

Developing Next Generation AUV

Subsea 7 and SeeByte have joined forces to develop the next generation of Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) for the offshore oil and gas industry. The project will see the development of the first truly autonomous vehicle capable of both inspection and light intervention in an offshore environment.

SeeByte Ltd, providing solutions for improved awareness and robot autonomy, and Subsea 7, subsea engineering, construction and technology companies, aim to provide the offshore oil and gas industry with a new concept of autonomous inspection and intervention vehicles. The vehicle, deployed from a host facility, will be capable of inspecting risers, pipelines, moorings and other structures and general visual inspection. Docking, data exchange and light intervention activities will also be inherent features of the vehicle design.

The project will be executed in collaboration with BP and Chevron. The multi-year project will entail building the prototype vehicle, carrying out initial onshore trials and then full offshore operation trials.

This new generation of AUVs will significantly change the way in which offshore inspection and intervention activities are carried out and has the potential to dramatically reduce costs by removing the need for a dedicated support vessel.

According to sales and marketing manager of Seebyte, Ioseba Tena, the project will benefit from the company's experience in automating the control process of underwater vehicles.

David Saul, BP, Senior Subsea Engineer said that BP has long supported the development of advanced AUV technology and believes the development of this prototype autonomous inspection/intervention vehicle will be a key next step.