



For immediate release: 23 July 2010

**Rockhopper Exploration plc**

("Rockhopper" or the "Company")

**Ernest 26/6-1 Exploration Well Spud**

Rockhopper Exploration plc (AIM: RKH), the North Falkland Basin oil and gas exploration company, is pleased to announce that the Ernest 26/6-1 Exploration Well was spudded at 05.15hrs BST on 23 July 2010.

The Ernest prospect is located on Licence PL024. Rockhopper will drill Ernest as operator with a 100% interest. The well is being drilled to an estimated target depth of circa 2,400 metres. Drilling operations are expected to take approximately 30 days and a further announcement will be made once drilling is completed.

Ernest is being drilled using the fourth rig slot in the overall drilling programme of the Ocean Guardian rig. On completion of the Ernest 26/6-1 Exploration Well, it is currently anticipated that the Ocean Guardian will return to Rockhopper's Sea Lion 14/10-2 Well (100% Rockhopper) to conduct flow testing on the oil discovery.

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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 is the first oil discovery and Contingent Oil Resource in the North Falkland Basin.

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