

AUV Contract to Monitor Munitions in the Baltic Sea



OceanServer Technology, Canada, has recently delivered an Iver AUV for the MODUM project supported under the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme. The Iver AUV is equipped with high-resolution sidescan sonar, a magnetometer and a full suite of environmental sensors utilising the YSI Sonde 6600.

This combination of sensors enables the AUV to identify likely munitions and take georegistered environmental readings in close proximity to the targets. The vehicle will primarily be operated out of The Institute of Oceanology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IO PAN) in Sopot, Poland.

The purpose of the MODUM is to move 'Towards the Monitoring of Dumped Munitions Threats in the Baltic Sea'. The goal of the project is to establish a cost-effective, research-based monitoring network using underwater vehicles to enhance understanding about dumped munitions in the Baltic Sea which pose both environmental and human security threats.

Dumped Chemical Weapons pose an environmental and security hazard in the Baltic Sea Region. The Iver AUV should help determine the location of munitions (many of which are unknown) and allow for environmental impacts originating from corroded munitions to be continuously assessed. The status of the munitions in the Baltic Sea area are of particular concern given the high ship traffic, impact on fish/fishing and development of offshore energy (ie wind farms). NATO-Country Project Director (NPD), Jacek Beldowski, commented after the first few deployments that the vehicle proved to be of use in an offshore environment, even during 1.5m waves, operating satisfactorily down to 120m depth. The recovery cocoon demonstrated successful operation even at ships with 6m distance to the water. IVER 2 proved to be seaworthy up to Beaufort Scale 4.

Image: The project team with the AUV.