

Exxon Mobil to acquire Canadian oil&gas firm

Exxon Mobil, the largest U.S. energy company, said Wednesday its subsidiary in Canada is acquiring Canadian oil and gas exploration firm Celtic Exploration Ltd. to gain access to Western Canada's most promising shale oil and gas regions.

Under an agreement, ExxonMobil Canada will acquire 545,000 net acres (220,725 hectares) in the liquids-rich Montney shale, 104, 000 net acres (42,224 hectares) in the Duvernay shale and additional acreage in other areas of Alberta, Exxon Mobil said in a statement.

Current production of the acreage to be acquired is 72 million cubic feet (2.038 million cubic meters) per day of natural gas and 4,000 barrels per day of crude, condensate and natural gas liquids.

Celtic's approximately 60 workers will get the chance to work for ExxonMobil Canada, the statement said.

The agreement is subject to approval by Celtic's shareholders and Canadian regulatory authorities. "This acquisition will add significant liquids-rich resources to our existing North American unconventional portfolio," said Andrew Barry, president of ExxonMobil Canada.

"Our financial and technical strength will enable us to maximize resource value by leveraging the experience of ExxonMobil subsidiary XTO Energy, a leading U.S. oil and natural gas producer which has expertise in developing tight gas, shale oil and gas and coal bed methane," he said.

World oil giants like Exxon Mobil are buying more oil and gas assets in North America in an attempt to boost output in a sector where vast energy resources are controlled by countries like Brazil and Russia.

Exxon Mobil started a big push into unconventional resources like shale with its 2010 purchase of Texas-based XTO Energy. Since then, Exxon has steadily added shale gas and shale oil reserves in North America as it struggles to boost production.