

Remotely Controlled USV Undertakes Survey Work for Wind Farm



In a first for the offshore wind sector, a vessel remotely controlled from shore took to the sea off Suffolk (UK) over the weekend to undertake survey work for Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm, a joint venture between SSE Renewables and innogy, a German energy company. The XO-450 Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV), owned and operated by UK-based XOCEAN, carried out seabed surveys on

seven of the turbines at the 140-turbine wind farm, located 23 kilometres off the UK coast.

The unmanned vessel is around the size of an average car (4.5 metres) and half its weight (750kg) and can be monitored and controlled 24/7 via a satellite connection by a team at an on-shore control centre. Throughout the survey, the data collected was monitored from shore in real-time by experts located in the UK, to validate data collection before the vessel departed the work locations. This demonstrates the highly flexible and collaborative nature of this new technology, enabling industry experts to have direct access to real-time data, from any location, according to the company.

Ultra-low Emissions

XOCEAN's USVs offer significant benefits including safety with operators remaining onshore, efficiency with 24/7 operations and environmental with ultra-low emissions which together leads to significant economic savings.

Jeremy Williamson, SSE Renewables Head of Operations, said: "We are constantly looking for innovative ways in which we can operate our fleet of renewable assets.



XOCEAN Control Room

"XOCEAN's vessel will allow us to carry out our work in a more efficient, and most importantly for SSE Renewables and our partners innogy, in the safest way possible. We're really interested to see how this sort of work can help improve our industry and look forward to working with XOCEAN in future."

The 500MW offshore wind farm has been in operation since 2012, generating enough low-carbon renewable energy each year to power the equivalent of over 400,000 UK homes.

www.xocean.com.