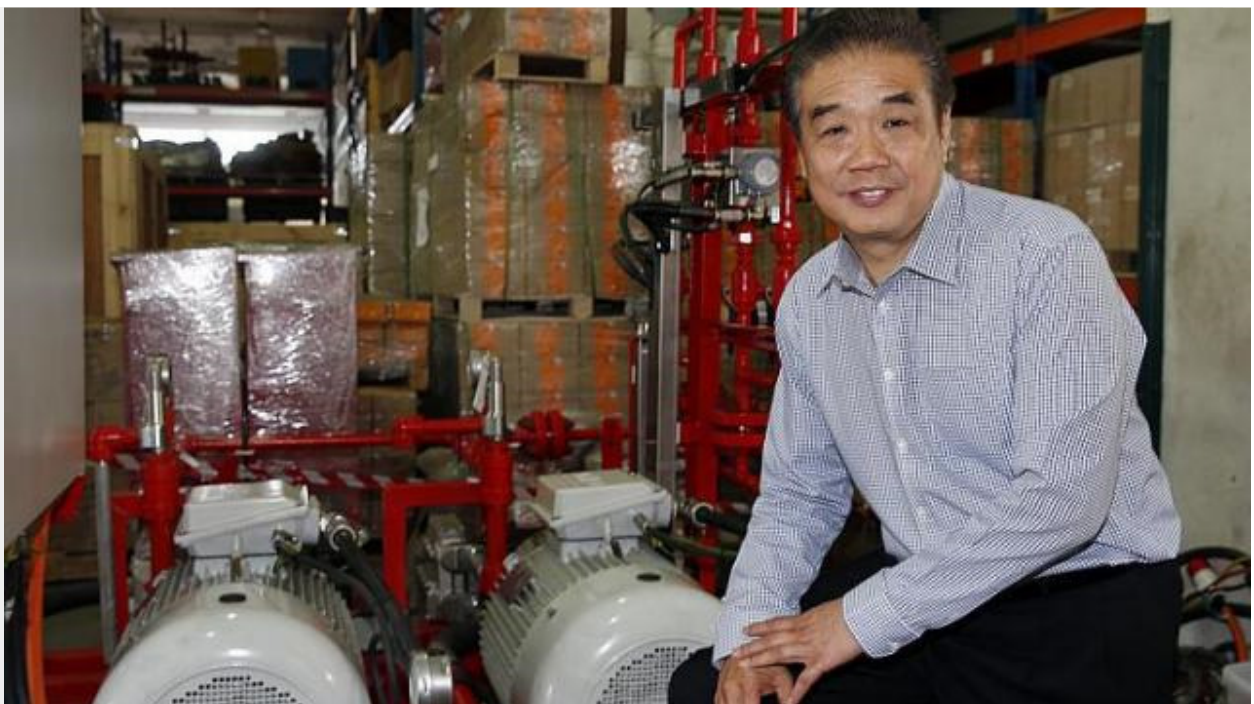


Temasek unit gives local firm a shot in the arm

Investment in Deluge Fire Protection will allow it to expand further overseas

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MD Vincent Cheo of Deluge, which specialises in designing and installing fire-protection systems such as sprinklers, said the investment could help the firm double its overseas revenue in the next three to five years. -- ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

By Michelle Lee

A UNIT of Temasek Holdings has invested an undisclosed amount in local construction firm Deluge Fire Protection to allow it to expand further overseas.

The capital injection by Heliconia, which focuses on helping local small and medium-sized enterprises, will underpin the firm's expansion into Indonesia and the Philippines amid rapid urbanisation across the region.

The company has already moved abroad with offices in Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, along with a pre-fabrication factory in Johor.

Deluge managing director Vincent Cheo said the investment could help the firm double its overseas revenue in the next three to five years.

The company, which employs 200 permanent and 700 contract staff, specialises in designing and installing fire-protection systems such as sprinklers in a wide range of sectors, including residential, commercial, aviation and petrochemical.

It is the only private fire-protection specialist to be given unlimited tendering opportunities for public works projects by the Building and Construction Authority. One of its recent projects is a \$20-million contract to supply and build fire systems for the Sengkang General and Community hospitals, which are due for completion in 2018.

Mr Cheo told The Straits Times that the outlook in the region was "positive", as other countries increasingly adopt tougher fire-safety regulations.

"Fire-safety regulations in Singapore and in the region all follow international standards...but the problem is enforcement," he noted.

"I think Singapore enforces them more than other countries but the region will become more stringent, and there'll be more opportunities to expand overseas."

He added that Heliconia realised that the firm was well-placed to grow overseas: "We're one of the leading fire-protection companies in Singapore. We definitely have this potential for growth in the region and we've already established bases overseas."

Mr Cheo said the Heliconia capital "will help us to expand regionally. But it's not just the funds we're looking at, but also their network, the fact that we will have access to more regional opportunities".

Heliconia chief executive Derek Lau said in a statement yesterday: "Vincent has done very well in building the Deluge brand by focusing on technology, design, and performance delivery for customers.

"The challenge is in scaling up the operation in a much bigger way to capitalise on the regional urbanisation and infrastructure-development trends."

Deluge's full-year revenue to March 31 last year was around \$100 million. It declined to disclose what percentage of this comes from overseas operations.

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