

Weatherford bags completion job in south Iraq

US drilling and well services company Weatherford International has a contract from Iraq to carry out completion work on 150 wells in the south of the country, writes *Vahe Petrossian*.

The wells essentially need perforation and acidisation, said

Thamir Ghadhban, energy adviser to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Once completed the wells will add between 200,000 and 250,000 barrels per day to Iraqi crude output capacity.

Ghadhban said the drilling

programme will be completed in less than a year.

Weatherford has been operating in Rumaila for a number of years. It won a tender in 2004 to drill 60 wells at the oilfield in the south, where the relatively good security situation has allowed

some work to proceed on rehabilitating oil installations after the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein government in 2003.

Ghadhban said the security situation was good enough to allow Weatherford to complete the project.



Syria gets off blocks for round

SYRIA officially launched its debut offshore licensing round this week covering four blocks in deep waters, writes *Iain Esau*.

Players already involved in the country's onshore assets turned up to a one-off presentation that also attracted companies who would be new to Syria.

The incumbents included supermajors Shell and Total who are joint-venture partners with state-owned Syrian Petroleum Company (SPC).

Other attendees active in Syria that showed their faces were Petro-Canada, UK-based Gulfsands Petroleum, Norwegian player DNO, UK-based Dove Energy and Ina of Croatia.

The potential newcomers included RWE-Dea of Germany and Calgary-based Talisman Energy.

Bids for the quartet of blocks, each covering about 1250 square kilometres and lying in water depths ranging from 1000 to 1200 metres, are due in by 27 September.

Only pre-qualified companies can submit bids and, if production sharing contracts are signed, they will have 30 months to evaluate the acreage and shoot 3D over an entire block.

SPC's service contracts manager Melhem Ksairy said the next 30-month period would call for at least one well to be drilled while two extension periods, each of two years, require at least one well each.

If a commercial discovery is made, then development activities should kick off within two years.

Syria requires a 12.5% royalty on total production while cost recovery depends on how much each field produces.

Half of excess cost recovery will go to SPC with the remainder split between the PSC partners and SPC.

Signature bonuses would also appear to be payable — although Ksairy was unclear on this — while there will also be a commercial discovery bonus and production bonuses.

Bidders are required to buy 5000 kilometres of 2D data from Wavefield Inseis, which shot the seismic two years ago, and will need to put down a €200,000 (\$270,000) bid bond that can be refunded in certain instances.

•• SYRIA'S Minister of Petroleum Sufian Al Alao said more than 24 companies have so far responded to its onshore licensing round. Seven blocks are up for grabs with bids due by 12 July.

Floatec to give legs to Big Foot

Concept study to examine the options to tap US Gulf find

BLAKE WRIGHT
Houston

DEEP-WATER solutions provider Floatec has scooped the conceptual study for Chevron's large Big Foot discovery in the ultra-deep Walker Ridge area of the Gulf of Mexico.

Over the next few months, Floatec will run its slide rule over the gamut of development solutions for the field including floating systems — such as spars, semi-submersibles and floating production, storage and offloading vessels — and subsea solutions.

However, there is little infrastructure nearby and what little talk there has been on reserves has suggested that Big Foot is a multi-hundred million-barrel find, so a standalone development would seem a likely prospect.

Floatec beat out stiff competition from the likes of Granherne-KBR, WorleyParsons Sea with Intec and Fluor-Exmar, among others vying for the Big Foot job.

A Floatec source said the contractor will use its sister companies to assist with the screening process.

Mentor Subsea will be responsible for the examination of subsea hardware for the field. J Ray McDermott Engineering will formulate the topsides parameters for each screened solution. Floatec itself will be responsible for looking at the various hull forms as well as overall project management.

The Chevron project team was expected to attend a kick-off meeting at Floatec's Houston office at press-time.

The Big Foot screening study comes just as Floatec is in the final stage of wrapping up a similar exercise for Nexen Petroleum's Knotty Head field in the deep-water US Gulf.

The contractor is carrying out costing and scheduling exercises on different facility configurations ranging in capacity from 60,000 barrels per day of crude oil to 120,000 bpd.

Chevron's Big Foot field is located in Walker Ridge Block 29 in about 5000 feet of water.

The supermajor has several penetrations in the Big Foot



reservoir including the number-2 sidetrack-3 probe drilled last summer that struck 300 feet of net pay. The zones were the same as those found in the number-2 discovery well drilled in late 2005, which also hit 300 feet of pay.

The concept screening study is expected to gobble up between 5000 and 10,000 man-hours for Floatec. Upon completion,

Chevron is expected to take competing scenarios into the front-end engineering stage as soon as year-end. Big Foot is not expected to come on stream until after 2010.

Chevron operates Big Foot with a 60% working interest. The field partners include Norway's Statoil (27.5%) and supermajor Shell (12.5%).

In the running: the Big Foot conceptual study by Floatec will cover a range of development options for the US Gulf deep-water field from floating systems, such as spars and semisubs, to subsea solutions