

Subsea UK unveils actions to achieve vision

Subsea UK has revealed that initial actions are underway to achieve its vision of Britain achieving long-term dominance of the global subsea oil and gas sector. A vibrant technology driven sector generating revenues of \$15 billion by 2015 and employing the most talented, skilled workforce in the world is the ambitious vision outlined by the industry body earlier this year.

The actions outlined earlier this month form part of a strategy to ensure the continued exploitation of hydrocarbons from the UKCS and to drive the exports of the UK's services and products and address the three priorities in the strategy: technology, skills and business.

Close collaboration with the Industry's Technology Facilitator (ITF) to fast-track emerging technologies is underway to maximise an existing mechanism for identifying technology needs and creating joint industry projects to develop new technologies.

"The development of new 'smart' subsea technologies is the single most important contributor to the achievement of our vision," says Subsea UK chief executive, David Pridden. "We must create a leading edge research programme that sees academia working closely with industry to commercialise and get technology to the market place more quickly and efficiently. By working with ITF which has an established and proven track

record, we can assess and explore the challenges faced by the sector and then work in partnership to develop the types of technologies needed to address them."

Subsea UK has formed an industry-led skills forum to address real skills' needs in practical ways. To date senior HR executives from almost 20 companies are involved in pulling together a number of key initiatives that will deliver the skills the industry urgently needs.

So far, these initiatives include a teacher placement scheme, a mentoring programme, and an adopt a school campaign. In addition, Subsea UK has been working with OPITO on the roll-out of its on-line module for subsea training and the creation of a modern apprenticeship specifically for the subsea oil and gas sector.

"The schools agenda is vital to our skills programme. We must generate excitement around science and maths at an early stage in the curriculum. We must also ensure teachers have a better understanding of what our industry needs and how important engineering is to the future not just of the subsea sector but of the UK. Getting teachers into the workplace on placement and getting our companies to build strong relationships with schools is, we believe, a first step in the right direction."

To maintain the UK's dominance in subsea, the sector needs to capture a minimum of \$10 billion of

the global capex market by 2011. Subsea UK's strategy would see this achieved by capitalising on international opportunities, greater collaboration across the supply chain to pool resources and overcome technical hurdles and by developing improved commercial models such as transparent planning, standardisation and alternative contracting strategies.

"We are conducting our annual review of the UK's subsea industry in order to benchmark performance. We are also in the process of rolling out a global subsea events agenda which will promote UK capability to markets in the US, South-east Asia and Africa."

Subsea UK also launched an updated Subsea Pages - a national directory of businesses in the sector to encourage greater collaboration - at Offshore Europe. This will be closely followed by the distribution of a prospectus outlining our vision for a Subsea Centre of Excellence in the UK. This document is intended to capture the industry's imagination and generate interest in the concept in order to move to the next stage of feasibility and design.

Pridden concludes: "These are only some of the actions we need to put in place to achieve the vision and more will follow. If our strategy succeeds we will have a highly successful industry in 2020 because there will be a global demand for our people, our technology and our businesses." ■