



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**24 April 2008**

Rockhopper Exploration plc ("Rockhopper" or "the Company") (AIM:RKH)

**Operational Update**

Rockhopper Exploration is pleased to provide the following operational update.

- SPD appointed to provide drilling expertise
- Appointment of farm-out specialist adviser
- EIA on PL032 & PL033 commences
- Geohazard assessment of possible drilling locations on PL032 & PL033 commences

The Company announces that it has appointed SPD Group Limited ("SPD") (part of the Petrofac group) to undertake a range of well engineering services as part of the ongoing preparations for a drilling campaign in the North Falkland Basin. The agreement provides Rockhopper with access to a wide range of engineering and project management services available from SPD including the provision of long lead equipment such as wellheads and casing.

Rockhopper announces that it has simultaneously appointed Thompson Knight Global Energy Services, a specialist adviser to oil and gas companies seeking farm-out arrangements, to assist in its drilling farm-out campaign.

The Company has also appointed RPS Energy to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") on licences PL032 & PL033 in preparation for drilling. The EIA on licences PL023 & PL024 is already in progress.

Finally, Rockhopper has commissioned CGG Veritas to reprocess the short offset 3D data over licences PL032 and PL033. The Company will use this data to evaluate potential geohazards over a number of possible drilling locations, thereby eliminating the requirement to collect specialist hi-resolution seismic. This reprocessing is likely to take approximately 8 weeks.

Following the reprocessing and evaluation of this data and completion of the EIAs, the Company expects to be ready to drill 2 to 4 targets across its acreage.

These 2 to 4 wells, when added to the 4 wells to be drilled by Desire and its new partner (Rockhopper will also participate in a number of these wells) result in a potential 8 well campaign in the North Falkland Basin.

These developments follow the evaluation of seismic data and the identification of unrisks prospects that the Company's Board estimates may contain over 3.5bn barrels of recoverable oil on the acreage licensed to Rockhopper.

Pierre Jungels, Rockhopper Exploration's Executive Chairman, commented:

"We are now moving into the final phase prior to drilling. We have identified a number of targets in PL032 & PL033 on the 3D seismic which are of sufficiently low risk for us to drill in addition to the Ernest prospect and we are waiting to see what the interpretation of the new 2D over Weddell shows us.

It is a huge advantage for us to have SPD onsite bringing both experience of drilling and access to long lead items.

We believe that our acreage is of low to medium risk in the global exploration setting with potential to find over 3.5 billion barrels of recoverable oil using conservative parameters and that this should prove to be of considerable interest to the industry in the current environment.

We are continuing to move forward towards our ultimate goal of drilling between 2 and 4 wells on our operated acreage, in addition to participating in other wells in the Basin.

The 3D still looks hugely encouraging, we are moving forward on our work programme and with the interpretation of the new 2D on Weddell to come shortly, we feel that 2008 will prove to be an extremely exciting year for Rockhopper."

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.

For further information, please contact:

**Rockhopper Exploration plc**  
Sam Moody - Managing Director

[www.rockhopperexploration.co.uk](http://www.rockhopperexploration.co.uk)  
01722 414 419

**Aquila Financial Ltd**  
Peter Reilly

[www.aquila-financial.com](http://www.aquila-financial.com)  
0118 979 4100

**Landsbanki Securities (UK) Limited**  
Tom Hulme

[www.landsbanki.co.uk](http://www.landsbanki.co.uk)  
020 7426 9000

#### **Notes to editors**

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

The Rockhopper Group started trading in February 2004 to invest in and carry out an offshore oil exploration programme to the north of the Falkland Islands. The Group, floated on AIM in August 2005, has a 100 per cent. interest in four offshore production licences which cover approximately 3,800 sq. km. These licences have been granted by the Falkland Islands government.

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