



PRESS RELEASE

Afghanistan announces Qualification of Eight Bidders for Oil and Gas Tender

July 4, 2012

The Afghanistan Ministry of Mines is pleased to announce the qualification of eight bidders for oil exploration and production in the Afghan-Tajik Basin of northern Afghanistan. The companies are ExxonMobil (NYSE: XOM), Dubai-based Dragon Oil (LSE: DGO), Kuwait Energy, India's ONGC Videsh, Petra Energia of Brazil, Pakistan Petroleum, Thailand's PTT, and Turkey's TPAO. The qualification results from evaluation leading to a decision made today by the Inter-Ministerial Commission.

H.E. Minister Wahidullah Shahrani, Minister of Mines, remarked, "This impressive group of bidders shows the robust growth and rapid development of Afghanistan's oil and gas sector. Building on the success of last year's tender in the Amu Darya Basin, we believe this tender magnifies the progress we are making. The development of these blocks will increase economic opportunity, improve infrastructure, and enhance the lives of citizens in Afghanistan."

The six blocks on offer are estimated to contain several hundred million barrels of oil equivalent. More than sixty geologic structures that may contain oil or gas have been identified in the six blocks through previous gravity and magnetic surveys, and twenty-five of them have been mapped using two-dimensional (2D) seismic data collection. The data will be made available to the eight bidders as part of the tender process.

A total of twenty companies submitted an indication of interest. In addition to the eight qualified bidders, twelve companies were found not to possess the required financial capability or technical expertise, did not submit their expressions by the submission deadline, or did not submit complete information.

In 2011, Afghanistan offered three blocks containing five known oil fields in the Amu Darya Basin for competitive tender. That tender was won by a joint venture between China's CNPC International and its local Afghan partner. The new company, CNPCIW, began production on June 24 and is expected to produce at least 150,000 barrels of oil in 2012.

The Ministry expects that there will be several additional tenders for Afghanistan's oil and gas resources in the next few years. The geology of northern Afghanistan is similar to the vast hydrocarbon reservoirs of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan across the

northern border. However, other regions of Afghanistan are also believed to contain oil and gas potential as well.

The tender process is expected to be completed with the award of contracts to the winning bidders in early 2013. Further information may be obtained at the Ministry of Mines website, www.mom.gov.af.