
Russia ready for greater foreign investment in oil and gas projects

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Russia is ready to consider greater foreign participation in oil and gas projects, including on its continental shelf, a first deputy prime minister said on Friday.

Dmitry Medvedev, who chairs the board of energy giant Gazprom, told journalists in northern Russia: "We are an energy power and must think about the future. We must invest funds into this sphere. We have our own funds, but we are ready to discuss these issues with foreign investors."

"We have very good positions on the continental shelf. We are interested in developing them on a priority basis," Medvedev said.

The first deputy premier, who is likely to be elected Russian president in March having been picked last month by Vladimir Putin as his favored successor, said that on energy issues the country's leadership would like to retain the right to make all key decisions itself.

Russia's Natural Resources Ministry said in late December six major investment projects, being implemented on the basis of tenders, could attract 800 billion rubles (\$32.5 billion) in funding.

The ministry has worked out a number of amendments to a bill on oil, gas and mining, which will determine a procedure for drawing up lists of deposits to be offered for development as part of investment tenders.

"After the bill is approved, we plan to lease at least six deposits. This will help to attract investment of 800 billion rubles (\$33 bln) in these projects and to create 31,000 jobs," the ministry said in a statement.

The bill sets out criteria and procedures for classifying deposits as strategic. These will include oil fields with reserves of more than 70 million metric tons (513 million bbl), natural gas deposits with over 50 billion cubic meters, gold deposits with more than 50 metric tons, copper deposits with over 500,000 metric tons, and all continental shelf deposits.
