



Dr. Peter Gorf, Senior Engineer at BP and chairman of the FPSO Research Forum discusses the increasing importance of the FPSO and the future role of the Forum.

FPSO concept inc



“As oil companies continue in the search for oil and more efficient and cost effective means of production, the FPSO concept is becoming increasingly popular”, Gorf says, with the clear exception of the Gulf of Mexico.

Commenting on the importance of Floating Production for oil companies, he says: “The FPSO concept is extremely versatile and often very competitive when compared to other offshore oil production platform concepts.”

This is both in terms of cost and construction schedule, which enables expedient deployment of production facilities, he tells Report.

For Gorf the main advantage of the FPSO concept is the use of a ship-shaped hull with shipyard fabrication which facilitates the relatively fast delivery of a bare hull.

There is a large deck area available on a ship-shaped hull, he adds, which can accommodate a large range of topsides processing equipment, with oil production throughput ranging from zero (the case for a Floating Storage & Offloading vessel – or FSO), to large throughputs of 250,000 barrels per day.

The high overall payload capacity can accept significant riser and mooring loads in addition to topsides equipment.

While storage capacity for crude oil in the hull clearly depends on the hull size, it can range from 600,000 to more than two million barrels, Gorf points out.

And of course, he adds, one of the major advantages is the operating water depth - FPSOs have been deployed in water depths from 20 to 2,000 m.

Gorf: “As operators develop hydrocarbon reserves in deeper and therefore, more remote waters, where pipeline export infrastructure may not exist, the benefits of the FPSO become even more apparent.”

However, the issue of gas handling and the subject of LNG is a potential constraint, he says.

The increasing use of the FPSO concept has led to a number of Joint Industry R&D Projects (JIPs). The JIP Steering Committee Meetings for these are held during one “FPSO JIP Week”.

Six years ago, these meetings spawned the FPSO Research Forum - an informal discussion group which was initially 20-30 strong.

