

First Offshore Workshop at SMM 2010

At this year's SMM Hamburg Messe, with the support of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, is organising a two-day SMM Offshore Dialogue. This will take place on 8th and 9th September as part of the side programme at the world's leading international shipbuilding exhibition at Hamburg Fair site. With its main themes of Offshore Oil & Gas, Deep Sea Mining and Offshore WindEnergy, the workshop is dedicated to the forward-looking offshore market, which is becoming more important all the time for the shipbuilding industry and its suppliers.

Oil and gas extraction on the high seas and the building and operation of offshore wind parks all offer enormous market potential. The highly regarded English energy consultancy firm Douglas Westwood Ltd. expects the offshore market, both directly off the coast and on the high seas, to grow continuously in the next five years, with anticipated investments worldwide of the order of EUR250 billion. In connection with offshore wind parks alone the analysts are predicting a global investment volume of EUR21.6 billion by the year 2013.

John Westwood, Managing Director of the consultancy company, will give an introduction to the offshore market and urge the case for the responsible operation of the technically very complex offshore oil and gas platforms.

Hans Joachim Otto, Parliamentary State Secretary and coordinator of maritime industry at the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, explains his ministry's support for the Offshore Dialogue. According to him, the workshop offers visitors and exhibitors at the SMM an excellent occasion for getting well-founded information about market chances, and exchanging views with specialists in the industry.

The first thematic block of the workshop, the Oil & Gas Dialogue, will focus on the market potential of oil and gas extraction on the high seas and the opportunities it gives rise to. Walter Kühnlein, Managing Director of the German consultancy firm sea2ice, will be session chairman of this thematic block. According to the offshore expert, 35% of the oil produced in the world already comes from offshore deposits.

Professor Hans-Joachim Kümpel, President of the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, will chair the Deep Sea Mining Dialogue. Experts in the industry will be speaking about possible market opportunities for the shipbuilding industry, existing and future technological methods of deep sea extraction and advantages and disadvantages of marine mineral substances for the global market. He will also touch on the increasingly important alternative energies and raw materials that offer an alternative to oil and gas. These for example include manganese nodules, which are to be found on the sea floor at depths of between 4000 and 6000 metres. In view of their copper, cobalt and nickel content, these minerals could become an indispensable source of raw materials in future.

The concluding WindEnergy Dialogue will be led by session chairman Thorsten Herdan, Managing Director of the VDMA professional association Power Systems and Vice-President of the German Offshore Wind Energy foundation. He estimates the investment volume for the wind parks planned in the North Sea and the Baltic between now and 2030 at around EUR60 billion. Approximately EUR200 million out of this will go to the building of an ambitious special ship for the construction of big wind power plants. These installation ships include 'jack-up legs' as a characteristic design feature - four columns that position the ship on the sea floor, making it independent of wave motion and providing a stable working platform.

The experts agree in thinking that with continuing low demand in the global shipbuilding industry, and with Asian shipyards dominating the commercial shipbuilding market, the offshore sector could create new opportunities for shipyards and suppliers in Europe, and in Germany in particular. To effect a sustainable entry to the market, however, effective strategies are called for. At the SMM Offshore Dialogue participants and speakers will be able to share their experiences in exciting discussions and have the possibility of developing solutions for the current and future challenges facing the industry.

For exhibitors and visitors to the SMM attendance at the workshop is free of charge, but potential participants are asked to book in advance.