

# Call for Sunrise to be delayed

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WOODSIDE Petroleum should delay plans to develop the Sunrise natural gas field in the Timor Sea for up to 10 years to extend the time East Timor will get royalties, an East Timor non-government group says.

Starting liquefied natural gas from the proposed Sunrise project in 2019 rather than 2013, as in the fastest possible development, would provide six more years of income, La'o Hamutuk said yesterday in a report on its website.

The delay would also avoid an overlap in revenue for the Government from Sunrise and the operating Bayu-Undan field, it said.

East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, last week extended a state of emergency after renegade soldiers shot and wounded President Jose Ramos-Horta at his home. Oil and gas supplies more than 90% of government revenue in the nation, which gained independence from Indonesia in 2002.

"If the project goes ahead expeditiously, concept selection will be probably in 2008, the development plan could be approved in 2009 and gas production could begin in 2013," the report said. "However, it would be better for Timor-Leste if the project started later."

Dili-based La'o Hamutuk, or the Timor-Leste Institute for Reconstruction Monitoring and Analysis, is a non-government organisation that analyses and reports on international institutions working in East Timor in connection with the country's economic and social development.

The Sunrise venture, which includes ConocoPhillips and Royal Dutch Shell, resumed work on the project last year after a gap of more than two years while it awaited an agreement between Australia and East Timor on administering the project.

The field straddles a boundary between Australian waters and an area jointly managed by Australia and East Timor.

Perth-based Woodside, which owns 33.4% of Sunrise and is the venture operator, does not have an official timetable for the project.

A spokesman, Roger Martin, said the company was developing plans for several LNG projects and had not said which of Sunrise, the Browse project, or a second production unit at the Pluto project being built in Western Australia would be developed next after the first Pluto plant.

The venture was studying three development options, including piping the gas to Darwin for processing, a floating LNG plant or building a plant in East Timor, he said.