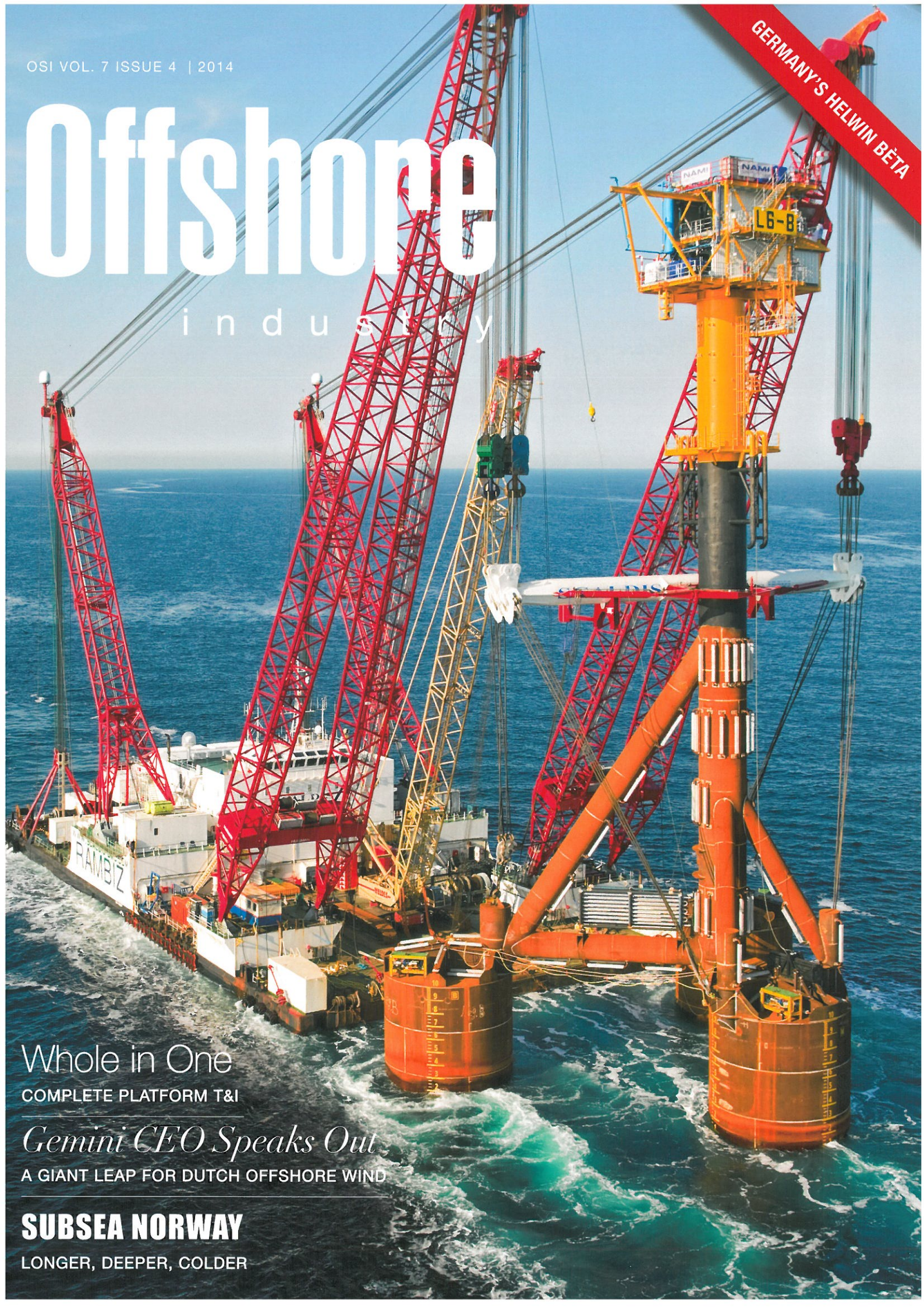


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# Offshore

industry

GERMANY'S HELWIN BETA



Whole in One  
COMPLETE PLATFORM T&I

*Gemini CEO Speaks Out*  
A GIANT LEAP FOR DUTCH OFFSHORE WIND

**SUBSEA NORWAY**  
LONGER, DEEPER, COLDER



Photo courtesy of Seafox

SEAFOX ADDRESSES P&A AND RENEWABLES CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

# Changes Afoot

THERE ARE CHANGES AFOOT IN THE OFFSHORE INDUSTRY. IN THE NORTH SEA AND THE GULF OF MEXICO MANY OIL AND GAS PROJECTS ARE APPROACHING THE END OF THEIR LIFE cycle. Simultaneously, a new spate of European offshore wind projects are set to take place, many of them farther offshore than previous projects. Seafox Commercial Director Erwin Lammertink tells OSI's Ben Littler how his company is preparing to tackle the future.

WORDS BY BEN LITTLER

At the same time as these new challenges arise, the ever-present push for more cost-effective solutions is asserting itself, fuelled by the presence of so much competition in the market. It's an interesting time for offshore operators but, then again, when isn't it? It's the dynamic nature of the industry that gives rise to so many of its innovations. Seafox's solution stems from

a flexible and efficient fleet of offshore work and accommodation platforms and vessels, able to offer a competitive advantage across a range of project scenarios – present and future.

### Good Potential

Industry estimates suggest the presence of as many as 12,000 wells in the Gulf of Mexico that are candidates for plug and abandonment (P&A) activity in the not too distant future. Add to this the approximately 6,700 wells in the UK and Norwegian sectors of the North Sea and you begin to see the emergence of a high-potential market, even before taking platform decommissioning into consideration.

At the same time as these older non-renewable sites are approaching the end of their life, a fresh spate of wind energy projects look set to go ahead in the North Sea. "At the moment we are still relying for more than half of revenue on normal bread and butter work. The majority of our units have been working on accommodation work or well service work," Mr Lammertink begins. "Both oil and gas projects and renewable projects like wind farms and decommissioning – both P&A and removal – are under growth and development. The volume is not sustainable yet, but we will

be seeing stronger growth," he says.

### Keeping Busy

Until that time, Mr Lammertink explains, conventional offshore projects can appear more attractive than those he expects to be more plentiful in the future. "The offshore wind industry has set itself some remarkable goals," he says. "The biggest challenge we see is the uncertainty of projects and awards. We are sometimes confronted with oil and gas projects that have a shorter turnaround time from prospect to award. This means that, although we are working very hard to get contracts in the wind industry, oil and gas work can be awarded in the meantime and take the potential vessel slot of the wind project."

The company is keeping particularly busy with accommodation projects in the North Sea, with all units currently active and a promising order book for the future. "It feels healthy, especially with client relationships. They like us because we perform or outperform what we need to do. This gives us a good basis to go back to them and get extensions or new contracts."

### Poised for Action

But, Mr Lammertink says, when the time comes for the new markets to really



*Our units are significantly cheaper... the capacity for removal... is the cherry on the cake.*

take off, Seafox will be ready. "The key advantage of our units for the future, especially with the smaller, standard, jack-ups, is the combination of T&I and decommissioning. I truly believe if you want to remove a platform – and our units have a UK safety case to enable them to do plug and abandonment – then we can provide huge benefits for our clients. Our units are significantly cheaper than the drill rigs which are conventionally used for plug and abandonment and the

capacity to do removal work at the same time and mitigate risk is the cherry on the cake."

### Range of Options

A current trend is an increase in self-propelled DP units – such as the Seafox 5, a joint venture between Seafox and Keppel FELS constructed with the deeper waters of the central and south North Sea in mind. Mr Lammertink, however, says there will always be a place for tug assisted units. "I think there will be both, although self-propelled >>>



Seafox Commercial Director Erwin Lammertink is planning for the future.

Photo courtesy of Seafox



Photo courtesy of Seafox

units seem have an edge on projects where you have to move often, like on wind farms. When it comes to weather vulnerability and duration of projects, both methods are almost the same.

“Whether or not a self-propelled vessel makes sense or not depends on how often she moves. We believe that when a unit moves ten times or more per year then a self-propelled system is more economical. However, for a decommissioning project where the unit is to remain at the same location for a longer period, it doesn’t add up to the cost of the investment.”

### Flexible Cost Reduction

Seafox is planning a new addition to their fleet for just such projects. They have recently signed an agreement with Keppel FELS to embark upon an engineering study for Seafox 8. The vessel will be built to the specifications of Keppel FELS J Class and be put to work in the P&A market.

In keeping with the need for flexibility as this market matures, however, she will be given wide-ranging capabilities. As well as P&A, she will cover well intervention services, accommodation and crane support services. The Keppel design also ensures that the vessel can be

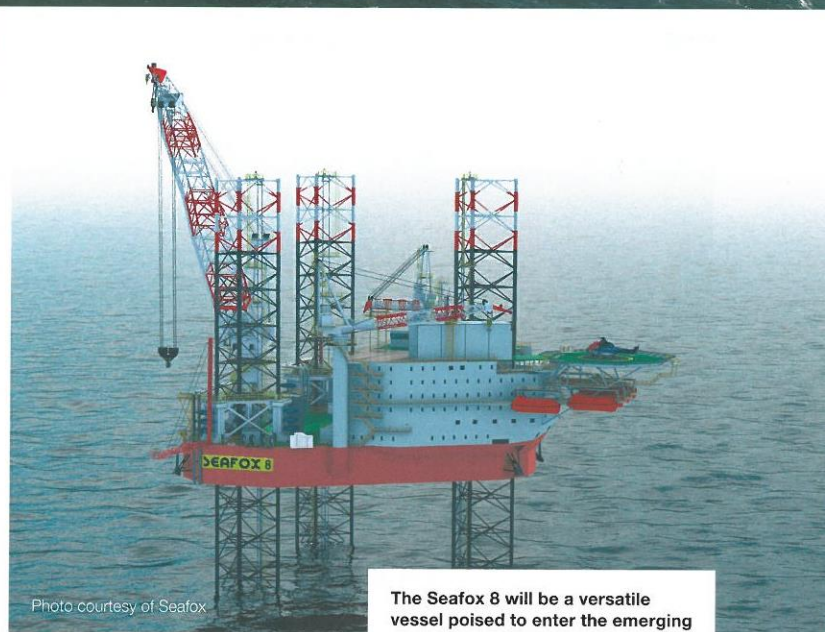


Photo courtesy of Seafox

The Seafox 8 will be a versatile vessel poised to enter the emerging plug and abandonment market.

configured for other offshore support services. Seafox reports that, as well as being more versatile, the Seafox 8 will be 25-30 percent more economical in comparison to drilling rig day rates – just what the industry is calling for.

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