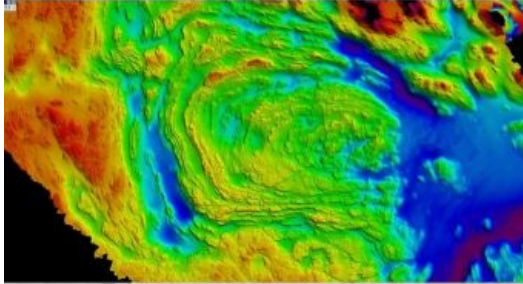


Fugro Partners with Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE



Fugro has entered into a partnership with the Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE to support first-round testing of the global, three-year competition, which incentivises development of rapid, unmanned and high-resolution ocean mapping technologies. Fugro's role is to provide high-resolution deepwater baseline bathymetry data over a 500km² competition area. The company has recently collected more than 1 million square kilometres of high-resolution bathymetry data per year globally, predominantly in water depths greater than 750 metres.

Capitalising on its deepwater survey expertise, Fugro will acquire the seafloor data using equipment including a deepwater autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) equipped with sonar-based survey systems. This information will be used to ground-truth the work of 21 semi-finalist teams advancing to Round 1 of the competition. The challenge for the competing teams is to deploy their inventions to operate at 2,000 metres ocean depth, mapping 20% of the project site at 5.0 metres resolution, and identifying at least five archaeological, biological or geological features, all within a 16-hour timeframe.

Technology as Result

Given that 85% of the world's oceans is yet to be mapped using modern survey techniques, there is a lot of seabed yet to cover. According to David Millar, Fugro's director of hydrographic services for the Americas, Fugro is working on a number of fronts to help close this data gap. He finds the competition could result in technology that will be for the benefit of the industry and general understanding of the world's oceans.

In addition to increasing the speeds and methods by which baseline bathymetry could be acquired, the competition offers a special USD1M incentive sponsored by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for systems that can also detect and track biological and chemical signals. Such advancements would improve emergency response and foster the discovery and monitoring of new marine life and underwater communities.

First round testing for semi-finalist teams is scheduled to commence in September 2017. Fugro will acquire, process and deliver the high resolution baseline datasets in advance.

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/news/fugro-partners-up-with-shell-ocean-discovery-xprize>
