



Press Release

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TUV NEL TO CREATE WORLD LEADING RESEARCH FACILITY TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF HEAVY OIL RESERVES

TUV NEL has been awarded funding from the UK Government's Technology Programme, to help establish a new facility and technical capabilities that will help unlock the potential of heavy oil, which accounts for more than two-thirds of the planet's remaining oil reserves.

The company is set to establish the world's first industrial scale facility for the development of the specialist multiphase flowmeters that are essential in assisting the production of trillions of barrels of oil that exists in oil sands and bitumen deposits around the globe.

TUV NEL will be working with Schlumberger, the world's leading oilfield services company, who already produce a range of multiphase flowmeters for the oil and gas sector.

The technology needed to produce heavy oil efficiently has moved on considerably in the past few years. However, there is currently no effective method of quantifying the make up of the complex multiphase flows that result from the processes of heavy oil production and without accurate flow metering, the majority of heavy oil reserves simply cannot be produced.

"Heavy oil is the one natural hydrocarbon resource that so far has remained largely untapped," said TUV NEL's Operations Director Dr Brian Millington.

"There are around ten trillion barrels of technically recoverable heavy oil and bitumen deposits in place around the world, but in the past it has simply been too complex or too costly to produce the majority of these resources. However, new methods of extraction, combined with sustained high oil prices, mean that the production of heavy oil will quickly develop around the globe.

“Due to the processes required to produce heavy oil, the raw product that flows through pipelines will inevitably be a highly viscous, complex, and usually inconsistent, multiphase mixture of gas, water, crude oil, sand and other production chemicals.

“To make commercial use of such flows, it is essential that operators and fiscal bodies are able to determine its precise make up in real time. This means that there is now an urgent need to develop the flow metering technologies required to calculate the oil content and value of produced heavy oil fluids.”

TUV NEL’s new investment will create the world’s first industrial scale facility specifically to research and develop the innovative techniques and technologies that are needed to measure these complex multiphase flows.

The first project within the research programme will use Schlumberger’s existing multiphase flow metering systems to model flows and produce a set of generic data to help set the agenda for the development of future flow meters.

“Our multiphase technology is already proven with the oil, gas and water mixtures produced in many fields around the globe,” said Bruno Pinguet, multiphase domain champion, Schlumberger. “We are working with TUV NEL to help establish the required industry specifications for the future generation of specialised multiphase oil flow meters that will be needed as heavy oil production increases.”

The new facility will build upon the strong reputation TUV NEL has as a world-class centre for excellence in oil and gas flow metering and will be a focal point for future heavy oil developments.

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1) TUV NEL is a leading international technology services organisation. With a successful track record of more than five decades delivering world class innovative solutions to difficult problems we provide services, solutions and technology to clients across many industries including oil & gas, government, manufacturing, water, petrochemical, industrial and automotive and defence on a local and a global basis. It is part of the TÜV SÜD Group, the leading international service organisation.

2) TÜV SÜD is a major international service group operating in the INDUSTRY, MOBILITY and PEOPLE business segments. With 11,000 staff, we are represented at over 600 locations worldwide. Our teams of specialists are engaged in optimising technology, systems and know-how, and thus act as process partners, enhancing the competitive strength of our customers throughout the world.