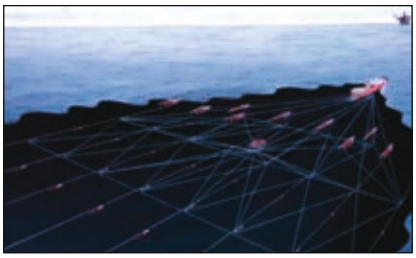
Intelligent Acquisition makes winning debut for ION



Graphic of Intelligent Acqusition.

ION Geophysical has won three key supply contracts from major contractors for its marine seismic acquisition business and in the process highlighted its newly conceptualized 'Intelligent Acquisition (IA)' solution offering

ION's Concept Systems software group has signed a five-year agreement with Petroleum Geo-Services (PGS), largest ever for Concept Systems software, which specifies that PGS will upgrade all existing 2D and 3D towed streamer vessels to the Orca command and control management system in a phased manner and that all newbuild PGS vessels will be outfitted with Orca upon commissioning. Following successful joint development for Orca's predecessor Spectra, ION says the contract will extend the parties' technology partnership in marine command and control to over 20 years. Purpose-designed to incorporate the latest hardware, software, and positioning technologies, Orca is said to manage all aspects of the navigation and seismic data workflows for vessel operators, enabling them to operate more safely and efficiently during complex survey operations while delivering processing-ready data to their customers. Acting as the 'brain' in ION's IA approach to towed streamer acquisition technology, Orca offers vessel operators reduced downtime with increased functionality, flexibility, and productivity.

Rune Eng, PGS group president, marine acquisition, said: 'As towed streamer surveys became more complex in recent years, we recognized the need to develop and commercialize new functionality to more efficiently execute the most technically advanced, multi-vessel marine acquisition programs, including 4D and HD3D surveys. Orca contains the advanced features we need, while the R&D collaboration outlined in the agreement will allow us to tailor Orca to the specific requirements of PGS' fleet and the customers we serve.'

ION has also been awarded a fleet-wide contract by Polarcus, the new marine geophysical services company, to equip all six of its vessels currently under construction with four streamer positioning and control technologies from the IA portfolio. The contract, with a value in excess of $25 million, includes DigiFIN, CompassBIRD, DigiRANGE II, and Orca command and control systems. Polarcus is launching an ultra-modern fleet of initially six advanced seismic vessels designed by Norway's Ulstein Design incorporating the innovative ULSTEIN X-BOW hull. The vessels are being built in Dubai, UAE, by Drydocks World – Dubai LLC, with the first vessels becoming operational in 2009.

Dave Moffat, senior vice president of ION's marine imaging systems, said: 'Focused on high-end marine acquisition, Polarcus is well positioned to enter the market in 2009 and operate from pole to pole. These IA technologies enable the customer to proactively position and optimize the streamer spread while decreasing acquisition complexity, cycle time, and cost in the most challenging surveys and operating conditions. In addition, innovative systems like DigiFIN can help Polarcus reduce its carbon footprint by reducing infill, enabling faster line changes, and speeding cable deployment and retrieval.'

A further contract for ION has been the recent multi-year, multi-vessel agreement covering marine acquisition technology with Norway-based Fugro-Geoteam, part of the Fugro group of companies. The agreement is said to signify a long-term commitment from both parties to continue developing and improving steerable streamer technology using the Orca command and control system and DigiFIN lateral streamer control and outlines the terms under which Fugro will further develop these technologies on its high end, 3D streamer-vessel fleet. The next phase of collaboration between ION and Fugro is intended to ensure that marine acquisition technologies will meet the increasingly complex survey requirements of the future.

Dag Sigurd Stensholt, vice president operations, Fugro-Geoteam, said: 'As 3D streamer acquisition programmes become increasingly complex, we are pleased to be further integrating Orca and DigiFIN into our marine operations. Fugro and our customers have realized the advanced imaging and productivity benefits that Orca and DigiFIN have provided in multiple commercial 3D acquisition surveys.'

ExxonMobil's Romania move

Exxon Mobil is to help explore deepwater portions of the Neptun Block offshore Romania following an agreement with Petrom, the largest Romanian oil and gas company and a part of the Austrian company OMV. The deal was ExxonMobil's second major exploration venture announced recently involving Black Sea. The company has agreed to cooperate with Petrom on a 3D seismic acquisition and evaluation programme of the Neptun Block providing expertise in evaluating the deepwater seismic data. Petrom will operate the initial work programme funded by ExxonMobil.

www.firstbreak.org © 2009 EAGE