

# Collaboration on Flexible Pipes in Subsea Sector

A global initiative to promote shared knowledge of flexible pipe in the subsea sector is being hailed a success. The Flexible Network Forum (FNF) has been set up by subsea engineering company MCS in a bid to promote shared learning and generate cross-company relationships in the subsea engineering community.

The second FNF to share lessons learnt between the North Sea and Australia was held in March in Perth (Australia) and attracted almost 30 participants from AGR, Apache, Coogee Resources, Santos, Trident and Woodside as well as the Department of Industry and Resources and the ITF.

Tim O'Sullivan, managing director for MCS in the UK spoke at the Perth event on recent North Sea experience of repairing and monitoring flexibles. Sylvain Lyonnet of Woodside Petroleum presented the Cossack Pioneer (CWLH) Flexible Pipe Life Extension Initiative.

In Australia, there is a long tradition of innovation in the use of floating production systems. The classical solution adopts unbonded flexible pipe to enable floating facilities to produce in relatively shallow waters. While unbonded flexible pipe is a reliable technology that has been in use for over 30 years, damage and ultimately failure can occur during manufacturing and testing, installation and early operation as well as in later life.

Accurate assessments of historical records of flexible pipe usage have led to an increased understanding of the potential reasons for failure and the development of operating strategies and procedures to avoid incidents.

The Flexible Network Forum was set up in Aberdeen over two years ago to facilitate open discussion and sharing of lessons learnt in the flexible pipe industry, and has involved operators, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and regulatory bodies across the North Sea oil and gas industry.

The Flexible Network Forum programme in 2008 offers a comprehensive agenda for flexible pipe technology, including updates on flexible pipe industry research findings and current projects, inspection technology advances, damaged riser repair techniques and the latest technical paper on "The Systematic Appraisal of the Thrulife Integrity and Life Extension of Deepwater Subsea Systems".

The next forum meeting will be held in Aberdeen on April 24th, followed by a New Pipelines Inspection Technology event in May co-hosted by Qserv and MCS. This meeting will examine the HSE's feedback on learnings in the flexible pipe industry with a presentation entitled "Flexibles : HSE Intervention Plans", and provide an overview of Oil & Gas UK's newly launched initiative to develop a Global Flexible Pipe Defects and Failure Modes Database and to update its Guidance Note on Flexible Pipe Integrity Assurance.

In November, another forum meeting is scheduled along with a site visit to Subsea 7 has been arranged when the company will demonstrate riser inspection and repair capabilities utilising the latest ROV technology.