

## Vampira in strike off Brazil

SPANISH oil company Repsol YPF has informed Brazil's National Petroleum Agency it has hit oil and natural gas in Santos basin Block BM-S-48, writes Fabio Palmigiani.

The pioneer 1-REPF-4-SPS well Vampira was drilled by Transocean semi-submersible rig Sovereign Explorer.

Two tests carried out at depths between 4821 and 4841 metres indicated the presence of very light oil and gas in a preliminary analysis.

It is the second time Repsol YPF has found traces of hydrocarbons in the BM-S-48 shallow water area.

In May, the company successfully tested the Panoramix discovery, with the find flowing 378,600 cubic metres per day of natural gas and 1570 barrels per day of condensate.

"It's too soon to define a development plan for the area. We need more information about the play and to drill more appraisal wells," said Repsol Brazil country manager Javier Moro.

It will take a couple of months before Repsol YPF resumes work on BM-S-48.

The Sovereign Explorer will now be sublet to Maersk Oil to allow the Danish company to chase a September deadline for finding hydrocarbons on Block BM-S-29.

After the rig completes the campaign on BM-S-29, it will be returned to the Spanish company to drill two or three more wells in BM-S-48 this year and throughout 2010.

"The development of Santos basin deep-water projects in Brazil is one of the 10 key elements in Repsol's 2008-2012 strategic plan," Moro said, pointing out that the company also holds a minority 25% interest in Block BM-S-9, where earlier this year oil was hit at the Iguacu pre-salt prospect.

The block already contains the Carioca and Guara discoveries and another well is currently being drilled at Abare West.

Meanwhile, Italy's Eni revealed it detected signs of natural gas in offshore Santos basin Block BM-S-4 for the sixth time since 2003.

The company started a new campaign in the area a couple of months ago after almost two years without drilling a single well in Brazil.

Eni used Diamond Offshore semisub Ocean Quest in the 3-ENI-8-RJS extension well.

The plan was to drill to the pre-salt layer to a target depth of 6080 metres. The company was not available for comment.

Repsol YPF operates BM-S-48 with a 40% stake, while Eni is the operator of BM-S-4 holding a 50% interest.



Commission: Twister sales director Hugh Epsom

Photo: ANTHONY GUEGEL

# Twister turns to Brazilian demo

SUPERSONIC gas separator technology provider Twister is preparing to commission a new demonstration plant of its processing module outside of Salvador, Brazil which if successful could lead to its adoption by Brazilian operator Petrobras for subsea field developments.

The Netherlands-based Twister and Petrobras are team members in a joint technology development of the module for subsea application.

Twister sales director Hugh Epsom said Petrobras is keen to witness the demonstration of the technology before making a go or no-go decision around year-end on whether to enter phase two, which is subsea installation of the Twister.

The module would dehydrate gas right at the wellhead, but its precise installation at the seafloor is under design.

Twister is sending a commissioning team now to Brazil to start up the demo plant, Epsom said. Subsea gas conditioning

## Gas separator technology plant to be set up for Petrobras trial

ANTHONY GUEGEL  
Houston

would indeed be the "big prize" for Twister, he added.

Twister technology was originally developed by Shell in 1998, leading to the first installation aboard the B11 platform off Sarawak, Malaysia, for a Shell-Petronas joint venture.

Since 2004 the Twister has been dehydrating about 600 million cubic feet per day of sour gas before it is sent to a liquefaction plant onshore.

The technology involves injecting gas at supersonic velocities inside the Twister tube, thereby extracting water and hydrocarbon liquids in the process. No chemicals or moving parts are involved.

Shell still holds a 40% equity

stake in Twister alongside investment partnerships but Epsom sees Shell eventually exiting ownership in a few years.

Epsom is keen to point out that there has been no downtime associated with that Tubular Twister.

He said also that there have been no observed signs of erosion or corrosion in that or other Twisters put into operation.

In June Twister said that one of its supersonic separation gas processing modules is up and running at the onshore Okoloma gas plant where it is used to dew point 120 MMcf/d of natural gas.

The gas provides feedstock for the 650-megawatt Afam VI power station, which is owned and operated by Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria. Twister said that its unit

was selected for Okoloma because it is able to achieve water and hydrocarbon dewpoint specifications without the need for a glycol plant or a heat exchanger for inlet cooling.

The Twister module being used incorporates six supersonic separator tubes along with a chemical-free hydrate separator.

Besides Brazil and Nigeria, a new Twister system is also being installed by state oil company Ecopetrol in Colombia.

Twister is already at work on the latest version of its proprietary design, the Reflux Twister, which would do away with the inner body and replace it with a virtual one — a counter-flow injection of high-pressure gas.

The prototype, which would allow the use of a shorter tube, is under construction on the testing loop in The Netherlands and tests are scheduled to begin in October 2009.

Epsom said he hopes to bring the Reflux to market in 2010.

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