

# A NATURAL PIVOT

## PROSERV'S RENEWABLES STRATEGY HAS BEEN BUILT ON WHAT IT DOES BEST

Dan Hyland, Operations Director, talks to CEO Davis Larssen and Vice President, Renewables, Paul Cook.

In March, Deirdre Michie, CEO of energy industry trade body OEUk, chose to mark the first anniversary of the publication of the North Sea Transition Deal, a template for how the UK oil and gas industry can move in-step with the changing energy landscape in the coming years, by visiting global controls technology company Proserv at one of its Aberdeen based facilities.

After her tour of the site, OEUk's CEO highlighted how Proserv was an "inspiring" example of a business with a long and impressive subsea heritage using its established skill sets "as a foundation to innovate new, exciting solutions for offshore wind".

Proserv's CEO Davis Larssen used the occasion to remark that the energy transition represented a "great opportunity not only for further innovation but to harness our decades worth of experience" to support sustainable energy generation.

### EVOLUTION NOT REVOLUTION

Speaking to OGV Energy, Larssen and the leader of his team's global renewables business, Paul Cook, are quick to reiterate that Proserv's emerging presence in the offshore wind segment, accelerated by its exciting technology rollout, is a measured, natural "pivot", rather than a sudden diversification, with Cook choosing the phrase "evolution, not revolution" to summarise the direction of travel.

Larssen observes:

*"We are focused on innovating the right technologies to solve problems in the renewables space and to propel the transition. In doing that, we are growing our business, future-proofing it for a changing industry, so we can continue to thrive and be profitable, but we are also committed to this because the energy transition is the right thing to do."*

Larssen references Proserv's strategic alliances with Synaptec, a key partner in the generation of its highly-regarded holistic cable monitoring system **ECG™**, and Intelligent Plant (IP), a vital



OEUK CEO Deirdre Michie during a visit to one of Proserv's Aberdeen sites earlier this year  
(image: Michal Wachucik/Aberdmedia)



Hywind Scotland floating wind farm, operated by Equinor (Michal Wachucik © Equinor)

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Paul Cook

element in his team's development of new digital technology offerings, as being aligned with how his company instinctively likes to build relationships with other parties to deliver gains and products for the market.

*"Regarding our collaborations with IP and Synaptec, we are taking two embryonic Scottish technology companies and we are accelerating their growth on a global scale by harnessing their expertise and combining that with our own 60 years of energy experience. So, we are driving the development of discrete technologies, and businesses, while advancing the transition."*

Cook has overseen the past few critical years of Proserv's journey into the offshore wind segment, evaluating where opportunities existed for the team to make an impact with its distinct skill sets:

*"This is about taking what we do now and what we are renowned for, so our years of experience and know-how around control system integration and subsea environments, and applying that*

*in renewables. Developing solutions that can make a real difference around monitoring the performance of critical infrastructure in offshore wind is a cohesive and natural segue for us."*

### DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

But if Proserv's move into offshore wind has been about emphasising a strategic evolution, its initial offerings for the market certainly offer radical and disruptive outcomes.

ECG™ has been described as delivering a step change in subsea cable monitoring providing a level of visibility of condition and integrity, alongside early insights of issues, simply not seen in the sector before.

It has secured a landmark deal on Dogger Bank, a vast North Sea project and the world's biggest offshore wind farm on completion, while later this year its data analytics capabilities will be applied on Equinor's Hywind Scotland, the world's first commercial floating wind asset. But

Cook is clear as to the backstory to this impressive progress:

*"ECG™ is genuinely exciting and presents great potential to asset owners and operators around a host of benefits – from detecting potential cable failures before they become issues and preventing downtime, through to the subsequent gains around effective maintenance planning and targeted deployment of OPEX."*

*"But as with Proserv's solutions right across the energy sector, our controls independence, our OEM agnostic positioning, flexibility and scalability lie at the heart of ECG™'s value proposition."*

With the offshore wind industry set for rapid growth over the next decade, requiring close to 150,000 kilometres of new cables to be installed, ECG™ appears both timely and necessary.

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## POWER OF DATA

Larsen and Cook are keen to stress that while ECG™ is central to Proserv's current renewables offering, the company's reputation for innovation and partnering are advancing the creation and rollout of further disruptive offerings, with digital technology a vital catalyst. Larsen comments, "Over time, we have seen that our developing use of digital solutions has become one of the key drivers of our own transition into renewables, and this is also bringing new technologies to the market quicker, furthering our footprint in the renewables space."

Proserv's CEO references the latest tie-up for his team with a Memorandum of Understanding signed earlier this month with a technology start-up venture, Ortomation, focused on generating unique real-time optimisation (RTO) software solutions, distinct from traditional "OEM closed" RTO packages, to improve yields and operational efficiencies.

"This is another great example of how we like to work: integrating our mutual capabilities, taking a potentially disruptive technology and then seeking to innovate a marketable solution that brings an alternative methodology, and real gain, to the sector. Our aim is once more steered by our philosophy around building transparent, OEM agnostic and scalable solutions."

Digital tools are at the core of the ECG™ cable monitoring system from its "accessible, intuitive dashboard" to its "predictive insights via data analytics". As one of Proserv's key leaders for the company's pivot, Cook is clear on the route forwards:

"What comes next? This will constitute a digital impetus, innovating data analytics solutions applicable right across an entire offshore wind asset with the fundamental goal of supplying highly effective visualisation of performance, connecting everything from the turbine to the cables and foundation, enabling enhanced decision-making around operations, maintenance and long-term strategy."

"Our goal is to assist owners and operators with the life extension of their wind farms. By utilising intelligence insights into the integrity and condition of infrastructure, via our products, wind farms with an expected life span of 25 years could still be operating a whole decade later. That not only aids return on investment but global policy around combating climate change."

## CYCLE OF OFFERINGS

Larsen explains that Proserv's increasing emphasis on digital technology, and how its services and capabilities are rapidly evolving, has led to a reassessment of how his team defines what it delivers the market:



**"Our goal is to assist owners and operators with the life extension of their wind farms."**

Paul Cook

A Proserv technician surveys an offshore wind farm

"We provide a cycle of expertise: from control system provision and upgrade to the condition monitoring of performance and integrity, underpinned by the analytics and intelligence insights derived from that process, all aiding the optimisation of assets and critical infrastructure. Control, monitoring, intelligence and optimisation – four core specialisms to improve efficiencies, productivity and extend life."

**"Control, monitoring, intelligence and optimisation – four core specialisms to improve efficiencies, productivity and extend life."**

Davis Larsen

He suggests that Proserv's own pivot towards renewables and digital tech reflects the wider market, "We are on our own journey and the Proserv of 2032 will have similarities, and marked differences, to the Proserv of 2022. The same will be the case with the energy mix."

"Oil and gas will remain dominant components of power generation, and our

corporate business strategy aligns with that, but at the same time segments like offshore wind will accelerate, becoming increasingly central, and our goal is to substantially grow our own position in the renewables market, leveraging the disruptive technologies that we can offer to support its growth and performance."

Proserv has an unrivalled long-standing reputation for engaging its OEM agnostic design approach to enable its technologies to coexist and be retrofittable alongside existing systems. Such flexibility and independence allow Larsen and his team to push their offerings to both brownfield and greenfield opportunities in offshore wind – and their innovation is ambitious, with the CEO enthusing about the prospect of building "OEM agnostic, retrofittable control systems that really open up data access and can be hugely insightful."

## INDUSTRY BACKING

The company's progress on its pivot has prompted tangible support from the energy sector with ScottishPower Renewables providing industrial sponsorship to the development of ECG™ in 2021, and Equinor doing the same earlier this year. Meanwhile, as the sector gathered in Manchester in June for the cornerstone Global Offshore Wind conference, Proserv announced that Hugh McNeal, CEO of RenewableUK for five years from 2016, had joined its Board of Directors.

## PROSERV'S RENEWABLES &amp; TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP

- Oct 2019 New five-year Proserv technology roadmap is established
- Oct 2020 Strategic alliance formed with power monitoring experts Synaptec
- Dec 2020 Strategic alliance set up with data analytics firm Intelligent Plant
- Sept 2021 Industrial sponsorship for ECG™ from ScottishPower Renewables
- Feb 2022 ECG™ lands key cable monitoring deal on Dogger Bank Wind Farm
- May 2022 Industrial sponsorship from Equinor and ECG™ to operate on the Hywind Scotland floating asset this year
- June 2022 Former RenewableUK CEO Hugh McNeal joins Proserv's Board of Directors
- Aug 2022 Memorandum of Understanding with technology start-up Ortomation.io

Hugh McNeal, former CEO of RenewableUK and Proserv Board appointee

To receive such an endorsement from a well-known industry figure seems advantageous for Proserv but Paul Cook gives the bigger picture:

"To have Hugh on board is clearly very positive for us but he has got involved precisely because of the progress we've been making. He buys into our philosophy, our pivot and he recognises the value we can bring to this segment and how our knowledge and technology innovation, accrued over decades, can enhance operational performance and extend the life of wind farms significantly."

Davis Larsen frames McNeal's arrival with an eye to Proserv's future:

"What Hugh gives is vast experience around renewables and therefore a valuable perspective upon our pivot. He can provide questions and challenge us, bringing fresh ideas around driving our new technologies into the sustainable energy market."

"We are firmly committed to this journey and Hugh's input is a part of the process to help steer and direct that roadmap on the right path forwards."

