

Lysaker, 26 April 2019

The Royal Ministry of Petroleum and Energy

**Awards in Pre-defined Areas 2019 – Public consultation concerning expansion of APA areas**

Reference is made to the letter from the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, dated 14 March 2019, inviting comments to a proposed expansion of areas for «Awards in Pre-defined Areas» (APA).

INPEX Norge welcomes and supports the Ministry's proposal.

The proposed expansion will in our view provide important additional acreage for exploration. In turn, this may assist time-critical utilisation of existing infrastructure, as well as potentially attaining resource levels that may justify additional development, especially in the Barents Sea and in the deep-water areas in Norwegian Sea. Both these ends would appear to reside well within the intentions of the APA regime, as earlier established by Norwegian Authorities.

As a result of the political decision to defer the 25th Licensing Round, the availability of new frontier exploration areas has been delayed. Thus, the APA awards have become increasingly important and have attracted high industry attention. Moreover, additional exploration acreage is likely to maintain activity in the petroleum-related industries and local communities, while underpinning the petroleum industry's long-term and long-standing value contribution to the Norwegian Society.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Yukihiro MachidaManaging Director  
INPEX Norge AS