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More ice-going vessels opt for hard coatings



Subsea Industries will apply its Ecospeed hull and Ecoshield rudder coatings to a new 70-tonne-bollard-pull AHTS vessel



The operational success of the 1995-built RRS Ernest Shackleton exemplifies the coating performance of Ecospeed

POLAR CODE | Subsea Industries reports it has received an order for its specialist hull and rudder coatings for a shallow-draught anchor handling tug supply (AHTS) vessel currently under construction at Turkey's Atlas Shipyard.

The Ice-Class 1A, 65m-long tug with a bollard pull of 70 tonnes will carry out anchor handling and oil recovery duties in the ecologically sensitive Arctic in compliance with IMO Polar Code requirements, due to enter into force in January 2017. The Polar Code recommends the application of abrasion-resistant, low-friction coatings to vessels operating in ice-covered waters.

"There is a risk that conventional anti-fouling can degrade rapidly in polar ice, leach chemicals or leave paint fragments

behind when ice impacts damage the coating. There is no such risk with a hard-type coating. Ecospeed and Ecoshield are tough, durable and highly abrasion-resistant protective coatings," said Manuel Hof, production executive and NACE coatings inspector at Antwerp-based Subsea Industries.

Hof cites the operational success of the 1995-built RRS Ernest Shackleton – the British Antarctic Survey ship due to be replaced by the Sir David Attenborough in 2019, now under construction by UK ship-builder Cammell Laird – as an example of the coating performance of Ecospeed.

When the 4,028gt survey ship was dry-docked after navigating 2.5m thick ice with a high content of gravel and volcanic lava, the original coating, applied seven

years ago, was "virtually intact, undamaged". This was in stark contrast to the vessel's previous docking, when the conventionally coated hull had to be stripped back to bare steel and recoated.

Hof notes that the trend towards arctic operations together with the pending implementation of the Polar Code are resulting in increased interest in the hard-coat concept. "Ecospeed is highly relevant to ice-going tonnage," Hof said. "We have a number of icebreaker references now, all of which are producing some very positive results. We are focusing on the ice-breaking and ice-going market and are in discussions concerning a number of projects, some of which are high-profile vessels."

The current contract includes options for two additional tugs.

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