

# OIL INDUSTRY GAINING KNOWLEDGE BY POOLING INFORMATION RESOURCES

*According to the Faroes Oil Industry Group, FOÍB, it is of great value for the industry to share best practices and other resources in order to learn the most possible about the Faroese Shelf and the Atlantic Margin as an area of activity.*

THE IDEA BEHIND the Faroes Oil Industry Group, FOÍB, may correspond much with the classic wisdom of desiring to avoid wasted effort on something that has already been completed by, or can be done more effectively by joining forces with, someone else. When mutual interest is at stake, especially the mutual interest of the global oil industry players which form the membership of FOÍB, the key goal is collaboration and this has an immediate impact on the industries and communities in the Faroes.

“The upstream oil industry in the Faroes is still confined to exploration activity,” Ben Arabo, chairman of FOÍB, once noted in an article. He added: “The Faroese area has all the characteristics of a frontier area and the industry is gaining valuable new knowledge about the area as each day passes. FOÍB plays an important role in this work. In an area as complex as the Faroes we have to use a collaborative approach, pooling resources and



FOÍB chairman, Ben Arabo.

sharing best practice to gain knowledge on the Faroese Shelf and the North Atlantic Margin as a whole.”

Later, in an interview, Mr Arabo pointed out that apart from the obvi-

ous practical advantages of providing a single point of contact with the Faroese Government and its authori-

ties, there is much indeed to FOÍB in the way of planning, sponsoring and co-sponsoring surveys and scientific research of common interest for the oil companies—often, as well, of interest to parts of the general public. In fact, FOÍB pursues a full range of issues of relevance to the Faroes through the activities of its sub-committees, covering Environmental (including Metocean), Engineering & Operations, Exploration and Geotechnical, Operational Health, Safety and Environment (HSE), Commercial & Legal. The activities of the five sub-committees are coordinated by a Management Committee, which drives initiatives, approves research plans of the sub-committees and acts as a fund holder.

**‘CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE’:** The various initiatives in the FOÍB work programme reflect the stage of activities in the Faroese area, but the structure caters for future development, the chairman explained.

“For one thing, FOÍB provides a common point of contact between the companies operating in the Faroese area and the Faroese authorities and institutions on matters of broad policy and on general operational issues,” he said. “However, the organisation also ensures that jointly funded projects are managed and the results distributed in an efficient and effec-

tive manner. This is already proving very valuable not only by the data and resources made available, but also by the point that once full scale oil production activities commence on the Faroese shelf, which may happen sooner or later, it will be very difficult to recreate the groundwork that FOIB has done—it will have provided a baseline for the future.”

As the written ‘Scope and Objectives of FOÍB’ declare: “We will maintain and expand the knowledge base for the Faroese area, obtaining new data for the benefit of the development of an offshore oil & gas industry in the Faroe Islands. We will continue and build on constructive dialogue with interested parties in the Faroes as a forum for industry communication with the Faroese Authorities and other interested parties.”

With an extensive list of publicly available reports, the records indicate that environmental issues have been imperative in many of the joint projects in FOÍB.

Accordingly, the Environmental Sub-Committee has focused on the ecosystem to provide a baseline for future reference and the main delivery is the Regional Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the overall objective of which is to “provide the best available basis for environmental decision-making

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Chairman: Ben Arabo,  
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FOÍB acts as the joint association of the oil companies holding licences to explore for hydrocarbons in the Faroese area either as license holders or partners.

Current members: Amerada Hess, Anadarko, Atlantic Petroleum, BG, BP, DONG, Eni, Faroe Petroleum, Petro-Canada, Phillips, Shell and Statoil.

and management strategies in line with Faroese national regulations and international standards for this kind of work.” Likewise, a considerable amount of metocean data has been gathered through the Metocean Sub-Committee by continued funding of wave and current data series acquisition. As to matters of health, safety and the environment, the Operational HSE Sub-Committee has worked with Faroese authorities on addressing emergency response in connection with future offshore activities in Faroese waters, an activity that has materialized in several major offshore emergency response exercises.

Since the 13 oil companies that were awarded licences in the first licensing round established FOÍB, another licensing round has been awarded, adding new oil companies to the list of license holders—and new potential FOÍB members.