



People, skills and proactive maintenance in a changing wind sector

Donatas Zeniauskas, Managing Director, Marius Dirvonskis, HSE Specialist, and Andrejus Solovjovas, Technical Project Manager at DZ Projects, discuss how workforce development, rope access expertise, safety and proactive maintenance are shaping service delivery as Europe's wind fleet matures.

PES: Welcome to PES Wind. Before we get into the technical details, how would you describe DZ Projects' journey as the European wind sector has matured over recent years?

Donatas Zeniauskas: The company has grown alongside a sector that has become more mature, international and demanding. We have progressed from individual technical assignments to coordinating multidisciplinary teams across several European markets, while integrating training, safety and operational processes.

Growth is not simply about delivering more projects; it is about creating consistent standards and dependable teams wherever we operate.

PES: The business operates across multiple European markets, each with its own site conditions and expectations. How does that variety shape the way your teams approach projects on the ground?

Andrejus Solovjovas: Every site has its own rules, turbine types and environmental conditions. Before mobilisation, we review client requirements, local regulations, project risks and scope. Our teams must adapt while maintaining the same safety and quality standards. Working across different markets creates continuous learning: we prepare carefully, communicate clearly and apply lessons from one project to the next.

PES: Blade repair and inspections are often seen as reactive activities, but where do you see the biggest opportunities for genuinely proactive maintenance? Are there recurring issues that could realistically be addressed much earlier in a turbine's lifecycle?

AS: One of the biggest opportunities is better maintenance data collection and analysis, including AI-driven tools. Large volumes of operational and inspection data can reveal

patterns in recurring issues such as blade stress points, leading-edge erosion and coating degradation.

Understanding how these develop over time can help identify potential failures earlier and make inspection and maintenance more targeted, shifting the focus from reacting to damage towards addressing known risks sooner.

PES: Rope access is a defining part of your service offering. In turbine environments, what tends to distinguish a capable rope access team from a truly high-performing one?

AS: A capable team has the qualifications to complete the task. A high-performing team adds trust, communication, discipline and continuous learning. Its members understand not only rope access, but also the technical scope, rescue arrangements and one another's responsibilities. They plan carefully, communicate changes immediately and maintain quality under demanding conditions. Individual skill matters, but team coordination makes the decisive difference.

PES: Safety is frequently discussed in terms of procedures and certifications, but day-to-day behaviour matters just as much. How is that mindset reinforced on site, especially when time pressure or weather windows create challenging conditions?

Marius Dirvonskis: Safety culture is built through everyday decisions. Daily toolbox talks review planned work, weather and changing site risks, while every team member is encouraged to speak openly. Experienced technicians lead by example: no deadline is more important than safety. Everyone has the authority to stop work when conditions are unsafe. Under pressure, the ability to reassess and make the safe decision together is essential.

PES: Workforce retention is a challenge across the sector, yet DZP has achieved relatively low turnover. What do you believe encourages people to stay and grow with the company?

DZ: People stay when they feel heard, respected and able to plan their future. We maintain direct communication with our technicians and listen to their feedback on working conditions, equipment and project organisation. We also aim to provide continuity throughout the year rather than treating people as short-term resources. Stability, honest communication and opportunities to develop skills and responsibility create the trust needed for long-term cooperation.

PES: Experience is critical in turbine maintenance. How do you balance bringing new technicians into the business while preserving the practical knowledge of seasoned specialists?

AS: New technicians are integrated through structured training and supervised practical work. Experienced specialists pass on site knowledge, judgement and safe working habits that cannot be learned from a certificate alone. Our training centre, Vertikalis, allows us to use quieter winter periods for development and preparation. On site, we combine different experience levels so knowledge is transferred through hands-on work.

PES: Continuous training is often easier to promise than deliver. How do you keep skills current without disconnecting teams from real-world site conditions?

AS: Training must remain connected to real situations on site. We combine formal certification with practical exercises, lessons from projects and field feedback, adapting methods to different learning needs. The objective is not training for its own sake, but

A turbine can deliver long-term value only when it can operate safely and reliably.



Donatas Zeniauskas

ensuring technicians can apply their knowledge confidently when weather, equipment or site conditions change.

PES: As Europe's wind fleet continues to age, maintenance strategies are shifting. How is that change shaping the conversations you're having with operators today?

AS: Operators increasingly understand that ageing assets require planned inspection and timely intervention. The discussion is moving from completing isolated repairs towards maintaining availability, extending asset life and preventing larger failures. Manufacturers and operators generally maintain their turbines responsibly, but access to experienced technicians remains a major constraint. Planning the workforce and securing the right expertise are therefore becoming as important as planning the technical scope itself.

PES: As operators look for greater continuity in maintenance and service delivery, where do you believe a specialist service provider can add the greatest long-term value?

DZ: Our greatest value is continuity: stable teams, experienced technicians and honest communication. When clients work with technicians who already understand their turbines, procedures and expectations, less time is lost rebuilding knowledge at the start of every assignment. Trust is created through consistent delivery, not slogans. A long-term service partner should help the client anticipate challenges, mobilise the right expertise and maintain the same standards from one project to the next.

PES: Innovation clearly plays a role in supporting operators over the long term. How do you assess which new tools, methods or technologies genuinely enhance safety, quality or efficiency?



Andrejus Solovjovas

AS: We take a practical, step-by-step approach. A new tool or technology must solve a real problem and demonstrate value under real site conditions, not only in a presentation. We test new methods carefully, assess their effect on safety, quality and efficiency, and listen closely to the technicians using them. Digital tools and AI can support planning, reporting and analysis, but their adoption should be evidence-based, with clear human oversight.

PES: You are also involved in sports sponsorships and education initiatives. What motivates that wider engagement, and what role do you see for service companies in strengthening community and industry connections?

DZ: A company is part of the community in which its people live. In Klaipėda, basketball club Neptūnas brings the city together, and supporting it is one way of contributing to that shared identity. We also organise the annual DZP Family Day, bringing employees, families and the wider community together.

There is also a natural connection with our industry, where teamwork, discipline and people supporting one another are equally important. Education and community engagement help young people see the opportunities behind the turbines on the horizon.

PES: Looking ahead over the next five to 10 years, what assumptions about wind turbine maintenance in Europe do you think the industry may need to rethink?

DZ: One assumption the industry may need to rethink is that maintenance capacity will naturally keep pace with the expansion of Europe's wind fleet. Skilled technicians cannot be created instantly. They require structured training, supervised experience and continuous professional development.



Marius Dirvonskis

Maintenance capacity and workforce competence should be considered from the earliest planning stages, alongside construction targets, technology and finance.

PES: From your experience, where do you see the human element remaining essential, even as tools, training methods and processes evolve?

AS: The human element remains essential wherever judgement, accountability and quality control are required. Drones, robotics and AI can collect information, support decisions and perform selected tasks, but people still define the standard, interpret unusual conditions and verify the outcome.

In turbine maintenance, experienced technicians also respond to changing weather and site conditions that do not always fit a predefined scenario. Technology should extend human capability, not remove professional responsibility.

PES: Finally, if you could give one piece of advice to new operators entering the European wind market today, what would it be? What might they not immediately realise but could make all the difference?

DZ: Plan maintenance from the beginning. Building a turbine is only the first stage of a long asset lifecycle. Reliable performance depends on a clear inspection strategy, access to skilled people, realistic maintenance windows and effective cooperation between the owner, manufacturer and service provider.

Choose partners carefully and treat safety, quality and maintenance capacity as part of the investment from day one. A turbine can deliver long-term value only when it can operate safely and reliably.

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