BP Exploration (Canada) Limited was the successful bidder on four exploration licences offshore Nova Scotia in late 2012. These licences, ELs 2431, 2432, 2433 and 2434, are located approximately 300 kilometres southeast of Halifax in water depths ranging from 100 metres to more than 3,000 metres.

BP Exploration proposes to conduct a three dimensional (3D) seismic survey of these licences beginning in April 2014. The results from this 3D seismic acquisition will help evaluate the subsurface geology of the target area and potentially identify rock structures that may contain oil and/or natural gas. This is done by sending acoustic waves through the water column and by recording the echoes from the rock layers deep beneath the ocean floor.

BP has conducted successful seismic surveys offshore Canada before. In 2009, the Pokak 3D Seismic Program safely collected more than 1,500 square kilometres of 3D data and over 1,400 kilometres of 2D data in the Arctic’s Beaufort Sea. It was, at the time, the most northerly 3D marine seismic program ever conducted.

PROJECT STATUS

BP Exploration’s proposed seismic survey is called the Tangier 3D Seismic Survey. In July 2013, BP submitted a Project Description to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB), which outlines the general elements of the program. The survey is expected to be conducted from April 2014 to November 2014 (and if necessary during the same period in 2015) and to acquire up to 14,000 square kilometres of data.

EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY

BP has decades of experience managing the extraction of oil and natural gas in all types of environments around the world, both onshore and offshore. In recent years, the company successfully conducted offshore seismic programs in many other regions, including the Gulf of Mexico, the North Sea, Australia and Angola.

BP’s top priority is safety. Its 2009 Pokak Seismic Program and the 2012-2013 Canadian onshore seismic program were completed without any recordable injuries.

BP’s health, safety, security and environment (HSSE) goals are no accidents, no harm to people and no damage to the environment. Everyone who works for BP is responsible for ensuring his or her own safety and the safety of colleagues, partners, suppliers and local communities. When conducting seismic operations offshore Nova Scotia, BP Exploration will assure its seismic contractor complies with HSSE regulatory requirements and BP’s HSSE policy.
ENVIRONMENT

BP is committed to safe and environmentally responsible exploration activities that avoid or minimize impacts. As required by the CNSOPB, BP will conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed study area prior to any seismic activities.

It is expected that the EA will include a focus on all species designated as at-risk under the Species At Risk Act (SARA) and their critical habitat, on migratory birds and on all species assessed as endangered, threatened or of special concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

The EA is also expected to address special areas in and near the seismic area, including the Gully Marine Protected Area. Commercial fisheries, marine shipping, the Department of National Defense operations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada scientific research that may occur in the area are also expected to be considered.

BP Exploration will comply with all regulatory requirements including those outlined in the Canadian Practice with respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment. For example, those regulations include the establishment of safety zones around seismic vessels and using marine mammal observers onboard the vessels.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

BP recognizes that safe and environmentally sound operations require early and ongoing stakeholder engagement over the full life cycle of a project. BP believes that it is important to build relationships with the stakeholders in the areas where it operates. Listening and responding to concerns which stakeholders have about BP’s activities are an important part of obtaining BP’s privilege to operate in Nova Scotia. BP wants to be a neighbour, partner, employer and investment of choice.

LOCAL BENEFITS

In line with regulatory requirements, BP Exploration will give consideration to services and goods from Nova Scotia companies, where those services and goods are competitive in terms of fair market price, quality and delivery. BP Exploration is committed to ensuring that full and fair opportunities for employment, procurement and contracting are provided for Nova Scotia and Canadian companies.

It is important to remember that the proposed seismic program is the first stage in the exploration for oil and natural gas. If BP moves forward with drilling in future years, there may be further opportunities for local businesses.

For more information about the Tangier 3D Seismic Survey, please see the Project Description on the CNSOPB’s website or email nsinfo@bp.com.