



Embargoed: 0700hrs 26 September 2011

**Rockhopper Exploration plc**

("Rockhopper" or the "Company")

**14/10-8 Well Spud**

Rockhopper Exploration plc (AIM: RKH), the North Falkland Basin oil and gas exploration company, announces that the 14/10-8 exploration well (the "Well") was spudded at 03:45hrs BST on 25 September 2011.

The Well is situated on Licence PL032, which is 100% owned and operated by Rockhopper, and is located approximately 4.1km to the south-south-east of the 14/10-2 discovery well, outside of the Sea Lion Discovery Area.

This well is designed to investigate reservoir and hydrocarbon presence within the Sea Lion Main Complex in an area of relatively low amplitudes and is also an exploration well on both the Casper and Kermit oil prospects.

Drilling operations are expected to take approximately 28 days and a further announcement will be made once drilling is completed.

**Ocean Guardian drilling rig**

The Company is in discussions with Diamond Offshore, owners of the Ocean Guardian drilling rig, with regards to the assignment of a further drilling slot to which the Company would be required to commit prior to the spudding of well 14/10-9.

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**Notes to Editors**

Rockhopper was established in February 2004 with a strategy to invest in and carry out an offshore oil exploration programme to the north of the Falkland Islands. The Company floated on AIM in August 2005 and holds a 100 per cent. interest in four offshore production licences: PL023, PL024, PL032 and PL033 which cover approximately 3,800 sq. km. Rockhopper has also farmed in (7.5% working interest) to licences PL003 and PL004, which are operated by Desire Petroleum. These licences have been granted by the Falkland Islands government.

An extensive work programme has been carried out over a number of years on the licences operated by Rockhopper. This has included 2D and 3D Seismic and Controlled Source Electromagnetic Mapping (CSEM). In February 2010, the Ocean Guardian drilling rig arrived in Falkland waters to carry out a multi-well drilling campaign. Rockhopper drilled an exploration well on its Sea Lion prospect during April and May 2010, the result of which was the first oil discovery and Contingent Oil Resource in the North Falkland Basin. The Sea Lion discovery was successfully tested during September 2010 and June 2011 and was the first oil to flow to surface in Falkland Islands waters. Rockhopper contracted seismic vessels MV Polarcus Asima and Nadia to carry out a 3D seismic survey over areas of licences PL024, PL032 and PL033 which were not previously defined by 3D, as well as adjacent areas. Data over the southern portion of licences PL032 and PL033 has been fast track processed and an initial interpretation has now been completed. The balance of the newly acquired 3D seismic data is still being processed and the Company expects it will be available for interpretation before the end of 2011.

Rockhopper Exploration plc [www.rockhopperexploration.co.uk](http://www.rockhopperexploration.co.uk)