

Editorial

On behalf of the entire Hydro International team, I wish you a healthy and prosperous New Year. And to those readers who celebrate the start of a new year on a date other than 1st January, our best wishes are meant for you too, both now and then. As Hydro International is mailed to 170+ countries, I realise that this may pertain to quite a number of you.

Technology is moving ahead and with it the possibilities that affect our profession. This coming year will bring more visible steps in the GNSS Galileo project. In the meantime, for a glance ahead visit http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/index_en.htm. Technological progress is also occurring in equipment like Multi-beam Echo Sounders (MBES) and in motion sensors. It looks as if some HOs are falling behind in making use of the opportunities provided by the present MBES technology. This may be due to budget constraints or uncertainty about the reliability of results. If this latter is the case, special attention should be paid to this issue of our magazine, which features the present state of technology as it emerges from comparative testing over common survey ground. The presented comparison is based on surveys carried out in the time leading up to the Shallow Survey Conference 2005 (September, Plymouth UK), when manufacturers of motion-sensor and MBES equipment were invited to take part in the study. Five motion-sensor manufacturers and six MBES manufacturers participated – “sticking their heads out, so to speak” by providing equipment and technicians to do the surveys. In presenting you with the results of these comparisons we asked the UKHO (considered an objective institution) to compile a report for publication. Since the equipment used for the MBES surveys varied in technical capacity and was employed under differing circumstances (sea-state, survey speed. etc.) we offered each participating manufacturer some space to comment on the report.

I would like to thank both UKHO and MCA, organisers of Shallow Survey 2005, for their co-operation in writing the report. My thanks go also to the manufacturers for their co-operation in the study. We managed to put together a special Product Comparison giving field information on the present state of technology. I encourage the industry to participate in future comparison tests. Note: The planned Product Survey on ROVs will now be published in our March issue.

We are aware that the articles on these comparison tests (with another coming on Lidar surveys of the common dataset area) might very well generate questions and discussion. Hydro International gladly facilitates this and has opened a discussion forum at its website www.hydro-international.com. The authors of the papers from the comparative study had to limit themselves as to length of text, and size and number of pictures; if we had not done so, you would now have in your hands a centimetres-thick magazine! We intend to post additional information and pictures on our website.

Another advance in technology is digital processing technology, which also helps to make manageable the data explosion caused by a rapidly increasing rate of data collection. The conclusion to be drawn from all this progress: lots of interesting subjects to keep you up to date with this coming year.