Issue 51
Summer 2021

wireline

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The magazine for the UK offshore oil and gas industry

OGUK

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Issue 51 | Summer 2021

Welcome to Issue 51

Welcome to *Wireline*, the magazine for the UK offshore oil and gas industry published by OGUK, and welcome to our 51st issue.

One of the most significant developments for the organisation over the past few months has been the publication of results from the first OGUK Diversity & Inclusion Survey. Overseen by the D&I Task Group and prepared by RGU, the survey received more than 1,600 responses which highlight attitudes towards D&I across industry. The data also help provide an indexed score by which we can measure progress.

With an index of 7.1 out of 10, the sector scores favourably and we should be encouraged by the fact that many people feel included and empowered to bring their whole selves to work. Indeed, 57% of respondents rated the D&I culture in their organisation as strong or very strong. However, other markers also indicate areas that must be improved. Index scores were around 7% lower for those from ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+ communities (including those who prefer not to say), and 11% lower for those who identified with disabilities or who preferred not to say.

The reasons for this are varied for each of these communities, but 'belonging and openness' and 'diversity of leadership' were common themes. It's therefore important that the sector reflect on these findings, particularly as events such as June's Pride Month bring them to the fore, and that leaders and colleagues work together to address the challenges highlighted by these experiences. You can read more reflections on the results from members of the OGUK D&I Task Group later in this issue [p. 12].

For this issue, *Wireline* also spoke with Proserv group CEO David Currie, who raises another important point about engaging with staff and wider society: that it is essential to clearly explain the journey we are on. Reflecting on both the North Sea Transition Deal and his group's diversification into new markets and technologies, the importance of articulating the journey towards new skills, opportunities and - above all - to net zero by 2050, is vital. Hear more from David inside [p. 26].

Indeed, this journey is being seen across the supply chain. *Wireline* also hears from OGUK members ASCO and Vysus Group about how their investments in the energy transition help secure their businesses and those of their clients for the long term [p. 38]. Elsewhere, member Superheat explores how its heat treatment technology can help deliver more for clients, with a smaller footprint – particularly important as COVID continues to affect how essential works are carried out [p. 30].

Finally, we also look at the UK's new post-Brexit Emissions Trading System, and the impact it may have on businesses and operations in the coming years [p. 20].

Wishing our readers a pleasant summer, and our thanks once again for reading *Wireline*.

Andrew Dykes, Editor
OGUK

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Courtesy of ASCO

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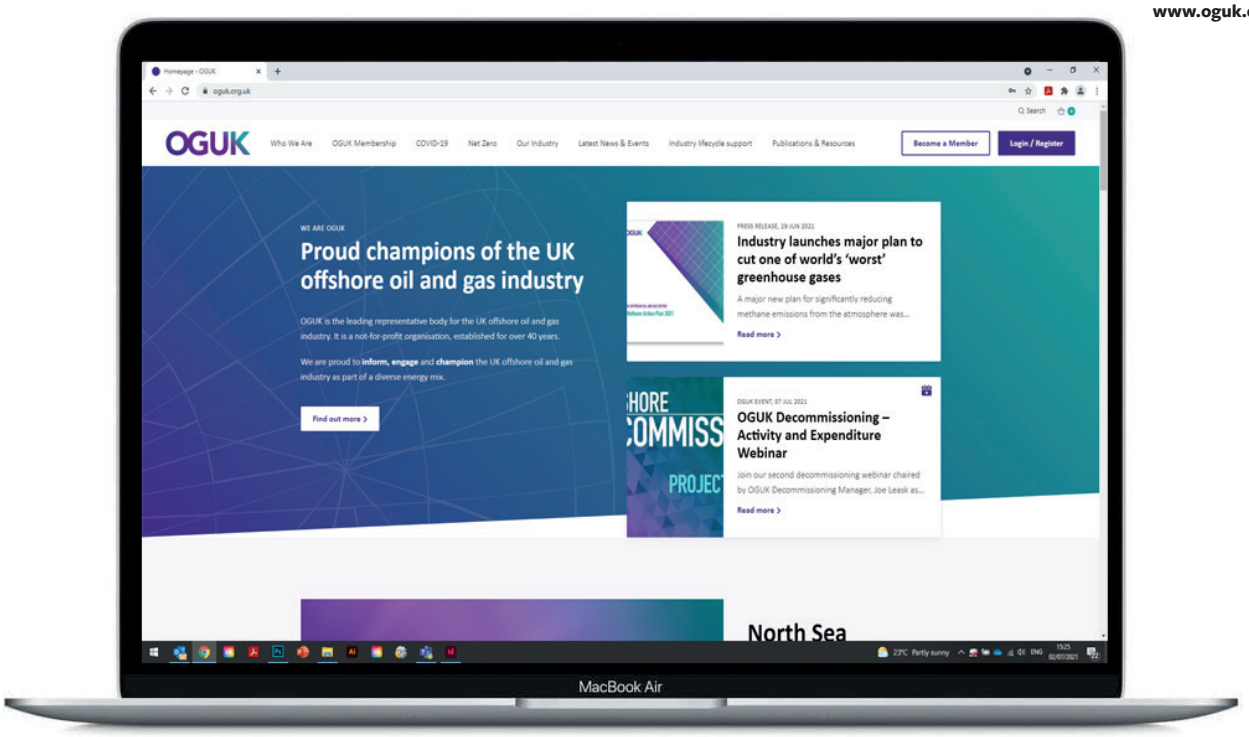
OGUK's new website is matched with a new domain name and email addresses for the organisation

www.oguk.org.uk



Welcome to OGUK.org.uk

In April 2021, oilandgasuk.co.uk moved to an all-new website and a new domain at OGUK.org.uk.

This is a significant moment in the history of Oil & Gas UK as we ourselves continue to keep pace with the changing needs of our industry, this also aligns our online identity with the OGUK visual identity you will be familiar with.

All staff from OGUK's member companies can access our Members Area, which includes details on upcoming forum dates, exclusive Market Intelligence Insights, webinar recordings, our library of industry Guidelines and more.

Your corporate email address will automatically confirm you as an OGUK member, but you may need to re-register to access the new OGUK site. Registration is quick, easy and secure.

If you are experiencing difficulties in registering or accessing member content, contact our digital team, who will help get you connected as swiftly as possible.

New report sets baseline for UKCS D&I efforts

The OGUK Diversity & Inclusion Task Group has published a new report offering insight into the progress of diversity and inclusion efforts in oil and gas. Titled *Building a Baseline: OGUK Diversity & Inclusion Survey*, the report was produced in partnership with Robert Gordon University using data gathered from a wide-reaching survey, completed by more than 1,600 people from over 23 job families.

In addition to the Task Group's existing work streams, the report identifies five specific areas of work to help deliver a more inclusive industry, which harnesses a diversity of talent and unlocks potential within the industry. These include inclusive and diverse leadership & culture, inclusive recruitment, D&I in SMEs, flexible working, and a focus on the 31-40 age group.

The survey also enabled the creation of a new UKCS D&I index, which comprises the average D&I score from around 50 core questions in the survey. The index reflects the level of industry maturity in key D&I areas such as belonging, openness, respect, career, opportunities, organisation, culture, leadership, impact and flexibility.

The 2020 survey sets the baseline for the D&I index from which the sector can measure progress regularly. The 2020 UKCS D&I index is 7.1 (on a 10-point scale).

Read the report and learn more about the work of the D&I Task Group at diversityandinclusioninenergy.co.uk.

LOGIC oversees new contracts, Flightshare scheme for 2021

LOGIC is a not-for-profit wholly owned subsidiary of OGUK that operates as the custodian for cross-industry projects that aim to increase the efficiency of working practices.

Q2 saw the publication of Edition 3 of the Marine Construction Standard Contract. This edition was developed under the auspices of OGUK's Standard Contracts TFG, which works to ensure that all the LOGIC standard contracts are kept current and in alignment with changes in the law and legal practice.

The LOGIC team would also like to remind members that the suite of Standard Contracts also includes resources for decommissioning.

Another LOGIC system, Flightshare, provides a mechanism for companies to share excess seat capacity on North Sea helicopter flights. A new deed covering the LOGIC Flightshare 2021 scheme became effective as of 1 April, and will now run for five years.

Building Back Better with multi-operator campaigns

OGUK's Improving Partnerships Task Group has published a new position paper on improving partnerships. Launched during the same week as a presentation by OGUK operations manager Keith Wise at the SPE Well Decommissioning Conference and an update to the OGA's Decommissioning Strategy, a timely theme links these events together.

Chiefly, it is about sharing the ambition to find better ways to deliver value to both operators and supply chain as they seek to carry out well operations on the UKCS. Getting that right means the industry retains the skills, resources and competitiveness it needs to maximise economic recovery from the UKCS while successfully transitioning to a net zero future.

A key priority in the OGA's 2021 Decommissioning Strategy focuses on encouraging operators to adopt a campaign mindset. In well decommissioning, aggregating work-scopes could have great potential for cost reduction, but it's about much more than sheer costs.

If multiple operators took up this approach, the supply chain would benefit from increased project visibility, the ability to drive schedules, better asset utilisation and improved continuity of work, enabling companies to retain personnel and equipment in the region.

Promoting this multi-operator, multi-well campaign approach is at the heart of the work being done by OGUK's Improving Partnerships Task Group, which links in with the North Sea Transition Forum's Wells Task Force. In its 'Building Back Better' position paper, it puts forward a business case which also highlights how a new mindset will help create the optimum conditions for successful campaign projects.

Read *'Building Back Better: The Business Case for Multi-Operator Well Campaigns in a Diverse Basin'* via the OGUK website.

OGUK Annual Conference explores energy's 'Silicon Valley' and the future of greening companies

This year's OGUK Industry Conference was delivered as a series of free-to-attend webinars running 1-3 June. Attracting over 1,500 registrations over the three sessions, attendees were able to hear from leading industry figures, regulators, academia and research, the next generation and an exciting high-speed tour from six energy hubs around the UK.

Delegates heard from speakers including bp CEO Bernard Looney, OGA chief executive Dr Andy Samuel, Equinor senior VP for UK & Ireland Offshore Arne Gürtner, and many more.

In a speech opening the conference, OGUK CEO Deirdre Michie said that with the right support, the UK could become "the Silicon Valley of energy" – a global leader in the critical areas of the future, such as emissions reduction, clean energy and low carbon technologies.

Meanwhile, in a fireside chat session titled Resilient Hydrocarbons and the Energy Transition, bp's Bernard Looney called for more support for greening companies, if a transition to a net zero future is to be achieved.

Catch up on the sessions. presentations and recordings at ogukindustryconference.co.uk.

OGUK INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

OGUK-led Supplier Qualification Joint Industry Project delivers SEQual®

Since 2018, OGUK has been facilitating a Joint Industry Project, working with operators and the supply chain to simplify supply chain pre-qualification processes and increase the choice of options available to the industry.

Over the past two years, the project has developed SEQual: a new web-based tool that reduces bureaucracy by standardising HSEQ pre-qualification questions and the on-site assessments needed for higher risk goods and services, so that they are accepted by all SEQual buyers.

SEQual was launched on 19 May with the support of nine operators and is operated on a not-for-profit basis by OGUK's LOGIC subsidiary.

To learn more about the SEQual scheme and the benefits of a common industry approach to pre-qualification, visit sequal.co.uk.

SEQual

OGA Stewardship report reveals positive performance

In June the OGA published its 12th UK Stewardship Survey which assesses how the industry is progressing against the regulator's targets across areas including CO2 emissions; carbon-conscious exploration; production; drilling & wells; expenditure and well decommissioning. Press coverage noted that the regulator had 'hailed the positive performance by firms amid challenging times' while also noting the impact of COVID-19 on shutdown schedules in 2020.

OGUK's supply chain and operations director Katy Heidenreich said: "These results demonstrate the breadth of our industry's collective commitment to deliver as much of our energy needs as possible, in a low-carbon way. Emissions from our offshore operations have decreased by 10%, and once again we've hit the production efficiency target.

Our fragile supply chain will be greatly boosted by the OGA's expectation that capital expenditure will rebound by 2023. This indicates that the industry's continuing efforts to boost recovery are bearing fruit, enabling our sector to prepare for its role as a key contributor to a future low carbon economy."

New series of Decommissioning Unwrapped

A new series of bite-sized videos shines a light on the highly skilled activity of decommissioning oil and gas installations, with some now nearing the end of their productive life in the UK North Sea

Working with the National Decommissioning Centre, the University of Aberdeen and OGTC, plus several operators and specialist supply chain companies, these videos bring to life key aspects of this growth industry that the UK has the potential to lead globally.

OGUK decommissioning manager Joe Leask said: "This series of 3-minute films is about unwrapping the layers of complexity sometimes associated with decommissioning. They go into the rigour involved at each stage of the process, the focus on driving technological innovation and the massive scale of removing offshore structures. The films also cover advances in well expertise, as well as the cost and tax implications of decommissioning.

"Working together with the broader supply chain, academia and the innovation community has enabled us to highlight where the industry is taking action to accelerate the energy transition and embrace opportunities for decommissioning to support a low carbon future. We'd like to thank the following for their contributions: bp; CNR International; Fairfield Decom Limited; Legasea Ltd, Lerwick Harbour Board; National Decommissioning Centre; OGTC; Petrofac; RepsolSinopec Resources; Saipem; Shell Upstream International; Spirit Energy; University of Aberdeen and Well-Safe Solutions."

All five in the series are available to view on OGUK's website oguk.org.uk/decommissioning.

SCiS and OGUK publish COVID safety materials

Together Step Change in Safety and OGUK have launched a series of posters and social media visuals to maximise COVID-19 safety offshore.

The series of graphics have been designed to address the common findings from the industry's recent COVID-19 outbreak investigation. It is the belief that these consistent, industry-wide messages will not only reduce complacency, but will inform those who may not have been offshore since the pandemic started, to help reduce covid (and other infectious diseases) transmission offshore.

OGUK Health, Safety and Environment advisor Tricia Schooling said: "Throughout

the pandemic, the safety of our workforce has been our paramount concern. As we see the number of personnel working offshore increase, communications like this becomes increasingly more important to ensure the safety of our workforce. We continue to encourage colleagues offshore to respect social distancing where possible, follow the guidelines in place and maintain best hand santisation practice."

Step Change in Safety head of communications Kirstin Gove said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the way that we all work and has made us reassess how we protect people to help minimise them contracting similar viruses in the future. As we move forward in these unprecedented times, we will continue to share examples of how different organisations are reminding colleagues of the guidelines so that, as an industry, we can continue to work together to protect our workforce."

This pack of safety information materials is available to download digitally at: https://oguk.org.uk/product/covid-communications-pack/

Industry publishes Methane Action Plan to reduce upstream emissions

OGUK has published a blueprint for helping the sector reduce methane emissions, and one of the first key deliverables of the North Sea Transition Deal, agreed in March between industry and the UK Government.

Methane is one of the world's most potent greenhouse gases, having up to 80 times the impact than that of carbon emissions. Offshore installations release these emissions through a process called flaring and venting for primarily safety reasons when extracting oil and gas.

The Methane Action Plan sets out six actions in total, with four new actions for industry. These include reducing methane by 50 per cent compared with a 2018 baseline, committing to 0.20 per cent methane intensity by 2025 and stopping all routine flaring by 2030.

It will also ensure all companies create individual, asset-based action plans by the end of 2022.

Read the Methane Action Plan in full at oguk.org.uk.

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Diverse perspectives

April 2021 saw the publication of the first major survey exploring attitudes towards diversity and inclusion in the oil and gas industry. *Wireline* spoke with members of the OGUK D&I Task Group to hear their thoughts on the report, and how its findings can help chart a path forward.

The OGUK Diversity & Inclusion Task Group (D&ITG) was convened in 2019, with the aims of championing a diverse and inclusive working environment within the oil, gas and energy sector. April 2021 saw the group publish the results of the first OGUK Diversity & Inclusion Survey, opened in late 2020, which sought for the first time to measure attitudes towards D&I within industry.

Titled Building a Baseline, and produced in partnership with Robert Gordon University, the resulting report drew on responses from more than 1,600 people across more than 20 job families. Its key finding was to establish a data-led measurement of attitudes towards D&I, using scores from around 50 core questions in the survey. The resulting UKCS D&I index reflects the level of industry maturity in key areas such as belonging, openness, respect, career, opportunities, organisation, culture, leadership, impact and flexibility.

Based on a ten-point scale, the report found a D&I Index sore of 7.1. This now sets a baseline from which the sector can measure progress regularly. The report also identifies five specific areas of work to help deliver a more inclusive industry.

Wireline spoke with key members of the D&ITG, including principal process engineer and co-founder of AFBE-UK, Ollie Folayan, Blackwood Partners head of employment Erica Kinmond, and Baker Hughes, VP and general counsel, oilfield equipment Findlay Anderson, to gauge their reaction to the report, and how it can help inform future action.

Have you noticed any change in industry attitudes or perception towards D&I efforts since the TG was launched?

OF: I would argue that the setting up of the task group was as much a reaction to the growing interest in D&I in the industry as it was a necessary aspect of achieving the objectives of Roadmap 2035. It was also timely because many of the changes we have seen in the last 15 months such as the global pandemic and/or the events in 2020 in the US which brought about an increase in the conversation around racism have also helped to shape our direction.

EK: The pandemic has been a big test of attitudes and perceptions to D&I efforts. Many organisations did take their focus away from D&I as they tried to get to grips with the initial challenges thrown at them (including delaying their gender pay gap reporting) but what has impressed me is how quickly many organisations have moved back to placing D&I as a key business priority. I see a lot of engagement now and I hope that this continues as we focus in on the key findings from the OGUK Diversity & Inclusion Survey.

FA: I think the Task Group is bringing better visibility from an industry perspective to what companies and individuals across the industry are doing in this area. That raises awareness of what is being done and what can be done. Otherwise, activities in this area can be siloed to the individual companies.

In your opinion, what is the most important takeaway from the 'Baseline' report?

OF: The lowest D&I index scores (11 points below average) were among people with a disability and people who are black. This highlights two areas that

Left-right: principal process engineer and co-founder of AFBE-UK, Ollie Folayan; Blackwood Partners head of employment Erica Kinmond; Baker Hughes, VP and general counsel, oilfield equipment Findlay Anderson.

the industry cannot afford to ignore. We need to ensure that disability is not a barrier to contribution to industry. We also need to rid our companies of the biases that often hinder ethnic minorities in general and Black African and Caribbean people in particular from being represented at leadership level in our companies.

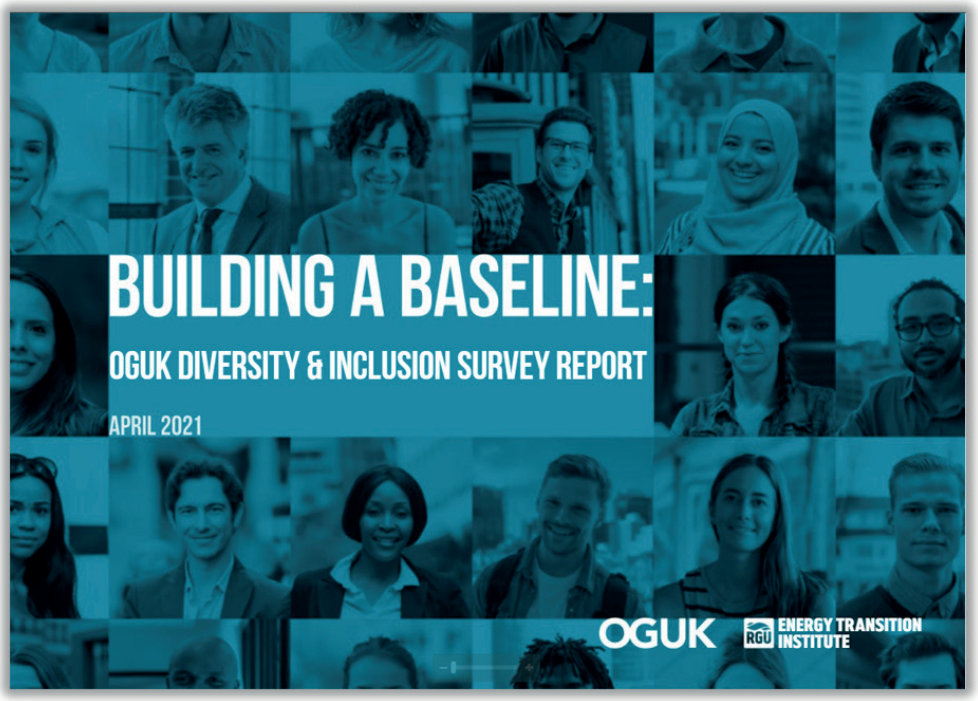
EK: The importance of inclusive and diverse leadership and culture to our survey respondents. Culture is driven from the top and without the buy-in and back up of senior leaders D&I initiatives are likely to flounder. A visibly diverse leadership team is ideal but not a reality yet for most across our industry. However, leaders can counter that through their own efforts to publicly champion, understand, learn about, speak about, and collaborate on D&I issues.

FA: As well as creating a "baseline" from which we can measure progress over the coming years, the report flags four or five useful areas where companies can focus their energies to drive real effect – inclusive and committed leadership, empowering and catalysing the 31-40 year age group, addressing flexible recruitment and flexible career pathways as a priority and the importance of the SME perspective and challenge for our industry. These are highlighted because they are areas of challenge which companies and industry needs to wrestle with and find solutions.

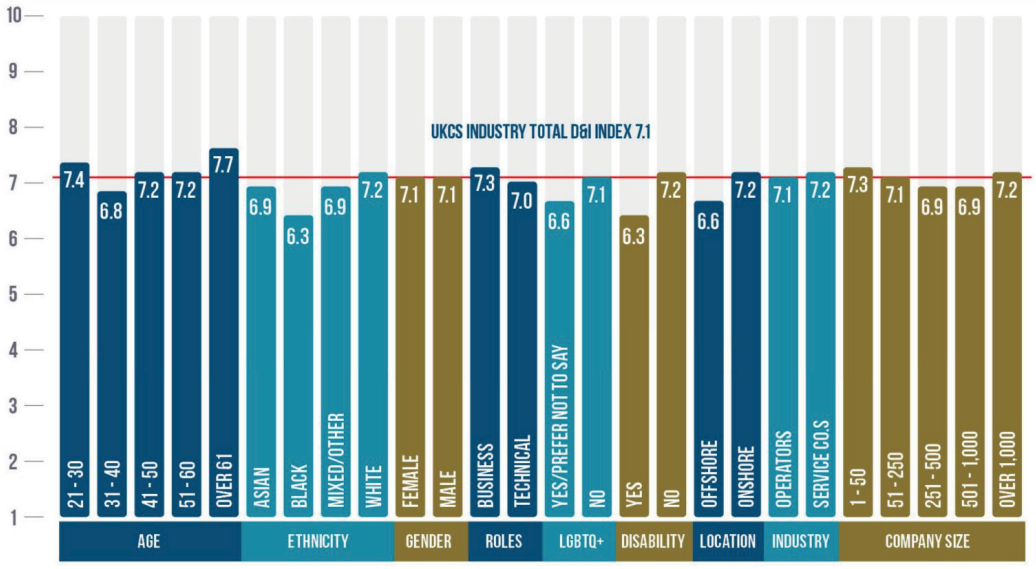
Were there any findings that surprised you?

OF: I was surprised that the experiences of people of Asian descent contrasted so starkly from the experiences of black people. This highlights the importance of not treating ethnic minorities as a monolith.

"A visibly diverse leadership team is ideal but not a reality yet for most across our industry. However, leaders can counter that through their own efforts to publicly champion, understand...and collaborate on D&I issues."


BUILDING A BASELINE:
OGUK DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SURVEY REPORT
APRIL 2021
OGUK
RGU ENERGY TRANSITION INSTITUTE


BELONGING AND OPENNESS 7.7
7.9 RESPECT
LEADERSHIP 7.2
7.0 FLEXIBILITY
CULTURE 6.9
6.9 CAREER & OPPORTUNITIES
D&I IMPACT 6.6
6.4 ORGANISATION
D&I INDEX COMPONENTS
*Detailed information on page 33 and 34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UKCS INDUSTRY TOTAL D&I INDEX 7.1
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51 - 250
251 - 500
501 - 1,000
OVER 1,000
AGE
ETHNICITY
GENDER
ROLES
LGBTQ+
DISABILITY
LOCATION
INDUSTRY
COMPANY SIZE

FA: I was actually surprised that the index was as high as it was. The survey did take account of 1,500 responses. However, partly I wonder whether we managed to hear from the most activated group across companies (from a D&I perspective) who therefor have a particular perspective. I think there is also a broader perspective that we need to be aware of that is perhaps not as impressive as the 7.1 baseline suggests.

EK: I was surprised that female and male respondents to the survey scored the same overall in our D&I Index, given what we know of the gender imbalance in our industry. However, when you look into the composition of that score there are some telling differences. Men tend to score higher in terms of how they are perceived at work, and women are more likely to view lack of flexible working as a barrier to career progression. Women also tended to score higher in relation to questions surrounding their knowledge, participation in and importance of D&I initiatives. More men need to get involved in these!

How will the results direct the work of the Task Group?

OF: I expect it will lead us to prioritise the worst performing areas. Part of our role is also holding leaders to account and so I hope it gives us a basis to emphasise these key messages to the company leaders.

EK: We have looked carefully at the key findings of the survey and will be using them to direct our efforts going forward to ensure these have the maximum possible impact.

FA: Essentially, the Task Group is not set-up to provide solutions for companies across our industry. But we can catalyse the conversation, provoke awareness of the issues and the specific challenges and point companies in a direction of progress whilst challenging companies to own and drive the change. The Task Group can signpost companies to where they can find solutions or to support organisations to help them. In all of this, we are already focused on the main findings of the report and addressing how we can drive visibility and change in these areas.

What can organisations do to support these efforts?

OF: Companies should take the time to read and understand the results and then revise their companies' D&I strategy to weave in inclusivity to their company's goals. There are numerous studies that link increased profitability to profitability. Companies should then set a number of metrics they can measure their D&I performance on; we need to ensure that a commitment to diversity becomes a competency on which staff are appraised. This will send a strong message to employees that our commitment to diversity goes beyond lip service.

Finally, the OGUK D&I TG has also set up an Ally network - sign up and join to meet other diversity champions.

EK: D&I efforts need to be visibly led from and supported at the very top of the organisation – a member of the senior leadership team should sponsor and lead on initiatives. A lack of diversity and inclusion impacts across all areas of the business and is not simply a people issue to be left to HR. D&I impacts on the bottom line and should be treated as a business priority, but it is not enough to simply talk about diversity and inclusion at the top - leaders also need to ensure that their actions match their words. When employees see that D&I is a genuine business priority for their leadership team it paves the way for a successful inclusive workplace.

FA: I think it is too easy sometimes to look at the report and think that the issues are someone else's issues or more indicative of other companies. We need leadership to take serious the challenges laid out in the report and spend the time and energy to address those challenges within their organisations. That takes time and commitment. Lip service and good branding will not take us on this journey. It is critical that companies make the board and executive level commitment to driving change.

The statistics speak for themselves – in a world where companies fight so hard for the smallest of percentage gains, we have an opportunity not just to drive diversity and inclusion for their own sake (as important as that is), but to see it also as a business imperative to truly deliver success within our companies.

Read *Building A Baseline* and learn more about the work of the D&I Task Group at diversityandinclusioninenergy.co.uk.

Member News

Swire Energy Services invests in technology to support net zero target

Swire Energy Services (SES) has committed to a £4 million investment for the installation of two new robotic blast and paint coating processes across its UK and Norway operations.

The leading-edge robotic technology for the blasting and paint coating process will support Swire Energy Services' North Sea offshore container rental fleet of 28,000 units. The technology allows for consistent quality through the precise application of blast media and paint coatings which will extend the operating life of the fleet. The robotic installation will also increase SES's capacity to support maintenance and services for customer equipment.

The automation project, expected to be installed during the second half of 2021 in Aberdeen and Stavanger, will see SES emissions related to the process reduce by more than 30% for both locations.

Speaking on the investment, SES VP for Operations Michael King commented: "As part of our ongoing commitment to innovate, digitalise and reduce our carbon emissions, I am delighted to announce the launch of this project. The new automation processes will allow us to maintain our North Sea rental fleet to the highest standard whilst reducing our process and energy related emissions. Also, and perhaps more significantly, by extending the operating life of our fleet we will reduce the need for early disposal and replacement which in turn will reduce emissions across the entire supply chain."

Kishorn Port granted approval for dry dock extension

Kishorn Port has received approval from Highland Council for its proposal to extend the port's dry dock. This is a further and significant step in the regeneration of the port and dry dock which was originally established in the mid-1970s to fabricate the Ninian Central oil and gas platform.

The development proposal involves an extension of the dry dock into adjoining land which, when completed, will allow the port to receive vessels and structures up to 250 metres in length in comparison to the current 160 metres. This will allow the port to accommodate a wider range of marine projects for decommissioning, maintenance and upgrade, and enhance the port's offering to the offshore wind sector.

Rock excavated from the dry dock extension will be utilised in the reclamation of an area of foreshore which will provide further land within the port to support the various industry sectors which use the port now and in the future.

Speaking after the Council committee meeting, co-director Colin Ortlepp said: "We welcome the Council's approval of this proposal which follows a period of over ten years during which Kishorn Port has invested significantly to bring the dry dock and wider port area back to life. 2020 saw three significant decommissioning and oil and gas projects use our facilities, and we believe the port will host many more projects in future as a direct result of Scotland's energy transition."

In late April, the port also welcomed Northern Offshore Company, Northern Producer Floating Production Facility ('FPF') to the port for a period of anchorage.

TAQA begins one of the largest North Sea decommissioning projects

Abu Dhabi National Energy Company TAQA has commenced the first major asset removal project and one of the largest topside removal projects of its kind in the North Sea.

The Brae Bravo platform, first commissioned in 1988, is being removed over three separate

Left: The MV Kaami at the dry dock facility at Kishorn Port.

Below: Heerema SSCVs Thialf and Sleipnir remove elements of Brae Bravo.
Source: TAQA

phases in 2021 and 2022, using two of the world's largest semi-submersible crane vessels (SSCVs). Marking the first time that these vessels have converged in the North Sea, Heerema's Thialf and Sleipnir are each greater than 200 metres in length.

The first campaign, which began in April 2021, saw the two SSCVs simultaneously in the field for several days to prepare and ultimately remove the flare tower, bridge and jacket. Thialf remains in the field to complete final preparatory works and module separation to allow final removal in the summer.

For the second campaign, Sleipnir will remove the remaining topsides during two trips to the field during the summer of 2021, at which point the only remaining visible element of Brae Bravo will be the top of the jacket above the sea surface. A dedicated navigational aid will be placed on the remaining structure and a 500-metre safety zone will remain in place until jacket decommissioning is completed in 2022.

As a late-life asset operator, safety and environmental impact principles are at the centre of the project for TAQA and its partners. All waste materials will be transported to the AF Environmental Base in Vats, Norway and processed, aiming for a 95% recycling or reuse target.

TAQA managing director for Europe, Donald Taylor, commented: "TAQA Europe is embarking on one of the largest decommissioning exercises in the North Sea to date. The Brae Bravo has been an integral part of the Brae fields for more than three decades with the size and scale of the platform, including the topside structure, almost the height of the London Eye.

"The arrival of Thialf in the field was a historic occasion, heralding the moment when we started converting many years of planning into practical implementation.

"Over the last 33 years, Brae Bravo has been an important contributor to the UK oil and gas industry with many people having long-standing connections to the platform. This project will involve more than 500 people working offshore on the program during peak decommissioning operations, and we are committed to delivering safe and efficient execution of this milestone."

IOG completes Blythe and Southwark platforms

IOG confirmed on 7 June that the Blythe and Southwark gas platforms, which will operate as normally unmanned installations (NUIs), had been successfully installed at their respective offshore field locations, in line with the project schedule.

For both platforms, after the suction pile

Member News

foundations were fixed on the seabed and jacket legs cut to height, topsides lift operations were undertaken by the Seaway Strashnov heavy lift vessel. After the final welding of the connections between the topsides and jacket the IOG, HSM Offshore and ODE Asset Management teams then performed all the necessary inspections and checks.

IOG CEO Andrew Hockey noted: "Safe, successful and timely installation of the Blythe and Southwark unmanned platforms is another important milestone for our Phase 1 development. These facilities are integral to our infrastructure-led hub strategy and form a pivotal link between our co-owned and operated offshore pipeline network and our onshore Thames Reception Facilities at Bacton Terminal."

Wood to support world's largest carbon capture and storage project

Summit Carbon Solutions recently announced its plans to develop a new carbon dioxide (CO_2) capture, transportation, and sequestration project, which will connect multiple sources throughout US states Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota.

The project includes a gathering and transmission pipeline system to support capture and permanent storage of up to 10 million tons of CO_2 annually, making it the largest CCS project in the world.

As an industry leader in both CO_2 handling design and pipeline project execution, Wood has been engaged by Summit to perform pre-FEED (Front End Engineering and Design) analysis on the CO_2 pipeline network. Wood will support Summit with concept selection activities for the pipeline system, including route development, hydraulics, preliminary engineering, cost estimating, and an initial decarbonisation SCORE assessment.

"We have a strong history of delivering CO_2 handling and transportation projects and will combine this service-specific expertise with our pipeline project strength to execute this pre-FEED," said SVP of onshore upstream/midstream and field services, Mark Netzel. "At Wood, we are prioritising the development of our decarbonisation solutions and will leverage best practices to reduce the overall carbon footprint of this project."

TotalEnergies, Green Investment Group and RIDG join forces for Scottish offshore wind bid

TotalEnergies has joined forces with Macquarie's Green Investment Group (GIG) and Renewable Infrastructure Development Group (RIDG) to bid for sites in Scotland's forthcoming offshore wind leasing round (ScotWind). The Offshore Wind Power Ltd (OWPL) consortium will bring together the partners' extensive expertise to leverage Scotland's domestic supply chain and deliver world-class developments that will accelerate the country's energy transition.

All partners have ambitious plans. TotalEnergies is targeting the development of 35 GW of gross renewable generation capacity by 2025 and 100 GW by 2030, while GIG has over 250 projects under development and construction, with a pipeline of more than 30 GW, and is developing or has invested in over 20 offshore wind projects around the world with a cumulative capacity of over 12 GW. RIDG has been created specifically with the aim of putting Scottish companies and communities firmly at the centre of this global opportunity.

In February 2021, GIG and TotalEnergies successfully secured rights to a seabed lease in the Eastern Regions zone in the Crown Estate's England and Wales Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 to develop a 1.5 GW offshore wind project. The companies are also working together in South Korea to co-develop a portfolio of floating offshore wind projects with a potential cumulated capacity of more than 2 GW.

Left: emissions.AI software solution helps companies to operate complex assets with the lowest achievable emissions

Right: Licence P2244 and the Orcadian Energy-operated Pilot field.

px Group teams up with OPEX Group on emissions reduction

px Group, an infrastructure management company for energy and high hazard industries, has teamed up with OPEX Group to support emissions reduction across all px Group operated sites.

As part of the collaborative agreement, OPEX Group's emissions.AI software will target emissions reduction opportunities across px Group's upstream, downstream, midstream, chemicals, renewables and power plant operations throughout the UK.

With emissions reduction becoming a very real and urgent priority for the global oil, gas and energy industries, emissions.AI offers a quick and cost-effective route towards driving down operational emissions. The cloud-based software solution helps companies to operate complex assets with the lowest achievable emissions as an integral part of their day to day business. emissions.AI is a powerful tool designed to support on and offshore teams to monitor, reduce and control their operational emissions and meet sustainability targets.

The application measures and monitors, in real time, an asset's emissions holistically and down to the individual consumers and sources. By continuously calculating the lowest achievable emissions, for any operating mode, configuration or constraint, emissions.AI automatically pinpoints opportunities to reduce emissions in the moment.

emissions.AI has a range of modules focused on energy efficiency, flaring and venting and oil in water, with a module covering methane due for release later this year.

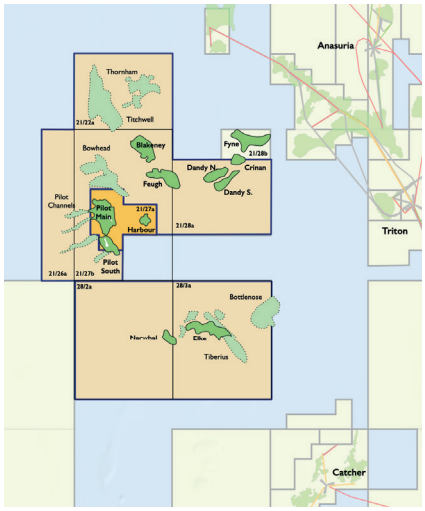
px Group MD for energy transition, David Henderson, stated: "px Group is committed to energy transition and has been delivering lower carbon footprints and sustainable operations for over 30 years. As we continue along this journey, offering to optimise the assets of both existing and new customers, we are delighted to enter into this new agreement with OPEX Group to exploit their unique technologies to drive lower emissions and lower costs."

Orcadian Energy and Crondall Energy push GHG emissions reduction in new Pilot field development plan

Orcadian Energy, the licence holder of the Pilot Oil Field on the UKCS, has been working with offshore engineering specialist Crondall Energy to investigate ways to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions expected as part of Pilot's future development.

Orcadian plans to use polymer flooding to develop Pilot, which should deliver a substantial step towards the reduction of GHG emissions when compared to other analogous heavy oil fields or UK sector average emissions. However, Orcadian wanted to explore what further reductions would be required to meet the longer-term objectives of the OGA.

Orcadian engaged Crondall to first benchmark GHG emissions using Crondall's in-house GHG assessment tool, and then to investigate ways to further reduce the Scope 1 carbon dioxide (direct emissions) and Scope 2 carbon dioxide (from imported electrical power) emissions from the Pilot development concept, by making changes to the proposed processing and utility systems.



By implementing a number of interrelated initiatives around process heat management and power generation, Crondall identified opportunities to reduce GHG emissions by close to 50% when compared with the original field development concept, using existing, field-proven technology. Furthermore, Crondall was able to identify a road-map of future technology and electrification opportunities that could, during the lifetime of the asset, deliver the reductions in GHG required by 2040.

Crondall and Orcadian intend to submit to the OGA, an addendum to the Concept Select Report which incorporates the reduction of GHG emissions into the selected concept for the Field Development Plan.

Steve Brown CEO of Orcadian commented: "We believe the opportunities to reduce emissions at Pilot in the future are very significant. The ability of the Crondall team to integrate their processes and electrical engineering capabilities was the key to the optimisation of our initial concept. Minimising emissions is not as simple as wiring up to the grid and dispensing with onboard generation, it is important to quantify all the emissions caused by the process of extracting oil and Crondall's technology helps us do that very well. The work that the Crondall team has done, has given us real insights into how we can fully support the OGA's drive to electrify the CNS, deliver on the OGA's commitment to a Net Zero basin and still maximise economic recovery from our licences."


SCOTTISHPOWER

UK moves forward with independent carbon market

The UK's national carbon market was launched in May, replacing the European Union's Emissions Trading System amid surging prices over recent months. Both markets are expected to see prices rises over the next decade, while potentially expanding to cover emissions in transport and heating, and driven by increasingly ambitious net-zero commitments.

One of the key questions regarding the UK's post-Brexit energy policy has been what would replace the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). Following some speculation, the December 2020 Energy White Paper confirmed that the government would pursue a separate, yet very similar cap-and-trade system to help drive domestic emissions reduction, which would be launched in Q2 2021.

When the UK ETS debuted on 19 May, the first auction of government permits on the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) saw more than 6 million UK allowances sell at £43.99/tonne (well above the Auction Reserve Price of £22/t), although this was closer to the EU price than the early spot trade. "The auction clearing price was broadly comparable to the EU ETS carbon price on the day of €50.86/t (equivalent to ~£43.74/t)," noted Cornwall Insight analyst Laura Woolsey.

The December 2021 forward contract reached high as £50.23/t ($71.13) before falling back to £47.50/t by the end of the day – which was almost £5/t higher than the EU ETS at the time (€50-52.40/t or up to £45.25/t). This meant the costs of emitting carbon for energy intensive industries (including oil and gas) in the UK moved slightly above that in the EU – and much higher for onshore power producers, which must also pay the Carbon Price Support (CPS) charge of £18/t.

When combined with the carbon price support (CPS) – a domestic top-up levy in addition to the ETS – this put the cost of carbon emissions for onshore power generators at £61.99/t, among the highest carbon prices anywhere in the world. More recently, prices for UK allowances have moderated as new auction rounds have progressed and are now relatively close to the EU level, trading at £44.05 at the time of writing in mid-June.

This outcome reflects the development in EU prices over recent months, which have risen sharply as climate pledges among European member states have toughened. EUA prices for December 2021 hit an all-time closing high of €56.65/t on 14 May – although they have receded following the launch of the UK market, closer to €50/t, as UK long positions transferred across.

In mid-June, UK ETS prices were close to EU levels at £44.05/tonne.

Left: Traffic in central Glasgow, where COP26 will be held later in 2021.

Similar by design

The UK ETS is set to cover some 155 million tonnes CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e) during its first year and has been designed along the same lines as the well-established EU version. This initial emissions cap is 5% lower than the previous cap it had under the EU ETS, having been designed to push prices a little above EU levels.

Emissions trading systems work by capping the total amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted by certain sectors. After each year, companies must surrender enough carbon allowances to cover their emissions or face fines. Carbon allowances can be traded, and the overall cap (the number of credits) is reduced over time to drive decarbonisation. The UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) said the tax "promotes cost-effective decarbonisation, allowing businesses to cut carbon emissions where it is cheapest to do so."

The government says carbon pricing will be aligned with net-zero commitments, which means an increasing price over time as emissions caps are revised downwards. Cornwall Insight wholesale manager James Brabben said: "Policy and aligning to Net Zero is the biggest long-term factor on prices as tighter carbon budgets increase permit scarcity in the market... It is also clear that UK policy will play a major role in shaping this market as it becomes a key tool in meeting the net zero target."

"In the short-term there's likely to be some correlation due to the purposeful design of the UK ETS being very close to the EU scheme."

Some of the anticipated tightening may already be priced into the market, and according to OGUK energy policy manager Will Webster: "Certificates can be banked across years so there's a bit of a forward look," he noted, "But emitters must also balance the books at the year-end for compliance."

Price stability

The small UK market is making some emitters nervous given the limited supply, and the launch was made more problematic due to the recent upside price volatility on the EU ETS. Brabben cautioned that there could be problems given the smaller size of the UK market: "It's still early days here, the UK market is potentially expected to be more volatile because of its relative size to EU ETS. For instance, one large [combined cycle gas turbine] CCGT going offline and not requiring permits has a proportionally larger impact on the standalone UK scheme."

A positive sign is that several leading non-energy participants are also now involved with the UK market, which is helping provide the liquidity that it needs to operate effectively, according to Webster. "Traders in the market provide liquidity and should help with price discovery," he added, though agreed there was still some concern over liquidity, which could, for example, be a problem at the end of the compliance year.

To address these concerns, the UK government has indicated it would like a link with the EU ETS, which it sees

Left: UK ETS futures, May-June 2021.

as driven by the same market fundamentals, although the EU appears less keen at this point. Brabben noted that whilst the scheme is standalone and not directly linked to the EU scheme, "in the short-term there's like to be some correlation due to the purposeful design of the UK ETS being very close to the EU scheme." Major EU energy trader group EFET has voiced its support for a link between the schemes, saying it would be best for liquidity and regulatory purposes.

OGUK and other industry groups are also keen, because of the larger scale, and more liquid market that it would bring. "The timing of establishing a link will depend on wider Brexit-related discussions," added Webster. "I hope there is an appetite to do this."

In addition, there are a series of mechanisms to stop the price from collapsing or going too high. These include the Market Stability Mechanism (MSM) to manage permit supply, and the Cost Containment Mechanism (CCM) to limit sustained price rises, which BEIS said it had calculated at £44.74 as of 10 May – or twice the two-year rolling average UK carbon price. If UK carbon prices stay above this level on average through to July, then the CCM would come into force at the start of August, pushing prices down. There is also a floor or auction reserve price of £22/t, which effectively means an overall price floor for the onshore power sector of £40/t, according to Cornwall.

Brabben continued: "The CCM is only triggered in the event of sustained and consistently high prices over a number of months – so higher prices, we believe above £45/t, would be needed for the coming months to trigger this." The intervention may not end there. BEIS says it will monitor the market and "should excessive market instability compromise the scheme in early auctioning rounds, the Authority may consider further interventions beyond the cost containment mechanism aimed at calming instability, without affecting the integrity of the scheme." The EU also appears keen to have more control over prices, which would also avoid the complexity of accurately assessing volume allowances as the range of emissions included widens.

Advancing decarbonisation

The higher the ETS price goes, the more economical decarbonisation schemes such as electrification, and carbon capture and storage become, and the greater the incentive to switch from coal to gas, and from gas to renewables in the power sector. It also encourages the adoption of lower or zero-carbon fuels among industrial emitters and, as the scheme is expanded, areas like space heating, passenger cars, shipping, aviation and haulage as well.

For example, the high prices will help with the economics of the UK's blue hydrogen and CCS schemes. The largest of these is BP's H2Teesside project in the UK, which is targeting 260,000t per year of hydrogen by 2030, with first production by 2027. The project has a carbon price assumption of $50/t for 2021 and 2025, rising to $100/t in 2030. S&P Global Platts said in May that a carbon price of about €70/tCO_2 was needed

for parity between blue and grey hydrogen (the latter produced in refineries without CCS), while the European Commission put the figure at €55-90/tCO_2 in 2020.

OGUK's Webster reaffirmed that the oil and gas industry is behind the UK's net-zero 2050 target and process. "A reliable economy-wide carbon price is a big part of [the UK's net zero target], driving decarbonisation across sectors – which helps support projects decarbonise, including electrification, CCS and hydrogen." However, he noted there was a dilemma, in that if the carbon price were pushed up to the level where such projects were viable, "you may risk driving manufacturing industry overseas".

The carbon price must therefore be accompanied by government incentives and guarantees to be effective. "Government, with OGUK's and other industries' help, is trying to work out business models where CCS and hydrogen work, which require incentives at this stage, not just carbon penalties. Like wind, it needs support to get going – then costs can be reduced over time and in future potentially we may be able to rely just on the carbon price."

In the EU, as part of its 'Green Deal', the carbon market is being expanded to include emissions from areas other than power generation and heavy industry.

"The EU carbon market is being expanded to include carbon from flights within Europe. The next step will be emissions from road and rail transport."

Carbon from flights within Europe is the first new category to be added, bringing coverage up to just under half of all EU emissions. The next step is to bring in emissions from road and rail transport, shipping and heating, which would increase coverage to over 90% of emissions (although road transport is already taxed heavily in most European countries; in 2018 an OECD study, found that in 34 of 42 countries at least 90% of road transport emissions incurred taxes equivalent to a carbon price of more than €60/tCO_2).

The UK also intends to expand the areas covered by carbon pricing. BEIS said that it had committed to exploring the expansion of carbon pricing to include the two-thirds of emissions that are not currently covered. "Additionally, we are looking at how the UK ETS could incentivise the deployment of greenhouse gas removal technology." BEIS is also committed to review the free allocation of some allowances. Cornwall's Brabben said the UK's 6th Carbon Budget (2033–37) would incorporate international aviation and shipping. "Therefore, it is likely the government will have to re-evaluate how aviation and shipping are accounted for in the scheme, which may be done when the government reviews how to align the UK ETS to Net Zero later this year."

Trade implications

Rising carbon prices and expanded coverage have implications for trade, potentially adding costs to many areas of business and putting them at a disadvantage to competitors outside the EU and UK with a lower or no carbon prices. If both are to reach net zero by 2050 and still retain energy-intensive industry, some feel that embedded carbon import tariffs are essential. In mid-2020, only 20% of global emissions were subject to a pricing scheme or soon to become so, with an average price of about $15/tCO2, according to The Economist.

In the EU there have been moves in this direction in the form of discussions over the introduction of a border carbon adjustment (CBAM) mechanism, which would be imposed on imported products with embedded carbon from jurisdictions without a carbon price. Webster said that this approach "is not developed in the UK as yet... But there is awareness in government that the challenge of decarbonisation is going to require new policy thinking, and we are discussing various options with government."

Outside Europe there are also carbon prices in Canada and parts of the US, including California where Democrats have proposed a nationwide US carbon price and border adjustments, though with little progress so far. Canadian prices are set to rise quickly up to C$50/$tCO_2$ ($40/$tCO_2$) in 2022. South Korea is also introducing a system and, most importantly, China launched a nationwide carbon trading market in February 2021 as part of its efforts to reach net-zero emissions by 2060. Covering more than 4 billion tonnes of CO_2 per year it will be the world's largest. In addition, this year 70% of global aviation emissions are due to enter a UN emissions-trading programme.

The UK's approach is one of many; around the world, climate change policies are tightening, and carbon pricing is already a major part. Oil and gas companies are increasingly aware that this means that continuing as before will become an increasingly costly option, prompting many to introduce their own internal net zero carbon targets, alongside electrification, CCS and other low carbon strategies. But contrary to those who feared of any post-Brexit backsliding on emissions progress, the UK ETS only looks set to help spur on the energy transition.

Making a deal: the supply chain role in the NSTD

Group CEO for Proserv David Currie explains why the North Sea Transition Deal marks an important step on the industry's transitional journey, and how the supply chain can contribute.

Having joined Proserv in May 2018, group CEO David Currie has overseen a period of significant change at the controls technology business. The past few years have seen David steer the company through a restructure – creating two distinct divisions, Gilmore and Proserv Controls – and develop a new five-year strategy to grow a client base outside of its core base in oil and gas.

In addition to guiding Proserv into new territory, David is well versed in the diversity of the wider energy supply chain. As an active member of both OGUK and Subsea UK, and previously as a member of the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC), he has helped shape and implement the direction of the sector in recent years. In the latter case, the Council helped oversee development of the Offshore Wind Sector Deal, while more recently David has been involved with government and OGUK on what would become the North Sea Transition Deal (NSTD), announced in March 2021.

He says publication and support for the NSTD marks "a major step on the journey," though emphasises it's a path the oil and gas industry has already been on for some time. "I think everybody understands the journey we have to make, and the effects in the world today, but they also understand the need for a balanced energy approach and oil and gas has a future in that mix," he tells *Wireline*.

"I think the industry has been working at different levels with the move forward, but I think what the NSTD does is bring the main players together; it gives us something to glue ourselves to. Industry and government working together is a focal point we can all feed off... It's about sharing how we all improve together, and the government is putting things in place to support us to do that."

Two elements of the NSTD are particularly exciting from his perspective: "The discussion around supply chain, and the discussion around bringing people and skills with us is fantastic. We employ a lot of great talent in our industry, both mature and young, and they have so much to offer this transition - it's the technology and knowledge that we have to bring with us into this new all-energy world."

Start local

Harnessing that technology and expertise from within and without Proserv has been a key component of its strategy for diverse growth. David draws attention to one project, a subsea cable monitoring system, which has received government support during the R&D stage. Aimed primarily at offshore wind, this is being accelerated through a strategic alliance with Synaptec, a Scottish university spin-off which has developed a unique passive distributed electro-mechanical sensing (DES) technology, and BPP Cable Solutions. The combined system will help enable faults and failures to be identified pre-emptively, and the consortium is now in positive talks with developers looking to deploy it on demonstration sites.

Proserv has also drafted a new ESG policy in the wake of the NSTD and the UK's net zero target. More than 35 volunteers from across the business helped draft the policy, with a particular focus on the environmental component. "It's to make sure we get to be carbon net-zero ourselves by 2050 or sooner," David explained. "It's trying to set realistic and achievable goals yet make them aspirational as well."

While this will focus on the company's emissions,

Component design at Gilmore's facility in Houston.

it will also build in support for Proserv's own supply chain. David sees this as another vital role for the supply chain in supporting the NSTD and the wider push for decarbonisation. "It's incumbent upon us to move that forward with our own supply chain; their carbon footprint is our footprint. You have to join the dots as a combined chain."

"I think that links neatly with what the NSTD is about," he continues. "It's not about looking only at your own company. We all have supply chains and we have influence with them, they want to support you as their customer. When I get asked to meet key suppliers one of my key questions will be to have a chat about their ESG policy, ask what they're doing, and say: 'This is what we're planning.' And share our own ideas and actions. That type of dialogue should be encouraged in industry, so we can help and learn from each other."

This dialogue also extends to the solutions companies offer their clients. David says Proserv is good at constructively challenging clients, asking whether other approaches have been considered or suggesting solutions beyond the scope of the request. It's clear that real collaboration is as much about the ability to push back and suggest alternatives as it is about finding compromise, and

"Sharing your journey and your future is very important... There is without doubt a clear belief now in the journey this industry is on."

it is only through these kinds of conversations that ambitious decarbonisation can be delivered.

Sharing the journey

To help guide its diversification, Proserv has also set revenue targets within its five-year strategy, most notably to generate 25% of revenue from sources outside of oil and gas by 2025. David says progress on this has been encouraging, and has helped develop thinking around the services that it offers. "It made us start then to look at how we evolve our company further into that new energy space, and we're still working on that. We're re-presenting [the strategy] this year and I would now change that goal to 50%. If all the actions we're looking at now bear fruit, I think we could even be at 25% by next year."

Targets like these are important from a governance perspective, but more than that, David says they help show staff where the company is headed, and how it will get there, especially if that may be in territories or markets that have been historically unfamiliar. "That's what we forget sometimes I think," he notes. "We have about 850 people around the world and all of them are desperate to know more about our steps into new energy and our efforts in the digital space, how we will pivot. Sharing your journey and your future is very important."

If employees are behind the journey, is the same enthusiasm seen on company boards? He thinks so: "Every board meeting I have it's now an agenda item... There are people who doubted the journey in the early days, and that has changed dramatically in the last 18 months. Whatever the catalysts are and whatever the messages have been, there is without doubt a clear belief now in the journey this industry is on."

This is vital as younger staff and new graduates enter the workforce. The NSTD will help to support the creation of up to 40,000 new energy jobs, but it also emphasises the importance of helping the UK's existing energy and industrial communities throughout the energy transition.

Proserv technician surveys an offshore windfarm in the North Sea.

Equally, David sees a wealth of transferrable skills in the graduates emerging today, especially with regards to data and digital: "I think we're seeing a shift in the fundamental knowledge base of an individual – they are much more comfortable around the analytical data side of information than we were five years ago. There is a more holistic approach to that type of technology than there was before."

That's important when Proserv looks to the future of its workforce. He continues: "For our business in controls, a lot of that is eminently transferrable, it's the same technology just applied in a different

manner. I think as companies we have to be courageous with our people, we need to take risks with talent quicker and promote from within. That knowledge base is within all levels of our company so I think we should be brave with these people and let them have at it."

Looking to the immediate future, David expects an uptick in business as the global economy unlocks, and a significant ramp up in activity towards the end of 2021 and into 2022. He also makes a particular point of recognising the work of the company's COVID operating committee and their "fantastic job" keeping all staff safe and informed through the last 15 or so months.

And amidst its strategy for growth and diversification, it's also clear that the commitments of the NSTD will help guide the direction of Proserv in the coming years. David affirms: "Having a government, an industry body and forward-looking companies work together, it gives that glue that allows us to take what we've done so far, make sure we're on the right path and add to it. Bringing the present into the future is an integral part of the journey."

Working smarter in heat treatment

As asset owners work to ever-tighter turnarounds, heat treatment is one discipline benefitting from new innovations. OGUK member Superheat explains how its Superheat SmartWay™ process can help the UKCS market.

Heat treatment processes can be a diverse and challenging proposition for the operator of any major piece of infrastructure or equipment. The process of heat treatment, also known as stress relieving, is the controlled heating and cooling of a component to alter the physical and chemical properties of a material. Typically, these materials are brought to extreme temperatures to achieve the desired result, such as the hardening or softening of a component. To do so often requires plant shutdowns, and the mobilising of trained personnel and equipment, difficult enough onshore before one considers moving those resources many miles offshore.

Navigating and overcoming those challenges for clients has been the driving force for much of the work conducted by heat treatment provider Superheat in its 20+ years of operation. Headquartered in Chicago, USA, the company operates over 30 facilities across North America and the UK, and opened its most recent office in Larbert, Scotland in 2020.

Having built its presence in the UK, it's now a go-to provider for several major refineries and end users in the world of petrochemicals, oil and gas, and power. Its newest location marks an expansion of its services to offer greater capabilities for offshore oil and gas assets, particularly those in north east Scotland. *Wireline* spoke with business development manager Steve McDonnell and marketing manager Dylan Sayle to learn more.

Doing more with less

Steve notes that at the time the company was created, the methods and technologies for heat treatment had remained fairly consistent since the 1980s, without a great deal of innovation or development. Having looked at the competition, he says Superheat adopted a 'back to basics' approach, refining both the technology and the way its personnel were deployed to a client's site. This strategy involved "making sure that every time we went through somebody's gate we were all doing the work the same way, using technology which was fit for purpose: tried and tested and developed and was ready for the modern-day market."

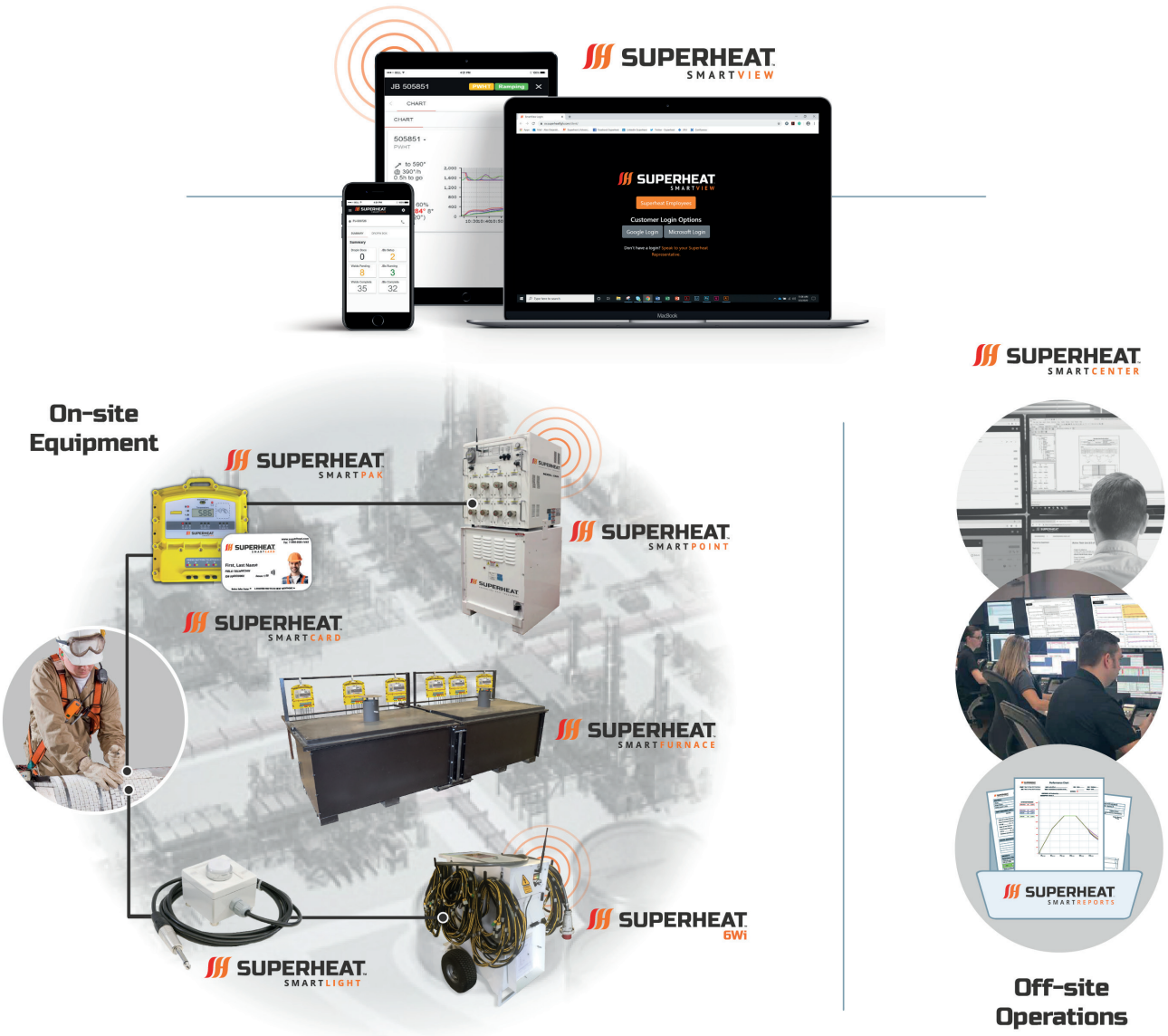
He continues: "We have developed a technology that allows us to do a lot more with a lesser footprint of manpower, but also a lesser footprint of equipment. That's a really big deal on a rig or a refinery, because they've got less space than ever before. It means because you can get more done with less of a footprint, which equals less dollars, and less power generation that you require to switch that on."

On the technological side, the company has developed an end-to-end process it calls Superheat SmartWay™. On-site wrapping configurations using flexible ceramic heating pads, furnaces and other treatment equipment are set up by on-site Superheat technicians, but are overseen and controlled by a remote hub, the Superheat SmartCenter™. In addition to on-site innovation – the rig used offers around three times the output zone control and thermocouple attachments in comparison to a traditional heat treatment rig – the company's patented ability to operate the equipment remotely ensures safety and consistency across any job, compared with the variable results often achieved using previous technologies.

"Our SmartCenter centralised the quality control and the quality awareness of what we were doing on that client site," Steve continues. "What that meant is that the client actually got what they paid for, which was a quality assured end product, rather than being in the hands of a technology that unfortunately can be unreliable."

Remote support allows the personnel that are on site to work more effectively, and the smaller equipment footprint means fewer people are needed to complete treatment. Uniquely, Dylan says, its Superheat SmartPak™ wrap is also "lockout tagged" meaning no power is supplied until designated by the technician and handed over to the central control room, as an additional safety and consistency measure.

Supporting this is the company's Superheat SmartView™ system, a web-based quality assurance (QA) suite that spans the full process of heat treatment, from initial customer requests, documentation and



An overview of the Superheat SmartWay™ system.

specifications, through real time weld statuses and live data, and finally to a 'Superheat SmartReports' QA package once the treatment is complete. Cloud-hosted documentation also allows Superheat's engineering team to ensure that every weld setup meets all client specifications and code requirements and uses the most efficient method. With access to a vast library of specs, it's likely that most weld configurations have been seen and proven by the company before.

Adds Dylan: "There are a lot of instances in the heat treatment world where transparency is non-existent, and we're able to give project details as well as access to critical data specific to their weld heat treatment. It captures the entire process from start to finish and offers them a quality package at the end."

Live tracking of heat treatment also allows clients to better plan other work during scheduled shutdowns, without waiting for daily reports from their contractor. SmartView shows when a job is underway and completed, minimising any associated downtime on site.

Remote working

The advantages of efficient mobilisation have only become more apparent in the past year. As Dylan notes: "Throughout our whole SmartWay process, in order to do more with less we've focused on providing tools and technology that allow our on-site technicians and project managers to optimise the process. We've done that because we've seen a need, and that need has become critical in the era of COVID."

Steve stresses that collaboration with clients is also central to Superheat's offering, and while fewer of its staff might travel to work sites, they can help train and support client staff in the treatment process. Not only does this help save time and resources on travel and labour, but it also ensures they are both invested in the

The Superheat SmartCenter™ which oversees all heat treatment operations.

"We're getting challenged to be as efficient as you can be and also come to site with new ideas."

outcome. "By working with the site team, in tandem with them, you can significantly improve your site efficiency," he adds.

That collaboration was exemplified in a 2020 project in Abu Dhabi where, due to travel restrictions, Superheat staff were unable to reach the work site. Equipment was instead shipped directly to the client, while SmartCenter operators hosted 11 days of pre-outage virtual training with the contractors' local labour team, including setup, the use of SmartView, trial wrapping configurations and safety protocols. Once suitably comfortable with the procedure, the local team could set up their own heat treatment before then handing over to the SmartCenter for remote operation.

With that support, all remotely operated heat cycles were successfully completed. And while far from a routine scenario, it proves the potential of more agile technologies, backed up by remote support. "We're getting challenged to be as efficient as you can be and also come to site with new ideas," Steve says, and increasingly solutions like this may be the optimum route for time-pressed clients.

He highlights that, for the offshore oil and gas market in regions like the UKCS, efficiency gains using these kinds of processes are significant differentiators given the demand for tighter turnarounds. "What was maybe a 12 or 13-week event is now getting done in four or five weeks, so customers need to partner with contractors that have invested appropriate resources into being fit for the modern day – both with their technology and their people." he says. "Now more than ever before, the generation of change is in front of us."

Having opened its newest location, Superheat is now working to further demonstrate the value of the technology in offshore environments. It draws on an exemplary safety record – zero recordable safety incidents across all clients over the last two years – and continues to serve clients around the UK.

Looking to the rest of 2021 and beyond, Superheat is actively engaging with new and existing contractors and end users as it builds on its latest Scottish base. For the Steve, the goal is simple: "We will be continuing to deliver the best solutions to address the needs of each particular project from a safety, cost implication, manpower and equipment footprint on site using our technologies."

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Meet the team: Jenny Stanning

OGUK external relations director Jenny Stanning assesses the changing political and policy landscape, and how the organisation is responding on behalf of members.

Appointed at the end of 2020, external relations director Jenny Stanning is responsible for leading OGUK's external affairs, events and membership teams. Her responsibilities include working with Governments, Parliaments, industry leaders, business and industry organisations and regulatory bodies to ensure that members' interests are well represented.

Prior to joining OGUK, Jenny worked in politics and stakeholder management for 10 years, including some time working in the Scottish Parliament.

In a year which has already seen the agreement of a North Sea Transition Deal (NSTD), a raft of global climate policies and the lead up to COP26, keeping OGUK and its members informed and engaged is a challenging and fast-paced brief. Wireline spoke with Jenny to learn more about her role and her priorities for the year.

As the new external affairs director, what are your priorities and how are you working towards delivering them?

OGUK has great relationships with parliamentarians and stakeholders from across the political spectrum and this is the same across the UK business and industry communities One of my key priorities is to develop that base so that we can bring together advocates and champions of our sector in Scotland and across the UK.

It's an exciting time to be part of industry. We have exciting developments to talk about like the NSTD. Understanding who it is we should talk to and developing telling the OGUK story on behalf of our members is central to my new role.

I'm also responsible for our events and membership teams. The pandemic has totally changed how we run events and a priority will be supporting the team getting back to the networking events that our members really enjoy. Webinars have been great in terms of the global reach and how accessible they are, but we know people are champing at the bit to be in a room together to talk about big issues and get networking again. Taking this role on was a great reminder that OGUK members are at the heart of what we do.

How might the recent election results affect energy policy locally and nationally?

Across cities and regions in England we're seeing a greater significance placed on the role of elected city and regional mayors. Either as part of the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda or for non-government parties, it's about ensuring their patch gets a fair deal. We've seen this in Teeside, where we've also had a Parliamentary by-election. OGUK has a major footprint here and local leaders are driving energy projects on hydrogen and carbon capture – we're going to see more of this across England and our people and skills are going to be at the heart of it.

Closer to home for me, the Scottish elections proved very interesting too. We now have an SNP minority government, Conservatives still in opposition and the Green Party returning more MSPs than ever before. We've already seen support in the Scottish Parliament for the North Sea Transition Deal, which is great and the team has done a power of work to engage with new and returning MSPs and Scottish Ministers, building on the OGUK manifesto that we sent out pre-election.

It's also important not to forget the political context of the time we're operating in. These elections have taken place as we emerge from a pandemic into an arena where public focus on economics is huge – public debt is bigger than it's been since 1945 and economic recovery is the priority for the public and therefore it's the number one priority for politicians as well.

Are we likely to see any major new UK policies in the lead up or wake of COP26?

COP26 sets the agenda for this year and we're going to see the public pushing for action and governments and parliaments looking to industry to deliver change at speed. But it's also important to say that industry is a partner to this change, we want to deliver at pace and our challenge to government is to provide us with the support we need to underpin the transition.

The Queen's Speech – the UK Government's legislative plan – took place in May and although there wasn't a new Energy Bill, we are expecting hydrogen and innovation

strategies to be published before the Parliamentary recess.

Governments across the UK have put tackling climate change at the heart of their political agenda and that shone through during the election campaigns. Net Zero was a concept that many people would not have touched only a few years ago – now it is in nearly every manifesto.

Your role takes in stakeholder relationships locally, but also needs an awareness of the international dynamic – what should be watching out for this year on the global scale?

This is a global industry and climate change is a global emergency. We work with national oil industry associations (NOIAs), the IOGP and individual members and they're all very interested in the North Sea Transition Deal, which is the first time any G7 country has worked with industry in a partnership to help it transition to net zero fairly and at pace.

We think we can be held up by the government as a demonstration of climate leadership, and we think that's a really positive way to approach an international climate change conference that just so happens to be held in the UK.

"Net Zero was a concept that many people would not have touched only a few years ago – now it is in nearly every manifesto."

"The UK oil and gas industry is well placed to support economic recovery post-pandemic, but with the North Sea Transition Deal, that recovery will be focused towards achieving the Government's net zero targets."

We're also coming to the end of a global pandemic, which has knocked economies and industries across the world. The UK oil and gas industry is well placed to support economic recovery post-pandemic, but with the North Sea Transition Deal, that recovery will be focused towards achieving the Government's net zero targets.

It has been a challenging 18 months for everyone. How do you see the state of the industry and how do members feel after such a difficult operating environment?

I think as we start to look towards recovery, it's really important to remember that our members – in common with many businesses across the UK – have had a really hard 12 months. We have had the triple whammy of COVID, low oil and low gas prices, and that's had a material impact on not just companies but people and people's lives. We've had to juggle jobs, the uncertainty of the pandemic on our personal lives, and huge stress and anxiety. But also uncertainty in the industry; many of us based in oil and gas hubs will have friends and family who have lost jobs as a result of the pandemic and commodity prices collapsing, and that's very difficult to deal with.

We also know that investment has stalled and many activities have been postponed to next year or the year after, and that will have a real impact on our supply chain. We always see a bit of a lag between investment decisions and the impact on the supply chain, and as they are hit you feel the shockwaves through from big Tier 1 contractors down to smaller members of our supply chain community.

We have some brilliant, innovative and exciting SME members who do fantastic things for oil and gas now but are also well placed to support the energy transition, and it would be a travesty if they're no longer here.

I think it's a mixed picture, but we are starting to see signs of more positivity and this is where Government and our other stakeholders can help us tell the story of how this industry can support the recovery post pandemic and can transition, fairly.

How can OGUK members stay engaged with the organisation?

I always say my favourite OGUK members are the ones who give me the most work and there hasn't been a shortage of that this year!

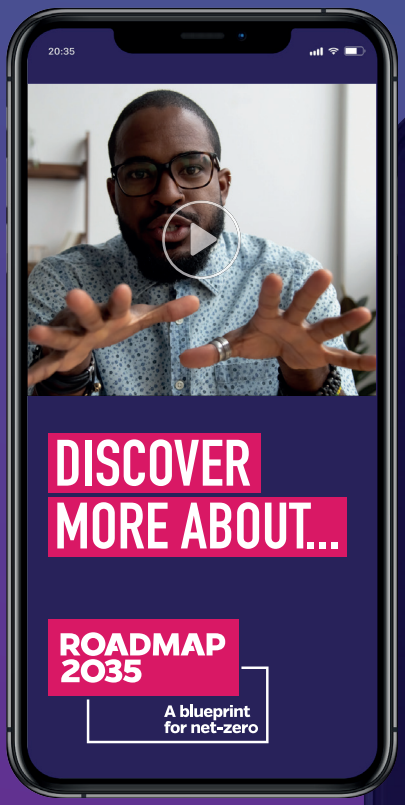
OGUK has been really busy over the past year supporting members through COVID. Part of that is ensuring there are still strong advocates out there for the oil and gas industry, but we're also helping members access opportunities presented by the energy transition. We know that many of them are already involved in new energies and markets, and part of what we're doing is showing how their skills can translate.

There are the usual channels to stay in touch with what we're doing: we have our newly re-launched website, our member newsletter and of course, *Wireline* magazine. We also have our fantastic events programme running throughout the year which is virtual and mainly free, and we're running a series of member-exclusive sessions to give members access to technical expertise and specialists at OGUK.

We also have more technical work groups and forums where you can come and discuss tricky subjects and technical issues with your peers, and stay abreast of the work that OGUK facilitates on members' behalf. That includes our work with government and our communications team and the work they are doing to showcase the positive opportunities this industry has to offer.

All OGUK staff are accountable to make sure members receive best value for money. That means that every member has an OGUK staff member responsible for maintaining that relationship and ensuring they can access the resources they need. If you don't know who your key account manager is, please drop our membership team a line and they will connect you.

membership@oguk.org.uk



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Investing in the energy transition

As the UK's oil and gas supply chain works toward recovery, many companies are developing strategies for sustainability in the longer term.

Like the rest of the sector, the UK's oil and gas supply chain is changing. In the wake of COVID-19, and with the UK and others now en route to net zero by 2050, companies are developing new strategies to ensure their sustainability. For some, this is about diversification, offering their existing services to a broader range of industries; for others it may be adapting their existing business to meet the changing needs of offshore energy. In many cases, it is both.

Market conditions remain tough. In OGUK's most recent *Business Outlook*, survey respondents in the supply chain reported lower sentiment than for the same period in 2020. While most expected revenues to hold steady or grow in 2021, they also expected margins would be squeezed, with more than a quarter anticipating margins would decline.

Amidst this however, there are encouraging signs. While consolidation amongst the sector is to be expected, new investors are forthcoming and recent deals suggest new interest in private equity investment in UK-headquartered businesses. *Wireline* spoke with two OGUK members, each at different phases of growth, to gauge what this means for the long-term health of the supply chain.

International, interconnected

Vysus Group was created in October 2020, following the carve-out of Lloyd's Register's (LR) Energy division. Although a new business entity, it brings with it 650 staff, operations in 20-plus countries and the full extent of LR Energy's expertise and pedigree, stretching back to the 1930s. As an engineering and technical consultancy, its operations are structured around global delivery of a broad range of capabilities, spanning the upstream, power, renewables, energy transition, and complex infrastructure sectors.

Vysus Group CEO David Clark joined the business in 2019, with the task of reshaping the LR Energy division and bringing together the expertise from its various

Left: Managing offshore logistics and materials in ASCO's Peterhead warehouse.

Right: Vysus Group CEO, David Clark.

areas of work – be that oil and gas, renewables, or civil engineering – in a more holistic manner. "Our strategy was to focus and leverage our significant depth of expertise and experience, and apply this not only to the emerging technologies and solutions, but the integration of these pieces," he explains. "We have a global footprint and we service the energy sectors (from upstream hydrocarbons to renewables, to nuclear, to transition energy) complex industrial process sectors (downstream petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals) and infrastructure (power, energy & transport)."

In this case, the strategy was less about diversifying the business and more about being able to offer customers the maximum breadth of LR Energy's expertise to help them find the best solutions. "The energy landscape is going to be significantly more complex and interconnected, and the scale of infrastructure change that's going to be needed over the next 20–30 years is only now becoming apparent to the public." Successfully navigating these changes will require increasingly complex solutions, and David presses the importance of the supply chain, industry and government working together to meet those challenges.

The new business strategy was making significant progress through 2019, however, a company-wide review in early 2020 highlighted that an advisory and consulting division with a broad sector client base was no longer an ideal fit within LR's core business of maritime and compliance professional services. The subsequent impact of COVID-19 sped up the divestment process, and by summer 2020 David and the team were in discussions with private equity (PE) houses specialising in complex carve-outs like this.

Inspirit Capital proved to be the winning partner, signing on to officially acquire the LR Energy business last October. Executing the formal transition of staff, systems and infrastructure has been no mean feat, he says, particularly when it comes to personnel spread across the globe, all while working remotely from home. Yet despite those headwinds, Vysus Group was officially launched at the end of the year, and is now fully independent.

Integrating inventories

Another service business looking to invest in the future is ASCO Group. The Aberdeen-headquartered materials and logistics management specialist has an equally prestigious history dating back to the late 1960s and its formative years as Aberdeen Service Company. Since then, it has seen global expansion and now provides a fully integrated logistics and materials management service, supporting projects in oil and gas, decommissioning, and new energy sectors. ASCO's safe, lean, efficient and sustainable end-to-end solutions include supply base management, materials and warehouse management, environmental services management, training, lifting and assurance, personnel provision, fuel services and marine,

transport, freight and logistics management. The company now comprises some 1,300 staff in 70 base locations across seven countries.

In December 2020, the company was acquired from previous owners DH Equity Partners by investor consortium Zander Topco, although ASCO confirmed there would be no changes to its operations. Indeed, CEO Peter France is emphatic about the role of industry stalwarts like ASCO in helping steer the sector through the energy transition: "It's important for us as a service company to understand what the market needs and that we are joining the interconnected dots together. There will be a lot of change and disruption, and so companies like ASCO, which can draw upon decades of expertise and experience to support new market demands, need to be there to bridge those gaps. That's a big part of our strategy."

Having added a range of competencies over past decades, Peter says the Group is now focused on providing an integrated 'end-to-end solution' for clients. While some may still opt for individual services, he points out the value in leveraging the Group's ability to take on all elements of logistics – from managing quayside inventory and live tracking equipment to and from assets, to waste and recycling services – and more besides. "So, the focus now is really to improve delivery of that service across a wider scale, so customers benefit from all those service lines."

UK managing director Glenn Hurren notes that two main areas for ASCO's business development are environmental services and inventory management. With the latter, Glenn says the goal has been to help customers 'lean' their operations and make them faster, more efficient and sustainable by drawing on track-and-trace solutions and ASCO's 40+ years of experience in managing warehouses and inventory.

As well as the benefit to an operator's bottom line, leaner, more agile logistics also lower waste and emissions. Group operations and HSSEQ director Steve Mitchell highlights that greater transparency, trust and reliability in logistics mean its customers don't need to hold onto large, unused inventories – whose production, storage and disposal also have a carbon footprint – for 'just in case' scenarios. It's another instance in which more efficient business can also lead to better environmental outcomes.

This also goes hand in hand with ASCO's 'zero waste to landfill' initiative, and its commitment – set by the company's Environmental Sustainability Policy – to becoming a net zero carbon emissions business by 2040, both of which the team hopes will set the company apart in the eyes of current and potential clients. Adds Steve: "We are seeing [environmental impact data] being requested more and more in the tender process. What's interesting is how that's going to be evaluated going forward and how much weighting will be placed on it, because it can be a differentiator."

Eye for opportunity

Despite the changes across industry, both businesses clearly see opportunities. Indeed, Vysus Group sees oil and gas as a growth market, largely because its broad skillset is well positioned to support clients as they also look to diversify and tackle new projects. "Upstream activity and decommissioning activity are growing parts of our portfolio," David continues, "And we see significant growth in the years ahead in CCUS – which needs all of the same skillset, expertise and delivery muscle."

That skillset extends to regulation as well. Having worked alongside policymakers such as the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), offshore wind authorities, Crown Estate, National Grid, all which have different regulatory frameworks and rules, he believes the group is well placed to support projects that will increasingly involve several of these organisations at once.

The transferability of oil and gas expertise is also borne out in Vysus Group's work. David lists recent projects including offshore electrification studies, hydrogen technology evaluations and the integration of wind generation into upstream assets. Notably, its wells teams have also been assisting the Eden Project drill a 4.5km geothermal well to help power its facilities – positive proof that expertise honed in offshore hydrocarbons will be invaluable to the future energy landscape.

Support from the company's new investors has also been reassuring. "Inspirit Capital fundamentally got the business model, they understood what our team was about and where we wanted to take the business," David explains. He believes that the move from a hydrocarbon-dominated energy business to a much broader energy services and infrastructure consultancy is particularly appealing for an investor looking to create value. "Given the expertise, footprint and customer relationships we have with key players who are going to be executing that, they saw the potential in the business and understood the plan the management team had presented."

Moreover, Inspirit Capital's carve out experience and expertise has proved invaluable, both in offering advice and in flagging challenges and risks – even supporting Vysus Group to complete an ad hoc acquisition during the transition process. "The VC world's level of focus and their willingness and ability to move at pace is

Right: Vysus Group's drilling expertise is aiding the Eden Project develop a geothermal well and power plant.


MND

From top: ASCO CEO Peter France; UK managing director Glenn Hurren; Group operations and HSSEQ director Steve Mitchell.

Right: ASCO's Aberdeen supply base.

something we absolutely need," he continues.

ASCO's Peter France also believes that the changing corporate landscape in the UK will alter customer demands – particularly in the case of private equity, where exit strategies may support extra efforts to ensure sustainability and climate change compatibility. Those like ASCO, who can help demonstrate these credentials, may well have an edge. "We can't just be focused on the price, those days are gone," Peter adds. "I think PE companies will invest, which will extend the life of the UKCS, they will run it efficiently, but they will have an eye on the environmental impact, and companies like ASCO will be able to support them on that journey."

That is borne out in the recent addition of 'sustainability' to ASCO's core values, which Peter says reflects environmental impacts, but also the company's role in the local community and the skills developed by those who work there. Discussions around these goals have proved a powerful engagement tool for the staff: "They want to be part of the environmental committee

and sustainability committee, they want us to look at new technologies in terms of fuel or equipment – all of that is quite exciting," he adds.

Building back better

Despite the widespread disruption of 2020, both Vysus Group and ASCO have emerged confident in their strategies and capabilities. Peter France praises teams across the business for their performance and resilience, adding that: "From a service point of view, we didn't miss a beat - I am so proud of the organisation and how they responded. We're now back to working on how we're going to grow the business and take it to the next level," he says."

This includes further digitalisation projects and a new operational control centre in Dyce, which will enable oversight across the whole North Sea business, and aid planning, tracking and control of operations with end-to-end visibility from vendors to end users. Peter also raises a new internal initiative – OneHub – aimed at supporting integration across departments, again with the aim of enabling the company's 'end-to-end' approach for customers.

Vysus Group has also worked hard to bring customers along with its new identity as it looks to the rest of 2021 and beyond. David is pleased that no client was left behind during the journey, and as work resumes on many global projects, he is reassured by "encouraging signs of increasing activity and demand" across the company's global customer base through the rest of the year.

Most of all, he is confident that the company's holistic expertise and diverse customer base will continue to help drive the energy transition in the coming years. "We set a three-to-five year vision for our business to be 40% renewables and transition, 30% in complex industrials and infrastructure and 30% in the upstream hydrocarbon world," he says. "That was a vision we put in place 18 months ago. We revalidated that in the last few months with the new identity and core values and we're on track to deliver on that."

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