

# A Lifetime of *E*NGINEERING *A*CHIEVEMENTS



**Adolf Feizlmayr**

Co-founder of ILF Consulting Engineers

We interview  
Adolf Feizlmayr  
– one of the  
two founders of  
ILF Consulting  
Engineers,  
which offers  
consulting and  
engineering  
services  
worldwide.

**M**r Feizlmayr was born in 1937 and was raised on a farm in Upper Austria. He studied petroleum engineering at the Montanuniversität Leoben, Austria. At this time, in 1956, CO2 emissions and climate protection were no issues at all. On the contrary, the industry was concerned that the oil reserves would be exhausted within the next 40 years, or before the end of the century.

After completing his studies in 1961, Mr Feizlmayr joined the Transalpine Pipeline (TAL) in 1965, which was the most challenging crude oil pipeline project in the world at the time. At 29, he became assistant project manager for the Austrian section of TAL within Bechtel, which acted as Owner's Engineer.

There, he met Pius Lässer, a professional civil engineer who founded his company in 1967. Two years later, Mr Feizlmayr joined him to set up Ingenieurgesellschaft Lässer-Feizlmayr (ILF) in Innsbruck, Austria and Munich, Germany. Together they built up the company which today trades as ILF Consulting Engineers.

As an engineer, Mr Feizlmayr has been involved in all large-scale projects of ILF in his field of expertise. From 2016 to 2019, he was Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the ILF Group.

In recognition of his lifetime achievement as a pipeline engineer, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from his Alma Mater University in Leoben and the honorary ring of the Technical University of Munich (TUM). He's set up the Adolf Feizlmayr Foundation to support talented and dedicated students in technical universities and to promote science and research on climate protection.

Mr Feizlmayr still enjoys offering advice to ILF's engineers. We speak with him about his long career and his company over the next pages.

### **ILF Consulting Engineers has been in operation for over 50 years. What inspired you to start this company, and how has it evolved over the years?**

The origin of ILF is the Transalpine Pipeline project. This was when I met Pius Lässer and when we decided to test our ability to cooperate and quickly build up pipeline engineering competence in a very challenging project as members of the Bechtel organisation.

The idea to start an engineering company was on my mind long before the TAL project. But the TAL experience gave the idea the decisive push. The main driver for this decision was to work as a creative professional engineer on challenging projects and have the strong ambition to execute them excellently.

Our first projects as a startup company have been in the business area of oil and then natural gas pipelines. Then we wanted to expand our portfolio to civil infrastructure. As we had no references we prepared

## Adolf Feizlmayr

### Co-founder of ILF Consulting Engineers

on our own initiative and cost something like a concept study for the 14-kilometre-long Arlberg road tunnel. And we offered to take responsibility as the Owner's Engineer for the execution of the complete project. This courageous approach was new in Austria.

The Arlberg road tunnel became a great success for ILF when it was opened in 1978. It was the first time in which we implemented our vision to execute a large project in-house, covering all disciplines.

We applied the same principle of business development for the Riyadh Water Transmission System foreseen to transport 830,000 m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water per day over 460 km from the Gulf to the capital of Saudi Arabia. We developed an innovative concept for this pipeline and won the competition without any reference project as a newcomer in the Saudi market. This lighthouse project of ILF became a great success too.

The two examples show that especially in the start-up and pioneer phase of an engineering company, you need initiative but also creativity, courage and convincing power.

The Riyadh Water Transmission System was opened in 1983, which I consider the end of ILF's pioneer phase.

## How was the further buildup of the company after the Riyadh Water Transmission System opened?

We put all of our efforts into satisfying our clients with our work for ongoing projects. At the same time, we continuously expanded our portfolio

by using existing competencies to enter into neighbouring fields and to adjust them to the needs of the market.

A typical example in this respect is our move into climate change mitigation several years ago, offering sustainable energy system consultancy and engineering services for all kinds of renewable energy projects including hydrogen plants.

We went to foreign countries by acquiring projects and used them to establish a local presence. A typical example is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where we've been engaged continuously since 1977 when we signed the contract for the Riyadh Water Transmission project.

Today, ILF is offering its clients a very wide portfolio of international expertise and a strong local presence with 45 office locations worldwide.

## What are the core values that have guided ILF Consulting Engineers throughout the years and how have they contributed to its success?

Our vision is to be a leader in improving the quality of life around the globe and our values include respect, honesty, reliability and fairness. We believe in engineering excellence, effective cooperation and sustainable solutions.

Looking back, the key to the success story of ILF, in addition to all these visions, values and beliefs, was the unshakable partnership of the two founders of the company which continued for over 50 years in their active roles and still continues to this day as a great friendship.

We have always subordinated our personal interests to the interest of ILF.

I am very happy to see that the next generation believes in the same principles under the leadership of Klaus Lässer as the CEO, who strongly promotes the ONE ILF concept.

### **As senior adviser of ILF Consulting Engineers, what role do you play?**

As I no longer have any operational responsibilities, I can now concentrate on the following areas:

#### **Competence Management**

Each engineering company has a matrix organisation. In the case of the ILF Group, the vertical structure consists of some 40 individual companies and the horizontal structure represents our competence areas.

The 2500 staff available in this matrix represent a great potential for intellectual and professional power. The extraordinary challenge for the leadership of ILF is to convert it into technical and economic success. This requires optimum cooperation in the best spirit of ONE ILF. As I am deeply convinced that an essential element of such optimum cooperation is adequate competence management, I'm fully dedicated to fostering its development.

#### **Climate Change Mitigation**

I not only promote this business area with great future potential for ILF but also as an engineer, I feel obliged to proactively provide my knowledge and expertise to help prevent a climate catastrophe.

#### **Philanthropic Work**

I've always enjoyed working with talented and dedicated young engineers and I am convinced

that one of their major tasks for the future will be to work on climate change mitigation in order to save our planet.

By combining both aspects, it was a logical step to set up the Adolf Feizlmayr Foundation to support talented and dedicated students at technical universities and to promote science and research on climate protection. I've also established close cooperation between the foundation and ILF to the benefit of both parties.

### **What do you see as the future of ILF Consulting Engineers and how do you plan to continue evolving the brand and its services in the coming years?**

In the future, there will be a huge workload for engineering companies, especially for the transformation of the global energy system, to mitigate climate change and to adapt to it, as the speed of transformation is too low. In addition, I expect sufficient opportunities in most of our other business areas.

I believe that ILF has a bright future if we take advantage of the full potential of our great staff. This requires the right mindset of ambition, optimum cooperation in the spirit of ONE ILF supported by adequate competence management and strong leadership.

With this approach, ILF will satisfy its clients by engineering excellence and will further evolve its brand and services in the years to come.

**[www.ilf.com](http://www.ilf.com)**