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Aker BP, DNO, Equinor and Vår Energi win lion's share of APA 2025 licences

The Norwegian energy ministry has awarded 57 new production licences in its APA 2025 round as it looks to encourage exploration and new developments that will boost oil and gas production in the next decade when output is currently expected to decline.

The ministry, in a statement yesterday (Tuesday), said 19 companies have been offered licence interests, with 13 of them winning operatorships. 31 of the newly awarded blocks are in the North Sea, 21 in the Norwegian Sea and the remaining five in the Barents Sea.

"Norway is Europe's most important energy supplier, but in a few years' time production will start to fall. That is why we need new projects that can slow the decline and provide the most production possible," said energy minister Terje Aasland.

He described the outcome of the round as a "significant contribution to ensuring activity in the oil and gas industry", which is "important for jobs, value creation and Europe's energy security"

Norway's big three producers, Equinor, Aker BP and Vår Energi, along with DNO, which expanded with the acquisition of Sval Energi last year, were notable winners in APA 2025.

Equinor has been offered interests in 35 licences, 17 of them operated. Jez Averty, Equinor senior vice-president for subsurface on the Norwegian Shelf, said the awards facilitate the operator's plans for a continued high level of exploration activity amid its plans to drill 20-30 exploration wells per annum.

He highlighted awards in the northeastern part of the North Sea and in the southwestern Møre Basin that "provide new and exciting opportunities". "Access to new acreage is crucial for our ambition to maintain a high level of production and predictable energy deliveries to Europe from the NCS towards 2035. There is still a lot of energy left on the NCS, but we need new discoveries to curb the expected production decline," Avery said. *(Continued on page 2)*