



19 May 2010

Rockhopper Exploration plc
("Rockhopper" or the "Company")

Drilling Programme Update

**Sea Lion Exploration Well – 14/10-2
Oil Discovery – Completion of Well**

Rockhopper Exploration, the North Falkland Basin oil and gas exploration company, is pleased to confirm that well 14/10-2 on the Sea Lion prospect has been successfully suspended for future testing.

The well was drilled to a total depth of 2,744m and the duration of the rig hire was 35 days.

Work continues on analysis of the results of the well. The physical samples taken from the well are currently being transported to the United Kingdom by freight plane, and are due to arrive shortly. Based on that timetable, the Company anticipates making a further update within the next 10-15 days at which point it expects to be able to provide initial estimates of the potential size of the discovery.

Pierre Jungels, Executive Chairman, commented:

"I would like to thank the Company's staff, consultants and contractors for running such a professional and seamless operation during the drilling and suspension of our Sea Lion discovery.

The outcome is great news in itself, but it also demonstrates that small operators, with the correct planning by the Company, combined with the right support from outside experts and quality contractors, can work to the highest industry standards in terms of health, safety and respect for the environment whilst achieving excellent operational results. We can never be complacent in this regard and will seek to maintain this standard with the drilling of our Ernest prospect in the coming months."

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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 to licences PL003 and PL004 which are operated by Desire Petroleum in which it holds a 7.5% working interest. 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 Falklands waters to carry out a multi-well drilling campaign. Rockhopper has drilled an exploration well on its Sea Lion prospect and current indications are that the Company has made the first oil discovery in the North Falkland Basin. Further analysis is being carried out. The Company intends to drill its Ernest prospect later during 2010 in addition to participating in further wells with Desire.

In November 2009 the Company completed an equity placing to raise gross proceeds of £50 million which covers the anticipated costs of these wells, including contingencies.

Rockhopper Exploration plc www.rockhopperexploration.co.uk

NB: This statement has been approved by the Company's geological staff who include David Bodecott (Exploration Director), who is a Member of Petroleum Exploration Society of Great Britain (PESGB) and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) with over 30 years of experience in petroleum exploration and management, for the purpose of the Guidance Note for Mining, Oil and Gas Companies issued by the London Stock Exchange in respect of AIM companies, which outline standards of disclosure for mineral projects.