

UNMANNED OR REMOTELY OPERATED PLATFORM

Technical field

5 The present invention relates to an unmanned or remotely operated platform concept. Such platforms include a jacket standing on the seabed. The jacket extends through the body of water and projects above the sea level. A topside is mounted on top of the jacket. The purpose of this platform concept is to bring the subsea infrastructure to the surface, which makes the wellheads, blow out preventer, Xmas trees, valves, actuators etc. dry and far more accessible.

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The term un-manned or remotely operated platform must be interpreted broadly. The term could be an unmanned wellhead platform, an unmanned platform, remotely operated platform, normally unmanned platform, unmanned process platform or simpler facilities offshore.

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Typical for these platform concepts is that the platform has no permanent manning and the concept grant options for removing typical functions as living quarters, helicopter deck and lifeboats. All these facilities may be found on a service operations vessel (SOV) that may be chosen to serve and operate the
20 unmanned wellhead platform during eg. maintenance campaigns.

Technical background

There is a continuous and ongoing demand and challenge to save cost during the development of oilfields in order to extract hydrocarbons from subsea oil
25 reservoirs in a cost-effective way. It is only in the more recent years it has been proposed to make use of the rather new concept of unmanned wellhead platforms. The alternative would have been to install the wellheads on the seabed. However, the costs of subsea wells have grown extremely the last decades. The total cost for unmanned wellhead platforms is found very
30 beneficial in respect of the expensive subsea concept.

The overall design philosophy is to minimize the equipment on the platform, thus minimizing the requirement for visiting the platform for operation and maintenance. Visits to the platform is planned limited to once a year except for unplanned well maintenance. Further, focus is on efficient and safe evacuation
5 if for some reason a leakage and/or fire should occur during a visit.

Publication WO2016/122334 discloses an unmanned platform supported on a structure arranged on the seabed. The platform structure of the publication is standardized so that the same platform may be used on several installation
10 structures.

Publication US2016/0221648 discloses a floating facility for offshore hydrocarbon production with drilling slots and production slots and a cart that is movable together with a drilling riser above the well bay to drill the well through the drilling riser.

15 GB2515021 discloses a support structure for use in an offshore platform. The support structure comprises a main support strut having one end anchored to the seabed and guide rail extending to the top of the support strut for cooperation with a framework with a payload slidably mountable to the guide rail for elevating the frame work and payload to the top of the structure.

20 None of the above publications do however discloses a platform structure for an unmanned platform that is adapted and designed for possible future expansion.

Summary of the Invention

According the present invention, an unmanned wellhead platform comprising at
25 least one topside construction, a jacket design and adapted to be supported on the seabed and projecting above the sea level, which jacket includes a topside structure installed on top of said jacket, is provided. The topside structure is designed as a standardized base concept tailored for repetitive future topside constructions, each topside construction being adapted to the number of wells
30 to be developed, the topside construction being made up by a number of different but standardized sections, each standardized section being dedicated

for a particular and predetermined purpose and location in said topside construction, said number of standardized sections (4) adopt different sizes and configurations, though grouped in sets of sections (4) having equal dimension.

- 5 In one embodiment, some of the standardized sections of the topside construction has defined well slots, each well slot having received its respective and unique number from one and up, each numbered well slot repeatedly receives the same location in the topside construction each time a base topside construction is constructed, hence “standardizing” such base topside
10 construction.

- The many standardized sections may adopt different sizes and configurations, though normally grouped in sets of sections having equal dimension. Even if the topside frame construction is subdivided into a number of different sections,
15 each section has its standard in respect of size and intended use.

In one embodiment, the at least one of the standardized sections may be adapted to receive and mount various components associated with a dedicated well.

- 20 In one embodiment, the number of standardized sections are grouped in standardized structural sections and standardized equipment sections.

- Each standardized section may span over at least two decks, or alternatively each standardized section may span over three decks, i.e. a cellar deck, a
25 middle deck and a weather deck.

- Further, the topside sectioned frame structure may include eight, twelve or sixteen dedicated well slots, each well slot being adapted to receive required components for one respective well. Any number of dedicated well slots are
30 conceivable, but eight, twelve or sixteen are shown here.

- In one embodiment, the topside may be rotated in the horizontal plane approximately 45 degrees relative to corner legs of the jacket. This provides benefits with regard to accessibility and reach for a jack-up rig (not shown) to be located adjacent to the unmanned wellhead platform. The legs of the jack-up rig are able to straddle over the corner leg of the jacket and in this way being able to arrive as close as possible to the unmanned wellhead platform topside construction and thus the well area.
- 10 In one embodiment, the topside construction is adapted and designed for possible future expansion, where such expansion takes place by adding one or more structural section elements as required.

Short description of the drawings

- 15 While the various aspects of the present invention have been described in general terms above, a more detailed and non-limiting example of embodiments will be described in the following with reference to the drawings, in which:
- Fig. 1 shows a schematic perspective view an unmanned wellhead platform according to the present invention,
- 20 Fig. 2 shows a schematic top view of a first embodiment of the unmanned wellhead platform shown in figure 1, the platform having 8 well slots,
- Fig. 3 shows a schematic top view a second embodiment of the unmanned wellhead platform shown in figure 1, the platform having 12 well slots,
- Fig. 4 shows a schematic top view a third embodiment of the unmanned wellhead platform shown in figure 1, the platform having 16 well slots,
- 25 Fig. 5 shows a schematic view from above the first embodiment shown in figure 2, and with the top deck (weather deck and xmas deck) removed,
- Fig. 6 shows a schematic view from above the second embodiment shown in figure 3, and with the top deck (weather deck and xmas deck) removed,
- 30 Fig. 7 shows a schematic view from above the third embodiment shown in

figure 4, and with the top deck (weather deck and xmas deck) removed,

Fig. 8a shows a principal view an exemplary layout of various pipes and components onboard said platform, view from the side

Figure 8b shows a principal view of an exemplary layout of various pipes and components onboard said platform, viewed from above,

Fig. 9 shows in schematic view a typical field layout.

Detailed description of the invention

Reference is made to figure 1 showing an unmanned wellhead platform 1. The platform, or more precisely a topside 3, is installed on top of a jacket 10 (figure 2). The jacket 10 is designed with legs 9 (figure 2) and adapted to be supported on the seabed. The jacket 10 is secured to the seabed by suction buckets (anchors) or piles. The jacket 10 is normally a truss structure projecting above the sea level to support the topside frame construction 3 on top of the jacket structure. A number of risers 2 extend from the seabed up to the topside 3. The topside frame construction 3 further includes a swing crane 5 having reach all over the top deck floor 6.

Basically, the topside frame construction 3 is designed as a frame construction (also numbered 3), normally made up by several decks, here three decks are shown. The lowest deck is a cellar deck D_1 , next is a XMT deck D_2 and weather deck D_3 on top. The top area can easily be expanded or diminished.

The topside frame construction 3 is designed as a standardized base concept. This means that the concept is prepared for repetitive future use. However, the topside frame construction 3 needs to be adapted to each project depending on the number of wells to be operated and the site where it is to be located. The topside frame construction 3 could be adjusted according to the number of wells that are needed. This could be any number from 1-16. Further the number of decks are adjusted. The deck area and the height between the decks are defined accordingly.

The topside frame construction 3 is divided into a number of sections 4. Each section 4 is standardized in respect of size and intended use. However, even if many sections 4 are equal, many sections 4 are different also. Hence, they are
5 grouped into particular sizes, but each size is standardized. Each section size is dedicated for a particular and predetermined purpose and location in the topside frame construction 3. Example of purpose and location are shown in fig. 5-7, and in the description below referring to the figures.

Figure 2-4 shows three different embodiments of D3, namely D3', D3'', D3''' of
10 the weather deck of the topside frame construction 3.

As more clearly shown in fig. 2, some of the standardized sections 4 of the topside construction 3 has defined well slots 1_s to 8_s. Each well slot has received its unique number. For future eight well slots topside frame constructions 3 to be built, each numbered well slot 1_s-8_s repeatedly receives
15 exact the same location in the topside frame construction 3. Thus, such base topside frame constructions 3 are named as "standardized".

The number of standardized sections 4 can be grouped in sets of equal sections, though the sections may adopt different sizes and configurations in
20 the various sets. Two coarsely divided groups of sections can be "standardized structural sections" and "standardized equipment sections", as an example. In fig. 2 they are numbered 4' and 4'' respectively.

At least one of the standardized sections 4 is adapted to receive and mount
25 various components associated with a dedicated well.

In the embodiment shown in fig. 2, the topside construction 3 is rotated in the horizontal plane approximately 45 degrees relative to corner legs 9 of the jacket structure 10. This provides benefits with regard to accessibility and reach for a
30 jack-up rig (not shown) to be located adjacent to the unmanned wellhead platform 1. The legs of the jack-up rig are able to straddle over the corner leg 9

of the jacket 10 and in this way, being able to arrive as close as possible to the unmanned wellhead platform topside construction 3 and thus the well area. A material handling platform 11 is also shown. This platform 11 is located at a desired height above sea level. The platform 11 could be, either of the fixed
5 design located at a higher level, or a temporary platform intended for location at a lower level closer to the sea.

As mentioned, the topside construction 3 is sectioned where the most important parameter for the total size of the topside construction 3 is the number of well
10 slots 1_s to 16_s. The well slots are dedicated to be either producers, injectors, flexibles (both producer and injector) and redundant.

Referring to fig. 2, 3 and 4, the unmanned wellhead platform typically has from two to sixteen well slots. As mentioned, the well slots numbered 1_s to 16_s are
15 given a fixed location according to numerical value. For example, a ten slot unmanned wellhead platform will receive slot locations as shown in fig. 3 up to slot number 10.

Each well slot has a set of components topside in order to be able to produce or
20 inject the well. This is typically wellhead, XMT (Christmas tree), flow control valves, flow meters and isolation valves.

Each well slot is typically 2,5 X 2,5 meters. The wellhead and XMT are installed within this area.

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The topside construction 3 is sectioned with predetermined location and design of the respective sections 4.

As mentioned, the sections 4 can have different sizes, dependent of the number
30 of well slots and location in the topside construction 3.

As an example, shown in fig. 2, the topside construction 3 can be based on a 20m X 20m deck floor 6 (fig 1) and in three heights (decks). This one has 2-8 wells. However, the number of wells can be expanded, for example as shown in
 5 fig. 3 with up to four more wells. Then you need to expand the area with a row of sections 20m X 5,5m as shown in the bottom of fig. 3. If you expand with four more wells, as shown in fig. 4, you need to expand the area with another row of sections 20m X 5,5 m as shown on top of fig. 4.

10 Typical values for sections having four different sizes, dependent of the number of well slots, can be:

	2-4 wells	14 X 14 X 11m	(not shown)
	4-8 wells	20 X 20 X 11m	(fig. 2)
	9-12 wells	20 X 25 (including cantilever in south)	(fig. 3)
15	13-16 wells	20 X 30 (including cantilever in north)	(fig. 4)

The equipment has standardized layout (for example the fig. 6 injection system), is sectioned and located in fixed locations for the respective topside sizes and scaled in accordance with the number of wells. Typical sections/areas
 20 are:

- Well area, shown in the figure as producers and injectors
- Production area
- Injection (WAG) (Water and Gas) area
- Gas lift area
- 25 Hydraulics
- Electro, Instrument, control, telecom (EICT) (XMT deck, not shown on drawing)
- Material handling area
- Area for pigging operation equipment

As an example, a water and gas/injection well on a 10 slots unmanned wellhead platform then will have:

- 5 - Layout of flow control, measurement and isolation valve as shown in fig. 8a and 8b
- Flow control, measurement and isolation valve as shown in fig. 8a and 8b will be connected to a manifold in water and gas area as shown in fig. 6.

- 10 As mentioned, the construction typically has three deck levels, cellar deck D_1 , xmas tree deck D_2 and weather deck D_3 .

On cellar deck D_1 (fig. 5, 6 and 7) the well heads (producers and injectors) are installed together with equipment for flow regulation, flow measurements,
15 isolation valves, manifolds, gas lift etc in the different sections or area as shown in the figures.

Figure 5-7 discloses three different embodiments D_1' , D_1'' , D_1''' of the cellar deck of the topside frame structure 3. The embodiments corresponding to the weather deck D_3' , D_3'' , D_3''' as disclosed above in figure 2-4.

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On xmas tree deck D_2 , the xmas tree is placed together with equipment for power supply (electro), control systems, inlet of umbilical from the mother platform, injection systems.

- 25 The weather deck D_3 has hatches 12 for access to the various wells. The weather deck D_3 shields the well area and operates as base for connection to the wells for conducting well intervention. On the weather deck D_3 there are room for a pig skidder. The pig skidder can easily be connected to a temporary piping spool connected to the risers 2 down at the cellar deck D_1 . The pig
30 skidder is arranged to launch or receive a plug device that is forced through the

pipeline system for cleaning purpose after the installation and before the start production/operation of the platform.

As an Example, one global layout is shown in fig. 9. What shown is:

- 5 - A Jack-up Rig (JUR) approaching from windward side; minimize the jack up rig (JUR) exposure of potential gas leakage during drilling and well operations.
- Service operation vessel (SOV) approach from leeward side; minimize risk for SOV interference with the unmanned wellhead platform in case of
- 10 e.g. Dynamic positioning (DP) failure
- Flowline and umbilical routing to avoid conflict with jack-up rig footprint
- Four possible SOV headings for simultaneous material handling from SOV and Walk to work (W2W) connected to the unmanned wellhead platform. The walk to work is a bridge landing system for use between a
- 15 fixed installation and a floating vessel for personell transfer.
- Dropped object protection above flowlines and umbilical close to the unmanned wellhead platform might be required

The hook-up philosophy is as follows. It is kept at a minimum, only risers and J-

20 tubes are required. The topside is designed for single lift offshore. This means that all components are ready installed and tested. Only hook-up spools are required to complete the connection between topside and jacket. Hook-up spools are fabricated onshore and shipped to the topside. Possible adaptations are made offshore.

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The control system is preferably in an EICT container. The choice was to collect electrical and instrument cabinets within the EICT container. The size of the container can vary, it is determined by the equipment it is to contain. Primary location for such container will be in direction south on the Xmas tree deck D2,

30 since this will provide a good air direction on Norwegian offshore sector, i.e.

prevailing wind is often toward north-east. All equipment within the container are Ex secured.

5 The external material handling takes place either to/from Jack-Up Rig (JUR) or to/from Service Operation Vessel (SOV). Toward jack up rig (JUR) the external material handling is performed by crane located on jack up rig (JUR) and towards dedicated landing areas on the unmanned wellhead platform. Toward unmanned wellhead platform also called SOS (subsea on a stick), the external material handling takes place with crane located on SOV toward dedicated load
10 platform on. unmanned wellhead platform

Internal material handling takes place in vertical shafts typically 2m X 3m extending from weather deck to cellar deck.

Claims

1. An unmanned wellhead platform comprising at least one topside construction, a jacket designed and adapted to be supported on the seabed and projecting above the sea level and a topside structure installed on top of said jacket, wherein said topside structure is designed as a standardized base concept tailored for repetitive future topside constructions, **characterized in that** each topside construction is adapted to the number of wells to be developed, said topside construction being made up by a number of different but standardized sections, each standardized section being dedicated for a particular and predetermined purpose and location in said topside construction, said number of standardized sections adopt different sizes and configurations, though grouped in sets of sections having equal dimension.
2. The unmanned wellhead platform according to claim 1, **characterized in that** some of the standardized sections of the topside construction having at least one defined well slots, each well slot having received its respective and unique number from 1 (one) and up, each numbered well slot repeatedly receives the same location in the topside construction each time a base topside construction is constructed, hence “standardizing” such base topside construction.
3. The unmanned wellhead platform according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** said at least one of said standardized sections is adapted to receive and mount various components associated with a dedicated well.
4. The unmanned wellhead platform according to any of the claims 1-3, **characterized in that** said number of standardized sections are grouped in standardized structural sections and standardized equipment sections.

5. The unmanned wellhead platform according to any of the claims 1-4,
characterized in that each standardized section is spanning over at least two decks.
- 5 6. The unmanned wellhead platform according to claim 5, **characterized in that** each standardized section is spanning over three decks, i.e. a cellar deck, a middle deck and a weather deck.
7. An unmanned wellhead platform according to any of the claims 1-6,
characterized in that said topside structure includes eight, twelve or sixteen dedicated well slots, each well slot being adapted to receive
10 required components for one respective well.
8. An unmanned wellhead platform according to any of the claims 1-7,
characterized in that said topside construction is rotated in the horizontal plane approximately 45 degrees relative to corner legs of said jacket.
- 15 9. An unmanned wellhead platform according to any of the claims 1-8,
characterized in that said topside construction is adapted and designed for possible future expansion, said expansion taking place by adding one or more standardized section as required.
- 20 10. An unmanned wellhead platform according to any of the claims 1-9,
characterized in that said seabed support comprises an equilateral jacket adjusted for the sea depth, metocean data, soil condition and strength required for the location of the unmanned platform.