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- Geologische Potenziale und technische Herausforderungen -
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Dr. Ir. René Peters



René Peters is responsible for Gas Technology Research at TNO, a Research and Technology Organisation of the Netherlands (www.tno.nl). This includes research on exploration, unconventional gas, gas transport and storage, LNG and offshore production. He received this PhD thesis on flow-induced pulsations in pipe systems at the Eindhoven University of Technology in 1993. He started his career at Shell Research (1993 – 1998), after which he served in several technical and managerial positions in TNO since 1999. His current position is director gas technology, where he is also managing the Dutch National Innovation Program on Upstream Gas. He is leading the EERA Joint Program on Shale Gas since 2013 (<http://www.eera-set.eu/index.php?index=140>).



TNO Energy

Dr. Rene Peters – Director Gas Technology
Stieltjesweg 1
2628 CK Delft
The Netherlands
Tel. +31 (0) 6 51551566

Shale Gas Developments in The Netherlands

The Netherlands has been a gas producing and exporting country after the development of the huge Groningen field in the Northern part of the Netherlands. Current gas production from the Groningen field and small on and offshore fields is about 80 BCM per year, which creates a direct financial income of 14 Billion Euros annually for the Netherlands. However, conventional gas fields are declining, and the gas production will reduce over the next decades to come to a level which will be below the domestic gas demand around 2025. To delay the change from net gas export to import country, the Dutch government supports innovation into new sources of gas for the future. This can be new conventional gas sources, biogas or unconventional gas sources such as tight gas, coalbed methane or shale gas.

The Netherlands is expecting to have significant resources of unconventional gas, but to date no exploration drilling has been applied to confirm these expectations. Current estimates of technically recoverable reserves are between 200 and 500 BCM, although the latest estimates by EIA (2013) are even higher at 735 BCM. Currently, a study is ongoing to determine the risks and challenges for shale gas extraction in the Netherlands, which should be reported in July 2013. On the basis of this analysis, the Dutch government will decide on final approval for a number of shale gas exploration licences.

Companies who have applied for a licence for shale gas extraction are Cuadrilla (Noord Brabant and Noordoostpolder), Hexagon (Limburg) and BNK Petroleum (Utrecht). Queensland Gas Company had applied for a licence to develop Coalbed Methane in the Gelderland Province, but has withdrawn its application.