

SUBSEA 7 AND SEEBYTE JOIN TO DEVELOP NEXT GENERATION AUV

Two world leading companies in their own respective fields, Subsea 7 and SeeByte, have joined forces to develop the next generation of Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) for the offshore oil and gas industry.

The project will see the development of the first truly autonomous vehicle capable of both inspection and light intervention in an offshore environment.

SeeByte Ltd, the cutting edge software company providing solutions for improved awareness and robot autonomy, and Subsea 7, one of the world's leading subsea engineering, construction and technology companies, aim to provide the offshore oil and gas industry with a new concept of autonomous inspection and intervention vehicle. The vehicle, deployed from a host facility, will be capable of inspecting risers, pipelines, moorings and other structures and general visual inspection.

Docking data exchange and light intervention activities will also be inherent features of the vehicle design.

The project will be executed in collaboration with BP and Chevron, two of the world's leading energy companies. The multi-year project will entail building the prototype vehicle, carrying out initial onshore trials and then full offshore operation trials.

This new generation of AUV will significantly change the way in which offshore inspection and intervention activities are carried out and has the potential to dramatically reduce costs by removing the need for a dedicated support vessel.

"The project will benefit from SeeByte's experience in automating the control process of underwater vehicles. This ranges from SeeTrack Offshore, our current offering to the ROV industry, a true Dynamic Positioning system that simplifies the ROV control process and helps save on training and operational costs, to our experience in previous AUV development programmes, including the world record breaking Autotracker programme that demonstrated autonomous pipeline inspection over 22 km and was carried out in partnership with Subsea 7 and BP," said Dr. Joseba Tena, Sales & Marketing Manager of

SeeByte.

"Our involvement in this programme results from Subsea 7's ambition to be the Subsea Partner of Choice in the subsea engineering, construction and technology sector and is underpinned by our reputation as a pioneer of ROV and remote intervention technology. In order to meet our customers' evolving needs, Subsea 7 is committed to developing new cost-effective solutions to meet the challenges of subsea oil and gas field development and maintenance activities in increasingly deep water and remote locations. We believe that our new generation of AUV being developed with SeeByte and with the backing of BP and Chevron, will be a key component of this strategy," said John Mair Global Technology Manager for Subsea 7.

"BP has long supported the development of advanced AUV technology and we believe the development of this prototype autonomous inspection/intervention vehicle will be a key next step," said David Saul, BP, Senior Subsea Engineer.

"Successful development will allow us to apply the technology across a far wider range of challenging subsea applications, including deep water subsea process, bringing both significant operational benefits and cost reductions."

"This collaboration seeks to accelerate the efficient use of autonomous vehicle technology for offshore operations. It represents a fresh approach to fostering innovation in the offshore industry," said Alexis Denz, Subsea Engineer for Chevron.

"Our vision is that this technology will meet our future inspection and intervention requirements and eventually reduce the need for intervention vessels for routine inspection and intervention work."

The plan to develop the next generation of AUV was announced at Subsea 08 in February.

The project is expected to take a number of years to complete. At this time, a completion date is unclear however H₂Ops will keep an eye on the progress of this important project and keep you posted of any developments and results of the trials.

Subsea Tieback Forum 2008 - Texas

This year's Subsea Tieback Forum & Exhibition, is being held at the Moody Gardens Hotel & Conference Center in Galveston, Texas from the 3-5 March. Over 2000 people are expected to attend this meeting with 150 companies exhibiting.

You only have to take a look at the advisory board to see that this show means business, as it is made up of 26 names from the top subsea companies worldwide.

This really is a must for those in the subsea industry with all of the leading names attending. This year's theme is "Subsea is here, the game is changing" and there are a range of fascinating papers being presented including, Keynote presentation from Robert Patterson of Shell called 'Subsea is Here', industry giants, sharing their challenges

& experiences in previous subsea projects, news on the Tui area development - New Zealand's first subsea development and much, much more...

If all of this is not enough reason for you to attend, then maybe the chance to win your own Harley Davidson will be! This year delegates will have the chance to register to win a 2008 Harley Davidson. The winner will be announced on the last day of the event.



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