 2,000 employees globally
- Deliver projects and services in the infrastructure, energy and property sectors in the UK, while in Hong Kong the company currently focuses on engineering and maintenance work
- Its subsidiary Access Services HK Ltd was established in last September to provide construction and scaffolding projects in the region

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