

First gas production from L6-B in the Dutch North Sea

- **Expansion of production portfolio in the Netherlands**
- **New concept with very small unmanned platform**

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Rijswijk. Wintershall is expanding its natural gas production in the Netherlands: the unmanned mini-platform L6-B has started to produce natural gas off the Dutch North Sea coast. The first so called “Minimum Facility”-platform was built in just nine months and brought to its offshore location in June 2014. The advantage of this new generation of platforms is that they can be deployed in particularly shallow waters and can economically produce even from very small natural gas fields. Furthermore, they can cut down on costs thanks to the short time needed for construction and the simple installation. The costs for such a platform are less than half of a conventional satellite platform.

The platform is located in field L6-B in the middle of a restricted military zone, and Wintershall Noordzee is the first company that is allowed to operate in this area. The installation needs to be as small as possible, and may well be the smallest topside known. The facility is anchored in the seabed through suction piles, rises about 18 meters above the sea and has three decks but no helideck. The facility can accommodate maximum 2 producing wells. Since there is only minimum processing equipment on the platform, the expected visit frequency is low. The substructure weighs 1,100 tons, the top side

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just around 100 tons. To compare, the close by platform L8-P4 weighs 4,500 tons. From there the mini-platform is controlled, operated and supplied with electricity. A pipeline will transport the gas produced in L6-B to the neighboring platform L8-P4.

Expansion of production activities in the Netherlands

The North Sea is a core region for Germany's largest, internationally active crude oil and natural gas producer. The BASF subsidiary has been active in the region since 1965 and in the last five years it has been awarded exploration and production rights in around 120 licenses in the North Sea. At the same time, the company has firmly established itself as an operator of producing fields in Norway and the southern North Sea.

Wintershall operates now 25 offshore platforms in Dutch, German and UK waters of the North Sea and is one of the most active explorers and one of the biggest gas producers in the southern North Sea. Natural gas production will continue to be one of the company's main areas of activity in the Netherlands and in the southern North Sea – and will be complemented by oil production as well.

Wintershall Holding GmbH, based in Kassel, Germany, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BASF in Ludwigshafen. The company has been active in the extraction of natural resources for 120 years, and in the exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas for over 80 years. Wintershall focuses on selected core regions where the company has built up a high level of regional and technological expertise. These are Europe, Russia, North Africa, South America, and increasingly the Middle East region. The company wants to expand its business further with exploration and production, selected partnerships, innovation and technological competence. Wintershall employs some 2,500 staff worldwide from 40 nations and is now Germany's largest, internationally active crude oil and natural gas producer.

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