

HEAVYLIFT VESSELS

Allseas' gamble starts to pay off

Work commitments lined up for mammoth vessel as owner runs slide over **even bigger twin-hull unit**

ERIK MEANS
Houston

SWISS marine construction contractor Allseas, having just signed a lucrative pipeline contract for its massive newbuild installation vessel Pieter Schelte, is about to sign another contract for a platform topsides lift.

Allseas president Edward Heerema, speaking at OTC in Houston, said the new contract should be signed for the twin-hull newbuild "within weeks" when final formalities are cleared.

He declined to offer specific details of the client or project, but said the job comprises topsides installation work.

This contract comes hot on the heels of the giant award secured by Allseas last week for the installation of the South Stream gas pipeline across the Black Sea.

Heerema said that deal will see Pieter Schelte used to install 888 kilometres of 32-inch trunkline, in water depths stretching to 2100 metres.

With this contract in hand, the initial schedule of Pieter Schelte — which Allseas is building on speculation for an eye-watering price of \$3 billion — is taking shape.

The vessel is earmarked to sail from the Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering yard in South Korea in early October for a five-week trek to Europe.

There it will move to a yet-to-be determined yard for fitting of its eight topsides lifting system beams, before sea trials including test lifting and pipeline testing in the first quarter of 2015.

The first job for the vessel will be removal of the ill-fated production field jack-up on Talisman's Yme the North Sea.

The South Stream project in the Black Sea will be next, starting in mid-2015, and next on Pieter Schelte's agenda is a journey back to the North Sea for the removal for Shell of the four Brent field platforms in the UK sector, starting in May 2016.

It is not yet clear whether the soon-to-be signed topsides lifting assignment will be scheduled



Contracts: the Pieter Schelte lies quayside at Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering in South Korea

before or after the work on Brent. Heerema told Upstream that his decision in December 2012 to widen by seven metres the gap between the giant vessel's two hulls ended up increasing the overall price of the unit by about €140 million (\$194 million).

That move meant the unit could manoeuvre around even larger platforms for lifting operations, and led directly to the Brent contract growing from the initial

intention of covering only three platforms to also include a fourth, the Brent D structure.

The Pieter Schelte will be a true record-breaker, designed to remove and install platform topsides of up to 48,000 tonnes in a single lift.

However, the Allseas president is not satisfied at that level and is working on a plan to build an even bigger twin-hull monster capable of lifting up to 72,000 tonnes at

one go. Heerema hopes to begin construction on this vessel, which has yet to be given a name, in 2017, with delivery to follow in 2020.

He said the big sister vessel, if built would not be designed for pipeline operations, nor would it have a jacket-lifting system on the stern like the Pieter Schelte does.

Nevertheless, he added, the price of the bigger catamaran would exceed the \$3 billion price tag attached to Pieter Schelte.

Photo: ALLSEAS



Hopes: Allseas president Edward Heerema

Photo: ALLSEAS

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