If the downturn of recent years has taught company executives anything, it’s that they can’t always rely on the same old strategies.

That’s certainly true for the companies behind infrastructure and energy project – at a time when so much is riding on these deals across the EMEA region, global financial problems mean that some banks have all but left the market. Instead, companies must be willing to consider new sources of funding to keep their transactions on track.

It’s a problem that the team at Taylor-DeJongh, an investment bank specialising in energy, oil and gas and infrastructure projects, knows well. It’s also a big opportunity for the bank, which has carved a niche for itself as an adviser happy to help clients step outside of their comfort zones.

Earlier this year Terry Newendorp, the bank’s chairman and CEO, told EMEA Finance that in Africa, for example, this approach was reaping rewards.

“One of the reasons we had a lot of activity on the African continent in 2011 was that people couldn’t necessarily go to their usual banker and expect to be able to get their deal funded or even get much hope of a club being put together,” Newendorp said.

“Consequently they needed to think outside the box when it came to putting together the capital required. That’s our strength – we don’t do plain vanilla PPP or plain vanilla corporate finance. We do difficult oil and gas and natural resources transactions that require some combination of non-traditional funding, political risk insurance, backstops from official government agencies, and being able to blend all that together.”

Now the firm has named Ibrahim Mardam-Bey, an entrepreneur, financier and business developer with global experience in investment banking and Islamic banking, as its group president. His appointment gives a bank already eager to step off the beaten path even more options for broadening its reach.

Adapt and adopt

Mardam-Bey previously sat on Taylor-DeJongh’s advisory board, so knows the business and its team well. Speaking to EMEA Finance shortly after his appointment is announced, he says a new niche for the bank had become evident in recent years.

“The interesting thing about Taylor-DeJongh is that it’s a 30-year old specialist in energy and infrastructure that traditionally had done business with very large oil and gas companies – its legacy lay with large projects and transactions,” he says.

“I thought there was an opportunity to take that and widen the horizon to mid-cap companies and SMEs that, post-financial crisis, were really in a difficult position because traditional banks were not lending.”

Working between the bank’s offices in London, Washington and Dubai, Mardam-Bey now has particular hopes to boost Taylor-DeJongh’s standing in the Islamic finance markets.

“Islamic finance is liquidity looking for assets – and oil and gas are assets that Middle Eastern investors understand and are comfortable with,” he says, adding: “The industry is young but it’s beginning to mature so the growing pains are being overcome. From a legal and regulatory stance it’s improving and being standardised… You’ll see UK and US companies tapping this market by adapting and adopting structures that give them access to this kind of liquidity.”