

Unprecedented Growth

The offshore - oil & gas and renewables - industry is still very much growing, the outlook is still bearish and will be for the coming years. The fact is that new oil fields are being discovered – the Dutch government recently announced the possible discovery of oil & gas in the most northern part of the Dutch EEZ of the North Sea worth billions of euros, while at the same time a huge offshore wind farm is being built in the IJsselmeer, near the former island of Urk, with 86 huge wind turbines with a tip height of between 150 and 200 metres. Some 30 kilometres to the west, at the Enclosure Dam, which closes off the former Zuiderzee (now IJsselmeer) from the North Sea, experiments with tidal energy power are in preparation, whereas even further north west, at the Orkney islands on the Scottish coast, tidal energy is already being generated. Hydrography has played a role in all of these projects. Enough reason to pay special attention in this issue of Hydro International to the offshore industry at large and the role hydrography plays in supporting it. Magnus Wettle, Knut Hartmann and Thomas Heege describe the use of satellite-derived mapping and monitoring technologies for the oil & gas sector in their article [Space-borne technologies for the O&G sector](#) and we [interviewed Jim Davis, senior vice president of Teledyne Technologies](#), one of the biggest players in the world, building environmental monitoring systems, marine sensors and autonomous underwater vehicles. According to Davis, hydrography is vital in creating economic growth in the marine domain: “The offshore oil and gas industry is expected to double its expenditure on subsea hardware over the next five years. The building of off-coast LNG terminals for liquefaction and regasification is accelerating. Offshore renewable energy projects are growing at an unprecedented rate as renewables are expected to surpass gas-based power generation by 2016.” These developments are not just taking place in the North Sea and surrounding estuaries, as described above. No, more and more coastal states all over the globe seek to exploit their offshore resources, whether that be hydrocarbons or minerals, and everywhere hydrography comes into play to define what is beneath a nation's territorial waters and to chart their exclusive economic zones and continental shelf extensions over which jurisdiction is claimed in accordance with the UN's Law of the Sea. It's good to know that chances for hydrography will be plentiful in the coming years, irrespective of whether carbon fuels will continue to dominate the market or new, alternative energy sources will be found – because either way it looks like the solution for the world's craving for energy will come from offshore sources.

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