

Utec Surveyor Equipped for Deep Ocean Cable Route Surveys



The UTEC Surveyor has become the first civilian vessel to be equipped with the Kongsberg EM 122 multi-beam echo sounder only used previously by the US Navy. This gives the ship exceptional deep ocean mapping capabilities that UTEC Survey is now using to support operators in the submarine cable industry.

The echo sounder installation was carried-out in Malta during September and has significantly enhanced the capabilities of the UTEC Survey-owned ship.

With 288 simultaneous beams, the new sounder enables the *UTEC Surveyor* to obtain high resolution seabed imagery from as deep as 11,000 metres. This is expected to offer significant cost benefits for clients in the submarine cable industry by enabling deep ocean routes to be chosen with greater confidence and precision.

The *UTEC Surveyor* began operating with the new EM 122 in October when it commenced a project for a major submarine cable installer in the Mediterranean. This contract is expected to continue until March 2009 after when it will be available to operate anywhere in the world that its advanced technology is needed.

The EM 122 system fitted to the *UTEC Surveyor* has been designed to perform seabed mapping to full ocean depth with an unsurpassed resolution, coverage and accuracy. Compared with previous models, it has up to four times the resolution in terms of sounding density through the inclusion of multi-ping capability and more than twice the number of detections per swath. High-density signal processing keeps the acoustic footprint small even for the outer beams in the swath. In typical ocean depths Kongsberg claims that a sounding spacing of about 50m across and along is possible. The achievable swath width of the EM 122 is in the order of 30,000m, which is 25% greater than Kongsberg's previous model, the EM 120. UTEC Survey now believes that this will enable it to provide a major benefit for customers seeking to optimise their survey operations.

The *UTEC Surveyor* is a highly specialised 60m survey vessel that is permanently mobilised with a full survey spread including a 2D high resolution seismic streamer system. With newly upgraded accommodation for 32 persons it can also support a wide variety of underwater operations including the deployment of observation class ROVs. It is one of a small fleet of vessels operated by UTEC Survey which operates out of bases in Aberdeen (UK), Accra (Ghana), Calgary (Canada), Houston (USA), Lowestoft (UK) and Singapore. The company is now a rapidly expanding contractor providing a full range of marine survey services to its clients in the oil and gas, telecommunications and maritime management sectors.

UTEC Surveyor leaving Malta