

The Future of Commercial Diving: Bright or Blinkered?

In an article in The Press and Journal earlier this year, press writer Jeremy Cresswell reviews the Subsea UK's annual conference, and asks whether the UK is prepared for the next phase of windfarm installation off UK shores. He asks with good reason. There seems to be a marked lack of 'joined-up' thinking in the sector, especially where plans for diver training are concerned.

We at Reference Point, UMC - The Underwater Maintenance Company and Quartz Business Media are intrigued and interested by this question. We are currently planning and facilitating what is a unique industry event: the Commercial Diver and Diving Operations Asia International Conference and Exhibition, April 2012 (CDDO). We realise that this rapidly growing high-value industry, currently worth billions, has no dedicated global forum. Though the industry stretches worldwide, there is only one event that directly services this market, with its needs for specialised training and trans-national certification. This event is held in and focused almost exclusively upon the USA.

With rapid regional growth in Europe, the Middle East, South America and Southeast Asia, the commercial diving sector is definitely looking under-serviced. Our 2012 CDDO Conference and Exhibition will be the first of its kind to be held outside - and focused outside - the USA.

We feel this Commercial Diver and Diving Operations Conference and Exhibition provides a major opportunity for industry companies and skilled individuals to come together and share not just products and services but expertise and up-to-date information. We are structuring the conference so it affords a high knowledge-transfer element as well as the chance to showcase products and safety equipment, with the knowledge that the UK and other countries are about to take a multi-million pound leap into sub-sea operations.

As for example Round Three of our offshore windfarm programme kicks off, the UK is on the verge of a massive surge in windfarm construction. This will involve water depths that require saturation divers in considerable numbers. Training and safety competencies have already been funded by the UK government. But it looks as if the industry - according to Cresswell - has not picked up the ball. Are training competencies being addressed? How ready are we to meet the global need? How can we help each other to maximise the market and achieve the sales?

It's high time, in our view, that a high-value industry had a high-quality forum in which to take forward best practice and form strategic alliances for the future. After all, only by working trans-nationally will the industry achieve its best results.

If you are interested, or know someone who would appreciate further information on CDDO 2012, see www.cddo.co.uk or contact us at Reference Point for a brochure. We are taking bookings now.



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