

SRM Ship Repair Newsletter

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FARSTAD: Offshore operators should try to build in as much likely future technology to their new vessels as possible, Norwegian owners believe. They point out that the urgent search for new sources of oil and the drive to raise the yield from subsea wells means that they face deeper waters, more hostile conditions and a constant challenge on the safe operation of their vessels.

Børge Nakken, head of the Project Department at Aalesund-based Farstad Shipping ASA, confirms this. We try to build in the future, he explains. The company's new ships are being built for 20-year operation and must be built with the lowest risk of breakdown and extra maintenance requirements, he says.

Farstad's long-term chartered-vessels must be repaired in regions close to their operation, as there is only a certain number of maintenance days written in to each contract. The company's North Sea fleet is therefore often booked in to Danish repair yards as many Norwegian facilities are making the most of the offshore boom and focusing on new construction. There are limited options for Farstad's Brazil-based ships, with Maua Jurong in Niteroi one obvious choice. Similarly, vessels working off the Australian coast cannot be repaired nearby and Nakken explains these are often sent up to Singapore to a number of facilities there.

Long-lasting coatings offer scope to cut maintenance, Nakken believes, and Farstad is opting for International's Intersleek 900 on the hull of a newbuild platform support vessel, due for delivery in the first quarter of 2009. The company has been attracted by the fact that this coating is suitable for vessels function at lower speeds, unlike silicone coatings which required relatively high speeds to "water-wash". Although it is charterers who benefit most from the fuel savings, Nakken says longer paint intervals, reduced time in dock and environmental benefits associated with latest generation coatings all benefit owners and operators.