First 900,000 barrels from Maari oil field after third well starts flowing

18 May 2009 - The latest Taranaki offshore oil field at Maari has pumped in excess of 900,000 barrels of oil soon after the start-up of the third of its planned five oil wells.

Horizon Oil, a 10% partner in the OMV operated project, says that a peak rate of production of 32,000 bopd was reached after the third well, MR5P12, came on stream on 8 April.

The first two cargoes of oil were offloaded from the FPSO Raroa moored on the Maari field. OMV and Horizon offloaded the first cargo of about 480,000 barrels of crude oil in early April. The second cargo was offloaded onto Todd Energy's chartered vessel MS Sophie on 19 April for Todd and Cue Energy, the two other parters in the Maari project.

The first well, MR3P8, completed for production on 22 January 2009 flowed oil after clean-up on natural flow at a rate in excess of 10,000 bopd through a choke 26% open.

The second well, MR4P9, was brought on stream on 9 March, exhibiting similar performance to MR3P8.

Horizon says in its first quarter report that production at Maari is currently subject to disruption, when heavy lift operations during the development drilling phase by the Ensco 107 jack-up rig alongside the wellhead platform required the wells to be temporarily shut-in.

The rig is currently batch drilling the three water injector wells. After these are completed the two final oil production wells, MR1P7 and MR2P1, will be drilled.

Horizon says good progress on the drilling programme continued over the first quarter, with indications being that drilling will be completed sooner than the planned timing of mid August and at less cost.

Oil production at Maari is expected to ramp up to an expected initial gross rate of 35,000 barrels of oil per day.

Horizon also said that good results had been achieved from the completed reprocessing of the 3D seismic coverage over the Maari, Manaia, Pike and Paua structures (and funded by the PMP 38160, PEP 38413, and PEP 38494 joint ventures). Improved definition and velocity information was obtained.

Sources: Horizon Oil and Lindsay Clark