



Weather in the Margins

Leading Cable-Laying Company Made Tough Call with Accurate Weather Data

Only the DTN weather forecasting service predicted this sudden change in weather. Without this information – and the team's long-standing trust in the forecast accuracy – work may have continued in unsafe conditions.

Discover how accurate weather forecasts helped a leading cable-laying company make tough calls during projects – and prevent financial losses.

Companies working in the offshore industry are no strangers to making difficult decisions and tough calls in the margins based on weather forecasts. For a world-leading cable systems company operating on a project in the North Sea, this is a familiar situation. In the summer, the marine project operations team had to make a close call based on a weather forecast, the difference between saving and losing millions of euros.

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The problem: weather turned unexpectedly

During a cable-laying operation in the German Bight, weather conditions seemed ideal and daily forecasts expected it to continue for the duration of the work — all except for one. This single forecast predicted a significant change in wind direction and speed, which, if accurate, posed a severe risk to safety.

The outlier forecast posed a real dilemma for the team. At the time it emerged, the cable was already in the ocean. Continuing the work in unsafe weather conditions posed a risk to both the crew and equipment, which could cause the cable to snap. This scenario would have added up to 15 days to the project. The crew would have to find the cable and re-do the survey before continuing the work — not ideal when timings on projects are already tight.

However, if the forecast was wrong and they cut the cable unnecessarily, they would have to spend approximately €4 million to reconnect the cable.

The solution: making tough decisions based on accurate weather data

The marine project operations team was continually checking the forecasts during the project execution. They kept up a constant dialogue with the weather room, scrutinizing the feasibility of continuing the work. When it was time to make the tough decision, they had the most reliable and accurate data backed with confidence of meteorological consultation. Their decision — cut the cable.

A decision validated by weather conditions

After cutting the cable, the wind speeds exceeded the workability thresholds for more than three hours. This change, combined with a critical shift in wind direction, validated the decision to halt work.

If the operations team had relied on other forecasting services and free resources the team would not have the complete data to make the the call to cut the cable. Instead the company would have faced substantial financial losses if the cable snapped.

Why did they trust the DTN forecast against the rest? It comes down to confidence in the forecast accuracy in the margins. Working collaboratively with the weather room, and leaning on its meteorological expertise backed by proprietary DTN models, unlocks valuable insight. This advanced information, and collaboration with experts, simply isn't available from a basic weather service.

Accurate weather forecasts support decisions making

Metoccean conditions can adversely affect the safety of operations conducted both on and around offshore installations. Accurate weather helps offshore companies address the main concerns and pressures that come with working offshore: managing costs, keeping projects on track, and ensuring the crew and assets are safe.

For the leading cable laying company (renowned for providing state of the art solutions for high voltage underground and submarine cable links in some of the world's most challenging conditions), monitoring the weather forecast is essential to maintain safety and minimize weather-related disruption to operations. For them, and others working in the offshore industry, accurate weather forecasts and decision support tools can be the difference between profitability and financial losses on projects.

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