



# OPITO in Action

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# Welcome from the CEO

John McDonald – CEO, OPITO

**Welcome to the latest edition of OPITO in Action.** I am pleased to let you know that the number of candidates completing OPITO training is on the rise. This not only strengthens the industry, it secures a safer working environment globally and underpins our delivery partner network. Last year we approved 12 new training providers to deliver industry standards, as well as 67 individual standard approvals at existing centres. We very much value our delivery partner companies and training providers and I look forward to continuing a close working relationship.

The feedback from the annual [OPITO Global](#) conference in November was very positive. We heard from Jeff Skiles, the 'Miracle on the Hudson' co-pilot and US Navy Elite Fighter Pilot Jack Becker who both illustrated how their training saves lives. The key message to delegates was the importance of standardisation in training and equipment within civilian and military aviation. We heard how daily flight crews can work with different pilots and crew members each time they fly. Through consistent and standardised training and retraining however, each member of the crew is aware of their role and actions in the case of an emergency - ensuring the safety of all 155 people on board in the case of US airlines flight 1549.

Discussions with our industry forums mirror this sentiment. The value in standardisation and the adoption of OPITO standards at regional levels will enable consistency and benefit workforce mobility. We will continue to work with industry to evolve new standards, qualifications and competencies required to meet the changing landscape of training and how it is delivered.

As we look forward, forecasts suggest that even with thousands of new people joining the industry over the coming years, the upskilling or reskilling of a substantial portion of the current workforce will be required. It is therefore even more



important that we take a strategic view and a collaborative stance on the development of skills and training and tackle this challenge together.

To inform our direction, OPITO commissioned research initially in the North Sea to understand the changing landscape of skills and the drivers that will affect them up to 2025. Our earlier research highlighted that innovations in digital technology and changing business delivery models are creating new ways of working within the industry. We also see a trend in delivery partners evolving using new learning technologies in simulation both physical and virtual. Our [UKCS Workforce Dynamics: The Skills Landscape 2019 - 2025](#) report informs our future

direction to ensure that our standards and qualifications are fit for purpose and training providers, educators and trade organisations will all have a part to play in this development.

I believe that by engaging in research and dialogue, OPITO as a whole will evolve the way we deliver our services and how we interact with our stakeholders and partners. OPITO is focused on three main drivers; continuing to create global standards and qualifications, creating workforce development solutions to support requirements and future needs as well as leading on dialogue with both industry and governments around the globe.

*John McDonald*



Lauren Montosh

## OPITO events encourage more females into energy sector

**As the Oil & Gas Apprentice Technical Apprentice Programme (OGTAP) 2019 opened for applications in the UK, around 30 young women signed up to attend one of four events in Aberdeen and Edinburgh.** The evening sessions were organised so those considering a future in the sector could hear first-hand from current female apprentices and oil and gas workers about their experiences.

Organised by OPITO, the 'Girls in OGTAP' dates took place at Edinburgh College and Aberdeen, which were held at ASET, part of North East Scotland College (NESCol). Attendees of all ages took part from across the UK including Berkshire, Yorkshire and the Central Belt.

Accompanied by family and friends, they heard from women already working in the sector and networked with current female OGTAP trainees and course mentors. They were also given a tour around the ASET training facilities, where apprentices receive classroom work and learn practical skills.



## Energy Skills Mapping Update

**A significant skills mapping initiative is underway to help ensure that as more companies diversify their business portfolios, the workforce has the ability to operate across the energy mix.**

During the second half of 2018, OPITO held three technical meetings of a Skills Mapping project group, facilitated by the UK Government's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), with representatives from offshore oil and gas, onshore oil and gas, nuclear and renewables industries.

The project aims to identify core skills across similar roles in offshore and onshore oil and gas, renewables and nuclear with the objective of helping to develop plans for upskilling existing personnel and pinpointing specifications for new candidates.

The research will identify training gaps to ensure workers can be up-skilled or retrained to allow more flexibility across operations within energy industries. The benefit of the skills mapping exercise is to create a more fluid workforce which can better support employers as they introduce low carbon strategies. It will also provide employees with a clearer career pathway for progression and career change within energy, helping to sustain the future of the sector.

The project team has identified technician roles as a priority and is currently mapping the qualifications and skills requirements for these roles across the respective sectors. This work will continue in 2019 and will encompass further roles which are commonly utilised across the energy industry.

# New VPs support global growth of standards



Hart Victor

**Engagement with stakeholders in key global regions is growing following the creation of two new senior strategic development roles covering Asia Pacific and Middle East/Africa.**

[Hart Victor](#) has joined as VP of strategy for Asia Pacific based in Kuala Lumpur, and [Richard Roberts](#) has been appointed VP of strategy for Middle East and Africa and is working from our Dubai operation.

Hart sees great potential for increasing support to the industry through OPITO standards and has been meeting with contacts throughout the region. Hart said, "There is a regional trend of National Oil Companies (NOCs) taking their operations outside of their own waters into the international arena, frequently in joint ventures or through contracts with International Oil Companies (IOCs), which is creating a further need for global training and certification standards. We're aiming to expand our uptake in the Asia Pacific region and will be working with Petronas on a systems project over the coming months."

CNOOC, the largest producer of oil and natural gas in China, adopted OPITO safety



Richard Roberts

standards last year and more than 1,000 employees will be certified throughout 2019.

"China is the second highest consumer of oil and gas and is also a large net importer. There is a desire to improve competency within the workforce and we are having a lot of positive dialogue about how we can help make this happen."

Hart previously spent more than a decade with National Oilwell Varco as regional training manager for Asia where he supported the growth of the team from 50 to over 1,000 people as well as establishing new training centres in the region.

Richard has been based in the Middle East since 2005 and has enjoyed a 25-year career in senior roles ranging from operations to regional human resources. A key theme throughout has been the development of local national capability.

He said: "Many of the region's NOCs are keen to invest in new structures, systems and processes when it comes to workforce safety and skills. They are looking for high quality industry standards that are aligned to the rest of the global industry. The

Middle East and Africa is a critical region for the oil and gas community and is an area where OPITO is keen to strengthen working relationships and contribute to the regional approach. Discussions are already taking place with a major regional NOC who is looking to adopt various OPITO qualifications and standards."

Both VPs will also be involved with the established training provider groups (TPAG) in the regions as well as building new links with industry stakeholders.

Mark Cullens, director of strategic development said: "Hart and Richard's appointments underline our intention to extend the OPITO skills and workforce development offering globally. We are already seeing increased interactions within these regions and look forward to sharing details on these developments throughout 2019."

OPITO will shortly announce the appointment of a VP based in the US, focusing on strategic development across the Americas region.

# CNOOC becomes China's first OPITO approved safety trainer

**The largest producer of offshore crude oil and natural gas in China, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), has become the country's first organisation certified to train workers to OPITO safety standards.**

Its safety training facility, CNOOC Safety & Technology Services Co., Ltd, achieved the internationally recognised approval last summer and it's anticipated that more than 1,000 of its personnel will be certified within the first 12 months.

CNOOC is China's third largest state-owned E&P firm. It has operations in the South China Sea as well as being involved in LNG storage activities within the Tianjin port district of the Bohai Sea. Internationally, it has assets in Asia, Africa, North and South America, Oceania and Europe.

The training centre and its satellite facilities are based in the city of Tianjin where up to 40,000 CNOOC personnel are based. It obtained OPITO approval over a period of nine months.



The approval will see the company introduce personnel to the specific safety issues and regimes relevant to offshore installations and equip them with the basic emergency response knowledge and skills for travelling offshore by helicopter.

The offshore survival approval includes: Basic Offshore Safety Induction and

Emergency Training (BOSIET) with Emergency Breathing System (EBS); Helicopter Underwater Emergency Training (HUET) with EBS; and the refresher course, Further Offshore Emergency Training (FOET) with EBS.

CNOOC Safety & Training Services Co., Ltd also gained approval to deliver Basic H2S Training, providing participants with knowledge and understanding of hazards and gas, and appropriate emergency response actions to take should a related incident arise.

OPITO CEO, John McDonald, said: "This is very good news for CNOOC, CNOOC Safety & Technology Services Co., Ltd, China and the wider global industry. It's extremely reassuring to see this scale of investment in safety training which will benefit workers all over the world.

"Our aim is to see the global workforce trained to the same high quality, common standards wherever they are operating, helping to build a sustainable and competent workforce for today and tomorrow. Every worker has the right to go to work and return from work safely. Knowing the person that you work next to has the same understanding of what to do in the event of an incident is paramount."



# OPITO Global delivers skilled for safety message



**The revamped OPITO Global event in Kuala Lumpur in November was hailed a great success.** With a 'Skilled for Safety' theme, the two keynote speakers delivered standout presentations relating to safety and competence in the international oil and gas sector.

More than 400 delegates from around the world attended the conference and exhibition. They heard from Miracle on the Hudson' First Officer, Jeff Skiles (the co-pilot who helped safely land a stricken passenger flight on New York's Hudson River in 2009 with 155 people on board), and top US Navy elite fighter pilot and globally renowned safety expert, Jack Becker.



And for the first time, a fast-paced interactive Technical Forum was held on the following day providing a two-way channel for open conversations. Helen Bates, head of operational leadership development at BP, joined OPITO directors to host three workshop sessions. These looked at the changing landscape of learning and development and how learning methodology is modernising and transforming to embrace change;



how competence assessment will be affected as the industry moves into the third age of energy; and OPITO's regional footprint around the globe where a selective approach to the adoption of OPITO standards is taking place.

Plans are underway for the 2019 event, which will be held in the Malaysian capital for a fourth consecutive year.



## Oil and gas safety champions of 2018

**The 2018 OPITO Award winners impressed the judges by leading their businesses through the digital transition, pioneering the use of technologies in training and delivering high quality courses.**

The winners were Malaysia-based Wild Geese Group; Stork Technical Services, Trinidad and Tobago Ltd; and influential leaders from PVD Technical Training & Certification JSC, Vietnam; and Indonesian training company PT Samson Tiara.

The annual awards were presented during OPITO Global in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last year.

CEO, John McDonald, said: "The award winners demonstrated their long-term commitment to training, competence and safety in oil and gas. Their approach to raising safety awareness and delivering courses has been highly impressive and in some cases pioneering."

Wild Geese Group, which has been a regular supporter at OPITO's flagship conference since it began in 2009, collected the Digital Champion award for adapting its training programmes to the expectations of a changing oil and gas industry through technology enabled learning.

Stork, which earlier in 2018 became the first company in Central and South America to gain OPITO approval for the way it monitors and develops the skills and competence of its maintenance workers in the region, collected the Skilled for Safety Champion award for reducing health and safety risk through implementation of the internationally recognised standards.

In the people categories, managing director of PVD, Bui Thanh Van, collected the Leadership award for building and constantly developing training facilities for OPITO approved programmes in Vietnam since 2007.



Meanwhile, the Emerging Leader accolade was presented to general manager of PT Samson Tiara, Herdian Mohammad, for maintaining operational excellence and increasing demand for the training company's services through promotion and sales activity in Indonesia.

John added: "The annual awards are a chance to celebrate the achievements of everyone in the oil and gas industry. It's clear that safety and competence remains highest on the agenda for the exhibitors and delegates of our conference and we know their influence extends throughout the industry."

# Oil and gas skills strategy reveals rapidly changing sector

**Energy skills body OPITO has set out a strategy to prepare the UK oil and gas industry for a shift in skills requirements over the next six years.**

OPITO's [Skills Landscape 2019 – 2025 report](#), part of the UKCS Workforce Dynamics research series, reveals technology advances, internationalisation and the transition to a lower carbon future are accelerating changing skills demands in the sector.

It is expected that around 80% of the current workforce will still be working within the industry in 2025, taking into account natural attrition and retirement. The opportunity to retain these skills, as well as upskill and reskill the workforce as the industry adapts to take advantage of new technologies and different ways of working, is substantial.



In just six years it is estimated the industry needs to attract 25,000 new people and 4,500 of those will be into completely new roles that do not currently exist in areas such as data science, automation and new materials. Future roles may include 'Artificial Intelligence Business Developer', 'Virtual Reality Journey Builder' and '3D Material Scientist'.

Built on four strategic components – Retain, Retrain, Recruit, and Renew – the report, led by OPITO in partnership with Robert Gordon University's Oil & Gas Institute, is designed to help the sector develop an increasingly flexible, multi-skilled and technology-enabled workforce.

A route map has been developed to bring organisations together to deliver on targeted actions. Coordinated and facilitated by OPITO, on behalf of industry, the route map includes activities such as developing new education and training courses, technology focused apprenticeships and initiatives that support future recruitment and skills diversity.

Mark Cullens, Director of Strategic Engagement at OPITO said: "Oil and gas skills requirements are changing rapidly. Equipping the current workforce with the skills to adapt to this dynamic business environment is essential and work needs to begin right away.

"We have the potential to leverage UK skills and capabilities around the world, but close collaboration and partnership is needed to make an effective and lasting impact. We require a sharp focus on supporting the industry to take advantage of the benefits of digitisation and energy transition, creating a more technology-enabled, fluid and multi-skilled workforce of tomorrow. OPITO is working with industry and various stakeholders to coordinate and facilitate a route map of actions to help support the industry's Vision 2035 and the role of the sector in the low carbon economy."

The Skills Landscape report was published at an Oil & Gas UK Business Breakfast, sponsored by Deloitte which featured a

panel of industry speakers including Ariel Flores, BP's North Sea Regional President, Lesley Birse, President of People and Organisation for Europe, Africa, ME, Asia and Australia at Wood and Sophie Ewen, currently an OG-TAP (Oil & Gas Technical Apprenticeship Programme) apprentice working with Chevron.

To help determine the changing oil and gas skills requirements, 1,000 people from around 140 organisations responded to a detailed skills survey and supplemented the data already received covering 35,000 UKCS roles.

The Skills Landscape report follows the 2018 UKCS Workforce Dynamics: Shaping the Skills of Tomorrow review, that assessed the changing skills requirements over the next 20 years to support industry's Vision 2035, which aims to secure another generation of production and double exports.

# OPITO becomes an SCQF approved credit rating body

**OPITO has achieved the status of becoming a Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) approved Credit Rating Body (CRB) through the SCQF Partnership.** This allows the skills body to make decisions about the SCQF level and SCQF credit points allocated to qualifications developed to train staff in the oil and gas sector.

The Framework helps people of all ages and circumstances to access the education and training that is appropriate to them over their lifetime. It can also help learners to plan their learning and develop progression routes to follow, whatever their situation may be.

Being an SCQF approved CRB allows OPITO to make its own professional judgements, using tools provided by the SCQF

Partnership, about what level a qualification sits at on the SCQF. Once a qualification has an SCQF level it attracts national and international recognition for the learners who achieve it.

The organisation had to demonstrate it has robust quality assurance processes in place and a rigorous approach to qualifications development and credit rating. As part of the application, OPITO credit rated its Global Training Certificate 1: Basic Maintenance Practices (Electrical) at SCQF Level 4 with 9 SCQF credit points and the OPITO Vocational Qualification 2: Oil and Gas Engineering Maintenance (Mechanical) at SCQF Level 5 with between 16-18 SCQF credit points.

CEO John McDonald spoke at a SCQF

Partnership parliamentary reception at Holyrood in February. He presented on the importance on becoming a CRB and highlighted the benefits for the industry. He added: "Achieving the Credit Rating Body status through the SCQF Partnership is a significant milestone and further recognises OPITO's work alongside energy industry stakeholders to develop solutions to ensure a safe and skilled workforce around the globe. By achieving this status, we can add further value to our OPITO qualifications and also enhance the offering from industry."

OPITO is now one of eight SCQF approved CRBs which, along with the Scottish Qualifications Authority, universities and colleges, is allowed to make its own credit rating decisions.



## New Approvals



## Students experience virtual subsea work at Energise event



**More than 100 students aged 13 to 17 from across the North-east of Scotland experienced an array of subsea focused activities including a virtual tour of the seabed, as part of the Energise Your Future (EYF) initiative during Subsea Expo 2019.**

Held on the last day of the exhibition in Aberdeen, 13 companies took part in the EYF programme including JFD, Nortek UK, ORCA Hub (part of the Oil and Gas Innovation Centre stand), Rovco and Tritech. The Oil & Gas Technology Centre got involved for the first time which included two of its young engineers delivering presentations to the students at their stand.

Marine engineering firm EC-OG offered pupils the chance to use its latest virtual reality technology to transport them subsea to inspect its subsea power hub and battery equipment.

Other companies involved included Astrimar, Expro, Pipeline Industries, ROVOP, Unique Systems and Xodus.

Now in its 11th year, EYF has been part of major oil and gas trade events or delivered through standalone sessions since 2008. The initiative aims to inspire and encourage more young people in the UK to consider the industry as a career

choice by providing a chance to engage with key companies and people who can help explain their businesses as well as roles and routes into the sector.

CEO John McDonald said: "As more and more oil and gas companies embrace new techniques such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, it is important that young people see and hear first-hand what the future of the industry looks like and the vast and exciting opportunities these developments present to them."

Coming up soon in the EYF calendar, students in the east of England will be able to take part in the programme for the first time during EEEGR's SNS2019 – The Southern North Sea Conference & Exhibition, which takes place in Norwich,



*"it is important that young people see and hear first-hand what the future of the industry looks like and the vast and exciting opportunities these developments present to them"*

England. And in September, EYF will feature at Offshore Europe 2019 which is being held at the new state-of-the-art events venue, The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA).

## Action needed on UK apprenticeship levy

**The energy sector has historically shown strong commitment to employing apprentices.** You only have to look at the success of the industry's Oil & Gas Technical Apprentice Programme (OGTAP) to see how actively engaged companies have been over the past 17 years since its inception.

Managed on behalf of the industry by OPITO and the ECITB, OGTAP boasts one of the highest apprenticeship achievement rates in the UK (96%) and with the backing of 20 oil and gas operators and major contractors, it has brought almost 2,000 trainees into the industry since 1998.

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017 caused immediate and widespread concern across industry sectors. Investment stalled as businesses wrestled with the new criteria. Figures released in September 2018 showed that the number of new apprenticeships in the UK (excluding Scotland) fell by 28% in the year to June 2018.

The energy sector continues to find the levy confusing and bureaucratic; failing both employers and apprentices alike. With two different regimes in Scotland and England to decipher, there are concerns on the complexity of drawing



down funds and the lack of flexibility the spending criteria allows.

In October, the UK Government acknowledged the concerns being expressed about the levy and that industry-wide engagement would take place. This was followed with promises for extra funding and reduced employer contribution rates in England.

While OPITO has welcomed the acknowledgement that the levy isn't working, action needs to be taken to listen to businesses across the UK and make changes.

We have written and requested confirmation of when the UK Government's engagement with businesses will commence. We're also calling for the Scottish Government to carry out a thorough operational review of the levy and the associated Flexible Workforce Development Fund in Scotland to assess if employers are indeed finding it easier to establish apprenticeships.

The overarching solution for the levy's policymakers could lie in changing the reform's remit, transforming it into a more flexible 'Skills' or 'Training' fund. Agreed changes to spending criteria could provide much needed accessibility to funds. For example, having the option to draw down money over a longer time period than the current limit of two years, or being able to invest in diversifying the skills of existing personnel.

We are developing a new skills strategy (see page 8) for the oil and gas workforce to ensure training requirements are in place to support the industry in line with the aims of Vision 2035. As posts and training requirements change over time, government policy must be aligned to ensure employers can take full advantage of all future opportunities.

Ultimately, we want government policy to support oil and gas companies investing in people who are keen to enter the industry, develop existing employee's skills and support those who want to re-skill.



## WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A SAFE AND SKILLED ENERGY WORKFORCE

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