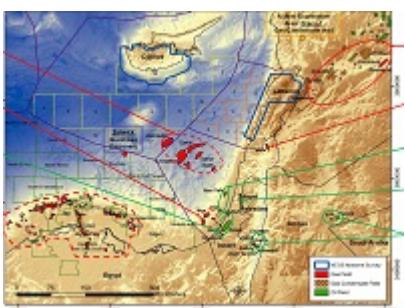


Cyprus Picks U.S. based NEOS to Map Oil and Gas Prospects



NICOSIA: Cyprus has selected California-based NEOS Geosystems to create a three-dimensional map of the island nation's onshore and near-shore oil and gas prospects, the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism announced on Monday.

"The new dataset will be non-exclusive," Minister Giorgos Lakkotrypis explained, "allowing prospective participants in Cyprus' emerging hydrocarbon sector to acquire crucial information to help guide their respective investment, exploration and development decisions."

NEOS, a global leader in the field, employs a unique combination of proprietary processes and technologies and information already available to build its maps, including multiple ground and airborne sensors and supercomputers running advanced analytics software developed in Silicon

Valley. According to Jim Hollis, the company's CEO, this allows a "quantitative integration of disparate imaging data that provides a faster, better and more-cost-effective workflow in previously underexplored areas."

"The data will provide new insights into the subsurface geology onshore to near-shore and help the region to explore and exploit the hydrocarbon potential it possesses," he added, "helping to create jobs for the local population, benefits for the national economy, and energy security well into the future."

Supported by a group of high-profile investors that includes Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and venture capital firm KCPG (a ground-floor backer of Amazon, Google, and Sun Microsystems), investment banking giant Goldman Sachs, NEOS' approach has won high praise from Super Majors and other key players in the oil and gas industry. No less a figure than Dirk Smit, Shell's Vice President of Exploration Technology and formerly the company's Chief Scientist for Geophysics, predicted in an interview with Exploration and Production magazine that technologies like those employed by NEOS were destined to have a decisive impact.

The company and its investment partners in the Cyprus venture – Beirut-based firms Energy & Environment Holding (EEH) and Petroserv – first applied its unique methodologies in the Eastern Mediterranean by carrying out a similar study for nearby Lebanon's CedarsOil project.

"I think that subsurface characterization or exploration will be more driven by more remote-type sensing technologies" whose measurements might extend to such factors as gravity and magnetics, Smit told Exploration and Production. "Perhaps this could be combining more refined measurements of surface expressions affected by climate, biology or geology with probing technologies that can be deployed airborne or on the ground."

EEH CEO Roudi Baroudi said the new Cyprus map would add to mounting evidence of multiple world-class gas and/or oil deposits in the Eastern Med.

"Thanks to the dataset acquired by NEOS, Lebanon looks more promising than ever, (Italy's) ENI has discovered a supergiant gas field in neighboring Egyptian waters immediately adjacent to Total's sector offshore Cyprus, and the latest news from Syria is encouraging too," the Ministry quoted Baroudi as saying.

Apart from the onshore and near-shore survey, the agreement also contains an option for NEOS to expand its work offshore into deeper waters.