

Royal Dutch Shell sets sights on Fram field's gas and oil



Royal Dutch Shell is investing further in the North Sea and is pressing ahead with the development of the Fram field.

The oil company approved a deal in January to overhaul its Penguins field and unlock about 80 billion barrels of oil held there. While the investment at Fram, which lies 137 miles east of Aberdeen, is understood not to be as large as that of Penguins, it is another mark of the returning confidence across the UK continental shelf.

Shell is one of the largest oil companies. Its interests also include renewable energy, retail and technology. It has been reshaping its portfolio to focus on lower cost or newer assets.

The company said that a mixture of gas and oil would be extracted from Fram. At its peak the field is forecast to produce the equivalent of 12,400 barrels of oil a day.

Steve Phimister, the vice-president for upstream for Britain

and Ireland, said that the company was still looking to invest in further projects as it tried to grow its North Sea business.

Shell will be the operator of the Fram field with Esso Exploration and Production UK, a subsidiary of Exxonmobil, the partner in the development.