

PROSERV: REPUTATION FOR SUBSEA EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION DRIVING STRONG PERFORMANCE

In an exclusive interview with Dan Hyland, OGV Energy's Operations Director, Proserv Controls CEO Davis Larssen explains how 2021 proved a record year for new orders, as tie-ups and technology offer further upside potential.



Davis Larssen, CEO, Proserv Controls

This time last year Davis Larssen, CEO at global controls technology leader Proserv Controls, spoke to OGV Energy about how the company had experienced an "encouraging" 2020, despite most sectors being brought to a screeching halt for months on end by Covid-19, and in a forward-looking comment he expected the firm to remain "at the cutting edge of innovation and development."

A year later and it would seem Larssen's outlook and confidence were well placed: Proserv has secured big subsea wins around the globe, from South-East Asia to the Gulf of Mexico, leveraging its market-leading controls reliability and high-speed data monitoring on greenfield opportunities, and its disruptive coexistence capabilities with legacy systems (overcoming that perennial industry problem of obsolete electronics) on brownfield wins.

Meanwhile Proserv's long-standing reputation for subsea expertise has provided impetus to ambitious plans to develop a significant foothold in offshore wind.

The team is known for its innovative approach to technology and strategy, forging numerous tie-ups to enable its solutions to access a broader market and guided by the voice of customers.

In 2020, an agreement with Houston's Dril-Quip (DQ) put forward a bundle of DQ's

subsea trees and Proserv's controls, leveraging "best-in-class" technologies, and offering a fresh perspective on the tendency for operators to acquire their subsea equipment from one provider "and accepting average technology simply for the sake of convenience".

Larssen has a direct view on the merits of building such arrangements:

"It's about recognising what you're good at and staying true to your core and partnering with people that bring something specific to the market, which you don't have yourself. With the DQ deal, that means a new, mutual proposition around our respective quality solutions."

"Proserv is an independent controls leader: nimble, flexible – completely OEM agnostic, able to integrate with any legacy system. But if there is a specific collaboration that can broaden our offering and ultimately provide more value for our clients, we're open to doing that. It's part of our innovative DNA."

Indeed, this past year has seen Proserv sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with another Texas based subsea services provider, Trendsetter Engineering, focused on a unique technology collaboration, which has already borne fruit with a significant win on BHP's tieback expansion of the Shenzi North field in the Gulf of Mexico.

The MoU involves a combination of Trendsetter's high integrity pressure protection system (HIPPS) and Proserv's controls technology. The Proserv powered HIPPS module is a critical piece of equipment for subsea extensions where new high-pressure wells can be safely incorporated into lower pressure environments. The HIPPS opens up viable tieback possibilities for operators, with the reassurance of leading-edge safety standards. Larssen observes:

"The tie-up with Trendsetter is about innovating a new solution that pulls us into another potential market for our controls. We are known for our backwards compatibility, our go-to retrofit proposition, our broad functionality through our faster bit rates, but this is a different role for our core system and it centres around our unrivalled reputation for reliability."

"A HIPPS module is a safety device guarding against dangerous pressure spikes, so its controls need to be the best in the business, with undoubted reliability, able to shut everything down rapidly if required – that is why Trendsetter was keen to partner with us. This safety protection is critical as it helps alleviate the threat of HSE risks around possible blowouts, not to mention the environmental impacts from such incidents."

RECORD YEAR

Larssen is keen to emphasise how it is Proserv's increasing sector-wide recognition for offering the "best-in-class subsea controls on the market" that has been the key criteria that has underpinned his team's ability to cement such significant tie-ups and contract wins.

"Our core capabilities are acting as a springboard, driving us into an increasing number of deals with some of the industry's major players. We have a high-quality product and more and more parts of the energy sector are recognising we are market leaders and are actively approaching us, not only as customers but as prospective partners, to leverage our standing in the controls environment."

Proserv is moving confidently into 2022 emboldened by a "record year for new orders" with the company booking an impressive \$150mn in future work around the globe, a solid proportion of it accrued through its cornerstone subsea capabilities.

Larssen believes increasing corporate responsibility around carbon footprints could attract further customers to Proserv's distinct offering.

"ESG strategies are very relevant as every organisation needs to think of its roadmap to lower emissions – we have set out our own position to be a carbon net zero company by 2050 or sooner."

"But one of the key advantages of our augmented controls technology (ACT) proposition is that our strengths around coexistence mean we can often reuse equipment rather than replace it. This creates efficiencies around cost, time and environmental impacts. It stands to reason that augmentation, rather than removal, is going to be less intrusive and less wasteful."

Larssen explains that improving the efficiencies and reliability of subsea infrastructure and "reinvigorating obsolete controls" via the team's ACT solutions, thus enabling life extension, is part of a wider joined-up philosophy across Proserv's global offerings, subsea and topside, around providing asset optimisation, and "whether in the North Sea or the Arabian Gulf, being the services life of field partner for our clients."

Proserv's Middle East based topside service operation has been growing rapidly, even through the pandemic, acquiring Dron & Dickson's regional business in 2021 to add electrical engineering services, and an ability to work in hazardous areas, to its own asset optimisation portfolio. The team has built strong partnerships over years with the Gulf's national oil companies and these represent vital clients.



Proserv's Westhill, Aberdeen HQ

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Developing innovative, disruptive solutions is another facet of Proserv's identity and driving ahead with digital technology enhancements is a key aspect of the company's asset optimisation template.

One such evolving technology is AEGIS, an asset enhancement platform that is being applied right across Proserv's business and Larssen sees multiple advantages.

"AEGIS has a wide range of uses such as maintaining documentation, spare part inventories, assessing obsolescence risks right through to condition based, real-time monitoring. Effectively, it's a technology that enables systems to remain running smoothly and is a core part of our 'Proserv as a life of field partner' focus."

"It is a good example of how we are digitalising the broader offering as well. It makes processes more efficient, gives the end user access to information quickly through their phone or laptop, makes written reporting redundant, speeds things up, including decision-making."

The real-time, condition monitoring component of the platform offers swift alerts sent directly to Proserv's support team and client, flagging up anomalies in performance. Larssen says this could have significant environmental benefits if a leak can be

mitigated rapidly or the emission of toxic gases, dangerous to personnel.

Condition monitoring lays at the heart of one of Proserv's most disruptive new solutions – which represents a fusion of the company's subsea heritage with its drive for innovation.

ECC™ is Proserv's new holistic cable monitoring system for offshore wind, and it has received industrial sponsorship from ScottishPower Renewables due to its potential to offer "a real step-change in cable monitoring capabilities" as offshore wind scales up.

Larssen reveals this ECC™ technology was selected late last year "to provide inter-array cable monitoring on one of the world's largest offshore wind projects" currently being developed in the North Sea.

As Davis Larssen looks ahead another 12 months, he sees synergies between his subsea ambitions and his team's growing activities in offshore wind:

"One of our key targets is to reinforce our growing status in the subsea arena with many of the majors, but at the same time, we are increasingly seeing these very same leading energy players turning to our subsea expertise to support their offshore wind projects, deploying our new technologies in vital condition monitoring roles on landmark developments. That's great recognition for our industry reputation and capabilities."



Proserv technician at one of the company's UK sites

