

Inpex continues to study Darwin option

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INPEX expects to start a near-shore drilling project in Darwin Harbour and around Blaydin Point in the Northern Territory to investigate geological and foundation conditions for near-shore infrastructure and an offshore gas pipeline route.

A jack-up barge will drill 26 holes between late August and early November 2008 to collect core samples for laboratory analysis.

The work will also lay the groundwork for subsequent dredging areas for the company's proposed liquefied natural gas processing facility.

The drilling project follows a recent onshore drilling campaign, completed on June 20, as well as an \$8 million hydrographic survey awarded to Neptune Marine Services on June 10. The survey is believed to cover the pipeline route to Darwin.



Darwin Harbour map

The work is further evidence that Inpex is seriously considering making Darwin its preferred location for processing gas from the giant Ichthys field, off northwestern Australia, rather than at the Maret Islands off the Kimberley coast. The company expects to make a decision in the third quarter of 2008.

The NT government has pulled out all the stops in an effort to secure the massive project, saying the project could inject \$50 billion into the territory economy over 20 years, from the start of site work in 2010.

Inpex and partner Total are planning a two-train 8 million tonne per annum LNG development to commercialise the Ichthys field.