

PROJECTS & COMPANIES

Egypt is struggling to meet growing demand for electrical power, much of which is generated from natural gas. Demand for gas in the country is reported to have eaten into the amount available

for export. When Kamal was appointed in August, he called for “extensive efforts and urgent actions from the petroleum sector” to meet the country’s energy needs and for more co-ordination

between the petroleum and electricity ministries.

Egypt’s proven gas reserves are estimated at 2.18 billion cubic metres, the third largest in Africa. ■

Early Mbawa success opens up Lamu Basin hopes

Initial results from the Mbawa 1 exploration well, being drilled offshore Kenya by Apache, suggest it has found gas. Statements from Australia’s Pancontinental Oil & Gas and UK-listed Tullow Oil on September 10 reported the well had found around 52 net metres of natural gas pay. The find is important in that it confirms the hydrocarbon system offshore Kenya works, continuing the exploration trend up from Mozambique and Tanzania.

Work on the exploration well began on August 10 and it is being deepened in pursuit of other exploration targets.

The gas find at Mbawa was reported as being of Cretaceous age, contained in porous sandstone. The well was drilled to a depth of 2,553 metres, at which point logs, fluid samples and cores were taken.

The well is being drilled with the Deepsea Metro 1 and, at the outset, was expected to take around 60 days. Mbawa is in 864 metres of water, in the L-8 block.

Work has now restarted on Mbawa, targeting a total depth of 3,275 metres. Another target lies above the planned total depth, Pancontinental said.

The Australian company’s CEO and director, Barry Rushworth, noted operations were continuing but said the “gas discovery is very promising and it is the first ever substantive hydrocarbon discovery offshore Kenya. We are delighted to prove that there is a working hydrocarbon system offshore Kenya. Further work continues to evaluate the size of the discovery.”

Rushworth went on to say the results might be the “first part of the story in this well, and they are certainly just the beginning of the main story of oil and gas exploration offshore Kenya.”

Tullow also issued a statement noting the discovery of gas in the Mbawa well. The company’s exploration director, Angus McCoss, said the find was an “encouraging start to our East African

Transform Margin exploration campaign. This is the first hydrocarbon discovery offshore Kenya. The ongoing drilling remains on course to test for any deeper oil potential within this gas prone region.”

Tudor Pickering Holt said there may be more than 28 billion cubic metres of gas in the find, based the net pay figures and an expectation that the structure covers 179 square km. Developing the discovery would involve the construction of a liquefaction project, which would be unlikely to take place at the same time as similar work in Mozambique and Tanzania. The deeper oil potential is the “big prize,” Tudor Pickering Holt said. ■

