

Thuraya EnergyComms helps Shapadu keep Malaysian oilfields operating at peak performance

Offshore contracting crews working in the harsh environment of the South China Sea rely on Thuraya XT and IP for reliable communications

Case Study:

Thuraya EnergyComms

Client:

Shapadu Energy and Engineering

Product:

Thuraya XT
Thuraya IP

Application:

Offshore Platforms

Area of Operations:

South China Sea



"A broadband data capability is essential for maintaining daily contact with colleagues on shore and the IP terminal is incredibly easy to set up and use,"



The importance of the energy sector to the Malaysian economy can be judged from the scale of its resources. According to national oil and gas corporation Petronas, the country has hydrocarbon reserves equivalent to 20.6bn barrels, making it the biggest oil and gas producer in the region.

The task of keeping the platforms that dot the South China Sea operating safely and efficiently falls to construction and maintenance experts like Shapadu Energy and Engineering of Kuala Lumpur. A Petronas-licensed oil and gas contractor, Shapadu is fully-equipped for the unique demands of working on platforms located 100 miles or more from shore.

"A typical platform in the South China Sea lies well beyond the range of shore-based GSM networks and short-wave radio," explains group managing director and chief executive Shafiz Shahrani. "The rig crews might use a fixed VSAT installation or

handheld satphones to communicate with shore or be connected via marine optical fibre or microwave links," he explains.

But for teams from Shapadu, which visit the platform for a few days or weeks, establishing reliable communications is more complicated. It may not be convenient to use the platform's VSAT or satphones and access can be restricted, so Shafiz and his team have to bring their own solution.

"It's essential we have our own communications equipment, because we have to be able to contact shore at any time," says Shafiz. "We sometimes need to check technical issues with our colleagues in Kuala Lumpur and we can't afford to delay the work while we wait for a satphone to be available. That's why we always carry Thuraya phones with us."

Shafiz purchased a pair of Thuraya XT handsets from Thuraya partner Radian Teknologi of Port Klang near Kuala Lumpur. The XT is the world's toughest

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and smallest satellite phone and meets the most demanding standards for shock proofing, splash and dust resistance. This makes it ideal for the harsh environment of an offshore platform in a region well known for its monsoon climate and summer typhoons.

"It really is a great phone with really good voice quality. I'd recommend it to anyone who needs to make and receive calls from remote areas," adds Shafiz. "It's so robust and durable that it can easily stand up to the conditions we work in, which are pretty extreme at times."

Battery life is also important because the opportunities to recharge the XT are limited by the demands of the working day. The XT provides a generous six hours of talk time and up to 80 hours on standby. The phone's advanced omnidirectional antenna ensures an uninterrupted signal during non-stationary calls.

"That means I don't have to stand still with the antenna pointing at the satellite and can move around while talking," he explains. "That's a really important feature when you're in the middle of a task and need to carry on while taking a call."

For its broadband data communication needs, Shapadu invested in a Thuraya IP terminal. The world's most compact satellite broadband modem offers IP streaming speeds of up to 384 kbps and shared speeds of up to 444 kbps from a portable unit not much bigger than an A5 book.

Shafiz and his team use the Thuraya IP for checking and sending emails



while working on the platforms and can easily connect to the company VPN or access web pages from a laptop.

"A broadband data capability is essential for maintaining daily contact with colleagues on shore and the IP terminal is incredibly easy to set up and use," says Shafiz. "If we want to send a technical video from the platform to our engineers on shore we just set up a streaming link with the Thuraya IP."

Of course, the Thuraya IP can also provide social connections too. When working offshore, Shafiz uses the IP terminal to keep in touch with his family during long assignments and always takes the Thuraya satphone with him when indulging his personal passion; exploring the natural environment of his native Malaysia.

The Thuraya XT enables Shafiz to keep in touch with his family in locations where traditional GSM signals are unavailable. The Thuraya also features a programmable SOS button, which can reach a nominated number in an emergency. It's a powerful combination, a too that is designed to work hard and also enables users to keep connected in their family and leisure time.