

Case Study



Life-of-Field Support

Oil and gas customers around the world know ASCO as a leading provider of supply chain services. Less well known is that we are capable of providing such services through all phases of oilfield development. In the Caspian region for instance, ASCO's cradle to grave involvement in the exploitation of oil deposits has just entered its sixteenth year.

In the early Nineties a consortium of oil companies, including BP, in partnership with the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijani Republic began to develop the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (ACG) oil field in the Caspian Sea. During these early days, ASCO's subsidiary in Azerbaijan provided construction services, inventory management, and supply chain expertise in support of BP's marine and aviation needs. We also helped BP build a logistics and organizational infrastructure to support onshore and offshore activity on ACG.

The ASCO team carried out this groundwork in a complex political economic and social environment, complicated by the emergence of newly independent states following the break up of the former Soviet Union. Long, complex supply chains – in part the result of the fact that the only access to Azerbaijan is via transport networks outwith Azerbaijani control – brought new logistics challenges in a country whose infrastructure was severely under-resourced.

Each phase of an oilfield's development has a particular logistics focus. During the initial phase, while driving toward first oil from Chirag, the focus was on reliability and safety. When production and drilling operations on the Chirag reached a steady state, the focus changed to cost control and assurance. As additional phases of development of the full field were sanctioned and implemented, focus returned to capacity building whilst ensuring reliability and safety.

Mention of phases, however, is misleading. It implies that the development of the ACG field (or any multi-platform oilfield for that matter) moves from one phase to another in linear fashion. In reality platforms have unique service and development timelines which overlap. Servicing such fields efficiently requires experienced logistics providers like ASCO who are capable of integrated planning designed to meet the varying needs of all assets simultaneously.



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Logistics requirements have now reached a new steady state, signalling a further phase of consolidation and refinement. Here ASCO played a major role in supporting BP's project Victor, which set out to refine systems and increase efficiency by embedding in BP's logistics infrastructure, well-established North Sea practices such as scheduled vessel runs, shared sailings and vendor management. In particular ASCO arranged and conducted a series of vendor workshops to raise the vendor base's understanding and awareness of LOLER regulations, cargo cut-off times and the need for pre-shipment checks on cargo to establish fitness-for-purpose. ASCO also helped develop new procedures and work methods that emerged from Project Victor.



The development of an offshore oil field is a complex and uncertain endeavour. Reservoir volumes and the oil price are notoriously difficult to predict and well rates fluctuate. In the Caspian region, developing economies offer a challenging backdrop to logistics provision in the area. Best in Class service providers like ASCO embrace the volatile nature of the business and counter it by building flexible response into their infrastructure and planning.

Wherever ASCO operate in the world, our aim is to deliver service assurance, safe operations and cost effectiveness to our customers through all phases of oil field development, from exploration, through engineering and construction, to production and ultimate abandonment.

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