

# QSTAR ROV PILOT TRAINING



View over the Port of Las Palmas

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**Some readers may be aware that I started my oil and gas career as an ROV Base Technician at Oceanering in Aberdeen. After spending some time in the company and completing my university education, I moved into an engineering design/support role working for KBR, Aker Solutions, and Cameron/OneSubsea. This role saw me working in several locations around the world, both in offices and fabrication yards. During that time I always dreamed of going offshore as an ROV Pilot and actually seeing how the kit I designed was being installed and operated underwater. Now after all these years it appears that this dream is going to become a reality.**

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I was recently offered a position on an ROV Pilot Technician training course with QSTAR ROV Training and Subsea Solutions in the Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Barcelona facilities.

As the course progresses I plan to write a series of articles recording my experiences, which will hopefully inspire other potential candidates to follow suit and enrol.

Las Palmas is located off the coast of the Western Sahara in Africa, although it is actually a part of Spain. As such it enjoys all the advantages of being within the EU, whilst still being located in close proximity to the North and West African oil fields and offshore operations. The island has high speed internet coverage even in remote locations, motorways make it easy to get around, and it even boasts its own deepwater port. Recently the island started to attract a lot of Oil&Gas companies to setup logistic bases by providing suited infrastructure and services for multipurpose and drilling vessels, semisubmersible platforms. Its strategic location in relation to Africa and Europe and the local tax system makes it an interesting option for business development.

When I landed in Las Palmas a taxi was waiting for me to drive me to my accommodation. Once I arrived and got settled in I had a whole day to myself to explore the area. As such, I decided to take a 30km walk to the Bandama Vulcano, and try some of the local cuisine. It proved to be a lovely daytrip.

On day one of the training course we were taken to the QSTAR Base, located in an industrial estate within the port of Las Palmas. Victor and Jose Maria Sepuvela (e.n. brothers) have started up the subsea services and training company after having worked offshore. The vast oceans of the world are second home to them: they grew up and lived on a boat sailing around the world for over 10 years exploring all kinds of exotic locations before settling down on the Canary Islands permanently.

“We have been working in the ROV industry for many years and we wanted to share our knowledge and experience with other persons that want to get into this industry, so we decided to open a ROV Training division at QSTAR located in Canary Islands and Barcelona” explained Victor.



Christian Gurgu (Courtesy of QSTAR)

At the training school we were greeted by Cristian Gurgu, one of the ROV trainers, who showed us around the premises. After our tour we had a coffee break on the roof of the building which has a breath-taking view over the harbour. We were lucky enough to experience 20°C (68°F) heat whilst most of Europe was suffering from the sub-zero temperatures of mid-winter.

Module number 1 of the course lasts approximately one week and covers the introduction to offshore life, basic ROV architecture, and general ROV operations. Basically it acts as an overview for the course. With this cohort the intro to offshore operations went relatively quickly; everybody on the course had some background in offshore, oil and gas, or seismic work , not to mention a valid BOSIET (offshore survival certificate).

One participant in the course, Mathieu Le Noac'h – a French seismic navigator with 10 years of offshore experience – already had a job lined up in Tahiti, French Polynesia. He was eager to learn about ROVs and was excited to pick up his brand new ROV from ECA, scheduled to be ready for him right upon completion of the course.

“I grew up by the sea and have always been attracted by the marine environment. I graduated in Oceanography specialized in survey and monitoring sensors. After more than 10 years surveying for CCG, I obtained a contract with ROVotik, a freshly created Polynesian Company that is going to conduct ROV inspections down to 1000m. Piloting an ROV, a new underwater adventure!

I therefore decided to be trained as Pilot Tech. QSTAR quickly turned out to be the most convenient provider for my needs. Very responsive to emails, lodging proposed with shared house in a residential area downtown, transportation taken care of, great training facilities, well experienced and knowledgeable trainers. Another advantage is the location in Las

Palmas offering a nice climate for a course hold in January and February. First week done, I feel really happy about having chosen QSTAR and calling for more!” said Mathieu.

The next segment of the module was ROV architecture which covered more technical things. This segment provided an overview of the main parts of an ROV, their purposes and various types, related principles of working, navigation and positioning principles (USBL, LBL, etc.), sonars, ROV tooling options including hotstabs, 5 and 7 function manipulators, and also the hydraulic parts, pressure principles, and their basic calculations for different scenarios.

Then there was the ROV operations segment. This touched on the possible type of works performed and main offshore operational procedures that were likely to be encountered on a job.

Normally the training hours were between 8:30am and 4:30pm. However on a couple of occasions we stayed on until 8:00pm, when there were a lot of questions to cover or we had to collect and try on our PPE from the nearby store in the harbour. Afterwards we would normally relax with a couple of beers at our villa.

During the module we tried the ROV simulators, practised manipulator operations by trying to retrieve and reinsert a dummy hotstab using the 5 function manipulator and also piloted a mini-ROV in the test tank. It was great to get a bit of practice and experience piloting first hand.

Cristian Gurgu, our trainer, has spent time offshore with Fugro-TSMarine and GSP Offshore working as an ROV Pilot Technician. He also has an extensive electrical background, and I found him to be a very competent trainer both in terms of knowledge and experience. He also possesses the skill and ability to transfer that knowledge to his audience.

“Gaining experience in the ROV field requires passion and persistence. Now, being part of QSTAR I can give it forward, intending to inspire the future pilot-techs into their new careers. We are glad that recently a new IMCA training guideline has been issued and we have contributed to it, therefore the quality of our services is in line with the most recent requirements.” explained Cristian.

The ROV Pilot Technician Premium Course that I’m taking with QSTAR consists of eight modules, and is normally seven weeks long. It can be completed in one round or on a modular basis with the weekends reserved for rest and regeneration. It is also a good opportunity to explore the islands that have so much to offer: be it the sandy beaches of Lanzarote, or the rainforests and volcanos of Tenerife, or the party scene of Playa del Ingles, everybody can find something to entertain themselves.

Gran Canaria has proven to be a splendid location for both training and leisure. As I was standing at the airport awaiting my departure, I was looking forward to my return visit. And when that happens, I will be sure to keep you all updated.



In the Simulators Training Room (Courtesy of QSTAR)



Richie at the test Pool ready to launch the EPRONS ROVBILDER mini-ROV (Courtesy of QSTAR)



In the Classroom (Courtesy of QSTAR)



ROV Instructor on the Forum VMax Simulator (Courtesy of QSTAR)



ROV Trainee Team on the Atlantic Explorer – Nov 2016 (Courtesy of QSTAR)

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# PLANET



7.  
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13  
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Mapping Technology



27.  
ROV Pilot  
Training



30.  
Making the Right  
Underwater Connections

# 10

The magazine of choice for Subsea  
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ISSUE  
Q1 / 2017

# WELCOME TO



**My name is Richie Enzmann, and allow me to welcome you all to the latest issue of ROV Planet!**

## Dear Reader,

ROV Planet is celebrating its "jubilee" issue no.10! It has been a great journey for us and we would like to take the opportunity to thank the help and support of everybody, including our readers and advertisers. It is very much appreciated!

You will see several changes being implemented within the new magazine structure in the forthcoming issues to reflect the diverse applications of ROVs across the range of different sectors including offshore renewables, decommissioning, submarine cables, and defence.

The poster is slightly different this time. Although not as entertaining as in issue 01, but we used it to reflect on our previous issues and to display the testimonials of some of the high profile readers within the ROV industry.

After 2 years of writing about ROVs and the ROV industry I have finally decided to undertake the Premium ROV Pilot training course offered by QSTAR in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. You will be able to read about this training and my experiences as I work myself through each module to become an ROV Pilot Tech! This will be an interesting and exciting read for all that are interested in ROVs and especially for a lot of people that were thinking of giving this course a go.

Additionally, we have started working on the ROV Planet ROV/AUV Equipment Supplier, Operator & Distributor Directory 2017 (aka The Little Yellow). Please get in touch if you would like your company to be listed and I still haven't gotten in touch with you within the next few months. We are planning to launch this comprehensive and useful directory later on this year.

And as always, please sit back and enjoy our 10th jubilee issue!

Best regards,  
**Richie Enzmann**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **17-18 January, 2017 – Undersea Defence Technology – Singapore**

The must attend conference for the undersea defence sector in Asia.

### **01-03 February, 2017 – Subsea Expo – Aberdeen, UK**

Europe's largest annual subsea exhibition and conference.

### **21-23 February, 2017 – Underwater Intervention – New Orleans, LA, USA**

A not-for-profit industry conference and exhibition, jointly owned by the Association of Diving Contractors International and the ROV Committee of the Marine Technology Society.

### **03-05 April, 2017 – MCE Deepwater Development – Amsterdam, Netherlands**

World-class technical discussions focusing on the offshore technology, innovation and experience.

### **04-06 April, 2017 – Ocean Business – Southampton, UK**

The hands-on ocean technology exhibition and training forum.

### **01-04 May, 2017 – OTC – Houston, TX, USA**

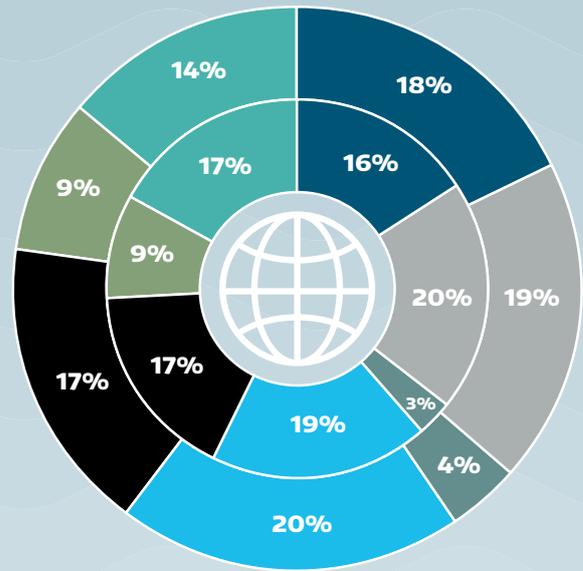
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# ROV DEMAND UPDATE

By Kieran O'Brien, Energy Researcher at Infield Systems  
(Kieran.OBrien@infield.com)

Despite the current and forecast short-term weakness within the ROV market, a more positive longer term market projection is anticipated, with Infield Systems' new analytical tool, providing a quarterly demand forecast of the ROV market, expecting an ROV demand growth of 18% over the five years to 2020.



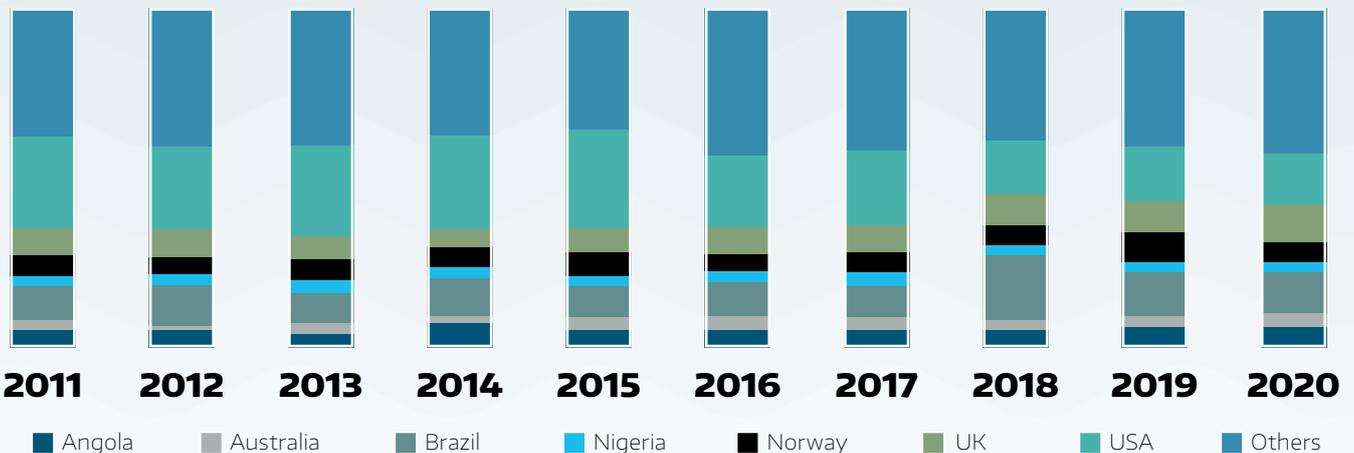
■ Africa   
 ■ Asia   
 ■ Australasia   
 ■ Europe   
 ■ Latin America  
■ Middle East & Caspian Sea   
 ■ North America

ROV Market Share (Days %) by Region 2011-2015 (inner ring) 2016-2020 (outer ring)  
(Source: Infield Analytics - ROV)

The prevailing low oil price has affected all sectors of the industry and the ROV market is no exception: the sector's high level of exposure to the floating rig market results in a vulnerability to any decrease in drilling activity. However, after decreases in demand from 2014 to 2016, the floating rig and the marine construction markets are expected to recover from 2017 onwards. Over the longer term, higher levels of growth in demand for oil and gas are expected to return and with this the current market oversupply is expected to be rectified. With global energy demand increasing and near-term declines in conventional production expected, unconventional reserves, and more challenging prospects, including deep and ultra-deepwater fields, will need to be brought to market.

Africa in particular will benefit from this increase in the unconventional oil and gas supply. The huge reserves found in ultra-deepwaters offshore West Africa, in particular Angola, are expected to drive ROV demand growth at a higher rate than in any other region. The Latin American market, which has undergone substantial growth over the last five years, is expected to see demand flatten off going forwards, with the financial difficulties facing Petrobras contributing to delays in investment. Within the North American market, Infield Systems expects activity to decline, predominantly as a result of the removal of IRM targets through shallow and mid-water decommissioning activity. Indeed, by the end of the decade, the USA will represent just 15% of the global vessel based ROV market; down from 29% in 2015.

Infield Systems' analytical tool can be used to examine all relevant parts of the ROV sector. The granularity of data behind this enables an accurate forecast how the market will change over the coming five years. The ROV market will weather the current downturn, the oil industry will adapt to lower prices and deepwater reserves will buoy ROV demand in the longer term.



ROV Market Share (Days %) by Country 2011-2020 Excluding Wells/Rig based Demand  
(Source: Infield Analytics - ROV)



- ROV Pilot Training Center
- ROV Services, Support & Sales
- Marine Geophysical Surveys
- Oil & Gas Pipelines & Platform Surveys
- Submarine Cable Surveys
- Marine Geotechnical Services
- Ports & Marine Construction Support
- Vessel & ROV Management
- Multipurpose work vessels
- Oceanography & Marine Research
- UTM & Cathodic potential inspections
- Diving operations assistance
- English & Spanish speaking personnel



**Barcelona - Las Palmas de Gran Canaria**



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE ROV INDUSTRY AS WELL  
AS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS."

**BOB CHRIST**  
President of SeaTrepid (Louisiana, USA)

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"GREAT WORK RICHIE, KEEP IT UP SIR!  
I AM A HUGE FAN AND SUPPORTER AND ALWAYS  
TELL PERSONNEL TO CHECK IT OUT!"

**SCOTT DINGMAN**  
President & CEO of Delta Subsea (Texas, USA)





"FOCUSING ON VALUABLE INSIGHT INTO THE EVER CHANGING WORLD OF ROV SYSTEMS, ROV PLANET DELIVERS IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ROV'S TO SUBSEA CONSTRUCTION AND ROV PROFESSIONALS GLOBALLY"

**STEVEN COWIE**

VP and UK Country Manager of Oceaneering (Aberdeen, UK)

"IT IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO READ ROV PLANET, THE WRITING IS VERY INFORMATIVE AND THE PRODUCTION QUALITY IS BEAUTIFUL."

**TYLER SCHILLING**

President of Schilling Robotics (California, USA)

# PLANET



8. Interview with Andrew Hodgson



16. J2's Innovative Tool Changer



27. Double Eagle Down Under



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The magazine of choice for Subsea Construction and ROV Professionals

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# QSTAR: PROVIDING STELLAR ROV TRAINING

By Jose María Sepúlveda López, General Manager of QSTAR ROV Training & Subsea services



## THE COMPANY

Established in 2007, QSTAR ROV Division and Subsea Services are based jointly out of Las Palmas, Canary Islands and Barcelona, Spain. The vision behind QSTAR was to offer services for offshore and onshore industries that need effective solutions for subsea projects. We have achieved this through the use of our fleet of ROV and experienced qualified personnel.

QSTAR has come a long way since its initial inception. We originally provided oceanographic research for several governmental agencies, and this has led to the company gaining a reputation as a reliable reference for underwater robotics and hydrographic surveys.

QSTAR's philosophy is simple: we provide the highest quality service and the all-important attention to safety aspects for both personnel and equipment. Our goal is to deliver the best possible service, without accident or incident.

Over the years QSTAR has grown in the Spanish market. Now we're expanding even further into international markets, while simultaneously investing in R&D and training qualified personnel.

Photo: Francis Pérez





## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

In 2012 QSTAR SLU saw the need to introduce ROV training both nationally and internationally from a strategic location. Consequently, we expanded our ROV division with the opening of an ROV Training Center ([www.rovs.eu](http://www.rovs.eu)) and became a Training Establishment Member of the IMCA (International Marine Contractor Association). This was very exciting as it allowed us to become the first established ROV training center in Spain.

Accordingly, the QSTAR ROV training program is built on (though not limited to) IMCA guidelines. This has meant that our trainers can provide real-world knowledge and skills for students in compliance with the actual requirements of today's oil and gas offshore industry. This is in addition to expertise in other sectors such as search and rescue, oceanography and marine research, marine archaeology, hydrology, subsea operations, and aquaculture.

Besides being able to provide the highest quality training based around IMCA guidelines, we provide real working conditions on board active work vessels. This allows students to work as part of an ROV team on board an actual ship, and provides the best training assessment for a newly qualified ROV pilot.

Since the creation of the ROV Training Center division, QSTAR has trained more than 200 students of various nationalities and backgrounds, and many of those have gone on to secure places with the world's best ROV operating companies.

## CORPORATE ONSITE TRAINING

In addition to providing high quality training courses, QSTAR specialises in supplying corporate training. We also offer certification for ROV personnel from different companies worldwide by performing specific on-site training, tailored to the company's individual needs. Furthermore, QSTAR have been undertaking ROV installation and commissioning projects internationally, from both offshore vessels and onshore operating bases.

In 2014, QSTAR SLU – represented by its General Manager, José María Sepúlveda – became part of the IMCA ROV TSG (Training Steering Group). This places our training program firmly alongside the big players of the ROV industry.

TSG includes individuals from IMCA member companies of all types: contractors like Fugro, Bibby, i-Tech 7, Subsea 7 and Saipem; training providers including MTCS-England, The Underwater Centre-Scotland, School of Ocean and Technology, QSTAR ROV Training-Canary Islands/Spain; and suppliers and manufacturers such as SMD, SAAB Sea-eye, Schilling, and Forum; with the IMCA technical adviser Neil Evans. Over the past year, the committee has been working on the drafting of new documents and guidelines that will facilitate a more global approach to the development of ROV training.

The companies involved contribute with their experience and by updating the competency schemes in order to fulfil their operational requirements. The QSTAR ROV Training center has recently become an IADC (International Association of Drilling Contractors) member, with the aim of having a more focused involvement in offshore drilling.

## LOCATION

As previously stated, QSTAR SLU Subsea Services and the ROV Training Center's headquarters are located in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands: a strong reference point for both the offshore and maritime industries. QSTAR's operations are also firmly established in Barcelona, where ROV training courses and subsea services are on-going.

'This location was one of the reasons for developing the training center [in the Canary Islands].', explains Technical Manager, Victor Javier. '[The] Islands are a strategic location between three continents: Europe, Africa, and America. We are in the middle of the offshore industry's routes.'

'The Canary Islands [have] cheap flights and very good connections heading all over the world, and the island of Gran Canaria offer a great variety of industrial services for the offshore industry, not only sun and holidays.'

The fortuitous nature of this location has allowed for connections with other regions of interest, bringing in the island's port rigs, drilling, and construction vessels from all over mid-Atlantic and Mediterranean. This composition gives our students a rich and in depth experience of the offshore industry. We are even able to set up visits to specific vessels and rigs. However, the surrounding area isn't simply swathed in floating steel and plastic, florescent-coloured boats. The local government takes stringent care of its tropical resources. These include crystal clear waters with sudden depths of up to 3,000m. This is yet another reason why the region is the perfect location for ROV training as we can lead practical ROV piloting in both shallow and very deep waters.

The training center itself is approximately 100 km from the African coast and relatively close to the main and second reserves of West Africa, Nigeria, and Angola. Out of consideration for the geopolitical environment of the location, QSTAR offers European quality, safety, and security to the offshore sector of the African continent. Recent reports have indicated approximately 55 oil rigs operating in this area, in addition to vessels performing exploration, survey, and construction activities.

Another fantastic feature of this sunny locality is the region's weather has previously been referred to as the

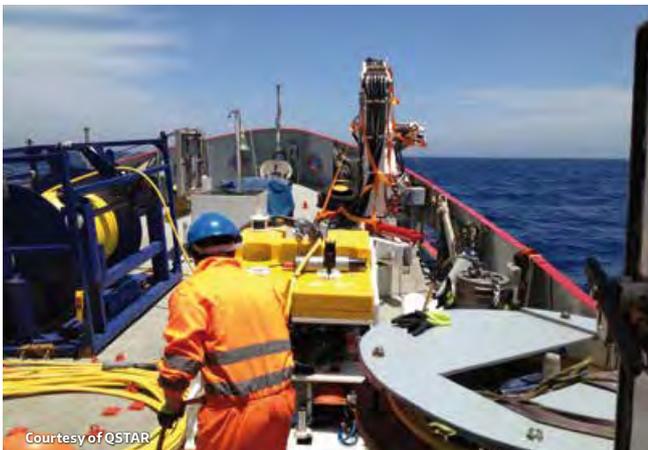
best in the world: minimum-maximum temperatures lie between 18 and 28 degrees Celsius year round, and wind conditions are mainly calm. These conditions are ideal for living in the area. and are definitely conducive to conducting offshore operations.

This is a virtue for QSTAR as it enables us to give our students coastal and offshore training experience in a safe and pleasant environment, before taking their experience onboard their own multipurpose vessel, the 'Atlantic Explorer'. The Government of the Canary Islands – through the Canary Islands Hub ([www.canaryislandshub.com](http://www.canaryislandshub.com)) – is proud to have a strategy to promote these ideal conditions and many other attractive aspects of this region around the world, further positioning the Canary Islands as an international hub in the offshore industry and other sectors.

## TRAINING AND FACILITIES

The QSTAR ROV courses are designed in accordance with industry requirements. The students are briefed about working offshore and the relevant safety regulations, and here they can gain skills in ROV maintenance and operation. The classes offer theoretical and practical input – depending on the students' or company's needs – with the goal of preparing them for real-life situations.

Many of QSTAR's alumni have great things to say about the time invested with our group. 'The ROV career is the shiny star of offshore', opines engineer Christian Gurgu, a QSTAR ROV instructor from Romania. '[Working] independently of



the offshore industry's phases, doing what you like (and) what you are good at, brings reliability and satisfaction. He goes on to discuss his own experience working with QSTAR. 'Working offshore for years, I've been contributing to the global supply of oil, gas, energy. Presently, as (an) ROV Instructor, the value of contribution feels even more intense by giving... the experience and knowledge to the new entrants in the industry. Shaping people's future is what we do at QSTAR, shaping for the brightest.' Someone else with a high opinion of QSTAR's training opportunities is Marius Molstad, an ROV pilot and technician from Norway. 'The ROV course opens lots of opportunities in my country and internationally.' says Molstad. 'Personally, QSTAR gave me the most complete education. I got to refresh my electronic background and [awarded me] new competencies that make me feel prepared for even the hardest technical and operational challenges offshore.' He goes on to say 'The center's facilities and local climate – as in weather, social vibe – is the perfect environment for an international study. For all these reasons I also chose to do my apprenticeship for ROV Pilot Technician, Grade I, with QSTAR.'

Candidates who complete the course are provided with all the relevant documentation to present to existing and potential employers. After successfully completing the theory, workshops, practical training, and exams the students are provided with an IMCA ROV Personnel Logbook and the QSTAR competency certificates.

Furthermore, from October 2015 QSTAR will be organizing via an OPITO Training Center for BOSIET and HUET, offshore survival training courses. These courses are very important to all those working in this offshore industry. QSTAR will start including these OPITO courses as part



**QSTAR'S IN-HOUSE RESOURCES INCLUDE:**

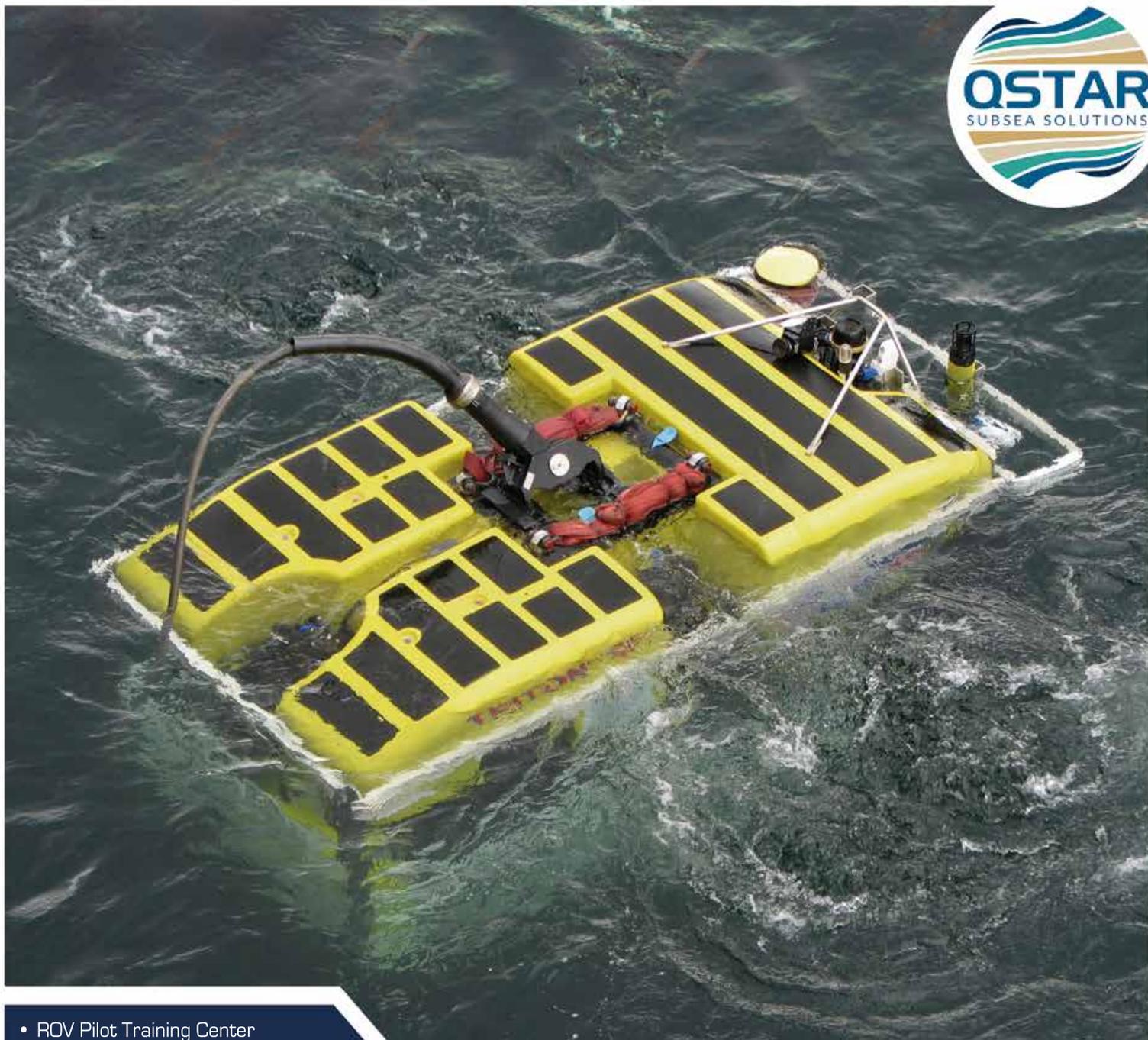
- | Spacious facilities of 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>;
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- | Subsea tooling and sensors;
- | Academic and industry experienced personnel;
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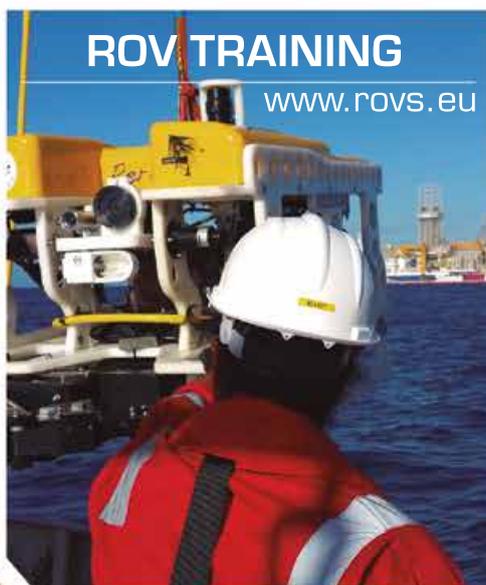
of a full premium package together with the ROV training courses, so as to give a full qualification. Offshore medicals will also be available through QSTAR SLU. The course coordinators at QSTAR ROV's Training Center endeavour to make sure that course content is kept up to date with the offshore and other ROV industries. This helps ensure that we maintain the very highest standards and retain our place as one of the industry leaders in ROV training globally. What's more, we are also offering an internship program with ROV operating companies worldwide, so that our trainees can have their first experience as part of an ROV team. All of these reasons combined mean that the Canary Islands are the perfect location for somebody just starting out in their ROV training. It's possible to do everything that you need to in order to become a qualified ROV Pilot Technician trainee and more, and all set against a picturesque backdrop in one of the best climates in the world.

**ROV Training courses are held every month. Check out our web site to see the full training schedule and special offers. [WWW.ROVS.EU](http://WWW.ROVS.EU)**

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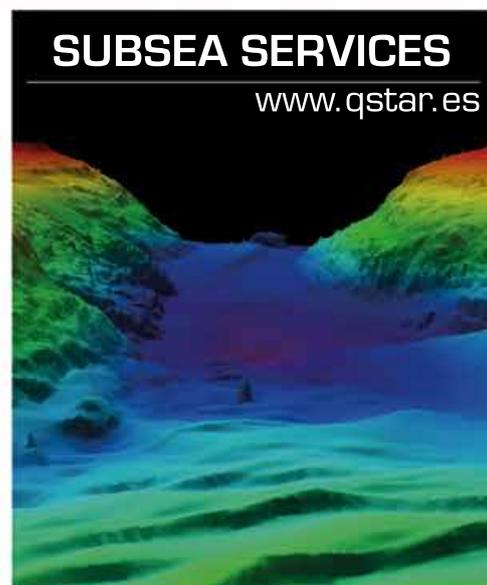


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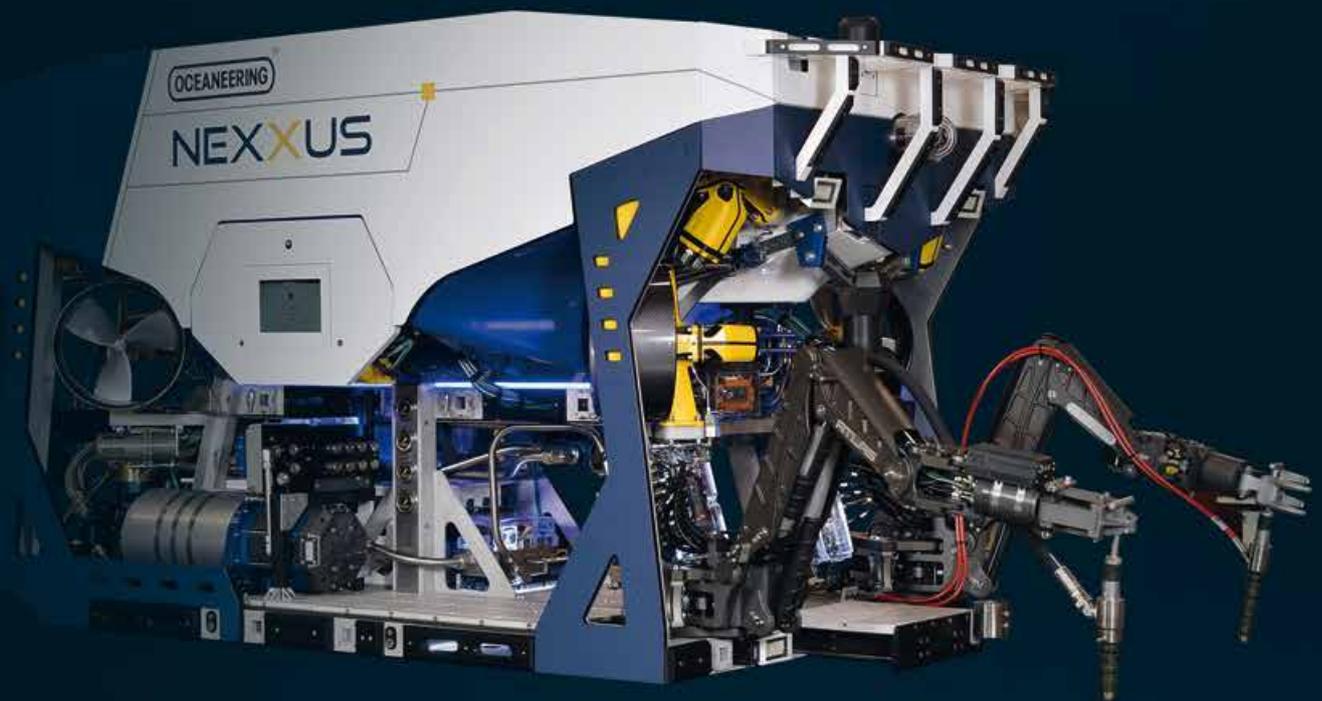
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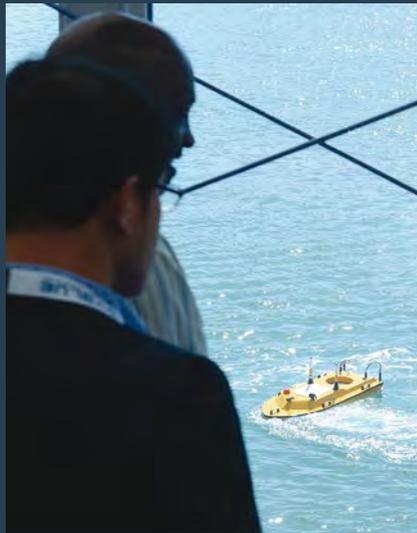


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