

# Recession Over

Reports over the past few months have heralded the end of recession in more and more countries. There has even been news of modest economic growth. Profits are posted in unexpected sectors, like car manufacturing and finance. And now, despite reduced energy demands brought about by the global recession and curtailment in OPEC production, energy analyst Douglas-Westwood predicts that drilling and work-over expenditure across the Middle East & North Africa region has the potential to increase by more than USD10 billion (almost a third) to reach USD27.9 billion by 2014.

But how did the recession affect a niche market like hydrography? You, our readers, you know the true answer to that question. Walking around at conferences and trade-shows I've asked people how their company was doing; did they feel the recession, had it changed business? Some replied that anyone who said it was not affecting their business was simply lying. Others showed optimism. Some pointed to the long-term contracts in the offshore sector that had helped the business stay strong. But new long-term contracts have to be made. Does this mean that while the recession is over in some parts of the world, it's not yet over for you?

Often blame was laid at the door of the media, and since we on Hydro international are part of that, I'd like to buck the trend by saying yes, the recession is over and we look forward to a new year that will bring growth and a new kind of recovery.

Judging from the number of conferences and attendees, I'd say business is going well. In this issue we are presenting not one, but four conference reports by readers, to be found in our 'We Visited for You' slot on page 34. First, we have pleasure in publishing a report on the Third International ECDIS Conference and Exhibition held in Singapore at the end of October. Co-organised by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and the UK Hydrographic Office, it was not to be missed. The show was attended by more than three hundred visitors from 29 countries, and in several respects differed from your typical professional conference on maritime navigation!

As a contrast, we also report on the huge Oceans'09 conference held earlier in October in Biloxi, USA, welcoming no fewer than 1,400 attendees, 163 exhibitors and 33 student posters from 35 countries. Also included this month is a report from the small, one-day Autumn Symposium hosted by the Southern Region of the UK Hydrographic Society, which zoomed in on the important issue of the marine component of spatial data infrastructure (SDI) in relation to the INfrastructure for SPatial InfoRmation (INSPIRE directive): a matter of great European significance. The last report we present is on the second East Asia Hydrographic Symposium and Exhibition that was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

A report from Hydro'09, this year's International Federation of Hydrographic Society annual conference, hosted by the Hydrographic Society of South Africa in November in Cape Town will appear in our next issue. If you can't wait that long, do check out our website! I'd say business is booming in the hydrography niche!