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Norway awards 56 oil and gas exploration licences on Norwegian Continental Shelf

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20 January 2016



Norway's Ministry of Petroleum and Energy has awarded 56 oil and gas exploration licences in mature areas on the Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS).

The licences have been offered in the Awards in Pre-defined Areas 2015 (APA 2015) licensing round in a bid to increase activity for the industry, which is experiencing weak crude prices.

A total of 36 companies were awarded stakes to explore in the mature areas, or areas that are already opened for exploration.

Minister of Petroleum and energy Tord Lien said in a statement: "Access to prospective exploration acreage is a central element in the government's policies and vital for the long-term activity on the Norwegian Continental Shelf.

"This year's APA round is among the largest ever awarded on the NCS. It will contribute to activity both in the oil companies and in the supply industry as exploration progresses, wells are drilled and discoveries are made."

Out of 56 licences, 27 were in the North Sea, 24 in the Norwegian Sea and five in the Barents Sea.

The ministry offered ownership interests to 36 different oil companies, which range from the international majors to small domestic exploration companies.

22 of these companies will be offered one or more operatorships.

Statoil was the biggest winner, which secured 24 licences, including 13 operatorships. Det norske oljeselskap was second with ten

"This year's APA round is among the largest ever awarded on the NCS."

Other companies to win operatorships include Lundin, Eni, ConocoPhillips, Total, BP and Wintershall.

Image: The 56 licences have been awarded in the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea. Photo: courtesy of suwatpo/FreeDigitalPhotos.net.

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