

Ensco 107 Arrives To Drill Kupe Gas And Maari Oil Fields

The *Ensco 107* offshore jackup rig has arrived in New Zealand waters to drill development wells for both the Kupe gas field and later the Maari oil field.

The 16,000 t rig's first task will be the erection of the Kupe wellhead platform jacket at the field which lies about 30 km off south Taranaki, followed by the drilling of three initial production wells in Kupe central field.

Later the rig will install the topsides on the project's offshore platform. Both the platform jacket, already at New Plymouth, and the topsides have been built by Thai Nippon

Steel in Thailand. The topsides are due in New Zealand at the end of the year.

The *Ensco 107* will also drill the Momoho-1 exploration well inside the Kupe permit area just a few kilometres to the south of the Kupe platform site. The NZ\$1080 million Kupe gas project is expected to be completed by mid-2009 and will produce about 254 PJ of natural gas, 1.1 MMt of LPG and 14.7 MMbbl of condensate.

Kupe operator Origin Energy has reported that foundations for the onshore production station near Hawera were substantially completed with many further contracts let.

The two horizontal directionally drilled tunnels under the coastal cliffs and beach and up to the seafloor 1.8 km offshore have been completed and lined with steel casing ready for installation of the line pipe and umbilical cable. A 'mattress' of crushed rocks to carry the subsea pipeline and umbilical over the boulder fields about 2 km offshore was also successfully completed.

The *Ensco 107* rig is expected to become available around March next year to drill the 50 MMbbl Maari oil field which lies almost 40 km south of the Maui gas field. Five oil development wells and three water injection wells are scheduled for the OMV-operated Maari field. ■