

## **Information on the Bilateral Framework Treaty**

There is already in place a number of bilateral treaties between Norway and the UK covering specific petroleum projects. These are treaties concerning the joint exploitation of the three median line fields Frigg, Staffjord and Murchison, the oil pipeline from Ekofisk to Teesside and the condensate pipeline from Heimdal to the Brae-platform on the UK continental shelf. The gas pipeline from Heimdal to St. Fergus in Scotland, called Vesterled, is covered by amendments to the Frigg Treaty.

The establishment of such treaties have proved to be time consuming. The aim has therefore been to establish a framework treaty which covers all future petroleum projects involving both Norwegian and UK authorities.

A framework treaty signed in 1998 regulates the governmental administration of pipelines linking Norwegian infrastructure on the Norwegian continental shelf with UK infrastructure on the UK continental shelf and vice versa, so-called inter-connecting pipelines.

The Framework Treaty which has just been finalised covers all other cross-boundary petroleum projects. The treaty has been based on the principles established in the Ministerial Declaration signed by the Energy Ministers of the two countries in October 2003. The abovementioned treaties already agreed to, will not be affected by the new Framework Treaty. The projects which will be covered by the new Framework Agreement are primarily new cross-boundary landing pipelines, joint exploitation of fields on the boundary line, the use of existing infrastructure and joint use of new infrastructure across the boundary line.

The first projects to be covered by the new Framework Agreement, are the construction and operation of that part of Langeled, the new gas pipeline from Aukra (the landing site for Ormen Lange gas) in Norway to the UK, which goes from the Sleipner platform to Easington, and the development and operation of the two median line fields Enoch and Blane.

The Framework Agreement establishes a close co-operation between the authorities of the two countries. The two Governments undertake to use their best efforts to facilitate cross-boundary projects. When the development and operation of a project or the decommissioning of an infrastructure requires the approval by both Governments, their approval shall be compatible and normally issued simultaneously. This means that the two Governments are obliged to extensive reciprocal consultation and to harmonise requirements with regard to health, safety and the environment.

The Framework Treaty lays down provisions on inspectors' access to installations, equipment (including metering systems) and data, and on the inspectors' bilateral interaction. It also includes provisions on the information exchange between offshore pipeline operators and operators of onshore transmission systems. A central element of the treaty is the regulation of third party access to spare capacity in pipelines covered by the treaty. A Framework Forum with representatives of the two Governments will be established and will meet at regular intervals to discuss issues under the treaty. The treaty also contains procedures for settlement of disputes between the two Governments concerning the interpretation or application of the treaty.