

Inpex delays Ichthys first gas

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PERTH, AUSTRALIA: Inpex Corp. is pushing back its final investment decision on the Ichthys liquefied natural gas (LNG) project to the second half of next year.

First gas from Ichthys is scheduled for the second half of 2013 to first half of 2014, at least one year later than the original plan of year-end 2012.

The estimated reserves at the Ichthys field now stand at 12.8 Tcf of gas and 527 million barrels of condensate, according to Australia's Energy Minister Martin Ferguson. The new estimates are about 50 per cent higher than the previous forecast of 9.5 Tcf of gas and 312 million barrels of condensate.

Inpex on May 21 submitted a second development concept for the Ichthys gas field to the Australian government for the environmental approval. Inpex said the approval process for the new option based on an onshore liquefaction plant at Blaydin Point, Darwin, will run concurrently with that of its preferred proposal for Maret Islands.

The new development concept involves the drilling an initial 20 subsea producers, with possible expansion of up to about 50 wells, and the construction and installation of floating or fixed offshore production facilities as well as a subsea pipeline to export gas to onshore liquefaction facilities.

Two options are being considered for the offshore production infrastructure: the deployment of a semisubmersible gas processing platform with a floating production storage offloading facility to process the condensate or a fixed gas and condensate production facility with an optional floating storage offloading vessel.

Gas produced via a 42-inch wide, 850-kilometre to 935-kilometre (528-mile to 581-mile) long pipeline to two 8 million tonnes (8.8 million tons) per annum liquefaction plants at Blaydin Point. In addition to the LNG output, Inpex also expects to produce 1.6 million tonnes (1.76 million tons) of liquefied petroleum gas a year and 100,000 b/d of condensate from Ichthys.

Inpex operates the Ichthys gas project with a 76 per cent stake. France's Total holds the remaining 24 per cent.