

MMS TO PROVIDE TRAINING ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIA(#30036)

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The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today an agreement with the Agency for International Development (AID) to provide training to Russia's oil and gas regulators. MMS will assist the Russians in developing a regulatory program to work with the private sector in the development of their oil and gas resources in an environmentally sound manner.

MMS has the responsibility in the United States for managing the offshore oil, gas and mineral resources of the outer continental shelf; the agency also collects and disburses all mineral revenues accruing from onshore and offshore lands belonging to the federal government as well as native lands--about \$4 billion annually.

"Russia has significant oil resources," said MMS Director Tom Fry, "but as an emerging democracy, they have a critical need for an institutional framework to attract investment to develop those resources and to do so in an environmentally responsible manner.

"MMS is delighted to have this opportunity to share what we have learned about environmental safety management, royalty collection, and energy production," continued Fry. "As government regulators, we also know about working with the private sector."

Fry said the assistance will be provided in phases over several years with training likely to be given both in the U.S. and Russia. Currently, the MMS training program contains six teaching modules: assessing environmental information; evaluating mineral resources; conveying exploration and development rights; managing operations; managing revenues; and managing information.

"We will modify our training program as necessary," said Fry. "The goal is to show Russian regulators how they can work with the private sector to enhance environmental and production goals."

Several organizations within the Russian Federation, including the Tyumen Regional Executive Council, the Tyumen Regional

Committee of Environment Control, and the Far East Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and associated agencies, have expressed interest in receiving technical assistance from the MMS.

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