

Global oil and gas tax guide

2015



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Preface

The *Global oil and gas tax guide* summarizes the oil and gas corporate tax regimes in 84 countries and also provides a directory of EY oil and gas tax contacts. The content is based on information current to 1 January 2015, unless otherwise indicated in the text of the chapter.

Tax information

This publication should not be regarded as offering a complete explanation of the tax matters referred to and is subject to changes in the law and other applicable rules. Local publications of a more detailed nature are frequently available, and readers are advised to consult their local EY professionals for more information.

EY's Global oil and gas tax guide is part of a suite of tax guides, including; the *Worldwide Corporate Tax Guide*, the *Worldwide Personal Tax Guide*, the *Worldwide VAT, GST and Sales Tax Guide*, the *International Estate and Inheritance Tax Guide*, the *Transfer Pricing Global Reference Guide*, the *Worldwide R&D Incentives Reference Guide* and the *Worldwide Cloud Computing Tax Guide*.

Each represents thousands of hours of tax research, making the suite of all eight the most reliably comprehensive product of its kind. And the entire suite is available free online along with timely *Global Tax Alerts* and other great publications on ey.com or in our EY Global Tax Guides app for tablets. Further information concerning EY's oil and gas services may be found at www.ey.com/oilandgas.

Directory

Office addresses, telephone numbers and fax numbers, as well as names and email addresses of oil and gas tax contacts, are provided for the EY member firms in each country. The listing for each tax contact includes a direct-dial office telephone number, if available.

The international telephone country code is listed in each country heading. Telephone and fax numbers are presented with the city or area code and without the domestic prefix (1, 9 or 0) sometimes used within a country.

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Tax regime definitions

Concession

Under a concession, an oil and gas company is granted exclusive rights to exploration and production of the concession area and owns all oil and gas production. Under concession an oil and gas company typically pays royalties and corporate income tax. Other payments to the government may be applicable, such as bonuses, rentals, resource taxes, special petroleum or windfall profit taxes, export duties, state participation and others.

Production sharing contract (PSC)/production sharing agreement (PSA)

Under a PSC/PSA, a national oil company (NOC) or a host government enters into a contract directly with an oil and gas company. A company finances and carries out all E&P operations and receives a certain amount of oil or gas for the recovery of its costs along with a share of the profits. Sometimes PSC/PSA requires other payments to the host government, such as royalties, corporate income tax, windfall profit taxes, etc.

Service contracts

Under a service or risk service contract, an oil and gas company finances and carries out petroleum projects and receives a fee for this service, which can be in cash or in kind. The fees typically permit the recovery of all or part of the oil and gas company's costs and some type of profit component.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Depending on the date on which the petroleum contract was signed, the Algerian fiscal regime applicable to the oil and gas upstream industry is governed by:

- ▶ Law No. 86-14 dated 19 August 1986

Or

- ▶ Law No. 05-07 dated 28 April 2005 (as amended by Ordinance No. 06-10 dated 19 July 2006 and Law No. 13-01 dated 20 February 2013)

These laws rule production sharing contracts (PSCs) or other similar contracts concluded between the Algerian authorities and the contractor.

The main taxes applicable in this sector are the following:

- ▶ Under Law No. 86-14:
 - ▶ Royalties
 - ▶ Income tax
 - ▶ Tax on extraordinary profits (TEP) or windfall tax
- ▶ Under Law No. 05-07:
 - ▶ Royalties
 - ▶ Petroleum income tax (PIT)
 - ▶ Additional profits tax (APT)
 - ▶ Surface tax

Legal regime

- ▶ Law No. 86-14 governs the appraisal, exploration, exploitation and transportation of hydrocarbons, as well as the construction and installation of sites enabling these activities.
- ▶ Law No. 05-07 is broader in application, as it also provides for the refining of hydrocarbons; the commercialization, storage and distribution of petroleum products; as well as the construction and installation sites enabling these activities.

The latter Law also provides for the transfer of some rights and duties from the national oil company (NOC), Sonatrach, back to the Algerian State through the newly created national agency for hydrocarbons (ALNAFT). For instance, ALNAFT is the sole holder of the permit for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons.

ALNAFT may enter into contracts with third parties to perform exploration or exploitation activities.

However, the NOC maintains a key role, as invitations to tender for the award of an exploration and exploitation contract must contain a clause that awards the NOC a 51% interest in the contract. Law No. 05-07 as amended by Law No. 13-01 provides that oil and gas pipeline transport activities are performed by the NOC or its subsidiaries.

Under Law No. 05-07, the exploration (seven years) and exploitation (25 years) period is 32 years and follows a two-period approach. The exploitation period has been extended to five years for natural gas deposits, according to Law No. 13-01.

Exploration period

The exploration period lasts a maximum of seven years (consisting of an initial exploration phase of three years, followed by two phases of two years each). The exploration area is reduced by 30% at the end of the initial exploration phase and by another 30% after the second exploration phase.

Once a field has been discovered, a declaration of commerciality (*déclaration de commercialité*) and a draft of the development plan must be sent to ALNAFT for approval. Expected costs of development and a description of the exploitation area must be attached to the project development plan, and a budget must be delivered annually. The draft of the development plan must specify the agreed location as a basis for the royalties' calculation.

If the development plan includes the use of water, the contracting party will have to pay for the water at a rate of DZD80 per cubic meter.

Exploitation period

The exploitation period lasts a maximum of 32 years less the duration of the exploration period (seven years). For dry gas fields, there is an additional five-year exploitation period.

Specific periods apply for unconventional oil and gas. For the exploration and exploitation of unconventional liquid or oil and gas, the exploration period is fixed at 11 years from the date of commencement of the agreement, and is followed by an exploitation period of:

- ▶ 30 years in the case of exploitation of liquid unconventional oil and gas
- ▶ 40 years in the case of exploitation of gaseous unconventional oil and gas (i.e., up to 51 years as compared to 32 years for conventional oil and gas)

The production period may be extended for an initial period of five years upon request by the contracting party. This additional period may be followed by a second optional extension of five years upon request by the contracting party and after agreement by ALNAFT.

For unconventional oil and gas, the contractor may, within the scope of the performance of the pilot project, benefit from an anticipated production authorization of up to four years. This anticipated production is subject to the tax regime provided for by law.

B. Fiscal regime

Main taxes under the former regime (Law No. 86-14), which remain applicable for certain contracts

Royalties

Royalties are due on the gross income and are paid by the NOC at a rate of 20%. The royalty rate can be reduced to 16.25% for Zone A and 12.5% for Zone B (different zones of the Algerian territory). The Ministry of Finance can reduce the royalty rate further to a limit of 10%.

Income tax

Income tax at the rate of 38% applies to the profit made by a foreign partner, and is paid by the NOC on its behalf.

In practice, the income tax is included in the profit oil received by the NOC.

This profit is calculated by subtracting the royalties paid, transportation costs, amortization costs and exploitation costs from the gross income.

TEP or windfall tax

TEP was introduced by Ordinance No. 06-10 dated 29 July 2006 and only applies to contracts signed under Law No. 86-14.

TEP applies to the output share of foreign partners of the NOC when the arithmetic average price of oil exceeds US\$30 per barrel and applies at rates ranging from 5% to 50%.

The decree provides for different rates depending on the type of contract signed with the foreign partner, including:

- ▶ Contracts in which there is production sharing without distinction between hydrocarbons for reimbursement and hydrocarbons as a profit for the foreign partner and without a “price cap” mechanism
- ▶ Contracts in which there is production sharing, with a clause containing a specific formula for calculating the compensation of the foreign partner without a “price cap” mechanism
- ▶ Contracts in which there is production sharing, with a clause containing a specific formula for calculating the compensation of the foreign partner with a “price cap” mechanism

Main taxes applicable under Law No. 05-07, as amended

Surface fee

The surface fee is an annual tax that is not deductible. The amount of this tax payable depends on the territorial zone in which the operations are carried out and the surface perimeter.

The rates of the surface fee per square kilometer are (in Algerian Dinars) given in the table below.

| | Exploration period | | | Retention period and exceptional period | Production period |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|---|-------------------|
| | Years 1-3 (Inclusive) | Years 4-5 | Years 6-7 | | |
| Area A | 4,000 | 6,000 | 8,000 | 400,000 | 16,000 |
| Area B | 4,800 | 8,000 | 12,000 | 560,000 | 24,000 |
| Area C | 6,000 | 10,000 | 14,000 | 720,000 | 28,000 |
| Area D | 8,000 | 12,000 | 16,000 | 800,000 | 32,000 |

Zones A, B, C and D correspond to areas in the territory of Algeria.

Please note that the surface fee is indexed annually to the US dollar.

According to Law No. 13-01, the rates for Area A are applied for the site perimeters of unconventional oil and gas exploration and production.

Royalties

Royalties are calculated on the amount of hydrocarbons extracted from each perimeter of exploitation multiplied by the average monthly fixed price, and paid monthly to ALNAFT.

Royalties are established on the basis of the quantity of hydrocarbon production at the agreed spot (point de mesure), the location at which the measurement of the hydrocarbons production will take place (Art 5 and 26 L. 2005).

The fixed price is calculated by reference to published indexes, depending on the nature of the hydrocarbons.

4 Algeria

The rate of royalties is determined under the terms of each contract. Nevertheless, the Law has fixed a minimum rate for each area of production:

| Area | A | B | C | D |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0-20,000 BOE/day | 5.5% | 8.0% | 11.0% | 12.5% |
| 20,001-50,000 BOE/day | 10.5% | 13.0% | 16.0% | 20.0% |
| 50,001-100,000 BOE/day | 15.5% | 18.0% | 20.0% | 23.0% |
| > 100,000 BOE/day | 12.0% | 14.5% | 17.0% | 20.0% |

The royalty is deductible for APT purposes.

According to Law No. 13-01, a reduced rate of 5% applies for unconventional oil and gas, site perimeters located in underexplored areas, and those with complex geography and/or which lack infrastructure (the list of which is set by regulation).

PIT

The taxable basis corresponds to the value of the production of each perimeter of exploitation during the year, less deductible expenses.

PIT is deductible for APT purposes and must be paid monthly by the operator.

The following taxes and expenses are deductible:

- ▶ Royalties
- ▶ Annual investments for exploration and development
- ▶ Reserves for abandonment or restoration costs
- ▶ Training costs

According to the changes provided by Law No. 13-01, a distinction must be made as follows:

- ▶ Contracts entered into for an exploitation period before the 20 February 2013

The tax rate is calculated by taking into consideration the volume of production since production started (accrued production) and is determined as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Accrued production in DZD10 | First accrued production point (S1) | 70 |
| | Second accrued production point (S2) | 385 |
| PIT rate | First level | 30% |
| | Second level | 70% |
| | Level when PV is between S1 & S2 | $40/(S2-S1) * (PV-S1) + 30$ |

When the accrued production since the beginning of exploitation (PV) is under S1, the PIT is calculated by using the first level rate (30%).

When the accrued production since the beginning of exploitation (PV) is above S2, the PIT is calculated by using the second level rate (70%).

When the accrued production since the beginning of exploitation (PV) is between S1 and S2, PIT is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{PIT rate \%} = 40/(S2-S1) * (PV-S1) + 30$$

Example:

If the accrued production since the beginning of exploitation (PV) is 200 * DZD10, the PIT rate would be:

$$40/(385-70) * (200-70) + 30 = 40/315 * 130 + 30 = 46.5\%$$

- i. All other contracts (except contracts signed under the former hydrocarbon Law No. 86-14 dated on 19 August, 1986).

Law No. 13-01 amends the method for calculating the rate of the PIT, which will now range from 20% to 70% on the basis of the profitability of the project and which will be updated annually (coefficient R1 and R2 according to the scope under consideration), instead of the previous thresholds (S1 and S2) fixing the application of the rate at 30% or 70% depending solely on the cumulative value of production (VP) or turnover.

For a given calendar year, the coefficient (R1) is the ratio of accumulation (gross profit updated at a rate of 10%), from the year of entry into force of the contract up to the year preceding the year determining the rate of PIT on cumulative (investment expenses updated at the rate of 10%), since the year of entry into force of the contract until the year preceding the determination of the rate of PIT.

For a given calendar year, the coefficient (R2) is the ratio of accumulation (gross profit updated at the rate of 10%), since the year of entry into force of the contract until the year preceding the year in determining the rate of TRP on cumulative (investment expenses updated at the rate of 10%), since the year of entry into force of the contract until the year preceding the year determining the rate of PIT.

The following table is applied to the values of R1 and R2:

| | | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 |
|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| PIT rate | $R1 \leq 1$ | 20% | 30% | 20% |
| | $R1 > 1$ and $R2 < 1$ | $20\% + 50\% \times R2$ | $30\% + 40\% \times R2$ | $20\% + 50\% \times R2$ |
| | $R2 \geq 1$ | 70% | 70% | 70% |

Case 1 includes all exploitation perimeters except the perimeters included in case 3 where the daily production is less than 50 000 BoE.

Case 2 includes all exploitation perimeters excluding the perimeters include in the case 3 where the daily production is more than 50 000 BoE.

Case 3 includes small deposits and underexplored perimeters, with complex geology and/or which lack infrastructure.

For contracts mentioned in (i) and (ii) above, "uplift" rules apply to the annual research and development investments as follows:

| Zones | Uplift rate | Depreciation rate |
|---------|-------------|-------------------|
| A and B | 15% | 20% (5 years) |
| C and D | 20% | 12.5% (8 years) |

Additional profits tax

This tax is due by all entities in a exploration or production contract, based on the annual profits after PIT.

The following expenses are deductible for the calculation of the taxable basis:

- ▶ Royalties
- ▶ PIT
- ▶ Depreciation
- ▶ Reserves for abandonment or restoration costs

There are two applicable rates:

- ▶ 30%
- ▶ 15% (for profits that are reinvested)

This tax must be paid by the day that the annual income tax return is filed.

For calculation of this tax, contractors can consolidate their activities in Algeria.

According to Law No. 13-01, for unconventional oil and gas, small deposits and underexplored areas with complex geology and/or which lack infrastructure, each company which is party to the agreement is subject to a reduced rate set at 19% (instead of 30%), under the terms and conditions in force at the date of payment and pursuant to the depreciation rates provided for in the appendices to this Law. The said rate is applicable so long as the coefficient P2 is less than one. If it is equal to or greater than one, the applicable rate is 80%.

As a reminder, the Additional Tax on Income is still applicable at the reduced rate of 15% in the case of investments – notably in gas pipeline transport and in upstream petroleum activities (as Article 88 of Law was not amended).

Ancillary taxes

Gas flaring tax

Gas flaring is forbidden; however, ALNAFT can give exceptional authorization for a period not exceeding 90 days. The contractor is liable for a tax of DZD8,000 per thousand normal cubic meters (nm³).

This tax is not deductible for tax purposes.

Unconventional oil and gas

Law No. 13-01 has provided a legislative framework for unconventional oil and gas. Oil and gas that exists and are produced from a reservoir or geological formation that presents at least one of the following characteristics or conditions:

- ▶ Compact reservoirs whose average matrix permeabilities are equal to or less than 0.1 millidarcy and/or which can only be produced by using horizontal wells and tiered fracking
- ▶ Impermeable, clay with low permeability, or schist geological formations that can only be exploited using horizontal wells and tiered fracking
- ▶ Geological formations containing oil and gas that present viscosities higher than 1000 centipoises or densities lower than 15° API (American Petroleum Institute)
- ▶ High-pressure and high-temperature reservoirs

There is little environmental specificity within the framework of the production of unconventional oil and gas, but the following apply:

- ▶ Authorization or concession granted by the administration in charge of water resources in coordination with ALNAFT for the use of abstracted water
- ▶ Rational use of water, with no further specifications
- ▶ A general obligation for all exploration and exploitation activities to comply with the content of laws and rules in force for the protection of the environment and the use of chemical products, notably for operations concerning unconventional oil and gas

Any contracting party to an exploration and production agreement entered into with ALNAFT may benefit, within the scope of an amendment to the agreement, from the conditions applied to unconventional oil and gas in the event that the hydrocarbons to be exploited are primarily characterized by one of the situations provided for in the definition of the term “unconventional oil and gas.”

The carrying out of the activities relating to the exploitation of clay and/or shale or impermeable geological formations with very low permeability (Shale gas and shale oil) using the techniques of hydraulic fracturing are subject to approval by the Council of Ministers.

Other tax or legal specificities are as mentioned above.

C. Capital allowances

Under Law No. 05-07, the depreciation rates of investments in exploration and development are subject to an increased uplift mechanism, depending on the nature of the works and the zone in which the works were performed:

| Zone | Research and development | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | A and B | C and D |
| Rate of depreciation | 20% | 12.5% |
| Rate of uplift | 15% | 20% |

D. Incentives

As a general rule, operations conducted under the former law regime (1986) and the 2005 regime are exempt from:

- ▶ VAT
- ▶ Customs duties
- ▶ Social contributions (foreign employees of petroleum companies are not subject to social security contributions in Algeria if they remain subject to social security protection in their home country)

An exemption from the tax on professional activity applies to contracts signed under Law No. 86-14.

Moreover, as mentioned in the above sections, several incentives are provided by Algerian law in order to enhance the exploration and production of unconventional hydrocarbons.

E. Withholding taxes

Withholding taxes (WHT) are not dealt with under the Hydrocarbons Law.

F. Financing considerations

There are no specific issues or limitations concerning the financing of hydrocarbon activities in Algeria.

G. Transactions

The transfer of an interest in a PSC governed by Law No. 05-07 is subject to a 1% tax on the value of the transaction. This tax is also applicable to the transfer of a PSC signed under Law No. 86-14.

H. Indirect taxes

Facilities and services that are directly allocated to research and exploitation activities are exempt from VAT and customs duties.

I. Other

Foreign exchange controls

If exploration expenses were paid with imported convertible currency, nonresidents are authorized to:

- ▶ Keep abroad the product of hydrocarbon exportations acquired according to the contract
- ▶ Freely use the proceeds from sales of hydrocarbons on the national market, acquired according to the contract, and transfer them abroad

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession ■ Royalties □ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts ■ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

There are three types of contracts, each with different tax regimes:

1. Production sharing agreement (PSA) – the most common form of arrangement
2. Partnership – applicable only to certain partnerships set up in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Block 0 and FS/FST
3. Risk service contract (RSC)

Taxes applicable to all oil tax regimes:

- ▶ Petroleum income tax (PIT) – 50% (PSA) and 65.75% (partnership and RSC)
- ▶ Surface fee (SF) – US\$300 per square kilometer (km²)
- ▶ Training tax contribution (TTC) – US\$0.15 per barrel/US\$100,000 to US\$300,000¹

1 Annual contribution of US\$100,000 to US\$300,000 only applicable before production phase.

Taxes applicable exclusively to partnerships and RSC:

- ▶ Petroleum production tax (PPT) – 20%²
- ▶ Petroleum transaction tax (PTT) – 70%
- ▶ Investment incentives – U³

Legislation changes⁴ enacted in 2012 envisage a tax reduction for Angolan national oil and gas companies.

New Consumption Tax rules for oil and gas companies.

New regulations regarding the issuance of Environmental Licenses for the oil and gas sector.

B. Fiscal regime

The tax regime applies to all entities, whether Angolan or foreign, within the Angolan tax jurisdiction that perform exploration, development, production, storage, sale, exportation, processing and transportation of crude oil and natural gas, as well as of naphtha, paraffin, sulfur, helium, carbon dioxide and saline substances from petroleum operations.

The current oil and gas taxation regime applies to concessions granted on or after 1 January 2005, as well as to profits or capital gains from assignment of an interest in an earlier concession.

A PSA is a contract between a contracting group and the state concessionaire under which the contracting group bears all expenditures for exploration and extraction of substances in the contract area, together with related losses and risks.

The state concessionaire is a distinct department of Sonangol (the Angolan national oil company (NOC)), through which the Government manages its oil and gas properties and its contractual relationships with other oil companies.

Profit oil, under a PSA, is the difference between the total oil produced and oil for cost recovery (cost oil). Cost oil is the share of oil produced that is allocated for recovery of exploration, development, production and administration and service expenditures.

Profit oil is shared between the state concessionaire and its partners based on the accumulated production or on the contracting group rate of return (preferred method).

The computation of tax charges for each petroleum concession is carried out on a completely independent basis.

In a PSA, the assessment of taxable income is independent for each area covered by the PSA, except for the expenses provided for in Article 23, subparagraph 2 (b) of Law No. 13/04, dated 24 December 2004, to which the rules in the preceding paragraph apply (generally, exploration expenditure).

Common revenues and costs associated with distinct development areas and concessions are allocated proportionally based on the annual production.

For the purposes of assessing taxable income, crude oil is valued at the market price calculated on the free-on-board (FOB) price for an arm's length sale to third parties.

Bonuses may be due from the contracting group to the state concessionaire in compliance with the Petroleum Activities Law and cannot be recovered or amortized. Furthermore, a price cap excess fee may also be payable under a PSA whenever the market price per oil barrel exceeds the price fixed by the Minister of Oil. In both cases, the amounts are ultimately due to the Angolan state.

A contracting group may also be requested to make contributions for social projects to improve community living conditions (such as hospitals, schools and social housing), which also cannot be recovered or amortized.

2 Maybe reduced to 10%.

3 U: uplift on development expenditure under investment allowance.

4 Presidential Legal Decree No. 3/12, of 16 March 2012.

Entities engaged in business activities in Angola and not subject to the oil and gas taxation regime are subject to industrial tax on business profits. This tax is not dealt with in this guide. Moreover, this guide does not cover the specific tax regimes that apply to mining activities or the incentives available under private investment law, such as exemptions from customs duties, industrial tax, dividends withholding tax, (WHT) and property transfer tax. Since a special regime is in force for the LNG Project, we also outline below the main features of the said regime.

Petroleum income tax

PIT is levied on the taxable income assessed in accordance with the tax law from any of the following activities:

- ▶ Exploration, development, production, storage, sale, exportation, processing and transportation of petroleum
- ▶ Wholesale trading of any other products resulting from the above operations
- ▶ Other activities of entities primarily engaged in carrying out the above operations, resulting from occasional or incidental activity, provided that such activities do not represent a business

PIT does not apply to the receipts of the state concessionaire, premiums, bonuses and the price cap excess fee received by the state concessionaire under the terms of the contracts.

PIT is computed on accounting net income adjusted in accordance with the tax law. Tax law provides detailed guidelines on taxable revenues, deductible costs and non-deductible costs.

PSAs

Under a PSA, tax-deductible costs should comply with the following general rules:

- ▶ Cost oil is limited to a maximum percentage of the total amount of oil produced in each development area, in accordance with the respective PSA (generally 50%, but may be increased up to 65% if development expenditures are not recovered within four or five years from the beginning of commercial production or from the year costs are incurred, whichever occurs later)
 - ▶ Exploration expenditures are capitalized and are recognized up to the amount of cost oil (limited as above) not utilized in the recovery of direct production and development expenses as well as indirect administration and service expenses
 - ▶ Development expenditures are capitalized, and the amount is increased by the investment allowance (uplift) defined in the respective PSA and amortized at an annual rate of 25% up to the cost oil amount, from the year incurred or upon commencement of oil exportation, whichever occurs later
 - ▶ Production expenditures are expensed up to the cost oil amount
 - ▶ Administration and service expenditures are either capitalized and amortized (similar to development expenses) or immediately expensed up to the cost oil amount being allocated to exploration, development and production expenses
 - ▶ Inventory is allocated to exploration, development, production, and administration and service activities in proportion to its utilization or consumption within oil operations
 - ▶ Strategic spare parts are allocated to exploration, development, production, and administration and service expenses in accordance with the respective PSA
 - ▶ Costs incurred in assignment of a participating interest (the difference between acquisition price and recoverable costs plus the net value of remaining assets – goodwill) are considered development expenses (but do not benefit from uplift), provided such difference has been taxed at the level of the transferor
 - ▶ Should the cost oil amount not be enough to recover allowable expenses, the balance can be carried forward within the same concession
-

Taxable income is fixed by an assessment committee on the basis of the tax return submitted. The committee validates the amounts reported and determines the taxable income. The taxpayer may challenge the amount determined by the committee.

If the company operates under a PSA, the tax rate is 50%; otherwise, the tax rate is 65.75%.

Partnerships and RSCs

For partnerships and RSCs, tax-deductible costs should comply with the following general rules:

- ▶ Costs incurred in exploration operations, drilling costs of development wells, costs incurred for production, transportation and storage facilities, as well as costs incurred with the assignment of a participating interest (the difference between the acquisition price and the capitalized costs plus the net value of remaining assets – goodwill, provided this difference has been taxed at the level of the transferor), are recognized at an annual rate of 16.666% as of the beginning of the year in which they are incurred, or the year in which oil is first commercially produced, whichever occurs later.
- ▶ Costs incurred before production are capitalized and recognized over a four-year period (25% per year) from the first year of production.
- ▶ If the costs exceed the revenues in a given year, the excess can be carried forward up to five years.

Petroleum production tax

PPT is computed on the quantity of crude oil and natural gas measured at the wellhead and on other substances, less the oil used in production as approved by the state concessionaire.

The tax rate is 20%. This rate may be reduced by up to 10% by the Government and upon petition by the state concessionaire in specific situations, such as oil exploration in marginal fields, offshore depths exceeding 750 meters or onshore areas that the Government has previously defined as difficult to reach. This tax is deductible for the computation of PIT.

PPT is not imposed under a PSA.

Petroleum transaction tax

PTT is computed on taxable income, which takes into account several adjustments in accordance with the tax law. The tax rate is 70%. This tax is deductible for the computation of PIT.

Deduction of a production allowance and an investment allowance is possible on the basis of the concession agreement. PPT, SF, TTC and financing costs are not deductible to compute the taxable basis.

PTT is not imposed under a PSA.

Surface fee

SF is computed on the concession area or on the development areas whenever provided for in the application agreement of Decree-Law No. 13/04.

The surcharge is equivalent to US\$300 per km² and is due from partners of the state concessionaire. This surcharge is deductible for PIT purposes.

Training tax

This levy is imposed on oil and gas exploration companies as well as production companies, as follows:

- ▶ US\$0.15 per barrel – for production companies as well as companies engaged in refinery and processing of petroleum
- ▶ US\$100,000 a year – for companies owning a prospecting license
- ▶ US\$300,000 a year – for companies engaged in exploration.

The levy is also imposed on service companies that contract with the above entities for more than one year.

The levy for service companies is computed on the gross revenue from any type of contract at the rate of 0.5%. If a clear distinction exists between goods and services, it may be possible to exempt the portion relating to the goods and, in some circumstances, it may also be possible to exempt part of the services for work entirely performed abroad.

The same 0.5% also applies to the revenue obtained by entities engaged in the storage, transport, distribution and trading of petroleum.

Angolan companies with capital more than 50% owned by Angolan nationals are not subject to this levy. Also excluded from this levy are:

- ▶ Foreign companies that supply materials, equipment and any other products
- ▶ Services providers and entities engaged in the construction of structures (or similar), which execute all or most of the work outside Angola
- ▶ Entities engaged in a business not strictly connected with the oil industry

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply: there are no specific rules applicable to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Investment allowances (uplift on development expenses) may be granted by the Government upon request made to the ministers of oil and finance. The amount and conditions are described in the concession agreement. Uplift may range between 30% and 40%, based on the profitability of the block.

Production allowances exist for certain blocks, which allow for the tax deduction of a fixed US dollar amount per barrel produced in all development areas in commercial production from a predefined date. This deduction is available up to the unused balance of cost oil.

D. Incentives

The Government may grant an exemption from oil industry-related taxes, a reduction of the tax rate or any other modifications to the applicable rules, whenever justified by economic conditions. This provision may also be extended to customs duties and other taxes.

In this regard, a new law has been enacted granting tax incentives to Angolan national oil and gas companies, i.e., all public companies owned by the State and/or Angolan public companies or private owned companies wholly owned by Angolan nationals.

The incentives granted include the PIT reduction from 50% (PSA) and 65.75% (partnership and RSC) to the equivalent of the industrial tax standard rate, which is 30%.⁵

Moreover Angolan national oil and gas companies are exempt from the signature bonus and from making contributions to social projects which may be due under the respective PSA.

The PSA entered into between the Government and the oil company may override the general taxation regime and may set forth specific taxation rules and rates.

E. Withholding taxes

For companies operating in the oil and gas industry, no WHT is levied on dividends.

Interest is normally subject to 10% (shareholder loans) or 15% investment income WHT.

Royalties are subject to 10% investment income WHT.

5 *Rate introduced by the new Industrial Tax Code, as per Law no. 18/14, of 22 October, in force since 1 January 2015. This new rate is applicable for the years of 2014 onwards.*

Industrial WHT applies to service payments at a general rate of 6.5%.⁶

No branch profits remittance tax applies in Angola for oil and gas entities.

F. Financing considerations

There are no thin capitalization rules in Angola. However, finance expenses are not deductible for PIT, except for borrowings with banks located in Angola upon authorization by the ministers of finance and oil.

G. Transactions

Profits or capital gains, whether accounted for or not, on the sale of oil and gas interests are included in the calculation of taxable profit.

No tax is levied on the share capital of oil and gas companies.

Other income is generally included in the taxable basis for the PIT computation.

H. Indirect taxes

Consumption tax

The general consumption tax rate is 10%, but it may vary between 2% and 30%, depending on the nature of the goods or service. With the recent amendments introduced to the Consumption Tax Regulation,⁷ apart from the production of goods in Angola, importation of goods, goods sold by customs authorities or other public services, use of goods or raw materials outside the productive process that have benefited from a tax exemption, consumption of water and energy, communications and telecommunications services, and tourism services (including hotels and restaurants) are currently taxed at a 10% rate, but it may vary between 2% and 30% depending on the nature of the goods or service. The following services are subject to consumption tax at a 5% rate:

| Services | Rate |
|--|------|
| Lease of areas for parking of cars | 5% |
| Lease of machinery or equipment excluding the lease of machinery and other equipment that for its nature originate the payment of royalties in accordance with the terms defined with the Investment Income Tax code | 5% |
| Lease of areas prepared for conferences, exhibitions, publicity and other events | 5% |
| Consulting services, including, legal, tax, financial, accounting, computer and information, engineering, architecture, economics, real estate, audit, statutory audit and lawyers' services | 5% |
| Photographic services, film processing and image processing, informatics and website creation services | 5% |
| Port and airport services and broker services | 5% |
| Private security services | 5% |
| Travel and tourism agency services promoted by tourism agencies or touristic operators | 5% |
| Business premises, cafeteria, dormitory, real estate and condominium management services | 5% |
| Access to cultural, artistic and sporting events | 5% |
| Lease of vehicles | 5% |

⁶ Rate introduced by the new Industrial Tax Code, as per Law no. 18/14, of 22 October, in force since 1 January 2015 (which revoked Law 7/97, of 10 October).

⁷ The new Consumption Tax Regulation has been republished by Presidential Legislative Decree no. 3-A/2014, of 21 October, in force since 20 November, 2014.

Consumption tax must be paid by the goods supplier or service provider. If certain services are rendered by a nonresident entity, a reverse charge mechanism applies where an Angolan acquirer must assess and pay the respective consumption tax.

Any consumption tax benefit or advantage granted to importation of certain types of goods must also be extended to its production.

Consumption tax – specific rules for oil and gas upstream companies

Although Executive Decree No. 333/13, of 8 October has been formally revoked by the new Consumption Tax Regulation, the regime itself is now covered by Presidential Legislative Decree no. 3-A/2014, of 21 October.

Consequently, all entities providing services (subject to consumption tax) to oil and gas upstream companies should assess the consumption tax due in the respective invoices or equivalent documents.

This taxation regime derives from the fact that there are no subjective exemptions foreseen in the Consumption Tax law (except the ones mentioned below) and, therefore, although subject to a special tax regime, oil and gas upstream companies are not entitled to consumption tax exemption.

Consequently, oil and gas upstream companies, when paying the services related to those invoices or equivalent documents, must pay only the amount due as consideration for the services rendered (except with respect to water and electricity supplies, communications and telecommunications, lodging, touristic or similar services) and should hold the consumption tax amount therein included since they are liable for delivering such tax amount at the respective tax office.

A new consumption tax exemption has been established for oil and gas companies at the exploration or development stage (up to the start of commercial production), and at the production phase (in cases where consumption tax could result in an economic and contractual imbalance) under the following conditions:

- ▶ An oil and gas company formally submits a respective request to the National Tax Office seeking for a tax exemption.
- ▶ An oil and gas company acquires services subject to consumption tax (other than the water, electricity supplies, communications and telecommunications, and lodging, touristic or similar services).
- ▶ An oil and gas company could seek exemption only for those services which are directly connected with and provided for in the concession areas.
- ▶ An oil and gas company should obtain a tax exemption certificate from the National Tax Office, without which such an exemption is not valid.
- ▶ An oil and gas company at production stage should obtain a respective authorization from the National Concessionary and a joint ruling from the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Petroleum.

Customs duties

Under the new Customs Tariff applicable as from year 2014, customs duties are levied on imported goods, including equipment. The rates vary between 2% and 50%, according to the goods tariff classification.

The oil and gas industry has a special customs regime that provides an exemption from customs duties, consumption tax and general levies and taxes on the importation of goods to be used exclusively in oil and gas operations (although stamp tax at 1% and statistical tax at the general rate of 0.1% still apply). The list of goods may be added to upon a petition to the Minister of Finance. The importer should present to the customs authorities a declaration stating that the goods are to be exclusively used in such operations.

A temporary import regime granting an exemption from customs duties and consumption tax is also available for goods that are exported within one year (general regime) or two years (oil and gas industry regime); this may be

extended upon petition. A temporary exportation regime is also available for goods shipped abroad for repairs, provided the goods are re-imported within a one-year period.

The exportation of oil produced in each concession before or after processing is exempt from duties, except from stamp duty on customs clearance documents, the statistical tax of 0.1% *ad valorem* and other fees for services rendered.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty is levied on a wide range of operations, including:

- ▶ Acquisition and financial leasing of real estate at 0.3%
- ▶ Collection of payments as a result of transactions at 1%
- ▶ Real estate lease at 0.4%
- ▶ Lease of equipment at 0.4%
- ▶ Importation of goods and equipment at 1%
- ▶ Bank guarantees between 0.1% and 0.3%
- ▶ Insurance premiums between 0.1% and 0.4%
- ▶ Funding arrangements between 0.1% and 0.5%

The transfer of shares in an oil company should not be subject to stamp duty; however, the transfer of oil and gas assets may be deductible.

The rates vary between 0.1% and 1%, but may also be a nominal amount, depending on the operation.

Some of the stamp duty rates apply starting from 1 April 2012.⁸

Emoluments

General customs emoluments at the rate of 2% of the customs value of the goods are also chargeable on the importation of goods.

Transport expenses also apply and may vary, depending on the means of transport used and the weight of the goods.

I. LNG Project

The Angola LNG Project (the Project) – meaning all activities and installations aimed at receiving and processing associated gas in Angola, production in Angola of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and natural gas liquids (NGL), as well as respective commercialization – has been considered of public interest, hence special incentives for tax, customs and exchange controls have been granted under Decree-Law No. 10/07.

The Project is subject to the laws applicable to petroleum activities, namely, the Petroleum Activities Law, the Petroleum Activities Taxation Law and the Customs Regime law applicable to the oil sector, as complemented and amended by the Decree-Law.

Angola LNG Limited is the main entity responsible for executing the Project, through which the promoting companies hold their investment and rights. Other companies, such as *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*, act in representation of Angola LNG Limited. Promoting companies, which are the original shareholders of Angola LNG Limited, include Cabinda Gulf Oil Company Limited, Sonangol – Gas Natural Limitada, BP Exploration (Angola) Limited and Total Angola LNG Limited.

Petroleum income tax

Taxable profit of Angola LNG Limited is subject to PIT computed in accordance with the rules stated in Decree-Law No. 10/07 and other related legislation. Tax losses can be carried forward for five years.

⁸ *The Stamp Duty code has been revised and republished by Presidential Legislative Decree no. 3/14, of 21 October, in force since that date. In this context, other tax rates have been modified, namely, some customs exportation operations are now subject to a 0.5% rate.*

Taxable profit is imputed to the promoting companies under a sort of tax transparency regime. The applicable PIT rate is 35%.

Promoting companies enjoy a tax credit for 144 months from the commercial production date, against the PIT liability, determined as per Decree-Law No. 10/07.

An exemption from PIT applies to interest and dividends obtained by affiliates (of promoting companies) that hold a participating interest in a block through which a production contract is entered into with Sonangol.

Training tax contribution

Angola LNG Limited is subject to TTC of US\$0.15 per LNG barrel, increased by US\$0.02 per each mmbtu of LNG sold.

Gas surcharge

Angola LNG Limited is subject to the payment of a gas surcharge, on a quarterly basis, as from the first LNG export.

Industrial tax

Any income obtained by Angola LNG Limited, the promoting companies, and their affiliates, related to the commercial activities and transactions realized under the Project, benefits from an industrial tax exemption.

Profits obtained by *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola* are subject to industrial tax, although specific rules apply.

Payments made by Angola LNG Limited to *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*, as well as the payments between *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*, concerning the execution of any service contract, are not subject to industrial tax withholdings.

Concerning service contracts (including the supply of materials) entered into by Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*, these companies are not required to perform industrial tax withholdings. This exemption only applies during a specific time frame. This is also applicable to the entities contracted and subcontracted, and to the subcontracts aimed at the rendering of services or works (including the supply of materials) for the Project.

Investment income tax

Interest income derived from shareholder loans or other loans made by the promoting companies, respective affiliates, and third parties, for the benefit of Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG*, *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola* or other companies they have incorporated, will be exempt from investment income tax. A similar exemption, under certain conditions, may apply on interest derived from loans made between the promoting companies.

Promoting companies and their affiliates are exempt from investment income tax on dividends received from Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*.

Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG*, *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola* or any other company incorporated by them are not required to withhold investment income tax in relation to payments under certain lease contracts, transfer of know-how, and intellectual and industrial property rights. This exemption only applies during a specific time frame.

Other tax exemptions

Income obtained by Sonangol from payments for the use of the associated gas pipelines network, made by Angola LNG Limited under the investment contract, is exempt from all taxes and levies. Angola LNG Limited should not perform any withholdings on such payments.

Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG*, *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*, promoting companies, and their affiliates are exempt from all other taxes and levies that are not specified in Decree-Law No. 10/07, namely: PPT, PTT, urban property tax, property transfer tax, investment income tax and stamp duty (under certain conditions). Notwithstanding, these companies are subject to the standard administrative surcharges or contributions due in relation to commercial activities and transactions associated with the Project, provided such surcharges and contributions are generically applicable to the remaining economic agents operating in Angola.

The transfer of shares in Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*, without a gain, should be exempt from all taxes and levies. Moreover, no taxes or levies are imposed on the shares of the mentioned companies, including increases and decreases of capital and stock splits.

No taxes or levies are imposed to the transfers or remittances of funds to make any payment to the promoting companies, their affiliates or third parties making loans that are exempt from income tax or WHT, as per Decree-Law No. 10/07, including the reimbursement of capital and payment of interest in relation to shareholder loans and other loans, as well as the distribution of dividends in accordance with the above Decree-Law.

Customs regime

In accordance with the Project's regime, the customs procedure applicable to the operations and activities is that established for companies in the customs regime law applicable to the oil industry, with the changes and adjustments stated in Decree-Law No. 10/07.

This customs regime is applicable to Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG*, *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola* and other entities that carry out operations or activities related to the Project on behalf of Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* or *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola*.

In addition to the goods listed in the customs regime law applicable to the oil industry, also exempted from customs duties are various other products that are exclusively used for the purposes of the Project.

Angola LNG Limited, *Sociedade Operacional Angola LNG* and *Sociedade Operadora dos Gasodutos de Angola* are subject to surcharges on all acts of importation and exportation (up to the limit of 0.1%), a statistical surcharge on all acts of importation and exportation (0.1% ad valorem) and stamp duty on all acts of importation and exportation (0.5%).

J. Other

Environmental rules

Angolan Decree no. 59/07, of 13 July, foresees the requirements, criteria and procedures to be adopted, namely by the oil and gas industry, to obtain the respective environmental license. Under this Decree a fee is due, which should be jointly established by an Executive Decree issued by the Ministry of Finance and by the entity responsible for the environmental policy.

In view of the above, considering the high-risk, operational characteristics and volume of investments required to carry out oil and gas activities, the Angolan competent authorities considered justifiable the adoption of a specific fee regime for this industry.

Thus, on 3 May 2013, the Government issued Executive Decree No. 140/13, which approves the calculation basis of the rate applicable to environmental projects within the oil and gas industry.

Under this Executive Decree, the rate/fee in question is determined based on the "Total Environmental Impact" (TEI) quantified by its coverage, its severity and its duration. The quantification formula is also foreseen in the Executive Decree under analysis.

Therefore, and since the taxable basis varies according to the different stages of the oil and gas project, the basis for calculating the value of the environmental fee is based on the following formulas:

- ▶ Installation license rate (TI)
 $TI = 3$ (corresponding to the number of years of duration of the installation license) $\times TEI \times AOA 220,000$.
- ▶ Operation license fee (TO)
 $TO = 5$ (corresponding to the number of years of duration of the installation license) $\times TEI \times AOA 220,000$.
- ▶ License renewal fee
 The license renewal fee should amount to a maximum of 20% of the original installation license fee or operating license fee, respectively.
- ▶ License fee in case of projects aiming to increase the production and/or improve the quality of the project (TA).
- ▶ $TA =$ Remaining period for operating license termination $\times TEI \times AOA 220,000$.

Personal income tax⁹

Employees working in Angola are subject to personal income tax, which is charged under a progressive rate system up to 17%. Personal income tax is paid through the WHT mechanism operated by employers (PAYE system).

Social security

Nationals or foreign individuals working in Angola are subject to the local social security regime. Contributions are paid by the employer and are due at the rates of 8% for employers and 3% for employees. Individuals temporarily working in the country may be exempt from local contributions if they remain affiliated to a similar regime abroad.

Petroleum activities law – main features

Concession rights and mineral rights are attributed to the NOC. Foreign or local entities may contract with the NOC as investors. Any company that wants to conduct oil and gas operations in Angola must do so in partnership with the NOC – except for operations within the scope of an exploration license.

Partnership with the NOC may take one of the following forms: a company, a consortium agreement or a PSA. The NOC is also permitted to carry out oil and gas activities under RSCs. In some cases, an incorporated joint venture may also be put into place. As a general rule, if the joint venture takes the form of a company or a consortium agreement in which the NOC has an interest, the state interest should be greater than 50% (although the percentage may be lower upon receiving Government authorization).

The partnership must be pre-approved by the Government. The operator, which may or may not be a partner, must be stated in the concession agreement following a proposal by the NOC. The operator or the partner must be a commercial company.

The investment risk during the exploration phase is taken by the parties that have contracted with the NOC, with no recovery of their investment if no economic discovery is made.

Borrowings for investments from third parties by the NOC or its partners must be authorized by the Government if oil production is used as security.

An exploration license or an oil concession is required to carry out the activity.

Hiring of contractors by oil and gas companies

Local regulations provide for the following three regimes:

1. Limited free trade regime – certain services should only be provided by local companies (foreign contractors are excluded).

⁹ *The new Personal Income Tax code has been approved by Law no. 18/14, of 22 October, in force since 1 January 2015.*

2. Semi-free trading regime – certain services may only be provided by local companies or foreign contractors when associated with local partners.
3. Free trade regime – all services related to oil and gas activity (onshore and offshore) that are not within either of the two previous regimes, and that require a high level of industry expertise, may be freely provided by local companies or by foreign contractors, although joint ventures with local partners are possible.

To be considered as a local company, the majority of the share capital must be owned by Angolan investors, and the company must be registered with the Ministry of Petroleum or the Angolan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Licensed entities, the state concessionaire and its partners, as well as all entities that participate in oil operations, must:

- ▶ Acquire materials, equipment, machinery and consumption goods produced locally, provided they are of equivalent quality and are available in reasonable time, at prices no more than 10% above the cost of imported items (including transportation, insurance and customs costs).
- ▶ Contract with local service providers if the services rendered are identical to those available in the international market and the price, when liable to the same level of tax, does not exceed the prices charged by foreign service providers for similar services by more than 10%.
- ▶ Recruit local nationals, unless there are no locals with the required qualifications and experience.

Foreign-exchange controls

Legislation was approved in January 2012 to introduce new foreign-exchange control regulations applicable only to the oil and gas sector.

The new rules aim primarily to establish a uniform treatment in this sector by replacing the multiple exchange regimes that have been applied to the oil and gas upstream companies operating in Angola, providing fair treatment to all investors.

These foreign-exchange control rules cover the trade of goods and services and capital movements arising from the prospecting, exploration, evaluation, development and production of crude oil and natural gas.

For the purpose of the rules, exchange operations will encompass (i) the purchase and sale of foreign currency, (ii) the opening of foreign currency bank accounts in Angola by resident or nonresident entities and the transactions carried out through these bank accounts, (iii) the opening of national currency bank accounts in Angola by nonresident entities and the transactions carried out through these bank accounts, and (iv) the settlement of all transactions of goods, services and capital movements.

The NOC and corporate investors, domestic or foreign, must carry out the settlement of foreign-exchange transactions through bank institutions domiciled in the country and authorized to conduct foreign-exchange business. This must be done by opening bank accounts, in the foreign currency, and depositing sufficient funds for tax payments and other mandatory payments for the settlement of goods and services provided by residents or nonresident entities.

The Angolan Central Bank (*Banco Nacional de Angola* – BNA) has established a phased implementation of the procedures and mechanisms to be adopted by the agents carrying out foreign-exchange transactions and will ensure its correct enforcement within a period not exceeding 24 months.

In general terms, the new rules imposed on oil and gas upstream companies foresee that (i) all foreign-exchange transactions must be carried out through Angolan banks and (ii) bank accounts opened in Angolan banks must be funded sufficiently to satisfy tax obligations and the purchase of all goods and services from local and foreign companies.

Other

The NOC and its partners must adopt an accounting system in accordance with the rules and methods of the General Accounting Plan. The Ministry of Finance may issue rules to adjust the accounts if the currency devalues, using the US dollar as a benchmark. Accounting records must be maintained in Angola, and book entries should be made within 90 days.

Oil and gas upstream entities (which are now classified as large taxpayers) must prepare local statutory accounts under the local GAAP, which need to be certified by a statutory auditor duly registered at the local professional association – “*Ordem dos Contabilistas e Peritos Contabilistas de Angola.*”

The fiscal year is the calendar year. The time allowed in Article 179 of the Commercial Companies Code for the approval of the balance sheet and the report of the board of auditors is reduced to two months.

Documents must be submitted in Portuguese, using Angolan Kwanza, and these documents must be signed and stamped to indicate approval by a director. Oil tax returns are filed in thousand Angolan Kwanza and US dollars.

Angola recently approved significant changes under the tax reform which began in 2014, namely, revising, revoking and republishing several codes as the Industrial Tax Code, Consumption Tax Regulation, Stamp Duty Code, Personal Income Tax Code, Investment Income Tax Code, General Tax Code, Tax Procedures Code and Tax Enforcement Code, including a new withholding tax regime.

The Angolan Central Bank BNA has recently approved Ruling no. 7/14, of October 8, in force since 8 November 2014, which has established new rules concerning the Foreign Exchange Transactions Regime applicable to oil and gas companies¹⁰ (including LNG companies), concerning the sale of foreign currency to BNA, under the following terms:

- ▶ Except for receivables and bonus obtained by NOC, all oil and gas companies should sell to BNA the foreign currency for taxes payment purposes and BNA should credit such amount in national currency (Angolan Kwanza) to the national Treasury account.
- ▶ Oil and gas companies (including those undertaking exploration for oil and gas) should sell to BNA the correspondent foreign currencies needed to proceed with the payments for services rendered and supply of goods to resident entities, and BNA should credit such amounts to the oil and gas companies' bank account domiciled in Angola.

Certain deadlines and specific rules apply.

¹⁰ This regulation was first covered by Law no. 2/12, of January 13, in force since 13 April 2012.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties □ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts □ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Argentina is organized into federal, provincial and municipal governments. The fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry principally consists of federal and provincial taxes.

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – 35%
- ▶ Withholding tax (WHT) – Dividends 10% Interest 15.05%/35% Royalties 21%/28%/31.5%
- ▶ Minimum presumed income tax (MPIT) – 1%
- ▶ VAT – 21% (general rate)
- ▶ Stamp tax – 1.2% (general rate)
- ▶ Turnover tax – 2.8% (average rate)
- ▶ Customs duties – Importation taxes (rates on cost, insurance and freight (CIF)), importation duty 0%/35.0%, statistical rate 0.5%, VAT 10.5%/21% and withholding on: income tax 0%/6%/11%, VAT 0%/10%/20% and turnover tax 0%/2.5%
- ▶ Export taxes – Income tax withholding on exports: 0%/0.5%/2%, exportation duties variable, according to the method of calculation mentioned in Section D.
- ▶ Tax on debits and credits in checking accounts – 0.6%
- ▶ Personal assets tax – Equity interest on local entities 0.5%
- ▶ Social security tax – Employer 23% or 27%, employee 17%

B. Fiscal regime

Argentina is organized into federal, provincial and municipal governments. The main taxes imposed on the oil and gas industry by the national Government include income tax, VAT, minimum presumed income tax, personal assets tax, tax on debits and credits in checking accounts, custom duties and social security taxes.

Provincial taxes imposed on the petroleum industry are turnover tax, stamp tax and (for upstream companies only) royalties. Municipalities may impose taxes within their jurisdictions.

Taxation powers are jointly exercised by the national and provincial governments up to three nautical miles offshore, measured from the lowest tide line. However, the national Government has exclusive taxation power up to 200 nautical miles offshore.

Corporate income tax

Argentine resident corporations and branches are subject to income tax on their non-exempt, worldwide income at a rate of 35%.

Capital gains derived by tax-resident companies are included in taxable income and taxed at the regular corporate tax rate. Capital gains on the sale, exchange, barter or disposal of shares, quotas, participation in entities, titles, bonds and other securities held by non-Argentine persons are subject to a 15% tax (which may be calculated on actual net income, or by applying a 90% presumed income, thus resulting in an effective 13.5% tax on sale price).

Dividends

Dividends and branch remittances are subject to a 10% withholding tax on after-tax profits. On a separate basis, if the amount of a dividend distribution or a profit remittance exceeds the after-tax accumulated taxable income of the payer (determined in accordance with the income tax law rules), a final withholding tax of 35% may be imposed on the excess, regardless of the application of the general 10% dividend withholding.

Consolidation

No system of group taxation applies in Argentina. Members of a group must file separate tax returns. There are no provisions to offset the losses of group members against the profits of another group member.

Tax losses

Net operating losses arising from the transfer of shares or equity interests may only offset income of the same origin. The same applies to losses from activities that are not sourced in Argentina and from transactions under derivative agreements (except for hedging transactions). All tax losses generated in a tax period may be carried forward to the five periods following the period when the losses were incurred.

Thin capitalization

Thin capitalization rules require a debt-to-equity ratio of 2:1 for interest deductions on loans granted by foreign entities that control an Argentine borrower company (according to the definition provided for transfer pricing purposes), except when interest payments are subject to the maximum 35% withholding rate (according to conditions mentioned in Section C).

The withholding tax rate that applies is the rate chargeable under the income tax law or the rate provided by the relevant treaty signed by Argentina to avoid international double taxation, whichever is less. If the treaty rate is less than 35%, thin capitalization rules must be observed by the local borrower to the extent that the above mentioned control condition is satisfied.

Transfer pricing

Transfer pricing rules follow the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines (the arm's length principle).

Depreciation

The following depreciation principles apply:

- ▶ Intangible assets related to the oil and gas concession – depreciation based on units of production
 - ▶ Wells, machinery, equipment and productive assets – depreciation based on units of production
 - ▶ Other tangible assets (vehicles, computers) – straight-line, considering the useful lives of the assets
-

Minimum presumed income tax (MPIT)

MPIT is assessed at a rate of 1% on the value of the taxpayer's assets at the end of the taxpayer's accounting period. Value in this case excludes shares in Argentine companies. In addition, value excludes investments in new movable assets or infrastructure for the initial year of investment and the succeeding year.

MPIT is due to the extent that a taxpayer's MPIT liability exceeds its CIT. This excess is then treated as a tax credit that may be carried forward for the 10 years following the year the tax was paid. To the extent that the taxpayer's CIT exceeds MPIT during this 10-year period, the credit may be used to reduce the CIT payable, up to the amount of this excess.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Withholding taxes on interest and royalties

A WHT rate of 15.05% applies on interest payments related to the following types of loans:

- ▶ Loans granted by foreign financial entities that are located in jurisdictions listed as cooperative for the purposes of fiscal transparency under the Argentine income tax regulations, or jurisdictions that have signed exchange-of-information agreements with Argentina (and have internal rules providing that no banking, stock market or other secrecy regulations can be applied to requests for information by the Argentine tax authorities)
- ▶ Loans for the importation of movable assets, except automobiles, if the loan is granted by the supplier of the goods

In general, the WHT rate for all other interest payments to nonresidents is 35%.

The general WHT rate for royalties is 31.5%. If certain requirements are met, a 21%/28% rate may apply to technical assistance payments, and a 28% rate may apply to certain royalties (e.g., trademarks).

The above withholding tax rates may be altered by a double tax agreement (where relevant). As noted in Section E, Argentina has entered into numerous double tax agreements.

D. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is levied on the delivery of goods and the provision of services derived from an economic activity, on the import of goods and on the import of services to be used or exploited in Argentina.

The standard VAT rate is 21%. This rate is reduced for certain taxable events (e.g., sales, manufacturing, fabrication or construction, and definitive imports of goods that qualify as "capital assets" according to a list included in the VAT law, and on interest, commissions and fees on loans granted by financial institutions, subject to certain conditions).

Exports are exempt from VAT. Taxpayers may claim a refund from the Government for VAT paid relating to exports.

The VAT that a company charges on sales or service provisions is known as "output VAT." The VAT paid by companies for goods or services purchases is called "input VAT." In general, companies deduct input VAT from output VAT every month, and pay the difference (if any). VAT returns are filed monthly.

If, in a given month, the input VAT exceeds the output VAT, the difference may be added to the input VAT for the next month. A taxpayer is not entitled to a refund unless the accumulated input VAT is related to exports.

Stamp tax

Stamp tax is a provincial tax levied on acts formalized in Argentina through public or private instruments. It is also levied on instruments formalized abroad when they produce effects in Argentina.

In general, effects are produced in Argentina when the following activities occur in its territory: acceptance, protest, execution, demand on compliance and payment. This list is not exhaustive.

Each province has its own stamp tax law, which is enforced within its territory.

The documents subject to stamp tax include agreements of any kind, deeds, acknowledged invoices, promissory notes and securities.

The general rate is approximately 1.2% but in certain cases, for example when real estate is sold, the rate may reach 4%. However, rates vary according to the jurisdiction.

Royalties

Royalties in Argentina amount to 12% of the wellhead value of the product. Royalties may be treated as an immediate deduction for CIT purposes.

Turnover tax

Provincial Governments apply a tax on the gross revenues (or turnover) of businesses. The rates are applied to the total gross receipts accrued in the calendar year. The average rate is 2.8% (for upstream companies). The rate could be higher for service companies in the oil and gas industry.

Exports are exempt for turnover tax purposes for all activities without any formal procedure.

Customs duties

Argentina is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and MERCOSUR (South American trade block).

As a member of the WTO, Argentina has adopted, among other basic principles, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Value Code, which establishes the value guidelines for importing goods.

ALADI is an intergovernmental agency that promotes the expansion of regional integration to ensure economic and social development, and its ultimate goal is to establish a common market. Its 12 member countries are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

MERCOSUR was created in 1991, when Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay signed the Treaty of Asunción. Bolivia is also in the process of being appointed as member. The basic purpose of the treaty is to integrate the four member countries through the free circulation of goods, services and productive factors, and establish a common external tariff.

Venezuela was incorporated as a full member of MERCOSUR on 31 July 2012, and is officially participating with all rights and obligations in the trade bloc. It should also be noted that Chile is associated with MERCOSUR as acceding country.

The import of goods originating in any of the member countries is subject to a 0% import duty.

Import taxes

In Argentina, importation duties are calculated on the CIF value of goods, valued using GATT valuation standards. The duty rate ranges from approximately 0% to 35%, according to the category of goods, which should be identified for duty purposes using common MERCOSUR nomenclature tariffs.

Additionally, the importation of goods is subject to the payment of a statistical rate, which is 0.5% of the CIF value of goods, with a US\$500 cap and VAT (10.5%/21%, depending on the goods). VAT payable at importation may be treated as input VAT by the importer.

The definitive importation of goods is subject to an additional income tax withholding of 6% or 11% (depending on the classification of the imported goods), VAT withholding (10% or 20%) and turnover tax withholding (2.5%).

These tax withholdings constitute an advance tax payment for registered taxpayers of tax calculated in the tax return for the relevant tax period.

Export taxes

The definitive exportation of goods is subject to an additional withholding tax when such goods are destined for a different country than the one where the foreign importer is located. Rate is 0.5% (or 2% when the invoices are issued to importers located in non-cooperative countries regarding fiscal transparency) of the FOB value of the goods.

Export duty is levied on the export of goods for consumption, i.e., the definitive extraction of merchandise from Argentina. For example, the export duty on crude oil is calculated as follows:

- ▶ If the international price of the crude oil (IP), which is defined as the Crude Oil Brent value in the month of export less US\$8, is less than US\$71 per barrel, a duty rate of 1 % must be applied
- ▶ If the international price, as defined above, is US\$71 or more, the duty rate must be calculated as follows:

$$(IP - 70)/70 \times 100$$

Finally, it should be stated that local prices are regulated by the Government.

Other taxes

Tax on debits and credits in checking accounts

The tax on debits and credits in checking accounts is assessed at a 0.6% rate, based on the amount of the credit or debit made in the checking account. The tax is determined and collected by the bank.

Additionally, 34% of the tax paid for bank account credits may be offset against income tax or MPIT returns and related tax advances.

Personal assets tax

Personal assets tax applies to individuals with assets owned as at 31 December each year. Taxpayers are required to pay the equivalent of 0.5% to 1.25% of the assets owned at that date, depending on their global tax value if it exceeds a certain amount. For resident individuals, the tax applies on assets owned in Argentina and abroad. For nonresident individuals, the tax applies only on assets owned in Argentina.

The law presumes (without admitting evidence to rebut the presumption) that shares, quotas and other participation interests held in the capital of Argentine companies by nonresident entities are indirectly owned by foreign individuals; thus, the tax applies to this type of ownership. The tax amounts to 0.5% annually (based on the equity value according to the financial statements), which must be paid by the Argentine companies as substitute taxpayers. The substitute taxpayer is consequently entitled to ask for a refund of the tax from its shareholders or partners.

Social security taxes

Salaries paid to employees are subject to employer and employee contributions to the social security system, which are withheld from the salary.

The percentages for employers and employees are 23% and 17%, respectively. The employee's tax must be withheld from the salary payment by the employer.

Additionally, if a company's main activity is commerce or the provision of services and its average sales for the last three fiscal years exceed ARS48 million (about US\$5.6 million), the social security taxes borne by the company rise from 23% to 27%.

Province of Tierra del Fuego

A special tax regime currently applies to certain activities carried out in the Province of Tierra del Fuego. Law No. 19640 establishes that individuals, undivided estates and legal persons are exempt from any national tax that may apply to events, activities or transactions performed in the Province of Tierra

del Fuego, Antarctica and the South Atlantic Islands, or that relate to assets located in Tierra del Fuego. As a result, activities carried out in the Province of Tierra del Fuego are exempt from CIT, VAT and MPIT. Furthermore, employees working in this province are exempt from income tax.

Despite this, the Argentine Government enacted Decree No. 751/2012, which abolishes all fiscal and custom benefits created by Law No. 19640 in respect of activities related to oil and gas production, including services to the oil and gas industry. Decree No. 751/2012 applies to taxable events and income accrued since 17 May 2012.

E. Other

Business presence

In Argentina, forms of “business presence” typically include corporations, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial issues, the tax consequences of each form are important considerations when setting up a business in Argentina. Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

Foreign exchange controls

The executive branch and the Central Bank have issued regulations that establish certain requirements for the transfer of funds abroad. Exporters must repatriate into Argentina the cash derived from the exports of goods and services within a specified time period. Funds derived from loans granted from abroad must be received in Argentina and remain in the country for a minimum term. In certain circumstances, 30% of the funds received from abroad must be held as foreign currency in a non-interest bearing deposit for a one-year period. Payments abroad of dividends, loans, interest and principal, and imports of goods, are allowed if certain requirements are met.

Promotion system for investments in hydrocarbon operations

In July 2013 a decree established a promotion system for hydrocarbon investors. This system is intended for those presenting investment projects of at least US\$1 billion and which would make disbursements during the first five years of the project. Under these conditions, the following benefits are provided:

- ▶ Investors will be able to trade 20% of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbon production from the project freely on the foreign market after the fifth year of the project, without having to pay export duties.
- ▶ Investors would have free availability of the foreign currency obtained as a result of the sale of this 20% (although there are certain conditions that must be satisfied), without the obligation of entering that money into Argentina.
- ▶ When domestic demand prevents the producer from exporting the above mentioned 20%, those producers will be guaranteed a local price that is equivalent to the export benchmark (without the effect of withholdings, which would not apply in this case) and they will have privileged rights to obtain freely available foreign currency on the official exchange market up to the amounts equaling the above mentioned percentage.

Treaties to avoid international double taxation

Argentina has numerous treaties in effect to avoid double international taxation and thus promote reciprocal investment and trade.

Also, Argentina has entered into specific international transportation treaties with several nations.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Australia to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), a petroleum resource rent tax (PRRT) and royalty-based taxation.

- ▶ Royalties¹ – 10% to 12.50%
- ▶ Income tax – CIT rate 30%²
- ▶ Resource rent tax – 40%³
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E, O⁴
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, RD⁵

1 Generally applicable to onshore projects, royalties paid are creditable for PRRT and deductible for income tax purposes. A 5% royalty applies for tight gas in WA.

2 From 1 July 2015, it has been proposed that the corporate tax rate be reduced to 28.5% with the introduction of Paid Parental Levy of 1.5% imposed on companies with taxable income greater than A\$5 million (levied on the excess income amount). These changes have not yet been legislated.

3 PRRT paid is deductible for income tax purposes. From 1 July 2012, PRRT also applies to all onshore projects and the North West Shelf.

4 D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs; O: PRRT expenditure uplift.

5 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely; RD: R&D incentive.

B. Fiscal regime

The current fiscal regime that applies in Australia to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of CIT, a PRRT and royalty-based taxation.

Corporate income tax

Australian resident corporations are subject to income tax on their non-exempt, worldwide taxable income at a rate of 30%. The taxable income of nonresident corporations from Australian sources that is not subject to final withholding tax or treaty protection is also subject to tax at 30%. The 30% rate applies to income from Australian oil and gas activities.

It has been proposed that the company tax rate be reduced to 28.5% for all companies, effective from 1 July 2015. A 1.5% Paid Parental Leave Scheme Levy is likely to be imposed on companies with taxable income in excess of A\$5 million (levied on the excess income amount), effective from 1 July 2015.

Australia does not apply project ring-fencing in the determination of corporate tax liability. Profits from one project can be offset against the losses from another project held by the same tax entity, and profits and losses from upstream activities can be offset against downstream activities undertaken by the same entity.

Australia has tax consolidation rules whereby different Australian resident wholly owned legal entities may form a tax-consolidated group and be treated as a single tax entity.

CIT is levied on taxable income. Taxable income equals assessable income less deductions. Assessable income includes ordinary income (determined under common law) and statutory income (amounts specifically included under the Income Tax Act). Deductions include expenses, to the extent that they are incurred in producing assessable income or are necessary in carrying on a business for the purpose of producing assessable income. However, expenditure of a capital nature is not deductible.

Deductions for expenditures of a capital nature may be available under the "Uniform Capital Allowance" regime. This would most relevantly be in the form of a capital allowance for depreciating assets (see "Capital allowances" in Section C). However, there may be deductions available for other types of capital expenditures (e.g., an expenditure incurred to establish an initial business structure is deductible over five years).

Profits from oil and gas activities undertaken by an Australian resident company in a foreign country are generally exempt from tax in Australia, provided they are undertaken through a foreign permanent establishment.

Capital gains

Gains resulting from a capital gains tax (CGT) event may be subject to income tax. Gains arising from assets acquired prior to 20 September 1985 can be disregarded subject to the satisfaction of integrity measures. Capital gains or losses are determined by deducting the cost base of an asset from the proceeds (money received or receivable, or the market value of property received or receivable). For corporate taxpayers, the net capital gain is included in taxable income and taxed at 30%.

Capital losses are deductible against capital gains and not against other taxable income. However, trading losses are deductible against net taxable capital gains, which are included in taxable income. Net capital losses can be carried forward indefinitely for use in subsequent years, subject to meeting loss carryforward rules.

Capital gains and losses on disposals of plant and depreciating assets acquired on or after 21 September 1999 are not subject to the CGT provisions. Instead, these amounts are treated as a balancing adjustment under the depreciation rules and are taxed on revenue account (see "Asset disposals" in Section G).

Oil and gas exploration permits, retention leases and production licenses acquired after 30 June 2001 are treated as depreciating assets and are therefore not subject to CGT. Permits, leases and licenses acquired on or before 30 June 2001 are subject to the CGT provisions.

For interests in foreign companies of 10% or more, capital gains or losses derived by an Australian resident company on the disposal of shares in a foreign company are reduced according to the proportion of active versus passive assets held by the foreign company. Foreign companies with at least 90% active assets can generally be disposed of free of CGT.

Australian companies with foreign branch active businesses (which will generally include oil and gas producing assets) can also generally dispose of foreign branch assets free of CGT.

Nonresidents are only subject to CGT on taxable Australian property (TAP). TAP includes:

- ▶ Taxable Australian real property (e.g., real property or land in Australia and mining, quarrying or prospecting rights if the underlying minerals or materials are in Australia).
- ▶ Indirect Australian real property, comprising a membership interest in an entity where, broadly speaking, the interest in the company is equal to or greater than 10% and more than 50% of the market value of the company's assets can be traced to taxable Australian real property. The residency of the entity is irrelevant, and this measure can apply to chains of entities (see Section G for an explanation of how this principle is applied in the context of nonresidents selling shares in an Australian company).
- ▶ Assets of a business conducted through a permanent establishment in Australia.
- ▶ Rights or options to acquire the above mentioned assets.

A 10% non-final withholding tax is proposed for nonresidents in relation to the disposal of TAP which will apply from 1 July 2016 (see Section E).

Functional currency

Provided certain requirements are met, taxpayers may elect to calculate their taxable income by reference to a functional currency (i.e., a particular foreign currency) if their accounts are solely or predominantly kept in that currency.

Transfer pricing

Australia's transfer pricing laws, amended in 2012 and 2013, ensure that international related-party transactions are priced at arm's length. They allow the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to reconstruct transactions in certain circumstances and taxpayers are required to demonstrate that the actual commercial or financial dealings between themselves and a related party accord with those which might be expected to be observed between independent parties. Where the ATO considers this not to be the case, the ATO may replace the actual commercial or financial dealings with an alternative that better reflects arm's length conditions.

The ATO issued guidance in 2014 on the new transfer pricing specific documentation requirements for compliance purposes. Although preparing transfer pricing documentation is not mandatory, failure by taxpayers to prepare documentation for income years commencing on or after 1 July 2013 results in those taxpayers not being able to establish that they have a reasonably arguable position with respect to their transfer prices in the event of an ATO audit, which automatically elevates the taxpayer to a higher penalty position.

Specific disclosures in relation to international related-party transactions and their underlying pricing (including methodologies adopted and supporting documentation maintained) are required to be made as part of the income tax return process.

Dividends

Dividends paid by Australian resident companies can be franked with a franking credit to the extent that Australian income tax has been paid by the company at the full corporate tax rate on the income being distributed.

For resident corporate shareholders, to the extent the dividend has been franked, the amount of the dividend is grossed up by the amount of the franking credit and included in assessable income. The company is then entitled to:

- ▶ A non-refundable credit or offset of an amount equal to the franking credit
- ▶ Conversion of excess franking credits into carryforward trading losses
- ▶ A franking credit in its own franking account that can in turn be distributed to its shareholders

For resident individual shareholders, the shareholder includes the dividend received plus the franking credit in assessable income. The franking credit can be offset against personal income tax assessed in that year and excess franking credits are refundable.

Dividends paid or credited to nonresident shareholders are subject to a final 30% withholding tax (the rate is generally reduced by any applicable tax treaty) on the unfranked portion of a dividend. No dividend withholding tax applies to franked dividends. Subject to double tax treaty relief, the withholding tax is deducted at source on the gross amount of the unfranked dividend.

Dividends paid by a foreign company to an Australian resident company are not taxable if the Australian company has a 10% or more participation interest in the foreign company. This exemption is limited to equity interests from 16 October 2014 and aligns with the debt/equity classification of financial instruments for income tax purposes.

Special rules exempt withholding tax on dividends on-paid to foreign residents that are classed as "conduit foreign income." This term broadly means foreign-sourced income earned by an Australian company that is not subject to tax in Australia. In practice, this means non-Australian exploration and production companies may consider using Australia as a regional holding company because:

- ▶ Profits from foreign operations (or foreign subsidiaries) can be passed through Australia free of tax.
- ▶ CGT is not generally levied on the disposal of foreign subsidiaries or branch operations (provided they hold predominantly active assets).

Tax year

A company's tax year runs from 1 July to 30 June of each year. It is, however, possible to apply for a different accounting period to align a taxpayer's tax year with the financial accounting year of the taxpayer or the worldwide corporate group.

PRRT

PRRT is a federal tax that applies to petroleum projects. PRRT has historically only applied to projects in most offshore areas under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Australia. However, from 1 July 2012 PRRT also applies to onshore projects and the North West Shelf project. PRRT does not apply to projects within the Australia-East Timor Joint Petroleum Development Area (JPDA).

PRRT returns are due annually, for each year ending 30 June, if assessable receipts are derived in relation to a petroleum project. It is not possible to change the PRRT year-end to a date other than 30 June. Quarterly installments of PRRT must also be calculated and paid.

PRRT applies to the taxable profit of a project generated from a project's upstream activities. The taxable profit is calculated by reference to the following formula:

$$\text{Taxable profit} = \text{assessable receipts} - \text{deductible expenditure}$$

Generally, because PRRT is imposed on a project basis, the deductibility of expenditure is limited to expenditures incurred for that project, and such expenditures cannot be deducted against other projects of the same entity.

However, exploration expenditures may be transferred between projects in which the taxpayer or its wholly owned group of companies has an interest, subject to certain conditions.

A liability to pay PRRT exists where assessable receipts exceed deductible expenditures. PRRT applies at the rate of 40%.

PRRT is levied before income tax and is deductible for income tax purposes. A PRRT refund received is assessable for income tax purposes. Royalties and excise paid (on onshore projects and the North West Shelf project) are granted as a credit against the PRRT liability. Taxpayers can elect to calculate their PRRT liability by reference to a functional currency other than Australian dollars, provided certain requirements are met.

Assessable receipts include most receipts, whether of a capital or revenue nature, related to a petroleum project – e.g., petroleum receipts, tolling receipts, exploration recovery receipts, property receipts, miscellaneous compensation receipts, employee amenity receipts and incidental production receipts.

For projects involving the conversion of gas to liquids, special regulations apply to govern the calculation of the deemed sale price of the sales gas at the point where it is capable of conversion. It is necessary to calculate a deemed price in terms of the regulations where no independent sale occurs at the gas-to-liquid conversion point. This price is then applied to determine the assessable receipts subject to PRRT.

Deductible expenditures include expenses of a capital or revenue nature. There are six categories of deductible expenditures:

- ▶ Exploration expenditures (e.g., exploration drilling costs, seismic survey)
- ▶ General project expenditures (e.g., development expenditures, costs of production)
- ▶ Closing-down expenditures (e.g., environmental restoration, removal of production platforms)
- ▶ Resource tax expenditure (e.g., state royalties and excise)
- ▶ Acquired exploration expenditure
- ▶ Starting base expenditure

Acquired exploration expenditure and starting base expenditure are only applicable to onshore projects and the North West Shelf which transitioned into the PRRT regime from 1 July 2012.

Certain expenditures are not deductible for PRRT purposes, for example: financing type costs (principal, interest and borrowing costs); dividends; share issue costs; repayment of equity capital; private override royalties; payments to acquire an interest in permits, retention leases and licenses; payments of income tax or good and services tax (GST); indirect administrative or accounting type costs incurred in carrying on or providing operations or facilities; and hedge expenses. A number of these items are contentious and have been subject to review and recent legislative amendments by the ATO and the federal government.

Excess deductible expenditures can be carried forward to be offset against future assessable receipts. Excess deductible expenditures are compounded using one of a number of set rates ranging from a nominal inflation rate (based on GDP) to the long-term bond rate plus 15%, depending on the nature of the expenditure (exploration, general, resource tax, acquired exploration or starting base expenditure) and the year the expenditure was incurred (or deemed to be incurred for projects transitioning to PRRT from 1 July 2012). Such a compounded expenditure is referred to as an “augmented” expenditure.

Where closing-down expenditures and any other deductible expenditures incurred in a financial year exceed the assessable receipts, a taxpayer is entitled to a refundable credit for the closing-down expenditure, which is capped at the amount of PRRT paid by the project. The amount of this credit or PRRT refund is calculated in terms of specific rules.

As discussed above, onshore projects and the North West Shelf project transitioned into the PRRT from 1 July 2012. Those projects that existed on 2 May 2010 had the option of electing a “starting base” or taking into account expenditures incurred prior to 1 July 2012.

A consolidation regime has also been introduced for PRRT purposes from 1 July 2012; however, this applies to onshore project interests only.

Royalty regimes

For onshore projects, wellhead royalties are applied and administered at the state government level. Wellhead royalties are generally levied at a rate of between 10% and 12.5%⁶ of either the gross or net wellhead value of all the petroleum produced.

Each state has its own rules for determining wellhead value; however, it generally involves subtracting deductible costs from the gross value of the petroleum recovered. Deductible costs are generally limited to the costs involved in processing, storing and transporting the petroleum recovered to the point of sale (i.e., a legislative net back).

For most offshore projects, federally administered PRRT is applied rather than a royalty and excise regime. Royalties continue to apply to onshore projects subject to the PRRT.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas. However, as discussed above, special regulations apply to the conversion of gas to liquids for PRRT purposes.

C. Capital allowances

In calculating a company's CIT liability, tax depreciation deductions may be available.

Depreciating assets include assets that have a limited effective life and that decline in value over time. Examples of depreciating assets include plant and equipment, certain items of intellectual property, in-house proprietary software and acquisitions of exploration permits, retention leases, production licenses and mining or petroleum information, after 30 June 2001.

A capital allowance equal to the decline in the value of the asset may be determined on a diminishing value (DV) or a prime cost (PC) method. The DV method allows a taxpayer to claim a higher decline in value earlier in the effective life of a depreciating asset.

The formula under each method is as follows:

- ▶ $DV = \text{base value} \times (\text{days held}/365 \text{ days}) \times 200\%/\text{asset's effective life}$
- ▶ $PC = \text{asset's cost} \times (\text{days held}/365 \text{ days}) \times 100\%/\text{asset's effective life}$.

A taxpayer can elect to use either the effective life determined by the ATO or to independently determine the effective life of an asset.

A specific concession under the capital allowance provisions relevant to the oil and gas industry is the immediate write-off available for costs incurred in undertaking exploration activities.

Prior to 14 May 2013, an immediate deduction was also available for the cost of acquiring an interest in a petroleum right where the right was first used for exploration. However, from 14 May 2013 the acquisition cost of acquiring a petroleum right which is first used for exploration will only be immediately deductible where the rights are acquired directly from an issuing authority of the Commonwealth, state or territory. The acquisition cost of petroleum rights otherwise acquired from 14 May 2013 will now be treated as follows:

- ▶ If the right is first used for exploration, the cost will be claimed as a capital allowance over the lesser of 15 years or the effective life.

6 A 5% royalty rate applies for onshore tight gas in WA.

- ▶ If the right is first used for development drilling for petroleum or for operations in the course of working a petroleum field, the cost may be claimed as a capital allowance over the effective life.

The effective life of certain tangible assets used in petroleum refining, oil and gas extraction and the gas supply industry is capped at between 15 and 20 years, with taxpayers able to self-assess a lower effective life.

Draft legislation has also been released in relation to concessional treatment for exploration “farm-in, farm-out” arrangements and interest realignments (see “Farm-in and farm-out” in Section G). The changes are proposed to apply from 14 May 2013 and provide tax relief for certain arrangements that were adversely impacted by the changes to the exploration deductions discussed above.

D. Incentives

Exploration

Expenditure on exploration is immediately deductible for income tax purposes.

Tax losses

Income tax losses can be carried forward indefinitely; however, the utilization of a carried-forward loss is subject to meeting detailed “continuity of ownership” requirements (broadly, continuity in more than 50% of the voting, dividend and capital rights traced to ultimate shareholders) or “same business test” requirements.

The federal government recently repealed the company tax-loss carryback rules. These rules previously allowed tax losses up to A\$1 million to be carried back up to two years. As a result of the repeal, the loss carryback will effectively be limited to tax losses incurred in the 30 June 2013 income year and tax losses incurred in subsequent income years will no longer be able to be carried back to previous income years.

Research and development (R&D)

The R&D Tax Incentive provides a non-refundable 40% tax credit or offset to eligible entities with a turnover greater than A\$20 million that perform R&D activities. The 40% tax credit can be used to offset the company’s income tax liability to reduce the amount of tax payable. If the company is in a tax loss position, the tax credit can be carried forward indefinitely, subject to ownership and same business requirement tests.

Eligible R&D activities are categorized as either “core” or “supporting” R&D activities. Generally, only R&D activities undertaken in Australia qualify for the R&D Tax Incentive with some limited scope to claim overseas R&D activities that have a scientific link to Australia. Core R&D activities are broadly defined as experimental activities whose outcome cannot be known in advance and which generate new knowledge. Supporting activities may also qualify if they are undertaken for the purpose of directly supporting the core R&D activities (certain specific exclusions can apply).

Smaller companies (under A\$20 million group turnover) may obtain a refundable 45% tax credit.

It has been proposed that from 1 July 2014 there will be an exclusion from the R&D Tax Incentive, whereby companies with aggregate assessable income of \$A20 billion or more would no longer be eligible to access the 40% non-refundable tax offset. However, at the time of writing, this proposal had not yet been passed into law.

It is also proposed that the various R&D Tax Incentive rates will be reduced by 1.5 percentage points from 1 July 2014. The higher (refundable) tax offset rate will be reduced from 45% to 43.5% and the lower (non-refundable) tax offset rate will be reduced from 40% to 38.5%. The reduction in the R&D tax offset rates is related to the proposed cut to the company tax rate from 1 July 2015. However at the time of writing, this proposal has not yet been passed into law.

Eligible expenditure is defined as expenditure incurred by an eligible company during an income year, including contracted expenditure, salary expenditure and other expenditure directly related to R&D.

Eligible companies are companies incorporated in Australia or foreign branches that have a permanent establishment in Australia. An entity whose entire income is exempt from income tax is not an eligible entity.

To claim the R&D Tax Incentive, claimants must complete an annual registration with AusIndustry (the government body which looks after the technical aspects of the R&D tax system) and must retain appropriate substantiation of its R&D activities. The annual registration needs to be lodged within 10 months of the income tax year end.

Foreign-owned R&D

Where intellectual property (IP) formally resides in a foreign jurisdiction of an Australian R&D entity (e.g., an overseas parent company), the Australia-based R&D activities may qualify for the 40% R&D Tax Incentive provided that the R&D contract arrangement is undertaken with a country with which Australia has a double tax treaty.

E. Withholding taxes

Interest, dividends and royalties

Interest, dividends and royalties paid to nonresidents are subject to a final Australian withholding tax of 10%, 30% (on the unfranked portion of the dividend (see Section B for a discussion on dividends)) and 30%, respectively, unless altered by a relevant double tax treaty.

Australia has a comprehensive tax treaty network that can significantly reduce these taxes. In addition, some recent double tax agreements specifically exclude payments for the use of substantial equipment from the definition of royalty.

Natural resource payments made to nonresidents are subject to a non-final withholding tax. Natural resource payments are payments calculated by reference to the value or quantity of natural resources produced or recovered in Australia. Entities receiving natural resource payments are required to lodge an income tax return in Australia, which includes the non-final withholding tax paid.

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax does not generally apply in Australia.

Foreign resident withholding tax and foreign contractor withholding tax

Foreign resident withholding tax and foreign contractor withholding tax (FRWT) of 5% must be withheld from payments made to foreign residents for certain "works" and for related activities in connection with such works in Australia.

Works include the construction, installation and upgrade of buildings, plant and fixtures, and include such works where they relate to natural gas field development and oilfield development and pipelines. Related activities cover associated activities, such as administration, installation, supply of equipment and project management.

A variation of, or exemption from, the FRWT rate of 5% may be sought from the ATO in certain circumstances: for example, if the relevant income is not assessable in Australia, or if the rate of 5% is excessive in comparison to the amount of tax that would ultimately be payable or if the foreign entity has an established history of tax compliance in Australia.

Examples of payments that are not subject to FRWT include:

- ▶ Payments that constitute a royalty (a royalty withholding tax may apply depending on the circumstances)
 - ▶ Payments for activities relating purely to exploration-related activities
 - ▶ Payments for services performed entirely outside of Australia
-

Withholding tax from clients of nonresidents doing business in Australia without an Australian Business Number

An entity is required to withhold 49%⁷ from a payment it makes to another entity if the payment is for a supply made in the course or furtherance of an enterprise carried on in Australia and the other entity does not correctly quote its Australian Business Number (ABN).

The 49% need not be withheld if the ABN is correctly quoted or if the taxpayer has evidence that the payment is being made to a nonresident for a supply that is not made in carrying on an enterprise in Australia, or if it will be exempt from income tax.

Withholding tax on transactions involving taxable Australian property (TAP)

On 6 November 2013 the federal government announced that it would proceed with a 10% non-final withholding tax on the disposal, by foreign residents, of certain TAP assets (see "Capital gains" in Section B for assets which are TAP). The 10% withholding tax is on the proceeds payable in relation to the sale (not the profit from the sale).

The proposed measure is expected to apply to disposals from 1 July 2016. Residential property transactions under A\$2.5 million are proposed to be exempt.

F. Financing considerations

Australia's income tax system contains significant rules regarding the classification of debt and equity instruments and, depending on the level of funding, rules that have an impact on the deductibility of interest.

Thin capitalization measures apply to the total debt of Australian operations of multinational groups (including foreign and domestic related-party debt and third-party debt). The measures apply to the following entities:

- ▶ Australian entities that are under foreign control.
- ▶ Foreign entities that either invest directly into Australia or operate a business through an Australian branch.
- ▶ Australian entities that control foreign entities or operate a business through an overseas branch (outward investors).

With effect from 1 July 2014, new thin capitalization rules provide for a safe harbor based on 60% (75% prior to 1 July 2014) of assets less non-debt liabilities (+/- some adjustments). This largely approximates to a debt-to-equity ratio of 1.5:1. Interest deductions are denied for interest payments on the portion of the company's debt that exceeds the safe-harbor ratio. The thin capitalization rules do not apply to an entity whose debt deductions (and those of its associates) do not exceed A\$2 million (A\$250,000 prior to 1 July 2014). Separate rules apply to financial institutions.

If the entity's debt-to-equity ratio exceeds the safe-harbor ratio, interest is still fully deductible, provided the entity can satisfy the arm's length test. Under this test, the company must establish that the level of debt could be obtained under arm's length arrangements, taking into account industry practice and specific assumptions required under the tax law. The arm's-length debt test is currently under review by Australia's Board of Taxation.

The maximum allowable debt of an Australian entity may alternatively be determined by reference to a worldwide gearing test of the entity and its associates. Previously this test was generally only available to outward investors, but effective from 1 July 2014, it was extended also to inward entities. The rate for the worldwide gearing test was reduced to 100% down from 120%, effective from 1 July 2014.

⁷ No ABN withholding tax has temporarily increased from 46.5% to 49%. The rate of 49% is in effect from 1 July 2014 until 30 June 2017.

The debt/equity classification of financial instruments for tax purposes is subject to prescribed tests under law. These measures focus on economic substance rather than on legal form. If the debt test is satisfied, a financing arrangement is generally treated as debt even if the arrangement could also satisfy the test for equity.

The debt/equity measures are relevant to the taxation of dividends (including imputation requirements), the characterization of payments to and from nonresident entities, the thin capitalization regime, and the dividend and interest withholding taxes and related measures.

Australia does not currently impose interest quarantining. Generally, corporate-level debt deductions may be used to offset all assessable income derived by the borrowing entity, regardless of the source or type of assessable income. However, interest deductions may be disallowed if the related borrowing is directly related to the derivation of certain exempt income (e.g., foreign income derived by a foreign branch).

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The disposal of a petroleum permit, retention lease or production license acquired on or after 1 July 2001 may result in an assessable or deductible balancing adjustment under the Uniform Capital Allowance provisions.

Any gain is assessable and included in taxable income – not just the depreciation previously claimed (i.e., sales proceeds less the written-down tax value). If the sales proceeds are less than the written-down tax value, a deductible balancing adjustment is allowed.

The transfer or disposal of an interest in a petroleum permit does not in itself trigger PRRT consequences: a transferor is not subject to PRRT on any consideration received and the transferee is not entitled to any deduction for PRRT purposes for any consideration given. However, generally the purchaser inherits the vendor's PRRT profile, including undeducted expenditure.

Farm-in and farm-out

It is common in the Australian oil and gas industry for entities to enter into farm-in arrangements.

Under an immediate transfer arrangement, the farmor will typically transfer a percentage interest in a permit or license on entry into the agreement, in return for a commitment from the farmee to undertake exploration or other commitments for a period of time or up to a specified amount. A cash payment may also be made to the farmor by the farmee on entering into the arrangement.

Under a deferred transfer arrangement, the farmor will typically transfer a percentage interest in a permit or license after the farmee meets its commitment to undertake exploration (or other commitments) for a period of time or up to a specified amount. A cash payment may also be made to the farmor by the farmee on entering into the arrangement.

The income tax implications for a farmee who enters into a farm-in arrangement on or after 1 July 2001 are determined under the Uniform Capital Allowance provisions. A farmee is deemed to hold a depreciating asset, being the interest in the petroleum permit, from the time the interest is acquired (this can be up front or deferred, depending on the terms of the particular arrangement).

The income tax consequences of farm-in and farm-out arrangements can be complex. The ATO has previously expressed its views in two tax rulings (MT 2012/1 and MT 2012/2). However, it should be noted that the government has announced proposed concessions that will apply from 14 May 2013 to provide tax relief for exploration "farm-in, farm-out" arrangements and interest realignments which were adversely impacted by the enacted changes to immediate deductions for exploration (refer to Section C above). The ATO may revise MT2012/1 and MT2012/2 following these changes.

Acquisition costs of a farmee are not deductible for PRRT purposes and, similarly, consideration received by a farmor for a farm-out is not assessable for PRRT purposes.

Selling shares in a company (consequences for resident and nonresident shareholders)

A share disposal is generally subject to the CGT regime. Nonresidents who dispose of shares in an Australian or nonresident company are subject to tax in Australia only if the shares are considered to be taxable Australian property (TAP) (see Section B for a discussion of CGT and TAP and Section E for a discussion on withholding tax). Entities that hold, directly or indirectly (via interposed subsidiaries), assets comprising primarily Australian oil and gas exploration permits and production licenses are generally classed as having TAP. However, exceptions to this provision may apply, depending on the company's asset mix.

H. Indirect taxes

Goods and services tax

Introduction

A goods and service tax (GST) regime applies in Australia. Most transactions that take place within Australia (and some from offshore) are subject to GST. This tax, which was introduced in July 2000, is a multi-staged value-added tax (VAT) that applies at each point of the supply chain. It is applied at a standard rate of 10%, with GST-free status (zero rated) for qualifying exported products and services and some other specified transactions; and input taxed treatment (exempt) generally applies to financial services and residential housing.

Both Australian resident and nonresident entities engaged in the oil and gas industry may be subject to GST on services and products supplied. Most commercial transactions have a GST impact, and this should be considered prior to entering into any negotiation or arrangement.

Imports and exports

The importation of goods into Australia is subject to GST. GST is typically payable at the time of importation in a similar manner to customs import duty (see below). Goods may not be released by Customs authorities until such time as GST and import duty have been paid.

Under certain conditions, importers may register to participate in the GST deferral scheme. This scheme allows the payment of GST on imports to be deferred and reconciled upon lodgment of a Business Activity Statement (BAS). As entities would typically claim input tax credits for the GST payable on imported goods, the deferral scheme facilitates this process and alleviates the cash flow impacts that may arise where duty is paid upon the Customs clearance of goods. GST is calculated on the value of the taxable importation, which includes the value of the goods, the import duty, and the international transport and insurance.

If goods are exported, GST-free status may be obtained. To qualify as GST-free, goods must generally be exported within 60 days of the earlier of consideration being provided or a tax invoice being issued, although this period can be extended by the ATO in certain circumstances. Evidence that indicates the goods have left Australia within the required time frame must be retained by exporters.

Registration

The compulsory GST registration threshold is A\$75,000; however, entities below this threshold can choose to register voluntarily for GST.

Nonresident entities are able to register for GST, and GST will apply to taxable supplies made by them. A nonresident may appoint a tax or fiscal representative in Australia (but is not required to do so).

A registered entity may recover input tax on “creditable acquisitions,” that is, the GST charged on goods and services that a registered entity acquires for creditable purposes. Input tax is generally recovered by being offset against the GST payable on taxable supplies.

There are both voluntary and compulsory reverse-charge provisions that may apply to both resident and nonresident entities.

Disposal of assets or shares

The disposal of an asset, such as a petroleum permit, retention lease or production license, will ordinarily be a taxable supply upon which GST is payable. However, an entity can usually claim input tax credits for acquisitions made in connection with the sale and/or acquisition of the asset(s). Such transactions can also be treated as GST-free going concerns in qualifying circumstances.

A share disposal is ordinarily treated as an input-taxed supply under the Australian GST regime. Thus, although no GST will be payable on the sale of the shares, an entity may be restricted from claiming input tax credits on acquisitions made in connection with the disposal or acquisition of those shares.

Farm-in and farm-out

The GST consequences of farm-in and farm-out arrangements can also be complex and MT 2012/1 and MT 2012/2 (See “farm in” discussion in Section G above) include the ATO’s views on the GST interactions.

Various supplies are made by the farmor and farmee and depend on whether the arrangement is an immediate or deferred transfer farm-in and farm-out. Once these supplies have been identified by all parties, the supplies will be either taxable or GST-free (as a going concern).

Common GST related issues arising in farm-in and farm-out arrangements include:

- ▶ Economic mismatch of supplies between the farmor and farmee (on the basis of GST-free and taxable supplies being made by the parties)
- ▶ Non-cash consideration
- ▶ The valuation of supplies involving non-cash consideration
- ▶ GST registration of the parties involved in the arrangement

Import duties

All goods imported into Australia are subject to classification and the potential to attract customs import duty. Rates of duty align specifically with tariff classifications with rates for goods other than excise-equivalent goods generally attracting duty at the rate of either 0% or 5%.

The rate of duty is applied to the customs value of the goods, which generally reflects a FOB value. Where duty is payable, opportunities may exist to reduce or remove the tariff. Preferential treatment may be secured where goods originate from countries with which Australia has a trade agreement, or concessional treatment may be secured where substitutable goods are not produced by Australian manufacturers. Importers should assess import duty implications and opportunities to benefit from treatments well before goods are exported to Australia from the country of origin.

Excise equivalent goods (EEGs), such as petroleum products, alcohol and tobacco, attract excise-equivalent customs duty upon importation into Australia. That is, the import duty reflects the excise duty payable on such goods when produced in Australia. Import duty for EEGs is calculated on quantity rather than value. For example, most tariff classifications for petroleum products align with rates of duty that are calculated on a “cents per liter” basis.

An import declaration is required for all goods being imported into Australia, and all goods arriving in Australia from overseas are subject to customs controls.

Fuel tax credits

Entities that import fuel into Australia or purchase it domestically for use in a business activity may be eligible to claim fuel tax credits (FTCs). FTCs are a rebate of the fuel tax component of the overall price paid for fuel, being either the excise duty or the excise-equivalent import duty. FTC entitlements are claimed through the Business Activity Statement (BAS), and entities (or agents) seeking to make a claim must be registered with the ATO for both GST and FTCs.

Certain criteria must be met before claiming FTCs, including establishing the eligibility of the fuel, the eligibility of the business activity in which fuel will be, or has been consumed, and the rights of the claimant to the entitlement. Importantly, a claim for FTCs can be made based on intended use. Where actual use of the fuel differs from the intended use, amendments are made in subsequent BAS submissions.

Australia has recently re-introduced indexation in relation to fuel tax. As such the rate of fuel tax will be adjusted on a biannual basis, in February and August. The fuel tax rate (as at January 2015) is A\$0.386 per liter for most liquid fuels, including diesel and petrol. FTCs are claimed at the rate applicable at the time fuel is purchased, imported, or otherwise acquired.

Export duties

There are no duties applied to goods exported from Australia.

Excise duty

Excise duty is applied to some goods manufactured in Australia, including petroleum products, alcohol and tobacco. In the case of petroleum, the rate of excise depends on annual production rates, the reservoir date of discovery and the date production commenced. Excise does not generally apply to exported oil or condensate sourced from most offshore areas. Excise continues to apply to those projects that are subject to the expanded PRRT; however, that excise is creditable against the project PRRT liability.

Excise duty on most refined petroleum products is (as at January 2015) A\$0.386 per liter and subject to biannual indexation. It is not generally levied on goods bound for export and, where already paid on exported goods, it may be recovered through an application for drawback or, where the exported product is fuel, through a claim for fuel tax credits.

Stamp duty and registration fees

Stamp duty is a state- and territory-based tax that is generally imposed on specified transactions. Each state and territory has its own stamp duty legislation, which can vary in relation to the types of instrument or transaction on which duty is imposed, the rates of duty, the parties liable to pay duty and the timing for lodgment and payment of duty.

The stamp duty payable on the conveyance or transfer of dutiable property is based on the higher of the consideration paid or the market value of the dutiable property being transferred at rates that range from 4.5% up to 5.75%. The definition of dutiable property varies in each Australian jurisdiction, but generally includes land, certain rights in respect of dutiable property and business assets. Moveable items of plant and equipment may also be subject to duty if transferred with other dutiable items of property. In Western Australia, the definition of "land" also includes a pipeline or a pipeline license that is administered or issued under the Petroleum Pipelines Act 1969 (WA). Queensland and South Australia are the only Australian jurisdictions that treat certain petroleum titles as dutiable items of property (not Commonwealth petroleum titles situated in Commonwealth waters).

New South Wales and South Australia also impose stamp duty at a rate of 0.60% on transfers of marketable securities in unlisted companies or unit trusts, if the entities are incorporated or formed in these states.

Landholder duty may also be payable on the acquisition of a 50% or greater interest in a private company or unit trust, or the acquisition of a 90% or greater interest in a listed company or unit trust, if the entity directly or indirectly (i.e., through its subsidiaries) holds an interest in "land" situated within an Australian jurisdiction and the value of the land exceeds certain value thresholds. The value thresholds differ between the Australian jurisdictions. We note however that the acquisition of a listed company would not have any stamp duty implications in Tasmania.

Landholder duty is payable at rates that range from 4.5% up to 5.75% based on the gross value of the Australian land held by the entity and its subsidiaries, but only to the extent of the interest that has been acquired. In certain Australian jurisdictions such as Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia, the landholder duty payable would be based on the gross value of the Australian land and chattels (moveable items of plant and equipment) held by the company and its subsidiaries.

In New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland, there is a stamp duty concession for the acquisition of a 100% interest in a listed landholder. The landholder duty payable in these jurisdictions is limited to 10% of the total duty that would otherwise be payable.

Treatment of dealings in petroleum titles

The stamp duty treatment of dealings in Australian onshore petroleum titles (i.e., petroleum titles situated within an Australian state or territory or within three nautical miles of the coastline of the state or territory) varies among the Australian states and territories.

Transfers or dealings in onshore petroleum titles may be subject to stamp duty or a registration fee, depending on the relevant jurisdiction. For example, Western Australia exempts from stamp duty any transfers or dealings in onshore petroleum titles. However, Western Australia imposes a registration fee on the transfer or dealings in onshore petroleum titles, calculated at 1.5% of the greater of the consideration or the value of the petroleum title. Western Australia is the only Australian jurisdiction that imposes a registration fee on the transfer or dealings in onshore petroleum titles, while Queensland and South Australia are the only Australian jurisdictions that impose stamp duty on the transfer or dealings in onshore petroleum titles.

Transfers or dealings in offshore petroleum tenements (i.e., tenements situated outside three nautical miles of the coastline of a state or territory, but within Australian Commonwealth waters), are subject to a fixed application fee. The application fee is intended to reflect the administrative costs incurred in undertaking the assessment of the applications by the National Offshore Petroleum Title Administrator (NOPTA).

The application fee for the approval of a transfer of an offshore petroleum title (i.e., a petroleum title situated in Commonwealth waters) is (as at January 2015) set at A\$7,180, whereas the new application fee for the approval of a dealing relating to an offshore petroleum title is A\$2,950.

Employment taxes

Employers have an obligation to comply with various employment taxes, including Pay-As-You-Go-Withholding from payments of remuneration to residents of Australia, or for work done in Australia by nonresidents. Other significant taxes include fringe benefits tax payable on non-cash employee benefits at a rate of 47% (49% from 1 April 2015) and payroll taxes (paid by employers) of 4.75% to 6.85%, where the rates vary by state.

Although not a tax in itself, it is important to note that a statutory contribution of 9.5% applies to superannuation. This contribution rate will remain at 9.5% until 30 June 2021 and then increase by 0.5 percentage points each year until it reaches 12%. Australia also has compulsory workers' insurance requirements.

I. Other

Joint petroleum development area

In general, the taxing rights for operations in the JPDA are split between Timor-Leste and Australia on a 90:10 basis (i.e., 90% is taxed in Timor-Leste, and 10% in Australia). This guide does not deal with the tax implications of operating in the JPDA.

Foreign Investment Review Board

The federal government monitors investment into Australia through the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB). Government policy generally is to encourage foreign investment, although there are strict controls regarding the purchase of real estate. There are notification and approval requirements depending on the level of investment and the assets in which the investment is being made.

Acquisitions of greater than 15% of a company's share capital are also subject to review.

Domestic production requirements

There has been significant discussion regarding minimum domestic production requirements, particularly in the context of domestic gas. This landscape is continuing to evolve, and companies that seek to invest in Australia should be aware of the possibility that a minimum domestic production commitment may be imposed, depending on the location of the project.

Foreign exchange controls

There are no active exchange control restrictions on the flow of funds. However, the Financial Transaction Reports Act of 1988 requires each currency transaction involving the physical transfer of notes and coins in excess of A\$10,000 (or the foreign currency equivalent) between Australian residents and overseas residents, as well as all international telegraphic and electronic fund transfers, to be reported to the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC). This information is then available to the ATO, Federal Police, Australian Customs Service and other prescribed law enforcement agencies.

Business presence

Forms of "business presence" in Australia that are typical for the petroleum industry include companies, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial considerations, the tax consequences of each business are important to consider when setting up a business in Australia. Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

Visas

Australia has very strict immigration rules, and it is critical that anyone coming to Australia, whether short term or long term, enters and remains in Australia holding the correct visa. The appropriate visa will depend on the nature, location and duration of the proposed work and whether an employment relationship exists between the foreign worker and an Australian entity. In the oil and gas context, special consideration must also be given to the type of offshore resources installation or vessel upon which the work will be performed. Sanctions may be imposed on employers and foreign workers may have their visas cancelled where there has been inadequate compliance with Australian immigration rules.

Carbon pricing mechanism

On 17 July 2014, the carbon pricing legislation implementing the carbon pricing mechanism was repealed with effect from 1 July 2014. Australia's carbon pricing mechanism previously applied from 1 July 2012. Liable businesses and other entities must pay all carbon tax liabilities incurred up to 30 June 2014 under the carbon pricing mechanism, the fuel tax credits system, excise or excise-equivalent customs duties, or synthetic greenhouse gas levies by 2 February 2015.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession
 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Azerbaijan's fiscal regime consists of a combination of production sharing agreements (PSAs) and host government agreements (HGAs). In addition, the Law on Application of Special Economic Regime for Export-Oriented Oil and Gas Operations (the Law) came into force on 17 April 2009. The Law applies to export-oriented oil and gas operations carried out by contractors, as well as by subcontractors, as defined in the Law. The Law will be effective for 15 years but may be further extended once this period is over.

- ▶ Bonuses – Negotiated bonuses and acreage fees are applicable to PSAs.
- ▶ PSA – PSA partner contractors are subject to a profit tax (at a negotiated rate that varies from 20% to 32%) and social fund contributions for local employees. Other potential major payments include bonuses, acreage fees and social fund payments. The PSA partners are exempt from all other taxes, including royalties.

PSA subcontractors are deemed to earn taxable profit of 20% to 25%, depending on the particular PSA, of the payments received for transactions performed in Azerbaijan. These subcontractors are subject to tax on such profit at the rate of 20% to 32%, resulting in a total withholding tax (WHT) obligation at rates between 5% and 8%. Subcontractors are also liable for social fund payments.
- ▶ HGA – Participants are only subject to a profit tax of 27% and social fund contributions for local employees. The participants are exempt from all other taxes. Registered contractors (subcontractors in common terms) are exempt from all types of taxes, except for social fund payments.
- ▶ Income tax rate – Tax rates range from 14% (up to AZN2,500) to 25% (above AZN2,500) – the same as in domestic legislation.
- ▶ Capital allowances – Capital allowances are calculated in accordance with the tax rules prescribed under applicable tax regime of PSAs, HGAs and in accordance with the Tax Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan (TCA) for contractors and subcontractors falling under the Law.

B. Fiscal regime

Azerbaijan's fiscal regime consists of a combination of PSAs and HGAs. To become entitled to a special economic regime introduced by the Law, contractors and subcontractors, except for foreign subcontractors that do not

have a permanent taxable presence (i.e., a permanent establishment) in Azerbaijan, should obtain a special certificate that will be issued for each contract separately. The certificate will be granted by the respective state authority, generally for a period specified in the contractor's or subcontractor's contract (or an alternative document). However, the period may not be longer than the validity period of the Law. The legislation in Azerbaijan applies to ownership of all petroleum resources existing in a natural state in underground and surface strata, including the portion of the Caspian Sea within the jurisdiction of the state that vested with Azerbaijan.

The State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) has been given the authority to control and manage the country's petroleum resources. Several oil consortia, with participation from a number of major oil companies, are engaged in exploration and production activities in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea and in onshore exploration. All consortia were created on the basis of PSAs.

Currently, HGAs apply to oil and gas pipeline projects. The Main Export Pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) (MEP) and the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) activities are governed by the respective HGAs.

There are substantial differences between the general tax legislation and the tax regimes of the existing PSAs, HGAs and the Law. Generally speaking, PSAs, HGAs and the Law have negotiated taxes that provide for substantial relief to investors, while those operating outside the above mentioned agreements must pay the whole range of standard Azerbaijani taxes under the statutory tax regime.

Production sharing agreements

A range of taxes, duties and bonuses are applicable to PSAs. The taxation of contractor parties and subcontractors are considered separately below.

Contractor parties

Oil and gas contractors (PSA partners) are subject to profit tax and social fund contributions for local employees. Other major payments include bonuses and acreage fees. The PSA parties are exempt from all other taxes, including royalties.

Profit tax

Under the PSAs currently in effect, contractor parties carrying out business in Azerbaijan in connection with petroleum operations are subject to tax on profit. The profit tax rate is negotiated and varies from 20% to 32%.

Taxable income is calculated in accordance with internationally accepted accounting practices in the petroleum industry, rather than in accordance with Azerbaijani statutory accounting procedures. In calculating taxable income, contractors get a capital allowance for capital expenditure based on the tax depreciation rules prescribed by PSAs.

Losses incurred by contractor parties to PSAs during the period of exploration are deductible once production starts. Loss carryforward provisions (including how long losses may be carried forward) vary between different PSAs.

Activities that are not connected with hydrocarbon activities in Azerbaijan or relevant contract areas are deemed to be outside the scope of PSAs and the related protocol tax regimes. If a company is engaged in both hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon activities, separate accounting books in accordance with statutory rules must be maintained to reflect income and losses generated from the non-hydrocarbon activities. The operating companies under the PSAs are not taxable and allocate income and expenses to contractor parties in proportion to their participating interests in the PSAs.

Social charges

Under the PSAs, contractor parties are permitted to employ personnel as required for the purpose of carrying out their operations. There may be

requirements to give preferences, as far as they are consistent with the operations, to employ citizens of Azerbaijan within the framework of the overall quotas.

Contractor parties are required to make contributions to the Social Insurance Fund of 22% of the gross local payroll. These contributions are made at the expense of the employer. A further 3% of employees' salaries is withheld from local employees and paid to the same Social Insurance Fund.

Bonus payment and acreage fees

The terms of the bonus payment and the size of the bonus are negotiated and vary for each individual PSA. Existing PSAs call for the bonus to be paid in three installments, connected with the stages of the agreements.

Starting with the second consortium agreement signed, an acreage fee is payable for the contract area during the exploration period and an additional exploration period. For some PSAs, the range of the acreage fee is US\$1,200 to US\$2,000 per square kilometer (km²).

Royalties

Under the existing PSAs, the contractor parties are not subject to royalties for extraction of hydrocarbon resources in Azerbaijan.

Subcontractors

Both Azerbaijani legal entities and foreign legal entities are treated as subcontractors to PSAs. Azerbaijani legal entities are subject to tax in accordance with the general taxation rules. Registered foreign subcontractors, on the other hand, are generally subject to WHT (as described below), as well as social fund payments in the same manner as contracting parties. The sale of goods or equipment to which title is transferred outside Azerbaijan, and the provision of services outside of Azerbaijan, should not be subject to the WHT.

Withholding taxes

Foreign subcontractors that carry on business in Azerbaijan in connection with hydrocarbon activities are deemed to earn a taxable profit of 20% to 25% of the payments received in respect of transactions performed in Azerbaijan (depending on the particular PSA). These subcontractors are subject to tax on profits at a rate of 20% to 32%, resulting in a total WHT obligation at the rates of 5%, 6.25%, 7.5% or 8% (depending on the particular PSA) of the gross contractual payment.

WHT on foreign subcontractors that sell goods should only apply to a mark-up charged on such goods. Under certain PSAs, where no mark-up is indicated, the tax may apply to the gross sales price.

However, under some of the existing PSAs, certain foreign subcontractors are subject to profit taxation under the domestic law. Such foreign subcontractors include those working after approval of the development and production stage of the agreement or those selling goods without indicating a mark-up on their sales.

Social charges

Similar to the contracting parties, subcontractors are allowed to employ personnel as required for the purpose of carrying out their operations. There may be requirements to give preferences, as far as they are consistent with the operations, to employ citizens of Azerbaijan within the framework of the overall quotas.

Subcontractors are required to make contributions to the Social Insurance Fund of 22% of the gross local payroll. These contributions are made at the expense of the employer. A further 3% of employees' salaries is withheld from local employees and paid to the same Social Insurance Fund.

Other benefits

Export and import regulations

Each contractor or subcontractor is entitled to import and re-export (free of any taxes) machinery, equipment, fixed assets, goods, works and services for use in petroleum operations. However, customs processing fees are payable. A customs duty exemption certificate must be obtained from the customs authority in connection with the PSA.

VAT

Contractors and subcontractors are “exempt with credit” from value-added tax (VAT) (i.e., a 0% rate is applied) in connection with petroleum activities on all:

- ▶ Goods, works and services supplied to or by them
- ▶ Exports of petroleum
- ▶ Imports of goods, works and services

Any supplier of works and services (including subcontractors) to each contractor may treat these supplies as being exempt from VAT with credit. A VAT exemption certificate must be obtained from the relevant tax authority in connection with the PSA.

Tax residency rules for individuals

Local employees are generally subject to taxation under the Azerbaijani domestic tax regime, whereas most existing PSAs separately address the issue of expatriate taxation.

Normally, an expatriate employee of an operating company, a contractor party, an affiliate of a contractor party or a foreign subcontractor who is present in Azerbaijan on “ordinary business” becomes a tax resident in the event that they spend more than 30 consecutive days in Azerbaijan in a calendar year. Income earned after the 30th day is taxable in Azerbaijan. Individuals spending fewer than 30 consecutive days but more than 90 cumulative days in Azerbaijan in a calendar year are also treated as tax residents, and income earned after the 90th day becomes taxable. Rotating employees and foreign employees who have a primary place of employment in Azerbaijan qualify as tax residents if they spend more than 90 cumulative days in Azerbaijan in a calendar year, and they are taxable from the first day of their presence in Azerbaijan.

Penalties

In general, penalties applicable to contractor parties and subcontractors under the PSAs tend to be less strict than those provided for by the general domestic legislation. One of the typical penalties applied is interest for late tax payments at the rate of London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) plus 4%.

Host government agreements

Currently, HGAs apply exclusively to oil and gas pipeline projects. MEP and SCP activities are governed by the respective HGAs. A range of taxes and duties is applicable to HGAs. The taxation of participants and contractors is considered separately below and on the next page.

Participants

Participants (the HGAs' partners) are subject to a profit tax at 27% and social fund contributions for local employees. The participants are exempt from all other taxes.

Profit tax

Profit tax may apply to all participants (i.e., companies investing in the pipelines), although actual or deemed tax treaty relief may protect the parties from taxation in Azerbaijan. Profit tax applies individually to each participant.

The profit tax rate is fixed at 27% in the Azerbaijan HGA and is based on the prevailing statutory rate in effect on the date of signature of the agreement.

Tax depreciation is available for expenditure of a capital nature. In addition, tax losses of a MEP and SCP participant may be carried forward without limitation to the subsequent years of assessment.

Social charges

Participants (HGA partners) are allowed to employ personnel as required for the purpose of carrying out their operations. Participants are required to make contributions to the Social Insurance Fund of 22% of the gross local payroll. These contributions are made at the expense of the employer. A further 3% of the employees' salaries is withheld from local employees and paid to the same Social Insurance Fund.

Both Azerbaijani legal entities and foreign legal entities are considered as contractors (subcontractors) to the HGAs. Registered contractors are allowed to employ personnel as required for the purpose of carrying out their operations, and they are exempt from all types of taxes except for social fund payments (which apply in a similar manner as for the participants).

Contractors are required to make contributions to the Social Insurance Fund of 22% of the gross local payroll. These contributions are made at the expense of the employer. A further 3% of the employees' salaries is withheld from local employees and paid to the same Social Insurance Fund.

Other benefits

Export and import regulations

The HGAs allow for import and re-export (free of any taxes) of machinery, equipment, fixed assets, goods, works and services for use in HGAs' operations. However, customs processing fees are payable. A customs duty exemption certificate must be obtained from the customs authority in connection with the HGAs' operations.

VAT

Participants and contractors are exempt with credit from VAT (i.e., a 0% rate is applied) in connection with the HGAs' activities on all:

- ▶ Goods, works and services supplied to or by them
- ▶ Imports of goods, works and services

Additionally, any supplier of works and services (including contractors) to each participant may treat those supplies as being exempt with credit from VAT. A VAT exemption certificate must be obtained from the relevant tax authority in connection with the HGA operations.

Tax residency rules for individuals

Special residency rules apply for expatriate employees of the participants and contractors. Specifically, a foreign individual who spends more than 182 days in a calendar year in Azerbaijan is considered to be a tax resident. Residents are liable to pay personal income tax exclusively on income received from Azerbaijani sources.

The Law

The privileges set out next are envisaged under the special economic regime established by the Law.

Profit tax

Contractors have an option of paying profit tax at 5% of total payments (without any expense deductions) received from the qualifying activity. Alternatively, contractors may choose to be subject to profit tax on such activity under the basic rules established by the TCA. If a contractor chooses to pay profit tax specified by the TCA, any future increases in the tax rate will have no effect on the contractor because it will continue paying the tax at the rate valid on the date when the aforesaid certificate was issued.

All payments made to foreign subcontractors (legal entities only) by contractors or other subcontractors will be subject to WHT at a rate of 5%. Payments made to foreign subcontractors that are physical persons are subject to WHT in the manner specified by the TCA. Local subcontractors (both legal entities and individuals) shall also pay their respective taxes in accordance with the TCA.

Withholding tax

No WHT applies to the payments made by contractors and foreign subcontractors for dividends and interests.

Nonresident subcontractors are not subject to the net profit repatriation tax at the source of payment by their permanent establishments.

VAT

Goods (works and services) exported by contractors from Azerbaijan are subject to VAT at a 0% rate.

Income tax

Regarding contractors' and subcontractors' employees, foreign and stateless persons directly employed in Azerbaijan, as well as Azerbaijani citizens, shall be subject to income tax in accordance with the TCA.

Property tax and land tax

Contractors are exempted from both property tax and land tax.

Any other taxes envisaged by the TCA but not covered by the Law should be applied in the manner specified by the TCA.

Customs regime

Contractors and subcontractors are exempt from customs duties and VAT on goods (works and services) imported to, or exported from, Azerbaijan. Irrespective of the value of imported or exported equipment and materials, contractors and subcontractors shall pay AZN275 of customs collections for each customs declaration.

Currency regulation regime

Contractors and subcontractors may open, keep and use AZN and foreign currency accounts at banks within as well as outside Azerbaijan. Contractors must inform the relevant Azerbaijani authorities about opening and closing of bank accounts outside Azerbaijan. Moreover, contractors and subcontractors may convert funds received in AZN into foreign currency, and, as such, freely transfer these funds outside Azerbaijan, subject to making tax and other mandatory payments.

The Law also imposes the following "local content" type requirement:

Use of local manpower regime

Unless export-oriented oil and gas operations are to last for less than six months, within one year from the day of obtaining the certificate, at least 80% of contractors' and subcontractors' employees represented at all organizational hierarchies and management bodies shall be Azerbaijani citizens. However, in certain cases, a relevant state authority shall grant permission to contractors and subcontractors to employ Azerbaijani citizens in different proportions.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Capital allowances are available to contractors (PSAs) and participants (HGAs). Allowances are calculated in accordance with the tax rules prescribed by the relevant agreements.

D. Incentives

Not applicable.

E. Withholding taxes

WHTs are specific to PSAs. The details are given in Section B.

F. Financing considerations

There are no specific issues related to financing.

G. Transactions

Participation interests in PSAs and HGAs, and shares in companies that hold an interest in PSAs and HGAs, may be sold. The transaction mechanisms and the tax consequences of any sales depend on the provisions of the particular PSA or HGA.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties and export duties

Each contractor or subcontractor under a PSA or participant or contractor under an HGA is entitled to import and re-export (free of any taxes) machinery, equipment, fixed assets, goods, works and services for use in respect of petroleum operations. A customs duty exemption certificate must be obtained from the customs authority.

VAT

Contractors and subcontractors are exempt with credit from VAT (i.e., a 0% rate is applied) in connection with petroleum activities on all:

- ▶ Goods, works and services supplied to or by them
- ▶ Exports of petroleum
- ▶ Imports of goods, works and services

Additionally, any supplier of works and services (including subcontractors) to each contractor may treat those supplies as being exempt with credit from VAT. A VAT exemption certificate must be obtained from the relevant tax authority in connection with the PSA.

I. Other

Issues relevant to PSAs, HGAs and the Law are discussed in Section B.

Bahrain

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 46%¹
- ▶ Capital gains tax (CGT) rate – n/a
- ▶ Branch tax rate – n/a

Withholding tax (WHT):

- ▶ Dividends – n/a
- ▶ Interest – n/a
- ▶ Royalties – n/a
- ▶ Management fees – n/a
- ▶ Branch remittance tax – n/a

Net operating losses (years):

- ▶ Carryback – n/a
- ▶ Carryforward – indefinitely²

Bahrain provides a free, open and transparent environment for businesses and has a globally competitive, value-creation story that focuses on sustainability, skills and good governance.

Although major industries such as oil, gas, aluminum and others connected with the infrastructure are usually majority-owned by the Government, there is an increasing trend toward privatization and no industry is closed to foreign investors.

To carry out any commercial activity in the Kingdom of Bahrain, a legal vehicle should be established in accordance with the Bahrain Commercial Companies Law No. 21 of 2001.

Foreign investors are able to establish a 100% foreign-owned entity in Bahrain under certain conditions. However, for some business activities (e.g., trading), there is a limitation on foreign ownership so a local partner would be required.

B. Fiscal system

Corporate tax

There are no corporate taxes in Bahrain except for the levy of income tax on the profits of companies engaged in the exploration, production or refining of crude oil and other natural hydrocarbons in Bahrain, which is levied at a rate of 46%.

1 Only applicable to hydrocarbon companies obliged to pay tax in Bahrain.

2 Only applicable to hydrocarbon companies obliged to pay tax in Bahrain.

Taxable income for oil companies is net profits, consisting of business income less business expenses.

Reasonable business expenses are deductible for tax purposes. This includes administrative, overhead and establishment expenses, interest, royalties, rental, contributions, remunerations, rewards for services rendered by others and pension or other plans established for the benefit of the persons rendering the services.

Trading losses of oil companies may be carried forward indefinitely. Loss carryback is not permitted.

Personal income tax

There are no personal income taxes in Bahrain.

Capital gains tax

There is no capital gains tax in Bahrain.

VAT and GST

There is no VAT or goods and services tax (GST) in Bahrain except for the following:

- ▶ Hotel, short-term lease apartment rents and certain restaurants are subject to a 5% tourism levy on the gross income
- ▶ 12% sales tax on gasoline included in the price

Withholding tax

There are no withholding taxes in Bahrain.

Zakat (religious wealth tax)

Zakat is not levied in Bahrain.

Land registration fee

There is generally a 2% land registration fee payable to the Government on the transfer of real property. The percentage is based on the sales fees. If registered within the first two months upon finalizing in the notary, a discount of 0.3% will be applicable - lowering the percentage to 1.7%.

Payroll tax

There is no payroll tax in Bahrain.

Advance tax ruling

Advance tax rulings are not available in Bahrain.

Transfer pricing

Bahrain does not have any transfer pricing rules. However, in principle, transactions between related parties should be at arm's length.

Customs duties

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) announced the unification of customs duties, effective from 1 January 2003.

There are no customs tariffs on financial transactions or trade in locally manufactured goods between GCC Member States where the products have at least 40% local value-added content. A certificate of origin may be issued by the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry as proof of the goods' origin.

Bahrain has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since January 1995, but signed GATT in December 1993. Bahrain applies its customs tariff according to the codes issued by the World Customs Organization (WCO). The following are the broad categories applicable to customs duty:

- ▶ Free duty – vegetable, fruits, fresh and frozen fish, meat, books, magazines and catalogs
-

- ▶ 5% duty – all other imported items such as clothes, cars, electronics and perfumes
- ▶ 100% duty – tobacco and tobacco-related products; these are also evaluated based on the quantity or weight and the higher value is taken into consideration for duty
- ▶ 125% duty – alcohols.

Municipality tax

A municipality tax is payable by individuals or companies renting property in Bahrain. The rate of the tax varies for unfurnished, furnished residential property and commercial property; rates vary from 7-10% depending on the type of rental agreement.

- ▶ Rented commercial building – 10% of rent
- ▶ Rented unfurnished residential building – 10% of rent
- ▶ Rented furnished residential building:
 - ▶ Owner pays electricity, water and municipal tax – 7% of rent
 - ▶ Tenant pays electricity, water and municipal tax – 7.5% of rent

Some landlords include the tax and utility costs when quoting the rental amounts.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Social insurance

The social insurance scheme is governed by the Social Insurance Organization (SIO). It is mandatory to register all employees, once employed by a Bahraini entity, with the SIO and pay social contributions.

Every January, an employer is required to update salary records for employees registered with the SIO.

Whenever an employee joins or leaves an entity, the entity must update its SIO records. The SIO will calculate the amount to be remitted monthly, and the employer is required to remit the same by the stipulated date.

The deduction is made from basic wages and recurring constant allowances as a percentage, and this is then appropriated for social insurance and pension.

The basis for the calculation of social insurance contributions cannot exceed BHD4,000 per month (i.e., if the salary exceeds BHD4,000 per month, the contributions will be calculated only on BHD4,000).

Set out next is an overview of social security contributions and benefits applicable in Bahrain.

| Contribution | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| For Bahrainis | |
| Social insurance contributions (pension fund) | |
| Employer's contribution | 9 |
| Employee's contribution | 6 |
| Insurance against employment injuries | |
| Employer's contribution | 3 |
| Unemployment insurance | |
| Employee's contribution | 1 |
| For expatriates | |
| Insurance against employment injuries | |
| Employer's contribution | 3 |
| Unemployment insurance | |
| Employee's contribution | 1 |

End-of-service benefit

At the completion of their employment contract in Bahrain, expatriate employees are entitled to an end-of-service benefit that is calculated on the following basis:

- ▶ Half a month's salary for every year of service for the first three years
- ▶ One month's salary for each subsequent year

D. Other levies

Training levy

Companies with 50 employees and above, who do not provide their employees with training are subject to a training levy of; 1% of Bahraini employees' salaries and 3% on the salaries of expatriate employees.

Foreign Workers levy

Fees have to be paid in order to obtain employment visa. Currently, the fee for a two-year employment visa is BHD 200. All private and public companies are required to pay a monthly levy with respect to each expatriate that is employed. The levy is charged at a rate of BHD5 per employee for the first 5 expatriate employees and BHD10 for each expatriate employee thereafter. Further, since January 2015 an additional fee of BD72 for health insurance when issuing/renewing a visa for an expat has been introduced. This fee may not be applicable if the employer provides compulsory health insurance for the employee.

E. Foreign exchange controls

There are no exchange control restrictions on converting or transferring funds. Furthermore, Bahrain has no withholding or thin capitalization rules in relation to the financing arrangements in Bahrain.

F. Double tax treaties

To date, Bahrain has signed double tax treaties with 42 countries, 38 of which are in force. In addition, Bahrain has initialed agreements with Guernsey, Spain and Liechtenstein; and is currently in negotiations with Hong Kong and Jersey. The following table lists the most current information as provided by the Bahrain Ministry of Finance.

Bahrain double tax treaties

| Country | Signed | In force | Dividends | Interest | Royalties |
|----------------|--------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Algeria | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 4.8%/24% |
| Austria | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Barbados | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Belarus | Yes | Yes | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Belgium | Yes | Yes | 10% | 5% | 0% |
| Bermuda | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Brunei | Yes | Yes | 0% | 5% | 5% |
| Bulgaria | Yes | Yes | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| China | Yes | Yes | 5% | 10% | 10% |
| Czech Republic | Yes | Yes | 5% | 0% | 10% |
| Egypt | Yes | Yes | n/a | 0% | 0% |
| Estonia | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| France | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Georgia | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |

| Country | Signed | In force | Dividends | Interest | Royalties |
|--------------|--------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------|
| Hungary | Yes | No | 0%/5% | 0% | 0% |
| Iran | Yes | Yes | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Ireland | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Isle of Man | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Jordan | Yes | Yes | n/a | 10% | 10% |
| Korea | Yes | Yes | 5%/10% | 5% | 10% |
| Lebanon | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Luxembourg | Yes | Yes | 0%/10% | 0% | 0% |
| Malaysia | Yes | Yes | n/a | 5% | 8% |
| Malta | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Mexico | Yes | Yes | 0% ³ | 4.9%/10% | 10% |
| Morocco | Yes | Yes | 5%/10% | 10% | 10% |
| Netherlands | Yes | Yes | 0%/10% | 0% | 0% |
| Pakistan | Yes | Yes | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| Philippines | Yes | Yes | 10%/15% | 10% | 10%/15% |
| Seychelles | Yes | Yes | 0% | 0% | 0%/5% |
| Singapore | Yes | Yes | n/a | 5% | 5% |
| Sri Lanka | Yes | Yes | 5%/7.5% /10% | 10% | 10% |
| Sudan | Yes | No | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Syria | Yes | Yes | 0% | 10% | 18% |
| Tajikistan | Yes | No | 8% | 8% | 8% |
| Thailand | Yes | Yes | 10% | 15% | 15% |
| Turkey | Yes | Yes | 10%/15% | 10% | 10% |
| Turkmenistan | Yes | Yes | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| UK | Yes | Yes | 0%/15% | 0% | 0% |
| Uzbekistan | Yes | Yes | 8% | 8% | 8% |
| Yemen | Yes | Yes | n/a | 0% | 0% |

An agreement was signed with Cyprus 17 March 2015, but is yet to come into force.

³ From 2014 dividends are subject to a 10% WHT.

Benin

Country code 229

Benin

GMT +1

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
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| Abidjan 01. | |

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| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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Tax regime applied to this country

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |
-

A. At a glance

The tax and legal regime applicable to oil companies operating in Benin depends on the date on which the petroleum contract was signed. Petroleum contracts signed with the Beninese authorities before 17 October 2006 are governed by the Petroleum Code dated 13 April 1973 (Order No. 73-33).

This Code only provides for a concession regime. Oil companies operating under the 1973 regime had the opportunity to opt into the new 2006 regime (this option expired in November 2007).

On 17 October 2006, a new Petroleum Code was issued by the Beninese authorities (Law No. 2006-18). In addition to the existing 1973 concession regime, this new Petroleum Code introduces production sharing contracts (PSCs) and other types of contracts used in the petroleum sector.

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime applicable to the petroleum industry is provided for by the Beninese Tax Code, the 2006 Petroleum Code or the 1973 Petroleum Code (as applicable) and the agreement concluded between the hydrocarbons contractor and the Beninese authorities.

The main taxes applicable in the petroleum sector are:

- ▶ Under the Petroleum Code of 1973:
 - ▶ Fixed fees depending on the type of agreement concluded with the Beninese authorities
 - ▶ Royalty
 - ▶ Surface fees
 - ▶ Income tax on gross profit at a rate between 50% and 55%
- ▶ Under the Petroleum Code of 2006:
 - ▶ Fixed fees depending on the type of agreement concluded with the Beninese authorities
 - ▶ Royalty
 - ▶ Surface fees
 - ▶ Income tax with a cap of 45%, with the tax rate depending on the categories of hydrocarbon and operating conditions

Legal regime

Under the Petroleum Code of 1973, hydrocarbon contractors are required to set up a Benin subsidiary in order to hold a petroleum title.

The Petroleum Code also provides that the exploitation of hydrocarbons is based on a concession regime. Under this regime, the Beninese authorities grant to a hydrocarbon contractor or a consortium the exclusive right to prospect or research for a maximum of nine years. Where there is a discovery, the Beninese authorities may grant an exploitation permit for production. In return, the hydrocarbon contractor or the consortium pays royalties and taxes to the State of Benin.

Three types of permits are provided for under the Petroleum Code of 1973:

- ▶ A prospecting authorization: this allows its owner to perform investigations from the surface with potential use of geophysical and geochemical methods to obtain evidence of hydrocarbons. The prospecting period is nine years, with an initial period of three years and two renewals of three years each.
- ▶ A permit for research (also called an “H permit”): this allows its owner to perform surface or deep work to obtain further evidence regarding the operating conditions and industrial use and to conclude on the existence of exploitable deposits. The permit for research has a maximum term of nine years, with an initial period of three years and two renewals of three years each.
- ▶ A concession for hydrocarbon exploitation: only the holder of a valid research permit can obtain this. It allows its owner to extract hydrocarbons. The concession period is 25 years, which may be extended for an additional 10-year period.

The Petroleum Code of 2006 has introduced the possibility of using PSCs. The Code also provides that the State of Benin can conclude all kinds of contracts in use in the international oil industry.

The 2006 Code supersedes the 1973 Code provisions concerning prospecting, research and exploitation of hydrocarbons, but prospecting authorization is now limited to three years.

The obligation to establish a Beninese subsidiary to hold the petroleum title is enforced by the new Code.

B. Fiscal regime

Hydrocarbon contracts signed before the publication of the Petroleum Code of 2006 remain governed by the Petroleum Code of 1973. Until November 2007, oil companies under the 1973 regime could opt for the new regime provided by the Petroleum Code of 2006.

Main taxes under the Petroleum Code of 1973

Fixed fees

The following table indicates the fixed fees due, depending on the petroleum license required:

| | |
|---|---------|
| Hydrocarbons prospecting authorization | XOF2.5m |
| Issuance of an H permit | XOF4m |
| Renewal of an H permit | XOF4m |
| Provisional authorization for exploiting hydrocarbons | XOF5m |
| Issuance or renewal of petroleum concession | XOF10m |
| Authorization of hydrocarbon pipeline transportation | XOF2m |

Surface fees

The surface fee is an annual tax based on the surface allocated to perform petroleum activities. The following table summarizes the surface fees applicable:

| | |
|--|---|
| H permit | XOF12.5 per hectare during the first period XOF25 per hectare for the following periods |
| Concession for hydrocarbons exploitation | XOF375 per hectare during the first three years XOF750 per hectare for the following years |

The surface fee for temporary exploitation of an oil field is XOF300 per hectare.

Proportional royalty on hydrocarbons

This royalty is proportional to the initial value of the hydrocarbon fields and is determined as follows:

- ▶ 12.5% for liquid hydrocarbons
- ▶ 10% for gas hydrocarbons

The value used is the price set at oil wells, after their cleaning out. Oil used by the producing company, gas flaring and reinjected gas are not subject to this royalty charge.

Income tax

Hydrocarbon contractors are subject to income tax on research and exploitation activities. The income tax rate is negotiated in the convention concluded between the contractor and Beninese authorities. However, for the holders of a concession for hydrocarbon exploitation, the income tax rate must be between 50% and 55% of the gross profit.

The Benin Financial Act of 1999 has fixed the income tax rate at 55% for research, exploitation, production and sale of hydrocarbons. In principle, the taxable gross profit is defined as total revenues less total expenses. In the case where special conditions on the determination of the taxable gross profit and its basis are specified in the petroleum concession agreement (PCA), the provisions of the Tax Code should be applied only if these provisions are not changed by the PCA. Moreover, the Petroleum Code of 1973 obligates the hydrocarbon contractor to provide annually two certified copies of its balance sheet, profit and loss account, auditor's report and board meeting report to the director of mines, geology and hydrocarbons.

Main taxes under the Petroleum Code of 2006

The Petroleum Code of 2006 has modified the tax legislation of petroleum contracts, as set out next.

Fixed fees

Fixed fees are due on the following:

- ▶ Granting of a prospecting authorization
- ▶ Issuance and renewal of an H permit
- ▶ Issuance and renewal of an exploitation permit
- ▶ Provisional authorization for exploiting hydrocarbons
- ▶ Authorization of hydrocarbon pipeline transportation

Annual surface fees

A fixed surface fee is due for research and exploitation permits.

Royalty *ad valorem*

This royalty is proportional to the value of the hydrocarbons at the wellhead. The rate of this royalty is negotiated in the petroleum contract and will depend on the nature of hydrocarbons and the operating conditions. However, the minimum rate is 8%.

Oil and gas that are either consumed for direct production needs or reinjected into the field or lost, together with related substances, are excluded from the calculation of the taxable basis for the *ad valorem* royalty.

Income tax

Hydrocarbon contractors are subject to income tax on research and exploitation activities. The income tax rate is negotiated in the convention concluded between the contractor and Beninese authorities. However, this rate is capped at 45%.

For the holders of concessions of hydrocarbon exploitation, the income tax rate is between 35% and 45%.

In the case of a PSC, the income tax due by the contractor is deemed to be included in the profit oil received by the State (which will then pay the income tax).

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

Tax incentives

Article 106 of the Petroleum Code of 2006 provides that the permit holders and their subcontractors are exempt from all duties and taxes during:

- ▶ The research period, except for property taxes on residential premises, surface fees, road tax and the fixed fees on granting authorizations and permits
- ▶ The exploitation period, except for the *ad valorem* royalty and income tax

Moreover, hydrocarbon contractors are exempted from paying the "*patente*," a specific business tax the value of which depends on the location and the activities of the taxpayer.

Customs incentives

Pursuant to Article 7 of Order No. 73-34 and Article 108 of the Petroleum Code of 2006, concessible mineral substances are exempt from customs duties. The petroleum agreement provides that hydrocarbon contractors and their subcontractors may benefit from exemptions from duties and taxes on imported equipment, exploitation materials and machines.

These exemptions are negotiated by the hydrocarbon contractor while concluding the agreement with the Beninese authorities.

The Finance Act of 2013 has incorporated some of the above exemptions. For instance, according to the Finance Act of 2013, new equipment imported for the construction and renovation of oil and gas tanks are exempted from customs duties. This exemption has been extended by the Finance Act of 2014, in force as of 1 January 2014.

VAT

VAT is not included in the Petroleum Code of 2006. However, in practice, hydrocarbon contractors may benefit from VAT exemptions on activities strictly related to petroleum operations. This exemption is negotiated by the hydrocarbon contractor while concluding the petroleum agreement with the Beninese authorities.

In addition, according to the Finance Act of 2013, new equipment imported for the construction and renovation of oil and gas tanks are exempted from VAT. This exemption has been extended by the Finance Act of 2015, for the period between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2015.

D. Withholding taxes

Withholding taxes (WHT) are not dealt with under the Petroleum Code. Amounts paid to a nonresident as compensation for services of any kind provided or used in Benin are nonetheless subject to WHT at a rate of 12% – but the 2006 Petroleum Code may exempt from WHT certain types of subcontractors.

E. Registration duties

The Petroleum Codes do not provide for specific rules on registration duties.

F. Capital allowances

The Petroleum Codes do not include capital allowances. These are taken into account while negotiating the petroleum agreement with the Beninese authorities.

G. Financing considerations

There is no specific issue or limitation concerning the financing of hydrocarbon activities.

H. Transactions

The Petroleum Codes do not include any specific taxation on the transfer of an interest in petroleum contracts. However, registration duties may apply.

I. Foreign exchange controls

According to Article 109 of the Petroleum Code of 2006, permit holders and their subcontractors are allowed to:

- ▶ Pay in foreign currency, in full or in part, wages, reimbursements and other indemnities
- ▶ Open, keep and use bank accounts in foreign currencies in Benin and abroad, and accounts in local currency in Benin
- ▶ Directly pay abroad, in foreign currency, foreign subcontractors for the acquisition of equipment and supplies of services related to the petroleum operations
- ▶ Receive, transfer and keep abroad and freely dispose of all funds, including but not limited to all payments received for the exportation of hydrocarbons and any payments received from the Government
- ▶ Obtain from abroad all financing required for the petroleum operations
- ▶ Buy local currencies required for the petroleum operations and convert into foreign currency all local currencies in excess of the immediate domestic needs in accredited banks or exchange offices

Compliance requirements

- ▶ The holder of a petroleum title is required to keep, in French and in conformity with local legislation, accounting information separated from any other activity not covered by the petroleum contract.
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties ■ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts □ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The Brazilian fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry consists of corporate income tax (CIT) and government and third-party takes. Government and third-party takes vary depending on the type of contract.

In Brazil, there are two main types of contract:

- ▶ **Concession contract (CC)** – under this contract, the assessment is done through the allocation of scores and weights, considering the signature bonus, the minimum exploratory program and the local content.
- ▶ **Production sharing contract (PSC)** – under this contract, the winner of the bid is the entity that offers the greater volume of oil to the Government. Introduced in 2010, this model is applicable for exploitation of pre-salt and other strategic areas. On 21 October 2013 the first bidding round for the Libra block (pre-salt area) took place.

Government and third-party takes include:

- ▶ **Signature bonus** – a one-time amount (not less than the minimum price established by the ANP (the Brazilian National Agency of Petroleum, Natural Gas and Biofuels)) paid by the winning bidder in the proposal for the CC or the PSC to explore and produce crude oil and natural gas.
- ▶ **Royalty percentage** – under the CC, it varies from 5% to 10% of the oil and gas production reference price. Under the PSC, it corresponds to 15% of the volume of produced oil.
- ▶ **Special participation percentage** – applies only under the CC, as a percentage that varies from 10% to 40% for large production volumes, based on progressive tables relating to net production revenues adjusted for royalties, exploration investments, operating costs, depreciation and taxes.

- ▶ Fee for occupation or retention of an area – applies only under the CC and corresponds to BRL10-BRL5,000 per km², depending on the phase and based on a progressive table.
- ▶ Landlord cost percentage – under a CC, it varies from 0.5% to 1% of the oil and gas production reference price. Under a PSC, it applies only to onshore oilfields and corresponds to a percentage up to 1% of the value of the oil and gas production.

Other fiscal arrangements primarily include:

- ▶ Income tax rate – 34%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Capital allowances – D¹, U²
- ▶ Investment incentives – L³, RD⁴

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

Brazilian resident legal entities are subject to income tax on their worldwide income at a rate of 15%, with a surtax of 10% for profits exceeding BRL240,000 a year. In addition, Brazil imposes a social contribution tax on corporate net profits at a rate of 9%. Therefore, the combined CIT rate used is 34%. Taxation is the same for entities bearing CC or PSC contracts, or both.

Brazil does not apply ring fencing in the determination of the CIT liability. Profits from one project can be offset against losses from another project conducted by the same legal entity and, similarly, profits and losses from upstream activities can be offset against profits and losses from other activities undertaken by the same legal entity. Brazil has no tax consolidation rules; each legal entity is subject to its own CIT.

Brazilian resident legal entities may elect to pay CIT based on taxable profits determined as:

- ▶ A percentage of gross revenues (Presumed Profit Method – PPM)

Or

- ▶ A proportion of their actual income under accounting records (Actual Profit Method – APM)

Such election is made annually, and it is usually driven by the company's profitability and future investment plans. In general, the PPM taxation regime is limited to companies with annual gross revenues that do not exceed BRL78 million. Accordingly, upstream companies that operate in Brazil generally pay CIT based on taxable profits determined according to their actual income according to their accounting records.

Under the APM, the tax is charged on the company's accounting profit and adjusted for non-deductible expenses and non-taxable revenues. CIT may be calculated and paid on a quarterly or annual basis (with prepayments during the calendar year). In general, operating expenses are deductible for CIT purposes, provided they are "necessary and usual" to the company's activity.

Royalties on oil and gas production are fully tax-deductible. Other types of royalties, in general, may be deducted from taxable income limited to 1% to 5% of the net sales derived from the activity on which royalties are paid, depending on the business activities of the payor entity. For trademark royalties, the limit is 1%. For royalty payments to be treated as tax-deductible expenses, the underlying contracts must be approved by the Brazilian Intellectual Property Agency (the INPI), and they must be registered with the Brazilian Central Bank (BACEN) to allow foreign remittances.

1 D: accelerated depreciation.

2 U: capital uplift.

3 L: tax losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

4 RD: research and development (R&D) incentives.

Capital expenditures are normally deducted in the form of depreciation on fixed assets or amortization of costs incurred and capitalized during the exploration and development stages. Depreciation and amortization criteria, as well as specific rules related to the oil and gas industry, are described in section C.

Foreign Profits Taxation

In 1996, Brazil changed from a territorial to worldwide system by launching a rigorous Foreign Profits Taxation (CFC) regime. Under the CFC regime, any type of corporate investment abroad, be it direct or through a branch or subsidiary, is subject to corporation tax on a current basis (at 31 December of each year), regardless of a foreign local tax burden, local substance of the foreign group company, and the active or passive nature of the operations carried out abroad. A foreign tax credit generally is available in Brazil. Deferral of this tax is not possible. As from 2014, if the taxpayer elected the early adoption of the Law 12,973/14, or as from January 2015, relevant changes were introduced in the CFC rules. Although the new rules do not change the basic principles of the taxation in Brazil of foreign corporate profits, it makes the following primary changes:

- ▶ Modifies the technique to tax profits of overseas group companies
- ▶ Introduces individual taxation as a general rule but with a temporary option to consolidate the results of certain foreign subsidiaries and branches for Brazilian tax purposes
- ▶ Introduces a temporary provision to allow the payment of tax on foreign profits in installments
- ▶ Allows tax deferral for profits earned through affiliates (generally, minority interests)
- ▶ A carve out from the CFC regime is provided to foreign subsidiaries and affiliates that earn profits directly related to oil and gas operations in Brazil. The Brazilian parent or investor of such a foreign subsidiary or affiliate is exempt from tax in Brazil on those profits.

Carry forward tax losses

Tax losses may be carried forward indefinitely. No carryback or inflation adjustments are permitted. Tax losses that are carried forward may be used to offset up to 30% of a company's taxable income in a tax period. Restrictions on the offsetting of carried forward tax losses may be imposed if there is a change of ownership control and a change of the business activity between the period when the losses were generated and the period when the losses will be effectively used.

Capital gains

Capital gains recognized by Brazilian resident entities are included as ordinary income and taxed at CIT standard rates. In general, capital losses incurred in a calendar year may offset operating profits or capital gains generated in the same year. Excess capital losses may be carried forward indefinitely, but are limited to 30% of future capital gains only.

Capital gains recognized by nonresidents from the disposal of assets located in Brazil, regardless of whether the buyer is located in Brazil or abroad, are also subject to taxation in Brazil, at a general rate of 15%. The capital gains taxation rate increases to 25% when the beneficiary is domiciled in a low-tax jurisdiction (i.e., any country where income is not taxed or the maximum income tax rate is less than 17%⁵ or in a jurisdiction in which information on the company's owner or economic transactions is confidential). Indirect dispositions of Brazilian assets are not taxable, but transactions with lack of substance can be challenged by Brazilian Tax Authorities.

Transfer pricing

Brazilian transfer pricing regulations deviate from the arm's length principle adopted under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

5 According to Portaria MF, 488 of November 28, 2014.

(OECD) guidelines and from the majority of the countries with transfer pricing regulations. There are no profit-based methods, and a functional/risk analysis is not necessary. Profit margins are determined by law, which may not provide consistency with an arm's length result, exception made to the newly introduced methods for commodities transactions.

The legislation contains a very broad definition of "related parties," involving concepts of direct and indirect control, utilizing voting power, and business control criteria. The legislation also includes joint ventures, consortia and other forms of joint ownership (as related parties). In addition, there are rules whereby exclusive distributors and interposed parties are also considered related parties for the purposes of Brazilian transfer pricing regulations.

The Brazilian transfer pricing rules also apply to residents located in low-tax jurisdictions, regardless of any equity relationship with the Brazilian company, as defined under Brazilian tax legislation. On 4 June 2010, a new blacklist of low-tax jurisdictions was issued by the tax authorities, increasing the number of jurisdictions from 51 to 65. Note, as of June 2014, Switzerland was removed from the Low Tax Jurisdiction list blacklist, although some particular Swiss taxation regimes have been included in the Privileged Tax Regimes List ("graylist"), also subject to transfer pricing rules.

Changes were introduced to the Brazilian transfer pricing legislation with effect from 1 January 2013. The main changes included: (i) the gross profit margin for the calculation of the "resale minus profit" method for imports is determined by the taxpayer's sector of economic activity – including 40% gross profit for companies that work in the extraction of crude oil, natural gas and petroleum products;⁶ (ii) mandatory transfer pricing methods for the calculation of export or import products deemed as commodities; and (iii) changes in the calculation of interest associated with loan agreements.

Prices on the importation and exportation of goods, services and rights are generally based on the following transfer pricing methods:

- ▶ Use of uncontrolled, similar transactions (PIC and PVex)
- ▶ Resale minus (PRL and PVA/PVV)
- ▶ Cost plus (CPL and CAP)
- ▶ Market price quotation, in the case of commodities (PCI and Pecex)

With the exception of commodity pricing, no "best method/most appropriate" rule applies. Instead, a Brazilian taxpayer may demonstrate compliance with the transfer pricing rules by choosing the method that is most favorable to the taxpayer, provided that the necessary documentation can be established. In the case of products considered commodities, the application of the "market price quotation" is required.

Regarding exportation, transfer pricing rules apply to transactions entered into with related parties or parties located in low-tax jurisdictions or privileged tax regimes only if the average price used for the transaction is less than 90% of the average price for identical or similar goods, services or rights traded in Brazil during the same period and under similar payment terms with unrelated parties (the "absolute safe harbor" provision), as long as the transaction does not involve the exportation of items classified as commodities.

Brazilian transfer pricing regulations also provide for two additional safe-harbor provisions on exports, which allow the Brazilian entity to demonstrate the adequacy of the adopted export price by disclosing regular commercial documents that support the export transaction. Under such provisions, no additional transfer price calculation is required. The safe-harbor provisions are not applicable to the export of products deemed as commodities or to export transactions with low-tax jurisdictions and privileged tax regimes. The safe-harbor provisions apply in the following situations:

6 *The 40% gross profit could be reduced to 20% where a taxpayer only committed with associated service/supply for the oil and gas sector, according to Law 9,430/96, Article 18,12,III.*

- ▶ The taxpayer's net export revenues do not exceed 5% of the total net revenues during the calendar year.
- ▶ The taxpayer demonstrates a minimum pretax net profit of 10% on the export transaction (for the analyzed calendar year and the two preceding years). This safe harbor only applies if the exports to related parties do not represent more than 20% of the company's total export revenues.

In the case of the export/import of commodities, the newly introduced transfer method of PCI/Pecex is mandatory. Consequently, inbound and outbound transactions involving commodities must be tested by calculating the parameter price as the daily average price of goods or rights as traded on international future or commodity exchanges, but modified by certain price adjustments to reflect market conditions on the day of the transaction. Price adjustments include quality and volume adjustments but also adjustments for freight, logistics, payment terms and others. In addition, in certain cases, the price calculation can be based on official recognized publications. In the case of Oil & Gas reference price published by ANP can be considered.

As of October 2014, new items such as steel, lead, nickel, zinc and cobalt are to be considered as commodities for Brazilian transfer pricing purposes.

As of March 2014, new possibilities for pricing adjustments were included:

1. Based on business conditions, physical nature and content regarding PIC method (applied for importation transactions) and general exportation methods
2. For commodity methods

Moreover, new Normative Instructions provisions clarified the wording related to the commodity premium or discount.

Leasing of equipment and charter of vessels – typical transactions in the oil and gas industry – are transactions that are not clearly covered by the legislative framework and, thus, should be deeply and carefully analyzed.

Interest paid or received to related parties abroad associated with loan agreements are also subject to Brazilian transfer pricing rules. The calculation of the maximum amount of deductible expenses or minimal revenue arising from interest subject to transfer pricing regulations should observe the following:

- ▶ In a case of transactions in US dollars (USD) at a fixed rate, the parameter rate is the market rate of the sovereign bonds issued by the Brazilian Government on the external market, indexed in USD.
- ▶ In a case of transactions in Brazilian reals (BRL) at a fixed rate, the parameter rate is the market rate of the sovereign bonds issued by the Brazilian Government on the external market, indexed in BRL.
- ▶ In all other cases, the parameter rate is the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR).

The subsequently obtained parameter rate can still be increased by an annual spread to be established by Brazil's Ministry of Finance. For 2013, the annual spread was fixed by the Brazilian Ministry of Finance with 3.5% for interest expenses and as 2.5% for interest income.

The Brazilian transfer pricing rules do not apply to royalty payments associated with agreements duly registered with the INPI, to the extent that the deductibility of these payments for CIT in Brazil is subject to limitations based on domestic legislation.

Transactions involving cost sharing, cost contribution and management fees might be considered deductible for purposes of calculating Income Tax and Social Contribution on Net Income, when assessed according to article 299 of the Income Tax Regulation. According to private ruling n. 8/2012, costs and expenses shared among group companies could be considered deductible when:

- a. Relating to goods and services actually paid and received
- b. Are considered to be necessary, usual and normal to the business activities of the payer

- c. Apportioned based on a reasonable and objective criterion, agreed up front and properly formalized by an instrument signed by the parties
- d. The apportionment criterion is consistent with the effective cost of each company and the total price paid for goods and services are in compliance with the general accounting principles
- e. The company that centralizes the acquisition of goods and services appropriates solely the portion that relates to it under the apportionment criterion adopted

Dividends and interest on net equity

No currency exchange restrictions are imposed on dividends distributed to shareholders domiciled abroad, provided the foreign investment into Brazil is properly registered with the BACEN.

A Brazilian entity may also calculate notional interest on the net equity value (adjusted by the deduction of certain accounts) payable to both resident and nonresident shareholders. Notional interest on equity is a hybrid mechanism to remunerate the capital of shareholders and create a deductible expense for purposes of Brazilian CIT.

Interest on equity is calculated by applying the official long-term interest rate (TJLP) on net equity, but it is limited to 50% of the greater of the current earnings or accumulated profits. Interest on equity paid to a foreign beneficiary is subject to withholding tax (WHT) in Brazil charged at a general rate of 15% (25% if payment is made to a low-tax jurisdiction).

Interest on equity payments tends to be advantageous to profitable Brazilian subsidiaries, to the extent that the interest generates tax-deductible expenses at 34% with the cost of the 15% WHT, although the overall tax benefit should be evaluated in light of the country of residence of the foreign shareholder.

Deduction of payments to an individual or company resident in a low-tax jurisdiction or under a PTR

Any payment made, direct or indirectly, to an individual or company resident in a low-tax jurisdiction or under a PTR is not deductible for income tax purposes, unless there is:

- ▶ Identification of the effective beneficiary of the income
- ▶ Evidence of the operating capacity of the recipient
- ▶ Supporting documentation regarding the price paid for rights, goods and services

Government and third-party takes

Government and third party takes vary depending on the contractual regime to which the Brazilian entity is subject.

Concession contracts

In 1997, with the end of the monopoly of *Petróleo Brasileiro S/A (Petrobras)* in the Brazilian oil and gas sector, a concession regime was introduced into Brazilian legislation to grant licenses to private players to perform oil and gas activities in Brazil. Under the concession regime, the concessionaire is authorized to explore oil and gas activities within a certain area, at its own cost and risk, and must compensate the Brazilian Government for this right.

More than one company may exploit a concession. Partners on a joint venture should organize themselves under a consortium agreement. Specific provisions between the partners can be set up through a joint operation agreement (JOA) for each concession granted.

In this context, upstream concession holders are subject to the payment of four government and one third-party takes, as described next.

Signature bonus (government)

The signature bonus reflects the amount offered by the winning bidder in the proposal for the concession to explore and produce crude oil and natural gas. It

is a one-time payment, and it may not be less than the minimum price established by the ANP in the bid notice. It must be paid in full at the date of the signature of the respective concession agreement.

Royalties (government)

The amount of petroleum royalties to be paid monthly for a field is equivalent to 10% of the total production volume of crude oil and natural gas of the field during that month, multiplied by the relevant reference prices (determined by the ANP), beginning in the month of the relevant production start-up date, with no deductions allowed. Royalty payments are due on the last working day of the month following the month of their computation.

The ANP may, in the bid notice for a given block, reduce the percentage of 10% to a minimum of 5% of the total production volume, considering geological risks, production expectations and other factors pertaining to the block. In the 12 bidding rounds conducted by the ANP (note that round 8 is suspended), only some of the auctioned blocks – blocks classified as inactive marginal fields for evaluation, rehabilitation and production of oil and natural gas – had their royalties reduced from 10% to 5%.

Special participation payment (government)

The special participation payment represents an extraordinary financial compensation payable by crude oil and natural gas exploration and production concessionaires for large volumes of production or high earnings. It must be paid in relation to each field in a given concession area from the quarter when the relevant production start-up date occurs. Special participation payments are due on the last working day of the month following the quarter of computation.

Computation of special participation is based on net production revenues adjusted for royalties, exploration investments, operating costs, depreciation and taxes. In general, the special participation rates are based on progressive tables that range from 10% to 40%⁷ and consider:

- ▶ Reservoir location (onshore, lakes, rivers, river islands, lake islands and continental shelf within bathymetric depths of up to and more than 400 meters)
- ▶ Years of production (1, 2, 3 and more than 3 years)
- ▶ The inspected quarterly production volume, measured in thousands of cubic meters of equivalent oil, for each field

The current standard CC provides that, in fields where the special participation is due, concessionaires must invest an amount equivalent to 1% of the gross revenue of the oilfield in expenses that qualify as R&D.

Fee for occupation or retention of areas (government)

Both the bid notice and the concession agreement include payment provisions for the occupation or retention of the area. The amount is to be computed each calendar year, beginning from the date of execution of the concession agreement. It is payable on 15 January of the following year.

The amount due for the occupation or retention of an area is set by the ANP, which considers the block location and other pertinent factors. The calculation is based on a progressive table that ranges from BRL10 to BRL5,000 per square kilometer.

Landlord cost (third party)

Landlord cost is not a governmental take because it is due to the owner of the land as a monthly rental payment for access to and use of the land. For onshore blocks, the ANP sets the amount from 0.5% to 1% of the oil and gas production reference price. In the 12 bidding rounds conducted by the ANP (note that round 8 is suspended), only some of auctioned blocks – blocks auctioned that

⁷ Note however that Decree 2705/98, article 22 provides for some exemptions depending on the field location and the production volume.

were classified as inactive marginal fields for evaluation, rehabilitation and production of oil and natural gas – had their landlord cost reduced from 1% to 0.5%.

Production sharing contracts

After significant debate, Law 12,351 was published on 23 December 2010, introducing a production sharing regime for the pre-salt area and other strategic areas, which include regions of interest for national development, characterized by low exploration risk and high production potential. The first pre-salt bidding round occurred on 21 October 2013.

In summary, a production sharing contract (PSC) is a regime in which the contracted company will execute, at its own cost and risk, exploration, development and production activities and, in the case of commercial discovery, will have the right to recover, in oil, operational costs incurred during the exploration and development stages (cost of oil) and receive the volume corresponding to the oil surplus (the difference between the total oil produced and royalties paid plus recovered costs) relating to its participation in the venture. Signature bonuses and production royalties will not be allowed in the computation of the cost oil. Details about allowed expenses in the cost oil are duly provided by ANP.

Under a PSC, Petrobras (the national oil corporation, NOC) must be the exclusive operator and leader of the consortium established for such venture and must have a minimum 30% participation in all ventures. Under certain circumstances, which shall be defined by National Energy Policy Council (CNPE), and with prior approval from the Brazilian President, Petrobras may be directly hired to explore and produce the remaining 70%, which shall otherwise be offered to private oil companies under a bid process, in which Petrobras may also participate on equal terms.

The consortium to explore and produce oil and gas in these strategic areas must be set up by:

- ▶ The Government-owned company, *Empresa Brasileira de Administração de Petróleo e Gás Natural S.A. – Pré-Sal Petróleo S.A. (PPSA)*, to be incorporated with the specific purpose of managing the PSC. PPSA will not bear any risks or cost associated with the exploration, development and production activities
- ▶ Petrobras
- ▶ The bid winner, if applicable, which shall have joint liability for the execution of the contract with Petrobras.

Under Brazilian oil and gas legislation, upstream PSC holders are subject to the payment of two government and one third-party takes, as described next.

Signature bonus (government)

The signature bonus, which does not integrate the cost of oil, corresponds to a one-time fixed amount payment, and it may not be less than the minimum price established by ANP in the bid notice. It must be paid in full at the date of signature of the PSC.

Royalties (government)

The royalties, which do not integrate the cost of oil, correspond to a 15% of the oil surplus. The criteria for the calculation of royalties taxable basis would be determined by the executive branch, based on market prices, oil specifications and field location.

Landlord cost (third party)

In the case of an onshore block, the landlord cost, which does not integrate the cost of oil, will correspond to up to 1% of the production value and is due to the owner of the land.

Unconventional oil and gas

Brazil has not yet issued any special rule for unconventional gas. It is expected that the ANP will in due course issue a rule to regulate the exploration of unconventional gas.

A bill has recently been proposed in Parliament by the Brazilian Green Party aiming at avoiding the exploration of unconventional gas for the next 5 years, until a detailed study of the environmental impact of unconventional gas exploration and extraction is performed.

C. Capital allowances

As a general rule, fixed assets may be depreciated according to their "useful life." Documentation is required to support the useful life when it differs from the useful life provided by the Brazilian Internal Revenue Service (the RFB). This supporting documentation should be issued by the Brazilian National Institute of Technology or other similar institute.

Examples of rates ordinarily used by the RFB include:

- ▶ Buildings – 25 years
- ▶ Machinery and equipment – 10 years
- ▶ Vehicles, computer hardware and software – 5 years

A company that works two shifts per day may depreciate machinery and equipment at 1.5 times the normal rate. If it operates three shifts, it may double the normal rate.

Oil and gas upstream companies may depreciate fixed assets directly connected with upstream operations based on the concession term or on the produced volume in relation to the total crude oil or gas in the reservoir when the useful lives are shorter than those defined by the RFB. Currently, some tax incentives apply to specific industries and also to companies located in developing areas, such as the north and northeast regions of Brazil. An R&D incentive was enacted in 2006 that introduced an accelerated depreciation program and capital uplifts. For further information, see section D below.

Capital expenditures for the acquisition of rights, which are expected to exist or be exercised within a limited period of time, may be amortized. This amortization can be calculated based on the remaining life of the right, or on the number of accrual periods for which the legal entity expects to enjoy the benefits originating from the expenses registered as deferred charges.

For the depletion of mineral resources, a Brazilian legal entity can opt to calculate the exhaustion of the mineral resource based on the concession term or on the produced volume in relation to the total crude oil or gas in the reservoir. Upstream companies have generally accounted for costs incurred on exploration and development activities as permanent assets. Under the "successful efforts" method, costs are written off when wells are not considered viable. The only exception is for geological and geophysical costs, which are not capitalized but are generally expensed when incurred.

D. Incentives

Tax holiday

Brazil does not have a tax holiday regime.

Regional incentives

Apart from some special customs regimes (see comments about the Special bonded warehouse for oil and gas platforms and about the REPETRO regime in section H below), REPENEC (*Regime especial de incentivos para o desenvolvimento de infraestrutura da indústria petrolífera nas regiões Norte, Nordeste e Centro-Oeste*) is the only specific tax incentive for the oil and gas industry.

REPENEC

On 14 June 2010, Law 12,249/2010 (a conversion of Provisional Measure 472/09) was published in Brazil's *Official Gazette*. Among other measures, the law introduced a new special regime for the oil and gas industry (REPENEC). REPENEC relates to infrastructure projects in the oil and gas industry approved by the Federal Government by 31 December 2010 where the applicant is incorporated in the north, northeastern or mid-western regions of Brazil.

In summary, in the event of local sales or importation of new machinery, instruments and equipment, and of construction materials for use or integration into infrastructure projects classified as fixed assets, REPENEC provides for the suspension of social contribution taxes (PIS and COFINS), federal VAT (IPI) and import duty (II) that would otherwise apply (please see section H for further explanations on these taxes). PIS and COFINS are suspended on the importation or acquisition of local services for these projects.

Other regional tax incentives

Besides REPENEC, Brazil offers a variety of more general tax incentives intended to attract businesses of particular importance and foster the development of certain underdeveloped regions in the country.

The following incentives are offered to entities located in the area of the Agency for the Development of the Northeastern States (*Superintendência de Desenvolvimento o Nordeste*, or the SUDENE) and the Agency for the Development of the Amazon (*Superintendência de Desenvolvimento da Amazônia*, or the SUDAM):

- ▶ A reduction of 75% on the 25% CIT due, calculated on profits from activities covered by the incentive tax treatment (*lucro da exploração*) for projects considered to be vital for development of the SUDAM and SUDENE regions, or for modernization, expansion or diversification of existing projects considered to be vital for the development of the SUDAM and SUDENE regions. This incentive is granted until 31 December 2018. Companies may benefit from this incentive for a maximum period of 10 years.
- ▶ From 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013, a reduction of 12.5% on the 25% CIT due, calculated on profits from activities covered by the incentive tax treatment (*lucro da exploração*) for new ventures considered to be a priority for the development of the regions covered by the SUDAM and the SUDENE.

Until 2018, companies that undertake projects of particular importance for the development of the region are entitled to reinvest up to 30% of the income tax due at 15% on their SUDENE and SUDAM projects.

Research and development

Companies that invest in technological innovation are entitled to a R&D federal tax incentive under Law 11,196/05 of 2005. The definition of "technological innovation" is "the design of a new product or manufacturing process, as well as new functionalities or characteristics added to products or to processes, which results in incremental improvements and an actual gain in quality or productivity, thus leading to increased market competitiveness."

Based on the qualifying conditions, the application of this tax incentive is associated with the design of new manufacturing processes or products, or with new functionalities or characteristics being added to existing processes or products.

In summary, the tax incentives offered include:

- ▶ Deduction of total expenditures made during the computation period in connection with technological R&D of technological innovation, which are classifiable as operating expenses pursuant to Brazilian tax legislation
 - ▶ Deduction for the purposes of CIT of 60% to 100% of total expenditures made during the computation period in connection with R&D of technological innovation, which are classifiable as operating expenses by Brazilian tax legislation
-

- ▶ Reduction by 50% of IPI levied on equipment, machinery, devices and instruments, as well as on their related spare accessories and accompanying tools that were intended for use in technological R&D
- ▶ Accelerated depreciation by deduction, in the acquisition year, of the total cost of new machinery, equipment, devices and instruments intended for use in activities regarding R&D of technological innovation
- ▶ Accelerated amortization by deduction (only for CIT purposes), in the computation year in which they are incurred, of the expenditures classifiable as deferred assets relating to the acquisition of intangible assets associated exclusively with R&D of technological innovation activities
- ▶ Reduction to zero of the WHT rate applicable to foreign remittances for the purposes of registration and retention of trademarks, patents and cultivars (variety of cultivated plants)

No prior approval is necessary to take advantage of this tax incentive. However, the taxpayer is required to provide information to Brazil's Science and Innovation Technology Ministry (*Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia e Inovação*) non its technological research programs by 31 July of each subsequent year and must have a regular status update, in both semesters of the year, regarding its federal tax liabilities. Under Brazilian tax legislation, all documentation related to the use of these tax incentives must be available for tax inspectors during the open period under the statute of limitation.

Exportation incentives

Another incentive for exporters that can be used by the oil and gas industry in Brazil is the *Regime Especial de Aquisição de Bens de Capital para Empresas Exportadoras* (RECAP) regime, which is a special tax regime for the acquisition of capital goods by export companies. To benefit from the RECAP, a company must have recognized gross revenues derived from exports in the prior year of at least 50% of its total annual gross income, and it must maintain a minimum of 50% of export revenues for the following two calendar years (or the following three years, if the company does not comply with the first requirement).

The RECAP regime applies to certain equipment, instruments and machinery imported directly by the RECAP beneficiary to be used as fixed assets. Under the RECAP regime, the social contribution taxes on gross revenues triggered upon the importation, namely PIS and COFINS, are suspended and converted into a zero tax rate after the incentive conditions are fulfilled. The regime also provides for the suspension of PIS and COFINS on local acquisitions made by the beneficiary of the RECAP regime.

In addition to the conditions outlined above, to benefit from the RECAP regime a Brazilian legal entity must not have any overdue federal tax liabilities. Benefits are also canceled if the legal entity does not comply with the minimum export revenues requirement of 50%, if the beneficiary does not comply with the other requirements of the RECAP regime or at the beneficiary's own request.

A legal entity excluded from the RECAP regime must pay interest and penalties on the taxes suspended, calculated from the date of acquisition of the imported assets and services or the registration of the import transaction with the electronic customs system (SISCOMEX).

The RECAP tax incentive is not available to Brazilian companies subject to PIS and COFINS under the cumulative tax regime.

Apart from the RECAP tax incentive, Brazilian legal entities may also qualify for the IPI, PIS and COFINS suspension upon a local purchase or importation of raw materials, intermediary products and package materials if they meet, among other conditions, the 50% threshold outlined above. Some Brazilian states provide a similar tax incentive for state VAT (ICMS) tax purposes.

E. WHT and other taxes on imported services

Dividends

Dividends paid from profits accrued as of 1 January 1996 are not subject to WHT in Brazil, regardless of whether the beneficiary is a resident or a nonresident shareholder.

Interest on net equity

Unlike dividends, which are exempt from withholding tax, INE is subject to withholding tax at a 15% rate. If the beneficiary is a resident in a low-tax jurisdiction, it will be subject to a 25% withholding income tax rate.

Interest

Interest remitted abroad is generally subject to WHT at a rate of 15% (unless a tax treaty provides otherwise). Interest paid to residents of low-tax jurisdictions is subject to WHT at a rate of 25%.

Royalties and technical services

Royalties and technical assistance fees remitted abroad are generally subject to WHT at a rate of 15% (unless a tax treaty provides otherwise) when the special contribution (CIDE) tax is due on this remittance (see below). Royalties and technical assistance fees paid to residents of low-tax jurisdictions are subject to WHT at a rate of 25%.

Administrative and similar services

Administrative and similar service fees remitted abroad are generally subject to WHT at a rate of 15% (unless a tax treaty provides otherwise) when the CIDE tax is due on this remittance (see below). Administrative service fees paid to residents of low-tax jurisdictions are subject to WHT at a rate of 25%.

Other services

For the remittance of fees for other services, the WHT rate is 25%, even if the payment is not made to a low-tax jurisdiction. This rate applies because CIDE tax is not due on these remittances.

Rental

Rental payments made to a nonresident are generally subject to WHT at a rate of 15%. Rental payments made to residents of low-tax jurisdictions are subject to WHT at a rate of 25%.

Payments for charter of vessels with no service components are subject to WHT at a rate of 0%, provided that the entry of the vessel into Brazilian waters is approved by the competent authority. This reduced rate does not apply if the beneficiary is domiciled in a low-tax jurisdiction, in which case taxation will be at the rate of 25%.

On 13 November 2014, Brazil enacted Law 13,043/2014 and limited the applicability of the 0% withholding tax rate on charter of vessels, specifically targeting the split contract structures used by companies operating in the Brazilian oil and gas industry.

The new restrictions apply on the simultaneous execution among related parties (as defined by the law – see below) of a vessel charter agreement and a services agreement, related to the exploration of oil and natural gas. In such cases, the value of the charter contract may not exceed the following percentages of the total contract value:

- ▶ 85%, when the charter relates to floating productions systems
- ▶ 80%, when the charter relates to drilling ships or
- ▶ 65%, when the charter relates to other types of vessels.

Tax authorities may increase or decrease these percentages by up to 10%.

Remittances abroad will be subject to withholding tax at a 15% rate on the portion of the charter contract exceeding those thresholds, or a 25% rate when

the beneficiary is located in a low-tax jurisdiction or a privileged tax regime, as defined by Brazilian tax legislation.

The new legislation provides a specific definition of related party for the application of the restrictions, which departs from that generally adopted for Brazilian tax purposes. The foreign owner of the vessel and the service provider will be considered related parties when they are partners directly or indirectly in the entity owning the chartered assets.

CIDE tax

The CIDE tax is charged at a rate of 10% on royalty payments, including fees for technical assistance, technical services, administrative services and similar services. The Brazilian payor that makes the remittance to the foreign beneficiary is considered to be the taxpayer for purposes of the CIDE tax.

Social contribution taxes on importation

As a general rule, PIS and COFINS are both social contribution taxes charged on the importation of assets, products and services and are usually charged at a rate of 1.65% and 7.6% respectively (a combined nominal rate of 9.25%). Certain products, including machinery and equipment, are subject to a COFINS rate of 8.6% (increasing the combined nominal rate to 10.25%). The Brazilian importer under the non-cumulative PIS and COFINS regime may compute a PIS and COFINS tax credit for certain inputs and services acquired (for more details, see section G). PIS and COFINS are not due on certain imports (e.g., imports under the Repetro and RECAP regimes). As the right for tax credits has been strongly debated within the oil and gas industry and it is not under a mature legislative consensus, it should be deeply and carefully analyzed by taxpayers.

Service tax on importation

The municipal tax on services (ISS) is charged on the importation of services. ISS applies at rates that vary from 2% to 5%, depending on the nature of the service and the municipality where the Brazilian payor is domiciled.

Tax on financial operations on import of services

The federal tax on financial operations (*Imposto sobre Operações de Crédito, Câmbio E Seguro, ou Relativas A Valores, Mobiliários*, or IOF) is currently charged at 0.38% on the amount of Brazilian currency exchanged into foreign currency for the payment of imported services. Most currency exchange transactions are subject to IOF at a rate of 0.38%. This tax may be altered by the executive branch with immediate effect.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

Thin capitalization rules were introduced in Brazil to apply to inbound and outbound transactions performed either with related parties or with unrelated parties resident in low-tax jurisdictions or under a PTR.

Under the applicable rules, irrespective of whether the intercompany loans are compliant with the general rules governing the deduction of expenses and Brazilian transfer pricing rules, interest expenses are only deductible if the related Brazilian borrower does not have a debt-to-equity ratio greater than 2:1. Any excess interest is not deductible for the purposes of Brazilian CIT.

Additionally, interest expenses deriving from financing arrangements executed with a contracting party established in a low-tax jurisdiction or under a PTR, irrespective of whether related or not to the Brazilian borrower, are only deductible if the debt-to-equity ratio of the Brazilian borrower does not exceed 0.3:1.

Debt versus equity

Brazilian operations can be financed by debt, equity or a combination of both. By capitalizing a Brazilian entity with equity, a parent company bears the risk of currency exchange fluctuation. Alternatively, if the Brazilian entity is financed

through debt, the exchange risk is shifted to the Brazilian subsidiary, which may accrue a currency exchange loss or gain for book and tax purposes, even if unrealized. At the election of the Brazilian payor, currency exchange gains or losses may be recognized on a cash basis for Brazilian tax purposes. Debt may also be interest bearing, which triggers a deductible interest expense for Brazilian tax purposes. Brazilian corporate borrowers cannot lend funds to others on conditions that are more favorable when compared with their own debt liabilities.

With the recent introduction of thin capitalization and transfer pricing rules on loans in Brazil, restrictions are applicable to interest deduction on loans (see above).

To foster Brazilian exports, the Government has reduced the WHT on export financing loans to 0%. Therefore, if an upstream company intends to export its production, either totally or partially, this instrument may be tax efficient because it triggers a local tax deduction at the rate of 34% with the cost of 0% WHT.

IOF on loans

Under certain circumstances, IOF is imposed by the Federal Government at rates varying from 0% to 25%. Indeed, domestic loans between legal entities, including related parties, are subject to IOF, on the credit transaction, at a maximum rate of 1.88% per year.

Foreign loans are subject to IOF on the foreign currency exchange transaction, but not on the lending (foreign credit) transaction itself. As a general rule, a 0% rate applies, but foreign loans with average maturity terms of up to 180 days are subject to IOF at a rate of 6%.

G. Transactions

Under Brazilian oil and gas legislation, it is possible to transfer concession agreements to third parties, provided that the transfer is pre-approved by the ANP.

Asset disposals

Concession costs, including exploration and development costs, are classified as permanent assets. Disposals of permanent assets are treated as non-operating transactions, which trigger capital gains or losses. Capital gains are taxed at the same CIT rates as ordinary income (see section B).

Farm-in and farm-out

Brazilian tax legislation does not have a special tax treatment for farm-in and farm-out transactions. Accordingly, general Brazilian tax rules apply to asset disposals apply.

Selling shares in a Brazilian company

Investments not for sale in subsidiaries either in Brazil or abroad are classified as permanent assets. Disposals of permanent assets by Brazilian legal entities are treated as non-operating transactions, which trigger capital gains or losses. Capital gains are taxed at the same CIT rates as ordinary income (see section B above).

The gain on a sale of a Brazilian asset by a nonresident shareholder is taxable in Brazil at the rate of 15%. If the beneficiary of the capital gain is resident in a low-tax jurisdiction, the WHT rate is increased to 25%. Indirect dispositions of Brazilian assets are not taxable, but transactions with lack of substance can be challenged by Brazilian Tax Authorities in Brazil (see section B).

State VAT (ICMS)

ICMS is due on the local sale of oil and gas, based on the sale price, including the ICMS itself (built-in calculation). For intrastate operations (carried out by a seller and buyer located in the same Brazilian state), the ICMS rate is determined by the legislation of the state where the sale is made, which generally varies from 17% to 19%.

Interstate transactions (carried out by a seller and buyer located in different Brazilian states) are subject to reduced rates of 7% or 12%, depending on the states involved. One exception is that, because of a specific provision under the Brazilian federal constitution, ICMS is not due on interstate oil operations. Another is where, in the case of consumables or fixed assets, the buyer must pay, to the state where it is located, an additional ICMS tax calculated based on the difference between the reduced interstate rate and its own internal ICMS rate.

From January 2013 onwards, interstate transactions with imported products have been subject to an ICMS rate of 4%. Some requirements apply; these include the non-submission of the product to a manufacturing process or, in the case of further manufacturing, the resulting product should have a minimum imported content of 40%.

Federal VAT

As a general rule, federal VAT (IPI) is charged on transactions involving manufactured goods by a manufacturing plant, or on the first sale in Brazil of an imported asset, as defined in the legislation in force. According to the Brazilian Federal Constitution, local sales, intrastate sales or the importation of oil products, including crude oil and its by-products, are not subject to the IPI tax.

IPI rates vary from 0% to 365%.

Social contribution taxes on gross revenue

PIS and COFINS are social contribution taxes charged on gross revenues earned by a Brazilian legal entity under one of two different regimes of calculation: non-cumulative and cumulative.

Under the non-cumulative regime, PIS and COFINS are generally charged at a combined nominal rate of 9.25% (1.65% PIS and 7.6% COFINS) on revenues earned by a legal entity. Certain business costs result in tax credits to offset PIS and COFINS liabilities (e.g., depreciation of machinery, equipment and other fixed assets acquired to be directly used in the manufacturing of a product or rendering of a service). PIS and COFINS paid upon importation of certain assets and services are also creditable. Upstream companies are generally subject to this regime, but there are a lot of debates on the availability of such credits depending on the phase of the area/field.

Brazilian taxpayers subject to the cumulative regime must calculate PIS and COFINS at a combined rate of 3.65% (0.65% PIS and 3% COFINS). No tax credits are provided under this regime. It applies to some industries (not including oil and gas) and also to companies that compute taxable profits as a percentage of gross sales. For further information, please see section B above.

Exportation of oil

Oil export transactions are exempt from ICMS, IPI, PIS and COFINS.

H. Indirect taxes

Importation of equipment and other items

In Brazil, companies that intend to operate with foreign trade transactions must be registered within the SISCOMEX electronic system, an integrated computerized system through which all international trade transactions are electronically processed. Through this system, an import declaration (*Declaração de Importação*, or DI) is issued and registered for each import operation.

In a few cases, the importation of goods, including machines and equipment, also requires an import license (*Licença de Importação*, or LI), which is a type of pre-authorization for the import procedure. The need for a prior import license is determined based on the tariff classification of the goods to be imported and some other specific conditions.

The licensing procedure may be automatic or non-automatic, depending on the product. In most cases, the import license is obtained automatically during the

filing of the DI in the SISCOMEX system. Certain products, however, are subject to the non-automatic licensing process, which means that it is important to check whether the import license must be obtained before shipment of goods to Brazil. In some other listed circumstances, the import license may be obtained after the shipment of the goods but before the registration of the DI (at the beginning of the customs clearance process).

The importation of certain goods, such as petrochemicals, crude oil and natural gas, requires authorization from special regulatory agencies as a condition for the issuance of the import license.

Import Duty (Imposto de Importação, or II) is due on the customs value of imported goods, consisting of the cost of the product, the international insurance and freight (i.e., the CIF value). The customs value may vary depending on specified price elements, as defined by the customs valuation rules.

II is a non-recoverable tax, which means that no credits are available against it, and it always represent a cost to the importer (as II is not a creditable tax and, consequently, II paid upon importation cannot be deducted from any subsequent import transaction taxed by the II).

The II rate varies depending on the tariff classification of the imported goods, as per the MERCOSUR tariff code system, which is based on the Harmonized System. The average rate for machines and equipment is 14%.

Capital goods and data processing and telecommunications goods may benefit from an II reduction to 2% if the importer is able to attest and demonstrate that no similar goods are manufactured in Brazil.

In addition to II, import transactions are also subject to IPI and ICMS and PIS and COFINS.

For import transactions, the IPI is calculated on the customs value of the imported item, plus II. The rate also depends on the respective tariff classification. The average IPI rate ranges between 10% and 20%. However, for machines and equipment, it generally ranges from 0% to 5%. IPI is a recoverable tax, which means that, in principle, the amount paid on the import transaction may be offset in the future, provided some requirements are met.

ICMS is charged on the customs value of the imported goods, plus II, IPI, ICMS itself, PIS and COFINS and other smaller customs charges. ICMS rates vary depending on the state where the importer is located, which means that, unlike II and IPI, the ICMS applicable rate does not relate to the product itself but to the state where the importation takes place. The ICMS rates range from 17% to 19% and may be lower in some cases, depending on:

- ▶ The nature of the goods being imported
- ▶ Eventual application of state tax benefits

As from January 2013 onwards, interstate transactions with imported products are subject to an ICMS rate of 4%. Some requirements apply, including the non-submission of the product to a manufacturing process or, in case of further manufacturing, the resulting product should have a minimum imported content of 40%. As with IPI, if the imported item is either used in a manufacturing process in Brazil or resold, the Brazilian importer may recover the ICMS paid upon the import transaction.

PIS and COFINS contributions are also levied on the import of goods and services at a nominal combined rate of 9.25% (10.25% in certain cases – see earlier). On import transactions, the taxable amount is the customs value of the goods.

Freight surcharge for renovation of the merchant marine fleet

Maritime transportation is subject to a freight surcharge for renovation of the merchant marine fleet (*Adicional ao Frete para Renovação da Marinha Mercante*, or AFRMM), which is an extra freight charge levied through Brazilian and foreign shipping companies unloading cargo in Brazilian ports. AFRMM is charged at a rate of 25% on ocean navigation freight, at 10% on coastal

navigation freight and at 40% on the inland navigation of liquid bulk cargos carried within the north and northeast regions of Brazil (based on the bill of lading and the cargo manifest).

The AFRMM does not apply to the transportation of goods in connection with exploration activities of hydrocarbons and other underwater minerals in the Brazilian Exclusive Economic Zone, such as those carried out by Petrobras. In addition, goods imported by autarchies and other entities directly connected to federal, state and municipal governments, are not subject to the AFRMM.

Similarly, AFRMM is suspended for assets imported under a special customs regime granted by the Brazilian Revenue Services (*Receita Federal do Brasil*), such as under the drawback or the temporary admission regime with suspension of taxes, up to the date of registration of the import declaration (DI) in the event of nationalization.

The main fees applicable to the customs clearance of imported equipment or goods are storage fees, demurrage, terminal handling charges (*capatazias*), unstuffing and cargo handling fees, and deconsolidation of bill-of-lading fees. Rates and amounts vary.

Special customs regimes related to oil and gas activities

There are a number of special regimes related to oil and gas activities. The two principal regimes are described next.

Special bonded warehouse for oil and gas platforms

The special bonded warehouse for oil and gas platforms is a customs regime specifically targeted to cover bonded areas located in oil and gas platforms contracted by companies located abroad for research and drilling purposes. This special bonded warehouse may be operated and located in construction or conversion platforms, shipyards or other manufacturing establishments located by the sea and destined for the construction of marine structures, oil platforms and modules for such platforms.

This regime applies to materials, parts, pieces and components to be used in the construction or conversion of such facilities and allows manufacturing processes and testing activities to be performed inside the bonded facility.

The arrangement grants full suspension of federal taxes otherwise due on imports (II, IPI, PIS, and COFINS) and full suspension of federal taxes otherwise due on local purchases (IPI, PIS and COFINS). Some states also extend the benefits to ICMS.

Temporary admission

“Temporary admission” is a special customs regime that grants total or partial suspension of federal and state import taxes (II, IPI, PIS, COFINS and ICMS) on the importation of equipment and general products, provided that the imported items are re-exported within a stipulated period. Failure to re-export the products results in a tax liability for the previously suspended taxes, increased by fines and interest. Temporary admission is generally granted for a maximum period of 3 months, with a possible extension by the same period.

Equipment and products imported for economic applications, such as those imported to be used or applied on the provision of services, fall under the temporary admission regime with partial suspension of the import taxes. In this case, they may remain in the country for the duration of the underlying contract (operational lease, rental, loan, loan agreements, etc.) and up to a maximum of 100 months.

Under the current calculation rules, II, IPI, PIS and COFINS and ICMS will be partially paid and calculated at 1% per month of permanency of the imported goods in Brazil, calculated on the total amount of taxes that otherwise would be due upon nationalization. Some restrictions on proportional ICMS exist, depending on the state.

Drawback

The Brazilian customs legislation provides for different types of drawback regimes.

Integrated drawback suspension

Regulated by the Foreign Trade Operations Department (DECEX), the integrated drawback suspension (*Drawback Integrado Suspensão*) is a special customs regime that allows the importation and local acquisition of goods to be applied or consumed in the manufacturing process for export purposes, with total suspension of federal taxes (i.e., II, IPI and PIS/COFINS-Import). These items must be industrialized and composed or be consumed in the industrialization of a product to be further exported. The regime also provides for the suspension of the AFRMM freight surcharge, when applicable.

As a general rule, integrated drawback suspension only allows the suspension of ICMS on imported items; there is no similar benefit for goods purchased locally under the regime. For goods purchased locally, the local invoice issued by the local supplier must be registered by the beneficiary company within the SISCOMEX system.

Internal and strict controls over the inventory of goods imported and locally acquired for industrialization and exportation under the drawback regime are required.

A Brazilian company that requests drawback suspension must comply with certain requirements to obtain approval. As a general rule, taxes may be suspended on regular imports for 1 year, extendable for another year. With long production cycles, the suspension may reach 5 years.

Integrated drawback exemption

The integrated drawback exemption (*Drawback Integrado Isenção*) is a variation of the drawback regime. The main difference from the suspension framework consists in exempting imported or locally purchased items from regular taxation when similar and fully taxed items were already used in the process of manufacturing exported final goods.

It is a type of retroactive applicability of the drawback rules. It works as a replacement for benefited items that could have been covered by integrated drawback suspension in the past, but were not.

This regime involves an exemption from II, IPI, PIS, COFINS and, possibly, an exemption of ICMS, depending on the state. It applies to the importation of raw materials and goods in equal quantity and quality as the ones once used in the prior manufacturing process in Brazil of a final product that was already exported. The company benefiting from the drawback exemption must prove that the goods have been exported to obtain the tax exemption.

Certified bonded warehouse

The certified bonded warehouse (DAC) system is a special export system under which goods are deemed exported but physically remain within a bonded warehouse in Brazil. Goods remitted to a DAC facility are subject to certain export customs clearance procedures and are considered as legally exported for all fiscal, administrative and foreign-exchange purposes.

Remittances to DAC are exempted from all federal taxes (IPI and PIS/COFINS). As ICMS is a state tax, each Brazilian state establishes its own legislation and decides whether ICMS should be levied.

Goods may remain stored in this special regime for no longer than 1 year.

Repetro

Repetro is the most relevant tax incentive for the oil and gas industry. Repetro is a special customs regime available in Brazil for the importation and exportation of equipment and other qualifying assets for the oil and gas industry. It consists of a combination of three different customs regimes: temporary admission, drawback (under the drawback suspension type) and fictitious exportation.

This regime is applicable to companies and consortiums that hold an authorization or concession to exploit oil and gas in Brazil and to its subcontractors. The importation process under Repetro is complex and attracts specific requirements, such as an electronic inventory control with the tax authorities.

ICMS tax consequences of Repetro are defined by Convênio ICMS 130, as discussed below.

Temporary admission under Repetro

As per the above-mentioned comments on the temporary admission regime, under such a regime Repetro grants total suspension of federal taxes (II, IPI, PIS and COFINS) that otherwise would be due upon the importation of equipment and other qualifying assets in connection with oil and gas exploration, development and production activities. The regime applies to qualifying equipment with a unitary import value of US\$25,000 or more.

Under Repetro temporary admission, the assets are permitted to remain in Brazil for a determined period of time, for the purposes for which they were imported, and must return abroad with no significant modifications, while ownership is kept abroad.

Drawback under Repetro

Under the drawback regime, Repetro grants full suspension of taxes for the manufacturer in Brazil for parts, pieces or complete equipment and other qualifying assets imported, under the condition that they are re-exported to an owner established outside Brazil.

Fictitious exportation under Repetro

Fictitious exportation is a legal fiction aimed at creating fair competition among foreign and Brazilian suppliers, under which equipment and other qualifying assets supplied locally to foreign purchases are considered commercially exported, despite their delivery within the Brazilian territory (no actual remittance abroad). These sales are treated as exportation for the purpose of federal taxes and, thus, are exempt from IPI, PIS and COFINS taxes.

Convênio ICMS 130

Convênio ICMS 130 establishes that taxpayers may elect to import equipment and qualifying assets used for the production of oil and gas under a cumulative or a non-cumulative ICMS regime, at rates of 3.0% and 7.5%, respectively.

The non-cumulative method allows the appropriation of ICMS tax credits at 1/48th monthly, after the 24th month of the actual ICMS collection.

Individual Brazilian states may also exempt, or reduce to 1.5%, the cumulative ICMS on the temporary admission of equipment and other Repetro-qualifying assets used for the exploration of oil and gas fields, and may either exempt from ICMS or apply non-cumulative and cumulative regimes at the rates of 7.5% and 3.0%, respectively.

In addition, the Brazilian states may exempt from taxation locally manufactured equipment and Repetro-qualifying assets used for the exploration of oil and gas fields, or used for the production of oil and gas, as long as they are fictitiously exported and are subsequently temporarily imported under the Repetro rules. ICMS credits for the exporter in these cases are not allowed.

Finally, ICMS exemption may apply to:

- (i) Equipment and Repetro-qualifying assets exclusively used in exploration activities
- (ii) Production platforms in transit for repair or maintenance
- (iii) Equipment and Repetro-qualifying assets used in exploration and production activities that remain in Brazil for less than 24 months

Instead of granting ICMS tax exemption, Brazilian states may opt to tax equipment and Repetro-qualifying assets within (i) and (iii) above at the cumulative rate of 1.5%.

Taxpayers must formally opt for taxation under the Convênio ICMS 130 regime. As at mid-2014, not all Brazilian states have implemented regulations on this matter.

I. Other

Brazilian tax reform

In March 2008, the Brazilian Government submitted a tax reform proposal to be voted on and approved by the federal congress. The main goals of the proposal included simplifying the national tax system and eliminating gaps that forestall the growth of the Brazilian economy, as well as alleviating interstate competition, especially with regard to the “fiscal war” among Brazilian states. Additionally, the proposal increased the amount of resources devoted to the National Policy on Regional Development (*Política Nacional de Desenvolvimento Regional*) and introduced significant modifications to the implementation of that policy.

One of the items in the proposal addressed the unification of the rules for VAT levied on the production and trading of goods and services. To this effect, COFINS, PIS and the special social contribution on fuel products (CIDE-Combustível) would be consolidated into a new tax to be levied on operations involving goods and services, referred to as federal VAT (*Imposto sobre Valor Agregado Federal*, or IVA-F). Under the proposals, the constitutional provisions that created the COFINS, PIS and CIDE-Combustível taxes would be repealed.

Two other important modifications proposed were the consolidation of federal income taxes into a single income tax, and payroll distressing measures.

There was a general consensus that the tax reform would be positive for Brazil; however, it was also expected that it would undergo significant changes before it passed into law. And as this proposal comprised conflicting taxation interests, it has been stuck in Congress since March 2009, and other proposals introducing more focused changes are nowadays under discussion. This is the case of a new proposal for the gradual reduction and unification of the ICMS charged on interstate transactions to 4%, whose bill was submitted by the President to the Senate for discussion in December 2012.

International Financial Reporting Standards and Law 11638/07

In the process of aligning Brazilian accounting standards with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), Law 11,638/07 was enacted on 28 December 2007. It amended the Brazilian Corporation Law (Law 6404, dated 15 December 1976) in order to allow international accounting convergence, as well as to increase the transparency level of the overall financial statements, including those of large companies not organized as corporations (*sociedades anônimas*).

Effective 1 January 2008, the law prescribed, among other accounting changes, that accounting standards issued by the Brazilian Securities Commission (CVM) must all be aligned with international accounting standards adopted in the main security markets—i.e., standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (the IASB), which is currently considered the international reference for accounting standards.

Privately held companies may now elect to adopt the standards issued by the CVM for publicly held corporations, which allows them to participate in the accounting convergence process. Large companies – construed to be those that individually or under common control have total assets in excess of BRL240 million or gross revenues of more than BRL300 million – must be audited by independent auditors registered with the CVM.

Transitional tax regime

Effective from its publication date (and converted into Law 11,941/09), Provisional Measure (MP) 449 of 3 December 2008 is an instrument that aims to achieve the intended tax neutrality in the conversion to IFRS. It has created a transitional tax regime (RTT) under which, for income taxes and

PIS and COFINS purposes, the accounting methods and criteria as of 31 December 2007 have to be considered for the recognition of revenues, costs and expenses.

The RTT was optional for the years 2008 and 2009, and it has created the necessity for off-book controls for the different accounting methods and criteria for the determination of the computation basis of such taxes, thus leading to the existence of deferred taxes. As from 2010, the RTT became mandatory, until a new piece of legislation determines otherwise.

On 12 November 2013, Brazil's Federal Government published a new Provisional Measure (MP 627, that was converted into the Law 12,973/14), containing a long-expected set of rules that, besides revoking the RTT, also added new rules aimed at permanently aligning the Brazilian tax system to the accounting model set forth by Law 11,638/07.

Concession participant or PSC consortium member

Foreign companies may participate in the block concession or PSC bidding rounds held by the ANP. However, a foreign company must commit to incorporating a company in Brazil under Brazilian law, with its headquarters and administration in Brazil, to hold the concession rights or to be a partner in the PSC if it wins the bid.

National content

The national content rule was created to foster national industry. Under this rule, a certain percentage of goods, equipment and services must be purchased from Brazilian suppliers.

Up to ANP round 4, there were no minimum national content requirements. As from ANP round 5, the ANP has established minimum national content requirements for the exploration and development phases. The percentages indicated in the table below have varied depending on the ANP round.

| | | Round number | | | | | | | | | | 1a PSC | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------|----------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-----|--------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | 5 | 6 Min | 7, 8, 9 | | 10 | | 11 | | 12 ^a | | | | |
| Commitment of acquiring local services and resources (minimum value) | | | | | | Max | | Max | Min | Max | Min | Min | Min | Min |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | (First oil up to 2021) | (First oil from 2022) |
| Exploration | Deepwater | 30% | 30% | 37% | 55% | - | - | 55% | 37% | NA | NA | 37 | NA | NA |
| | Shallow water | 50% | 50% | 37% | 55% | - | - | 55% | 37% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| | Shallow water <100m | - | - | 51% | 60% | - | - | 60% | 51% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| | Land | 70% | 70% | 70% | 80% | 70% | 80% | 80% | 70% | 80 | 70 | NA | NA | NA |
| Development | Deepwater | 30% | 30% | 55% | 65% | - | - | 65% | 55% | NA | NA | NA | 55 | 59 |
| | Shallow water | 60% | 60% | 55% | 65% | - | - | 65% | 55% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| | Shallow water <100m | - | - | 63% | 70% | - | - | 70% | 63% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| | Land | 70% | 70% | 77% | 85% | 77% | 85% | 85% | 77% | 85 | 77 | NA | NA | NA |

The minimum national content is 70% for the auctioned blocks classified as inactive marginal fields for evaluation, rehabilitation and production of oil and natural gas.

Repatriation of capital

Repatriation of share capital is generally not restricted if the foreign investor has registered its foreign direct original investment and subsequent capital increases or capitalization of earnings with the Central Bank of Brazil (BACEN).

Repatriation of capital may be accomplished by the sale of Brazilian shares to a local resident by a capital reduction, redemption of shares or liquidation of the Brazilian company. Commercial law contains specific rules on the redemption of shares and on companies repurchasing their own shares.

Human Capital

Formalities for hiring personnel

New employees must have their working papers (employment registration) completed by the employer in a timely manner. The information required includes wage, job title, hours of work etc. The employer must also secure enrollment for collection of taxes and contributions due to employees.

In addition to these conditions, the Brazilian Immigration legislation establishes that a foreign individual may only enter the country and be engaged in gainful employment or professional activities under certain types of entrance visas. Depending on the type of activity and physical presence in the country, the following visas apply:

- ▶ Business: up to 90 days
- ▶ Technical - item V: 1 year
- ▶ Marine - item V: 2 years
- ▶ Work - item V: 2 years
- ▶ Permanent: up to 5 years

Technical, marine and work visas are different subtypes of the generic Temporary Item V visa, while business and technical visas require the existence of a local employment contract. As visas involve the performance of an activity in the Brazilian labor market, their issuance by the Brazilian Consulate depends on authorization from the Ministry of Labor and Employment. The application for such visas must be supported by a Brazilian company, either as an employer or a sponsor.

National labor law

Brazilian labor laws apply to crew members of all Brazilian-flagged vessels, and to crew members hired by a Brazilian shipping company.

When engaged through a local employment contract with a Brazilian entity, individuals must be duly registered as employees and remunerated through the Brazilian company payroll. All amounts paid through the local payroll are subject to Brazilian individual withholding income tax (rates varying between 0% and 27.5%), and social security tax (rates varying between 8% and 11%).

Moreover, local employment contracts will also trigger corporate payroll costs and provisions, which include as standard:

- ▶ An additional one-month salary (also referred to as the 13th monthly salary)
- ▶ A one-third vacation bonus (in addition to the salary for the vacation period of 30 days per year, after each 12-month period)

These are in addition to other labor rights granted by legislation, which include but are not restricted to:

- ▶ Transportation and meal tickets/vouchers
 - ▶ Compensation for overtime hours through a 50% premium on normal pay rates (during weekdays and Saturdays) or a 100% premium (on Sundays and national holidays)
-

Brazilian entities are also obliged to pay monthly contributions and other miscellaneous social contributions as follows (though some exceptions apply):

- ▶ Employee Severance and Indemnity Fund - 8%
- ▶ INNS - 20%
- ▶ RAT/SAT (risk of work accident) - 1% to 3%
- ▶ Education Fund - 2.5%
- ▶ To other entities, known as third parties (or "the S System": SESI, SENAC, SENAI, and SEBRAE)

In December 2011, the Federal Government introduced a program entitled "*Plano Brasil Maior*". This program consists of the replacement of the social security contribution of 20% of the total compensation paid to employees and individual taxpayers, by a contribution on the gross income of the employing company, which can vary between 1% and 2%.

Regulations on employing personnel

Brazil requires that Brazilian marine workers hold appropriate certifications and credentials in order to work onboard vessels, depending on the required ability level established by the maritime authorities to exercise the relevant functions. International marine cards held by foreign crew members working on foreign-flagged vessels operating in Brazilian territorial waters, with no employment relationship, may be used so as to comply with the required qualifications in certain cases and for a limited period of time. Depending on the period of time that a foreign-flagged vessel will be operating in Brazilian territorial waters, a minimum number of Brazilian crew members are required.

It is noteworthy that the Brazilian regulations regarding the hiring of offshore employees foresees that if the foreign vessel or platform operates in Brazilian territorial waters for more than 90 consecutive days, there will be a requirement to hire a Brazilian workforce in accordance with the following proportion:

- ▶ Vessels with logistic purposes, and with an operational period of more than 90 days should hire Brazilian professionals at all necessary technical levels for at least one-third of their workforce. After 180 days, the proportion should be raised to one-half, and past 360 days to two-thirds.
- ▶ Offshore drilling platforms with an operational period of more than 180 days should hire Brazilian professionals for at least one-fifth of their workforce. After 360 days of operations the proportion should increase to one-third, and past 720 days to two-thirds.

Brazilian labor laws have specific rules for shipping workers, mostly related to workload and safety in the work environment.

In addition, all independent port workers (*trabalhadores avulsos*) should be hired through port labor management agencies created by the port operators. Only private port terminals located outside organized ports are allowed to hire fixed-term employees for the execution of port-related services, as recently authorized by Law 12,815/2013.

Collective labor agreements

Brazilian labor law allows the negotiation of agreements between shipping companies and workers' unions. The negotiations result in collective agreements, which rule the relations between the companies and their employees. The main Brazilian shipping workers' unions are SINDAPORT, SINTRAPORT, SINDAMAR and SINDMAR.

Treaties relating to social security contributions

Brazilian shipping companies' employees are liable to pay contributions under the Brazilian social security system. Dockworkers are included in the same system and are regarded as independent workers ("*trabalhadores avulsos*"). Brazilian employers must also pay social security contributions on the Brazilian payroll.

Brazil has concluded several international bilateral and multilateral social security conventions, and currently these are with: Argentina, Bolivia, Cape Verde, Chile, Ecuador, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain and Uruguay.

Brazil has also signed agreements with Belgium, Canada (and Quebec separately), South Korea and France, but these are pending ratification from the National Congress and are therefore not yet in force in Brazil.

Fiscal aspects

Determination of residence for tax purposes depends on which visa an individual uses to enter the country. Foreign nationals holding either Temporary Type V visas, based on a labor contract with a Brazilian company, or permanent visas are taxed as residents from the time they enter Brazil. Other foreign nationals are taxed as nonresidents if they satisfy the following conditions:

- ▶ They hold other types of temporary visas
- ▶ They are not involved in a local labor relationship
- ▶ They do not remain in Brazil for more than 183 days during any 12-month period

A foreign national who remains in Brazil for longer than 183 days is subject to tax on worldwide income, at the progressive rates applicable to residents.

Resident taxpayers are subject to individual income taxation on a worldwide income basis at rates ranging from 0% to 27.5%. Income paid through the Brazilian payroll system, including assignment-related benefits (locally sourced), is subject to income tax and social security tax withholdings at source. It is the payer's obligation to carry out the necessary withholdings.

Income paid through non-Brazilian sources (e.g., off-shore split payroll arrangements) is subject to monthly income tax computations ("Carnê-Leão"). It is the individual's obligation to compute and collect the income tax due.

Additionally, resident taxpayers must abide by the following filing obligations:

- ▶ An annual Income Tax Return ("Declaração de Ajuste Anual de Imposto de Renda"), for individuals who meet the established criteria. The filing deadline is the last business day of April of the year following that to which the return applies. No extensions of time to file are allowed.
- ▶ A Declaration of Assets and Rights Held Abroad ("Declaração de Capitais Brasileiros no exterior - BACEN"), which is due whenever the total inventory of personal assets and rights held abroad amounts to US\$100,000 or more as at 31 December of the relevant year.

Tax treaties

Double-taxation treaties have the objective of avoiding/mitigating double taxation events by way of regulating the right to taxation of income for the participating countries.

Brazil has ratified tax treaties with Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Peru, Slovakia, South Africa, Korea, Slovak Republic and Czech Republic, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

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|---|---|

Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Royalties</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Service contract</p> |
|---|---|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

In Cambodia, the oil and gas fiscal regime is classified as the Real Regime System of Taxation (a self-assessment system). The principal taxes applying are:

- ▶ Tax on Profit (TOP) /corporate income tax (CIT) – 30%
- ▶ Investment incentives – Exemption from “Minimum Tax” (see Section B below); TOP/CIT exemption, or an allowance for special depreciation during a tax exemption period; and import duty exemption on certain products
- ▶ Withholding taxes
- ▶ Indirect taxes

B. Fiscal regime/Real Regime System

Corporate income tax

In accordance with TOP/CIT regulations, contractors are taxed at the rate of 30% on the profits realized under an oil or natural gas production sharing contract. The TOP/CIT liability is calculated by multiplying the rate of tax with the taxable profits.

The taxable profits are not the same in value as the accounting profits. For the calculation of taxable profits for a tax year, the contractor must take the accounting profit before tax to carry out various adjustments on deductible and non-deductible expenses during the tax year.

Deductible and non-deductible expenses

Under the current tax law, an expense is allowable for deduction for tax purpose if the expense meets three conditions:

- ▶ It is actually incurred (regardless of being actually paid or accrued)
- ▶ It is the result of economic activities (i.e., generating taxable income)
- ▶ The amount of taxpayer liability can be precisely determined (i.e., supported with verifiable evidence)

Non-deductible expenses include:

- ▶ Expenses incurred on activities generally considered to be amusement, recreation or entertainment, or on the use of any means with respect to such activities

- ▶ Losses on direct or indirect sales, or exchanges of property between related parties
- ▶ Penalties, additional tax and late-payment interest imposed for violation of the tax regulations
- ▶ Donations, grants or subsidies made other than to specified organizations

Depreciation and amortization

Under the tax regulations, tangible assets are categorized into four classes and are depreciated at the following rates:

| Classes | Assets | Method | Rate (%) |
|---------|--|-------------------|----------|
| 1 | Building and structures | Straight-line | 5 |
| 2 | Computers, electronic information systems, software, and data handling equipment | Declining-balance | 50 |
| 3 | Automobiles, trucks, and office furniture & equipment | Declining-balance | 25 |
| 4 | Other tangible property | Declining-balance | 20 |

Intangible assets with a limited useful life, such as patents, copyrights, drawings, models and franchises, can be amortized over their useful life on a straight-line basis. If the life of intangible assets cannot be determined, the assets are amortized using the straight-line method at a rate of 10%.

In addition, for depreciation of natural resources (e.g., oil and gas) allowance for the depreciation is determined as follows:

- ▶ All exploration and development costs, including interest attributable to these costs, is added to the asset account of the resource
- ▶ The amount of the depletion for each natural resource that is deductible for a tax year is determined by multiplying the balance of the natural resource account with the ratio of the quantity produced from the natural resource during the year to the estimated total production from the natural resource.

The procedures for the determination of the estimated total production shall be provided by sub-decree.

Minimum tax

“Minimum tax” is a separate annual tax imposed at a rate of 1% of annual turnover inclusive of all taxes except value-added tax (VAT). If the TOP/CIT liability exceeds the amount of the minimum tax, the taxpayer is not liable for the minimum tax. In the event that the TOP/CIT is lower than the amount of minimum tax, a company is required to pay at least the minimum tax.

TOP/CIT returns and payments

Resident taxpayers must file annual TOP/CIT or minimum tax returns within three months after the end of the tax year.

Investment incentives

Investment incentives are applicable for so-called “qualified investment projects” (QIPs). To be a QIP and be entitled to investment incentives, a contractor will need to undertake investment registration with the Council for Development of Cambodia.

The investment incentives shall be determined as follows:

- ▶ There is exemption from minimum tax.
- ▶ TOP/CIT exemption and 1% prepayment tax on profit (monthly prepayments of tax on profits, which are each equal to 1% of monthly turnover inclusive of all taxes except VAT) during a tax exemption period. A tax exemption period is composed of a trigger period + 3 years + a priority period. The maximum trigger period is the first year of profit, or three years after QIP earns its first revenues (whichever is sooner).

- ▶ Use of a special depreciation allowance, or a tax exemption period if the QIP does not use its entitlement to TOP/CIT exemption. The maximum trigger period is the first year of profit or the third year after the QIP earns its first revenue, whichever is earlier. The priority period, which is specified in the Finance Law and varies by project, may have a duration of up to three years.
- ▶ Domestic QIPs shall be entitled to import duty exemption with respect to the importation of production equipment and construction materials. Where the domestic QIP is capable of exporting any portion of manufactured products, the QIP shall be entitled to import duty exemption only on the portion of imported raw materials that serve the exportation.
- ▶ Export QIPs other than those operating under a customs-bonded warehouse mechanism shall be entitled to import duty exemption with respect to production equipment, construction materials, raw materials, intermediate goods and production input accessories.
- ▶ There is 100% exemption of export tax, except taxes involving natural rubber, unprocessed precious stones, processed wood and aquatic products.

C. Withholding tax

Payments to resident taxpayers

Resident taxpayers carrying on a business in Cambodia must withhold tax from payments made to other resident taxpayers at the following rates:

| Description | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| Interest paid to recipients other than domestic banks and saving institutions | 15 |
| Royalties | 15 |
| Payments to individuals or non-registered taxpayers for services, including management, consulting and similar services | 15 |
| Rent paid for movable and immovable property | 10 |

Payments to nonresident taxpayers

Resident taxpayers must withhold tax at a rate of 14% on the following payments to nonresident taxpayers:

- ▶ Dividends
- ▶ Interest
- ▶ Royalties
- ▶ Rent and other income connected with the use of property
- ▶ Compensation for management or technical services (not defined)

In general, the above withholding taxes are considered to be final taxes. However, the withholding tax on rent paid to registered resident taxpayers may be offset against any liability for profits tax.

If withholding tax is not withheld from the recipient, it is borne by the payer. Accordingly, the withholding tax is not deductible for TOP/CIT purposes.

In addition, there is no “deemed interest” expense on loans recorded in the enterprise’s balance sheet from the tax authority to impose WHT, although there is record or no record of interest expense in income statement of the enterprise.

Withholding tax returns and payments

Resident taxpayers must submit withholding tax returns and remit withholding taxes to the tax authorities by the 15th day of the following month.

D. Indirect taxes

Export duties

Generally, the export of crude oil is subject to export duty at the rate of 10% upon exportation, but QIPs are exempted. For the details of exemption, see the subsection on investment incentives in Section B above.

Import duties

Import duties are levied on a wide range of products, with rates varying from 0% to 35%. For details of exemption, see the subsection on investment incentives in Section B above.

Specific Tax on Certain Merchandises and Services (STCMS)

STCMS is a form of excise tax that applies to the importation or domestic production of petroleum products. The rates of importation of petroleum products range from 4.35% to 10%. Crude oil is not subject to STCMS.

Value Added Tax

Cambodia's VAT applies to the business activities of Real Regime taxpayers making taxable supplies. Such businesses must charge VAT on the value of the goods or services supplied. VAT also applies on the duty-paid value of imported goods.

The standard rate of VAT is 10%. A 0% rate of VAT applies for goods exported from Cambodia and services consumed outside Cambodia; it also applies to enterprises in supporting industries and subcontractors that supply certain goods and services to exporters.

A resident taxpayer must complete a registration for VAT within 30 days after the date on which it becomes a taxable person. The filing of VAT returns and the payment of VAT due for a particular month must be made by the 20th day of the following month.

E. Financing consideration

According to Cambodia's tax regulations, a limitation of interest rate on loans obtained from banks and other enterprises shall be determined as below:

- ▶ For loans borrowed from third parties, the interest rate shall not exceed 120% of the market rate at the time of loan transaction
- ▶ For loans borrowed from related parties, the interest rate shall not exceed the market rate at the time of loan transaction

The "market rate" in this context is the average of interest rate for loans from at least five of the largest commercial banks in Cambodia and the "market rate" will be issued annually by the General Department of Taxation. Interest costs that are higher than the value indicated by the market rate shall be adjusted, and the excess amount shall be excluded from interest costs for TOP purposes.

The Market Interest Rate for 2014 is 10.15% per annum. This rate is an average of interest rate for loans from the eight largest commercial banks in Cambodia. Furthermore, the Market Interest Rate for loans denominated in Khmer Riel for the year 2014 is 13.52% per annum. This rate is an average of interest rate for loans denominated in KHR from the four largest local commercial banks in Cambodia.

In addition, deductions for interest are limited to interest income plus 50% of taxable profits, excluding interest income and expenses. The disallowed interest may be carried forward to subsequent years and deducted subject to the same limitations.

Furthermore, for loans as stated above, the enterprises shall notify and submit the agreements and other supporting documentation to the tax authority by at most 30 days after the loan transactions occurred. In the absence of notification to the tax authority and the supporting documents, a loan shall be considered as a loan without supporting documents, which will lead to an adjustment in calculating the taxable income of the company.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

- Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Cameroon's fiscal regime applicable to the upstream petroleum industry consists of Cameroon's General Tax Code, the Cameroon Petroleum Code and the production sharing contracts (PSCs) or concession agreements (CAs) concluded between the State of Cameroon and a "holder," which under the Cameroon Petroleum Code is a petroleum company or a consortium of commercial companies at least one of which is a petroleum company. The main taxes applicable in this sector are:

- ▶ Corporate income tax
- ▶ Annual surface rent
- ▶ Royalties on the production
- ▶ Additional petroleum tax
- ▶ Bonuses
- ▶ Stamp and registration duties

Once negotiations on a PSC or CA are concluded between the contractor and the State of Cameroon, the agreement is signed by the minister in charge of petroleum activities following approval of the Minister of Finance. Each PSC and CA is presented for approval to the President of Cameroon and, once approved, published in the *Official Journal* and registered in accordance with the conditions provided by the law.

The State has an option to participate directly or indirectly through a public entity in the joint venture agreement with the consortium. Usually, this participation will range from 5% to 25%. The State's share should equal a percentage of output as reduced by petroleum costs incurred by the contractor – i.e., a percentage of oil production profit. The share will vary in accordance with the daily average of total available production.

Corporate income tax

The corporate income tax rate is provided for in the PSC. It may vary from 38.5% up to a maximum of 50%.

Bonuses

There are typically two sorts of bonuses: signature and production.

A "signature bonus" is one that a holder pays to the State for the conclusion of a petroleum contract. A lump sum in US dollars is to be paid on the effective date of signature.

A “production bonus” is one that a holder pays to the State depending on the quantities of hydrocarbons produced. In this case, a lump sum in US dollars is to be paid at the start of production of hydrocarbon output, and a further lump sum in US dollars is to be paid when the cumulative amount of production since the start of the exploitation phase reaches a certain level specified in the PSC.

Royalties (only applicable to CA holders)

The tax base and royalty rate are provided for in the CA. Royalties are payable on a monthly basis.

Surface rent tax (only applicable to PSC holders)

An annual surface rent tax is levied in Cameroon. This tax is payable in cash each calendar year before 31 January, based on the surface area on 1 January each year or, for the first year, on the surface area on the effective date.

The relevant rates are:

- ▶ The first year – XAF1,750/m²
- ▶ The second year – XAF2,000/m²
- ▶ The third year – XAF3,500/m²
- ▶ The following years – XAF5,500/m²

Other allowances and incentives

See Sections C and D below for further details.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

Corporate income tax (CIT) is levied on the taxable profits of the contractor. “Taxable profits” amount to net profits arising from all upstream activities performed in Cameroon during the taxable period. “Net profits” represent the difference between the opening and closing value of net assets for the relevant year of assessment, less extra contributions, plus any amounts taken by associated companies during this period. Net profits are computed after deduction of all expenses that are necessary to perform upstream operations (as supported by relevant invoices), depreciation, reserves and losses, as applicable.

CIT is payable in cash, except where the State expressly requests settlement by means of a corresponding quantity of hydrocarbons. Except as otherwise provided for by the PSC, upfront CIT is due monthly. The monthly amount is 2.2% of the turnover of the previous month, and any remaining balance due for the fiscal year has to be paid before 15 March.

The Cameroon’s General Tax Code does not provide for profits from one project to be offset against losses from another project held by the same tax entity. Accordingly, each petroleum project should be accounted for separately.

Cost oil

“Cost oil” (or “reimbursement oil”) is the portion of the available production applied for reimbursement of petroleum costs. “Petroleum costs” are all expenses borne by the contractor within the framework of the PSC and determined in accordance with accounting principles.

Government share of profit oil

After the deduction of cost oil, remaining production volumes are shared between the State and the contractor according to the value of the ratio *R* as defined in the table on the next page. *R* represents the ratio of “net cumulated revenue” to “cumulated investments,” which are determined in accordance with the cumulated amounts from the effective date until the end of the calendar year. “Net cumulated revenue” is the cumulative value of the benefit after assessment of the corporation tax. “Cumulated investments” are the cumulative value of expenditure on research, evaluation and development.

| Value of <i>R</i> | Government share % | Contractor share % |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Less than 1 |% |% |
| From 1 to 2 |% |% |
| From 2 to 3 |% |% |
| Over 3 |% |% |

Non-recoverable expenditures

Non-recoverable expenditures are those considered by the PSC to be non-recoverable. They notably include payments made for the settlement of fees, charges or expenses not directly related to the petroleum operations or not necessary for the undertaking of these operations.

They include, for instance, payments made for:

- ▶ Signature bonuses
- ▶ Costs relating to the period prior to the effective date
- ▶ External auditing costs paid by the contractor within the framework of the particular relationship between the companies constituting the contractor
- ▶ Penalties

Annual surface rent

The payment of an annual surface rent is due as of the signature of the PSC or service contract. Based on a typical PSC, the annual surface rent is determined as follows:

- ▶ The first year – XAF1,750/m²
- ▶ The second year – XAF2,000/m²
- ▶ The third year – XAF3,500/m²
- ▶ The following years – XAF5,500/m²

This tax is payable in cash each calendar year on or before 31 January, based on the surface area on 1 January each year or, for the first year, on the surface area on the effective date.

Royalty regime and additional petroleum tax

Contractors under a CA are subject to payment of a monthly royalty on the free-on-board (FOB) value of hydrocarbons produced, to be paid in cash or in kind at the State's option. The rate, basis of calculation, declaration, settlement and recovery of this royalty are specified in the CA.

Contractors can be subject to an additional petroleum tax that is based on the profitability of the petroleum operations. The rate, basis of calculation, declaration, settlement and recovery of this additional tax are again specified in the CA.

Bookkeeping

Holders of petroleum contracts or businesses are required to establish a separate account for their petroleum operations for each fiscal year. This bookkeeping will enable the establishment of accounting for production and profits as well as a balance sheet highlighting the profits, assets and liabilities directly allocated to hydrocarbon operations.

Holders of petroleum contracts undertaking petroleum operations in Cameroon are permitted to carry out bookkeeping and accounting records in US dollars and to record their registered capital in this currency. The method for such accounting in US dollars will be detailed in the petroleum contract between the holder of the contract and the State of Cameroon.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Land and intangible assets are not depreciable for tax purposes. Other fixed assets may be depreciated on a straight-line basis at rates provided for under the PSC and the General Tax Code. The following are some of the applicable straight-line rates.

| Asset | Rate (%) |
|---|-----------|
| Buildings | 5 to 20 |
| Plant and machinery and transport equipment | 7.5 to 33 |
| Office equipment | 10 to 20 |

D. Incentives

Ability to carryforward losses

Under the General Tax Code, losses arising from petroleum operations may be carried forward for up to four income tax years; but the PSC may provide for a longer period. Losses may not be carried back.

VAT incentives

The supply of goods and services of any kind that are directly linked to petroleum operations are exempt from VAT.

Contractors' suppliers, subcontractors, services providers and affiliates are also exempt from VAT otherwise due on account of sales made, services rendered or work performed in connection with the contract.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends paid by a company incorporated in Cameroon to a nonresident are exempt from the tax on dividends, as provided for by the Petroleum Code.

Interest

A 16.5% withholding taxes (WHT) is imposed on interest paid on debt claims, bank deposits and guarantees to corporations that do not have their head office in Cameroon or to nonresident individuals.

However, the following interests are exempted: (i) interests paid in consideration for foreign loans of a maturity period of at least seven years are exempted from any withholding tax, and (ii) interests paid to non resident lenders in consideration for funds related to the development phase.

Royalties

WHT will be levied on remuneration paid to foreign companies or individuals providing services to the local company if the services are used in Cameroon and if the foreign entities have no professional installation in Cameroon. The rate of WHT is 15% of the gross amount. Companies engaged in drilling, research or assistance work on behalf of oil companies whose activity is deemed to constitute a permanent establishment may opt for this 15% deemed-profit tax. In this respect, they must formally renounce the common taxation regime and declare that they opt for the application of the withholding tax regime. They are still subject to withholding requirements as regards their local and foreign subcontractors and reporting obligations of the related transactions. Related invoices must indicate the gross amount paid and the 15% WHT applied.

Branch remittance tax

Except as otherwise provided for by international tax treaties, profits made by companies that do not have their head office in Cameroon are deemed to be

distributed to foreign entities (individual or corporate) that are not resident or do not have their head office in Cameroon. However, under the Petroleum Code, contractors are exempt from any tax on profits or income distributed.

Capital gains in relation to the assignment of interests

Capital gains deriving from the sale of participating interests in the PSC (farm-ins and farm-outs), shares of companies which own exploration or exploitation authorizations are subject to the capital gain tax at the rate of 16.5%. This also applies to indirect transfers.

The capital gain tax is withheld by the assignor. In case the transaction is done abroad, the resident company (i.e. the assignor) and the nonresident entity are jointly liable for the payment of the tax.

This tax is levied on the difference between the sale price of the assets and the cost price, or capital, if the cost price cannot be determined.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization limits

Interests on funds made available to the company by shareholders in addition to their capital contributions, regardless of the form of the company, are deductible within the limit of those calculated at the rate of the Central Bank increased by two percentage points. However, with respect to shareholders who directly or indirectly own at least 25% of the share capital or corporate voting rights, such deduction shall be possible only if:

- ▶ The sums made available by all the partners do not exceed two and half times the amount of the equity. Otherwise, interests on the excess amount shall not be deductible.
- ▶ The interests paid to the shareholders do not exceed 25% of profit before the application of the corporate tax and before deduction of the said interests and amortizations taken into account in determining such profit. Otherwise, the excess amount of interests shall not be deductible.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

Income realized through the transfer of certain classes of asset of the holder is offset against the balance of petroleum costs to be recovered.

Capital gains are taxed at the regular corporate rate, which may vary from 38.5% up to a maximum of 50%. However, the tax due can be deferred in the event of a merger. Capital gains deriving from the sale of a petroleum permit or an authorization, or a participating interest in a permit or authorization, are also subject to income tax on securities at the rate of 16.5%. Given that the seller is normally subject to CIT in Cameroon, the income tax on securities withheld at source by the buyer (as required by the law) will be considered as a tax credit for the seller with respect to the said CIT.

If the business is totally or partially transferred or discontinued, only one-half of the net capital gain is taxable, provided the event occurs less than five years after the start-up or purchase of the business, and only one-third of the gain is taxable when the event occurs five years or more after the business is begun or purchased.

The registration fees to be paid for asset disposals are:

- ▶ Transfer of exploration permit – XAF6 million
- ▶ Transfer of production permit – XAF250 million

A PSC may be terminated if all the assets are transferred.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Provisions relating to customs duties are identical for most contracts (PSC or CA). They usually provide that the designated contractor and its subcontractors are allowed to import into Cameroon any goods, materials, machinery, equipment and consumer goods that are necessary to carry out qualifying operations, in its own name or in the name of its subcontractors, as follows:

- ▶ The contractor or third parties acting on its behalf or its subcontractors may import without restriction all materials, products, machinery, equipment and tools under the regulations relating to temporary admission (AT) or temporary imports (IT), either normal or special, on condition that these goods are to be used exclusively for qualifying operations and that they can be re-exported at the end of their use.
- ▶ The contractor or third parties acting on its behalf or its subcontractors are allowed to import, without payment of duty, materials, products, machinery, equipment and tools to be used exclusively for oil prospecting and exploration in the specified area, provided these are listed in the Annex to Act No. 2/92-UDEAC-556 dated 30 April 1992.
- ▶ The contractor or third parties acting on its behalf or its subcontractors may be granted permission by the Ministry of Economy and Finance to import, at a reduced rate of duty of 5%, materials, products, machinery, tools and equipment that, although they do not meet the criteria in the first two bullet points, are necessary and required for production, storage, treatment, transport, shipment and transformation of hydrocarbons.

Export duties

There is no export duty applicable.

VAT

The supply of goods and services of all kinds that are directly linked to petroleum operations are exempt from VAT.

Ancillary activities that are not linked to petroleum operations will be subject to VAT at a rate of 19.25%.

Stamp duties

Stamp duties may be payable on the registration of various contracts concluded by an oil company.

Registration fees

Registration fees depend on the type of agreement concluded.

I. Other

Exchange controls

The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa Countries (CEMAC) Act, dated 29 April 2000, provides exchange control regulations that apply to financial transfers outside the "franc zone," which is a monetary zone including France and mostly French-speaking African countries. However, for the duration of the PSC, Cameroon authorities provide certain guarantees to the contractor for operations carried out within the framework of the PSC or CA, especially:

- ▶ The right to open a local or foreign bank account in local or foreign currencies
 - ▶ The right to collect, and maintain offshore, all funds acquired or borrowed abroad, including sales receipts, and to freely dispose thereof, to the extent these exceed the requirements of its operations in Cameroon
 - ▶ The right to repatriate capital invested under a PSC and to transfer proceeds relating to the capital – in particular, interest and dividends
 - ▶ The right to provide offshore payments to nonresident suppliers
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry in Canada consists of a combination of royalties and income taxation:

- ▶ Corporate income tax – federal corporate tax rate at 15% in 2015 and provincial corporate tax rates which vary from 10% to 16% depending on the province
- ▶ Royalties – Crown royalties applicable to crown lands, at a rate of 10% to 45%; special regime for oil sands and offshore production; freehold royalties vary from lease to lease
- ▶ Investment – IC-R&D¹ 15%

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

For Canadian income tax purposes, a corporation's worldwide taxable income is computed in accordance with the common principles of business (or accounting) practice, modified by certain statutory provisions in the Canadian Income Tax Act. In general, there is not a special tax regime for oil and gas producers.

Depreciation, depletion or amortization recorded for financial statement purposes is not deductible; rather, tax-deductible capital allowances specified in the Income Tax Act are allowed.

Oil and gas corporations are taxed at the same rate as other corporations. Corporations are taxed by the federal Government and by one or more provinces or territories. The basic rate of federal corporate tax is 25%, but it is reduced to 15% by an abatement of 10% on a corporation's taxable income earned in a province or territory. Provincial or territorial tax rates are added to the federal tax, and they generally vary between 10% and 16% of taxable income, depending on the province.

¹ IC: investment credit; R&D: research and development.

No tax consolidation, group relief or profit transfer system applies in Canada. Each corporation computes and pays tax on a separate legal entity basis. Business losses referred to as non-capital losses may be carried back 3 years and carried forward 20 years.

Gains resulting from a disposal of capital property are subject to tax. Capital gains or losses are determined by deducting the adjusted cost base of an asset from the proceeds of disposition. For corporate taxpayers, one-half of the capital gain (the taxable capital gain) is subject to tax at normal income tax rates.

Capital losses are exclusively deductible against capital gains and not against any other income. However, non-capital losses are deductible against taxable capital gains, which are included in taxable income. Capital losses can be carried back 3 years and forward indefinitely for use in future years, provided an acquisition of control has not occurred.

Oil and gas rights are not capital properties.

Royalties

Oil and gas producers are required to make royalty payments to the holder of the mineral rights. In Canada, the majority of the mineral rights are owned by the province, territorial or federal governments (the Government) or by First Nation.

Royalty payments to the Government are referred to as "Crown royalties." The computation of Crown royalties is fairly complex and varies from province to province because each province or territory has its own royalty regime. In general, computations are based on a function of well productivity and the wellhead price. Crown royalty rates typically range from 10% to 45%. Special tax and royalty regimes may apply to oil sands, the Arctic and Atlantic offshore production.

Indian Oil & Gas Canada (IOGC) is a regulatory agency responsible for managing and administering the exploration and development of crude oil and natural gas on First Nation reserve lands. IOGC assists First Nation with all stages of resource management. Subsurface rights are part of an Indian reserve; however the title to subsurface rights, including oil and gas, is held by the Crown in trust for the First Nation. As a result, a producer must obtain the necessary licenses and permits from IOGC when exploring and developing resources on First Nation land. Native reserve lands and the resources on them are a separate entity in Canada and are governed by the Indian Oil & Gas Act. Indian Royalties are also unique and are negotiated between the lessee and the Native Bands on a well by well basis. Unlike Canada, IOGC does not take oil in kind and all royalties are paid in cash.

Royalties paid on mineral rights that are privately owned are called "freehold royalties." These royalties are typically based on production, and the royalty percentage varies according to the freehold lease. Because the Crown does not receive royalties on freehold leases, "freehold mineral taxes" are levied by the Crown on freehold leases, and the tax is based on production.

Royalties are deductible in determining income tax.

Unconventional oil and gas

There are no special provisions or rules with respect to unconventional gas. For unconventional oil, see Section D.

C. Capital allowances

Oil and gas rights

The cost of oil and gas rights is accumulated in a pool called Canadian Oil and Gas Property Expense (COGPE). Each year, the pool is increased by the cost of new acquisitions and reduced by the proceeds from disposition of oil and gas rights and by deductions claimed from the pool. COGPE does not include the cost of any tangible or depreciable property, such as oil and gas machinery or equipment.

Deductions in computing income for income tax purposes for a taxation year may be claimed up to a maximum amount of 10% of the unclaimed COGPE balance. The deduction is discretionary, and unclaimed COGPE may be carried forward indefinitely in order to be claimed in future years.

Oil and gas exploration

The costs incurred to determine the existence, extent and location of oil and gas (such as seismic, geological, geophysical and geochemical expenses) and the cost of drilling a well that results in the discovery of a new oil and gas reservoir are accumulated in a pool called the Canadian Exploration Expense (CEE). Each year, the CEE pool is increased by new expenditures and reduced by the amount claimed from the pool. CEE does not include the cost of any tangible or depreciable property, such as oil and gas well machinery or equipment.

A deduction in computing income for income tax purposes for a taxation year may be claimed up to a maximum amount of 100% of the unclaimed CEE balance. The deduction is discretionary and unclaimed CEE may be carried forward indefinitely, to be deducted in future years. A corporation that carries on an oil and gas business cannot claim a CEE deduction in a taxation year if the deduction would create or increase a loss for tax purposes for that year.

Oil and gas development

The costs incurred to drill and complete an oil or gas well for the production of oil and gas are accumulated in a pool called the Canadian Development Expense (CDE). Each year, the CDE pool is increased by new drilling and completion expenditures, and reduced by deductions claimed from the pool. The CDE does not include the cost of any tangible or depreciable property, such as oil and gas well machinery or equipment.

Deductions in computing income for income tax purposes for a taxation year may be claimed to a maximum amount of 30% of the unclaimed CDE balance. The deduction is discretionary, and the unclaimed CDE may be carried forward indefinitely in order to be deducted in future years.

Foreign exploration and development

The costs incurred to acquire foreign oil and gas rights and the expenses incurred to explore or develop a foreign oil and gas property are accumulated in a pool called Foreign Resource Expense (FRE). A separate FRE pool must be maintained for all FRE expenditures for each particular country. FRE does not include the cost of any tangible or depreciable property, such as oil and gas well machinery or equipment.

A corporation that carries on an oil and gas business is permitted to claim a minimum 10% FRE deduction in a taxation year, regardless of whether it has any income from the foreign resource property for the year. The deduction for a particular taxation year may be increased to the lesser of 30% of the FRE pool for a particular country or the income for the year from the foreign resource property in that country. Unclaimed FRE may be carried forward indefinitely in order to be claimed in future years.

Well equipment

The acquisition cost for oil and gas well equipment used for the exploration, development and production of oil and gas is accumulated in a pool called Class 41. Each year, the Class 41 pool is increased by the cost of the acquisition of oil and gas well equipment. It is reduced by deductions claimed from the pool (capital cost allowances) and by the proceeds of disposition (up to the original cost) of the oil and gas machinery or equipment that was previously added to the pool.

Deductions in computing income for income tax purposes for a taxation year may be claimed up to a maximum amount of 25% on the unclaimed Class 41 pool balance. The deduction is discretionary, and the unclaimed Class 41 pool may be carried forward indefinitely in order to be claimed in

future years. Only one-half of the normal 25% deduction is allowed in respect of the additions in the year. Special available-for-use rules determine when the cost of oil and gas equipment is first available for the purposes of claiming a deduction.

D. Oil sands operations

The Canadian tax rules do not have a specific section that covers the taxation of oil sands operations. The tax treatment of oil sands project expenditures depends on a number of determinations, which are affected by factors such as the material being extracted and the type of operations involved.

The two most common types of oil sands operations are open-pit mining and in situ projects. In situ operations involve oil wells that can generally be compared with the oil wells used for conventional oil production. Open-pit mining is used to remove and process oil sands (to extract bitumen) at surface level, whereas in situ techniques are used when the oil sands are located at depths that are not economical to reach through surface mining.

The acquisition cost of an oil sands lease or other oil sands resource property is treated as COGPE for acquisitions after 21 March 2011. Prior to that date they were treated as CDE.

Expenses incurred for performing geological, geophysical or geochemical activities and for trenching, prospecting, digging test pits and preliminary sampling for an oil sands project may be eligible for treatment as CEE.

Costs incurred during oil sands development using an open pit mine or an in situ project for production will be CDE, unless the costs relate to new mines on which major construction began before 22 March 2011, in which case the costs will be split between CEE and CDE based on the ratio for the respective year.

Capital cost allowance (CCA) deductions are generally available for equipment acquired for oil sands operations at 25% on a declining-balance basis. Additional CCA (up to 100%) may be available for equipment acquired for an oil sands operation that constitutes a mine. This accelerated CCA (ACCA) is available to both open-pit mining and in situ projects. The Government announced on 19 March 2007 that ACCA for oil sands projects – both mining and in situ – will be phased out; that is, the current ACCA system will continue to be available in full for assets acquired before 19 March 2007, and assets acquired before 2012 that are part of a project phase on which major construction commenced by 19 March 2007. For assets that do not meet these criteria, the current ACCA will be progressively phased out until it is completely eliminated in 2015.

E. LNG operations

While Canada does not have current LNG exports, there has been a significant increase in activity in this area and a number of LNG projects are currently being proposed. With the expected growth in LNG exports, particularly from the west coast, the province of British Columbia (BC) has enacted a new tax on LNG activities (the “LNG Tax”). The new LNG Tax is a BC provincial tax separate from the BC income tax. LNG Tax applies for taxation years beginning on or after 1 January 2017 to profits from an “LNG source”, which is defined as liquefaction activities carried out at or in respect of a particular LNG facility in BC. The LNG Act distinguishes not only between an LNG source and a non-LNG source, but also between each particular LNG source. Thus, if a person has an LNG source and a non-LNG source, LNG Tax applies only to income from the LNG source; and if the person has more than one LNG source (i.e., the person undertakes liquefaction activities at or in respect of more than one LNG facility), LNG Tax applies separately on a non-consolidated basis to each LNG source.

Conceptually, LNG Tax applies only to a ring-fenced set of activities, from the input of feed gas to an LNG facility to the sale of LNG from the BC coast. If there is no actual transaction at these boundaries, sales or purchases (as applicable) are deemed to occur at amounts determined in accordance with specific transfer pricing rules.

The LNG Tax is a two-tier tax. A tier one tax of 1.5% applies to an LNG taxpayer's net operating income. A tier two tax of 3.5% (5% for taxation years beginning on or after 1 January 2037) applies to an LNG taxpayer's net income. While not addressed here, computations of "net operating income" and "net income" generally begin with the computation of net income for tax purposes but exclude significant items such as interest and depreciation. Tier one tax is creditable against tier two tax, such that the maximum aggregate LNG Tax payable will be at the tier two rate. LNG Tax is not deductible for federal or provincial income tax purposes under current legislation.

F. Incentives

Atlantic investment tax credits

Federal income tax payable may be reduced by investment tax credits (ITCs) of 10% of qualifying expenditures in the Canadian Atlantic (including the offshore area of the Canadian Atlantic). This ITC is being reduced to 5% for 2015 and then to nil after 2015. Qualifying expenditures include, among other things, the acquisition of machinery, equipment and buildings primarily for use in oil and gas exploration or production.

Unused ITCs may be carried forward for up to 20 years or carried back for up to 3 years in order to reduce the federal income taxes payable for those years.

The effect of the ITC is a reduction in the amount of income tax payable, as well as a reduction in the cost of machinery, equipment or buildings, thereby reducing the amount of the cost available for the CCA.

Scientific research and experimental development

Scientific research and experimental development (SR&ED) generally refers to systematic investigation or research carried out in a field of science or technology by means of experiment or analysis.

The treatment of SR&ED expenditures has the following special features:

- ▶ Current expenditures are accumulated in a special pool that can be deducted at a rate of 100% in the current year or in any subsequent year. No time limit applies for deducting these amounts.
- ▶ SR&ED current expenditures are also eligible for federal ITC of 15%.
- ▶ If these expenditures are carried out in the course of carrying on an oil and gas business in Canada, they are deductible when computing the income from that oil and gas business for income tax purposes.

Generally, SR&ED ITC are used to offset taxes otherwise payable. Unused SR&ED ITC may be carried backward for up to 3 years and forward for up to 20 years.

In addition to the federal SR&ED ITC, most provinces offer similar incentives on eligible expenditures, with ITC rates varying from 10% to 20%. In some cases, the ITCs that are not required to offset taxes otherwise payable are refundable.

G. Withholding taxes

Under the Income Tax Act, withholding taxes (WHT) are imposed at a rate of 25% on interest, dividends, royalties and certain other payments; however, such rates may be reduced under an applicable tax treaty.

Interest

Interest paid to arm's length nonresident persons is exempt from WHT (other than in respect of participating debt). Interest paid to non-arm's-length nonresident persons is subject to 25% WHT, unless the rate is reduced by an applicable treaty. Generally, the reduced treaty rate is either 10% or 15%; however, the Canada-US Income Tax Convention provides for a 0% WHT rate for interest paid to non-arm's-length US residents.

Dividends

Dividends paid to nonresidents are subject to 25% WHT, unless the rate is reduced by an applicable treaty. Generally, the reduced treaty rate is 15%. If the

nonresident shareholder is a corporation that has a substantial interest in the payer (usually defined as 10% of the votes and value), the dividend WHT rate is typically reduced to either 5% or 10%, depending on the applicable treaty.

Oil and gas royalties

Oil and gas royalties paid to nonresidents are generally subject to 25% WHT and this rate is not usually reduced under tax treaties.

Branch remittance tax

In general, repatriated branch profits (i.e., after-tax income, subject to an allowance for investment in Canadian property) are subject to an additional 25% tax. If a nonresident corporation that carries on business in Canada is resident in a treaty country, in most cases the branch profits tax rate is reduced by the applicable treaty to either 5% or 10%.

H. Financing considerations

Interest expense is generally deductible, provided that the interest is a reasonable amount and it is incurred pursuant to a legal obligation to pay interest on borrowed money or on an amount payable for property and provided that it is used for the purpose of earning income from a business or property. Canadian transfer pricing rules apply to the interest rate on a debt owed to a non-arm's-length nonresident.

Thin capitalization restrictions

Canada has thin capitalization rules that can disallow a deduction for interest payable by a Canadian corporation on debts owed to "specified nonresidents." These rules generally disallow a deduction for interest on the portion of the affected debt that exceeds one and a half times the Canadian corporation's equity. The calculation is determined using the monthly average of the greatest amount of the debts outstanding at any time in each calendar month in the relevant taxation year. A corporation's equity for this purpose is basically the aggregate of its retained earnings (deficits are ignored) at the beginning of the year and the monthly average of each of its contributed surplus and paid-up capital in respect of shares owned by specified nonresidents at the beginning of each calendar month.

Any disallowed interest under the thin capitalization rules will be deemed to be a dividend and subject to withholding tax applicable to dividends.

Generally, if the debt is not denominated in Canadian dollars, there may be tax consequences for the borrower from any foreign-exchange fluctuations (e.g., a gain or loss on the repayment of the principal amount of the debt).

Back-to-back loans

A new anti-avoidance provision was introduced that applies back-to-back loan arrangements aimed at financing transactions where a third party (e.g., a bank) is interposed between a Canadian borrower and a specified non-resident of the Canadian borrower to circumvent either or both the Canadian thin capitalization restrictions and Canadian withholding taxes of the Act. The new provision applies to interest payments made after 2014.

Where the anti-avoidance provisions apply, the applicable loan will be subject to the thin capitalization rules and the withholding rate on the interest payments will be subject to the higher of the actual withholding rate and the withholding rate that would apply if the loan were made by the first lender.

I. Transactions

Many transactions in Canada involve the acquisition of shares of a corporation or interests in a partnership, as opposed to a direct acquisition of operating assets. This trend is generally driven by the differing tax consequences of each type of transaction for the vendor. On the sale of a capital property (such as shares or partnership interests), only one-half of the capital gain is included in taxable income in Canada. However, the sale of operating assets can give rise to

income, 100% of which is included in taxable income in Canada and capital gains (as discussed in further detail below). Having a mix of income and capital gains on a sale of assets generally results in a higher effective tax rate on an asset sale versus a sale of capital property.

Share acquisitions

There are no stamp duties or similar taxes payable in Canada on the acquisition of shares.

Since there are no tax consolidation rules in Canada, most share acquisitions are completed using a special-purpose Canadian acquisition company, which is formed by the purchaser to acquire the shares of the target company.

The purchaser capitalizes the acquisition company with debt (subject to the thin capitalization restrictions noted) and equity. Subsequent to the acquisition of the shares of the target company, the acquisition company and the target company are amalgamated. The purpose of the amalgamation is to ensure that the interest expense paid on the debt incurred by the acquisition company is deductible against the income of the target company. Since there are no tax consolidation rules in Canada, if the amalgamation is not completed, the interest expense incurred by the acquisition company would not be available to offset the income of the target company.

Generally, no rules allow for a step-up of the inside tax basis of the assets of the target company upon acquisition of the target company's shares. However, when the acquisition company and the target company amalgamate, an opportunity arises to step up to fair market value the tax cost of non-depreciable capital property owned by the target company at the date of the acquisition (usually shares of subsidiaries or partnership interests), provided that certain qualifying conditions are met.

Shares in a private corporation and any other shares not listed on a designated stock exchange are taxable Canadian property, including shares of nonresident companies whose value is more than 50% attributable directly or indirectly to Canadian oil and gas properties and other Canadian real property at any time in the 60-month period preceding the sale. The sale of this type of share can give rise to a Canadian income tax liability for a nonresident vendor. To ensure that nonresidents pay tax due in respect of a sale of taxable Canadian property, the nonresident vendor must provide the purchaser with a certificate issued by the tax authorities. The certificate is granted when appropriate arrangements are made to ensure payment of any tax liability. If the certificate is not provided, the purchaser must withhold and remit to the tax authorities 25% of the purchase price, whether or not any tax would be payable by the vendor on the sale. It is not necessary to obtain a certificate with respect to shares that are listed on a recognized stock exchange.

If a share purchase results in an acquisition of control, certain tax consequences apply for the acquired company, including a deemed tax year-end and restrictions on the availability of tax losses and the deductibility of FRE, CEE, CDE and COGPE.

Asset acquisitions

Generally, no land transfer taxes are imposed on the purchase of oil and gas assets.

The allocation of the purchase price among the various assets acquired has Canadian tax implications for both the vendor and the purchaser. For the vendor, the manner in which the purchase price is allocated may result in the recapture of CCA claimed in prior years, the realization of income upon the sale of intangible oil and gas rights (see above) and, in some cases, capital gains on the sale of capital property. For the purchaser, the value attributed to the various assets forms the cost of such assets. Therefore, to accelerate deductions from the taxable income that will be generated from the business in future years, the purchaser may wish to allocate as much of the purchase price as possible to depreciable property (in most cases, eligible for Class 41, which

is a 25% declining-balance pool) rather than to oil and gas rights (in most cases, classified as COGPE, a 10% declining-balance pool). The allocation is a matter of negotiation between the parties, and the values attributed to the assets should generally form part of the purchase agreement.

Most assets used by a nonresident vendor in a Canadian oil and gas business are taxable Canadian property and are usually not treaty-protected property. In these circumstances, the purchaser is therefore generally required to withhold and remit to the tax authorities 50% of the purchase price if the nonresident vendor does not have a certificate from the tax authorities authorizing a lesser withholding rate.

J. Indirect taxes

Goods and services tax and harmonized sales tax

The goods and services tax (GST) (harmonized sales tax (HST) in certain provinces) is a federal value-added tax (VAT) that applies at each point of a supply made in Canada and certain imports into Canada.

Taxable supplies made in the provinces of Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Ontario is subject to HST at a rate of 13%. Taxable supplies made in the provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are subject to HST at a rate of 15% and 14% respectively. Supplies made in all other provinces and territories of Canada are subject to GST at a rate of 5%.

The importation of products and equipment into Canada is subject to GST, which is payable by the importer of record to the Canada Border Services Agency.

Certain supplies, such as goods sold for subsequent export and services provided to nonresidents of Canada, are zero-rated. This means that GST/HST applies to the transaction, but at a rate of 0%. Documentation that evidences the export, and in some situations a declaration letter provided by a GST-registered exporter, is required to support the zero-rating.

Certain goods and services are exempt from GST, such as most supplies made by charities and financial institutions. Oil and gas businesses are not typically involved in making exempt supplies.

GST/HST paid on purchases and imports is recoverable by a registrant that purchases the goods or services for use in commercial activities. "Commercial activities" includes a business carried on by a registrant, other than to the extent to which the business involves making exempt supplies. Oil and gas businesses are typically engaged in commercial activities.

A nonresident is required to register for GST/HST if it makes taxable supplies in Canada in the course of a business carried on in Canada. The term "carrying on business" is not defined under the Excise Tax Act.² Several factors are considered in determining whether a nonresident carries on business in Canada. Generally, a nonresident must have a significant presence in Canada to be considered to be carrying on business in Canada. Even if a nonresident does not carry on business in Canada, it may choose to register voluntarily if it expects to pay a significant amount of GST/HST to its suppliers or on importation (although it should be noted that the nonresident must meet certain conditions to register voluntarily). A voluntary registration will allow a nonresident person to recover the GST/HST paid on purchases that are acquired for consumption, use or supply in the course of its commercial activities.

If a nonresident does not have a permanent establishment in Canada through which it makes supplies, it will be required to post security with the Canada Revenue Agency in order to register for GST/HST. The security ranges from CAD\$5,000 to CAD\$1 million. The security is based on 50% of the absolute value of the expected net GST/HST payable or recoverable over the course of the first year of registration.

2 *The Excise Tax Act is the statute that governs GST/HST.*

Except for rights supplied to consumers³ and to non-registrants that acquire the right in the course of the business of supplying these rights to consumers, the supply of natural resources property rights is not deemed to be a supply. Therefore, any consideration paid or due, or any fee or royalty charged or reserved in respect of these rights, is not deemed to be consideration for GST/HST purposes and thus does not attract GST/HST. This provision applies to most (but not all) property interests that form the legal basis of Canada's major resource industries (i.e., oil and gas, mining, forestry). For all practical purposes, this treatment has the same effect as zero-rating. The rights covered by this provision include:

- ▶ A right to explore for or exploit: a mineral deposit (including oil and gas); a peat bog or deposit of peat; or a forestry, water or fishery resource
- ▶ A right of entry or use relating to the right to explore
- ▶ A right to an amount computed by reference to the production (including profit) from, or to the value of production from, any such deposit, bog or resource

Oil and gas businesses often explore for and operate oil and gas resource properties as joint ventures with other oil and gas companies. If a written joint venture agreement exists between the joint venture participants, and the participants complete an election, the operator can account for the GST/HST collected on the sales and claim an input tax credit for the GST/HST paid on purchases on its own GST/HST return. Furthermore, where the election is in place, the operator does not need to charge GST/HST to the other participants on the joint venture interest billings.

Provincial sales taxes

Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia each impose a provincial sales tax (PST) on sales and imports of tangible goods and on some services for consumption in those provinces. The PST rates as of 1 January 2015 are as follows: Saskatchewan at 5%, Manitoba at 8% and British Columbia at 7%. In those provinces, PST will apply in addition to the federal GST of 5%. Alberta does not have a provincial sales tax, so only GST at the rate of 5% applies to supplies made in that province.

In general, persons are required to register for PST if they make regular supplies of taxable goods or services in a province to the end users and they carry on business in the province. Once registered, persons must collect PST on all taxable goods and services they deliver in that province.

PST is imposed on the purchaser. Thus, even if PST is not charged by the vendor, it must be self-assessed by the purchaser on any taxable purchases. PST is non-recoverable unless it is paid in error.

Goods acquired for the purpose of resale are not subject to PST.

Each province also provides various exemptions in respect of certain goods and services. For example, Saskatchewan and BC provide exemptions or rebates for certain oil and gas exploration and production equipment, certain processing materials and certain services in respect of oil and gas exploration and well servicing. LNG equipment and facilities are not expected to be exempt from PST in BC.

Some goods are conditionally exempt (e.g., where exemption is based on the person's use, status or intent to resupply the goods rather than the nature of the goods themselves). In these circumstances, the vendor is required to obtain certain documents from the purchaser. The documents that are required to satisfy this condition vary by province.

3 *"Consumer" is defined by the Excise Tax Act as a "particular individual who acquires or imports the property or service for the particular individual's personal consumption, use or enjoyment or the personal consumption, use or enjoyment of any other individual at the particular individual's expense."*

Other indirect taxes

If a business imports, refines or sells refined fuel products, it may be required to register for and remit federal excise tax and provincial fuel taxes. In many provinces, businesses that use natural gas they produce to power their own compressors are required to self-assess fuel tax on their consumption of natural gas.

British Columbia imposes a carbon tax on various fossil fuels consumed in the province, including natural gas that is flared or used to power compressors. The carbon tax rate varies, based on the type of fossil fuel used. Some of the other provinces also levy a carbon tax in certain circumstances on certain fossil fuels.

There may also be customs duties on the import of certain types of goods and equipment into Canada. The duties are payable to the Canada Border and Services Agency, together with the import GST by the importer of record.

The federal government and many provinces levy a tax on the payment of insurance premiums to non-resident insurers with respect to risk that is located in Canada or the respective province.

K. Other

Canada has a concessionary type of fiscal regime, whereby private ownership of resources is permitted. Oil and gas in Canada typically belongs to the province in which the resource is located. Rights to explore, develop or produce oil and gas in a province are obtained by acquiring a petroleum or natural gas lease or license from the province or from another party that holds such a lease or license. As is typical with most concessionary fiscal regimes, the initial owner of the resource (usually a government) leases or licenses the right to take petroleum or natural gas from the lands but retains a royalty interest in the production.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Chad's fiscal regime applicable to the upstream petroleum industry consists of:

- ▶ The Chadian Petroleum Code (Law No. 006/PR/2007 dated 2 May 2007 pertaining to hydrocarbons)
- ▶ Ordinance No. 001/PR/2010 dated 30 September 2010, which approved the standard production sharing contracts (PSC) and modified and completed the provisions of the above mentioned law regarding petroleum operations
- ▶ The standard production contract (hereafter referred to as the Model PSC)
- ▶ The PSC and concession agreements (CA) concluded between the state of Chad and contractors (the oil companies)
- ▶ The Chadian Tax Code

Fiscal regime under a PSC

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – not applicable
- ▶ Royalties on crude oil – Rate set by the PSC, provided that it is not less than 14.25% nor greater than 16.5%
- ▶ Royalties on natural gas production – Rate set by the PSC, provided that it is not less than 5% nor greater than 10%
- ▶ Cost stop (as defined below) – 70%
- ▶ Cost recovery principles – Ring-fence according to the Model PSC (negotiable) and the principle of LIFO (last in, first out)
- ▶ Tax oil (as defined below) – Cannot be less than 40% and varies according to a profitability ratio (the R-factor)
- ▶ Surface rent tax – Annual contribution as agreed in the PSC (non-recoverable cost)
- ▶ Exceptional tax on capital gains resulting from assets assignments – 25%
- ▶ Withholding tax (WHT) – On payments made to nonresidents for services provided in the country as described below
- ▶ Dividends – Exempt
- ▶ Interest – Exemption for interest paid to nonresident lenders
- ▶ L¹ – VAT exemption
- ▶ Signature bonus – As agreed in the PSC
- ▶ Bonus for the awarding of an exclusive exploitation authorization – As agreed in the PSC

1 L: Ability to carry forward losses.

Fiscal regime under a CA

In practice, such contracts are no longer concluded.

Legal regime

The Chadian Petroleum Code provides for two types of regimes: the concession regime and the PSC regime. However, since the issuance of Ordinance No. 001/PR/2010 dated 30 September 2010, all of the conventions and agreements concluded between the State and contractors have followed the PSC regime, based on the Model PSC approved by this Ordinance.

Under this regime, the contractor undertakes petroleum activities on behalf of the State but at the contractor's sole and full risk. The contractor is not entitled to be granted a mining title. Exploration operations are undertaken pursuant to an exclusive exploration authorization granted to the contractor for a maximum period of five years, renewable once for three years. The exclusive exploration authorization provides exclusive rights to undertake exploration activities within the contractual zone. In a case of a commercial discovery, the State grants to the contractor or the consortium (as appropriate) an exclusive exploitation authorization for a maximum period of 25 years that is renewable once for 10 years.

Upon the award of any exclusive exploitation authorization, the State is entitled to require the assignment of a stake up to a maximum of 25% of the rights and obligations attached to the exclusive exploitation authorization. Pursuant to Article 16 of the Ordinance of 30 September 2010, the participation of the state is fully carried by the oil company for a threshold of 10% of the participation. The State is co-owner of the exclusive exploitation authorization to the extent of its participation.

The contractor is responsible for financing all petroleum costs. In return, as from the date of production start-up, the contractor is entitled to recover these petroleum costs by receiving a quantity of hydrocarbons known as "cost oil," which cannot exceed 70% of production per year. The remaining production, known as "profit oil," is shared between the State and the contractor. The share for the State in the profit oil, referred to as "tax oil," cannot be less than 40% of the profit oil and varies according to a profitability ratio (the R-factor).

The ownership of any property purchased or acquired by the contractor for the purpose of carrying out petroleum operations is transferred to the State free of charges. However, the contractor is reimbursed through the cost recovery mechanism discussed below.

PSCs are negotiated with reference to the Model PSC approved by law. They are signed by the minister in charge of petroleum activities, approved by an Act of Parliament and published in the *Official Gazette*.

B. Fiscal regime (under a PSC)

Corporate income tax

Chadian corporate income tax (CIT) is charged at a rate of 35%.

Pursuant to Article 15 of the Ordinance of 30 September 2010, a contractor is not subject to any other taxation other than the taxation that is provided by the Ordinance and the Model PSC.

According to Article 47.1.2.d of the Model PSC, the contractor (the oil company or the consortium that jointly holds the exclusive exploitation authorization) is exempt from CIT – Article 47.2.1 of the Model PSC provides that the share for the State via the tax oil mechanism is the equivalent of CIT. A tax clearance is delivered to the contractor upon payment of the tax oil to certify that this tax oil is the equivalent of the CIT and that there is no need for the contractor to pay any additional CIT or direct tax on profits.

The contractor must nevertheless file a yearly tax return for its petroleum operations within three months following the end of the tax year (i.e., before 1 April).

Net profits arising from the operations carried out by the contractor in Chad that do not form part of petroleum operations are subject to CIT in accordance with the common law and shall be held in separate accounting from the petroleum operations accounting.

Royalty regime

Contractors are subject to a monthly royalty on production at a rate agreed in the PSC. The Model PSC provides that the rate ranges from 14.25% to 16.5% for crude oil and from 5% to 10% for natural gas.

The royalty on crude hydrocarbons shall be payable at the State's option, either in cash or in kind.

Contractors must file a monthly production statement, together with supporting documents, that sums up the total production of the previous month, including, but not limited to:

- ▶ The net hydrocarbon production (total hydrocarbon production minus water, sediment and the quantities of hydrocarbons used for petroleum operations)
- ▶ The quantity of hydrocarbons allocated to the payment of the royalty, as measured at the measurement point, regardless of whether such royalty is paid in cash or in kind
- ▶ The quantity of hydrocarbons allocated for the reimbursement of the petroleum costs
- ▶ The quantity of hydrocarbons delivered at the delivery point, which is the quantity of hydrocarbons to be exported

The summary should mention separately the quantity of crude hydrocarbons and the quantity of natural gas.

Each royalty is required to be paid by the 15th day of the month following the relevant month. When the royalty is paid in cash, the amount is assessed based on the ex-field market price.

Royalty is not a recoverable cost under the PSC.

Cost recovery

Contractors are entitled to receive a part of the net production (after deduction of the royalty) for the purpose of recovery of their petroleum costs. The production to be allocated to the recovery or reimbursement of the petroleum costs cannot exceed 70% of net production (after deduction of the royalty).

The petroleum costs shall be reimbursed in the following order of priority:

- ▶ Exploitation costs (opex)
- ▶ Development costs
- ▶ Exploration costs
- ▶ Provisions that are determined to cover abandonment operations

Non-recoverable expenditures

Some expenditures or costs are not recoverable. Examples include:

- ▶ Expenses relating to the marketing and transportation of the hydrocarbons beyond the delivery point
 - ▶ Gifts, donations and subsidies, except those approved by the Chadian State
 - ▶ Gifts and discounts granted to suppliers, as well as gifts and discounts granted to intermediaries used in the frame of supplies or services contracts
 - ▶ Fines, confiscations and penalties of all kinds arising from consortium transactions in contravention of the legal, economic or fiscal provisions of the convention
 - ▶ Any other expenses that are not necessary for the performance of petroleum operations or are considered indirect, unreasonable or excessive
 - ▶ Surface rent tax
 - ▶ Signature bonus and the bonus for the award of an exclusive exploitation authorization (although in certain contracts these are recoverable)
-

Surface rent tax

Contractors are liable to the payment of an annual surface rent tax on the basis of the surface area as provided for in the PSC.

The surface rent tax is payable annually and in advance, based on the situation as at January of the current year, and must be paid to the Public Treasury by 31 March of the relevant year.

Exceptional tax on capital gains relating to assignment of interests

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Ordinance of 30 September 2010, capital gains resulting from any assignment by a contractor of any authorization to undertake petroleum operations under the PSC and related assets shall be subject to a special 25% tax, which shall be payable by the assignor pursuant to the terms and conditions set forth in the Model PSC. In practice, however, the special tax applies only to assignments of exclusive exploration authorizations or assets and interests deriving from such authorizations. Under PSCs, there is an exemption for capital gains resulting from the transfer of assets under an exclusive exploitation authorization (farm-in and farm-out during the exploitation period). Inter-affiliated companies' assignments are also exempt from this tax.

This special tax is levied on the difference between the sale price of the assets and the cost price of the relevant assets. The tax is payable within 30 days from the issuance of the assignment authorization by the state.

Flat amount on prospecting, exploration and exploitation of oil and gas

Pursuant to Article 68 of Law no. 006/PR/2007 dated 2 May 2007 pertaining to hydrocarbons, the request for attribution, renewal, transfer and renouncement to a petroleum authorization or permit should be subject to the approval of the Minister of Energy and Petroleum. Such approval is granted after the payment of a lump sum set as follows:

- ▶ US\$50,000 for the issuance and the renewal of the prospecting authorization
- ▶ US\$50,000 for the issuance, renewal, prorogation and division of an exclusive exploration authorization or an exploration permit
- ▶ US\$1 million for the transfer of an exclusive exploration authorization or an exploration permit
- ▶ US\$500,000 for the issuance and renewal of an exclusive exploitation authorization or an exploitation permit
- ▶ US\$3 million for the transfer of an exclusive exploitation authorization or an exploitation permit

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

VAT incentives

The supply of goods and services of all kinds that are directly linked to petroleum operations are exempt from VAT. A list of exempted goods and services is included in the PSC.

D. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends paid by a company incorporated in Chad to a nonresident are exempt from taxation as provided by the Petroleum Code.

Interest

Any interest paid to lenders that are nonresident, from a Chadian fiscal point of view, shall be exempt from any WHT.

Payments made abroad

Withholding tax applies to the following types of services provided in Chad but only insofar as such withholding is prescribed by the Chadian General Tax Code:

- ▶ technical, financial and accounting services
- ▶ a share of general and administrative expenses relating to operations carried out in Chad
- ▶ equipment or material rental
- ▶ supplying information of an industrial, commercial, scientific or technical nature
- ▶ any services provided to a contractor by any other contractor, subcontractor or affiliate

For the purposes of the application of the relevant withholding rules, “technical, financial and accounting services,” as well as “general and administrative expenses,” shall have their respective common law meanings.

E. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization limits

Interest paid to shareholders for funds made available to the company in addition to their capital contributions, regardless of the type of the company, is fully deductible to the extent that

- i. The rate applied does not exceed the Chadian Central Bank’s rate plus two points.
- ii. The interest is calculated on the portion of loan no higher than half of share capital.

However, intercompany interests bearing loans (loans granted by sister companies) are not tax deductible as from 1 January 2015.

International tax treaties signed with the Chadian State could provide for specific provisions related to the deductibility of interest on loans.

F. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Provisions regarding customs duties are identical for most contracts. They usually provide that the person designated as the “contractor,” as well as its subcontractors are allowed to import into Chad any goods, materials, machinery, equipment or consumer goods that are necessary to carry out qualifying operations in their own name or in the name of their subcontractors. The following rules apply:

- ▶ The material intended exclusively for petroleum exploration and exploitation will be exempt from all taxes and customs duties.
- ▶ Equipment, merchandise and appliances intended for the petroleum exploration and exploitation work sites will be placed under the normal temporary admission regime.
- ▶ Work site vehicles, specialized or not, will be placed under the temporary admission regime; company vehicles and vehicles for personal use will be subject to the general legal regime without exemption; airplanes and their spare parts and consumable materials required for petroleum exploration and exploitation, as listed in an appendix of the PSC, will be exempt from all taxes and customs duties.

Export duties

The Chadian Petroleum Code provides that contractors will be exempt from any taxes and duties while exporting.

VAT

As noted above, the supply of goods and services of all kinds that are directly linked to petroleum operations is exempt from VAT. A list of exempted goods and services is usually enclosed with the CA. Ancillary activities that are not linked to petroleum operations will be subject to VAT at a rate of 18%.

No separate registration process is necessary for VAT purposes. VAT registration will be included in the registration for tax purposes with the Chadian tax administration. There is no threshold minimum value of supplies; registration for tax purposes will be required for all resident entities.

Registration fees

Registration fees depend on the type of the agreement concluded. Contractors are exempt from registration fees relating to the incorporation of any company in Chad and from any capital increase.

G. Other

Exchange control

The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa Countries (CEMAC) Act (Act No. 02/00/CEMAC/UMAC/CM), dated 29 April 2000, provides for exchange control regulation that applies to financial transfers outside the franc zone, which is a monetary zone including France and mostly French-speaking African countries. However, for the duration of the CA, Chadian authorities provide certain guarantees to the contractor for the operations carried out within the framework of the CA, notably:

- ▶ The right to obtain financing from abroad necessary for the conduct of the petroleum operations; to receive and to maintain abroad all funds acquired or borrowed abroad, including income from sales; and to dispose of them freely insofar as funds exceed the requirements of their operations in Chad and of their fiscal and contractual obligations
 - ▶ Free movement of funds belonging to it, free of all taxes and duties, between Chad and any other countries
 - ▶ The right to repatriate the capital invested within the framework of the CA and to transfer income from such capital – in particular interest and dividends – although the state shall have no obligation to provide foreign currency
 - ▶ Free transfer of amounts payable, as well as the right to receive amounts of any nature that are payable to them, subject to making the necessary declarations required by the regulations
 - ▶ The right to direct payments abroad to foreign suppliers and services required for the petroleum operations
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

As a general rule, the oil and gas industry is subject to the same general tax regime and tax regulations as any other industry in Chile. However, pursuant to Article 19, No. 24, Subsection 10 of Chile's Political Constitution, the exploration, exploitation or benefits arising from deposits or oil fields that contain substances that are not freely traded may be carried out by means of administrative concessions or through special operating contracts or agreements. According to the foregoing, there is a special regime applicable to the exploitation of hydrocarbons, being an exception to the above-mentioned general rule.

This special regime is contained in Decree Law No. 1.089 of 1975, which regulates the granting, subscription, rights, obligations and tax treatment of the operating agreements (Contrato Especial de Operaciones para la Exploración y Explotación de Hidrocarburos, or special operating agreements for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, also known as CEOP) by means of which private contractors may carry out the exploitation of hydrocarbons.

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate (standard regime) – 22.5% for 2015; (2016: 24%, afterwards, the rate will depend on the elected tax regime. 2017: Attributed system (14A) - 25%, or Semi-integrated system (14 B) - 25.5%; CY 2018 onwards: Attributed system (14A) - 25%, or Semi-integrated system (14 B) - 27%)
- ▶ Special tax regime applicable to CEOP – 50% of gross revenues
- ▶ Tax on capital gains – 22.5%-35%
- ▶ Withholding tax (WHT):
 - ▶ Dividends – 35%
 - ▶ Interest – 35%; 4% when paid to registered Foreign Financial Institution (FFI) and within 3:1 debt-equity ratio
- ▶ Royalties (patents, trademarks, formulas and similar items) – 30%
- ▶ Technical services and professional services – 15%-20%
- ▶ Other fees and compensation for services rendered abroad – 35%
- ▶ Net operating losses (years):
 - ▶ Carryback – Unlimited (until 31 December 2016, after which carry back ceases to exist). From 1 January 2017, no longer available.
 - ▶ Carryforward – Unlimited
- ▶ VAT – 19%

B. Fiscal regime

Special operating agreements for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons

These agreements may be subject to the standard income tax regime or to a special regime under which a 50% tax is assessed on gross revenues for the relevant CEOP. Notwithstanding the foregoing, and regardless of the tax regime applicable to the CEOP, the President of Chile may grant reductions to all or some of the taxes contained in the Income Tax Law, equivalent to 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% of the taxes imposed, in particular circumstances (e.g., if the exploration or exploitation areas are difficult to access, if there are no double taxation agreements in force between Chile and the country from which the investment comes, or when other terms of the CEOP are too burdensome for the contractor).

When hydrocarbons are transferred to the contractor under the respective CEOP, they are exempt from all taxes and duties, including export taxes. However, according to Decree Law 1.089 the remuneration of foreign subcontractors that are domiciled abroad and that have entered into a CEOP will be subject to a 20% tax rate, applied to the total amount of the remuneration, and will substitute any other direct or indirect tax that may be levied upon the remuneration of the subcontractor. The President of Chile may grant a reduction of the above-mentioned tax equivalent to 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70% or 75% of the same.

Finally, under the provisions of Decree Law No. 1.089, companies engaged in oil exploration or exploitation activities are eligible for VAT and customs reductions ranging from 10% to 100% on certain items, including imported machines, materials and spare parts. These reductions are granted by the President of Chile by means of enacting a Supreme Decree.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in practice almost all of the companies acting as contractors or subcontractors in a CEOP are subject to the standard tax regime.

Specific oil and gas tax

According to Law No. 18.502, a specific tax is applied to natural compressed gas and liquefied gas used in vehicular consumption, automotive gasoline and diesel.

With respect to natural compressed gas and liquefied gas, this tax will be levied upon its sale in Chilean territory. The same tax will be applicable when the distributor, producer or importer of these gases sells them directly for vehicular consumption or in order to supply fuels to vehicles exploited by them.

With regard to automotive gasoline and diesel, the tax will be accrued when they are sold for the first time or when imported into the country, and levied upon the producer or the importer.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Corporate tax

General considerations

CIT is imposed on accrued net income. Chilean resident companies are subject to CIT (first-category tax) on their worldwide income. Companies are considered resident if they are incorporated in Chile. The income of a Chilean branch of a foreign corporation will be determined by considering the results for its attributable business in Chile compared with that abroad.

The income of corporations, limited liability companies and foreign branches is assessed in two stages: first, when the income is accrued and second, when the profits are distributed to shareholders or partners or else, in the case of branches, when they are withdrawn or remitted abroad. The corporate tax is credited against the tax on profits distributed to partners or shareholders.

Tax rates

The current CIT rate for profits generated in the calendar year 2015 is 22.5%. In addition, a WHT of 35% applies to profits distributed to nonresident individuals and corporations; however, CIT paid by the distributing entity is creditable against the WHT.

D. Tax payments and income tax return

Financial statements must be prepared as of 31 December of each year for income tax purposes. Income tax returns must be filed in April of the following year.

Provisional monthly payments (PPM) with respect to the final annual income tax liability must be made on a monthly basis. The amount payable is determined as a percentage of gross receipts accumulated during the corresponding month. If the company has losses in a given year, PPM can be suspended during the following quarter. PPM will continue to be suspended if losses continue in the quarters thereafter.

E. Foreign tax relief

Income tax paid in other countries may be credited against Chilean CIT liabilities up to an amount equivalent to the lower of:

- ▶ the taxes paid abroad
- ▶ 30% of the foreign source income – although the total foreign tax credit can never exceed 30% of the Chilean company's net foreign source income

Foreign tax relief may also be available under double tax treaties currently in force in Chile with the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and the United Kingdom. Chile has signed tax treaties with Austria, South Africa and the United States, which are awaiting ratification by the Chilean Congress.

The tax treaty with Argentina as from 2013 is no longer in force. The rest of the tax treaties are based on the OECD model; they generally eliminate double taxation by allowing a credit system for Chile and a deduction mechanism for the other party.

F. Determination of taxable income

Taxable income, determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, includes all profits, with the exception of specified items that are not considered income for tax purposes. Dividends received by resident companies from other resident companies are exempt from tax.

Taxable income is determined on the basis of profits or losses disclosed in the financial statements prepared at the company's year-end.

Inventories

For inventory valuation, the first in, first out (FIFO) method and the weighted-average cost method are accepted by law.

Expenses

As a general rule, all necessary expenses for producing income, duly proven and justified, may be deducted in determining taxable income.

Likewise, Chilean taxes, except for those contained in the Income Tax Law, are deductible. Foreign taxes that are not creditable in Chile are not treated as deductible expenses. In the case of VAT, whenever VAT cannot be reclaimed, it is a deductible cost or expense.

Depreciation and amortization allowances

Depreciation of tangible fixed assets is tax deductible. Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method on the estimated useful life of the assets, without considering a residual value.

The tax authority has established the following normal periods of depreciation:

| Assets | Years |
|---|----------|
| Solid buildings | 40 to 80 |
| Semi-solid buildings | 20 to 40 |
| Buildings of light materials | 10 |
| General installations | 10 |
| Machinery and equipment | 15 |
| Cars, pickups, station wagons and buses | 7 |
| Trucks | 7 |

Taxpayers may apply the accelerated-depreciation method. This allows the calculation of depreciation as straight-line depreciation based on a useful life for an asset equivalent to one-third of the normal useful life established by the Chilean tax authorities. Accelerated depreciation can be applied to new goods acquired locally or imported goods, provided that the useful life exceeds three years.

The difference between normal and accelerated depreciation must be recaptured on any profits distributed to nonresidents.

Goods that become unusable before the end of their expected useful life may be depreciated at twice the rate that was originally expected.

Research and development (R&D) expenses may be deducted entirely in the year they are owed or paid, or they can be amortized over six consecutive years.

Annual depreciation rates must be applied after the revaluation of fixed assets according to the monetary restatement rules (see below).

Monetary restatement

The Income Tax Law contains provisions designed to prevent the taxation of profits created by inflation. These provisions, known as “monetary restatement,” require taxpayers to revalue certain assets and liabilities annually based on changes reflected in the consumer price index (CPI)¹ and the foreign-exchange rates.

In order to make an inflation adjustment, a distinction is made between monetary and non-monetary assets and liabilities. Only non-monetary assets and liabilities in existence at the balance sheet date are adjustable by inflation. Equity is considered non-monetary.

Relief for losses

Losses must first be carried back to offset undistributed profits of prior years and then may be carried forward indefinitely.

However, where there is a change in ownership, tax losses may not be deducted from the company's taxable income.

G. Issues related to foreign companies

International loans and thin capitalization rules

The overall tax burden on repatriation of equity is 35%. Yet foreign investors frequently use thin capitalization financing for their Chilean projects to benefit from a reduced 4% WHT on qualifying interest payments (provided that the interest was paid to a foreign bank or to a foreign financial institution). Nevertheless, a change in the Income Tax Law provided that, from 1 January 2003, a 31% rate would be applied in addition to the 4% rate on those interests that arise from “excess indebtedness” in related-party transactions.

¹ The National Statistics Institute fixes Chile's monthly CPI.

A company is in an “excess indebtedness” position when its overall debt² is greater than three times its equity (the 3:1 ratio). The company’s equity is calculated as of 1 January of the fiscal year when the debt was contracted, or the date the activities commenced, as the case might be, adjusted by the increases (or decreases) in equity capital. The share in the income of subsidiaries or affiliates by the company paying the interest is also added to (or deducted from) this calculation.

Services, duties, patents and technical assistance

In general, payments for services provided abroad made to entities not domiciled in Chile are subject to a 35% WHT.

The payment of duties, patents and assistance is subject to a 15% or 30% WHT, depending on the specific nature of the service. However, the 15% rate is only available if the service is not provided between related parties or if the payment is not made to a tax haven – in which case the rate is 30%.

Also, a 15% rate applies for technical assistance, engineering and professional services, whether provided in Chile or abroad, unless the service is provided between related parties or payment is made to a tax haven – in which case the rate is 20%.

The tax treaties subscribed to by Chile under the OECD Model establish reduced rates for services provided by an entity of a contracting state, or even exemption if the income qualifies as a business profit.

Capital gains

Capital gains derived from the sale of a local entity (be it a Chilean corporation or a partnership) are subject to corporate income tax as the sole tax if the following conditions are met:

- ▶ The shares were owned for at least one year
- ▶ The seller is not habitually engaged in the sale of shares
- ▶ The parties to the transaction are not related

If any one of these conditions is not met, the 35% general rate applies to the amount of capital gain.

Sales of shares of companies listed on the stock exchange are exempt from income tax under certain conditions. In addition, under certain double tax treaties the general rate may be reduced.

According to the tax reform, a transfer between two foreign companies that takes place abroad but that includes underlying Chilean assets (i.e., shares, social rights, bonds, among others) may constitute a taxable event in Chile, depending on the magnitude of the underlying Chilean assets in the total price of the transfer.

H. Transfer pricing

As from 2013 transfer pricing rules have been modified in order to follow OECD principles and standards. In this regard, the arm’s length principle must be complied with when there are transactions between related parties. The tax law now defines what should be understood as “related” parties, and it contains and individualizes the methods that may be applied by tax payers within the “best method rule.” Transfer pricing studies are not mandatory, but are advisable.

Advanced pricing agreements (APAs) are also included under this new legislation. Taxpayers must file a sworn statement every year in order to inform the Chilean tax authorities of all transactions carried out with its related parties. The differences determined by the Chilean tax authorities in related transactions are taxed with a 35% tax, plus penalties.

2 *Following the Tax Reform approved and published on 29 September 2014, from 1 January 2015 all debt is now considered to determine the ratio, not just foreign-related debt subject to 4% withholding tax, as was the case with the previous rule.*

Charges between companies

The reimbursement of specific expenses incurred by a foreign company in relation to activities of a Chilean agency can be deducted from taxes by the agency. General unspecified charges are unacceptable.

I. Taxation on payments to persons or entities not domiciled in Chile

Profit distributions out of Chile are subject to taxation, as indicated in Section A above. Other payments to nonresident entities are subject to Chilean taxes, to the extent that they are Chilean source income. Exceptional services rendered abroad are also subject to Chilean taxation. Applicable rates are listed below in Section J.

J. Special additional tax rates

- ▶ Interest payments on loans paid to foreign banks or financial institutions: 4%
- ▶ Payments for the use of trademarks, patents, formulas, assistance and other similar services: 15%/30%
- ▶ Payments for engineering services, technical assistance and professional services rendered in Chile or abroad: 15%/20%
- ▶ Fees paid for ocean freight to or from Chilean ports: 5%
- ▶ Payments for leases, lease purchases, charter parties or any other contract that contemplates the use of foreign vessels for coastal trading: 20%

Foreign taxpayers who suffer WHT on profit and dividend distribution are entitled to a tax credit equal to the first-category tax rate paid on income withdrawn, distributed or remitted. This credit must be added in the calculation of the tax base for the WHT. Starting 1 January 2017 foreign shareholders will be entitled to 100% of that tax credit only if they are located in a country with a double tax treaty with Chile currently in force, or if the Chilean entity in which they have invested is subject to the attributed system (whereby the taxes are levied on accrual basis). If not, only a 65% of such credit should be available.

The following examples illustrate the above:

| | |
|--|--------|
| Chilean company's income | 100 |
| Corporate tax (first-category tax) | (22.5) |
| Income distributed to foreign parent company | 77.5 |
| WHT base (additional tax) | 100 |
| WHT determined | (35) |
| Corporate tax credit | 22.5 |
| WHT payable | (12.5) |
| Available to foreign parent company | 65 |

K. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT applies to sales and other transactions regarding tangible personal property, as well as to payments for certain services. It also applies to certain real estate transactions. The standard VAT rate is 19%. VAT is imposed under a debit-credit system.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in China mainly consists of production sharing contracts (PSC), special oil gain levies, VAT, resource tax and corporate income tax (CIT).

- ▶ Special oil gain levy – Calculated in accordance with a formula in circumstances where the monthly average weighted price per barrel of crude oil sold is greater than US\$40 per barrel before 1 November 2011, US\$55 per barrel before 1 January 2015 and US\$65 per barrel from 1 January 2015
- ▶ Royalties – 0% to 12.5%, not applicable to PSCs concluded after 1 November 2011
- ▶ Bonuses – Signature bonuses are defined in the PSC and take into account the volume of petroleum resources and the economic value of the field
- ▶ Production sharing – Based on production volumes
- ▶ Income tax rate – 25%

- ▶ VAT – 17% (general rate)
- ▶ Resource tax – 6% of the sales price, where sales revenue is collected from 1 December 2014
- ▶ Mineral resources compensation fee – Zero of the sales revenue from oil and gas production from 1 December 2014
- ▶ Investment incentives – Qualified research and development (R&D) expenditure can be deducted at 150% of the actual expenses

B. Fiscal regime

Foreign petroleum companies are permitted to participate in and operate the exploration, development and production of petroleum resources in China by entering into PSCs with the Chinese Government or its designated Chinese national petroleum companies.

Special oil gain levy

As of 26 March 2006, a revenue windfall levy is charged on all oil production enterprises (both domestic and foreign) that sell crude oil produced in China. According to the Ministry of Finance, the revenue windfall levy applies regardless of whether the crude oil is sold within or outside China. The revenue windfall levy is charged whenever the weighted-average price of crude oil sold in any month exceeds US\$40 per barrel for months before 1 November 2011, US\$55 per barrel for months before 1 January 2015 and US\$65 per barrel for months after 1 January 2015.

The revenue windfall levy, if applicable, is paid monthly and filed quarterly. The amount of revenue windfall levy payable per barrel is calculated according to the formula:

$$\text{Special Oil Gain Levy} = (\text{Monthly weighted-average price per barrel of crude oil sold} - \text{US\$65}) \times \text{Rate of levy} - \text{quick calculation deduction}$$

The progressive rates and quick calculation deduction amounts are as follows:
US\$65 per barrel for months ending after 1 January 2015

| Crude oil price (US\$/barrel) | Rate of levy | Quick calculation deduction (US\$/barrel) |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| 65-70 (inclusive) | 20% | 0.00 |
| 70-75 (inclusive) | 25% | 0.25 |
| 75-80 (inclusive) | 30% | 0.75 |
| 80-85 (inclusive) | 35% | 1.50 |
| Above 85 | 40% | 2.50 |

Petroleum royalties

Petroleum royalties are administered and collected by the tax authorities under the relevant rules pronounced by the Ministry of Finance. Payments are made in kind with the crude oil and natural gas produced.

Sino-foreign¹ PSC onshore petroleum operations in Qinghai, Tibet and Xinjiang provinces and Sino-foreign PSC offshore petroleum operations are subject to petroleum royalties, as shown below:

| Annual gross output of crude oil (thousand metric tons) | Royalty rate |
|---|--------------|
| Portion not exceeding 1,000 | 0.0% |
| Portion between 1,000 and 1,500 | 4.0% |

1 Involving collaboration between a Chinese state-owned oil company and a foreign oil company.

| Annual gross output of crude oil (thousand metric tons) | Royalty rate |
|---|--------------|
| Portion between 1,500 and 2,000 | 6.0% |
| Portion between 2,000 and 3,000 | 8.0% |
| Portion between 3,000 and 4,000 | 10.0% |
| Portion exceeding 4,000 | 12.5% |

| Annual gross output of natural gas (cubic meters) | Royalty rate |
|---|--------------|
| Portion not exceeding 2 billion | 0% |
| Portion between 2 billion and 3.5 billion | 1% |
| Portion between 3.5 billion and 5 billion | 2% |
| Portion exceeding 5 billion | 3% |

Sino-foreign PSC onshore petroleum operations other than those located in Qinghai, Tibet and Xinjiang provinces are subject to a different set of petroleum royalties, as shown below:

| Annual gross output of crude oil (thousand metric tons) | Royalty rate |
|---|--------------|
| Portion not exceeding 500 | 0.0% |
| Portion between 500 and 1,000 | 2.0% |
| Portion between 1,000 and 1,500 | 4.0% |
| Portion between 1,500 and 2,000 | 6.0% |
| Portion between 2,000 and 3,000 | 8.0% |
| Portion between 3,000 and 4,000 | 10.0% |
| Portion exceeding 4,000 | 12.5% |

| Annual gross output of natural gas (cubic meters) | Royalty rate |
|---|--------------|
| Portion not exceeding 1 billion | 0% |
| Portion between 1 billion and 2.5 billion | 1% |
| Portion between 2.5 billion and 5 billion | 2% |
| Portion exceeding 5 billion | 3% |

Pursuant to the resource tax regulations issued in 2011, Chinese and foreign parties to onshore/offshore PSCs shall pay resource tax instead of royalties. Where a PSC for oil and gas exploitation is concluded before 1 November 2011, the taxpayers shall still follow the existing petroleum royalties regime during the effective period of the PSC. The taxpayers, who are mainly Chinese and foreign parties on cooperative upstream oil and gas projects, shall start to pay resource tax (instead of royalties) upon expiry of the PSC.

Signature bonus

A signature bonus is a lump-sum payment made by a petroleum entity to the Government for the right to exploit the petroleum resource. The amount may be defined by the Government based on the volume of petroleum resources and economic value of the field. The signature bonus is payable upon signing a PSC.

Chinese national petroleum companies who receive a signature bonus from foreign petroleum companies may treat it as an increase of registered capital, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Finance and the State Administration of Taxation.

Resource tax

According to the regulations on resource tax issued by the State Council on 30 September 2011, companies engaged in the exploitation of natural resources in China are liable to pay resource tax. The tax rate for crude oil and natural gas is 5% before 1 December 2014 and 6% from 1 December 2014, based on the sales price. The sales price shall be determined on the same basis as for VAT purposes, i.e., the total consideration plus any other charges. However, the sales price shall not include the output VAT collected.

Oil and gas used by taxpayers in the continuous production of oil and gas are not subject to resource tax. Tax exemptions and reductions are also available in the following situations, subject to the approval of the tax authorities:

- ▶ Full exemption for oil and gas extracted and used in heating the heavy oil in transporting heavy oil inside the oil fields
- ▶ 40% exemption for the extraction of heavy oil, high pour point oil and high sulfur gas
- ▶ 30% exemption for tertiary recovery
- ▶ 20% exemption for oil and gas extracted from low abundance oil (gas) field
- ▶ 30% exemption for deepwater oil (gas) field

Mineral Resources Compensation Fee

According to the newly issued Notice regarding the Adjustment of Certain Resource Tax Policies on Crude Oil and Natural Gas by the State Administration of Taxation and Ministry of Finance, starting from 1 December 2014 mineral resources compensation fee levied on oil and gas is reduced to zero.

Production sharing

Production sharing is based on the production volume that is termed “annual gross production.” A PSC defines the percentage of total production to be used for cost recovery and the sharing of the Government and the PSC participants in the “profit production.”

Annual gross production net of all revenue levies and revenue taxes (such as special oil gain levy, resource tax and VAT) is used for calculating “cost recovery” and profit production. In general, cost recovery for offshore PSCs and onshore PSCs is from 50% to 62.5% and 60%, respectively (with deemed interest cost recovery on development costs).

The cost recovery mainly involves the recovery of the following expenses and expenditure in the sequence below:

- ▶ Petroleum royalties (replaced by resource tax for PSCs concluded after 1 November 2011)
- ▶ Production and operating expenses
- ▶ Exploration expenditure
- ▶ Development expenditure
- ▶ Deemed interest cost recovery on development costs, currently 9%

The remainder is automatically added to the pool for profit production.

Profit production is shared between the Government and the PSC participants based on the allocation factor stipulated in the PSC.

Ring fencing

In China, there is no clear definition of “ring fencing” for PSC participants – meaning that PSC participants do not need to determine the tax base or the amount of tax separately for each PSC activity.

According to China’s income tax law, if the taxpayer is conducting activities in multiple provinces, it can report corporate income tax at its principal place of

business on a consolidated basis, as long as its report is examined and approved by the State Administration of Taxation (the highest level of China's tax authorities). The principal place of business should satisfy the following conditions simultaneously:

- ▶ Overseeing the business and operations of other entities or establishments
- ▶ Setting up books and documents capable of accurately reflecting revenue, expenses, costs and profits or losses of each entity or establishment

If the contractor has more than one contract, it can offset the tax losses generated by one or more contracts against the profits resulting from other contracts. Theoretically, from a tax administration perspective, the onshore and offshore contracts need to be separately registered with different levels within China's tax authorities.

Corporate income tax

Petroleum companies are taxed at the rate of 25% on their taxable income according to the Enterprise Income Tax Law. Taxable income equals assessable income less deductions. Net operating tax losses may be carried forward for 5 years to offset future taxable income. Carryback of losses is not allowed.

Taxable income is defined as total revenues less non-taxable income, tax-exempt income, deductible expenses and tax losses. For PSC petroleum operations in China, deductions may typically include payments of revenue-based taxes and levies (including special oil gain levies and VAT levied at a rate of 5%), petroleum royalties or resource tax, deductible production and operating expenses, tax amortization of exploration expenditure and tax amortization of development expenditure.

All necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in carrying on a business are deductible for tax purposes, except for advertisement and sales promotion expenses, entertainment expenses, union fees, employee welfare costs and employee education expenses, which are subject to specified deduction thresholds. Qualified R&D expenditure may be deducted at 150% of the actual expenses. Charitable donations within 12% of the total annual profit are deductible.

The allocated management fee by head office is disallowed to be deductible for CIT purpose under the prevailing China income tax regulations. However, the reasonable service fee incurred by the head office can be deductible provided that such expenses are actually incurred and supported by proper documents. It is a requirement to provide contemporaneous transfer pricing documents when the inter-company charges exceed the required threshold.

Provisions that have not been approved by the tax authorities are in general not deductible, such as various provisions and allowances for asset impairment and risk reserves.

Foreign tax credit

A foreign tax credit (FTC) is allowed for foreign income taxes paid, or indirectly borne, by China resident enterprises, but the credit is generally limited to the amount of China CIT payable on the foreign-sourced portion of an enterprise's worldwide taxable income and must be calculated on a country-by-country basis. For dividend income derived from overseas subsidiaries, FTCs would be allowed within three tiers, provided the qualified shareholding percentage requirement is met.

Special FTC treatment has been granted to Chinese oil companies under Caishui [2011] No. 23, which extends the FTCs from dividend income derived by Chinese oil companies up to five tiers (for foreign-sourced income derived from the investment activities, construction service and technical service of oil and gas exploration projects overseas). In addition, Chinese oil companies are able to select either the country-by-country method or general deduction method. The general deduction method (or combined method) only applies to a specific class of worldwide income – i.e., foreign-sourced income relating to the exploration of crude oil and relevant technical services (upstream-related activities).

Once a calculation method is adopted, no changes can be made for five years. The balance of creditable foreign tax and FTC limit calculated for prior years can be carried forward and credited in the remaining years, according to the China CIT Law.

Abandonment expenses

The actual incurred abandonment expense is deductible for China CIT purposes, but it should be netted against the provision made. The new regulation of Guojia shuiwuzongju (2011) No. 22 (Notice 22), issued by the State Administration of Taxation, provides the following detailed regulations, which were effective from 22 April 2011.

Registration of abandonment plan

Expenses incurred on abandonment of offshore oil and gas production facilities cover expenditure on disposal, removal and environment restoration of offshore oilfields and the related preparatory works. According to Notice 22, an operator of the oil field should prepare and register the detailed provisional abandonment plan for offshore oil and gas production facilities with its competent tax bureau before it starts deducting the provision for abandonment expenses.² The provisional abandonment plan should cover an estimation of abandonment costs, funding arrangements and methods to dispose of the facilities.

Before the company implements the abandonment of the oilfield, the implementation plan for the abandonment should be registered with the competent tax bureau.

Provision for abandonment expenses and tax treatment

Provision for abandonment expenses should be made on a monthly basis in the month after the relevant oil field enters into commercial production. The provision should be made based on the "production method" or "straight-line method" in accordance with the proposed abandonment plan. Such provisions would be managed as a special fund and would be deductible for CIT purposes.

Under the straight-line method, the formula would be:

$$\text{Monthly provision for abandonment expenses} = (\text{total estimated abandonment expenses} - \text{accumulated provision for abandonment expenses}) / \text{PSC contract production period (in months)} - \text{gain or losses of designated account for abandonment expenses for current month}$$

Under the production method, the formula would be:

$$\text{Monthly provision for abandonment expenses} = (\text{total estimated abandonment expenses} - \text{accumulated provision for abandonment expenses}) \times \text{current month's provision ratio} - \text{gain or losses of designated account for abandonment expenses for current month}$$

$$\text{Current month's provision ratio} = \text{current month's actual production} / (\text{current month's actual production} + \text{closing proved exploitation reserves})$$

where "gain or losses of designated account for abandonment expenses" includes interest income and foreign-exchange gain or loss in relation to the designated account

Use of abandonment expenses provision

Upon implementation of the abandonment plan, the actual incurred abandonment expenses would be netted against the provision made. If there is any unused provision after completion of the abandonment plan, the provision balance should be added back to the taxable income of that year. However, any abandonment expenses incurred in excess of the provision made would be deductible from the taxable income of that year.

² According to Circular [2010] No. 1305, jointly issued by the Ministry of Finance and other authorities, provision for abandonment expenses should start to be made in the month following the month in which the oil field commenced commercial production.

Management of abandonment expenses provision

The provision and use of abandonment expenses should be accounted for in RMB. Any foreign-exchange gain or loss should be taken into account in calculating the provision to be made.

The provision for abandonment expenses should not be used for other purposes. Otherwise, the amount used for other purposes where a tax deduction has been claimed should be added back for income tax purposes.

Service contracts

Foreign contractors that provide services to a petroleum company in China are liable to pay Chinese taxes, including corporate income tax, business tax/VAT and some other local levies.

Corporate income tax is payable at the standard tax rate of 25% of actual profits derived by a foreign contractor or on the imputed profits agreed upon between a foreign contractor and the tax authorities.

A rate of 17% for VAT generally applies to productive oil and gas field services provided by oil and gas field enterprises established by Chinese national petroleum companies. From 1 August 2013, the qualified productive oilfield services can be entitled to a reduced 6% VAT when certain conditions are met. In practice, the Chinese tax authorities use their discretion to determine whether the relevant services are qualified oilfield services that are entitled to the reduced VAT rate.

Foreign companies that provide productive oilfield services in relation to the exploitation of natural resources in China are subject to a 3% business tax under the nature of construction activities. The construction industry will likely be included in the VAT scope by 2015, considering that the VAT pilot reform is expected to be completed by end of the 12th Five-Year Plan period.

The company engaged in the provision of productive labor services in relation to coal bed gas and shale gas are subject to VAT (and might be entitled to a reduced 6% VAT under the VAT pilot regime).

The petroleum company that receives the services is deemed to be the tax-withholding agent.

Tax on engineering, procurement and construction contract in China

Under the China turnover tax regime, an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract is not administered as one single contract. The engineering and construction parts of the contract will be taxed as business tax liable activities at 5% (or 6% VAT applicable in the specific cities and provinces under the current VAT pilot regime) and 3% of the gross contract portion, respectively. The procurement part of the contract will be taxed as a sale of goods under China VAT at 17%, allowing the input VAT to be offset against the output VAT. It is worth noting that the ongoing VAT reform may alter this treatment in the future, and the whole contract could become subject to VAT once the reform is fully implemented across China. In terms of income tax, the cost/expense incurred for the implementation of the EPC contract is an allowable deduction for CIT purposes.

Unconventional oil and gas

The Chinese government issued a Shale Gas Industry Policy in October 2013, which states that the government will continue to increase financial support for shale gas exploration and extraction. The policy includes five items, such as designating shale gas as one of the nation's strategic emerging industries, providing subsidies for shale gas producers, encouraging provincial governments to subsidize local producers, tax reductions or exemptions for producers and customs tariff exemptions for imported equipment.

Upon approval by the Government, shale gas projects can be exempt from the Mineral Resources Compensation Fee and from royalties. Other tax incentives on resource tax, VAT and corporate income tax for shale gas projects will be issued in the near future.

Upon approval by the Ministry of Finance and the National Energy Administration, unconventional oil and gas projects can be entitled to a specific national financial subsidy.

C. Capital allowances

Amortization of expenditure on acquisition of oil (gas) field interests and exploration expenditure

Under Circular 49, qualified expenditure on the acquisition of oil (gas) field interests and exploration expenditure incurred by a petroleum company can either be expensed against production income generated from other oil (gas) fields that the company owns in China or be capitalized and amortized on a straight-line basis against production income generated from the oil (gas) field for which the expenditure was incurred. The minimum amortization period of the exploration expenditure is three years, starting from the month during which commercial production commenced.

Expenditure on the acquisition of an oil (gas) field (oilfield acquisition expenditure) includes all necessary expenditures incurred in obtaining the exploration right.

Exploration expenditure may include the drilling of appraisal wells, feasibility studies, the preparation of an overall petroleum development program, and other work to identify petroleum reserves and to determine whether the reserves have commercial value. Exploration expenditure may also include expenses incurred for scientific research and training for the development of petroleum resources in China.

Any remaining oilfield acquisition expenditure and exploration expenditure balance that is not yet amortized can be expensed if the operations cease as a result of a failure to discover any commercial oil (gas) structure. Net operating tax losses may be carried forward for five years to offset against future taxable income. Carryback of losses is not allowed.

If the exploration drilling expenses incurred result in fixed assets and the relevant oilfield enters into commercial production, the unamortized exploration drilling expenses should be reclassified as development expenditures for depreciation purposes.

Depreciation of development expenditure

Under Circular 49, qualified development expenditures may be depreciated on a straight-line basis against production income generated from the oil (gas) field for which the expenditure was incurred, subject to a minimum period of not less than 8 years starting from the month during which commercial production commenced. If the operation of an oil (gas) field is terminated, the residual value of the development assets would be recognized as a loss and be deductible for CIT purposes in the year of termination. Net operating tax losses may be carried forward for five years to offset against future taxable income. Carryback of losses is not allowed.

Development expenditure includes activities such as design, construction, installation, drilling and the corresponding research work, performed during the period starting from the approval date for the overall petroleum development program up until the commencement date for commercial production. Expenditures, including all investments – either tangible or intangible (and including fixed assets acquired) – that have been made during the period of development operations should be capitalized, based on each individual oil (gas) field.

D. Investment incentives

In an effort to support oil and gas drilling, the Chinese government has issued tax exemption incentives for drilling programs in China. During China's 12th Five-Year Period, which started on 1 January 2011 and ends on 31 December 2015, oil and gas drilling projects on specially appointed land and sea areas will be exempt from import duties and import VAT on equipment, instruments, accessories and special-purpose tools that domestic companies are unable to manufacture and that are directly used in exploration and exploitation. The exemptions are valid within quotas for free imports.

Tax-exempt drilling programs include projects on deserts and barren beaches in Chinese territory, land blocks jointly exploited by Chinese and foreign companies under the permission of the Chinese government, inland seas, territorial waters, continental shelves, and other maritime resources under China's jurisdiction.

E. Withholding taxes and double tax treaties

Remittance of dividends, interest, royalties and rental is subject to withholding tax (WHT) at a rate of 10%. WHT is due at the time the remittance is made or at the time the relevant transaction and costs are recorded in the accounting books of the Chinese payer, whichever is the earlier.

The treaty WHT rates for dividends, interest and royalties varies depending on the particular country. Generally speaking, dividend, interest and royalty WHT rates vary between 5% and 10%.

F. Financing considerations

According to the new income tax regime, interest expenses paid on bank loans used to finance taxable operations are generally deductible. Interest expenses paid on loans borrowed from related parties other than a financial institution are also deductible. The deduction is subject to the arm's length principle and generally should be subject to a debt-to-equity ratio of 2:1. Please note that PSCs are not subject to the thin capitalization regime (i.e., the deductibility of interest is not subject to a 2:1 debt-to-equity ratio).

Deemed interest cost recovery on development costs is not deductible for income tax purposes.

G. Transactions

Disposal of PSC interest

Gains, if any, derived from the disposal of an interest in a PSC are taxable in China. Taxable gains are equal to the disposal proceeds less the remaining balance of exploration and development expenditure that has yet to be amortized for tax purposes. Costs incurred for acquiring an interest in a PSC may be claimed as qualified exploration and development expenditure and are eligible for tax amortization according to the relevant tax rules.

H. Indirect taxes

Customs duties

The importation of tangible goods (including equipment and materials) into China for the purpose of petroleum exploration, development and production is subject to customs duties. However, this arrangement is subject to the availability of special import incentives, as discussed in Section D).

VAT

VAT is payable at a rate of 5% on the crude oil and natural gas produced from an oil (gas) field operated under a Sino-foreign PSC.

The purchase of goods (including equipment and materials) supplied in China is subject to VAT, generally at the standard rate of 17%. After the full implementation of VAT reform on 1 January 2009, input VAT associated with the purchase of fixed assets is deductible against output VAT unless the taxpayer is subject to the special VAT exemption regime as discussed in Section D.

Local levies

To unify the city construction tax (CCT) and education surcharge (ES) treatments applicable to foreign enterprises (FEs), foreign investment enterprises (FIEs), domestic enterprises and individuals, on 18 October 2010 the State Council announced circular Guofa [2010] No. 35 to resume the collection of CCT and ES from FEs, FIEs and foreign individuals from 1 December 2010, who had been exempted from these local levies for more than 20 years. On 7 November 2010 the Ministry of Finance released another circular, Caizong [2010] No. 98, regarding the unification of the local education surcharge (LES) on all parties subject to turnover tax in China. LES is a separate local levy from CCT and ES, but these three levies share the same tax base, i.e., the turnover taxes (VAT, business tax and consumption tax) actually paid by taxpayers.

The applicable rates of the local levies:

- ▶ CCT – 7% of the PRC turnover taxes for a taxpayer in a city; 5% of the PRC turnover taxes for a taxpayer in a country town or town; 1% of the PRC turnover taxes for a taxpayer in a place other than a city, country town or town
- ▶ ES – standardized as 3% of the PRC turnover taxes
- ▶ LES – standardized as 2% of the PRC turnover taxes

SAT issued a special tax circular (SAT Circular [2010] No. 31) on 30 December 2010 to reconfirm that foreign oil companies participating in upstream petroleum production are liable to pay CCT as well as ES. CCT and ES are levied at their respective applicable rates on the 5% flat rate VAT payment made by the foreign oil company. The applicable CCT rate is 1% for a foreign oil company participating in an offshore oil production project.

Circular No. 31 does not clarify whether a foreign oil company would also be liable to pay LES. Assuming that LES would also be payable, extra indirect tax costs to an offshore oil production project would be equivalent to 6% of the VAT payments, adding CCT, ES and LES together, whereas the extra indirect tax costs to an onshore oil production project could be equivalent to 12% of the VAT payments should the project be located in a city.

I. Other

Transfer pricing

China has introduced transfer pricing rules that require all fees paid or charged in business transactions between related parties to be determined based on an arm's length standard. If the parties fail to meet this requirement, the tax bureau may make reasonable adjustments by using one of the following methods:

- ▶ Comparable uncontrolled price (CUP)
- ▶ Resale price method (RPM)
- ▶ Cost plus method (CPM)
- ▶ Transactional net margin method (TNMM)
- ▶ Profit split method (PSM)
- ▶ Other methods that are consistent with the arm's-length principle

The new income tax regime recognizes the concept of cost-sharing arrangements. Taxpayers may also apply for advance pricing agreements (APAs) in China.

General anti-avoidance rules

The new income tax regime has introduced general anti-avoidance rules that require any tax planning to have a “business purpose.”

The controlled foreign corporation (CFC) rules have also been introduced to counter planning based on income deferral. Under the new rules, a CFC’s retained earnings are subject to current Chinese taxation if the earnings are retained overseas without a reasonable business purpose.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in to the oil industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), corporate income tax for equality (CREE); CREE surtax and royalty-based taxation.

Royalties¹

| New oil and gas discoveries after Law 756 issued in 2002: field daily production (monthly average in barrels of crude per day) | Percentage |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Up to 5,000 | 8 |
| 5,001 to 125,000 | 8 + [(production – 5,000)*0.10] |
| 125,001 to 400,000 | 20 |
| 400,001 to 600,000 | 20 + [(production – 400,000)*0.025] |
| More than 600,000 | 25 |

Royalties for gas exploitation are obtained by applying the following percentages on oil royalties:

| Location | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Onshore and offshore below 1,000 ft depth | 80 |
| Offshore more than 1,000 ft depth | 60 |

¹ Law 756 entered into force on 25 July 2002 (Official Diary No. 44,878). Law 1530, issued on 17 May 2012, modified some aspects of Law 756.

Royalties on unconventional hydrocarbons – shale gas, shale oil, tar sands and tight sands – are equivalent to 60% of those on conventional oil.²

Bonuses

Economic rights to be paid to the National Hydrocarbon Agency (ANH)³ are applicable⁴ as set out in the table below. Further details are included in the section on “Royalty regimes.”

| | |
|--|---|
| Rights for the use of the subsoil (Exploration phase) | An amount in US dollars per hectare, depending on the location and area of the block and the duration of the phase |
| Rights for the use of the subsoil (E&P) (Evaluation and Production) phase) | An amount in US dollars per barrel |
| Participation rights | A percentage of the production (after royalties) to the extent agreed in the contract |
| Rights for high prices | Agreed in the contract as explained below, with regard to the level of production paid in kind or in cash set by the ANH |
| Rights of participation relating to the extension of production phase | If the production phase is extended, the contracting party pays the ANH a sum depending on the nature of the hydrocarbon (10% or 5% as explained below) |
| Technology transfer rights | An amount set in relation to the number of hectares and the fraction of the contracted area, and rights for the use of the subsoil fixed |

Production sharing contract

It is no longer possible to execute new production sharing contracts (PSCs) in Colombia. PSCs were used until Decree 1760 of 2003 came into effect.

PSCs executed before Decree 1760 of 2003 may still be in force. Therefore, it is possible to become an associate of a PSC if an associate of one of the contracts in force assigns the economic rights in the contract, either totally or partially.

Exploration and production

The oil and gas contract model was changed, from PSC to an exploration and production (E&P) contract – which is a type of contract similar to a concession contract (royalty and tax system) – entered by the ANH. The contractor autonomously explores and produces at its own risk and cost. The length of time in each phase of the E&P contract is as follows:⁵

- ▶ Phase 0 – One year, with extensions allowed to identify special zones and consult with local communities (i.e., indigenous territories)
- ▶ Exploration – Six years, with extensions allowed under certain conditions
- ▶ Evaluation – Up to two years

² Decree 4923 of 26 December 2011.

³ Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos (ANH).

⁴ Included in the E&P contract versions of 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

⁵ Under 2009 to 2014 versions of the E&P contract, extensions can be granted under certain conditions.

- ▶ Exploitation – Up to 24 years (plus extensions of 10-year periods until final depletion).

The contractor has all the production rights, after a sliding-scale royalty payment, and makes conditional payments to the ANH to share surplus income in case of high crude prices. Natural gas and heavy crude have these general tax considerations and special incentives:

- ▶ Income tax rate – CIT rate 25%
- ▶ Income tax for equality (CREE⁶ Tax) – 9%
- ▶ CREE surtax
- ▶ Wealth tax
- ▶ Resource rent tax – Not applicable
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, A⁷
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, Don, Env, R&D (175%)⁸

B. Tax regime

Corporate tax

“Domestic Corporations” are corporations organized under Colombian law. “National Corporations” are corporations with their principal domicile within the Colombian territory; or organized under Colombian law; or that during the respective taxable year or period have their effective place of management in the Colombian territory (simply holding board meetings in Colombia is not enough to qualify as a national corporation). National corporations are taxed on worldwide income and capital gains.

Permanent establishment

The “Permanent Establishment” (PE) concept was introduced into domestic tax legislation⁹ from 2013. The PE definition maintains the main characteristics of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) model definition, with some exceptions (paragraphs 3 and 7 of Article 5 of the OECD model). The PE will be subject to tax only on income and capital gains sourced in Colombia, and attribution will be based on domestic “tax accounting” records, which should be supported mainly by an analysis of functions, assets, risks and personnel. Oil and gas fields are expressly considered as a PE by local law.¹⁰

Corporate income tax

The corporate income tax (CIT) rate is 25%, except for foreign taxpayers without a branch office or permanent establishment in Colombia, for which the income tax rate is 33%. The income tax for equality (CREE) rate is 9%. It is applicable as of 1 January 2013, is accompanied by the elimination of certain payroll taxes but only for employees earning up to 10 minimum monthly

6 As per the acronym in Spanish.

7 D: depreciation; A: amortization. A special 30% capital allowance for investment in real productive fixed assets was granted, except for free-trade-zone taxpayers, up to FY2010. As of FY2011, 30% applies only for taxpayers with legal stability agreements filed before 1 November 2010 who have been granted the application of the tax benefit up to 3 years since its stabilization.

8 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely; Don: donations; Env: special deduction for investments in the environment; R&D: special deduction for investments in scientific or technological development.

9 Law 1607 of 2012.

10 According to Decree 3026 of 2013, for the purposes of the definition of PE in Colombia it is included in the concept of a foreign company, not only to the companies and foreign entities, but to foreign individuals who develop any business or activity. The decree expressly considered business or activity, the activities of the professions, the provision of personal services and activities of an independent character. The definition of PE includes the fixed place for business as a place for business within Colombian territory.

wages. Not-for-profit organizations and free-trade-zone users already qualified on 31 December 2012. Free-trade-zone users in special free trade zones with a request filed before 31 December 2012 and new free-trade-zone users in an existing permanent free trade zone at 31 December 2012 are not subject to CREE tax.

Law 1004 of 2005, implementing the Free Trade Zone Regime, established a reduced income tax rate of 15% for legal entities that perform activities in the industrial free trade zones that qualify as “manufacturing users”¹¹ or “users that provide services.”¹² The reduced income tax rate does not apply to commercial users.

It is important to note that Subsection 2(1) of Decree 4051 of 2007 forbids the establishment of permanent free trade zones in areas of “exploration, exploitation or extraction of non-renewable natural resources,” notwithstanding those located offshore, as provided by the Customs rules.

Offshore free trade zones

By means of Executive Order 2682 of 23 December 2014, the National Government introduced the requirements for establishing the Offshore Free Trade Zone. This incentive is aimed at developing offshore exploration and production projects in a form of free trade zones which would provide tax and customs benefits.

The application for a certificate establishing a free trade zone should be filed for the considered activities (technical evaluation activities, exploration and production of hydrocarbons offshore and related activities) with the National Hydrocarbons Agency (Spanish acronym “ANH”) who will also approve the entity who will act as an operator of a project.

The certificate of offshore FTZ shall comprise continental or insular areas for the development of logistic, compression, transformation, gas liquefaction and other activities directly related to the offshore hydrocarbons sector.

Finally, within six years following issue of the certificate of offshore FTZ, the operator of the agreement signed with the ANH shall have to certify the following:

- a. Execution of an investment equal to or higher than 150,000 minimum legal wages (COP96.652.500.000 or US\$37.578.500 approx.).
- b. Generation of at least 30 new direct employments.

Tax year and due dates for corporations

The tax year is the calendar year for both income tax and CREE tax returns. The Colombian Government sets the due dates for both filing tax returns and making tax payments annually. Income tax is paid in three installments by large taxpayers and in two installments by all other corporate taxpayers. Each year, the tax authorities identify and list the companies they will consider to be large taxpayers as of that year, as well as companies that will be removed from the list. CREE tax and the payment in advance for its respective surtax is payable in two installments for large taxpayers, regular corporate taxpayers and all other subjects of CREE tax. Foreign entities deemed as national entities for tax purposes and permanent establishments have a special fixed date.

11 “Manufacturing user” is an entity authorized to produce, transform or assemble goods through the processing of raw materials or semi-manufactured products.

12 “User that provide services” is an entity authorized to develop the following activities exclusively in one or more free trade zones: (i) logistics, transportation, handling, distribution, shipping, labeling and classification of goods; (ii) communications and data processing; (iii) science and technological research; (iv) medical assistance and health services; (v) tourism; (vi) maintenance of goods; (vii) technical support maintenance of aircraft and related equipment; and (viii) auditing, administration, consulting and others.

Taxable income for CIT and CREE purposes

The tax basis for calculation of annual CIT payments is the higher of ordinary taxable income and presumptive income.

For CREE purposes, the calculation of the taxable basis may include deductible costs and expenses under a similar (but not identical) basis to ordinary corporate income tax.

The latest tax reform (Law 1739, 2014) modified the CREE tax structure to include aspects clarifying issues such as:

- a. Application of transfer pricing regulations
- b. Application of thin capitalization rules (section 118 - 1 Tax Code).

The reform allows taxpayers to offset the CREE tax with losses and the excess of presumptive income generated as of tax year 2015. The CREE tax and its surtax may not be offset with a "balance in favor" of the taxpayer from other taxes.

A tax credit for foreign tax imposed on foreign source income is granted against the CREE tax and surtax, provided conditions and limitations set forth in the income tax regulations are met.

Ordinary taxable income

Ordinary taxable income is calculated by subtracting deductible costs and expenses from net revenues (taxed revenues minus rebates and discounts). If this calculation results in a net operating loss (NOL), the loss may be carried forward. From tax year 2007, tax losses have been able to be carried forward without any limitation.

Additional restrictions apply to the transfer of tax losses in mergers or spin-offs (which may be tax-free events for Colombia tax purposes if certain requirements are met). The transfer of tax losses in mergers and spin-offs is applied only where the economic activity of the companies involved (which generates the losses) remains the same after the merger or spin-off occurs.

The amount of income tax payable after tax credits may not be less than 75% of the income determined under the presumptive income rules before taking the tax credits into account.

CREE tax provides a similar taxable base to ordinary assessment, but with limitations on some accepted tax deductions such as donations, investment in the control and improvement of the environment, and R&D. Offset of losses and presumptive income is allowed for those losses and excess of presumptive income generated from 2015.

Presumptive income

Presumptive income is calculated as 3% of the prior fiscal year's net tax equity. For tax purposes, "net tax equity" is tax assets minus tax liabilities. Liabilities held with related parties abroad can be regarded as debt for local tax purposes (if transfer pricing requirements are met) and so are no longer deemed as tax equity.

Some assets may be excluded from the taxable basis – for example, the net equity value of assets during non-productive periods of an enterprise and associated with the same unproductive contract.¹³ The excess of presumptive income, adjusted with inflation, over ordinary income may be carried forward as a compensation for five years. This treatment is extended to CREE tax assessment as of 2015.

13 On 5 May 2011, a decision issued by a law tax court (Council of State) confirmed that reference to "enterprise" must be taken based on the contract but cannot be in a well, when establishing the productivity of assets in the determination of presumptive income tax.

Costs and expenses

Costs and expenses may generally be deducted from income tax, provided that they are necessary, related to the generation of taxable income, and the expenditure is not limited or forbidden by law.

Payments abroad

In general, taxpayers may deduct expenses incurred abroad if they are related to national source income and if:

- ▶ Where applicable, the relevant withholding tax is made on the payments
- ▶ The amounts charged comply with the transfer pricing rules
- ▶ Exchange regulations are fulfilled¹⁴

If tax withholdings are not required, deductibility of costs and expenses abroad are limited to 15% of the net taxable income before such payment. Compliance with transfer pricing rules is mandatory, where applicable.¹⁵

If costs incurred abroad relate to the acquisition of assets or capitalized costs, the limitation of 15% applies annually to the quota of amortizations and/or depreciation of the asset.

Accruals

As a general rule, accruals are not a tax-deductible expense, except for those related to receivable accounts, subject to special rules, and accruals for the payment of pensions.

Capital gains tax

Gains on the sale of assets considered fixed assets¹⁶ and owned for more than two years are subject to capital gains tax (CGT) at a rate of 10%. Capital losses may be offset against capital gains generated in the same taxable year. The portion of the capital gains that corresponds to previous depreciation/ amortization deductions must be treated as a deduction recapture, which means that the amount is treated as ordinary income.

Functional currency

Pursuant to local accounting provisions the functional currency is Colombian pesos (COP).

Transfer pricing

The transfer-pricing regime includes several of the methods contained in the OECD rules. However, as a result of rulings of the Constitutional Court of Colombia, the OECD guidelines may not be directly referred to for purposes of interpretation of the Colombian transfer-pricing rules and are considered auxiliary criteria for interpretation. Significant aspects of the transfer pricing system in Colombia include the following:

- ▶ Several events create economic linkage, including, among others:
 - ▶ Transactions between branches and their home offices
 - ▶ Transactions in which a PE participates
 - ▶ Transactions between related parties made through third parties
 - ▶ Transactions between related parties executed through joint venture types of agreement and other collaborative agreements
- ▶ The rules cover transactions performed with related parties abroad or located in free trade zones and any company located in a tax haven.

14 Sections 123 and 419 of the Colombian Tax Code.

15 Sections 121 and 122 of the Colombian Tax Code include some exceptions to this 15% limitation; also Sections 124 and 260-7.

16 Section 60 of the Colombian Tax Code defines "fixed assets" as "those assets which are not sold or changed in the regular course of business."

- ▶ Tax payers that have gross equity higher than 100,000 tax units as of the last day of the tax year, or gross revenues for the year in excess of 61,000 tax units (for 2015, a tax unit equals COP 28,279, or approximately US\$12.29), must prepare contemporaneous documentation and file an informative return.
- ▶ When internal comparatives are available, these take priority when performing transfer pricing analysis.
- ▶ When taxpayers perform payments to related parties resident or domiciled in a low-tax jurisdiction, those taxpayers must document and demonstrate the details of the functions performed, assets used, risks assumed and all costs and expenses incurred by the related party for the performance of the activities that generated those payments. However, if proved not to be a related party, this detail of information is not required, though the transactions must be included in the transfer pricing study and return.
- ▶ Segmented financial information used for the preparation of the transfer pricing documentation must be certified by a public accountant, independent auditor, or its counterpart.
- ▶ With regard to payment for services, the taxpayer must demonstrate that the services were in fact received and that there is a benefit for the Colombian entity. Moreover, it is necessary to prove that the fee paid complies with the arm's length principle.
- ▶ Business restructuring where functions, assets or risk of the Colombian entity are assigned or transferred to a foreign related party must be in compliance with the arm's length principle.
- ▶ Advanced pricing agreements (APAs) may be signed with tax authorities, and will have a five-year term (including one-year rollback).
- ▶ Penalties are imposed for failure to meet filing requirements, submitting erroneous or incomplete reports, or failing to meet other requirements.
- ▶ In the case of financing operations, attributes such as the principal, the term, the debtor's credit rating, guarantees, and the interest rate of a loan, should be considered to determine the comparability between transactions with related and independent parties. If an intercompany transaction does not comply with the elements mentioned above, interest expenses could be considered as non-deductible because the transaction has not been carried out at market conditions. In such cases, the intercompany transaction would not be considered as a loan, but as a capital contribution, and the interest expense would be treated as dividend.
- ▶ In the event that the terms and conditions of the loan are not consistent with market practice, this operation would not be considered as a loan for tax purposes. In that case, an eventual re-characterization may take place, regardless of the interest rate agreed between the parties. However, there are no precedents for the application of the re-characterization rule, so the Tax Administration's position on what constitutes non-compliance with market conditions is unknown.
- ▶ The Colombian Tax Code establishes a threshold for interest expense deductions (thin capitalization rules). Interest expenses originated from debts, whose annual average amount exceeds the result of multiplying by three the last year's net equity, will not be considered as deductible.
- ▶ When purchasing used assets, using the Comparable Uncontrolled Price (CUP) method to assess the market price, under Colombian regulations this must be supported with the original invoice and the depreciation of the asset. In cases where the invoice is not available, the taxpayer can rely on a technical appraisal.

CREE surtax

The latest tax reform (Law 1739 of 2014) introduced a new CREE surtax for taxpayers with a taxable base higher than COP\$800 million (approx. US\$341,000). After deducting, the first COP800 million (US\$341,000), the balance will be subject to surtax according to the following rates:

| Range | Rate for 2015 | Rate for 2016 | Rate for 2017 | Rate for 2018 | Applicable formula |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| >0 <COP800,000,000 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | Taxable base * 0% |
| >=COP800,000,000 | 5% | 6% | 8% | 9% | Taxable base- COP\$800,000,000) * Rate |

The surtax is subject to an advance payment of 100% calculated over the base used to determine the CREE tax from the previous year and it should be paid in two installments within the time specified by the Government for each fiscal year.

Tax haven jurisdictions

The national Government has published a list of the countries, jurisdictions, domains, associated states or territories that are considered tax havens for tax purposes.¹⁷ Taxpayers that do business with a company located, domiciled or resident in a tax haven and want to deduct income tax payments must document and show detail of the functions performed, assets used, risks assumed and all costs and expenses incurred by the beneficiary company in the tax haven.

Additionally, to constitute a cost or deduction, the taxpayer must have withheld tax (except for financial transactions registered with Colombia's Central Bank). If the payments constitute taxable income to the beneficiary company, the applicable tax rate is 33% regardless of the nature of the payments. The Colombian tax authorities have provided diverse interpretations of this point, which should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Transactions with individuals, companies, firms or entities located, resident or domiciled in tax havens will be subject to the transfer pricing regime, requiring supporting documentation and an informative tax return to be filed.

Dividends

Dividends paid to nonresidents without a branch or permanent establishment are not subject to tax if the dividends are paid out of profits that were taxed at the corporate level. If the dividends were not taxed at the corporate level, dividends paid to nonresidents are subject to withholding tax (WHT). Dividends paid between domestic corporations are not subject to tax if the company generating the profits out of which the dividends are paid is taxed on these profits in Colombia.

Law 1607 of 2012 includes within its definition of "dividends" the remittance of profits obtained by Colombian branches of foreign entities. Consequently, any transfer of such profits abroad may be subject to income tax (to be paid out of profits that were taxed at the branch level). Special provisions are applied to determine the amount of "dividends" distributed each taxable year for oil and gas branches belonging to the special exchange regime (see description below).

¹⁷ Decree 1699 of 2014.

Royalty regimes

Royalties for use of the production field¹⁸

In Colombia, ownership of minerals found beneath the surface, including oil and gas, is vested in the national Government. Therefore, companies engaged in the exploration and extraction of non-renewable resources (i.e., oil and gas) must pay the ANH (which represents the Government) a royalty at the production field, determined by the Ministry of Mining as follows:

- ▶ New oil discoveries following the introduction of Law 756 issued in 2002 (E&P contracts), as per the table following.

| Field daily production (monthly average in barrels of crude per day) | Percentage (%) |
|--|--|
| Up to 5,000 | 8 |
| 5,001 to 125,000 | $8 + (\text{production} - 5,000) * 0.10$ |
| 125,001 to 400,000 | 20 |
| 400,001 to 600,000 | $20 + (\text{production} - 400,000) * 0.025$ |
| More than 600,000 | 25 |

- ▶ Prior to the introduction of Law 756 issued in 2002, two other royalty regimes applied: 20%, and a sliding scale (5% to 25%).

Royalties for gas exploitation are obtained by applying the following percentages to oil royalties:

| Location | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------|
| Onshore and offshore below 1,000 ft depth | 80 |
| Offshore more than 1,000 ft depth | 60 |

Royalties on unconventional hydrocarbons – shale gas, shale oil, tar sands and tight sands – are equivalent to 60% of those on conventional oil.¹⁹

Currently, royalties are allowed to be collected in kind, and in certain cases cash payment is also allowed.

Economic rights of the ANH²⁰

Standard contracts for the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas set out various economic rights related to use of the subsoil and subsurface of an area, as described next.²¹

Right for use of the subsoil and subsurface during the exploration phase

Beginning with the second exploration phase, the contracting party pays a fee in US dollars as set out in the following table.²²

18 Currently, there is a bill on course at the Lower House of Representatives at the Colombian Congress by which the royalties' rate for the exploitation of hydrocarbons might be modified. Determination of the rate will be increased, depending on the level of production, by legal range, proposing also the increasing of the royalty to be paid when high prices exists whereas increase varies from 35% to 55% depending on high price and the non-deductibility of the royalty for income tax purposes.

19 Decree 4923 of 26 December 2011.

20 The latest contract model appears on the ANH website: www.anh.gov.co (latest version for contracts entered into from 2014). The figures have been established by the Administrative Act Circular 02 of 24 January 2011 and Circular 29 of 18 December 2014.

21 Established within the E&P contract (2013 model contract for E&P).

22 Annex D of the latest version of the E&P contract (2013 model contract for E&P).

By means of Circular 29 of 18 December 2014, the National Hydrocarbons Agency updated the values of formulae for 2015 to determine economic rights corresponding to rights for the use of subsoil and rights for high prices.

For the purpose of economic rights assessments the annual Producer Price Index "PPI" for 2015 is 1.24% (0,0124):

| Monthly amount per phase in US\$/hectares on exploration areas | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------|---|------|
| Size of contract area | First 100,000 hectares | | Each hectare in addition to first 100,000 | |
| | <= 18 | >18 | <= 18 | >18 |
| Duration of the phase | <= 18 | >18 | <= 18 | >18 |
| Within polygons A and B | 2.71 | 3.61 | 3.61 | 5.41 |
| Outside polygons A and B | 1.83 | 2.71 | 2.71 | 3.61 |
| Offshore | 0.91 | | | |

Terms applicable for Colombia rounds 2012 and 2014:

| Size of contract area | First 100,000 hectares | | Each hectare in addition to first 100,000 | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------|---|------------|
| | <= 18 months | >18 months | <= 18 months | >18 months |
| Duration of the phase | <= 18 months | >18 months | <= 18 months | >18 months |
| Onshore | 2.71 | 3.61 | 3.61 | 5.41 |
| Offshore | 0.91 | | | |

Please note that values can change depending on the negotiation of the contract.

Right for the use of the subsoil and subsurface during the evaluation and production phase

The contracting party pays ANH the resulting value of multiplying US\$0.1372²³ by the number of barrels of liquid hydrocarbon owned by the contracting party. This amount increases annually, based on the terms of the contract.

Rights for high prices

The production levy that could be payable in cash or in kind and that is linked to international prices for hydrocarbons. The rates vary depending on the quality of produced hydrocarbons and projects' logistics.

From the time when the accumulated production of the exploitation area, including the volume of royalties, exceeds 5 million barrels of liquid hydrocarbon (not applicable for extra heavy hydrocarbons), and in the event that the international oil reference price (West Texas Intermediate (WTI)) is higher than the price determined in the contract (Po), the contracting party shall pay an amount Q, at an agreed delivery point, for participation within the production, net of royalties, according to the following formula:

$$Q = [(P-P_0)/P] \times S$$

Notes:

1. For gas, the rule applies five years after commencement of the exploitation field, instead of on the basis of accumulated production.
2. The ANH may ask to receive this right in cash rather than in kind, according to certain rules set up in the E&P contract.

3. P: for liquid hydrocarbon, P is the average benchmark of the West Texas Intermediate index (WTI) in US dollars per barrel. For natural gas, P is the average sale price of the gas sold in the contract in US dollars per million British thermal units (BTUs).
4. PO: for liquid hydrocarbon, PO is the base price of benchmark crude oil expressed in US dollars per barrel; and for natural gas, it is the average natural gas price in US dollars per million BTU, according to a table included in the contract. The table varies depending on (i) American Petroleum Institute (API) gravity of crude oil (starting from 15° API) – for heavy crude oil, the rights for high prices are triggered if API gravity is higher than 10°; or (ii) discoveries more than 300 meters offshore; or (iii) the amount of natural gas produced and exported. However, if the API gravity is 10° or less, the rights for high prices are not triggered. Unconventional liquid hydrocarbons are included.
5. Almost all the amounts are subject to a readjustment formula already set up in the E&P model contract.

Rights of participation due to extension of production phase

If the production phase of an exploration area is extended from the initial exploitation phase subscribed in the E&P contract, the contracting party pays the ANH a sum equivalent to 10% of the production for light hydrocarbon, or 5% in the case of heavy hydrocarbon.

Technology transfer rights

Technology transfer rights lead to a royalty payment to perform investigation, education and scholarships programs, from 25% of the amount resulting from multiplying the number of hectares and fraction of the contracted area to the value assessed on rights for the subsoil and subsurface.

Other participation rights

The E&P model contract applicable for contracts submitted since 2009²⁴ allows the ANH to agree a percentage of the production with the contractor in other circumstances, subject to negotiation.

Unconventional oil and gas

Royalties on unconventional hydrocarbons – shale gas, shale oil, tar sands and tight sands – are equivalent to 60% of those on conventional oil.

C. Capital allowances

Depreciation

Fixed assets (other than land) are depreciable under the following useful lives:²⁵

| | |
|---|----------|
| Computers and vehicles | 5 years |
| Machinery and equipment | 10 years |
| Real estate (e.g., pipeline, buildings) | 20 years |

However, taxpayers may apply a different useful life (lower or higher) after requesting authorization from the national tax authority (DIAN). This request must be submitted not less than three months prior to the start of the relevant taxable period. This means that, for example, a request for authorization to use a different useful life for 2015 has to be filed before 30 September 2014.

Generally, the depreciation deduction may be calculated using any of the following methods:

- Straight-line method

²⁴ The E&P contract used for 2013 onwards corresponds to the 2009 E&P model issued by the ANH.

²⁵ Section 2 of Regulatory Decree 3019 of 1989.

- ▶ Declining-balance method²⁶

Or

- ▶ Any other method of recognized technical value authorized by the DIAN

These methods follow international accounting principles. For instance, in the declining-balance method, the assets are depreciated annually at a fixed rate. This method requires the taxpayer to set a salvage or residual value not lower than 10%; otherwise, a balance would remain, making the depreciation period infinite. Under this method, the annual fixed depreciation rate is calculated using the following procedure. For assets acquired during the taxable year or period, the depreciation amount is calculated in proportion to the number of months (or fraction of months) that the assets (or improvements) were in service. The salvage value is related to the realization amount at the time that the asset's useful life ends. From 2013, Colombia's tax law establishes as mandatory for setting the salvage value a minimum percentage of 10% of the cost of the asset. Additional shifts will not be accepted when a declining balance method is used.

Amortization of investments

Investments or disbursements made for business purposes²⁷ and intangibles feasible of impairment are amortized.

For hydrocarbon activity, the following values may be treated as deferred amortizable assets:

- ▶ Initial preoperative installation, organization and development expenses
- ▶ Acquisition costs or well production
- ▶ Exploration and production costs of natural, non-renewable resources, and production facilities

For tax purposes, the general rule is to amortize all investments over a minimum of five years, except where it can be demonstrated that it should be done over a shorter term as a result of the nature or duration of the business. However, for hydrocarbon activity, if it is determined that investments made in exploration are unsuccessful, the activated values should be amortized in full in the same year that the condition is determined and, in any case, no later than within the following 2 years. The amortization of investments for the oil and gas industry may be summarized as set out in the table below.

| Amortization of investments | Method | Period |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| E&P costs | Technical units of operation or straight-line method | Five years for straight-line method for 2002 onward |
| Other investments (preoperative) | Straight-line method | Five years or less if the business ends before such period of time |
| Unsuccessful investments | When investments in exploration phase are unsuccessful, amounts must be amortized in the year such condition is determined or in either of the following two years | - |

²⁶ This method is not allowed for assets that were considered for the benefit of the 30% capital allowance.

²⁷ In accordance with the accounting method used, they are to be recorded for their amortization as deferred assets.

D. Incentives

Exploration

During a nonproductive period, an exploration company is required to calculate income tax under the presumptive income tax system. An exemption excludes nonproductive assets being affected by this tax assessment (explained in section B).

Tax holiday

Colombia does not have a tax holiday regime.

Incentives for the use of non-conventional and renewable energy

Law 1715 of 2014 was issued to promote the development and use of non-conventional and renewable energy sources, with the following tax benefits:

Tax deductions: Deduction of 50% of the investment made for research and development related to production and use of non-conventional and renewable energy, for five years from the moment on which the investment was made.

This deduction cannot exceed 50% of the net income of the taxpayer calculated before deducting the amount of investment.

VAT exemption. National and imported goods and services destined for pre-investment and investment in non-conventional and renewable energy are exempt from VAT.

The Ministry of Environment will certify the equipment and service covered by this exemption.

Customs duty incentive. Exemption from customs duties on the importation of goods for pre-investment and investment in non-conventional and renewable energy.

This benefit only applies to goods that are not produced in the country and any request for duty exemption should be filed by an applicant in advance of importation.

Accelerated depreciation. Necessary goods for pre-investment and investment (acquired or built) of non-conventional and renewable energy will be able to apply for this regime.

The depreciation rate cannot exceed 20%.

Tax losses

Effective from tax year 2007, tax losses may be carried forward with no time limit or limitation on the amount. Additionally, the tax regulations provide no limitations to the amount of tax losses available to offset against taxable income each tax year. With Law 1739 of 2014, taxpayers are allowed to offset the CREE tax with losses and the excess of presumptive income generated as of tax year 2015.

Additional restrictions apply to the transfer of losses in mergers or spin-offs (which are tax-free events for Colombian tax purposes, under certain circumstances). In mergers, the surviving entity may offset losses originating in the merged entities, limited to the percentage of its equity participation in the merged entity's equity. In spin-offs, the new company (or companies) or the resulting companies may offset losses originating in the spun-off entity, limited to the participation percentage of the new companies in the equity of the spun-off company. Tax losses generated do not affect the entity's presumptive income for the relevant tax year. To have the right to offset tax losses, companies involved in mergers or spin-offs are required to carry on the same economic activity as they did before the merger or spin-off process.²⁸

28 Section 147 of the Colombian Tax Code.

Regional incentives

Section 16 of Decree 1056 of 1953 (the Oil Code) states that “oil exploration and exploitation, the extracted crude oil, its derivatives and its transportation, machines and elements used for its benefit, and in the construction and maintenance of refineries and pipelines” are exempt from departmental or municipal taxes. In these circumstances, the taxpayer may be required to file a local tax return with assessment of no taxes.

Another incentive that exists for oil and gas activities is one under the industrial and commercial activities (ICA) tax regime.²⁹ The ICA regime does not assess tax for the exploitation of oil and gas if the amount received by the municipality as royalties and contributions is equal to or greater than the amount it would have received otherwise as a tax under the ICA.³⁰ In these circumstances, the taxpayer is not required to file an ICA return (but the case must be analyzed when the taxpayer obtains financial revenues).

Donations

Donations effectively made during the tax period are deductible by the beneficiary if one of the following is true:

- ▶ The entity is deemed to be a non-taxpayer under Section 22 of the Colombian Tax Code.³¹
- ▶ The entity is an association, corporation or foundation whose object and activity correspond to the development of health, education, culture, religion, sports, technological and scientific research, ecology and environmental protection, defense, protection and promotion of human rights, and access to justice or social development programs, provided they are of general interest.

Deductibility for donations is limited to 30% of the net taxable income calculated before subtracting the investment value. Nonetheless, the 30% limitation does not apply in some special cases.

Section 125 of the Colombian Tax Code states that a certificate issued by the beneficiary of the donation, signed by the statutory auditor or accountant, is required in order to treat donations as an income tax deduction. The certificate must include details of the form, amount and destination of the donation, and it must state that the requirements listed above are fulfilled.

Donations will not be allowed as a reduction of the CREE taxable basis.

Special deduction for environmental investments

Taxpayers that make voluntary investments for the control and improvement of the environment are entitled to deduct the value of the investments made during the relevant tax year from their income. Mandatory investments are excluded from this deduction. The total value of the deduction may not exceed 20% of the taxpayer's net income, calculated before subtracting the investment value.

The law establishes several additional requirements for this deduction to apply. The investment is not allowed as a reduction of the CREE tax basis.

29 *The triggering event is the exercise or undertaking, directly or indirectly, of commercial, industrial or service activities within the jurisdiction of a municipality or district, either permanently or occasionally, in a certain property, with or without a commercial establishment.*

30 *Section 39 of Law 14 of 1983.*

31 *Section 22 of the Colombian Tax Code lists as non-taxpayers: the nation, departments and associations; the districts; the indigenous territories; the municipalities and other territorial entities; regional autonomous corporations; metropolitan areas; associations, superintendencies, special administrative units and federations; indigenous entities; public establishments and decentralized official establishments; and any groupings where the law does not explicitly state that they are taxpayers.*

Special deduction for investments in research and development

Investments in projects qualified by The National Council of Tax Benefits in Science as technological investigation and development are deductible to the extent of 175% of the investment value of the technological project executed in the relevant tax year. The law establishes several requirements for this deduction to apply – among others, that the special deduction excludes a deduction for amortization or depreciation of assets.

The total annual value of the deduction may not exceed 40% of the taxpayer's net income, calculated before subtracting the investment value. The utilization of this deduction does not generate taxable profits for partners or shareholders in a case of distribution.

In order to obtain the qualification and acquire the special deduction in scientific or technological development and/or innovation³², a specific process has to be followed and official authorizations need to be obtained. For the qualification of special deduction for the tax year, a petition must be submitted before the competent authority.³³ This investment is not allowed as a reduction of the CREE tax basis.

Income tax discount for VAT paid on the importation of heavy machinery for basic industries

The VAT paid on the definitive importation of heavy machinery to be used by companies qualified as “basic industry” may be used as a tax credit (discount) for income tax purposes. The hydrocarbon industry is considered to be a basic industry for these purposes.

VAT paid on capital goods

Until 2014, VAT paid on the acquisition of capital goods (mostly related to PP&E) can be used as a tax credit, based on the portion that the government determines for such taxable year. VAT paid that does not give rise to tax credits for CIT purposes can be considered as cost or deduction for the taxable year.

A “capital good” is a depreciable tangible asset not disposed of in the regular execution of business, used in the production of goods or services and, unlike raw materials and other inputs, is not transformed in the production process.

As of 2015, Law 1739 of 2014 allows entities to treat as a tax credit against income tax two points of VAT paid at a general rate on the acquisition and importation of capital goods. Included in this category are the acquisition of goods through leasing (Number 2 of Section 127-1 of the Colombian Tax Code) and where there is a purchase option for the leased goods.

Entities may also treat as a tax credit 100% of VAT paid for the acquisition of heavy machinery for basic industries, as long as the conditions set out in 258-2 of the Colombian Tax Code are fulfilled.

In both cases, the law creates a recapture mechanism for the tax credit when the goods are transferred before their useful life or when no purchase option for leased goods has been exercised.

Temporary imports

“Temporary importation” is defined as the importation of certain goods that must be exported under the same conditions as they entered the national customs territory within a specific period of time – that is, without having undergone any modifications, except for the normal depreciation resulting from use.

Temporary imports can obtain some deferrals in payments of import duties. However, the sale of goods will be restricted while they remain within the national customs territory.

32 *The tax incentives for investments on research and development for innovation were recently introduced by Law 1739 of 2014.*

33 *Administrative Act 1427 of 2011.*

The temporary imports can be of two subtypes: short-term and long-term. Goods are classed as "short-term" when they are imported to meet specific needs. The maximum import term will be six months, extendable for up to three additional months, and in exceptional situations for up to another three additional months with prior authorization from the DIAN customs authorities.

VAT or customs duties are not meant to be paid on this type of temporary import. Once the short-term duration has expired, the importer must re-export or modify the import declaration to the long-term subtype (with a deferral of payment) or to an ordinary import.

Goods are classed as "long term" when they are imports of capital goods and any accessory or spare parts, as long as they constitute one single shipment. The maximum term for these imports is five years. Extensions are not expressly authorized but are possible if the request is filed with the customs authorities before the entry of the goods into the country. The import duties have to be paid by biannual installments every six months within the five years.

Authorized economic operators

By means of Decree 3568 of 27 September 2011, the DIAN incorporated the concept of an "authorized economic operator" (OEA). Exporters in the oil and gas industry may ask for this qualification. The main benefits of this figure are the following:

- ▶ Decreased numbers of physical and documentary inspections for export operations, import and customs transit by the DIAN, and decreased physical inspections for export operations from the Narcotics Division of the National Police Force
- ▶ The use of special and simplified procedures for the development of measures of recognition or inspection of goods
- ▶ Reduction in the amount of guarantees required
- ▶ Cash flow benefits on the return of credit balances of VAT

To be recognized as an OEA, the request must be presented to the DIAN, which will grant it subject to compliance with the conditions set forth in the regime.

Free trade agreements

Colombia has various free trade agreements (FTAs) in force allowing the importation of goods and raw materials, in most cases with a 0% customs duties rate. The most significant are those involving the following:

- ▶ Colombia and the United States
- ▶ Colombia and the European Union
- ▶ Colombia and Canada
- ▶ Colombia and Mexico
- ▶ Colombia and Chile
- ▶ Colombia with Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador
- ▶ The Andean Community Agreement with Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia
- ▶ Colombia and the Economic Complementary Agreement (Mercosur)

Import duties

Goods imported by companies operating in the oil and gas sector are generally subject to import duties (customs duties and VAT). Customs duties are assessed on an *ad valorem* basis and are typically between 0% and 15% *ad valorem*, based on the CIF value of the goods. The general rate of VAT in Colombia is 16%, based on the CIF value of the goods and the custom duty applied.

Decree 562 of 2011 (supplemented by Decree 1570 of 2011) establishes a specific list of subheadings (including machinery, equipment and spare parts) which are partially exempted from customs duties if the goods are imported by companies devoted to exploitation, transformation and transportation in the mining industry, or the exploitation, refinement and transportation (by pipes) of hydrocarbons. Exemption is at 50% of the custom duty applicable. This customs duty benefit applies until 16 August 2015.

Up to 3,000 sub-tariff items have had their custom duty temporarily reduced – for two years – to 0% under Decree 1755 of 2013, which related to raw materials and capital goods not produced in Colombia, and this benefit will persist until 15 August 2015. Other decrees have temporarily reduced customs duty under some subheadings (e.g., Decree 899 of 2013).

In light of the above, prior to the importation of any goods to Colombia, the subheading (tariff classification) and the purpose of the importation should be considered carefully to determine whether the imported goods qualify for an exemption or a reduction in customs duties.

E. Withholding taxes

Colombia has a withholding tax (WHT) regime that is intended to secure the collection of taxes and make the system more efficient by providing for the advance collection of tax. The most important taxes subject to this procedure are income tax, VAT and ICA.

CREE withholding works as a self-withholding tax. From 1 May 2013, Colombian taxpayers are obliged to apply withholding for CREE purposes at a rate of 0.4%, 0.8% or 1.6% depending of the activity of the taxpayers to which the withholding tax is applied.

Self-withholding of income tax for exports of hydrocarbons

Since 1 January 2011, exportation of hydrocarbons has been subject to “self-income tax withholding” by the exporter, the withheld amount being paid over to the authorities through the corresponding WHT return. The rate of the self-income tax withholding is 1.5% on the exportation amount. This income tax withholding is creditable against the year-end income tax due.

Note that the rate of 1.5% may vary if another regulatory decree regarding the self-withholding is established. The maximum withholding rate authorized by law cannot exceed 10%.

For CREE tax, the applicable rate is 1.6% on the exportation amount.

Payments made abroad

Generally, services rendered abroad generate foreign source income, and therefore no Colombian WHT applies. This provision does not apply to services rendered abroad that are, by legal provision, considered to be generators of national source income. For example, this service includes payments or credits to accounts related to consulting, technical services and technical assistance services,³⁴ which are subject to WHT at the rate of 10% irrespective of whether they are rendered in the country or abroad.

Unless modified by a treaty,³⁵ the following table contains a list of the most relevant items subject to WHT, together with the relevant withholding rates on payments made to beneficiaries abroad. The list is not exhaustive.

| Items | Income tax withholding | Deductibility (income tax) | VAT*** |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Payment for technical assistance services and consulting (rendered in Colombia or abroad)* | 10% | 15% limit does not apply | 16% |
| Payment for technical services (rendered in Colombia)* | 10% | 15% limit does not apply | 16% |
| Payment for technical services (rendered abroad)* | 10% | 15% limit does not apply | 0% |

³⁴ Section 408 of the Colombian Tax Code.

³⁵ Treaty to prevent double taxation with Spain is applicable as of 2009. Treaty with Chile is applicable as of 2010 and treaty with Switzerland is applicable as of 2012.

| Items | Income tax withholding | Deductibility (income tax) | VAT*** |
|--|--|---|--------|
| Overhead expenses for general services rendered abroad and charged to the home office | 0% | Non-deductible** | 0% |
| Royalties in acquisition and exploitation of intangibles | 33% | 100% | 16% |
| Royalties in acquisition and exploitation of software | 33% over a special taxable base (80% of the value of the contract) | 100% | 16% |
| Payments for services rendered in Colombia (other than those mentioned above) Tax references on these cases will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis | 33% | 15% limit does not apply | 16% |
| Payments for services rendered abroad as a general rule (other than those mentioned above) | 0% | Limitation of 15% of net taxable income | 0% |
| Payments to tax havens | 33% | 100% (****) | 16% |

Notes:

- * For these types of service, the supplier must be non-resident in Colombia.³⁶
- ** Payments are deductible if the transaction is structured as a service and pursuant to the arm's length principle, supported by a transfer pricing study, regardless of whether it is subject to WHT, provided it complies with general tax deduction requirements. The 15% limitation applies if no WHT applies. In some cases, deduction is granted if compliance with the registration of the service contracts is met (i.e., general licensing, technical services and technical assistance services).
- *** Colombian residents receiving services in Colombia from nonresident providers must apply a reverse-charge mechanism. In this case, a special withholding method is applied whereby the Colombian resident who requests the service must withhold the total VAT generated. If the VAT paid is creditable, the resident computes the self-accounted VAT amount from its bimonthly VAT return for the period when the payment was made.
- **** A transfer pricing study is also required to allow the deduction of expenses incurred with a third party resident in a tax haven jurisdiction.

Interest on credit obtained abroad

Generally, payments or credits to accounts made by legal entities relating to interest are subject to WHT, at the rates of 14% if the loan payment length exceeds one year or 33% if the loan term is under one year, for 2011 onwards (unless modified by a treaty³⁷). Nevertheless, the following credits obtained

³⁶ Paragraph 2, Section 408 of the Tax Code.

³⁷ Treaties to prevent double taxation entered into with Spain, Switzerland and Chile are applicable from 2012; a treaty with Canada is applicable from 1 January 2013, Mexico as of 2014 and both India and Korea as of 2015 .

abroad (among others) are not considered as national source income³⁸ and so they are not subject to WHT:

- ▶ Short-term credits originating from imports of goods and banks overseas
- ▶ Credits for foreign trade operations obtained through financial corporations and banks incorporated pursuant to the Colombian laws in effect

Note that foreign indebtedness is not allowed for branches belonging to the special exchange regime.

F. Financing considerations

Effective from 1 January 2013, thin capitalization rules are applicable where any interest paid on loans (with third parties or related parties) that on average exceeds a 3:1 debt-to-equity ratio is not deductible. For this purpose, the equity that should be taken into account is the taxpayer's previous year's net equity as well as any debt that accrued interest.

G. Transactions

Farm-in and farm-out

Farm-in arrangements are commonly used in Colombia in the oil and gas industry. A farm-in typically involves the transfer of part of an oil and gas interest in consideration of an agreement by the transferee (the farmee) to make certain expenditures that would otherwise have to be undertaken by the owner (the farmor). For tax purposes, the local selling price cannot be lower than 75% of the fair market value of the rights. Transactions with foreign-related parties must comply with transfer pricing provisions.

Selling shares in a company

A share disposal is generally subject to the CGT or income tax regime. The taxable capital gain or taxable net income is equal to the positive difference between the sale price of the asset and its tax basis (fiscal cost). Sales to foreign-related parties must comply with transfer pricing provisions. Unrelated sales or sales between Colombia-resident related parties cannot be performed for less than 75% of the fair market value of the assets sold.

Nonresidents that dispose of shares held directly in a Colombian company are subject to tax in Colombia. Indirect sales may be levied in Colombia. Assets owned in Colombia for two years or more are liable to tax as capital gains on sales. Assets owned for less than two years are liable to income tax upon the sale under the ordinary regime.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT and GST

Colombian VAT is triggered by the following transactions:³⁹

- ▶ The sale of movable tangible assets (sales of fixed assets are not taxed with VAT)
- ▶ The importation of goods
- ▶ The provision of services in the national territory

In some cases specified in the tax laws, the importation of services (that is, services rendered abroad and used in Colombia) is subject to VAT if the recipient of the service is located in Colombia. The services subject to this provision include the following (but the list is not exhaustive):

- ▶ Licenses and authorizations for the use of intangible assets
- ▶ Consulting and advisory services (including technical assistance services) and audit services – technical services are not included under this provision
- ▶ Rental of corporate movable assets
- ▶ Insurance and reinsurance services

³⁸ Section 25 of the Tax Code.

³⁹ Section 420 of the Tax Code.

Crude oil to be refined, natural gas, butane, natural gasoline, gasoline and diesel oil are excluded from VAT under Section 424 of the Colombian Tax Code, modified by Law 1607 of 2012 (gasoline and diesel oil being taxed through the national tax on gasoline and diesel fuel). Other excluded products include goods that are basic necessities and services, such as health, transportation, education and public services. Excluded supplies are not subject to VAT, and the VAT paid to suppliers of goods and services cannot therefore be credited in the VAT return and should be accounted for as an increase in the cost or expense of the goods or services. If a company exclusively makes excluded supplies, the VAT paid on its supplies cannot be recovered through the VAT credit system; thus, VAT paid becomes an additional cost or expense for the company.

In Colombia, the term “exempt supplies” is used for supplies of goods and services that are liable to VAT but have a zero rate (taxed at 0%). Exported goods and services are included within this category. In this case, the VAT paid to suppliers of goods and services may be recovered through the VAT credited system. If, as a result of making exempt supplies, the taxpayer has paid more VAT to its suppliers than it has charged, the credit balance may be requested as a refund from the tax authorities (subject to compliance with certain requirements and conditions).

To improve the tax collection system, the Colombian Government has introduced a VAT withholding mechanism and designated certain entities as VAT withholding agents (including governmental departments, large taxpayers, Colombian payers to nonresident entities, and VAT taxpayers that qualify under the VAT common regime). These agents are responsible for withholding 15% of the tax due on any payment or accounting accrual related to taxable goods or services. In the case of transactions with nonresidents (both entities and individuals), the withholding rate is 100%.

The general VAT rate is 16%. This rate applies to all goods and services, unless specific provision allows a reduced rate.

The VAT rate on imported goods for the oil and gas sector is generally 16% too. However, the Colombian Tax Code offers the following VAT benefits for imported goods:

- ▶ Subsection 428(e) of the Colombian Tax Code establishes a VAT exclusion for the temporary importation of heavy machinery for use by basic industries (the hydrocarbon sector is regarded as a basic industry), to the extent that those goods are not produced in the country (subject to the opinion given by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism). Any request for VAT exclusion must be submitted at the time of the importation.
- ▶ Subsection 428(f) of the Colombian Tax Code establishes a VAT exclusion for importation of machinery or equipment for treatment of residues when this machinery is not produced in Colombia.
- ▶ Subsection 428(g) of the Colombian Tax Code establishes a VAT exclusion for ordinary imports of industrial machinery made by so-called “high export users” to the extent that the machinery is used to transform raw materials and does not have local production (according to the opinion given by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism). Any such request for exclusion should be submitted at the time of the importation.
- ▶ VAT will be accrued on mergers and spin-offs if the tax event does not qualify as tax neutral.

National Tax on gasoline and diesel oil

Imports, self-consumptions and sales of gasoline and diesel oil as of 2013, previously taxed with VAT and Global Tax will be taxed with the National Tax. The National Tax is a fixed amount per gallon of fluid. Thirty-five percent of the National Tax on gasoline and diesel oil can be considered as input VAT in the VAT tax return when it is acquired directly from the producer or importer of such goods by the final consumer.⁴⁰

40 *Regulatory Decree 3037 of 2013.*

Law 1739 of 2014 includes as a taxable event the temporary importation of assets for improvement, including transactions of "Plan Vallejo" that up to the enactment of this law were not subject to the fuel and diesel oil tax. However, this law creates an exemption for those taxpayers that already had Plan Vallejo and directly imported diesel or fuel before the enforcement of this law. The exemption is limited to the average volume of importations from 2012 to 2014.

The law also establishes a tax contribution named "Participation Differential," which has the same taxable event as the fuel and diesel tax and is accrued when the international parity price for the day on which the refiner or importer of record of fuel carries out the taxable event is below the reference price fixed by the Ministry of Mines and Energy. To determine the taxable basis, the positive difference between those prices (reference and international parity) will be multiplied by the volume of fuel at the moment of sale, importation or withdrawal. The rate of this contribution is 100% of the value of the taxable base.

Import duties

Goods imported on a permanent basis by companies in the oil and gas sector are generally subject to customs taxes (customs duties and VAT), even if they are imported on a non-reimbursable license basis.

Decree 562 of 2011 (supplemented by Decree 1570 of 2011) establishes a specific list of subheadings (including machinery, equipment and spare parts) that are partially exempted from customs duties if the goods are imported by companies devoted to exploitation, transformation and transportation in the mining industry, or to the exploitation, refinement and transportation (by pipes) of hydrocarbons. Exemption is for 50% of the customs duty applicable. This customs duty benefit applies until 16 August 2015.

In light of the above, prior to the importation of any goods to Colombia, those decrees should be consulted to determine whether the imported goods qualify for an exemption or a reduction in customs duties.

Export duties

No duties apply to goods or services on export from Colombia.

Excise duties

Excise duties do not apply to upstream oil and gas.

Registration tax

A registration tax is levied on documents or contracts that must be registered with the Chamber of Commerce or with the public instrument office.

As explained below, a branch is the most common and convenient legal structure for oil and gas companies. Companies that operate using other legal structures must register with the authorities (e.g., a notary) if they decide to increase their patrimony by funding, and they must pay registration taxes, whereas branches do not have these obligations. Instead, a branch maintains a special account called a "supplementary investment to the assigned capital," in which it registers capital differences after funding, as if the account was a current account held with the head office.

I. Other

Wealth tax

Law 1739 of 2014 creates a new wealth tax. In general terms, all individuals and legal entities in Colombia, who are deemed income taxpayers, including nonresidents (not expressly excluded by the law from paying this tax) are subject to this tax, provided their tax net equity (gross assets minus debts) on 1 January 2015, is greater than COP1 billion (approx. US\$388,800). Unliquidated inheritances are also subject to this tax if the tax net equity threshold is met.

In accordance with the wording of this rule, those that do not meet the tax net equity threshold as of 1 January 2015, or are not considered income taxpayers, are not subject to the tax for corporations for 2015, 2016, and 2017.

For foreign nonresidents, the tax will be assessed on their equity held in Colombia directly or indirectly through branches and permanent establishments (PE) located in Colombia.

Entities conducting a spin-off after 23 December 2014 and on or before 1 January 2015, will have to add the equity of the split entities to their own equity for 1 January 2015 (the accrual date). Likewise, individuals and legal entities that incorporate entities during the same period will have to add to their own equity the incorporated entities' equity in accordance with their participation in such vehicles.

The taxable basis for corporations will arise on 1 January 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The taxable basis is the gross equity minus debts as of each year. The reform protects the taxable basis from potential fluctuations in the equity (increase/decrease). The reform includes a limitation that assumes a formula with reference to the taxable basis as of 1 January 2015, bearing in mind the adjusted inflation with a 25% variation, as follows:

- ▶ When the tax basis is higher in 2016 and 2017, the lesser value between the taxable basis determined for the current year and the taxable basis assessed for 2015 with a 25% inflation increase, certified by (National Planning Department (DANE acronym in Spanish) for the previous year, will be the taxable basis.
- ▶ When the tax basis is lower in 2016 and 2017, the higher value between the taxable basis determined for the current year and the taxable basis assessed for 2015 with a 25% inflation decrease, certified by DANE for the previous year, will be the taxable basis.
- ▶ For branches and PEs, the taxable basis will correspond to the attributed equity. For the latter, an attribution study will be conducted in accordance with the arm's length principle, with functions, assets, personnel and assumed risks all being considered.

Rates of wealth tax are as follows:

| Range | Rate for 2015 | Rate for 2016 | Rate for 2017 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| >0 <2,000,000,000 | 0,20% | 0,15% | 0,05% |
| >=2,000,000,000 <3,000,000,000 | 0,35% | 0,25% | 0,10% |
| >=3,000,000,000 <5,000,000,000 | 0,75% | 0,50% | 0,20% |
| >=5,000,000,000 and onwards | 1,15% | 1,00% | 0,40% |

| Range | Applicable formula | Sum set for 2015 | Sum set for 2016 | Sum set for 2017 |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| >0 <2,000,000,000 | Taxable basis * Rate | - | - | - |
| >=2,000,000,000 <3,000,000,000 | ((Taxable basis - \$2,000,000,000) * Rate) + Sum set | 4.000.000 | 3.000.000 | 1.000.000 |

| Range | Applicable formula | Sum set for 2015 | Sum set for 2016 | Sum set for 2017 |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| >=3,000,000,000 <5,000,000,000 | ((Taxable basis - \$3,000,000,000) * Rate) + Sum set | 7.500.000 | 5.500.000 | 2.000.000 |
| >=5,000,000,000 and onwards | ((Taxable basis - \$5,000,000,000) * Rate) + Sum set | 22.500.000 | 15.500.000 | 6.000.000 |

This tax may be offset against equity reserves without affecting profits and losses (P&L), including profits for both individual and consolidated balances.

The wealth tax will not be deductible for income and CREE tax assessment.

Tax on financial transactions

The tax on financial transactions (TFT) applies to any financial debit transactions involving a withdrawal of deposited resources in checking or savings bank accounts opened in financial entities. Exemptions apply, but none apply specifically to the oil and gas sector.

The current tax rate is 0.4%, applied to the total amount of the transaction. In general, the withholding agents of TFT are financial entities and the Colombian Central Bank.

In accordance with Law 1739 of 2014, progressively eliminates the GMF. For 2015 to 2018, the GMF rate is 0.4%. Subsequently, the GMF rate will be reduced as follows: 0.3% for 2019, 0.2% for 2020 and 0.1% for 2021. By 2022, the GMF will be eliminated. For 2014 tax year, 50% of the amount paid will be a deductible allowance.

Mergers and spin-offs

Acquisition mergers and spin-offs

The acquisition merger and spin-off rules apply to domestic companies that are not deemed to be related parties under the definitions contained in the transfer pricing rules. The merger and spin-off rules are neutral for income tax and VAT purposes, as no disposal of property is deemed to occur. No disposal of shares is deemed to take place for the shareholders of the participating companies, provided that certain conditions are met, such as (i) owners of 75% of the shares of the existing companies participate in the resulting company, and (ii) shareholders receive a participation equivalent to no less than 90% of the resulting capital as measured by application of the valuation methods and share exchange method used. A 2-year minimum holding period is required; otherwise, a special fine may be imposed, with certain exceptions. Other restrictions apply.

When foreign and domestic companies participate in a merger or spin-off, the same consequences apply as are set out in the preceding paragraph, to the extent that the absorbing company (in mergers) or resulting company (in spin-offs) is a domestic entity.

Reorganization mergers and spin-offs

The reorganization merger and spinoff rules apply to domestic companies that are deemed to be related parties under the definitions contained in the transfer pricing rules. The merger or spin off is tax-free for income tax and VAT purposes. The requirements that apply to acquisition mergers or spinoffs also apply to reorganization mergers and spinoffs, except that certain thresholds increase. For example, (i) ownership of interest in shares is increased to 85%, and (ii) shareholders must receive a participation equivalent of no less than 99% of the resulting capital as measured by the application of the valuation methods and share exchange method used. Other restrictions apply.

Mergers and spinoffs of foreign entities owning Colombian property

Foreign mergers or spin-offs of companies holding Colombian interests are taxed in Colombia when through these mechanisms direct ownership of Colombian companies or assets is transferred, provided the value of the assets exceeds 20% of the total assets of the group to which the participating companies in the merger or spin-off belong, according to the consolidated balance sheet of the ultimate parent company.

Foreign exchange regime

As a general rule, all business entities that undertake business operations in Colombia are subject to Colombia's exchange control regime. Colombian incorporated legal entities qualify as "residents" for exchange control purposes and are subject to the "general foreign-exchange control regime." Colombian registered branches of foreign legal entities also qualify as residents and are subject to this same regime; however, if the purpose of the business of a branch of a foreign entity is to enter into hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities, or to provide exclusive services to the hydrocarbon sector in accordance with Decree 2058 of 1991 (as a "qualified branch in which case they will require an exclusivity certificate issued by the Ministry of Mining and Energy"), the branch will belong to the "special foreign-exchange control regime."

The most notable differences between the two regimes are related to the way that the entities may handle their foreign currency resources and deal with "exchange operations" as set out next.

| General regime | Special regime |
|--|--|
| Scope | |
| <p>Applies to all Colombian residents (persons, public entities, and incorporated legal vehicles including companies undertaking exploration and exploitation of oil and gas and non-qualifying branches of foreign legal entities).</p> | <p>Applies to branches of foreign companies operating in the exploration and exploitation of oil, gas, coal, ferronickel or uranium, as well as the exclusive provision of services to the hydrocarbon sector. To apply for the special regime, branches devoted to providing services will require a certification issued by the Ministry of Mining and Energy.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|--|--|
| Regime election | |
| <p>Applies by default to the residents referenced above.</p> | <p>This regime is automatically applicable to branches of foreign companies involved in the exploration and exploitation of oil, gas, coal, ferronickel or uranium. Branches devoted to providing services exclusively to the hydrocarbon sector, must obtain an exclusivity certificate issued by the Ministry of Mines and Energy in order to apply for the special regime. However, branches of foreign companies that comply with the above mentioned requirements and that do not wish to follow the special provisions stipulated in the special foreign-exchange control regime must report their decision to the Central Bank, and they will be exonerated from applying such rules for a minimum period of 10 years from the date of submitting the respective communication. Accordingly, all foreign-exchange operations carried out shall be subject to the common regulations provided for in the general foreign-exchange control regime (Section 50 of Resolution 8 of 2000), as explained below.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|---|--|
| Characteristics | |
| <p>It is mandatory to repatriate and wire through the exchange market all foreign currency received from sales abroad (i.e., it is mandatory to bring it into Colombia and convert it into local currency through an intermediary of the Foreign Exchange Market.</p> <p>However, Colombian regulations also allow for residents to wire the money under the general regime through a foreign-currency-based bank account registered at the Central Bank as a compensation account.</p> | <p>It is not mandatory to repatriate foreign currency received from sales (i.e., to bring it into Colombia and convert it into local currency). Branches are only required to repatriate into the Colombian Foreign Exchange Market the foreign currency needed to cover expenses in Colombian currency.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|--|--|
| Characteristics | |
| <p>Acquisition of foreign currency from the Colombian regulated foreign currency market is permitted. An entity covered by this regime should undertake all its exchange control operations through Colombian-qualified foreign-exchange intermediaries or their compensation accounts.</p> | <p>In general, branches belonging to the special exchange regime do not have access to the regulated foreign-exchange market. As a result, these branches are not allowed to purchase foreign currency from the Colombian foreign currency market. Therefore, the execution of determined exchange operations is limited, and most business must be attended to directly by the main office. By way of exception, qualifying branches may remit abroad through the exchange market (with the certification of the entity's statutory auditor or accountant) any proceeds received in Colombian pesos for internal sales of oil, natural gas or services related to the hydrocarbon sector, and the foreign capital amount to be reimbursed to the main office in the event of the liquidation of the branch in Colombia.</p> |
| <p>Residents that belong to the general foreign-exchange regime are obliged to carry out the payment of internal operations between them in Colombian legal currency (COP). However, they are allowed to carry out these payments in foreign currency through duly registered compensation accounts. Both the payer and the receiver should wire through these accounts.</p> | <p>All expenses incurred by a branch in Colombia should be paid in Colombian legal currency (COP), except for payments between companies in the same business sector, which may be performed in foreign currency. These are the national entities with foreign investment (companies, and branches of foreign companies) that carry out activities of exploration and exploitation of oil, natural gas, coal, ferronickel or uranium, and national companies with foreign investment that provide exclusive services to the hydrocarbon sector in accordance with Decree 2058 of 1991 (as a "qualified branch in which case they will require an exclusivity certificate issued by the Ministry of Mining and Energy").</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|--|--|
| Characteristics | |
| <p>Import and export of goods, international investments, foreign indebtedness, financial derivatives and guarantees are operations that residents must mandatorily wire through the Foreign Exchange Market, either through an intermediary of that market or through compensation accounts.</p> | <p>Considering that the import of goods is an exchange operation that must be mandatorily wired through the Foreign Exchange Market, all imports of goods must be paid in full by the main office with its own resources because the branches will not be able to wire payments through the exchange market.</p> <p>The import of goods by these types of branches must be filed for customs purposes as non-reimbursable imports.</p> <p>Payment for services (which is a free-market operation not mandatorily wired through the Foreign Exchange Market) must be made abroad by the head office on behalf of the branch.</p> <p>These payments are considered to be contributions when made abroad by the head office. Payments must be managed as supplementary investments to the assigned capital.</p> |
| <p>Colombian incorporated legal entities may receive investments in cash or in kind from foreign shareholders (whereas non-qualifying branches may only receive cash contributions) in the form of capital contribution, assigned capital or supplementary investment to the assigned capital.</p> | <p>The receipt by a branch of an investment in cash or in kind from its main office must be accounted for through the supplementary investment to the assigned capital account (SIACA). The SIACA is a special account that, even though it forms an integral part of the equity accounts of the qualified branch, is a separate account from the assigned capital account. This allows the flow of investment funds into the branch's equity account without entailing a change to the assigned capital account, thus allowing the branch to increase or reduce the SIACA balance without requiring the formality of a corporate resolution, or prior authorization by Colombian supervisory entities (e.g., Superintendence of Corporations). Therefore, the SIACA can be managed, in effect, as a "current account" of the branch with its home office. The branches pertaining to the special exchange regime may receive contributions in cash or in kind as SIACA.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|---|---|
| Foreign currency movements | |
| <p>These entities may carry out all operations that are typical of the foreign-exchange market. Some of the exchange control operations as mentioned above are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Foreign investments in Colombia and related yields ▶ Colombian capital investments abroad and related yields ▶ Financial investments in securities issued abroad, investments in assets located abroad and related yields, unless the investment is made with foreign currency from transactions that are not required to be wired through the exchange market ▶ Endorsements and warranty bonds in foreign currency ▶ Financial Derivatives transactions ▶ Foreign indebtedness | <p>These entities may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Receive foreign investments into their assigned capital or SIACA ▶ Remit abroad the proceeds of the branch's final liquidation and the proceeds received in Colombian pesos for internal sales of oil, natural gas or services <p>Considering that the main office receives the proceeds abroad, and carries out directly most of the payments on behalf of the branch, it may not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Carry out operations of the exchange market ▶ Remit profits ▶ Carry out foreign indebtedness operations ▶ Purchase foreign currency for the payment of obligations ▶ Pay for imports of goods |

| General regime | Special regime |
|---|--|
| Registration of foreign investment | |
| <p>In general terms, registration of a foreign investment is an automatic process at the time of wiring funds through the Foreign Exchange Market, via the filing of Form 4.</p> <p>Some specific investments – such as contributions in kind, intangibles and tangibles, participation in contracts that do not imply participation in the capital and the capitalization of sums “with right of remittance,” such as payable interest or dividends – are registered using Form 11.</p> <p>For the special registries (Form No. 11), the filing of the required form and documents has a deadline of 12 months from the time of the operation.</p> | <p>Registration of a foreign investment is automatic at the time of channeling the funds through the Foreign Exchange Market, via presentation of Form 4.</p> <p>Registration of SIACA has to be completed by 30 June of the year following the investment, using Form 13.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|---|---|
| Annual foreign investment update | |
| <p>Form 15, "Equity reconciliation – companies and branches of the general regime," is used for providing a foreign investment update.</p> <p>This annual update is not mandatory to entities subject to surveillance, control or inspection by the Superintendence of Corporations when such entities are obliged to submit their annual financial statements to this authority.</p> <p>Any entity submitting an annual update has to do so by 30 June every year.</p> | <p>Form 13 is used for providing a foreign investment update.</p> <p>The deadline for submitting the form is six months from the financial closing on the 31 December every year.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|---|--|
| Foreign trade operations | |
| <p>Payment of imports must be channeled through the Colombian Foreign Exchange Market.</p> <p>The proceeds of exports must be brought into the Colombian Foreign Exchange Market.</p> | <p>Imports coming from their home office or from third parties must not be paid in foreign currency; therefore, all goods entering the country should come in as a contribution from their main office. Imports therefore qualify as non-reimbursable imports and so there is no access to foreign currency to pay for them.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|--|--|
| Foreign indebtedness | |
| <p>Entities may enter into passive or active foreign debt transactions. Also, active indebtedness can be undertaken with any nonresident, and passive indebtedness with any legal entity abroad.</p> <p>Foreign currency that has originated in foreign indebtedness operations, together with its financial costs, must be wired through the Colombian Foreign Exchange Market.</p> | <p>These entities may not enter into passive or active foreign indebtedness operations for any concept – i.e., all foreign indebtedness (including any international leasing) must be undertaken by the main office, as opposed to the branch.</p> |

| General regime | Special regime |
|--|---|
| Foreign currency accounts | |
| <p>Entities may have checking or savings accounts in foreign currency with foreign financial entities, and they are not required to report or register them with the Central Bank. These accounts may only be used for handling operations not required to be channeled through Colombia's Foreign Exchange Market (Section 55 of Resolution 8 of 2000).</p> | <p>Entities may have current or savings accounts in foreign currency with foreign financial entities, and they are not required to report or register them with the Central Bank (Section 55 of Resolution 8 of 2000). No operations, other than free market operations, may be carried out through these accounts.</p> |
| <p>Entities may have foreign-currency compensation accounts registered with the Central Bank for handling operations that have mandatory to be wired through the Colombian Foreign Exchange Market. (Section 56 of Resolution 8 of 2000).</p> | <p>Entities cannot have compensation accounts, due to the fact that accessing the Colombian Foreign Exchange Market is proscribed.</p> |

J. Other tax compliance

The Colombian Tax Code states that taxpayers are required to provide certain specified information to the tax authorities. Based on that, the tax authorities (at national and municipal levels) request every year from some taxpayers detailed information (known colloquially as "MM") to support the figures reported in their income tax returns, using a specific format provided by the tax authorities.

Individuals or corporations acting as "operator" in E&P oil and gas contracts are obliged to provide MM to the tax authority, comprising a full set of information from their own operations and those of any partners engaged in the same E&P contract.

K. Anti-abuse rules

Tax abuse is defined as the use or implementation of a transaction or several transactions for the purposes of:

- ▶ Changing or modifying artificially those tax effects that would otherwise have arisen for the taxpayer, or its related parties, shareholders or effective beneficiaries
- ▶ Obtaining a tax benefit

Typically, such transactions do not have a valid and reasonable business purpose that serves as the main cause for such use or implementation.

Burden of proof is shifted to the taxpayer, when at least two of the defined criteria apply (e.g. the use of a tax haven, and a related-party transaction). The taxpayer is required to demonstrate business purpose, or market value of the transaction under transfer pricing methodologies, when applicable. Otherwise, the tax authority may re-characterize the transaction, pierce the corporate veil, and assess the tax due with fines and penalties.

The decision that a tax abuse has occurred is made by a body composed of several governmental institutions, including the Director of the Tax Authority.

Côte d'Ivoire

Country code 225

| Abidjan | | GMT |
|--|--|-----|
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| Oil and gas contact | | |
| Eric N'Guessan Tel 20 21 11 15 eric.nguessan@ci.ey.com | Mathieu Calame Tel 09 68 88 88 mathieu.calame@ci.ey.com | |
| Tax regime applied to this country | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service contract | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime applicable to the petroleum industry in Côte d'Ivoire consists of the General Tax Code, the Petroleum Code and any production sharing contracts (PSC) or contract of service concluded between the Ivorian Government and the contractor (hereafter referred to as the holder). The most recent PSCs are those where the tax is paid on behalf of the holder (a "tax-paid PSC"), rather than those when the tax is paid by the holder (a "taxpaying PSC").

The principal taxes and duties applying for the oil and gas industry are:

- ▶ Corporate Income tax (CIT) – 25%
- ▶ Surface rent tax – No specific legislated rate and depends on the terms of the PSC
- ▶ Bonuses – Amount depends on the terms of the PSC
- ▶ Royalties on production – Rate depends on the terms of the PSC¹
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E²
- ▶ Incentives – L, RD³

B. Fiscal regime

There are two groups of petroleum companies in Côte d'Ivoire. The first consists of exploration and production (E&P) companies specializing in the exploration and the production of oil and gas (hereafter referred to as E&P companies or holder). The second group consists of petroleum services providers that specialize in the supply of petroleum services and are subcontracted by the holder (see Section I below).

The fiscal regime that applies to E&P companies differs from the one applying to petroleum service providers.

Corporate tax

E&P companies in Côte d'Ivoire are subject in principle to CIT on their nonexempt income at the rate of 25%. Some holders are exempt from corporate tax, and such exemptions are specified in their PSCs.

CIT could be paid in cash or in kind (in which case, the CIT is considered as already included in the profit oil of the State). In the latter case, the national oil company (PETROCI) must deliver a tax payment certificate to the holder.

1 Royalties are applicable to the holder of the PSC.

2 D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off of exploration costs.

3 L: ability to carryforward losses; RD: R&D incentive.

The CIT is calculated on the net taxable income of the holder. The net profit is the difference between the value of the opening and closing balances of the net assets in the relevant year of assessment, less extra contributions, plus any amounts taken by associated companies during the said period.

Exploration and development costs are taken into account in determining the company's income.

The profit is calculated after deduction of all charges that meet the following conditions:

- ▶ Are incurred in the direct interest of the company or related to the normal management of the company
- ▶ Correspond to actual charges and are supported by sufficient evidence
- ▶ Are reflected by a decrease in the net assets of the company
- ▶ Are included in the charges of the fiscal year during which they were incurred

However, the PSCs signed over the last few years are tax-paid PSC. The holders are receiving their profit oil share net of taxes (including CIT). The Ivorian Government is supposed to settle the holder's taxes on its behalf out of its own share of profit oil. The holder will still receive tax payment certificates.

Characteristics of the PSC

A PSC is concluded between the holder and the Ivorian Government and is signed by both the Minister of Petroleum and the Minister of Finance. It is one of the most common contracts used by the Government. The PSC is in principle published in the *Official Journal*, but this has never been done in practice.

As in most PSCs, an E&P company finances all exploration and development costs and bears all costs and risks of this operation in the event that no oil and gas is found.

The production is allocated as follows: one part of the production will be used to recover the exploration and development costs incurred by the company ("cost oil"); the remaining part ("profit oil") is shared between the Government and the holder. Production sharing is calculated with reference to the production volume, and cash can be payable in lieu of oil under certain circumstances.

Government share of profit oil

The Government share of profit oil is determined in each PSC; there is no quantity required by law. The Government share depends on the terms of the PSC or the service contract and should be equal to a percentage of the production after the deduction of cost oil. As an example of a PSC, the Government share of profit oil could be computed as follows:

| Daily oil production (barrels) | Government share of profit oil | Holder share of profit oil |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| From 0 to 100,000 | 45% | 55% |
| From 100,001 to 200,000 | 47% | 53% |
| From 200,001 to 300,000 | 55% | 45% |
| Over 300,000 | 60% | 40% |

Cost oil

Recoverable expenditures

Exploration and development costs are recoverable by the holder in the form of cost oil.

Non-recoverable expenditures

The following expenditures are not recoverable:

- ▶ Expenditures relating to the period before the effective date of the contract
- ▶ Expenses relating to the operations carried out beyond the point of delivery, such as marketing and transportation charges
- ▶ Bonuses
- ▶ Financing costs (under certain conditions).

Determination of cost oil

Cost oil is all expenses borne by the holder in the performance of the PSC and determined in accordance with relevant accounting processes. Cost oil and profit oil are determined for each contract; there is no standard rate, and each holder agrees its share of cost oil with the Government. Cost oil recovery is usually capped between 70% and 80% of the total production.

Uplift

Some PSCs allow the holder to claim an uplift (i.e., additional cost oil) on expenditures incurred for deep- and ultra-deep water operations. The uplift rate is negotiated for each PSC.

VAT

The holder is exempt from VAT and tax on financial operations in Côte d'Ivoire for the purchase of goods and services related to its petroleum activities. The availability of the exemption is subject to compliance with VAT exemption procedures established by the Ivorian tax authorities.

The holder is liable for VAT at the rate of 18% on the purchase of certain goods and services not connected with petroleum operations.

It is not necessary to register for VAT separately. As soon as a company is registered in Côte d'Ivoire (as a branch or company), a taxpayer number is allocated to the holder and it covers all taxes, including VAT.

Bonuses

Each petroleum or gas agreement specifies the bonus payable to the Government. The amount is negotiated with the Government when the agreement is signed and therefore the amount of any bonus payable generally differs in each contract. There are two kinds of bonus:

- ▶ Signature bonus, payable 30 days after the signing of a gas or petroleum agreement
- ▶ Production bonus, payable 30 days after the last day of the test production

Bonuses vary according to the total cumulated oil production. Based on an example, the bonus might be due as follows:

- ▶ US\$3 million when the net cumulated oil production reaches 50 million barrels
- ▶ US\$6 million when the net cumulated oil production reaches 75 million barrels
- ▶ US\$8 million when the net cumulated oil production reaches 100 million barrels
- ▶ US\$12 million when the net cumulated oil production reaches 200 million barrels

Annual surface rent

The payment of an annual surface rent or other surface rent can be due according to the PSC or service contract. In this case, the payment must be made in the first 10 days of the year. In the case of annual surface rent tax, the amount due will be paid for the entire year, based on the area of the permit.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply for unconventional oil or gas.

C. Capital allowances

Holders are subject to local GAAP known as SYSCOHADA.

In practice, each holder, whether resident or not, must adopt two accounting systems: one for general activities and the other for petroleum costs. In this second system, the relevant company must have a special account each year where the production level, results and balance sheet of the company are set out.

Immediate write-off for exploration costs

The exploration expenses incurred by the holder in the territory of Côte d'Ivoire – including the cost of geological and geophysical surveys, and the cost of exploration wells – will be regarded as expenses fully deductible as of the year during which they are incurred. Alternatively, these costs may be capitalized under certain conditions and depreciated once production starts.

D. Incentives

Tax exemptions

Holders of PSCs are exempt from certain taxes, duties and fees as soon as they sign the PSC and up to the end of their activities in Côte d'Ivoire or at the end of the PSC. The main taxes exempted are:

- ▶ Tax on banking operations
- ▶ Value Added Tax (VAT)
- ▶ Taxes and duties applicable to petroleum products supplied to permanent facilities and drilling facilities.

During this period, equipment intended directly and exclusively for petroleum operations is exempt from any duties and taxes on its importation into Côte d'Ivoire by the holder or by companies working on its behalf.

Ability to carry forward losses

In a taxpaying PSC, the unverified amount of the loss is deductible from the taxable profits until the fifth fiscal year following the period in which the loss arose, unless the PSC or service contract authorizes the holder to carry these losses forward beyond the five-year period.

Losses relating to asset depreciation can be carried forward indefinitely.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends distributed by the holder are exempt from taxation.

Interest

Loan interest related to petroleum activities paid by the holder to its affiliates is not subject to any withholding tax (WHT).

Technical services

Nonresident service providers are subject to taxation on the payment they receive from a holder based in Côte d'Ivoire at a common rate of 20%. In the presence of a double tax treaty, services having the characteristics of royalties are subject to 10% tax.

However, some PSC can exempt the holder and its service providers or suppliers from this tax.

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax applies in general, but not to PSC holders.

F. Thin capitalization limits

There are no thin capitalization tax rules.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The income that results from asset disposals is included in the corporate income of the holder and is subject to CIT and registration fees.

Capital gains

In principle, capital gains are taxed at the corporate income tax rate of 25% (capital gains arising from transfer of assets, or from a PSC participating interest between affiliated companies, could be exempt from CIT under certain conditions.)

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

All goods and materials entering into Côte d'Ivoire from overseas are subject to customs import duties.

However, personal and domestic goods of nonresident workers of E&P companies are exempt from any customs duties. Also, all materials required to carry out petroleum or gas operations are exempt.

VAT

See Section C above.

Export duties

Holders that export petroleum products are not subject to export duties.

Stamp duties

Stamp duties are due on transactions made by a holder. These stamp duties are the same for all companies.

Registration tax

Upon company registration, holders become taxable entities and must register with the tax authorities in order to obtain a tax identification number.

The registration tax for the creation of a subsidiary is:

- ▶ Up to US\$10 million share capital – 0.3%
- ▶ More than US\$10 million share capital – 0.1%

I. Petroleum services provider tax regime

Petroleum services providers are eligible to the Simplified Tax Regime if all of the following conditions are met:

- ▶ The provider is a foreign entity
- ▶ The provider signed a service contract with an E&P company or a direct contractor of an E&P company
- ▶ The provider uses expensive equipment and machinery, i.e., the drilling rig
- ▶ The provider is registered with the Trade Register of Côte d'Ivoire as an agency or branch
- ▶ The provider files a request with the Head of Tax Office within three months after the start of operations in Côte d'Ivoire.

The taxpayer must opt to be taxed under this regime if it wishes to operate under the Simplified Tax Regime; this election is definitive and is subject to the approval of the Head of Tax Office.

The Simplified Tax Regime (STR) covers corporate income tax, dividend withholding tax, tax on insurance premiums and payroll taxes (as described in the table below). A single STR rate is applied to turnover realized by the providers in Côte d'Ivoire.

| Taxes | Taxable basis | Rate | Effective rate (on gross turnover) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate income tax | 10% of turnover | 25% | 2.5% |
| Withholding tax on dividends | 50% of profit (i.e., 5% of turnover) | 15% | 0.75% |
| Payroll taxes | | | |
| - for expatriate employees | 8% of turnover | 12% | 0.96% |
| - for local employees | 2% of turnover | 2.8% | 0.056% |
| Tax on salaries (due by employees) | | | |
| - Salary tax | 8% of turnover | 1.5% | 0.12% |
| - National contribution tax | 10% of turnover | 5% | 0.5% |
| - General income tax | 8% of turnover | 10% | 0.8% |
| Tax on insurance premium | 10% of turnover | 0.1% | 0.1% |
| Overall tax rate | | | 5.786% |

Providers that have elected to the STR do not need to keep local books under local GAAP.

J. Other

Recent legislative changes 2014 Finance Law

No changes relating to petroleum activities were enacted.

Croatia

Country code 385

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Tax regime applied to this country
 Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts

- Service contract**

The fiscal system applied in Croatia to upstream operations is based on production sharing contracts (PSCs). The fiscal terms are defined both in the PSCs and in applicable legislation. Croatia has a model PSC both for onshore and offshore blocks, prepared in time for the first international bidding round launched in 2014. Some provisions addressing the specifics of petroleum operations are still evolving.

A. At a glance

- ▶ Income tax rate – 20%
- ▶ Signature bonus – This is biddable
- ▶ Production bonus – Applies
- ▶ Surface rental fees – Apply
- ▶ Administration fee – Applies
- ▶ Royalties – 10%
- ▶ Cost recovery – Applies
- ▶ Profit production – Linked to the so-called “R-factor”
- ▶ Customs duties – Apply

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax regime

Resident companies are subject to tax on their worldwide income. A company is deemed resident in Croatia if its legal seat or its place of management and supervision is located there. Branches of foreign companies are subject to tax only on their profits derived from Croatia.

The rate of corporate income tax for petroleum activities is 20%, which is the general tax rate in Croatia. Generally, lower tax rates or other tax benefits may be available based on size and location of investment.

There is no branch remittance tax in Croatia.

Some provisions addressing specifics of petroleum operations are yet to be introduced to the general tax regime (for example, depreciation rates for exploration and development costs, and the treatment of unsuccessful exploration). Until then, companies should apply the general income tax rules.

Signature bonus

A signature bonus is biddable. The minimum bonus is HRK1.4 million. The signature bonus is tax deductible, but not cost recoverable.

Production bonus

A production bonus is linked to accumulated production and distinguished for oil and for gas fields. Bonuses are payable upon commencement of production, and again once certain production thresholds are reached. There is no distinction for onshore and offshore blocks. Production bonuses are tax deductible, but not cost recoverable.

| Oil fields | |
|--|------------------------|
| Cumulative production thresholds (barrels of oil equivalent) | Production bonus (HRK) |
| Start of commercial production | 1,400,000 |
| 50,000 | 1,400,000 |
| 100,000 | 1,400,000 |
| 150,000 | 1,400,000 |
| 200,000 | 1,400,000 |

| Gas fields | |
|---|------------------------|
| Cumulative production (barrels of oil equivalent) | Production bonus (HRK) |
| Start of commercial production | 900,000 |
| 25,000 | 900,000 |
| 50,000 | 900,000 |
| 75,000 | 900,000 |
| 100,000 | 900,000 |

Surface rental fees

Surface rental fees apply at the flowing annual rates:

- ▶ HRK400 per square kilometer are specified in the PSC agreement
- ▶ HRK4,000 per square kilometer of exploitation area for each such area

Surface rentals are tax deductible, but not cost recoverable.

Administration fee

An annual administration fee applies. The rate for the first year of contract is HRK600,000, increasing annually by 4% until expiration of the contract. The administration fee is tax deductible, but not cost recoverable.

Royalties

The royalty rate is 10% of gross production. Royalties are tax deductible.

Cost recovery

The cost recovery ceiling for crude oil is set for offshore blocks at 50% of production net of any royalty payment, and for onshore blocks at 70% of production net of royalty payments. Costs allowed for recovery can be recovered at rate of 100%, subject to a specified recovery ceiling. Unrecovered costs can be carried forward within the duration of the contract.

Profit production

The production remaining after royalty payments and cost recovery is treated as profit production, to be further split between the State and the contractor.

Profit split is based on the so-called "R-factor" as set out in the table below. Both the R-factor's sliding scale and the production split rates are predetermined. The R-factor is defined thus:

$$R = \text{Cumulative Net Revenues} \div \text{Cumulative Capital Expenditures}$$

| R-factor | Contractor's share of profit production | State's share of profit production |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| $R \leq 1$ | 90% | 10% |
| $1 < R \leq 1.5$ | 80% | 20% |
| $1.5 < R \leq 2$ | 70% | 30% |
| $R > 2$ | 60% | 40% |

Royalties, the cost recovery ceiling and the profit production split are not distinguished for oil and for natural gas.

Customs duties

Both contractors and subcontractors engaged in carrying out operations under a PSC with respect to the importation of equipment and materials are not exempt from customs duties and are subject to both EU legislation and the laws and regulations of the Republic of Croatia effective at the time.

Unconventional oil and gas

Currently no special terms exist for unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

Cyprus

Country code 357

| | | |
|--|---|---------------|
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| EY EY House 27 Spyrou Kyprianou, Mesa Geitonia 4003, Cyprus | Tel 25 209 999 Fax 25 209 998 | |
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| Philippos Raptopoulos Tel 25 209 740 philippos.raptopoulos@cy.ey.com | Olga Chervinskaya Tel 25 209 736 olga.chervinskaya@cy.ey.com | |
| Tax regime applied to this country | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Cyprus to the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), capital gains tax (CGT), immovable property tax (IPT), VAT and excise duty, whereby upstream oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities are to be undertaken under a production sharing contract (PSC).

- ▶ CIT rate – 12.5%
- ▶ CGT rate – 20%
- ▶ IPT rate – 0.6%-0.19%
- ▶ Branch tax rate – 12.5%
- ▶ VAT rate – 19%
- ▶ Royalties – None
- ▶ Bonuses – Yes
- ▶ Surface rental fees – Yes
- ▶ PSC – Yes

B. Fiscal regime

There are currently no specific tax laws on hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation activities in Cyprus, and the general (corporate) tax laws in force are applicable. As per the model exploration and production sharing contract (MEPSC), published as part of the second licensing round for offshore Cyprus concerning the authorization for hydrocarbons exploration, the intention of the Cyprus Government is to enter into a PSC with operators and contractors under which the Republic of Cyprus shall be entitled to a certain percentage of the profit hydrocarbons resulting from the hydrocarbon operations to be undertaken by the operator or contractor in Cyprus at its sole risk, cost and expense. Under the MEPSC, the applicable CIT shall be deemed to be included in the Republic's share of profit oil and profit gas, and therefore the portion of the available hydrocarbons that the operator or contractor is entitled to shall be net of CIT.

Corporate income tax

Companies resident in Cyprus are subject to CIT on their worldwide income from business activities and certain other selected types of income. A company is deemed "resident" in Cyprus if its management and control are exercised from Cyprus. Nonresident companies are taxed only on income derived from a permanent establishment in Cyprus and on rental income from property located in Cyprus.

Ring-fencing

Cyprus does not apply ring fencing in determining an entity's corporate tax liability in relation to its oil and gas activities. Losses from one project (where, if such losses were profits, they would be subject to CIT) can be offset against profits of the same company from another project; similarly, profits and losses from upstream activities can potentially be offset against downstream activities undertaken by the same taxpayer. New oil and gas industry taxation rules in this respect may be introduced by regulations envisaged by the Government.

CIT is levied on taxable income

Taxable income is the difference between taxable revenues and tax-deductible expenses for the year of assessment. Expenses (including interest expenditure) are deductible for CIT purposes if they are incurred wholly and exclusively for the production of (taxable) income.

The determination of taxable income is generally based on accounts prepared in accordance with international financial reporting standards (IFRS), subject to certain adjustments and provisions.

Tax losses

Losses can be carried forward for 5 years from the end of the year of assessment in which the tax losses incurred. This change was introduced in December 2012 and means in practice that tax losses incurred in tax year 2009 cannot be set off after the tax year 2014, tax losses incurred in 2010 cannot be set off after the tax year 2015, and so on. Loss carry-backs are not allowed.

Groups of companies

Group loss relief for a loss incurred in an income year is allowed between resident group companies that meet certain conditions.

Capital gains tax and immovable property tax

Cypriot capital gains tax (CGT) is levied at a rate of 20% only with respect to profits realized upon a disposal of immovable property situated in Cyprus, as well as on the sale of shares of companies whose property consists partly or wholly of immovable property situated in Cyprus. Gains realized upon the disposal of shares in companies that do not own Cypriot-based immovable property are not subject to CGT. Moreover, the disposal of a lease registered in accordance with the Immovable Property (Tenure, Registration and Valuation) Law constitutes a taxable event for Cypriot CGT purposes.

Cypriot immovable property tax (IPT) is imposed at rates in the range of 0.6% to 0.19% on the owner of an immovable property. It is calculated on the market value of property as of 1 January 1980 as per the general revaluation.

Although not explicitly provided in the legislation, the term "immovable property" should be confined to include only immovable property physically situated on the mainland of Cyprus, as well as leases registered in accordance with the provisions of the Immovable Property Law, and should neither include the sea blocks or sea beds falling within the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Cyprus, nor a right to a fixed or variable payment for the working of mineral deposits and other natural resources (e.g., rights under the PSC).

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Depreciation and amortization allowances

The general depreciation and amortization allowances rules are as follows:

- ▶ *Plant and machinery.* A straight-line allowance of 10% a year is given on capital expenditures for plant and machinery (20% for assets acquired in 2012-2014).
- ▶ *Industrial buildings.* A straight-line allowance of 4% a year is available for industrial buildings (7% for assets acquired in 2012-2014).
- ▶ *Commercial buildings.* A straight-line allowance of 3% a year is available for commercial buildings.
- ▶ *Office equipment.* A straight-line allowance of 20% a year is available for computers. Other office equipment is depreciated under the straight-line method at an annual rate of 10%. (20% for assets acquired in 2012-2014).
- ▶ *Motor vehicles.* In general, a straight-line allowance of 20% a year is available for motor vehicles (except for private saloon cars).
- ▶ *Sales of depreciable assets.* On disposal of an asset, if sale proceeds are less than the remaining depreciable base, a further allowance is granted, up to the difference between the two. If sale proceeds exceed the depreciable base, the excess (up to the amount of allowances received) is included in taxable income. This is done on an asset-by-asset basis.

New oil and gas industry depreciation and amortization allowance rules may be introduced by regulations envisaged by the Government.

D. Incentives/tax holidays

There are no specific incentives or tax holiday facilities in Cyprus.

E. Withholding taxes

Cyprus does not impose any withholding taxes (WHT) on payments of dividends and interest to nonresident shareholders or lenders.

A 5% or 10% WHT rate applies (subject to double tax treaty relief or the absence of WHT, based on the EU Interest and Royalties Directive) to royalty payments for the economic utilization of licensing rights and the provision of technical assistance services within Cyprus.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

There are no thin capitalization rules or debt-to-equity ratios in Cyprus.

The arm's length principle is codified in the CIT law in wording similar to that of Article 9 of the OECD Model Tax Convention. Consequently, all transactions entered into with related parties should be concluded on an arm's length basis in order to avoid adjustments of the taxable profit by the Cypriot tax authorities. However, there are no specific rules regarding transfer pricing or transfer pricing documentation requirements in Cyprus.

In terms of intragroup loans, this means that the interest rate applicable on such loan(s) should be based on market terms and conditions (irrespective of the tax-residency status of the related counterparty of the Cypriot tax-resident company).

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The MEPSC provides for assignment of the PSC (subject to conditions) as well as a change of control of the contractor.

If the contractor (Cyprus tax-resident company) is to realize a gain from disposal of assets, such gain is not subject to CIT in Cyprus if not realized in the course of conducting the business and being capital in nature (i.e., if such transactions are not of a repetitive character) and is not subject to CGT in Cyprus (unless Cyprus-based immovable property is disposed of).

Farm-in and farm-out

No specific provision applies for the tax treatment of farm-in and farm-out consideration, and its treatment is determined on the basis of the general taxation principles and provisions of the PSC.

Joint operations

There are currently no specific rules in Cyprus on the allocation of profits (i.e., revenues and costs) applicable to joint undertakings.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

In Cyprus, the following rates of VAT currently apply: the standard rate at 19%; the reduced rates of 5% and 9%; and the zero rate (0%). The standard rate of VAT applies to all supplies of goods or services, unless a specific provision allows a reduced rate, zero rate or exemption.

Excise duties

In accordance with the EU Acquis, Cyprus has adopted special excise duty rates in the following categories of products known as “harmonized,” irrespective of whether they are produced in Cyprus, imported from other EU Member States or imported from non-EU countries:

- ▶ Energy products and electricity, e.g., petroleum oil, gas oil, kerosene, natural gas, coal and coke
- ▶ Alcohol and alcoholic beverages, e.g., ethyl alcohol, beer, still wine and fermented beverages
- ▶ Tobacco products, e.g., cigarettes and cigars

Transfer tax

There are no specific transfer taxes in Cyprus other than Land Registry Office fees when transferring immovable property.

Stamp duties

Cyprus levies stamp duty on every instrument (i.e., agreement or contract) if it relates to any property situated in Cyprus, or it relates to any matter or thing that is performed or carried out in Cyprus (e.g., a sale or purchase of Cypriot-based assets, such as immovable property and shares in a Cypriot company). There are instruments (e.g. agreements without consideration) that are subject to Cypriot stamp duty at a fixed fee ranging from 7 cents to €35, and instruments that are subject to stamp duty based on the value of the instrument at the following rates:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| For sums €1–€5,000 | Nil |
| For sums €5,001–€170,000 | €1.50 per €1,000 or part thereof |
| For sums above €170,000 | €2 per €1,000 or part thereof |

The maximum stamp duty payable is capped at €20,000.

Registration fees

Registration fees are payable to the Registrar of Companies upon incorporation of a Cypriot company (fixed fee of €105 and an additional fee of 0.6% on every euro of registered nominal or authorized capital); upon every further increase of registered nominal or authorized capital (fee of 0.6% on every euro of registered nominal or authorized capital); and upon every further issue of shares (fixed fee of €20).

Other significant taxes

The following table summarizes other significant taxes.

| Nature of tax | Rate (%) |
|--|----------|
| Special contribution for the Defence Fund of the Republic | |
| On 75% of rents received | 3 |
| On interest received or credited (except for interest earned in the ordinary course of business) | 30 |
| On dividends received or deemed to be received from a nonresident company (if exemption under the Cyprus domestic tax laws does not apply) | 17 |

Payroll taxes

| Nature of tax | Rate (%) |
|--|----------|
| Social insurance contribution, levied on each employee's gross salary, up to €4,533 per month; payable by both employer and employee | 7.8 |
| Special Cohesion Fund, levied on gross salary; payable by employer | 2 |
| Human Resource Development Authority and Redundancy Fund, levied on gross salary, up to €4,533 a month; paid by employer | 1.7 |
| Leave Fund, levied on gross salary, up to €4,533 a month; paid by employer in lieu of holiday pay (employer may obtain exemption from contribution to this fund) | 8 |
| Special contribution (levied on salaries, income of the self-employed and pensions in the private sector) | 0-3.5 |

I. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

Cyprus does not impose foreign-exchange controls.

Gas to liquids

There is no special regime for gas-to-liquids conversion.

Mergers and demergers

No taxes arise on mergers and demergers with respect to transfers of businesses, assets or shares provided they qualify as company reorganization transactions.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime applicable to the petroleum industry in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) consists of the Income Tax Code dated March 2003 and amended to date, the Reform of Tax procedures book dated 13 March 2003, the Hydrocarbon Ordinance-Law No. 81-013 dated 2 April 1981, the VAT Law, the Customs Code and customs tariff, the relevant petroleum convention or production sharing contract (PSC) concluded between the DRC Government and an oil company and provincial legislation.

Petroleum conventions concluded before the enforcement of Hydrocarbon Law No. 81-013 are governed by Ordinance Law 67-231 dated 17 May 1967. The use of petroleum conventions has been replaced progressively by the use of PSCs.

The rules for taxation, rate, control, sanctions, prescription and litigation in relation to bonuses, royalties, profit oil contribution etc. are contained in each PSC or petroleum convention.

The main taxes applicable are:

- ▶ Surface rent
- ▶ Bonuses – Various amounts applicable
- ▶ Royalties – Rate depends on the terms of the of the petroleum convention or PSC
- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – Application depends on the terms of the petroleum convention
- ▶ Profit oil contribution – Rate depends on the terms of the PSC

B. Fiscal regime

Petroleum contracts (former regime)

The petroleum contract under which the DRC Government gives a right to an oil company to exploit a specific area was known as a “petroleum convention.”

The tax regime of the petroleum convention is exclusively defined by the convention provisions. In existing conventions, a royalty on production is levied and corporate income tax (CIT) is also due by applying the specified CIT rate set forth in the convention on the annual net profit oil.

The profit oil is determined by subtracting from gross revenues the deductible costs as listed in the convention, which typically include royalties, oil costs (exploration, exploitation, transports, refinery, transports, trading, and warehouse expenses), asset depreciation and a provision for depletion of reserves.

Production sharing contract

Usually, under the terms of a PSC and to the extent that oil is discovered by a company undertaking exploration and development activities in the DRC, the exploitation is made in the name of the DRC Government. If oil is not discovered, all the costs of exploration are assumed by the company.

The interest of the State is granted to the Congolese Hydrocarbon National Company (Cohydro), which manages the DRC Government stake.

The tax regime of the PSC is exclusively defined in the PSC provisions. Typically, two main taxes are levied under a PSC:

- ▶ A royalty on net production, determined by applying a rate set in the PSC to the value of oil production (production excluding any water, mud, sediment, etc.,) exclusive of any warehouse and transportation costs. The royalty is payable either in kind or in cash.
- ▶ A profit oil contribution, which represents the portion of the profit oil allocated to the DRC Government. The law does not prescribe any quantitative consideration for the sharing of profit oil between the company and the DRC Government; accordingly, the government share of profit oil is determined by the relevant PSC in place.

The profit oil contribution is typically computed by deducting from the gross income after royalty the oil costs specified in the PSC as follows by order of priority:

- ▶ Expenses incurred prior to the setting-up of the entity and related to completion of the PSC
- ▶ Exploitation expenditures
- ▶ Development and construction expenditures
- ▶ Exploration expenditures
- ▶ Social and skills improvement contributions and expenses, as defined in the PSC
- ▶ Provision for decommissioning expenditures
- ▶ Environmental costs
- ▶ Any other costs specified in the PSC

The accounting system applicable for a PSC is specified in the contract.

Bonuses

A bonus is usually paid to the DRC Government for grant or renewal of an exploration or exploitation permit (in which case it is known as a “signature bonus”), or upon start of production or upon the reaching of prescribed production thresholds.

Annual surface rent

An annual surface rent (l'impôt sur la superficie des concessions minières et d'hydrocarbures) is due from the company to the DRC Government. The amount per hectare is US\$0.02 for the first year, US\$0.03 for the second year, US\$0.035 for the third year and US\$0.04 after that.

Royalty regimes

Royalty regimes are determined by the PSC if the contract provides for such payment. Typically, there is no difference in the royalty rates between onshore and offshore production.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

The tax depreciation rules for the petroleum sector are provided in the PSC according to the standard accounting procedure applying.

D. Incentives

There are usually various tax incentives that would be specified within any negotiated PSC. These potential incentives are listed below.

Exemption from capital gains tax on disposal of shares or interest

The PSC may provide an exemption from capital gains tax arising from sale of an interest by a contracting party to a third party.

Extension of PSC tax framework to subcontractors

Subcontractors could benefit from the exclusive tax provisions of relevant PSCs.

E. Withholding taxes

Interest and technical services

Depending on the PSC provisions, a withholding tax (WHT) on gross invoice amount applies to payments for services provided by foreign companies without a permanent establishment in the DRC. The rate under common law is currently set at 14%.

Dividends

Depending on the PSC provisions, dividend payments made by a DRC tax-resident company may be subject to WHT. The rate under the common law is currently 20%.

Branch remittance tax

There is no concept of branch remittance tax for overseas tax-resident companies performing activities in the oil and gas sector in the DRC.

F. Indirect taxes

VAT

In principle, the activities included in a PSC are exempt from VAT, generally through a PSC stability clause, and this position has been confirmed through a Ministerial Decree dated 30 December 2011. However, in practice this exemption is continually challenged by the tax administration.

In any case, the VAT Law provides that the import of materials, equipment and chemical goods and services related to petroleum activities is exempt from VAT during exploration, development and construction, as well as during the exploitation phase.

Import duties

Depending on the nature of equipment, import duty is usually applied at a rate of between 5% and 20%, although the applicable PSC can provide exemptions.

Export duties

Export duties depend on the nature of the equipment. The PSC can provide exemptions.

Stamp duties

Stamp duties are not applicable.

Registration fees

Registration fees are not applicable.

However, registration fees at the rate of 1% of the amount of the capital are due for the incorporation of a public limited liability company or for an increase of its capital.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The tax regime that applies to hydrocarbon exploration and production (E&P) companies in Denmark consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT) and hydrocarbon tax. As of 1 January 2014, all licenses are covered by Chapter 3A of the Hydrocarbon Tax Act. Certain transition rules apply to licensees which, prior to 2014, were taxed according to the so-called "Chapter 3" under the previous hydrocarbon tax regime (hydrocarbon tax rules applicable to licenses granted before 1 January 2004).

The principal aspects of the fiscal regime for the oil and gas sector are as follows:

- ▶ Royalties – None
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – None¹
- ▶ Income tax rate:
 - ▶ Ordinary corporate income tax rate – 23.5%
 - ▶ Chapter 2 corporate income tax rate – 25%
 - ▶ Chapter 3A hydrocarbon tax rate – 52%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, U, E²
- ▶ Investment incentives – L³

B. Fiscal regime

Danish resident companies are subject to tax in accordance with a modified territoriality principle, which means that income and expenses from foreign permanent establishments (PEs) and real estate outside Denmark are not included in the income of a Danish resident company. As a general rule, branches of foreign companies located in Denmark are taxed exclusively on trading income and on chargeable capital gains derived from the disposal of trading assets that are located in Denmark and related to a PE.

1 Denmark does not have a PSC regime, except for the fact that the Danish Government holds a 20% interest in the 1962 Sole Concession.

2 D: accelerated depreciation; U: capital uplift; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs and the cost of permits first used in exploration.

3 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

The Danish hydrocarbon tax rules, however, contain a broader definition of when a Danish tax limited liability is created for a foreign company or person, compared with the ordinary PE test. Foreign persons and companies that engage in hydrocarbon feasibility studies, exploration activities, production of hydrocarbons and related business, including the construction of pipelines, supply services and transportation of hydrocarbons by ship or pipeline, are subject to taxation in Denmark on the income from the time the activity commences in Denmark. If Denmark has entered into a double tax treaty with the country where the foreign company is a tax resident, the treaty may modify the Danish tax liability.

With effect from income year 2015, the Hydrocarbon Tax Act establishes a tax liability for state institutions and entities, including the simultaneously created *Nordsøenheden* (an independent state company whose task is to administer *Nordsøfonden*, the state oil and gas company) even though they are tax exempt under the Danish Corporation Tax Act. The amendment widens the tax liability to cover not merely extraction but also related activity.

The Danish taxation regime that applies to hydrocarbon E&P companies and state institutions consists of a combination of CIT and hydrocarbon tax. Effective as of 1 January 2014, all licenses are taxed according to Chapter 3A. However, certain transition rules apply to licensees which, prior to 2014, were taxed according to chapter 3 under the old hydrocarbon tax regime.

The Danish hydrocarbon tax system is a two-string system combining corporate income tax (CIT) at the standard rate of 25% (Chapter 2 income) and a special hydrocarbon tax at a rate of 52% (Chapter 3A income). The overall combined tax rate for Chapters 2 and 3A is 64%. The income covered by Chapters 2 and 3A includes first-time sales of hydrocarbons, gains and losses from disposal of licenses, exploration rights, gains and losses from the disposal of assets used in E&P activities and financial income directly related to the hydrocarbon activities.

Income related to hydrocarbon feasibility studies, providing services to E&P companies, the construction of pipelines, supply services and the transportation of hydrocarbons by ship or pipeline is not covered by Chapters 2 or 3A, but is subject to ordinary CIT at 23.5%.⁴ This also applies for state institutions and entities which normally are tax exempt under the Danish Corporation Act.

The income taxed under Chapters 2 and 3A is calculated according to the ordinary tax rules that apply to Danish companies and branches, with the adjustments provided in the Danish Hydrocarbon Tax Act. In general, as a result of the hydrocarbon tax uplift (see the subsection on capital uplift in Section C below), hydrocarbon tax is levied exclusively on profitable oilfield production. Chapter 2 tax is allowed as a deduction against the tax basis for hydrocarbon tax (Chapter 3A).

Separate tax returns must be filed each year for each income stream (i.e., for Chapter 2 and Chapter 3A income), and all companies involved in oil and gas exploration in Denmark are required to file a Danish tax return from the year when they commence their exploration activities. The filing deadline is 1 May of the following year. The financial period must follow the calendar year.

Besides hydrocarbon income, the company may have ordinary corporate income (income not covered by the hydrocarbon tax rules). Such income is taxed at the ordinary CIT rate. The filing deadline for this tax return is 30 June of the following year. In 2015, the filing deadline has been extended to 1 September due to the implementation of a new online filing system.

⁴ *The ordinary corporate income tax rate will gradually be lowered from 23.5% in the 2015 income year to 22% in 2016 income year. The reduced corporate income tax rate is not applicable for Chapter 2 income, which is subject to tax at the standard rate of 25%.*

Ring-fencing and losses

As a general principle, expenses and tax losses on transactions not related to Danish oil and gas E&P may not be offset against oil- and gas-related taxable income, either for company tax purposes (Chapter 2) or for hydrocarbon tax purposes (Chapter 3A). For example, financing expenses are deductible against the oil- and gas-related income only to the extent that the loan proceeds have been used in an oil and gas business. Chapter 2 losses may, however, be offset against ordinary corporate income (income not covered by the hydrocarbon tax law), but this does not apply the other way around.

As of 1 January 2014, no field ring-fence exists. This means that tax losses from one field may be offset against a profitable field. All fields are jointly taxed and the taxable income is constructed on an aggregated basis.

Dismantlement costs

Expenses related to closing down a field are tax deductible under Chapters 2 and 3A. Companies and persons taxed according to Chapter 3A may receive a tax refund equal to the tax value of the tax losses remaining at the time of closing a Danish hydrocarbon business. The refund is limited to the hydrocarbon taxes paid.

The expenses are deductible when they have been incurred. Provisions for dismantlement costs are not deductible.

Mandatory joint taxation

Danish companies, branches of foreign companies and real property in Denmark that belong to the same corporate group are subject to mandatory joint taxation. The mandatory joint taxation also applies if a group has two entities in Denmark involved with hydrocarbon activities.

Functional currency

Provided that certain requirements are met, taxpayers may calculate their taxable income by reference to a functional currency (i.e., a currency other than the Danish krone). The election must be made before the beginning of the income year.

Transfer pricing

Transactions between affiliated entities must be determined on an arm's length basis. In addition, Danish companies and Danish PEs must report summary information about transactions with affiliated companies when filing their tax returns.

Danish tax law requires entities to prepare and maintain written transfer pricing documentation for transactions that are not considered insignificant. The documentation does not routinely need to be filed with the tax authorities but on request it must be filed within 60 days. For income years beginning on or after 2 April 2006, enterprises can be fined if they have not prepared any transfer pricing documentation or if the documentation prepared is considered to be insufficient as a result of gross negligence or deliberate omission.

The fine for failure to prepare satisfactory transfer pricing documentation is a maximum amount of DKK250,000 per year per entity for up to five years, plus 10% of the income rise carried through by the tax authorities. The basic amount may be reduced to DKK125,000 if adequate transfer pricing documentation is subsequently filed.

Fines may be imposed for every single income year for which satisfactory transfer pricing documentation is not filed. In addition, companies may be fined if they disclose incorrect or misleading information to be used in the tax authorities' assessment of whether the company is subject to the documentation duty.

The documentation requirements for small and medium-sized enterprises apply exclusively to transactions with affiliated entities in non-treaty countries that

are not members of the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA). To qualify as a small or medium-sized enterprise, companies must satisfy the following conditions:

- ▶ They must have fewer than 250 employees
- ▶ They must have an annual balance sheet total of less than DKK125 million or annual revenues of less than DKK250 million

The above amounts are calculated on a consolidated basis (i.e., all group companies must be taken into account).

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Capital uplift

To enable companies engaged in oil and gas E&P activities to earn an attractive rate of return after taxes, the hydrocarbon tax relief (uplift) was introduced to ensure that the 52% Chapter 3A hydrocarbon tax is levied exclusively when production from a field is extraordinarily profitable. No uplift is available under Chapter 2. The Chapter 3A hydrocarbon tax relief is an uplift of 30% on qualifying expenditures, which includes capitalized exploration costs and investments made in drilling rigs, ships, pipelines and other production plant and equipment. The relief is available for the tax basis for hydrocarbon tax only. The uplift is allowed as a 5% deduction per year over a 6-year period and is granted in addition to the normal tax depreciation of plant and machinery and amortization of capitalized exploration costs over a 5-year period. The uplift is not available for lease payments, interest, and production and administration expenses.

Certain transition rules are applicable to licensees which, prior to 2014, were taxed according to Chapter 3 of the previous hydrocarbon tax regime. An uplift of 25% per year over a 10-year period was granted under the old hydrocarbon tax regime; however, according to the transition rules the uplift is reduced to 10% per year over the remaining 10-year depreciation period.

Depreciation

An acquired oil license right may be amortized at an equal rate per year over the term of the license.

The main rule is that fixed assets (machinery, production equipment, etc.) may be depreciated according to the reducing-balance method by up to 25% a year. However, a number of large assets with a long economic life are depreciated on a separate balance by up to 15%⁵ annually, according to the reducing-balance method. This group of assets includes, for example, fixed plant such as drilling rigs.

Exploration costs

All costs related to oil and gas exploration in Denmark are allowed as a deduction for the purposes of Chapters 2 and 3A when they are incurred.

As an alternative to expensing the costs when they are incurred, exploration costs may be capitalized and then deferred for amortization over five years when the oil production is commenced or for write-off if the exploration is stopped altogether. No time limits apply to capitalized exploration costs.

A company may choose to expense costs when they are incurred for the purposes of Chapter 2 while, at the same time, capitalizing them for the purposes of hydrocarbon tax (Chapter 3A). Capitalization of exploration costs is particularly advantageous in relation to the 52% hydrocarbon tax and, unlike non-capitalized costs, capitalized exploration costs qualify for an uplift of 30% by way of hydrocarbon tax relief (see above).

5 The rate is 17% in 2014-2015 and 15% in 2016 onwards.

No capitalization of exploration expenses can be made by a company from the time the company has classified one field as "commercial." To the extent the company has some costs that do not relate to the oil and gas business in Denmark, these costs are only deductible against ordinary business income.

D. Incentives

Tax losses

Chapters 2 and 3A tax losses may be carried forward indefinitely, except that hydrocarbon tax losses realized before the 2002 income year may only be carried forward for 15 years.

According to the transition rules applicable to licensees that, prior to 2014, were taxed according to the old Chapter 3, only 71% of any tax losses accumulated but not utilized before the transition to the new tax regime can in general be utilized against future income generated under the new tax regime effective from 1 January 2014. The accumulated tax losses can be utilized by 2.5% in the income years 2014-2015 and by 6% in the income years 2016-2026. The remaining 29% cannot be deducted and is therefore forfeited. Furthermore, where the 2.5% or 6% of the 71% accumulated tax losses carried forward are not fully utilized in a year in the period 2014-2026, for example because of low income, such losses will also be forfeited.

If a change of control of an entity occurs, certain loss carryforward restrictions may apply for ordinary tax losses. It is likely that the change of ownership rules do not apply to Chapters 2 and 3A tax losses, but this issue has not yet been specifically dealt with in law or in practice.

E. Withholding taxes

Classification of shares

"Subsidiary shares" can generally be defined as shares in a company in which the shareholder directly owns at least 10% of the share capital (although other conditions also apply).

"Group shares" are shares in a company that is subject to mandatory joint taxation under Danish rules with the shareholder, or is eligible to be subject to international joint taxation under Danish rules with the shareholder.⁶

"Portfolio shares" are shares that are not subsidiary shares or group shares.

Dividends paid

In general, dividends paid are subject to withholding taxes (WHTs) at a rate of 27%. However, no WHT is imposed on dividends paid to companies if the Danish shares qualify as subsidiary shares, provided that the WHT has to be reduced or eliminated as a result of the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive or a double tax treaty. For a company owning Danish shares that are not subsidiary shares but group shares, it is a requirement that the WHT should be reduced or eliminated as a result of the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive or a double tax treaty if the shares were subsidiary shares. Furthermore, in both cases it is a condition that the recipient of the dividends is the beneficial owner of them and thus is entitled to benefits under the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive or a double tax treaty.

Dividends received

Dividends from group shares or subsidiary shares are tax exempt if the dividend has to be reduced or eliminated according to the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive or a double tax treaty. Dividends for which the dividend-paying company has made a tax deduction in its taxable income are not tax exempt for the Danish dividend-receiving company unless taxation in the source country is reduced or eliminated according to the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive.

Dividends received by a Danish PE may also be tax exempt if the PE is owned by a foreign company that is tax resident within the EU, EEA or in a country that has concluded a double tax treaty with Denmark.

⁶ See Section C on "Group of companies" in the EY Worldwide Corporate Tax Guide.

Dividends received on a company's own shares are tax-exempt.

Withholding tax on dividends from a Danish subsidiary to a foreign company will apply in the case of redistribution of dividends if the Danish company itself has received dividends from a more-than-10%-owned company in another foreign country and if the Danish company cannot be regarded as the beneficial owner of the dividends received. Correspondingly, it will apply if the Danish company has received dividends from abroad through one or more other Danish companies. Such dividends will generally be subject to withholding tax at a rate of 27%, unless the rate is reduced under a double tax treaty with Denmark, or the recipient is covered by the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive.

Dividends that are not covered by a tax exemption (see above), such as dividends from portfolio shares, must be included in the taxable income of the dividend-receiving company. Such dividends are thus taxed at a rate of 22%. A tax credit may be available for the dividend-receiving company for foreign WHT paid by the dividend-distributing company.

Capital gains derived from the disposal of portfolio shares should not trigger any taxation, provided the shares disposed of relate to a Danish limited liability company (or similar foreign company), the shares are not publicly listed, a maximum of 85% of the book value of the portfolio company are placed in public listed shares and the company disposing of the shares does not buy new portfolio shares in the same company within 6 months after the disposal.

Interest

In general, interest paid to foreign group companies is subject to WHT at a rate of 22%.

The WHT is eliminated if any of the following requirements are satisfied:

- ▶ The interest is not subject to tax or is taxed at a reduced rate under the provisions of a double tax treaty. For example, if WHT on interest is reduced to 10% under a double tax treaty, the WHT is eliminated completely
- ▶ The interest is not subject to tax in accordance with the EU Interest and Royalties Directive (2003/49/EC). Under that Directive, interest is not subject to tax if both of the following conditions are satisfied:
 - ▶ The debtor company and the creditor company fall within the definition of a company under Article 3 in the EU Interest and Royalties Directive.
 - ▶ The companies have been associated as stated in the Directive for a period of at least 12 months
- ▶ The interest accrues to a foreign company's PE in Denmark
- ▶ The interest accrues to a foreign company in which the Danish company, indirectly or directly, is able to exercise control (for example, by holding more than 50% of the voting rights)
- ▶ The interest is paid to a recipient that is controlled by a foreign parent company resident in a country that has entered into a double tax treaty with Denmark and has controlled foreign corporation (CFC) rules and if under these foreign CFC rules, the recipient may be subject to CFC taxation
- ▶ The recipient company can prove that the foreign taxation of the interest income amounts to at least three-quarters of the Danish CIT and that it will not in turn pay the interest to another foreign company that is subject to CIT, amounting to less than three-quarters of the Danish CIT.

Furthermore, it is a condition that the recipient of the interest is a beneficial owner of the interest and thus is entitled to benefits under the EU Interest and Royalties Directive or a double tax treaty.

The above measures and exceptions also apply to non-interest-bearing loans that must be repaid with a premium by the Danish debtor company.

Royalties

Royalty payments are subject to a 22% WHT.

The WHT rate may be reduced under a double tax treaty or taxed in accordance with the EU Interest and Royalties Directive. Royalty payments are subject to

WHT if the payments are remunerated for the use of, or the right to use, any patent, trademark, brand, brand name, design, model, pattern, drawing, secret formula or manufacturing or production method, or for information on industrial, commercial or scientific experiences (know-how). The rules apply both to lump-sum payments and to ongoing payments. Under Danish tax law, the qualification of royalty income is based on the substance of the agreement between the parties rather than on how the payments are “named” (form).

As a general rule, payments to technical service providers and nonresident contractors are not subject to WHT, unless the payment falls within the definition of royalty as defined above. These services may, however, be subject to taxation under Chapter 2 (corporate taxation of hydrocarbon income).

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax is not applicable in Denmark.

Income tax withholding and reporting obligations

A foreign company that is engaged in oil and gas exploration or production activities in Denmark is required to withhold a 30% flat-rate income tax from salaries paid to nonresident employees working in Denmark. If Denmark has entered into a double tax treaty with the country where the foreign employee is a tax resident, the treaty may modify the Danish tax liability.

From a double taxation treaty viewpoint, triangular situations may occur where the employees are resident in a different country than the foreign company (the employer), i.e. the tax assessment should be performed based on the treaty between Denmark and the employee's country of residence.

The withholding and the payment of withheld taxes are required on a monthly basis, and reports must be filed with the Danish tax administration on an annual basis.

F. Financing considerations

Interest expenses

Interest expenses and capital losses (e.g., due to foreign exchange) on debts incurred for financing oil and gas E&P in Denmark are allowed as a deduction against both tax bases (Chapters 2 and 3A). The interest or loss must be related to the Danish oil and gas activity.

However, a branch of a foreign company cannot deduct interest on loans from its principal (i.e., its head office); there must be an “outside” lender (which can be a sister company).

Capital losses are generally deductible according to the realization principle, but it is possible to opt for the mark-to-market principle on currency fluctuations.

Debt to equity and other interest limitation rules

Under the thin capitalization rules, interest paid and capital losses realized by a Danish company, or by a branch of a foreign group company, are partly deductible to the extent that the Danish company's debt-to-equity ratio exceeds 4:1 at the end of the debtor's income year and the amount of controlled debt exceeds DKK10 million.

Denied deductibility applies exclusively to interest expenses related to the part of the controlled debt that needs to be converted to equity in order to satisfy the debt-to-equity rate of 4:1 (a minimum of 20% equity). The thin capitalization rules also apply to third-party debt if the third party has received guarantees or similar assistance from a foreign group company.

The Danish thin capitalization rules have been supplemented by an “interest ceiling” rule and an “earnings before income tax” (EBIT) rule. These rules cover both controlled and non-controlled debt. Only companies with net financial expenses exceeding DKK21.3 million are affected by these supplementary rules. For jointly taxed companies, the DKK21.3 million threshold applies to all group companies together.

As a result of the interest ceiling, deduction for net financial expenses is restricted to 4.1% (2015 level) of the taxable value of certain qualified assets. Any net financial expenses that exceed this amount are lost, except for capital and exchange losses, which may be carried forward for three years.

Under the EBIT rule, a company may only reduce its taxable income (due to financial expenses) by 80% of the EBIT. Net financial expenses in excess of this amount are non-deductible, but, in contrast with the net financial expenses restricted under the interest ceiling rule, these amounts can be carried forward to be used in future years (if they are not restricted once again by the EBIT rule in that year). The EBIT calculation must be made after a possible restriction due to the interest ceiling.

If a company establishes that it could obtain third-party financing on similar terms, it might be permitted to deduct the interest that would normally be disallowed under the ordinary thin capitalization rules described above. But no arm's length principle can be applied to help the company avoid the interest ceiling or the EBIT rule.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The disposal of assets is a taxable event; gains and losses are generally taxable or deductible. As a rule, sales proceeds from fixed assets are deducted from the depreciation pool.

As an alternative, it is also possible to take the loss deduction directly in the taxable income computation. However, this requires that the written-down tax value of the asset is deducted from the depreciation pool and that no depreciation on the asset is available in the year of sale. A further requirement is that the depreciation pool does not become a negative amount as a result of deducting the written-down tax value of the asset from the pool.

Farm-in and farm-out

It is common in the Danish hydrocarbon production industry for entities to enter into farm-in arrangements. However, the tax consequences of farm-in and farm-out arrangements must be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on how the agreement is structured.

The farmee (the party entering into a farm-in arrangement) is subject to taxation according to the hydrocarbon taxation rules. A farmee is deemed to hold a depreciating asset, the interest in the hydrocarbon license, from the time the interest is acquired (which can be upfront or deferred, depending on the terms of the particular arrangement). The farmee can deduct the cost of the depreciating asset. The "cost" is the amount that the farmee is considered to have paid for the interest, and it can include the value of non-cash benefits. Future commitments incurred by the farmee in respect of interest are generally deductible for the farmee (either outright or over the asset's effective life) if the farmee holds an interest in the permit.

The farmor (i.e., the person farming out) is deemed to have disposed of an interest in the license, production equipment, etc. The tax treatment of the farmor is described in the subsection above on asset disposals.

Selling shares in a company

Taxation of a company's dividends received, and realized capital gains on the sale of shares, will depend solely on whether the shares qualify as subsidiary shares, group company shares, own shares or portfolio shares.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

Since Denmark is part of the European Union, the EU common system of VAT has been implemented. VAT is a general value-added tax on consumption, which is based on transactions. VAT applies to all supplies of goods and services at every stage of the supply chain, up to and including the retail stage.

A deduction is granted for VAT on purchases for use in a business subject to VAT, making the VAT neutral to the business and industrial structure. The place of taxation depends on the place of supply. However, there are specific rules concerning the place of supply where a distinction between the supply of goods and of services must be made. Gas, water, electricity and heat are considered as goods in this context.

The VAT system was introduced in Denmark in July 1967. Danish VAT is now applied at a standard rate of 25%; however, some transactions are zero-rated, and other transactions and entities are exempt from VAT.

Danish VAT applies exclusively within Danish territory, which is made up of landmasses, internal territorial waters, up to 12 nautical miles into the outer territorial waters from the shore or base line and the airspace above. The territory does not include the Faroe Islands or Greenland.

VAT applies to: the supply of goods or services made in Denmark by a taxable person; the acquisition of goods from another EU Member State (intra-community acquisition) by a taxable person; reverse-charge services received by a taxable person; and the importation of goods from outside the EU, regardless of the status of the importer. A "taxable person" is anyone who independently carries out an economic activity. Furthermore it is a prerequisite for applying VAT that the supply of goods or services is made for a consideration.

New rules have been adopted from 1 July 2014 whereby the supply between Danish companies (B2B-sales) of e.g., mobile phones, tablets and laptops is no longer subject to sales VAT. Instead a national reverse-charge mechanism applies, and the business company must calculate and apply the sales VAT, and subsequently deduct this VAT according to the VAT-deduction right on purchases.

Examples of common transactions and arrangements are given in the following (non-exhaustive) list:

| Subject to VAT | Zero-rated | Exemption |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Selling goods and services | Exports | Letting of real estate |
| Leasing goods | Intra-community trade | Financial transactions |
| Importing goods | - | Conveyance of passengers |

If goods are exported or sold to a VAT-registered entity in another EU Member State, (intra-community supply), the supplies may qualify as free of VAT if they are supported by evidence that the goods have left Denmark.

Non-established businesses must also register for VAT in Denmark if any of the following apply:

- ▶ Goods are located in Denmark at the time of supply
- ▶ The business acquires goods into Denmark from other EU-countries
- ▶ The business acquires e.g., mobile phones, laptops etc from Danish business-suppliers of these goods
- ▶ Goods are imported from outside the EU
- ▶ Distance sales exceed the annual threshold for services taxable in Denmark, and to which the reverse-charge mechanism is not applicable.

The VAT registration threshold is DKK50,000 (approximately €6,700); however, entities trading below this threshold can choose to register voluntarily for VAT. There is no registration threshold for foreign businesses.

A registered entity must include the output VAT it has charged on its sales in its periodic VAT returns (monthly, quarterly or biannual, depending on the taxable person's total annual turnover). From the output VAT, the registered entity may deduct input VAT on purchases and costs related to its activities subject to VAT. Non-established businesses may apply for reimbursement on costs incurred in Denmark.

Import duties

Denmark is part of the EU, which is a customs union with a common market; goods that circulate within the EU are deemed to be “in free circulation” and the transfer of goods between EU Member States is exempt from customs duty. The EU is considered one country from a customs point of view.

The importation of goods from outside the EU may be subject to customs duty (depending on the nature of the goods). The EU, therefore, is considered one country from a customs point of view. The duty rate on imported goods is regulated by the customs tariff, which is based on information from the World Customs Organization (WCO). Furthermore, the EU has entered into several agreements with developing countries. According to these agreements, goods from the developing countries may be subject to a reduced or zero customs duty rate under certain circumstances.

Goods are reported to the Danish tax authorities on importation into Denmark and, thus, to the EU Customs Union. In general, all duties (including customs duty, excise duties and VAT) must be paid to the authorities before the goods are in free circulation in Denmark and the EU. However, most companies are granted a credit.

Export duties

The export of goods or services is not subject to any duties.

Excise duties

Excise duties are levied on a number of goods manufactured in Denmark or imported into Denmark. Excisable goods include mineral oil products, natural gas, coal and electricity. All these energy products are covered by an energy tax, a carbon dioxide tax and a sulfur tax. The rates for the most common products in 2015 are as follows (where €1 is around DKK7.50):

| Energy product | Energy tax | Carbon dioxide tax | Sulfur tax(es) | Nitrogen oxide tax |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gasoline | €0.56/liter | €0.054/liter | €3,06/kg content of sulfur | €0.006/liter |
| Diesel oil | €0.40/liter | €0.060/liter | €3,06/kg content of sulfur | €0.006/liter |
| Heating oil | €0.26/liter | €0.062/liter | €3,06/kg content of sulfur | €0.006/liter |
| Heavy fuel oil | €0.30/kg | €0.078/kg | €3,06/kg content of sulfur | €0.020/kg |
| Natural gas | €0.29/m ³ | €0.051/m ³ | nil | €0.006/m ³ |
| Coal | €7.26/GJ | €2.1/GJ | €3,06/kg content of sulfur | €0.34/GJ |
| Electricity | €0.12/kWh | nil | nil | nil |

For certain purposes, companies that are registered for VAT can get a refund on energy taxes and carbon dioxide taxes.

The energy tax on electricity for oil and gas drilling purposes in Danish territory is refundable. The carbon dioxide tax on electricity is also refundable if it is used for refining. If certain conditions are met, the energy tax, carbon dioxide tax and sulfur tax on heating oil, heavy fuel oil, natural gas and coal for oil and gas drilling and refining purposes are refundable. Taxes on gasoline and diesel oil (for engines) are not refundable.

Offshore oil and gas drilling takes place outside Danish territory and is therefore outside the scope of energy taxation. However, offshore oil and gas drilling activities are liable for the nitrogen oxide tax.

Stamp duty and registration fee

The Stamp Duty Act was amended in 1999, and again in 2013. As a result, only "insurance against loss or damage" is subject to what is now called a "casualty insurance fee". This fee constitutes 1.1% of the collected insurance premiums.

The other parts of the Stamp Duty Act are implemented in the Registration Fee Act. This registration fee should not be confused with the registration fee on cars (commonly known as "car tax"). The main items subject to the registration fee arising from the Registration Fee Act are the registrations of ownership of immovable property, boats and aircraft (generally, when ownership changes).

The registration fee is fixed. However, the basis of the fee calculation is subject to specific regulations. As a general rule, the fee on immovable property is DKK1,660 plus 0.6% of the amount payable for the change in ownership. It should be noted that it is possible to avoid the 0.6% registration fee on immovable property in connection with an ownership change as a result of certain transactions (such as mergers, demergers and the conveyance of assets).

I. Other**Business presence**

Forms of business presence in Denmark typically include companies, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial considerations, it is important to consider the tax consequences of each form when setting up a business in Denmark. Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

Tax treaty protection

In general, oil and gas production constitutes a permanent establishment under most tax treaties; therefore, treaty protection cannot generally be expected for a foreign company. For individual income tax liability, tax treaty provisions vary from country to country, and protection against Danish taxation may be available in specific cases.

Other reporting obligations

Entities involved in E&P that engage foreign (non-Danish) contractors to provide services have a reporting obligation to the Danish tax authorities. The Danish tax authorities use this information to determine whether the contractor has a Danish limited tax liability arising from the services provided.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The principal elements of Ecuador's fiscal regime that relate to the oil and gas sector are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 22%¹
- ▶ Royalties – 12.5% to 18.5%²
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – 81.5% to 87.5%³
- ▶ Exploration and exploitation service fee – 1% of the services fee amount after determination of profit sharing and income tax
- ▶ Sovereignty margin – 25% of gross income of the field production
- ▶ Exploration and exploitation service contract – Only contracting structure currently applied

Capital allowances

Immediate write-off for exploration costs is not a common practice. However, these costs can be subject to write-off when the operation is finished. See the description of the amortization of exploration costs in the following sections.

Investment incentives

Loss carryforward: net operating losses may be carried forward and offset against profits in the following five years, provided that the amount offset does not exceed 25% of the year's profits. Loss carrybacks are not permitted.

Depreciation and amortization expenses can be deducted on a double base (twice the expense), to the extent they are related to the acquisition of machinery, equipment and technologies for the implementation of cleaner

1 A 44.4% income tax rate applies for companies whose concession contracts in force were agreed in accordance with previous legislation; but this is no longer used by the current Government.

2 Royalties paid to the Government for petroleum exploitation might range from 12.5% to 18.5%, depending on the barrels produced, and calculated upon the gross monthly income. For gas exploitation, there is a minimum rate of 16% over the monthly income.

3 Once production begins, the contractor has the right to share in the production of the area of the contract, which is calculated based on the percentages offered in the proposal and agreed in the contract.

production mechanisms, energy generation projects from renewable sources or reduction of environmental impact productive activities, and greenhouse gas emission reduction.

Reinvestment of profits results in a 10% reduction to the corporate income tax rate.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

The Ecuadorian tax system is based on the “worldwide principle,” whereby all income, both foreign and Ecuadorian-sourced, is subject to income tax.

Oil and gas companies are subject to the general rules that apply to all industries. Oil and gas entities that operate through a locally incorporated company, a branch or a consortium are obligated to file and pay annual corporate income tax (CIT) for the net profit of the year. Income tax has to be paid on an annual basis, in April, for the preceding calendar year.

The CIT rate has been 22% since year 2013. However, companies that reinvest their profits are entitled to a 10% reduction in the income tax rate, provided that they use those profits for the acquisition of new machinery or equipment to be used in production activities or for the purchase of goods related to research and technology applied to production. That is, the reinvested profits are taxed at a 12% rate, provided that the reinvested amount has been used for the acquisition of machinery for purposes of the business.

For Ecuadorian companies whose shareholders, beneficiaries or similar are resident or established in tax havens or lower tax jurisdictions, representing 50% or more of its corporate capital (direct or indirect participation), the CIT rate is 25%. If the tax haven participation is lower than 50%, the 25% CIT rate applies only over the portion of taxable base related to this participation.

Also, the 25% CIT rate applies when the company fails to comply with the obligation to provide its shareholders’ annex (which includes the information on shareholders, partners, and members) to the Ecuadorian Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Incomes derived from the sale of stocks, shares and rights that allow exploration, exploitation, concession or similar, are considered as income from an Ecuadorian source subject to CIT. These transactions should be reported to the IRS. Failure to comply with this obligation will result in a fine of 5% based on the market price of the shares.

General deductibility rules

Resident taxpayers are taxed on their net income: taxable income less deductible costs and expenses.

In this manner, all the expenses that are directly related to the main course of the business, and necessary to obtain, maintain or improve taxable income, might be considered as deductible expenses on production of duly supported valid invoices and receipts.

Withholding taxes

According to the local legislation, withholding taxes (WHT) is triggered upon payment or crediting on account, whether directly or through any other intermediary, to the extent it constitutes taxable income for the receiver. In this sense, remittances of Ecuadorian-sourced income to nonresidents are subject to WHT. The tax is withheld on the gross amounts remitted with no deductions allowed. The taxpayer of this WHT is the nonresident beneficiary of the Ecuadorian-sourced income. However, the local payer is considered a withholding agent and, as such, jointly and severally liable.

It is noteworthy that all incomes are deemed taxable except those expressly listed as exempt. The list of exemptions does not include items such as royalties, renderings of service, expenses reimbursement, payments made to nonresidents or the importation of goods. Generally, almost all types of cross-border payments are subject to income tax withholding, at a rate of 22% since

2013. However, this percentage can be reduced under the application of double taxation treaty benefits.

Income generated from non-monetary investments, performed by companies that have contracts with the Ecuadorian Government for the rendering of oil and gas exploration and exploitation, are considered as exempted income, provided that such investments have been charged to related companies as a cost in order to render these services. Such investments must be registered before the Ecuadorian Central Bank as non-monetary investments to be reimbursed.

A 2% WHT applies on payments made to local beneficiaries for the provision of services, and a 1% WHT is applied to the acquisition of goods.

Dividends

Dividends paid after determination and payment of annual income tax also exempt, provided that the beneficiary is a company non-domiciled in a tax haven or lower tax jurisdiction in accordance with the Ecuadorian Blacklist issued by the tax administration authority. Dividend recipients domiciled in a tax haven or lower tax jurisdiction have been subject to an additional income tax withholding of 13% since 2013.

Dividends received by Ecuadorian corporations from foreign corporations are considered to be tax-exempt income, provided that those foreign-sourced incomes have already been subject to taxation in the country of origin and provided that such country is not deemed to be a tax haven or lower tax jurisdiction for Ecuadorian tax purposes – in which case the tax paid overseas (if any) could be used as a tax credit for local purposes, up to the level of income tax liability in Ecuador.

Dividends paid to individuals who are tax residents are subject to an income tax withholding at a rate that varies from 1% to 13% depending on the amount distributed.

Noncommercial loans granted to shareholders and related parties should be considered as dividend prepayments and subject to withholding tax assumed by the Ecuadorian taxpayer. This WHT is considered as a tax credit for the Ecuadorian entity.

Interest

Interest payments and financial fees are generally subject to 22% income tax withholding (0% locally); however, if the loan has been granted by a foreign financial institution or by an international organization (e.g., the World Bank), no income tax withholding should apply on such interest payments.

In addition, for interest expenses on foreign loans to be deductible the following conditions should be met:

- ▶ The economic “substance over form” condition should be met.
- ▶ The loan must be registered with the Ecuadorian Central Bank.
- ▶ The interest rate should not exceed the maximum rate set up by the Ecuadorian Central Bank at the date of registration of the loan.
- ▶ The income tax withholding on the payment should be made (except for the abovementioned case in which, if the interest rate exceeds the maximum rate set up by the Ecuadorian Central Bank, the 22% income tax withholding should be made over the excess).
- ▶ When the transaction is performed between related parties, a 3:1 debt-to-equity ratio is applied.

Excess on sale price

With respect to the units sold, the Government is entitled to at least 50% (currently 70%) of the difference between the sale price and the base price established in the contract. If the base price has not been established in the contract, it is determined by the president of Ecuador through a decree. In no case will the decreed price be less than the international price in force at the contract subscription date. For newly signed PSCs, the applicable rate on the excess sales price shall be 99%.

Foreign tax relief

Ecuador does not grant relief from foreign taxes for companies domiciled in Ecuador. However, apart from countries considered to be tax havens, income sourced from other countries received by Ecuadorian corporations is considered to be tax exempt, provided that the income was subject to tax in that foreign country. This exemption does not apply when the foreign income comes from a tax haven jurisdiction.

Pre-payment of Income tax

Companies that have signed an oil and gas exploration and exploitation services contract with the Ecuadorian Government is required to make a prepayment of income tax. This prepayment consists of an amount equal to 50% of the corporate income tax amount triggered and paid in the previous fiscal year, less the amounts paid by the company via income tax withholdings. The prepayment of income tax is made in two installments: one in July and the other in September of the corresponding fiscal year.

If the triggered corporate income tax for the current fiscal year, payable in April of the following year, is lower than the prepayment of income tax, this latter constitutes a minimum tax amount payable and no refund is available.

Other

There is no branch remittance tax in Ecuador.

Exploitation companies might be granted one or more fields in Ecuador, which could be negotiated in one or more exploitation service contracts. Ecuadorian laws state that the party to each contract must be considered as a single and separate business unit, and the consolidation of financial statements of contract units is therefore not permitted.

C. Contracts

In Ecuador, a variety of contracts can be signed with the Government in order to invest and produce in the oil and gas sector: joint contracts, shared management contracts, specific services provision or specific goods acquisition contracts and participation contracts. However, due to recent changes made by the current Government, participation contracts are no longer being signed; instead, the oil and gas exploration and exploitation service contract is now being strictly enforced.

In order to sign an oil and gas exploration and exploitation service contract, companies must be domiciled in Ecuador through a local branch or a subsidiary company, and must participate in a public open bidding process.

In addition, companies that have signed an oil exploration and exploitation service contract may sign an additional contract in order to explore and exploit natural gas within the same field.

Exploration phase

The oil and gas exploration phase can last four years and can be extended for two years with prior approval by the hydrocarbons secretary.

Production sharing contracts

The participation of the contractor is based on production volume. It is calculated using the terms and parameters offered and agreed upon in the contract, in accordance with the following formula:

$$PC = X \times Q$$

where:

PC = Participation of the contractor

X = Average factor, in decimals, corresponding to the participation of the contractor

Q = Audited annual production in the area of the contract

Gross proceeds

In a PSC, income corresponds to the participation of the contractor based whether on the sales price or on the reference price; however, the sales price cannot be less than the reference price set by the Government petroleum entity (*EP PETROECUADOR*).

According to the regulations applicable to hydrocarbons, the reference price is the average price for the previous month's external sales of hydrocarbons made by *EP PETROECUADOR* of equivalent quality, based on the contractual bases. If there are no external sales by *EP PETROECUADOR*, the reference price is calculated based on the crude proportion negotiated by the parties, obtained from specialized and recognized publications.

For natural gas, the reference price is the same as for renewable energy. In PSCs, the reference price is calculated as follows:

- ▶ For free natural gas: the reference price for each unit is calculated by multiplying the calorific power (in BTU) by the BTU price of fuel oil no. 6.
- ▶ For condensed gas: the reference price of a metric ton is the same for the average volume price of liquefied petroleum gas sold by *EP PETROECUADOR* under cost, insurance and freight (CIF) conditions.

Therefore, the reference prices may be verified with the production companies to analyze new conditions regarding this issue.

Pre-production costs

Generally, pre-production costs include exploration costs, development costs and associated financial costs. If reserves are found, these costs are amortized equally over a five-year period starting from the date that production begins. If no reserves are found, these costs may be deducted in the year that this is recognized.

Payments to related parties that exceed 5% of the taxable basis are not deductible for corporate income tax purposes. Amortization of pre-production costs attributable to administrative expenses is not permitted to exceed 15% of the total amount of such costs.

Funding from a company's headquarters must be registered as a long-term liability. No income statements need be presented.

Exploration costs

For PSCs, exploration costs may be assigned within the duration of the exploration period, which might range from 4 to 6 years starting from the date that the contract is registered in the Hydrocarbons Control and Regulation Agency (*Agencia de Regulación y Control Hidrocarburiífero*).

Exploration costs generally include depreciation of fixed assets (support equipment). Excluded from exploration costs are those that are incurred by the contractor before the date of registration of the contract in the Hydrocarbons Directory, and interest from financing.

Furthermore, in order to initiate exploration activities, the company must give a 20% guarantee to *EP PETROECUADOR*.

Development costs

These costs can be registered from the date on which the development plan is approved.

Production costs

These costs should be registered from the date on which the first barrel is available for commercialization or industrialization and should be amortized based on the units of production. During this period, funding from a company's headquarters is registered as a short-term liability and income statements are presented.

Depreciation, depletion and amortization calculation

Pre-production costs are amortized on a straight-line method over a five-year period, starting from the production phase.

- ▶ Production costs are amortized over the life of the contract using the units-of-production method based on proven crude oil reserves. See formula below:

$$\text{DDA} = (\text{unamortized cost at beginning of period/proven reserves at beginning of period}) \times \text{production during period.}$$

If the proven reserves change during the fiscal year, the applicable formula is as follows:

$$\text{DDA} = (\text{unamortized cost at beginning of period/proven reserves at beginning of period}) \times \text{production during period.}$$

Transportation and storage costs are amortized on the straight-line method over a 10-year period beginning with operations.

Support equipment is depreciated using the straight-line method, according to general percentages of annual depreciation as follows:

- ▶ Buildings, aircraft and ships – 5%
- ▶ Facilities, machinery, equipment and furniture – 10%
- ▶ Vehicles and other transportation equipment – 20%
- ▶ Electronic hardware and software – 33.33%

Transport and storage costs

Amortization of transport and storage costs will be carried out in 10 years from the moment the transport system enters in operation, duly authorized by the National Agency for Control and Regulation of Hydrocarbons.

Oil production

To determine oil production, it is necessary to measure the crude oil kept in the warehouse tanks at the collecting centers, after separating water and ware materials. The resulting oil is measured in barrels.

Fiscal uncertainty

Oil and gas companies must adapt to the fiscal regime in force. However, fiscal uncertainty clauses are included in oil and gas transportation contracts.

Marginal field contracts

With low operational and economic priority, marginal field contracts are intended for low-quality crude. They represent less than 1% of the national production.

Under these contracts, all production belongs to the estate. Exploration costs under these contracts are capitalized annually. The tax basis for these costs (adjusted for amortization) is considered an asset of the contractor.

For the development of the contract, the contractor receives reimbursement for operational costs for the base curve of production, in dollars, and participation in the volume of crude oil resulting from any increase over base production. The base curve is estimated on future production from developed, proven reserves using mathematical simulation and studies of the wells; it is specifically detailed in the contract.

Service contracts for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons

In service contracts for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, the contractor commits to *EP PETROECUADOR* to provide exploration and exploitation services in the areas previously determined. The contractor uses its own economic resources. Accordingly, the contractor has to invest the necessary capital and use the equipment, machinery and technology required for such contracts.

Transportation, commercialization and production costs (including reimbursements and payments made by *EP PETROECUADOR* in favor of the contractor) are deducted from income. Furthermore, the contractor secures the right to a refund of its investments, costs and expenses, as well as the payment for services provided, when it finds hydrocarbons that may be commercialized.

Farm-in and farm-out

Farm-in and farm-out are both permissible; however, before any agreement is entered into, it is mandatory that the contractor obtains the written authorization of *EP PETROECUADOR* and the Ministry of Non-Renewable Natural Resources. If the authorization is not duly obtained, any agreement is invalid, resulting in the termination of the contract with the Government. The Government is not only in charge of authorizing this type of agreement, but also in charge of qualifying the entity entitled to the rights through the corresponding transfer. Transfer fees apply, and vary depending on the type of transfer.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

D. Royalties

As a general rule, royalties to be paid to the Ecuadorian Government range from 12.5% to 18.5%. To determine the amount of royalties, oil production has to be efficiently determined once water and ware have been separated from the oil. A measurement will then be taken in the collection tank centers. The corresponding royalties will be paid on a monthly basis.

Royalties for PSCs are generally calculated as follows:

| Production (P) in barrels per day | Monthly maximum contractor sharing | Monthly minimum estate sharing |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| $P < 30,000$ | 87.5% | 12.5% |
| $30,000 \leq P < 60,000$ | 86.0% | 14.0% |
| $P \geq 60,000$ | 81.5% | 18.5% |

E. Financing considerations

Effective from 1 January 2008, thin capitalization rules are in force, establishing a ratio of 3:1 foreign debt to paid common stock capital.

F. Transactions

Capital gains

There is no capital gains tax in Ecuador, but the profit generated from sale of stocks, shares and rights that allow exploration, exploitation, concession or similar, is considered as income from an Ecuadorian source subject to CIT. Losses on sales between related parties are not deductible.

Asset disposals

All assets are generally the property of the Government, except for those acquired under specific service contracts.

With respect to all contracts, assets from foreign investments can enter the country under a special customs regime known as "temporary importation with re-exportation." Under this regime, there is no income tax effect or VAT effect (provided the goods are not "nationalized").

Currency exportation tax

All Ecuadorian taxpayers that remit currency abroad are subject to a 5% tax on the amount of the transfer, regardless of whether the transaction is made through a financial institution.

All payments made abroad by Ecuadorian tax-resident companies shall pay currency exportation tax independently, if the financial resources are not located in Ecuador.

Additionally, exportation cash in amounts (incomes) also trigger currency exportation tax, regardless of whether the corresponding payments were made in Ecuador. In this case, the value of currency exportation tax payments that were generated abroad may be deducted.

Dividends distributed to foreign residents shall be exempt from currency exportation tax to the extent that the recipients of the dividends are not domiciled in a tax haven or lower tax jurisdictions. Currency exportation tax payments can be considered as CIT tax credit for five fiscal years in some cases.

G. Indirect taxes

Import taxes

Import taxes are paid based on the customs return (generally based on the description of goods, including origin, cost and quantity) and on "auto-liquidation" (generally, the self-assessment of taxes) performed by the taxpayer. The taxable base for customs taxes is the CIF value.

The direct importation of machinery, tools and other materials for the exploitation and exploration of hydrocarbons, by companies that have entered into exploration and exploitation contracts with the Ecuadorian Government, is not subject to import taxes during the period of exploration or in the first 10 years of exploitation, provided that the imported machines are not made in Ecuador. Similarly, the importation of equipment, machinery, implements and other materials are exonerated from customs taxes within the exploration phase and within 10 years of the exploitation phase, provided that such products are not, and could not, be produced in Ecuador.

VAT

VAT is based on the value of imported goods, the acquisition of goods and the provision of services. The VAT rate is 12%; however, certain transfers of goods or services are specifically zero-rated. Imported services are taxed with 12% VAT.

Local taxpayers must file monthly VAT returns. VAT amounts paid in the local acquisition of goods or services, importation of goods or services, and acquisition of intellectual property rights could be offset with the VAT amounts levied on sales, to the extent sales are taxed with 12% VAT.

VAT paid on the purchase of goods or services for the production of exported goods may be recovered. In addition, companies may receive tax credits regarding all VAT payments for the purchase of goods or services, when those purchases have been in order to render services levied with 12% VAT.

Export duties

The tax basis for customs duties is the freight-on-board (FOB) value. Export duties depend on this item.

H. Other considerations

Employee profit sharing

In general, all employers must distribute 15% of their annual profits to their employees; however, with respect to the hydrocarbon industry, the employees receive only 3% of the 15%, and the remaining 12% is provided on behalf the Government.

Other specific requirements

For all contracts:

- ▶ Compensation for public construction – the contractor is required to compensate public construction at the beginning of the production period in accordance with government plans, the size of the contracted area and the proximity of the findings. The amount of this compensation is determined by the Government.
- ▶ Water and materials contribution – this is an annual fixed contribution of at least US\$60,000.
- ▶ Provinces contribution – it is necessary to make a monthly auto-liquidation; the amount is based on the transported barrels through the SOTE (state pipeline for export of oil), except for any that are not destined for sale.
- ▶ Fund for the development of Amazon provinces – the taxable base is the value of the *EP PETROECUADOR* bill for the services performed.
- ▶ Fund for the development of the ecosystem of the Amazon region – the taxable base is the commercialization value of the petroleum.
- ▶ Environmental warranties – the amount depends on the basis for contracting.

For specific services provision or specific goods acquisition contracts:

- ▶ Honor of offer warranty – a minimum of 2% of the amount of the offer. This warranty is recoverable once the contract is signed.
 - ▶ Proper compliance warranty – 5% of the amount of the contract. This warranty is recoverable once the documentation of termination or delivery is registered.
 - ▶ Proper performance of work – 5% of the amount of the contract. This warranty is recoverable once there is evidence of the quality of the well's materials and whether the development work is considered highly effective.
 - ▶ Investment warranty – before the signing of the contract, the contractor or its associate must pay a guarantee in a quantity equivalent to 20% of the compromised investments detailed for the contractor during the exploration period. This guarantee may be paid in cash or Government bonds. This warranty is recoverable once the exploitation period concludes and all exploration obligations have been accomplished.
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Egypt

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Tax regime applied to this country

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- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |
-

A. At a glance

Egypt's fiscal regime applying to the oil and gas exploration and production industry is a combination of concession agreements and production sharing contracts.

The concession agreement must be formalized between the following three parties:

1. The Arab Republic of Egypt, as the owner of the resource
2. A public sector company representing the Ministry of Petroleum:
 - ▶ Egyptian General Petroleum Company (EGPC)
 - ▶ Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS)
 - ▶ Ganoub El Wadi Petroleum Holding Company (GANOPE)
3. Foreign holding companies and local private sector companies (contractors)

The public sector company will be the last bearer of the corporate tax due, as it pays the corporate tax due on behalf of the contractor.

The concession agreement will envisage a specific cost recovery mechanism.

B. Fiscal regime

Oil and gas exploration and production companies operating in Egypt will be subject to the provisions of the Egyptian income tax law, except as otherwise provided in the concession agreement.

Corporate tax

As per the provisions of the Egyptian income tax law no. 91 of 2005, the corporate tax applies to:

- ▶ Companies that are resident in Egypt, on profits generated inside or outside Egypt
- ▶ Companies that are not resident in Egypt, only on profits generated inside Egypt

Based on the provisions of the Egyptian income tax law, the profits of oil and gas exploration and production companies should be subject to corporate tax at a rate of 40.55%.

The concession agreement provides that the contractor should be obliged to adhere to the Egyptian income tax provisions in connection to the filing of the corporate tax return, the assessment of tax and keeping of required legal books.

The contractor is obliged to prepare the corporate tax return and submit it to the public sector partner 25 days prior to the filing due date, EGPC/EGAS/GANOUB should have the right to review the tax return in order to confirm the tax-due calculations.

As per the provisions of the Egyptian income tax law, the tax return should be filed before 1 May each year, or within four months following the closing date of each financial year.

The contractor's annual income for Egyptian income tax purposes under the concession agreement should be calculated as follows:

- ▶ the total sum received by the contractor from the sale and/or any other disposition of all petroleum/gas acquired by the contractor pursuant to the provisions of the concession agreements, reduced by:
 - i. The costs and expenses of the contractor
 - ii. The value of the excess cost recovery oil/gas as determined by the concession agreement.

The public sector partner of the concession agreement shall pay the tax in the name of, and on behalf of, the contractor.

Because it is considered as additional income to the contractor, the corporate tax paid by the public sector partner will be subject to corporate tax. The contractor must add an amount to its taxable profit equal to the corporate tax amount paid by the public sector partner on its behalf.

Egypt applies ring fencing in the determination of corporate tax liability. Profits of certain concession agreements cannot be offset against the losses of another concession agreement, even if both concessions are cascaded by the same taxable entity.

The public sector partner of the concession must review, confirm and approve in its own corporate tax return the contractor's calculations of corporate tax due.

An exploration entity is generally entitled to sell its share of the oil to whomever it chooses, subject to approval by the EGPC (and in some circumstances the EGPC may elect to purchase the oil itself). The sales income from its share of the oil and deductible expenses (which may be recoverable and non-recoverable expenses) is included as part of the entity's tax return and is subject to tax.

Capital gains tax

Gains resulting from a capital gains tax (CGT) event may be subject to tax. The Income Tax Law provides for CGT events, including the disposal of assets. Capital gains or losses are determined by deducting the cost base of an asset from its proceeds (money received or receivable, or the market value of property received or receivable).

For oil and gas exploration and production companies, the concession agreement typically provides that any assignment, sale, transfer or any other such conveyance done in accordance with the concession agreement provisions shall be exempted from any transfer/capital gain tax and any other taxes including, without limitation, income tax, sales tax, stamp duty tax, or any similar taxes.

Functional currency

Provided certain requirements are met under Egypt's Income Tax Law, taxpayers may calculate their taxable income by reference to a functional currency (i.e., a particular foreign currency) if their accounts are solely or predominantly kept in that currency.

The corporate tax due amount shall be translated to Egyptian pounds in the company's corporate tax return based on the exchange rate declared by the EGPC.

Transfer pricing

Egyptian tax law includes measures to ensure that the Egyptian taxable income base associated with cross-border transactions is based on arm's length prices. Several methods for determining the arm's length price are available, and strict documentation requirements apply to support the method chosen and the prices reached. This is particularly relevant to the sale of commodities, intercompany services, intercompany funding arrangements, and bareboat and time charter leases.

Dividends

The concession agreement provides that, except for corporate income tax, the contractor shall be exempted from all taxes that might be imposed on dividends.

Bonuses

Signature bonuses and production bonuses are generally considered deductible according to the concession agreement.

Direct instructions were issued by EGPC in this regard, stressing the deductibility of such bonuses for corporate tax purposes. However, having such bonuses as deductible costs in a corporate tax return is still debatable and challenged within the Egyptian tax authorities – which, in return, issued instructions contradicting the EGPC instructions and stressing the fact that such costs should not be considered deductible.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Capital allowances are based on the provisions of the concession agreement.

D. Incentives

Exploration

Expenditures on exploration are capitalized and are deductible for income tax purposes. Based on the provisions of the concession agreement and pending approval of the EGPC, capitalized exploration expenses are amortized over the lifetime of the concession agreement.

Tax losses

Income tax losses may be carried forward for five years.

Research and development

R&D incentives are based on the provisions of the concession agreement.

E. Withholding taxes

Generally, the Egyptian income tax law imposes a withholding tax on all payments made by an Egyptian resident entity to nonresident entities, such as interest, dividends or royalties.

However, the concession agreement provides an exemption for the contractor from all withholding tax on dividends, interest, technical services and royalties.

F. Financing considerations

The Egyptian income tax system contains significant rules regarding the classification of debt and equity instruments and, depending on the level of funding, rules that have an impact on the deductibility of interest. These rules can have a significant impact on decisions regarding the financing of oil and gas projects.

The measures provide for a safe-harbor debt-to-equity ratio of 4:1. Interest deductions are denied for interest payments on the portion of the company's debt that exceeds the safe-harbor ratio.

G. Transactions

As mentioned earlier, the concession agreement provides that any assignment, sale, transfer or any other such conveyance done in accordance with the provisions of the concession agreement, shall be exempted from any transfer/capital gain tax and any other taxes including, without limitation, income tax, sales tax, stamp duty tax and/or any similar taxes.

H. Indirect taxes

Goods and services tax

A goods and services tax (GST) regime applies in Egypt to ensure that all transactions that take place within Egypt (and some from offshore) are subject to GST. The tax, introduced in 1991, is a multi-staged tax that applies at each point of sale or lease. GST is applied at a standard rate of 10%, with GST-free ratings for qualifying exported products and services and other transactions, and input tax ratings for financial services and residential housing.

Only Egyptian residents may be subject to GST on services and products supplied. All sales within Egypt are subject to GST at the rate of 10% (and are thus known as "taxable supplies"). All commercial transactions have a GST impact, and this should be considered prior to entering into any negotiation or arrangement.

Common transactions or arrangements that have GST implications include:

- ▶ Importations of equipment and vessels
- ▶ Sales or leases of equipment in Egypt
- ▶ Sales of products in Egypt
- ▶ Asset disposals

If products are exported, a GST-free status may be obtained. Exports must also be supported by evidence that indicates the goods have left Egypt.

The GST registration threshold is EGP150,000 for resident entities. However, entities below this threshold can choose to register voluntarily for GST.

Nonresidents are not required to register for GST.

Input tax is generally recovered by being offset against GST payable on taxable supplies.

In general (and according to the standard concession agreements), oil and gas exploration entities working in Egypt are exempt from being subject to GST on supplies made for them by other suppliers (except for passenger cars). It is mandated that such supplies are used for exploration and development purposes.

Import and export restrictions

Egyptian entities are not permitted to import without obtaining an importation license under certain criteria.

Importation with commission arrangements is no longer available.

Import restrictions

The Government imposes import controls to improve Egypt's balance of payments. Importers must obtain approval to open a letter of credit. A cash deposit ranging from 15% to 100% is also required, depending on the type of goods imported. The origin of goods must be certified in order to enter Egypt.

Travelers entering Egypt may import modest quantities of alcohol, cigarettes and perfumes free of duty. Visitors may also purchase certain quantities of duty-free liquor using foreign currency after passing through customs. Valuable personal effects may be declared to permit them to be taken out of the country on departure.

The concession agreement states that the public sector partner, the contractor and the operating company shall be allowed to import and shall be exempt from customs duties, any tax (i.e. sales tax and WHT at the customs clearance point, being the point of importation), levies or fees of any nature, as well as from importation rules.

Such an exemption should only be granted in cases where oil and gas companies have an official certificate issued by EGPC confirming that such imports are required for their operations in accordance with the concession agreement.

Export restrictions

Most goods may be exported free of duty. Certain items must be inspected before an export license is granted.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty is a state- and territory-based tax that is usually imposed on specified transactions but, in general, is very minor.

The concession agreement provides an exemption from stamp duty tax to oil and gas exploration and production companies.

Other significant taxes

Other significant taxes include cash remuneration (or fringe benefits) tax on non-cash employee benefits of 10% to 20%, and payroll taxes paid by employees of 10% to 20%.

I. Other

Foreign direct investment

The Government sets a high priority on attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country. FDI helps improve technological innovations, creates more jobs and expands the country's ability to compete in international markets. Equally important, FDI opens the Egyptian economy to trade in semi-finished products and other intermediate goods, which are increasingly becoming the mainstream of international trade.

As part of the economic reform program, and in an effort to attract foreign investors, changes were made in various areas, such as corporate tax reform, lowered customs duties and streamlined investment procedures. Changes have also affected the system of national accounting, the modernization of Egyptian insurance supervision and intellectual property rights. These measures make Egypt an attractive destination for investors seeking to enter the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) market place.

The opportunities in Egypt are open in all sectors, including energy, banking and finance, and information technology.

Exchange control regulations

There are no restrictions on transferring money to Egypt, except for illegal operations provided for by the money laundering law no. 80 for 2002, amended by law no. 78 for 2003.

There is a restriction on transferring money from Egypt. The maximum transfer allowed for individuals is restricted to an amount of USD 100K,000, except for transfers required for trading transactions and certain other specific transactions. As for the oil and gas industry, on the assumption that transactions will be in the nature of trading transactions (e.g., sale of oil well pipes, provision of services), we would not expect such restriction to apply.

In all situations, bank approval on the transfer is subject to receiving proper evidence and documents related to the transfer. The transfer should take place after at least five working days from the company's request.

Repatriation of profits abroad

There is no restriction on the repatriation of profits abroad.

Business presence

Forms of business presence in Egypt typically include companies, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial considerations, the tax consequences of each business are important to consider when setting up a business in Egypt.

Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry is provided by the Equatorial Guinea Tax Code (EGTC) dated 28 October 2004, the Hydrocarbon Law No. 8/2006 dated 3 November 2006, and production sharing or other similar contracts concluded between the Equatorial Guinea (EG) Government and the contractor.

The main taxes applicable in the oil and gas sector are:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – 35%
- ▶ Taxes on transfers and assignments – If a transaction generates capital gains not invested in Equatorial Guinea, it is subject to CIT
- ▶ Export duties – Generally exempt, subject to conditions¹
- ▶ Royalties – Not less than 13%
- ▶ Bonuses – Determined under the terms of each PSC
- ▶ Surface premiums on rental rates – Determined under the terms of each PSC
- ▶ Discovery, production and marketing bonds – Determined under the terms of marketing bonds of each PSC²
- ▶ Urban property tax – 1% of tax base
- ▶ PSC – The State is entitled to a percentage of all hydrocarbons³

1 *Materials and equipment directly related to petroleum operations and imported under the temporary import regime may be exported from Equatorial Guinea free of all export duties.*

2 *“Discovery” here means the finding by the contractor of hydrocarbons whose existence within the contract area was not known prior to the effective date or hydrocarbons within the contract area that had not been declared a commercial discovery prior to the effective date, and that are measurable by generally accepted international petroleum industry practices.*

3 *The State is entitled to a percentage of all hydrocarbons won and saved from a contract area, based on the terms agreed in each contract and after deduction of royalties and investment recovery oil. The participation of the State should not be less than 20%.*

- ▶ Capital allowances – Straight-line depreciation⁴
- ▶ Investment incentives – RD⁵, L⁶

B. Fiscal regime

Production sharing contract

The main type of oil contract in Equatorial Guinea is a PSC. The contract is concluded either by international public invitation to tender in order to guarantee competition between the potential contractors or by direct adjudication.

Each contract comes into force only after it has been ratified by the President of the Republic and on the date of the delivery to the contractor of a written notice of this ratification.

Corporate income tax

EG companies are subject to corporate income tax (CIT) of 35% on the territorial principle. "EG companies" are those registered in Equatorial Guinea regardless of the nationality of the shareholders or where the companies are managed and controlled. Foreign companies engaged in business in Equatorial Guinea are subject to CIT on EG-sourced profits.

Company net profit will be determined by deducting from the gross income or gross profit all expenses tied to the performance of the taxable activities in Equatorial Guinea.

Operations carried out offshore (i.e., outside the international boundaries of Equatorial Guinea) do not fall within the scope of EG corporate tax. However, the EG tax authorities might try to attract profits from operations performed outside Equatorial Guinea when they could be linked to a branch or company in Equatorial Guinea.

Ring-fencing

EG law does not provide that the profit from one project can be offset against the losses from another project held by the same tax entity. Accordingly, petroleum operations should be accounted for separately.

Government share of profit oil

In addition to royalties, the state is entitled to a percentage of all hydrocarbons that have been extracted and kept from a contract area, based on the terms agreed in each contract and after deduction of royalties and investment recovery oil.

Non-recoverable expenditures

The following expenditures are not recoverable:

- ▶ Interest on loans obtained by the contractor from any affiliated company, or the parent company or non-affiliated third parties, that exceed the commercial rates charged by official banks
- ▶ Expenses incurred by the contractor prior to and during contract negotiations, and any expense incurred prior to the effective date of the contract
- ▶ Bonuses paid by the contractor upon execution of the contract
- ▶ Discovery bonus paid by the contractor
- ▶ Annual surface rental rate paid to the State

4 *The EGTC provides the straight-line system of depreciation: all assets are depreciated in a uniform manner over a period representing the probable useful life of the assets in question.*

5 *The EG investment regulations provide financial and fiscal advantages for companies that create jobs and offer professional training for nationals and for research and development (R&D).*

6 *Net operating losses incurred during the previous year are deductible up to a maximum of five years.*

- ▶ Amounts in excess of 7.5% of the annual budget approved by the appropriate Branch Ministry during the initial exploration period, and in excess of 5% of the annual budget approved by the Ministry during the development and exploitation phase
- ▶ Any payments made to the Government as a result of failure to comply with minimal exploration work obligations as agreed upon in the contract
- ▶ Any sanctions imposed by the Government on the contractor as a result of environmental contamination (oil spills, etc.)
- ▶ Fines or sanctions that may be levied as a result of a violation of EG laws, regulations and other legal provisions
- ▶ Audit and inspection expenses incurred by the EG Government at the contractor's headquarters, as a result of the absence of original documents in the contractor's office in the republic
- ▶ Contractor's expert's expenses according to the contract

Determination of cost oil

Cost oil is the sum of all expenses borne by the holder in the framework of the PSC, determined in accordance with accounting methods. All costs related to petroleum operations are classified in accordance with their end use⁷, and classification criteria are included in the approved annual work program and annual budget for the calendar year in which the expenditure is made.

Uplift available on recovered costs

With the exception of general and administration costs incurred in Equatorial Guinea directly assignable to the annual budget, an uplift is available on the general and administration expenditures incurred by the contractor outside national territory with respect to petroleum operations. The uplift should be determined using a sliding scale set out in the PSC, based on total petroleum operational costs incurred during the year and duly justified by the contractor and approved by the Ministry.

Annual surface rent

An annual surface rent is due when the PSC or service contract is signed. The surface rental is prorated from the effective date through to 31 December of such year and is paid within 30 days of the effective date.

Surface rentals are calculated based on the surface of the contract area and, where applicable, of a development and production area occupied by the contractor on the date of payment of such surface rentals.

Royalty regimes

Contractors are subject to the payment of a royalty on the value of the hydrocarbon produced (including the Government share of the production) and this payment is due from the first day of production based on the total disposable production volume from a development and production area.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Tax depreciation rules

Depreciation will be estimated from the calendar year in which the asset is placed into service, with a full year's depreciation allowed for the initial calendar year. Depreciation is determined using the straight-line method. The following rates are some of those applicable:

- ▶ Developed land – 5%
- ▶ Housing – 5%

⁷ Exploration costs, development and production costs, operating or production costs, commercialization costs, and an allocation of general and administrative costs.

- Temporary buildings – 20%
- Light vehicles – 25%
- Heavy vehicles – 33.33%
- Office furniture – 20%
- Naval and air material – 20%

EG law does not provide for any accelerated depreciation for the assets of a petroleum company.

D. Incentives

Carryforward losses

Net operating losses incurred during the previous year are deductible up to a maximum of 5 years. EG law does not provide that the profit from one project can be offset against the losses from another project held by the same tax entity. Accordingly, petroleum operations should be accounted for separately.

Research and development incentives

R&D incentives are determined according to each PSC.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends paid by an EG company to a nonresident are subject to a withholding tax (WHT) at the rate of 25%.

Interest

Interest paid by an EG company to a nonresident is subject to WHT at the rate of 25%. The bank interest rate is currently 2.95%.⁸

WHT on resident and nonresident income

Gross income obtained in Equatorial Guinea for any kind of commercial or industrial activity, services, manpower supply or analogous services is subject to WHT at the rate of 6.25% when the economic activities are performed and invoiced by a resident, while the rate is fixed at 10% for nonresidents.

Amounts paid for mobilization, demobilization and transportation services in Equatorial Guinea in the petroleum sector are subject to WHT at the rate of 5% for nonresident entities.

Branch remittance tax

There is no branch remittance tax in Equatorial Guinea.

F. Financing considerations

Interest on loans is tax-deductible only when they do not exceed the interest invoiced by the banks, as authorized by the Bank Commission.

G. Transactions

The assignment, transfer or other disposition of the rights granted by a contract requires prior written authorization from the Ministry. Such assignment, transfer or other disposition is subject to the payment of a non-recoverable, non-deductible fee and to other requirements that are established in the authorization granted by the Ministry.

The transfer of the ownership of more than 50% of the shares in capital of any person making up a contractor, where the transfer affects the ownership of the rights under the relevant contract, is deemed to be an assignment of contractual rights under a contract. All profits resulting from any assignment, transfer or other disposition of rights under a contract – regardless of the beneficiary, type or location of the transaction – are subject to taxes in accordance with the laws of Equatorial Guinea.

⁸ This rate may be changed at any time by Equatorial Guinea's Central Bank.

Capital gains will be included in the taxable profit calculation for CIT purposes, in accordance with the provisions of EG tax law.

The registration fees to be paid depend on the kind of asset – for example:

- ▶ Shares – 2%
- ▶ Transferable bonds – 2%

These registration fees are paid by the assignee.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Provisions of customs duties are identical for most EG production sharing agreements (PSAs). They usually provide that the person designated as a contractor under a PSA, as well as its subcontractors, are allowed to import into Equatorial Guinea without restrictions and without payment of duties on goods, materials, machinery, equipment and consumer goods that are necessary for carrying out qualifying operations under a PSA, so long as the importation is in its own name or in the name of its subcontractors under regulations of temporary admission (AT) or temporary imports (IT), either normal or special, and on condition that these goods are to be used exclusively for qualifying operations and will be re-exported at the end of their use.

Export duties

The materials and equipment directly related to petroleum operations and imported under the IT regime may be exported from Equatorial Guinea free of all export duties, provided that the ownership of such materials and equipment has not been transferred to the State.

Stamp duties and registration fees

Registration fees are based on a percentage of the foreign company's share capital for a branch registration and of the share capital for a subsidiary registration. Registration costs pertaining to a subsidiary or to a branch are similar.

Provided that the share capital for a subsidiary or for the foreign company's share capital does not exceed XAF10 million (which is the legal minimum share capital for any public limited company (PLC) under the OHADA regulations), registration costs may be estimated at XAF8 million.

Registrations have to be renewed every year at different administrations (mines, trade, promotion of small and medium-sized businesses, and city council).

I. Other

Urban property tax

All owners, holders and equitable owners of assets will be required to pay this tax, including heirs, joint owners and other entities that, while lacking their own legal status, constitute an economic unit and are the owners of record of assets that are urban in nature.

The tax base for urban property tax, which will coincide with the net base, will be constituted by 40% of the sum of the value of the land and the construction. It will enter into effect for taxation purposes on the fiscal year immediately following its notification.

The tax debt will be the result of calculating 1% of the tax base. This tax will be due for each complete six months and paid in the second quarter of the respective fiscal year.

Personal income tax

Employers are liable to personal income tax (as a payroll deduction) on behalf of their employees and must pay it back to the tax administration no later than 15 days after the beginning of the month following that in which the deduction took place.

The taxable basis is the previous month's gross salary,

The rate of deduction is 0% to 35% on a progressive scale. Professional expenses deduction amounts to 20% of gross salary, after social contributions have been deducted, up to XAF1 million a year.

Employers are also liable to withhold (as a payroll deduction) the following individual contributions on behalf of their employees, and must pay them to the tax administration no later than 15 days after the beginning of the following month:

- ▶ Social security contribution – Taxable basis is the previous month's gross salary; rate of deduction is 21.5% for employers and 4.5% for employees
- ▶ Worker Protection Fund (WPF) – Employers' rate is 1% on a taxable basis of gross salary; employees' rate is 0.5% on a taxable basis of net salary.

Applicable domestic production requirements

All contractors are obliged to sell and transfer to the State, upon written request of the Ministry, any amounts of hydrocarbons from a contract area and any amounts of natural gas processed in Equatorial Guinea by a contractor or its associate that the State deems necessary in order to meet domestic consumption requirements.

Tax treaties

Equatorial Guinea has entered into the tax treaty of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community.⁹

⁹ CEMAC, whose six Member States are: Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of the Congo.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts ■ Service contract |
|---|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

A new Hydrocarbon Code was published in *Official Journal* 221 of August 2014 by the Gabonese Government. See Section F below for further information.

The fiscal regime that applies in Gabon to the upstream petroleum industry consists of the Gabonese Tax Code, the Gabonese petroleum laws, and the production sharing contract (PSC) or service contract between the Gabonese Government and the contractor. Under the new Hydrocarbon Code, concession rights are no longer possible.

The main taxes applicable in the oil and gas industry are the following: corporate income tax, annual surface rent and royalties on production. The main features are as follows:

- ▶ Royalties – Between 6% and 12% of total production
- ▶ Bonuses:
 - ▶ On production: between US\$1 million to US\$2 million, depending on the volume of production
 - ▶ On signature: US\$215/km² minimum (from US\$0.5 million to US\$1 million, depending on the area)
- ▶ PSC¹ – At least 50% should be in favor of the State
- ▶ Corporate tax:
 - ▶ Corporate income tax rate – 35% in general; 35%-40% for holders of an exploitation and production sharing contract (CEPP); 73% for holders of a concession agreement
- ▶ Annual surface rent:
 - ▶ On exploration: US\$3 to US\$6/km²
 - ▶ On production: US\$4 to US\$8/hectare
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Investment incentives – D², L³

1 PSC government share is based on production. A service contract regime is in place called CEPP.

2 D: Accelerated depreciation for capital goods.

3 L: Losses can be carried forward until the third fiscal year following the deficit period.

- ▶ Additional petroleum levies:
 - ▶ Contribution to the Petroleum Support Fund:
 - ▶ On exploration – US\$200,000/ year (included in cost oil)
 - ▶ On production – US\$0.05/barrel (not included in cost oil)
- ▶ Contribution to the fund of reconstruction of deposits:
 - ▶ Around US\$200,000/year (depending on the value of equipment removed or upgraded)
 - ▶ For the restoration of site: maximum amount of 0.5%/year of the value of original equipment and facilities involved
- ▶ Contribution to training:
 - ▶ On exploration: paid three times at US\$50,000, US\$100,000, and then US\$100,000 per year
 - ▶ On production: US\$200,000/year
- ▶ Investment contributions:
 - ▶ Contractors will be required to contribute 1% of their turnover to a fund for diversified investments and 2% of their turnover to the fund for the development of the hydrocarbons industry.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate tax

Tax rate

For oil and gas net profits, the tax rate is 35%. Companies following the CEPP regime are exempted from corporate or any other tax, except for those taxes that are expressly stated in the CEPP.

Ring-fencing

In principle, ring-fencing is limited to activities in the exploitation zone. However, the contract can extend coverage to the whole area covered by the contract.

Production sharing contract

A production sharing contract (PSC) is an agreement between the State and a company. It is a type of service contract where a company is viewed as a service provider and the State is considered a master builder. All the operations are realized by the company in favor of the State, which is the owner of the resources and investment.

Treatment of exploration and development costs

Depreciation deductions applicable in the petroleum industry are calculated by the operator in accordance with the rate defined in the CEPP. In practice, this mostly concerns companies operating under a concession agreement that has this specified in the agreement. In such a case, rates depend on the time period for depreciation, which in turn depends on whether expenses are exploration expenses or development and exploitation expenses. The rates can be readjusted if the actual time period for utilization is shorter (particularly in the case of an accidental loss or if the material wears out more quickly than expected).

However, within the framework of a PSC, depreciation is subject to special treatment. It is excluded from cost oil and does not impact corporate income tax as this is paid in kind. In practice, development and exploitation costs are recovered first, and exploration costs are recovered afterwards.

Determination of cost oil and profit oil

Once production has started, it is divided into two parts: cost oil and profit oil. These are divided pursuant to the terms of the service contract between the service provider and the State.

Cost oil

Cost oil is the part of oil production that serves to recover the exploration expenses, operating expenses and development expenses. Cost oil is calculated using an annual basis but can be recovered monthly. The calculation is based on net production (total production available of hydrocarbons, less royalty payments made).

Profit oil

Profit oil, or the remaining production volume, is the net production less the cost oil. The contractor and the State share the profit oil according to a rate specified in the contract. Depending on the contract, the rate in favor of the State can be two-thirds, three-quarters or four-fifths. The rate is progressive and depends on the volume of production. The law does not define the minimum share that must be allocated to the company or to the State.

Corporate tax

Companies must pay corporate tax in kind. Corporate tax is not based on annual sales but on the level of production. The companies give the State a quantity of petrol that corresponds to the amount of tax owed (i.e., the quantity of petrol given is equivalent to the amount of corporate tax that companies would otherwise pay in cash). This amount is included in the profit oil as part of the State's entitlement.

For accounting purposes, the amount of corporate tax is calculated according to a special method called a "grossing-up" method (which is not specified in the contract). The amount of corporate tax of the company is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Amount of corporate tax} = \frac{(\text{Profit oil} \times \text{tax rate})}{(1 - \text{tax rate})}$$

where the tax rate is expressed as a decimal number rather than a percentage.

In addition to their operating accounts, companies have to establish special petroleum cost accounts. The amount of corporate tax calculated should normally correspond to the amount calculated in the operating account. However, as the expenditures differ between the operating account and the petroleum cost account, there could be a discrepancy between these numbers.

Royalties

The CEPP generates a royalty that is calculated at the production stage. The rate of royalty depends on the daily average of the total production (for a limited zone and for one month only). This rate is proportional to the total production and is not progressive. The rate can be fixed or variable within a production bracket (as determined in the contract) and is generally between 6% and 12% of the total production.

The rate is determined according to the following formula:

$$\text{Amount of royalty} = \frac{(\text{Official sale price/transfer}) \times \text{contractual royalty rate}}{\text{gross production}}$$

Royalty regimes are not affected by the characterization of production as onshore or offshore.

Expenditure recovery

Non-recoverable expenses

The following expenditures are non-recoverable:

- ▶ Expenses that are not tax-deductible
- ▶ Bonuses
- ▶ Expenses related to the period before the effective date of the contract

- ▶ Expenses related to operations carried out for commercialization purposes
- ▶ Taxes, duties and royalties which the tax legislation does not authorize as deductible expenses or for which recovery is excluded by a provision of the contract.

Caps that apply to expenditure recovery

The contractor reports to the State the amount of expenses incurred during the exploration according to the terms of the contract. Those expenses are refunded by the State at a later time, but are limited by a “cost stop.” The amount of a cost stop is determined in the contract and is generally around 60% to 70% of net production. If the costs incurred in a particular year are higher than this limit, they can be deducted in the next year.

Uplift available on recovered cost

Uplift is available on recovered costs but overhead costs are limited to 3%.

Fiscal uncertainty clauses

Fiscal uncertainty clauses are generally included in the contract.

VAT treatment

During the exploration phase and until the quantity produced is sufficient for commercialization, the contractor is exempted from paying VAT, as are suppliers, subcontractors, service providers and affiliated companies.

However, during the production phase, contractors, suppliers, subcontractors, service providers and affiliated companies are required to pay VAT at the rate in force (normally 18%, or 10% to 5% for certain products⁴), but they can recover these payments later. For operations between companies on the UPEGA list,⁵ the rate is 0%.

Resource rent tax

Gabon does not have a resource rent tax.

Annual surface rent

An annual surface rent is due in the calendar year following the grant of title to a parcel of land. This fee is based on the surface of the site:

- ▶ On exploration, the annual surface rent is US\$3 to US\$6/km²
- ▶ On production, the annual surface rent is US\$4 to US\$8/hectare.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply for unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

Accelerated depreciation

The tax depreciation rules are provided for in the applicable CEPP contract. Depreciation can be calculated using either the straight-line method or the declining-balance method. The declining-balance method is only possible for goods that are part of a list of specific goods made by a joined order of the Minister of Finance and the minister of the activity sector.

Only goods that are necessary to the production, transformation or development of petroleum, and those companies that participate in the industrial development of the country, can benefit from the use of the declining-balance method.

The Gabonese Tax Code allows accelerated depreciation for certain fixed assets.⁶ The list of fixed assets eligible for accelerated depreciation is made available by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Mines, but this list has

4 *I.e., customs rate.*

5 *UPEGA is the Gabonese Petroleum Union.*

6 *Under Article 11(VXb) of the Gabonese Tax Code.*

not yet been released. All the fixed assets of the company that are eligible for accelerated depreciation are specified in the applicable CEPP contract.

In order to use the accelerated-depreciation method, a letter must be sent to the director of the tax office within three months of the acquisition of the fixed asset. The director must then consent within three months from the date of acknowledgment of receipt of the request. If no answer is received within those three months, the request is presumed to be accepted by the tax office.

Carryforward losses

Losses can be carried forward until the third fiscal year following the deficit period. The Finance Bill 2014 provides that losses would be carried forward until the fifth year following the deficit period.

D. Withholding taxes

A 20% withholding tax (WHT) is levied on capital gains (e.g., dividends, attendance fees and bondholder fees) paid by a resident company to an individual.

A 20% WHT is levied on distributions (e.g., dividends, attendance fees and bondholder fees) paid by a resident company to another company. The rate is expected to increase to 20% through the Finance Bill 2014. The levied rate can be reduced if the recipient is resident in a tax treaty partner country.

A 10% WHT is levied on most other payments made to a nonresident or foreign company. This withholding tax applies to services, industrial property, royalties or interest. There is also a branch remittance tax of 15%, which can be reduced down to 10% should the head office of the relevant company be resident in a tax treaty partner country.

E. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Exploration and production (E&P) companies are subject to the Customs Code of the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) and its regulations.

Products, materials and equipment exclusively related to the prospecting and researching of petroleum are exempt from customs duties. Contractors, subcontractors or others related to the contractors have to produce a final certificate of utilization. For customs administration, the exploration period ends when the production reaches 10,000 barrels per 24-hour period.

The same exemption exists for the personal belongings of the company's foreign employees who are engaged in the prospecting, researching or exploitation of petroleum.

Products, materials and equipment related to the production, storage, treatment, transport, expedition and transformation of hydrocarbons are subject to a reduced rate of 5%. A contractor must request the Director General of Customs to grant permission for this reduced rate to be applicable. The reduced rate is not applicable after 5 years following the beginning of exploitation.

Products, materials and equipment that are exclusively related to the activity of a petroleum company and that are destined to be re-exported at the end of their utilization can be imported under the normal temporary regime, where customs duties on imports for certain goods that are destined to be re-exported are suspended. Such materials must be necessary to the petroleum company's activities and should not belong to the State.

For all other goods, normal customs rules are applicable.

Export duties

Materials and equipment that are destined to be re-exported at the end of their utilization will be exempt from customs duties.

F. New Hydrocarbons Code

The main changes provided by the draft Hydrocarbons Code include the following topics:

- ▶ The duration for a branch that undertakes exploration can exceed 4 years before a branch should be converted into a local entity
 - ▶ The Gabon (national) Oil Company has the possibility of participating directly in the share capital of a contractor holding a PSC and contracts for exploration and the sharing of production, but such participation cannot exceed 15%
 - ▶ There must be a minimum 20% participation of the State in a PSC
 - ▶ Minimum cost recovery is 65%, up to a maximum of 75%, adjustable depending on profitability
 - ▶ The duration of exploration and exploitation phases is fixed
 - ▶ There is a strengthening of the obligation to contribute to the promotion of national employment (by submission of the realization of efforts in hiring nationals, including advertisement of vacancies in local newspapers and through firm recruitment)
 - ▶ Priority is given to awarding a subcontract to companies incorporated in Gabon (with 80% national participation expected)
 - ▶ A framework for the activity of gas flaring has been created.
-

Germany

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Tax regime applied in the country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |

A. At a glance

- ▶ Income tax rate – Approx. 29.8%
- ▶ Royalties – 0%-40%
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contracts (PSCs) – None

| | Oil and gas companies | Other companies |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Ordinary tax | Approx. 29.8% | Approx. 29.8% |
| Special tax | 0%-40% | None |

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry in Germany consists of a combination of royalties (called: "Foerderabgaben") and corporate profits tax, i.e. corporate income tax, solidarity surcharge and trade tax.

In principle, there is no special taxation regime applicable to the oil and gas industry in Germany. Oil and gas companies are subject to the general accounting and taxation principles, i.e. they are subject to corporate income tax, solidarity surcharge and trade tax. In addition to that, oil and gas companies are subject to royalties for the exploration of oil and gas in Germany. Germany does not impose signature or production bonuses, and there are no state participation arrangements.

The German ministry of finance has set out its opinion regarding the tax treatment of issues related to oil and gas in a decree dated 13 December 1957, followed by an amendment dated 20 May 1980. The content of this decree is generally still applicable on the basis of decrees at state level containing guidelines as to whether expenses have to be capitalized or can be deducted, the useful lifetime of an extraction right, the treatment of provisions for abandonment, etc. In particular, no generally admitted federal decree currently exists, and so a taxpayer subject to taxation in one local state can generally not rely on a decree issued by the Tax Authority of another local state.

Right of taxation

Resident corporations, such as stock corporations (e.g. companies suffixed AG or GmbH) having their legal seat or effective place of management in Germany, are subject to taxation on all non-exempt worldwide business income. All income qualifies as business income.

In contrast, a nonresident corporation, whose corporate seat and place of management are located outside Germany, is subject to corporate income tax as well as to solidarity surcharge and may be subject to trade tax (if a commercial business activity is carried out in Germany) only on income derived from German sources. Income from German sources includes, among others, business income from operations in the country through a branch, office or other permanent establishment.

German offshore activities

Germany's rights to the taxation of income also extends to certain activities in Germany's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the North Sea and thus, in the German offshore area. The EEZ stretches seaward out to 200 nautical miles. Such activities particularly comprise the exploration or exploitation of the seabed and subsoil and their natural resources as well as the production of renewable energy.

Corporate profits taxes

Corporate income tax is imposed at a rate of 15% on taxable income, regardless of whether the income is distributed or retained.

A 5.5% solidarity surcharge is imposed on corporate income tax, resulting in an effective tax rate of 15.825%.

In addition, income from a commercial business activity in Germany is subject to trade tax. Trade tax is levied under federal regulations but at rates determined by the local authority where the business has a permanent establishment. These rates vary from approximately 7% up to 18.2%, whereas the average trade tax rate amounts to 14%.

The overall combined corporate profits tax rate amounts to approximately 22.8% up to 34% (with an average of 29.8%).

Royalties

Royalties are imposed annually at individual state level and can vary between 0% and 40% based on the market value of the produced oil or gas at the time of the production due to the federal mining law. The royalties can be deducted from the tax base for German corporate income tax and trade tax purposes.

Furthermore, the royalty-owning oil and gas company is also allowed to offset field handling charges against the royalty assessment base. These field handling costs include transport costs from well to treatment plant, preliminary treatments and the disposal of waste water, but exemptions may apply.

Oil is mainly produced in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, with a combined share of around 90% in 2013.

Gas is mainly produced in Lower Saxony, with a share of about 95% in 2013.

The royalty rates applicable in these states are outlined below:

| State | Oil | Gas |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Lower Saxony | 18%* | 30%* |
| Schleswig-Holstein | 21%-40%** | 40% or 18%*** |

* General royalty, which may be decreased to 0%/9% for oil and 18% for gas depending on the location of the oil or gas field.

** General royalty rate is 40%, which may be decreased down to 21% depending on the location of the oilfield as well as the amount of oil exploited (North Sea blocks A6/B4 and Heide-Mittelplate I).

*** General gas rate is 40%, which may be decreased down to 18% depending on the location of the gas field (North Sea blocks A6/B4 and Heide-Mittelplate I).

Constitution of permanent establishments abroad during the exploration activities

According to Germany's ministry of finance, the activities for searching and producing have to be split into three different phases:

- ▶ Phase 1, "Project acquisition": The project pursuit and acquisition phase covers the geologic, economic and political assessment of the target country
- ▶ Phase 2, "Exploration": The project acquisition phase is followed by a detailed geological and seismic analysis as well as exploration drillings. Where there are successful results, further investigations are made as to whether the resources are economically feasible to exploit the oil and gas deposits.
- ▶ Phase 3, "Development and production": The third phase comprises the construction of the production sites and infrastructure as well as the production of oil and gas.

In general, activities during the exploration phase result in a permanent establishment if the exploration activity takes more than six months in total, either as a single exploration activity or as a series of simultaneous or consecutive exploration activities. However, activities in double tax treaty countries during the exploration phase may not give rise to a permanent establishment even if a fixed place of business is present (as they are deemed as preliminary or ancillary activities in terms of a double tax treaty), unless the exploration itself is a service rendered to third parties.

If exploration is not economically feasible, generally all related costs can be deducted from the German tax base since no permanent establishment is constituted abroad (exemptions may apply for certain expenses). Upon determination of economic feasibility, an intangible asset (oil or gas production/extraction right) is developed and a permanent establishment is generally constituted abroad. As a consequence, all tangible and intangible assets relating to that foreign permanent establishment have to be attributed and are deemed to be transferred to it, generally leading to an exit taxation in Germany. In general, the value for the transferred assets equals its fair market value. According to the German ministry of finance, the fair market value of the intangible asset is deemed to correspond to the amount of costs incurred in Germany, irrespectively whether deducted or capitalized in the past.

Capital gains resulting from the transfer of intangible assets to a foreign permanent establishment located in a double tax treaty country are generally subject to taxation immediately. In a case where the foreign permanent establishment is located within the European Union, however, the taxation of the capital gain can (upon application) be deferred and apportioned over a period of five years.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply for unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Depreciation

For tax purposes, "depreciating" assets include assets that have a limited useful life and that decline in value over time. The German ministry of finance has issued an overview containing industry-specific assets required for the exploration and production activities, as well as their assumed useful lifetime.

A taxpayer is generally entitled to choose either the straight-line or reducing-balance method of depreciation, taking account of special considerations established in Germany's Tax Code. It should be noted that the straight-line method of charging depreciation is generally used in relation to oil and gas extraction right (if time-wise limited) and buildings.

Based on the aforementioned decrees of the German ministry of finance, expenditures for geological studies including preliminary exploration drillings and dry drill holes can generally be deducted from the tax base at the point in time when they are incurred. However, expenditures for deep wells have initially to be capitalized, leading to a separate tangible asset for each deep well. Such tangible assets are depreciated over an assumed lifetime of 8 or 15 years, depending on the period in which oil is produced or the kind of gas produced (8 years for acid gas and 15 years for natural gas).

Acquisition costs for exploration rights and seismic data have to be capitalized as intangible assets and amortized over the useful lifetime based on the straight-line approach.

In the case of a legal or contractual obligation to refill the drilled holes, the estimated abandonment costs have to be time-wise allocated over the useful lifetime of the hole – i.e., generally 8 or 15 years. The same applies to field clearance costs, where the period is assumed to be generally 20 years.

D. Incentives

No specific tax incentives are available for the oil and gas industry in Germany.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends paid by a resident corporation to both residents and nonresidents are subject to withholding tax. The domestic withholding tax amounts to 26.375% (i.e. 25% plus a solidarity surcharge of 5.5% thereon). For nonresidents a full or partial relief from withholding tax is generally available under an applicable double tax treaty, the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive as well as under domestic law, but any such relief is also subject to strict German anti-treaty shopping rules.

Interest

Interest payments to nonresidents are generally not subject to withholding tax, unless for the following types of interest:

- ▶ Interest paid by financial institutions.
- ▶ Interest from “over-the-counter business,” which refers to bank transactions carried out over the bank counter without the securities being on deposit at the bank.
- ▶ Interest from certain types of profit-participating and convertible debt instruments.

Nonresidents may apply for a refund of the withholding tax if a treaty or EU directive exemption applies.

Royalties

Royalties paid to nonresidents are subject to corporate income tax, which is imposed by withholding at a rate of 15% (15.83% including the 5.5% solidarity surcharge).

Nonresidents may apply for a refund of the withholding tax if a treaty or EU directive exemption applies.

Branch remittance tax

There is no branch remittance tax in Germany.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

Under the interest expense limitation rule, the deduction of interest expense exceeding interest income (net interest expense) is limited to 30% of taxable earnings before (net) interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA). Tax-exempt income and partnership income are not considered in the calculation of the taxable EBITDA. The limitation rule does not apply if one of the following exemption rules applies:

- ▶ *Exemption threshold:* annual net interest expense is less than €3 million.
- ▶ *Group clause:* the company is not a member of a consolidated group (a group of companies that can be consolidated under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)). The group clause does not apply if both of the following circumstances exist:
 - ▶ A shareholder who, directly or indirectly, holds more than 25% in the corporation or a related party of such shareholder grants a loan to the company.
 - ▶ The interest exceeds 10% of the company's net interest expense.
- ▶ *Escape clause:* the equity ratio of the German subgroup is at least as high as the equity ratio of the worldwide group (within a 2% margin). A "group" is defined as a group of entities that could be consolidated under IFRS, regardless of whether a consolidation has been actually carried out. The equity ratio is calculated on the basis of the IFRS/US GAAP/EU local country GAAP consolidated balance sheet of the ultimate parent. The same accounting standard is applied to a German group but subject to several complex technical adjustments, such as a deduction for unconsolidated subsidiaries. The access to the escape clause is limited in the case of certain loans from nonconsolidated shareholders (the "related party debt exception").

Unused EBITDA can be carried forward over a five-year period. Nondeductible interest expense can be carried forward indefinitely but is subject to German change-in-ownership rules.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

Oil and gas licenses (i.e. exploration rights) can generally be transferred by way of an assets deal, but the transfer might be subject to restrictions arising from German mining law. The disposal of assets is a taxable event, and so gains and losses are generally taxable or deductible, respectively.

Farm-in and farm-out

A decree issued by the German ministry of finance dated 14 September 1981 deals with the tax consequences of the farm in and farm out. The farmee (the party entering into a farm-in agreement) is deemed to have acquired an intangible asset. The acquisition cost corresponds to the amount the farmee has to pay or, alternatively, the amount the farmee is obliged to pay under the arrangement in the future. Upon economic feasibility, the farmee is allowed to depreciate the acquired intangible asset over its useful lifetime.

Selling shares in a company

Gains derived from a disposal of shares in a German corporation are generally tax-exempt at the level of resident corporate investors for corporate income tax and trade tax purposes. The "gain" is the difference between the purchase price and the book value of the sold shares. However, 5% of the capital gain is treated as a deemed non-deductible business expense subject to corporate income tax and solidarity surcharge thereon and to trade tax. Accordingly, any exemption is limited to 95% of the capital gain.

The disposal of shares in a German corporation by a nonresident should, in the absence of double tax treaty protection, generally qualify as a taxable event in Germany under German domestic law, but such disposal could also be 95% tax-exempt at the level of corporate investors. However, no trade tax is generally levied in the case of a nonresident corporate shareholder who is only subject to limited taxation in Germany, unless the shares are attributed to a German permanent establishment. In contrast, if double tax treaty protection exists, there should be no taxable capital gain in Germany.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is applied at a standard rate of 19% for local supplies and 0% for exported oil, oil products, gas and gas condensate. Taxation depends on the place of supply. However, there are specific rules concerning the place of supply, where a distinction between the supply of goods and of services must be made. Gas, water, electricity and heat are considered as a supply of goods.

VAT is potentially chargeable on all supplies of goods and services made in Germany. The territory does not include Helgoland, Büsingen, free harbors and territorial waters. However, some supplies made in free harbors and territorial waters have to be treated as German domestic supplies.

As a general rule, German VAT applies to:

- ▶ The supply of goods or services made in or to Germany by a taxable person
- ▶ the acquisition of goods from another EU Member State (known as “intra-community acquisition”) by a taxable person
- ▶ Reverse-charge services or goods received by a taxable person
- ▶ The importation of goods from outside the EU, regardless of the status of the importer.

A “taxable person” is anyone who independently carries out an economic activity. If goods are exported or sold to a VAT-registered entity in another EU Member State (known as “intra-community supply”), the supplies may qualify as free of VAT if they are supported by evidence that the goods have actually left Germany.

In Germany, nonresident businesses must also register for VAT in Germany if any of the following apply:

- ▶ Goods are located in Germany at the time of supply
- ▶ The business acquires goods into Germany from other EU countries
- ▶ The business imports goods from outside of the European Union
- ▶ Distance sales exceed the annual threshold for services taxable in Germany and
- ▶ If the reverse-charge mechanism is not applicable.

A nonresident company that is required to register for German VAT can register directly with the German tax authorities; there is no requirement to appoint a VAT or fiscal representative. The input VAT incurred by an entity that is VAT registered in Germany is normally recoverable on its periodic VAT returns.

As of 1 September 2013 Germany has introduced a new domestic reverse-charge mechanism applicable for the domestic supply of gas to a company that itself renders supplies of gas (this is interpreted as being a reseller of gas) and for the domestic supply of electricity if the supplier and the customer are resellers of electricity. Furthermore, Germany implemented the reverse charge to certain supplies of gas and electricity through the natural gas system or electricity grid by non-established suppliers.

Natural gas and associated products imported into Germany (via a gas pipeline) from a field outside Germany are subject to formal customs import procedures – although from 1 January 2011 the importation of natural gas has been exempt from import VAT.

Import duties

As a member state of the European Union, Germany is also part of the customs union of the EU. The EU’s customs territory includes generally the national territory of all EU Member States, including the territorial waters. The territorial waters of Germany include 12 nautical miles into the North Sea and certain areas defined by geographic coordinates in the Baltic Sea. Hence, any offshore activities outside German territory are generally not relevant under EU customs law. Goods circulating within the European Union are free of any customs duties and restrictions; only when goods are imported into Germany from outside of the EU are they potentially subject to customs duties.

The rate of customs duties is based on the customs tariff classification (combined nomenclature) of the goods and might be lowered to 0% when the goods qualify for preferential treatment. Besides the preferential benefits, customs relief regimes may apply, resulting in reduced or zero rates of duty. Under the end-use relief, the goods have to be subject to a certain use under customs control. Other special customs regimes (e.g. customs bonded warehouse use or temporary use) may require a special authorization, which is usually limited to the owner and applied for by the importer because in most cases an EU-resident company is required.

Export duties

There are no export customs duties in Germany. However, export control restrictions might apply under certain conditions. In these cases, export licenses may become necessary or the export itself is prohibited.

Excise duties

In contrast with customs regulations, excise tax regulations are country specific. However, excise tax regulations are largely harmonized within the European Union. The territory of the German excise duty laws generally includes the national territory of Germany and its territorial waters. The territorial waters of Germany reach 12 nautical miles into the North Sea and also cover certain areas defined by geographic coordinates in the Baltic Sea. Hence, any offshore activities outside German territory are generally not relevant under German excise laws. The respective excise duty law has to be considered in all cases of importations into Germany, including intra-EU transactions. In Germany, excise duties might accrue for certain hydrocarbon products (generally energy tax).

An energy tax is generally incurred when the taxable product is imported into Germany or removed from an energy tax warehouse. The excise duty rate of hydrocarbon products is based on the customs tariff classification of the product and calculated on the basis of the volume (e.g., per 1,000 liters). The energy tax can be suspended under a special procedure for transportation or storage in an energy tax warehouse, which is subject to prior authorization. For certain products and uses, a tax exemption might apply.

Stamp duties

There are no stamp duties in Germany.

Registration fees

There are no registration fees in Germany.

I. Other

Transfer pricing

In Germany, extensive related-party transfer pricing regulations apply, which are substantially in line with the OECD reports. It should, however, be noted that the German transfer pricing regulations are subject to changes in certain key respects as a result of announced legislation. The German ministry of finance has issued a draft decree regarding permanent establishments in order to align them with the OECD approach. The draft decree also includes oil and gas industry-specific regulations.

As the initial attempt at this introduction into tax law failed, it needs to be further monitored and analyzed if and to what extent the proposed amendments of the transfer pricing regulations might impact the current treatment of permanent establishments in the oil and gas industry.

Gas to liquids

There is no special tax regime for gas-to-liquids conversion.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession
 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry consists of the combined use of two basic tax laws – the Internal Revenue Act¹ (the IRA) and the Petroleum Income Tax Act² (PITA) – and the Petroleum Agreement (PA). A Bill is currently before the Ghanaian Parliament to repeal the PITA and save its provisions (after some amendments) under the IRA.

PAs are signed between the Government of Ghana (GoG), the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) and the respective petroleum company or contractor.

The principal aspects of the fiscal regime that are affecting the oil and gas industry are as follows:

- ▶ Royalties – Royalty rates are not fixed. The PAs signed so far prescribe royalty rates ranging from 3% to 12.5% for gas and crude production.
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – The PA deals with specific PSC issues that exist between the petroleum company, the GNPC and the GoG. Generally, the PA indicates that the GoG's share may be taken in cash or in petroleum lift. An initial carried interest of at least 10% is provided in the PA for the Republic (acting through the GNPC). Additional interest, which is a paying interest, may be acquired by the GoG through the GNPC.
- ▶ Income tax rate – The income tax rate for upstream petroleum activities is 50% (as per the PITA) or an alternative rate as specified in the PA. The PAs signed so far prescribe a rate of 35%. The Bill currently before Parliament proposes a fixed rate of 35%. If passed, the PA will no longer provide for an alternative rate of tax. For downstream petroleum activities, the applicable income tax rate is 25%.
- ▶ Capital allowances – D³
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, RD⁴

1 (2000) Act 592 as amended.

2 (1987) PNDCL 188, yet to be amended; to be repealed and replaced soon.

3 D: accelerated depreciation.

4 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely. RD: R&D incentive.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate tax

Ghana's petroleum fiscal regime is governed by two basic tax laws – the IRA⁵ and the PITA⁶ – and the PA. A Bill is currently before Parliament to repeal the PITA and save its provisions (with some amendments) under the IRA. The commissioner-general of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) administers the IRA, the PITA and the tax portions of the PA.

The IRA is the main tax law covering downstream petroleum activities, whereas the PA and the PITA are the main instruments covering upstream petroleum activities. The IRA will govern both downstream and upstream oil activities as and when the PITA is repealed; the PA will continue to govern upstream oil activities.

The corporate tax rate provided in the PITA is 50%, but the PAs signed to date prescribe an overriding tax rate of 35%. The Bill currently before Parliament proposes a fixed rate of 35%. If passed, the PA will no longer provide for an alternative rate of tax.

The corporate tax rate is applied on the chargeable income derived by the petroleum contractor. The chargeable income is arrived at after deducting all expenditures "wholly, exclusively and necessarily" expended and specified expenditures, including prior-year losses, and permitted capital allowances for the year, from the gross income from petroleum operations. Expenditures of a capital nature, private outgoings and costs paid in respect of taxes are not deductible.

Ghana applies ring fencing. Profits from one project cannot be used to offset the losses of another project unless both projects are of the same type (i.e., downstream profits or losses can be offset against downstream projects, and upstream profits or losses can be offset against upstream projects).

Downstream petroleum activities are governed by the IRA, while upstream oil activities are governed by the PITA and the PA. The IRA shall govern both the downstream and the upstream oil activities when the PITA is repealed. The PA shall continue to govern the upstream oil activities as well. The different tax laws apply different tax rates of 25% to downstream petroleum activities, and 50% or 35% to taxable income from upstream petroleum activities. It has been proposed to amend this to preclude companies from setting off costs in one contract area or site against profits in another area or site.

Annual and quarterly tax returns must be filed by the contractor or the petroleum operator. Annual corporate tax returns must be filed within 4 months after the financial year-end of the contractor. In addition, within 30 days after the end of every quarterly period, the contractor must submit a quarterly tax return to the commissioner-general. The quarterly return must disclose an estimate of taxable income from petroleum operations for the quarter, an estimate of the tax due and a remittance in settlement of the tax due on that income. The commissioner-general has the power to grant a further 14-day extension for the contractor to meet the quarterly return requirement.

The PITA grants the commissioner-general the power to assess the contractor provisionally to tax in respect of any quarterly period after receipt of the quarterly return, or after the expiry of the periods allowed for the submission of the returns.

Capital gains tax

No capital gains tax (CGT) applies on gains derived from the disposal of depreciable assets, such as plant or machinery. CGT, however, is payable on the gains made on the sale of chargeable assets (e.g., goodwill or technical know-how). The gain or loss made on the disposal of depreciable assets is included in the normal income tax calculation. It has been proposed to amend this

5 (2000) Act 592 as amended.

6 (1987) PNDCL 188, yet to be amended.

provision. The Bill before Parliament proposes the imposition of capital gains tax on petroleum operations and on profits arising from the assignment of interest in a petroleum agreement.

It is important to note that the rate of capital gains tax is 15%, whereas the rate for corporate income tax in the oil and gas sector can be 25%, 35% or 50% depending on the particular circumstances (see above).

Capital losses are not carried forward and are not allowed as a deduction against any other gains made on other chargeable assets. In addition, capital losses cannot be recouped or offset against taxable income.

Functional currency

The primary and functional currency in Ghana is the Ghana cedi. All monetary transactions in Ghana, therefore, are expected to be conducted in the Ghana cedi. However, under specified conditions, the Ghana fiscal authorities permit companies that have strong reasons to report their business activities in another currency. The PA permits oil and gas companies to transact business in a currency of their choice. However, for tax purposes the commissioner-general must give approval for the oil and gas company to report in any currency other than the Ghana cedi.

Transfer pricing

Ghana's tax laws include measures to ensure that cross-border trading does not unnecessarily erode local taxable profits of companies in their dealings with their parent or related entities. The commissioner-general has wide powers to disallow expenses or make adjustments if it is believed that an attempt is being made by the taxpayer, in dealing with the parent or any other related entity, to reduce the tax payable in Ghana. The commissioner-general has the power to determine the acceptability and taxability or otherwise of any pricing module that exists between related parties. The Technology Transfer Regulations (LI 1547) also attempt to ensure that the transfer of technology between an entity and its parent or other related persons is uniformly regulated in Ghana.

The GoG, with the assistance of the African Tax Administrators Forum, has enacted comprehensive Transfer Pricing Regulations. The Regulations entered into force in September 2012. The Regulations apply to transactions between persons who are in a controlled relationship, among others, and require the maintenance of documentation and the filing of returns by resident associated persons using methods either prescribed or approved by the commissioner-general.

Management and technical services

The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) is the manager of all technical service transfer agreements that an entity incorporated or registered in Ghana can have with its parent, affiliate or other unrelated persons.

The Technology Transfer Regulations (LI 1547) regulate the types of technology that can be transferred for a fee in Ghana. The fee ranges between 0% and 8% of the net sales, or 0% to 2% of profit before tax.

Dividends

Ordinarily, dividend income is taxable under the IRA. However, dividend income paid out from the gross income that has been subject to tax under the PITA is not a taxable income under the PITA. Further, the PA exempts contractors from the payment of dividend tax. This means that dividend income earned by investors in a company carrying on upstream petroleum operations in Ghana is not subject to any tax.

Royalties

Petroleum royalties are administered and collected by the commissioner-general and, like all taxes, are paid into the state's consolidated fund. The royalty rate is not fixed. In the PAs signed so far, it ranges from 3% to 12.5% of the gross production of crude oil and natural gas.

Royalty payments are based on the gross value of oil or gas lifting. The GoG and GNPC have the right to elect to choose oil and gas lift as payment for the royalty, or to receive a cash payment in lieu of petroleum lift.

Additional oil entitlement

The GoG and GNPC have the right to receive an additional oil entitlement (AOE), which is taken out of the contractor's share of the petroleum. The GoG and GNPC also have the right to elect that the AOE receivable be settled in cash or petroleum lift.

The AOE calculation is very complex. Broadly, it is based on the after-tax, inflation-adjusted rate of return that the contractor has achieved with respect to the development and production area at that time. The contractor's rate of return is calculated on the contractor's net cash flow and is determined separately for each development and production area at the end of each quarter, in accordance with an agreed formula.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances for petroleum capital expenditure

A petroleum capital expenditure is depreciated for tax purposes over a period of five years in equal installments.

A pre-operational petroleum capital expenditure incurred by a person carrying on petroleum operations is divided into five equal parts and claimed as a capital allowance in each of the first five years from the year of commencement (i.e., the year in which the contractor first produces oil under a program of continuous production for sale). Capital expenditure incurred after the year of commencement is also claimed equally over a five-year period.

Accordingly, the capital allowance for any year of assessment after the year of commencement is therefore the sum of:

- ▶ The annual capital allowance for that year
- ▶ The sum of:
 - ▶ The capital allowance for the year of commencement (see below) as long as that allowance subsists (i.e., there is a carried-forward undeducted balance)
 - ▶ The capital allowance in respect of the subsisting annual capital allowances for previous years (i.e., where there are carried-forward undeducted balances)

To calculate the capital allowance for the year of commencement, the sum of petroleum capital expenditure incurred in the year of commencement and in previous years is taken and the following deductions are made:

- ▶ Consideration received in respect of any interest acquisition
- ▶ Sales of any asset in respect of which a petroleum capital expenditure has been incurred
- ▶ Insurance monies received in respect of the loss of an asset
- ▶ Monies received in respect of the sole risk of operations
- ▶ Any other amount received in respect of petroleum operations in or before the year of commencement

D. Incentives

Exploration

Exploration costs incurred prior to commencement of drilling operations are capitalized and a capital allowance claimed equally in the first five years of commercial operations. Similarly, exploration costs incurred after commencement of drilling operations may be capitalized and a capital allowance claimed equally over a five-year period.

Tax losses

Tax losses incurred in any year of assessment can be deducted from the subsequent year's profit. If the subsequent year's income is not enough to recoup the loss, the loss can be carried forward until it is eventually recouped. Under no circumstances may the aggregate deduction in respect of any such loss exceed the amount of the loss.

As noted previously, ring-fencing applies and, accordingly, losses from upstream petroleum activities cannot be used to offset profits from downstream or other unrelated business activities.

Research and development

No special incentives for R&D costs are available in the PITA or the PA. However, the IRA ordinarily permits the deduction of R&D expenditure. The IRA indicates that, for the purposes of ascertaining the income of a person for a period from any business, the R&D expenditure incurred by that person during the period in the production of income is deducted. The IRA further defines "R&D expenditure" as "any outgoing or expense incurred by a person for the purposes of developing that person's business and improving business products or processes but does not include any outgoing or expense incurred for the acquisition of an asset in relation to which that person is entitled to a capital allowance."

E. Withholding taxes

Branch remittance tax

The PITA and the PA do not tax branch profit remittances. The IRA, however, imposes a tax on branch profit remittances at 10%. But since the PA indicates that no tax, duty or other impost shall be imposed by the State of Ghana or any political subdivision on the contractor, its subcontractors or its affiliates with respect to the activities relating to petroleum operations and to the sale and export of petroleum - other than as provided for in the PA - branch remittances are not captured as taxable transactions.

Thus, unless the PITA is amended, branch remittances relating to upstream activities are not subject to branch remittance tax, but remittances relating to downstream activities are subject to a branch remittance tax of 10%.

Foreign resident and foreign contractor withholding taxes

Subcontractors to a PA are subject to a final withholding tax (WHT) of 5% on gross payments received from the contractor who is a party to the PA. It has been proposed to classify third-party lenders as subcontractors, in which case interest payments made to them will also be subject to the 5% final WHT. In this context, a "contractor," as defined by the PITA, means any person who is a party to a PA with the GoG and GNPC. A "subcontractor" is also defined as any person who enters into a contract with a contractor for the provision of work or services (including rental of plant and equipment) in Ghana for, or in connection with, the PA.

Generally, no variation of, or exemption from, the 5% WHT payable is available in respect of payments to subcontractors. However, WHT in respect of services provided to the contractor by an affiliate is waived, as long as such services are charged at cost.

Although the commissioner-general cannot grant any exemptions from the payment of WHT, Ghana's Parliament may grant an exemption.

Ghanaian registered or incorporated companies are required to file annual returns with the Ghana Revenue Authority. However, for a nonresident company no returns need be filed. Under the IRA, however, a nonresident person who derives income in Ghana and whose income is not subject to a final withholding tax is required to file tax returns in Ghana.

F. Financing considerations

Ghana's tax system has significant rules governing the tax impact that the degree of debt and equity mix could have on a company. These rules should be taken into account by petroleum companies in evaluating any planning options.

Thin capitalization rules restrict the total debt and equity mix in a foreign-controlled entity for tax purposes. The permitted debt-to-equity ratio for tax purposes is 2:1, although the Bill before Parliament proposes a ratio of 3:1. Any excess interest payment or foreign-exchange loss incurred in respect of a fall in the value of the debt obligation over and above this ratio is not tax deductible.

The rules apply to the following entities:

- ▶ Ghanaian entities that are foreign-controlled or foreign entities that operate locally registered entities in Ghana
- ▶ Ghanaian entities that are locally controlled by other Ghanaian parent entities

The thin capitalization rules govern the extent of debt on which an "exempt-controlled entity" can obtain interest deductions on debts from the parent. An "exempt-controlled entity" is a company with 50% or more of its shares owned or controlled by the parent entity or a related entity. The deductibility of interest payments and foreign-exchange losses for tax purposes in any particular year is restricted to a debt-to-equity ratio of 2:1.

Financial institutions are excluded from the debt to equity rules.

Proposed changes that may affect the financing of oil and gas companies include:

- ▶ Interest on loans from third parties not being allowed to exceed the lowest market interest rates for similar loans
- ▶ Debt in excess of a debt-to-equity ratio of 3:1 being disallowed

Most investments are inbound and, therefore, it is not common for Ghanaian entities to have controlling interests in other Ghanaian entities such that they could be caught by the thin capitalization rules. In the majority of instances, thin capitalization rules have been applied to Ghanaian resident companies with parents domiciled elsewhere. Such parent companies generally prefer not to tie down funds in equity. Instead, they prefer to have a mechanism to allow for quicker repatriation of funds invested in Ghana and, thus, tend to invest in debt rather than equity.

G. Transactions

Asset disposal

The disposal of an asset can have two effects, depending on whether it was sold before or after the year in which petroleum operations commenced.

If an asset is sold before the year in which petroleum operations commence, its sale has an impact on the quantity of capital allowances that may be claimed when operations commence. For the purposes of calculating the capital allowance for the year of commencement of commercial operations, the full proceeds of the sale are deducted from the accumulated petroleum capital expenditure incurred up to the year of commencement. The net expenditure, after deducting the proceeds of the sale, is treated as the petroleum capital expenditure at commencement and is subject to a capital allowance in equal installments over a period of five years.

In the case of the disposal or the loss or destruction of a petroleum capital asset in any year after the year of commencement of operations by a person carrying on petroleum operations, the full proceeds of the sale or insurance monies, compensation or damages received by the person must be divided into five equal amounts. Each resulting amount is added to the year's gross income of the person arising from petroleum operations, for the purpose of calculating the taxable income in the year in which it occurred and for each of the immediately succeeding four years.

Farm-in and farm-out

Farm-in arrangements are a common practice within the petroleum extracting sector. A farmee entering into a farm-in arrangement is expected to be allocated the proportionate cost purchased in respect of the farm-in arrangement (i.e., the cost of the interest purchased). The farmee is entitled to a deduction for the cost it incurs over a period of five years from the date of commencement of commercial operations (see the previous section on capital allowances for more detail).

For the farmor, if the farm-in occurs in or before the year of commencement of commercial operations, the petroleum capital expenditure incurred up to the date of commencement or in previous years is a net expenditure, after deducting the consideration received in respect of the acquisition by the farmee of an interest or proportionate part of the petroleum interest or in the related assets.

Where a petroleum contractor assigns its interest in a petroleum licence after the year commercial production commences, the capital allowances which the assignor (farmor) will be entitled to in respect of the petroleum capital expenditure incurred up to the time of the disposal shall be reduced by a proportionate part of the interest that has been disposed of. The assignee (farmee), on the other hand, shall be granted capital allowances equivalent to the amount by which the capital allowances granted to the farmor was reduced.

Selling shares in a company

Gains made on the sale of shares ordinarily attract CGT. However, to encourage listing and trading in shares on the Ghana Stock Exchange, gains made from the sale of shares listed and traded on the Ghana Stock Exchange are for the time being tax exempt. Gains made on shares not listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange attract a 15% tax. The tax treatment is the same for resident and nonresident shareholders.

No CGT is payable on gains derived from the sale of upstream petroleum shares.

It has been proposed that the written approval of the sector minister be required prior to the transfer to a third party of ownership, directly or indirectly, in a company, if the effect is to give the third party control of the company or enable the third party to take over the shares of another shareholder.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Goods imported for upstream petroleum operations are exempt from import duties. The sale of an exempt item by a contractor to another petroleum contractor remains exempt. However, the sale of an exempt item by a contractor to a non-petroleum contractor attracts duty if the item is ordinarily dutiable. The duty is assessed at the duty rate prevailing on the date the asset is transferred.

VAT

The VAT regime came into effect in 1998. VAT applies in Ghana to all transactions conducted in Ghana, except for transactions that are exempt.

The VAT rate is 15.0%. There is a National Health Insurance Levy (NHIL) of 2.5%. The NHIL, like the VAT, is collected by the Ghana Revenue Authority. When combined with the VAT, it effectively makes the VAT rate 17.5%.

The PA basically exempts upstream petroleum activities from VAT (both the 15.0% VAT and the 2.5% NHIL). However, VAT applies to goods and services supplied to companies that undertake petroleum activities. To effect the exemption, the Ghana Revenue Authority issues a VAT Relief Purchase Order (VRPO) to the petroleum company whose activities are VAT exempt, so that it may "pay" any VAT assessed on goods and services with the VRPO. This means

that the petroleum entity is still charged VAT on supplies to it, but it uses the VRPO instead of cash to pay the VAT element. Also, it does not charge VAT on its sales and transactions.

In general, exports of goods and services are zero-rated for VAT. That means that petroleum exports by a contractor attract VAT on exports at a zero rate.

However, imports of equipment (machinery) and vessels are exempt from VAT. In addition, the sale of equipment (machinery, including items that constitute apparatus appliances and parts thereof) designed for use in the industry is exempt. The sale of crude oil and hydrocarbon products is also exempt.

An asset disposal is exempt from VAT if the asset is listed under the First Schedule of Ghana's VAT Act. However, if the asset is ordinarily subject to VAT, a disposal of the asset to an entity that is not a petroleum company is subject to VAT.

The VAT registration threshold is currently GHS120,000 (around US\$37,500). Every person who earns or reasonably expects to earn revenue in excess of the threshold in a year, or a proportionate amount thereof in a quarter or in a month, is required to register for VAT.

Export duties

No export duties apply to the export of upstream petroleum products. Ghana does not usually charge duty on the export of goods. This is probably because the Government wants to encourage exports.

Stamp duties

The PA exempts upstream petroleum companies from the payment of stamp duties.

Registration fees

A variety of registration fees are payable at the local Government level and to other governmental agencies.

I. Other

Government interest in production

The Government's approach is toward taking equity ownership of projects and to the maximum equity limits that can apply within the interests of all parties.

In order to encourage prospecting and the development of oil and gas in Ghana, pioneer oil and gas corporate entities received very generous fiscal incentives. The GoG has become less and less generous following the oil find in 2007.

In relation to all exploration and development, the GNPC is expected to take (at no cost) a 10% to 12.5% initial interest in respect of crude oil and a 10% initial interest in respect of natural gas. The GNPC has an interest in all exploration and development operations.

The GNPC also has the option to acquire an additional interest in every commercial petroleum discovery. However, in order to acquire the additional interest the GNPC must notify the contractor within 90 days after the contractor's notice to the minister of the discovery. If the GNPC does not give the required notice, its interest shall remain as described above. If the GNPC decides to acquire the additional interest, it will be responsible for paying for its proportionate share in all future petroleum costs, including development and production costs approved by the JMC (joint management committee – every PA signed by the GoG and GNPC and the petroleum contractor requires the establishment of a JMC to conduct and manage the petroleum operations).

Domestic production requirements

The GoG has a 5%-12.5% royalty from all petroleum production, and a 3% royalty from gas production. The GoG can elect to take a cash settlement for its 3% and 5%-12.5% royalties, or it may have it settled with the supply of gas and crude petroleum, respectively. In addition to the 5%-12.5% royalty take in oil

and the 3% in gas, the GoG (through its equity interest) has a 12.5% initial interest in oil and a 10% interest in gas, or their cash equivalents. Any additional interest that the Government has in petroleum production is taken in oil and/or gas or their cash equivalent.

Crude oil for domestic consumption is therefore expected to be met through the royalty and the Government's share in petroleum production. However, if domestic consumption exceeds the State's share of oil and gas, the GoG is expected to inform the other partners about the additional local need 3 months in advance, and the contractor is expected to oblige and meet local production requirements. The State must pay for any additional supply required, and at the ruling market price.

Local content and local participation

Entities engaged in petroleum activities in Ghana are required to provide for local content and local participation in the conduct of their operations. In this regard, contractors, subcontractors, licensees and allied entities in the petroleum sector are required to establish local offices in their operational areas. They are also required to submit to the Petroleum Commission (PC) for approval a local content plan detailing, among other things, the consideration to be given to services that are produced locally, the employment of qualified Ghanaian personnel and the training of Ghanaians on the job. Entities are also required to submit to the PC an annual local content performance report within 45 days of the start of the year.

In addition, foreign companies that seek to provide services to the petroleum sector have to incorporate a joint venture company with an indigenous Ghanaian company. The indigenous Ghanaian company must hold at least 10% of the equity of the joint venture. Also, for an entity to qualify to enter into a PA or petroleum license, there must be at least a 5% interest held by an indigenous Ghanaian company in its equity.

The Regulation was enacted on 20 November 2013 and came into force on 20 February 2014.

Proposed changes before Parliament

The proposed changes that are currently before Parliament can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ Interest on loans from third parties not to exceed the lowest market interest rates for similar loans.
 - ▶ Third-party lenders to be considered subcontractors; interest payable to them to be subject to WHT (presently 5% and final).
 - ▶ Percentage of loans to total capital to receive the prior approval of the minister.
 - ▶ Interest on "unapproved" loans to be disallowed.
 - ▶ Profits from direct or indirect assignment, transfer or disposal of rights to be subject to CGT regardless of beneficiary, type or location of the transaction.
 - ▶ Written approval of the minister to be sought by a contractor before direct or indirect transfer of shares to a third party.
 - ▶ Possible offset of VAT credit against corporate tax outstanding.
 - ▶ No less than 5% of contractor's entitled petroleum to be supplied to the domestic market at a negotiated price.
 - ▶ Contractors obliged to meet domestic supply requirements (pro rata but not to exceed total entitlement).
 - ▶ Contractors and subcontractors in petroleum operations to be required to consider Ghanaian companies and operators first in awarding contracts.
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

Greece applies a concessionary regime for petroleum operations. Currently, there are two active licensing rounds for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons offshore and onshore in Greece, the latter being regulated by the terms of a model lease agreement.

A. At a glance

- ▶ Income tax – 20% and an additional 5% as a regional rate
- ▶ Surface rental fees – Apply
- ▶ Royalties – linked to the so-called “R-factor”
- ▶ Signature bonus – This is biddable
- ▶ Production bonuses – This is biddable
- ▶ Training contributions – Biddable, but at least €80,000 per year
- ▶ Production sharing – none.

B. Fiscal regime

Law 2289/95 (known as the Hydrocarbons Law) regulates the general principles of the fiscal regime applicable to lease agreements. The basic terms of the fiscal regime are included in the model lease agreement; nonetheless, further customized provisions may be included in each specific negotiated and signed lease agreement. The provisions of other tax laws that do not contradict the provisions of the lease agreement may also apply.

The companies concluding lease agreements are subject to a special income tax at 20% and to a regional tax at 5%, resulting in a total rate of 25%. The tax is imposed on net taxable income. The calculation of the net income is determined in the lease agreement.

Losses incurred prior to the commencement of commercial production are carried forward without any time restrictions. After the commencement of commercial production, the general income tax provisions apply in relation to the carry-forward of losses (currently, tax losses can be carried-forward for five years under those provisions).

The calculation of taxable income is ring-fenced in relation to each exploration or exploitation area. Nonetheless, special consolidation rules apply stipulating that up to 50% of the expenses incurred for exploration operations in one contract area may be included in the expenses of another contract area where the production of hydrocarbons has commenced.

A depreciation rate is calculated as a percentage ranging between 40% and 70% of the annually produced and saved hydrocarbons and by-products. The rate is unified for exploration and development costs. Moreover, the exact rate is biddable.

Surface rental fees

Surface rental fees, which are tax deductible, apply at the following annual rates:

- ▶ €50 per square kilometer of contract area during the first exploration stage
- ▶ €100 per square kilometer of contract area during the second exploration stage
- ▶ €200 per square kilometer of contract area during the third exploration stage and any further extensions
- ▶ €1,000 per square kilometer of the exploitation area annually during all phases of the exploitation stage.

Royalties

Royalties are based on the so-called "R-factor," as set out in the table below. The R-factor is defined thus:

$$R = \text{Cumulative Gross Inflows} \div \text{Cumulative Total Outflows}$$

where calculation of the R-factor takes into consideration the consolidated results for the contract area. The exact royalty calculation procedure, involving deductible and non-deductible costs, should be set out in the lease agreement.

The R-factor sliding scale is predetermined, with the rates being biddable (although some minimum rates are also predetermined).

| R-factor | Royalty rate |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| $R \leq 0.5$ | Negotiable, but not less than 4% |
| $0.5 < R \leq 1$ | Negotiable |
| $1 < R \leq 1.5$ | Negotiable |
| $1.5 < R \leq 2$ | Negotiable |
| $R > 2$ | Negotiable, but not less than 20% |

Royalty payments are tax deductible.

Signature bonus

Signature bonus is biddable. No minimum bonus is determined in legislation or in the model lease agreement. The signature bonus is tax deductible.

Production bonuses

Production bonuses are inked to daily production and are biddable. No minimum bonus is specified in Greece's legislation or in the model lease agreement; nor are the number of production thresholds specified or limited.

Production bonuses are tax deductible.

Training contributions

Contractors are required to contribute annually to training and the improvement of professional skills among the local staff, in accordance with the provisions of the Hydrocarbons Law. Annual training contributions are biddable and should be set out clearly for the exploration stage, after a commercial discovery is made, and once a certain (biddable) level of average daily production has been reached.

The minimum contribution amount is set at €80,000 per year. A contribution is tax deductible.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

There are no separate tax laws or regulations in Greenland governing the oil and gas sector. Companies are therefore subject to the general Corporate Income Tax Act, including regulations under licenses

- ▶ Royalties – Yes
- ▶ Bonuses – Not applicable
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – Not applicable
- ▶ Income tax rate – 30%¹
- ▶ Capital allowances – E²
- ▶ Investment incentives – L³

B. Fiscal regime

Greenland tax-resident companies are subject to corporation tax on their worldwide profits, including chargeable gains, with credit for any creditable foreign taxes. The taxable income of companies is stated as their gross income net of operating expenses – i.e., expenses incurred during the year in acquiring, securing and maintaining the income. The tax assessment is based on the net income or loss, adjusted for tax-free income, non-deductible expenses, amortization and depreciation, and tax loss carryforwards.

The taxable income must be stated for one income year at a time. The income year generally corresponds to the calendar year. However, companies may, upon request to the tax authorities, be allowed to apply a staggered income year. The area covered, generally, is activities undertaken within Greenlandic territorial borders, its territorial sea or continental shelf area.

Foreign persons and companies that engage in hydrocarbon prospecting activities, exploration activities, exploitation of hydrocarbons and related business, including the construction of pipelines, supply services and

¹ Companies subject to full and limited tax liability (including companies subject to the Act on Mineral Resources) must pay tax at a rate of 30% on their round-off income plus a charge of 6% on that, which adds up to an effective tax rate of 31.8%. In practice, licensees do not pay the 6% tax charge and, thus, pay tax at a rate of 30%.

² E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

³ L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

transportation of hydrocarbons by ship or pipeline, are in general subject to taxation in Greenland on the income from the time the activity is commenced in Greenland. If Greenland has entered into a double tax treaty with the country where the foreign person or company is a tax resident, the treaty may modify the Greenland tax liability.

Prospecting and exploration for mineral resources may be carried out by either a branch (considered a permanent establishment for tax purposes) or a company, whereas a license to exploit mineral resources can only be granted to public limited companies that are domiciled in Greenland, that exclusively carry out business under licenses granted pursuant to the Mineral Resources Act, and that are not taxed jointly with other companies. In addition, the company cannot be more thinly capitalized than the group to which it belongs; however, the company's debt-to-equity ratio may go as far as 2:1.

Furthermore, the licensee must command adequate technical knowledge and financial resources to carry out the exploitation activities in question. If the exploration for mineral resources has been carried out by a branch, it may be necessary to convert the branch into a public limited company in connection with the transition from exploration to exploitation activities (subject to a license granted for such activities).

Such conversion is generally considered a taxable transaction, and any gains arising in connection with the transfer are subject to tax. However, provided certain conditions are fulfilled, it is possible to transfer all assets and liabilities related to a Greenland branch operation to a new Greenland public limited liability company on a tax-exempt basis. One of the conditions that must be fulfilled is that the public limited company – in all relations – must succeed to the rights and obligations of the branch as far as the Corporate Income Tax Act and the Greenland Home Rule Act on tax administration are concerned.

Carry

Under the Mineral Resources Act, the publicly owned company NUNAOIL A/S must be part of an oil/gas license. Oil and gas companies undertaking oil and gas operations in Greenland will enter into a carry contract with NUNAOIL A/S according to which NUNAOIL A/S will participate in the license with a specified share (determined on a license-by-license basis). The contractor will provide financing and bear all the risks of exploration. However, upon commencement of development and exploitation activities, NUNAOIL A/S will assume its own costs.

Royalties

Under the current regime a special surplus royalty regime applies to all licenses. However, a revenue-based royalty regime has been passed and will have effect on new licenses.

Ring-fencing and losses

As a general principle, expenses and tax losses on transactions related to Greenland oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities may not be offset against non-oil and non-gas-related taxable income. For example, exploration costs are deductible against the oil- and gas-related income only to the extent that the costs de facto have been used in an oil and gas business. The ring-fence principle does not follow from tax legislation but stems from the fact that a licensee may not carry out activities other than oil and gas activities.

Losses from a loss-making field may be offset against profits from a profitable field if all fields are held by the same legal entity.

No fiscal consolidation is possible between Greenlandic entities.

When a loss-making field is closed down, any tax loss carryforward from that field may be offset against a profitable field.

Shutdown provision

Upon the granting of a license for exploration for, and exploitation of, mineral resources, pursuant to the Mineral Resources Act a plan must be drawn up detailing the licensee's obligations to remove installations etc. upon termination of the activities and to clear out the areas concerned. Companies that have been granted an exploitation license pursuant to that Act may, in their statement of taxable income, deduct any amounts set aside to ensure that an approved shutdown plan can be implemented. The right to deduct such amounts presupposes that the terms relating to security etc. stipulated in the license are fulfilled.

Tax consolidation

Joint taxation and other forms of tax consolidation are, in general, not allowed in Greenland. However, companies granted a license to explore for mineral resources in Greenland pursuant to the Mineral Resources Act are allowed to compute their taxable income on an aggregate basis if, for instance, they have more than one permanent establishment at the same time or carry on other activity that is subject to limited tax liability.

Functional currency

Taxpayers must calculate their taxable income in Danish krone (DKK).

Transfer pricing

Transactions between affiliated entities must be determined on an arm's length basis. In addition, Greenland companies and Greenland permanent establishments must report summary information about transactions with affiliated companies when filing their tax returns.

Greenland tax law requires entities to prepare and maintain written transfer pricing documentation for transactions that are not considered insignificant. The documentation does not routinely need to be filed with the tax authorities but, on request, it must be filed within 60 days.

A fine is set as a minimum penalty corresponding to twice the expenses (e.g., internal staff costs and fees to tax advisors) that have been saved by not having drawn up, or having partially omitted to draw up, transfer pricing documentation. In addition, if the income is increased because the arm's length criterion is not met, the minimum penalty can be increased by an amount corresponding to 10% of the increase.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply for unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances**Depreciation**

An acquired license right may be amortized on a straight-line restricted basis over a 10-year period. Licenses with a remaining term shorter than 10 years at the time of acquisition are amortized at a rate resulting in equal annual amounts over the remaining term.

The main rule is that fixed assets (e.g., machinery or production equipment) may be depreciated according to the reducing-balance method by up to 30% a year. Included are fixed onshore plant, etc., fixed and mobile platforms and associated equipment and machinery, pipelines, pumps, storage tanks and other equipment, and any independent accommodation platforms.

For the purposes of liquidity in the companies disposing of depreciable assets (in this respect, "assets" only covers buildings and installations, ships and aircraft), companies can further increase the depreciation for tax purposes through "gains depreciation," following which the company can provide depreciation for tax purposes corresponding to the taxable gain (gains depreciation) on disposal of the assets in question.

To prevent speculative trading in companies with unutilized depreciation allowances, the Greenland tax rules state that where a company provides for depreciation at rates below 30%, the company's depreciation balance is reduced to the amount to which the company's assets could have been depreciated in the following cases:

- ▶ 30% or more of the share capital is owned by other shareholders or owners at the end of the income year compared with the beginning of the income year
- ▶ The distribution of shares or voting rights in the company changes significantly during the income year, as compared with the distribution in the previous income year
- ▶ The company's activities change significantly during the income year, as compared with the activities in the previous income year
- ▶ The company is a party to a merger, a demerger or a similar reconstruction.

A "significant change" in relation to the distribution of shares or voting rights is, as a general rule, defined as a change of 30% or more. In relation to the company's activities, a "significant change" takes place if 30% or more of the company's income or net profit in the income year in question stems from other activities as compared with the company's income in the preceding income year.

Exploration costs

All costs related to oil and gas exploration in Greenland are allowed as a deduction for the purposes of the statement of taxable income.

D. Incentives

Tax losses

Tax losses may be carried forward indefinitely. However, there is a requirement that there is no significant change of ownership during an income year. The right to carryforward tax losses may be restricted in connection with a significant change in the company's ownership structure or activities.

Losses are forfeited if the composition of the group of shareholders is "significantly changed." A group of shareholders is deemed to have been "significantly changed" where more than one-third of the capital has changed hands. This is established by comparing the group of shareholders at the beginning of the income year showing a loss with the group of shareholders at the end of the income year in which the company wishes to deduct the loss.

Tax exemption

The Greenland tax authorities may exempt companies with a license to exploit mineral resources from taxation if this is stipulated in the license granted to the licensee.

E. Withholding taxes

Greenland companies paying dividends and royalties must withhold tax at source. Greenland distributing companies must withhold dividend tax at the rate fixed by the tax municipality of the company in question (currently 37% to 44%). Dividend tax is a final tax that must be withheld only on declared dividends. Companies with a license to explore for and exploit hydrocarbons and minerals pay withholding tax at a rate of 36%.

Royalty tax at a rate of 30% must be withheld on royalty payments to foreign companies.

Dividend and royalty tax may be reduced or eliminated under an income tax convention if the receiving company is able to document that it is domiciled in a foreign state with which Greenland has concluded such a convention.

Under Greenland law, interest and capital gains are not subject to tax at source.

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax is not applicable in Greenland.

Income tax withholding and reporting obligations

A foreign company that is engaged in oil and gas exploration or exploitation activities in Greenland is required to withhold income tax from salaries paid to nonresident employees working in Greenland. If Greenland has entered into a double tax treaty with the country where the foreign company is a tax resident, the treaty may modify the Greenland tax liability.

Withholding and the payment of taxes withheld are required monthly, and reports must be filed with the Greenland tax administration on an annual basis.

F. Financing considerations

Interest expenses

Interest expenses and capital losses (e.g., due to foreign exchange) on debts incurred for financing oil and gas exploration and exploitation in Greenland are allowed as a deduction against the tax base. The interest or loss must be related to the Greenland oil and gas activity.

However, a branch of a foreign company cannot deduct interest on loans from its principal (the head office); there must be an "outside" lender (e.g., a sister company).

Capital losses are generally deductible according to the realization principle, but it is possible to opt for the mark-to-market principle on currency fluctuations.

Debt-to-equity limitation

Under the thin capitalization rules, interest paid and capital losses realized by a Greenland company or by a branch of a foreign group company are partly deductible, to the extent that the Greenland company's debt-to-equity ratio exceeds 2:1 at the end of the debtor's income year and the amount of controlled debt exceeds DKK5 million. Denied deductibility applies exclusively to interest expenses related to the part of the controlled debt that needs to be converted to equity in order to satisfy the debt-to-equity rate of 2:1 (a minimum of 33.3% equity).

The thin capitalization rules also apply to third-party debt if the third party has received guarantees or similar assistance from a foreign group company.

Greenland tax law does not re-characterize or impose withholding tax on the disallowed interest.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The disposal of assets is a taxable event; gains and losses are generally taxable or deductible for tax purposes. Provided certain conditions are fulfilled, it may be possible to transfer assets and liabilities on a tax-exempt basis (see Section B above).

Transfers of license interests

All transfers of licenses (including farm-ins and farm-outs) require approval from the Greenland Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum.

It is common in the Greenland oil and gas business for entities to enter into farm-in and farm-out arrangements. However, the tax consequences of each farm-in or farm-out must be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on how the agreement is structured.

Provided certain conditions are fulfilled, it is possible to farm out (i.e., transfer part of a license to another company in return for this other company's defrayment of part of the exploration costs, to be paid by the seller regarding their remaining interest) a license on a tax-exempt basis for the farmor. The company farming in can deduct its share of the exploration costs against its taxable income.

Intra-group transfers are not covered by the Greenland farm-out provisions, so it only applies to the transfer of license interest to independent third parties.

Selling shares in a company

Gains and losses arising from the disposal of shares are included in taxable income irrespective of the percentage interest and period of ownership.

H. Indirect taxes

In Greenland, there is no general VAT system and hence no sales tax. Also, in general, there are no energy taxes or similar. However, for a number of specific products, such as motor vehicles, meat products, alcohol and cigarettes, there are import duties.

I. Other**Business presence**

Forms of business presence in Greenland typically include companies, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial considerations, it is important to consider the tax consequences of each form when setting up a business in Greenland.

Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

Tax treaty protection

In general, oil and gas activities constitute a permanent establishment under most tax treaties; thus, treaty protection cannot generally be expected for a foreign company. For individual income tax liability, tax treaty provisions vary from country to country, and protection against Greenland taxation may be available in specific cases.

Tax returns and tax assessment

Foreign companies subject to limited tax liability and Greenland domestic limited liability companies must submit an annual tax return to the Greenland tax authorities, but they are not required to prepare separate financial statements. Tax returns must be prepared and filed with the Greenland tax authorities no later than 1 May in the income year following the income year it concerns. Tax is due 10 months and 20 days after the end of the income year.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession
 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

The fiscal system applied in Guinea is based on the General Tax Code, Petroleum Code and Petroleum Agreements (in the form of production sharing contracts (PSCs)). The fiscal terms are defined both in the PSCs and in applicable legislation. For the PSC template, the Guinea Petroleum Code refers to the model agreements used in international practice.

A new Guinean Petroleum Code, introduced by Law L/2014/034/AN dated 23 December 2014, entered into force on 1 January 2015, replacing Presidential Order 119/PRG/86 that issued the 1986 Petroleum Code. The new Petroleum Code is applicable to all oil contracts that will be signed from the date of the code's promulgation. Stabilization provisions contained in previous agreements may apply for existing oil operations. "Oil contracts" means contracts executed by the State or a national company with one or more qualified contractors to conduct hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation on an exclusive basis.

Oil contracts are generally signed after a bidding round. Exceptionally, based on national interest, oil contracts can be signed after direct negotiations in derogation of the bidding principle. The derogation is issued via a presidential decree, upon a proposal from the government ministry in charge of the oil sector.

A. At a glance

- ▶ Bonus – applies
- ▶ Surface rentals – applies
- ▶ Royalties – applies, rate is negotiated in oil contracts
- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 35% (was 50% under previous petroleum code)
- ▶ Production sharing – a whether biddable or negotiable contract, the taxation related to oil and gas activities is put in writing in the production-sharing contract.

B. Fiscal regime

Guinea income tax regime

Income tax is levied on resident and nonresident companies. Resident companies are those incorporated under Guinea law, or those incorporated under foreign law and having a permanent establishment in Guinea.

Nonresident companies are deemed to derive income from a permanent establishment in Guinea if they derive income from, among other activities, the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, such as oil and gas.

In principle, all expenses incurred with respect to the conducting of petroleum operations are deductible. However, if expenses exceed normal arm's length charges and are incurred directly or indirectly for the benefit of shareholders or related companies, the excess is considered to be nondeductible.

Royalties

The contractor is obliged to pay royalty as a percentage of gross production. The royalty rates are not established in the Petroleum Code, but rather defined in oil contracts. Royalty of 10% is typical.

Cost recovery

In the Petroleum Code the share of total annual production to be allocated to the recovery of petroleum costs is set at a maximum of 60% for crude oil and 65% for deposits of natural gas. Details for the recovery are left to be defined by the oil contract.

Unrecovered costs can be carried forward indefinitely within the duration of the contract.

Production profit sharing

The production remaining after royalties and cost recovery is treated as "profit oil," to be further split between the Government and the contractor.

The production profit split mechanism is not stipulated in the legislation and should be provided for in the oil contract. Information about oil contracts concluded so far suggests that the production split is linked to daily production.

The oil contract can provide that the Government's share of oil includes the contractor's corporate income tax.

Ring-fencing

Each oil contract or oil interest must be reflected in a separate profit-and-loss account for the computation of corporate income tax. A company cannot consolidate different oil contracts for tax purposes.

Surface rentals

Surface rentals are payable and should be defined via the oil contract. For the calculation of the corporate income tax, the rentals are not deductible and are not deemed a recoverable petroleum cost.

Bonuses

Signing bonuses can be provided by the oil contract. Bonuses are not deductible expenses nor a cost-recoverable petroleum cost.

Annual contribution toward training and industry promotion

The oil companies are subject to an annual contribution for the training of Government personnel and the promotion of the oil sector. The contributions and conditions of recovery should be stipulated in the oil contracts. The contribution is considered as a deductible expense for the calculation of the CIT as well as a recoverable petroleum cost.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply for unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

Foreign subcontractors' fiscal regime

The new Petroleum Code has implemented a simplified taxation system applicable for oil contract subcontractors with no permanent establishment (PE) in Guinea, where the subcontractors have signed a services contract

(relating specifically to oil and gas operations) with the contractor or the contractor's direct subcontractors for a maximum period of 12 months. Qualification for the simplified system requires subcontractors to obtain prior approval from the Guinean tax authorities.

The simplified regime provides that the eligible subcontractors are subject to a lump sum tax payment at the rate of 10% of the respective turnover. The lump sum tax is withheld directly by the contractor at the time of payment of the invoice, and it is paid to the tax authorities not later than the 15th day of the month following the payment of the invoice.

Beside the simplified taxation system, eligible subcontractors may benefit from the taxation regime and the exemptions usually granted to contractors as a result of the new Petroleum Code.

Incentives

An oil contractor and its foreign subcontractors with no permanent establishment in Guinea are each entitled to the following exemptions unless otherwise provided by the oil contract:

- ▶ Withholding tax on dividends and on interest on loans
- ▶ Business license tax
- ▶ Single land tax for buildings allocated to oil operations
- ▶ Registration and stamps fees

It should also be noted that the material, machinery, equipment, engines, vehicles, spare parts and consumables intended for use in oil activities can be imported either without duty paid or via a suspension regime if they are to be exported after being used in Guinea. The listed goods should be included in an application sent to the customs authority prior to the commencement of exploration.

VAT

Under the previous code, oil companies were exempt from the payment of any tax on turnover relating to oil operations. The new Petroleum Code extends VAT liability to oil companies at the standard rate (currently 18%).

Major transactions are taxed as follows:

- ▶ Exports of hydrocarbons are subject to VAT at the rate of 0%
 - ▶ Local purchases of goods and services are subject to VAT
 - ▶ Imports are subject to VAT, either at the standard rate or with temporary VAT suspension
 - ▶ Input VAT on local purchases and imports is refundable, with prior verification by the tax authorities, within 90 days following the application for refund made in accordance with the regulations in force
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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

Production sharing contracts

Service contract

A. At a glance

- ▶ General corporate income tax (CIT) – 20%
- ▶ Production levy – D, 5%
- ▶ Special hydrocarbon tax – E, progressive

B. Fiscal regime

Exploration for oil and gas in Icelandic waters is regulated by Act No. 13/2001 on prospecting, exploration and production (E&P) of hydrocarbons (the Hydrocarbons Act). Accompanying the Act are Regulation No. 884/2011 and Regulation No. 39/2009. The Act applies to the Icelandic territorial sea and exclusive economic zone, together with the Icelandic continental shelf. In addition, the Agreement of 22 October 1981 between Norway and Iceland on the Continental Shelf Between Iceland and Jan Mayen, the Agreement of 3 November 2008 between Norway and Iceland concerning transboundary hydrocarbon deposits and the Agreed Minutes of 3 November 2008, concerning the Right of Participation pursuant to Articles 5 and 6 of the Agreement from 1981, apply to the relevant parts of the continental shelf between Iceland and Norway.

Petroleum activities are subject to general Icelandic laws and regulations on taxation, environmental protection, health and safety. Hydrocarbon accumulations are owned by the Icelandic state, and a license from the National Energy Authority (Orkustofnun, or NEA) is required for prospecting, E&P of hydrocarbons. The NEA is also responsible for monitoring hydrocarbon prospecting and E&P activities and for archiving the data generated by such activities. The NEA coordinates the response of Icelandic authorities to requests from oil companies for information regarding petroleum activities.

Iceland is a member of the European Economic Area. The EU Directive on the conditions for granting and using authorizations for the prospecting and E&P of hydrocarbons (Directive 94/22/EC), and other relevant EU legislation therefore applies to petroleum activities in Icelandic waters.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. The scope and parties liable for taxation

Hydrocarbon extraction activities are subject to CIT of 20%, a production levy (see Section D) and a special hydrocarbon tax (see Section E).

Act No. 109/2011 on the taxation of hydrocarbon production extends the territorial scope of Icelandic CIT to all income derived from exploration, production and sales of hydrocarbons, including all derived activities such as transportation in pipelines or by ships and other work and services provided:

- ▶ In Iceland's territorial waters, its exclusive economic zone and on its continental shelf
- ▶ In the adjacent ocean region where hydrocarbon resources extend across the center line with another state, when entitlement to the hydrocarbons falls to Iceland under an agreement with the other state
- ▶ Outside Iceland's territorial waters, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf where Iceland has the right to tax the activity and work in accordance with ordinary law or a special agreement with a foreign state

An obligation to pay taxes and levies lies with those parties which have received licenses for exploration or production of hydrocarbons, and also all other parties which participate, directly or indirectly, in the exploration, production and distribution of hydrocarbon products and other related activities. Thus, liability for taxation, in accordance with Act No. 90/2003 on income tax, rests with legal persons, self-employed individuals and wage earners who earn income through activities that take place in the above listed areas.

D. Production levy

A licensee who is liable for taxation must pay a special production levy of 5% of the value of the quantity of hydrocarbons that the licensee produces each year on the basis of its activities for which a license is required. "Production" refers to all the hydrocarbons that are delivered from the resource, including those destined for further processing and for the licensee's own use.

The value of the hydrocarbons is based on a reference price determined at the beginning of each month in respect of the month that has just passed. The reference price is based on the average price of hydrocarbons on a recognized international market trading in comparable hydrocarbon products, also taking into account the cost of sales and the point of delivery.

The production levy is a part of operational expenses and is therefore deductible for Icelandic corporate income tax and special hydrocarbon tax purposes.

E. Special hydrocarbon tax

Taxable licensees having income from exploration, production, distribution or sale of hydrocarbons, as well as other parties receiving a part of this income, are obliged to pay a special hydrocarbon tax.

The tax base for the special hydrocarbon tax for a taxable entity includes all operating revenue and capital gains, with certain costs restricted or excluded as set out in Section F. If sales of hydrocarbons during any period have been made at a price lower than the reference price for the production levy, the reference price is used when the tax base is calculated.

The tax rate of the special hydrocarbon tax is the company's profit rate multiplied by 0.45. The profit rate as a percentage is the ratio of the special hydrocarbon tax base to total income. For example, if a company's profit ratio is 40%, the special hydrocarbon tax rate is 18% ($40\% \times 0.45$). Special hydrocarbon tax is not deductible for CIT purposes.

F. Deductions from taxable income

When determining the base of the hydrocarbon tax, certain restrictions are placed on deductions, as follows:

1. Financial costs deducted from the year's income may not exceed 5% of the company's balance sheet liability position, less financial assets, including receivables and inventory, at the end of the relevant financial year.
 2. Financial costs shall include all interest costs, indexation adjustments, depreciation and exchange rate gains or losses on the book value of liabilities, after interest earnings, indexation adjustments, depreciation
-

and exchange rate gains or losses on the book value of assets have been deducted from them. If such financial costs arise in connection with the acquisition of assets other than those that are used in the operations for which the license is required, they shall be divided in direct proportion to the outstanding balance of the depreciated value, for tax purposes, of all depreciable assets at the end of the year. That part of the financial costs which pertains to assets that are not used in connection with hydrocarbon production shall not be deductible from income when the tax base is determined.

3. The minister may raise or lower the reference percentage, taking into account the currency used in the licensee's operations and financing, and the general rate of interest in the currency involved. When calculating this base, unpaid income tax or calculated unpaid hydrocarbon tax shall not be included among liabilities. The same shall apply to calculated tax commitments and tax credits arising from a permanent incongruity in the timing of the compilation of annual accounts and the payment of tax.
4. Rent paid for structures or equipment used for exploration or extracting hydrocarbons, which exceeds normal depreciation and interest on the assets involved, based on the utilization time each year, may not be deducted from income. If equipment is rented by an associated party, the Icelandic tax authorities may disallow the entry of the rental as a cost item, unless the lessee submits information and other material demonstrating the cost price and accrued depreciation of the equipment in the ownership of the lessor, so that it is possible to establish that certain conditions have been met.
5. The cost of the hire of labor may only be deducted from income if the work agency has registered itself in Iceland. Insurance fees, distribution costs and all service fees to related parties can only be deducted from income if the taxable entity can demonstrate that these costs are no higher than would apply in arm's length transactions. In the year in which a production area is closed, 20% of operating income for the preceding year may be entered as income for that year.

In calculating the tax base for the special hydrocarbon tax, it is not permitted to deduct the following items:

- ▶ Losses incurred on sales of assets to related parties
 - ▶ Any gifts or contributions to charities, cultural activities, political organizations or sports clubs
 - ▶ Depreciation of receivables and inventories
 - ▶ Losses or expenses in activities not covered by Act No. 109/2011, including places of business onshore
 - ▶ Losses or expenses incurred by a taxable entity before the issuing of a license
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

India has a hybrid system of production sharing contracts (PSCs) containing elements of royalty, as well as sharing of production with the Government.

Royalties

Onshore areas:

- ▶ Crude oil – 12.5%
- ▶ Natural gas – 10%
- ▶ Coal bed methane – 10%

Shallow water offshore areas:

- ▶ Crude oil and natural gas – 10%

Deepwater offshore areas:

- ▶ Crude oil and natural gas – 5% for the first seven years of commercial production, and 10% thereafter

Bonuses:

- ▶ Crude oil and natural gas – None, as per the New Exploration Licensing Policy
- ▶ Coal bed methane - US\$ 0.3 million

Income tax:

- ▶ Domestic companies – 30%¹
- ▶ Foreign companies – 40%¹
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E²
- ▶ Investment incentives – TH, RD³

B. Fiscal regime

India has a hybrid system of PSCs containing elements of royalty, as well as the sharing of production with the Government.

Companies enter into a PSC with the Government of India to undertake exploration and production (E&P) activities. Income from E&P operations is taxable on a net income basis (i.e., gross revenue less allowable expenses). Special allowances are permitted to E&P companies (in addition to allowances permitted under the domestic tax laws) for:

- ▶ Unfruitful or abortive exploration expenses in respect of any area surrendered prior to the beginning of commercial production; after the beginning of commercial production; expenditure incurred, whether before or after such commercial production, in respect of drilling or exploration activities or services or in respect of physical assets used in that connection
- ▶ Depletion of mineral oil in the mining area post-commercial production

Domestic companies are subject to tax at a rate of 30% and foreign companies at a rate of 40%. In addition, a surcharge of 5% on tax for a domestic company and 2% on tax for a foreign company must be paid if income is in excess of INR10 million. The surcharge is applicable at the rate of 10% on tax for a domestic company and 5% on tax for a foreign company if the company income is in excess of INR100 million. An education levy of 3% also applies.

The effective corporate tax rates are as given in the table below.

| Domestic company | | | Foreign company | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| For net income up to and including INR10 million | For net income exceeding INR10 million | For net income exceeding INR100 million | For net income up to and including INR10 million | For net income exceeding INR10 million | For net income exceeding INR100 million |
| 30.9% | 32.45% | 33.99% | 41.2% | 42.02% | 43.26% |

Minimum alternate tax

Minimum alternate tax (MAT) applies to a company if the tax payable on its total income as computed under the tax laws is less than 18.5% of its book profit (accounting profits subject to certain adjustments). If MAT applies, the tax on total income is deemed to equal 18.5% of the company's book profit.

Credit for MAT paid by a company can be carried forward for 10 years and it may be offset against income tax payable under domestic tax provisions. Due to the MAT regime, a company may be required to pay some tax, even during a tax holiday period.

1 In addition, a surcharge of 5% on tax for a domestic company and 2% on tax for a foreign company must be paid if income of the company is in excess of INR10 million (surcharge applicable at the rate of 10% for a domestic company and 5% for a foreign company where the company income is in excess of INR 100 million). An education levy of 3% on the tax and surcharge is also applicable.

2 D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs and the cost of permits first used in exploration.

3 TH: tax holiday; RD: research and development incentive.

Ring-fencing

No ring-fencing applies from a tax perspective. Thus, it is possible to offset the exploration costs of one block against the income arising from another block.

Treatment of exploration and development costs

All exploration and drilling costs are 100% tax deductible. Such costs are aggregated till the year of commencement of commercial production.

They can be either fully claimed in the year of commercial production or amortized equally over a period of 10 years from the date of first commercial production.

Development costs (other than drilling expenditure) are allowable under the normal provisions of domestic tax law.

Production sharing contract regime

India has a hybrid system of PSCs containing elements of royalty as well as the sharing of production with the Government. E&P companies (contractors) that are awarded exploration blocks enter into a PSC with the Government for undertaking the E&P of mineral oil. The PSC sets forth the rights and duties of the contractor.

The PSC regime is based on production value. Under the current regime, in PSCs for conventional crude oil and gas the share of production for the Government is linked to profit petroleum (see later subsection below). However, the Government is considering replacing the payment system linked to profit petroleum with a production-linked payment system for future PSCs.

In case of CBM (i.e. unconventional natural gas), a production-linked payment system is followed.

Cost petroleum or cost oil

“Cost petroleum” is the portion of the total value of crude oil and natural gas produced (and saved) that is allocated toward recovery of costs. The costs that are eligible for cost recovery are:

- ▶ Exploration costs incurred before and after the commencement of commercial production
- ▶ Development costs incurred before and after the commencement of commercial production
- ▶ Production costs
- ▶ Royalties

The unrecovered portion of the costs can be carried forward to subsequent years until full cost recovery is achieved.

Profit petroleum or profit oil

“Profit petroleum” means the total value of crude oil and natural gas produced and saved, as reduced by cost petroleum. The profit petroleum share of the Government is biddable by the contractor as blocks are auctioned by the Government. The bids from companies are evaluated based on various parameters, including the share of profit percentage offered by the companies.

The law has placed no cap on expenditure recovery. The percentage of recovery of expense incurred in any year is as per the bids submitted by the companies. Furthermore, no uplift is available on recovered costs.

The costs that are not eligible for cost recovery⁴ are as follows:

- ▶ Costs incurred before the effective date⁵ including costs of preparation, signature or ratification of the PSC

⁴ Without prejudice to their allowability under domestic tax laws.

⁵ “Effective date” means the date when the contract is executed by the parties or the date from which the license is made effective, whichever is later.

- ▶ Expenses in relation to any financial transaction involving the negotiating, obtaining or securing funds for petroleum operations – for example, interest, commission, brokerage fees and exchange losses
- ▶ Marketing or transportation costs
- ▶ Expenditure incurred in obtaining, furnishing and maintaining guarantees under the contract
- ▶ Attorney's fees and other costs of arbitration proceedings
- ▶ Fines, interests and penalties imposed by courts
- ▶ Donations and contributions
- ▶ Expenditure on creating partnership or joint-venture arrangements
- ▶ Amounts paid for non-fulfillment of contractual obligations
- ▶ Costs incurred as a result of misconduct or negligence by the contractor
- ▶ Costs for financing and disposal of inventory

The PSC provides protection in case changes in Indian law result in a material change to the economic benefits accruing to the parties after the date of execution of the contract.

Royalties

- ▶ Land areas – payable at the rate of 12.5% for crude oil and 10% for natural gas and coal bed methane
- ▶ Shallow water offshore areas – payable at the rate of 10% for crude oil and natural gas
- ▶ Deepwater offshore areas (beyond 400m isobath) – payable at the rate of 5% for the first seven years of commercial production and thereafter at a rate of 10% for crude oil and natural gas

The wellhead value is calculated by deducting the marketing and transportation costs from the sale price of crude oil and natural gas.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Accelerated depreciation

Depreciation is calculated using the declining-balance method and is allowed on a class of assets. For field operations carried out by mineral oil concerns, the depreciation rate is 60% for specified assets⁶ while the generic rate of depreciation on the written-down basis is 15% (majority of the assets fall within the generic rate). Further, additional depreciation of 20% is available on the actual cost of new machinery or plant⁷ in the first year.

Allowance for investment in new plant and machinery

In addition to depreciation and/or additional depreciation, deduction of 15% of cost of new assets is available where a company invests more than INR 1 billion in acquisition and installation of new plant and machinery, from 1 April 2013 up to 31 March 2015, subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions.

A similar but new investment allowance has been introduced with a lower investment threshold – INR 250 million in new plant and machinery, from 1 April 2014 up to 31 March 2017. This deduction is available on a year-on-year basis from 1 April 2014 up to 31 March 2017, provided that the investment threshold of INR 250 million is met each year.

6 Mineral oil concerns:

(a) Plant used in field operations (above ground) distribution – returnable packages.

(b) Plant used in field operations (below ground), not including curbside pumps but including underground tanks and fittings used in field operations (distribution) by mineral oil concerns.

7 Additional depreciation is permitted for all persons engaged in the business of manufacturing or producing any article or thing for new plant and machinery acquired after 31 March 2005.

D. Incentives

Tax holiday

A seven-year tax holiday equal to 100% of taxable profits is available for an undertaking engaged in the business of commercial production of mineral oil, natural gas or coal bed methane, or in the refining of mineral oil. The tax holiday is not available in respect of oil and gas blocks awarded after 31 March 2011; further, a tax holiday is not available for an undertaking that began refining after 31 March 2012.

Carryforward losses

Business losses can be carried forward and set off against business income for eight consecutive years, provided the income tax return for the year of loss is filed on time. For closely held corporations, a 51% continuity-of-ownership test must also be satisfied.

Unabsorbed depreciation can be carried forward indefinitely.

Research and development

Expenditures on scientific research incurred for the purposes of the business are tax deductible.

Deduction for site restoration expenses

A special deduction is available for provisions made for site restoration expenses if the amount is deposited in a designated bank account. The deduction is the lower of the following amounts:

- ▶ The amount deposited in a separate bank account or "site restoration account"
- ▶ Twenty percent of the profits of the business of the relevant financial year

E. Withholding taxes

The following withholding tax (WHT) rates apply to payments made to domestic and foreign companies in India:⁸

| Nature of income | Rate (%) ⁸ | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | Domestic company | Foreign* company |
| Dividends** | 0% | 0% |
| Interest | 10% | 5%/20%*** |
| Fees for professional or technical fees | 10% | 10%**** |
| Royalty | 10% | 10%**** |
| Nonresident contractor | | Maximum 40%***** |
| Branch remittance tax | 0% | |

* The rates are to be further enhanced by the surcharge and education levy

** Dividends paid by domestic companies are exempt from tax in the hands of the recipient. Domestic companies are required to pay dividend distribution tax (DDT) at 19.995% on dividends paid by them

*** The rate of 20% generally applies to interest from foreign currency loans. Subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, a lower rate of 5% applies on interest payable for foreign currency loans. Other interest is subject to tax at the rate of 40% (plus applicable surcharge and education levy)

**** These rates have been reduced from 25% to 10% with effect from 1 April 2015, vide Finance Budget 2015

***** Subject to treaty benefits. If a permanent establishment is constituted in India, the lower WHT rate depends on profitability

⁸ In the absence of tax registration (PAN Number) in India, withholding tax rate is 20% (gross) or a rate prescribed in the table of WHT rates, whichever is the higher.

For countries with which India has entered into a tax treaty, the WHT rate is the lower of the treaty rate and the rate under the domestic tax laws on outbound payments.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization limits

There are no thin capitalization rules under the Indian tax regulations.

Under the exchange control regulations, commercial loans obtained by an Indian company from outside India are referred to as “external commercial borrowings” (ECBs). ECBs are generally permitted only for capital expansion purposes. However, subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, ECBs are permitted for general corporate purposes as well.

ECBs can be raised from internationally recognized sources such as international banks, international capital markets and multilateral finance institutions, export credit agencies, suppliers of equipment, foreign collaborators and foreign equity holders (subject to certain prescribed conditions, including debt-to-equity ratio).

Interest quarantining

Interest quarantining is possible, subject to the exact fact pattern.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

A capital gain arising on transfer of capital assets (other than securities) situated in India is taxable in India (sale proceeds less cost of acquisition). Capital gains can either be long term (capital assets held for more than three years, except for listed securities where it is required to be held for more than one year) or short term. The rate of capital gains tax (CGT) is as follows:^{9,10}

| Particulars | Rate (%) ⁹ | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Short-term capital gains | Long-term capital gains |
| Resident companies | 30% | 20% |
| Nonresidents | 40% | 20% |

A short-term capital gain on transfer of depreciable assets is computed by deducting the declining-balance value of the classes of assets (including additions) from the sale proceeds.

Farm-in and farm-out

No specific provision applies for the tax treatment of farm-in consideration, and its treatment is determined on the basis of general taxation principles and the provisions of the PSC. However, special provisions determine the taxability of farm-out transactions in certain situations.

Selling shares in a company (consequences for resident and nonresident shareholders)

Listed securities on a stock exchange

The transfer of securities listed on a stock exchange is exempt from long-term CGT provided that securities transaction tax is paid. Short-term capital gains are taxable at a reduced rate of 15%.

⁹ The rates are further enhanced by the applicable surcharge and education levy.

¹⁰ The cost of capital assets is adjusted for inflation (indexation) to arrive at the indexed cost, although the benefit of indexation is not available to nonresidents. The indexed cost is allowed as a deduction when computing any long-term capital gain.

Transfer of listed securities outside a stock exchange

Long-term capital gains derived from the transfer of listed securities are taxed at the rate of 10% (without allowing for indexation adjustments), or at the rate of 20% with indexation benefits. Short-term capital gains are taxable at the rate of 30% for resident companies and 40% for nonresident companies.

Unlisted securities

The CGT rate applicable to transfers of unlisted securities is as given in the table below.

| Particulars | Rate (%) [*] | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Short-term capital gains | Long-term capital gains |
| Resident companies | 30% | 20% |
| Nonresidents | 40% | 10% ¹¹ |

* The rates are to be further enhanced by the surcharge and education levy

H. Transfer pricing

The Income Tax Act includes detailed transfer pricing regulations. Under these regulations, income and expenses, including interest payments, with respect to international transactions¹² or specified domestic transactions¹³ between two or more associated enterprises (including permanent establishments) or must be determined using arm's length prices (ALP). The transfer pricing regulations also apply to cost-sharing arrangements.

The Act specifies methods for determining the ALP:

- ▶ Comparable uncontrolled price method
- ▶ Resale price method
- ▶ Cost plus method
- ▶ Profit split method
- ▶ Transactional net margin method
- ▶ Any other method prescribed by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)

The CBDT has issued regulations for applying these methods when determining the ALP.

Further, the Advance Pricing Agreement (APA) has been introduced with effect from 1 July 2012. The revenue authorities may enter into an APA with any person, determining the ALP or specifying the manner in which ALP is to be determined in relation to an international transaction.

The APA rules provide an opportunity for taxpayers to opt for a unilateral, bilateral or multilateral APA. The APA can be valid for a maximum period of five years and requires payment of a specified fee to the Government. The APA filing process includes a pre-filing submission, filing the APA request itself, negotiating the APA, execution and monitoring. Taxpayers are required to prepare and file an annual compliance report for each year under the APA, which is subject to a compliance audit by the tax authorities. The APA can be rolled back for a period of four years as well; however, detailed rules in this regard are yet to be released.

In addition, safe harbors for certain classes of international transactions for eligible taxpayers have been prescribed for certain years. The taxpayer opting

11 This rate is applicable without allowing benefit of indexation or exchange fluctuation.

12 International transactions include transactions with unrelated parties (even if resident in India), as well as where a prior agreement exists or the terms of the transaction are determined in substance between an unrelated party and any associated enterprises.

13 As specified in section 92BA of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The specified domestic transactions are covered only if the aggregate of all such transactions in a tax year exceeds the sum of INR50 million.

for safe harbors is required to make a claim for the same at the time of filing its tax return and for every year covered under the safe harbor. In addition, the taxpayer is also required to undertake the other regular compliances like preparation of transfer pricing documentation and filing of accountant's report.

The transfer pricing regulations require each person entering into an international transaction or specified domestic transactions to maintain prescribed documents and information regarding a transaction.

Each person entering into an international transaction or specified domestic transactions must arrange for an accountant to prepare a report and furnish it to the tax officer by the due date for filing the corporate tax return, which is 30 November. The non-maintenance of documentation or non-filing of accountant's report attracts penalties. The due date for corporate tax return filing for taxpayers not subject to the transfer pricing provisions is 30 September.

A tax officer may make an adjustment with respect to an international transaction or specified domestic transactions, if the officer determines that certain conditions exist, including any of the following:

- ▶ The price is not at arm's length
- ▶ The prescribed documents and information have not been maintained
- ▶ The information or data on the basis of which the price was determined is not reliable
- ▶ Information or documents requested by the tax officer have not been furnished

Stringent penalties (up to 4% of transaction value) and USD 1,650 (approximately) may be imposed for non-compliance with the procedural requirements. Additional penalties for understatement/concealment of profits/income or furnishing of inaccurate particulars may be levied at the rate of 100-300% of the tax that the transaction is seeking to evade.

I. Indirect taxes

Indirect taxes are applicable to activities that range from manufacturing to final consumption, and include within their scope distribution, trading and imports, as well as services. Therefore, indirect taxes impact almost all transactions.

In India, indirect taxes are multiple, multi-rate and multi-tier (i.e., levied at the central, state and local levels). The principal indirect taxes are central excise, customs duty, service tax, central sales tax and VAT. Additionally, other indirect taxes such as entry tax are levied by state governments and municipalities.

Customs duty

Customs duty is levied on the import of goods into India and is payable by the importer. The customs duty on imports comprises the following:

- ▶ Basic customs duty (BCD)
- ▶ Additional customs duty (ACD), levied in lieu of excise duty on goods manufactured in India
- ▶ Special additional customs duty (SACD), levied in lieu of VAT payable on the sale of similar goods in India
- ▶ "Cess" (tax) comprised of education cess and secondary and higher education cess

The rate of customs duty is based on the classification of imported goods. The classification is aligned to the Harmonized System of Nomenclature (HSN).

The rates of BCD vary across goods and range from 0% to 10%, except for certain specified items that attract higher rates.

ACD is generally levied at 12.5%.¹⁴ SACD is levied at 4%. Cess is levied at 3% and is charged on the aggregate customs duty.

14 These rates have been revised in the recent Budget 2015, and the new rate for ACD is 12.5%. The new rate is applicable with effect from 1 March 2015.

Vide the Union Budget 2015, the median rate of excise duty has been increased from 12% to 12.5%. Consequently, there has been an increase in the rate of ACD rate from 12% to 12.5%. Thus, the general effective customs duty rate for most imported products is 29.44%. Further, certain exemptions or concessions are provided on the basis of classification, location or usage of the imported products.

The Government of India has entered into several free or preferential trade agreements with trade partners such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, Singapore, and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. To promote trade-in terms, preferential tariff rates have been extended for certain identified goods traded with these countries. Similar trade agreements with the European Union and others are also currently being negotiated.

Subject to certain conditions, an importer using imported goods in the manufacture of goods may obtain a credit for ACD and SADC, whereas a service provider using imported goods may obtain a credit exclusively for ACD.

Further, upfront exemption/refund of SADC is available in cases where goods are imported for re-sale.

Notable issues for the oil and gas sector

Several concessions or exemptions have been provided for the import of goods for specified contracts for the exploration, development and production of petroleum goods. Further, concessions or exemptions have been provided for the import of crude oil and other petroleum products. Various concessions and exemptions are also available for the import of goods to be used in coal bed methane blocks, subject to the fulfillment of specified conditions.

The import of certain petroleum products attracts other customs duties in addition to the duties discussed above, such as additional duty on the import of motor spirit and high-speed diesel, and national calamity contingent duty on the import of crude oil.

Excise duty

Excise duty applies to the manufacture of goods in India. The median rate of excise duty has been increased from 12% to 12.5%. Cess (earlier levied at the rate of 3%) has been exempted on all goods. Accordingly, the effective rate of excise duty on most products is 12.5%.

Excise duty is mostly levied as a percentage of the transaction value of goods. However, for certain goods, the excise duty is based on the maximum retail price, reduced by a prescribed abatement.

The Cenvat Credit Rules of 2004 allow a manufacturer to obtain and use eligible credit of excise duty, ACD, SAD and service tax paid on the procurement of goods and services towards payment of excise duty on manufactured goods.

Notable issues for the oil and gas sector

No excise duty is levied on the domestic production of crude oil, but it attracts national calamity contingent duty as well as an oil development levy. On certain petroleum products, excise duty is levied both on the basis of value and quantity. Certain petroleum products also attract other excise duties, such as additional duty (on motor spirit and high-speed diesel) and special additional excise duty (on motor spirit).

Cenvat credit is not available in respect of excise duty paid on motor spirit, light diesel oil and high-speed diesel oil used in the manufacture of goods. Manufacturers of certain products now have the option to pay excise duty at a reduced rate of 2%, provided the manufacturer does not claim Cenvat credit on goods and services used for such manufacture.

Service tax

From 1 July 2012 the Negative List regime for the levy of service tax has been in force. Under this regime, any activity undertaken by one person for another, for consideration within the taxable territory (i.e., the whole of India, except

Jammu and Kashmir), is liable to service tax unless included in the Negative List or notified as an exempt service. The rate of Service Tax is proposed to be increased to 14%. However, the effective rate is pending notification by the government. Cess, which was earlier levied in addition to the basic rate of service tax, is proposed to be subsumed in the revised service tax rate.

Further, a Swachh Bharat Cess is proposed to be levied at the rate of 2% on the value of services. Such Cess would be applicable on all or any services as may be notified.

Although the changes are material, you may consider whether reporting is feasible considering that the effective dates are yet to be notified.

In order to determine whether a service is provided in the taxable territory, the Place of Provision of Service Rules, 2012 (the "PoS Rules") have been promulgated. The PoS Rules stipulate certain criteria for determining whether a service is rendered in the taxable territory. No service tax is applicable if the place of provision of a service is deemed to be outside the taxable territory. Further, the conditions for a service to qualify as an export of services have been provided in the Service Tax Rules, 1994. No service tax is required to be paid if a service qualifies as an export of service.

The liability to pay the service tax is on the service provider, except in the case of specified services, where the liability to pay the service tax has been shifted to the service recipient. Since the introduction of the Negative List regime, there have been certain services in respect of which the liability to deposit service tax accrue on both the service provider and the service recipient, based on specified ratios. These services include rent-a-cab services, works contract services, manpower services, security services and others. In addition, for services provided by a person outside the taxable territory to a person in a taxable territory, the liability to pay service tax would be on the service recipient.

Similar to the manufacture of goods, the Cenvat credit rules allow a service provider to obtain a credit of the ACD and excise duty paid on the procurement of inputs or capital goods. Service tax paid on the input services used in rendering output services is also available as credit towards payment of the output service tax liability. However, credit of SAD is not available to a service provider.

Notable issues for the oil and gas sector

Oil and gas services such as the mining of minerals, oil and gas and also the survey and exploration of minerals, oil and gas, are liable to service tax.

Previously, the application of service tax extended to the Indian landmass, territorial waters (up to 12 nautical miles) and designated coordinates in the continental shelf and exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Further, there was an amendment in the law (with effect from 7 July 2009) whereby the application of service tax was extended to installations, structures and vessels in India's continental shelf and EEZ.

Subsequently, a new notification (with effect from 27 February 2010) was issued, superseding an earlier notification, which stipulates that the service tax provisions would extend to:

- ▶ Any service provided in the continental shelf and EEZ of India for all activities pertaining to construction of installations, structures and vessels for the purposes of prospecting or extraction or production of mineral oil and natural gas and the supply thereof
- ▶ Any service provided, or to be provided, by or to installations, structures and vessels (and the supply of goods connected with the said activity) within the continental shelf and EEZ of India that have been constructed for the purpose of prospecting or extraction or production of mineral oil and natural gas and the supply thereof.

However, with effect from 1 July 2012 the 2009 and 2010 notifications have been rescinded and the applicability of service tax has been extended to the following (which is included in the definition of India):

- ▶ The territory of the Union, as referred to in Clauses (2) and (3) of Article 1 of the Constitution
- ▶ Its territorial waters, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone or any other maritime zone as defined in the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976
- ▶ The seabed and the subsoil underlying the territorial waters
- ▶ The air space above its territory and territorial waters
- ▶ Installations, structures and vessels located in the continental shelf of India and the exclusive economic zone of India, for the purposes of prospecting or extraction or production of mineral oil and natural gas and supply thereof

VAT or central sales tax

VAT or central sales tax (CST) is levied on the sale of goods. VAT is levied on the sale of goods within an individual state i.e., where the goods move intra-state as a condition of sale, and CST is levied on a sale occasioning the movement of goods from one state to another.

VAT is levied at two prime rates of 5% and 12.5% to 15%, although certain essential items are exempt from VAT. CST is levied either at the rate of 2% (subject to the provision of declaration forms prescribed under the CST Act) or at a rate equivalent to the local VAT rate in the dispatching state.

A VAT- or CST-registered dealer is eligible for credit for the VAT paid on the procurement of goods from within the state and to utilize it toward payment of the VAT and CST liability on any sale of goods made by the dealer in that state. However, CST paid on procurement of goods from outside the state is not available as a credit against any VAT liability.

Notable issues for the oil and gas sector

Petroleum products – petrol, diesel, naphtha, aviation turbine fuel, natural gas etc. – are subject to VAT at higher rates, which range from 5% to 33% depending on the nature of product and the state where they are sold. VAT credit on petroleum products is generally not allowed as a credit against output VAT or CST liability, except in the case of the resale of such products. Since crude oil has been declared under the CST Act as being one of the “goods of special importance” in interstate trade and commerce, and hence VAT or CST on sale of crude oil cannot be levied at a rate higher than 5%.

GST

The current scheme of indirect taxes is being considered to be replaced by GST. GST is expected to be introduced with effect from 1 April 2016 and shall replace central taxes such as service tax, excise and CST as well as state taxes such as VAT and entry tax.

GST would be a dual tax, consisting of a central GST and a state GST. The tax would be levied concurrently by the center as well as the states, – i.e., both goods and services would be subject to concurrent taxation by the center and the states. An assessee can claim credit of central GST on inputs and input services and offset it against output central GST. Similarly, credit of state GST can be set off against output state GST. However, specific details regarding the implementation of GST are still awaited.

The GST Constitution (122 Amendment) Bill was tabled before the Lower House of Indian Parliament in December 2013, and was passed by the Lower House of the Parliament in May 2015. The Bill is now pending before the Upper House of the Indian Parliament.

Under the Opposition Parties’ demand, the Bill has been referred to the Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha. The Committee, has 21 members, and is expected to submit its report by the end of first week of the monsoon session of the Parliament scheduled to commence in the third week of July 2015.

With the Constitution Amendment Bill enabling the introduction of GST now likely to be passed only in the monsoon session, the proposed implementation date of 1 April 2016 is not likely to be met.

As per the Amendment Bill, certain petroleum products (petroleum crude, high-speed diesel, petrol, natural gas, and aviation turbine fuel) would remain outside the ambit of GST until a date to be determined by the GST Council. Until that date is confirmed, existing indirect taxes would continue to apply on petroleum products. This means that production/manufacture of petroleum products would continue to attract excise duty, as currently applied, and sale of these products would be subject to VAT/ CST, as currently applied. The specified petroleum products would therefore be subject to the current regime on the output side and to the GST regime on the procurement side, with GST also applying to non-specified petroleum products. Availability of credit of input GST against output excise and VAT on specified petroleum products and vice versa seems unlikely.

J. Other

Tax regime for foreign hire companies

There is a special tax regime for foreign companies that are engaged in the business of providing services or facilities, or supplying plant or machinery for hire when it is used in connection with prospecting, extraction or production of mineral oils.

Potential future change to the direct tax code

Please note that the Indian Finance Ministry has proposed to release a new direct tax code (DTC). As yet, the date of the introduction of DTC is unconfirmed.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

The fiscal regime applicable to oil and gas companies consists of production sharing contracts (PSCs) that are entered into between contractors and the executive body for oil and gas upstream activities on behalf of the Indonesian Government. This used to be BPMIGAS, but this body was disbanded following a decision by the Constitutional Court in late 2012 and has been replaced by an almost identical body with the new name SKKMIGAS.¹ SKKMIGAS is under the authority of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 9 of 2013 dated 10 January 2013. SKKMIGAS has been assigned all of its predecessor's powers and responsibilities, and has stated that existing PSCs will remain in force until their natural expiry date.

Most of the contractual arrangements between foreign oil and gas contractors and SKKMIGAS are in the form of a PSC. The other types of agreement between contractors and SKKMIGAS are joint operating contracts (JOCs), technical assistance agreements (TAAs) and enhanced oil recovery (EOR).

Fiscal regime

The principal features for the fiscal regime applicable to oil and gas companies are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – Tax rate depends on the PSC entered into; the current rate is 25%
- ▶ Branch profits tax (BPT) – Current rate is 20%
- ▶ Royalties on production – None
- ▶ Bonuses – Amount varies depending on PSC terms
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Surface rent tax – None
- ▶ Withholding tax:
 - ▶ Dividends – Depends on the contract in force
 - ▶ Branch remittance – Depends on the contract in force
 - ▶ Other withholding tax – Follows general tax law

¹ SKKMIGAS's full name translates as *Interim Working Unit for Upstream Oil and Gas Business Activities*.

- ▶ Capital allowances – Declining-balance depreciation
- ▶ Incentives – L²

Legal regime

The existing contractual arrangements between foreign oil and gas contractors and BPMIGAS are mainly in the form of a PSC. The other types of agreement between the contractors and BPMIGAS are joint operating contracts (JOC), technical assistance agreements (TAA) and enhanced oil recovery (EOR).

Article 33 of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution is the fundamental philosophy underlying the taxation of the oil and gas industry in Indonesia. It stipulates that “all the natural wealth on land and in the water is under the jurisdiction of the State and should be used for the greatest benefit and welfare of the people.”

Law No. 8 of 1971 gave authority to a body named Pertamina (the predecessor to both BPMIGAS and SKKMIGAS) to administer, control and carry out mining operations in the field of oil, natural gas and geothermal energy. Subsequently, Law No. 22 of 2001 differentiated between upstream (exploration and exploitation) and downstream (refining, transport, storage and trading) activities, and caused them to be undertaken by separate legal entities. That law gave authority for the Government to establish BPMIGAS, an executive agency for upstream activities, and BPHMIGAS, a regulatory agency for downstream activities. At the same time, Pertamina was transformed from a State-owned enterprise into a State-owned limited liability company, PT Pertamina (Persero). PT Pertamina is now similar to other oil and gas companies in Indonesia, but it has the authority to supply for domestic consumption.

Previous contractual agreements entered into with the Indonesian Government have also changed and are now structured as cooperation contracts. The contractor may now enter into cooperation or service agreements under similar terms and conditions to those of the previous PSCs. Government Regulation (GR) 79/2010, issued 20 December 2010 and in force from that date, provides rules on cost recovery claims and Indonesian tax relating to the oil and gas industry. This regulation applies to cooperation contracts signed or extended after that date. The terms and conditions of cooperation contracts signed before 20 December 2010 are still respected, except where the cooperation contracts do not clearly define certain specific areas covered by the regulation. Taxpayers covered by such cooperation contracts were given a transitional time frame of three months to comply with the rules provided by GR 79/2010 in those specific areas.

For the implementation of GR 79/2010, the Ministry of Finance issued several decrees in late 2011 relating to the withholding of contractors' other income in the form of uplift or other similar compensation and/or contractor's income from the transfer of participating interest, and thresholds of expatriates' remuneration costs.

B. Fiscal regime

General corporate tax rules

By regulation, each interest holder, including the operator of the work area, has to register with the Indonesian tax office from the moment it obtains an interest in the work area.

The income tax rates, consisting of corporate income tax (CIT) and dividend tax or branch profits tax (BPT) for branch operations, vary depending on the year the contract was entered into.

The contractor's taxable income is broadly calculated as gross income less tax deductions. The calculation embraces the “uniformity concept” as the basis for determining which costs are recoverable and which are tax deductible. Under this concept, very broadly, costs that are recoverable are tax deductible.

2 *L: ability to carryforward losses.*

Ring fencing

The Government applies the tax ring-fencing rule, meaning that costs incurred by the contractor in one working interest are not allowed to be offset by income of another working area. As a result, an entity is likely to hold working interest in only one contract area.

GR 79/2010 specifically also requires costs relating to gas activities and oil activities in the contract area to be separated, and it provides rules on how to offset and recover the costs from the different products.

There are no tax consolidations or other group relief facilities available in Indonesia.

General terms of a PSC

The general concept of the PSC is that contractors bear all risks and costs of exploration until production. If production does not proceed, these costs are not recoverable. If production does proceed, the contractor can receive the following:

- ▶ A share of production to meet its recoverable costs
- ▶ Investment credit (see below)
- ▶ An equity interest of the remaining production

Generally, the following points are included as part of a PSC agreement:

- ▶ Management responsibility rests with SKKMIGAS
- ▶ The contractor pays a bonus at the time the contract is signed, which, based on GR 79/2010, is not cost recoverable and not tax deductible
- ▶ The contractor agrees to a work program with minimum exploration expenditures for a 3- to 10-year period
- ▶ Exploration expenses are only recoverable from commercial production
- ▶ The contractor is reimbursed for the recoverable cost in the form of crude oil called cost oil
- ▶ The contractor's profit share oil is called equity oil and is taken in the form of crude oil
- ▶ The contractor has to settle its taxation obligations separately on a monthly basis

Relinquishment

Each PSC also stipulates the requirements for part of the working area to be relinquished during the exploration period. The PSCs can vary in the timing and percentage to be relinquished. Typically, 15% to 25% of the contract is relinquished after three years and 30% to 35% by the end of five years.

Calculation of equity oil and sharing of production

The following simplified example may serve to illustrate the amount of equity oil to be shared. Broadly, it is crude oil production in excess of the amounts received for first tranche production (FTP), cost recovery and investment credit, adjusted with the contractor obligation to supply a domestic market obligation (DMO). These terms are further explained below.

First tranche production

Usually, FTP is equal to 20% of the production each year (before any deduction for cost recovery) and is split between the Government and the contractor according to their equity oil share as stipulated in the agreement with the Indonesian Government. FTP is taxable income.

According to the standard form of the monthly C&D Tax return in the attachment to the Minister of Finance (MOF) Regulation No.79/PMK.02/2012 (PMK 79), tax on First Tranche Petroleum (FTP) is deferred until the unrecovered cost pool has been exhausted or positive equity has been split.

Domestic market obligation

Broadly, after commencement of commercial production from the contract area, a contractor is required to supply a specific portion of the crude oil to the domestic market in Indonesia from its equity share. A DMO can also apply to gas production. The DMO is negotiated for each agreement and usually ranges from 15% to 25%. GR 79/2010 requires that the DMO for oil and gas is 25% of production.

Usually, the quantity of DMO that is required to be supplied under the PSC will be limited by the quantity of equity oil or gas to which they are entitled. Any difference between the maximum DMO to be supplied and the DMO to be supplied based on the equity share will usually not be carried forward to subsequent years.

The compensation to be received for the DMO by the contractor is governed by the agreement signed with the Indonesian Government. Usually, the contractor is compensated by SKKMIGAS for the DMO at the prevailing market price for the initial five years of commercial production. The difference between the DMO costs and the DMO fee received is subject to tax.

Cost recovery

Cost recovery is usually stipulated in Exhibit C of the agreement with the Indonesian Government and is the reimbursement of PSC cost (through cost oil) prior to the determination of profit oil. GR 79/2010 reconfirms the uniformity concept of operating expenses (i.e., costs that are recoverable are also deductible for tax purposes). The basic principles for operating expenses to be recoverable and tax deductible are:

- ▶ The costs are incurred in order to earn, collect and maintain income and have a direct connection with operation of the production block of the respective contractor
- ▶ The costs are at arm's length and are not influenced by a special relationship
- ▶ The petroleum operation is conducted in accordance with accepted business and technical practice
- ▶ The operation is in accordance with a work program and budget approved by the Indonesian regulatory body

GR 79/2010 provides that direct and indirect allocation of expenses from a company's head office can only be charged to an Indonesian project and is cost recoverable and tax deductible if certain conditions are met. GR 79/2010 further defines costs that cannot be claimed as recoverable or tax deductible. In total, there are 24 items listed as non-recoverable and not tax deductible.

Capital allowances

The depreciation and amortization of assets are usually stipulated in Exhibit C of the agreement with the Indonesian Government.

All equipment purchased by contractors becomes the property of SKKMIGAS once the equipment is in Indonesia. The contractors have the rights to use and depreciate such property until it is abandoned or for the life of the work area, subject to approval by SKKMIGAS.

Depreciation will be calculated at the beginning of the calendar year in which the asset is placed into service, with a full year's depreciation allowed for the initial calendar year. The method used to calculate each year's allowable recovery of capital costs is the declining-balance depreciation method.

An asset falls into one of three groups, and calculation of each year's allowance for recovery of capital costs should be based on the individual asset's capital cost at the beginning of that year multiplied by the depreciation factor as follows:

- ▶ Group 1 – 50%
 - ▶ Group 2 – 25%
 - ▶ Group 3 – 10%
-

The balance of unrecovered capital costs is eligible for full depreciation at the end of the individual asset's useful life.

GR 79/2010 provides a list of assets, useful life and depreciation rates.

The regulation again provides for a declining-balance depreciation method, but depreciation only starts from the month the asset is placed into service.

The assets are again grouped into three groups with the depreciation factors as follows:

- ▶ Group 1 – 50%
- ▶ Group 2 – 25%
- ▶ Group 3 – 12.5%

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

Several incentives are available to oil and gas companies – e.g., investment credit, interest recovery, indefinite carryforward of prior year unrecovered costs, and exemption from importation tax and duties on certain equipment and assets. The availability of the incentives depends on the agreement with the Indonesian Government.

Investment credit

Usually, the contractor will be permitted an investment credit of 8.8% net after tax on the capital investment cost directly required for developing production facilities out of new oilfields. This investment credit is allowed for capital investment on production facilities, including pipeline and terminal facilities, and the investment credit must be claimed in the first or second production year after the expenditure has been incurred. The investment credit is treated as taxable income as it is considered additional contractor lifting. The investment credit rules that apply can depend on the year the agreement was signed and the types of field involved.

The Director General of Taxation's (DGT) new Regulation No. PER-05/PJ/2014 (PER-05), dated 18 February 2014, stipulates that investment credit is taxable in advance, even when unrecovered costs mean the equity to be split is still in a negative position. Effective from 2013 corporate income tax returns onwards, investment credit is taxable at the time investment credit is received. PER-05 does not, however, cover tax treatment of investment credit prior to 2013. From a legal perspective, regulations cannot be applied retrospectively, it is possible therefore that the regulation may be interpreted differently by taxpayers and the Indonesian tax authority.

Oilfields entitled to the incentive must meet the following criteria:

- ▶ They must be located in the production working area
- ▶ They must have an estimated rate of return of less than 15%, based on the terms and conditions in the contract and other prevailing intensive package regulations

VAT reimbursement

In December 2014, the Minister of Finance issued a new regulation No. 218/PMK.02/2014 (PMK-218) dated 5 December 2014 regarding procedures for VAT reimbursement by PSC contractors from SKK MIGAS. PSC contractors are entitled to reimburse VAT paid on acquired VATable goods or services when the equity is split and FTP of Indonesian Government. VAT reimbursement is not allowed for input VAT relating to operating costs of liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants and LNG transportation costs up to the point of sales, VAT that is treated non-creditable or nondeductible based on the Indonesian laws and regulations, and VAT where other VAT exemption facilities are otherwise available.

Interest recovery

Interest costs on loans do not normally form part of the cost recovery, irrespective of whether the loans are internal or third party "loans," unless specifically approved by SKKMIGAS. Approval is not common, and there are certain conditions that must be satisfied for the recovery of interest on loans.

The claim for interest recovery must be included in the financing plan, and the amount must be included in each year's budget for the approval of SKKMIGAS. The interest rate should not exceed the prevailing commercial rate. Subject to tax treaty relief, the interest is subject to withholding tax of 20% of the gross amount if it is provided by a non-Indonesian lender. The contractors can gross up the interest amount to reflect the withholding tax amount.

Based on GR 79/2010, interest costs or interest cost recovery is not a cost recoverable expense and is not tax deductible.

Loss carryforward and unrecovered cost

Contractors are allowed to carryforward for tax purposes the pre-production expenses to offset against production revenues. However, these capital and non-capital costs incurred during the pre-production stage are not expensed and, accordingly, no tax loss originates from these costs.

Generally, these pre-production costs may be carried forward indefinitely to future years. The tax loss carryforward limitation outlined in the tax laws is not applicable to pre-production costs.

D. Withholding taxes

The rate of dividend withholding tax and the rate of branch profits tax depend on the year that the PSC was entered into.

Withholding tax on all other amounts follows the general tax law. For example:

- ▶ Interest – 15%/20%³
- ▶ Royalties from patents, know-how, etc. – 15%/20%⁴
- ▶ Fees for services paid to residents of Indonesia:
 - ▶ Technical, management and consultant services – 2%⁵
 - ▶ Construction contracting services – 2%/3%/4%⁶
 - ▶ Construction planning and supervision – 4%/6%⁷
 - ▶ Other services – 2%
- ▶ Fees for services paid to nonresidents – 20%⁸

E. Financing considerations

Refer to Section C above in relation to interest recovery.

-
- 3 *A final withholding tax of 20% is imposed on payment to nonresidents. Tax treaties may reduce the tax rate. A 15% withholding tax is imposed on interest paid by non-financial institutions to residents.*
 - 4 *A final withholding tax of 20% is imposed on payment to nonresidents. Tax treaties may reduce the tax rate.*
 - 5 *This tax is considered a prepayment of income tax. It is imposed on the gross amount paid to residents. An increase of 100% of the normal withholding tax rate is imposed on taxpayers subject to this withholding tax that do not possess a tax identification number.*
 - 6 *This is a final tax. The applicable tax rate depends on the types of service provided and the qualification of the construction company.*
 - 7 *The applicable tax rate depends on the types of service provided and the qualification of the construction company.*
 - 8 *This is a final tax on gross amounts paid to nonresidents. The withholding tax rate on certain types of income may be reduced under double tax treaties.*
-

F. Indirect taxes

Generally, PSCs are VAT collectors and are required to collect the VAT and remit it to the Indonesian Government on a monthly basis. However, for PSCs that are signed under the law prior to Law No. 22/2001, import duties, VAT on importation and import withholding tax on the importation of capital goods and equipment are generally exempted by the Indonesian Government through the use of a "master list" arrangement.

For PSCs that are signed under Law No. 22/2001, the import duty is exempt, and VAT on importation is borne by the Indonesian Government relating to the import of capital goods and equipment used in exploration activities through the use of a "master list" arrangement. The import withholding tax may also be exempt but it will require separate approval from the Indonesian tax office.

G. Other

Disposal of PSC interest

Generally, under the terms of most agreements, a contractor has the right to transfer its interest under the contract to a related party or other parties with either written notification to or the prior written consent of SKKMIGAS. The income tax laws provide that the transfer of assets is subject to income tax.

GR 79/2010 provides that the transfer of a direct or indirect participating interest in the exploration stage is subject to a final tax of 5% of gross transaction proceeds. However, the final rate is 7% if the transfer is conducted when the participating interest is in the exploitation stage. Transfers of participating interest to domestic companies, as required by a cooperation contract, are exempt from tax. In addition, the transfer of participating interests in the exploration stage with the intention to share risks is not considered taxable income if all of the following conditions can be satisfied:

- ▶ The transfer is not of the entire participating interest owned
- ▶ The participating interest is owned for more than three years
- ▶ Exploration activities have been conducted (i.e., working capital has been spent)
- ▶ The transfer is not intended to generate profit

The implementing regulation to GR 79/2010, which was issued in December 2011, further outlines the mechanism for the reporting, withholding and remittance of the final tax. It also provides transitional rules in relation to the transfer of participation interests that occurred between the date of issue of GR 79/2010 (i.e., 20 December 2010) and the date of the implementing regulation.

The implementing regulation also outlines the requirement to pay profit remittance tax on the after-tax income from the sale of the participating interest.

CIT rate

GR 79/2010 provides that taxpayers can choose to adopt the prevailing CIT rate for PSCs, cooperation contracts and service contracts at the time of signing, or such contracts can be subject to the CIT rate as it varies over time.

Uplift income

Income received by a participating interest holder in relation to funding support provided to other participating interest holders for operational expenses for the contract area is "uplift income." Uplift or other income of a similar nature is subject to a final tax of 20% of gross transaction value.

The implementing regulation to GR 79/2010, which was issued in December 2010, also outlines the requirements for the reporting, withholding and remittance of the final tax of 20% and provides transitional rules in relation to uplift payments that occurred between the date of issue of GR 79/2010 (20 December 2010) and the date of the implementing regulation.

The implementing regulation also outlines the requirement to pay profit remittance tax on the after-tax income from the uplift payments.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

A. At a glance

The Iraqi federal government (FG), through the authority granted to it by the post-war Iraqi constitution, offers a number of possible contract models to use with International Oil Companies (IOCs) for upstream oil and gas production and extraction activities, including service contracts, namely, technical service contracts (TSC), and production sharing contracts (PSC). While the Iraqi FG has been persistent in its use of the TSC model developed by the Iraqi Ministry of Oil (MoO) rather than the PSC model, the PSC model is being widely used by the official ruling body of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in the north – the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) – when engaging IOCs for upstream oil and gas activities. The most notable differences between the two models are in the cost and profit provisions.

For tax purposes, it is important to distinguish between the two models since there are differences in the tax laws and the practices adopted by the tax authorities in each jurisdiction implementing the different models.

Overview of the fiscal regime under the Iraqi FG model TSC:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate for upstream oil and gas activities – 35%¹

¹ In 2010, the Iraqi Parliament ratified a tax law for foreign oil and gas companies. As per this law, the income tax rate applicable to income earned in Iraq from contracts undertaken by foreign oil and gas companies and by contractors working in the fields of production and extraction of oil and gas and related industries is 35%. Companies, branches or offices of oil and gas companies and service companies, and subcontractors working in fields of production and extraction of oil and gas and related industries are all subject to this law. This law has not been adopted by the KRG and the 35% rate is not applicable in the KRI.

- ▶ Duration of TSC – 20 years extendable to 25 years
- ▶ Remuneration – Fixed remuneration fee per barrel based on sliding R-factor and a plateau rate (Performance Factor)² and 25% share of remuneration fee transferred to Regional Oil Company
- ▶ Cost contribution – Full carry of all costs, including petroleum and supplementary costs, with possible recovery
- ▶ Signature bonus – Varies
- ▶ Royalty – Not applicable
- ▶ Cost recovery – 50% of petroleum revenue³
- ▶ Fiscal reporting requirements – Quarterly basis
- ▶ Tax filing requirements – Within five months of the fiscal year-end
- ▶ Capital gains tax rate on upstream oil and gas activities – 35%¹
- ▶ Withholding tax on payments made to nonresidents:
 - ▶ Dividends – 0%
 - ▶ Interest – 15%
 - ▶ Royalties – 15%
 - ▶ Branch remittance tax – 0%
- ▶ Net operating losses (years):
 - ▶ Carryback – None
 - ▶ Carryforward – 5⁴
- ▶ Overview of the fiscal regime under the KRG model PSC.
- ▶ CIT rate for upstream oil and gas activities – 15%¹
- ▶ Duration of PSC – 25 years extendable to 30 years
- ▶ Profit oil – Profit sharing based on R-factor⁵ and 20% share of profit generated to KRG
- ▶ Cost contribution – Full carry of costs with subsequent sharing of operating costs
- ▶ Signature bonus – Varies
- ▶ Royalties – 10%
- ▶ Cost recovery – 40% for crude oil, and 60% for natural gas after deducting royalty
- ▶ Fiscal reporting requirements – Annual basis
- ▶ Tax filing requirements – Within six months of the fiscal year end
- ▶ Capital gains tax rate on upstream oil and gas activities – 15%¹
- ▶ Branch remittance tax – 0%
- ▶ Net operating losses (years):
 - ▶ Carryback – None
 - ▶ Carryforward – indefinitely⁴

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

In general, income tax is imposed on corporate entities and foreign branches with respect to taxable profit from all sources arising or deemed to arise in Iraq. Income is deemed to arise in Iraq if any of the following is located there:

- ▶ The place of performance of work
- ▶ The place of delivery of work
- ▶ The place of signing the contract
- ▶ The place of payment for the work

² See Section C.

³ Costs approved by the MoO and the Joint Management Committee (JMC) should be recoverable.

⁴ See Section G.

⁵ See Section D.

Tax rate

The general CIT rate applicable to all companies (except upstream oil and gas activities) is a unified flat rate of 15% of taxable income. Activities that relate to oil and gas production and extraction activities and related industries, including service contracts, will be subject to income tax at the rate of 35% of taxable income. The higher CIT rate of 35% has not yet been adopted in the KRI and therefore the CIT rate of 15% continues to apply to all companies, including those engaged in upstream oil and gas activities under the KRG's model PSC in the KRI.

Withholding tax

IOCs and oil service companies are required to retain taxes from payments they make to their subcontractors and remit the retained taxes to the Iraqi tax authority on a monthly basis. Generally, a retention rate of 7% applies to oil and gas activities and a rate of 3.3% applies to all other activities. This retention and remittance process is not currently observed in the KRI.

Capital gains

Capital gains derived from the sale of fixed assets are taxable at the normal CIT rate of 15% (35% for oil and gas production and extraction activities and related industries, including service contracts – except in the KRI where the 35% tax rate has not been adopted). Capital gains derived from the sale of shares and bonds not in the course of a trading activity are exempt from tax; otherwise, they are taxed at the normal corporate income tax rate.

Administration

In Iraq, tax returns for all corporate entities must be filed in Arabic within five months from the end of the fiscal year together with audited financial statements prepared under the Iraqi Unified Accounting System (IUAS). The KRG's tax authority currently only requires for the audited financial statements prepared using IUAS to be filed within six months after the end of the fiscal year. A rate of 10% of the tax due is imposed as a delay fine, up to a maximum of 500,000 Iraqi dinars (IQD) on a taxpayer that does not submit or refuses to submit an income tax filing within five months (within six months in the KRI) after the fiscal year end. In addition, foreign branches that fail to submit financial statements by the income tax filings' due date are also subject to an additional penalty of IQD10,000.

After an income tax filing is made, the tax authority will undertake an audit of the filing made, may request additional information, and will eventually issue a tax assessment. Payment of the total amount of tax is due after the Iraqi tax authority sends the taxpayer the tax assessment based on the Iraqi tax authority's audit of the tax return and audited financial statements that were filed. If the tax due is not paid within 21 days from the date of assessment notification, there will be a late payment penalty of 5% of the amount of tax due. This amount will be doubled if the tax is not paid within 21 days after the lapse of the first period. The penalties applicable in the KRI and their administration differ due to the KRG tax authority's practice.

Criminal penalties may also be imposed under Iraq's income tax law in certain instances of non-compliance.

C. Technical service contracts of the Iraqi FG

The Iraqi MoO has developed a model TSC in collaboration with its state-owned Regional Oil Companies (North Oil Company (NOC), South Oil Company (SOC), Midland Oil Company (MDOC), and Missan Oil Company (MOC)); the model TSC is used as a basis for engaging with IOCs for long-term oil and gas exploration and development. Under the model TSC, the IOC operates as a contractor to a Regional Oil Company whereby the IOC bears all costs and financial risk, including petroleum costs, supplementary costs, and tax costs, for undertaking its upstream oil and gas activities in return for a fixed fee known as a remuneration fee per barrel (RFB). The IOC should also be entitled to recover

all of its petroleum and supplementary costs, up to a maximum of 50% of petroleum revenue, provided that these costs are approved by the MoO and the JMC.

Duration

The model TSC would typically be for a term of 20 years, with a maximum of 25 years, divided into a period of three years covering the first phase of exploration, a period of two years covering the second phase of exploration (with a possible extension for two additional years), an appraisal period of two years, a development period of seven years, and, finally, a transfer period of four years. Upon the termination of the transfer period, the contractor is required to handover all petroleum operations to the Regional Oil Company.

Petroleum costs

The model TSC defines petroleum costs as recoverable costs and expenditures incurred and/or payments made by a contractor in connection with or in relation to the conduct of petroleum operations (except corporate income taxes paid in the Republic of Iraq or as otherwise stipulated in the TSC).

Supplementary costs

Under the model TSC, supplementary costs are known as recoverable costs and expenditures incurred by the contractor other than petroleum costs. These include: signature bonus, de-mining costs, costs incurred for additional facilities, and costs incurred for remediation of pre-existing environmental conditions.

Supplementary costs should not exceed 10% of petroleum revenue.

Signature bonus

A contractor is required to pay a signature bonus as determined by the TSC to the bank account of the Regional Oil Company. The amount of signature bonus should be amortized in the books of the contractor and recovered over 20 equal quarterly payments. The recoverability/non-recoverability of the signature bonus varies depending on the terms of the TSC.

Transportation costs

All transportation between the production measurement point in the contract area and the delivery point is done by the transporter (an entity appointed by the MoO).

Training costs

All costs and expenses incurred by the contractor or operator in organizing, setting up and conducting training activities for their Iraqi personnel engaged in petroleum operations or contractor's training activities, including the planning, designing, constructing, commissioning and running training facilities and the related software are recoverable.

All training costs are subject to JMC approval.

Importation of equipment

The MoO is currently importing material and equipment on behalf of IOCs, any costs suffered by the IOC should be considered recoverable.

Cost recovery

Recoverable costs should be approved by the MoO and JMC and should not exceed 50% of petroleum revenue.

Non-recoverable costs

The following non-extensive list of items should be treated as non-recoverable costs for the purpose of cost recovery:

- ▶ Costs incurred as a result of any proven gross negligence or willful misconduct of the contractor and operator including any amount paid in
-

settlement of any claim alleging gross negligence or willful misconduct whether or not gross negligence or willful misconduct is admitted or whether such sum is stated to be paid on an ex-gratia or similar basis

- ▶ Any expenditure incurred directly or indirectly in connection with the raising of money to finance petroleum operations and other incidental costs and charges related thereto by whatever method raised; such expenditure includes, but is not limited to, interest, commissions, fees and brokerage
- ▶ Any costs, charges or expenses, including donations relating to public relations or enhancement of the contractor's corporate image and interests, unless expressly approved by the JMC
- ▶ Any expenditure incurred which is not related to petroleum operations or on matters or activities beyond the delivery point(s)
- ▶ Corporate income tax
- ▶ Signature bonus (varies)
- ▶ Training, Technology and Scholarship Fund; and
- ▶ Any other expenditure that is stated elsewhere in the TSC to be a non-recoverable expenditure.

Remuneration fee

In return for the petroleum operations embarked upon, a contractor is entitled to a fixed fee per barrel known as the RFB. The RFB is determined based on the stage of the contractor's cost recovery in the TSC, which is based on an index called the "R-factor". The R-factor, calculated annually, is a coefficient of the contractor's overall payback over the contractor's total expenditures. The R-factor is used to adjust the contractor's RFB with the increase in the contractor's cost recovery. The R-factor corresponding to the RFB for which a contractor is entitled is as follows:

| R-factor | Remuneration fee per barrel (USD) |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| $R < 1$ | 100% |
| $1 < R < 1.25$ | 80% |
| $1.25 < R < 1.5$ | 60% |
| $1.5 < R < 2$ | 50% |
| $R > = 2$ | 30% |

The RFB is also adjusted based on a performance factor calculated as the ratio of net production rate to the bid plateau production target. If the contractor fails to reach the designated performance factor (less than 1.0); i.e., the net production is below the minimum level of production, the contractor may lose out on remuneration.

Under the model TSC, the governmental party has a 25% share of remuneration fee.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or gas.

Domestic supply obligations

No domestic supply obligations.

Local content requirements

No local content requirements.

Taxes

An IOC should comply with the tax laws and regulations governing Iraq, including CIT, withholding tax, employee income tax, social security, customs duty and stamp duty, and complete the required registrations and filings, as required by the tax laws and regulations (including modifications to the laws of general applicability as introduced by the TSCs).

D. Production sharing contracts of the KRG

Under the model PSC, IOCs share revenue and operating costs with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MoNR) on behalf of the KRG.

Duration

The exploration period is seven years, divided into a first phase of three years, plus two two-year renewals. The contractor is entitled to two one-year further extensions of the exploration period in order to carry out appraisal work. There is also a possibility for an additional two-year extension for gas marketing work.

In case of a commercial discovery, there is a development and production period of 20 years with an automatic extension of five years under the same terms and conditions.

If a field is still producing at the end of the extended development and production period, the contract can be extended further for another five years. This means that for oil, the total maximum contract period is 39 years, and 41 years for gas.

Royalty

Under the model PSC, there is a royalty of 10% on all oil and non-associated gas produced and saved from the contract area, except for petroleum used in petroleum operations, re-injected in a petroleum field, lost, flared or for petroleum that cannot be used or sold and such crude oil and non-associated natural gas.

Signature bonus

A contractor is required to pay a signature bonus as determined by the PSC to the MoNR. Such a cost is regarded as non-recoverable.

Importation of equipment

The MoNR is currently importing material and equipment on behalf of IOCs, subcontractors, and employees without applying custom duty.

Cost recovery

Cost recovery is limited to a portion of production after deduction of the royalty, to a maximum not exceeding 40% for crude oil, and not exceeding 60% for natural gas.

Non-recoverable costs

Non-recoverable costs include all costs except the following:

- ▶ Production costs
- ▶ Exploration costs (including appraisal costs and further exploration within the Contract Area)
- ▶ Gas marketing costs
- ▶ Development costs; and
- ▶ Decommissioning costs.

Profit oil

Production share from remaining production after the royalty and allowable cost recovery is determined according to a formula which takes into account cumulative revenues and cumulative petroleum costs, and provides the contractor with reasonable returns (the "R-factor"), which equals cumulative revenues actually received by the contractor divided by cumulative costs actually incurred by the contractor.

The share of profit petroleum to which the contractor will be attributed and allocated from first production for profit oil is an amount equal to the quantities of petroleum resulting from the application of the relevant percentage (as indicated below) to the daily volume of production of profit oil within the contract area at the corresponding delivery point:

| R-factor | Contractor's % share |
|----------------|---|
| $R \leq 1$ | 35% |
| $1 < R \leq 2$ | $35 - (35 - 16) * (R - 1) / (2 - 1) \%$ |
| $R > 2$ | 16% |

Under the model PSC, the government party receives a maximum of 20% of the profit generated by the contractor. Furthermore, a percentage of the total profit oil must be submitted by the contractor to the KRG social program. The percentage ranges from 20% to 40%.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

Domestic supply obligations

No domestic supply obligations.

Local content requirements

No local content requirements.

Taxes

According to the model PSC executed with the KRG, each contractor entity, its affiliates and any subcontractor should, for the entire duration of the PSC, be exempt from all taxes as a result of its income, assets and activities under the contract. The government (i.e., KRG) shall indemnify each contractor entity upon demand against any liability to pay any taxes assessed or imposed upon such entity, which relate to any of the exemptions granted by the government. Each contractor entity should be subject to CIT on its income from petroleum operations as per the applicable tax rates. Payment of the said CIT at a rate of 15% should be made, for the entire duration of the contract, directly to the KRG's tax authorities by the MoNR, for the account of each contractor entity, from the government's share of the profits received.

Notwithstanding the above, it is important to note that the KRG's MoNR is not the government body that is legally mandated with the responsibility of administering the KRG's income tax law. There is a regional tax authority within the KRI, under the umbrella of the KRI's Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for tax administration and for issuing instructions in respect of the tax law applicable within the KRI.

E. Withholding tax on payments to nonresidents

Dividends

In general, dividends paid from previously taxed income are not taxable to the recipient.

Interest

Interest paid to nonresidents is subject to a withholding tax rate of 15%.

Royalty

Royalty paid to nonresidents is subject to a withholding tax rate of 15%.

F. Foreign tax relief

A foreign tax credit is available to Iraqi companies on income taxes paid abroad. In general, the foreign tax credit is limited to the amount of an Iraqi company's CIT on the foreign income, calculated on a country-by-country basis. Any excess foreign tax credits may be carried forward for five years.

G. Determination of taxable income

General

Generally, all income generated in Iraq is taxable in Iraq, except for income exempt by the income tax law, the industrial investment law, or the investment law.

All business expenses incurred to generate income are allowable, with limitations on certain items such as entertainment and donations. However, provisions and reserves are not deductible for tax purposes.

Under the model TSC, the remuneration fee constitutes a contractor's taxable income to which the 35% rate is applied, whereas under the model PSC, profit oil is used when determining a contractor's CIT liability.

Tax depreciation

The Iraqi Depreciation Committee (IDC) sets the maximum depreciation rates for various types of fixed assets. The tax regulations provide for straight-line depreciation rates for the financial sector (banks and insurance companies) and other sectors.

Depreciation percentages applicable to selected oil and gas companies' assets:

- ▶ Pure butane production unit – 6.5%
- ▶ Gas drying and cooling units – 5%
- ▶ Electrical system technology – 5%
- ▶ High-pressure vessels – 8%
- ▶ Machinery and equipment – 20%
- ▶ Electrical air compressors – 8%
- ▶ Cranes and rollers – 7.5%
- ▶ Liquid gas tanks – 4%
- ▶ Bulldozers and shovels – 20%
- ▶ Precision machinery and equipment – 10%

Used assets are depreciated at statutory rates established by the tax authorities, calculated on the purchase price.

When petroleum contractors or operators under a TSC acquire fixed assets, they are not allowed to capitalize such costs. This is because this expenditure is reimbursed to the petroleum contractors or operators by the Regional Oil Company under the TSC arrangement.

An exception to the above general rule is the signature bonus paid by the petroleum contractors or operators to the MoO for the right to benefit from an oil field. This item may be amortized by the petroleum contractors or operators over a period of 10 years using the straight-line method. However, the Iraqi tax authority may require the bonus to be amortized over the term of the contract instead, and may not accept the bonus as a tax-deductible expense. No formal position has yet been communicated by the GCT on this matter.

A contractor operating under the model PSC, on the other hand, is allowed to depreciate its capital assets and expenditures using the reducing balance method and the depreciation rates set out in the provisions of the PSC.

If the depreciation rates used for accounting purposes are greater than the ones computed under the rates prescribed for tax purposes, the excess is disallowed.

Relief for losses

Taxpayers may carryforward unabsorbed losses for five years to offset profits in future years. However, the amount of losses carried forward that may be used to offset taxable income is limited to 50% of each year's taxable income.

Moreover, the availability of losses carried forward can be severely limited if the Iraqi tax authority applies a deemed profit percentage to a book loss year, the losses with respect to that year will be lost forever.

The above is the general practice, whether losses were incurred under a TSC or otherwise. However, the same does not hold true for those operating under a PSC. Under the model PSC, losses may be carried forward indefinitely.

Losses may not be carried back. Losses incurred outside Iraq cannot be offset against taxable profit in Iraq.

Ring-fencing

The Iraqi tax law, model TSC, and model PSC are silent on this matter.

Groups of companies

Iraqi law does not contain any provisions for filing consolidated returns or for relieving losses within a group of companies.

H. Other significant taxes

The following table summarizes other significant taxes.

| Nature of tax | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| Stamp fees; imposed on the total contract value | 0.2 |
| Property tax; imposed on the annual rent: | |
| From buildings | 9 |
| From land | 2 |
| Employee income tax; imposed on individuals' income after applicable allowances | |
| Iraq | 3 - 15 |
| KRI | 5 |
| Social security contributions, imposed on salaries and benefits of local and expatriate employees; a portion of employee allowances up to an amount equaling 30% of the basic salary is not subject to social security contributions: | |
| Employer | 12 |
| Employer (oil and gas companies) | 25 |
| Employee | 5 |

I. Miscellaneous matters

Foreign-exchange controls

The currency in Iraq is the Iraqi dinar. Iraq does not impose any foreign-exchange controls.

Debt-to-equity rules

The only restrictions on debt to equity ratios are those stated in a company's articles and memoranda of association.

J. Tax treaties

Iraq has entered into a bilateral double taxation treaty with Egypt and a multilateral double taxation treaty with the states of the Arab Economic Union Council. However, in practice, the Iraqi tax authority does not apply the double tax treaties.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Ireland's fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of corporation tax and a profit resource rent tax (PRRT) based on field profitability.

- ▶ Royalties – None
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – Not applicable
- ▶ Income tax rate – Corporation tax rate of 25%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – PRRT rate between 5% and 15%, depending on field profitability relative to capital investment¹
- ▶ Production profit tax (not yet in force) – PPT rate between 10% and 40%, depending on field profitability²
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E³
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, RD⁴

B. Fiscal regime

Ireland's fiscal regime for the petroleum industry consists of a combination of a corporation tax and PRRT.

Corporation tax

Irish resident companies are subject to corporation tax on their worldwide profits (i.e., income and gains). Income from Irish trade is subject to corporation tax at a rate of 12.5%; however, certain "excepted trades" are subject to corporation tax at a rate of 25%. The definition of "excepted trades" includes dealing in land, working minerals and petroleum activities.

Nonresident companies are also subject to Irish corporation tax if they carry on a trade in Ireland through a branch or agency. Profits or gains arising from a

¹ PRRT is not deductible for corporation tax purposes.

² Legislation to introduce PPT has not yet been published or enacted. When the outline of the new PPT measures was announced in 2014, the stated intent was that the new regime would apply in respect of future licenses only, including those issued under the 2015 Atlantic Margin Licensing Round.

³ D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

⁴ L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely; RD: research and development incentive.

nonresident person from exploration or exploitation activities carried on in Ireland or in a “designated area,” or from exploration or exploitation rights, are regarded for tax purposes as profits or gains of a trade carried on by that person in Ireland through a branch or agency. A designated area is an area designated by order under Ireland’s Continental Shelf Act 1968. Accordingly, income arising for a nonresident company from petroleum activities is regarded as arising from an excepted trade and is subject to corporation tax at a rate of 25%.

Chargeable gains accruing from the disposal of “petroleum-related assets” are subject to tax at a rate of 33%. Petroleum-related assets include any petroleum rights, any assets representing exploration expenditure or development expenditure, and shares deriving their value or the greater part of their value, whether directly or indirectly, from petroleum activities, other than shares quoted on a stock exchange.

Corporation tax is charged on taxable income. This is determined by starting with income before taxation according to accounting principles and then adjusting it for certain add-backs and deductions required under the tax legislation. Expenses are generally allowed if they are incurred “wholly and exclusively” for the purposes of the trade, but certain expenses are not permitted under the legislation, such as capital expenditure.

Deductions for expenditure of a capital nature may be available under the capital allowances regime. For the petroleum industry, this is in the form of a 100% deduction for both exploration expenditure and development expenditure that become available when petroleum extraction activities commence (in the case of petroleum exploration expenditure) and when production in commercial quantities commences (in the case of development expenditure). In addition to allowing full write-offs against petroleum profits for exploration and development expenditures, a provision allows for a deduction for expenditure that companies may incur in withdrawing from or shutting down an oil or gas field (see further discussion on exploration, development and abandonment expenditure in section C below).

Ring-fencing

Petroleum activities are ring-fenced for tax purposes so that losses from petroleum activities may not be set off against profits from other activities. Similarly, there are restrictions on the group relief of petroleum losses and charges on income incurred in petroleum activities. The ring-fencing also prevents losses from other sectors of the economy being applied against petroleum profits. This two-way ring-fencing recognizes the unique potential of the petroleum exploration and production industry for exceptionally large costs, losses and profits.

Profits from oil and gas activities undertaken by an Irish resident company in a foreign country are subject to tax in Ireland.

Profit resource rent tax

Irish tax legislation contains provisions for PRRT that apply to petroleum activities. Under these provisions, companies carrying on Irish petroleum activities will be subject to an additional charge to tax depending on the profitability of the fields affected.

The PRRT rate varies from 5% to 15%, depending on the profitability of the field as measured by reference to the capital investment required for that field. PRRT is not deductible for corporation tax purposes.

PRRT only applies to exploration licenses and reserved area licenses awarded on or after 1 January 2007 and licensing options. PRRT operates on a graded basis by reference to profitability and, in particular, by reference to the profit ratio achieved on the specific field for which a license has been granted. “Profit ratio” is defined as the cumulative after-tax profits on the specific field divided by the cumulative level of capital investment on that field.

Each field that falls within the scope of the regime is treated as a separate trade for the purposes of this tax and is effectively ring-fenced, with the result that a

company would not be entitled to offset losses from any other activities against the profits of a taxable field for the purposes of calculating the PRRT. It is possible for capital expenditure incurred by one company to be deemed to have been incurred by another group company (with the necessary relationship to the first company) for the purposes of calculating the level of capital investments used in determining the profit ratio. For this provision to apply, an election must be made by the company that originally incurred the expenditure. PRRT is calculated as follows:

| Profit ratio | <1.5 | ≥ 1.5 but <3.0 | ≥ 3.0 but <4.5 | ≥ 4.5 |
|----------------|------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| Additional tax | 0% | 5% | 10% | 15% |

PRRT applies to taxable field profits, which are defined as the amount of the petroleum profits of the taxable field for the accounting period after making all deductions for, and giving or allowing all reliefs for, corporate tax purposes. The one exception is if, in a particular accounting period, the profit ratio for a specific field is in excess of 1.5 and was less than 1.5 in the immediately preceding accounting period with respect to that field; in such a situation, the profits to which the PRRT applies are calculated by reference to the following formula:

$$\{A - (B \times 1.5)\} \times 100 / (100 - R)$$

In this formula, A is the cumulative field profits on the field from 1 January 2007, B is the cumulative field expenditure on the field from 1 January 2007 and R is the general rate of tax for Irish petroleum activities (currently 25%). The purpose of this formula is to reduce the quantum of profits to which the PRRT applies in the period immediately following a period for which the PRRT did not apply as a result of the profit ratio being less than 1.5.

PRRT is collected in the same manner as corporation tax, and returns for PRRT are submitted with the annual corporate tax return.

Production profit tax

On 18 June 2014, the Irish Government announced its intention to introduce a new taxation regime for petroleum exploration and production as part of a review of Ireland's fiscal system for oil and gas. It was stated that the new regime, which will provide for a higher and earlier contribution to the Irish Revenue, will apply to future licenses only (instead of PRRT), including those issued under the 2015 Atlantic Margin Licensing Round.

The new rules will apply a production profit tax (PPT) to the net profits of each field (on a field-by-field basis) using a sliding scale of rates from 10% to 40% based on the profitability of the field.

However, a minimum payment of 5% of gross field revenue will be required, ensuring that a fiscal contribution is received even where a producing field is not yet profitable, or where there are losses carried forward. The corporation tax rate applicable remains at 25%. However, as the PPT will be deductible for corporation tax purposes, the maximum effective tax rate applicable to the fields with the highest profitability will be 55%, up from the current 40%. It is unclear at this point if the 5% minimum payment could augment a loss for corporation tax purposes.

While the details have yet to be published, it is expected that the PPT rates announced by the Government will apply in accordance with the scale below (as recommended in the review).

Aside from the minimum PPT, the point at which PPT applies is expected to be earlier than the equivalent entry point under the PRRT regime. This arises because the R-factor used to determine field profitability is computed on the basis of cumulative field gross revenue less PPT paid (but pre-corporation tax)/cumulative field costs, compared to the existing "profit ratio" calculation that is based on cumulative after-corporation tax net profits for a field. It is intended that the "gross revenue" for PPT purposes should be calculated in accordance with transfer pricing rules.

Proposed tax regime:

| R-factor | PPT rate | CT rate | Effective rate |
|------------|----------|---------|----------------|
| < 1.5 | 0%* | 25% | 25% |
| 1.5 | 10% | 25% | 32.5% |
| 1.5 to 4.5 | pro-rata | 25% | varies |
| > 4.5 | 40% | 25% | 55% |

*subject to a minimum PPT of 5% of field gross revenue

No changes are envisaged vis-a-vis capital allowances or the carry forward of exploration losses.

As the 55% effective marginal rate of tax only applies at a high level of profitability, it is envisaged that the new rules will not be a deterrent for investment.

Draft legislation to allow for the introduction of PPT has yet to be published.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Development expenditure

Irish tax legislation provides for a 100% allowance for capital expenditure incurred for production and development in connection with a relevant field being worked in the course of carrying on a petroleum trade. The allowance is available for the period when the asset represented by the expenditure is brought into use for the purposes of the trade. The allowance is subject to production in commercial quantities, having started in the field for which the assets were provided.

Assets leased to a person for the purposes of a petroleum trade are treated in a broadly similar manner. The allowance is available to the lessor, provided it directly bears the burden of wear and tear. The legislation excludes from development expenditure any amounts expended on vehicles, land and buildings, machinery or plant, or structures for processing or storing petroleum won (other than initial treatment or storage) and the acquisition of, or rights in or over, deposits of petroleum. Interest payments are also excluded.

Exploration expenditure

Irish tax legislation provides for a 100% allowance for exploration expenditure against the profits of a petroleum trade. The allowance is due when petroleum extraction activities begin. Exploration expenditure is defined as a capital expenditure on petroleum exploration activities, but excludes any interest payments. If expenditure qualifies as development expenditure, it cannot also be exploration expenditure. To the extent that a loss is created by the exploration allowance, this can be carried forward against future profits of the same petroleum trade.

An allowance is given for successful and abortive exploration expenditure, subject to the abortive expenditure having been incurred not more than 25 years before the commencement of the petroleum trade against which profits such allowances are claimed. However, an abortive expenditure incurred more than 25 years previously on a field that subsequently begins production may still be claimed upon commencement of production.

No allowance for exploration expenditure will be made to the extent that the exploration expenditure is reimbursed to the claimant. A clawback provision applies (by way of a balancing charge on the amounts previously allowed) if a disposal or part disposal of an asset takes place, representing the amount of

the expenditure with respect to which the allowance was originally made. The maximum balancing charge is limited to the amount of the allowances made or, in the case of a partial disposal, the appropriate part of that amount.

A person who buys assets representing exploration expenditure connected with a relevant field may claim an allowance if that person carries on a trade that consists of, or includes, working that field or part of that field. The allowance cannot exceed the exploration expenditure originally incurred or, if less, the price paid for the assets representing that expenditure.

If there is a sale or transfer of assets representing an exploration expenditure before a petroleum trade commences, the allowance due to the claimant is reduced by the proceeds of the sale or transfer.

A provision applies for granting an allowance for an exploration expenditure against the profits of a petroleum trade carried on by one company if the exploration expenditure was incurred by another company and one company is a wholly owned subsidiary of the other company, or both are wholly owned subsidiaries of a third company. A transferred expenditure is treated as incurred by the transferee company at the time it was actually incurred by the transferor, thus preventing old abortive exploration expenditure from being used by the transferee any later than it could have been used by the transferor. A provision also applies to avoid the duplication of allowances.

Abandonment expenditure

“Abandonment expenditure” is expenditure incurred on “abandonment activities” in relation to a field or part of a field. Abandonment activities in relation to a field or part of a field are activities of a company that comply with the requirements of a petroleum lease held by the company with respect to closing down, decommissioning or abandoning the field or part of it. This provision includes dismantling and removing pipelines used to bring petroleum to dry land.

A 100% allowance applies for abandonment expenditure for the chargeable period in which the expenditure is incurred. If a loss arises due to an insufficiency of income to absorb the allowance, the loss may be carried back to offset the income from the petroleum activities of the three previous years. An offset is made against later periods in priority to the earlier periods.

A provision is made for a carryforward of unused abandonment losses if a company permanently discontinues one petroleum trade and subsequently commences a new one. In these circumstances, the losses are deductible in the first chargeable period of the new petroleum trade carried on by the company.

An abandonment expenditure incurred after a petroleum trade has ceased is brought back into the final period of trading. If this creates a loss, that loss may be carried back for the three years preceding the final year of trading.

D. Incentives

Losses

Tax losses may be carried forward indefinitely against profits for the same petroleum trade. However, if within a three-year period there is both a change in ownership (effectively more than 50%) and a major change in the nature or conduct of the trade, relief for losses carried forward may be denied.

Research and development

To encourage expenditure on R&D, a tax credit of 25% of the incremental expenditure incurred by a company over the base year R&D expenditure in 2003 may be offset against its corporate tax liability for the accounting period when the expenditure is incurred. Relief is available on the first €300,000 of R&D spend on a volume basis (rather than an incremental basis), for accounting periods commencing on or after 1 January 2014.

With effect for relevant periods commencing on or after 1 January 2015, the 2003 base year comparison requirement has been removed and therefore all qualifying R&D expenditure will attract a tax credit of 25%.

Any excess R&D credits may be carried back against corporate tax of the preceding accounting period. Any remaining excess R&D credits may be cash refunded by the Irish tax authorities (Revenue) over a three-year period.

A limit is placed on the amount of the refund available to a company, which is the greater of:

- ▶ The corporation tax payable by the company in the previous 10 years.
- ▶ The aggregate of the total payroll tax liabilities (including employers' social insurance) combined for the current and preceding accounting periods.

In the case of a company, "expenditure on R&D" is expenditure that has been incurred on R&D activities carried on by that company in the European Economic Area (EEA) in a relevant period. The expenditure must qualify for tax relief in Ireland and, in the case of an Irish resident company, it must not qualify for tax relief in any jurisdiction other than Ireland. The R&D credit is in addition to any tax relief that may be available by way of a deduction in computing trading income, or by way of capital allowances.

"R&D activities" mean systematic, investigative or experimental activities in a field of science or technology and being one or more of basic research, applied research or experimental development. Activities do not qualify as R&D activities unless they seek to achieve scientific or technological advancement and involve resolution of scientific or technological uncertainty.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends, interest and royalties

Under Irish domestic law, dividends, interest and royalties are prima facie subject to a withholding tax (WHT) of 20%. However, interest paid by a company in the course of a trade or business to a company resident in an Member State, or in a country with which Ireland has a double taxation agreement, is exempt from WHT, provided the recipient country generally imposes tax on such interest receivable. Furthermore, under Irish domestic law, WHT on royalties applies only to certain patent royalties (where Revenue clearance is not obtained) and to other payments regarded as "annual payments."

In relation to dividends, exemptions from dividend withholding tax (DWT) are provided for certain nonresidents. The principal exemptions are for:

- ▶ Nonresident companies under the control of persons resident in an EU Member State or in a country with which Ireland has a double taxation agreement (provided these persons are not under the control of persons not resident in such countries).
- ▶ Nonresident companies, or 75% parent companies of nonresident companies, the principal class of shares of which is substantially and regularly traded on a recognized stock exchange.
- ▶ Companies not controlled by Irish residents that are resident in an EU Member State or a tax treaty country.

Third party declarations are no longer required to obtain this exemption. Instead, a self-assessment system applies whereby the nonresident company declares that it meets one of the conditions above. DWT does not apply to dividends covered by the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive (subject to compliance with a bona fide parent test).

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax does not apply in Ireland.

Relevant contracts tax

Relevant contracts tax (RCT) is a withholding tax under Irish domestic law that applies to persons engaged in the construction, meat processing and forestry industries. Unfortunately, the RCT provisions are very widely drawn and the

definition of “construction operations” brings “operations which form an integral part of, or are preparatory to, or are for rendering complete, the drilling for or extraction of minerals, oil, natural gas or the exploration for, or exploitation of, natural resources” within the ambit of RCT. The Irish Revenue take the view that this extends to activities carried on in a “designated area” but the legislative basis for this view is unclear.

Effective from 1 January 2012, the administration and compliance aspects of the RCT regime have moved to an electronic platform (from the previous paper-based system), with principal contractors required to communicate electronically with the Revenue via the Revenue On-Line Service (ROS) or other approved software system. Under the new system, the Revenue will issue an electronic deduction authorization to the principal contractor, stating the withholding tax rate to be applied to the specific subcontractor (i.e., 0%, 20% or 35%). By improving their tax compliance position, subcontractors can reduce the withholding rate assigned by the Revenue. Principal contractors are exposed to tax, interest and penalties where they are found not to be compliant with the RCT regime.

The Revenue will automatically credit any RCT deducted to the subcontractor’s tax record. This credit will be available for offset against other tax liabilities of the subcontractor as they arise or for repayment annually. The RCT regime extends to nonresident principals and subcontractors.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization and interest quarantining

At present, Ireland does not have legislation dealing with thin capitalization and interest quarantining.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

If a company that carries on a petroleum trade disposes of an asset representing an exploration expenditure, it is subject to a balancing charge calculated by reference to the proceeds received for the disposal. If the disposal takes place prior to the commencement of a petroleum trade, the exploration allowance to be made to the company when it commences its petroleum trade is reduced by the amount of any consideration in money or money’s worth received on the disposal.

A disposal of an asset representing development expenditure is similarly subject to a balancing charge calculated by reference to the proceeds received for the disposal.

Farm-in and farm-out

The legislation provides that changes in license interests at the pre-production stage that are approved by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources do not give rise to chargeable gains if their sole purpose is the furtherance of exploration, delineation or development of a licensed area (i.e., an area licensed under the 1975 or 1992 licensing terms or subsequent licensing terms).

The legislation operates by defining a “relevant period” in relation to such a disposal as being a period beginning 12 months before and 3 years after the disposal. If the consideration received on a disposal is wholly and exclusively applied within the relevant period for the purposes of either or both petroleum exploration activities and searching for and winning access to petroleum in a relevant field, the disposal is not treated as a disposal for the purposes of capital gains tax (CGT). Therefore, no chargeable gain (or allowable loss) can arise. On a subsequent disposal of an asset acquired, brought into being or enhanced in value by the application of the consideration received, the consideration is not deductible in calculating the gain on the subsequent disposal (i.e., it does not form part of the base cost).

The legislation also treats the exchange of license interests as not involving any disposal or acquisition. It treats the asset given and the asset received as the same asset acquired, in the same manner as the asset given was acquired.

For an exchange of license interests where one party receives consideration in addition to the license interest taken by that party, the exchange rule set out above does not apply to that party unless the additional consideration is applied in full in the same manner as set out above. In this way, the disposal of the portion of the license interest that is represented by the consideration received is treated as a partial disposal for which the disposal provisions set out above apply.

If a party to an exchange of license interests gives consideration in addition to the license interest, the portion of the license interest received represented by the additional consideration is regarded as an asset that has a basis equal to the consideration given.

Selling shares in a company

Irish tax legislation contains substantial shareholding exemption provisions. However, they do not apply where the shares being sold derive the greater part of their value from exploration or exploitation rights in a designated area. If unable to exploit the substantial shareholding exemption, a resident shareholder company is liable for CGT on the disposal of shares in a company that holds exploration or exploitation rights in a designated area.

A nonresident shareholder company is also liable for CGT on a disposal of shares in a company that holds exploration or exploitation rights in a designated area. This is because Irish domestic law deems a gain on a disposal of shares that derive their value or the greater part of their value, directly or indirectly, from exploration or exploitation rights in Irish designated waters to be a gain accruing on the disposal of assets situated in Ireland. This has the effect of bringing the gain into the charge to CGT at a rate of 33%.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Duties apply to the importation of goods.

If goods are imported directly to a rig that is located outside Irish territorial waters, there are no Irish customs duty issues. However, if goods are brought to the rig via Ireland, Irish customs duties issues arise (end-use authorizations). On the assumption that correct procedures are put in place, Irish customs duty should not be a cost.

Excise duties

A European Community excise regime governs the production, processing and holding of excisable products under duty-suspension within each member state of the Community (including Ireland) as well as all intra-community movement of excisable products. The rates of excise duty on mineral oils in Ireland (known as mineral oil tax) vary depending on the type of oil.

Excise duty on direct imports into Ireland of most excisable products from outside the fiscal territory of the Community is payable at the time of import unless the products are removed to a tax warehouse. In the case of excisable products dispatched to or received from other EU Member States, an intra-Community warehousing network allows duty-suspended movement of products to the premises of receipt, with excise duty being subsequently paid on release in the member state of destination. Excisable products on which duty has already been paid and that move to another member state are liable to excise duty in the member state of destination. In such cases, the excise duty paid in the member state of dispatch may be reclaimed.

Carbon tax

Carbon tax at a rate of €15 per metric ton of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted was introduced in Ireland in 2009. The national Budget for 2012 increased

the rate to €20 per metric ton of carbon dioxide. This change applied from 7 December 2011 to petrol and auto-diesel, and applies from May 2012 to other fossil fuels (excluding solid fuels such as peat and coal). The 2013 Budget extended the application of carbon tax to solid fuels on a phased basis. A rate of €10 per metric ton of CO₂ applied since 1 May 2013 and the rate increased to €20 per tonne from 1 May 2014.

Persons who receive, either from a tax warehouse or directly by importation, mineral oils that are exclusively for a use covered by their greenhouse gas emissions permit, can obtain oils free of the carbon charge.

Natural Gas Carbon Tax applies to supplies of natural gas to consumers in Ireland. A rate of €4.10 per megawatt hour has applied since 1 May 2012. A relief from the tax applies if it is shown to the satisfaction of the Revenue Commissioners that the gas is to be used solely for the generation of electricity.

VAT

VAT applies to the supply of goods and services, the importation of goods and intra-Community acquisitions made in the territory of Ireland.

If a company is not established in Ireland and it undertakes activities outside the 12-nautical-mile limit from the shore of Ireland (and thus outside the EU), the supply of those activities is deemed to occur outside the jurisdiction. In these circumstances, the company is not entitled to register for Irish VAT. Supplies of goods from Ireland to such an offshore location are charged at a zero rate because they are effectively exports.

If goods or services supplied to an offshore company are liable to Irish VAT, VAT reclaims may be made through the electronic VAT refund (EVR) procedure (if the claimant company is established in the EU) or the EU 13th Directive reclaim process (if the claimant is established outside the EU). Alternatively, if an offshore company has an administrative office in Ireland that would constitute an establishment for VAT purposes, it may be allowed to register for VAT in Ireland in order to recover any Irish VAT incurred through its Irish VAT returns.

An offshore company that operates outside the Irish jurisdiction makes supplies that are outside the scope of Irish VAT and, accordingly, any invoices raised by the company are also outside the scope of Irish VAT.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty applies to certain documents that are executed in Ireland or relate to Irish property or to something done or to be done in Ireland. Stamp duty is chargeable under different heads, with the most significant related to the conveyance or transfer of property on a sale. Stamp duty can represent a significant cost. The rate applicable to transfers of nonresidential property is 2%. The rate of stamp duty applicable to transfers of Irish-registered shares is 1%. Stamp duty is payable by the purchaser.

As stamp duty is a tax on documents, if assets such as plant and machinery pass by delivery and no document evidences the transfer, no stamp duty should arise.

Also, full relief from stamp duty can apply to the transfer of property between companies that are 90% associated. An exemption from stamp duty is provided for the sale, assignment or transfer of licenses and leases granted under the Petroleum and Other Minerals Development Act 1960. The exemption extends to the sale, assignment or transfer of any right or interest in any such license or lease.

I. Other

Rules for valuation of petroleum in certain circumstances

For accounting periods commencing on or after 1 January 2011, Irish transfer pricing regulations apply. These regulations apply to intercompany trading transactions to impose the arm's length principle and documentation requirements.

Irish legislation provides rules for the valuation of petroleum disposed of other than by way of sale at arm's length or appropriated for use in activities that fall outside the ring fence (e.g., if the oil is appropriated by a production company for use in its own refinery).

Petroleum disposed of other than by way of sale at arm's length is treated as disposed of for a consideration equal to the market value at the time of disposal. Petroleum that is "relevantly appropriated" for use in activities outside the company's ring-fenced activities without being disposed of is treated, for the purposes of the ring-fenced activities and the activities to which it is appropriated, as having been sold and bought, respectively, for a price equal to its market value at the time it is appropriated.

The market value of petroleum at any time is the price that the petroleum could be expected to fetch in a sale on the open market at that time.

Employee taxation

Income tax

Irish tax legislation brings into charge income arising from the exercise of employment in Ireland, whether or not an individual is tax resident in Ireland (although there are some exemptions from this charge, which are discussed below). The charge extends to both income tax and the universal social charge (USC). The legislation provides that duties performed in a designated area in connection with exploration or exploitation activities are treated as performed in Ireland. Thus, income tax and the USC arise on an individual under domestic legislation, but they might be mitigated or exempted under a relevant double tax treaty.

An Irish income tax charge will not generally apply if an individual spends fewer than 30 working days in Ireland (which, for this purpose, includes a designated area of the Continental Shelf) in a fiscal (calendar) year. There will therefore not be any income tax, USC liability or withholding requirement if the individual spends fewer than 30 working days in Ireland.

Where no exemption is applicable, an obligation arises on a foreign employer to withhold income tax, pay-related social insurance (where applicable – see next subsection) and the USC under the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system from individuals that exercise duties in Ireland, regardless of whether those individuals ultimately have a tax liability in Ireland. If the employer is a nonresident and does not comply with this obligation, the entity benefiting from the services in Ireland may be held liable. However, two exemptions from the requirement for the employer to operate Irish PAYE exist.

The first exemption states that PAYE withholding will not be required if:

1. The individual is resident in a country with which Ireland has a double taxation agreement and is not resident in Ireland for tax purposes for the relevant tax year.
2. There is a genuine foreign office or employment.
3. The individual is not paid by, or on behalf of, an employer resident in Ireland.
4. The cost of the office or employment is not borne, directly or indirectly, by a permanent establishment in Ireland of the foreign employer.
5. The duties of that office or employment are performed in Ireland for not more than 60 total working days in a year of assessment and, in any event, for a continuous period of not more than 60 working days.

The second exemption states that condition 5 above may be extended to 183 days where an employee suffers withholding taxes in their home country on the same income, but only if conditions 1 through 4 above are satisfied. In this instance, it would also be necessary for the employer to apply to the Irish Revenue for clearance from the obligation to operate Irish PAYE. This clearance must be applied for within 21 days of the individual commencing their employment duties in Ireland. Where Revenue clearance is not granted or not due, the obligation to operate Irish tax remains.

Social insurance

Pay-related social insurance (PRSI) is payable with respect to every individual who exercises duties of employment in Ireland, regardless of the duration. Various classes of contribution apply, depending on the nature of the employment and the level of the emoluments. The most common class is A1, which imposes a charge of 10.75% on the gross earnings (including benefits) of the employer and 4% on the employee. There is no ceiling on the earnings liable to employer or employee contributions.

A charge to PRSI can be avoided only if the employer provides an appropriate authorization from the employee's home country to remain within the home country's social insurance regime. The authorization may be either an E101/A1 form (for EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway) or a Certificate of Coverage (for Australia, Canada (including Quebec), New Zealand, the United States, Japan and South Korea). In respect to the countries not covered by the E101/A1 or Certificate of Coverage provisions, there may be an entitlement to an exemption from PRSI for the first 52 weeks of a posting in Ireland. Advice should be sought on the specific conditions applicable to this exemption.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Israel has an income tax regime that is applicable across all industries, and a windfall tax for oil and gas activities.

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 26.5%
- ▶ Capital gains tax (CGT) rate – 26.5%
- ▶ Windfall profits tax rate – 0% up to 44.56%
- ▶ VAT rate – 18%
- ▶ Incentives:
 - ▶ Large number of incentives offered
 - ▶ Losses may be carried forward indefinitely

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

The income tax regime is applicable across all industries. Resident companies are subject to Israeli tax on their worldwide income. Nonresident companies are subject to Israeli tax on income accrued or derived in Israel, unless otherwise provided for in an applicable tax treaty.

A company is considered resident in Israel for Israeli tax purposes if either of the following applies:

- ▶ It is incorporated in Israel
- ▶ Its business is controlled and managed in Israel

Effective from January 1 2014, the regular rate of company tax is 26.5% for 2014 (25% for 2013). The combined Israeli taxes on profits for 2014, taking into account the 30% withholding tax (WHT) on dividends paid to shareholders holding 10% or more of the company (counted as “material shareholders”) and the 25% WHT imposed on shareholders holding less than 10% of the company, are:

- ▶ Material shareholders – 48.55% for 2014 onwards. Individual shareholders whose taxable income exceeds NIS811,560 (for 2013 and linked to the CPI each year) may be subject to an additional 2% tax rate on their taxable income that is in excess of the NIS811,560 threshold.
- ▶ Other shareholders – 44.875%. For individual shareholders, an additional tax of 2% may apply as described in the preceding bullet point.

The dividend WHT rates mentioned above may be reduced in accordance with applicable tax treaties.

Determination of trading income

Taxable income is based on financial statements that are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and derived from acceptable accounting records. In principle, expenses are deductible if they are wholly and exclusively incurred in the production of taxable income. Various items may require adjustment for tax purposes, including depreciation, research and development (R&D) expenses, and vehicle and travel expenses.

Payments subject to WHT, such as salaries, interest and royalties, are not deductible unless the requisite tax is withheld and paid to the tax authorities.

Provisions

Bad debts are deductible in the year they become irrecoverable. Special rules apply to employee-related provisions, such as severance pay, vacation pay, recreation pay and sick pay.

Tax consolidation

Subject to certain conditions, consolidated returns are permissible for a holding company and its industrial subsidiaries if the subsidiaries are all engaged in the same line of production. For this purpose, a holding company is a company that has invested at least 80% of its fixed assets in the industrial subsidiaries and controls at least 50% (or two-thirds in certain cases) of various rights in those subsidiaries. For a diversified operation, a holding company may file a consolidated return with the subsidiaries that share the common line of production in which the largest amount has been invested.

Group returns may also be filed by an industrial company and industrial subsidiary companies if the subsidiaries are at least two-thirds controlled (in terms of voting power and appointment of directors) by the industrial company and if the industrial company and the subsidiaries are in the same line of production.

Detailed rules concerning the deferral of CGT apply to certain types of reorganizations, including corporate mergers, divisions and shares-for-assets exchanges. In many cases, an advance ruling is necessary.

Holding companies and participation exemption

To qualify for the participation exemption, an Israeli holding company must satisfy various conditions, including the following:

- ▶ It must be incorporated in Israel
- ▶ Its business is controlled and managed in Israel only
- ▶ It may not be a public company or a financial institution
- ▶ It must not have been formed in a tax-deferred reorganization
- ▶ For 300 days or more in the year, beginning in the year after incorporation, the holding company must have an investment of at least NIS50 million in the equity of, or as loans to, the investee companies, and at least 75% of the holding company's assets must consist of such equity investments and loans

Specific conditions should be satisfied by a foreign investee.

An Israeli holding company is exempt from tax on the following types of income:

- ▶ Capital gains derived from the sale of an entitling shareholding in an investee company
- ▶ Dividends distributed during the 12-month minimum shareholding period with respect to an entitling shareholding in an investee company
- ▶ Interest, dividends and capital gains derived from securities traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange
- ▶ Interest and indexation amounts received from Israeli financial institutions

In addition, dividends paid by Israeli holding companies to foreign resident shareholders are subject to a reduced rate of dividend WHT of 5%.

Capital gains and losses

Resident companies are taxable on worldwide capital gains. Capital gains are divided into real and inflationary components. The following are descriptions of the taxation of these components:

- ▶ Effective from 2014, the tax rate on real capital gains is 26.5%; an additional 2% tax rate may apply as detailed above
- ▶ The inflationary component of capital gains is exempt from tax to the extent that it accrued on or after 1 January 1994, and is generally taxable at a rate of 10% to the extent that it accrued before that date

Unless a tax treaty provides otherwise, nonresident companies and individuals are in principle subject to Israeli tax on their capital gains relating to Israeli assets. Exemptions are available for disposals of certain types of Israeli securities and subject to certain conditions. Foreign resident companies pay CGT in accordance with the rules and rates applicable to residents, as described above. However, nonresidents investing with foreign currency may elect to apply the relevant exchange rate rather than the inflation rate to compute the inflationary amount.

Windfall tax

According to the Windfall Profits Tax Law, in effect from 10 April 2011, oil profits from an oil project will be levied in the relevant tax year. The levy is designed to capitalize on the economic dividend arising from each individual reservoir. The levy will be imposed only after the investments in exploration, development and construction are fully returned plus a yield that reflects, among other things, the developer's risks and required financial expenses. The levy is progressive and will be at a relatively low rate when first collected; but it will increase as the project's profit margins grow.

The basic economic unit used to calculate the collection of the levy is an oil project, based on a single oil right that is an early permit, license or lease, according to the oil project's current development stage.

According to the Law, the levy rates will be determined using the R-factor which establishes the project's profitability. Oil profits from an oil project will be calculated for every individual tax year at the end of that year as the difference between total current receipts in the tax year and total current payments in that year. The R-factor formula takes into consideration the levy on oil and gas profits in the early years, the timing of discovery and production, investments, interest and certain expenditures, including royalties paid to the Government. The R-factor will be calculated for each tax year and a relative levy factor will be calculated for each month in an amount equal to retained profits divided by accrued investments. The levy rate will be 0% as long as the relative levy factor is less than 1.5. Once a project's relative levy factor reaches 1.5, the levy rate will be 20%. This rate will increase linearly as the relative levy factor increases, up to a maximum of 44.56% (which is imposed when the relative levy factor is 2.3).

It has been determined that the levy will be a deductible expense for corporate tax purposes.

In order to allow tax benefits arising from the allocation of taxable income or losses to the qualifying holders and to allow effective tax assessment and collection procedures, specific provisions regarding the taxation of oil partnerships were determined that will apply to the taxable income or losses of the oil partnership in the tax year 2011 onward.

It is determined that the owner of the oil right will have a special deduction from the base price of the "deductible asset" in their possession, effective from the tax year in which commercial production commences. This special deduction – of 10% annually – will replace the depreciation of the deductible asset pursuant to the provisions of Section 21 to the ITO for each of the holders of the oil right, pro rata to their share in the project. The Law states that the depreciation provisions applicable pursuant to the ITO apply to such deduction as if it were depreciation, under the necessary adjustments.

The Law prescribes transitional provisions that allow a gradual transition to the determined system in order to prevent any impairment to the construction of the oil projects that are in planning and construction stages and that are designed to supply oil to the Israeli market in the coming years.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Depreciation

Depreciation at prescribed rates, based on the type of asset and the number of shifts the asset is used, may be claimed with respect to fixed assets used in the production of taxable income.

Accelerated depreciation may be claimed in certain instances. For example, under the Inflationary Adjustments Regulations (Accelerated Depreciation), for assets first used in Israel between 1 June 1989 and 31 December 2013 industrial enterprises may depreciate equipment using the straight-line method at annual rates ranging from 20% to 40%. Alternatively, they may depreciate equipment using the declining-balance method at rates ranging from 30% to 50%.

The following are some of the standard straight-line rates that apply primarily to nonindustrial companies:

| Asset | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| Mechanical equipment | 7-10 |
| Electronic equipment | 15 |
| Personal computers and peripheral equipment | 33 |
| Buildings (depending on quality) | 1.5-4 |
| Goodwill | 10 |
| Solar energy-producing plant | 25 |

D. Incentives

Capital Investment Encouragement Law

An amendment to the Law was effective from 1 January 2011. Significant aspects of the amended law are summarized below.

The law has the following objectives:

- ▶ Achieving of enhanced growth targets in the business sector
- ▶ Improving the competitiveness of Israeli industries in international markets
- ▶ Creating employment and development opportunities in outlying areas

Precedence is granted to innovation and development areas. The country is divided into national priority areas, which benefit from several reduced tax rates and benefits based on the location of the enterprise.

A reduced uniform corporate tax rate for exporting industrial enterprises (over 25% of turnover from export activity) is applicable. The reduced tax rate does not depend on a program and applies to the industrial enterprise's entire income. As from 1 January 2014 the reduced tax rates for industrial enterprises are 9% for Development Area A and 16% for the rest of the country.

In addition, accelerated depreciation is applicable, reaching 400% of the standard depreciation rate on building (not exceeding 20% per annum and exclusive of land) and 200% of the standard depreciation rate on equipment.

As from 1 January 2014 a reduced tax on dividends of 20% (15% previously) is imposed without distinction between foreign and local investors. On the distribution of a dividend to an Israeli company, no WHT is imposed.

A unique tax benefit is granted to certain large industrial enterprises, which entitles such companies to a reduced tax rate of 5% in Development Area A and 8% in the rest of the country. Furthermore, fixed-asset grants of 20% to 32% of the investment cost of fixed assets may be granted to enterprises in Development Area A.

Some of Israel's tax treaties include tax-sparing clauses under which regular Israeli taxes, rather than reduced Israeli taxes, may be credited against tax imposed on dividends received from an Israeli company in the investor's country of residence. As a result, the Israeli tax benefits may be partially or fully preserved for an investor in an Israeli company enjoying the benefits of the Law.

Oil and gas activity is not entitled to benefits under the Capital Investment Encouragement Law.

Eilat free port

Corporate tax exemptions and other benefits are granted to authorized enterprises in the Eilat free port and free trade area.

Other incentives

Approved industrial, commercial and residential rental properties qualify for reduced company tax rates on rental income (and on gains derived from sales of certain buildings that have a residential element; and a building has a residential element if at least 50% of the floor space is rented for residential purposes for a prescribed number of years, according to detailed rules). The reduced rates range from 10% to 18%. A tax holiday or grants may be available to approved industrial properties, depending on their location.

Preferential tax treatment may also be allowed with respect to the following activities:

- ▶ Real estate investment trust (REIT) companies
- ▶ International trading
- ▶ R&D financing
- ▶ Nonresidents' bank accounts

Significant non-tax incentives include financial support for the following activities:

- ▶ R&D
- ▶ Development of production prototypes
- ▶ Investment in new facilities or products to promote competition with foreign companies (trade exposure fund)
- ▶ Exporters
- ▶ Export agents
- ▶ Equipment leasing to approved enterprises

Foreign resident investors may qualify for exemption from CGT in certain circumstances.

Relief for losses

In general, business losses may be offset against income from any source in the same year. Unrelieved business losses may be carried forward for an unlimited number of years to offset business income, capital gains derived from business activities or business-related gains subject to land appreciation tax (see Section B). According to case law, the offset of losses may be disallowed after a change of ownership and activity of a company, except in certain bona fide circumstances.

Special rules govern the offset of foreign losses incurred by Israeli residents. Passive foreign losses (for example, relating to income from dividends, interest, rent or royalties) may be offset against current or future foreign passive income. Passive foreign rental losses arising from depreciation may also be offset against capital gains from the sale of the relevant foreign real property.

Active foreign losses (relating to a business or profession) may be offset against the following:

- ▶ Passive foreign income in the current year
- ▶ Active Israeli income in the current year if the taxpayer so elects and if the foreign business is controlled and managed in Israel; however, in the preceding two years and in the following five years, foreign-sourced income is taxable up to the amount of the foreign loss
- ▶ Active foreign income and business-related capital gains in future years

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

A 30% WHT is generally imposed on dividends paid to individual shareholders holding 10% or more of the shares in an Israeli company (material shareholders), and a 25% WHT is imposed on dividends paid to individual shareholders holding less than 10% of the shares in an Israeli company. However, resident companies are exempt from company tax on dividends paid out of regular income that was accrued or derived from sources within Israel. Companies are generally subject to tax at a rate of 25% on foreign dividend income that is paid from a foreign source or from income accrued or derived abroad (foreign-sourced income that is passed up a chain of companies).

A reduced WHT of 15% is imposed on dividends paid out of the income of a company enjoying the benefits of the Capital Investment Encouragement Law.

Interest

An exemption from Israeli tax is available to foreign investors that receive interest income on bonds issued by Israeli companies traded on the Israeli stock exchange.

In addition, interest is exempt from Israeli tax when it is paid to nonresidents on Israeli governmental bonds that are issued for 13 months or more.

Overseas remittances

Israeli banks must withhold tax, generally at a rate of 25%, from most overseas remittances unless the remittances relate to imported goods. An exemption or a reduced withholding rate may be obtained from the Israeli tax authorities in certain circumstances, such as when a treaty applies or when the payments are for services that are rendered entirely abroad. A 30% WHT rate applies to dividend payments to recipients who hold 10% or more of the payer entity.

F. Other significant taxes

Other significant taxes are as set out in the table below.

| Nature of tax | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| VAT, standard rate | 18 |
| Wage and profit tax, imposed on financial institutions instead of VAT; this tax is imposed in addition to company tax | 18 |
| National insurance contributions on monthly employment income (subject to an upper income limit that changes periodically) | Various |
| Payroll levy on salaries of foreign employees (although the levy does not apply if monthly salary exceeds twice the average monthly salary) | 20 |
| Acquisition tax, imposed on purchasers of real estate rights; maximum rate | 5-7 |
| Annual municipal taxes on property | Various |

G. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

The Israeli currency is the new Israeli shekel (NIS). On 14 May 1998, exchange control restrictions were abolished.

However, transactional and periodic reporting requirements apply in certain circumstances, principally to Israeli residents when the amounts involved or overseas assets total more than US\$5 million. Furthermore, shekel-to-foreign-currency swap transactions and foreign residents' transactions in short-term Israeli Government bonds are also sometimes subject to reporting requirements. These reports are filed with the Bank of Israel.

Debt-to-equity rules

No thin capitalization rules are imposed in Israel. However, approved enterprises and approved properties must be at least 30% equity-financed if they received their approval before 1 April 2005.

Transfer pricing

Transactions between related parties should be at arm's length. Detailed transfer pricing regulations apply. An Israeli taxpayer must report on each international transaction undertaken with a related party and indicate the arm's length amount for such transaction. Advance rulings may be requested regarding transfer pricing.

Free trade agreements

Israel has entered into free trade agreements with Bulgaria, Canada, the European Free Trade Association, the European Union, Mexico, Romania, Turkey and the United States.

Foreign tax relief

A credit for foreign taxes is available for federal and state taxes but not municipal taxes. Any excess foreign tax credit may be offset against Israeli tax on income from the same type in the following five tax years.

Foreign residents that receive little or no relief for Israeli taxes in their home countries may be granted a reduced Israeli tax rate by the Minister of Finance.

Administration

The Israeli tax year is normally the calendar year. However, subsidiaries of foreign publicly traded companies may sometimes be allowed to use a different fiscal year.

Companies are generally required to file audited annual tax returns and financial statements within five months after the end of their fiscal year, but extensions may be obtained.

Companies must normally file monthly or bimonthly reports and make payments with respect to the following taxes:

- ▶ Company tax advances, which are typically computed as a percentage of a company's sales revenues
- ▶ Supplementary company tax advances with respect to certain non-deductible expenses
- ▶ Tax withheld from salaries and remittances to certain suppliers
- ▶ VAT

Nonresidents are required to appoint an Israeli tax representative and VAT representative if any part of their activities is conducted in Israel. The VAT representative is deemed to be the tax representative if no other tax representative is appointed. The tax representative is empowered to pay tax out of the foreign resident's assets.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Italian companies and Italian branches of foreign companies are subject to the general Corporate Income Tax Act in Italy, with some specific additional provisions that may apply to the oil and gas sector:

- ▶ Royalties – Yes
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Corporate income tax rate – 27.5%
- ▶ Regional Income Tax – 3.9%

The Italian tax regime for oil and gas companies requires the payment of specific concessions to the state, and also royalties to be calculated on the amount of production.

Companies establishing new oil and gas activities (e.g., extraction, distribution, research, tillage or storage) in Italy must apply to the Italian state for certain specific licenses. Once granted, the licenses facilitate the calculation of the concessions due.

A summary of licenses and concessions is as shown in the table below.

| Yearly fees for oil and gas concessions | €/Km ² |
|---|-------------------|
| Prospection license | 3.40 |
| Research license | 6.82 |
| Research license (first extension) | 13.61 |
| Research license (second extension) | 27.23 |
| Tillage license | 54.48 |
| Tillage license (extension) | 81.71 |
| Storage license under tillage license | 13.61 |
| Storage license without tillage license | 54.48 |

The Italian state also requires payment of certain royalties to be calculated on the gross value of oil and gas production. Such royalties may vary on the basis of the location of production plants (land or sea), and some exemptions are available relating to production value below certain thresholds. For plants established on land, an additional royalty is payable to the so-called "*Fondo Idrocarburi*," the purpose of which is to reduce the fuel price of the region in which the plant is located.

A summary of royalties is as shown in the next table.

| Production | | Exempted production quota | Royalty rate | <i>Fondo Idrocarburi</i> additional rate |
|------------|------|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| Oil | Land | 20,000 tons | 7% | 3% |
| | Sea | 50,000 tons | 7% | |
| Gas | Land | 25 million cubic meters | 7% | 3% |
| | Sea | 80 million cubic meters | 10% | |

The abovementioned royalties are not due on the productions dispersed, burned or flared or re-injected into a well.

B. Fiscal regime

Italian tax resident companies are subject to corporate income tax (CIT or IRES) on their worldwide income, while Italian branches (permanent establishments) of foreign companies are taxed only on their Italian sourced income. A "resident company" is a company that has any of the following located in Italy for the majority of the tax year:

- ▶ Its registered office
- ▶ Its administrative office (similar to the "place of effective management" concept)
- ▶ Its principal activity

In addition, a mine, an oil or gas well, a quarry or any other place of extraction of natural resources are also included in the term permanent establishment.

Nonresident companies are subject to IRES on their Italian source income only. Certain deemed residency provisions apply to foreign entities controlling an Italian company.

The IRES rate is fixed at 27.5% and it is applied to the IRES taxable income. To determine taxable income, profits disclosed in the financial statements are adjusted for exempt profits, non-deductible expenses, special deductions and losses carried forward.

The following general principles govern the deduction of expenses:

- ▶ Expenses are deductible if and to the extent to which they relate to activities or assets that produce revenue or other receipts that are included in income.
- ▶ Expenses are deductible in the tax year to which they relate (accrual basis rule). Exceptions are provided for specific items, such as compensation due to directors, which is deductible in the tax year in which it is paid.

Write-offs of the value of Italian and foreign shareholdings may not be deducted.

Companies may not deduct expenses incurred in transactions with enterprises and consultants resident in non EU tax havens. Such a limitation does not apply if it is established that either of the following conditions is satisfied:

- ▶ The foreign enterprise is effectively involved in an actual business activity.
- ▶ The relevant transaction had a real business purpose and actually took place.

Additional surcharge imposed on oil, gas and energy companies

An additional surcharge tax was levied on companies and Italian branches of foreign companies operating in the oil, gas and energy sector with revenues exceeding €3 million and a taxable income exceeding €300,000 in a previous tax year. This surcharge tax, also known as the “Robin Hood tax,” was levied at the rate of 6.5% of the IRES taxable basis.

However, in February 2015, the Italian Constitutional Court declared that the surcharge is unconstitutional. The Court affirmed that the Robin Hood Tax is incompatible with some principles of the Italian constitutional chart and that it is no longer justified by the economic conjuncture. The Court’s decision has determined the repeal of the Robin Hood tax with effect from the day after the constitutional decision (i.e., 12 February 2015). The repeal will not apply retroactively. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, according to the interpretation given by the Provincial Tax Court of Reggio Emilia (decision n. 217/3/2015) to the mentioned Constitutional Court decision, the inapplicability of the retroactivity should not apply to the pending cases but only to the defined ones. This interpretation should be in due course confirmed by the Regional Court and the Supreme Court in the higher levels of jurisdiction. Consequently, the aforementioned scenario could change again.

Regional tax on productive activities

Resident and nonresident companies are subject to a regional tax on productive activities (so-called IRAP) on their Italian-sourced income. The taxable basis of such tax is represented by the net value of production, which is calculated by subtracting the cost of production from the value of production and applying some adjustments provided by law.

IRAP is fixed at 3.9% rate, but each Italian region may vary such rate up to 1 basis points. Companies generating income in more than one region are required in the IRAP tax return to allocate their taxable base for IRAP purposes among the various regions and to pay the applicable tax to the local tax authorities.

Certain deductions are not allowed for IRAP purposes, such as the following:

- ▶ Certain extraordinary costs
- ▶ Credit losses
- ▶ Labor costs (although some specific deductions can be claimed for social security contributions paid and for some categories of hired employees)
- ▶ Interest expenses.

Groups of companies

Groups of companies may benefit from tax consolidation and consortium relief. These regimes allow the offsetting of profits and losses of members of a group of companies.

Tax consolidation

Italian tax consolidation rules provide two separate consolidation systems, depending on the companies involved. A domestic consolidation regime is available for Italian resident companies only. A worldwide consolidation regime, with slightly different conditions, is available for multinationals.

To qualify for a tax consolidation, more than 50% of the voting rights of each subsidiary must be owned, directly or indirectly, by the common Italian parent company. For domestic consolidation, the election is binding for three fiscal years. The tax consolidation includes 100% of the subsidiaries’ profits and losses, even if the subsidiary has other shareholders. Domestic consolidation may be limited to certain entities.

Tax losses realized before the election for tax consolidation can be used only by the company that incurred such losses. Tax consolidation also allows net interest expenses to be offset with spare EBITDA capacity of another group’s company.

Consortium relief

Italian corporations can elect for consortium relief if each shareholder holds more than 10% but less than 50% of the voting rights in the contemplated Italian transparent company. Under this election, the subsidiaries are treated as look-through entities for Italian tax purposes, and their profits and losses flow through to the parent company in proportion to the stake owned. Dividends distributed by an eligible transparent company are not taken into account for tax purposes in the hands of the recipient shareholders. As a result, Italian corporate shareholders of a transparent company are not subject to corporate income tax on 5% of the dividend received.

Transfer pricing

Italy imposes transfer pricing rules on transactions between related resident and nonresident companies. Under these rules, intra-group transactions must be carried out at arm's length. Italian transfer pricing rules do not apply to domestic transactions; however, under case law, grossly inadequate prices in these transactions can be adjusted on abuse-of-law grounds.

No penalties will be levied as a result of transfer pricing adjustments if the Italian company has complied with Italian transfer pricing documentation requirements, allowing verification of the consistency of the transfer prices set by the multinational enterprises with the arm's length principle. The following documentation is required:

- ▶ A "master file" with information regarding the multinational group
- ▶ Country-specific documentation, with information regarding the enterprise

Controlled foreign companies

Italian law provides for the following two categories of controlled foreign companies:

- ▶ Controlled companies
- ▶ Associated companies.

If an Italian company controls, directly or indirectly, a company established in a so-called "blacklist" jurisdiction, the company's share of the income of the controlled foreign company is attributed to the company, regardless of distribution. Such rules do not apply if the Italian resident company proves that the foreign company is not a wholly artificial arrangement for the purpose of obtaining an advantage; a mandatory Italian ruling must be requested for this purpose.

The Italian controlled foreign company regime also applies to non blacklisted companies with more than 50% of passive income and a tax rate below 50% of the IRES tax rate.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Depreciation and amortization

Depreciation at rates not exceeding those prescribed by a specific Ministerial Decree is calculated on the purchase price or cost of manufacturing. Incidental costs, such as customs duties and transport and installation expenses, are included in the depreciable base. Depreciation is computed on a straight-line basis. Rates for plant and machinery vary between 3% and 15%.

In general, buildings may be depreciated using a 3% annual rate; land may not be depreciated. If a building has not been purchased separately from the underlying land, for tax purposes the gross value must be divided between the non-depreciable land component and the depreciable building component. The land component may not be less than 20% of the gross value (increased to 30% for industrial buildings). As a result, the effective depreciation rate for buildings is 2.4%.

Purchased goodwill may be amortized over a period of 18 years. Know-how, copyrights and patents may be amortized over two fiscal years. The amortization period for trademarks is 18 years.

In relation to research expenses and advertising expenses, a company may choose that these expenses are either entirely deducted in the year incurred, or in equal installments in that year and in the four subsequent years.

Amortization allowances of other rights may be claimed with reference to the utilization period provided by the agreement.

Amortization and depreciation for oil and gas distribution and transportation companies

A particular amortization rule applies to companies operating in the gas and electricity distribution and transportation sectors. Such companies have to calculate the tax amortization of goods used for the above-mentioned activity at an amount not higher than the one resulting from dividing the purchase price by the useful life as established by the Italian Authority for Gas and Electricity.

Exploration costs

All costs related to oil and gas exploration in Italy are allowed as a deduction for the purposes of the statement of taxable income.

D. Incentives

Allowance for corporate equity

Italian companies and Italian branches of foreign companies are entitled to a corporate income tax deduction corresponding to the notional interest of any qualifying equity increase that occurred after the 2010 year-end, and this is known as an allowance for corporate equity (ACE). The ACE has been fixed by the Italian Government as follows:

- ▶ 4% for fiscal year 2014 (until 2013 3%)
- ▶ 4.5% for fiscal year 2015
- ▶ 4.75% for fiscal year 2016

A Ministerial Decree should issue the new notional interest applicable from fiscal year 2017 onward.

The qualifying equity increase must be computed on a yearly basis and corresponds to the positive difference between the equity as at the 2010 year-end and the equity as at the year-end of any following year, to the extent that it derives from the formation of profit reserves available for distribution (or for the setting-off of operating losses) and from cash contributions.

Any cash contribution triggers a qualifying equity increase from the moment of the actual injection (i.e., on a *pro rata temporis* basis) while any increase deriving from the creation of a profit reserve will count retroactively from the first day of the year – e.g., the creation of a reserve with 2010 profits upon a resolution taken during 2011 will count as an equity increase as of the first day of 2011.

The rule specifically provides that the 2010 year-end equity (i.e., the starting reference value to consider when computing any equity increase for ACE purposes) should not include the 2010 profit. It follows that Italian companies that have set aside 2010 profit will benefit from the 3% corporate income tax deduction on such amount. The relevant provisions also specify that the computation of the equity increase should be reduced by any capital distribution to the shareholders, any purchase of participations in controlled companies, and any purchase of going concerns.

In the case of companies incorporated after 2010, the notional deduction is computed on the entire equity resulting at the end of any relevant fiscal year, with no starting reference value.

Tax losses

For IRES purposes only, losses may be carried forward with no time limit and deducted from income for the following periods for a total amount equal to 80% of taxable income. Stricter rules apply to loss carryforwards if ownership of the company is transferred or if the company changes its main activity.

Losses incurred in the first three years of an activity may also be carried forward for an unlimited number of tax periods, but the limit of 80% of the taxable income does not apply.

Under certain circumstances, the company resulting from or surviving after a merger may carryforward unrelieved losses of the merged companies against its own profits for the unexpired portion of the loss carryforward periods.

E. Withholding taxes

Under Italian domestic law, a 26% withholding tax is imposed on loan interest paid to nonresidents. Lower rates may apply under double tax treaty protection.

A 30% withholding tax applies to royalties and certain fees paid to nonresidents. The taxable basis of royalties is usually reduced to 75% of the royalty paid (effective tax rate of 22.5% – 75% of the income, taxed at 30% withholding). Lower rates can apply under double tax treaties.

As a result of the implementation of EU Directive 2003/49/EC, withholding tax on interest payments and qualifying royalties paid between “associated companies” of different EU Member States is abolished. A company is an associated company of a second company if any of the following circumstances exist:

- ▶ The first company has a direct minimum holding of 25% of the voting rights of the second company
- ▶ The second company has a direct minimum holding of 25% of the voting rights of the first company
- ▶ A third company has a direct minimum holding of 25% of the voting rights of both the first company and the second company.

Under the EU directive, the shareholding must be held for an uninterrupted period of at least one year. If the one-year requirement is not satisfied as of the date of payment of the interest or royalties, the withholding agent must withhold taxes on interest or royalties. However, if the requirement is subsequently satisfied, the recipient of the payment may request a refund from the tax authorities

To qualify for the withholding tax exemption, the following additional conditions must be satisfied:

- ▶ The recipient must be a company from another EU Member State
- ▶ The income must be subject to tax in the recipient’s jurisdiction
- ▶ The recipient must be the beneficial owner of the payment

F. Financing considerations

Interest expenses

The deductibility of interest expenses is determined in accordance with an Earning before Income Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) test. Under this test, net interest expenses (i.e., interest expenses exceeding interest income) are deductible up to 30% of the EBITDA.

Interest expenses exceeding 30% of the EBITDA can be carried forward with no time limit. Spare EBITDA capacity is available for carryforward.

Foreign-exchange losses

Gains and losses resulting from mark to market of foreign-currency-denominated debts, credits and securities are neither taxable nor tax deductible. An exception is provided for those gains and losses hedged against exchange risk if the hedging is correspondingly marked to market at the exchange rate at the end of the fiscal year.

Capital Gains

Capital gains derived by resident companies or nonresident companies with a permanent establishment in Italy are subject to IRES and IRAP. Gains derived from sales of participations and extraordinary capital gains derived from transfers of going concerns are excluded from the IRAP taxable basis.

Capital gains on assets that have been held for at least three years can be taxed, at the taxpayer's option, entirely in the year of sale or spread in equal installments over a maximum period of five years.

Italian corporate taxpayers may benefit from a 95% participation exemption regime for capital gains derived in fiscal years beginning on or after 1 January 2008 from disposal of Italian or foreign shareholdings that satisfy all of the following conditions:

- ▶ The shareholding is classified in the first financial statements closed during the holding period as a long-term financial investment.
- ▶ The Italian parent company holds the shareholding for an uninterrupted period of at least 12 months before the disposal.
- ▶ The subsidiary actually carries on a business activity.
- ▶ The subsidiary is not resident in a tax haven.

If the conditions described above are not satisfied, capital gains on sales of shares are fully included in the calculation of the tax base for IRES purposes. Capital gains on investments that have been recorded in the last three financial statements as fixed assets may be taxed over a maximum period of five years.

Financial transaction tax

By approving the Financial Year 2013 Budget Law, the Italian Government introduced a new financial transaction tax (FTT) regime. This regime is applicable to the following:

- ▶ Cash equity transactions
- ▶ Derivatives
- ▶ High-frequency trading

Regarding cash equity transactions, the transfer of property of shares issued by Italian companies is subject to an FTT of 0.2% on the value of transaction. This rate is reduced to 0.1% in the case of transactions carried out in regulated markets. The FTT on cash equity transactions is due from the purchaser.

For derivatives, starting from 1 July 2013 a flat FTT – which amount nonetheless varies depending on the kind of the instrument and value of the contract – is due on all the operations on derivatives based on shares or other equity financial instruments.

Starting from 2013, financial operations performed in the Italian financial market are subject to a tax on “high-frequency trading” if related to shares, other equity financial instruments or derivatives. The tax is determined by applying the rate of 0.02% on the value of the orders cancelled or modified that in a daily market exceed the numerical threshold established by the implementing decree.

A FTT should not apply in certain cases specified in the implementing decree.

G. Indirect taxes

VAT

In Italy, VAT rates are currently:

- ▶ Standard rate – 22%. The standard rate applies to all supplies of goods or services, unless a specific provision allows a reduced rate or exemption.
- ▶ Reduced rate – 10%. This rate is applicable to certain services and products, such as certain food products, water, gas, electricity, admission to cultural services and the use of sports installations.
- ▶ Reduced rate – 4%. This rate is applicable to supplies of basic necessities and mass-market items, such as certain food products and pharmaceuticals.

For transactions relating to oil and gas activities the standard rate of 22% is generally applicable, while a 10% rate is applicable to the following cases:

- ▶ Gas, methane gas and liquefied petroleum gas to be directly put into the pipelines network in order to be delivered or to be supplied to enterprises using it to produce electricity (a statement concerning the destination of the gas by the purchaser is required).
- ▶ Crude oil, combustible oil and aromatic extracts used to generate, directly or indirectly, electricity, as long as power is not below 1kW; crude oil, combustible oil (except for fluid combustible oil for heating) and filter sands remnants from the processing of lubricant oil, where it contains more than 45% in weight of oil product, to be used directly as combustible in boilers and kilns; combustible oil used to produce directly tractor-strength fuel with engines fixed in industrial, agricultural-industrial plants, laboratories or building yards; and combustible oil other than the special ones to be converted into gas to be put in the civic grid system.
- ▶ Unrefined mineral oil arising from the primary distillation of raw natural oil or from the processing by plants that convert mineral oil in chemical products of a different nature, with a flash point lower than 55°C, where the distillate at 225°C is lower than 95% in volume and at 300°C is at least 90% in volume, to be converted to gas to be put into the civic grid system.

Excise duties

Italy implemented the EU Energy Taxation Directive 2003/96/EC providing for the application of certain excise duties on energy products. Such excises are dependent on the type of energy and its end use.

Local authorities (e.g., regions and municipalities) can levy additional charges on energy products. These vary widely and are very complex in nature due to the number of options that may apply, including different suppliers, place of consumption and the energy use.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the energy tax regime on oil is also regulated by Directive 2008/118/EC, implemented in Italy via Legislative Decree No. 48 issued on 29 March 2010.

The above-mentioned legislation assumes the following definitions:

- ▶ “Authorized warehouse keeper.” A natural or legal person authorized by the Customs Authority, in the course of his business, to produce, process, hold, receive or dispatch excise goods under a duty suspension arrangement in a tax warehouse (see Article 4(1) of Directive 2008/118/EC, implemented by Article 5(3) of Legislative Decree No. 504/95).
- ▶ “Tax warehouse.” A place where excise goods are produced, processed, held, received or dispatched under duty suspension arrangements by an authorized warehouse keeper in the course of his business. The management of a tax warehouse by an authorized warehouse keeper is subject to authorization by the Customs Authority (see Article 4(11) of Directive 2008/118/EC, implemented by Article 5(1) of Legislative Decree No. 504/95).
- ▶ “Registered consignor.” A natural or legal person authorized by the Customs Authority of the state of importation to only dispatch excise goods under a duty suspension arrangement upon their release for free circulation (see Article 4(10) of Directive 2008/118/EC, implemented by Article 9 of Legislative Decree No. 504/95).
- ▶ “Registered consignee.” A natural or legal person authorized by the Customs Authority to receive excise goods moving under a duty suspension arrangement (see Article 4(11) of Directive 2008/118/EC, implemented by Article 8(3) of Legislative Decree No. 504/95).

Even if the current legislation does not provide for a precise definition of “commercial warehouse” for energy products and of a “commercial warehouse keeper”, it is possible to affirm that the commercial warehouse is a place where excise goods are held since excise duties have been already paid (see Article 25 of Legislative Decree No. 504/95). Commercial warehouses need always to be registered, whatever the capacity of the warehouse.

All the aforementioned subjects need to be registered with the Customs Authority for their activities.

As for excise duties on energy products:

- ▶ The following products included within the combined nomenclature code CN 2710 19 are subject to taxation at the time of their release for consumption: kerosene (CN 2710 19 21 and CN 2710 19 25); gas oils (from CN 2710 19 41 to CN 2710 19 49); fuel oils (from CN 2710 19 61 to 2710 19 69)
- ▶ Natural gas (from CN 2711 11 00 to 2711 21 00) is treated similarly
- ▶ Other products included in the CN 2710 19 range are subject to taxation as long as they are used as motor fuel or as heating fuel (e.g., lubricant oils and bitumen).

Italian legislation provides for a specific tax rate with regard to products listed in the first and second bullet points immediately above. For others, the tax rate to be applied has to be identified "for equivalence," taking into consideration similar products.

The taxpayer is obliged to file a yearly excise return reporting information regarding the amount of natural gas dispatched. The tax return has to be filed by March 31 of the year following the one referred to in the tax return.

The following tables show the main excise duties on oil and gas.

Energy products

| Products | Propellant | Heating | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | Business use | Non-business use |
| Leaded/ unleaded petrol | €730.80 per 1,000 liters | N/A | N/A |
| Kerosene | €337.49 per 1,000 liters | €337.49 per 1,000 liters | €337.49 per 1,000 liters |
| Gas oil | €619.80 per 1,000 liters | €403.21 per 1,000 liters | €403.21 per 1,000 liters |
| Heavy fuel oil | | | |
| ATZ (<i>Alto Tenore di Zolfo</i>) with a sulfur content > 1% | N/A | Thick – €63.75351 per 1,000 kg Semi-fluid – €168.53796 per 1,000 kg Fluid – €189.49475 per 1,000 kg Very fluid – €461.93403 per 1,000 kg | Thick – €128.26775 per 1,000 kg Semi-fluid – €216.92378 per 1,000 kg Fluid – €234.65477 per 1,000 kg Very fluid – €465.15982 per 1,000 kg |
| BTZ (<i>Basso Tenore di Zolfo</i>) with a sulfur content < 1% | N/A | Thick – €31.38870 per 1,000 kg Semi-fluid – €144.26449 per 1,000 kg Fluid – €166.83934 per 1,000 kg Very fluid – €460.31597 per 1,000 kg | Thick – €64.2421 per 1,000 kg Semi-fluid – €168.90413 per 1,000 kg Fluid – €189.83664 per 1,000 kg Very fluid – €461.95830 per 1,000 kg |
| Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) | €267.77 per 1,000 kg (carburation use) €189.94 per 1,000 kg (use for heating) | | |

For the above-mentioned products, the tax obligation arises at the time of their production, including extraction from the subsoil where excise duty is applicable, or at the time they are imported. The excise duties are payable at the time of release for consumption of the product within the State.

As a general rule, the taxpayer is:

- ▶ The holder of the tax warehouse which the products are released from for consumption
- ▶ The registered recipient who receives the excisable products

or

- ▶ For the importation of goods subject to excise, the person liable to customs duties

There is an obligation for the taxpayer to electronically register any movement of energy products so that transactions can be monitored across Europe.

Lubricant oils and bitumen

| Products | Any Use |
|----------------|---|
| Lubricant oils | €787.81 per 1,000 kg (except for propellant or heating fuels) |
| Bitumen | €30.99 per 1,000 kg |

Lubricant oils (from CN 2710 19 81 to CN 2710 19 99) and bitumen (CN 2713 20 00) that are not used as motor fuel or as heating fuel (i.e., when burned or decomposed for gas production), even if they are not subject to excise according to Directive 96/2003/EC, are subject to a pure domestic energy tax regulated by Article 62 of Legislative Decree No. 504/95.

For lubricant oils and bitumen, the tax obligation arises at the time of supply to the final consumer. As a general rule, the taxpayer is the supplier with legal seat in Italy, duly registered with the Italian Customs Authority.

Natural gas

| | Propellant | | Heating |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| | Business use | Business use | Non-business use |
| Natural gas (North of Italy) | €0.00331 per m ³ | €0.012498 per m ³ | Annual consumptions: Up to 120 m ³ : €0.044 per m ³ from 120 m ³ to 480 m ³ : €0.175 per m ³ from 480 m ³ to 1,560 m ³ : €0.170 per m ³ exceeding 1,560 m ³ : €0.186 per m ³ |
| Natural gas (South of Italy) | €0.00331 per m ³ | €0.012498 per m ³ | Annual consumptions: Up to 120 m ³ : €0.038 per m ³ from 120 m ³ to 480 m ³ : €0.135 per m ³ from 480 m ³ to 1,560 m ³ : €0.120 per m ³ exceeding 1,560 m ³ : €0.150 per m ³ |

For natural gas, the tax obligation arises at the time of delivery to the final consumer.

As a general rule, the taxpayer is:

- ▶ The national entity billing the natural gas to final consumers
- ▶ The entity that purchases for its own use natural gas from EU countries or third countries, using network of pipelines or transmission facilities for the product
- ▶ The entity that purchases natural gas packaged in cylinders or other containers from EU countries or third countries
- ▶ The entity that extracts natural gas for its own use in the State

Stamp duties

There are no significant stamp duties.

Registration fees

There are no registration taxes specifically applicable to the oil and gas sector.

Other significant taxes

No carbon taxes on CO₂ emissions have been introduced yet. However, specific taxes on NO_x and SO₂ emissions are applicable. For such emission taxes, reference should be made to the EU Large Combustion Plant Directive 2001/80/EC, implemented in Italy by Law Decree 152/2006, to identify the eligible combustion plants.

The following table shows the relevant rates.

| Emission taxes | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| NO _x emission | €209 per ton/year |
| SO ₂ emission | €106 per ton/year |

H. Other

Local tax on real estate

A local tax on real estate (also called IMU) has been introduced by the Italian Government, to be calculated as 0.76% of the cadastral value revalued for certain multiples established by law. Oil and gas companies that own equipment or pipelines have to pay such tax on the value of their plant.

For equipment and pipelines directly used by the company for its main business, the taxable basis is represented by the historical cost sustained for the purchase or for the building, as reported in the financial statements.

Another local tax on real estate (also called TASI) has been recently introduced by the Italian Government, and is calculated as 0.1% of the same taxable basis of the IMU.

Tax treaty protection

Italy has entered into a number of double taxation treaties with other states.

Tonnage Tax

As from 1 January 2005, shipping companies may opt for tonnage taxation, which applies for 10 years and is available for "qualified" vessels (i.e., those registered in the Italian international shipping register with a tonnage higher than 100 tons). If the tonnage tax regime is not elected, the ordinary regime for these vessels states that the income attributable to them is reduced by a special deduction of 80%.

In addition, IRAP does not apply to qualified vessels.

Tonnage taxation depends on the net tonnage of the vessel, and is determined as follows:

| Tonnage | Daily fixed income per ton (€) |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0-1,000 | 0.0090 |
| 1,001-10,000 | 0.0070 |
| 10,001-25,000 | 0.0040 |
| More than 25,000 | 0.0020 |

Tonnage taxation applies to:

- a. Qualified owned vessels
- b. Qualified bareboat chartered-in vessels

- c. Chartered-in (also non-qualified) vessels, but only up to 50% of the tonnage of all the employed vessels (a+b+c). Income from chartered-in vessels with tonnage in excess of 50% is taxed under the ordinary rules¹
- d. Italian partnerships (similar to German KG legal structures)
- e. Qualified vessels employed in national traffic

In case d in the above list, although partnerships are tax-transparent entities, only partners are eligible to be taxed under the tonnage tax rules.

Capital gains and losses on transactions on qualified vessels are included in the fixed income of the table above.

Shipping groups should apply this taxation to every vessel owned by group companies, although the current understanding is that the law applies only to Italian companies/permanent establishments.

Under certain conditions, income from bareboat-out qualified vessels may not be subject to the tonnage tax but can be reduced by 80%.

Tax returns and tax assessment

Income tax returns must be filed by the end of the 9th month following the end of the company's fiscal year. Companies must make advance payments of their corporate and local tax liability equal to a specified percentage of the tax paid in the previous year.

A tax assessment could be issued by the Italian tax authorities within five years following the year subject to assessment, and the five-year period could be extended up to 10 years in some particular cases.

¹ This rule follows a ministerial interpretation dated 26 December 2007.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties ■ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|--|---|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime described here for Kazakhstan applies to almost all existing and new contracts since 1 January 2009. This regime is applicable to all contracts except production sharing agreements that became effective prior to 1 January 2009 and contracts specifically approved by the President of Kazakhstan.

The generally applicable fiscal regime for exploration and production (E&P) contracts in the petroleum industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), rent tax on export, bonuses and royalty-type taxation. Oil and gas production activities are ring-fenced from downstream activities and from each other (i.e., contract by contract) for tax purposes.

Mineral extraction tax

Mineral extraction tax (MET) is a volume-based, royalty-type tax applicable to crude oil, gas condensate and natural gas. Rates escalate depending on volume. Different tables of rates apply, depending on what is produced and whether it is exported or sold domestically. The rates are applied to production valued at world prices for export sale.

Bonuses

Subsurface users are expected to pay a signature bonus and a commercial discovery bonus.

Corporate income tax

CIT is applied to all companies at a rate of 20% of taxable income.

Rent tax on export

The tax base is determined as the value of the exported crude oil and gas condensate based on the same tax valuation as for MET. The tax rate ranges from 0% to 32%.

Excess profit tax

Excess profit tax (EPT) is calculated annually. The tax is paid at progressive rates on tranches of income that remain after deduction of CIT. The taxable tranches are derived by applying percentages of the deductible expenses.

Capital allowances

Capital allowances are available for CIT and EPT.

Investment incentives

Losses relating to subsurface use contracts can be carried forward for up to 10 years.

Crude oil export duty

Crude oil export duty is currently charged at a rate of US\$60 per ton and may be further revised.

B. Fiscal regime

In Kazakhstan, oil and gas E&P concessions are referred to as "subsurface use contracts." The taxes applicable to subsurface users are as follows:

| Applicable taxes | Rate |
|--|----------------------|
| Bonuses | Variable |
| MET | 0.5% to 18% |
| EPT | 0% to 60% |
| Payment for compensation of historical costs | Variable |
| Rent tax on export | 0% to 32% |
| Excise on crude oil and gas condensate | Variable |
| Land tax | Generally immaterial |
| Asset tax | 1.5% |
| Environmental fees | Variable |
| Other fees (e.g., fee for the use of radio frequency spectrum, fee for the use of navigable waterways) | Variable |
| Other taxes and payments | Variable |
| VAT | 12% |
| Crude oil export duty | US\$60 per ton |

Excess profit tax

EPT is calculated annually. The taxable object is the portion of net income (if any) that exceeds 25% of "deductions." The net income is calculated as aggregate annual income less deductions less CIT and branch profits tax, if any. For EPT purposes, "deductions" is the expenditure deductible for CIT purposes plus certain modifications such as the right to take accelerated depreciation for fixed assets. The tax is calculated by applying the following rates to the tranches of excess income, each tranche being allocated the marginal net income determined as a percentage of deductions until the limit of net income is reached.

| Net income allocation schedule for EPT, % of deductions | % for calculating marginal net income allocation for EPT | EPT rate (%) |
|---|--|--------------|
| Less than or equal to 25% | 25 | Not set |
| From 25% to 30% inclusively | 5 | 10 |
| From 31% to 40% inclusively | 10 | 20 |
| From 41% to 50% inclusively | 10 | 30 |
| From 51% to 60% inclusively | 10 | 40 |
| From 61% to 70% inclusively | 10 | 50 |
| Over 70% | Any excess | 60 |

Special rules apply to determine the taxable object if the hydrocarbon production is processed prior to sale – for example, by refining crude oil into gasoline or diesel. In such cases, it is unlikely that an EPT liability would actually arise.

Payment for compensation of historical costs

From 2009, the payment for compensation of historical costs has been included in the list of obligatory payments of a subsurface user and is a fixed payment of the subsurface user to compensate the State for geological survey and development costs of the contract territory incurred before the subsurface use contract is concluded.

The obligation to compensate for historical costs arises from the date when the confidentiality agreement is concluded between the subsurface user and the authorized state body on subsurface study and usage.

Mineral extraction tax

MET applies to crude oil, gas condensate and natural gas. The taxable object is the value of production. For export sales, the value is based on world prices without deductions. The “world price” of crude oil and gas condensate in this context is determined as the arithmetic mean of daily quotations for each of the Urals Mediterranean (Urals Med) or Dated Brent (Brent Dtd) brands in the tax period on the basis of information published in the *Platts Crude Oil Marketwire* issued by The McGraw-Hill Companies or, if that source does not provide price information for those brands, using the Petroleum Argus source. The “world price” for natural gas is determined as the arithmetic mean of daily quotations in the tax period on the basis of information published in the *Platts Crude Oil Marketwire*; but if that source does not provide price information for natural gas, the Petroleum Argus source should be used.

The rates of tax are determined by the annual volume of production at the rates shown in the table below. Different rates apply to crude oil and gas condensate on the one hand and natural gas on the other, as shown.

| Volume of annual oil production, including gas condensate, for each calendar year (thousand tons) | MET |
|---|------|
| | 2015 |
| Up to 250 inclusively | 5% |
| Up to 500 inclusively | 7% |
| Up to 1,000 inclusively | 8% |
| Up to 2,000 inclusively | 9% |
| Up to 3,000 inclusively | 10% |
| Up to 4,000 inclusively | 11% |
| Up to 5,000 inclusively | 12% |

| Volume of annual oil production, including gas condensate, for each calendar year (thousand tons) | MET |
|---|------|
| | 2015 |
| Up to 7,000 inclusively | 13% |
| Up to 10,000 inclusively | 15% |
| Over 10,000 | 18% |

These rates are reduced by 50% if the production is processed domestically in Kazakhstan either by the producer or by a purchaser. There are special rules for the calculation of tax bases in such cases.

In the case of natural gas that is exported, a flat rate of 10% applies. If the gas is sold to the domestic Kazakhstan market, rates are reduced to between 0.5% and 1.5% depending on the level of annual production.

Bonuses

Subsurface users are expected to pay two types of bonus:

- ▶ Signature bonus
- ▶ Commercial discovery bonus

Signature bonus

The signature bonus is a lump-sum amount paid by a subsurface user for the right to use the subsurface.

For oil exploration contracts, the bonus is a fixed amount of 2,800 MCI,¹ which is equivalent to KZT5,549,600. For oil production contracts, where reserves have not been approved, the bonus is a fixed amount of 3,000 MCI, which is equivalent to KZT5,946,000. Where reserves have been approved, the bonus is calculated by a formula that applies a rate of 0.04% to the approved reserves and 0.01% to the provisionally approved reserves, but not less than 3,000 MCI. For production contracts, the signature bonus should not be less than the amount of the commercial discovery bonus.

Commercial discovery bonus

The commercial discovery bonus is a fixed payment paid by subsurface users when a commercial discovery is made on the contract territory.

The basis for calculation of the commercial discovery bonus is defined as the value of the extractable minerals duly approved by the competent State authorities. The value of the mineral resources is determined using the market price established at the International (London) Petroleum Exchange in Platts. The rate of the commercial discovery bonus is fixed at 0.1% of the value of proven extractable resources.

Corporate income tax

CIT is applied to all companies at the rate of 20% of taxable income previous years. Taxable income is calculated as the difference between aggregate annual income (after certain adjustments) and statutory deductions.

Deductions

All expenses incurred by a taxpayer in carrying out activities that are directed at the receipt of income are deductible for the purpose of determining taxable income. Examples of expenses that are allowed for deduction can be found below (but this list is not exhaustive):

- ▶ Interest expense (within limits)
- ▶ Contributions to the decommissioning fund; the procedure for making such contributions and the amount to be established in the subsurface use contract

¹ The monthly calculation index (MCI) is KZT1,982 as of 1 January 2015.

-
- ▶ Expenditure on geological studies and exploration and preparatory operations for the extraction of mineral resources
 - ▶ Expenditure on R&D and scientific and technological works

Geological studies and exploration, and preparatory operations for production of useful minerals, include the following: appraisal, preparatory work, general and administrative expenses, and costs associated with the payment of the bonuses. These costs, together with expenditure on the purchase of fixed assets and intangible assets (expenditure incurred by a taxpayer while acquiring the right to geological exploration, development or extraction of mineral resources), form a depreciation group that is separate from fixed assets for tax purposes.

The costs may be deducted by declining-balance depreciation at a rate not exceeding 25%. Similar expenses incurred after the separate depreciation group has been formed (such as expenses incurred after depreciation starts) are included into the group to increase its balance value if, under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), such expenses are capitalized into the value of assets already included in the group.

Depreciation of the pool of such expenses begins when production commences after commercial discovery. In the case of a farm-in, the subsurface user is allowed to capitalize the cost of acquiring a subsurface use right. Upon farm-out, the subsurface user is liable for tax on capital gains.

The following are examples of other deductible expenses:

- ▶ Expenses incurred under a joint operating agreement based on information provided by the operator
- ▶ Business trip and representative expenses (per diems are deducted in full, based on the taxpayer's internal policy, whereas representative expenses are deductible in the amount up to 1% of payroll)
- ▶ Net foreign-exchange loss when a foreign-exchange loss exceeds a foreign-exchange gain
- ▶ Expenses on social payments to employees
- ▶ Insurance premiums, except for insurance premiums paid according to accumulative insurance contracts
- ▶ Amounts paid as redemption of doubtful payables previously written off as income
- ▶ Doubtful receivables not redeemed within three years
- ▶ Taxes paid (except for the taxes already excluded prior to determining aggregate annual income, income tax paid in Kazakhstan and in any other states, and EPT)
- ▶ Fines and penalties, except for those payable to the state budget
- ▶ Maintenance or current repair expenses
- ▶ Capital repair (within the statutory limits)
- ▶ Expenditure actually incurred by a subsurface user with respect to training Kazakhstan personnel and the development of the social sphere of rural areas, within amounts stipulated in subsurface use contracts
- ▶ The Tax Code also provides for certain expenses to be deducted directly from taxable income up to 3% of the taxable income, such as sponsorship aid and charitable contributions (subject to certain conditions)

The depreciation regime for fixed assets is discussed in Section C.

Dividends

Dividends distributed domestically (i.e., by a local subsidiary to a local parent company) are tax exempt. Dividends paid abroad by subsurface users are subject to withholding tax (WHT) as discussed in Section E. Branches are subject to an equivalent branch profit tax at the same rates but applied to net profit after deduction of CIT.

Rent tax on export

The rent tax on export is paid by legal entities and individuals that export crude oil and gas condensate. The tax base is calculated as the volume of the exported crude oil multiplied by the world price of crude oil and gas condensate. The world price is determined as the arithmetic mean of daily quotations for each of the Urals Med or Brent Dtd brands in the tax period on the basis of information published in *Platts Crude Oil Marketwire* issued by The McGraw-Hill Companies or, if that source does not provide price information for those brands, using the Petroleum Argus source. The tax rates applied to exported crude oil and gas condensate vary as shown in the next table.

| Market price (US\$/bbl) | Rate |
|-------------------------|------|
| US\$20/bbl inclusively | 0 |
| US\$30/bbl inclusively | 0 |
| US\$40/bbl inclusively | 0 |
| US\$50/bbl inclusively | 7 |
| US\$60/bbl inclusively | 11 |
| US\$70/bbl inclusively | 14 |
| US\$80/bbl inclusively | 16 |
| US\$90/bbl inclusively | 17 |
| US\$100/bbl inclusively | 19 |
| US\$110/bbl inclusively | 21 |
| US\$120/bbl inclusively | 22 |
| US\$130/bbl inclusively | 23 |
| US\$140/bbl inclusively | 25 |
| US\$150/bbl inclusively | 26 |
| US\$160/bbl inclusively | 27 |
| US\$170/bbl inclusively | 29 |
| US\$180/bbl inclusively | 30 |
| US\$190/bbl inclusively | 32 |
| US\$200/bbl inclusively | 32 |

The tax period for rent tax on export is a calendar quarter.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

For tax depreciation purposes, fixed assets are split into four groups. Assets are depreciated at the maximum depreciation rates set out in the table below.

| Group number | Type of fixed assets | Maximum depreciation rate (%) |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| I | Buildings, structures (except for oil and gas wells and transmission devices) | 10 |
| II | Machinery and equipment, except for machinery and equipment of oil and gas production | 25 |
| III | Office machinery and computers | 40 |

| Group number | Type of fixed assets | Maximum depreciation rate (%) |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|
| IV | Fixed assets not included in other groups, including oil and gas wells, transmission devices, machinery and equipment for oil and gas production | 15 |

“Fixed assets, among other things, include:

- ▶ Fixed assets, investments in real estate, intangible assets and biological assets recorded in accordance with IFRS and Kazakhstan accounting standards
- ▶ Assets with a useful life exceeding one year, manufactured and/or acquired by concessionaires under concession agreements
- ▶ Assets with a useful life exceeding one year that are objects of social infrastructure projects
- ▶ Assets with a useful life exceeding one year that are intended for use in activities directed at the receipt of income and received by a fiduciary for fiduciary management under a fiduciary management agreement, or on the basis of another document, which is a basis on which fiduciary management arises

The following items, among other things, are not considered as fixed assets:

- ▶ Intangible assets with an indefinite useful life
- ▶ Assets commissioned under investment contracts concluded before 1 January 2009

Subsurface users have the right to use double depreciation rates in the year of commissioning “newly created” fixed assets, provided they will be used in their contract activities for three years.

Expenses actually incurred in the use, repair, maintenance and liquidation of fixed assets are defined as “subsequent costs” and are deductible in the tax period when they are actually incurred.

D. Investment incentives

Losses

Losses pertaining to subsurface use contracts may be carried forward for up to 10 years. Tax losses may not be carried back.

Tax holidays

Kazakhstan does not have a tax holiday regime for subsurface users.

Investment tax preferences

Certain tax preferences are available for subsurface users subject to the Government’s approval and limited to contracts concluded between 2009 and 2012.

E. Withholding taxes

In the absence of a permanent establishment in Kazakhstan of a nonresident company, Kazakhstan withholding tax (WHT) applies to a nonresident’s income derived from Kazakhstan sources. The general WHT rate is 20%, except for dividends, capital gains and interest income (15%), income from international transportation services and insurance premiums payable in accordance with reinsurance risk agreements (5%) and insurance premiums (10%).

Further, double tax treaties provide either an exemption from Kazakhstan WHT or application of reduced WHT rates. Generally, interest and royalty rates in treaties are 10%, and dividends 5%, provided certain conditions are met.

Any type of income payable to a nonresident registered in a country with a preferential tax regime is subject to WHT at a rate of 20%. The list of such countries is approved by Governmental decree.

F. Financing considerations

From 2012, a 4:1 debt-to-equity ratio limit has applied on both Kazakhstan and non-Kazakhstan sourced financing obtained from, or guaranteed by, a related party or obtained from an entity registered in a tax haven. Interest on debt-to-finance construction should be capitalized.

G. Transactions

Any capital gains derived from a sale of an equity interest in a subsurface use contract, or in a Kazakhstan resident company or a nonresident company, may give rise to Kazakhstan-sourced income.

The gains realized by nonresidents and not associated with a permanent establishment in Kazakhstan are subject to WHT in Kazakhstan at 15%, unless specifically exempt from tax according to Kazakhstan domestic tax law or by virtue of an applicable double taxation treaty.

The capital gain from the sale of shares or participating interests in a resident or nonresident legal entity or consortium may be exempt from Kazakhstan taxation provided that the following conditions are simultaneously met:

- ▶ The shares or participating interests have been owned by the taxpayer for more than three years
- ▶ The legal entity (consortium) in which the shares or participating interests are being sold is not a subsurface user
- ▶ No more than 50% of the asset value of the legal entity (or consortium) in which the shares or participating interests are being sold consists of the property of an entity that is a subsurface user

The above exemption is inapplicable if the capital gain is made by a nonresident registered in a country with a preferential tax regime and without a registered presence in Kazakhstan. Such capital gains are subject to WHT at a rate of 20%, unless the applicable double tax treaty provides for an exemption.

In the case of a farm-in, the subsurface user may capitalize the cost of acquiring a subsurface use right. Upon farm-out, the subsurface user is liable for tax on capital gains.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Some old contracts benefit from grandfathered customs exemptions; however, new contracts do not. Moreover, imports from Customs Union countries (Russia and Belarus) are exempt from import duties, and imports are not subject to customs clearance.

The customs legislation provides for a temporary import regime for goods that will be re-exported. It either exempts goods and equipment from customs duties and import VAT or it allows for partial payment provided the goods and equipment are re-exported.

VAT

An EU-style VAT applies in Kazakhstan. The VAT rate has reduced from 20% in the late 1990s to 12% currently.

Crude oil, natural gas and gas condensate sold in the territory of Kazakhstan are subject to 12% VAT. Export sales of crude oil, natural gas and gas condensate are subject to zero-rated VAT.

Under the Tax Code, international transportation services (including the transportation of oil and gas via trunk pipelines) are subject to zero-rated VAT. Imports of goods and equipment from Customs Union countries and other countries are subject to 12% import VAT. Special tax administration rules apply to import VAT.

Place of supply rule

The applicability of Kazakhstan VAT is determined based on the deemed place of supply of a given supply. It is important to note that, under the place of supply rules, a service may be physically performed outside Kazakhstan but deemed to be supplied inside Kazakhstan for VAT purposes. Examples of services taxed in this way include a supply of a service related to immovable property located in Kazakhstan, or a consulting service performed outside Kazakhstan for a customer inside Kazakhstan. If the place of supply is deemed to be outside Kazakhstan, the underlying supply is not subject to Kazakhstan VAT.

The rules determining the place of supply are generally as follows:

- ▶ For goods:
 - ▶ The place where transportation commences if goods are transported or mailedOr
 - ▶ The place where goods are transferred to the purchaser (but it is not clear whether this involves a physical transfer or a transfer of rights)
- ▶ For works and services:
 - ▶ The place where immovable property is located for works and services directly related to such property
 - ▶ The place where works and services are actually carried out for works and services related to movable property
 - ▶ The place of business or any other activity of the customer for the following works and services: transfer of rights to use intellectual property, consulting services, audit services, engineering services, design services, marketing services, legal services, accounting services, attorney's services, advertising services, data provision and processing services, rent of movable property (except for rent of motor vehicles), supply of personnel, communication services and others
 - ▶ Otherwise, the place of business or any other activity of the service provider

Sales of goods or services that are merely auxiliary to a principal sale are deemed to take place wherever the principal sale takes place – no definition of auxiliary sales is provided in the tax legislation.

Export duties

In May 2008, Kazakhstan introduced a new customs export duty on crude oil at the rate of US\$109.91 per ton. It is intended that the rate will be adjusted periodically, *inter alia*, in line with movements in world market prices. At the present time, the rate is US\$60 per ton effective from 19 March 2015.

Stamp duties

No stamp duty applies in Kazakhstan.

Registration fees

Insignificant fixed fees apply.

I. Other

Social tax

A social tax is paid by employers for each employee at the rate of 11% on the total cost of employing the individual (including benefits in kind).

Individual income tax

Employees pay individual income tax at 10% on practically all income.

Contract transfers

The Kazakhstan State has a pre-emption right on transfers of subsurface use contracts or entities that own them directly or indirectly. The State frequently exercises this right, often taking 50% of the interest transferred.

Transfer pricing

From 2009, a new transfer pricing law was introduced and is aggressively applied.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|--|---|

A. At a glance

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – standard rate 30%; other rates apply for nonresident companies and newly formed companies
- ▶ Branch tax rate – 37.5%
- ▶ Tax loss carryback – this applies only to a petroleum company that has ceased operations. If a contractor incurs a loss from a contract area where he has ceased operations, the loss can be carried back as a deduction against income to a maximum of three previous years of income from the year of income in which the loss arose and the operations ceased. However, the contractor will be required to apply to the Commissioner to treat the loss as such.
- ▶ Tax loss carryforward – losses incurred by a contractor in a contract area shall be carried forward and allowed as a deduction against income in the next following years until the loss is fully deducted or the operations in the contract area cease.

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Kenya is fairly similar to the regime that applies to other industries. It consists of CIT, VAT, import duty and royalties. It includes some tax exemptions on import duties and relief on VAT for exploration companies. Under CIT, however, a special regime applies for petroleum companies.

This is guided by the 9th Schedule to the Income Tax Act on "Taxation of Extractive Industries." The schedule guides the taxation of both petroleum and mining operations in Kenya. It became effective from 1 January 2015.

The Schedule is applicable to the following persons:

- ▶ Licensee, a person who has been issued with, or granted a mining right.
- ▶ Contractor, a person with whom the Government has concluded a petroleum agreement, including any successor or assignee of the person.
- ▶ Subcontractor, means a person supplying services other than a person supplying services as an employee to:
 - a. A licensee in respect of mining operations undertaken by the licensee or
 - b. A contractor in respect of petroleum operations undertaken by the contractor

The National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) is a limited liability company incorporated by the Government of Kenya for the development of the exploration, prospecting and production of oil and gas. The company acts on behalf of the Government in the coordination of exploration activities. It operates both upstream and downstream. The cabinet secretary in charge of energy and petroleum is mandated to sign production sharing contracts (PSCs) on behalf of the Government.

Corporate income tax

The taxable income of a petroleum company is the value of the production to which the company is entitled under a petroleum agreement in that year of income. A resident corporation is subject to CIT on its worldwide income at the rate of 30%. A nonresident corporation is taxed on income derived or accrued from Kenya at the rate of 37.5%. However, a new company is taxed at a reduced rate of 20% or 25% for a period of five years, or 27% for a period of three years, if at least 40%, 30% or 20% of the issued share capital of the company is listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange, respectively.

CIT is imposed on net taxable income. Taxable income is determined based on audited financial statements and is calculated as gross revenue less tax-deductible expenses and other qualifying expenditures under the Income Tax Act Cap. 470. Allowable deductions include expenses incurred wholly and exclusively in the production of income, as well as those deductions under the special regime for the taxation of petroleum companies as provided under the 9th Schedule to the Income Tax Act.

Ring-fencing

Ring-fencing rules apply. Expenditure incurred by a contractor in undertaking petroleum operations in a contract area during a year of income can be allowed only against income derived by the contractor from petroleum operations in the contract area during the year.

Hedging Transactions

Hedging transactions entered into by a contractor to manage commodity price risk are treated as specified sources of income unless the transaction entered has an annual turnover of less than 10 million shillings and is approved by the Commissioner.

Capital gains or losses

Capital gains on the disposal of depreciable assets are treated as business income for the corporate entity and are taxed at the normal corporate income tax rate of 30% for resident corporations and 37.5% for nonresident corporations.

Taxation of the consideration for disposal of petroleum interest/agreement or information:

A consideration for the assignment of a right is treated as a receipt for a petroleum company and taxed accordingly. Only the net gain from a disposal in a petroleum interest is subject to tax. The net gain is computed as the consideration for the disposal reduced by the cost of the interest. Where the interest transferred derives less than 20% of its value directly or indirectly from an interest in a petroleum agreement, the gain is not taxable. Where the interest transferred derives a value of more than 50% directly or indirectly, the entire gain from the transfer is taxable in Kenya. Where the interest transferred derives a value of between 20% to 49% directly or indirectly, the gain which is subject to tax in Kenya is computed using the formula: $A*B/C$

where:

“A” is the net gain

“B” is the value of interest derived directly or indirectly from an interest in petroleum agreement in Kenya; and

“C” is the total value of the interest.

Functional currency

Accounting income must be reported in the local currency, namely Kenyan shillings (KES).

Transfer pricing

There are transfer pricing rules and guidelines that should be adhered to by all companies that have nonresident related-party transactions.

Indirect transfers of interest

A contractor is required to notify the Commissioner immediately in case of change in the underlying ownership of a contractor of 10% or more. Where the interest is disposed by a nonresident, the contractor shall be liable, as the tax agent of the nonresident person, for tax payable as a result of the disposal.

Other petroleum taxes

The following taxes are payable under PSCs, with the applicable rates negotiated at the time of signing each PSC:

- ▶ Signature bonus
- ▶ Surface fees
- ▶ Training fee
- ▶ Windfall profits
- ▶ Profit oil – to be shared, taken and disposed of separately by the Government and contractor according to increments of profit oil

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

For a petroleum company, capital expenditures incurred with respect to each development area is tax deductible. Other capital expenditures are pooled into classes and granted wear and tear allowances at the applicable rates.

Deductibility of exploration expenditure

A contractor is allowed a deduction for exploration expenditure in the year of income in which the contractor incurred the expenditure. The rate of depreciation for machinery first used to undertake exploration operations is 100%.

Deductibility of development expenditure

Development expenditure is deductible over a period of five years at the later of the dates when expenditure was incurred, or production commenced. The allowable deduction is apportioned accordingly in the year in which production commences.

D. Deductibility of interest (thin capitalization threshold)

Interest expense for petroleum companies is to be restricted where the Debt: Equity (D:E) ratio exceeds 2:1.

E. Incentives

Exploration

Expenditure of a capital nature on exploration qualifies for deduction in the year of income in which it is incurred.

Escrow account

The Income Tax Act allows establishment of an escrow account/rehabilitation fund for purpose of decommissioning/rehabilitation of petroleum operations. Contributions to an escrow account/rehabilitation fund as well as expenditure incurred under an approved decommissioning/rehabilitation plan will be allowed as a deduction. Amount accumulated in or withdrawn from an escrow account/rehabilitation fund to meet expenditure under the approved decommissioning/

rehabilitation plan is exempt from tax. However, any surplus amount upon completion of the decommissioning/rehabilitation plan or amount withdrawn and returned to the contractor is taxable as gains or profits from business in the year in which the amount was returned.

Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure expenditure (e.g., public schools, hospitals) will be tax deductible subject to approval by the Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury.

Tax holiday

Kenya does not have a tax holiday regime, other than for companies operating in export processing zones.

Tax losses

For petroleum companies, income tax losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

The amount of loss from petroleum operations can be carried backward as a deduction against income to a maximum of three previous years of income from the year of income in which the loss arose and the operations ceased. However, the contractor will be required to apply to the Commissioner to treat the loss as such.

F. Withholding taxes

Below are the withholding tax rates that are applicable to petroleum companies:

| Description | Rate |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Interest | 15% |
| Dividends | 10% |
| Royalties or natural resource | 20% |
| Management/professional fees | 12.5% |

Withholding tax on "service fees"

The rate of withholding tax on service fees paid by a contractor to a non-resident sub-contractor will attract withholding tax at a rate of 5.625%.

Sale of property or shares

The amount or value of the consideration from the sale of property or shares in respect to oil companies, mining companies or mineral prospecting companies is subject to withholding tax at the rates of 10% and 20% when made to residents and nonresidents, respectively. The tax deducted from residents' income is final, except in the case of the assignment of rights involving an oil company.

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax and exchange control regulations do not apply. Repatriation of branch profits can be effected freely after payment of statutory taxes.

G. Transactions

Books, accounts and audits

A contractor must keep books and accounts in accordance with the accounting procedures and submit to the Cabinet Secretary for energy and petroleum a statement of those accounts not more than three months after the end of each calendar year.

At the request of the Cabinet Secretary, the contractor must appoint an independent auditor of international standing, approved by the Government, to audit the books and accounts of the contractor annually and report thereon, with the cost of such audit borne by the contractor.

The Government may audit the books and accounts within two calendar years of the period to which they relate and is required to complete that audit within one calendar year.

Farm-out transactions

With effect from 1 January 2015, farm-out transactions will be taxed on the gain where the net gain will form part of the taxable income of the transferor and will be taxed at the corporation tax rates.

If interest is transferred at the time of the agreement, the consideration shall not include value of any work undertaken by the transferee on behalf of the contractor. If the transfer of interest is deferred until some or all of the work undertaken by the transferee is completed, the amount payable to be included in the taxable income of the contractor as gains or profits from business excludes the value of the work undertaken by the transferee on behalf of the contractor.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

Taxable supplies – but excluding motor vehicles imported or purchased for direct and exclusive use by companies engaged in exploring and prospecting for oil and gas – are exempt from VAT.

Import duties

All goods imported into Kenya are subject to customs import taxes, unless specifically exempt. The general rate ranges from 0% to 25% of the customs value of the imported goods. However, special exemptions apply to companies engaged in the exploration and prospecting of oil and gas for machinery and other items necessary for the oil and gas business.

Excise duties

Excise duty is levied on some goods manufactured in Kenya, including petroleum products.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty applies to specified transactions. It is imposed under different heads of duty, the most significant being a conveyance duty on a transfer of property (e.g., land, buildings, certain rights, goodwill).

I. Other

Pay as you earn

Resident individuals, including expatriates, are taxed on their worldwide income based on the resident tax rates, while nonresidents pay tax on Kenyan-sourced income only. The resident minimum tax rate is 10%, and the maximum rate is 30%. Employers have the responsibility to withhold and pay the tax due from employees' entire remuneration on a monthly basis. Employees are required to file annual returns.

National Social Security Fund

NSSF is a statutory contribution for both the employee (including expatriates) and the employer. Each contributes KES 200 per month. However, the Government of Kenya enacted the NSSF Act No. 45 on 24 December 2013 to replace the NSSF Act (Cap. 258). The Act was to be effective 31 May 2014 but its implementation was halted by a court injunction. Upon implementation, contributions in the first year will range from Kshs. 360 to Kshs. 1,080 per month.

National Health Insurance Fund

This is a statutory health insurance for which employees are required to contribute. Depending on the salary scale, contributions range from Kshs. 80 to Kshs. 320 per month. However, there is a proposal to increase the rates

to a minimum of Kshs. 150 and a maximum of Kshs.2,000, depending on the salary scale of the individual. The effective date of the new rates is not yet determined.

Double tax treaties

Kenya has double tax treaties with Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Norway, Sweden, the UK and Zambia.

Taxation of petroleum service subcontractors

A distinction is made between taxation of subcontractors with a PE in Kenya and those without a PE. Sub-contractors without a PE are subject to withholding tax while those with a PE in Kenya are taxed on business profits.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

There are no separate tax laws or regulations in Kuwait governing the oil and gas sector. Foreign (i.e., non-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)) companies are therefore subject to the corporate income tax (CIT) law as amended by Law No. 2 of 2008 and Executive Bylaws (the Bylaws) thereto.

For fiscal periods commencing after 3 February 2008, the principal regime comprises the following:

- ▶ Royalties – 15%¹
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contract – None
- ▶ Income tax rate – 15%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Investment incentives – A number of incentives are offered

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

There are no separate tax laws or regulations in Kuwait governing the oil and gas sector.

Foreign “bodies corporate” are subject to tax in Kuwait if they carry on a trade or business in Kuwait, either directly or through an “agent” (see below), in the islands of Kubr, Qaru and Umm al Maradim, or in the offshore area of the partitioned neutral zone under the control and administration of Saudi Arabia.

Kuwaiti-registered companies wholly owned by Kuwaitis, and companies incorporated in GCC countries that are wholly owned by GCC citizens, are not subject to income tax. The members of the GCC are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The term “body corporate” refers to an association that is formed and registered under the laws of any country or state and is recognized as having a legal existence entirely separate from that of its individual members. Partnerships fall within this definition.

¹ Royalties are considered in the same manner as normal business income and are subject to tax at 15%.

Law No. 2 of 2008 includes a definition of an agent. Under this definition, an agent is a person authorized by the principal to carry out business, trade or any activities stipulated in Article 1 of the law or to enter into binding agreements with third parties on behalf and for the account of the person's principal. A foreign principal conducting business in Kuwait through an agent (as defined in the preceding sentence) is subject to tax in Kuwait.

Foreign companies conducting a trade or business in Kuwait are subject to income tax under Amiri Decree No. 3 of 1955. Foreign companies conducting a trade or business in the islands of Kubr, Qaru and Umm al Maradim are subject to tax in Kuwait under Law No. 23 of 1961.

Foreign companies conducting a trade or business in the offshore area of the partitioned neutral zone under the control and administration of Saudi Arabia are subject to tax in Kuwait on 50% of the taxable profit under Law No. 23 of 1961. In practice, the tax department computes the tax on the total income of the taxpayer and expects that 50% of such tax should be settled in Kuwait. Many taxpayers are currently contesting this practice. In addition, certain recently awarded contracts for work in the offshore area of the partitioned neutral zone refer only to taxation in Saudi Arabia, giving rise to the impression that, from a Saudi Arabian perspective, the entire income from these contracts may be taxable in Saudi Arabia. The Kuwait tax authorities, on the other hand, expect that 50% of the tax should be settled in Kuwait, as described above. This has given rise to a degree of ambiguity, and potential taxpayers are advised to consult with tax advisers in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on this matter.

Amiri Decree No. 3 of 1955 and Law No. 23 of 1961 differ primarily with respect to tax rates.

Foreign companies can operate in Kuwait either through an agent or as a minority shareholder in a locally registered company. In principle, the method of calculating tax is the same for companies operating through an agent and for minority shareholders. For minority shareholders, tax is levied on the foreign company's share of profits (whether or not distributed by the Kuwaiti company) plus any amounts receivable for interest, royalties, technical services and management fees.

Tax rates

Under Law No. 2 of 2008, the tax rate is set at a flat rate of 15%, effective for fiscal years beginning after 3 February 2008. For the fiscal years commencing prior to 3 February 2008, the tax rates shown in the table below were applicable under Amiri Decree No. 3 of 1955.

| Taxable profits | | Rate (%) |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------|
| Exceeding (KWD) | Not exceeding (KWD) | |
| 0 | 5,250 | 0 |
| 5,250 | 18,750 | 5 |
| 18,750 | 37,500 | 10 |
| 37,500 | 56,250 | 15 |
| 56,250 | 75,000 | 20 |
| 75,000 | 112,500 | 25 |
| 112,500 | 150,000 | 30 |
| 150,000 | 225,000 | 35 |
| 225,000 | 300,000 | 40 |
| 300,000 | 375,000 | 45 |
| 375,000 | – | 55 |

The tax rates under Law No. 23 of 1961 are shown in the next table.

| Taxable profits | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------|
| Exceeding (KWD) | Not exceeding (KWD) | Rate (%) |
| 0 | 500,000 | 20 |
| 500,000 | - | 57 |

Kuwaiti income tax is not progressive; consequently, total profits are taxed at the appropriate rate from the above table. If taxable profit is only marginally higher than the previous limit, tax is calculated by adding the actual excess to the amount payable on the previous limit.

For example, on KWD38,000 of taxable income derived in Kuwait, the tax is (KWD37,500 at 10% = KWD3,750) plus KWD500, resulting in a total tax of KWD4,250.

Capital gains

Capital gains on the sale of assets and shares by foreign shareholders are treated as normal business profits and are subject to tax at the rates stated above.

Article 1 of Law No. 2 and Article 8 of the Bylaws provide for a possible tax exemption for profits generated from dealing in securities on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE), whether directly or through investment portfolios. However, no further clarifications have been provided regarding the definitions of "profits" and "dealing."

Other significant taxes

The following are the other significant taxes:

| Nature of tax | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| Social security contributions; levied with respect to Kuwaiti employees and employees who are citizens of other GCC countries only; payable monthly by employers and employees. From Kuwaiti employees, social security is payable on a monthly salary up to KWD2,250 | |
| Employer | 11.5 |
| Employee | 8 |
| (Different monetary ceilings and percentages are prescribed for citizens of other GCC countries who are employed in Kuwait) | |
| Contribution to the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS); contribution payable by Kuwait shareholding companies; contribution levied on profits after transfer to the statutory reserve and offset by any loss carryforwards | 1 |
| National Labor Support Tax; imposed annually on the profits derived from activities in Kuwait by a Kuwaiti company listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange; Ministerial Resolution No. 24 of 2006 provides rules for the application of the tax | 2.5 |
| Zakat; imposed on annual net profits of public and closed Kuwaiti shareholding companies; Ministerial Order No. 58 of 2007 provides rules for the application of Zakat | 1 |

Administration

The calendar year is generally used for Kuwaiti tax purposes, but a taxpayer may ask in writing for permission to prepare financial statements for a year ending on a date other than 31 December. For the first or last period of trading or conducting a business, a taxpayer may be allowed to file a tax declaration covering up to 18 months.

Accounting records should be kept in Kuwait, and it is normal practice for the tax authorities to insist on inspecting the books of account (which may be in English) and supporting documentation before agreeing to the tax liability.

The tax authorities also have issued notifications restating the requirement for taxpayers to abide by Article 13 and Article 15 of the Executive Bylaws of Law No. 2 of 2008, which relate to the preparation of books and accounting records and the submission of information along with the tax declaration. Article 13 requires the taxpayer to enclose the prescribed documents – e.g., trial balance, list of subcontractors, list of fixed assets, inventory register – along with the tax declaration. Article 15 requires the preparation of prescribed books of accounts, including the general ledger and stock list.

The tax authorities have recently issued Executive Rules for 2013 (which are effective for all fiscal years ending on or after 31 December 2013) which require analyses of contract revenues, tax retentions, expenses, depreciation rates and provisions to be included in the tax declaration. In addition, these executive rules require that these analyses and the financial statements should also contain comparative figures for the prior year.

In the case of noncompliance with the above regulations, the Department of Inspections and Tax Claims (DIT) may finalize an assessment on the basis deemed reasonable by the DIT.

The Bylaws provide that a taxpayer must register with the DIT within 30 days after signing its first contract in Kuwait. In addition, a taxpayer is required to inform the Ministry of Finance of any changes that may affect its tax status within 30 days after the date of change. The taxpayer must also inform the Ministry of Finance of the cessation of any activity within 30 days after the date of cessation.

Under the Bylaws, a new system of tax cards has been introduced, whereby all taxpayers are issued with tax cards that have to be renewed annually. All government departments and public authorities will be prohibited from dealing with companies that do not hold an active tax card. The information required to be included in the tax card application form is generally the information that is provided to the Ministry of Finance at the time of registration. Currently, applications for tax cards are being accepted and the Ministry of Finance is updating its database.

A tax declaration must be filed on or before the 15th day of the 4th month following the end of the tax period (for example, 15 April in the case of a 31 December year-end). Tax is payable in four equal installments on the 15th day of the 4th, 6th, 9th and 12th months following the end of the tax period, provided the tax declaration is submitted on or before the due date for filing. The Bylaws provide that a request for extension in time for filing the tax declaration must be submitted to the DIT by the 15th day of the 2nd month (the 3rd month under the prior law) after the fiscal year-end. The maximum extension of time that may be granted is 60 days (75 days under the prior law).

In the event of a failure to file a tax declaration by the due date, a penalty is imposed, equal to 1% of the tax for each 30 days or fraction thereof during which the failure continues. In addition, in the event of a failure to pay tax by the due date, a penalty is imposed, equal to 1% of the tax payment for each period of 30 days or fraction thereof from the due date to the date of the settlement of the tax due.

The tax authorities have recently issued Circular No. 1 of 2014. This Circular applies to all taxpayers filing tax declarations after the issuance of the Circular. Where tax declarations are prepared on an actual accounts basis, the Circular requires, among other things, that all tax declarations are prepared in accordance with the tax laws and the Executive Rules issued by the tax authorities. For these types of declarations the Circular also requires the submission of a draft income and expense adjustment computed in accordance with the last assessment finalized by the tax authorities within three months of the date of submission of the tax declaration.

Where tax declarations are prepared on a deemed-profit basis, the Circular requires among other things that tax declarations should be submitted on the same percentage that was applied in the last assessment. It also requires certain supporting documents to be provided together with the tax declaration, and also requires details of all subcontractors to be provided.

Articles 24 to 27 of the Bylaws provides for the filing of objections and appeals against tax assessments. As per Article 24, an objection may be filed against the assessment within 60 days from date of assessment. The tax department has to consider and issue a revised assessment within 90 days from the date of filing the objection. If the department fails to pass a revised assessment during this period, the objection is considered as rejected.

The Bylaws allow companies to submit a revised tax declaration if an assessment of tax has not yet been issued by the DIT.

If the DIT accepts the amended tax declaration, the date of filing of the revised tax declaration is considered for the purpose of imposing delay fines.

Law No. 2 of 2008 introduced into tax law a statute of limitations for a period of five years. This change is consistent with Article 441 of the Kuwait Civil Law, which states that any claims for taxes due to Kuwait or applications for tax refunds may not be made after the lapse of five years from the date on which the taxpayer is notified that tax or a refund is due.

Article 13 of the Bylaws provides that companies that may not be subject to tax based on the application of any tax laws, other statutes or double tax treaties, must submit tax declarations in Kuwait.

Determination of trading income

General

Tax liabilities are generally computed on the basis of profits disclosed in audited financial statements and adjusted for tax depreciation and any items disallowed by the tax inspector on review.

The tax declaration and supporting schedules and financial statements, all of which must be in Arabic, are to be certified by an accountant practicing in Kuwait who is registered with Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Design expenses

Under Executive Rule No. 26 of 2013 (applicable for fiscal years ended on 31 December 2013 and thereafter), costs incurred for engineering and design services provided by third parties are restricted according to the following:

- ▶ If design work is carried out in the head office, 75% of the design revenue is allowed as costs (previously 75% to 80%)
- ▶ If design work is carried out by an associated company, 80% of the design revenue is allowed as costs (previously 80% to 85%)
- ▶ If design work is carried out by a third party, 85% of the design revenue is allowed as costs (previously 85% to 90%)
- ▶ If the design revenue is not specified in the contract but design work needs to be executed outside Kuwait, the following formula may be used by the tax authorities to determine the revenue:

$$\text{design revenue for the year} = \frac{\text{design costs for the year} \times \text{annual contract revenue}}{\text{total direct costs for the year}}$$

Consultancy costs

Under Executive Rule No. 26 of 2013 (applicable for fiscal years ended on 31 December 2013 and thereafter), costs incurred for consultancy services provided by various parties are restricted in the following way:

- ▶ If consultancy work is carried out in the head office, 70% of the consultancy revenue is allowed as costs (previously 70% to 75%)

- ▶ If consultancy work is carried out by an associated company, 75% of the consultancy revenue is allowed as costs (previously 75% to 80%)
- ▶ If consultancy work is carried out by a third party, 80% of the consultancy revenue is allowed as costs (previously 80% to 85%)
- ▶ If the consultancy revenue is not specified in the contract, but design work needs to be executed outside Kuwait, the following formula may be used by the tax authorities to determine the revenue:

$$\text{consultancy revenue for the year} = \frac{\text{consultancy costs for the year x annual contract revenue}}{\text{total direct costs for the year}}$$

Interest paid to banks

Interest paid to local banks relating to amounts borrowed for operations (working capital) in Kuwait may normally be deducted. Interest paid to banks or financial institutions outside Kuwait is disallowed unless it is proven that the funds were specifically borrowed to finance the working capital needs of operations in Kuwait. In practice, it is difficult to claim deductions for interest expenses incurred outside Kuwait.

Interest paid to the head office or agent is disallowed. Interest that is directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of an asset is capitalized as part of the cost of the asset if it is paid to a local bank.

Leasing expenses

The Kuwait tax authorities may allow the deduction of rents paid under leases after inspection of the supporting documents. The deduction of rent for assets leased from related parties is restricted to the amount of depreciation charged on those assets, as specified in the Kuwait Income Tax Decree. The asset value for the purpose of determining depreciation is based upon the supplier's invoices and customs documents. If the asset value cannot be determined based on these items, the value is determined by reference to the amounts recorded in the books of the related party.

Agency commissions

The tax deduction for commissions paid to a local agent is limited to 2% of revenue, net of any subcontractor's costs if paid to the agent and any reimbursement costs.

Head office overheads

Article 5 of the Bylaws provides that the following head office expenses are allowed as deductions:

- ▶ Companies operating through an agent: 1.5% (previously 3.5%) of the direct revenue
- ▶ Companies participating with Kuwaiti companies: 1% (previously 2%) of the foreign company's portion of the direct revenue generated from its participation in a Kuwaiti company
- ▶ Insurance companies: 1.5% (previously 2%) of the company's direct revenue
- ▶ Banks: 1.5% (previously 2%) of the foreign company's portion of the bank's direct revenue

Article 5 of the Bylaws also provides that, for the purpose of computation of head office overheads, direct revenue equals the following:

- ▶ For companies operating through an agent, companies participating with Kuwaiti companies, and banks: gross revenue less subcontract costs, reimbursed expenses and design costs (except for design costs incurred by the head office)
- ▶ For insurance companies: direct premium net of share of reinsurance premium plus insurance commission collected

Inventory

Inventory is normally valued at the lower of cost or net realizable value, on a first in, first out (FIFO) or average basis.

Provisions

Provisions, as opposed to accruals, are not accepted for tax purposes.

Tax depreciation

Tax depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method. The following are some of the permissible annual depreciation rates:

| Asset | Rate (%) |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Buildings | 4 |
| Furniture and office tools | 15 |
| Drilling equipment | 25 |
| Computer equipment and accessories | 33.3 |
| Vehicles | 20 |
| Software | 25 |
| Electrical equipment and electronics | 15 |

Relief for losses

Article 7 of the Bylaws provides that approved losses may be carried forward for a maximum of three years. (The prior tax law provided that losses could be carried forward and deducted from subsequent profits without limit if no cessation of activities occurred.)

Aggregation of income

If a foreign company has more than one activity in Kuwait, one tax declaration aggregating the income from all activities is required.

Foreign currency exchange gains and losses

As per Executive Rule No. 37 of 2013, gains and losses on foreign currency conversion would be classified into realized gains or losses and unrealized gains or losses.

Realized gains and losses resulting from fluctuation of exchange rates are allowed as a deduction (for losses) and taxable (for gains), provided the taxpayer is able to substantiate the basis of calculations and supplies documents in support of such transactions.

Unrealized losses are not allowed as deductible expenses and unrealized gains are not considered as taxable income.

Reimbursed costs

Where deemed profit filings occur, reimbursed costs will be allowed as a deductible expense subject to the following:

- ▶ Such costs are necessary and explicitly mentioned in the contract
- ▶ Such costs do not exceed 30% of gross revenues
- ▶ Supporting documentation is available for such costs

Furthermore, in cases where the reimbursable costs exceed 30%, the taxpayer is required to file its tax declaration on an accounts basis instead of deemed-profits basis.

Miscellaneous matters

Foreign-exchange controls

No foreign-exchange restrictions exist in Kuwait. Equity capital, loan capital, interest, dividends, branch profits, royalties, management and technical service fees, and personal savings are freely remittable.

Imported material costs

- ▶ Under Executive Rule No. 25 of 2013, the Kuwaiti tax authorities deem the following profit margins for imported materials and equipment: Imports from head office: 15% of related revenue (previously 10% to 15%)
- ▶ Imports from related parties: 10% of related revenue (previously 6.5% to 10%)
- ▶ Imports from third parties: 5% of related revenue (previously 3.5% to 6.5%)

The imputed profit described above is normally subtracted from the cost of materials and equipment claimed in the tax declaration. If the revenue from the materials and equipment supplied is identifiable, the DIT normally reduces the cost of such items to show a profit on such materials and equipment in accordance with the percentages described above. If the related revenue from the materials and equipment supplied is not identifiable or not stated in the contract, the following formula may be applied to determine the related revenue:

$$\text{Material and equipment revenue for the year} = (\text{Contract revenue for the year/ total direct cost for the year}) \times \text{Material and equipment costs for the year}$$

Supply and installation contracts

In supply and installation contracts, a taxpayer is required to account to the tax authorities for the full amount received under the contract, including the offshore supply element, which is the part of the contract (cost, insurance and freight to the applicable port) pertaining to the supply of goods.

Contractors' revenue recognition

Tax is assessed on progress billings (excluding advances) for work performed during an accounting period, less the cost of work incurred. Although the authorities generally used not to accept the completed-contract or percentage-of-completion methods of accounting, the prohibition against the use of the percentage-of-completion method has now been removed via Executive Rule No. 27 of 2013 (effective for fiscal periods ended on 31 December 2013 and thereafter). It appears that the authorities may accept the use of the percentage-of-completion method if it results in the proper matching of revenues and costs and the method applied is reasonable.

Subcontractors' costs

The Kuwait tax authorities are normally stringent in allowing subcontractors' costs, particularly subcontractors' costs incurred outside Kuwait. Subcontractors' costs are normally allowed if the taxpayer provides the supporting documentation (contract, invoices, settlement evidence and other documents), complies with Article 37 of the Bylaws and Executive Rule No. 6 of 2013 (see the subsection immediately below on tax retention) and fulfills certain other conditions. The tax authorities have also taken the view that they would no longer accept any loss on work that is subcontracted to other entities.

Tax retention

Under Article 37 of the Bylaws and Executive Rule No. 6 of 2013, all business entities operating in Kuwait are required to withhold 5% from each payment due to contractors and subcontractors until they present a tax clearance from the DIT.

In addition, local and foreign establishments, authorities and companies conducting a trade or business in Kuwait are required to give the director of income taxes details of the companies with which they are doing business as contractors, subcontractors or in any other form. Information to be provided should include the name and address of the company, together with a photocopy of the contract.

When inspecting the tax declaration filed with the DIT, the DIT will disallow all payments made to subcontractors if the rules described above are not followed.

Article 39 of the Bylaws of Law No. 2 of 2008 empowers the Ministry of Finance to demand payment of the 5% retained amount withheld by entities if the relevant contractors or subcontractors fail to settle their taxes due in Kuwait. It also provides that where business entities have not retained the 5%, they are liable for the entire taxes and penalties due from the contractors and subcontractors.

Work in progress

Costs incurred but not billed by an entity at the end of the fiscal year may be carried forward to the subsequent year as work in progress if the revenue related to the costs incurred cannot be reliably measured. Alternatively, revenue relating to the costs incurred but not billed may be estimated on a reasonable basis and reported for tax purposes if the estimated revenue is not less than the cost incurred.

Taxpayers claiming treaty relief or exemption

Executive Rules No. 47 and 48 of 2013 (effective for fiscal periods ended on 31 December 2013 and thereafter) provide that where a taxpayer claims treaty relief or exemption of certain income, the tax authorities shall disallow 20% of indirect costs (previously 15% to 20%).

Salaries paid to expatriates

In a press release issued on 23 September 2003, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor announced that it would impose stiff penalties if companies failed to pay salaries to employees into their local bank accounts in Kuwait. These penalties apply from 1 October 2003. The press release also stated that the DIT may disallow payroll costs if employees do not receive their salaries in their bank accounts in Kuwait.

Offset program

The MOF issued Ministerial Order 13 of 2005 to reactivate the offset program. In 2006, the National Offset Company (NOC) was formed to manage and administer the implementation of the offset program on behalf of the Kuwait Government and the MOF. Per Decision No. 890 of the Council of Ministers, which was taken in their session No. 2014/2-30 on 7 July 2014, the offset program has been officially suspended in Kuwait until further notification. However, based on our informal discussions with the officials at the NOC, it appears that the offset program has been suspended in relation to all tenders floated after the decision of the Council of Ministers Number 890 on 7 July 2014 and all other tenders which were floated earlier but which have not closed as of the date of the decision.

Significant aspects of the earlier offset program were:

- ▶ All civil contracts with a value of KWD10 million or more and defense contracts with a value of KWD 3 million or more attracted the offset obligations for contractors. The obligations became effective on the signing date of the contract.
 - ▶ Contractors subject to the offset obligation were required to invest 35% of the value of the contract with Kuwaiti government bodies.
 - ▶ Contractors subject to the offset obligation were allowed to take any of the following actions to fulfill their offset obligation:
 - ▶ Option 1: equity participation in an approved offset business venture (direct participation in a project company)
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- ▶ Option 2: contribution of cash and/or in-kind technical support
- ▶ Option 3: participation in any of the offset funds managed by certain banks or investment companies in Kuwait
- ▶ Option 4: purchase of commodities and services of Kuwaiti origin
- ▶ Contractors covered by the offset obligation were required to provide unconditional, irrevocable bank guarantees issued by Kuwaiti banks to the MOF equal to 6% of the contract price. The value of the bank guarantee was gradually reduced based on the actual execution by the foreign contractor or supplier of its work. The MOF could cash in the bank guarantee if the company subject to the offset obligation fails to fulfill such obligation.

The following were practical considerations:

- ▶ Option 3 above was not a viable option because the NOC has indicated that investment in funds is not considered for the completion of offset obligations
- ▶ The NOC insisted that every offset venture have a local equity partner and had issued guidelines in this respect
- ▶ A combination of Options 1, 2 and 4 was being used.

The offset program was implemented through the inclusion of clauses in supply contracts that referred to an offset obligation of the foreign contractor.

C. Tax treaty withholding tax rates

Kuwait has entered into tax treaties with a number of countries for the avoidance of double taxation, as set out in the table below. In addition to these treaties, Kuwait is in the process of signing a number of tax treaties with approximately 22 other jurisdictions, including Denmark, Japan, Hong Kong, Ireland and Spain, which are awaiting the final approval of the Government.

Disputes between taxpayers and the DIT about the interpretation of various clauses of tax treaties are not uncommon. Disputes with the DIT regarding tax treaties normally arise with respect to the following issues:

- ▶ Existence of a "permanent establishment"
- ▶ Income attributable to a permanent establishment
- ▶ Tax deductibility of costs incurred outside Kuwait

Kuwait has also entered into treaties with several countries relating solely to international air or sea transport. Kuwait is also a signatory to the Arab Tax Treaty and the GCC Joint Agreement, both of which provide for the avoidance of double taxation in certain geographical areas. The other signatories to the Arab Tax Treaty are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Domestic tax law in Kuwait does not provide for withholding taxes except for the distribution of dividends by companies listed on the KSE. As a result, it is not yet known how the Kuwaiti Government will apply the withholding tax procedures included in the treaties listed in the table below. The withholding tax (WHT) rates listed in the table are therefore for illustrative purposes only.

| Jurisdiction | Dividends % | Interest % | Royalties % |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Austria | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Belarus | 5 ^(c) | 5 ^(c) | 10 |
| Belgium | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Bulgaria | 5 ^(j) | 5 ^(f) | 10 |
| Brunei | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Canada | 5%/15% ^(m) | 10 | 10 |
| China | 5 ^(a) | 5 ^(a) | 10 |
| Croatia | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Cyprus | 10 | 10 ^(b) | 5 |

| Jurisdiction | Dividends % | Interest % | Royalties % |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Czech Republic | 5 ^(d) | 0 | 10 |
| Denmark | 0 ^(r) | 0 | 10 |
| Egypt | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Ethiopia | 5 ^(c) | 5 ^(b) | 30 |
| France | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | 15 ^(e) | 0 | 10 |
| Greece | 5 ^(c) | 5 ^(c) | 15 |
| Hong Kong | 0/5 ^(s) | 0/5 ^(t) | 5 |
| Hungary | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| India | 10 ⁽ⁿ⁾ | 10 ⁽ⁿ⁾ | 10 |
| Indonesia | 10 ^(c) | 5 ^(b) | 20 |
| Iran | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Italy | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| Japan | 5/10 ^(u) | 10 | 10 |
| Jordan | 5 ^(c) | 5 ^(b) | 30 |
| Latvia | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Lebanon | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Malaysia | 0 | 10 | 15 ^(q) |
| Malta | 10/15 ^(d) | 0 | 10 |
| Mauritius | 0 | 0 ^(r) | 10 |
| Mongolia | 5 ^(h) | 5 ^(h) | 10 |
| Morocco | 2.5/5/10 ^(v) | 10 | 10 |
| Netherlands | 10 ⁽ⁱ⁾ | 0 | 5 |
| Pakistan | 10 | 10 ^(q) | 10 |
| Poland | 5 ⁽ⁱ⁾ | 5 ⁽ⁱ⁾ | 15 |
| Romania | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Russian Federation | 5 ^(c) | 0 | 10 |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 5/10 ^(w) | 10 | 10 |
| Singapore | 0 | 7 ^(b) | 10 |
| Spain | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| South Africa | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Korea | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| Sri Lanka | 5/10 | 10 | 20 |
| Sudan | 5 ^(h) | 5 ^(h) | 10 |
| Switzerland | 15 | 10 | 10 |
| Syria | 0 | 10 ^(k) | 20 |
| Thailand | 10 | 10/15 ^(o) | 20 |
| Tunisia | 10 ^(c) | 2.5 ^(b) | 5 |
| Turkey | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Ukraine | 5 ^(f) | 0 | 10 |

| Jurisdiction | Dividends % | Interest % | Royalties % |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| United Kingdom | 5/15 | 0 ^(e) | 10 |
| Venezuela | 5/10 ^(b) | 5 | 20 |
| Yugoslavia | 5/10 ^(f) | 10 | 10 |
| Zimbabwe ^(k) | 0/5/10 | 0 | 10 |
| Non-treaty countries | 0 | 0 | 0 |

- (a) The rate is 0% for amounts paid to a company of which the Government owns at least 20% of the equity.
- (b) The rate is 0% for interest paid to the Government of the other contracting state. Under the Ethiopia treaty, the rate is also 0% for interest paid to entities in which the Government owns a specified percentage of the equity and for interest paid on loans guaranteed by the Government.
- (c) The rate is 0% for dividends and interest paid to the Government of the other contracting state. Under the Ethiopia treaty, the rate is also 0% for dividends paid to entities in which the Government owns a specified percentage of the equity.
- (d) The rate is 10% for dividends paid to the Government of Kuwait or any of its institutions or any intergovernmental entities. The rate is 15% for other dividends.
- (e) The 5% rate applies if the recipient of the dividends owns directly or indirectly at least 10% of the payer. The 15% rate applies to other dividends.
- (f) The rate is increased to 5% if the beneficial owner of the interest carries on business in the other contracting state through a permanent establishment and the debt on which the interest is paid is connected to such permanent establishment.
- (g) The rate is 0% for amounts paid to the Government of the other contracting state and to entities of which the Government owns at least 51% of the paid in capital.
- (h) For dividends and interest, the rate is 0% if the payments are made to the Government, a governmental institution of the other contracting state or to a company that is a resident of the other contracting state and is controlled by, or at least 49% of the capital is owned directly or indirectly by, the Government or a governmental institution. A 0% rate also applies to interest arising on loans guaranteed by the Government of the other contracting state or by a governmental institution or other governmental entity of the other contracting state.
- (i) A 0% rate applies if the beneficial owner of the dividends is a company that holds directly at least 10% of the capital of the company paying the dividends.
- (j) The rate is 0% if the payments are made to the Government, a governmental institution of the other contracting state or to a company that is a resident of the other contracting state and is controlled by, or at least 25% of the capital is owned directly or indirectly by, the Government or a governmental institution of the other contracting state.
- (k) The rate is 0% if the beneficial owner of the interest is a resident in the other contracting state and the loan is secured or financed directly or indirectly by a financial entity or other local body wholly owned by the Government of the other contracting state.
- (l) The 5% rate applies if the recipient of the dividends owns, directly or indirectly, at least 25% of the payer. The 10% rate applies to other dividends.

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- (m) The rate is 5% if the beneficial owner of the dividends is a company that owns 10% or more of the issued and outstanding voting shares or 25% or more of the value of all of the issued and outstanding shares. The 15% rate applies to other dividends.
- (n) Dividends or interest paid by a company that is a resident of a contracting state is not taxable in that contracting state if the beneficial owner of the dividends or interest is one of the following:
- ▶ The Government
 - ▶ A political subdivision or a local authority of the other contracting state
 - ▶ The central bank of the other contracting state
 - ▶ Other governmental agencies or governmental financial institutions, as may be specified and agreed to in an exchange of notes between the competent authorities of the contracting states
- (o) The rate is 10% in the case of financial institutions (including insurance companies) and 15% in all other cases.
- (p) The rate is 5% if the beneficial owner is a company that holds directly at least 10% of the capital of the company paying dividends. The rate is 10% in all other cases.
- (q) The rate is 15% for the use of, or the right to use, cinematograph films, tapes for radio or television broadcasting and any copyright of literary or artistic work. The rate may be reduced to 10% for the right to use any patent, trademark, design, model, plan, secret formula process or any copy.
- (r) The 0% rate is applied if the beneficial owner is a company (other than a partnership) that directly holds at least 25% of the capital of the company paying the dividends where such holding is being possessed for an uninterrupted period of no less than one year and the dividends are declared within that period; or if the beneficial owner is the other contracting state or any governmental institution or any entity being a resident of the other contracting state.
- (s) The 0% rate is applied if the beneficial owner is the Government of that other contracting party or any of its institutions or other entity wholly-owned directly by the Government of that other contracting party, or 5% in all other cases.
- (t) The 5% rate is applied if the beneficial owner of the interest is a resident of the other contracting party; or 0% if this interest is paid : in the case of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, (1) to the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; (2) to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority; (3) to any institution set up by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under statutory law such as a corporation, fund, authority, foundation, agency or other similar entity; (4) to any entity established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region all the capital of which has been provided by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region or any institution as defined in paragraph 3(a)(3) of Article 11 of the tax treaty; and in the case of Kuwait, (1) to the Government of Kuwait; (2) to any governmental institution created in Kuwait under public law such as a corporation, central bank, fund, authority, foundation, agency or other similar entity; (3) to any entity established in Kuwait all the capital of which has been provided by the Kuwaiti Government or any governmental body.
- (u) The 5% rate is applied if the beneficial owner is a company that has owned, directly or indirectly, for the period of six months ending on the date on which entitlement to the dividends is determined, at least 10% of the voting shares of the company paying the dividends; or 10% in all other cases.
- (v) The rate is 2.5% where the beneficial owner of the dividends is the Government of that other contracting party, or 5% where the beneficial owner is a company that holds directly at least 10% of the capital of the company paying the dividends, or 10% in any other cases.
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- (w) The rate is 5% where the beneficial owner is a company (other than a partnership) which holds directly at least 25% of the capital of the company paying, or 10% in all other cases.
- (x) The rate is 0% if the beneficial owners are the entities mentioned in Article 4(2) of the treaty, 5% of the gross amount of the dividends if the beneficial owner is a company that controls directly or indirectly at least 10% of the capital of the company paying the dividends, or 10% of the gross amount of the dividends in all other cases.

The new Companies Law

A new Companies Law has been promulgated through the publication of Decree No. 25 of 2012 as of 29 November 2012, and is effective with its publication.

The new Companies Law permits the incorporation of special purpose companies (SPCs) for issuing bonds, other securitization operations or for any other objective. It allows shareholders to agree to share profits and losses in a ratio other than their percentage shareholding in the company. Chapter 6 has been introduced regarding sukuks, bonds and convertible bonds.

It appears that the requirement for a minimum 51% Kuwaiti shareholding in the capital of Kuwaiti companies may also be relaxed for certain special types of companies or companies in specified sectors.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

D. Incentives

Kuwait offers a number of investment incentives, as described next.

Industry Law

To encourage investments in local industrial undertakings, Industry Law No. 56 of 1996 offers:

- ▶ Reduced import duties on equipment and raw materials
- ▶ Protective tariffs against competing imported goods
- ▶ Low-interest loans from local banks
- ▶ Export assistance
- ▶ Preferential treatment on Government supply contracts

Promotion of direct investment in the State of Kuwait

The Law for the Promotion of Direct Investment in the State of Kuwait (PDISK; Law No. 116 of 2013) was published in the Kuwait *Official Gazette* on 16 June 2013 and became effective 6 months from the date of issue (i.e., in December 2013). PDISK replaces Law No. 8 of 2011 – the Direct Foreign Capital Investment Law (DFCIL). The new law calls for the establishment of a new authority: the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), which will take over from its predecessor (the Kuwait Foreign Investment Bureau (KFIB)). The new authority is part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

On 14 December 2014, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) issued Executive Regulations (ERs) to Law No 116 of 2013 (the Law) for the promotion of foreign direct investment in Kuwait through Ministerial Decision No. 502 of 2014.

The ERs provide guidelines to simplify the process of obtaining a license for foreign direct investment and certain benefits as set out in the Law.

“One-stop shop”

KDIPA has reiterated its commitment to establish an administrative unit to act as a one-stop shop. The administrative unit, staffed by employees from various government authorities' units, will assist in the review of applications and approval of licenses, incentives and exemptions.

Investment entity

The ERs clarify that an entity seeking a license under the Law may operate as a:

- ▶ Wholly foreign-owned limited liability company
- ▶ Branch of a foreign entity; or
- ▶ Representative office in Kuwait for the sole purpose of preparing market studies or studying production possibilities without engaging in any commercial activity.

Licensing formalities and procedures

While the ERs do not provide a complete list of the formalities to be completed, it appears from discussions with KDIPA that relevant forms are likely to be issued in the near term to apply for:

- ▶ A license as an Investment entity
- ▶ Incentives and exemptions as set out in the Law.

Incentives and exemptions

The Law allows for the granting of a tax holiday to not exceed 10 years and an exemption from customs duty for a period of up to five years.

Non-qualifying activities

It has been reported that KDIPA has finalized a list of non-qualifying activities to be published shortly. This list is currently with the Council of Ministers for final approval. Based on EYs discussions with the authority, it appears that activities for oil and gas exploration, coal gas exploration, real estate activities, defense activities and the security sector may be included in this list.

Kuwait Free Trade Zone

To encourage exporting and re-exporting, the Kuwaiti Government has established a Kuwait Free Trade Zone (KFTZ) in the vicinity of the Shuwaikh port. The KFTZ offers the following benefits:

- ▶ Up to 100% foreign ownership is allowed and encouraged
- ▶ All corporate and personal income is exempt from tax
- ▶ All imports into and exports from the KFTZ are exempt from tax
- ▶ Capital and profits are freely transferable outside the KFTZ and are not subject to any foreign-exchange controls

E. Withholding taxes

The domestic tax law in Kuwait does not provide for withholding taxes except in the case of dividend income received by the investors in companies listed on the KSE, as mentioned above. However, please refer to the comments in Section B in respect of tax retention regulations.

F. Financing considerations

There are currently no thin capitalization rules imposed in Kuwait. However, please refer to Section B for comments on the deductibility of interest charges.

G. Indirect taxes**Import duties**

The six Member States of the GCC have entered into a GCC Customs Union, under the terms of which Member States have agreed to unify regional customs tariffs at 5% on all taxable foreign imports, down from individual country rates ranging from 4% to 15%, as of 1 January 2003.

In general, after landing in Kuwait, goods may be cleared through Customs within two weeks if documentation is in order. Customs examination is rigorous for all imported goods, and Kuwait's department of standards and metrology

has established a large number of minimum-quality standards, based on a combination of American, British, German and other national standards. Rigorous examination also applies to containerized cargoes arriving at the two main ports, Shuwaikh and Shuaiba. Lorries may be off-loaded on a random basis at a special inspection point in Kuwait City. Customs accepts no responsibility for damage, delays or losses.

VAT

Kuwait currently does not impose any VAT or other sales taxes. However, VAT is currently expected to be implemented across the GCC in the next 2-3 years.

Export duties

Kuwait does not currently impose any export duties.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Laos does not have law and regulations to govern crude oil and gas extraction and production. Currently, the Government of Laos applies a production sharing contract (PSC) model similar to other countries, however, conditions for each contract/agreement may be different based on a negotiation between the Government and the contractor. From our observation of the agreements signed between GOL and contractors, the following terms of payment may, in principle, be envisaged by the PSC:

- ▶ Rentals
- ▶ Production bonuses
- ▶ Training fees
- ▶ Lump sum payments
- ▶ Income tax – applied, but does not represent a cost to the contractor

Signature bonuses and production royalties may not apply in Laos.

B. Fiscal regime

Cost recovery

There is currently no specific regulation on the cost recovery ceiling for both crude oil and gas; this will be subject to negotiation and agreement between the Government and the contractor.

Profit production sharing

The production remaining after cost recovery is treated as “profit production” to be further split between the Government and contractor.

Profit production sharing for crude oil is based on a progressive sliding scale linked to daily production. The scale shall be subject to negotiation and agreement between the Government and the contractor and in principle may be in format as below:

| Daily average production (barrels per calendar month) | Contractor's share of profit crude oil | Government's share of profit crude oil |
|---|--|--|
| Up to 25,000 | 35% | 65% |
| 25,001 to 50,000 | 32.5% | 67.5% |
| 50,001 to 75,000 | 30% | 70% |
| 75,001 to 100,000 | 27.5% | 72.5% |
| 100,001 to 125,000 | 25% | 75% |
| 125,001 to 150,000 | 22.5% | 77.5% |
| 150,001 to 175,000 | 20% | 80% |
| 175,001 to 200,000 | 17.5% | 82.5% |
| More than 200,000 | 15% | 85% |

Similarly, production sharing for natural gas may be on a fixed basis and the rate will be subject to negotiation between the Government and the contractor.

Production bonuses

Below are examples of production bonuses, which will be subject to negotiation and agreement between the Government and the contractor:

- ▶ US\$1 million at 50,000 barrels
- ▶ US\$2 million at 100,000 barrels
- ▶ US\$3 million at 150,000 barrels
- ▶ US\$4 million at 200,000 barrels

Production bonuses are not cost-recoverable.

Lump-sum payments

These are viewed as compensation for the costs of Government assistance to the contractor; however, specific amounts will be subject to negotiation and agreement between the Government and the contractor.

Training fee and surface rental fee

Similar to lump-sum payments, training fees and surface rental fees will be subject to negotiation and agreement between the Government and contractor.

Income tax

The standard income tax rate in Laos is currently 24%. However, similar to the above, income tax rate for PSC shall be subject to negotiation and agreement between the Government and the contractor.

Ring-fencing

Each PSC is ring-fenced. Profits from one PSC cannot be offset against losses from another PSC or other businesses, and vice versa.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

The contractor and its subcontractors may be permitted to import free of customs duties any machinery, installations, fuel, houses, transport facilities, equipment, vehicles, materials, supplies, consumable items and movable property necessary for conducting petroleum operations. This exemption may not apply for items that have comparables manufactured in Laos.

Exports of hydrocarbons are exempt from export duties and any other taxes.

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After discovery of hydrocarbon prospects, Lebanon is formulating its legislation related to hydrocarbon activities, including a special fiscal regime which as expected will be different from the general tax regime as currently applicable. At the time of this publication, the special fiscal regime had not been enacted or published, and information provided in this section is based on general tax laws. Readers should obtain updated information and seek professional advice before engaging in any transactions relating to Lebanon's oil and gas deposits.

Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Lebanese oil and gas tax regime

As of the date this publication, there are no specific tax laws governing the taxation of oil and gas activities in Lebanon. However, the Lebanese Petroleum Administration is currently working on the design of a specific oil and gas tax regime. Based on preliminary discussions, production sharing contracts could be the preferred arrangement for exploration and production activities. Because of this lack of approved specific legislation, the information provided in this section is based on the current applicable tax laws as of the date of this publication.

B. Fiscal regime

There are no special taxes for oil and gas and the currently applicable fiscal regime for such activities is the same for other industries. The applicable taxes and tax rates in Lebanon are summarized below:

- ▶ Corporate income tax rate – 15% (applicable to Lebanese resident companies or Lebanese branches of overseas companies)
- ▶ Capital gain tax rate – 10%
- ▶ Value-added tax (VAT) rate – 10%
- ▶ Withholding tax on dividends – 10%
- ▶ Withholding tax on interest – 10% (but 5% on interest earned on Lebanese bank accounts)
- ▶ Withholding tax rate on payments for services – 7.5%
- ▶ Withholding tax rate on supply of goods – 2.25%
- ▶ Branch remittance tax – 10%
- ▶ Stamp duty rate – 0.3%
- ▶ Built property tax (BPT) rate – from 4% to 14%
- ▶ Employees' income tax rate – from 2% to 20%

Corporate income tax

Taxable results

An entity is subject to Lebanese corporate income tax (CIT) in respect of profits derived in Lebanon only. An entity is subject to CIT if it is either a Lebanese tax resident or carries on a business in Lebanon through a branch (permanent establishment). A company will only be tax resident in Lebanon by virtue of its incorporation in Lebanon. There are no central management or control tests for residence in Lebanon.

Taxable income for Lebanese CIT purposes follows the accounting principles after applicable tax adjustments (e.g., add-back of depreciation/amortization and deductions for tax depreciation, etc.) as under Lebanese tax law.

Depreciation rates

For tax purposes, assets are depreciated according to depreciation rates at the taxpayer's choice within a range of permissible rates for a particular class of assets on a straight-line basis – for example, technical installations and industrial equipment can be depreciated at a chosen rate between 8% and 25%. A company is required to inform the Lebanese tax authority about the tax depreciation rate intended to be used prior to doing so. Failure to do so will result in the minimum relevant rate being applied.

No relief is available for expenditure capitalized as intangible assets, which includes oil licenses.

Utilization of tax losses

Losses can be carried forward for three years. Losses may not be carried back and offset against profits arising in previous years.

Capital gains tax

Gains arising from a sale of depreciable and non-depreciable assets are subject to a capital gains tax of 10%. Any disposal of shares in a joint stock company by a foreign company is exempt from capital gain tax.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas in Lebanon.

C. Indirect taxation

Withholding taxes

Branches of foreign companies operating in Lebanon are subject to a 10% branch remittance tax on after-tax profits generated, irrespective of whether a distribution is actually made. Lebanese joint stock companies are subject to the same 10% dividend distribution tax upon the actual distribution of dividends.

Any interest payments made from a Lebanese branch or company to an overseas entity is subject to a 10% withholding tax.

Under the current CIT law, withholding tax is levied on service providers that have no registered place of business in Lebanon and that render services onshore (i.e., within Lebanon's territorial waters). The withholding tax applies to gross revenues at the rate of 7.5%. Any withholding tax deducted from income derived from providing services to non-Lebanese residents are not tax-deductible and cannot be used to offset any taxes due in Lebanon.

Value-added tax

The standard rate of VAT is 10%. Exportation of goods and services is zero-rated, provided that exports are properly supported with documents. Importation is subject to VAT at the 10% rate and can be claimed for offset.

Any company with a turnover exceeding LBP150 million (approximately USD100,000) for a period of four consecutive quarters is obliged to register with the Directorate of Value Added Tax (DVAT). There is no minimum turnover requirement for voluntary VAT registration; however (as per the VAT

authorities' practice), in order to register with the DVAT the company should have recognized revenues. A company cannot recover any input VAT incurred until it has successfully registered with the DVAT.

Where a Lebanese entity or branch is in a net recoverable position for VAT, a refund can be obtained through a formal process. If the formal request is approved, the refund is usually paid within a period of four months from the date of submission of the request.

Customs duties

Customs duties are levied on imports to Lebanon. Exports from Lebanon are not subject to customs duties or other fees. For Lebanese customs purposes, offshore oil and gas activities performed in Lebanese waters are considered to be Lebanese onshore activities.

Customs tariffs are normally either a percentage of the value of the imported products or a fixed rate per imported unit. An average rate of customs duties on machinery ranges between 0% and 20%.

Stamp duty

All contracts and deeds between related and non-related parties with a determinable value are subject to stamp duty at a rate of 0.3%, rounded up to the nearest LBP1,000.

D. Financing considerations

Interest can be claimed as an allowable deduction only when incurred wholly and exclusively for business purposes. Amounts paid for guarantees against bank facilities can be claimed as a deduction if they do not exceed 2% of the bank's facilities granted.

There are no thin capitalization rules in Lebanon. However, joint stock companies (*Sociétés Anonymes Libanaises*) cannot issue bonds in excess of twice their issued share capital.

E. Transfer pricing requirements

The Lebanese tax authorities have the right to ignore any transaction where the main purpose (or one of the main purposes) was the avoidance of tax, and to calculate taxable profits as if the transaction had not occurred. In addition, where intercompany transactions (particularly those with overseas affiliations) are undertaken at a position deemed not to be at arm's length, transfer pricing adjustments can be imposed to restate these transactions as at an arm's length position.

Services provided between companies holding mutual license interests can also be subject to transfer pricing restrictions in Lebanon.

F. Other aspects

Double tax agreements

Lebanon has an extensive network of 32 double tax treaties in force.

Restrictions on transfer of money

There are no restrictions on the transfer of cash outside Lebanon.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession
 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

In Libya, the fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT) and other taxes. Production sharing contracts (PSCs) between the Government and contractors are the general means of regulating the activities of the industry.

Under the PSC regime, taxes are deemed to be paid by the National Oil Corporation (NOC), and the tax computation is notional. The following apply:

- ▶ PSCs – Libya has a PSC regime and is presently contracting under the fourth generation of exploration- and production sharing agreements (known as “EPSA IV”). There have, though, been no new agreements since 2007.
- ▶ Royalties – There is a notional royalty under the PSC regime of 16.67% of production.
- ▶ Bonuses – Signature bonuses are payable under a bid process. Subsequent bonuses are payable upon declaration of a commercial discovery, upon reaching a production level of 100 million barrels, and upon subsequent milestone production of each additional 30 million barrels, depending upon the specific agreement.
- ▶ CIT rate – 20% plus jihad tax of 4%. If these taxes, plus an adjustment for royalties, are less than 65% of profits, a surtax is payable so that tax, other deductions and a surtax combine to produce a composite 65% rate.
- ▶ Resource rent tax – Not applicable.
- ▶ Capital allowances – All capital expenditures are recoverable from cost oil through depreciation or amortization.
- ▶ Investment incentives – Not applicable to oil companies.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate tax

Libyan corporations are subject to income tax on their non-exempt worldwide income. Foreign corporations, registered as branches, including international oil companies (IOCs), are taxable on income arising in Libya.

Oil companies

Petroleum exploration and production in Libya is governed by Petroleum Law No. 25 of 1955, as amended (principally by Regulation No. 9 of 1973). Until

the 1970s, oil licenses were granted via deeds of concession and Libya received remuneration through royalties and taxes; the royalty was 16.67% of production. A combination of a royalty adjustment, rents, income taxes and a surtax combined to create a deduction of 65% on profits. The amount paid by international oil companies (IOCs), therefore, was not a single petroleum tax but a payment composed of a variety of elements. With one exception, these concession agreements have been renegotiated into EPSA IV contracts.

In 1974, the first EPSA contract was introduced, and succeeding generations of EPSA contracts have introduced a variety of changes and refinements. IOCs and the National Oil Corporation of Libya have shared profits in a variety of percentages and in accordance with a number of formulas.

Under the current EPSA IV, introduced in 1999 but amended a number of times since then, there is an open and transparent bid process for new acreage. A share of production is bid for, and the lowest percentage bid wins the acreage. Percentage shares have been awarded for bids in the range of 7.5% to 25%. The agreement is usually for a period of 5 years, extendable by 25 years if oil is found in commercial quantities. The agreement contains a minimum exploration commitment, which may comprise, for example, the drilling of up to 3 wildcat wells and, for example, 3,000 kilometers of 2D seismic lines.

EPSA IV is a cost-recoverable agreement. If oil is discovered and produced, the NOC takes 100% less the share of the production bid by the IOC, until the IOC has recovered all exploration, appraisal, development and current annual production costs. Thereafter, any "excess petroleum" is allocated to the IOC based on the following formula:

$$\text{Excess petroleum allocated to IOC} = \text{"A" factor} \times \text{excess petroleum (barrels)}$$

The "A factor" is related to the ratio of the cumulative value of production received by the IOC over the cumulative expenditure. The A factor is negotiable, but an example of a reasonable amount incurred is illustrated in the table below.

| Ratio | A factor |
|---|----------|
| Less than or equal to 1:5 | 0.90 |
| More than 1:5 but less than or equal to 3:0 | 0.70 |
| More than 3:0 but less than or equal to 4:0 | 0.50 |
| More than 4:0 | 0.30 |

The crude oil value is used in determining the cumulative value of production received and is based on an average monthly international market price. The 2007 EPSA agreement values production at the monthly average price achieved by the NOC.

Calculation of corporate taxes for IOCs

Libyan corporations are subject to corporate income tax on their non-exempt worldwide income. Foreign corporations registered as branches, including IOCs, are taxed on income arising in Libya.

The terms of the current EPSA IV model contract state that the taxation terms of the Petroleum Law apply and that the IOC should submit royalty and tax returns. Estimated returns must be submitted, and taxes and royalties must be paid, quarterly. A final return (called a "financial declaration") comprising actual production amounts for the calendar tax year must be submitted no later than 31 March of the following year.

The Petroleum Law identifies that the 65% of profits paid by an IOC under the terms of a concession deed comprises a number of elements. However, under EPSA IV, a tax computation is prepared using the 65% rate as if it was a single rate.

Taxes are deemed to have been paid on behalf of a foreign IOC by the NOC and are grossed up. The grossed-up amount is calculated thus:

$$\text{Grossed-up amount} = \frac{\text{Profit} \times 0.65}{(1 - 0.65)} = \frac{\text{Profit} \times 0.65}{0.35}$$

A tax receipt is issued for this amount.

The composite rate of 65% of profits payable by companies that are subject to the Petroleum Law comprises:

1. Income tax due under Income Tax Law No. 7 of 2010
2. Jihad tax due under Law No. 44 of 1970
3. Surface rents due under Article 14(1)(a) of the Petroleum Law
4. A surtax so that the total deductions are 65% of taxable income

To date, 65% of the profit defined under the Petroleum Law has always exceeded the amount due in items 1, 2 and 3 above, and so a surtax has always arisen.

Corporate income tax is computed in accordance with Libya's Income Tax Law (Law No. 7 of 2010) at the rate of 20% of profits. The jihad tax is payable by IOCs at the rate of 4% of corporate profits. It is charged at sliding scales on both salaries and profits. Although it is assessed under different legislation, it is therefore essentially another income tax.

The computation of revenue is generally defined in the applicable concession agreement or EPSA contract, and the EPSA tax computation is explained in Decision 394 of 2007 and Decision 96 of 2008.

Depreciation of tangible assets is allowed at 10% per year, and intangibles are amortized at 5% per year. Under Law No. 3 of 1983, the secretary of petroleum was given discretion to change these depreciation rates, and the rate applied under the terms of the old concession agreements is 33.33%.

Interest is not deductible in determining profits.

Taxpayers from some countries do not have any objection to paying one undifferentiated amount that is labeled the petroleum tax. By comparison, tax authorities of some home countries of foreign investors require them to prove the specific amounts paid for the income tax, jihad tax and petroleum surtax in order to calculate foreign tax credits or the amount that is eligible for a home-country exemption. For those taxpayers, it is important to calculate separately the various Libyan taxes arising.

Ring-fencing

Historically, Libya applied the ring-fence principle in determining a petroleum tax liability. Profits from one project could not be offset against the losses from another project held by the same tax entity. Similarly, a non-associated gas project had to be accounted for separately from a crude oil project. Under the current EPSA IV arrangement, ring-fencing does not apply – revenue and costs may be pooled if the result is a commercially viable economic unit.

The Petroleum Law covers only upstream operations, although it includes rules relating to pipeline and terminal tariffs. Oil companies in Libya may acquire and build assets under their agreements but, in practice, downstream activities are usually undertaken by separate entities called "oil service companies."

Royalty regime

A royalty is payable monthly under the terms of the one remaining concession agreement, at the same time as taxes. It is computed at the rate of 16.67% of production and valued at the "Libyan posted price" applicable to liftings in the month that the royalty is paid. The "Libyan posted price" is an anachronism: it is US\$27.75 at 40 degrees API.

Oil service companies

An oil company may establish or have an interest in an oil service company, but such companies are subject to income tax law, not the Petroleum Law. Separate legal entities cannot form a tax consolidated group and, therefore, oil companies and oil service companies are taxed individually.

Corporate tax for oil service companies is levied on taxable income. "Taxable income" is assessable income less any deductions. "Deductions" includes expenses to the extent that they are incurred in producing assessable income or are necessary in carrying on a business for the purpose of producing assessable income. "Assessable income" generally comprises billings, capital gains and exchange rate gains.

Libyan tax law is straightforward, and the basis of determining taxable income, assessing and paying tax and the appeal process, as established in the income tax law, resembles tax laws in many countries. However, practice can differ from theory.

Although corporate tax law is based on the usual "add-back" basis, whereby a disallowed expenditure is added back to declared net profits or losses, current practice is that the Libyan tax department usually raises assessments based on a percentage of turnover – a "deemed profit." Tax, therefore, is payable even when losses are declared. The 2010 tax law restates the requirement for taxation on the usual "add-back" basis and the tax department has confirmed that this is the basis on which taxes will be applied in future – the "deemed profit" basis will be the exception. There is nonetheless limited precedent currently as to whether the "add-back" basis will actually be applied.

The level of deemed profit applied to turnover varies according to the type of business activity, but it is generally 15% to 20% for an oil service company.

Capital gains

No separate schedule exists in the tax law under which capital gains are taxed in Libya. Gains are taxed as trading income at the tax rates discussed above.

Functional currency

With the exception of oil companies, the general rule is that the functional currency is the Libyan dinar, a currency that floats against the special drawing rights (SDR).

However, for oil companies, an EPSA requires that records are maintained in both Libyan dinars and US dollars and, for cost recovery and tax purposes, the US dollar records are used. Oil company tax liabilities are determined in US dollars but paid in Libyan dinars.

Transfer pricing

Libya has no transfer pricing regulations. The Petroleum Law requires that charges from a parent company to its Libyan branch under the terms of a service agreement must be at cost.

There is no precedent, but transactions at arm's length, which include a profit to comply with OECD regulations, should be identified and are subject to tax under the income tax law.

Dividends

Branches established in Libya by foreign oil companies do not declare and pay dividends.

Dividends declared and paid by an oil service company that has formed a Libyan joint stock company (JSC; the legal entity that a foreign company may establish) are taxable, but the rate to be applied has not yet been announced.

Interest and royalties more generally

Libyan tax law taxes income specifically and only under the following headings:

- ▶ Pure agricultural income
- ▶ Income arising from commercial, industrial and craft activities
- ▶ Income from the liberal professions
- ▶ Wages, salaries, etc.
- ▶ Income from bank deposits
- ▶ Tax on companies

Tax law does not, therefore, directly deal with matters such as interest, royalty payments (except royalties under the Petroleum Law, as described above), leasing and payments for intellectual property rights, and much depends upon precedent.

All contracts for services to be performed in Libya should be registered with the tax department, and stamp duty should be paid on these contracts. Thus, a foreign company registered in Libya that enters into an agreement with an overseas third party for the use of an asset or provision of a service in the Libyan jurisdiction that results in a payment should require that the contract is registered by the supplier. In these circumstances, tax is payable on the profit deemed to result from the payment, and is payable even if the company to which the payment was paid is not registered in Libya.

The same position applies to interest payable on a loan to a Libyan-registered entity.

Taxes and stamp duty must be paid in full, in advance, within 60 days of the effective date of the contract.

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax is not applicable in Libya.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

There is no capital allowances regime in Libya. Statutory rates of depreciation are chargeable and deductible. Under the Petroleum Law, the rate may be determined by the NOC. Since 1983, it has been 33% for concession agreements; the rate for EPSAs is 10%.

D. Incentives

Investment Law

Investment Law No. 9 of 2010, together with the Implementing Regulations of 2010, offers:

- ▶ Exemption from company income tax on both retained and distributed profits for 5 years, with the possibility of an extension, and the carrying forward of losses in exemption years to subsequent years
- ▶ Exemption from customs duties for machinery, tools, equipment, spare parts and primary materials, although this is now superfluous because customs duties are at a 0% rate (with the exception of tobacco)
- ▶ Exemption from stamp duties

There is flexibility as to the corporate form. That is, an investor may establish any legal entity allowed under business law – such as a branch or company with a majority or minority shareholding.

The NOC is in the process of negotiating with a number of oil companies and international industrial companies to refurbish and extend refineries and other downstream facilities under the terms of the Investment Law. The template is for joint ventures to be established (in 50%/50% proportions), which will refurbish or build these facilities and subsequently operate them. Contracts are generally for 25 years, perhaps with an exclusive distribution agreement of 10 years.

After the expiration of the company income tax exemption period, these projects will be subject to tax under the income tax law.

Because the NOC is a shareholder or owner in such an agreement, and because revenue will be based on contracts with specific rates for throughput with defined costs, it is likely that any profit from these projects will subsequently be taxed on an add-back basis.

Exploration

As noted above, all capital expenditures and operating expenditures for exploration, appraisal, development and production are immediately cost-recoverable if a commercial discovery is declared.

Tax losses

Tax losses can be carried forward for 10 years for an oil company under the Petroleum Law and for 5 years for an oil service company under the income tax law.

Regional incentives

Regional incentives are not applicable in Libya.

Research and development

There are no incentives (or tax obligations) in relation to R&D in Libya.

E. Withholding taxes

There are no formal withholding taxes established in the law.

F. Financing considerations

Libya's tax system contains no significant rules regarding the classification of debt and equity instruments or the level of funding.

The Petroleum Law specifically prohibits interest paid to a parent to fund its Libyan operations, but agreements usually allow for the lesser of 2% or US\$1 million of annual expenditures to be charged as the parent company's overhead (PCO).

Under the income tax law, PCO and interest and commissions are exclusively allowed, up to a maximum of 5% of administrative expenses included in the accounts.

There are no thin capitalization rules.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

A profit resulting from the sale of a business, or from any of its tangible or intangible assets, is taxable income. The profit is the difference between the sale proceeds (or what is considered by the tax department to be the fair market value) and the cost or net book value.

Farm-in and farm-out

It is not common in the Libyan oil and gas industry for entities to enter into farm-in arrangements.

Selling shares in a company

There is little precedent on this issue. However, a share disposal is subject to the income tax law, and any gain on disposal is subject to tax as if it was trading income, when a transaction of this nature being concluded within the Libyan jurisdiction.

H. Indirect taxes

Stamp Duty

Stamp duty is chargeable according to Stamp Duty Law No. 12 of 2004, as amended by Stamp Duty Law No. 8 of 2010. Stamp duty is applied to numerous documents, both to "papers" and "actions." There are 45 assessable schedules appended to the Law.

Stamp duty's most relevant impact on foreign companies arises from the requirement to register all contracts for work to be performed in Libya. Once a contract has been negotiated in Libya, if it is for anything other than a direct

supply from abroad from an unregistered foreign company, it must be registered with the tax department within 60 days of the first date noted in the contract.

A 1% duty on the total contract value (plus 0.5% of the duty) is payable upon registration. Any invoice subsequently rendered against a registered contract must be taken to the tax department and stamped to confirm that the contract under which it is issued has been registered and the duty has been paid. Invoices should not be paid unless they are stamped as registered.

VAT and GST

There is no VAT or GST in Libya.

Import duties

There are three rates of import duty, as follows:

- ▶ Base rate – 5%
- ▶ Rate on cars and vehicles – 10%
- ▶ Rate on luxury items – 15% (as set out in associated regulations)

Export duties

There are no export duties applied to goods exported from Libya.

Excise duties

There are no excise duties applied to goods exported from Libya.

I. Other

Importation

Equipment may be imported either on a permanent or temporary basis. Equipment imported on a permanent basis cannot be re-exported, whereas equipment imported on a temporary basis must be re-exported.

The conditions associated with temporary importation are strict. Equipment may only be used for the contract for which it was imported and a deposit must be paid to the customs department.

Employment taxes

Other significant taxes include employer social security contributions of 11.25% of the gross salary, employee social security of 3.75% and taxes of 14% on all salary and benefits in kind paid to employees.

Foreign-exchange controls

The Libyan dinar is not a convertible currency and contracts usually specify the proportion of the contract value that may be remitted abroad (the average is 80%). The balance of Libyan dinars is not transferable.

A foreign entity may hold only one Libyan dinar account at one bank. Different foreign currency accounts may be opened, but not multiple accounts in the same currency.

Branches of foreign companies may be paid directly offshore. JSCs may pay into foreign currency accounts held locally, and they may then remit the currency in accordance with the terms of their contracts, which should be deposited with the local bank.

Forms of business presence

A foreign oil company may establish a branch in Libya.

A foreign service company seeking to conduct a contract in the Libyan jurisdiction is required by law to establish either a branch (to undertake a "permitted activity" as listed by the authorities) or a Libyan JSC in which, from July 2012, the foreign company may hold a maximum of 49% of the share capital.

However, Decision 22/2013 stated that existing 65% foreign-owned Libyan JSCs could carry on working until the commercial law is reviewed. This will be undertaken at some point in the future, although a date has not yet been announced.

“Permanent establishment”

There is no definition of “permanent establishment” (PE) in Libyan Tax Law No. 7 of 2010, as amended, but Libya has signed a number of double tax agreements in which the concept of a PE is recognized under the general provisions of the model UN and OECD tax treaties. The establishment of PE status in Libya, therefore, ought to be clear and in accordance with definitions contained in the model tax treaties. However, in practice it is a gray area.

Regardless of the definitions in the treaty, as a matter of practice on a day-to-day basis, the Libyan tax authorities work on the principle that de facto PE status is established if any work is undertaken or service performed in the Libyan jurisdiction. This is the case even if only a small proportion of a contract is undertaken in the Libyan jurisdiction (e.g., site visits), and regardless of the time spent in Libya.

Although it is a legal requirement for a foreign company to establish a corporate entity in Libya, in practice it is possible to pay taxes and register contracts without registering in a situation where a particular expertise is required, usually for a single, short-term contract. In such a case, the associated contract must be registered with the tax authorities, and income taxes and stamp duties on the full contract value must be paid in full and in advance, as noted above.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |
-

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The taxation of income from petroleum operations in Malaysia is governed by the Petroleum (Income Tax) Act 1967 (PITA) whereas income derived from non-petroleum operations is subject to tax under the Income Tax Act 1967.

- ▶ Royalties – 10% of gross production
- ▶ Bonus – A signature bonus may be payable to PETRONAS prior to the signing of a production sharing contract (PSC)

Production sharing contracts (PSC)

Under the Petroleum Development Act 1974, PETRONAS, the national oil corporation of Malaysia, is vested with the exclusive rights of exploring and exploiting petroleum resources in Malaysia.

Oil and gas companies undertaking petroleum operations in Malaysia (other than areas within the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area) will enter into a PSC with PETRONAS where, generally, under each PSC, the contractor provides the financing and bears all the risks of exploration, development and production activities in exchange for a share of the total production.

Risk service contracts (RSC)

For marginal fields, instead of entering into a PSC with oil and gas companies, PETRONAS may instead enter into an RSC. Under a RSC, the contractor earns a fee from PETRONAS, based on certain agreed parameters, as opposed to a share of production. From a tax perspective, a PSC would be treated differently from a RSC.

Tax rates

- ▶ Petroleum income tax:
 - ▶ Malaysia: 38% unless incentives are available
 - ▶ Joint Development Area (JDA):
 - ▶ First eight years of production: 0%
 - ▶ Next seven years of production: 10%
 - ▶ Subsequent years of production: 20%
- ▶ Income tax – 25%¹
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Real property gains tax – rates from 1 January 2014 are as follows (for disposals by companies):²
 - ▶ Disposal within three years from date of acquisition: 30% on chargeable gains
 - ▶ Disposal in the fourth year: 20%
 - ▶ Disposal in the fifth year: 15%
 - ▶ Disposal in the sixth and subsequent years: 5%.

B. Fiscal regime

Petroleum income tax is levied at the rate of 38% on the income of a chargeable person arising from petroleum operations (although reduced rates may apply for income from approved marginal fields – see below). The term “petroleum operations” refers to searching for and winning or obtaining petroleum in Malaysia and any sale or disposal of petroleum so won or obtained, and includes the transportation within Malaysia of the petroleum so won or obtained to any point of sale, delivery or export, but it does not include:

- ▶ Any transportation of petroleum outside Malaysia
- ▶ Any process of refining or liquefying petroleum
- ▶ Any dealings with products so refined or liquefied
- ▶ Services involving the supply and use of rigs, derricks, ocean tankers and barges

Please note that information on the fiscal regime in this section relates to petroleum upstream operations only. Downstream operations are subject to separate income tax legislation (the Income Tax Act 1967), and the tax treatment may differ from that provided under the PITA.

Chargeable person

Each PSC effectively creates a separate “chargeable person” for PITA purposes.

Generally, an operator for the PSC is appointed and is responsible for keeping the books of the PSC, as well as filing the petroleum income tax return on behalf of the PSC. The individual partners of the PSC are not required to file a separate petroleum income tax return in respect of their share of income from the PSC.

Multiple agreements and ring-fencing

If a person conducts petroleum operations under more than one PSC, each PSC will be treated as a separate chargeable person. Effectively, expenses incurred in respect of a PSC can only be offset against income from petroleum operations under the same PSC.

1 *The Protocol to the Malaysia-Thailand Double Taxation Agreement provides for the tax chargeable to be reduced by 50% in respect of business income or profits derived from the Joint Development Area, which are directly related to the exploration and exploitation of petroleum in the Joint Development Area and which are taxable in both countries.*

2 *Determining the date of “acquisition” and “disposal” for real property gains tax purposes can be a complex process.*

Contiguous agreement areas

In contrast, if partners in a PSC carry on petroleum operations under two or more PSCs in contiguous areas, the petroleum operations in those areas are treated as being conducted under one PSC.

Succeeding partnerships

If, at any time during the period of the PSC, a partner in a PSC is succeeded by another, and at least one of the original parties to that PSC remains as a partner, both partnerships are treated as a succeeding PSC partnership.

Unabsorbed losses and capital allowances

Any unabsorbed losses and capital allowances can be carried forward indefinitely to offset future business income, as long as there is a succeeding partnership.

Recovery of cost oil and profit oil

Generally, the gross production of crude oil in each quarter is divided as follows:

- ▶ A maximum of 10% is first taken by PETRONAS as a royalty payment to the federal and state governments
- ▶ Next, cost oil recovery by contractors is determined by the "revenue over cost" (R/C) ratio
- ▶ The remaining portion, which is the profit oil, is split between PETRONAS and the contractors; the profit oil attributable to the contractors is shared, based on each party's participating interest.

Cost oil recovery excludes non-recoverable expenses such as:

- ▶ Costs incurred as a result of any proven negligent act or omission, or willful misconduct
- ▶ Replacement and/or repair costs in respect of assets or other property that is uninsured or underinsured
- ▶ Indemnity payments by contractors
- ▶ Expenses incurred in connection with the negotiation, signature or ratification of the PSC
- ▶ Expenses incurred in connection with raising money to finance petroleum operations, such as interest, bank charges and commissions
- ▶ Central administration and head office costs, and charges that are not substantiated or are excessive
- ▶ All taxes and export duties
- ▶ Costs and expenses associated with local offices and local administration, including staff benefits that are excessive

Note that the above is not an exhaustive list.

Functional currency

Upon obtaining approval from the Ministry of Finance, oil and gas operators may opt to submit their petroleum income tax returns and calculate their taxable income by reference to a functional currency (i.e., a particular foreign currency) if their accounts are solely or predominantly kept in that currency.

Transfer pricing

The Inland Revenue Board Malaysia (MIRB) has issued transfer-pricing guidelines that apply to cross-border transactions and local transactions between associated enterprises. The guidelines are generally based on the arm's length principle set forth in the OECD Transfer Pricing Guidelines and provide several methods for determining an arm's length price. The guidelines also provide a detailed list of information, documentation and records that need to be maintained with respect to related-party transactions.

The MIRB had historically used the anti-avoidance provision under PITA to disregard or vary any transaction that is not made on an arm's length basis. Effective from January 2013, a specific transfer pricing and thin capitalization section has been inserted into the PITA. However, the thin capitalization section will only be enforced after the release of detailed rules.

Capital allowances

Capital allowances are set out in the following table:

| Qualifying plant expenditure | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Initial allowance ^(a) | Annual allowance ^(b) |
| Plant | | |
| Secondary recovery | 40% | 10% |
| Any other case | 20% | 8% |
| Fixed, offshore platform | nil | 10% |
| Environmental protection equipment and facilities | 40% | 20% |
| Computer software and hardware | 20% | 40% |
| Buildings | | |
| Secondary recovery | 20% | 3% |
| Any other case | 10% | 3% |

(a) Initial allowance is claimable in the year the expenditure is incurred.

(b) Annual allowance is claimable in each year, commencing from the year the expenditure is incurred.

The qualifying plant expenditure incurred during the exploration and development period is accumulated and carried forward to the commercial production period, and deemed to be incurred in the year of the first sale of petroleum (i.e., when commercial production begins).

Qualifying exploration expenditure

Qualifying exploration expenditure (QEE) incurred during the exploration and development period is accumulated and carried forward until the first sale of petroleum (i.e., when commercial production begins). QEE is allowed as a graduated deduction in the form of the initial allowance and annual allowances against the gross income for each year of assessment:

- ▶ Initial allowance – 10%
- ▶ Annual allowance – the greater of:
 - a. 15% of residual expenditure
 - or
 - b. **(Output from petroleum operations for the basis period × residual expenditure)**
$$\frac{\text{(Output from petroleum operations for the basis period)}}{\text{+ total potential future output of the petroleum operations}}$$

Effective from 30 November 2010, the QEE of a chargeable person incurred prior to the first sales of petroleum may be deducted against the gross income of another chargeable person in another petroleum agreement, provided that the original parties to the petroleum agreements are the same. Other rules and conditions apply – for example, this order is not applicable to the JDA.

Disposal of assets used in petroleum operations

If an asset (for which capital allowances have been claimed) is sold, discarded, destroyed or ceases to be used by the contractor for purposes of petroleum operations, a balancing allowance or a balancing charge is computed. A balancing allowance arises when the residual expenditure of the asset exceeds the disposal value of the asset. A balancing charge arises when the disposal value of the asset exceeds the residual expenditure of the asset.

Financing considerations

Upon commencement of commercial production, interest expense on borrowings utilized in the production of gross income or laid out on assets used or held for the production of gross income is deductible. The amount of the deduction may not exceed the fair amount of interest in a similar transaction between independent parties dealing at arm's length. Once the thin capitalization rules highlighted above are in effect, the impact of these rules on the deductibility of interest expenses will also need to be considered.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special rules have been released in Malaysia with respect to unconventional oil or unconventional gas activities.

C. Incentives

The Malaysian Government had announced the following incentives to promote upstream development and boost the commercialization of hard-to-reach oil fields:

- ▶ Investment allowance (IA) for capital-intensive projects
- ▶ A reduced tax rate of 25% from 38% for marginal oil fields
- ▶ Accelerated capital allowances of up to five years
- ▶ QEE transfers between noncontiguous petroleum agreements
- ▶ A waiver from export duty on oil produced from marginal fields

Details on some of these incentives are set out below. Note that some of the incentives relating to a field or an area may be mutually exclusive.

Marginal fields

A "marginal field" is a field that is determined by the Minister of Finance and which is a field in a petroleum agreement area that has potential crude oil reserves not exceeding 30 million stock tank barrels or natural gas reserves not exceeding 500 billion standard cubic feet. A chargeable person's statutory income derived from petroleum operations in a marginal field is effectively taxed at 25%.

Investment allowances

Investment allowances are available to a chargeable person who incurs qualifying capital expenditure in respect of qualifying projects, as determined by the Minister of Finance – such as projects of enhanced oil recovery, high carbon dioxide gas, high-pressure high-temperature, deep-water project, or an infrastructure asset. The investment allowance rate is 60% on qualifying capital expenditure incurred within a period of 10 years. Investment allowances can be set off against 70% of the statutory income of the qualifying project. Any unutilized investment allowances can be carried forward for future utilization against income from the qualifying project. Investment allowances are given in addition to capital allowances.

Accelerated capital allowances

A chargeable person who incurs qualifying capital expenditure solely for the purpose of carrying out petroleum operations in a marginal field would qualify for accelerated capital allowances on such qualifying capital expenditure. This incentive provides an initial allowance of 25% and annual allowances of 15% (including in the year of acquisition) on qualifying plant expenditure incurred between the years of assessment 2010 to 2024.

Global Incentive for Trading (GIFT)

In addition to the above upstream incentives, Malaysia has also introduced an incentive for commodity trading activities undertaken via a Labuan International Commodity Trading Company (LITC).

The GIFT program is available for a LITC. A LITC is a company which undertakes trading of the physical and related derivative products of certain commodities with nonresidents, in a currency other than the Malaysian ringgit. These

commodities include petroleum and petroleum-related products, including liquefied natural gas (LNG). Note that with respect to petroleum and petroleum-related products including LNG, the LITC is permitted to deal with Malaysian residents, though the trading must still be undertaken in a currency other than the Malaysian ringgit. The LITC must be incorporated under the Labuan Companies Act 1990 and must be licensed by the Labuan Financial Services Authority (LFSA). The following are some of the incentives that are provided to a LITC under the GIFT program:

- ▶ Corporate tax rate of 3% on chargeable profits.
- ▶ A LITC set up purely as a LNG trading company would be entitled to a 100% tax exemption for the first three years of operations, provided the company is licensed as a LITC before 31 December 2014. Thereafter, the company would be subject to the 3% tax mentioned above.
- ▶ After the first five years of operations, a LITC failing to meet certain conditions would be subject to a general penalty. The conditions are:
 - ▶ Minimum annual turnover of US\$100 million
 - ▶ Minimum annual business spending of MYR3 million (approximately US\$850,000) payable to Malaysian residents
 - ▶ The LITC needs to employ at least three professional traders. These traders must have a minimum salary of MYR15,000 (approximately US\$4,300) per month and must be Malaysian tax residents.

D. Withholding taxes

Withholding taxes in Malaysia are currently as follows:

- ▶ Dividends – 0%
- ▶ Interest – 15%^{3, 4}
- ▶ Royalties – 10%^{4, 5}
- ▶ Payments for specified services performed in Malaysia and for use of movable property – 10%^{4, 5}
- ▶ Payments to nonresident contractors – 13%^{5, 6}
- ▶ Other gains or profits (non-business) deemed to be derived from Malaysia (e.g., commissions, guarantee fees which are not business income of the nonresident) – 10%⁴

E. Indirect taxes

VAT and GST

Goods and services tax (GST) will be implemented in Malaysia with effect from 1 April 2015 at a standard rate of 6% (replacing the existing sales tax and service tax systems). The Goods and Services Tax Act 2014 and Goods and Services Tax Regulations 2014 were gazetted in 2014.

GST, which is similar in nature to VAT, would be a multi-staged consumption tax applicable to every taxable supply of goods and services made in Malaysia, as well as to the importation of goods and services into Malaysia. The registration threshold for GST is MYR500,000 per annum. Draft GST guidelines have been issued on various matters and in relation to various industries, including the petroleum upstream and downstream industries.

3 *Bank interest paid to nonresidents without a place of business in Malaysia is exempt from tax.*

4 *This is a final tax applicable only to payments to a nonresident.*

5 *The Protocol to the Malaysia-Thailand Double Taxation Agreement provides for the tax chargeable to be reduced by 50% in respect of royalties, technical fees and contract payments in connection with income arising from activities which are directly related to the exploration and exploitation of petroleum in the Joint Development Area and which is taxable in both Malaysia and Thailand.*

6 *The withholding tax is treated as a prepayment of tax for the final tax liability of the nonresident.*

For details of the sales tax and service tax regimes which would apply prior to 1 April 2015, see the relevant subsections later in this Section E.

Import duty

All dutiable goods, equipment and materials that enter Malaysia from overseas are subject to customs import duty. The general rates of import duty applied to the customs value of imported goods are between 2% and 50%, depending on the types of goods imported. Goods under trade agreements are accorded the relevant preferential import duty rates. Certain classes of petroleum products under the HS code heading 27.10 are currently subject to import duty at rates ranging from 0% to 5% and may require an import license.

The petroleum upstream industry (approved companies under the relevant order involving the exploration, development and production of crude oil, including condensate and gas) currently benefits from import duty and sales tax exemptions on all equipment and materials (listed in the master equipment list) used in such operations.

The petroleum downstream industry (involving the refining of crude oil into petroleum products, manufacturing of petrochemical products, gas processing and the distribution of processed gas) may apply for raw materials, components, packaging materials, machinery and equipment to be free of import duty if the goods are used in the manufacturing activity.

Export duty

Export duty at the rate of 10% applies to petroleum crude oil exported from Malaysia. Exportation of certain classes of petroleum products may require an export license.

Excise duty

Excise duty applies to a selected range of goods manufactured in Malaysia, as well as on selected goods imported into Malaysia. No excise duty is payable on dutiable goods that are exported.

Excise duty on petroleum has been abolished since 1 January 2000.

Sales tax

Sales tax is a single-staged consumption tax imposed on the domestic sale of taxable goods manufactured locally and on taxable goods imported into Malaysia. However, sales tax generally does not apply to goods manufactured in, or imported into, Labuan, Langkawi and Tioman Island, and in the Malaysia-Thailand JDA, free zones, licensed warehouses, or licensed manufacturing warehouses.

Generally, the rates of sales tax for crude petroleum, its associated products and gas are as follows:

- ▶ Crude petroleum and natural gas (in a gaseous state) – 0% sales tax
- ▶ Refined petroleum – subject to sales tax at a specific rate
- ▶ Lubricant oils – subject to 5% sales tax
- ▶ Liquefied natural gas – subject to sales tax at the specific rate of MYR0.01 per kilogram

All exports of crude petroleum, its associated products, and gas are exempt from sales tax.

Any company that undertakes a manufacturing activity (of goods that are subject to sales tax), such as refining or compounding, and including the addition of any foreign substance, is required to register for sales tax, except any:

- ▶ Manufacturer whose taxable turnover does not exceed MYR100,000 (but that manufacturer has to apply for a Certificate of Exemption from sales tax licensing)
 - ▶ Manufacturer that has been approved with licensed manufacturing warehouse (LMW) status
 - ▶ Manufacturer located in a free zone
-

A company that is registered for sales tax, is approved with an LMW status or is located in a free zone is eligible to obtain tax-free raw materials, components, packaging materials, machinery and equipment for use in its manufacturing activity.

Service tax

Service tax is a single-staged consumption tax applicable on specified "taxable services." Services that are not included in the prescribed list are not taxable. Currently, there are nine major groupings of taxable services included in the prescribed list. Examples of taxable services include telecommunication services, employment services, consultancy services, management services, legal services, accounting services, advertising services, engineering services, surveying services, architectural services, insurance services and hired-car services.

Since 1 January 2011 the service tax rate has been 6%.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |
-

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The new Crude Hydrocarbons Code (new code) was voted and promulgated by the Mauritanian Parliament in 2010. The new code has not been issued in the *Official Gazette* and so the comments hereafter are based on the version passed by the Mauritanian Parliament.

The new code consolidates the pre-existing legal framework applicable to the oil industry, namely Ordinance No. 88.151 of 1988 (the 1988 Ordinance), which pertains to the legal and fiscal regime applicable to the exploration and exploitation of petroleum. The new code also includes the simplified tax regime (STR) introduced in 2004 by Law No. 2004-029.

Depending on the date on which the petroleum contract was signed, the Mauritanian fiscal regime applicable to the oil and gas upstream industry is governed either by the 1988 Ordinance or the new code, the production sharing contract (PSC) and the General Tax Code. Indeed, companies undertaking petroleum activities under a petroleum contract signed before 2010 remain subject to such contracts and to any non-contrary provisions of the new code.

A specific legal regime for downstream activities was introduced by Ordinance No. 2002-005 in 2002 and will not be presented here.

The main taxes applicable to the oil and gas upstream sector are the following:

- ▶ Under the 1988 Ordinance:
 - ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT)
 - ▶ Royalties
- ▶ Under the new code:
 - ▶ CIT
 - ▶ VAT
 - ▶ Surface fee

Legal regime

The 1988 Ordinance governs the legal regime applicable to the exploration and exploitation of petroleum – whether solid, liquid or gaseous – as well as the transportation, storage and marketing thereof.

The scope of the new code is broader than the 1988 Ordinance as it also provides the legal regime applicable to constructions and installations enabling the exploration and exploitation of petroleum (as well as the associated transportation and storage). However, the new code does not cover the legal regime for petroleum marketing activities or the conduct of petroleum activities by individuals.

Under the new code, the State may carry out any petroleum activities, either directly or through the national company. The State may also authorize one or more companies resident in Mauritania or with a branch there to carry out petroleum activities through:

- ▶ A reconnaissance authorization, which gives its holder the non-exclusive right, within a limited contractual perimeter, to conduct reconnaissance operations such as geological methods.
- ▶ The initial duration of a reconnaissance authorization must not exceed 12 months and may be renewed once for the same duration.
- ▶ Exploration and production (E&P) activities into hydrocarbons, which are conducted on the basis of a PSC-style E&P contract between the contractor and the State.

A PSC provides for the sharing of oilfield production between the State and the contractor and must be approved by a State Decree.

The PSC includes two phases:

- ▶ An initial research phase that cannot exceed 10 years and that should include three phases defined in the PSC
- ▶ An exploitation phase that cannot exceed 25 years if the exploitation concerns crude oil fields and 30 years for dry gas fields.

The PSC should include a clause granting the State the option of participating in the rights and obligations of the contractor within the exploitation perimeter. This clause will state that the maximum percentage of the State's participation in the E&P activities is 10%.

Transportation of hydrocarbons

A right to transport hydrocarbons is granted to the PSC holder. The new code provides, in particular, that holders of different PSCs may form an association to build and operate transportation systems.

B. Fiscal regime

Contracts signed before the new code came into force remain governed by any of its non-contrary provisions. This analysis therefore covers the main taxes applicable in Mauritania under both regimes (the 1988 Ordinance and the new code).

Main taxes applicable under the 1988 Ordinance

Royalties

Contractors holding a so-called "B-type" exploitation permit are subject to a royalty on production, to be paid in cash or in kind. The amount of this royalty is determined by the total quantity of hydrocarbons produced from the exploitation permit (and not used in petroleum operations, excluding storage and marketing). The royalty will be specified in the contract but should not be less than 10% of production. Royalties are deductible when determining taxable net profits.

The holder of an exclusive right of exploitation, excluding the holder of the B-type permit of exploitation, is not subject to royalties.

Corporate income tax

Companies conducting petroleum operations within the Mauritanian national territory are liable to CIT as provided for in the General Tax Code. CIT is determined based on the net profit arising from such operations. The applicable rate will be specified in the contract; however, it must be at least equal to the common tax rate applicable at the time the contract was signed.

CIT is paid directly by the contractor. For CIT purposes, the contractor has to maintain separate accounts for its petroleum operations in each calendar year. These accounts must include a profit-and-loss statement and a balance sheet that will show the results of the petroleum operations and the assets and liabilities assigned or directly related to the petroleum operations.

For the purpose of CIT, the following expenses are deductible (provided that they have actually been recorded in the financial statements and the annual tax return of the current fiscal year that have been submitted to the tax administration):

- ▶ Petroleum costs, including costs of supplies, salaries and costs of services provided to the contractor in connection to the petroleum operations (the costs of supplies or services rendered by affiliated companies are deductible, provided that they do not exceed the arm's length amount for identical or similar supplies of services)
- ▶ Depreciation of capital expenditure, in accordance with the rates applicable in the oil industry and covered by the contract
- ▶ Overheads related to petroleum operations performed under the contract, including rentals for movable and immovable property, and insurance premiums
- ▶ Interest paid to creditors of the contractor, subject to the limits stated in the contract
- ▶ Any accounting provisions made for clearly identified future losses or liabilities for probable future events
- ▶ With respect to a holder of a B-type permit, the total amount of royalties paid in cash or in kind

The amount of prior-year losses that a company might have incurred during commercial production cannot be deducted from the taxable profit beyond the time limit allowed under the General Tax Code, unless otherwise provided for in the contract.

Additional Petroleum Tax

An additional petroleum tax may be incurred by a holder of a B-type exploitation permit. This tax is calculated on the profits arising from petroleum operations. The applicable rate is determined in the contract.

Main taxes applicable under the new code

Corporate income tax

Similarly to the 1988 Ordinance, companies conducting petroleum operations within Mauritanian national territory are liable to CIT as provided for in the General Tax Code (GTC). CIT is determined from the net profit arising from such operations – the applicable rate is specified in the contract but it must be at least equal to the common tax rate applicable at the time the contract was signed. The current applicable rate is 25%.

From the first year of production and for each subsequent fiscal year, contractors must submit their annual tax return and financial statements to the Mauritanian tax authorities. The tax return and financial statements must be submitted before 31 March of the subsequent year, as specified in Article 74 of the new code. The deadline for the filing of a tax return has in fact been postponed to 1 April of the subsequent year, under the regular GTC regime, but the tax administration has yet to specify whether this amendment will apply to oil companies.

The PSC may provide that the production sharing that the State receives includes the CIT due by the contractor.

The same deductible expenses as those provided in the 1988 Ordinance are applicable under the new code, with the exception of royalties since there are no royalties payable under the new code.

Surface fee

The surface fee is an annual tax that is not deductible. The PSC determines the basis and rate for each phase of the research period and for the exploitation period.

Bonuses

Contractors are required to pay a bonus upon signing the contract. They are also liable to pay a production bonus when the quantity of hydrocarbons produced has reached certain thresholds determined in the contract.

These bonuses are not deductible for CIT purposes.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas under either of the regimes.

C. Capital allowances

Capital allowances are governed by the General Tax Code and the PSC, and not by the hydrocarbons legislation.

Under the General Tax Code and the PSC, for the purposes of determining the taxable net profit arising from petroleum operations, capital expenditure incurred by the contractor that is necessary for the petroleum operations is depreciated on a straight-line basis. The rates shown in the table below can be used as guidance, but the PSC may provide otherwise:

| Nature of capital asset to be depreciated | Annual depreciation rate |
|---|--------------------------|
| Permanent buildings | 5% |
| Temporary buildings | 33.3% |
| Office and home furniture and fixtures | 20% |
| Productive wells | 20% |
| Production and delivery equipment | 20% |
| Drilling equipment | 33.3% |
| Pipelines | 10% |

D. Incentives

Under the 1988 Ordinance, contractors are exempt from any further tax on income that is in addition to royalties, CIT and Additional Petroleum Tax. There is therefore no additional tax on profits and the distribution of profits, nor is there any other levy, duty, tax or contribution on any transfer of funds or export of hydrocarbons. This exemption extends to income or activities of companies affiliated with companies holding exclusive petroleum exploration and exploitation rights, provided that such activities are directly related to petroleum operations.

In addition, as noted above, under the 1988 Ordinance the holder of an exclusive right of exploitation is exempt from royalties.

The new code provides for an exemption from the following taxes:

- ▶ The minimum tax (*impôt minimum forfaitaire*)
- ▶ General income tax (usually due by individuals) and any other tax on profits
- ▶ Tax on movable property, as well as any other withholding taxes (WHTs) on profits distribution
- ▶ Any tax on turnover, including any tax on services
- ▶ Patent fees
- ▶ Registration fees
- ▶ Learning fees
- ▶ Any other tax, duty or contribution related to petroleum activities

Similarly to other oil-producing countries, Mauritania introduced an optional Simplified Tax Regime (STR) in 2004 for foreign companies providing services to contractors in the oil industry, and the STR has recently been integrated within the new code. Operations conducted in Mauritania by foreign subcontracting companies can be taxed under the STR, which provides for an exemption from all taxes with the exception of CIT and payroll tax (ITS). Using the STR is, though, optional.

E. Withholding taxes

Under the new code, contractors must withhold ITS at source and remit it to the Mauritanian tax authorities as provided by Article 84 of the General Tax Code. The ITS capped rate is 35% for expatriate employees in Mauritania.

The STR mentioned in Section D above is based on a withholding system that transfers the tax collecting burden from subcontractors to contractors. The STR covers taxes on salaries and CIT. As the STR regime is an optional regime, a contractor must confirm, prior to making any payments to a subcontractor, whether that subcontractor has elected for the STR to apply.

If foreign subcontractors are taxable on their Mauritanian sourced income and do not opt for the STR, or if their application for the STR is rejected by the tax administration, they will be subject to the general tax regime.

The Finance Act for tax year 2013 introduced a 15% final withholding tax regime (RSI), which is applicable to nonresident providers of services or goods where those providers have entered into contracts with resident companies for a period not exceeding 6 months. This regime is optional and should also apply to foreign oil services companies. The resident oil company should request a prior-approval agreement on behalf of the nonresident services or goods provider and should withhold 15% of the amount paid to the latter.

The RSI exempts the foreign services or goods provider from General Income Tax, Minimum Tax, the tax on movable property (IRCM) and any other taxes and duties. However, contrary to the STR, expatriate personnel are still liable for ITS, capped at the rate of 35%. The RSI will constitute a tax credit, which the foreign services or goods provider is entitled to claim back from the Mauritanian tax administration.

If foreign subcontractors do not opt for the RSI, or the six-month period has expired, they should be subject to the general tax regime. However, the RSI regime can still be applied after the initial six-month period has expired to newly incorporated foreign companies or individuals who have not yet complied with their tax filing and payment obligations.

F. Financing considerations

Under the 1988 Ordinance, interest paid to creditors of the contractor is treated as a deductible expense, subject to the limits stated in the accounting procedure determined in the contract.

The new code provides for the same. However, its scope for deductibility is broader as it also includes interest paid to affiliated companies, provided they are related to financing petroleum activities and do not exceed the rates that would normally be charged in arm's length transactions.

G. Transactions

There is no specific issue or limitation regarding transactions (e.g., transfers of shares) under either of the hydrocarbon regimes.

H. Indirect taxes

Under the 1988 Ordinance, the holder of an exclusive petroleum exploration or exploitation right is exempt from any taxes on turnover. Under the new code, however, contractors are subject to VAT under the common tax regime.

Local purchases of goods and services are subject to Mauritanian VAT. Imports are subject to Mauritanian VAT at the normal rate (16%) or to the temporary import procedure (where a suspension of VAT applies). As noted above, the export of hydrocarbons is exempt from VAT.

I. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

Contractors are subject to the exchange control legislation established by the Central Bank of Mauritania, in particular Law No. 2004-042 of 2004, which sets forth the applicable regime for financial relations with foreign countries.

Expatriate employees of contractors have the right of free exchange and free transfer of their Mauritania-sourced income to their own country, within the limits of the exchange control legislation.

Stability clauses

Under both regimes, the contract is expected to provide for a "stability clause" stating that the contractor shall not be subject to any legislative provision that would disadvantage it when compared with the legislation and regulations in force on the date of signing the contract.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession¹
 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

A. At a glance

In December 2013, the Mexican Constitution (the "Constitution") was amended to loosen restrictions on the energy industry. These constitutional amendments represented a game-changer for Mexico's state-owned hydrocarbon resources, as the basis for expanding the types and nature of hydrocarbon investment contract models with private investors. In addition, the reform loosened control of other aspects of the energy industry, including a full liberalization of midstream and downstream activities within the oil and gas industry, as well as creating an open market for the generation of power.

¹ According to the last amendment made to the Mexican Constitution, private companies are allowed to invest in exploration and production activities in Mexico through license contracts, profit/production sharing contracts and service contracts; however concessions are not allowed.

In August 2014, the secondary legislation was implemented, as well as its regulations, in order to provide the legal framework for the opening up of the oil and gas industry. In general terms, the secondary legislation relies on the principle that unextracted hydrocarbons remain the property of the Mexican State. However, the adopted legislation provides the roadmap for a free and open competition between state-owned companies (i.e., *Petróleos Mexicanos*, or “PEMEX”) and private companies, for the exploration and production of oil and gas.

Round Zero, has already happened, whereby PEMEX sent a list of the oilfields that it wanted to keep for its own development to the National Commission of Hydrocarbons (“CNH”) and the Secretary of Energy, which then determined which of the fields should be assigned to PEMEX. PEMEX requested 100% of proved reserves (P1), 83% of the proved and probable (P2), 71% of the proved, probable and possible (P3) and 31% of the prospective resources. The Government allocated P1, P2, and P3 reserves as requested by PEMEX and only 21% of the prospective resources.

For Round One, 169 blocks will be offered to private investors and certain additional joint ventures with PEMEX. Of these blocks, 109 are for exploration and 60 are already producing. Bidding processes for Round One will take place during 2015, depending on the type of block. (i.e., shallow water, deep water, etc.).

Expansion of investment alternatives

Ending PEMEX’s exclusive rights to Mexican hydrocarbons, the Energy Reform permits investors (both Mexican and non-Mexican investors through Mexican vehicles) to participate throughout the oil and gas value chain - from exploration to refining of hydrocarbons. Although the legal ownership of the hydrocarbons remains the property of the State, the Energy Reform provides for mechanisms whereby investors may be able to participate in the exploration and production of hydrocarbons. To carry out such investments, the Energy Reform specifically provides four different types of contracts:

- ▶ Licensing agreements whereby investors may be granted licenses offering the possibility of transferring oil to private companies once the hydrocarbons have been extracted, with the right to market such hydrocarbons.
- ▶ Service contracts.
- ▶ Profit-sharing contracts giving private companies a share of profits from operations in cash.
- ▶ Production sharing contracts, where oil barrels are divided between the state and the private companies.

The Energy Reform also mandates the creation of a trust fund with the Mexican Central Bank responsible for managing and distributing profits (excluding taxes) from such contracts. This trust was created in September 2014. Additionally, minimum local content requirements and other provisions will continue to enhance local Mexican participation in the expected build-out of the fields and related infrastructure.

Most importantly, the Energy Reform generally permits foreign companies to book the petroleum reserves (for financial and accounting purposes), with certain requirements; however, as noted above, the hydrocarbons and ownership thereof will continue to remain the property of the State.

Effect on PEMEX and additional governmental oversight

Pursuant to the Energy Reform, PEMEX has to be restructured, and PEMEX is mandated to become a National Oil Company within two years.

Fiscal regime

The Hydrocarbons Revenue Law (HRL) establishes that in order to participate in a contract bidding process to carry out exploration and production activities, companies must be Mexican companies, resident also in the country for tax purposes, having as their purpose exclusively the exploration and extraction of

hydrocarbons, and not be taxable under the optional integration tax regime for groups of companies (a new limited tax consolidation regime in Mexico).

State-owned companies and private companies are entitled to participate in a bidding process either individually, through a consortium or a joint venture.

In general terms, the Mexican fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), governmental taxes (depending on the type of contract), value-added tax (VAT) and other local taxes.

Depending on the contract (license, profit and production sharing, or service) contractors will pay the following considerations in favor of the Mexican state:

- a. Upfront signing bonus
- b. Contractual Quota for Exploration Period (CQEP)
- c. Revenue-based royalty
- d. Profit sharing payment based on the net operating profit or value of hydrocarbons
- e. Over-royalty
- f. Tax on exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons
- g. Property tax; property taxes should not be relevant
- h. Compensation for the acquisition or temporary use of land

On the other hand, a new entitlement regime applies to PEMEX and its subsidiaries by which those entities will become subject to CIT and government fees.

Other fiscal arrangements primarily include:

- a. Income tax rate – 30%
- b. Dividend payments income tax withholding – 10%
- c. Value added tax – 0% (i.e., E&P activities), 16%

B. Fiscal regime

As for the fiscal regime (oil revenues and taxation), the new regulations are contained in the HRL. The HRL establishes that contractors would not only continue to be subject to the general federal taxes, including income tax and VAT, but also to additional types of fees, royalties and other payments that would have to be made under the new contracts and activities.

Contracts

Government takes vary depending on the contractual regime to which the Mexican entity is subject.

License contracts

Under the HRL, when the Government enters into a licensing agreement with a contractor, it may receive upfront signing bonuses, CQEP, royalties and payments based on the value of hydrocarbons (over-royalties). In exchange, contractors will receive the transfer of the extracted hydrocarbons.

- i. **Signing bonus:** Consist of a lump sum payment made upon signing of the licensing agreement. The lump sum amount, as well as its payment conditions, will be determined by the Ministry of Finance on each contract and will be revealed during the bidding process.
- ii. **CQEP:** The CQEP is a periodic payment that is made before extraction activities begin. The CQEP for the first 60 months is \$1,150 MXP (approximately US\$85) per square kilometer, and increases to \$2,750 MXP (approximately US\$205) thereafter.
- iii. **Royalties:** Royalties are payments to the Government based on the gross income derived from oil, gas and condensate production:
 - Oil royalty: The oil royalty rate is based on the value of the barrel of oil. If the price is under US\$48 per barrel, the rate is fixed at 7.5%. If the price per barrel is above US\$48, the rate will be increased according to the following formula:

$$\text{Rate} = [(0.125 \times \text{Contractual Oil Price}) + 1.5]\%$$

- ▶ Gas royalty: The royalty rate for:
 - ▶ Associated Natural Gas is the Contractual Price divided by 100
 - ▶ Non-Associated Natural Gas:
 - ▶ if the price is less than or equal to US\$5 per million BTUs, a 0% royalty
 - ▶ If the price is between US\$5 and US\$5.5 per million BTUs, the following formula should be used:

$$\text{Rate} = \frac{[(\text{Contractual Natural Gas Price} - 5) \times 60.5]}{\text{Contractual Natural Gas Price}}$$
 - ▶ If the price is more than US\$5.5 per million BTUs, the formula for determining the royalty rate is the same as for Associated Gas (i.e., Contractual Price divided by 100)
- ▶ Condensates royalty: With respect to condensates (i.e., natural gas liquids formed primarily by pentanes and heavier components of hydrocarbons), a progressive rate is established based on the price of the condensates. Under US\$60, the royalty rate will be fixed at 5%. Over US\$60, the following formula applies for determining the royalty rate:

$$\text{Rate} = [(0.125 \times \text{Contractual Condensate Price}) - 2.5]\%$$

- iv. *Over-royalties*: The over-royalties are payments “contrapretaciones” made to the Government based only on a percentage rate of the value of hydrocarbons.
- v. *Adjustment mechanism (the “R-Factor”)*: These compensations shall be established in each call for bids as well on the corresponding contracts.

Profit and production sharing contracts

Under profit and production sharing contracts, the Government may receive CQEP, royalties and payment based on the net operating profit. The contractor may receive cost recovery and compensation based on the remainder of the net operating profit.

- i. *CQEP*: Same terms described in the license contracts
- ii. *Royalties*: Same terms described in the license contracts
- iii. *Net operating profit*: This compensation will be determined by the application of a percentage to the operating profit
- iv. *Adjustment mechanism (the R-Factor)*: These compensations shall be established in each call for bids as well on the corresponding contracts

The net operating profit is determined by subtracting from the value of the hydrocarbons the amount of royalties paid by the contractor, plus the payment derived from the costs and expenses recovery. The amount of costs, expenses and investments that may be deducted in each period may be limited, but such limitations will be established when the contract is entered into.

In both contracts the net operating profit is determined in the same way, but the difference between these two contracts is that:

- ▶ In a profit sharing contract, all of the production shall be delivered to the State’s marketer, who shall deliver the proceeds of the sale of such production to the Mexican Petroleum Fund (Petroleum Fund). The Petroleum Fund will receive and distribute the payments that correspond to the Government and contractor.
- ▶ In a production sharing contract, the contracts will include which portion of the production should be delivered to the State’s marketer who shall deliver the proceeds to the Petroleum Fund.

With respect to cost recovery, the HRL provides that the limit will be established in each contract as a percentage of the value of hydrocarbons, and in certain cases it is possible that cost recovery is not included. Additionally, the HRL provides that the following costs will be considered non-deductible: (i) financing costs; (ii) costs derived from negligence or fraud; (iii) donations; (iv) costs and expenses derived from easements and acquisition of land or rights over land (including legal hydrocarbons easements constituted under the Hydrocarbons

Law); (v) non-approved advisory services; (vi) cost from non-compliance of the relevant provisions including risk administration; (vii) unqualified training expenses; (viii) cost from non-compliance of warranties conditions; (ix) expenses for the use of owned technology unless proven to be arm's length; (x) most provisions and reserves; (xi) legal fees; (xii) broker fees; (xiii) royalties and contractual payments during the exploration phase as well as payments of compensations, costs, expenses and investments related to other contracts; and (xiv) those not strictly necessary for the execution of the contract.

Service contracts

Under the service contracts, the contractor is obliged to provide services to the State in exchange for a consideration in cash.

Entitlements ("Asignaciones")

Under this modality, PEMEX and its subsidiaries are obliged to pay the corresponding income tax, as well as the following government fees for the exploration and production activities:

- i. **Profit sharing fees:** The assignation holders should annually pay the profit sharing fee by applying a percentage of the difference resulting from subtracting from the value of the hydrocarbons extracted during the tax year in question, including the consumption of these products by the assignation holder, as well as the reductions because of spills or burnings of said products, the deductions allowed under this Law. For 2015, the applicable rate shall be 70%, with transitory provisions seeing the rate move to 68.75% for 2016, 67.5% for 2017, 66.25% for 2018 and 65% for 2019 and thereafter.

The aforementioned fee should be paid by means of a return submitted at the latest by the last working day of March of the year in question.

- ii. **Hydrocarbon extraction fee:** The assignation holder will be obliged to pay on a monthly basis the hydrocarbon extraction fee, applying the respective rate to the value of the hydrocarbon in question extracted during the month.
- iii. **Hydrocarbons exploration fee:** The assignation holder will be obliged to pay on a monthly basis the hydrocarbon extraction fee, for the portion of the assignation area that is not in a production phase, in accordance with the following rates. MXP1,150 (approximately US\$85) per square kilometer for the first 60 months, and increases to MXP2,750 (approximately US\$205) thereafter.

Tax on exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons

The HRL imposes a tax on exploration and extraction of hydrocarbon activities that is applicable to contractors and assignation holders. The tax during the exploration phase will be MXP1,500 (approximately US\$112) per square kilometer assigned to the contractor and MXP6,000 (approximately US\$450) per square kilometer during the extraction phase. This tax should be paid monthly. The amount will be adjusted on an annual basis.

Compensation for the acquisition or temporary use of land

The Hydrocarbons Law establishes a special procedure for the acquisition by contractors of land or rights to use land when required to perform exploration and production activities under a contract.

The consideration that will be paid to the land owners shall cover the following:

- a. Encumbrances over goods or rights that are different from rights over lands
- b. Foreseen damages calculated on the basis of habitual activity of the property
- c. Rent for occupation, easement or land use
- d. For projects that reach commercial production of hydrocarbons, a percentage between 0.5% and 3% (3% in the case of Non-Associated Natural Gas) of the contractor's income, after payments are made to the Government

The consideration agreed can be paid in cash or by any of the following means:

- a. Contracting commitments to become part of the labor
- b. The purchase of manufactured goods or services
- c. Commitment to be part of projects and developments
- d. Any other consideration that is not contrary to the law
- e. A combination of the above

Local content

The Hydrocarbons Law and its regulations establish that exploration and production of hydrocarbons activities in Mexico should reach, at least 25% of local content for 2015 and should be increased progressively up to 35% in 2025. However, this provision does not apply for exploration and production activities in deep water.

It is expected that additional regulations on the calculation of local content will be issued.

Corporate income tax

Under the 2014 Mexican Income Tax Law (MITL), the corporate income tax rate is 30%. Mexican resident companies are taxed on their worldwide earnings. A corporation is considered to be a Mexican resident if its "effective place of management" is located in Mexico.

A permanent establishment (PE) of a foreign resident is generally taxed in the same manner as a Mexican resident, but it is taxed only on income attributable to the PE. It is important to bear in mind that a PE could be created without the signing of an agreement; only services need an agreement to be provided.

The HRL includes an expanded definition of PE, which would also be applicable for income tax purposes for nonresidents performing any activity under the Hydrocarbons Law in Mexican territory for more than 30 days in any 12-month period. Nevertheless, it is important to analyze the interaction that it has with double tax treaties.

Dividends

Dividend Withholding Tax

Starting from 2014 the MITL incorporates a 10% Dividend Withholding Tax rate on dividends paid to Mexican individuals as well as foreign residents. Therefore, dividends between Mexican resident entities are still not subject to withholding tax at the shareholder level. In certain instances, the Mexican tax treaties may provide tax relief from this Dividend Withholding Tax.

The definition of "dividend" for purposes of the 10% Dividend Withholding Tax include, among others:

1. Interest paid on preferred shares
2. Loans to shareholders and partners, unless the loan is established for less than one year, incurred in the operations of the business and meets certain requirements
3. Payments that are considered non-deductible and benefit the shareholders
4. Amounts not recognized as a result of omissions of income or unrealized purchases
5. Transfer pricing adjustments to income or expenses as a result of assessments by the tax authorities for related-party transactions

In addition to the Dividend Withholding Tax, distributing companies are subject to CUFIN (taxed earnings account) rules, which result in a tax to the extent that a dividend is made in excess of CUFIN. If the Mexican company has enough CUFIN balance to cover the dividends, no tax at the corporate distributing company level should be triggered. If the amount of the dividend distribution exceeds the CUFIN balance, the excess amount would be subject to a 30% corporate income tax on a grossed-up basis (i.e., the dividend multiplied by a gross-up factor of 1.4286), therefore, the effective tax would be 42.86%.

The Mexican tax treaties should not provide any relief from this tax because it is imposed at the Mexican corporate level and not the shareholder level, through a withholding tax. The tax paid under the foregoing test should be creditable against the current annual income tax liability of the Mexican distributing company in the year in which the excess distribution is made, and the following year if any portion cannot be credited in the first year.

A reduction of capital may be reclassified as a dividend for the excess CUFIN Distribution Tax if certain conditions are met.

Branch remittance tax

A 10% Distribution Tax applies on distributions from a Mexican PE to its foreign head office. As mentioned above, a 10% Dividend Withholding Tax applies on distributions from a Mexican PE to its foreign head office. In certain instances, the Mexican tax treaties may provide tax relief from this Dividend Withholding Tax.

Distribution rules similar to those for dividends from Mexican resident entities apply to nonresident entities with a PE or branch in Mexico. For this purpose, the branch is required to keep an account (known as the CURECARE) for capital remittances made to the non-Mexican-resident head office. In general terms, the CURECARE balance shows the amount of earnings that have been subject to corporate income tax by the PE.

Additionally, Mexican branches are also required to record their previously taxed earnings through the CUFIN account. If a remittance is made to the head office of the Mexican PE, it is deemed to be a dividend distribution from previously taxed earnings. If the payment of the remittance exceeds the CURECARE and CUFIN balances, the excess dividend must be grossed up with a 1.4286 factor, with the result multiplied by the corporate income tax rate (currently 30%).

Deductibility requirements

In general, expenses related to the business activity of a taxpayer are deductible for income tax purposes. In addition, Mexico has formalistic documentation requirements that must be met to support the deduction, including requirements related to accounting records as well as invoices.

Payroll-related expenses

Fifty-three percent of payroll-related expenses, including contributions to pension funds that are considered exempt income for employees, are considered non-deductible. The non-deductible amount may be reduced to 47%, as long as the amount of the benefits that are exempt for employees has not been reduced compared with the amount paid to employees in the prior year.

Interest, royalties and technical assistance

Deductions are denied for interest, royalties or technical assistance in cases where the income is not subject to tax for the foreign recipient. Specifically, the deduction is denied for payments that are made to a foreign entity that controls or is controlled by the Mexican taxpayer and meets one of these conditions:

- ▶ The payments are made to a foreign entity that is fiscally transparent (as defined), unless the shareholders or partners are subject to tax on the foreign entity's income and the payments are made at arm's length.
- ▶ The payments are not deemed to exist for tax purposes in the country or territory in which the entity is resident.

Or

- ▶ The foreign entity does not accrue the taxable income under the applicable tax rules.

For this purpose, control is deemed to exist when one of the parties has, either directly or through an intermediary, effective control or control of the administration of the other, to the level of deciding the moment to distribute or share revenue, income or dividends. It is notable that the rule references and defines "controlled" or "controlling" recipients, rather than all related parties, which is already a broadly defined term under Mexican income tax rules.

Among other related-party transactions, agreements and structures related to the lease of vessels, rigs or other type of machinery and equipment used by the oil and gas industry have to be revised based on this rules, as rental payments are deemed royalties for tax purposes in Mexico.

Expenses deducted by an affiliate

Deductions of expenses that are also deducted by a related party in another jurisdiction are denied, unless the affiliate is also recognizing income of the Mexican taxpayer in the same year or the subsequent year.

Consolidated regime

The 2014 tax reform eliminated the consolidation regime as of 2013; a new "Integrated Regime" was established for periods thereafter.

The integrated regime (similar in nature to a consolidation regime), allows groups to combine results of group members on an annual basis. In effect, there is an ability to use losses between the members of the group. The benefits of this regime are subject to recapture after three years. To file under this regime, authorization must be requested prior to 15 August of the year before the integrated return will first be filed. It is, therefore, no longer possible to request to pay taxes subject to the integrated regime for 2014.

One of the key differences for current groups and the new integrated regime is that the integrated regime is allowed for group members owned at least to the level of 80% within the group. The previous consolidation regime only required more than 50% ownership within the group.

As mentioned above, companies that want to participate in the bidding processes in Mexico to carry out exploration and production of hydrocarbons activities cannot pay taxes under this regime.

The HRL establishes that entities could participate in the tender processes individually, as a consortium or by means of joint ventures. A consortium should be understood as an instance where two or more State-owned productive enterprises and or legal persons, jointly present a proposal within the tender process for the awarding of a contract. In summary, the members of a consortium should comply with their tax obligations in an individual manner.

Capital gains

Capital gains and losses are treated as ordinary income and deductions, except for most losses arising from the disposal of shares. Losses arising from the disposal of shares are generally not deductible against ordinary income.

Otherwise, losses from the disposal of shares may only be used to offset gains derived from the sale of stock or securities during the same tax year or the subsequent 10 tax years.

A "gain" or "loss" is computed as the difference between the sale proceeds and the cost of the asset. The cost of the assets is adjusted for inflation using actualization factors based on the National Consumer Price Index. The tax basis of shares of a Mexican entity is also adjusted for changes in the CUFIN account of the company, as well as the net operating losses.

Capital gains from sale of publicly traded shares are taxed at a rate of 10% for individuals and nonresidents. Certain requirements must be met to qualify for the 10% rate as opposed to the general 35% tax rate on the net gain, including, but not limited to, the requirement that a shareholder or a related group of shareholders should not sell more than 10% of the capital of the issuer in a two year period and/or the transaction should not be deemed to be as a planned transaction, as defined in the MITL.

Notwithstanding the above, the MITL includes an exemption from capital gains on the sale of shares of publicly traded companies over an exchange when made by a resident of a country with which Mexico has entered into a tax treaty. For this purpose, the shareholder is required to file, with the custodian, a sworn statement of residence and compliance with the treaty.

Profit sharing

Employers in Mexico must pay profit sharing to employees each year equal to 10% of the taxable income of the business. It is important to analyze the structure that must be implemented to operate in Mexico.

Transfer pricing

Mexican taxpayers are required to conduct transactions with related parties on an arm's length basis. In addition to filing an annual informational return, taxpayers are required to produce and maintain contemporaneous documentation (i.e., a transfer pricing study) demonstrating that income and deductions arising from intercompany transactions are consistent with the amounts that would have resulted had these transactions taken place with unrelated parties under similar conditions. In recent years, transactions between related parties have been subject to greater scrutiny.

It may be possible to reach an advance pricing agreement (APA) with Mexico's Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (commonly known as "*Hacienda*") in order to obtain confirmation of a method used. These agreements may apply for a period of up to five years in the case of unilateral agreements, and for more years in the case of mutual agreements.

According to the HRL, for purposes of cost recovery and the computation of the operating profit in the profit sharing and production sharing contracts, transfer pricing provisions should be met. Likewise, the HRL establishes that in cases where contractors carry out transactions with related parties, the Transfer Pricing Guidelines issued by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would apply.

Functional currency

The functional currency for Mexican tax purposes is always the Mexican peso. It is not possible to elect any other currency as the functional currency.

C. Capital allowances

Taxpayers are required to depreciate the costs of pre-operating expenses, fixed assets and intangible assets using the straight-line method. The amount of the depreciation deduction is adjusted for inflation from the date of the acquisition until the tax year in which the deduction is taken. For this purpose, the MITL provides statutory depreciation rates; however, taxpayers may elect a lower rate than provided for by law.

In addition to the percentages included in the MITL, the HRL establishes the following rates for asset depreciation that could also be used for tax purposes:

- ▶ 100% of original investment amount for exploration, secondary and enhanced oil recovery, non-capitalized maintenance.
- ▶ 25% of original investment amount in the exploration and development of oil and natural gas deposits.
- ▶ 10% of original investment amount made in infrastructure for storage and transport required for the execution of the contract, such as oil and gas pipelines, terminal, transportation or storage tanks required for the contractual production.

It is important to take into account that these rates apply only to oil and gas exploration and extracting companies and not to the entire oil and gas industry.

D. Incentives

Mexico does not grant any incentive or tax holidays for production and exploration activities, or any other activity related to the oil and gas industry.

E. Tax losses

As a general rule, the MITL establishes that net operating losses (NOLs) obtained in one fiscal year may be carried forward for 10 years, although no carryback is allowed. The HRL establishes that losses derived from the execution of deep-water contracts may be carried forward for 15 years.

The amount of NOLs that may be used in a particular tax year is adjusted for inflation by multiplying the amount by the inflation factor for the period from the first month of the second half of the tax year when the loss was incurred until the last month of the first half of the tax year when the NOL is used.

In a merger, only the NOLs of the surviving company continue to exist after the merger. Furthermore, the NOLs of the surviving entity may be used exclusively to offset income generated by operations of the same category as the operations that produced the losses. Thus, the merger of a profitable company into a loss-making company, designed to use the latter's losses to offset profits, is effective only if the activities conducted by the profitable company prior to the merger are in the same line of business as the loss-making company.

The NOLs of a company that undergoes a corporate split survive after the transaction. The NOL balance of the original company is allocated between the old and new entities based on the type of businesses the companies are engaged in. The NOL allocation is based on inventory and accounts-receivable balances if the entities are engaged in commercial activities, and the allocation is based on the fixed-asset balances if the entities are engaged in industrial activities.

In the case of a change, either direct or indirect, of the shareholders of a company that has tax losses, the usage of the NOLs may be restricted. This rule applies when the sum of the gross income in the three prior tax years is less than the amount of the available NOLs, adjusted for inflation. If this test is met, the tax losses may exclusively be used to offset income from the same business activity that generated the losses. A change in the controlling partner or shareholder is deemed to occur when there is a change of shareholders, either directly or indirectly, of more than 50% of the shares or social parts with voting rights of the company, in one or more transactions over a period of 3 years.

F. Withholding taxes

Mexico collects taxes borne by foreign residents with Mexican source income via the withholding mechanism. To qualify for a beneficial treaty rate, a certificate of tax residence is required, among other formal requirements that may result applicable under domestic and treaty regulations.

With respect to related-party transactions, the tax authorities may request that the foreign resident document the existence of a legal double taxation, through a sworn oath signed by the legal representative stating that the income subject to tax in Mexico to which the treaty benefit is being sought is also subject to tax in the country of residence. Some exceptions may be applicable to this requirement.

Some of the entries in the table below have been described in more detail in section B above.

| Item of Income | Domestic withholding rate* | Regular reduced rate available with treaties |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Dividends | 10% | 0% - 5% |
| Branch remittance tax | 10% | 0% - 5% |
| Royalties for the use of patents, certificates of invention or improvements, trademarks and trade names | 35% | 10% |
| Other royalties, including know-how and payments for the use of commercial, scientific or industrial equipment | 25% | 10% |
| Technical assistance | 25% | 0% |

| Item of Income | Domestic withholding rate* | Regular reduced rate available with treaties |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Bareboat charter of vessels (with cabotage in Mexico) | 10% | 10% |
| Timer charter of vessels | 25% or permanent establishment | 0% or permanent establishment |
| Payments for services rendered in Mexican territory | 25% | 0% or permanent establishment |
| Payments for services rendered outside Mexican territory | Not subject to withholding | - |
| Interest | 4.9% to 35% | 10% to 15% |

* Withholding tax may increase up to 40% in any case, if paid to a tax haven or certain tax transparent vehicles.

G. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization rules

Mexico adopted thin capitalization rules denying the deduction of interest expense on loans with non-resident related parties when the company has a debt-to-equity ratio that exceeds 3:1.

Notwithstanding, the MITL establishes that the 3:1 debt to equity limitation is not applicable if debt is contracted for financing the construction, operation or maintenance of infrastructure that is related to certain strategic sectors. Since exploration and production of hydrocarbons activities should be considered as a strategic sector in Mexico, thin capitalization rules may not apply to certain oil and gas activities.

Dividend characterization rules

Interest paid on a loan from a related party is treated as a non-deductible dividend if the loan has any of the following characteristics:

- ▶ The loan agreement provides that the debtor unconditionally promises to repay the loan at any time determined by the creditor.
- ▶ In the event of default, the creditor has the right to intervene in the administration of the debtor's business.
- ▶ The payment of interest is conditional on the availability of profits, or the amount of the interest is determined based on the profits.
- ▶ The interest rate is not stated at a fair market rate.
- ▶ The interest is derived from a back-to-back loan, including a back-to-back loan entered into with a financial institution.

Inflationary adjustment

Mexican companies must recognize for tax purposes the inflationary gains or losses attributable to their monetary liabilities and assets. Thus, in determining how to finance an investment in Mexico, consideration must be given to the income tax treatment of interest expense, whereby the inflationary gains arising from the debt may, in whole or in part, offset the interest expense and thereby erode the tax benefit from the interest expense deduction.

Exchange gains and losses

In the case of financial assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency (i.e., any currency other than Mexican pesos), the resulting exchange gains and losses are treated in the same way as interest, and they are recognized on an accruals basis.

H. Transactions

Asset disposals

The transfer of assets in Mexico is generally a taxable transaction subject to the general corporate income tax rate of 30%, unless the transfer occurs as a result of a qualified reorganization. Mergers and demergers can be done tax free between Mexican-resident entities if certain conditions are met.

Selling shares in a company

The MITL provides that a foreign resident is deemed to have Mexican-sourced income if it sells (i.e., transfers) shares of a Mexican-resident company or if it transfers shares in a non-Mexican entity whose accounting value (more than 50%) is derived from real property located in Mexico. Under domestic rules, the seller has the option of being taxed at either 25% on gross proceeds or 35% on the net gain (the difference between the sales price and the tax basis of the shares). It should be noted that the net-gain treatment is allowed exclusively for shareholders resident in countries that are not deemed to have a preferential tax regime or territorial tax jurisdiction. The tax basis is determined as the historical acquisition price of the shares, net of capital redemptions, adjusted for inflation, with the addition or subtraction of positive or negative fluctuations in the Mexican company's CUFIN account and an adjustment for the increase or decrease in the balance of NOLs during the period the shares were held. The 35% tax rate can only be elected if certain requirements are fulfilled. Note that sellers who are residents of tax havens are subject to tax on a gross basis at the rate of 40%.

In the case of a group restructuring, it is possible to transfer the shares and defer the income tax due until the shares leave the group (a group is considered to be a group of companies when at least 51% of the voting shares are directly or indirectly owned by the same corporate entity). Certain tax treaties entered into by Mexico provide an exemption for capital gains tax or for tax-free corporate reorganizations.

Please refer to section B's subsection on "capital gains" for further details of the tax treatment on capital gains from the sale of publicly traded shares.

I. Indirect taxes

VAT

Under the Mexican VAT law, VAT is imposed on legal entities and individuals that carry out any of the following activities in Mexico: sell goods and property; render independent services; grant the temporary use or enjoyment of goods (e.g., leasing); and import goods or services.

While the general 16% VAT rate is applicable to most transactions, there is also a 0% rate applicable to certain transactions, such as the exportation of goods and certain services, sales of foods, medicines, books and gold.

The HRL establishes that any activity that requires compensation to be paid between the contractor and the Government will be subject to a 0% VAT rate. This provision does not apply to contracts entered into between the contractor and other third parties.

Generally, the VAT that is paid to suppliers (input tax) is creditable against the VAT charged to customers (output tax). Consequently, the amount that companies must remit to the Mexican tax authorities is the excess of the total VAT collected during the tax period from their customers over the VAT paid to suppliers. If, in a given period, VAT credits exceed the VAT collected from customers, the excess may be carried forward to the following tax period or, alternatively, the taxpayer may obtain a refund for such excess or offset the excess against other federal taxes.

Import duties

All foreign goods, equipment and materials that enter Mexico are subject to import duties as well as VAT. There are exemptions for import duties under

certain free trade agreements and special trade programs. Special preferential duty rates are available under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the free trade agreements between Mexico and Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, the EFTA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), the EU, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay, among others. To qualify for these preferential duty rates, the importer must present a certificate of origin at the time of customs clearance.

Temporary importation regime

The VAT exemption on the temporary importation of goods under certain import regimes was eliminated under the tax reform for 2014 tax year. However, it is important to bear in mind that these tax changes did not affect the temporary importation regime of vessels, rigs, platforms or other similar equipment used in the oil and gas industry.

Export duties

In general, the export of goods is not subject to VAT or other duties. However, it is important to bear in mind that the exportation of certain services (not goods) is subject to the general VAT rate of 16%, which implies an additional cost for the recipient of the services outside Mexico.

Excise tax

Under the Mexican Excise Tax Law, the sale or importation of certain products, as well as the rendering of certain services, is subject to excise taxes based on specific characteristics (e.g., alcoholic beverages, gasoline, diesel oil).

Excise tax is imposed on the sale or importation of the fossil fuels listed in the table below.

| | Fossil fuel | Rate |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Propane | 6.15 cents per liter |
| 2. | Butane | 7.97 cents per liter |
| 3. | Gasoline, gas airplane | 10.81 cents per liter |
| 4. | Jet fuel and other kerosene | 12.91 cents per liter |
| 5. | Diesel | 13.11 cents per liter |
| 6. | Heavy oil (<i>Combustóleo</i>) | 14.00 cents per liter |
| 7. | Fuel oil | 16.24 pesos per ton |
| 8. | Fuel coal | 38.09 pesos per ton |
| 9. | Mineral coal | 28.68 pesos per ton |
| 10. | Other fossil fuel | 41.45 pesos per ton of carbon in the fuel |

Taxation is therefore calculated in proportion of the amount of fossil fuel used. The tax rate will be adjusted on a yearly basis. The 2014 Excise Tax Law provides a tax exemption on the importation of crude oil and natural gas.

Stamp duties

No stamp duty applies in Mexico.

Registration fees

No significant registration fees apply in Mexico.

J. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

Mexico currently does not have foreign-exchange controls.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

The oil and gas industry is regulated in Morocco by Law No. 21-90 as amended and completed by Law No. 27-99, which together form the Hydrocarbon Code. Most of the tax provisions and incentives initially laid down in the Hydrocarbon Code are also now included in the Moroccan Tax Code.

The tax treatment provided for the oil and gas industry in Morocco consists mainly in a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), withholding tax (WHT) on dividends, royalties and interest, branch remittance tax, value-added tax (VAT), registration duties, import duties and business tax.

The common tax rates regarding each tax category that apply to oil and gas industry are as follows:

- ▶ CIT rate – 30%
- ▶ WHT (dividends) – 15%
- ▶ WHT (royalties and interest) – 10%
- ▶ VAT – 20% (10% for hydrocarbon products sold locally)
- ▶ Registration duties – Fixed/proportional rate depending on the type of transaction
- ▶ Import duties – Exempt (subject to certain conditions)
- ▶ Branch remittance tax – 15%
- ▶ Business tax – Proportional rate depending on the activity
- ▶ Royalties due to the government – 3.5% to 10%
- ▶ Training duties – Included in the petroleum agreement with the Government

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

Companies operating in Morocco are subject to corporate income tax (CIT) on their Moroccan sourced income. The common applicable tax rate is set at 30%. This rate applies to any type of income, including that generated from oil and gas activities.

Nevertheless, the Moroccan Tax Code provides a temporary exemption for companies operating in the hydrocarbon industry. A holder or, where applicable, each of the co-holders of any exploitation concession of hydrocarbon deposits is entitled to a total exemption from CIT for a period of 10 consecutive years running from the beginning of regular production. Before the beginning of regular production, the exemption does not apply and thus any tax benefits are taxable in normal conditions.

CIT computation and filing requirements

Taxable income is derived from the difference between the revenues derived during the fiscal year and the deductible expenses incurred for performing the activities that generated the revenue.

An income tax return has to be filed on an annual basis, within 3 months following the closure of the fiscal year.

The Moroccan Tax Code does not provide any tax rules specific to oil and gas activities. However, the Hydrocarbon Code provides that:

- ▶ Taxable revenue corresponds to the value of the portion of hydrocarbons attributable to the concession holder during the considered fiscal year
- ▶ Deductible expenses correspond to the sum of:
 - ▶ Expenses and depreciation related to the fiscal year
 - ▶ Carried forward losses.

“Expenses” include in particular:

1. Start-up costs for the set-up and launching of oil and gas operations
2. The costs of reconnaissance, exploration and development, drilling costs not compensated, and costs incurred in the drilling of wells that do not produce oil or gas in marketable quantities
3. Operating costs
4. Surface rental and concession royalties

Costs referred to in 1 and 2 above may be considered, according to the option selected annually by the holder of the concession, as deductible expenses in the fiscal year during which they are incurred, or they can be depreciated over the period provided by the oil and gas agreement (although the depreciation period must not exceed 10 years).

Tax losses

Standard carryforward rules apply to oil and gas activities. Tax losses can be carried forward for a period of four years. Losses corresponding to depreciation can be carried forward without time limitation.

Consolidation of activities

The Hydrocarbon Code provides that, for the computation of corporate income tax, the holder (or, where applicable, each of the co-holders) of an exploitation concession may consolidate the revenues, expenses and results derived from all exploration permits and all exploitation concessions of which it is a holder.

It should be noted that the Moroccan Tax Code does not provide any other option for the computation of the taxable benefit in cases of multiple activities or licenses at different stages.

Withholding taxes

Dividends

Benefits and dividends remitted by holders of exploitation concessions of Hydrocarbon Deposits are exempt from WHT on dividends as well as branch remittance tax.

Royalties

Royalties paid by Moroccan-based companies to nonresident entities are subject to 10% WHT, unless otherwise provided by double tax treaties concluded with Morocco. Furthermore, domestic tax rules provide a 10% WHT on royalties as well as on payments for services rendered by nonresident entities to Moroccan companies.

Interest

Interest paid to nonresident entities is subject to 10% WHT, unless otherwise provided by double tax treaties concluded with Morocco.

Unconventional oil and gas

- ▶ **Shale oil:** treated as a mining product under the Mining Code of 16 April 1951, and therefore viewed as such from a tax perspective. In this regard, mining companies with exporting activities (or those selling their products to other companies that will export such products after their technological treatment) benefit from a reduced CIT rate of 17.5%, instead of the common rate of 30%.
- ▶ **Shale gas:** should be treated as an oil product since it is not expressly excluded from the scope of application of the Hydrocarbon Code (Law n° 27-99). Activities related to shale gas are subject to the provisions that apply to conventional oil and gas. No special terms apply to other unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Indirect taxes and duties

VAT

VAT applies to all transactions involving the supply of goods and services performed in Morocco and to the importation of goods and services, including the one-off supply or importation of goods. According to the Moroccan Tax Code, the common applicable tax rate is 20%.

The Moroccan Tax Code provides an exemption from VAT for the holders of a reconnaissance license, exploration permit or exploitation concession, as well for their contractors and subcontractors, regarding all acquisition operations pertaining to goods or services necessary for their oil and gas activities. Such exemption applies to goods and services purchased locally or imported. It is subject to administrative procedures and prior authorization from the Moroccan tax administration.

Exportation is VAT-exempt, with a right to deduct VAT charged by suppliers. However, sales of oil and gas products on the Moroccan market are subject to a VAT rate of 10%.

Registration duties

No specific incentives are provided for oil and gas activities regarding registration duties. They remain applicable for transactions related to such duties (company formation, capital increase, transfer of real estate, or other ongoing concerns).

Import duties

Pursuant to the provisions of the Hydrocarbon Code, all equipment, materials and products necessary for reconnaissance, exploration and exploitation operations are exempt from all duties and taxes upon importation, provided that the goods are not available on the local market within the limit of 10% (CIF) price difference and for the same conditions of quality and delivery.

Business tax

Business tax is a local tax, provided by Law No. 47-06 related to local communal taxation. It is computed on the basis of the rental value of assets and means that are used for the operation of the business. The current rates are 10%-20% and 30%, depending on the nature of the activity.

Holders of exploration permits and exploitation concessions of hydrocarbon deposits are permanently exempted from business tax (but exemption is not provided for holders of reconnaissance licenses).

Royalties due to the Moroccan Government

The holder (or, where applicable, each of the co-holders) of an exploitation concession are required to pay to the Moroccan Government an annual concession royalty on their share in the production of hydrocarbons derived from the concession. The royalty is payable wholly or partly in cash or in kind.

The rates are as follows:

- ▶ Onshore, and offshore in up to 200 meters' water depth: 10% for oil and 5% for gas. The first 300,000 tonnes of oil and 300 million cubic meters of gas produced from each exploitation concession are exempt.
- ▶ Offshore in more than 200 meters' water depth: 7% for oil and 3.5 % for gas. The first 500,000 tonnes of oil and 500 million cubic meters of gas produced from each exploitation concession are exempt.

D. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

Foreign holders of exploitation concessions may maintain abroad the proceeds of their sales of hydrocarbons performed outside Morocco. The exit of hydrocarbons from Morocco has to be performed in compliance with Moroccan regulations. Periodic information in this regard has also to be provided to the Moroccan exchange office.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, foreign holders of exploitation concessions are required to repatriate to Morocco necessary funds in order to cover local expenses and their financial and tax obligations, as well as the proceeds from sales of hydrocarbons in the domestic market.

Moroccan legal entities holding an exploitation concessions are required to repatriate to Morocco the proceeds of their sales of hydrocarbons performed outside Morocco, unless otherwise authorized by the Moroccan exchange authorities, in particular in order to allow them to cover necessary expenses abroad within the framework of their oil and gas activities abroad.

It should be noted that Moroccan foreign-exchange regulations guarantee the right of foreign license holders to repatriate benefits and dividends derived from their activities in Morocco, as well as the transfer price upon the sale of their activities. The transfer guarantee covers:

- ▶ Any initial capital contribution made in foreign currency
- ▶ Capital gains derived from the transfer

Government partnerships

The Moroccan Government owns as a matter of course a participation in any permit for research, but the proportion owned cannot exceed 25%.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|---|---|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Mozambique consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), royalty-based taxation and production sharing. The main elements are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate Income tax rate – 32%
- ▶ Royalties – From 6% to 10%
- ▶ Bonuses – applicable under the public-private partnerships law, in which a signature bonus between 0.5% and 5% of fair value of assets applies; other bonuses might be paid but they are not enshrined in law
- ▶ Production sharing – based on R-factor
- ▶ Withholding taxes – applied to dividends
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Capital allowances – Not applicable
- ▶ Investment incentives – Exemption from customs duties on the importation of equipment, machinery and tools.

B. Fiscal regime

Concession contracts

In Mozambique, oil operations are engaged based on concession contracts resulting from public tender, which can be for reconnaissance, research and production, or the construction and operation of pipelines. Such contracts determine, among other things, the terms and conditions of State participation in the oil operations.

Mozambican law states that no tax benefits apply to oil operations other than the ones indicated in Section D. This means that the concession contracts effectively only formalize what is already foreseen in the law and determine which of these terms and conditions apply in each case. Contract terms and conditions must, of course, be determined or agreed within the legal limits established.

It is important to note that, in 2010, new legislation on public-private partnerships (PPPs) was introduced, which provides between 5% and 20% of local participation. As well as that local participation, the new law introduced a signature bonus and an annual concession fee between 2% and 5% of the fair value of the assets made available by the Government.

Revised legislation dealing with the specific taxation regime applicable for petroleum operations was approved in 2014 effective from January 2015 and explicitly covers ring-fencing, cost definition, depreciation rates, capital gains taxation and the mechanisms for production sharing with the state. This law does not apply to concessions that were in place at the time of its entry into force.

Corporate income tax

Under the Corporate Income Tax (CIT) code, companies and similar corporate entities (including oil and gas companies) are liable for CIT on income generated in Mozambique and abroad (i.e., their worldwide income). The standard rate that applies for CIT is currently 32%.

Companies that are tax resident in Mozambique or that are nonresident but have a permanent establishment (PE) in Mozambique and a turnover of more than MZN2.5 million (approximately US\$80,000) are required to keep organized accounts for tax purposes.

The financial year is normally a calendar year, but taxpayers can apply for a different financial year if it is justified and when more than 50% of share capital is held by entities adopting a different financial year (e.g., for consolidation purposes). Once granted, that arrangement must be maintained for a minimum of five years.

Transfer pricing

Transfer pricing was introduced recently in Mozambique and specific regulations are to be introduced early 2016. Transactions between entities with special relations must be undertaken on an arm's length basis. Special relations exist between two or more entities in situations where one has the power to directly or indirectly exercise significant influence on the management decisions of the other.

Thin capitalization

The thin capitalization ratio is 2:1.

Dividends

Dividends distributed by Mozambican taxpayers are subject to a 20% withholding tax (WHT).

Dividends distributed by a resident company to resident corporate shareholders are not subject to WHT, provided that the beneficiary holds at least 20% of the share capital and the shares have been held for a minimum of two years.

Dividends paid in these circumstances do not form part of the taxable income of the shareholder.

Losses can be carried forward for five years.

Ring-fencing

There is ring-fencing per concession. However, if the taxpayer benefits from a partial exemption or a reduction in the tax rate, the losses of the activity that benefits from such incentives cannot be offset against the losses of the remaining activities.

Mozambique does not have tax consolidation rules.

Tax-deductible costs

Costs or losses confirmed as indispensable for the generation of profits or gains, or costs or losses relating to the maintenance of the production source, are tax deductible. Under the tax regime applicable to oil and gas operations, these include:

- ▶ Functioning, assistance, maintenance and repair of production wells and injection and all field infrastructure completed during the phase of development and production.
 - ▶ Planning, production, control, measuring and petroleum flow tests, as well as gathering, treatment, storage and transport of the petroleum to the point of delivery.
-

-
- ▶ Professional training of Mozambique employees.
 - ▶ Contributions in cash to the demobilization fund and effective costs with demobilization.
 - ▶ General administration costs with certain limitations in relation to total costs incurred.
 - ▶ Depreciation.
 - ▶ Provisions.
 - ▶ Capital losses.
 - ▶ Any others that fall within the definition of costs given in the first sentence of this subsection.

The Mozambican tax system also allows for the following deductions:

- ▶ Economic double taxation of distributed profits
- ▶ Credit for foreign tax paid (international double taxation)
- ▶ Tax benefits
- ▶ Provisional payments

Oil production tax (royalty)

An oil (including natural gas) production tax (equivalent to a royalty) is due on the value of the oil (gas) produced in Mozambique at the development and production site. The rate is 10% for oil and 6% for natural gas. The tax rate is reduced by 50% when production is destined for the development of the local industry. The determination of the amount payable varies according to the purchaser as follows:

- ▶ For sales to non-related entities, it is determined based on the average sales price charged per barrel at the point of delivery, assessed with reference to FOB prices.
- ▶ For sales to third parties under conditions different from FOB, an FOB price shall be applied calculated in the form of net-back, established by the deduction to the agreed price, of the effective and direct costs incurred by the concessionaire with compliance of the respective sale agreements.
- ▶ For sales to entities where the concessionaire is a shareholder, the price is agreed between the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, the Ministry of Finance and the concessionaire.

The tax becomes payable at the time the petroleum produced enters the measuring station or, in cases of payment in kind, at the time the petroleum is delivered to the Government.

Oil production tax is not considered a cost for CIT purposes.

Branch remittance tax

There is no branch remittance tax in Mozambique.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

Cost recovery

Limited to 60% per year of the disposable oil, and excluding interest and other financial costs.

Production sharing

Profit oil is based on R-factor.

Fiscal stability

Fiscal stability may be negotiated for a period of 10 years, as from the date of approval of the development plan, without affecting the feasibility and profitability assumptions. This period may be extended up to the end of the initial concession period, by means of the payment of an additional 2% to the oil production tax (royalty), from the eleventh year of production.

C. Tax-deductible costs

Provisions created by companies involved in the petroleum-extracting industry related to the reconstruction of wells can be deducted for tax purposes.

See the appropriate subsection in Section B above for more detail on what is allowable as a tax-deductible expense.

Expenses are depreciated on a straight-line basis at the following rates, unless the period of useful life in a petroleum operation approved by the development plan is shorter; in such cases, the rate is one divided by the number of years expected for the petroleum operations:

- ▶ Expenses with exploration and appraisal - 100%
- ▶ Expenses with development - 25%
- ▶ Petroleum production assets - 20%
- ▶ Acquisition of petroleum rights - 10%
- ▶ Other assets - 10%.

Depreciation commences in the year in which the expense is incurred, or the year in which production commences, whichever occurs later.

D. Incentives

Import duties, VAT and excise duties

One particular incentive needs to be mentioned:

- ▶ Exemption from import duties on equipment destined to be used in oil operations classified in Class K of the customs classification list, including explosives, detonators, igniting tubes, machines and explosives-blowing devices

E. Withholding taxes

Withholding is required for both corporate and individual income tax.

Corporate income tax

The following income generated by nonresident entities in Mozambique is subject to a 20% WHT:

- ▶ Income generated from intellectual or industrial property (e.g., royalties), and the supply of information relating to experience acquired in the industrial, commercial or scientific sectors
- ▶ Income derived from the use or concession for use of agricultural, industrial, commercial or scientific equipment
- ▶ Income from technical assistance, management services and directors' fees
- ▶ Income derived from the application of capital (e.g., dividends and interest) and immovable property income

Telecommunications and international transportation services, and related assembly and installation, as well as those relevant to aircraft maintenance and freight performed by nonresident entities, are subject to a 10% WHT.

The special tax regime for petroleum operations provides for a reduced tax rate of 10% for services related to the concession agreement, rendered by non-resident entities.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

In terms of the special tax regime, thin capitalization rules apply if a taxpayer's debt related to an entity - that is not a resident in Mozambique - is excessive with regard to the equity of the taxpayer. Any interest paid as well as any other financial costs in respect of the excess is not deductible for the purposes of determining taxable income.

An excessive indebtedness is considered to exist if the value of the debt in respect of each of the entities involved, with reference to any date in the taxation period, is more than twice the value of the corresponding percentage held in the equity of the taxpayer.

Effective from 1 January 2014, a new provision has been introduced that limits the deduction of interest charged on shareholder loans to the amount corresponding to the MAIBOR rate of reference for 12 months plus 2 percentage points.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The transfer of immovable property is subject to real estate tax at a rate of 2%.

Moreover, any gains or losses arising from the disposal of the fixed assets of a company, and the gains and losses derived from the disposal of fixed assets permanently used for a purpose not related to oil production activity, are considered to be capital gains or losses. The amount of such capital gains or losses is determined with reference to the difference between the realization value (proceeds) and the base cost, which is calculated in accordance with Mozambican tax laws.

Gains obtained by nonresidents from direct or indirect transfer, gratuitous or for a consideration, of petroleum rights are considered to be gains resulting from immovable property and are subject to taxation in Mozambique, at the rate of 32%.

Nonresidents must appoint a tax representative in Mozambique to comply with their tax obligations. The purchaser or the holder of the petroleum rights has joint and several responsibility for the payment of the tax in case the seller is a nonresident entity without permanent establishment in Mozambique.

In the case of resident taxpayers, the gain is included in the taxable income of the respective financial year and is taxed at a general rate of 32%.

Farm-in and farm-out

In a farm-in transaction, the interest acquired is considered to be a depreciating asset, which is depreciated over the useful life of the asset.

In a farm-out transaction, a gain resulting from the transaction represents a capital gain that is included in the taxable income for the relevant financial year. For nonresident entities, the capital gain is taxed for CIT at a rate of 32%. A nonresident entity must appoint a tax representative to comply with its tax obligations and the purchaser or holder of the petroleum rights has joint and several responsibility for the payment of the tax.

Transfer of shares

Any gain resulting from a transfer of shares (i.e., the difference between the nominal value and the selling price) in a Mozambican company by a shareholder represents a capital gain and is taxed as:

- ▶ Extraordinary income if the shareholder is a company the amount being included in the taxable income in the relevant financial year
- ▶ Capital gains income if the shareholder is an individual, the amount being included in the individual's total taxable income for the relevant calendar year
- ▶ A capital gain for nonresident shareholders; tax must be paid within 30 days after the conclusion of the transaction

A nonresident shareholder must appoint a tax representative in Mozambique to comply with its tax obligations arising from the transfer of shares and the purchaser or holder of the petroleum rights has joint and several responsibility for the payment of the tax. The tax rate is 32%.

VAT

VAT is levied on the sale of goods and the rendering of services, and on imports, at a rate of 17%. However, the rendering of services related to exploration, drilling and construction of infrastructure to oil companies in the exploration phase are exempt from VAT.

Exports are exempt from VAT (and customs duties).

Stamp duty

Stamp duty is levied on all documents, books and acts listed in a table approved by the Council of Ministers.

Registration fees

Holders of the right to undertake oil operations are subject to payment of a registration fee in the following cases:

- ▶ Application for granting oil operation rights: approximately US\$20,000
- ▶ Renewal of a concession contract: approximately US\$5,000
- ▶ Review of a development plan, except in cases of pipeline construction and operation contracts: approximately US\$20,000
- ▶ Authorization to commence oil operations: approximately US\$5,000
- ▶ Approval of a demobilization plan: approximately US\$10,000

H. Other**Social responsibility**

A percentage of the income generated by an oil activity is allocated to the community in the area where the oil project is located. The percentage payable is established by the State budget law, which takes into account estimated oil production income for the period.

Exchange control regulations

Mozambique has strict exchange control regulations. Except for payments for services and the importation of goods, which qualify as current transactions, most payments (such as repayments of loans, repatriation of capital invested and remittance of profits or dividends) are subject to the prior approval of the Central Bank of Mozambique.

Service agreements require registration with the Central Bank. Loan agreements require the prior approval of the Central Bank. For shareholder loans provided by nonresident entities specifically, the Central Bank under its discretionary powers has determined a debt-to-equity ratio of 3:1. Notwithstanding the foregoing, loan agreements are approved on a case-to-case basis.

Commercial banks require proof of payment of the relevant taxes prior to granting approval for overseas payments.

Oil and gas companies are normally authorized to open and keep offshore bank accounts for specific purposes.

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|--|---|

Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Companies are required to sign production sharing contracts (PSCs) with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), which is a 100% state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Energy, in order to undertake petroleum exploration and production activities in Myanmar. As the investment in the oil and gas business is capital intensive, several foreign oil and gas companies sometimes jointly invest in the PSC, and the majority stakeholder acts as the "operator."

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) will handle each application for foreign investment under the Myanmar Foreign Investment Law (MFIL), and the MIC will approve the PSC under the MFIL upon the issuance of an MIC permit.

In relation to the fiscal and other financial elements that apply for a company involved in oil and gas exploration or production in Myanmar, the following are relevant:

- ▶ Signature bonuses apply
- ▶ Production bonuses apply
- ▶ Rentals do not occur
- ▶ Royalties are at the rate of 12.5%
- ▶ Production bonuses are paid at progressive rates
- ▶ Income tax is charged at 25%
- ▶ Training/R&D payments apply
- ▶ Investment incentives are available

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Myanmar centers on the PSC, the Myanmar Foreign Investment Law (MFIL), the Myanmar Companies Act (MCA), the Myanmar Income Tax Law (MITL) and the Myanmar Commercial Tax Law (MCTL). Moreover, the PSC has the full force of law.

Rentals

No rentals or other acreage fees are currently envisaged in Myanmar.

Bonuses

Signature bonuses and production bonuses apply. The rates are based on the standard PSC. Neither signature bonuses nor production bonuses are cost-recoverable.

Royalties

Royalties apply at a 12.5% rate of the value of production. The same rate applies for both oil and natural gas. Royalties are not cost-recoverable.

Cost recovery

The cost recovery ceiling varies for oil and for natural gas, as well as for project's logistics (whether onshore, shallow water or deepwater activity). Exploration costs are recoverable from the start of production. Development costs and other capital costs are recovered at the percentage agreed in the PSC from the start of production. Unrecovered costs can be carried forward in an unlimited fashion.

Profit production sharing

Production net of royalties and cost petroleum is shared between the PSC parties, based on a progressive sliding scale linked to average daily production levels from the production area. The rates are distinguished for oil and for natural gas.

Training contribution

A training contribution is payable annually by concession holders. Different annual payments apply during the exploration and production periods. Any training contribution made is cost-recoverable.

R&D contribution

Contractors should annually pay a contribution to a Research and Development (R&D) Fund from the start of production. The contribution equals 0.5% of contractor's share of profit production.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

Accounting period

Myanmar's fiscal accounting period is April to March of each year, and all Myanmar-incorporated companies, or a branch of foreign companies duty to file income tax returns related to that year. A five-year tax holiday period begins from the date of commercial operation and, after that tax holiday period has ended, the JV company has to start to pay any tax due.

Income tax

PSC contractors are subject to corporate income tax (CIT) at the rate of 25% on net income, unless specifically exempt under a tax holiday period.

According to the 2015 Myanmar Tax Act, the branch of the foreign company will be subject to the corporate income tax as same as Myanmar local company at the rate of 25%.

Consolidation of tax results

Each PSC is subject to tax on its own operating results; no tax consolidation is allowed for different PSCs. However, in the case where a PSC includes several oil and gas blocks, the operating results of the different blocks are to be consolidated under the PSC for tax purposes.

Determination of profit

As stated above, corporate income tax at 25% is applicable on the net income of the JV. The selling price of oil and gas, on which income is calculated, is determined by the JV company. For oil and gas supplied to the Myanmar market through an oil and gas pipeline, the selling price is set at 90% of the market value.

Deductible expenses of the JV company for the oil and gas business in Myanmar are as follows:

- ▶ Petroleum costs
- ▶ Labor and labor-related costs
- ▶ Assigned personnel
- ▶ Materials
- ▶ Inventories
- ▶ Transportation and employee relocation costs
- ▶ Services
- ▶ Damages and losses to material, and facilities insurance claims
- ▶ Legal expenses
- ▶ Charges and fees
- ▶ Offices, camps and miscellaneous expenses
- ▶ Credits under contract
- ▶ Various other expenditures

C. Incentives

Tax holiday

Generally, companies incorporated under the MIC and issued with an MIC permit are entitled to five years' tax holiday. Companies engaged in oil and gas activities in Myanmar and incorporated with an MIC permit can equally enjoy the five-year tax holiday from the date of commercial operations. The tax holiday does not apply to royalties.

Tax losses

Tax losses can be carried forward for three years under the normal Corporate Income Tax Act.

D. Withholding taxes

Dividends and profit remittance tax

Dividend distribution and profit remittance are not subject to tax of any kind in Myanmar.

Other types of income

When the payment of income is made by a Myanmar entity, such as the branch of a JV company or a PSC operator, to Myanmar citizens and/or resident foreigners (such as local distributors or nonresident foreigners), the company in Myanmar is required to withhold tax at various rates depending on the type of income and payee. The withholding tax rates applying in Myanmar are set out in the table below.

| Types of income | Paid to Myanmar citizens and resident counterparties | Paid to nonresident counterparties |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Interest | – | 15% ^(1X2) |
| Royalties for the use of licenses, trademarks, patent rights, etc. | 15% | 20% ^(1X2) |
| Payment for goods and services in Myanmar by a Myanmar company | 2% ⁽⁴⁾ | 3.5% ^(1X3X4) |

| Types of income | Paid to Myanmar citizens and resident counterparties | Paid to nonresident counterparties |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Payment for goods and services in Myanmar by a resident foreign company | 2% ⁽⁴⁾ | 3.5% ⁽¹⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾ |

Notes:

- (1) Payments to nonresidents are treated as final tax to such nonresidents.
- (2) In the case where a payment is made to a treaty country, the relevant tax treaty needs to be considered to find out whether reduction/exemption is available.
- (3) In the case where a payment is made to a treaty country, exemption may be available under the relevant tax treaty if there is no permanent establishment in Myanmar.
- (4) Payment for goods or services in Myanmar that is less than MMK300,000 (around US\$300) is not subject to withholding tax.

E. Financing considerations

The legally permitted debt-to-equity ratio of the JV is 9:1. Generally, interest can be a deductible expense, from the date of commercial operations, for the purposes of a JV company's income tax calculation.

F. Transactions**Selling shares in a JV company**

If any shareholder in a JV company disposes of or sells its shares to another party and a capital gain is realized, the shareholder is required to pay Capital Gains Tax (CGT) to the Myanmar Internal Revenue Department (MIRD) at the rate of 40% to 50%, the rate depending on the amount of share capital amount being sold.

G. Indirect taxes**Import duties**

Generally, oil and gas companies incorporated under a permit from the MIC need not pay import duties during the construction phase. In the case of a PSC that is also incorporated under an MIC permit, it is exempt from import duties on the importation of goods and equipment during the exploration and production period.

Commercial tax

Commercial tax at the rate of 5% applies for domestic sale and 5% and 8% apply on export of crude oil and natural gas, respectively. The commercial tax on export could be exempted under the MIC permit.

Export duties

Companies in the oil and gas business are exempt from export duties.

Stamp duties

A PSC is subject to a maximum stamp duty of MMK150,000.

Domestic supply obligations

Myanmar imposes an obligation on oil and gas production companies to supply a certain percentage of production domestically, with a 10% discount to the market price. Such an obligation is capped at a certain percentage of a contractor's production profit.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Namibia consists of a combination of petroleum income tax (PIT) under the Petroleum (Taxation) Act No. 3 of 1991 (the PTA), the administrative provisions as contained in the Income Tax Act No. 24 of 1981 (the Income Tax Act) and royalties levied on sales under the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act No. 2 of 1991 (the Petroleum Act).

The main elements of taxation and allowances applicable in this context in Namibia are as follows:

- ▶ Production sharing – No applicant is compelled to offer a production sharing contract (PSC) to the National Petroleum Corporation of Namibia (NAMCOR) or to share in a license, and so no applicant is penalized for not making an offer to NAMCOR. However, NAMCOR can participate in licenses if this is offered during negotiations and if NAMCOR decides to accept the invitation to participate. NAMCOR's interests are carried during the exploration phase, but it contributes fully from the development phase onward.
- ▶ Corporate income tax rate – 35%, and additional profits tax (APT) is levied on the after-tax net cash flows from petroleum operations.
- ▶ Royalties – 5% of gross revenues.¹ The value of the crude oil for royalty and tax purposes is the market value.
- ▶ Capital allowances – E²
- ▶ Investment incentives – L³

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Namibia to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of PIT under the PTA, the administrative provisions as contained in the Income Tax Act, and royalties levied on sales under the Petroleum Act.

1 A rate of 12.5% applies to exploration licenses issued prior to the commencement of the Petroleum Laws Amendment Act of 1998 effective from 1 April 1999.

2 E: write-off of accumulated exploration costs in the year of first production (unless transferred to another field under circumstances prescribed in the PTA) and one-third of development expenditure. The rest of the development expenditure is written off in equal installments in the two subsequent years.

3 L: assessed losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

Corporate tax

Corporate income tax on petroleum operations is levied under the PTA and not under the Income Tax Act. Under Section 5 of the PTA, taxable income received by a person from a license area within the Namibian territorial sea is taxed at a rate of 35%, levied in respect of each license area. License areas are taxed separately even if the taxpayer has been granted the right of exploration in different license areas.

Additional profits tax (APT)

APT is levied on the after-tax net cash flows from petroleum operations, determined by deducting the exploration and development expenditure and the PIT from gross income. The first tranche of APT is only payable if operations in a license area earn an after-tax rate of return of at least 15%. If operations in the license area earn an after-tax rate of return of 20% to 25%, the second and third tranches of APT become payable.

Gross income

Under Section 7 of the PTA, "gross income" is the total amount, in cash or otherwise, received by or accrued to, or in favor of, a person from a license area in connection with exploration operations, development operations or production operations, excluding amounts of a capital nature, but specifically including the following amounts, whether they are capital in nature or not:

- ▶ Amounts received or accrued in or outside Namibia, related to petroleum produced, saved or delivered and sold in an arm's length sale
- ▶ The market value of petroleum produced, saved or delivered and sold in a non-arm's length sale
- ▶ The market value of petroleum produced and saved in the license area and appropriated for refining purposes
- ▶ 50% of the market value of petroleum produced or saved, and which was not lost in any manner, not disposed of or acquired for refining purposes, or disposed of but not delivered
- ▶ Insurance proceeds in respect of any loss of petroleum produced or saved or any income that would have been included in gross income had the loss not occurred
- ▶ Any income received or accrued to the person from the license area and deemed to form part of gross income under Section 12 of the PTA
- ▶ Any income received or accrued to a person from the sale of petroleum information in relation to such license area
- ▶ Any other income received or accrued to a person under a condition of the license

Any amounts received or accrued to the license holder prior to the year of production in respect of these items are carried forward to the year of first production and are included in gross income in that year.

The share of petroleum in crude form produced and saved by a person in a license area is a contractually proportionate amount under any agreement if there are joint holders of a license. If no agreement was entered into, the petroleum is divided equally. If a person is the sole holder of the license area, all the petroleum produced and saved accrues to that person.

Deductible expenditure

Under Section 8 of the PTA, allowable deductions are expenses actually incurred, in respect of the particular license area, in the production of gross income. Other specific deductions, apart from the general deduction, include:

- ▶ Repairs and maintenance of premises occupied for exploration, development and production purposes and machinery used for these purposes.
 - ▶ Charges for rent of land or buildings occupied for exploration, development and production purposes.
 - ▶ Contributions to a fund or scheme approved by the permanent secretary in respect of a person employed in the production operations.
-

- ▶ Interest on borrowings relating to exploration, development and production in respect of a license area.
- ▶ Royalties paid under the Petroleum Act.
- ▶ Education and training of Namibian citizens and educational or scientific materials and equipment.
- ▶ Wages and salaries in connection with production operations in the license area.
- ▶ Consumables in connection with production operations in the license area.
- ▶ The right to use any plant, machinery or equipment in connection with exploration, development and production operations.
- ▶ Customs duties in respect of plant, machinery or equipment imported in connection with production operations.
- ▶ General administrative and management costs in connection with production operations.
- ▶ Restoration costs after exploration operations cease.
- ▶ Debts proven to be bad, provided that the amount is included in the income in the current tax year or was included in income but not deducted in any previous tax year.
- ▶ Amounts included in the immediately preceding tax year under Section 7(1)(d) (i.e., amounts included in respect of petroleum produced or saved but not lost, not disposed of or acquired for refining purposes, and not delivered).
- ▶ The amount determined in accordance with Section 68B(1)(a) of the Petroleum Act and deposited with reference to the trust fund and decommissioning shortfalls as referred to in Section 68D(3)(a).

Under Section 13 of the PTA, deductions are not allowed in respect of the following:

- ▶ Expenditures incurred in respect of improvements not specifically allowed under Section 8 of the PTA.
- ▶ Rental or costs of acquisition of land and buildings not occupied for the purposes of production in the license area.
- ▶ Contributions to a fund or scheme not approved by the permanent secretary.
- ▶ Expenditures incurred in obtaining a loan or other debt not specifically allowed under Section 8 of the PTA.
- ▶ Capital withdrawn or any sum used as capital.
- ▶ Any royalty not levied under the Petroleum Act.
- ▶ Expenses related to the purchase of an interest in petroleum.
- ▶ Any tax payable within or outside of Namibia.

Section 14 of the PTA provides that deductions for rent incurred outside Namibia in respect of the general administration and management of the business, as well as capital expenditures directly related to the general management and administration of development operations, are only allowed to the extent that provision is made in the production license, or to the extent that the permanent secretary considers it "just and reasonable."

Section 17 of the PTA provides that excessive expenditures incurred under an arrangement between associated persons may be disallowed by the permanent secretary.

Each license area is assessed separately and losses incurred in one license area cannot be offset against profits earned in another, but losses resulting from allowable deductions are deductible as an allowable loss against the gross income from the license area in the following year. However, exploration expenditures from a license area without gross income may be deducted from license areas with gross income from production. The license holder is not required to have taxable income after deducting its expenses. Nor is it a requirement that the license area where the exploration expenditure arose has to be in production before the license holder is able to deduct exploration expenditures incurred in respect of a license area without gross income from a license area with gross income.

Section 9 of the PTA provides for an allowance for exploration expenditures and development expenditures incurred in the years before production commences. This allowance is discussed in more detail in Section C.

Capital gains tax

Namibia does not generally impose capital gains tax (CGT).

Under the definition of "gross income" in Section 7 of the PTA, the gross income is the total amount, in cash or otherwise, received by or accrued to, or in favor of, such person from a license area in connection with exploration operations, development operations or production operations, excluding amounts of a capital nature. However, certain amounts specifically listed (as detailed above) are included in the gross income, whether or not they are of a capital nature.

In addition, if the license holder receives an amount from the disposal, loss or destruction of any asset used in exploration and development operations, capital expenditure is only allowed to the extent that it does not exceed the amount received (see Section G for further information).

Section 12 effectively provides that capital gains arising on the disposal of assets are included in gross income and are taxable in the hands of the license holder.

These provisions, however, only apply to disposals after production has commenced, and any gain realized on a disposal prior to production will only be taxable when production commences. If production never commences, or the participant sells its entire interest prior to production, there will not be any tax on the gain.

Functional currency

Books of account must be kept in Namibian dollars (NAD). Even though taxpayers may invoice or be invoiced in other currencies, the invoices must be converted to Namibian dollars for VAT purposes at the ruling exchange rates of those transactions.

There are no special provisions in the PTA that deal with the exchange rates to be used for PIT purposes. However, under generally accepted accounting practice, income and expenses are converted to Namibian dollars when the transactions take place.

Transfer pricing

As the PTA specifically provides that no tax may be levied under the Income Tax Act, the transfer pricing provisions contained in that Act do not apply.

However, the PTA contains provisions that are similar in scope to the transfer pricing provisions in the Income Tax Act in respect of the determination of gross income. Under Section 7 of the PTA, a sale of petroleum is considered to be at arm's length if the price provided for in the sale agreement is the only consideration, the sale is not affected by any relationships other than the sale relationship created in the sale agreement, and the seller or any person associated with the seller has no interest in the subsequent resale of the petroleum. The market value of the petroleum produced and saved in the license area is determined in accordance with any of the terms and conditions of the license of that license area or, in the absence of such an agreement, an amount determined by the permanent secretary with regard to the amount that would be obtained between a willing buyer and a willing seller acting in good faith.

Further, Section 17 of the PTA provides that excessive expenditures incurred under an arrangement between associated persons may be disallowed.

Dividends

Petroleum companies are exempt from withholding taxes on dividends, or the so-called nonresident shareholders' tax (NRST).

Royalties

Royalties are payable at a rate of 5% of gross revenues under the Petroleum Act. The value of the crude oil for royalty and tax purposes is the market value.

Royalties are generally payable quarterly. If the payer fails to remit payment, the Ministry of Mines and Energy may prohibit the removal of petroleum from the production area and any other dealings in respect of the petroleum.

Under the PTA, the royalty paid is deductible in the determination of the taxable income of the license holder.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Capital allowances are divided according to exploration expenditure and a development expenditure, both of which are defined in great detail in Section 1 of the PTA. However, no separate definition for production expenditure is provided.

“Exploration expenditure” is expenditure actually incurred, whether directly or indirectly, in, or in connection with, carrying out exploration operations in, or in connection with, a license area, including, among other things, expenditures actually incurred in respect of:

- ▶ The acquisition of machinery, implements, utensils and other articles employed for purposes of such operations.
- ▶ Labor, fuel, haulage, supplies, materials and repairs in connection with a survey or study, excluding drilling for appraisal purposes.
- ▶ Contributions to a fund or scheme, approved by the permanent secretary, in respect of any person employed in, or in connection with, exploration operations.
- ▶ The advancement of training and education of Namibian citizens at institutions approved by the permanent secretary.
- ▶ Charges, fees or rent for, or in respect of, land or buildings occupied for purposes of carrying out exploration operations.
- ▶ The general administration and management directly connected with exploration operations.
- ▶ The restoration of a license area, or any part thereof, after cessation of exploration operations.
- ▶ Customs duties in respect of the importation of plant, equipment, spare parts, materials, supplies or consumable items for use in, or in connection with, exploration operations in such license areas.

Under Section 1 of the PTA, “development expenditures” are actually incurred in, or in connection with, carrying out development operations in, or in connection with, a license area, including, among other things, expenditures actually incurred in respect of:

- ▶ The acquisition of machinery, implements, utensils and other articles used for purposes of such operations.
- ▶ The acquisition of furniture, tools and equipment used in offices and accommodation and in warehouses, export terminals, harbors, piers, marine vessels, vehicles, motorized rolling equipment, aircraft, fire and security stations, water and sewerage plants and power plants.
- ▶ Labor, fuel, haulage, supplies, materials and repairs in connection with drilling, laying, installation and construction.
- ▶ Contributions to a fund or scheme, approved by the permanent secretary, in respect of any person employed in, or in connection with, development operations.
- ▶ The advancement of training and education of Namibian citizens at institutions approved by the permanent secretary.
- ▶ Charges, fees or rent for, or in respect of, land or buildings occupied for purposes of carrying out development operations.

- ▶ General administration and management directly connected with development operations.
- ▶ The restoration of such license area, or any part thereof, after cessation of development operations.
- ▶ Customs duty in respect of the importation of plant, machinery, equipment, spare parts, materials, supplies or consumable items for use in, or in connection with, development operations in such license areas.

Section 9 of the PTA provides an allowance for the exploration expenditure and development expenditure incurred in the years before production commences. These allowances can be carried forward to that year in the same way as income is carried forward. In the year when production commences, all the exploration expenditures can be deducted (unless they have already been transferred to another license area that has gross income from production), as well as one-third of the development expenditure. The rest of the development expenditures can be deducted in the two subsequent years in equal installments.

Section 10 of the PTA provides that exploration expenditures incurred after the year when production commenced are immediately deductible, while all other capital expenditures may be deducted in three equal installments commencing in the year they were incurred.

D. Incentives

Exploration expenditure

Accumulated exploration expenditures are deductible in full in the first year of production (unless they have already been transferred to another license area that has gross income from production). Exploration expenditures incurred after the year when production commences are immediately deductible.

Development expenditure

Accumulated development expenditures are deductible in three equal installments commencing in the first year of production.

Losses

Losses resulting from allowable deductions may be deducted as an allowable loss against the gross income from the license area in the next year. Losses may be carried forward without limitation. However, losses incurred in one license area may not be offset against income from another license area or other operations.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Petroleum companies are exempt from the withholding tax (WHT) on dividends, or the NRST on any dividend distributed out of taxable income from mining for natural oil or gas in Namibia.

Services

As from 30 December 2011, payments for management, consultancy or technical services (as defined) to nonresidents (as defined) have been subject to WHT at a rate of 25% on the gross amount of the service fees. The WHT deducted must be paid by the Namibian company or branch, which pays the tax on behalf of the nonresident, unless the provisions of a double taxation agreement (DTA) provide relief.

Royalties

Royalty WHT applies to payments to nonresidents for the use or right to use defined intellectual property in Namibia. The rate of WHT on royalties is currently 9.9% and may be reduced by the provisions of a DTA. Proposals made by the Ministry of Finance to reduce the tax rate by 0.3% to 9.6% for 2014 when the amendments are gazetted.

Interest

No WHT is payable on interest.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization limits

There are no thin capitalization provisions in the PTA. However, exchange control rules may affect the choice of funding. The acceptance by a local entity of loan funds from abroad is subject to specific exchange control approval.

The remittance of interest to nonresidents may be allowed upon provision of evidence of indebtedness, provided the rate is reasonable. Currently, a debt-to-equity ratio not exceeding 3:1 is required by the Bank of Namibia.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The license holder is not taxable on the proceeds from the sale of a share in physical assets. Section 7 of the PTA does not include capital receipts in taxable income, and even though Section 7(2) provides that an amount from the sale of an asset is deemed to have been received during the year of production, an amount received from the sale of an asset prior to the first year of production is not included in gross income. If, however, any portion of the amount received relates to prospecting information, it is taxable in the hands of the license holder in the year that production commences. Furthermore, although the license holder is not taxable on the amount received on the sale of the asset, the asset's capital expenditure is only allowed (or carried forward) to the extent that it exceeds the amount received (i.e., the amount received is "deducted" from the capital expenditure carried forward from that year).

Capital gains arising on the disposal of assets that are sold after the first year of production are included in gross income, and they are taxable in the hands of the license holder.

The purchaser is able to deduct the consideration in the year that production commences, provided that the amount paid relates to the transfer of part ownership in an asset and not to the right to participate in the petroleum produced under a production license, or the license itself.

Farm-in and farm-out

Recoupment provisions do not apply if an interest in a petroleum license is sold (e.g., where a disposal of part of an interest in a license area takes place in a year prior to the first year of production). As such, even if the consideration received – whether it is cash, an asset or a carryforward of an expenditure – exceeds the value of the share of the interest sold, it is not included in the license holder's gross income because there is no tax on the profits of the sale of capital assets in Namibia in the years prior to the first year of production.

The recoupment provisions reduce the expenditure claimable in respect of the assets and reduce the capital expenditure claimable in the year that the consideration is received, whether the amount relates to an asset or to capital expenditures other than in respect of an asset.

The purchaser is able to deduct the consideration in the year that production commences, provided that the amount paid relates to the transfer of part ownership in an asset and not to the right to participate in the petroleum produced under the authority of a production license.

Selling shares in a company

Namibia does not impose CGT and, as such, the sale of the shares in a Namibian company will not be subject to tax in Namibia. The sale of the shares will, however, be subject to stamp duties at a rate of NAD2 for every NAD1,000 of the market value of the shares transferred.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

License holders are exempt from paying import VAT under Schedule V of the Value-Added Tax Act No. 10 of 2000 (the VAT Act).

VAT

VAT is chargeable on the taxable supply of goods by every registered person, under Section 6(1)(a) of the VAT Act. "Taxable supplies" are defined in Section 1 of the same Act as the supply of goods or services in the course or in the furtherance of a taxable activity. Namibia is defined for the purpose of the VAT Act as including the territorial sea, the economic zone, and the continental shelf. As such, for VAT purposes, goods or services supplied by a registered person up to 200 nautical miles from the low-water mark may be subject to VAT.

If taxable supplies exceed NAD200,000, registration for VAT is obligatory.

For VAT purposes, "taxable activity" means any activity that is carried on continuously or regularly by any person in Namibia or partly in Namibia, whether or not for a pecuniary profit, that involves or is intended to involve, in whole or in part, the supply of goods or services to any other person for consideration. No guidelines define the terms "continuously" or "regularly" but, in practice, the Directorate of Inland Revenue views an uninterrupted presence in Namibia of four weeks or of three times in any 12-month period to be a sufficient presence to oblige the enterprise to register for VAT.

License holders must levy VAT at 15% on invoices for goods or services unless they are exported, in which case VAT at 0% may be levied.

As VAT-registered persons, license holders are entitled to claim credit for VAT paid on invoices issued by Namibian suppliers against VAT charged on supplies made in Namibia.

Stamp duties

Stamp duties are payable at varying rates under the Stamp Duties Act No. 15 of 1993. Although there is no requirement to register the petroleum agreement, the stamping thereof ensures that the contract is valid for litigation purposes. Stamp duties on a contract are NAD5.

Registration fees

License holders are required to pay annual charges for the benefit of the State Revenue Fund, calculated by multiplying the number of square kilometers included in the contracted block or blocks by the amounts provided for in Section 67 of the Petroleum Act. In the case of exploration licenses, the charge is calculated as follows:

- ▶ During the first four years, NAD60 per square kilometer
- ▶ During the next two years, NAD90 per square kilometer
- ▶ During the subsequent two years, NAD120 per square kilometer
- ▶ Thereafter, NAD150 per square kilometer

In the case of production licenses, the fee is NAD1,500 per square kilometer.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in the Netherlands to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), a surface rental tax, a state profit share (SPS) levy and royalty-based taxation. The major elements of the fiscal regime are as follows:

- ▶ Royalties – 0% to 7%
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – Not applicable
- ▶ CIT – 25%; 20% applies to the first €200,000 of taxable income¹
- ▶ Surface rental:
 - ▶ Production areas – €744 per km²
 - ▶ Exploration areas – €248 to €744 per km²
- ▶ SPS levy – 50%²
- ▶ Remittance to the province – €5.45 per m² of production installations
- ▶ Capital allowances – U, E³
- ▶ Investment incentives – Research and development (R&D) credit (CIT), additional 25% deduction on capital investments in qualifying small fields (SPS)⁴

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in the Netherlands to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of CIT, a surface rental tax, an SPS levy and royalty-based taxation.

1 A CIT credit is applied for calculating SPS.

2 The SPS levy is deductible for income tax purposes.

3 U: capital uplift or credit; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

4 Effective as of September 2010.

Filing requirements (CIT/SPS)

The standard tax year, for CIT and SPS purposes, is the calendar year; however, a company may use its own accounting year as its tax year. A book year is established by the company's articles of incorporation and may end on any date during the year.

An annual CIT tax return must be filed within six months after the end of the year, accompanied by the tax due for corporate taxes. A company may, though, apply for an extension (generally, an additional nine months). For SPS purposes, the license holder must file profit and loss statements made in accordance with the provisions of the Mining Act, together with a balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities relating to the production as of the financial year-end. This SPS information should be included as an appendix to the Dutch CIT return.

CIT and SPS are paid on an assessment basis. The competent authority for CIT and SPS assessments is the Dutch tax authorities.

Corporate income tax

CIT is levied on resident and nonresident companies. Resident companies are companies incorporated under Dutch civil law and companies that have their place of effective management in the Netherlands. Resident companies are taxable on their worldwide taxable income. Nonresident companies, primarily branch offices of foreign companies doing business in the Netherlands, are taxable only on specific income sources, such as business profits earned through a permanent establishment (PE) situated in the Netherlands.

For 2015, the statutory CIT rate is 25%, but a reduced rate of 20% applies to the first €200,000 of taxable income.

It is important to note that the SPS due is deductible for Dutch CIT purposes.

Determination of taxable income

The profit for tax purposes is not necessarily calculated on the basis of the annual financial statements. In the Netherlands, all commercial accounting methods must be reviewed to confirm that they are acceptable under tax law. The primary feature of tax accounting is the legal concept of "sound business practice."

Expenses incurred in connection with the conduct of a business, in principle, are deductible. However, certain expenses are excluded from deduction, such as fines and penalties. For companies that do not have shareholders with substantial interests (generally shareholdings with an interest of 5% or more), no other restrictions exist, except with respect to the deductibility of interest.

Functional currency

Taxpayers must calculate their taxable income in euros. On request, Dutch corporate tax returns may be filed in the functional currency of the taxpayer, provided the financial statements of the relevant financial year are prepared in that currency. The financial statements may be expressed in a foreign currency if this is justified by the company's business or by the international nature of the company's group. If this regime is applied, in principle the functional currency must be used for at least 10 years.

Participation exemption

Generally, the Dutch participation exemption provides for a full exemption of Dutch CIT with regard to dividends derived from, and capital gains in relation to, a qualifying shareholding.

Since 1 January 2010, the following requirements must be satisfied in order for a taxpayer to qualify for the participation exemption in the Netherlands:

- ▶ The taxpayer must hold at least 5% of the normal paid-up share capital of a company, with capital divided into shares.
-

- ▶ One of the following two tests is met:
 - ▶ The participation is not held as a portfolio investment (the motive test).or
 - ▶ The subsidiary is not considered a low-taxed portfolio participation, which is determined by a two-pronged test: an asset test and an effective tax rate (ETR) test.

Motive test

The motive test requires a determination as to the taxpayer's objective of owning the participation. The motive test is not satisfied if the taxpayer only aims at earning a yield that is similar to the yield that can be expected from normal, active portfolio asset management. If the taxpayer has more than one motive (e.g., the subsidiary is partly held as a portfolio investment and partly for business reasons), the predominant motive is decisive.

The motive test is generally satisfied when the business carried on by the subsidiary is similar or complementary to the business conducted by the Dutch taxpayer. Further, the motive test is satisfied when the taxpayer plays an essential role in the business of the group because of its activities in terms of management, strategy or finance. The motive test is also satisfied if the Dutch taxpayer is an intermediary holding company that acts as a link between the ultimate parent and operating subsidiaries. In that case, the motive test is met when the intermediate holding company is held by an intermediate holding company.

The motive test is deemed not to be met if more than half of the subsidiary's consolidated assets consist of shareholding(s) of less than 5%, or if the predominant function of the subsidiary – together with the functions performed by its lower-tier subsidiaries – is to put cash or assets at the disposal of other group entities, i.e., to act as a group finance company.

Asset test

If a company's participation does not satisfy the motive test, it can still enjoy the participation exemption regime if its assets consist, directly or indirectly, of less than 50% of "low-taxed free investments."

"Free investments" include portfolio investments other than those reasonably required within the scope of the business activities of the entity holding the investments. This also includes assets used for activities that predominantly consist of providing, directly or indirectly, financing to related entities or financing the assets of related entities, including making available assets or the right to use assets. Examples of assets that could qualify as free investments are bank deposits, loan receivables, securities, real estate and bonds.

Group receivables are deemed to be free investments unless the participation qualifies as an active group finance company or unless the receivables are mainly (90% or more) financed from third-party debt. As of 1 January 2010, assets used in active leasing business are no longer deemed to be portfolio investments.

Free investments, both actual and deemed, are considered "low-taxed" if income from the assets is subject to sufficient taxation (similar meaning as for purposes of the ETR test – see below).

Real estate is excluded from the definition of a free investment. As a result, the participation exemption applies to benefits from real estate participations.

ETR test

If a company's participation does not meet the motive test or the asset test, it must be subject to a certain level of taxation in order to enjoy the participation exemption regime – i.e., it must pass the ETR test. If the participation fails the required level of taxation, income derived from the participation could be subject to the credit system rather than the exemption.

As from 2010, the ETR test is met when the participation is subject to a “realistic” local taxation. An effective tax rate of at least 10% is sufficient for passing this test. So from the foregoing date a full recalculation to Dutch tax standards of the taxable profits of the participation should in principle no longer be required. Basically, this is a three-tier test which firstly addresses the statutory tax rate (which should be at least 10%), secondly compares the local tax system to the Dutch system (which should be comparable on relevant points) and thirdly evaluates implementation of the rules that result in the eventual taxation (the profit should be effectively taxed). Listed examples of regimes that would be significantly different from Dutch standards include, among others, cost-plus regimes if the basis is too limited, notional deductions or exemptions that substantially erode the taxable basis, and too generous participation exemption regimes (i.e., certain imputation regimes).

Subject to prior approval from the Dutch tax authorities, a taxpayer can apply the participation exemption to the foreign-exchange results relating to financial instruments that hedge the exchange exposure on qualifying participations.

Depreciation at will

As of 2012, the Dutch Government abandoned the possibility of “depreciation at will” applying for qualifying new investment in business assets. A similar regime was reintroduced for qualifying investments made during the second half of 2013, but new investments as of 2014 are not able to benefit from this incentive. Accordingly, investments in qualifying assets in the periods 2009, 2010, 2011, and the second half of 2013, can benefit from the accelerated depreciation rules.

Treatment of foreign branches

As of 1 January 2012, the Dutch treatment of foreign branch results changed significantly. Until 2012, income from foreign branches was included in the company’s worldwide income, which resulted in a reduction of allocable CIT. Foreign exploration losses were fully tax deductible, albeit subject to a recapture. Under the new rules, the branch exemption (*objectvrijstelling*) applies, which means that the results of foreign PEs are no longer included in the worldwide income of a Dutch company. Under the branch exemption, positive PE results are excluded from the Dutch tax basis (thus reducing the taxable income), and negative PE results are added to the Dutch tax basis (thus increasing the taxable income). As a result, the PE income is effectively exempt. This treatment is effective for branches located in treaty and non-treaty countries. In contrast to the pre-2012 rules, for active branches there is no longer a subject to a tax requirement. Grandfathering rules apply regarding the recapture of historical claimed foreign PE losses.

These rules imply that foreign branch results cannot be deducted from the Dutch profit. However, if the branch is terminated, the ultimate loss will still be deductible, subject to certain deductions.

State profit share

The Mining Act provides for an SPS levy of 50% on income resulting from mineral production activities. The income relating to non-mineral production activities may be ignored. As a result, the determination of the taxable basis for SPS is a matter of ring-fencing. The holder or co-holder of a production license is subject to the levy of the SPS.

It is unlikely that gas storage activities fall within the realm of SPS. However, conversion of an upstream site into a storage facility may trigger SPS “exit tax” discussions with the Dutch tax authorities.

Determination of the taxable basis for SPS purposes

A separate profit and loss account must be prepared for SPS purposes. If the taxpayer holds several licenses, it may consolidate the income derived from them. However, no fiscal unity or group rules exist for SPS purposes.

The Mining Act specifically indicates that the determination of taxable income for SPS purposes is based on the same principles as the Dutch Corporate Income Tax Act. In addition, the Mining Act lists a number of specific income and expense items that are either included or excluded from the taxable basis.

Included income and expense components are, for example:

- ▶ The movement of inventory
- ▶ The gain or loss realized in relation to the sale of a production license
- ▶ Costs pertaining to the exploration phase, to the extent that these have not already been deducted for SPS purposes.

Excluded income and expense components are:

- ▶ Amortization of the purchase price of an exploration license, to the extent that the purchase price exceeds costs that have not been deducted before for SPS purposes – implying that a payment for an exploration license is only deductible for SPS purposes to the extent that this purchase price reflects costs that have not been deducted before for SPS purposes, so goodwill paid in addition to the true costs of an exploration license is not deductible.
- ▶ The value of extracted minerals that have been used for the upstream activity itself.

The Mining Act provides for a 10% uplift of all costs, with the exception of:

- ▶ Any taxes and public levies borne by the license holder.
- ▶ Amortization of the purchase price of a production license, to the extent that the purchase price exceeds costs that have not been deducted before for SPS purposes, so the uplift is only available for “truly incurred expenses” and not for a goodwill payment.
- ▶ Additions to an abandonment provision, to the extent that the transferor of the production license has already made additions to the abandonment provision earlier (this exception prevents multiple uplifts).

Third-party tariff income generated by the license holder, through making platforms or pipelines available, is excluded from the taxable basis for SPS purposes. As a consequence, costs relating to third-party tariff income should also be excluded from the taxable basis at the level of the license holder. Based on historic practice, which was confirmed in 2014 by the Dutch Supreme Court, such attributable costs are equal to 1/3 of the tariff income.

SPS investment incentive for marginal gas fields

Since 16 September 2010, owners of Dutch gas exploration and production (E&P) licenses are allowed to claim an investment allowance of 25% with respect to certain capital investments related to qualifying marginal gas fields for Dutch SPS purposes. Whether a (potential) gas field qualifies depends on a number of factors, including the expected productivity of the gas well, the technically producible gas volume of the reservoir and the shortest distance to an existing platform.

The additional allowance of 25% can be claimed in the SPS return for the year in which the license holder has entered into the obligation to purchase the capital asset or has incurred production costs in respect of the capital asset. If the asset is not yet in use at the end of the book year and the amount of the investment allowance would exceed the amount that has been paid, only the amount that has been paid can be taken into account. The excess can be taken into account in following years to the extent that payments are made, but not later than in the year in which the capital asset is taken into use.

The investment allowance could effectively result in a subsidy of 12.5% of the amount of investment.

Tax rate and credits

The SPS rate is set at 50%. Based on current legislation, a loss may be carried back for three years and carried forward for an indefinite period of time. This provision differs from the CIT loss carryback (one year) and the carryforward (nine years) terms.

The Mining Act contains a credit for Dutch CIT that is borne on the mineral production activity. The credit is determined as follows:

- ▶ The SPS income is adjusted for the 10% uplift
- ▶ The adjusted SPS income is reduced by SPS that will be due after credits
- ▶ The number computed under the previous bullet item is then multiplied with the Dutch CIT rate prevailing for the year.

Excluded licenses

The Dutch Mining Act contains a number of transitional rules relating to some old licenses. From an SPS perspective, Article 147 of the Mining Act is of particular relevance. Under this provision, financial regulations embedded in production licenses that have been granted prior to 1965 will remain in force. Therefore, these financial provisions may overrule the current SPS provisions. In addition, Article 149 of the Mining Act contains a number of transitional rules for the taxation of storage activities that were previously not subject to a license.

Surface rental

Surface rental is a tax levied on each license holder that either has an offshore exploration license or a production license at 1 January of a calendar year. The 2015 rates are €744 per km² for production areas and €248 to €744 per km² for offshore exploration areas.

The surface rental is paid on a "return" basis. The ultimate filing date is 1 April of the calendar year in question.

Royalty regimes

Royalties are calculated on a license-by-license basis by applying specified rates to the value of onshore oil and gas production. The royalty for offshore oil and gas production is set at 0%. Production does not include oil and gas that are used for reconnaissance or exploration in the license area, or transport or treatment of the oil and gas.

The following rates for 2015 are shown in the table below.

| Bracket | Oil (in thousands of cubic meters) | Gas (in millions of cubic meters) |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 0-200 units | 0% | 0% |
| 201-600 units | 2% | 2% |
| 601-1,200 units | 3% | 3% |
| 1,201-2,000 units | 4% | 4% |
| 2,001-4,000 units | 5% | 5% |
| 4,001-8,000 units | 6% | 6% |
| More than 8,000 units | 7% | 7% |

The above rates increase by 25% in the event that the average price of an imported barrel of crude oil exceeds €25.⁵ A 100% increase applies in the event of an absence of State participation in the license.

The royalty is paid on a return basis. The ultimate filing date is 1 April of the year following the calendar year in question.

5 During 2014 the 25% was confirmed for FY 2013. The 25% increase is to be confirmed for 2015 as per a notice of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Remittance to provinces

A one-time remittance fee is due to the relevant province within the Netherlands for each onshore production license. The fee is based on the size of the area in use for the production installations. The 2014 rate is to €5.45 per m² of production installation area. The fee is collected by the provincial authorities.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special tax regime applies to unconventional oil and gas. The Dutch Government is currently further investigating the general possibilities of shale gas production in the Netherlands, and what kind of incentives and regulatory rules are required.

C. Indirect taxes

VAT

The standard rate of VAT in the Netherlands is 21%, with a reduced rate of 6% potentially chargeable on all supplies of goods and services made in the Netherlands and its territorial waters (within a zone of 12 nautical sea miles). In addition, a 0% VAT (exempt with credit) could be applicable. Dutch and non-Dutch resident companies may be required to register for Dutch VAT if supplies are made which are VAT taxable in the Netherlands and for which VAT is due by that company. This also applies for supplies subject to the 0% rate. No registration thresholds apply in the Netherlands, although an administrative simplification regime may be applicable to small entrepreneurs.

A nonresident company that is required to register for Dutch VAT can register directly with the Dutch tax authorities; there is no requirement to appoint a fiscal representative, unless specific supplies are made which require a fiscal representative. Appointment of a fiscal representative is, amongst others, obligatory for supplies made within a VAT or excise warehouse, or for import of goods by non-resident companies using the import VAT deferment scheme ("article 23 license"). VAT incurred by an entity that is VAT registered in the Netherlands is normally recoverable on its periodic VAT returns provided that it performs VAT taxable activities in the Netherlands. Otherwise, VAT may be refundable via an EU or 13th Directive refund request.

A VAT cashflow advantage can be obtained in the Netherlands by importing goods from non-EU countries into the Netherlands, using an import VAT deferment license ("article 23 license"). A company can obtain its own import VAT deferment license, or make use of the import VAT deferment license of its limited fiscal representative. If an import VAT deferment license is used, no import VAT is due at the time of import. Rather the import VAT is reported in the periodic Dutch VAT return. Provided that the company has a full input VAT recovery right, the import VAT reported can be deducted in the same VAT return, not leading to an adverse VAT cashflow.

Oilrigs and similar production platforms at sea are regarded as "seagoing vessels" from a Dutch VAT perspective. As a consequence, the supply, lease and services with respect to these rigs and other platforms are subject to the 0% Dutch VAT rate (still enabling input VAT recovery). Additionally, the provisioning and other supplies to such rig or platform could, under certain conditions, benefit from the 0% Dutch VAT rate.

The supply of goods to oilrigs and similar production platforms from a Dutch onshore location to a place outside the 12-nautical sea miles zone, should be regarded as an export supply, subject to 0% VAT provided that all formal requirements are met. For services performed to such rigs or platforms, it should first be determined, based on the place of supply rules, where these services would be VAT taxable. For location-bound services, such as services to immovable property, these services are outside the scope of Dutch VAT if performed outside the 12-nautical sea miles zone. Services subject to the general place of supply rule for cross-border services should be VAT taxable where the recipient is established. In that country, it should be determined whether the services are subject to the standard VAT rate or, for example, to

the 0% VAT rate/exemption. As mentioned above, in the Netherlands, a 0% VAT rate may be applicable for services related to oilrigs and similar production platforms.

Input VAT incurred with respect to the exploration of hydrocarbon products should be recoverable, provided that the company incurring these costs can objectively demonstrate its intention to perform VAT-taxable activities in case of a successful discovery following exploration. It is important to document this intention, for example in business plans, contracts and/or board resolutions.

In the Netherlands, the VAT treatment of the sale of hydrocarbon products produced as a result of a successful exploration and production program depends on the product itself, where it is sold and to whom it is sold. Natural gas and associated products imported into the Netherlands from a field outside the Netherlands' territorial waters are subject to formal customs import procedures, although the 0% VAT rate is applicable to the import of natural gas into the Netherlands to the gas distribution network.

Excise duty

Excise duty is payable on certain hydrocarbon products and biofuels in the Netherlands, if these products are used as motor or heating fuel and removed from an excise warehouse for "home use" (i.e., they are removed for domestic use). As long as these products are stored in an excise warehouse they are duty suspended and the VAT rate is 0%. The rate of excise duty payable in respect of hydrocarbon products is based on the classification of the product. Excise dutiable products are among others: fuel, gasoil, heavy fuel oil, LPG, biodiesel and E85.

Oilrigs and similar production platforms at sea are regarded as 'seagoing vessels' from a Dutch excise duty perspective. As a consequence, the supply of oil products to these rigs and other platforms are excise duty-exempted provided that all formal requirements are met. The supply of oil products to oilrigs and similar production platforms from a Dutch onshore location to a place outside the 12-nautical sea miles zone, should be regarded as an export for excise purposes, as well as supplies to seagoing vessels in international traffic.

Customs duty

All goods imported into the Netherlands from outside the European Union are potentially liable to customs duty. The rate of customs duty is based on the classification of the goods in the EU Customs Tariff (based on the Harmonized System) and whether the goods qualify for preferential rates. For certain products, antidumping and countervailing duties might also be due (e.g., in 2015, for bioethanol from US and biodiesels from US, including certain blends from Canada.)

However, customs relief and regimes may allow goods to be imported at a reduced or zero rate of duty, provided the goods are used for a prescribed use under Dutch Customs control, within a specified time limit. Normally, a business must seek prior authorization from Dutch Customs to utilize any customs relief or regimes. Particularly products for "seagoing vessels", like ships, oilrigs and similar production platforms at sea, are suspended from customs duties based on an end-use license.

D. Other

Dutch wage tax withholding obligation

Under the Dutch Wage Tax Act, nonresident companies that perform their business activities during a period of at least 30 days in, at, or above the Dutch territorial waters and/or the Dutch Exclusive Economic Zone have the obligation to withhold and pay wage tax on the taxable employment income paid to their employees. The nonresident company should register with the Dutch tax authorities and process a wage tax withholding administration in this respect.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

New Zealand's fiscal regime applicable to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT) and royalty-based taxation. The main elements are:

- ▶ Royalties – 0% to 20%
- ▶ CIT rate – 28%
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E¹
- ▶ Investment incentives – L²

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in New Zealand consists of a combination of CIT and royalty-based taxation.

Corporate tax

New Zealand resident corporations are subject to income tax on their worldwide income at the rate of 28%.

CIT is levied on taxable income. "Taxable income" is defined as assessable income less deductions, less any available net losses. "Assessable income" includes ordinary income (determined under common law) and statutory income (amounts specifically included in the Income Tax Act). In general, deductions include expenditures incurred in deriving assessable income or expenditures incurred in the course of conducting a business for the purpose of deriving assessable income.

An expenditure of a capital nature is generally not deductible when incurred, although depreciation deductions may be available (other than buildings with an estimated useful life of at least 50 years). However, deductions for certain oil and gas expenditures of a capital nature are available under a specific petroleum mining regime – Section C below for an outline of exploration and development costs.

Ring-fencing

New Zealand does not generally apply ring-fencing in the determination of corporate tax liability. However, expenditures on petroleum mining operations

1 D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

2 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

undertaken through a foreign branch of a New Zealand resident company cannot be offset against other New Zealand sourced income. Otherwise, the same tax entity may offset losses against any of its project profits (or other group companies with at least 66% of common ultimate ownership).

New Zealand has tax consolidation rules under which various wholly owned New Zealand entities may form a tax-consolidated group and thereby be treated as a single tax entity.

Capital gains tax

There is currently no comprehensive capital gains tax (CGT) in New Zealand. However, generally, all gains on financial arrangements are subject to tax. Further, gains on the sale of property that is purchased for the purpose of resale, or as part of a profit-making scheme, are taxable. An amount that has been derived from a business is also taxable, unless the amount is of a capital nature.

The specific taxing provisions that apply to petroleum miners may override these general principles. For example, special provisions tax the proceeds from the sale of petroleum mining assets, such as license areas and geological information.

Dividends

New Zealand has a dividend imputation regime. So the benefit of tax paid by a New Zealand company can be passed on to its New Zealand resident shareholders.

Fully imputed dividends (sourced from tax-paid profits) are liable to a 0% rate of nonresident withholding tax (NRWT) if paid to a nonresident shareholder who holds at least a 10% direct voting interest in the company or, if less than 10%, where the relevant tax treaty reduces the withholding rate to below 15% (although none of the existing treaties allow for this second alternative to apply).

In other cases, a nonresident shareholder can receive a dividend that is fully imputed from a New Zealand company without further tax costs under the foreign investor tax credit (FITC) regime. The mechanism is somewhat complex but, in brief, a New Zealand resident company can effectively compensate a foreign shareholder for the NRWT by paying an additional supplementary dividend. The supplementary dividend is funded through an FITC, as the company can claim a tax credit or refund equivalent to FITC.

Treaty relief may also be available.

Mineral royalties

The royalty regime applies to petroleum permits granted on or after 1 January 1995. The regime is set out in detail in the Minerals Program for Petroleum 2013 (as provided for under the Crown Minerals Act 1991).

Royalties are payable if petroleum is discovered and sold, used in the production process as fuel, exchanged or transferred out of the permit boundaries without sale, or where petroleum remains unsold on the expiry of a permit. However, no royalty is payable in respect of:

- ▶ Petroleum that is flared or otherwise unavoidably lost
- ▶ Petroleum that is returned to a natural reservoir within the permit area (e.g., reinjected gas)
- ▶ Petroleum that is removed from an approved underground storage facility and upon which a royalty has previously been paid by the producer

Mining permits issued under the Crown Minerals Act 1991 prior to 1 January 1995, or mining licenses issued under the Petroleum Act 1937 prior to the passage of the Crown Minerals Act 1991, continue to pay the royalty specified at the time the permit or license was granted.

A company with a permit granted prior to 1 January 1995 may apply to the Secretary of Commerce to have the royalty calculated as if the permit was granted on or after 1 January 1995.

On 7 March 2012, the Government of New Zealand released a discussion document outlining proposed changes to the Crown Minerals Act 1991. A detailed review of the royalty regime for petroleum was undertaken and the royalty and taxation regime was seen as generally fit for purpose; as such, no major amendments to the royalty regime have been included in the Crown Minerals Amendment Act 2013 or in the Minerals Program for Petroleum 2013 (the Minerals Program for Petroleum provides guidance on how the legislation and associated regulations will be interpreted and applied.)

Discoveries between 30 June 2004 and 31 December 2009

There are special royalty provisions applying to discoveries made, and prospecting and exploration costs incurred, between 30 June 2004 and 31 December 2009. The purpose of the special provisions is to encourage increased exploration to identify new gas discoveries, given the decline of existing fields.

For any discoveries made under a mining permit between those dates, the royalty regime is a hybrid regime that stipulates an annual payment that is the greater of:

- ▶ An ad valorem royalty (AVR), which is levied on 1% of the net sales revenue for natural gas and 5% of the net sales revenue for oil.
 - ▶ An accounting profits royalty (APR) which is levied on:
 - ▶ 15% of accounting profits on the first NZD750 million (cumulative) gross sales for an offshore discovery.or
 - ▶ 15% of accounting profits on the first NZD250 million (cumulative) gross sales for an onshore discovery.
- And
- ▶ 20% of accounting profits on additional production.

Mining permit holders are required to pay the higher of the two royalties in any year.

Prospecting and exploration costs incurred anywhere in New Zealand between 30 June 2004 and 31 December 2009 are deductible for the purposes of calculating the APR.

All other petroleum production

For all other petroleum production, including any from a discovery made after 31 December 2009, the royalty regime comprises a 5% AVR or a 20% APR, whichever is the greater in any given year.

The APR deductions can only relate to the mining permit for which the royalty applies, not the activities of the permit holder overall.

Application of AVR and APR

Application of these royalties is determined by the net sales revenue earned in a period and the type of permit held. If a mining permit has never had net sales revenue of more than NZD1 million in a reporting period, the permit holder is liable to pay only the AVR. If the permit holder anticipates having revenue from a mining permit exceeding NZD1 million, the royalty is payable at the higher of the APR and AVR. Furthermore, where an exploration permit is held, the permit holders are only liable to pay the AVR.

Detailed records of allowable operating and capital expenses should be kept, in order to claim allowable APR deductions.

Calculation of APR

The following deductions are permitted in calculating the APR:

- ▶ Production costs
 - ▶ Capital costs, meaning development costs, exploration costs, feasibility study costs, and permit maintenance and consent costs (excluding permit purchase costs)
-

- ▶ Indirect costs
- ▶ Decommissioning costs
- ▶ Operating and capital overhead allowance
- ▶ Operating losses and capital costs carried forward (including costs from previous permit holders that have not been deducted)
- ▶ Decommissioning costs carried back

These costs are written off against sales revenues, and any excess is carried forward to the succeeding reporting periods. Note that the costs are not amortized on a time or production basis.

Unfortunately, the prescription for calculating the accounting profit does not specify:

- ▶ The manner in which exploration costs are to be treated (successful method or unsuccessful method)
- ▶ Guidelines for associated products (which may have material value) and by-products (which have relatively insignificant value)

Branch remittance tax

Branch remittance tax does not apply in New Zealand.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Specific income tax provisions relate to expenditures incurred in the course of petroleum mining operations.

Classification of petroleum expenditures

An expenditure on petroleum mining is categorized as a "petroleum exploration expenditure," a "petroleum development expenditure," or a "residual expenditure." These three categories are described next.

Petroleum exploration expenditure

The definition of a "petroleum exploration expenditure" encompasses:

- ▶ Exploratory well expenditures
- ▶ Prospecting expenditures
- ▶ Expenditures to acquire a prospecting license, a prospecting permit for petroleum or an exploration permit for petroleum

It does not include:

- ▶ Residual expenditures
- ▶ Expenditures on petroleum mining assets required to be treated as petroleum development expenditures

A petroleum exploration expenditure is allowed as a deduction in the year that the expenditure is incurred.

Petroleum development expenditure

The definition of a "petroleum development expenditure" includes an expenditure incurred that:

- ▶ Directly concerns a permit area
- ▶ Is for acquiring, constructing or planning petroleum mining assets.

It does not include:

- ▶ Residual expenditures
 - ▶ Petroleum exploration expenditures
 - ▶ Other expenditures otherwise allowed as a deduction elsewhere in the Income Tax Act
-

The term "petroleum mining asset" is defined as an interest in:

- ▶ A petroleum permit
- ▶ An asset that has an estimated life dependent on, and which is no longer than, the remaining life of the permit area, and is acquired by a petroleum miner for the purpose of carrying on in a permit area any activity in connection with:
 - ▶ Developing a permit area for producing petroleum
 - ▶ Producing petroleum
 - ▶ Processing, storing or transmitting petroleum before its dispatch to a buyer, consumer, processor, refinery or user
 - ▶ Removal or restoring operations

However, any asset acquired by a petroleum miner for the purposes of further treatment that takes place after the well stream has been separated and stabilized into crude oil, condensate or natural gas (by way of liquefaction or compression, the extraction of constituent products or the production of derivative products) is specifically excluded from the definition of a petroleum mining asset and is therefore not treated as a petroleum development expenditure. An exception applies if the treatment takes place at the production facilities.

Petroleum development expenditure is treated as a deferred deduction that is currently deductible over seven years on a straight-line or depletion basis.

The definition of a petroleum mining asset does not include underground facilities that are used to store processed gas. Instead, these facilities come within the general tax depreciation rules, being depreciated over their estimated useful life. Proceeds from the sale of an underground storage facility are capital in nature (though depreciation recovery may arise). Land is specifically excluded from the petroleum mining asset definition.

Residual expenditure

An expenditure excluded from the definition of both petroleum exploration expenditures and petroleum development expenditures is a residual expenditure.

Residual expenditure consists of:

- ▶ An expenditure on scientific research, other than a capital expenditure
- ▶ An application fee paid to the Crown in respect of a petroleum permit
- ▶ An insurance premium or royalty paid under the Petroleum Act 1937 or the Crown Minerals Act 1991
- ▶ Land tax or local authority "rates" (see Section H below), and interest
- ▶ Interest in, or expenditure under, a financial arrangement entered into prior to 20 May 1999
- ▶ Lease expenses in respect of land or buildings

A residual expenditure is deductible in the year it is incurred, subject to the general deductibility rules discussed above.

D. Incentives

Exploration

Petroleum mining exploration expenditure is immediately deductible for income tax purposes.

Tax holiday

New Zealand does not have a tax holiday regime.

Ability to carryforward losses

Losses (including New Zealand branch losses of a nonresident company) can be carried forward indefinitely. However, there is a requirement that a company

satisfies a 49% “continuity of ultimate shareholding” test from the period when the losses were incurred until the losses are used. This provision requires that there is a 49% shareholder continuity based on voting interests or, if applicable, based on the market value of shares and options.

Losses may also be offset against the income of other companies in the same group (and the companies must be in the same group from the date the losses were incurred until the date they are offset). To be considered in the same group, the companies are required to have at least a 66% ultimate common ownership. Losses incurred by a dual resident company may not be offset in this manner.

Losses from foreign branches of New Zealand resident mining companies are ring-fenced against foreign income so that they cannot be used to shelter New Zealand sourced income.

Ability to carryback losses

Previously, under the Income Tax Act 2004, petroleum miners had the ability to carryback losses from unamortized development expenditure when a petroleum permit was relinquished. The loss was allowed as a deduction in the years preceding the year of relinquishment. This was effectively limited to four years because of the refund provisions in the Income Tax Act 2004. The Income Tax Act 2007 currently does not allow this. This appears to be a drafting error and the Inland Revenue has indicated that it will be remedied via a tax bill.

Exemption for drilling rigs and seismic ships

Until 31 December 2019, income earned from the drilling of exploratory or petroleum development wells in New Zealand, and income earned from seismic or electromagnetic survey work relating to petroleum in New Zealand, is exempt from income tax. The activities must be carried out by nonresident companies and must be confined to offshore petroleum fields.

Modular drilling rigs are excluded from the exemption.

E. Withholding taxes

Nonresident withholding tax

The NRWT rules apply to dividends or royalties derived from New Zealand by a nonresident and to New Zealand sourced interest derived by a nonresident that is not engaged in business through a fixed establishment in New Zealand.

Dividends paid by a New Zealand resident company to a nonresident are subject to 30% NRWT, unless the dividends are paid from tax-paid profits or a double tax treaty applies (in which case, the rate is generally reduced to 15%, although some treaties may reduce the rate to either 5% or 0%). Further, a 0% NRWT rate may apply if the nonresident shareholder holds a 10% or more direct voting interest and the dividend is fully imputed (i.e., paid out of tax-paid profits) or, if the nonresident shareholder holds less than a 10% direct voting interest, where the relevant tax treaty reduces the withholding rate to below 15%. Interest and royalties are subject to NRWT at a rate of 15% (reduced to 10% under most treaties). The approved issuer levy (AIL) regime (see next subsection below) may also apply to interest payments.

Interest

A resident petroleum mining company may deduct interest costs on an accrual basis (resident companies are generally allowed an automatic deduction for interest without establishing a nexus with assessable income), subject to thin capitalization and transfer pricing constraints (see Section F).

As noted above, interest payments to nonresidents are generally subject to 15% NRWT (reduced to 10% under most treaties). However, the tax treatment varies depending on the residence of the borrowing company and the source of the borrowings.

New Zealand has an AIL system that allows a company to pay interest to a non-associated lender without having to deduct NRWT. The AIL is payable to the Inland Revenue at the rate of 2% (of the interest payable), which is generally tax deductible. A 0% AIL rate applies to qualifying New Zealand dollar-denominated widely held bonds.

New Zealand has no restrictions on the repayment of loans or foreign currency transactions.

Royalties

Royalties are generally tax deductible if they are of a revenue nature and are incurred in the production of assessable income. Royalty payments are generally subject to NRWT when paid offshore (see the information about NRWT above).

Lease expenses

The tax treatment of lease payments is dependent on whether the lease in question is a finance lease. A finance lease includes the following:

- ▶ The ownership of the asset is transferred at the end of the lease term
- ▶ The lessee has the option to buy the asset at a substantial discount
- ▶ The term of the lease exceeds 75% of the asset's estimated useful life

In the case of a finance lease, the lessee is treated as having purchased the asset, subject to a loan from the lessor. The lessee is therefore entitled to depreciation deductions on the leased asset and interest deductions in respect of the deemed loan.

If the lessor is not engaged in business through a fixed establishment in New Zealand, the lessor is potentially subject to NRWT on the deemed interest component of the lease payments. The amount of NRWT may be reduced under a relevant double tax agreement. Alternatively, a borrower may choose to pay a 2% AIL under the AIL regime (instead of NRWT) if the parties to the deemed loan are not associated.

If the lease is not a finance lease, the lessee is generally entitled to deduct the lease payments as they are incurred.

Nonresident contractors

Contract payments paid by a petroleum mining company to "nonresident contractors" for services performed in New Zealand are treated for tax purposes as payments liable for nonresident contractors tax (NRCT) deductions.

NRCT must be deducted from payments made to nonresidents in respect of any "contract activity." The definition of "contract activity" is very broad and includes:

- ▶ Performing any work in New Zealand
- ▶ Rendering a service of any kind in New Zealand
- ▶ Hiring personnel or equipment to be used in New Zealand

It should be noted from the first two bullet points that the work or service must be carried out in New Zealand. If work or service is carried out in any other country, the contract payments are not liable for NRCT even though they may relate to a New Zealand project.

Some payments are expressly excluded from treatment as a contract payment to a nonresident contractor. These are:

- ▶ Royalty payments, which are subject to NRWT
 - ▶ Cost reimbursing payments, which constitute a reimbursement of expenditures incurred by the nonresident contractor – but this exclusion does not apply if the parties to the cost reimbursement payment are associated persons
-

- ▶ Where the nonresident contractor has full New Zealand tax relief under a double tax agreement and is present in New Zealand for 92 days or less in a 12-month period
- ▶ When total payments do not exceed NZD15,000 in a 12-month period
- ▶ Where the nonresident contractor has provided an exemption certificate to the payer

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

New Zealand's income tax system contains significant rules regarding the classification of debt and equity instruments, and rules impacting the deductibility of interest.

New Zealand's thin capitalization rules require the ratio of debt to assets to not exceed 60%. Interest deductions are not allowed, to the extent that the debt-to-asset ratio exceeds this ratio. However, the rules allow one exception: when the debt percentage of the New Zealand taxpayer is not more than 110% of the consolidated worldwide debt-to-asset ratio of the controlling nonresident group.

Transfer pricing

New Zealand has a transfer pricing regime in respect of cross-border payments between associated parties. Broadly, the rules require the payments to be calculated on an arm's length basis.

G. Transactions

Removal or restoration expenditure

An immediate deduction for removal or restoration operations is permitted in the year when the expenditure is incurred. It is recognized that these costs generally arise after the well has ceased production. Accordingly, any loss that cannot be offset can be carried back and offset against prior-year profits if necessary (but such carryback is limited to four years).

Relinquishment of petroleum license

If a petroleum permit or license is relinquished, any deferred deductions that have not been deducted previously are deductible in the year of relinquishment (or otherwise carried back and offset against prior-year profits, once the Income Tax Act 2007 is amended to reflect the previous position under the Income Tax Act 2004).

Disposal of petroleum mining assets

Consideration received by a petroleum miner from the disposal of a petroleum mining asset is assessable income in the year the consideration is derived. Any deferred expenditure not yet deducted is deductible at that time, subject to the rules in the next paragraph in respect of associated person transactions.

If a petroleum mining asset is sold to an associated person, a petroleum miner's deduction for the balance of the deferred expenditure is limited to the amount of assessable income (i.e., consideration) that the person derives from the disposal. This rule prevents a petroleum miner from claiming a loss on disposal by selling the assets below value to an associated person. The balance of any deferred expenditure can be claimed by the associated person if the asset is subsequently sold to a third party.

Use of exploratory well for commercial development

If an exploratory well is subsequently used for commercial production, the "exploratory well expenditure" that has been deducted in respect of that well must be added to the assessable income of the petroleum miner. The expenditure incurred is then treated as a petroleum development expenditure and deducted over seven years on a straight-line or depletion basis.

Dry-well expenses

If a well that has commenced production subsequently becomes dry, the balance of any deferred expenditure is immediately deductible.

Farm-in and farm-out

Generally, the farm-in party's contribution to exploration or development work undertaken on a petroleum license area is deductible for the farm-in party according to whether it is a petroleum exploration or development expenditure. The farm-in party's contributions are specifically excluded from being assessable income for the farm-out party.

Disposal of petroleum mining shares

The proceeds from the sale of shares in any "controlled petroleum mining entity" are not taxable in New Zealand.

H. Indirect taxes**Import duties**

Import duties are payable on the importation of some goods into New Zealand. Import goods and services tax (GST) at 15% may also be payable, but is refundable if the importer is GST-registered.

Temporary import exemptions are available for goods that will be re-exported within 12 months.

VAT and GST

GST is imposed under the Goods and Services Tax Act 1985 on the supply of goods and services in New Zealand. The tax is paid (and reclaimed) at each step along the chain of ownership, until the goods or services reach the end user (who cannot reclaim the GST). From an economic perspective, therefore, GST is ultimately paid by the consumer or end-user.

GST is charged at the rate of 15% on goods and services supplied by a registered person. The principal exemptions are for the supply of residential accommodation and financial services. Also, the sale of land or a business as a going concern may be zero-rated for GST purposes (i.e., charged at 0%). Generally, GST is not imposed on goods exported from New Zealand (i.e., they are zero-rated for GST purposes).

The GST that a company pays when purchasing goods and services is called "input tax." Registration enables a company to claim this amount back from the Inland Revenue if the goods and services are purchased for the principal purpose of carrying on a "taxable activity."

The GST that the registered company is liable to charge on the supplies made is called "output tax." The company collects the output tax from the consumer and reports it to the Inland Revenue.

GST registration is compulsory if the total value of goods or services supplied exceeds (or will exceed) NZD60,000 in any 12-month period.

Petroleum mining companies exploring in New Zealand may not make supplies and are therefore not required to register. However, they have the option of voluntarily registering for GST, which then allows them to recover GST charged on supplies received.

Export duties

No duties apply to goods exported from New Zealand. However, a fee may be paid to the exporting company for the documentation necessary for the process of exporting goods.

Stamp duties

No stamp duty applies in New Zealand.

Local authority rates

Local authorities in New Zealand levy so-called “rates” on landowners for the purpose of funding their activities. These “rates” are based on the Government’s valuation of the property held. The amount charged varies from district to district.

Climate change emissions trading

New Zealand has a carbon tax on greenhouse gas emissions and also an emissions trading scheme. The emissions trading scheme enables organizations to manage their carbon tax obligations.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties ■ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts □ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Companies carrying on petroleum operations are deemed to be in the upstream regime and taxed under the Petroleum Profits Tax Act (PPTA) 2004 (as amended). "Petroleum operations" are defined under the PPTA as the winning or obtaining, and the transportation, of chargeable oil in Nigeria by or on behalf of a company for its own account. Petroleum operations include any drilling, mining, extracting or other such operations or processes (not including refining at a refinery) in the course of a business carried on by a company, including all operations incidental thereto and any sale of, or any disposal of, chargeable oil by or on behalf of the company.

Nigeria operates both a licensing and a contractual regime. Under the licensing regime, there are two arrangements. These are the joint ventures between the Federal Government of Nigeria and either an international oil company (IOC) or a sole risk operator (SRO). The contractual regime arrangements involve risk service contracts (RSCs) and the production sharing contracts (PSCs).

Of the four types of arrangement, those involving RSC operators are not deemed to be carrying on petroleum operations but are placed under performance schemes with the federal Government and are paid as service providers; they are taxed under the Companies Income Tax Act at a far lower rate and not under the PPTA. The Federal Government of Nigeria, under all the arrangements, operates through the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC).

- ▶ Royalties – 0% to 20%
- ▶ Bonuses – Yes¹
- ▶ PSC – Yes²

Income (profit) tax rate

Under Section 21 of the PPTA (Cap P13) LFN 2004, the rates apply as follows:

- ▶ First five years (newcomers) – 65.75%
- ▶ First five years (existing companies) – 85%

1 A company to which a concession has been granted to explore for and produce oil is liable to pay a signature bonus as consideration for the award of the concession. The amount payable is generally fixed at the absolute discretion of the Government and may not be determined in advance.

2 The Government share of each PSC is based on production.

- ▶ Subsequent years (all companies) – 85%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – Yes
- ▶ Capital allowances – D³
- ▶ Investment incentives – L⁴

B. Fiscal regime

Petroleum profit tax

All companies liable to pay petroleum profit tax (PPT) are assessed for tax on a current-year basis. As a result, the accounting period, which should cover the assessable profit, is from 1 January to 31 December of the relevant tax year, except in the year of commencement or cessation of business, when it may be shorter. For a company that is engaged in upstream crude oil operations, its profits for any accounting period are made up of the following:

- ▶ The proceeds from sales of all chargeable oil sold by the company in that period
- ▶ The value of all chargeable oil disposed of by the company in that period
- ▶ All income of the company during that period that is incidental to and arising from any one or more of its petroleum operations

In arriving at the taxable profits of the company, Section 10 of the PPTA provides for deductible expenses to include expenses “wholly, exclusively and necessarily” incurred in obtaining the profits.

To determine the assessable profits of an oil-producing company from its adjusted profits, the law allows all unrecouped losses suffered by the company during any previous accounting periods to be deducted from its adjusted profits. If all the losses cannot be relieved from the adjusted profits in any accounting period (e.g., because there is insufficient profit from which such losses could be offset), the PPTA allows the unrelieved losses to be carried forward to succeeding accounting periods.

Production sharing contracts

PSCs have recently become the vehicle of choice for Nigeria in participating in the exploration of petroleum resources over time, particularly for offshore acreages. A PSC is an agreement between the state oil company, the NNPC, and any other exploration and production (E&P) company or companies for the purpose of exploration and production of oil in the deep offshore and inland basins. In Nigeria, the PSC is governed by The Deep Offshore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contracts Decree No. 9 1999 Act (Cap D3) LFN 2004, amended by the Deep Offshore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contracts (Amendment) Decree No. 26 1999.

Under a PSC, the contractor funds exploration and production activities and recovers the cost of winning crude oil. A PSC is based on a production split, shared between the parties in agreed proportions. The contractor undertakes the initial exploration risks and recovers its costs if and when oil is discovered in commercial quantities – if no oil is found, the company receives no compensation. Under the PSC, the contractor has the full right only cost oil (i.e., oil to recoup production costs) and profit oil (i.e., oil to guarantee a return on investment). The contractor can also dispose of tax oil (i.e., oil to defray tax and royalty obligations) on behalf of the NNPC.

The balance of the oil (if any) is shared between the parties. The contractor is subject to a petroleum profits tax at 50% of the chargeable profit.

Resource rent tax

These are annual or periodic charges made in respect of licenses granted under the Petroleum Act. The rent payable is determined as follows:

- ▶ NGN5000 for each square kilometer or part thereof for an oil exploration license (OEL)

3 D: accelerated depreciation.

4 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely.

- ▶ US\$10 for each square kilometer or part thereof for an nonproducing oil mining lease (OML) or an oil prospecting license (OPL)
- ▶ US\$20 for each square kilometer or part thereof of a producing OML.

Royalty regimes

Any company engaged in upstream gas operations is required to pay royalties in accordance with the provisions of the Petroleum Act and the Petroleum Drilling Regulations 2004. This is usually in the form of monthly cash payments at an agreed percentage of the quantity of oil produced, after making adjustments for treatment, handling and related expenses. The royalty payable is dependent on the concession agreement between the company and the Government.

Royalty rates for joint venture operations are as follows:

- ▶ Onshore production – 20%
- ▶ Production in territorial waters and continental shelf up to 100 meters water depth – 18.5%
- ▶ Offshore production beyond 100 meters – 16.67%

The Deep Offshore and Inland Basin Production Sharing Contracts Act specifies the royalty rates that apply to production from PSC fields beyond 200 meters, which are as shown in the next table.

| Area | Rate (%) |
|---|----------|
| Up to 200 meters' water depth | 16.67 |
| In areas from 201 to 500 meters' water depth | 12 |
| In areas from 501 to 800 meters' water depth | 8 |
| In areas from 801 to 1,000 meters' water depth | 4 |
| In areas in excess of 1,000 meters' water depth | 0 |
| Inland basin | 10 |

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Under the PPTA, accounting depreciations are not allowable for tax calculations. Instead, the PPTA gives both petroleum investment allowance (PIA) and annual allowance (AA) to oil-producing companies that have incurred a "qualifying capital expenditure" (QCE). These allowances are allowed against the assessable profit to arrive at the chargeable profits. The relevant tax rate is applied to the chargeable profits to determine the amount of PPT payable.

Petroleum investment allowance

The PIA is an allowance granted to an E&P company in the first year when it incurs QCE for the purpose of its operations. The rates depend on the fiscal regime (contract form) under which the E&P company operates. The following rates apply to companies in joint venture operations.

- ▶ Onshore operations – 5%
- ▶ Operations in areas up to 100 meters' water depth – 10%
- ▶ Operations in areas between 101 meters' and 200 meters' water depth – 15%
- ▶ Operations in areas beyond 200 meters' water depth – 20%

Annual allowance

The AA is an allowance granted annually at a flat rate of 20% on the original cost of an asset, subject to the requirement that the taxpayer retains 1% of the original cost in its books until the asset is finally disposed. The retention of the 1% cost in the books of the company effectively means that the AA granted for

the fifth (and last) year is 19%, rather than the 20% for each of the previous four years. For the ease of reference, the rates of AA are as follows:

- ▶ 1st year – 20%
- ▶ 2nd year – 20%
- ▶ 3rd year – 20%
- ▶ 4th year – 20%
- ▶ 5th year – 19%

The capital allowance for which relief may be claimed in any particular tax year is the sum of any PIA and AA.

QCE is defined as capital expenditures incurred in an accounting year in respect of:

- ▶ Plant, machinery and fixtures
- ▶ Pipelines and storage tanks
- ▶ Construction of buildings, structures or works of a permanent nature
- ▶ Acquisition of rights in or over oil deposits; searching for, or discovering and testing, petroleum deposits or winning access thereto; or construction of any work or buildings likely to be of little value when the petroleum operations for which they were constructed cease

No capital allowance is granted for any expenditure that would have been a qualifying expenditure, except in respect of deductions that have been made in arriving at the adjusted profit of the company pursuant to Section 10 of the PPTA.

Investment tax credits or investment tax allowances

A company engaged in petroleum operations in the deep offshore and inland basin, pursuant to a PSC executed in 1993, is allowed an investment tax credit (ITC) at the rate of 50% of the qualifying expenditure, in accordance with the terms of the PSC for the accounting period when the asset was first used for the purpose of its petroleum operations. In the same way, a company that has executed a PSC after 1 July 1998 is entitled to an investment tax allowance (ITA) at a flat rate of 50% of the qualifying expenditure in the accounting year in which the relevant asset is first used in the business.

Restrictions on capital allowances

Under the PPTA, the capital allowance relief that can be claimed is the aggregate capital allowance for the relevant tax year. This, however, is subject to a limitation. Capital allowance relief is limited to the lower of either the aggregate capital allowance computed for the tax year or a sum equal to 85% of the assessable profits of the accounting period, less 170% of the total amount of the deduction allowed as PIA for that period. The purpose of this restriction is to ensure that the tax chargeable to the company is no less than 15% of the tax that would have been chargeable if no deduction had been made for capital allowances.

Unrelieved capital allowances may be carried forward until they are finally relieved.

D. Incentives

In order to encourage the development and utilization of the country's gas resources, the following incentives are available:

- ▶ An investment required to separate crude oil and gas from the reservoir into usable products is considered part of the oilfield development.
 - ▶ A capital investment in facilities equipment to deliver associated gas in a usable form at utilization or the designated custody transfer point is treated, for tax purposes, as part of the capital investment for oil development.
 - ▶ Capital allowances, operating expenses and the basis for tax assessments are subject to the provisions of the PPTA and the tax incentives under the revised memorandum of understanding.
-

Conditions for the incentives are as follows:

- ▶ Condensates extracted and re-injected into the crude oil stream are treated as oil, but those not re-injected are treated under the existing tax arrangement.
- ▶ The company pays the minimum amount charged by the Minister of Petroleum Resources for any gas flared by the company, currently at US\$3.50 per thousand standard cubic feet of gas flared. The company must, where practicable, keep the expenses incurred in the utilization of associated gas separate from those incurred in crude oil operations, and only expenses which cannot be separated are allowable against the crude oil income of the company under the Act.
- ▶ Expenses identified as incurred exclusively in the utilization of associated gas in usable form to downstream projects – including aluminum smelter and methanol, methyl tertiary-butyl ether and other associated gas utilization projects – benefit from the incentives.
- ▶ All capital investments relating to the gas-to-liquids facilities are treated as a chargeable capital allowance and recovered against crude oil income.
- ▶ Gas transferred from the natural-gas liquid facility to the gas-to-liquids facilities incurs 0% tax and 0% royalty.

The effect of these incentives is to give wider latitude to gas-producing companies on expenditures for which they can claim capital allowance relief.

E. Withholding taxes

Under Nigerian law, certain income is subject to withholding tax (WHT) regulations. Income subject to WHT includes rent, interest, dividends, fees, commissions and payments in respect of contracts. Thus, if a company makes a payment on one of these types of income, the payer company is required by law to deduct WHT from the payment at the applicable rate and remit the sum to the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) or the State Inland Revenue Service (SIRS). The relevant tax authority issues a receipt for the payment, which is forwarded to the payee as evidence of payment of the WHT on its behalf. However, WHT does not apply to dividends declared from profits that have suffered PPT.

The WHT rates are as follows:

- ▶ Interest – 10%
- ▶ Royalties – 10%
- ▶ Technical services – 10%
- ▶ Management services – 10%
- ▶ Consultancy services – 10%
- ▶ Other contracts for supply of goods and services – 5%
- ▶ Branch remittance tax – Not applicable

The above withholding tax rates differ if paid to individuals.

Nigeria has treaty agreements with countries that include Belgium, Canada, China, France, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom. These countries are granted a reduced rate of WHT, usually at 75% of the generally applicable WHT rates. Thus, the applicable rate of WHT for treaty countries on interest, dividends and royalties is generally 7.5%.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

A company is thinly capitalized if its capital is made up of a much greater proportion of debt than equity. The tax authorities regard this as a cause for concern, given the potential for abuse through excessive interest deductions. Some tax authorities limit the application of thin capitalization rules to corporate groups with foreign entities to avoid “tax leakage” to lower tax jurisdictions.

Nigeria does not have a specific thin capitalization rule, but it does apply general anti-tax avoidance rules. Under Section 15 of the PPTA 2004, if the tax authorities believe that any disposition is not, in fact, given proper effect, or that any transaction that reduces or would reduce the amount of tax payable is artificial or fictitious, they may disregard the disposition or direct that such adjustments be made in respect of the liability to tax as the authorities consider appropriate to counteract the reduction in the liability to tax, or the reduction that would otherwise apply, resulting from the transaction. The companies concerned are accordingly subject to tax. The expression “disposition” includes any trust, grant, covenant, agreement or arrangement.

As an example of the foregoing, the following transaction is deemed to be artificial or fictitious: a transaction between persons if one of them has control over the other or between persons if both of them are controlled by another person if, in the opinion of the tax authorities, the transaction has not been made at arm's length (i.e., on the terms that might have been fairly expected to be made by independent persons engaged in the same or similar activities dealing with one another at arm's length).

Transfer Pricing

The Income Tax (Transfer Pricing) Regulations No 1 of 2012 were published on 24 September 2012. Prior to the introduction of these Regulations, the Nigerian domestic tax laws merely provided general anti-avoidance rules whereby related-party transactions must be conducted at arm's length, and no detailed guidelines on the application of the arm's length principle were provided. Accordingly, the Regulations were introduced to provide guidance on the application of the arm's length principle.

The commencement date of the Regulations was specified as 2 August 2012. The Regulations define “commencement date” as the basis for periods beginning after the “effective date” of the Regulations, after which taxpayers should comply with the transfer pricing documentation requirements or the submission of the preprinted declaration form along with the taxpayers' annual tax returns. However, the Regulations do not provide further guidance as how “effective date” is defined.

The Regulations are to be applied in a manner consistent with the arm's length principle in Article 9 of the UN and OECD Model Tax Conventions on Income and Capital and the OECD Transfer Pricing Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and Tax Administrations (OECD Guidelines). The Regulations further provide that the provisions of the relevant tax laws shall prevail in the event of conflict in the application of any applicable law, rules or regulations, the UN Practical Manual or the OECD Guidelines.

Taxpayers are required to develop and maintain sufficient information or data in order to establish that the pricing of their controlled activities are consistent with the arm's length principle. Specifically, the documentation should be contemporaneous by ensuring that it is in place prior to the due date for filing the income tax return for the year in which the documented transactions occurred. The documentation should be provided to the Revenue within 21 days, upon request.

PSC expenditure recovery exclusions for financing costs

All the expenses incurred in respect of exploration activities prior to the effective date of the PSC are operating costs recoverable by the contractor from cost oil.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

If a company disposes of a capital asset, capital gains accruing from the disposal are subject to tax under the Capital Gains Tax Act 2004 at the rate of 10%. The amount of capital gains is calculated after deducting expenses associated with the disposal of the assets. A company may claim rollover relief, and therefore postpone the tax liability, if the proceeds from the disposal are used to acquire an asset similar in nature to the one disposed of.

Farm-in and farm-out

The Nigerian Petroleum (Amendment) Decree 1996 (Decree No. 23) provides that "farm-out" means "an agreement between the holder of an oil mining lease and a third party which permits the third party to explore, prospect, win, work and carry away any petroleum encountered in a specified area during the validity of the lease." Farming in is, therefore, a way of acquiring a license interest and, conversely, farming out is a way of disposing of a license interest whilst allowing the farmor to benefit from income generated from the farmee's activities within the area that has been farmed out. The terms "license interest" and "concession interest" are used in this chapter to include the bundle of rights owned by a participant in an oil or gas joint venture.

Selling shares in a company

The sale of shares does not attract capital gains tax (CGT) for resident and nonresident shareholders. A minimal stamp duty applies to the share transfer of documents. It is important to note that sales of interests in assets attract CGT. The consent of the Minister of Petroleum Resources is required for the transfer of interest in licenses and controlling shares in an oil and gas company.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties

Generally, customs duties are payable on various goods, including plant, machinery and all equipment according to the provisions of the Customs, Excise Tariff (Consolidation) Act 2004.

The Act provides that any machinery, equipment or spare part imported into Nigeria by a company engaged in exploration, processing or power generation through utilization of Nigerian oil and gas is exempt from customs duties. Unlike the VAT exemption (see below), the benefit for customs duty relief may be claimed by a company engaged in the upstream or downstream sector of the oil industry.

VAT

Under the Value Added Tax Act 2004, VAT is imposed at the rate of 5% on the supply of all goods and services, except the supply of any goods and services that have been exempted specifically under the Act. Taxable supplies include the sale, hire, lease and any other disposal of taxable goods. VAT charged by vendors in the oil and gas industry is deducted at source and remitted to the FIRS.

VAT incentive for gas businesses

VAT is not payable on the supply of plant, machinery and equipment imported or purchased locally for utilization of gas businesses in downstream petroleum operations. In addition, VAT is not payable on supplies of exported goods and services, including oil and gas products.

The following transactions are placed on a zero rate in line with the Value Added Tax Act 2007 (as amended):

- ▶ Non-oil exports
- ▶ Goods and services purchased by diplomats
- ▶ Goods purchased for use in humanitarian donor projects

By virtue of the 2007 amendment to the VAT Act and guidelines, oil and gas companies are required to deduct VAT at source and remit the amount directly to the relevant VAT authority.

I. Other

Education tax

An education tax is assessed alongside the PPT or income tax liability of a company. Education tax is assessed at 2% of the assessable profits of a company. For a company subject to tax under the PPTA, the education tax

paid is an allowable deduction under Section 10 of the PPTA in arriving at the adjusted profits of the company for tax purposes.

Oil terminal dues

Subject to the provisions of the Terminal Dues Act and the Nigerian Ports Authority Act (the NPA Act), Section 1 of the Oil Terminal Dues Act stipulates that terminal dues may be levied on any ship evacuating oil at any oil terminal and in respect of any services or facilities provided under that Act. Under the Oil Terminals (Terminal Dues) Regulations, the amount payable as terminal dues is US\$0.02 per barrel of oil loaded onto a ship.

Pursuant to the NPA Act, the Port Authority has the power to levy harbor dues on any ship. The harbor dues levied apply to all goods discharged or loaded within a harbor. The rate for a cargo of crude oil as specified under the NPA Act (Terminal Dues) Regulations is NGN0.1166 per ton.

Oil pipeline license fees

If a company seeks to construct and operate an oil pipeline for transportation of mineral oil or natural gas to any destination, it must obtain a license from the relevant authority. The application for a license and the granting of a license attract separate fees under the Oil Pipelines Act. Annual fees, chargeable in accordance with the length of the pipelines are also payable.

The application is made to the Minister of Petroleum Resources through the Department of Petroleum Resources. The fees are as follows:

- ▶ Application for permit – NGN20 on submission
- ▶ Grant of permit – NGN50
- ▶ Application for license – NGN50 on submission of application
- ▶ Grant of license – NGN200
- ▶ Variation of permit – NGN50
- ▶ Variation of license – NGN200
- ▶ Annual fee on each license – NGN20 per mile of pipeline, subject to a minimum of NGN200

The holder of a license is required to pay a fee of NGN100 upon submitting its application for an order restricting anyone from constructing any building or type of building or similar structures on lands adjoining pipelines. A maximum fee of NGN400 is payable upon the grant of this order.

State and local government rates

The Taxes and Levies (Approved List for Collection) Cap T2, Laws of the Federation 2004 sets out the various taxes and levies that may be collected by the three tiers of government in Nigeria. By virtue of the provisions of Section 10 of the PPTA, all these rates and levies are allowable as deductions in arriving at the adjusted profits of a company subject to tax under the PPTA. Some of the local taxes that may apply to oil and gas businesses are discussed below.

State government business registration fees

For a business located in an urban area, the maximum fee payable on registration is NGN10,000, while NGN5,000 is the maximum payable upon annual renewal of the registration. For a business located in a rural area, the maximum fees are NGN2,000 and NGN1,000 for initial registration and renewal, respectively.

Right of occupancy fees

Right of occupancy fees apply on lands in urban areas of a state. The rates vary from state to state.

Local government

Tenement rates

“Tenement rates” are rates chargeable on a building and payable by the occupier(s) of the building. The various state governments have enacted

statutes under which tenement rates are imposed. The actual collection of the rates is done by the local authority for the area where the relevant building is situated. The tenement rate is usually assessed on the rental value of a building – in Lagos State, for example, the tenement rate is assessed at the rate of 10% of the rental value of a building.

Signboard and advertisement permits

The rate for a signboard and advertisement permit varies between different local governments.

Oil and Gas Export Processing Zone

Under the Oil and Gas Export Free Zone Act 2004, any approved enterprise established within Onne, the Oil and Gas Export Processing Zone, is exempted from all taxes, levies and rates imposed by the federal, state or local governments in Nigeria.

Service company taxation

Pursuant to the Companies Income Tax (Amendment) Act 2007, services companies are taxed at a rate of 30%, in addition to the 2% education tax assessed on the assessable profit of all Nigerian companies.

A deduction is available for capital allowances, as shown in the table below.

| | Table I: Initial allowances | Table II: Annual allowances | Rate % | Rate % |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Building (industrial and non-industrial) | 15 | 10 | | |
| Mining | 95 | 0 | | |
| Plant: agricultural production | 95 | 0 | | |
| Others | 50 | 25 | | |
| Furniture and fittings | 25 | 20 | | |
| Motor vehicles: public transportation | 95 | 0 | | |
| Others | 50 | 25 | | |
| Plantation equipment | 95 | 0 | | |
| Housing estate | 50 | 25 | | |
| Ranching and plantation | 30 | 50 | | |
| Research and development | 95 | 0 | | |

The Petroleum Industry Bill

There is significant uncertainty as to when the Bill will be passed and what is going to be the content of the Act when passed into law.

Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Act 2010 (NOGIC Act)

The Nigerian Oil and Gas Content Act 2010 (commonly known as the NOGIC Act) was signed into law on 22 April 2010 and effective from this date. The NOGIC Act is the legal framework and mechanism for the creation of an environment aimed at increasing indigenous capacity building. The implementation of the provisions is to be carried out by the Nigerian Content Monitoring Board. Every entity awarding a contract in the upstream sector of the Nigerian oil and gas industry should deduct and remit 1% to the National Content Development Fund. The 1% mandatory deduction is not applicable to contractual arrangements executed prior to 22 April 2010 even if ongoing after that date. The 1% mandatory deduction applies to all contracts of any nature in the upstream sector and without any minimum limits.

IFRS conversion

The International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) conversion roadmap, which is in three phases, mandates publicly listed and significant public-interest entities to have prepared their financial statements based on IFRS by 1 January 2012 – i.e., full IFRS financial statements are required by such entities for the accounting period to 31 December 2012, and thereafter. Other public-interest entities are required to have adopted IFRS for statutory purposes by 1 January 2013. The third phase requires small and medium-sized entities to have adopted IFRS by 1 January 2014.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

- ▶ Royalties – None
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contracts (PSCs) – None
- ▶ Income tax rate – 27%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – 51%
- ▶ Capital allowances – O, E¹
- ▶ Investment incentives – L²

B. Fiscal regime

A company involved in extractive (i.e., upstream) activities within the geographic areas described in Section 1 of the Norwegian Petroleum Tax Act is subject to a marginal tax rate of 78% (27% ordinary corporate income tax and 51% resource rent tax) on the net operating profits derived from its extractive activities. The area covered, generally, is the area within Norwegian territorial borders or on the Norwegian continental shelf (NCS).

The tax basis for calculating taxes on extractive activities is essentially the same as for ordinary taxes except for the treatment of interest costs and uplift allowances. Overall tax rates are as shown in the table below.

| | Oil and gas companies (offshore tax regime) | Other companies (onshore tax regime) |
|--------------|--|---|
| Ordinary tax | 27% | 27% |
| Special tax | 51% | None |
| Total tax | 78% | 27% |

Transportation and extractive activities (including related activities) performed outside Norwegian territorial borders may be subject to Norwegian tax if the Norwegian authorities have the right to impose tax on these activities under international law or bilateral agreements.³ In addition, support activities performed onshore by oil and gas companies are subject to the 78% tax rate.

1 O, E: Offshore investments are depreciated over six years. An additional 22% uplift applies against the special (resource rent) tax for upstream activities.

2 L: Losses from offshore activities may be carried forward indefinitely with interest.

3 See the Petroleum Tax Act, Section 1.

The Norwegian petroleum tax system is based on the taxation of the entity rather than on specific assets and licenses. Thus, there is no ring fencing between different licenses or fields on the NCS.

Income derived from offshore activities, in principle, may not be offset against losses incurred from onshore activities, or vice versa. However, 50% of a company's onshore losses may be offset against income from offshore activities that are subject to the ordinary tax rate of 27%. Similarly, losses from offshore activities may be offset against income from onshore activities that are subject to the ordinary tax rate of 27%.

See Sections C and D for an explanation of the treatment of both exploration costs and development costs. See Section F for an explanation of the allocation of interest costs between onshore and offshore activities.

Group relief

Norway does not have a "group taxation" regulation. However, under Section 10-4 of the General Tax Act, if a company holds more than 90% of the shares in a subsidiary, each entity may contribute profits to the other company to offset losses incurred by the other company.

With respect to oil and gas companies, such contributions are limited to distributions from onshore activities – for instance, an upstream company with onshore income such as interest income or foreign-exchange gains may contribute this income to its 90%-owned subsidiary to offset any losses from onshore activities incurred by that entity.

Norm price

A "norm price" or administratively determined price is used to calculate the taxable income derived from the sale of petroleum products (currently only crude oil and propane from Karsto), regardless of the actual sales price obtained. If the sales price achieved is higher than the norm price, the additional amount is tax-free. Correspondingly, if the price achieved is lower than the norm price, the seller is still taxed at the norm price. The norm price is published quarterly and is based on actual prices obtained, although the Norm Price Board sets the norm price for crude oil from each field or blend on a daily basis.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

For taxable income subject to a marginal tax rate of 78%, investments in offshore production facilities, pipelines and installations (tangible assets) used in extraction activity are depreciated over a six-year period beginning with the year of investment.

Additional allowances are permitted at a rate of 22% when calculating the special tax basis for the 51% tax rate (i.e., 5.5% each year over a four-year period). This means that 89.2% (i.e., 51% + 27% + [22% × 51%]) of offshore investments are nominally borne by the Government.

Other investments and assets located onshore (e.g., buildings and office equipment) used in the business of extraction are depreciated on a declining-balance method (from 2% to 30%) from when the assets are utilized; however, depreciation from such investments or assets are deductible in the offshore regime at the 78% tax rate.

D. Incentives

Losses may be carried forward indefinitely for offshore activity. Interest on such losses is set by the Ministry of Finance annually; for 2013 the rate was 1.5%, for 2014 the rate was 1.28% [not officially confirmed per date].

In addition, losses can be transferred in connection with the sale of the total activity or by a merger with another “upstream” company. The tax value of the losses can be refunded when the extraction activity on the NCS ceases. These rules apply for losses incurred effective from 1 January 2002 and for cessation of petroleum activity after 1 January 2005. Thus, a company subject to the offshore tax regime is guaranteed the full tax refund of all costs incurred.

An upstream company may also be refunded the tax value of exploration expenses for each tax year loss, including direct and indirect expenses related to exploration activities on the NCS (except for financing costs). The refund is limited to the tax loss incurred for the year. The refund is made on 22 December in the year following the tax year for which the expenses were incurred. For example, NOK100 million spent on exploration expenses in 2015 would be expected to result in a cash refund of NOK78 million on 22 December 2016.

The refund of exploration costs has opened up the opportunity for third parties to fund exploration activities. The claim on the state can also be pledged. In general, banks may typically be willing to fund 80% to 90% of the tax value of the exploration tax refund (i.e., 65% to 70% of the exploration cost basis).

E. Withholding taxes

Withholding tax (WHT) is not levied on distributions from income subject to petroleum taxation, provided the recipient owns at least 25% of the distributing entity. However, any onshore income part may be subject to a prorated dividend WHT, depending on the tax treaty status of the recipient.

Dividend distributions from onshore activity are not subject to WHT if the shareholder is a company resident within the European Economic Area (EEA), the shareholder performs economic activity through an establishment in the EEA, and Norway has entered into an agreement concerning the exchange of such information or the shareholder can provide such documentation from the tax authorities.

If the receiving company is situated outside the EU/EEA, WHT may be levied on dividend distributions pending further conditions.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

There are no thin capitalization rules. However, under Norwegian company law, a limited company must, as a general rule, have a reasonable equity and liquidity to make dividend distributions.

If a company has entered into an internal funding agreement, the company may risk a discretionary deviation if the rates and terms agreed are not in compliance with the arm’s length principle (i.e., if the company exceeded its loan capacity compared with what it would have been able to obtain in the free market on a stand-alone basis).

Only a portion of interest costs (and related foreign exchange) is deductible in the offshore tax regime. The remaining interest costs are subject to onshore taxation at the ordinary 27% tax rate.

The allocation of interest cost to the offshore district is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Allocation of offshore interest cost} = \frac{\text{(total interest and forex related to interest bearing dept)} \times 50\% \times \text{tax value of offshore-related assets at the year end}}{\text{daily average interest-bearing debt}}$$

If the company has no investments or assets, all interest costs and related foreign-exchange costs are allocated onshore. However, if the company has no other onshore income, the financial costs may be allocated back to the offshore regime for deduction against the 27% corporate tax rate (and it may be carried

forward with interest). The maximum amount of interest costs that are deductible in relation to an offshore activity is the company's total interest cost incurred.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

In general, the disposal of assets is taxable or deductible at the 78% tax rate. Disposal of fixed assets offshore, such as platforms, will require a so-called "Section 10" approval.

Transfer of license interests

All transfers of production licenses (including farm-ins and farm-outs) require approval from the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum. The tax treatment must be approved by the Ministry of Finance. If the respective transaction is covered by the detailed regulations introduced in 2009, approval from the Ministry of Finance is granted automatically.

If the transaction is not covered by the detailed regulations, an application for a Section 10 ruling has to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance.

The standard conditions in a license sale/transfer include:

- ▶ License sales are treated as non-taxable for the seller and as non-deductible for the buyer (on an after-tax basis)
- ▶ The buyer inherits the seller's basis for depreciation and uplift
- ▶ All other costs or income (refunds) follow the ordinary rules

Reference is made here to the Section 10 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance on 1 July 2009, with subsequent updates.

From 1 January 2012, capital gains on the disposal of shares in Norwegian resident companies are exempt from taxation, provided that the owner is a Norwegian-resident limited liability company (i.e., one denoted AS or ASA).

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

Supplies of goods and specific services to drilling companies, license owners, owners and lessees of platforms, and foreign companies that are not liable to register for VAT in Norway are exempt from VAT provided certain requirements are fulfilled. The repair, building and maintenance of rigs and specialized vessels for use in petroleum activities outside Norwegian territorial waters are exempt from VAT when invoiced to the end user. The exemption for the supply of services applies regardless of whether the services are performed offshore or onshore, provided the services rendered are related to installations or equipment on these installations, for use in petroleum activities outside Norwegian territorial waters. Certain documentation requirements must be maintained to comply with the rules.

Transportation between offshore facilities outside Norwegian territorial waters and onshore is also exempt from VAT.

Further, pursuant to the Norwegian export regulations, the supply of services "entirely for use outside Norwegian territorial waters" is regarded as an export and consequently exempt from VAT. The export of goods to the NCS is also exempt from VAT, provided that the goods are exported directly by the supplier, and the supplier can prove the export. The export regulations apply regardless of who the purchaser is and will therefore (for example) also apply on sales to oil service companies registered for VAT in Norway.

Environmental taxes

Upstream companies are subject to CO₂ tax, which is levied on gas consumed or flared on production installations offshore. The CO₂ tax for upstream companies is NOK1 per standard cubic meter (Sm³) effective from 1 January 2015.

From 1 September 2010, CO₂ tax was introduced on natural gas and LPG in Norway. The tax applies on importation, including importation from offshore production installations and upon withdrawal from a warehouse. The rate in 2015 is NOK0.67 per Sm³ for natural gas and NOK1.01 per liter for LPG.

A fee of NOK19.19 per kilogram per date is levied on NOx emissions for 2015. However, the Norwegian Oil Industry Association and several other industry associations reached an agreement with the Ministry of Environment in 2008 to establish a fund to reduce NOx emissions. Participating companies must commit to emission reductions, and a fee equal to approximately NOK11 per kilogram must be paid to the fund. A tax deduction of 78% is granted when the payment is made.

Subsequently, any contribution from the fund will be regarded as taxable income when the contribution is made. Investments made offshore in order to reduce the emissions will be subject to a six-year, straight-line deduction and uplift.

Based on the estimated costs to implement necessary measures, the shipping and fisheries sectors are expected to be the most cost-efficient sectors, where the greatest potential for reductions can be attained.

The Ministry of Environment and the industry associations agreed in 2010 to extend the NOx fund cooperation for seven years and further reduce emissions by 16,000 tons by 2017. The new agreement for 2011-17 was approved by the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) on 19 May 2011.

Area fees

All production licenses are subject to an area fee that is paid after the initial exploration period has expired. The exploration period is normally four to six years. The annual area fee increases from NOK34,000 per square kilometer in year one to a maximum of NOK137,000 per square kilometer in year three and thereafter. Special rules and exceptions apply for continued exploration activities beyond the initial period.

I. Other

Tax returns and tax assessment

Companies involved in extraction activities must calculate and pay advanced tax. The first three installments are due on 1 August, 1 October and 1 December in the year of income. The remaining three installments are due on 1 February, 1 April and 1 June in the following year.

The tax return is due on 30 April in the year following the year of income. A draft assessment from the Oil Taxation Office is available from mid-November, and the final assessment is published on 1 December. The taxpayer has three weeks from 1 December to file a complaint with the appeal board.

The tax exploration refund is made on 22 December following the year of income.

Transfer pricing reporting and documentation requirements

The Norwegian tax authorities have increased their focus on intra-group transactions and transfer-pricing-related topics with the recent introduction of transfer pricing reporting and documentation obligations. Any legal entity that is obliged to file a tax return in Norway, and has transactions with related parties, is covered by the reporting and documentation requirements.

A company involved in extraction activities and subject to the PTA is only exempt from the reporting obligation (and subsequently the transfer pricing documentation obligation) provided that the total transactions are less than NOK10 million during the year and less than NOK25 million in receivables or debts at the end of the year (real values are based on arm's length principles).

These reporting obligations require a standard form to be filed with the tax return. The purpose of this reporting form is to give the tax authorities an overview of the extent and nature of the taxpayer's intra-group transactions. The tax authorities can request documentation to demonstrate that intra-group transactions are in compliance with the arm's length principle, as outlined in the OECD guidelines. The deadline for this documentation is 45 days from the date of the request.

Norwegian authorities tend to have an aggressive approach when reviewing these reports. Even if the Norwegian documentation requirements are based on the OECD guidelines, the interpretation and implementation requirements may differ slightly from other countries' practices.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts ■ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Oman to the oil and gas exploration and production industry sector consists of corporate income tax (CIT) in accordance with the production sharing contract (PSC) arrangement. The main elements are as follows:

- ▶ PSC – Concession agreement on profit oil after allocating cost oil
- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 55% (see also Section B)
- ▶ Royalties – Not applicable
- ▶ Bonuses – Applicable for PSC contracts only
- ▶ Resource rent tax – Not applicable
- ▶ Capital allowances – Specific depreciation rates for specific types of assets, but not applicable for PSCs
- ▶ Investment incentives – Dependent on the concession agreement

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

Oil and gas exploration and production companies are taxed at the rate of 55% on their taxable income. Taxable income is determined in accordance with the concession agreement to which the PSC applies. PSC arrangements generally involve a series of elements, as follows:

- ▶ Expenditures for exploration, production and related activities are fully funded by the company (concession holder) (i.e., the Government does not fund any of that activity).
- ▶ The Government shares in production.
- ▶ Production sharing depends on production for the period, valued at prices determined by the Government.
- ▶ From the production for the period, cost oil is first determined. Cost oil is a portion of produced oil that the operator applies on an annual basis to recover defined costs under the relevant production sharing agreement. Depending on the PSC, there may be a cap on the recovery of cost oil as a percentage of the total production for a year. However, if the cost oil required to recover costs fully is higher than the maximum cap allowed, cost oil is as set out under the PSC. The remaining cost is carried forward for

future recovery. The remaining oil (i.e., after allocating cost oil) is profit oil. Profit oil is shared between the company and the Government in accordance with the sharing percentage agreed in the concession agreement. The Government generally takes a major share of the profit oil.

- ▶ The PSC does not involve royalty payments.
- ▶ The following payments may be made to the Government under a PSC, depending on the terms agreed in the concession agreement:
 - ▶ Annual rental payments
 - ▶ Signature bonus upon signing of the agreement
 - ▶ Renewal bonus upon each renewal of the agreement
 - ▶ A one-time discovery bonus upon declaration of the first commercial discovery of oil or gas
 - ▶ A one-time anniversary bonus after the first anniversary of commercial production
- ▶ Certain expenditures qualify for cost recovery. Generally, a PSC requires that costs and expenses of activities carried out by the company or its affiliates (i.e., opex and capex) are to be included in recoverable costs only to the extent that such costs and expenses are directly or indirectly identifiable with such activities, and should be limited to the actual costs that are fair and reasonable. Certain costs are specifically prohibited for cost recovery. Excluded costs are bonus and rental payments made by the company to the Government in accordance with the PSC, the company's Omani income taxes paid in accordance with the PSC, foreign income taxes or other foreign taxes paid by the company, etc.
- ▶ A tax rate of 55% applies to taxable income, which is computed in accordance with the formula set out in the PSC. Taxable income is arrived at by applying the following formula:

$$TI = NI + (55\% \times TI)$$

where TI = taxable income and NI = net income determined as the market value of oil or gas lifted by the company, less recoverable costs.

- ▶ The Government settles the company's tax liability from the Government's share of production. This implies that the company is not required to settle taxes and claim reimbursement. The share of profit oil by the company is considered net of taxes. The tax authorities issue a tax receipt and a tax certificate for the taxes settled on behalf of the company.

Service contracts

Effective from 1 January 2010, service contracts are taxed at 12%.

Resource rent tax

Resource rent tax does not currently apply in Oman.

Bonuses

Bonuses apply to PSCs only, as explained above. Otherwise, bonuses do not apply.

Royalty regimes

Royalty regimes do not currently apply in Oman.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

The tax law provides specific depreciation rates for particular types of assets – for example, pipelines are to be depreciated at 10%, and vehicles and heavy equipment at 33.33%.

However, capital allowances do not apply in respect of PSCs because the entire capital expenditure qualifies as recoverable cost in accordance with the concession agreement.

D. Investment incentives

All incentives, such as tax holidays and R&D uplift, are dependent on the concession agreement. Currently, there are no PSC that qualify for a tax holiday.

Losses may be carried forward for five years but may not be carried back. Net losses incurred by companies benefiting from tax holidays may be carried forward without any time limit under certain circumstances. Loss carryforwards do not apply to PSCs because the entire cost is carried forward for future recovery (as outlined in Section B above).

E. Withholding tax and double tax treaties

The following payments made to foreign persons not having permanent establishments in Oman are subject to a final withholding tax (WHT) at the rate of 10%:

- ▶ Royalties
- ▶ Consideration for R&D
- ▶ Consideration for use or right to use computer software
- ▶ Management fees

WHT is also applicable where a foreign company has a permanent establishment but the permanent establishment does not account for income in Oman, that is subject to WHT.

WHT is final, and foreign companies have no filing or other obligations in this regard.

The term "royalty" is defined to include payments for the use or right to use software, intellectual property rights, patents, trademarks, drawings, equipment rentals and consideration for information concerning industrial, commercial or scientific experience and concessions involving minerals.

WHT is not imposed on dividends or interest. The 10% WHT on royalties under Omani domestic law applies to royalties paid to companies resident in the other treaty countries. Under Mauritius treaty, no WHT is imposed on royalties paid to a company resident in that country, subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions.

Oman has entered into double tax treaties with Algeria, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, Croatia, France, India, Italy, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, Vietnam and Yemen.

Oman has also signed double tax treaties with Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Iran, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sudan and Yemen, but these treaties are not yet in force.

Oman has ratified a free trade agreement with the United States, effective from 1 January 2009. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (of which Oman is one) have entered into a free trade agreement with Singapore but this agreement has not yet been ratified by Oman.

Recently, Oman signed a protocol with France that provides for 7% withholding tax on royalty payments. A similar protocol with the United Kingdom provides for an 8% withholding tax rate.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

The following deductions are subject to thin capitalization restrictions:

- ▶ Interest paid to a sole proprietor or another person controlled by a sole proprietor
 - ▶ Interest payable by an Omani company (other than banks and insurance companies)
 - ▶ Interest paid by a PE to a head office or controlled entity
-

Rules for deduction of interest on loans

- ▶ Interest expense must be real, incurred and relate to earning gross incomes and not for financing or capitalization of the business.
- ▶ Omani companies claiming deductions of interest costs on loans from related parties are required to comply with minimum capital requirements – i.e., the thin capitalization rules. Omani companies that exceed a debt-to-equity ratio of 2:1 will be subject to a proportionate disallowance of deductions for interest expenses on loans from related parties.
- ▶ Interest expenses incurred by branch offices are deductible only if the interest-bearing loan is actually borrowed by the head office from a third-party lender or bank for the specific benefit of the Oman branch and is used by that branch for financing working capital.

In addition, individual PSCs may contain rules regarding deductibility of interest cost.

G. Transactions

Expenditure that qualifies for cost recovery (opex and capex) is explained in Section B. Other major transactions are explained below.

Asset disposals

Under the PSC, if the assets that qualify for cost recovery are sold, the proceeds are remitted to the Government (i.e., they are considered to be the Government's assets). A balancing charge or allowance does not apply.

Relinquishment

Generally, a PSC requires a specified percentage of the stake held by a company to be relinquished from time to time. For example, the PSC may state that the company should relinquish from time to time its stake in the contract, in order to retain no more than 50% of the original contract area by a certain date. A PSC also allows a company to relinquish all or any part of the contract area at any time, as long as the company fulfills its obligations under the contract.

H. Indirect taxes

Customs duty is the only indirect tax imposed in Oman.

Customs duty

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman, as a member of the GCC, follows the Unified Customs Act across the GCC; the uniform customs duty of 5% applies on all imports. This means that any goods that come into a port of entry of a GCC member state that have been subjected to customs duty in that state are not subjected to customs duty again if the goods are transferred to another GCC member state.

An exemption or reimbursement of customs duty will depend on the wording of the PSC.

VAT

Currently, there is no VAT in Oman.

Registration fees

Registration fees are payable to various ministries.

Municipality and other taxes

Oman does not impose estate tax, gift tax or dividends tax. Municipalities may impose certain consumption taxes, including tax on the income categories outlined below:

- ▶ Hotel and restaurant bills – 5%
 - ▶ Hotels, motels and tourism restaurants – 4%
 - ▶ Tax at a rate of 2% on electricity bills exceeding OMR50 per month
 - ▶ Tax at a rate of 3% on lease agreements, payable by landlords
-

In addition, a border toll is levied on all vehicles that cross the Oman border at any points of entry.

I. Other

Payroll taxes and employee benefits

The Social Security Law (Royal Decree No. 72 of 1991) introduced a system of social security to insure employees against old age, disability, death and occupational injuries and diseases. The law currently applies exclusively to Omanis working in the private sector.

Under the law, private sector employers must make monthly contributions to the Public Authority for Social Insurance at a rate of 10.5% of each Omani employee's monthly wage; employees contribute at a rate of 7% of their monthly wages. Employers contribute an additional 1% of each Omani employee's monthly wage as security against occupational injuries and diseases. The Government contributes 5.5% of each Omani employee's monthly wage. The Public Authority for Social Insurance invests all funds received, and it pays out sums due to employees upon their retirement and as compensation for injuries and diseases.

In accordance with the Labor Law (Royal Decree No. 35 of 2003), employers must pay an end-of-service benefit (ESB) to their foreign employees. The ESB is calculated on an employee's final wage and paid according to the following guidelines:

- ▶ For the first three years of service, an equivalent of 15 days' basic pay for each year worked
- ▶ For each subsequent year, the equivalent of one month's basic pay

Special requirements for foreign nationals

An employer must make biannual contribution of OMR200 toward the vocational training levy for each non-Omani employee.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties ■ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts □ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Pakistan consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), a windfall levy and royalties in respect of the exploration license. In summary, we have:

- ▶ Royalties – 12.5%
- ▶ Bonuses – Varied amounts, linked with the level of commercial production
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – Product sharing applies only to offshore operations, on a sliding-scale basis
- ▶ Income tax rate – 40% as envisaged under the Petroleum Exploration & Production Policy 2012
- ▶ Capital allowances – Accelerated depreciation

B. Fiscal regime

Petroleum exploration and production (E&P) activities in Pakistan may be undertaken in accordance with two different types of agreements:

- ▶ For onshore operations, a system based upon a petroleum concession agreement (PCA)
- ▶ For offshore operations, a system based upon a production sharing agreement (PSA)

Corporate income tax

In accordance with the Petroleum Exploration & Production Policy 2012, the rate of CIT is 40% of the amount of profits or gains from all new PCAs and PSAs.

The Income Tax Ordinance 2001 (hereinafter the 2001 Ordinance) is the governing income tax legislation. Part I of the Fifth Schedule to the Ordinance deals with the computation of profits and gains or income from petroleum E&P activities in Pakistan. The Fifth Schedule provides that all expenses incurred after commencement of commercial production that are not capital or personal in nature are deductible, provided they are incurred “wholly and exclusively” for the purpose of petroleum E&P activities. However, certain expenses, such as royalty payments and depreciation, are deducted based on specific provisions of the 2001 Ordinance.

Ring fencing

In accordance with the provisions of the Fifth Schedule to the 2001 Ordinance, there is no concept of ring fencing for corporate tax calculations.

Dry holes

Any expenditure for searching, exploring and inquiring that results in a “dry hole” is treated as a loss on its completion or a surrender of the area back to the Government. As may be opted for by the working-interest owner in the PCA or PSA, this loss is adjusted in either of the following ways:

- ▶ The loss in any year is set off against the income of that year, chargeable under the head “income from business” or any income chargeable under any other head of income (other than income from dividends). Excess losses are carried forward for no more than six years from the year incurred.
- ▶ The loss in any year is offset against the income of such undertaking in the tax year in which commercial production commenced. Where the loss cannot be wholly offset against the income of such undertaking in that year, the excess is carried forward for no more than 10 years.

Offshore operations

In respect of offshore operations, the cost limit is 85%, including the royalty of 12.5%. The contractor can recover 100% of the cost from up to a maximum of 85% of the gross revenues.

A sliding-scale PSA is used for offshore operations instead of direct Government participation. The agreement is generally executed by the contractor with a Government-owned entity, which is also granted the exploration license and the development and production lease. The contractor therefore initially receives the oil and gas profit shares and is responsible for managing the PSAs.

The profit split is established on the basis of a sliding scale for shallow, deep and ultra-deep grids. The sliding scale is based on the cumulative production, permitting a rapid recovery of investments and a higher net present value. The profit split is set out below:

1. Profit oil and gas share for wells in shallow grid areas of less than 200 meters' water depth, with a depth to reservoir shallower than 4,000 meters:

| Cumulative available oil or available gas from contract area | Government share of profit oil or profit gas in contract area | | Contractor share of profit oil or profit gas in contract area | |
|--|---|-------------|---|-------------|
| | Crude oil, LPG or condensate | Natural gas | Crude oil, LPG or condensate | Natural gas |
| 0-100 | 20% | 10% | 80% | 90% |
| > 100-200 | 25% | 15% | 75% | 85% |
| > 200-400 | 40% | 35% | 60% | 65% |
| > 400-800 | 60% | 50% | 40% | 50% |
| > 800-1,200 | 70% | 70% | 30% | 30% |
| > 1,200 | 80% | 80% | 20% | 20% |

2. Profit oil and gas share for wells in deep grid areas of more than or equal to 200 meters' but less than 1,000 meters' water depth, or deeper than 4,000 meters to the reservoir in the shallow grid area:

| Cumulative available oil or available gas from contract area | Government share of profit oil or profit gas in contract area | | Contractor share of profit oil or profit gas in contract area | |
|--|---|-------------|---|-------------|
| | Crude oil, LPG or condensate | Natural gas | Crude oil, LPG or condensate | Natural gas |
| MMBOE | | | | |
| 0-200 | 5% | 5% | 95% | 95% |
| > 200-400 | 10% | 10% | 90% | 90% |
| > 400-800 | 25% | 25% | 75% | 75% |
| > 800-1,200 | 35% | 35% | 65% | 65% |
| > 1,200-2,400 | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| > 2,400 | 70% | 70% | 30% | 30% |

3. Profit oil and gas share for wells in ultra-deep grid areas of more than or equal to 1,000 meters' water depth:

| Cumulative available oil or available gas from contract area | Government share of profit oil or profit gas in contract area | | Contractor share of profit oil or profit gas in contract area | |
|--|---|-------------|---|-------------|
| | Crude oil, LPG or condensate | Natural gas | Crude oil, LPG or condensate | Natural gas |
| MMBOE | | | | |
| 0-300 | 5% | 5% | 95% | 95% |
| > 300-600 | 10% | 10% | 90% | 90% |
| > 600-1,200 | 25% | 25% | 75% | 75% |
| > 1,200-2,400 | 35% | 35% | 65% | 65% |
| > 2,400-3,600 | 45% | 45% | 55% | 55% |
| > 3,600 | 60% | 60% | 40% | 40% |

Windfall levy

A windfall levy also applies to onshore concessions. The windfall levy on oil (WLO) applies to crude oil and condensate from an onshore concession using the following formula:

$$WLO = 0.4 \times (M - R) \times (P - B)$$

where WLO = windfall levy on crude oil and condensate

M = net production

R = royalty

P = market price of crude oil and condensate

B = base price:

- ▶ The base price for crude oil and condensate is US\$40 per barrel
- ▶ This base price increases each calendar year by US\$0.50 per barrel starting from the date of first commercial production in the contract area

WLO applies to crude oil and condensate from an offshore PSA, using the following formula:

$$WLO = 0.4 \times (P - R) \times SCO$$

WLO = windfall levy on share of crude oil and condensate

P = market price of crude oil and condensate

SCO = share of crude oil and condensate allocated to a contractor

R = base price:

- ▶ The base price for crude oil and condensate is US\$40 per barrel
- ▶ This base price increases each calendar year by US\$0.50 per barrel starting from the date of first commercial production in the contract area

For the sale of natural gas to parties other than the Government, a windfall levy on gas (WLG) applies to the difference between the applicable zone price and the third-party sale price using the following formula:

$$\text{WLG} = 0.4 \times (\text{PG} - \text{BR}) \times \text{V}$$

WLG = windfall levy on share of natural gas

PG = third-party sale price of natural gas

BR = base price

V = volume of gas sold to third party, excluding royalty

The base price is the applicable zone price for sale to the Government. If the third-party sale price of gas is less than or equal to the base price, the WLG is zero.

The windfall levy does not apply to sales of natural gas made to the Government.

Royalty regimes

A royalty is payable in respect of onshore operations at the rate of 12.5% of the value of the petroleum at the field gate. At the option of the Government, the royalty must be paid in cash or in kind on liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons (such as LPG, NGL, solvent oil, gasoline and others), as well as on all substances, including sulfur, produced in association with such hydrocarbons. The lease rent paid during the year is not deductible from the royalty payment.

A royalty is treated as an expense for the purpose of determining the income tax liability. Ten percent of the royalty will be utilized in the district where oil and gas is produced for infrastructure development.

The following royalty schedule applies to offshore operations:

- ▶ The first 48 calendar months after commencement of commercial production – no royalty
- ▶ Calendar months 49 to 60 inclusive – 5% of field gate price
- ▶ Calendar months 61 to 72 inclusive – 10% of field gate price
- ▶ Calendar months 73 onward – 12.5% of field gate price

Similar to onshore operations, at the option of the Government the royalty is payable either in cash or in kind on liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons (such as LPG, NGL, solvent oil, gasoline and others), as well as for all substances, including sulfur, produced in association with such hydrocarbons. The lease rent paid during the year is not deductible from the royalty payment. Royalties are treated as an expense for the purpose of determining the income tax liability.

For the purpose of calculating the amount due by way of royalty, the value of the petroleum produced and saved must be determined by using the actual selling price in the following manner:

1. If the petroleum is sold in the national market, the actual selling price means the price determined in accordance with the relevant sale-and-purchase agreement between the petroleum rights holder and the Government or its designee, less allowed transportation costs beyond the delivery point
2. In all other cases, the actual selling price means the greatest of:
 - a. The price at which the petroleum is sold or otherwise disposed of, less allowable transportation costs
 - b. The fair market price received through arm's length sales of the petroleum, less the allowed transportation costs
 - c. The price applicable to the sales made under sub-rule 2(a) above

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

The following depreciation rates apply for onshore operations:

- ▶ On successful exploration and development wells – 10% on a straight-line basis
- ▶ On dry holes (exploratory wells) – expensed immediately upon commencement of commercial production or relinquishment, whichever is earlier
- ▶ Below-ground installation – 100% upon commencement of commercial production or relinquishment, whichever is earlier
- ▶ Initial allowance in respect of eligible depreciable assets in the year of use or commencement of commercial production, whichever is later – 25% of cost for plant and machinery and 25% of cost for building
- ▶ First-year allowance in respect of eligible plant, machinery and equipment installed in a specified rural and underdeveloped area – 90% of cost
- ▶ Normal depreciation rate on plant and machinery – 15% using the diminishing-balance method

It is permitted to carryforward unabsorbed depreciation for a maximum period of 6 years. If a depreciable asset is completely used and not physically available at the time of commencement of commercial production and it relates to a dry hole, it becomes a lost expenditure and it can be amortized on a straight-line basis over a period of 10 years after the commencement of commercial production (see the treatment of a lost expenditure for a “dry hole” above). In these circumstances, the entire cost of the asset is amortized as part of the lost expenditure and not as depreciation.

The following depreciation rates apply to offshore operations:

- ▶ On successful exploration and development wells – 33% on a straight-line basis
- ▶ On dry holes (exploratory wells) – expensed immediately upon commencement of commercial production or relinquishment, whichever is earlier
- ▶ Non-commercial well (exploration wells) – expensed upon relinquishment of license
- ▶ On facilities and offshore platforms – 25% using the declining-balance method
- ▶ Below-ground installation – 100% upon commencement of commercial production or relinquishment, whichever is earlier
- ▶ Initial allowance in respect of eligible depreciable assets in the year of use or commencement of commercial production, whichever is later – 50% of cost
- ▶ Normal depreciation rate on plant and machinery – 15% using the diminishing-balance basis
- ▶ It is permitted to carryforward any unabsorbed depreciation in respect of plant and machinery until the depreciation is fully absorbed

A depletion allowance, after commencement of commercial production, is allowed at the lesser of:

- ▶ 15% of the gross receipts representing wellhead value of the production
- ▶ 50% of profits of such undertaking before any depletion allowance

From tax year 2010 onward, decommissioning cost is allowed on the following basis, subject to a certification by a chartered accountant or a cost accountant:

- ▶ Where commercial production has not commenced – with effect from tax year 2010, decommissioning cost is allowed over the lower of the following terms:
 - a. 10 years
 - Or
 - b. The remaining life of the development and production or mining lease

Such cost is permitted to be claimed starting from the year of commencement of commercial production.

- ▶ Where commercial production commenced prior to 1 July 2010 – deduction for decommissioning cost shall be allowed from the tax year 2010 over the lower period of:
 - a. 10 years
 Or
 - b. The remaining life of the development and production or mining lease

D. Incentives

In accordance with the Petroleum Exploration & Production Policy 2012, prequalified E&P companies incorporated in Pakistan that pay dividends and receive payments for petroleum sold in Pakistan rupees (PKR) are entitled to the following incentives:

- ▶ E&P companies are encouraged to operate exploration blocks with 100% ownership.
- ▶ In cases of joint ventures with foreign E&P companies, local E&P companies shall have a working interest of 15% in Zone I, 20% in Zone II and 25% in Zone III on a full-participation basis (required minimum Pakistani working interest). Local E&P companies must contribute their share of exploration expenditures (denominated in PKR) up to the required minimum Pakistani working interest.
- ▶ On a case-by-case basis, during the exploration phase local E&P companies are entitled to receive foreign exchange against payment in Pakistani currency to meet their day-to-day obligations under permits, licenses and PCAs or PSAs. After commercial discovery, local E&P companies are paid up to 30% of their sale proceeds in foreign currency to meet their day-to-day operational requirements. For project financing after commercial discovery, local E&P companies are required to make their own foreign-exchange arrangements, except for companies in which the Government holds a majority shareholding.

Furthermore, the Schedule to the Regulation of Mines and Oilfields and Mineral Development (Government Control) (Amendment) Act 1976 (the 1976 Act) provides the following concessions to an undertaking engaged in exploration or extraction of mineral deposits. The concessions noted below are applicable to petroleum operations:

- ▶ There is the concept of “freezing of law” in respect of mining operations. The effect is that any provisions of the mining rules or amendment in the tax laws, made after the effective date of an agreement for the grant of a license or a lease to explore, prospect or mine petroleum, that are inconsistent with the terms of the agreement, do not apply to a company that is a party to the agreement, to the extent that they are incompatible with the agreement.
- ▶ Before commencement of commercial production of petroleum, any expenditure on searching for, or on discovering and testing, a petroleum deposit, or on winning access to the deposit that is allowable to a surrendered area and to the drilling of a dry hole, is deemed to be lost at the time of the surrender of the area or the completion of the dry hole. A lost expenditure is allowable in one of the two ways mentioned in Section B under the heading “dry hole.”
- ▶ The income derived by the licensee or lessee from the use of, and surplus capacity of, its pipeline by any other licensee or lessee, is assessed on the same basis as income from the petroleum it produced from its concession area.
- ▶ A licensee or lessee company incorporated outside Pakistan, or its assignee, is allowed to export its share of petroleum after meeting the agreed portion of the internal requirement for Pakistan.

- ▶ Sale proceeds of the share of petroleum exported by a licensee or lessee incorporated outside Pakistan, or its assignee, may be retained abroad and may be used freely by it, subject to the condition that it shall bring back the portion of the proceeds that is required to meet its obligation under the lease.
- ▶ No customs duty or sales tax is levied on the importation of machinery and equipment specified in a PCA or PSA for the purposes of exploration and drilling prior to commercial discovery.
- ▶ A concessionary, ad valorem customs duty rate of 5% or 10% applies on importation of specific plant, machinery and equipment by E&P companies, and their contractors and subcontractors, on fulfillment of specified conditions. Such plant, machinery and equipment are exempt from sales tax and federal excise duty.
- ▶ Foreign nationals employed by a licensee, a lessee or their contractor may import commissary goods free of customs duty and sales tax to the extent of US\$550 per annum, subject to the condition that the goods are not sold in or otherwise disposed of in Pakistan.
- ▶ Foreign nationals employed by a licensee, a lessee or their contractor may import used and bona fide personal and household effects, excluding motor vehicles, free of customs duty and sales tax, subject to the condition that the goods are not sold in or otherwise disposed of in Pakistan.

All data in respect of areas surrendered by a previous licensee or lessee must be made available for inspection to a prospective licensee free of charge.

Initial participation by the federal Government in exploration occurs to the extent as may be agreed upon between the Government and the licensee.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

The general rate of withholding tax (WHT) on payment of a dividend is 10% of the gross amount of the payment. The tax withheld constitutes a full and final discharge of the tax liability of the recipient shareholder if the shareholder is an individual or an association of persons. For corporate taxpayers, the tax deducted constitutes an advance tax and is adjustable against the eventual tax liability for the relevant tax year, which is 10% of the gross dividend.

Interest

The general rate of WHT on interest is 10% of the gross amount of interest if the recipient is a resident of Pakistan. The tax withheld constitutes the full and final discharge of the tax liability of the recipient if the recipient is a resident individual or an association of persons. For corporate tax payers, such tax withheld constitutes an advance tax and is adjustable against the eventual tax liability of the company for the year. If interest is paid to nonresidents not having a permanent establishment in Pakistan, the rate of withholding is 10% of the gross amount. The tax withheld constitutes an advance tax for the recipient lender and is adjustable against the eventual tax liability of the nonresident recipient. However, in respect of nonresidents not having a permanent establishment in Pakistan, the tax withheld constitutes final discharge of tax liability in respect of interest on debt instruments, Government securities (including treasury bills) and Pakistan Investment Bonds, provided that the investments are exclusively made through a Special Rupee Convertible Account maintained with a bank in Pakistan.

Royalties and technical services

Receipts in respect of royalties and technical services that are not attributable to the permanent establishment in Pakistan of a nonresident person are subject to WHT at the rate of 15% of the gross amount of the payment. The tax withheld constitutes the full and final discharge of the tax liability of the recipient.

Nonresident contractors

Payments made to nonresident contractors for construction, assembly or installation projects in Pakistan that are undertaken by the contractor, including services rendered in relation to such projects, are subject to WHT at the rate of 6% of the gross amount of the payment. The tax withheld constitutes the full and final discharge of the tax liability of the nonresident contractor, provided it opts for this treatment by filing a written declaration to that effect with the taxation authorities in Pakistan within three months of the commencement of the contract. If the option is not exercised, the net profit is taxable at the 33% corporate rate of tax for the tax year 2015.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization rules

The income tax law has a thin capitalization rule, whereby if a foreign-controlled resident company or a branch of a foreign company operating in Pakistan, other than a financial institution, has a foreign-debt-to-foreign-equity ratio in excess of 3:1 at any time during a tax year, the deductibility of interest as a business expense is capped. Interest on debt paid by a company in that year is not a permissible deduction to the extent that it exceeds the 3:1 ratio; in other words, only the interest expenses arising from loans that are within the debt-to-equity ratio ceiling may be deducted.

For purposes of the thin capitalization rule, "foreign debt" includes any amount owed to a foreign controller or nonresident associate of the foreign controller for which profit on the debt is payable and deductible for the foreign-controlled resident company and is not taxed under this Ordinance, or is taxable at a rate less than the corporate rate of tax applicable on the assessment to the foreign controller or associate.

Interest guaranteeing

Interest guaranteeing is not applicable in Pakistan.

PSC expenditure recovery exclusions for financing costs

Whereas cost push-down is not permitted by the head office to the local branch, all expenses, including head office expenses, incurred wholly and exclusively to earn the income, are allowable for tax purposes.

G. Transactions

The working-interest owner is not permitted to sell, assign, transfer, convey or otherwise dispose of all or any part of its rights and obligations under a license, lease or an agreement with a third party or any of its affiliates, without the prior written consent of the regulatory authorities. This permission, however, is generally not withheld.

The transfer of any interest or right to explore or exploit natural resources in Pakistan constitutes a disposal for tax purposes. The amount of gain arising on the disposal of such a right is computed as the difference between the consideration received for the transfer and the cost related to the right. Consideration is explicitly provided to be the higher of the amount received or the fair market value. The amount of the gain is taxable at the rate of the tax applicable for the relevant tax year.

The Ordinance explicitly provides that the amount of gain arising from alienation of any share in a company, the assets of which consist wholly or mainly, directly or indirectly of property or a right to explore or exploit natural resources in Pakistan, constitutes Pakistan-sourced income of the transferor. The amount of the gain is computed as the difference between the consideration received and the cost of the asset. If the consideration received is less than the fair market value, the fair market value is deemed to be the consideration for tax purposes. If the shares have been held for a period of more than one year, only 75% of the gain is taxable and at the rate of the tax applicable for the relevant tax year.

If the shares represent shares of a listed company in Pakistan, the amount of gain is taxable at the following rates depending upon the period of holding of such shares:

| S. no. | Holding Period | Tax Year ending 30 June | Rates |
|--------|---|-------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Where holding period of the security is less than 12 months | 2015 | 12.5% |
| 2 | Where holding period of the security is more than 12 months but less than 24 months | 2015 | 10% |
| 3 | Where holding period of the security is 24 months or more | – | 0% |

H. Indirect taxes

Sales tax

Sales tax in Pakistan is akin to the VAT system in various countries, and sales tax on goods is governed by the Sales Tax Act 1990. All supplies made in the course of any taxable activity and all goods imported into Pakistan are subject to sales tax (except those listed in Schedule 6 of the Sales Tax Act). Sales tax on services is a provincial levy in Pakistan and is governed through the respective provincial sales tax laws.

Effective from 1 July 2000 the provincial governments brought certain services within the ambit of sales tax. Such services included services supplied by hotels, clubs and caterers; customs agents, ship chandlers and stevedores; courier services; and advertisements on television and radio (excluding advertisements sponsored by the federal Government, its agencies and non-governmental organizations related to certain prescribed social causes).

Since at the time no provincial revenue administration and collection authority had been set up, the provincial governments authorized the federal Government to administer and collect such sales tax on services. Subsequently, the provinces of Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have set up their own revenue collection and administration authorities; hence sales tax on services as applicable in the respective jurisdictions of these provinces is now collected by the provincial governments themselves. Further, the respective provincial legislations have considerably expanded the scope of sales tax by including an extended range of services that are now liable to sales tax.

In addition to sales tax, federal excise duty is levied on certain goods and services. Those goods include cigarettes, liquefied natural gases, flavors and concentrates, whilst services include franchise services and other services (excluding those provided or rendered in the provinces of Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). (See also the subsection below on excise duties applicable specifically to the oil and gas industry.)

The general rate of sales tax on goods is 17% of the value of the supplies made or the goods imported. However, for goods specified in Schedule 3 of the Sales Tax Act, sales tax is charged on supplies at the rate of 17% of the retail price. In respect of services, the general rate of sales tax is 16%; however, rates may vary for certain services.

Goods exported from Pakistan and goods specified in Schedule 5 of the Sales Tax Act are subject to a zero rate of sales tax. The supply and importing of plant, machinery and equipment are subject to reduced rate of sales tax, with certain exceptions.

Goods specified in Schedule 6 of the Sales Tax Act (and any other goods that the federal Government may specify by a notification in the *Official Gazette*) are exempt from sales tax.

E&P companies are required to be registered under the Sales Tax Act because the supply of E&P products attracts sales tax.

Subject to certain restrictions, a registered entity may recover all or part of input tax paid on imports and the purchase of taxable goods or services acquired in respect of making taxable supplies. Input tax is generally recovered by being offset against the sales tax payable on the taxable supplies.

Import duties

The Customs Act 1969 governs the taxes that apply on the import or export of dutiable goods. Section 18 of that Act provides that customs duties are levied at such rates as prescribed in Schedules 1 and 2 (or under any other law in force at the time) on:

- ▶ Goods imported into or exported from Pakistan
- ▶ Goods brought from any foreign country to any customs station and, without payment of duty there, shipped or transported, or then carried to, and imported at, any other customs station
- ▶ Goods brought in bond from one customs station to another

Generally, the rate of customs duty applied to the customs value of imported goods ranges from 5% to 35%; the rate depends on several factors, including the type of commodity, the constituent material and the country of origin.

Customs duty on the import of plant, machinery, equipment and other accessories made by E&P companies, their contractors, subcontractors and service companies is governed by SRO.678(1)/2004 dated 7 August 2004 (the SRO) and issued under Section 19 of the Customs Act. The SRO provides exemptions from customs duty and sales tax:

- ▶ All machinery, equipment, materials, specialized vehicles or vessels, pickups (four-wheel drive), helicopters, aircraft, accessories, spares, chemicals and consumables not manufactured locally that are imported by E&P companies, their contractors, subcontractors or service companies, in excess of 5% by value and the whole amount of sales tax on import and subsequent supply
- ▶ The goods mentioned above that are manufactured locally and imported by E&P companies, their contractors, subcontractors or service companies and other petroleum and public sector companies, in excess of 10% by value and whole amount of sales tax on import

These customs duty concessions are available exclusively for E&P companies that hold permits, licenses, leases, PSCs or PSAs and that enter into supplemental agreements with Pakistan's Government. Moreover, the exemption under the SRO is available only in respect of the specified goods satisfying conditions specified in the notification.

Items imported at concessionary rates of duty that become surplus, scrap, junk, obsolete or are otherwise disposed of or transferred to another E&P company are also exempt from import duties (upon notification of the sales tax department). However, if these items are sold through a public tender, duties are recovered at the rate of 10% on the value of the sale proceeds.

Federal excise duty

Excise duty is a single-stage duty levied at varied rates on specified goods produced or manufactured in Pakistan, imported into Pakistan, on specified goods produced or manufactured in non-tariff areas and brought into tariff areas for sale or consumption, and on specified services provided or rendered in Pakistan. Table I of Schedule 1 of the Federal Excise Act 2005 identifies goods subject to excise duty (including cement, LPG and other liquefied petroleum gases) and the current rates of excise duty on gas-related products are listed in the table below. Certain goods and classes of persons are excluded from duty under Table I of Schedule 3 of the Federal Excise Act 2005.

| S. no. | Description of goods | Heading or subheading number | Rate of duty |
|--------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 31 | Liquefied natural gas | 2711.1100 | PKR17.18 per 100 cubic meters |
| 32 | Liquefied propane | 2711.1200 | PKR17.18 per 100 cubic meters |
| 33 | Liquefied butanes | 2711.1300 | PKR17.18 per 100 cubic meters |
| 34 | Liquefied ethylene, propylene, butylenes and butadiene | 2711.1400 | PKR17.18 per 100 cubic meters |
| 35 | Other liquefied petroleum gases and gaseous hydrocarbons | 2711.1900 | PKR17.18 per 100 cubic meters |
| 36 | Natural gas in gaseous state | 2711.2100 | PKR 10 per million British Thermal Unit (MMBTu) |
| 37 | Other petroleum gases in gaseous state | 2711.2900 | PKR10 per MMBTu |

Stamp duty

Under the Stamp Act 1899, stamp duty is paid on “instruments,” where the term “instrument” means a written deed, will or other formal legal document for transfer of property.

Stamp duty is a provincial or state levy and its application varies from province to province. Stamp duty rates also vary from instrument to instrument.

I. Other

Rental payments

In respect of an onshore concession, all holders of exploration licenses are required to pay an advance rental charge at the following rates:

- ▶ PKR3,500 per square kilometer or part thereof in respect of the initial five-year term of the license
- ▶ PKR800 per square kilometer or part thereof in respect of each year of the initial term of the license
- ▶ PKR5,000 per square kilometer or part thereof in respect of each renewal of the license
- ▶ PKR2,750 per square kilometer or part thereof in respect of each year of the renewal of the license

For onshore operations, during the lease period the following annual advance rental charges apply:

- ▶ PKR7,500 per square kilometer or part thereof covering the lease area during the initial lease period
- ▶ PKR10,000 per square kilometer or part thereof covering the lease area during the renewal period of a lease and further lease term extension

Contractors engaged in offshore operations are required to pay an advance annual acreage rental for the area covered under the PSA of US\$50,000, plus a further rate of US\$10 per square kilometer or part thereof every year.

Rental expenses are allowable deductions for taxpayers.

Production bonuses

A production bonus is payable for onshore operations on a contract area basis, as set out in the table below.

| Cumulative production (MMBOE) | Amount (US\$) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| At start of commercial production | 0.6 million |
| 30 | 1.2 million |
| 60 | 2 million |
| 80 | 5 million |
| 100 | 7 million |

In respect of offshore operations, a production bonus is payable according to the following table.

| Cumulative production (MMBOE) | Amount (US\$) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| At start of commercial production | 0.6 million |
| 60 | 1.2 million |
| 120 | 2 million |
| 160 | 5 million |
| 200 | 7 million |

Domestic supply obligation

Subject to the considerations of internal requirements and national emergencies, E&P companies are allowed to export their share of crude oil and condensate, as well as their share of gas, based on export licenses granted by the regulator. For the purpose of obtaining an export license for gas, the export volume is determined in accordance with the "L15" concept, provided a fair market value is realized for the gas at the export point.

Under the L15 concept, gas reserves that exceed the net proven gas reserves in Pakistan (including firm import commitments for projected gas demand for the next 15 years) can be considered for export. Once gas has been dedicated for export, any export licenses for agreed volumes cannot be subsequently revoked.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- Concession**
 - Royalties
 - Profit-based special taxes
 - Corporate income tax
- Production sharing contracts**
- Service contract**

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Papua New Guinea (PNG) to taxation of income derived by petroleum and gas companies consists of a combination of corporate income tax, royalties and development levies, additional profits tax (APT) and infrastructure tax credits.

| Income tax | Resident | Nonresident |
|--|---|---|
| Petroleum – incentive rate | 30% | 30% |
| Petroleum – new projects | 45% | 45% |
| Petroleum – existing projects | 50% | 50% |
| Gas | 30% | 30% |
| Additional tax | | |
| Petroleum and gas [†] | 2% | 2% |
| Royalties and development levies | 2% of gross revenue | 2% of gross revenue |
| Dividend withholding tax (WHT) (petroleum and gas) | 0% | 0% |
| Interest WHT (petroleum and gas) | 0% | 0% |
| *Additional profits tax | Calculation X: 7.5% Calculation Y: 10% | Calculation X: 7.5% Calculation Y: 10% |

* APT may apply to gas projects in some situations. Please refer below for further discussion on the basis of performing Calculation X and Calculation Y to calculate APT.

† Projects subject to fiscal stabilization agreements.

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in PNG to the petroleum and gas industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), royalties, development levies and development incentives.

Corporate income tax

General provisions applicable to petroleum and designated gas projects

Specific corporate tax rules apply to resource projects in PNG, and the application of these rules will depend on whether taxpayers are covered under these specific provisions.

A "resource project" means a designated gas project, a mining project or a petroleum project. A "designated gas project" means a gas project as defined under a gas agreement made pursuant to the Oil and Gas Act 1998. A "petroleum project" means a petroleum project as prescribed by regulation, or petroleum operations conducted pursuant to a development license or a pipeline license. There are specific provisions applicable to petroleum operations and gas operations that are discussed below.

Rate of tax (applicable to oil and gas profits)

PNG resident corporations are generally subject to PNG CIT on their worldwide net income at a 30% corporate tax rate. Nonresident corporations are generally subject to PNG income tax only on their PNG-sourced income at a 48% corporate tax rate. Companies engaged in petroleum and gas operations are subject to various tax rates as set out in the remainder of this subsection.

Residents

Tax rates are:

- ▶ Petroleum (incentive projects) – 30%
- ▶ Petroleum (new projects) – 45%
- ▶ Petroleum (existing projects) – 50%
- ▶ Gas operations – 30%

Nonresidents

Tax rates are:

- ▶ Petroleum (incentive projects) – 30%
- ▶ Petroleum (new projects) – 45%
- ▶ Petroleum (existing projects) – 50%
- ▶ Gas operations – 30%

Incentive rate petroleum operations – are those arising out of a petroleum prospecting license granted pursuant to the provisions of Division 2 of the Oil and Gas Act 1998 during the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2007 and in respect of which a petroleum development license has been granted pursuant to Division 7 of the Oil and Gas Act 1998 on or before 31 December 2017.

New petroleum operations are projects that did not derive any assessable income from petroleum projects prior to 31 December 2000.

Existing petroleum operations – are projects that existed and derived assessable income prior to 31 December 2000.

Additional tax

If a taxpayer is subject to fiscal stabilization under the provisions of the Resource Contracts Fiscal Stabilization Act 2000, an additional 2% income tax will apply in respect of net income. However, this excludes the PNG LNG operations.

“Fiscal stabilization” refers to an agreement entered into by the state and the participants of long-term resources projects, where the agreement guarantees the fiscal stability of the project by reference to the law in force at the date of the project agreement.

The fiscal stabilization agreement is usually entered into when a development contract is signed between the state and the resource developer(s).

General provisions applicable to petroleum and designated gas projects

A summary of certain general provisions that apply to petroleum and designated gas projects is given below. Taxpayers should be aware that this is not an exhaustive list; other specific provisions also exist that may apply in some circumstances. In particular, specific agreements negotiated with Government authorities may modify the operation of these general provisions.

Project basis of assessment

Income derived from each petroleum or gas project is assessed on a project basis as if it were the only income of the taxpayer, notwithstanding that the taxpayer may have derived other assessable income. A petroleum or gas project may include any number of development licenses or pipeline licenses, or a designated gas project, or a combination thereof.

Deductions are only available for expenditure attributable to the project. Where there is deductible expenditure or income not directly related to the project, this expenditure or income should be apportioned on a reasonable basis. Items of income or deductions exclusively relating to other projects are excluded with limited exceptions.

Allowable deductions

Allowable deductions against the assessable income of petroleum projects and designated gas projects include normal operating and administration expenses, depreciation, amortization of allowable exploration expenditure, amortization of allowable capital expenditure, interest, management fees, realized exchange losses and consumable stores.

Capital expenditure

Once a development license is issued, a distinction is made between allowable exploration expenditure (expenditure incurred prior to the issue of a development license), allowable capital expenditure (expenditure incurred after a development license has been issued) and normal depreciating assets. The rules relating to each of these are discussed separately below.

Depreciation of property, plant and equipment

Capital expenditure incurred on items of property, plant or equipment incurred after the issue of a development license is generally capitalized and depreciated under normal depreciation rules. Depreciation of fixed assets that are used in the production of taxable income is calculated using either the straight-line method or the diminishing value (DV) method. The taxpayer is required to make the election in the first year of income in which the asset is used for income-producing purposes. Any change in the method of depreciation should be approved by the Commissioner General.

The Internal Revenue Commission (IRC) has issued guidelines providing depreciation rates in respect of selected plant and equipment. The following table shows an excerpt of some relevant assets and their accepted depreciations rates under the two methods. Note, though, that the IRC has not issued any formal guidance in respect of gas assets.

| | Item | Prime cost method (%) | DV method (%) |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | Oil – exploration: | | |
| | Drilling plant | 20 | 30 |
| | Seismic geophysical survey equipment | 20 | 30 |
| | Surveying equipment | 10 | 15 |
| | Camp equipment: | | |
| | Portable sleeping, messing, etc., units | 20 | 30 |
| | Other camp equipment | 10 | 15 |
| | General plant and equipment | 10 | 15 |
| | Oil rigs (offshore) and ancillary plant | 10 | 15 |
| | | | |
| 2. | Petroleum | | |
| | Drilling and down-hole equipment | 20 | 30 |
| | Earthmoving plant and heavy equipment | 20 | 30 |
| | General plant and equipment | 17 | 25 |
| | Laboratory equipment | 5 | 7.5 |
| | Onshore production plant | 13 | 18 |
| | Offshore production plant | 13 | 20 |
| | Pipelines | 13 | 20 |
| | Pumps, motors and control gear and fittings | 13 | 20 |
| | Refining plant | 13 | 20 |
| | Shaft drilling equipment | 20 | 30 |
| | Tanks containing: | | |
| | Natural crude oil and redistillates | 13 | 20 |
| | Other petroleum products | 13 | 20 |
| | Wharves and jetties | 5 | 7.5 |
| | Vehicles | 20 | 30 |
| | | | |
| 3. | Allowable exploration expenditure (see below) | | Divided by the lesser of remaining life of project or four (i.e., 25%) |
| | | | |
| 4. | Allowable capital expenditure (ACE) (see below) | | |
| | Short-life ACE (effective life less than 10 years) | n/a | 25 |
| | Long-life ACE (effective life more than 10 years) | 10 | n/a |

Allowable exploration expenditure

“Allowable exploration expenditure” (AEE) is defined as expenditure incurred by a taxpayer for the purpose of exploration in PNG within the 20 years prior to the date of issue of a development license included in the resource project, and incurred:

- a. pursuant to an exploration license from which the resource development license was drawn
- b. in relation to the areas (including relinquished areas) of an exploration license which has been surrendered, cancelled or expired, and includes AEE deemed to have been incurred by the taxpayer under section 155L (see below)

AEE can effectively be carried forward for a period of 20 years. Expenditure incurred in a project area after a development license is issued is treated as ACE.

AEE is amortized by dividing the residual expenditure by the lesser of the remaining life of the project or four (i.e., a DV depreciation rate of 25%). The amount of the deduction is limited to the amount of income remaining after other deductions, except ACE; in other words, the allowable deduction cannot create a tax loss. Where there is insufficient income, the balance of AEE is reduced only by the available deduction (but the excess can be carried forward and utilized in future years).

A taxpayer will need to be carrying on resource operations to claim deductions for AEE.

Allowable capital expenditure

“Allowable capital expenditure” (ACE) is defined as capital expenditure incurred by a taxpayer carrying on resource operations after a resource development license is issued. ACE includes:

- ▶ Cost of buildings, improvements or plant necessary for carrying on the resource operations
- ▶ Feasibility and environmental impact studies
- ▶ Construction and operation of port or other facilities, for the transportation of resources (oil or gas) obtained from the resource project
- ▶ Provision of buildings and other improvements or plant
- ▶ Cost of providing water, light or power, communication and access to the project site
- ▶ Expenditure incurred to provide certain residential accommodation, health, education, law and order, recreational or other similar facilities and facilities for the supply of meals for employees or their dependents
- ▶ Depreciable plant that has been elected to be treated as short-life assets
- ▶ Exploration expenditure incurred after the resource development license is issued
- ▶ Certain general administration and management expenditure relating to resource projects
- ▶ Expenditure deemed to be incurred under section 155L (see below)

The following expenditure is excluded from ACE:

- ▶ Ships that are not primarily or principally used for the transport of gas or petroleum resources by the taxpayer in carrying out resource operations
- ▶ Office buildings that are not situated at, or adjacent to, the project site

The ACE of a taxpayer in respect of a resource project is split into two categories and amortized over the life of the project:

- ▶ Long-life ACE – capital expenditure with an estimated effective life of more than 10 years, where the allowable expenditure is broadly amortized over a period of 10 years
 - ▶ Short-life ACE – capital expenditure with an estimated effective life of less than 10 years, where deductions are calculated by dividing the unamortized balance by the lesser of the remaining life of the project or four
-

The amount of ACE deductions each year is limited to the amount of income remaining after deducting all other deductions so ACE deductions cannot produce a tax loss. Long-life ACE deductions are utilized first, and then a deduction for short-life ACE may be claimed. Where there is insufficient income to utilize the amount of deduction available in a year, the excess can be carried forward and utilized in future years.

A taxpayer will need to be conducting resource operations to claim deductions for ACE.

Disposal of property

Where deductions have been allowed or are allowable under the resource provisions in respect of capital expenditure on property that has been disposed of, lost or destroyed by a taxpayer carrying on resource operations, or the use of which has been otherwise terminated in relation to that resource project, a taxable balancing charge may arise if the consideration received is more than the undeducted balance of the expenditure. Where the consideration received is less, a balancing deduction is allowed.

As there is no capital gains tax (CGT) in PNG, any capital gains arising on disposal of property are not assessable.

Transfer of AEE and ACE

Where an interest in a resource project is disposed of, a so-called "Section 155L notice" can be lodged to transfer the undeducted AEE and ACE balance from the vendor to the purchaser. This notice has to be lodged with the Commissioner General no later than four months after the end of the year of income in which the interest in the resource project has been transferred.

Specific provisions applicable to petroleum projects and designated gas projects

In addition to the general provisions, some specific provisions apply to a taxpayer who undertakes petroleum operations or designated gas projects. These provisions deal with matters such as:

- ▶ Project basis of assessment
- ▶ Additional provisions relating to AEE
- ▶ Additional provisions relating to ACE
- ▶ Conversion between petroleum and designated gas projects
- ▶ Use of petroleum in operations
- ▶ Additional deductions for PNG LNG project participants

Additional profits tax

Additional profits tax (APT) potentially applies to a designated gas project, including the ExxonMobil led PNG LNG project, in the year in which the taxpayer has recovered its investment in the project and achieved a return on its investment above a prescribed level (i.e., when the accumulated value of net project receipts of a taxpayer turns positive). APT applies to "resource projects" which, for the purpose of the APT, means a "designated gas project."

Two calculations must be performed to determine the net project receipts for the purposes of the APT. These calculations require cash flow amounts to be uplifted using two different indexation factors, resulting in amounts referred to as "Calculation X" and "Calculation Y."

Where a taxpayer derives an amount of taxable additional profits from a resource project as a result of Calculation X or Calculation Y, or both, the amount of APT is calculated at the rate of:

- ▶ 7.5% where such taxable additional profits arise as a result of Calculation X
- ▶ 10% where such taxable additional profits arise as a result of Calculation Y

A taxpayer may have an amount of additional tax payable under both Calculation X and Calculation Y. However, any APT payable in respect of Calculation X is deductible for the purposes of performing Calculation Y.

Capital gains

Capital gains are not subject to tax in PNG. The disposal of a capital asset may be subject to tax to the extent the disposal takes place as part of a profit-making scheme or is part of the ordinary business of the taxpayer.

While capital gains are not generally subject to tax, if depreciable plant and equipment is disposed of, a calculation of any gain or loss on disposal must be performed. Where the amount received exceeds the tax written-down value, an amount of income may be derived up to the amount of depreciation deductions previously claimed (i.e., any gain over the original cost should not be taxed). Alternatively, if the amount received on disposal is less than the tax written-down value, an allowable deduction may be able to be claimed.

Functional currency

Income and expenses must be expressed in PNG currency (the kina), unless permission has been granted by the Commissioner General to report in another currency.

Transfer pricing

International related-party transactions must be carried out at arm's length. Specific transfer pricing provisions exist that allow the Commissioner General to adjust an entity's taxable income if international related-party transactions have not been conducted on an arm's length basis (i.e., if the transaction would not have been conducted on the same basis between independent parties).

In addition, specific provisions relate to management or technical fees paid to international-related parties.

Dividends

There is no dividend WHT on dividends paid out of profits from petroleum or gas operations.

Interest

There is no interest WHT on interest paid in respect of borrowings used to finance petroleum or gas operations.

Tax year

The PNG tax year is the calendar year. However, a substituted accounting period is often permitted on written request to the Commissioner General.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowance and tax depreciation

There are specific rules for petroleum and gas taxpayers with respect to the depreciation and amortization of capital expenditure. Refer to the previous discussion of AEE, ACE and depreciation of certain plant and equipment in Section B above.

D. Incentives

In addition to the various income tax concessions discussed above, the Government offers other incentives to taxpayers operating in the resources sector. Some of these are discussed in further detail in this section.

While some investors have been able to negotiate specific incentives for particular projects, the Government now aims to include all tax concessions in domestic legislation and make any concessions available on an industry basis, with the goal of developing a more neutral and equitable treatment of projects.

Pooling of exploration expenditure

Resource taxpayers (mining, petroleum and gas) may elect to pool expenditure incurred by the taxpayer or a related corporation outside a resource project to form part of the AEE of a producing resource project, and claim 25% of the

pooled expenditure against income from a producing resource project. The total amount of deductions allowed is limited to the lesser of 25% of the undeducted balance of the expenditure in the pool or such amount as reduces the tax payable by the taxpayer and its related corporations in respect of those resource operations for that year of income by 10%.

An election to pool exploration expenditure has to be made in writing, on or prior to the date of the first tax return in relation to that resource development license.

Rehabilitation costs

For resource projects that commenced on or after 1 January 2012, a resource taxpayer is able to transfer losses incurred in respect of environment rehabilitation incurred at the end of the project to other projects it owns. PNG uses ring-fencing provisions and calculates the profits of resource projects on a project-by-project basis. Historically, losses incurred when no further income was produced were effectively lost.

Tax losses

Losses incurred by taxpayers generally may be carried forward for 20 years, subject to the satisfaction of a continuity-of-ownership test for corporate taxpayers. If the continuity-of-ownership test is failed, tax losses may still be able to be carried forward and used if the taxpayer passes the same-business test.

Losses incurred by taxpayers carrying on resources operations (including oil and gas operations) are able to be carried forward indefinitely. Losses of resource taxpayers may also be quarantined on a project basis.

For resource taxpayers, the undeducted AEE and ACE balances are not considered tax losses for PNG tax purposes and are kept in separate pools. As discussed earlier, a taxpayer would need to be carrying on resource operations to claim deductions for AEE and ACE. Where a taxpayer is entitled to a deduction during a year of income, the deduction is limited to the amount of available assessable income. Any excess deduction cannot create a tax loss.

Losses are not allowed to be carried back, and there is no provision for grouping losses with associated companies (with the specific exception of certain company amalgamations).

Prescribed infrastructure development

Where a taxpayer engaged in resource projects incurs expenditure in relation to a prescribed infrastructure development, the amount of expenditure incurred is deemed to be income tax paid in respect of that project, and hence may be offset as a credit against tax payable in respect of the project. "Prescribed infrastructure development" means an upgrade of existing roads or construction of new roads or other infrastructure development in the project area or the surrounding areas, which are approved by the State. Accordingly, in order to qualify for the tax credits, all anticipated expenditure requires approval from the Government.

The amount of credit available in respect of prescribed infrastructure development expenditure is capped at the amount of the expenditure and is also limited to the lesser of:

- ▶ 0.75% of the assessable income from the project
- ▶ The amount of the tax payable in respect of the project

Credits for expenditure incurred (for income tax deemed to be paid) may be carried forward.

A taxpayer engaged in gas operations is entitled to additional tax credits in respect of certain expenditure incurred on behalf of the State in respect to the construction or repair of certain roads. The amount of credit available in these circumstances is limited to the lesser of:

- ▶ 1.25% of the assessable income from the project
- ▶ 50% of the tax payable in respect of the project

Credits for expenditure incurred (or income tax deemed to be paid) may be carried forward. This regime in respect of gas projects is separate from that relating to general infrastructure credits (see above).

Highlands Highway – infrastructure tax credits

Tax credits were previously available for expenditure incurred in the income years 2002 and 2005, in respect of a prescribed section of the Highlands Highway.

From 1 January 2012, tax credits in respect of the Highlands Highway were reinstated where the expenditure incurred by a taxpayer is for “emergency repair” and the expenditure was incurred before 1 January 2015. “Emergency repair” means, in relation to the Highlands Highway, “an activity carried out to restore traffic flow following an event that has resulted in the closure or partial closure of the highway, including bypass or replacement of a section of the highway, replacement of culverts, construction of temporary bridges and removal and repair of landslips.”

The amount of expenditure incurred is deemed to be income tax paid, and a credit is therefore available, limited to the lesser of:

- ▶ 1.25% of the assessable income derived by the taxpayer in the year of income
- ▶ The amount of tax payable

This credit is in addition to the prescribed infrastructure development credit of 0.75% (refer to the discussion above). Credits for expenditure incurred (or income tax deemed to be paid) may be carried forward. The regime is available to taxpayers engaged in mining, petroleum and gas operations. This brings the total of the infrastructure credits available to resource taxpayers to 2% (infrastructure development credit of 0.75% and Highlands Highway credit of 1.25%).

Research and development

Commencing 1 January 2014, the extended deduction of 50% has been phased out for research and development (R&D) expenditure. Previously, a 150% deduction was available for “prescribed” R&D expenditure. To claim the R&D concession, taxpayers needed to complete and submit an application annually to the Research and Development Expenses Approval Committee (within the PNG IRC) for approval before the start of the fiscal year.

However, any expenditure on scientific research incurred prior to 1 January 2014 will continue to be eligible. Further, whilst the additional deduction (of 50%) for eligible R&D expenditure is planned for abolition, such expenditure will continue to be deductible on a 100% basis – and even if such expenditure might otherwise be capital in nature and deductible under general provisions.

WHT incentives

As noted above, specific WHT exemptions are applicable to the petroleum and gas industry in respect of the payment of dividends and interest.

E. Withholding taxes

Most activities conducted by nonresidents in PNG (including PNG branches), other than individuals deriving employment income, fall under the foreign contractor and management fee WHT provisions of domestic legislation. In addition, the receipt of certain passive income (e.g., interest, dividends and royalties) will also be subject to WHT.

Foreign contractor withholding tax

Foreign contractor withholding tax (FCWT) will apply where the income is derived by nonresidents (usually referred to as foreign contractors) from contracts for “prescribed purposes” that include installation and construction projects, consultancy services, leases of equipment and charter payments.

FCWT is levied in respect of the gross contract income. In broad terms, the PNG Income Tax Act provides that, where a foreign contractor derives income from

a prescribed contract, the person is deemed to have derived taxable income of 25% of the gross contract income. This taxable income is then subject to tax at the nonresident corporate tax rate of 48%, giving an effective PNG tax rate of 12% on the gross contract payment. The local contracting party has an obligation to withhold the tax and remit it to the IRC within 21 days after the end of the month in which the payment was made.

As an alternative to paying FCWT, a foreign contractor can elect to lodge an income tax return and pay tax on actual taxable income at the nonresident corporate tax rate of 48%. The FCWT is the default tax, with requests to be assessed on a net profit basis being subject to the discretion of the Commissioner General. In order to be assessed on a net basis, a written request must be made to the Commissioner General prior to the commencement of work under the contract.

Where the foreign contractor elects to be assessed on a net basis, a deduction should be available for all costs directly attributable to the derivation of the PNG sourced income, including depreciation of equipment. A deduction should also be available for any indirect costs related to the income (i.e., head office general administration and management expenses). The deduction for indirect costs allowed is limited to the lesser of:

- ▶ 5% of the gross income from the prescribed contract

or

- ▶ A percentage of head office expenses (other than expenses incurred directly in deriving the contract income) in proportion to the ratio of gross income from the prescribed contract relative to the worldwide income of the taxpayer

Please refer below for treaty WHT rates that may provide for relief from FCWT or a reduction in the FCWT rate.

Management fee withholding tax

Subject to the availability of treaty relief, management fee withholding tax (MFWT) of 17% is required to be deducted in respect of management fees paid or credited to nonresidents.

The definition of "management fee" is very broad and includes "... a payment of any kind to any person, other than to an employee of the person making the payment and other than in the way of royalty, in consideration for any services of a technical or managerial nature and includes payment for consultancy services, to the extent the commissioner general is satisfied those consultancy services are of a managerial nature."

In practice, MFWT is generally applied to services rendered outside PNG by nonresidents and FCWT to fees for services rendered within PNG by nonresidents.

Taxpayers should also be aware that the deduction for management fees paid by a PNG resident company to a nonresident associate cannot exceed the greater of 2% of assessable income derived from PNG sources or 2% of allowable deductions excluding management fees paid. Similarly, to the extent that management fees exceed 2% of AEE or ACE, the excess is not able to be included in AEE or ACE respectively. However, a full deduction is allowed if the management fee can be supported as an arm's length transaction. This limit does not apply in respect of payments made to non-associates.

Please refer below for treaty WHT rates that may provide relief from MFWT or reduction of MFWT.

WHT rates

In addition to FCWT and MFWT, WHT is imposed in respect of various payments to nonresidents by entities carrying on business in PNG, including interest, dividends and royalties. Certain incentive rates exist for taxpayers operating in the oil and gas industry (refer to sections regarding dividends and interest). Set out in the table below is a summary of general WHT rates. Taxpayers self-assess for any reductions in WHT applicable as a result of a double tax agreement.

| | Dividends ¹ | Interest ² | Royalties | Management fees (including technical fees) % | Foreign contractor % |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| Australia | 17 | 10 | 10 | Nil ³ | 12 ⁴ |
| Canada | 17 | 10 | 10 | Nil ³ | 12 ⁴ |
| China | 15 | 10 | 10 | Nil ³ | 12 ⁴ |
| Fiji | 17 | 10 | 15 | 15 | 12 ⁴ |
| Germany | 15 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 ^{4,5} |
| Malaysia | 15 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 12 ^{4,6} |
| New Zealand | 15 | 10 | 10 | Nil ³ | 12 ⁴ |
| Singapore | 15 | 10 | 10 | Nil ³ | 12 ^{4,6} |
| South Korea | 15 | 10 | 10 | Nil ³ | 12 ⁴ |
| United Kingdom | 17 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 12 ^{4,6} |
| Non-treaty countries | 17 | 15 | Associate – 30 Non-associate – lesser of 10% of assessable income or 48% of taxable income | 17 | 12 |

Notes:

1. Dividend WHT is not payable on dividends paid out of profits from oil and gas operations.
2. There is no interest WHT on interest paid in respect of borrowings used to finance oil and gas operations.
3. Where there is no specific technical services article, the payment should not be subject to WHT in PNG, provided all of the services were performed outside of PNG.
4. The income of residents of countries with which PNG has a double tax agreement will only be subject to the FCWT provisions if the nonresident is conducting business in PNG through a permanent establishment.
5. Treaty not yet in force.
6. A reduced FCWT rate may apply to foreign contractors from countries where a non-discrimination article exists in the relevant treaty.

F. Financing considerations

Where a taxpayer has borrowed money for the purpose of carrying out a resource project, the interest will be deductible under the normal provisions (i.e., on an incurred basis).

Where funds are not borrowed on an arm's length basis, the interest deduction is limited to the market rate of interest that the Commissioner General determines in consultation with the Bank of Papua New Guinea. Interest incurred prior to the issue of a development license is not deductible.

Interest incurred in connection with the construction or acquisition of an item of plant or capital asset is not immediately deductible to the extent that it is incurred prior to the date on which the taxpayer first derives assessable income or uses the plant or capital asset for the purpose of deriving assessable income. The amount should instead be capitalized to the cost of the asset.

Specific thin capitalization rules exist for resource taxpayers (mining, petroleum and gas operations). When the debt of the taxpayer and all related corporations in relation to a particular resource project exceeds 300% of equity (i.e., when the debt-to-equity ratio exceeds 3:1) in relation to that resource project, the deduction for the interest incurred is reduced by the interest on the excess debt.

G. Indirect and other taxes

Goods and services tax

Goods and services tax (GST) is imposed at the rate of 10% on virtually all goods and services, except where the goods or services are zero-rated or are exempt. The importation of goods into the country will also be subject to GST.

Effective from 1 January 2012, any entity undertaking taxable activity in PNG is required to register and charge GST where taxable supplies exceed, or are expected to exceed, PGK250,000 in any 12-month period. (The previous registration threshold was PGK100,000.) Affected taxpayers should seek specific advice in this regard. Entities that are registered for GST are required to account for GST collected (output tax) and GST paid (input tax) during each month, with any excess of GST collected to be remitted to the IRC by the 21st day of the following month.

All supplies of goods or services, other than cars, to a resource company for use in resource operations are generally zero-rated. Taxpayers require written confirmation from the IRC stating that the entity is zero-rated to qualify for zero-rating. Taxpayers can then present the written confirmation to the suppliers when purchases are made to ensure the goods and services are supplied to them GST free.

Royalty regimes

Resource projects are subject to a royalty, equal to 2% of the gross revenue from resource sales. New petroleum projects and gas projects are also subject to a development levy that is equal to 2% of the gross revenue from resource sales.

Where a project is liable for both royalty and development levy, the royalty is claimable as a credit against income tax payable and the development levy is an allowable deduction.

Customs and excise duties

The importation of all goods into PNG is subject to customs and excise duty, unless the goods are duty free or exempt. Duty is imposed on the total cost of goods, including insurance and freight. The rate of duty depends on the nature of the goods imported. It will often be the case that a zero rate will apply to goods used in the oil and gas industry, to the extent that the relevant goods are not able to be sourced in PNG. However, a specific analysis must be undertaken in each instance.

Goods and consumables imported by a PNG LNG project entity in respect of the LNG project (referred to as LNG project goods and consumables) are exempt from all customs tariffs and levies. Recent changes to the Customs Act ensure the exemption is limited to goods and consumables used specifically in connection with the initial construction and subsequent phase of the PNG LNG project.

Export duties

There is no export duty on the export of petroleum or gas products.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty is imposed on dutiable instruments such as deeds, share transfers and a wide range of other documents at varying rates. Stamp duty may also apply to documents executed outside PNG pursuant to provisions that impose an obligation to lodge documents for assessment for stamp duty where they relate to property or things done within PNG.

Where the property transferred is a mining lease, special mining lease or exploration license issued under the Mining Act 1992, or the subject of a license issued under the Oil and Gas Act 1998, the rate of duty is 2% of the value.

Minerals and petroleum farm-ins, transfers of mining or petroleum information and transfers of tenements and exploration licenses are subject to stamp duty at the rate of the lesser of PGK10,000 or ad valorem duty up to a maximum of 5% of the value.

Where the acquisition is an interest in a landholding private corporation and the underlying land is a mining lease, special mining lease or exploration license, the rate of duty is 2% of the value. This excludes any amount that is mining or petroleum information. Where the underlying land comprises a tenement, or licenses or rights, or options over any such leases or rights, the rate of duty is the lesser of PGK10,000 or ad valorem duty up to the maximum of 5% of the value of the dutiable property.

Where the underlying property is mining or petroleum information, the rate of duty is PGK10,000.

Certain transactions with respect to the PNG LNG project are exempt from stamp duty.

Other taxes

All businesses with an annual payroll in excess of PGK200,000 are subject to a 2% training levy. The amount payable is reduced by training expenses incurred by the employer for the benefit of PNG citizen employees.

PNG does not have fringe benefits tax. However, noncash benefits to employees are taxed. The provision of some benefits is exempt (e.g., school fees and one set of annual leave fares) and other benefits are taxed concessionally.

Statutory requirements exist for employers to make superannuation contributions in respect of PNG citizen employees. Superannuation for noncitizen employees is currently voluntary. However, future legislation might make it compulsory.

PNG also has compulsory workers' compensation insurance requirements.

H. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

A tax clearance certificate is required where certain cumulative remittances of foreign currency exceed PGK200,000 in a calendar year. Where the remittance is to a tax haven, a tax clearance will be required regardless of the amount being remitted.

In general, PNG resident companies are not permitted to receive payment for goods or services in a foreign currency. This means that, where a contract is entered into between two PNG residents in a foreign currency, such as US dollars, the settlement of the invoice has to be made in PNG currency. For exchange control purposes, a "resident" will include a foreign company operating actively in PNG on a branch basis.

Business presence

Forms of "business presence" in PNG typically include companies, foreign branches and joint ventures.

PNG-incorporated shelf companies are readily available. To register a branch of a foreign company, an application has to be lodged with the Registrar of Companies, accompanied by the relevant documentation. As a minimum, documents that need to be lodged include copies of the relevant contract in PNG, the certificate of incorporation and the application fee.

Tax office registration

An application for a tax file number is required for a PNG-incorporated subsidiary or a branch of a foreign entity that elects to lodge an income tax

return. If the branch chooses to operate as a foreign contractor, a FCWT file number will be allocated on lodgment of the copy of the contract with the IRC. It is the responsibility of the local contractor to lodge a copy of the contract with the IRC and remit the relevant withholdings.

Where an entity has employees, the entity needs to register as a group employer and remit monthly salary and wages tax withholdings to the tax office.

GST registration is also required where taxable sales exceed, or are expected to exceed, PGK250,000 in an income year (as described above).

Visas

Expatriate employees cannot be gainfully employed in PNG without a work permit issued by the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations (DLIR). A properly completed Application for Foreigner Work Permit and the applicable Government fee need to be lodged with the DLIR for approval for a work permit to be issued.

In addition to work permits, an application for an entry permit or visa for the employee and dependents (if applicable) will have to be prepared and lodged with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Immigration. There are Government fees that need to accompany the application.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) activities are conducted under license or service contracts granted by the Government of Peru. The Government guarantees that the tax law in effect on the agreement date will remain unchanged during the contract term.

Royalties

Royalties can be determined based on one of two methodologies: production scales (fixed percentage and variable percentage) or economic results (the R-factor calculation).

The other main elements of the fiscal regime for oil and gas companies in Peru are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 28%^{1,2}
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – Not applicable
- ▶ Bonuses – Not applicable
- ▶ Dividend tax – 6.8%³
- ▶ Resource rent tax – Not applicable
- ▶ Capital allowances – See Section C

1 Oil and gas companies with license or service agreements are subject to a 2% premium. These two points should be added to the current income corporate tax rate (28% in 2015-2016, 27% in 2017-2018 and 26% in 2019 onwards), resulting in an income tax rate of 30%, 29% and 28% for oil and gas companies as of the date they signed license or service contracts.

2 In addition, oil and gas companies must pay employee profit sharing. See Section J.

3 Dividend tax rate is 6.8% in 2015-2016, 8% in 2017-2018, and 9.3% in 2019 onwards.

B. Fiscal regime

Oil and gas E&P activities are conducted under license or service contracts granted by the Government. Under a license contract the investor pays a royalty to the Government, whereas under a service contract the Government pays remuneration to the contractor for its activities.

As stated by the Peruvian Constitution and the Organic Law for Hydrocarbons, a license contract does not imply a transfer or lease of property over the area of exploration or exploitation. By virtue of the license contract, the contractor acquires the authorization to explore or to exploit hydrocarbons in a determined area, and Perupetro (the entity that holds the Peruvian State interest) transfers the property right in the extracted hydrocarbons to the contractor, who must pay a royalty to the State.

It is important to note that the Organic Law for Hydrocarbons and the related tax regulations foresee that the signing of an oil and gas agreement implies the guarantee that the tax regime in effect at the date of signature will not be changed during the life of the contract. This is intended to preserve the economy of the contract so that no further tax costs are created for the contractors.

The signing of an agreement for the exploration or exploitation of a block freezes the tax regime in force at the date that the contract is signed for the entire life of the contract. An additional two percentage points will be applicable to the income tax rate of the tax regime in force (i.e., currently Income Tax rate of 28% plus 2%). The taxes covered by this provision are the taxes that are the responsibility of the contractor as a taxpayer.

It is important to note that tax stability is, in essence, granted for the contract activities and not directly for the entities that signed the contract. Therefore, any change in the contractor's ownership will not affect the tax stability. Equally, the tax stability only covers the contract activities (i.e., the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons) and no other related or distinct activities that may be performed by the legal entity (e.g., refining). Taxes (i.e., dividend tax or branch profits tax) that affect profit distributions arising from the contract activities are also covered by the tax stability.

Contractors are entitled to keep their accounting records in foreign currency, but taxes must be paid in Peruvian *nuevos soles* (PEN).

Corporate tax

General considerations

Resident corporations are subject to income tax on their worldwide income, whereas branches, agencies or other permanent establishments of foreign corporations, while also being considered resident corporations, are subject to income tax exclusively on their Peruvian sourced income. Exports are considered to be Peruvian-sourced income.

Resident corporations are companies incorporated in Peru. As from 1 January 2013, Peruvian law contains CFC (controlled foreign company) legislation.

Tax rates

The CIT rate is 28% for fiscal years 2015-2016. The tax rate applicable for the taxable years 2017-2018 is 27%, and 26% from the taxable year 2019 onwards.

In addition, a dividend tax of 6.8% (years 2015-2016), 8% (years 2017-2018) and 9.3% (from year 2019 onwards) applies to profits distributed to nonresident individuals and corporations, as well as to resident individuals. All distributed profits, including those corresponding to prior years, are subject to this tax. The law specifies various transactions that are considered profit distributions by resident entities for the purpose of the 6.8% dividend tax, including a distribution of cash or assets other than shares of the distributing company and, under certain circumstances, a reduction in the company's capital or a liquidation of the company.

Expenses that are not subject to further taxation (i.e., expenses that might benefit shareholders, such as personal expenses and other charges assumed by the corporation) are also considered to be dividend distributions. However, the capitalization of equity accounts is not treated as a distribution.

For PEs, branches and agencies of foreign companies, a distribution of profits is deemed to occur on the deadline for filing their annual CIT return (generally, at the end of March of the following year).

The tax on dividends is basically applied through a withholding mechanism. The withheld amount is considered a final payment. Nevertheless, for dividends related to expenses not subject to further tax control, the 4.1% dividend tax is paid directly by the resident corporation, branch or PE (i.e., as a surcharge).

Taxable year

The taxable year is the calendar year. The accounting year is also the calendar year, without exception.

Tax returns

CIT returns must be prepared by the taxpayer under the self-assessment method. The annual income tax return must be filed within the first three months of the following tax year. Income tax prepayment tax returns must be filed monthly. VAT, withholding taxes (WHT) and other returns (e.g., payroll tax) are also filed monthly according to a schedule published by the tax authorities, based on the taxpayer's tax number.

The contractor has to determine the tax base and the amount of tax applicable. If the contractor carries out related activities (i.e., activities related to oil and gas but not carried out under the terms of the contract) or other activities (i.e., activities not related to oil and gas), the contractor is obliged to determine the tax base and the amount of tax separately and for each activity. The corresponding tax is determined based on the income tax provisions that apply in each case (subject to the tax stability provisions for contract activities, and based on the regular regime for the related activities or other activities).

The total income tax amount that the contractor must pay is the sum of the amounts calculated for each contract, for both the related activities and the other activities. The forms to be used for tax statements and payments are determined by the tax administration.

Monthly income tax prepayments

Taxpayers are required to pay estimated monthly income tax prepayments, which must be calculated, in general terms, based on the following methods:

- ▶ Percentage method: by applying 1.5% to the total net revenue of the month
- ▶ Ratio method: by dividing the tax calculated in the previous year by the total accrued net revenues of the same year and applying the ratio to the net accrued revenues of the month, multiplied by the factor 0.9333.

Income tax prepayments apply as a credit against the annual income tax obligation. They can be refunded at the end of the fiscal year (once the tax return is filed) if they exceed the annual income tax assessed.

Group treatment

Peruvian tax law does not include any provisions regarding taxation on a consolidated basis.

Ring-fencing

If the contractor has more than one contract, it may offset the tax losses generated by one or more contracts against the profits resulting from other contracts or related activities. Likewise, the tax losses resulting from related activities may be offset against the profits from one or more contracts.

It is possible to choose the allocation of tax losses to one or more of the contracts or related activities that have generated the profits, provided that the losses are depleted or are compensated to the limit of the profits available. The

tax losses are allocated up to the limit of the profits available in the block or related activities. If there is another contract or related activity, a taxpayer may continue compensating for the tax losses until they are fully utilized.

A contractor with tax losses from one or more contracts or related activities may not offset them against profits generated by the other activities. Furthermore, in no case may tax losses generated by the other activities be offset against the profits resulting from the contracts or from the related activities.

Income recognition

For local corporate purposes, income is recognized on an accrual basis.

Transfer pricing

Peru has adopted transfer pricing guidelines, based on the arm's length principle. The accepted methods are the comparable uncontrolled price (CUP) method, the resale price method, the cost plus method and the transactional net margin method, as well as other related methods based on margins. OECD guidelines can be used as a complementary source of interpretation. Advance pricing agreements (APAs) may be agreed with the tax authorities.

In Peru, these rules do not only apply to transactions between related parties, but also to transactions with entities that reside in tax havens. However, adjustments to the value of related party transactions should only occur if the value agreed between the parties results in the payment of lower taxes under specific criteria.

One or more legal entities are related parties if one of them participates directly or indirectly in the management, control or equity of the other one, or whenever the same person participates directly or indirectly in the direction, control or equity of diverse related entities.

From 1 January 2013, specific parameters will be taken into account when determining the fair market value of import and export transactions of goods (i.e. hydrocarbons and their by-products) between related parties. These parameters will apply where an international intermediary (other than the effective recipient of those goods) intervenes to carry out the import and export transaction from, towards or through a tax haven.

Capital gains

Capital gains are treated as ordinary income. Until 31 December 2009, capital gains derived from transactions on stock or commodity exchanges were exempt from income tax. Capital gains determined by resident entities are subject to a 28% tax rate in fiscal years 2015-2016, 27% in 2017-2018, and 26% from 2019 onwards.

Expenses

Expenses incurred in the generation of revenue, or in maintaining the revenue source, or in the generation of capital gains, are generally deductible for determining the income tax base.

However, expenses derived from transactions executed with entities (corporations or branches) that reside in tax havens are not deductible for the computation of taxable income, with the exception of payments derived from the following transactions: credit facilities and insurance; assignment of ships or aircrafts; transportation from/to the country and the tax haven; and fees for passage through the Panama Canal.

Peruvian Income Tax Regulations contains a list of countries considered as tax havens for income tax purposes. Notwithstanding this, countries not included on the list can be qualified as tax havens if their effective income tax rate is 0% or the effective income tax rate is less than 50% of the rate that would apply in Peru over the same kind of income. From 1 January 2013, if Peru signs a double taxation agreement that includes a clause for exchanging information with another country, that country will no longer be regarded as a tax haven for CIT purposes.

Organization expenses, initial pre-operating expenses, pre-operating expenses resulting from the expansion of a company's business and interest accrued during the pre-operating period may be deducted, at the taxpayer's option, in the first taxable year, or they may be amortized proportionately over a maximum term of 10 years. The amortization period runs from the year when production starts. Once the amortization period is fixed by the taxpayer, it can only be varied with the prior authorization of the tax authorities. The new term comes into effect in the year following the date that the authorization was requested, without exceeding the overall 10-year limit.

It is necessary to use certain means of payment for the deduction of expenses in excess of approximately PEN3,500 (equivalent to around US\$1,200). The permitted means of payment include deposits in bank accounts, fund transfers, payment orders, debit and credit cards issued in Peru, non-negotiable (or equivalent) checks issued under Peruvian legislation and other means of payment commercially permitted in international trading with nonresident entities (e.g., transfers, banking checks, simple or documentary payment orders, simple or documentary remittances, simple or documentary credit cards).

Valuation of inventory

Inventory is valued for tax purposes at the acquisition or production cost. Finance charges are not allowed as part of the cost. Taxpayers may choose any one of the following methods to calculate annual inventory for tax purposes, provided that the method is used consistently: first in, first out (FIFO); daily, monthly or annual average; specific identification; detailed inventory; or basic inventory.

Foreign income tax

Under certain circumstances, income tax paid abroad may be used as a tax credit. However, it should be noted that unused tax credits cannot be carried forward.

"Controlled foreign corporation" rules

As from 1 January 2013, the "international fiscal transparency regime" is applicable to all Peruvian residents who own a "controlled foreign corporation" (CFC). Under these rules, passive income earned by CFCs in other jurisdictions must be included and recognized in the taxable income of resident taxpayers in Peru, even though there has been no effective distribution.

A nonresident subsidiary company will constitute a CFC of a Peruvian company if:

- ▶ The Peruvian company owns more than 50% of the subsidiary's equity, economic value or righting votes
- ▶ The nonresident entity is resident of either a tax haven jurisdiction or a country in which passive income is either not subject to CIT, or is subject to a CIT that is equal to or less than 75% of the CIT that would have been applicable in Peru

For the application of this CFC regime, the law has established an exhaustive list of items that qualify as passive income (i.e., dividends, interest, royalties, capital gains from the sale of properties and securities, etc.).

Royalties

Oil and gas E&P activities are conducted under license or service contracts granted by the Government. Under a license contract the investor pays a royalty to the Government, while under a service contract the Government pays remuneration to the contractor. In both cases, however, the distribution of the economic rent (royalty or remuneration) between the Government and the investor is determined based on the following methodologies:

- ▶ Production scales: this methodology establishes a percentage of royalty (or brackets of royalties starting at 5%) over certain scales of production (volume of barrels per calendar day) for fiscalized liquid hydrocarbons,
-

fiscalized natural gas liquids and fiscalized natural gas for each valuation period. "Fiscalized hydrocarbons" (i.e., liquid hydrocarbons, natural gas, etc.) means those produced and measured in a specific fiscalized production point set between the investor and the Government in order to establish the quality and volume of hydrocarbons according to API (American Petroleum Institute) and ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) regulations.

Based on the scales of production, the percentage of royalty is as shown in the table below.

| Scales of production (barrels per calendar day) | Percentage royalty |
|---|--------------------|
| < 5 | 5% |
| 5-100 | 5% to 20% |
| > 100 | 20% |

- ▶ Economic results (RRE): according to this methodology, the royalty percentage is the result of adding the fixed royalty percentage of 5% to the variable royalty percentage. The variable royalty percentage is calculated once the ratio between revenues and expenditures as of the previous year is at least 1.15. The variable royalty rate will be applicable in a range between 5% and 20%.
- ▶ Other methodologies: R-factor and Cumulative Production per Oil Field with price adjustments. In the case of the R-factor, the royalty is calculated applying a ratio between revenues and expenditures of certain periods established in the contract. For these purposes, the minimal percentage of royalty is as given in the table below.

| R-Factor | Minimal royalty percentage |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| From 0.0 < 1.0 | 15% |
| From 1.0 < 1.5 | 20% |
| From 1.5 > 2.0 | 25% |
| From 2.0 or more | 35% |

The definitive percentages will generally be negotiated and established in each contract. However, in the case of cumulative production per oilfield with price adjustments, the royalty is calculated based on a specific percentage per oilfield for a contract. The royalty is adjusted based on two factors: the cumulative production of each oil field and the average price per barrel of such production.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Depreciation of tangible assets

According to the income tax regulations, the maximum annual depreciation rates for income tax purposes are: 20% for vehicles; 20% for machinery and equipment used in the mining, oil and construction industries; 10% for other machinery and equipment; 25% for hardware; and 10% for other fixed assets. Under the income tax general provisions, depreciation is deductible provided that it does not exceed the maximum rates and it is registered in the taxpayer's accounting records, regardless of the depreciation method used.

Buildings are subject to a fixed 5% depreciation rate, without the accounting record requirement. However, the Government has recently approved an exceptional and temporary depreciation regime applicable for years 2015-2016, which allows taxpayers to depreciate buildings by applying

an annual rate of 20% for income tax purposes. This regime only applies if the goods are used only for business purposes and if the following conditions are met:

- i. The construction of the building had begun from 1 January 2014
- ii. If, by 31 December 2016, the construction has been at least 80% completed

Special oil and gas rules regarding investments aimed to produce hydrocarbons

The hydrocarbon law provides that exploration and development expenditures, and the investments that contractors may make, up to the date when commercial extraction of hydrocarbons starts, including the cost of the wells, are accumulated in an account. At the contractor's option and with respect to each contract, the amount is amortized using either of the methods below:

- ▶ Units of production
- ▶ Linear amortization, deducting the expenditures in equal portions over a period of no less than five fiscal years

Any investments in a contract area that did not reach the commercial extraction stage and that were totally released can be accumulated with the same type of investments made in another contract that is in the process of commercial extraction. These investments are amortized in accordance with the amortization method chosen in the latter contract.

If the contractor has entered into a single contract, the accumulated investments are charged as a loss against the results of that contract in the year of total release of the area for any contract if the area did not reach the commercial extraction stage. Investments consisting of buildings, power installations, camps, means of communication, equipment and other goods that the contractor keeps or recovers to use in the same operations or in other operations of a different nature cannot be charged as loss against the contract.

Once commercial extraction starts, all amounts corresponding to disbursements with no recovery value are deducted as expenses for the fiscal year. Expenses with no recovery value at the start of commercial extraction include:

- ▶ Investments for drilling, completing or producing start-up wells of any nature, including stratigraphic ones, and excluding acquisition costs of surface equipment.
- ▶ Exploration investments, including those related to geophysics, geochemistry, field geology, gravimetry, aerophotographic surveys and seismic surveying, processing and interpreting.

The *Manual of Accounting Procedures* to be filed before Perupetro must detail the accounts considered expenditures without any recovery value.

D. Corporate tax incentives

Carryforward losses

Tax losses can be carried forward and offset against net income derived in future fiscal years. The provisions currently in force require the taxpayer to elect one of the following procedures to offset the tax losses:

- ▶ Offset the total net tax losses from Peruvian sources incurred in a tax year against net income derived in the four fiscal years following its generation. The amount of losses not offset after this term are cancelled.
- ▶ Offset the total net tax losses from Peruvian sources obtained in the tax year against 50% of the net income obtained in the following years, without limitation.

The election should be made when the annual income tax return is filed (see Section B) and it cannot be changed until the accumulated losses are fully utilized.

Loss carrybacks are not allowed.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends or branch profits tax

Dividends and profits obtained by branches are subject to a 6.8% (years 2015-2016), 8% (years 2017-2018) and 9.3% (years 2019 onwards) WHT.

The event that triggers the withholding obligation is the dividend distribution agreement. However, in the case of branches, it is triggered when the tax return is filed at the end of the income year.

It should be noted that the effect of the increase of the dividend tax rate combined with the reduction of the corporate tax rate results in a total tax burden of 31% (approximately) in each fiscal year.

Interest

The WHT rate on interest paid abroad is 30%. However, if certain conditions are met, this rate can be reduced from 30% to 4.99%. The 4.99% reduced WHT rate applies if the following conditions are met:

- ▶ For loans in cash, the remittance of funds to Peru must be duly documented and, to meet this requirement, the funds should enter the country through a local bank or be used for import financing
- ▶ The loans are subject to an annual interest rate (including fees and any additional amounts) no higher than LIBOR rate plus seven basis points
- ▶ The lender and the borrower are not regarded as economically related parties
- ▶ The loan does not qualify as a "back-to-back" or "covered" operation between related parties

The WHT rate on interest paid abroad to nonresident individuals is 30% when the transaction is performed between related parties or with entities that reside in tax havens; otherwise, a 4.99% WHT rate will be applicable.

Royalties

Royalties are defined as any payment in cash or in kind from the use or the privilege to use trademarks, designs, models, plans, process or secret formulas and copyrights for literary, artistic or scientific work, as well as any compensation for the assignment of software or the transfer of information related to industrial, commercial or scientific experience (know-how).

The WHT rate applicable to royalties is 30%.

Capital gains

Gains on the sale, exchange or redemption of shares, bonds and other securities issued by companies, investment funds or trusts incorporated or organized in Peru are considered to be Peruvian-sourced income; consequently, these gains are taxed at 30%. This includes the disposal of shares listed on the Peruvian stock exchange that are sold through centralized negotiation mechanisms.

The income tax treatment of capital gains made by non-domiciled entities depends on whether the transfer takes place within or outside Peru. If the transfer takes place in Peru, the WHT rate is 5%; otherwise, it is 30%. In any case, when the disposal is conducted through a centralized negotiation mechanism, the settlement agent (*CAVALI* in Spanish) will have to withhold the corresponding income tax.

Since capital gains on shares listed on a local stock exchange before 1 January 2010 were exempt from income tax, some specific rules are applicable to determine their referential value (tax cost). In this context, that would be their value at the end of fiscal year 2009, the acquisition cost, or the value of entry to the equity, whichever is the highest.

Indirect transfers of shares

From 16 February 2011, Law No. 29663 introduced a new category of Peruvian-sourced income that may lead to a scenario under which a

nonresident will be levied for income tax. Broadly, Law No. 29663 provides that a 30% income tax is imposed on any capital gain realized upon the transfer of the shares of a company located outside Peru that, directly or indirectly, holds shares (or participation interests) in one or more Peruvian subsidiaries (i.e., an “indirect transfer”) in one of the following situations:

1. Where 50% or more of the fair market value of the nonresident holding company’s shares is derived from the shares or participations representing the equity capital of one or more Peruvian subsidiaries at any time within the 12 months preceding the disposition

or

2. The overseas holding company is located in a tax haven or low-tax jurisdiction, unless it can be adequately demonstrated that the scenario described in (1) above did not exist.

New Law No. 29757, which amended Law No. 29663 from 22 July 2011, clarifies that the transaction described in the preceding text will only be taxable where shares or participation interests representing 10% or more of the nonresident holding company’s equity capital are transferred within the 12-month period. This means that transfers of shares (or participations) representing less than 10% of the nonresident holding company’s equity capital are not subject to taxation in Peru even when 50% or more of the fair market value of those shares is derived from the shares (or participations) representing the equity capital of one or more Peruvian subsidiaries at any time within the 12 months preceding the dispositions.

Services

Technical assistance, digital services and other services

Revenue received from certain activities performed by non-domiciled companies is subject to Peruvian WHT on a portion of the gross revenues earned from such activities. The WHT rate varies according to the activity performed. For services, the following distinctions can be made:

- ▶ Payments for services that qualify as “technical assistance” (defined below) are subject to a 15% WHT rate, provided that they are “economically utilized” within Peru yet regardless of whether the services are physically rendered in Peru.
- ▶ Technical assistance is considered to be economically utilized if it helps in the development of activities or the fulfillment of the purpose of resident entities, regardless of whether it generates taxable income. Moreover, Peruvian corporations that obtain business income and consider the compensation for technical assistance as a cost for income tax purposes are deemed to utilize the service in the country economically.

Current Peruvian income tax regulations define the concept of “technical assistance” as any independent service, whether performed abroad or within the country, through which the provider employs its skills by applying certain procedures or techniques, with the sole purpose of providing specialized knowledge that is not the subject of a patent, that are required for the productive process (including commercialization), rendering services or any other activity performed by the user of the service. “Technical assistance” also comprises training people for the application of the specialized knowledge.

Even though it is necessary to verify that all the characteristics are met in order to determine whether an activity qualifies as technical assistance, it is important to highlight that the income tax regulations cite three cases in which technical assistance is understood to exist:

- ▶ Engineering services
- ▶ Investigation and project development
- ▶ Assistance and financial consulting

These terms are all defined in the Income Tax Law.

If technical assistance services are provided together with another type of services, the compensation corresponding to each of the activities must be identified in order to grant the corresponding tax treatment. However, if it is not possible to identify the amounts separately due to the nature of the operation, the amount must be treated under the rules that apply to the essential and predominant operation.

It is important to note that if the total consideration for rendering technical assistance services exceeds 140 tax units (where 1 tax unit = PEN3,850, equivalent to approximately US\$1,292), taxpayers must supply a certification from an audit company stating that the hours and services provided have been effectively rendered, in order to apply the 15% WHT rate for technical assistance.

Payments for “digital services” (a term that covers a group of activities developed through the internet) are subject to a 30% WHT if they are economically utilized in Peru, regardless of where they are performed in Peru.

Services that do not qualify as technical assistance or digital services are subject to a 30% WHT, provided that they are developed within Peru. No WHT applies to services performed wholly abroad. If services are performed partially in Peru and partially abroad, a pro rata or allocation system may be used to determine the portion of the compensation for the service that is subject to WHT.

Other activities rendered partially in Peru and partially abroad

Activities undertaken partially in Peru and partially abroad by non-domiciled companies, including revenue generated by their branches or PEs, are subject to WHT on a portion of the gross revenues generated, according to the following chart (and, unless otherwise indicated, the WHT rate is 30%):

| Activities | Percent of gross revenues | Effective tax rate % |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Air transport | 1 | 0.3 |
| Ship leases | 80 | 8.0* |
| Aircraft charters | 60 | 6.0* |
| Supply of transport containers | 15 | 4.5 |
| Storage of transport containers | 80 | 24.0 |
| Insurance | 7 | 2.1 |
| International news services | 10 | 3.0 |
| Sea transport | 2 | 0.6 |
| Motion picture distribution | 20 | 6.0 |
| Television broadcast rights | 20 | 6.0 |
| Telecommunications services | 5 | 1.5 |

* The WHT rate for these activities is 10%

Services rendered by independent professionals

Independent professionals are subject to WHT at a 24% effective rate. This is the result of applying the general 30% rate to 80% of the income received.

Tax treaties

Peru has entered into a multilateral tax treaty with the Andean Community countries (Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador), which calls for exclusive taxation at source and bilateral income tax treaties with Brazil, Chile, Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Portugal and Switzerland (the last four came into force on 1 January 2015). Peru has also signed tax treaties with Spain, which are still subject to ratification in accordance with respective procedures of each country.

In Peru, the procedure requires that the signed treaty is submitted to Congress for its consent and approval before it is ratified by the President.

The principal purpose of this income tax treaty network is to prevent taxes from interfering with the free flow of international trade and investment by mitigating international double taxation with respect to certain income items.

This, however, is not a static list. Some existing treaties are being renegotiated and others are in various stages of negotiation with countries such as France, Italy, Thailand, Sweden, Singapore and the UK.

Except for the tax treaty with the other Andean Community countries, tax treaties entered into by Peru generally follow the OECD Model, although they incorporate provisions derived from the UN Model.

Each of the treaties currently in force between Peru and other countries deals with the same matters, and many of the treaties contain common provisions addressing the same issue. It should, however, be noted that Peru's tax treaties show a remarkable degree of individuality, considering that almost every treaty is different in at least some respects. For that reason, it is essential to analyze the specific treaty that may apply to a particular tax issue.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

Thin capitalization rules prohibit a tax deduction for interest paid by domiciled taxpayers to related or associated enterprises. To date, the maximum debt-to-equity ratio allowed under the thin capitalization rules is 3:1.

G. Transactions

The transfer of assets, as well as of interests in contracts (farm-in or farm-out arrangements), are subject to the common income tax and VAT rules.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is subject to tax stability, but only for the transferable nature of the VAT charged by the buyer to the seller. The stabilized regime for VAT and other selective consumption taxes (e.g., Peru's luxury tax, the so-called "*Impuesto Selectivo al Consumo*") also applies for exporters, which means that exports are not subject to any tax.

It should also be mentioned that the import of goods and inputs required for exploration activities is free from any taxes (based on a list detailing such goods approved by the Government authorities).

VAT at 18% applies to the following operations:

- a) The sale of goods within Peru
- b) Services performed within Peru
- c) Services performed by nonresidents within Peru
- d) Construction
- e) The first sale of real estate by a builder
- f) The import of goods.

For activities a), b), d) and e), the VAT payable is determined on a monthly basis by deducting credited VAT paid (i.e., input tax) from the gross tax charged (i.e., output VAT) in each period. As a result, VAT does not necessarily represent a financial cost but can be met through offsetting the input tax against the output tax charged in the tax period.

However, VAT paid on the import of goods or the utilization of services within Peru must be paid directly to the tax authorities, meaning that the VAT to be paid must equal the output tax with no deduction for any input VAT credit. This payment may be used as a VAT credit once paid. This can result in a financial cost as a VAT credit for the period from the date of payment until the amount is applied to offset the output tax arising from the activities in a), b), d) and e).

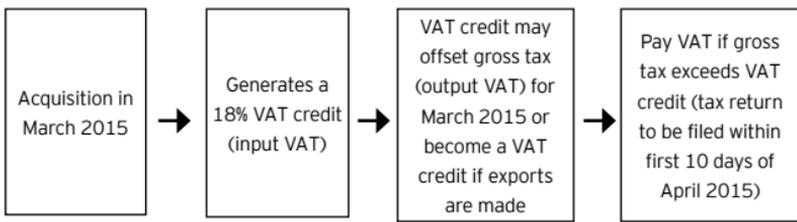
The output tax due for each taxable operation is calculated by applying the 18% VAT to the tax base (made up of the price of goods, services or construction contracts). The VAT credit consists of the VAT separately itemized in the payment voucher (or corresponding document) issued for any of the activities in a) to f).

VAT paid can be used as a VAT credit if the following conditions apply:

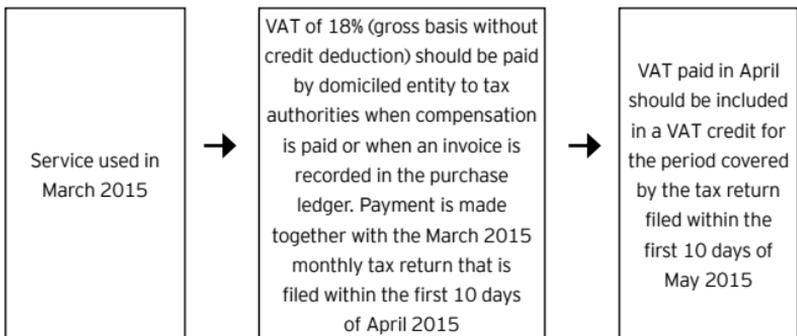
- ▶ The acquisition is allowed as an expense or cost for income tax purposes
- ▶ The acquisition is intended for operations that give rise to an obligation to pay the VAT
- ▶ The tax must be stated separately in the payment voucher that must be completed according to the corresponding legal provisions; and
- ▶ The amount must be registered appropriately in the accounting records of the purchaser (i.e., in the purchase ledger)

Nonresident purchasers of goods or services are not permitted to use the VAT charged as a credit, and no reimbursement is allowed under the Peruvian VAT law. Any VAT paid by a nonresident purchaser, therefore, becomes an additional cost.

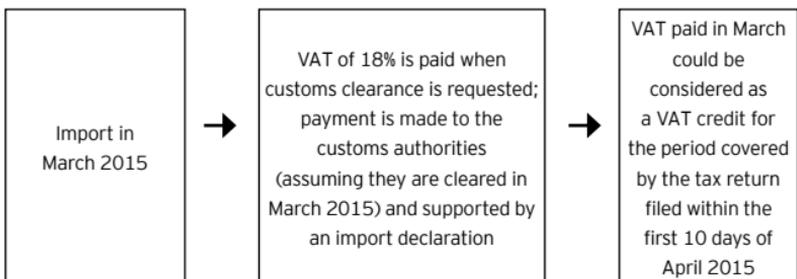
The VAT credit treatment is summarized in the charts below (where the dates used are examples only). For purchasing goods in Peru, the acquisition of services performed by local entities, construction contracts or acquisitions of real estate under its first sale, we have:



For the utilization of services in Peru performed by nonresident entities, we have:



For imported goods subject to VAT, we have:



Exporters are reimbursed with any VAT paid on the acquisition of goods and services. Also, exporters can apply this reimbursement as a credit in order to offset VAT or income tax liabilities. Any balance may be refunded by the tax administration.

Early recovery VAT system

Peru's early recovery VAT system allows early recovery of the VAT credit for acquisitions of goods, services, construction contracts, importations, etc., without waiting to recover such amount from a client when the invoice, including VAT, for the sales of goods, services or construction contracts is issued to the client. In other words, this regime provides relief of financial costs (cost of money) for projects with a significant pre-operating stage and for which no advance invoice (transferring the VAT burden) can be issued periodically to the client.

The law provides a general and a specific early recovery system:

- ▶ General early recovery VAT system: for the recovery of VAT on capital goods only.
- ▶ Specific early recovery VAT system: for companies that (i) enter into investment contracts with the Peruvian Government, and (ii) make a minimum investment commitment of US\$5 million for projects with a preoperative phase of at least two years. This system is applicable to the recovery of VAT on capital goods, services and construction contracts.

The use of one system does not preclude the possibility of using the other, as they each have a different scope.

Definitive VAT recovery for hydrocarbon exploration activities

Under this regime, VAT paid on the acquisition of goods and services used directly in oil and gas exploration activities can be recovered without having to wait until a commercial discovery takes place or production begins.

The application of this regime has been extended until 31 December 2015.

Joint ventures

VAT does not apply to the allocation of costs and expenses incurred by the operator in a joint venture that does not keep independent accounting records. Nor does it apply to the assignment of resources, goods, services and construction contracts made by the parties of a joint venture agreement for the performance of their common business or the allocation of the goods produced for each party under the agreement.

Likewise, any grant, sale, transfer or assignment of an interest in a joint venture is not subject to VAT.

Joint ventures that keep independent accounting records are considered to be legal entities and they are subject to VAT. Joint ventures that do not keep independent accounting records must allocate the income to each of the parties involved in the contract in proportion to their interest in the contract.

Customs duties

The custom duty rates that apply on the importation of goods into Peruvian territory are 0%, 6% and 11%, depending on the tariff classification of the goods. Customs value is assessed using the valuation rules of the WTO (World Trade Organization). Most capital goods are covered by the 0% rate.

The importation of certain goods and inputs during an oil or gas exploration phase is tax-free; however, these goods must be included in a pre-published list that will be approved by means of a Ministerial Resolution.

Goods can be temporarily imported for a period of up to four years. Import taxes (customs duties, if applicable, plus VAT) are suspended for temporary imports.

Selective consumption tax

The selective consumption tax (Spanish acronym ISC) applies to luxury goods such as jewelry, cars, cigars, cigarettes, liquor, soft drinks, fuel and others. ISC rates range from 10% to 100%, generally based on the CIF (imports) or sale value, depending on the goods. However, for certain goods, such as soft drinks and fuel, the ISC is calculated on a specific basis depending on the amount of goods sold or imported.

| Selective consumption tax | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|------------------|
| Tariff heading | Products | S/. per gallon | US\$ per gallon* |
| 2710.11.13.10 | Gasoline for motors with Research Octane Number (RON) less than 84 | 1.36 | 0.46 |
| 2710.11.19.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.20.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.13.20 | With RON equal or over 84, but less than 90 | 1.36 | 0.46 |
| 2710.11.19.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.20.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.13.30 | With RON equal or over 90, but less than 95 | 1.78 | 0.60 |
| 2710.11.19.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.20.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.13.40 | With RON equal or above 95, but less than 97 | 2.07 | 0.69 |
| 2710.11.19.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.20.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.13.50 | With RON equal or above 97 | 2.30 | 0.77 |
| 2710.11.19.00 | | | |
| 2710.11.20.00 | | | |
| 2710.19.14.00/ 2710.19.15.90 | Kerosene and Jet Fuels (Turbo A1), except certain sales in the country or imports of airships | 1.94 | 0.65 |
| 2710.19.15.90 | Jet Fuels (Turbo A1) only for: ▶ Certified air operators according to Law 27261 ▶ Certified aviation fuel marketers | 0.26 | 0.09 |
| 2710.19.21.10/ 2710.19.21.90 | Gas oils, except Diesel B2 | 1.47 | 0.49 |
| 2710.29.21.20 | Diesel B2 | 1.44 | 0.48 |
| 2710.19.22.10 | Residual 6, except sales in the country or imports by certified seacraft fuel marketers | 0.52 | 0.17 |
| 2710.19.22.90 | Other fuels | 0.50 | 0.17 |

Taxable persons for ISC purchases are producers and economically related enterprises engaged in domestic sales of listed goods, importers of listed goods, importers and economically related enterprises engaged in domestic sales of listed goods, and organizers of gambling activities.

Liability to ISC arises under the same rules that apply to VAT.

To avoid double taxation, a credit is granted for any ISC paid on imports and in other specific cases.

I. Other taxes

Financial transaction tax

Operations made through Peruvian bank accounts (deposits and withdrawals) are subject to a financial transaction tax, charged at the rate of 0.005%.

Temporary net assets tax

Temporary net assets tax (Spanish acronym ITAN) has been in force since fiscal year 2005 and is equal to 0.4% of the value of the total assets over PEN1 million. The ITAN obligation is determined based on the balance sheet as of 31 December of the previous year.

ITAN may be paid in a single amount or nine monthly quotas (i.e., a fractional payment). In the first case, the payment must be made with the ITAN return submitted in April. ITAN payments may be used as a tax credit to offset income tax liabilities (i.e., monthly prepayments and the income tax payment due when the annual income tax return is filed).

Likewise, according to the ITAN law, taxpayers that are obliged to pay taxes abroad related to income arising from Peruvian sources may choose to pay the ITAN due with the amount paid for the monthly prepayments of income tax. This option may be used only if the taxpayer has chosen to make the payment in fractional amounts.

Taxpayers choose the option by filing a sworn declaration; this declaration must be submitted when the taxpayer files its ITAN returns. If the declaration is not filed on time, it is considered not submitted and, therefore, the taxpayer may not apply for the option for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Taxpayers that choose this option may use the amount paid as a tax credit, as shown in the next table.

| Income tax prepayment corresponding to period | May be used as a tax credit against the quota of ITAN expiring in the corresponding month |
|---|---|
| March | April |
| April | May |
| May | June |
| June | July |
| July | August |
| August | September |
| September | October |
| October | November |
| November | December |

If the amount of the income tax prepayments is higher than the amount of the ITAN to be offset, according to the chart above, the balance may not be used against the next quota.

If the taxpayer chooses the option and directly pays some quotas of ITAN, it may not use the ITAN paid as a credit against income tax. In such cases, the ITAN paid may be regarded as an expense.

The income tax prepayments, which have been used as a tax credit against the ITAN, may also be used as a tax credit (without a right of refund) against the income tax due.

Municipal taxes

Real estate tax

The real estate tax affects real estate held by corporations and individuals. The tax rates are determined using a progressive accumulative scale based on the property's value, as set out in the table below.

| Real estate value | Rate |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Up to 15 tax units | 0.2% |
| More than 15 and up to 60 tax units | 0.6% |
| More than 60 tax units | 1.0% |

Vehicle tax

The vehicle tax applies to vehicles held by corporations and individuals. The tax rate is 1% of the original value upon acquisition or importation of the vehicle.

This tax applies to vehicles registered with the Vehicular Properties Office of the Public Registry in the previous three years.

Alcabala tax

Real estate transfers are subject to a 3% alcabala (sales) tax. The taxable base is the transfer value, which cannot be less than the self-assessed value of the property. The first 10 tax units are exempt.

Alcabala tax must be paid by the purchaser within the calendar month following the month the transfer is made.

J. Other tax issues

General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR)

Starting from 19 July 2012, a GAAR rule has been introduced into the Peruvian Tax Code to assist the tax administration in responding to situations of tax avoidance and simulated transactions.

When facing tax avoidance situations, the tax administration will be able to coercively request the corresponding tax debt, reduce tax credits or tax losses, or eliminate a tax benefit (including the restitution of taxes unduly refunded). To exercise the powers under the GAAR, the tax administration must determine two things, namely that:

- ▶ The taxpayer has performed artificial or improper acts to achieve a specific tax result – whether individual or jointly with others
- ▶ The use of such artificial or improper acts has created legal or economic results different than regular tax savings obtained from routine or proper acts.

Despite the aforementioned, the Government has recently suspended the application of the General Anti-Avoidance Rule, with the exception of the provisions of the first and last paragraphs relating to acts, facts and situations prior to July 19, 2012.

Profit sharing

Employers are obliged to distribute a share of their profits among their employees. The rate depends on the company's activity, as follows:

- ▶ Fishing – 10%
- ▶ Telecom – 10%
- ▶ Industry – 10%
- ▶ Mining – 8%, including exploitation of coal mines; production of petroleum and natural gas; and extraction of iron, uranium, thorium, iron-free minerals, construction stone, clay, talc, sand and gravel, feldspar and salt
- ▶ Commerce and restaurants – 8%
- ▶ Other – 5%, including farming, stockbreeding and forestry; production and distribution of electricity; production of gas; transportation services and services related to air transportation (such as travel agencies, storage and deposit); financial services of insurance and real estate; legal, audit and accounting activities; business consulting, consulting related to informatics and data processing; and advertising, health and medical services, and education

Many oil and gas companies calculate their employee benefit rates using the 5% rate, and the validity of such action has been a matter of discussion at the judicial level.

Profit sharing is calculated on pretax income, and the amount is deductible as an expense for determining income tax. An example of the combined-effect calculation using a 5% profit-sharing rate follows:

- ▶ Net income: say 100
- ▶ Profit sharing: 5
- ▶ Net income for CIT purposes: 95
- ▶ Income tax (30% of 95): 28.5
- ▶ Combined effect: $28.5 + 5 = 33.5$ (33.5% of net income)

It must be noted that the 30% rate includes the 28% CIT rate for 2015-2016, plus the 2% premium applicable to oil and gas license and service contracts.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime: corporate tax and production sharing

- ▶ Production sharing – The service contractor receives its share of petroleum as a service fee of up to 40% of the net proceeds from petroleum operations, and the Government share under a service contract is not to be less than 60% of the net proceeds.
- ▶ Bonuses – Bonuses are payable by the contractor to the Government upon signing, discovery or production, but only if stipulated in the service contract.
- ▶ Corporate income tax rate – The service contractor is subject to the corporate income tax (CIT) of 30% based on net income, as provided under the 1997 Tax Code for the country, as amended by Section 28(A)(1) of the Republic Act No. 9337.
- ▶ Capital allowances – Accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.
- ▶ Investment incentives – The service contractor is entitled to exemption from all taxes, except income tax.

B. Fiscal regime

The Philippines Government, through its Department of Energy, as owner of natural resources (including oil and gas reserves) in the Philippines, may directly explore for and produce indigenous petroleum. It may also enter into a service agreement with a service contractor for the exploration and development of oilfields under Presidential Decree (PD) No. 87, as amended (otherwise known as the Oil Exploration and Development Act of 1972). The agreement is embodied in a service contract with the Philippine Government.

The service contractor receives its share of petroleum as a service fee equivalent to no more than 40% of the net proceeds from the petroleum operations (under the Department of Energy Model Service Contract pursuant to PD No. 87, as amended). The service contractor's income is subject to CIT at a rate of 30% based on net income (proceeds), as provided under the 1997 Tax Code, as amended by Section 28(A)(1) of the Republic Act No. 9337.

Petroleum operations

“Petroleum operations” are defined as searching for and obtaining petroleum within the Philippines through drilling and pressure, or suction, or similar activities and other operations incidental to these activities. The term includes the transportation, storage, handling and sale, whether for export or for domestic consumption, of petroleum, but does not include any transportation of petroleum outside the Philippines, processing or refining at a refinery, or any transactions in the products so refined (Section 3(d) of PD No. 87, as amended).

Net proceeds

“Net proceeds” are defined as the gross income less the recoverable operating expenses and the Filipino Participation Incentive Allowance (FPIA).

Gross proceeds

“Gross proceeds” are defined as the proceeds from the sale, exchange or disposition of all petroleum, crude oil, natural gas or casing head petroleum spirit produced under the service contract and sold or exchanged during the calendar year, and all such other income that is incidental to or arising from any one or more of the petroleum operations under the contract.

Deductions

At the outset, operating expenses incurred by a service contractor are reimbursed by the Philippine Government. The reimbursement may not exceed 70% of the gross proceeds from production in any year. If the operating expenses exceed 70% of the gross proceeds from production in any year, unrecovered expenses may be recovered from the operations of the succeeding years (PD No. 87, as amended by PD No. 1857). There is no time limitation for recovery on the carryforward of unrecovered expenses to succeeding years.

Recoverable expenses

In arriving at the net proceeds, the following are allowable deductions (reimbursable expenses) for the contractor.

General expenses

All ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred by the contractor during the taxable year in carrying on the petroleum operations under a service contract (Rev. Reg. 1-81).

Interest

In general, interest expense paid or incurred within the taxable year is deductible (to the extent of two-thirds of the amount), except for interest on any loan or indebtedness incurred to finance exploration expenditures, for which no interest deductions will be allowed (PD No. 1857, amending PD No. 87). The prohibition on the deductibility of interest with respect to indebtedness incurred to finance petroleum exploration is explained in Section 34(B)(2)(c) of the 1997 Tax Code.

Depreciation

The service contractor is granted the option of using the straight-line or double-declining-balance method of depreciation on all tangible assets initially placed in service in a taxable year and directly related to the production of petroleum. The method elected for a particular taxable year must be used for assets placed in service during that year.

The general rule is that the useful life of assets used in, or related to, production of petroleum is 10 years, or such shorter life as allowed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. The useful life is five years under the straight-line depreciation method for property not used directly in the production of petroleum (Section 34(F)(4), 1997 Tax Code; Section 6(e), Rev. Reg. 1-81).

However, pursuant to PD No. 1857, the depreciation of all tangible exploration costs, such as capital expenditures and other recoverable capital assets, are to be depreciated for a period of 5 years using the straight-line or double-declining-balance method of depreciation, at the option of the contractor.

Intangible development and drilling expenses

Intangible development and drilling expenses for producing wells – If these are incurred after the commencement of commercial production, they can be allowed as a deduction in the taxable year they are paid or incurred. The contractor has the option to capitalize and amortize these costs on the basis of the recoverable units of reserves in the particular oilfield involved plus the units produced and sold during the same year from that oilfield, or over a shorter amortization schedule as allowed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue (Section 6(h), Rev. Reg. 1-81).

If the contractor chooses to capitalize and amortize the drilling expense of producing wells (including any well that is subsequently determined to have failed to find petroleum in commercial quantities), all unamortized costs regarding the well may be deducted in full in the year of the determination (Section 6(i), Rev. Reg. 1-81).

Intangible exploration costs

Intangible exploration costs – These can be reimbursed in full under the provisions of PD No. 1857.

Abandonment losses

Abandonment losses – If a contract area is abandoned, any expenditure incurred on or after 1 January 1979 may be deducted from the income derived from any other activity as an abandonment loss. The unamortized costs of a previously producing well and undepreciated costs of equipment are allowed as a deduction in the year that the well, equipment or facilities are abandoned by the contractor (Rev. Reg. 1-81).

Filipino participation incentive allowance

Filipino Participation Incentive Allowance – An FPIA is allowed as a deduction under general principles for computing taxable net income (Section 21(1), PD No. 87). An FPIA is the subsidy granted by the Government to a service contractor if Philippine citizens or corporations have a minimum participating interest of 15% in the contract area. An incentive not exceeding 7.5% of the gross proceeds may be computed by deducting the FPIA from the market price of crude oil produced under the contract and sold during the year (Section 28, PD No. 87).

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

A service contractor is granted the option of using the straight-line or double-declining balance method of depreciation for all tangible assets initially placed in service in a taxable year that are directly related to the production of petroleum. The method elected for a particular taxable year must be used for all assets placed in service during the year.

The general rule is that the useful life of assets used in, or related to, production of petroleum is 10 years, or such shorter life as allowed by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. The useful life of property not used directly in the production of petroleum is 5 years under the straight-line depreciation method (Section 34(F)(4), 1997 Tax Code; Section 6(e), Rev. Reg. 1-81).

However, under PD No. 1857, all tangible exploration costs, such as capital expenditures and other recoverable capital assets, are to be depreciated for a period of 5 years, using the straight-line or double-declining balance method of depreciation, at the option of the contractor.

D. Incentives

Under PD No. 87, known as the Oil Exploration and Development Act of 1972, the following fiscal incentives are provided for petroleum service contractors:

- ▶ A service fee of up to 40% of net production (note that, Section 18(b) of PD No. 87 provides that the annual share of the Government, including all taxes paid by or on behalf of the contractor, shall not be less than 60% of net production)
- ▶ Cost reimbursement of up to 70% of gross production with carryforward of unrecovered costs
- ▶ FPIA grants of up to 7.5% of the gross proceeds for service contracts with a minimum Philippine company or citizen participation of 15%
- ▶ Exemption from all taxes except income tax (although for service contracts executed after 1991, a local business tax ranging from 0.5% to 3% of gross receipts may be imposed)
- ▶ Exemption from all taxes and duties for the importation of materials and equipment for petroleum operations
- ▶ Easy repatriation of investments and profit
- ▶ Free-market determination of crude oil prices (i.e., prices realized in a transaction between independent persons dealing at arm's length)
- ▶ A special income tax rate of the 8% of gross Philippine income for subcontractors (although for subcontracts executed after 1991, a local business tax ranging from 0.5% to 3% of gross receipts may be imposed)
- ▶ A special income tax of 15% of Philippine income for foreign employees of service contractors and subcontractors (and for Filipinos employed and occupying the same positions)

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends received by a domestic or resident foreign corporation from a domestic corporation (i.e., a locally incorporated petroleum service contractor) are not subject to income tax.

Dividends received by a nonresident corporation from a locally incorporated petroleum service contractor are subject to withholding tax (WHT) at 30%. The tax is reduced to 15% if the recipient foreign corporation is a resident of a country that does not impose any tax on dividends received from foreign sources or allows a credit against the tax due from the nonresident foreign corporation taxes deemed to have been paid in the Philippines, equivalent to 15%.

However, if the recipient is a resident of a country with which the Philippines has a tax treaty, the more favorable tax treaty rate applies. In order to be eligible for the favorable tax treaty rate, the income recipient must file a tax treaty relief application (TTRA) with the Philippine Bureau of Internal Revenue before the occurrence of the first taxable event. For purposes of the TTRA, the first taxable event is the first or only time when the income payor is required to withhold tax, or should have withheld tax had the transaction been subjected to WHT.

Interest

In general, the 1997 Tax Code imposes a final WHT of 20% on interest on foreign loans received by a nonresident foreign corporation (Section 29(B)(5) (a)). However, if the lender is a resident of a country with which the Philippines has a tax treaty, the more favorable tax treaty rate applies. In order to be eligible for the favorable tax treaty rate, a TTRA must be filed with the BIR.

Royalties

Royalties (e.g., payments for the supply in the Philippines of scientific, technical, industrial or commercial knowledge or information) paid to a domestic or resident foreign corporation are subject to a 20% final tax. Royalties paid to a nonresident foreign corporation are subject to 30%

income tax, or the treaty rate if the recipient is a resident of a country with which the Philippines has a tax treaty, in which case the tax is withheld at source plus a 12% final withholding VAT. In order to be eligible for the favorable tax treaty rate, a TTRA must be filed with the BIR.

Technical services

Fees or income derived by nonresident foreign corporations for performing technical services (not related to petroleum operations) within the Philippines are generally subject to a 30% final WHT based on the gross amount.

If the provider of technical services is a domestic corporation or a resident foreign corporation, it is subject to regular CIT or the minimum corporate income tax (MCIT), whichever is higher. Beginning with the 4th taxable year immediately following the year when a corporation commences its business operations, MCIT is imposed if this tax exceeds the tax computed under the normal tax rules. As provided for by Sections 27(E) and 28(A)(2) of the 1997 Tax Code, as amended, in computing the gross income subject to the 2% MCIT for sellers of services, "gross income" means gross receipts less sales returns, allowances, discounts and the cost of services. "Cost of services" means all direct costs and expenses necessarily incurred to provide the services required by customers and clients. It includes salaries and employee benefits of personnel, consultants and specialists directly rendering the service, and the cost of facilities directly utilized in providing the service, such as depreciation, rental equipment and costs of supplies. Any excess of the MCIT above the normal tax may be carried forward and credited against the normal tax for the three immediately succeeding taxable years.

For as long as the services are performed in the Philippines, a 12% VAT on gross receipts applies.

In the case of technical services related to petroleum operations, Section 1 of PD No. 1354 applies. It provides that every subcontractor, whether domestic or foreign, that enters into a contract with a service contractor engaged in petroleum operations in the Philippines is liable for a final income tax equivalent to 8% of its gross income derived from the contract. The 8% final tax is in lieu of all national and local taxes. A petroleum subcontractor provides the means necessary for the service contractor to pursue its petroleum operations (*Zapata Marine Service Ltd., S.A. vs. CIR*, CTA Case No. 3384, 30 March 1987).

Note, however, that for subcontracts executed after 1991, a local business tax ranging from 0.5% to 3% of gross receipts may be imposed.

Branch remittance tax

A branch profits remittance tax (BPRT) of 15%, or the treaty rate if the branch is a resident of a country with which the Philippines has a tax treaty, applies to any profit remitted by a branch to its head office. The tax is based on the total profit earmarked for remittance without any deduction for the tax component (Section 28(A)(5), 1997 Tax Code). In order to be eligible for the favorable tax treaty rate, a TTRA must be filed with the BIR.

F. Financing considerations

Under PD No. 1857, two-thirds of the interest expense paid or incurred within the tax year is deductible and reimbursable (except for interest on loans incurred to finance exploration expenditures).

G. Transactions

In general, gains derived from the sale of assets, such as machinery and equipment used in business, are subject to 30% income tax and 12% VAT.

Gains from the sale of shares of stock not listed or traded in the local stock exchange are subject to 5% capital gains tax (CGT) on net gains not exceeding PHP100,000, and to 10% tax on the excess.

A documentary stamp tax (DST) also applies to the sale or transfer of shares at the rate of PHP0.75 per PHP200 par value.

H. Other

A service contractor must register with the Department of Energy all existing service contracts and all contracts to be entered into relating to oil operations between the service contractor and a subcontractor engaged in petroleum operations (Section 6, Rev. Regs. 15-78).

Administrative contracts do not need to be registered, but the contractor must provide a copy to the Department of Energy (Section 6, Rev. Regs. 15-78).

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Poland to the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), capital gains tax (CGT), VAT, excise duty and real estate tax (RET), as follows:

- ▶ CIT rate – 19%
- ▶ Capital gains tax (CGT) rate – 19%
- ▶ Branch tax rate – 19%
- ▶ VAT rate – 23%
- ▶ RET rate – 2%.

A new fiscal regime, which includes two new taxes for the hydrocarbon sector, is being introduced from 2016. The enabling law has already been passed by the Polish Parliament and approved by the President.

B. Fiscal regime

Current fiscal regime

The fiscal regime for upstream business is currently under-regulated in Polish tax law. The main current tax issues are: CIT/VAT treatment of joint operations (timing of revenue recognition, treatment of buy-in payments, farm-in/farm-out), CIT treatment of E&E expenses, and asset recognition (e.g., dry wells). These issues are therefore presented based on the general CIT and VAT regulations, and the practice of the tax authorities (expressed in the official tax rulings issued by the Ministry of Finance).

New fiscal regime for hydrocarbon sector from 2016

The new law concerning the regulatory and tax framework for the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons will come in force in 2016, (the new *ad valorem* royalties, however, will not be payable until 2020, as per the new law). The law introduces a hybrid model of taxation consisting of a special hydrocarbons tax chargeable on a cash basis (cashflow tax), and *ad valorem* royalty (i.e., the tax on the extraction of selected minerals). Other key areas of amendment relate to changes in the concession-granting system and significant changes to concessions transfers and trading.

Special Hydrocarbons Tax (SHT)

SHT will be a profit-based tax imposed on an excess of sale revenues over eligible expenses related to the hydrocarbons extraction business, both onshore and offshore, with rates linked to investor returns.

As a rule, revenues will include monies received, monetary values and the value of receivables settled in kind from supplies of the extracted hydrocarbons. Eligible expenses will be all expenses incurred to generate revenue or retain/secure a source of revenue, including expenses to explore, appraise, extract, store or supply hydrocarbons and to wind up the hydrocarbon extraction business.

The SHT will be charged based on a cash basis; however, some exemptions are provided to tax revenues on an accrual basis, e.g. if the sale proceeds are not paid within three months from the supply of hydrocarbons.

If the ratio of revenues cumulated from the beginning of the entity's extraction activity over cumulative eligible expenses would be higher than 1.5 and lower than 2.0, a progressive rate between 12.5% and 24.9% would apply to profit in a given year; a 25 % rate would apply if the ratio were to be higher than 2.0. A ratio below 1.5 will not trigger SHT (the applicable tax rate is 0%).

Since SHT should be charged only on upstream activities, ring fencing will be applicable in the case of an entity undertaking upstream and downstream activities simultaneously. However, no ring-fencing rules are envisaged where the entity holds several upstream projects.

The new tax regime will come into force in 2016. However, tax holidays from both new levies (SHT and royalty tax) are envisaged in a transition period lasting till 2020.

Tax on the mining of certain minerals (royalty tax)

Royalty tax is chargeable on the extraction of natural gas and oil. The taxable base is the value of the extracted natural gas and oil. The tax base is calculated as the volume of the extracted natural gas and oil multiplied by the average price of natural gas (MWh), determined by reference to the daily quotations at Towarowa Gielda Energii S.A., or the average price of oil per tonne established by reference to the prices of oil set by OPEC, respectively. The Minister of Finance will announce the prices by the 15th day of each month.

The rate of royalty tax (determined by the technical parameters of a deposit, i.e., average permeability or average effective porosity) will be:

- ▶ For natural gas – 1.5% (unconventional deposits), 3% (conventional deposits)
- ▶ For oil – 3% (unconventional deposits), 6% (conventional deposits)

The tax point is the day when natural gas or oil is released into a pipeline or directly to a distribution network, or where it is loaded into a vehicle/vessel.

Like SHT, the royalty tax is scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2016; liability to pay the tax will not apply for hydrocarbons extracted prior to 1 January 2020.

Relation between CIT, SHT and royalty tax

Relations between CIT, SHT and royalty tax can be characterized as follows:

- ▶ Neither SHT nor royalty tax will be a deductible cost for CIT purposes
- ▶ Paid CIT and royalty tax related to oil and gas exploration activities will be deductible for SHT purposes (being eligible costs)
- ▶ 19% of cumulative CIT losses from extraction activities which have not been carried forward in whole (because of the expiry of the five-year period) will be deductible from the royalty tax

C. Corporate income tax

Corporations operating in Poland are subject to CIT on their Polish-sourced income at a rate of 19%. This rate applies to any type of income, including that from oil and gas activities.

CIT basis

Taxable income in a given year is the difference between aggregated taxable revenues and aggregated tax-deductible costs. Accumulated expenditures on an unsuccessful investment (usually recognized in the books as an asset under construction) may also constitute the tax-deductible cost provided that the investment is no longer continued (i.e., liquidated or sold).

Tax losses

Aggregated annual tax-deductible costs exceeding annual taxable revenues constitute a tax loss. Losses may be carried forward to the following five tax years to offset income that is derived in those years. Up to 50% of the original loss may offset income in any of the five tax years. Losses may not be carried back.

Ring-fencing

Poland does not apply ring-fencing in determining an entity's corporate tax liability in relation to its oil and gas activities. Profit from one project can be offset against losses from another project held by the same Polish legal entity and, similarly, profits and losses from upstream activities can be offset against downstream activities undertaken by the same Polish entity. A new oil and gas taxation approach in this respect will, however, be introduced by regulations on special hydrocarbons tax (see earlier in Section B).

Unconventional oil and gas

For income tax purposes, no special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas – but see earlier in Section B where royalties on unconventional oil and gas are envisaged in the new legislation.

D. Capital allowances

Depreciation

For tax purposes, depreciation calculated in accordance with the statutory rates (or below) is deductible. Depreciation is usually calculated using the straight-line method, but in certain circumstances the reducing-balance method may be allowed. The following table shows some of the applicable annual straight-line rates.

| Type of depreciating asset | Rate (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Buildings | 1.5 to 10 |
| Wells | 4.5 |
| Machinery and equipment | 7 to 18 |
| Computers | 30 |

Accelerated depreciation is available for machinery and equipment, but not for wells.

Additionally, starting from 2016, the individually set tax amortization rate may be applicable to:

- Wells and mining/drilling,
- Drilling or production platforms

The individual rate cannot, however, be higher than 20%.

E. Incentives

Research and development (R&D) relief applies to expenses for innovative technologies that can be classified as intangibles, and 150% of expenses can be deducted from the taxable base.

F. Withholding taxes

The rate for withholding tax (WHT) on dividends is 19%. The rate for WHT on interest and royalties is 20%. However, the rates may be reduced for countries with which Poland has negotiated double tax treaties, or in line with European Union directives.

G. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

From 1 January 2015, new rules for thin capitalization in CIT came into force in Poland. Thin capitalization restrictions apply if an entity's debt-to-equity (equity is understood as share capital and other reserves) ratio exceeds 1:1 and loans are drawn from directly or indirectly affiliated companies with a minimum shareholding level of 25%.

Transition tax

As a rule, a 2% transfer tax is chargeable on such a debt, unless specific exemptions apply (shareholder's debt is not subject to transfer tax).

H. Transactions

Asset disposals

It is not possible to sell licenses or oil and gas extraction permits. It is possible to sell an enterprise as a property complex, together with all its assets and liabilities (but not licenses) as a whole. Such a transaction is outside the scope of VAT.

Farm-in and farm-out

Polish tax law does not recognize farm-ins and farm-outs, as the license issued by the State cannot be traded; therefore farm-ins and farm-outs are exercised through joint ventures, joint operations or share deals.

Joint operations

The Polish CIT Act outlines a general rule on the allocation of profits (i.e., revenues and costs) applicable among others to a joint undertaking. Assuming that cooperation is considered a joint undertaking within the meaning of the CIT Act, the CIT settlements between parties should be established in line with the above-mentioned provision and the general CIT rules.

The revenue generated within a joint undertaking should be allocated to the parties according to their shares in the undertaking, as declared in the agreement between the parties. This rule should be applied accordingly to tax-deductible costs, costs not deductible for tax, tax exemptions and tax reliefs. Here, the rule affects the recognition of revenues (and costs), in particular during the exploration and production (E&P) phase.

Currently, the tax authorities tend to accept that upstream cooperation should follow the CIT rules applicable to joint ventures. What is still unclear is the point of revenue recognition for the operators when non-operators provide extra funding for the operations in excess of their participation interest.

I. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is imposed on goods sold and services rendered in Poland, as well as on exports, imports and acquisitions and supplies of goods within the European Union. Poland has adopted most of the EU VAT rules.

Effective from 1 January 2011, the standard rate of VAT is 23%. Lower rates may apply to specified goods and services. A 0% rate applies to exports and supplies of goods within the EU. Certain goods and services are exempt altogether.

Excise duties

Excise duty is applied on energy products (including petroleum products), alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, electricity and passenger cars. The duty rates applying for petroleum products are shown in the table below.

| Item | Type of oil and gas product | Rate |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Engine gasolines | PLN1,540 per 1,000 liters |
| 2 | Diesel oils | PLN1,171 per 1,000 liters |
| 3 | Oils intended for heating purposes | PLN64 or PLN232 per 1,000 liters |
| 4 | Liquefied gases used for propulsion of combustion engines (LNG and LPG) | PLN670 per 1,000 liters |
| 5 | Other engine fuels | PLN1,797 per 1,000 liters |
| 6 | Other heating fuels | PLN64 to PLN232 per 1,000 liters |
| 7 | Gases used for propulsion of combustion engines in gaseous state | PLN10.54 per gigajoule |
| 8 | Gases for heating purposes | PLN1.28 per gigajoule |

Fuel charge

Placement on the domestic market of motor fuels and gas used to power internal combustion engines is subject to a fee, termed "fuel charge", paid by the producers and importers of motor fuels.

Motor fuels and gas subject to this fuel charge include:

- ▶ Motor gasoline with Combined Nomenclature (CN) codes: CN 2710 11 45 or CN 2710 11 49 and the products resulting from the mixing of these fuels with bio-components that meet the quality requirements specified in separate regulations (fuel charge in 2015 equal to PLN129,41 per 1,000 liters).
- ▶ Gas oils falling within CN code 2710 19 41 and the products resulting from the mixing of these oils with bio-components that meet the quality requirements specified in separate regulations (fuel charge in 2015 equal to PLN288,05 per 1,000 liters).
- ▶ Bio-components which are self-contained fuel, meeting the quality requirements specified in separate provisions for combustion engines, regardless of the CN code (fuel charge in 2015 equal to PLN288,05 per 1,000 liters).
- ▶ Natural gas (wet) and other gaseous hydrocarbons, aliphatic hydrocarbons and natural gas and liquefied gaseous state for combustion engines, codes CN 2711 and CN 2901 (fuel charge in 2015 equal to PLN159,71 per 1,000 liters).
- ▶ Products other than those mentioned above, intended for use, offered for sale, or used for combustion engines, regardless of the CN code (fuel charge in 2015 equal to PLN159,71 per 1,000 liters).

Transfer tax

As a general rule, the transfer tax applies to transactions made by entities that are not VAT registered (or those that are specifically exempt) and are not involved in professional commerce. Nevertheless, the transfer tax is also imposed on other businesses in specific situations: an incorporation of company and an increase of share capital is taxed at a rate of 0.5% on the

increased or created share capital value; any additional payment contributing to a company's supplementary capital is taxed at a 0.5% rate; transfers of shares are taxed at a 1% rate; and sales of real estate are taxed at a 2% rate.

Stamp duties

Stamp duty is levied by notaries and is generally capped at insignificant amounts.

Registration fees

There are no significant registration fees.

Other significant taxes

Real estate tax applies to land and buildings (rates per square meter) and all constructions (the rate is 2% p.a. of the initial value used for tax depreciation purposes). Many doubts surround the definition of "construction," in this context, and so the scope of RET taxation in the oil and gas industry is not entirely clear. Indeed, it has been the subject of disputes between taxpayers and the tax authorities. Close monitoring of the legislation and practice in this respect is required.

J. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

There are no foreign-exchange restrictions on inward or outward investments, apart from a requirement of disclosure imposed by a foreign-exchange law.

Gas to liquids

There is no special regime for gas-to-liquids conversion.

Concessions and mining usufruct agreements

The searching, exploration and production of natural resources are licensed activities. Concessions must be obtained separately for each activity or joint concessions maybe obtained. As the main rule under the Geological and Mining Act is that hydrocarbons are State-owned, upstream activities require concluding a mining usufruct agreement (MUA) with the Polish Government and are subject to an annual mining usufruct fee (in the form of an ad valorem fee based on the value of deposits) and annual extraction royalties (based on the volume of extracted minerals).

Annual extraction royalties for oil in 2015 will be PLN37,73/ton (t), whereas the royalties for gas will be PLN6,38/1000 m³ (high methane gas) and PLN5,31/1000 m³ (low methane gas).

New rates for the extraction royalty effective from 2016 will be as follows:

- ▶ PLN24 for 1000 m³ of extracted high methane gas (total extracted gas > 2500 k m³)
- ▶ PLN6,23 for 1000 m³ of extracted high methane gas (total extracted gas = < 2500 k m³)
- ▶ PLN20 for 1000 m³ of extracted low methane gas (total extracted gas > 2500 k m³)
- ▶ PLN5,18 for 1000 m³ of extracted low methane gas (total extracted gas = < 2500 k m³)
- ▶ PLN50 for 1 ton of extracted oil (total extracted oil > 1000 t)
- ▶ PLN36,84 for 1 ton of extracted oil (total extracted oil = < 1000 t)

Transfer pricing

Taxpayers carrying out transactions in excess of certain amounts, with related parties and permanent establishments of foreign companies operating in Poland, are required to prepare transfer pricing documentation.

The amounts referred to above are where the total transaction amount in a tax year exceeds the following limits:

- ▶ EUR100,000 if the transaction value does not exceed 20% of the share capital
-

- ▶ EUR30,000 if the transaction refers to services or intangibles
- ▶ EUR50,000 for other types of transaction between related entities

Taxpayers carrying out transactions, in which payments are made directly or indirectly to an entity in a territory or country recognized as a tax haven, are obliged to prepare tax documentation for such transactions when the total transaction amount in a tax year exceeds EUR 20,000.

The Polish transfer pricing regulations do not refer to the OECD Guidelines directly. Nevertheless, the tax authorities sometimes refer to the OECD Guidelines when applying transfer pricing principles; e.g., during APA negotiations.

There is no deadline for preparing the transfer pricing documentation; however, taxpayers are required to submit the documentation within seven days of the tax authorities' request. Otherwise the penalty CIT rate of 50% may be applicable to the income estimated by the tax authorities.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

■ Royalties

■ Profit-based special taxes

■ Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Fiscal Regime – Traditionally, the State of Qatar has favored production sharing contracts (PSCs) as the mechanism for agreements between the Government and oil and gas companies. However, more recent agreements have been drafted as development and fiscal agreements (DFAs).

The principal elements of the fiscal regime for oil and gas companies in Qatar are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 35%. Note that the rate of 35% is applicable to companies carrying out petroleum operations as defined under Law No. 3 of 2007; certain PSCs may define a higher CIT rate. Please see section B for full details.
- ▶ Royalty rate – Payable on the total sales under a DFA with the rate(s) set by each DFA.
- ▶ Bonuses – Payable under a PSC at signature and based upon production targets. DFAs do not include bonuses.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate tax

Companies carrying on petroleum operations in Qatar are subject to CIT in accordance with the specific terms of agreements negotiated with the State, which is represented by the national oil company (NOC) of Qatar. "Petroleum operations" are defined by Law No. 3 of 2007 as the exploration for petroleum, improving oil fields, drilling, well repair and completion; the production, processing and refining of petroleum; and the storage, transportation, loading and shipping of crude oil and natural gas.

The CIT rate applicable to companies carrying out petroleum activities is generally 35% (or rates ranging from 35% to 55% for agreements that precede the enactment of Law No. 21 of 2009 (the Income Tax Law)).

Fiscal agreements

Taxable income is determined in accordance with the provisions of the underlying PSC or DFA.

PSC arrangements generally involve the following elements:

- ▶ All risks are borne by the company. Expenditures for exploration, development, production and related activities are fully funded by the company and the Government does not fund any activity.
- ▶ The company is responsible for all costs but entitled to recovery out of annual production.
- ▶ Exploration and development costs are generally capitalized, and depreciated on a straight-line basis.
- ▶ Production is shared between the company and the NOC (there being no concept of the sharing of profits).
- ▶ The PSC will provide for signature and production bonuses, which are not cost-recoverable.
- ▶ "Pay on behalf" arrangements are no longer offered by the NOC.
- ▶ The Government is usually not entitled to a royalty.

It is worth noting that as Qatar's oil and gas market matures, a shift is being observed from traditional PSCs to DFAs. This is most often the case when contractors come to renew their existing PSCs.

Joint venture arrangements typically see the NOC and an oil and gas company establish a joint venture company. That joint venture company in turn enters into a development agreement with the Government of the State of Qatar. The royalties payable under such joint venture agreements are directly linked to both the production levels and the market rate for the product produced.

Taxable income

Under a PSC, the taxable income for the purposes of determination of Qatar CIT is defined in the PSC and is generally defined as the total sums received from the sale or other disposition of the company's share of all net production ("petroleum revenues") less allowable petroleum costs.

Under a DFA, the tax is paid at the level of the joint venture company and computed in line with the Income Tax Law and specific computational clauses in the DFA.

Petroleum revenues

"Petroleum revenues" here represent the sales value of the company's share of net production, as measured at the point of delivery but as adjusted for over- and under-lifting and any change in inventories at year-end.

Petroleum costs

All expenditure and costs defined by a PSC as exploration, appraisal and development costs are capitalized and carried forward for recovery against future production revenues or write-off at the time of relinquishment of interests.

Expenditure qualifying for cost recovery is subject to specific rules in the PSC. Generally, the PSC requires that costs and expenses of activities carried out by the company or its affiliates are included in recoverable costs only to the extent that such costs and expenses are directly or indirectly identifiable with such activities, and should be limited to the actual costs that are fair and reasonable.

Certain costs are specifically prohibited for cost recovery. Excluded costs include bonuses paid by the company to the Government in accordance with the PSC, the company's Qatari income taxes paid in accordance with the PSC, and foreign income taxes and other foreign taxes paid by the company.

Additionally, the following costs are generally disallowed:

- ▶ Finance costs
 - ▶ Marketing and sponsorship costs
-

- ▶ General head office/shareholder costs
- ▶ “Personal” costs
- ▶ “Unnecessary” costs (e.g., those arising from inefficiencies or waste, or what may be determined as “excessive” amounts)

The Government of Qatar does not generally enter into “pay on behalf” arrangements any more. However, under some older PSCs the oil company CIT may still be paid by the NOC on the company’s behalf. The NOC settles the company’s tax liability from its share of production, and the tax authorities issue a tax receipt and a tax certificate for the taxes that apply to the company.

Since under DFAs a joint venture company is established, such companies are not subject to cost recovery or profit restrictions.

Losses

Under the Income Tax Law, losses may be carried forward for three years but may not be carried back.

Loss carryforward restrictions do not apply to PSCs because the entire cost allowed is carried forward for future recovery.

Ring-fencing

Historically, operations under each PSC have been ring-fenced. However, under more recent agreements this has been relaxed so that revenues and costs from outside the agreement have been allowed to be introduced in computing net taxable profit.

For DFAs, such ring-fencing issues do not apply as activities are assessed to CIT at the level of the joint venture company.

Oil service companies

Oil and gas service companies are taxed at a 10% tax rate.

Resource rent tax

Qatar does not have a resource rent tax.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas activities in Qatar.

C. Capital allowances

Under PSCs, capital costs are generally capitalized, and depreciated on a straight-line basis from the quarter in which the capital cost is incurred. The most recent agreements have provided for a rate of 5% per quarter (20% per annum) with no limit on cost recovery.

Capital costs incurred under a DFA are capitalized and depreciated in line with the Income Tax Law. The Executive Regulations to the Income Tax Law provide specific depreciation rates for various asset classes. Depreciation is calculated by applying the following rates to the actual total cost on a straight-line basis:

- ▶ Buildings, pipelines and storage tanks – 5%
- ▶ Ships and vessels – 10%
- ▶ Aircraft – 20%
- ▶ Drilling tools – 15%

Depreciation is applied to other categories of assets on a pooled basis at the following rates:

- ▶ Computers – 33%
 - ▶ Plant and equipment – 20%
 - ▶ Office furniture and fittings – 15%
-

D. Investment incentives

All incentives under development and fiscal agreements are dependent on fiscal negotiations with the Government. The typical incentives offered under the Foreign Capital Investment Law include the following:

- ▶ A 6-year tax holiday (although it is very unlikely any contractor operating in the upstream oil and gas sector under a PSC or DFA would be granted such an exemption)
- ▶ Customs duty exemptions until the start of commercial production
- ▶ Land lease of 50 years at subsidized rates
- ▶ No restriction on repatriation of capital and dividends
- ▶ Feedstock gas or gas reserves at subsidized rates
- ▶ Favorable treatment with respect to compliance with general commercial, tax and other regulatory requirements in Qatar.

E. Withholding taxes and double tax treaties

Payments made to foreign companies that are not tax resident or that do not have a permanent establishment in Qatar are subject to a final withholding tax (WHT).

WHT is applicable at the following rates:

- ▶ 5% – on the gross amount of royalties as well as technical services rendered partially or wholly in Qatar.
- ▶ 7% – on the gross amount of interest, commissions, brokerage fees, director's fees and fees for any other payments in relation to services rendered partially or wholly in Qatar.

Thus, if an entity in Qatar makes any of these payments to a foreign company, it must deduct either 5% or 7% WHT from such payments and remit this to the tax authorities, as appropriate.

WHT is not levied on dividends and certain categories of interest.

Relief may be available from WHT under a relevant double tax treaty. Qatar currently has 57 double tax treaties in force.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

Interest paid to a head office or related party may not be deductible for tax purposes and such interest is not subject to WHT.

The accounting and tax treatment of finance costs are generally determined in accordance with the specific agreements underlying the oil and gas project; however, finance costs are a non-recoverable cost under most PSCs.

G. Transactions

Farm-ins, farm-outs and assignments

Farm-ins, farm-outs and assignments are permissible; however, before any agreement is entered into, it is mandatory for the contractor to obtain written authorization from the NOC (under a PSC) or the joint-venture partner (under a DFA), which will generally also be the NOC.

Under the terms of the PSC or DFA, any assignment should be free of transfer or related taxes, charges or fees (other than those that are customary administrative costs).

Asset disposals

Under a PSC, if the assets that qualify for cost recovery are sold, the proceeds are offset against recoverable costs or remitted to the NOC (i.e., they are considered to be the assets of the NOC). A balancing charge or allowance does not apply.

Relinquishment

The taxation of a disposal or relinquishment of an interest in a PSC is governed by the specific provisions of the PSC; however, these disposals are generally not subject to taxation.

Government buy-in rights

Under the most recent PSCs, the Government of Qatar has retained the right to acquire up to 65% of the contractor's interest until 30 days after the development plan is submitted. Such buy-in can by law only be made at cost (plus LIBOR interest on costs incurred).

H. Indirect taxes

Customs duty and legalization fees are the only indirect taxes currently imposed in Qatar.

Customs duty

Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and follows the Unified Customs Law applicable throughout the GCC. The uniform customs duty of 5% applies on all imports. This means that any goods that come into a port of entry of a GCC Member State that have already been subjected to customs duty in any GCC Member State are not subject to customs duty again in the import state.

An exemption or reimbursement of customs duty will depend on the wording of the PSC or DFA. The import of drilling rigs is an exempt import under the GCC customs regulations.

Legalization fees

Commercial invoices must be legalized by the Commercial Department of the Qatari Embassy in the country of origin, or by the customs authorities at the point of import into Qatar. Legalization fees are levied on the basis of invoice value and range from QAR100 on an invoice value of QAR5,000 to 0.4% of value for invoice amounts in excess of QAR1 million.

Free trade agreements

The Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA) has established preferential treatment for goods of GAFTA member origin. GAFTA maintains that goods originating from Arab countries (i.e., countries signed up to GAFTA, including Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and the GCC Member States) may receive preferential treatment from a customs duty perspective when imported into another GAFTA member country. The provisions of GAFTA state that in order to treat a good as "Arab" they must meet the rules of origin, and the value added as a result of production in a GAFTA country must not be less than 40% of the finished good.

In addition, the GCC states have entered into a free trade agreement with Singapore that is effective for trade between Singapore and Qatar.

VAT

Currently, there is no VAT in Qatar.

Registration fees

Registration fees are payable to various ministries. However, these fees are not significant.

Municipality and other taxes

Qatar does not impose estate tax, gift tax or dividend tax. Municipalities impose a license fee that is aimed at compensating the municipal authorities for central governmental services, such as the cleaning and maintenance of urban and rural areas and waste collection.

I. Other

Payroll taxes and employee benefits

Employee earnings are not taxed. Self-employed foreign professionals are subject to income tax on their business profits. There are no social security insurance contribution requirements or other statutory employment-related deductions, nor any similar contributions required from employers. The Qatar Labor Law requires all private-sector business entities to pay terminal benefits for all employees at the rate of 3 weeks' pay per annum.

The Government operates a contributory pension scheme for Qatari employees. The scheme applies to Qatari employees in both state and public sectors. Employees are required to contribute 5% of their salary to a pension fund operated by the General Corporation for Retirement and Pensions, and the employer's funding obligation is 10%. Qatari employees employed in the oil and gas sector will generally be covered by this pension fund requirement and, accordingly, an operator under a PSC, or a joint venture company operating under a development and fiscal agreement, will be required to apply the pension fund requirements for its Qatari employees.

Local content and environmental concerns

More recent PSCs and DFAs concluded by the Government of Qatar notably contain provisions concerning environmental compliance and personnel matters (i.e., Qatarization) as well as imposing a preference for local goods and services in meeting purchase requirements.

Research and development

The Qatar Tax Law and PSCs/DFAs do not include a specific provision for research & development expenditure (R&D). However, Qatar has established the Qatar Science & Technology Park, which is a free trade zone, and this makes it easy and attractive to establish a 100%-owned technology-based company in Qatar.

A number of oil and gas companies have established entities in the Qatar Science & Technology Park to undertake research activities.

Marketing

Contractors must establish joint marketing committees with the Government of Qatar, which are responsible for deciding to which entities all crude oil and natural gas products can be sold.

In addition, certain regulated products must be sold exclusively to a State-owned marketing and distribution group on preset terms and conditions. These products are:

- ▶ LPG
 - ▶ Sulfur
 - ▶ Field condensates
 - ▶ Refined products
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|---|---|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime applicable to the petroleum industry in the Republic of the Congo consists of the Congolese Tax Law (especially the VAT Law of 1997 and the VAT Decree of 2001), the Congolese Tax Code, the Congolese Hydrocarbon Code and the production sharing contract (PSC) or concession contract concluded between the Congolese Government and oil companies.

The rules for taxation rate, control, sanctions, prescription and tax litigation in relation to corporate tax and mineral fees (*redevance minière proportionnelle*) are contained within the general tax rules and the Hydrocarbon Code.

The principal elements of the applicable fiscal regime are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – 30%
- ▶ Surface rent¹ – Exploration permit: XAF3,000/km² Exploitation permit: US\$800/km²
- ▶ Bonuses – Amount specified in the Government decree that grants the exploration or exploitation permit
- ▶ Royalties – Rate depends on the terms of the PSC
- ▶ Mineral fee – 15%²
- ▶ Capital allowances – S, E³
- ▶ Incentives – L, RD⁴

B. Fiscal regime

There are two kinds of petroleum company in the Republic of the Congo:

- ▶ Upstream companies that specialize in the exploration and production of oil and gas
- ▶ Companies, known as subcontractors, providing petroleum services to upstream companies

The fiscal regime that applies to upstream oil and gas companies differs from that which applies to the subcontractor companies. This guide will focus only on the fiscal regime applicable to upstream oil and gas companies.

1 Annual surface rent is applicable to the PSC holder or participants.

2 Mineral fee can be paid by cash or oil equivalent.

3 S: straight-line depreciation at 20%; E: immediate write-off of exploration costs.

4 L: ability to carryforward losses; RD: research and development incentive.

Petroleum contracts

There are two different types of petroleum contracts entered into between oil companies and the Congolese Government – a concession contract and a PSC.

Concession contract

The first type of contract, and the rarest, is the concession contract that gives the right for the company to exploit, for its own benefit, a mining title (*titre minier*). Under a concession contract, the Congolese law does not allow setting off the losses from one permit against the profits of another permit. Accordingly, ring-fencing is applicable on permits.

Production sharing contract

The second type of petroleum contract, and the most common, is the PSC, under which the Congolese Government gives a right to an oil company to exploit a specific area. If oil is discovered by the company, the exploitation is made in the name of the Congolese Government. If oil is not discovered, all the costs of exploration are assumed by the company.

Pursuant to the Hydrocarbon Code, one part of the oil production is used to reimburse the costs of exploration and development incurred by the company. This is called “cost oil” and is limited to net production, called “stop oil.” This part of production cannot exceed 60% of the annual production for all the permits. However, when the work is especially difficult (e.g., deep areas, high prices of technologies), this rate can be increased to 70%.

The part of the oil production given to the company and the Congolese Government as a payment is called “profit oil.” It is calculated based on all production after deduction of the cost oil and the mineral fees (*redevance minière proportionnelle*). Cost oil and profit oil are determined for each contract.

The law does not prescribe any quantitative consideration in the sharing of profit oil between the company and the Congolese Government. Accordingly, the Government share of profit oil is determined by the contract. In general, the part of the production given to each party depends on net production of the year, and the level of net production is re-examined each year to ensure compliance with the terms of the PSC.

The accounting system for a PSC is specified in the contract itself. The PSC has an appendix called “accounting procedure” that lists the methods, rules and procedure that must be followed.

Corporate income tax

CIT is applied to the net profit of oil companies at the rate of 30%. The net profit is the difference between the net asset value at the end of a fiscal year, as reduced by definite charges such as cost oil (see below) and provision for recovery of the oilfield.

CIT is paid out of the Congolese Government’s share of profit oil (see below).

Bonuses

A bonus is paid to the Congolese Government for granting a prospecting permit or exploitation permit. The amount is different for each permit and it is fixed by the Government decree that grants the permit.

Annual surface rent

An annual surface rent (*redevance superficière*) is due from the company to the Congolese Government. The amount of this tax and its means of collection are fixed by ministerial decree.

This annual surface rent must be paid each year on 20 January. It is based on the surface area stated on the permit and granted during the previous year. Pursuant to the Decree dated 10 August 2000, the rates of this tax are:

- ▶ Exploration permit: XAF3,000/km²
 - ▶ Exploitation permit: US\$800/km²
-

Royalty regime

The royalty regime is determined by the contract if the contract provides for payment of a royalty. There is no difference in the royalty rates between onshore and offshore production.

Mineral fee

A mineral fee is payable by the company to the Congolese Government at the rate of 15%. It is payable on the amount of oil produced and stored plus the amount of oil used for operational purposes, excluding amounts reinjected into the oilfield to maintain power.

The mineral fee is due for payment on the 20th of each month and can be paid in cash or with oil equivalent.

Pollution tax

From the 2012 financial year, a pollution tax has been payable by oil companies in production. The pollution tax is imposed by financial law at a rate of 0.2% of the annual turnover of the oil company. The pollution tax is an annual tax and is payable quarterly by installments in proportion to the production during the quarter. The pollution tax must be paid on the 20th day of the month following the quarter end.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

The tax depreciation rules for the petroleum sector are provided in the PSC according to the straight-line method of depreciation. The depreciation rates are fixed by the Hydrocarbon Code as follows:

- ▶ Cost incurred for exploration can be depreciated at the rate of 100%
- ▶ All other capital expenditure is depreciated over a period of 5 years at the rate of 20% from the beginning of commercial production of each deposit

The Congolese Hydrocarbon Code does not provide any accelerated depreciation for the assets of the petroleum company.

D. Incentives

There are incentives available in the establishment contract (*convention d'établissement*), which is related to the Investment Charter adopted by the Congolese Government to promote the role of investment in the country's economic development program. The incentives are specific for each contract. The relevant incentives are described below.

Research and development

A permit can support losses from another permit regarding the cost of research and development. That is, research and development expenditure can be transferred between permits.

Ability to carryforward losses

In principle, losses can be carried forward for a period of three years. The amount of losses related to depreciation (*amortissement réputé différé* or ARD) can be carried forward indefinitely.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends distributed by an oil company to its shareholders are exempt from taxation.

Interest

The rate of interest for withholding tax (WHT) is 20%.

Technical services

The rate of WHT for technical services is 20%.

Special tax on capital gains

Capital gains realized by individuals or legal entities located abroad on the sale of all or part of their shareholdings in the capital of Congolese companies have 20% of the amount of the capital gain withheld.

Nonresident contractors

For subcontractors, the inclusive tax (*taxe forfaitaire*) rate is 7.7% where the subcontractor applies for a short-term business license (ATE), or 20% without an ATE. The withholding tax must be paid on the 20th of each month.

Foreign contractor wages and salaries

The wages and salaries received by foreign contractors from oil companies are subject to WHT at the rate of 20%, based on 80% of a salary fixed in a wage scale. Except where international convention applies, foreigners are taxable if more than two weeks are spent on Congo soil.

Branch remittance tax

From the 2012 financial year, 70% of the profits earned by a branch of a foreign company have been deemed to be distributed to the shareholders. The defined 70% portion is taxable under the tax on moveable assets at a rate of 20%. This taxation is also applicable to foreign companies doing business under an ATE.

F. Indirect taxes**VAT**

The VAT rate in the Republic of the Congo is 18%.

The VAT treatment is the same for PSC and concession contracts, as follows:

- ▶ VAT on sales: for export, there is an exemption of VAT for sales; for the local market, the VAT is due from the oil distributors
- ▶ VAT on purchases: the important criterion here is the purpose for which the services and goods are to be used after purchase. There is:
 - ▶ Exemption of VAT for all goods or services used directly for research, exploration, development, exploitation, production, transport and storage of hydrocarbons (pursuant to Decree No. 2001/152 of October 2001 and Law No. 12-97 of May 1997)
 - ▶ Redeemable VAT for all goods and services indirectly connected with petroleum activities
 - ▶ Non-redeemable VAT for all goods and services acquired from entities that are not on the list of suppliers and subcontractors established by the company and communicated to the tax authorities

Where a company's VAT on acquisitions exceeds the VAT on its sales in a reporting period, the excess is refundable to the company.

Import duties

All the goods and materials listed in Act No. 2-92-UDEAC-556-CD-SE1 of April 1992 and used for oil exploration or exploitation work are exempted from customs duties.

Export duties

In general, all exported goods are taxed at a rate of 0% to 13% plus a DAS (*droit accessoire de sortie*) of 2% of the goods' customs value.

Stamp duties

Pursuant to the Hydrocarbon Code, all stamp duties are due from the oil company.

All contracts signed between an oil company and another foreign company must be registered, and this process is free of charge.

Registration fees

All registration fees (e.g., in relation to contracts or lease agreements that are not specifically exempted) are due by oil companies pursuant to the Hydrocarbon Code and the Congolese Tax Code.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Romania to companies operating in the petroleum industry generally consists of corporate income tax (CIT), petroleum royalty and other oil-related taxes for special funds. In summary, the main elements are as follows:

- ▶ CIT rate – 16%
- ▶ Royalties – 3.5% to 13.5% on oil extraction; 10% on certain transportation/transit of oil; and 3% on the underground storage of natural gas
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contracts (PSCs) – None
- ▶ Resource rent tax – The Romanian authorities charge a duty for issuing the drilling and excavation authorizations needed (e.g., for oil and gas wells). The duty amount is computed by multiplying the surface area affected by drilling and excavation activities by an amount established by the local councils, which cannot exceed RON8.
- ▶ Special taxes (e.g.: taxation of monopoly activities in the energy and natural gas industries; exploitation of certain natural resources (including crude oil); and tax on supplementary income further to deregulation of the prices in the natural gas industry) – C¹
- ▶ Capital allowances – C²

B. Fiscal regime

Administration

In general, the tax year is the calendar year. However, from 1 January 2014 taxpayers have been permitted to opt for a fiscal year different from the calendar year.

1 Applicable from 1 February 2013 until 31 December 2015.

2 The taxpayer may opt for the accelerated depreciation method in the case of technical equipment, tools and installations.

Corporate tax

Romanian resident companies are subject to a 16% CIT on their worldwide taxable profits. Profits are computed as the difference between the total income and total expense booked in the company's accounts, subject to certain adjustments (e.g., non-taxable revenues are subtracted, non-deductible expenses are added). Generally, expenses are treated as deductible for tax purposes if they are incurred with the goal of earning taxable income.

The value of depreciable assets is recovered through tax depreciation, which is computed based on the useful life of the asset and the depreciation method applied by the taxpayer. Expenses related to locating, exploring, developing or any other preparatory activity for the exploitation of natural resources are recovered in equal amounts over a period of five years, starting from the month when the expenses are incurred.

Expenses related to the acquisition of any exploitation right in respect of natural resources are recovered as the resources are exploited, in proportion to the recovered value compared with the total estimated value of the resources.

Depreciation of buildings and constructions used in oil extraction, for which the useful life is limited to the duration of the reserves and which may not be used after depletion of reserves, is computed per unit of production, depending on the exploitable reserve of mineral substance. The production factor for per-unit depreciation is recalculated every five years of oil extraction.

Titleholders of petroleum agreements and their subcontractors that carry out petroleum operations in maritime areas (which include waters deeper than 100 meters) compute the depreciation of tangible and intangible assets related to petroleum operations for which the useful life is limited for the period of the reserve for each unit of product with a 100% degree of use, based on the exploitable reserve of the useful mineral substance over the period of the petroleum agreement.

Titleholders of petroleum agreements must create a tax-deductible provision for environmental recovery of the area affected by extraction. Such tax-deductible provisions should be of 1% applied to the difference between the revenues derived from the realization and sale of natural reserves and the expenses incurred with the extraction, processing and delivery of natural reserves during the entire period of natural reserves exploitation. Moreover, for titleholders of petroleum agreements that carry out offshore operations at depths of more than 100 meters, the tax-deductible provision for the dismantling of wells, installations and annexes and for environment rehabilitation is 10% (applied to the difference between income and expenses recorded over the entire exploitation period).

Romanian companies (including petroleum companies) are permitted to opt³ for the declaration and payment of annual CIT with advance payments performed on a quarterly basis, based on the CIT paid in the previous year and adjusted with the annual consumer price index. Such an option is mandatory for at least two consecutive fiscal years.

Furthermore, Romanian legal entities that have obtained an annual turnover of no more than €65,000 in the previous year and newly established Romanian legal persons (provided that their share capital is owned by entities other than the State and local authorities and their subscribed capital is less than €25,000) are obliged to apply the micro-enterprise regime (i.e., 3% tax on certain categories of revenues). However, if during a fiscal year the qualification conditions are not met any longer (e.g., the amount of revenues obtained exceeds the threshold of €65,000 or the proportion of the revenues obtained from advisory and management services is more than 20% of the total revenues), the entities will have to pay CIT based on their revenues and expenses incurred from the beginning of the fiscal year.

Romanian companies (including petroleum companies) benefit from a fiscal credit for revenues obtained through a permanent establishment (PE) located in another country and for income subject to withholding tax (WHT) abroad if

3 The official deadline for registering the option is 31 January of the respective year.

the revenues are taxed both in Romania and abroad and provided that the relevant double tax treaty concluded between Romania and the respective state is applicable. However, any fiscal credit is limited to the tax that would have been levied on the income in Romania under domestic tax rules.

Romanian PEs of foreign legal entities resident in an EU Member State or a state of the European Economic Area, which derive income from another EU Member State or from a state of the European Economic Area, benefit under certain conditions of a fiscal credit for the tax paid in the state where the income included in the taxable income of the PE from Romania was derived.

This provision does not apply to Romanian PEs of foreign legal entities residents in a state of the European Economic Area, other than a Member State of the European Union, if Romania has not concluded with that state a legal instrument under which an exchange of information procedure may be performed.

A foreign company that derives income from a PE in Romania is subject to a rate of 16% on profits attributable to the PE. The Romanian legislation contains specific provisions regarding the conditions under which PEs arise in Romania. These rules are generally in line with the OECD guidelines.

Starting 1 July 2013, tax consolidation was introduced for foreign legal entities having several PEs in Romania (i.e., offsetting the taxable profits of a PE against the tax losses of another PE).

Capital gains

Please refer to Section G for an explanation of the taxation of capital gains.

Functional currency

In general, accounting records must be kept in the Romanian language and in Romanian currency (RON). Accounting records relating to operations carried out in a foreign currency must be kept both in national and foreign currency. Tax amounts must be declared and paid in Romanian currency.

Transfer pricing

Under Romanian law, transactions between related parties must be performed in accordance with the arm's length principle. The Romanian transfer pricing regulations generally follow the OECD transfer pricing guidelines. Taxpayers are required to prepare a specific transfer pricing documentation file and present it to the tax authorities upon request.

Dividends

Romanian legal entities that pay or distribute dividends to Romanian shareholders must withhold, declare and remit the tax due. The tax is computed as 16% of the gross dividend amount. However, dividends paid by Romanian legal entities to Romanian shareholders (legal entities) that hold at least 10% of the share capital of the dividend payer for an uninterrupted period of one year ending on the date of dividend payment will be exempt from dividend tax.

Dividends paid by Romanian legal entities to private individual shareholders are subject to a 16% tax, which must be withheld and remitted by the legal entity paying the dividend.

Royalty regimes

The law does not generally apply different royalty regimes to onshore and offshore production.

Generally, petroleum royalties represent the amounts payable by the titleholders of petroleum agreements with the Romanian State for the exploitation of oilfields that are public property, for the transport and transit of oil through oil mains piping, for operation of oil terminals, and for underground storage of natural gas.

The petroleum royalty due to the Romanian State by the titleholders of petroleum agreements is computed based on reference prices established by competent authorities.

The petroleum royalty is payable from the commencement date of petroleum operations. It is payable on a quarterly basis, by the 25th day of the first month following the relevant quarter. Non-payment or late payment of the petroleum royalty may trigger late payment charges and/or cancellation of the concession title granted to the titleholder of the petroleum agreement.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas since the law does not generally apply different royalty regimes to unconventional oil and gas.

Special taxes

A 60% tax is charged on the supplementary revenues derived by natural gas producers (including their subsidiaries and/or economic operators that are part of the same economic interest group), which also supply natural gas extracted from Romania to final consumers, from the deregulation of natural gas prices in case of supplies to final consumers. The taxable base is computed by deducting from the supplementary revenues:

- ▶ Related royalties
- ▶ Upstream investments, capped at 30% of the supplementary revenues.

Companies (including their subsidiaries and/or economic operators that are part of the same economic interest group) exploiting natural resources (inter alia coal, crude oil, ore), with the exception of natural gas, will be liable to pay a tax of 0.5% of their revenues (computed based on specific regulations).

Also, a tax is due in respect of the activities of companies that transport electricity and natural gas and certain distributors of electricity and natural gas (natural monopolies) that hold licenses issued by ANRE (i.e., the Romanian regulatory authority in the field of energy). The tax is charged for each megawatt-hour (MWh) for which electricity and natural gas transportation and distribution services are invoiced, the level of the tax ranging from RON0.1/MWh to RON0.85/MWh.

These taxes are payable on a monthly basis by the 25th of the following month.

C. Capital allowances

Generally, depreciable assets are any tangible, immovable assets that:

- ▶ Are held and used in production or supply of goods or services, to be rented or for administrative purposes
- ▶ Have a fiscal value exceeding the limit established by the Government at the date of their entry in the taxpayer's patrimony (currently RON2,500)
- ▶ Have a useful life exceeding one year

The law also specifically enumerates other items that should be treated as depreciable fixed assets (e.g., investments in fixed assets granted under a concession, investments made for the discovery of useful mineral resources, improvements to the pre-existing fixed assets).

The useful lives to be used for the computation of tax depreciation are specified by legislation. The table below summarizes the useful lives of certain general categories of assets relevant to the oil and gas industry.

| Item | Type of depreciating assets | Period (years) |
|------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Oil and gas extraction assets | 4-12 |
| 2 | Assets for processing oil | 7-18 |
| 3 | Oil and gas transportation and distribution assets | 12-60 |
| 4 | Oil and gas derricks | 8-12 |
| 5 | Sea drilling and extraction platforms | 24-36 |

The tax depreciation methods that may be used depend on the nature of the asset, as follows:

-
- ▶ The straight-line depreciation method alone may be applied for buildings
 - ▶ For technological equipment, machinery, tools, installation, and for computers and related peripheral equipment, the taxpayer may choose between the straight-line, the declining-balance and the accelerated-depreciation methods
 - ▶ For other depreciable assets, the taxpayer may choose between the straight-line and the declining-balance depreciation methods

Specific regulations have been introduced regarding the deductibility of the remaining undepreciated fiscal value in the case of the retirement of fixed assets used in the oil industry by taxpayers that apply accounting regulations in line with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and that set accounting policies specific to the industry's activity for depreciation of these assets.

D. Incentives

Annual fiscal losses may be offset against taxable profits during the following seven consecutive years. Losses must be recovered in the sequence they were recorded. Tax losses may not be carried back.

Starting 1 February 2013 a 50% supplementary tax deduction for eligible research and development expenses can be granted for qualifying companies when computing their taxable profit. Furthermore, this incentive could be granted for research and development activities carried out in Romania or in other EU and European Economic Area Member States. The fiscal incentives for research and development expenses are granted separately for each project undertaken.

The Fiscal Code allows "sponsorship" expenses to be claimed as a credit against CIT due, subject to certain limitations. Starting 1 January 2014, the sponsorship expenses which were not used for obtaining a fiscal credit can be carried forward for seven consecutive years.

Starting 1 July 2014 the profits invested in production and/or acquisition of certain technological equipment of the Catalogue regarding the classification and the normal useful life of fixed assets is exempt from corporate income tax. The profits tax exemption is applicable in case of technological equipment produced and/or acquired after 1 July 2014 and put into use up to 31 December 2016. The period of retention in the patrimony of the technological equipment should be of at least half of their useful life, but not more than five years, with certain exceptions (e.g. cases where the technological equipment is destroyed, lost or stolen, etc).

E. Withholding taxes

Romanian tax regulations specifically define the income derived by nonresidents from Romania that is subject to withholding tax (WHT) in Romania. The main categories of income covered by this provision are dividends, interest, royalty, commissions, income from services performed in Romania and abroad (except for international transport and services ancillary to such transport) and revenue from the liquidation of a Romanian legal entity.

The categories of services rendered outside Romania for which income derived from Romania is subject to withholding tax are as follows: management, advisory in any field, marketing, technical assistance, research and design in any field, advertising and publicity, and the services of lawyers, engineers, architects, notaries, accountants and auditors.

In general, the provisions of double tax treaties concluded by Romania prevail over domestic legislation. Therefore, these provisions may be invoked when levying Romanian WHT. To qualify, the nonresident income beneficiary must provide the Romanian income payer with a tax residency certificate attesting that the income recipient was a tax resident in the relevant country during the period when the relevant income was derived from Romania, as well as an "own liability" statement in cases where EU legislation is applicable to the beneficiary of the income.

However, in the case of “net of tax” arrangements, whereby the Romanian party bears the WHT (instead of retaining the tax from the amount paid to the nonresident), the application of the double tax treaty provision is restricted under Romanian law. In such cases, the applicable WHT must be determined based on the gross-up method. The related expenses with such tax would also be non-deductible for CIT purposes at the level of the Romanian income payer.

Starting 1 February 2013, the provisions of double taxation treaties have not been able to be applied by taxpayers for transactions qualified by the Romanian tax authorities as “artificial.” “Artificial” transactions are defined in Romanian tax legislation as transactions or series of transactions without economic substance, their main purpose being tax avoidance and obtaining tax benefits that otherwise would not be granted.

Revenues of a nonresident that are attributable to a Romanian PE of the nonresident are not subject to WHT in Romania (because the income is subject to a 16% Romanian CIT at the level of the PE).

Dividends

Dividends paid to nonresidents are generally subject to a 16% WHT.

However, dividends paid by a Romanian legal entity or by a legal entity having its legal headquarters in Romania (i.e., a *societas europaea*) to a legal entity residing in another EU state or to a PE of an EU entity (situated in another EU state) may be reduced to nil if certain conditions related to the legal entity receiving the dividends and to the Romanian income payer are met.

These conditions include the following, whereby the legal entity:

1. Should be set up in one of the legal forms provided by the law and should be resident in the respective EU state and, from a tax perspective, according to the double tax treaties concluded with third parties, should not be resident outside the EU.
2. Should be liable to pay CIT or other similar tax as per the tax legislation in the state of residence without the possibility of exemption or choice of fiscal treatment.
3. Holds at least 10% of the participation titles in the Romanian legal entity for an uninterrupted period of at least one year ending on the date of the payment of the dividends.

Conditions regarding the Romanian legal entity paying the dividends include that it:

1. Should have one of the following legal forms: joint stock company, limited partnership or limited liability company.
2. Should be liable to pay CIT without the possibility of exemption or choice of fiscal treatment.

Interest and royalties

Interest and royalties are generally subject to a 16% WHT rate.

However, based on the EU Interest and Royalty Directive implemented in Romanian tax legislation as of 1 January 2011, an interest or royalty payment is exempt from Romanian WHT if the recipient is a legal entity resident in another EU or European Free Trade Association (EFTA) state (or a PE of a legal entity from an EU/EFTA state situated in another EU/EFTA state) that holds at least 25% of the share capital of the Romanian interest or royalty payer for an uninterrupted period of at least two years (ending on the date of the interest or royalty payment).

Starting 1 January 2014, no WHT exemption applies for interest and royalties derived from Romania by foreign legal entities located in the states that belong to the EFTA (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

Technical services and nonresident contractors

According to the Romanian tax regulations, fees paid by a Romanian entity to a nonresident service provider are subject to WHT in Romania irrespective whether they are rendered in Romania or abroad (please see above for details),

except for international transport and services ancillary to international transport. The WHT for these services is 16% under the domestic legislation.

Specific concern arises for service contracts (e.g., technical services contracts) whereby the nonresident transfers know-how or rights triggering royalty payments. In these cases, the provisions regarding the WHT treatment of royalties applies (at least to the part of the contract corresponding to the transfer of know-how or rights).

Attention should also be paid to the potential PE exposure that could arise, which is based on the specific characteristics of the activity carried out by the nonresident in Romania.

In this respect, Romanian legal entities, individuals and PEs of nonresidents in Romania that perform services generating taxable revenues in Romania should register with the competent tax authorities the service agreements concluded with nonresidents or any other supporting documents attesting that the transaction was performed (e.g. work sheets, market research reports, feasibility studies). The agreements/supporting documents should be registered within 30 days from their conclusion. No registration requirement is imposed for those contracts concluded with nonresidents that imply performing economic activities outside Romania.

We underline that a withholding tax of 50% applies starting 1 February 2013, amongst other things for dividends, interest, royalties, commissions and income from the rendering of certain types of services in Romania or abroad, if this income is paid to a nonresident from a state with which Romania does not have in place a legal instrument for the exchange of information (irrespective of the tax residence of the beneficiary). This provision applies only for those transactions qualified by the Romanian tax authorities as "artificial."

Branch remittance tax

No branch remittance tax is imposed under Romanian legislation.

F. Financing considerations

There is no limitation on the deductibility of CIT for interest expenses and net foreign-exchange losses related to loans granted by international development banks or loans guaranteed by the state, as well as loans granted by Romanian and foreign credit institutions, financial non-banking institutions, and legal entities that may grant loans according to special laws, or loans obtained based on bonds admitted to trading on a regulated market.

The interest related to loans contracted from other entities is deductible for CIT purposes within the following limits (the thresholds apply separately for each loan):

- ▶ 6% for loans denominated in a foreign currency (this interest rate level may be updated by a government decision).
- ▶ The reference interest rate communicated by the National Bank of Romania (BNR) for the last month of the quarter, for loans denominated in the local currency.

If the interest agreed between the parties is higher than the indicated threshold, the excess is not deductible for CIT purposes and may not be carried forward to subsequent periods. This interest deductibility limitation is applied before the debt-to-equity deductibility test is applied (described in the next subsection).

Thin capitalization

In addition to the interest limitation outlined above, interest expenses and net foreign-exchange losses related to loans (other than from the financial institutions as mentioned above) are deductible for CIT purposes if the debt-to-equity ratio is less than or equal to 3:1. Conversely, if the ratio exceeds 3:1 or is negative, the interest expenses and any foreign-exchange losses are entirely non-deductible in the reporting period, but they may be carried forward to the next reporting periods until they are fully deducted, subject to satisfying the same thin capitalization test.

The debt-to-equity ratio represents the ratio between the average debt and equity, computed in the reporting period. For computing the ratio, "debt" (i.e., borrowed capital) comprises all credits and loans (including commercial liabilities) granted by non-financial entities (i.e., other than those mentioned above) with a reimbursement term exceeding one year. Credits and loans with a reimbursement term of less than or equal to one year are included in the computation of the borrowed capital if the term is extended and the total reimbursement term exceeds one year. "Equity" (own capital) includes share capital, reserves, non-distributed profits, current-period profits and other equity elements.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

Gains derived by a Romanian company from the sale of assets are included in taxable profits and are subject to the standard 16% CIT rate. Gains are generally computed as the difference between the selling price of the assets and their fiscal value. Any revaluation of assets must be considered from a tax perspective when establishing their fiscal value. However, the unrealized revaluation reserves (i.e., those not realized through depreciation) pertaining to the assets that are disposed of are taxed upon their disposal at the 16% CIT rate, like other elements in the nature of income.

From a VAT perspective, sales of immovable property (i.e., buildings and land) are generally exempt from VAT, without credit for input VAT paid on related costs and expenses. However, companies may opt for taxation for these operations (i.e., they may opt to apply VAT and, therefore, recover input tax). As a derogation, the sale of a new building and of building land (as defined by law) is a taxable operation for VAT purposes (i.e., it cannot be exempted).

Income derived by foreign legal entities from sales of immovable property located in Romania or from the exploitation of natural resources located in Romania, including any gains arising from sales of any right related to such resources, is subject to the 16% CIT.

Farm-in and farm-out

Generally, a new company or a consortium (e.g., a joint venture) is set up in Romania by the parties involved in a farm-in agreement. Consortiums are entities without legal status that are subject to specific CIT, VAT and accounting rules.

For CIT purposes, the revenues and expenses of the consortium are attributed to each participant according to its participation quota of the association. From a VAT perspective, a consortium does not give rise to a separate taxable person. Under certain conditions, the association's rights and obligations relating to VAT may be fulfilled by one of the members.

Selling shares in a company

Similar to an asset disposal, and for CIT purposes, gains derived by Romanian resident companies from the sale of shares are added to profits derived from other activities and are taxed at 16%.

Capital gains derived by nonresident legal entities from the sale of ownership rights in shares held in Romanian legal entities are taxable in Romania at the standard CIT rate of 16%. It should be noted that Romania's domestic legislation puts particular emphasis on the application of the above taxation rule for capital gains obtained from the sale of shares if 50% or more of the fixed-asset value of the entity represents, directly or indirectly, immovable property located in Romania.

Application of the relevant double tax treaty provisions might need to be considered.

Starting 1 February 2013, additional registration requirements have been introduced in respect of the payment and declaration of the related CIT where revenues are derived by foreign legal entities from immovable property or sale

of shares held in a Romanian company. These obligations apply even in the case where the buyer is a Romanian legal entity or a foreign entity having a permanent establishment registered for tax purposes in Romania at the moment of concluding the transaction.

Starting 1 January 2014, capital gains derived by a Romanian taxpayer from the sale/assignment of shares held in other Romanian legal entities or in legal entities from countries with which Romania has concluded a double tax treaty are not included in taxable income if the taxpayer holds, for an uninterrupted period of one year, at least 10% of the share capital of the legal entity whose shares were sold/assigned.

Also, proceeds from the liquidation of another Romanian legal entity or of foreign legal entities from countries with which Romania has concluded a double tax treaty are not taxable in Romania provided that the minimum shareholding requirement of 10% for a period of one year is met.

H. Indirect taxes

Import and export duties

Import and export duties are based on the combined nomenclature classification of the imported or exported goods involved, in accordance with EU customs regulations.

VAT

The Romanian VAT legislation is based on the EU VAT Directive.

As a general rule, to fall within the scope of Romanian VAT, a transaction must satisfy all of the following conditions. It must:

- ▶ Qualify as a supply of goods or services for consideration
- ▶ Have its place of supply in Romania (according to the VAT place-of-supply rules)
- ▶ Be performed by a taxable person (as defined by the VAT law), acting as such
- ▶ Be derived from an economic activity

Generally, operations subject to Romanian VAT fall into one of the following categories:

- ▶ Taxable, either at 24% (the standard VAT rate) or 9%/5% (the reduced VAT rates)
- ▶ Exempt with credit (as specifically set out in the law, such as exports and intra-Community supplies of goods)
- ▶ Exempt without credit (as specifically set out in the law)
- ▶ Imports or intra-Community acquisitions (taxable at the same rate as domestic transactions)

Specific VAT rules apply to supplies of goods (intra-Community supplies and intra-Community acquisitions of goods) or services between Romanian persons and persons from other EU Member States and non-EU countries.

A taxable person established in Romania who performs taxable or exempt-with-credit supplies must register for VAT purposes in Romania if its annual turnover (computed based on specific rules) exceeds RON220,000. A taxable person established in Romania may also opt for VAT registration in Romania even if this threshold is not exceeded (subject to certain conditions imposed by the Romanian tax authorities). Different VAT registration rules apply to taxable persons that are not established in Romania or that are established via a fixed place of business.

If a taxable person who is established in another EU Member States is liable to register for VAT in Romania, the registration may be made either directly or through a fiscal representative. A person who is not established in the EU, and who is required to register for VAT in Romania, must obtain registration through a fiscal representative.

The VAT cash accounting system was introduced into the Romanian VAT legislation. The taxable persons that are registered for VAT purposes in Romania, having the place of economic activity in Romania and an annual turnover (computed based on specific rules) under RON2,250,000 can opt for applying the VAT cash accounting system.

Taxable persons opting for implementation of the VAT cash accounting system, or for the cancellation of this system, are required to submit by 25 January a notification to the relevant tax authorities.

Where a taxable person exceeds the threshold of RON2,250,000 during the year, the system is applied until the end of the next fiscal period in which the threshold was exceeded (by submitting a notification in this respect).

Taxable persons opting for implementation of the system are required to maintain the option until the end of the year. However, starting with the 2nd year, the option may be cancelled at any time during the year, between the 1st and 25th of the month.

The VAT cash accounting system is not applicable to the following taxable persons:

- ▶ Taxable persons established in Romania that are part of a VAT group
- ▶ Taxable persons not established in Romania that are registered in Romania for VAT purposes directly or through a fiscal representative; and
- ▶ Taxable persons that have the seat of their economic activity outside Romania, but have a fixed establishment in Romania in respect of their outgoing activities

Moreover, certain operations (e.g., supplies of goods or services which are exempt from VAT, supplies of goods or services between related parties, and supplies of goods or services paid in cash) are excluded from the application of the VAT cash accounting system.

According to the VAT cash accounting system, the VAT chargeability occurs at the date when the invoices issued are cashed, provided that in principle the payment was not performed in cash.

Furthermore, taxpayers applying the VAT cash accounting system are allowed to deduct the VAT related to their acquisitions only after paying the invoices issued by the suppliers. The same limitation of the deduction right is applicable to persons that do not apply the VAT cash accounting system, but who perform purchases of goods and services from persons that apply this system.

Specific VAT regulations have been enforced starting 1 February 2013 for transactions carried out between related parties. Thus, the VAT taxable base for goods delivered and services rendered between related parties are the market value in the following cases:

- ▶ When the consideration for the goods and services is less than the market value and the beneficiary does not have full deduction right.
- ▶ When the consideration for the goods and services is less than the market value and the supplier does not have full deduction right and the delivery is VAT exempt.
- ▶ When the consideration for the goods and services is higher than the market value and the supplier does not have full deduction right.

As a general rule, persons registered for VAT purposes in Romania may deduct the Romanian input VAT related to their acquisitions only if such operations are carried out with the goal of performing transactions with the right to deduct input VAT (such as taxable or exempt-with-credit transactions). Certain limitations exist on the deduction of input VAT related to the acquisition of cars and also for the input VAT for vehicle related expenses (e.g., repair and maintenance, spare parts, fuel). Deductible input VAT may be offset against the VAT collected by the taxable person (output VAT).

Specific rules apply in the case of operations qualifying as a transfer of a going concern. Specifically, the transfer of assets or a part thereof does not fall within the scope of Romanian VAT if the transferee is a taxable person and if the

transfer of assets is the result of transactions such as a sale, spin-off, merger or contribution in kind to the share capital of a company. Such transactions mainly refer to cases where the assets transferred constitute an independent structure capable of performing separate economic activities.

Excise duties

Under Romanian law, excise goods are harmonized (e.g., alcohol, alcoholic beverages, processed tobacco, electricity and energy products such as gasoline, diesel oil and natural gas) and non-harmonized (i.e., coffee, natural fur, jewelry, yachts, hunting guns). Generally, Romanian regulations regarding harmonized excise duties are based on the EU excise duty legislation.

Starting 1 January 2015, the excise duty rate in the case of energy products (including natural gas) is expressed in RON per measurement unit (gigajoule, in the case of natural gas and ton/liter in the case of other energy products) and generally depends on the type and the destination of the product.

The chargeability of excise duties occurs, in principle, upon the release in consumption of the excise goods, or when certain losses or shortages are ascertained (e.g., upon exit from the suspension regime, importation, losses of products).

Production of energy products (except for coke, coal and natural gas) is allowed only in authorized production fiscal warehouses. Storage fiscal warehouses may be used only for depositing excisable products. Moreover, in the particular case of energy products, the law provides that the process of adding additives can also be performed in a storage warehouse.

Authorization of premises as a fiscal warehouse (for production or storage) is subject to specific conditions. Fiscal warehouses have specific reporting obligations related to excise duty. Such locations are under the control of the competent relevant authorities and are subject to strict rules.

Under certain conditions, certain energy products may be transported between fiscal warehouses or between a fiscal warehouse and a customs office under an excise duty suspension regime. The intra-Community movement of energy products between EU Member States is subject to specific rules under Romanian law, which generally follows EU legislation.

Supplies of excise goods destined for certain purposes mentioned in the law are exempt from excise duty, subject to specific conditions.

Stamp duties

The sale or purchase of real estate located in Romania is subject to notary and real estate publicity fees, set by applying a specific percentage to the transaction value.

Registration fees

The registration of a company in Romania is subject to certain immaterial fees. Certain services provided by the competent authorities in relation to petroleum operations (e.g., issuing authorizations) are subject to fees computed based on the salary and other related expenses incurred by the authorities. In addition, fees for the provision of information necessary for petroleum operations (e.g., regarding oil resources) are levied based on the volume and quality of the information and the investigation method used for obtaining such data.

Other significant taxes

Other significant taxes include salary-related social contributions paid by the employer.

I. Other

Authorization for petroleum operations

The law establishes a detailed procedure for granting petroleum concessions (whereby the State grants the right to a legal person to perform petroleum operations) and specific rules for carrying out petroleum operations. Foreign

legal entities that are granted the right to perform petroleum operations are required to set up a subsidiary or a branch in Romania and to maintain it throughout the concession period.

The transfer of any rights and obligations derived from the petroleum concession is subject to prior approval of the relevant authorities.

Special fund for petroleum products

Gasoline and diesel oil produced or obtained as a result of processing are subject to a contribution to the special fund for petroleum products. A contribution is levied by including a fixed RON amount, equivalent to US\$0.01 per liter, in the price of these products. The obligation to compute and pay a contribution to the special fund remains with the producers and processors that are legal entities headquartered in Romania.

Domestic quality requirements

The law imposes certain quality standards that must be met for certain energy products traded on the Romanian market.

Energy products (e.g., diesel oil and gasoline) must contain a minimum percentage of biofuels (i.e., fuels used for transport and produced from biomasses). In 2014, for diesel oil, the percentage is 5% of the volume; and for gasoline the percentage is a minimum 4.5% by volume.

Environment fund

Economic operators that own stationary sources that release air pollutants are required to pay a contribution to a special environmental fund. The amount of the contribution depends on the nature of the pollutant.

Manufacturers and importers that introduce dangerous substances (as defined in the specific legislation) into the Romanian market are required to pay a contribution to the same fund.

Foreign investment

The Romanian authorities generally encourage foreign investment, and they seek to ensure non-discriminatory treatment of such investments. Associations organized by foreign investors in Romania and bodies of Romanian authorities supervise and facilitate foreign investments in Romania.

Notification requirements

Competent authorities (e.g., the BNR) must be notified of certain operations (e.g., loans) carried out by Romanian entities with foreign persons.

Forms of business presence

Forms of business presence in Romania include companies, branches and associations in participation (e.g., joint ventures).

Application of IFRS for listed companies

Starting with the financial year 2012, companies whose securities are listed on a regulated market are required to apply IFRS for the preparation of individual annual financial statements.

The individual financial statements prepared according to IFRS are subject to statutory audit, as per law.

Construction tax

Starting 1 January 2014, a new tax is applicable for constructions other than buildings.

Entities liable to pay this construction tax are Romanian legal entities (with certain exceptions), Romanian PEs of foreign legal entities, and the legal entities set up in Romania according to the EU legislation.

This tax does not apply for constructions for which building tax is due, nor to constructions owned by the State or to be transferred to the State.

Starting 1 January 2015, offshore constructions attributable to the oil and gas sector are exempt from construction tax.

The tax is computed by applying a 1% rate to the value of the constructions existing in patrimony as of 31 December of the previous year, recorded in the accounting books, subtracting from that certain elements such as the value of buildings (including certain works) for which building tax is due.

Construction tax has to be computed and declared to the tax authorities up to 25 May of the year for which such tax is due, and it has to be paid in two equal installments, up to 25 May and 25 September of the respective year.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

The fiscal regime that applies in Russia to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of royalties (called mineral extraction tax (MET)), corporate profits tax and export duty.

- ▶ Profits tax rate – 20%
- ▶ Royalties (MET)
 - ▶ Crude oil – RUB766¹ (\$15.3)² per tonne adjusted by coefficients
 - ▶ Natural gas – RUB35 (\$0.7) per 1,000 cubic meters adjusted by coefficients
 - ▶ Gas condensate – RUB42 (\$0.8) per tonne adjusted by coefficients
- ▶ Export duty
 - ▶ Crude oil – 35% to 45% (linked to oil price)¹
 - ▶ Natural gas – 30%
 - ▶ LNG – 0%
- ▶ Bonuses – Bonuses are specified in the license. A maximum amount is not fixed in legislation. The minimum rates of one-time payments for subsurface use which are established in relation to oil and/or gas condensate are established at no less than 5% of the amount of the MET, calculated on the basis of the average annual planned capacity of the subsoil user.
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – No PSCs are expected to be concluded unless there is an exceptional case, such as an obligation to enter into a PSC emanating from Russia's international conventions.
- ▶ Capital allowances (see Section D)
- ▶ Investment incentives

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate profits tax

Russian tax-resident companies are subject to profits tax on their non-exempt worldwide profits. Foreign companies operating in Russia through permanent establishments (PE) are subject to profits tax on profit received through (or attributable to) those PE.

1 See respective sections for more information on rates.

2 An exchange rate of 50 rubles per dollar was used throughout the chapter to provide approximate dollar values, where relevant.

Taxable profit equals non-exempt revenue less deductions. Non-exempt income includes sales income (determined with reference to accounting data for sales) and non-sale income (certain items are specifically mentioned in the Tax Code). Deductions include expenses to the extent that they are economically justified and documented in accordance with Russian legislation. However, expenditure of a capital nature is not immediately deductible.

Exploration costs are generally deductible within 12 months following the month when a particular stage in exploration work has been completed. Unsuccessful exploration costs are also written off over 12 months, as are expenses related to dry holes, following notice of liquidation of the well.

Development costs are deductible through depreciation of constructed fixed assets (see Section D).

The profits tax rate is 20%. The tax rate can be reduced for particular categories of taxpayers but not to less than 15.5%. Losses can be carried forward for 10 years.

Ring-fencing

Russia does not apply ring fencing in determining an entity's corporate tax liability in relation to its oil and gas activities. Profit from one project can generally be offset against the losses from another project by the same Russian legal entity, and, similarly, profits and losses from upstream activities can be offset against downstream activities undertaken by the same Russian entity (individual branches of foreign companies are generally taxed as separate entities for profits tax purposes). Certain ring-fencing restrictions apply to new offshore projects that commence production on or after 1 January 2016 (see Section C). Tax consolidation is available for a limited number of companies due to very high quantitative criteria (for example, the group's annual revenue should not be less than RUB100 billion (approximately \$2 billion)).

Mineral extraction tax

MET is levied on extracted natural gas, gas condensate and crude oil, and is deductible in calculating corporate profits tax.

Crude oil

The rate of MET on crude oil is established as the base rate per tonne of extracted oil (RUB766 for 2015)³, multiplied by a coefficient reflecting movements in world oil prices (C_p) and reduced by indicator E_m reflecting oil extraction factors. Special ad valorem MET rates apply to new offshore projects (see Section C).

The adjustment coefficient reflecting oil extraction factors (E_m) is calculated according to the following formula:

$$E_m = C_{met} \times C_p \times (1 - C_d \times C_r \times C_{de} \times C_{rd} \times C_{can})$$

General MET rate for crude oil

$$MET = \text{Base Rate} \times C_p - C_{met} \times C_p \times (1 - C_d \times C_r \times C_{de} \times C_{rd} \times C_{can})$$

| | |
|-----------|--|
| C_{met} | $C_{met} = \text{RUB}530^3$ |
| C_p | <p>$C_p = (P - 15) \times R/261$</p> <p>P - average price level of Urals oil for the tax period in US dollars per barrel</p> <p>R - average value for the month of the exchange rate of the US dollar to the Russian ruble as established by the Russian Central Bank</p> |
| C_d | $C_d = 0.3$, if the level of depletion of reserves of a particular subsurface site exceeds 1 |

3 RUB857 for 2016, RUB919 from 2017.

4 RUB559 for 2016.

General MET rate for crude oil

| | |
|------------|---|
| | <p>$C_d = 3.8 - (3.5 \times N/V)$, if the level of depletion is greater than or equal to 0.8 and less than or equal to 1</p> <p>N – amount of cumulative oil extraction according to the State's balance sheet of reserves of commercial minerals for the calendar year preceding the accounting year in which the coefficient C_d is applied</p> <p>V – initially extractable oil reserves</p> |
| | $C_d = 1$, if the rate of depletion is less than 0.8 |
| | $C_d = 1$, if C_{de} is less than 1 |
| C_r | <p>$C_r = 0.125 \times V_r + 0.375$, if the initially extractable oil reserves of a particular subsurface site are less than 5 million tonnes and the level of depletion of reserves of a particular subsurface site is not more than 5%</p> <p>V_r – initially extractable oil reserves</p> |
| | $C_r = 1$, in any other case |
| C_{de}^5 | <p>$C_{de} = 0.2$, initially in the case of extraction of oil from a specific hydrocarbon reservoir with an approved permeability of not more than $2 \times 10^{-15} \text{ m}^2$ and a net pay for that reservoir of not more than 10 meters</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January of the year in which the level of depletion of reserves exceeded 1%</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January 2014 if the level of depletion of reserves exceeded 1% as of 1 January 2013</p> |
| | <p>$C_{de} = 0.4$, initially in the case of extraction of oil from a specific hydrocarbon reservoir with an approved permeability of not more than $2 \times 10^{-15} \text{ m}^2$ and a net pay for that reservoir of more than 10 meters</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January of the year in which the level of depletion of reserves exceeded 1%</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January 2014 if the level of depletion of reserves exceeded 1% as of 1 January 2013</p> |
| | <p>$C_{de} = 0.8$, initially in the case of extraction of oil from a specific hydrocarbon reservoir within productive formations of the Tyumen suite</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January of the year in which the level of depletion of reserves exceeded 1%</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January 2014 if the level of depletion of reserves exceeded 1% as of 1 January 2013</p> <p>$C_{de} = 1$, after the expiry of 15 years starting from 1 January 2015 if the level of depletion of reserves is greater than 3% as of 1 January 2012</p> |
| | $C_{de} = 1$ in any other case |

5 The application of the coefficient C_{de} of less than 1 is subject to certain other conditions.

General MET rate for crude oil

| | |
|-----------|--|
| C_{rd} | $C_{rd} = 0.3$ if C_{de} for a specific hydrocarbon reservoir is less than 1 and the level of depletion of reserves of that hydrocarbon reservoir is greater than 1 |
| | $C_{rd} = 3.8 - (3.5 \times N_{rd}/V_{rd})$ if C_{de} for a hydrocarbon reservoir is less than 1 and the level of depletion of reserves of that hydrocarbon reservoir is greater than or equal to 0.8 and less than or equal to 1 N_{rd} – amount of cumulative oil extraction according to the State's balance sheet of reserves of commercial minerals for the calendar year preceding the accounting year in which C_{rd} is applied V_{rd} – initially extractable oil reserves |
| | $C_{rd} = C_d$ if the following conditions are simultaneously met: - the hydrocarbon reservoir for which the value of C_{rd} is being determined is situated within a subsurface site which contains another hydrocarbon reservoir for which the value of C_{de} is less than 1 - the value of C_{de} for the hydrocarbon reservoir for which C_{rd} is being determined is equal to 1 |
| | $C_{rd} = 1$ if C_{de} is less than 1 and the level of depletion of reserves is less than 0.8 |
| | $C_{rd} = 1$ if the subsurface site does not contain hydrocarbon reservoir for which C_{de} is less than 1 |
| C_{can} | $C_{can} = 0$, for high-viscous oil which is extracted from subsurface sites containing oil of a viscosity exceeding 200 mPa × s but less than 10,000 mPa × s |
| | $C_{can} = 0$, for oil extracted from oil deposits located in certain designated areas, until at least one of the following conditions is met: - The accumulated extraction level of oil exceeds the threshold prescribed for each designated area - The period from the date the license was registered exceeds the maximum number of years prescribed for each designated area - The reserve's depletion of the deposits exceeds 5% on prescribed dates - Occurrence of prescribed deadlines for certain deposits |
| | When C_{can} is equal to 0, the overall MET formula for 2015 effectively results in the following calculation: $MET = 236 \times C_p$ |
| | $C_{can} = 1$ in any other case |

For zero MET tax rate and reduced MET coefficients see Section E.

MET is not payable on associated gas (i.e., gas extracted via an oil well).

Natural gas/gas condensate

For natural gas and gas condensate, MET is payable as follows:

$$MET \text{ on gas}^6 = BR \times U_{sf} \times C_{df} + T_g$$

$$MET \text{ on gas condensate} = BR \times U_{sf} \times C_{df} \times C_{cm}, \text{ where:}$$

BR = base rate of RUB42 per tonne for gas condensate and RUB35 per 1,000 cubic meters for gas. The rate is set in accordance with the calorific value of the fuels.

6 If the result of the formula is a negative figure, the MET rate is deemed to be equal to zero.

U_{sf} = a base value of a unit of standard fuel, calculated taking into account the following:

- ▶ the price of gas supplied to the domestic market and beyond the boundaries of the territories of member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States
- ▶ a coefficient reflecting the proportion of extracted gas to the total amount of extracted gas and gas condensate
- ▶ the price of gas condensate (linked to the price of Urals oil)

C_{df} = a coefficient reflecting the degree of difficulty of the extraction of gas or gas condensate, equal to the lowest of the values of the following coefficients in the range of 0 to 1:

- ▶ C_{dg} - a coefficient reflecting the level of depletion of gas reserves of a particular subsurface site containing a hydrocarbon reservoir
- ▶ C_1 - a coefficient reflecting the geographical location of a subsurface site containing a hydrocarbon reservoir
- ▶ C_{do} - a coefficient reflecting the depth of occurrence of a hydrocarbon reservoir
- ▶ C_{as} - a coefficient reflecting whether or not a subsurface site containing a hydrocarbon reservoir serves a regional gas supply system
- ▶ C_{drf} - a coefficient reflecting specific factors relevant to the development of particular reservoirs of a subsurface deposit

T_g = an adjustment linked to transportation costs of gas, which for non-Gazprom-affiliated companies is a negative figure, calculated taking into account:

- ▶ the difference between the actual average tariff for the transportation of natural gas and the estimated average rate of gas in the relevant year
- ▶ the average transportation distance for natural gas on pipelines in the year preceding the year of the tax period by non-Gazprom-affiliated companies
- ▶ a coefficient characterizing the ratio of the extracted gas by Gazprom and its affiliated companies to the amount of gas extracted by other taxpayers in the year preceding the year of the tax period

C_{cm} = an adjustment coefficient which is equal to 4.4 for 2015.⁷

The coefficients involved in the calculation of U_{sf} , C_{df} and T_g also involve separate calculations.

For zero tax rates for extracted natural gas and gas condensate see Section E.

MET is not payable on natural gas reinjected to maintain reservoir pressure (to facilitate the extraction of gas condensate).

Export duty

Export duty for crude oil and condensate is determined by the Russian Government based on the price of Urals blend on the Mediterranean and Rotterdam markets. The rate (in US dollars per tonne) is changed every month.

| Actual price per barrel (\$) | General duty rate per barrel (\$) |
|------------------------------|--|
| Up to \$15 | 0% |
| Between \$15 and \$20 | 35% × (actual price – \$15) |
| Between \$20 and \$25 | \$1.75 + 45% × (actual price – \$20) |
| More than \$25 | \$4 + 42% ⁸ × (actual price – \$25) |

For special reduced export duty rates for crude oil see Section E.

⁷ 5.5 for 2016, 6.5 from 2017.

⁸ 36% for 2016, 30% from 2017.

The export duty for exported natural gas is 30%. The export duty for exported liquefied natural gas (LNG) is 0%. The export duty for stable gas condensate with specific physical and chemical characteristics obtained as a result of the processing of non-stable gas condensate extracted from the Yuzho-Tambeiskoye deposit is 0%.

The export duty for main petroleum products is set as the percentage of the export duty for crude oil:

| Oil product | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Light petroleum products | 48% | 40% | 30% |
| Motor oil | 48% | 40% | 30% |
| Gasoline | 78% | 61% | 30% |
| Naphta | 85% | 71% | 55% |
| Fuel oil, bitumen and other dark petroleum products | 76% | 82% | 100% |

Production sharing contracts

Although the legislation provides that PSCs can be concluded, none has been concluded since 1996. There are significant hurdles to overcome for any oil or gas deposit to be eligible for consideration for development under a PSC. However, in certain exceptional cases, such as an obligation to enter into a PSC emanating from Russia's international conventions, a PSC might be concluded.

Unconventional oil and gas

A zero MET rate is available for oil extracted from hydrocarbon deposits within the Bazhenov, Abalak, Khadum and Domanik productive formations (see Section E). No special terms apply for unconventional gas.

C. Special tax and customs regime for shelf projects

From 2014, a new tax and customs regime for shelf projects applies. The regime applies to offshore hydrocarbon deposits (OHDs) lying wholly within the boundaries of Russia's territorial waters, its continental shelf and/or the Russian sector of the Caspian Sea. "New offshore hydrocarbon deposits" (NOHDs) are OHDs for which the date of commencement of commercial extraction of hydrocarbons falls on or after 1 January 2016. The commencement of commercial extraction at a deposit is deemed to be the date of the State balance sheet of reserves that first shows that the level of depletion of reserves of one or more types of hydrocarbons (except associated gas) extracted has exceeded 1%.

MET on extraction from NOHDs

The tax base for MET is the value of extracted commercial minerals subject to a calculated minimum.

NOHDs are divided into four categories, each with special ad valorem MET rates established as follows:

- a. Category one: deposits which lie wholly in the Sea of Azov or at least 50% within the Baltic Sea – the MET rate is 30% for 60 months (5 years) after production begins, but not later than 31 March 2022
- b. Category two: deposits lying at least 50% within the Black Sea (up to 100m deep), in the Pechora, White or Japan Seas, in the Russian sector of the Caspian sea, in the southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk (south of 55 degrees north latitude) – the MET rate is 15% for 84 months (7 years) after production begins, but not later than 31 March 2032
- c. Category three: deposits lying at least 50% within the deeper waters of the Black Sea, the northern part of the Sea of Okhotsk (at or north of 55 degrees north latitude) or the southern part of the Barents Sea (south of 72 degrees north latitude) – the MET rate is 10% with respect

to hydrocarbons other than natural fuel gas for 120 months (10 years) after production begins, but not later than 31 March 2037. The MET rate is 1.3% in case of extraction of natural fuel gas from deposits in this category subject to the same time limits

- d. Category four: deposits lying at least 50% within the Kara Sea, the northern part of the Barents Sea (at or north of 72 degrees north latitude) and the eastern Arctic – the MET rate is 1% for extracted natural fuel gas, 4.5% for other hydrocarbons extracted by companies which do not have the right to export LNG produced from natural fuel gas extracted at NOHD to world markets, and 5% in other cases. These rates apply for 180 months (15 years) after production begins, but not later than 31 March 2042.

The general MET rules as to the tax base and tax rate will apply after the expiration of the above incentives.

The MET rate for other OHDs

A reduced MET rate (see section E) is applicable for crude oil extracted from subsurface sites that lie to the north of the Arctic Circle wholly or partially within the boundaries of the internal sea waters and the territorial sea and on the Russian continental shelf subject to conditions.

A zero rate also applies to hydrocarbons extracted from a hydrocarbon reservoir within a subsurface site that lies wholly within the boundaries of the internal sea waters or the territorial sea, on the Russian continental shelf or in the Russian sector of the Caspian Sea, provided that at least one of the following conditions is met:

- a. The level of depletion of reserves of each type of hydrocarbon (excluding associated gas) extracted from the hydrocarbon reservoir in question as at 1 January 2016 is less than 0.1%
- b. Reserves of hydrocarbons extracted from the hydrocarbon reservoir in question as at 1 January 2016 have not been placed on the State balance sheet of reserves of commercial minerals.

This rate applies for no more than 60 calendar months (5 years) commencing from the first day of the month following the month in which any type of hydrocarbon from the relevant hydrocarbon reservoir which is subject to tax is first placed on the State balance sheet of commercial minerals and not beyond the end of the tax period in which the process design for the development of the OHDs was first approved.

Export duty exemptions

Crude oil, natural gas, LNG and gas condensate derived from NOHDs falling into categories one and two established for MET purposes are exempt from export duties until 31 March 2032, these from NOHDs in category three are exempt until 31 March 2042 and these from NOHDs in category four have no time limits.

Crude oil, LNG and gas condensate, which are exported from Russia and were obtained as a result of the exploitation of OHDs, are exempt from export duties. The exemption will apply if the deposit has 50% or more of its area in the southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk (south of 55 degrees north latitude) until 1 January 2021, provided that the level of depletion of reserves of each type of hydrocarbon (excluding associated gas) extracted at the deposit in question as at 1 January 2015 is less than 5%.

Profits taxation of license holders

The profits tax rate is established as 20%. It cannot be reduced by regional governments and all profits tax is payable to the federal budget.

Ring-fencing rules apply to shelf projects. Income and expenses are to be recorded separately for each shelf project. In the event that the right to use subsurface resources at a subsurface site is terminated, the license holder will have the right to treat the entire amount of expenses qualifying as expenses incurred for the development of natural resources under Article 261 of the Tax

Code or any part thereof as expenses of hydrocarbon extraction activities at an NOHD which are carried out at another subsurface site (other subsurface sites) subject to no more than one-third being treated as relating to any one such other NOHD.

Losses made on one NOHD development project can be carried forward indefinitely but cannot reduce the profits tax base for other activities.

Fixed assets of license holders and operators used in carrying out activities qualified as hydrocarbon extraction activities at an NOHD can be depreciated at up to three times the usual rates.

Taxation of operators

The operator of an NOHD must simultaneously satisfy the following conditions:

- a. A direct or indirect interest in it is held by an organization which possesses a license to use the subsurface site within whose boundaries the prospecting for and appraisal of and/or the exploration and/or exploitation of an NOHD are intended to be carried out or by an affiliate recognized as interdependent for tax purposes
- b. It carries out at least one of the types of hydrocarbon extraction activities specified in Clause 1(7) of Article 11.1 of the Tax Code, independently and/or through the use of contractors
- c. It carries out these activities on the basis of an (operator) agreement concluded with the license holder and that agreement provides for the payment to the operator of a fee in an amount which depends, inter alia, on the volume of hydrocarbons extracted at the relevant OHD and/or receipts from sales of those hydrocarbons

There can be only one operator in relation to an NOHD at a time. The tax base for each NOHD must be calculated separately.

Transport tax and assets tax exemptions

The transport tax exemption is for offshore fixed and floating platforms, offshore mobile drilling rigs and drilling vessels. The exemption is not limited to assets used at an NOHD.

The assets tax exemption is for assets that are situated on the Russian continental shelf, in Russia's internal sea waters and territorial sea and/or in the Russian sector of the Caspian Sea, and that are used in activities associated with the development of OHDs, including geological study, exploration and the performance of preparatory work. Where an asset was not within the specified areas throughout a tax period, it must satisfy the above requirements for not less than 90 calendar days in the course of one calendar year.

Transfer pricing

The transfer pricing rules do not apply to transactions between a license holder and an operator of an NOHD related to activities at the relevant NOHD.

D. Capital allowances

Depreciation

For tax purposes, depreciating assets include assets that have a limited useful life and that decline in value over time. Licenses are not depreciated as fixed assets; expenses incurred in obtaining a license from the State are amortized over the term of the license or over two years, at the election of the taxpayer. Depreciable assets are assets with a service life of more than 12 months and a historical cost of more than RUB40,000.

Depreciable assets are allocated to depreciation groups (there are 10 groups) in accordance with their useful lives, which are determined partly by statute and partly by the taxpayer. Asset groups that are relevant to the petroleum industry in Russia, and their standard depreciation periods, are set out in the table below.

| Item | Type of depreciating asset | Depreciation period |
|------|--|---------------------|
| 1 | Oil field, exploratory drilling and extraction equipment | 1-5 years |
| 2 | Gas wells for production drilling | 3-5 years |
| 3 | Oil and gas exploratory wells | 5-7 years |
| 4 | Development oil wells, power equipment | 7-10 years |
| 5 | Gas distribution network | 10-15 years |

A taxpayer is entitled to choose either the straight-line or reducing-balance method of depreciation, taking account of special considerations established in the Tax Code. It should be noted that only the straight-line method of charging depreciation may be used in relation to buildings, installations and transmission facilities that are included in depreciation groups 8 to 10.

Special allowances

10% (and not more than 30% for fixed assets included in depreciation groups 3 to 7) of the cost of newly acquired fixed assets or expenses incurred in connection with the extension, modernization or partial dismantling of fixed assets may be expensed immediately.

Accelerated depreciation (up to three times) is available for fixed assets that are the object of a lease agreement and included in depreciation groups 4 to 10. There is also a provision for accelerated depreciation (up to twice the usual rates) for fixed assets acquired before 1 January 2014 and employed under the conditions of an aggressive environment, such as locations in the far north, above the Arctic Circle. Fixed assets of license holders and operators used in carrying out activities qualified as hydrocarbon extraction activities at an NOHD can be depreciated at up to three times the usual rates.

There is no capital uplift or credit in Russia. Exploration costs are generally written off over 12 months.

E. Incentives

Crude oil

A zero MET rate applies to superviscous oil with a viscosity under formation conditions of 10,000 mPa × s and higher.

A zero MET rate applies for a period of 15 years to oil extracted from a specific hydrocarbon reservoir within the Bazhenov, Abalak, Khadum and Domanik productive formations, subject to conditions. For oil extracted from hydrocarbon reserves that have been included in the state balance sheet of mineral reserves approved as of 1 January 2012, the depletion of reserves as of 1 January 2012 should be less than 13%. The start date to determine the 15-year period, during which the zero MET could apply, varies as follows:

| Depletion of reserves | The start date for the 15-year application period |
|--|--|
| The level of depletion of reserves as at 1 January 2012 is greater than 1% inclusively, but less than 3% | From 1 January 2014 |
| The level of depletion of reserves as at 1 January 2012 is greater than 3% inclusively | From 1 January 2015 |
| The level of depletion of reserves (other than mentioned previously) first exceeds 1% | From 1 January of the year, in which the depletion of reserves first exceeded 1% |

A zero reducing coefficient C_{can} in the MET formula is applicable to crude oil extracted for the below designated areas:

| Location of the eligible deposits | Issuance of the license or its type (i) exploration and extraction (ii) geological study and extraction | The reduced coefficient ceases to apply upon the earliest of the below: | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | Level of depletion of reserves, not more than: | Cumulative extraction level, not more than (in million tonnes) | Date or number of years after the license has been issued, or its type (i) for exploration and extraction (ii) for geological study and extraction |
| Wholly or partially within the borders of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Irkutsk Region and Krasnoyarsk Territory | Before 1 January 2007 | 5% as of 1 January 2007 | 25 | 31 December 2016 |
| | (i) Before 31 December 2011 (ii) Before 31 December 2006 | 5% as of 1 January 2015 | 25 | 31 December 2021 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 25 | (i) 10 years (ii) 15 years |
| North of the Arctic Circle, wholly or partially within internal sea waters and territorial waters and on the continental shelf of Russia | Before 1 January 2009 | 5% as of 1 January 2009 | 35 | 31 December 2018 |
| | (i) Before 31 December 2011 (ii) Before 31 December 2006 | 5% as of 1 January 2015 | 35 | 31 December 2021 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 35 | (i) 10 years (ii) 15 years |
| Wholly or partially in the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea | Before 1 January 2009 | 5% as of 1 January 2009 | 10 | 31 December 2015 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 10 | (i) 7 years (ii) 12 years |
| Wholly or partially in the Nenets Autonomous District and on the Yamal Peninsula in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District | Before 1 January 2009 | 5% as of 1 January 2009 | 15 | 31 December 2015 |
| | (i) Before 31 December 2014 (ii) Before 31 December 2009 | 5% as of 1 January 2015 | 15 | 31 December 2021 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 15 | (i) 7 years (ii) 12 years |
| Wholly or partially in the Black Sea | Before 1 January 2012 | 5% as of 1 January 2012 | 20 | 31 December 2021 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 20 | (i) 10 years (ii) 15 years |
| Wholly or partially in the Sea of Okhotsk | Before 1 January 2012 | 5% as of 1 January 2012 | 30 | 31 December 2021 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 30 | (i) 10 years (ii) 15 years |

| Location of the eligible deposits | Issuance of the license or its type (i) exploration and extraction (ii) geological study and extraction | The reduced coefficient ceases to apply upon the earliest of the below: | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| | | Level of depletion of reserves, not more than: | Cumulative extraction level, not more than (In million tonnes) | Date or number of years after the license has been issued, or its type (i) for exploration and extraction (ii) for geological study and extraction |
| North of 65 degrees north latitude within the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District (except for the Yamal Peninsula within the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District) | Before 1 January 2012 | 5% as of 1 January 2012 | 25 | 31 December 2021 |
| | For other licenses | n/a | 25 | (i) 10 years (ii) 15 years |

Gas and gas condensate

MET is not payable on gas condensate extracted from deposits located partly or fully on the Yamal and/or Gydan Peninsula in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District up to the accumulated volume of extracted gas condensate up to 20 million tonnes, but not for more than 12 years from the start of production. MET is not payable on natural gas extracted from deposits located partly or fully on the Yamal and/or Gydan Peninsula in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District up to the accumulated volume of extracted natural gas up to 250 billion cubic meters, but not for more than 12 years from the start of production.

MET is not payable on gas condensate extracted from deposits located wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and/or Irkutsk Region, and the date of commercial production of natural gas falls within the period commencing from 1 January 2018. MET is not payable for 15 calendar years after the start of commercial production of natural gas (defined as the date of the State balance sheet of mineral reserves, according to which the level of depletion of reserves of natural fuel gas of a particular subsurface site first exceeded 1%). From the 16th calendar year and until the 24th a special formula applies. Starting from the 25th, the general MET formula applies.

The coefficient reflecting expenses for the transportation of natural fuel gas (T_g) is equal to 0 with respect to subsurface sites which are resource bases exclusively for regional gas supply systems.

MET deduction for Tatarstan and Bashkortostan

Special MET deductions are provided for companies operating in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. To be eligible, oil companies developing subsurface sites in designated areas must satisfy certain criteria concerning the relevant mineral license, period of development and initial extractable oil reserves.

$$\text{MET deduction} = \text{BR} \times K_p, \text{ where:}$$

BR = the base rate, which equals RUB1,214m for Tatarstan and is applicable until 2016 and RUB193.5m for Bashkortostan and is applicable until 2018.

K_p = adjustment linked to the export duty for crude oil:

$K_p = 1$, if the export duty rate for crude oil for the relevant tax period does not exceed the result of the following formula:

$$\text{\$4 per barrel} + 60\% \times (\text{Actual price} - \text{\$20 per barrel})$$

$K_p = 0$, if the export duty rate for crude oil for the relevant tax period exceeds the result of that formula.

LNG

Export duty is not applicable to exports of LNG.

Export duty

Special reduced export duty rates for crude oil are available for the following:

- a. Crude oil with a viscosity under formation conditions of not less than 10,000 mPa × s. Export duty for such crude oil should not exceed 10% of the general rate of export duty for crude oil. The reduced rate can be applied for a period of 10 years but not after 1 January 2023.
- b. Crude oil with particular physical and chemical characteristics which is extracted from deposits located at subsurface sites lying wholly or partially:
 - In the Republic of Yakutia (Sakha), the Irkutsk Region and Krasnoyarsk Territory, the Nenets Autonomous District and north of 65 degrees north latitude wholly or partially within the boundaries of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District
 - Within the Russian area (the Russian sector) of the bed of the Caspian Sea
 - Within the boundaries of the seabed of Russian internal sea waters
 - Within the boundaries of the bed of the Russian territorial sea
 - Within the boundaries of the Russian continental shelf
- c. Crude oil which is extracted from deposits where at least 80% of the initial recoverable oil reserves of the deposit is within the Tyumen suite.

Companies should obtain pre-approval in order to apply the reduced export duty rate for each individual field. The decision on the application of a special export duty formula is to be made on the basis of the correctness of data in the submitted documents, the level of depletion of reserves (which should not exceed 5%), and the internal rate of return (which should not exceed 16.3%). Companies applying the reduced export duty rate are subject to government monitoring of a project's economics. Once a hurdle rate of return is reached by a project subject to the reduced export duty rate, a company should apply the general rate for crude oil. These requirements apply to crude oil with particular physical and chemical characteristics and crude oil of the Tyumen suite.

The special export duty rate is calculated monthly as indicated in the following table:

| Crude oil | Special duty rate per barrel (\$) |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Oil listed in a point a. | $10\% \times (\$4 + 57\% \times (\text{Actual price} - \$25))$ |
| Oil listed in points b. and c. | $42\%^{10} \times (\text{Actual price} - \$25) - 7.7 - \text{Actual price} \times 0.14$ |

9 55% from 2016.

10 36% for 2016, 30% from 2017.

F. Withholding taxes

The rate for withholding tax (WHT) on dividends paid to foreign organizations is 15%. The rate can be lower if a double tax treaty applies that contains a lower rate, but only to a minimum of 5%. The rate of WHT on interest, royalties and leases of movable property is 20%. The minimum rate possible if a double tax treaty applies is 0%.

Technical services

Technical services provided by nonresident contractors are not subject to tax if the services do not give rise to a PE.

Branch remittance tax

There is no branch remittance tax in Russia.

G. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

Russia limits debt deductions under thin capitalization rules. Thin capitalization measures apply to the following types of debt:

- a. Debt obtained from a foreign direct or indirect shareholder holding more than 20% of the capital in a Russian company
- b. Debt obtained from a Russian affiliate of that foreign shareholder
- c. Debt for which a guarantee, surety or any other form of security was provided by a Russian affiliate or the foreign shareholder

The measures provide for a safe harbor debt-to-equity ratio of 3:1. Interest deductions are denied for interest payments exceeding the figure calculated if the safe harbor ratio is exceeded. Furthermore, if the company's debt-to-equity ratio exceeds the safe harbor ratio, excess interest payments are deemed to be dividends and are taxed at the rate applicable to dividends payable to the foreign shareholder.

The debt or equity classification of financial instruments for tax purposes is unclear. The Tax Code does not contain detailed rules on the classification of such instruments; generally, the tax authorities give more weight to the form than the substance of an agreement in their analysis. Significant analysis is necessary for instruments with a variable interest rate to determine whether the interest is deductible.

Additional temporary rules apply for 2015 because of a significant devaluation of the ruble.

H. Transactions

Asset disposals

It is not possible to sell licenses or oil and gas extraction permits. It is, though, possible to sell an enterprise as a property complex, together with all its assets and liabilities (but not licenses) as a whole. For the seller, such a transaction is subject to VAT at a rate of 18% applicable to the sales price and to profits tax at a rate of 20% on the difference between the sale price and the net book value of the assets of the enterprise being sold.

There are no capital gains exemptions for sellers of enterprises. The State is not obliged to reissue a license to extract oil and gas to the new owner of the enterprise.

Farm-in and farm-out

Russian law does not recognize farm-ins and farm-outs because the license issued by the State cannot be traded, and parts of that license cannot be an object of any business transaction.

A quasi farm-in may be executed via a sale of shares of the licensee to an interested party.

Selling shares in a company (consequences for resident and nonresident shareholders)

Nonresidents that dispose of shares in a Russian company are subject to tax in Russia only if more than 50% of the assets of the company being sold consist, directly or indirectly, of immovable property in Russia.

Resident corporations that dispose of shares in a Russian company are subject to profits tax at a rate of 20% on the difference between the sale price and the acquisition costs of those shares. There are no exemptions from this tax for corporations.

Controlled foreign companies

From 1 January 2015 controlled foreign company (CFC) rules have been introduced in Russia. CFCs are companies that are tax resident in foreign jurisdictions and that are controlled by Russian tax-resident individuals and companies. The definition of CFCs also covers structures that are not legal entities and that are controlled by Russian tax residents. The CFC rules include certain particular provisions for the oil and gas industry, for example, the profits of the following CFCs are not subject to Russian profits tax:

- ▶ A foreign company involved in projects under production sharing, concession and similar agreements, provided that these companies' profits from such projects exceed 90% of total income.
- ▶ A foreign company that is an operator of an NOHD or is a direct shareholder of an operator of an NOHD.

I. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is applied at a standard rate of 18%. The rate is 0% for exported oil, oil products, gas and gas condensate. There is no separate VAT registration; all companies are VAT taxpayers. All sales of hydrocarbons within Russia are subject to VAT at a rate of 18%. Acquisitions and sales of shares and other financial instruments are not subject to VAT.

All commercial transactions have a VAT impact, and this must be considered prior to entering into any negotiation or arrangement. Common transactions or arrangements that have VAT implications include:

- a. The importation of equipment
- b. The supply of technical and other services in Russia or to Russian customers
- c. The secondment of personnel
- d. The sale or lease of equipment in Russia
- e. Asset disposals

A VAT withholding regime applies, and this regime is different from the reverse-charge regime. If services performed by nonresidents are subject to VAT under this regime, 18/118 of the payments must be withheld. It is not possible for nonresidents to obtain a VAT refund by obtaining a Russian VAT number.

Input VAT incurred at the development stage may generally be offset immediately, but the tax authorities often claim that it may only be offset when production starts. It is usually necessary to litigate with the tax authorities to obtain a refund before production starts. Nonetheless, a procedure for claiming an accelerated refund of VAT may be used by certain qualifying taxpayers and other taxpayers presenting a bank guarantee. Generally, there are significant obstacles to obtaining an input VAT refund in respect of exports. The administration of the tax is ineffective; as a result, litigation has often been the only effective mechanism for obtaining refunds.

Equipment for which no equivalent is produced in Russia, which is included in a special list drawn up by the government, is exempt from VAT on importation.

Import duties

Many goods, equipment and materials that enter Russia from abroad are subject to import duties. The rates vary from 0% to 25%, but a 0% to 20% rate is typical. An exemption may be obtained for goods imported as an equity contribution, and payment by installments is available for items imported under the temporary import regime.

Export duties

Please refer to Section B for a discussion of export duties on hydrocarbons.

Excise duties

Excise duty applies to some goods manufactured in Russia, or imported into Russia, including petroleum products, alcohol and tobacco. The current rates that apply to gasoline are in the range of RUB5,530 to RUB9,500 per tonne.

Stamp duties

Stamp duty is levied by notaries and is generally capped at insignificant amounts.

Registration fees

There are no significant registration fees.

Other significant taxes

Other significant taxes include contributions to social funds (a type of social security tax paid by employers). The aggregate rate for 2015 is 30%. An annual cap for contributions to the pension fund is RUB711,000. An annual cap for contributions to the social insurance fund is RUB670,000. There is no annual cap for contributions to the medical insurance fund. Payments exceeding the annual cap for the pension fund are taxed at a rate of 15.1%. Payments exceeding the annual cap for the social fund are taxed at a rate of 27.1%. No such contributions arise on payments to foreigners designated as highly-qualified foreign specialists for immigration purposes.

Employers should also pay compulsory insurance against accidents at the workplace and occupational illnesses. Those contributions are payable for all employees, including foreigners designated as highly-qualified foreign specialists. The rates vary from 0.2% to 8.5% depending on the level of occupational risk (there are 32 classes of risk for this purpose). The rate is typically 0.2% for office workers. Employees engaged in field work (e.g. rig workers) fall into the 30th class of professional risk and their remuneration is subject to a 7.4% rate.

Property tax applies to the net book value of fixed assets of Russian companies at a rate of 2.2% (subject to regional reductions and exemptions). Property tax is calculated on the basis of the cadastral value of assets for certain categories of immovable property at reduced rates. For foreign companies with property in Russia, their immovable property is subject to this tax, as well as other fixed assets unless exempt under a treaty. Fixed assets included in the first or second depreciation groups are not subject to property tax. All movable property put into use after 1 January 2013 is exempt from property tax, except for property obtained as the result of a reorganization or liquidation of legal entities, and obtained from related parties.

J. Other**Investment in strategic deposits**

The government has powers to deny the granting of licenses for oil and gas deposits of a strategic nature to companies with foreign investment. Foreign equity investments granting 25% or more of their voting rights require prior approval.

Applicable domestic production requirements

Under the law on exports of natural gas, only Gazprom and its 100%-owned subsidiaries may export gas in a gaseous state out of Russia. The list of companies that have the right to export LNG is limited to:

- ▶ Gazprom and its 100%-owned subsidiaries
- ▶ Subsurface users engaged in the development of a deposit of federal importance (currently defined as a deposit with natural gas reserves of 50 billion cubic feet and more) if the license for such a deposit as at 1 January 2013 provides for the construction of an LNG plant, or provides that the natural gas extracted is sent for liquefaction to an LNG plant
- ▶ Russian legal entities that are more than 50% owned and/or controlled by the Russian state, engaged in the development of deposits located in Russian internal waters, territorial seas, the continental shelf, the Black and Azov seas, and that produce LNG from natural gas produced on such deposits, or produced under production sharing contracts
- ▶ Subsidiaries, more than 50% of whose capital is owned by such Russian legal entities, that produce LNG from natural gas produced on the said deposits

Foreign-exchange controls

The currency control mechanisms that existed during the 1990s were abolished in 2005. They may be reinstated if the balance of payments deteriorates.

Transactions that may be suspicious in terms of potential money laundering are routinely reported by banks to the State's financial intelligence body.

Gas to liquids

There is no special regime for gas-to-liquids conversion.

Gas flaring

Companies are permitted to flare 5% of any associated gas they produce. Producers violating this limit are charged significant emission fees, which are not tax-deductible.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Saudi Arabia's fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum and natural gas industries consists of corporate income tax in accordance with a petroleum concession agreement (PCA). The main elements comprise:

- ▶ Royalties – PCA royalties are stipulated in the particular PCA
- ▶ Corporate income tax rate:
 - ▶ General – 20%
 - ▶ Oil production – 85%
 - ▶ Natural gas investment activities – 30%
- ▶ Capital allowances – Specific depreciation rates apply for specific asset classes

B. Fiscal regime

Saudi Arabian tax law applies to companies engaged in oil and other hydrocarbons production irrespective of their Saudi or non-Saudi ownership.

Corporate income tax

Oil and other hydrocarbon activities

Companies engaged in oil and other hydrocarbons production are subject to corporate income tax (CIT) at the rate of 85% on their tax base. Tax base is calculated as total revenue subject to tax less allowable deductions and is determined in accordance with the Saudi Arabian income tax law (effective from 30 July 2004).

Deductions include expenses to the extent that they are incurred in producing assessable income or are necessarily incurred in carrying on a business for the purpose of producing income that is subject to tax. However, expenditure of a capital nature is not deductible.

Natural gas investment activities

Natural gas investment tax (NGIT) applies to companies (irrespective of their Saudi or non-Saudi ownership) engaged in natural gas, natural gas liquids and gas condensates investment activities in Saudi Arabia. NGIT does not apply to a company engaged in the production of oil and other hydrocarbons.

The NGIT rate ranges from 30% to 85% and is determined on the basis of the internal rate of return on cumulative annual cash flows. The NGIT rate includes income tax of 30%.

Natural gas investment activities income is the gross income derived from the sale, exchange or transfer of natural gas, natural gas liquids, gas condensates and other products, including sulfur, as well as any other non-operational or incidental income derived within the taxpayer's primary activity, regardless of its type or source, including income derived from the utilization of available excess capacity in any facility that is subject to NGIT.

The NGIT base is the gross revenues described above less the expenses deductible under the general tax law. The amount of royalties and surface rentals shall be considered as deductible expenses.

Taxpayers subject to NGIT must ring-fence their natural gas-related activities for each gas exploration and production contract or agreement with the Government, and file separate tax returns and audited accounts for the activities under each gas exploration and production contract or agreement. A taxpayer must file a separate tax return and audited accounts for its other activities that are not related to its natural gas investment activity.

Other activities

Companies not subject to NGIT or the 85% tax rate are taxed at a rate of 20%.

Government royalties via a PCA

Royalty rates are stipulated in each particular PCA. Royalty payments in respect of production are deductible for tax purposes in calculating the tax base of a company engaged in oil or other hydrocarbon production activities.

Transfer pricing

Saudi Arabian tax law includes measures to ensure that the Kingdom's taxable income base associated with cross-border transactions is based on an arm's length price.

Broadly, the tax authority has discretionary powers to:

- ▶ Disregard or reclassify transactions whose form does not reflect its substance.
- ▶ Allocate income or deductions between related parties or persons under common control as necessary to reflect the income that would have resulted from a transaction between independent persons.

There are no formal transfer pricing guidelines or directives with regard to pricing methodologies in Saudi Arabia, although the Ministry of Finance has issued a resolution in March 2014 that Saudi Arabia shall adopt formal transfer pricing guidelines, which will be consistent with international standards. However, the tax authority often reviews transactions between related parties in considerable depth.

Losses

Losses may be carried forward indefinitely. However, the maximum loss that can be offset against a year's profit is 25% of the tax-adjusted profits for that year. Saudi tax regulations do not provide for the carryback of losses.

If a change of 50% or more occurs in the underlying ownership or control of a capital company, no deduction is allowed for the losses incurred before the change in the tax years following the change.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Depreciation deductions are calculated for each class of fixed assets by applying the prescribed depreciation rate to the remaining value of each group at the fiscal year-end. The remaining value for each asset class is calculated as the closing tax balance for the asset class at the end of the preceding year less depreciation claimed in the preceding year, and 50% of the proceeds received from asset disposals in the current and preceding years plus 50% of the cost of assets added during the current year and the preceding years.

Expenses for geological surveying, drilling, exploration and other preliminary work to exploit and develop natural resources and their fields are subject to a 20% depreciation rate. This includes expenditure assets acquired by the taxpayer in connection with the acquisition of rights to geological surveying and the processing or exploitation of natural resources.

Assets developed in respect of BOT or BOOT contracts may be depreciated over the period of the contract or the remaining period of the contract.

D. Withholding taxes and double tax treaties

The following payments made to nonresident companies that do not have a permanent establishment (PE) in Saudi Arabia are subject to a final withholding tax (WHT) at the following rates:

| Type of payment | Rate of WHT |
|---|-------------|
| Royalties and payments made to head office or an affiliate for services including technical and consultancy services and international telecommunication services | 15% |
| Rent, payments for technical and consulting services, dividends or remittance of PE profits, interest, insurance or reinsurance premiums | 5% |
| Management fees | 20% |

Tax treaties are currently in force between Saudi Arabia and Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Czech Republic, France, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the UK, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Treaties have been signed or under negotiation with Albania, Algeria, Australia, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Hungary, Jersey, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mexico, Morocco, Portugal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Venezuela, but ratification procedures in respect of these have not yet been completed.

In a circular, the Saudi Arabian tax authorities (DZIT) have provided that a Saudi Arabian resident party making payment to a nonresident party (beneficiary) may apply the provisions of the effective tax treaty provided that the resident party complies with the following:

- It reports all payments to nonresident parties (including those payments which are either not subject to WHT or subject to WHT at a lower rate as per the provisions of effective tax treaties) in the monthly WHT returns (on a prescribed format – Form Q7A).
- It submits a formal request for application of effective tax treaties' provisions including tax residency certificate issued from the tax authorities in the country where the beneficiary is residing confirming that the beneficiary is resident in that country in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of the treaty and the amount paid is subject to tax in that country (on a prescribed format – Form Q7B).
- It submits an undertaking that it would bear and pay any tax or fine due on nonresident party due to incorrectness of submitted information or a computation error or misinterpretation of the provisions of tax treaty (on a prescribed format – Form Q7C).

If the resident party is unable to submit the above requirements, it has to follow the procedure under the old DZIT circular of withholding and settling WHT in accordance with the provisions and rates specified in the Saudi Arabian income tax regulations and then later on applying for refund of overpaid WHT based on the following documents:

- i. A letter from the nonresident beneficiary requesting a refund of the overpayment
- ii. A valid certificate from the tax authority in the country where the beneficiary is residing, confirming that the beneficiary is resident in accordance with the provisions of Article (4) of the treaty in that country and the amount paid is subject to tax in the country
- iii. A copy of the WHT return form for the settlement of tax together with a bank collection order confirming the settlement of the WHT

Note: documents mentioned in points (i) and (ii) must be attested from the Saudi Embassy in the other treaty country and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saudi Arabia.

After review of the above documents and verification that treaty provisions are applicable on the nonresident party, the DZIT will refund the overpaid amount to the Saudi Arabian entity.

E. Indirect taxes

Customs duty

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as a member of the GCC, follows the Unified Customs Act across the GCC; the uniform customs duty of 5% applies on most imports. This means that any goods that come into a port of entry of a GCC member state that has been subject to customs duty in that state are not subject to customs duty again if the goods are transferred to another GCC member state.

VAT

Currently, there is no VAT or similar sales tax in Saudi Arabia.

Senegal

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|---|---|
-

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Senegal to the upstream oil and gas industry consists of the Senegalese tax law, the Senegalese petroleum code and the amendments to the aforementioned by virtue of a relevant production sharing contract (PSC) or contract of service concluded between the Senegalese Government and the contractor (hereafter, the holder).

A new Senegalese tax law came into force on 1 January 2013. The new tax law provides greater certainty with respect to the maintenance of benefits received by oil and gas companies. Transitional measures apply and comprise the following:

- ▶ Tax incentives benefiting oil and gas companies subject to the petroleum code will remain applicable if they were granted before the new tax law came into force. The former regime will continue to apply during the entirety of the taxpayer's exemption title.
- ▶ At the expiration of the exemption period, the common regulations of the new tax law will become applicable, replacing the specific regime granted to the holder in the applicable PSC.

The main elements of the fiscal regime for in the oil and gas sector in Senegal are the following:

- ▶ Corporate tax – 30%
- ▶ Annual land royalties (redevance superficière)
- ▶ Royalty on production
- ▶ Additional petroleum tax
- ▶ Royalties – Between 2% and 10%¹
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ PSC²
- ▶ Resource rent tax – An annual surface rent is levied

1 This royalty applies to the holder of a PSC.

2 The Government share depends on the terms of the PSC or the service contract; it should be equal to a percentage of the production after covering the oil cost of the holder.

- ▶ Capital allowances – E,³ O⁴
- ▶ Investment incentives – L,⁵ RD⁶

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate tax

A 30% corporate tax applies to the net profit of oil and gas companies. "Net profit" is defined as the difference between the value of the opening and closing balances of the net assets in the relevant year of assessment, less extra contributions, plus any amounts taken by associated companies during the period.

The profit is established after deduction of all charges that:

- ▶ Are incurred in the direct interest of the company or related to the normal management of the company
- ▶ Correspond to actual charges and are supported by sufficient evidence
- ▶ Are reflected by a decrease in the net assets of the company

The charges should be deductible in the fiscal year in which they are incurred.

Holders of petroleum exploitation title are exempted from minimum tax for three years from the date of granting the exploitation title. "Minimum tax" is a tax commonly due when companies are in a tax loss position.

Ring-fencing

The Senegalese Petroleum Code does not provide that the profit from one project can be offset against the losses from another project held by the same tax entity. Accordingly, the petroleum operations should be accounted for separately.

Production sharing contracts

A PSC is concluded between the holder and the Senegalese Government and is signed by the minister in charge of petroleum activities after the approval of the Minister of Finance. "Holder" refers to the holder of the mining deed (the mining title).

The PSC is approved by the President of the Republic of Senegal, published in the official journal and registered in accordance with the conditions provided by the law.

Government share of profit oil

The production volumes remaining after the deduction of oil costs are shared between the State and the holder according to the value of a ratio "R," defined as follows:

| Value of R | Government share | Holder share |
|-------------|--|---|
| Less than 1 | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC |
| From 1 to 2 | Percentage of Ratio R depending on each applicable PSC | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC |
| From 2 to 3 | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC |

3 E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

4 O: rules regarding currency exchange.

5 L: losses can be carried forward until the third fiscal year following the deficit period.

6 RD: R&D incentive – The Senegalese tax law provides tax exemptions for the holders of PSCs or service contracts during the period of exploration and development.

| Value of R | Government share | Holder share |
|-------------|---|---|
| More than 3 | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC | Percentage of Ratio R depending on the applicable PSC |

R is the ratio of the net accumulated revenue divided by the accumulated investments, which are determined in accordance with the accumulated amounts from the effective date until the end of the civil year. "Net accumulated revenue" is the total amount of the benefit after assessment of corporation tax. "Accumulated investments" make up the total amount of the expenditure for research, evaluation and development.

Non-recoverable expenditures

The following expenditures are not recoverable:

- ▶ Expenditures relating to the period before the effective date of the PSC
- ▶ All expenses relating to operations carried out beyond the point of delivery, such as marketing and transport charges
- ▶ Financial expenses relating to financing research, evaluation and operations, as well as those relating to financing of development and transport for production purposes.

Determination of cost oil

Cost oil is the sum of all expenses borne by the holder in the framework of the PSC, determined in accordance with accepted accounting methods.

Uplift available on recovered costs

The holder can add a reasonable amount representing general expenses incurred abroad that are necessary for the performance of the petroleum operations and that are borne by the holder and its affiliated companies, determined according to the annual amount of petroleum costs (excluding financial charges and general expenses).

This additional amount may be determined as follows:

- ▶ For up to US\$3 million per year – 3%
- ▶ Between US\$3 million and US\$6 million per year – 2%
- ▶ Between US\$6 million and US\$10 million per year – 1%
- ▶ More than US\$10 million per year – 0.5%

Annual land royalty

An annual land royalty is due when the PSC or service contract is signed. Based on an example of a PSC, the annual land royalty is determined as follows:

- ▶ During the initial exploration period – US\$5 per square kilometer per year
- ▶ During the first renewal period – US\$8 per square kilometer per year
- ▶ During the second renewal period and during any extension provided in the PSC – US\$15 per square kilometer per year

These amounts are paid for the entire year, based on the area of the permit.

Additional petroleum tax

Holders are subject to an additional petroleum tax, calculated according to the profitability of the petroleum operations. The rate, conditions of calculation, declaration, liquidation and recovery are specified in the PSC or service contract.

If the remuneration of the holder of a PSC has already been determined according to the profitability of its petroleum operations, this method of determination of the additional petroleum tax applies instead of the additional petroleum tax calculated in terms of the PSC.

The payment of the additional petroleum tax due for a given calendar year is required to be made, at the latest, within three months following the end of the relevant calendar year.

The additional petroleum tax is not a deductible charge for the determination of profits subject to the corporate tax.

Royalty regimes

Holders are subject to the payment of a royalty on the value of the hydrocarbons produced. The royalty must be paid in cash to the State. The royalty is calculated based on the total quantity of hydrocarbons produced in the concession and not used in the petroleum operations.

The royalty rates applicable to the production of crude oil or natural gas are determined as follows:

- ▶ Liquid hydrocarbons exploited onshore – 2% to 10%
- ▶ Liquid hydrocarbons exploited offshore – 2% to 8%
- ▶ Gaseous hydrocarbons exploited onshore or offshore – 2% to 6%

The amount of royalty and the rules relating to the basis and recovery of the costs are specified in the PSC.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Tax depreciation rules

The tax depreciation rules for the oil and gas sector are provided for in the PSC. The fixed assets realized by the holder that are necessary for its petroleum operations are depreciated using the straight-line method of depreciation. The minimum period of depreciation is five calendar years, or 10 calendar years for fixed assets relating to the transportation of the produced oil or gas. Depreciation commences with the calendar year when the fixed assets are realized, or with the calendar year when the fixed assets are put into normal operation.

The Senegalese Petroleum Code does not provide for any accelerated depreciation for the assets of an oil and gas company.

Immediate write-off for exploration costs

Hydrocarbon exploration expenses incurred by the holder in the territory of Senegal, including the cost of geological and geophysical surveys and the cost of exploration wells (but excluding the costs of producing exploration wells that may be capitalized), are considered to be fully deductible charges effective in the year they are incurred, or they may be depreciated in accordance with a depreciation method determined by the holder.

D. Incentives

The tax exemptions and incentives available to oil and gas companies were granted by Article 48 of the Petroleum Code. Given that this article has been repealed by the law No. 2012-32 dated 31 December 2012, the General Tax Code remains the main legal reference with respect to tax incentives available during R&D phases.

Carryforward losses

The unverified amount of a deficit is deductible from taxable profits until the third fiscal year following the deficit period, unless otherwise provided for in the PSC or service contract. A PSC or service contract may allow losses to be carried forward beyond the three-year period.

R&D incentives

During the R&D period, holders of petroleum research titles are exempted from the following taxes (during the period of validity of the title and its successive renewals):

- ▶ Direct tax (corporate tax)
- ▶ Tax on sales or similar tax (VAT)
- ▶ Employment tax (CFCE)
- ▶ Tax on developed lands except for properties for home usage
- ▶ Tax on undeveloped lands
- ▶ Business license tax

Article 48 of the Petroleum Code provided exemption from WHT on interest (IRC WHT), and taxes and duties that apply to petroleum products supplied to permanent facilities and drilling facilities. However, the new Senegalese tax law has not repeated the above tax exemptions.

Any person or company that works on behalf of holders may be exempt from tax on sales or similar tax, in respect of the petroleum operations performed.

During this period, equipment intended directly and exclusively for the petroleum operations is exempted from any duties and taxes on importation in the Republic of Senegal by holders or by companies working on their behalf.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends

Dividends paid by a Senegalese company to a nonresident are subject to a withholding tax (WHT) at the rate of 10%.

Interest

Interest paid by a Senegalese resident to a nonresident is subject to WHT at the rate of 16%. However, the 8% WHT rate is for interest paid by banks on some banking products.

Royalties

A WHT on profits for "non-commercial activity" must be paid by foreign companies or individuals that provide services to a resident company if such services are rendered or used in Senegal and if the nonresident service provider has no permanent professional installation in Senegal. The rate of WHT is 20% of the gross amount.

This tax must be paid by the local company within 15 days following the payment of remuneration to the nonresident service provider.

Branch remittance tax

Profits made in Senegal by a branch of a foreign company that are not reinvested in Senegal are deemed to be distributed and are subject to a 10% WHT. However, it should be noted that under double tax treaties concluded between Senegal and other countries, WHT may be reduced to a lower rate under certain conditions.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization limits

Thin capitalization is the limitation on the deductibility of interest payments if the prescribed debt-to-equity ratio is exceeded.

The rate of interest in respect of funds placed at the disposal of a company, in addition to authorized capital, by one or more shareholders is limited to three points above the discount rate of the central bank.

There is no limitation on the deductibility of interest that a Senegalese company may pay to a third party. The same situation applies to interest paid to a company belonging to the same group as the shareholders.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The PSC or service contract may be terminated if all the assets are transferred. Income realized through the transfer of certain classes of assets of the holder is credited to the account of oil costs to be recovered.

Capital gains are taxed at the corporate tax rate of 30%. The payment of the tax can be deferred in accordance with the conditions provided in the tax law.

The registration fees to be paid by the assignee depend on the kind of asset, for example:

- ▶ Shares – 1%
- ▶ Transferable bonds – 1%
- ▶ Debts – 1%

It should be noted that an adjustment should be made to the amount of VAT deducted at the time of purchase of the asset if the asset is not entirely depreciated.

H. Indirect taxes

Import duties and VAT

In general, a 22.9% customs duty applies, as well as VAT at a rate of 18%. The 22.9% rate is the maximum that can be applied on imported goods and includes ECOWAS duties (2.5%) and the COSEC levy (0.4%).

Export duty

No export duty applies.

Stamp duties

Stamp duties may apply to the registration of different contracts concluded by an oil and gas company. The amount is XOF2,000 for each page of the agreement.

Registration fees

Registration fees depend on the type of agreement concluded.

Disposal of interests through a farm-in agreement will give rise to a registration tax at the rate of 10%.

I. Other

Exchange controls

The holder is subject to Regulation No. 9/2010 CM/WAEMU relating to foreign financial exchanges between member states of West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).

However, for the duration of a PSC, the Senegalese authorities provide certain guarantees to the holder and its subcontractors for operations carried out within the framework of the PSC, in particular:

- ▶ The right to obtain offshore loans required for performance of the holder's activities in Senegal
 - ▶ The right to collect and maintain offshore all funds acquired or borrowed abroad, including the receipts from sales, and the right to dispose freely of these funds, limited to the amounts that exceed the requirements of the holder's operations in Senegal
 - ▶ Free movement of funds owned by the holder between Senegal and any other country, free of any duties, taxes and commissions of any kind, the right to repatriate the capital invested under the PSC and to transfer proceeds – in particular, interests and dividends
 - ▶ The free transfer of amounts due and the free receipt of amounts receivable for any reason whatsoever, provided that the declarations required by the regulations in force are filed
-

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |
-

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Singapore has a corporate income tax regime that is applicable across all industries. There is no separate fiscal regime for companies in the energy industry. The main elements of the regime are:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – Headline rate is 17%
- ▶ Capital allowances – D¹
- ▶ Incentives – Many incentives are offered.

Withholding tax (WHT) is applied to interest, royalties, rent and services, unless specifically exempted. Generally, the withholding tax (WHT) rates are 10% to 17%, although tax treaties may allow for a reduced rate or an exemption. There is no WHT on dividend distributions.

B. Fiscal regime

Scope of taxation

Income tax is imposed on all income derived from sources in Singapore, together with income from sources outside Singapore if received in Singapore. A nonresident company that is not operating in or from Singapore is generally not taxed on foreign-sourced income received in Singapore.

A company is considered “resident” in Singapore if the control and management of its business are exercised in Singapore; the place of incorporation is not relevant.

Remittances of foreign-sourced income in the form of dividends, branch profits and services income into Singapore by a tax-resident company will be exempt from tax if certain prescribed conditions are met.

Rate of tax

The standard CIT rate is 17%. Seventy-five percent of the first SGD10,000 of normal chargeable income is exempt from tax, and 50% of the next SGD290,000 is exempt from tax. The balance of chargeable income is fully taxable at the standard rate of 17%.

1 D: accelerated depreciation is available. See Section C.

A corporate income tax rebate of 30% of the corporate income tax payable, capped at SGD30,000 per tax year, is currently being granted for three years, from the tax year 2013 to tax year 2015.

Subject to certain conditions, a newly incorporated and tax-resident Singapore company may qualify for a full tax exemption on the first SGD100,000 of normal chargeable income and 50% of the next SGD200,000 of chargeable income. The exemption applies only to the qualifying company's first three consecutive years of assessment. However, the scheme does not apply to new start-ups undertaking property development or investment holding.

Computation of taxable income

In general, book profits reported in the financial statements prepared under generally accepted accounting principles are adjusted in accordance with the Singapore tax rules to arrive at the taxable income.

Functional currency

If a company maintains its financial accounts in a functional currency other than Singapore dollars, as required under the financial reporting standards in Singapore, the company must furnish tax computations to the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) denominated in that functional currency in the manner prescribed by law.

Deductions

For expenses to be deductible, they must be incurred "wholly and exclusively" in the production of income, and they must be revenue expenses in nature and not specifically disallowed under Singapore tax legislation.

Expenses attributable to foreign-sourced income are not deductible unless the foreign-sourced income is received in Singapore and is subject to tax in Singapore. Offshore losses may not be offset against Singapore-sourced income.

No deduction is allowed for the book depreciation of fixed assets, but tax depreciation (capital allowances) is granted according to statutory rates (see Section C below). However, a deduction for qualifying renovation or refurbishment expenditure is available subject to meeting specified conditions.

Double deductions are available for certain expenses relating to approved trade fairs, exhibitions or trade missions, maintenance of overseas trade offices, overseas investment development, logistics activities, and research and development (R&D).

Relief for trading losses

Trading losses may be offset against all other chargeable income of the same year. Unutilized losses may be carried forward indefinitely, subject to the shareholding test (which requires that the shareholders remain substantially (50% or more) the same as at the relevant comparison dates).

Excess capital allowances can also be offset against other chargeable income of the same year, and any unutilized amounts may be carried forward indefinitely, subject to the shareholding test and to the requirement that the trade giving rise to the capital allowances continues to be carried on (the "same trade" test).

A one-year carryback of up to an aggregate amount of SGD100,000 of the current year's unutilized capital allowances and trade losses may be allowed, subject to meeting certain conditions and compliance with specified administrative procedures. The carryforward and carryback of losses and capital allowances is subject to the above-mentioned shareholding test. If a shareholder of the loss-making company is itself a company, look-through provisions apply through the corporate chain to the final beneficial shareholder.

The carryback of capital allowances is subject to the same-trade test that applies to the carryforward of unutilized capital allowances (see above).

The IRAS has the authority to allow companies to deduct their unutilized tax losses and capital allowances, notwithstanding that there is a substantial

change in ownership at the relevant dates, if the change is not motivated by tax considerations – for instance, when the change is caused by the nationalization or privatization of industries, or if the shareholding of the company or its parent changes substantially as a result of the shares being widely traded on recognized exchanges. If allowed, these losses and capital allowances may only be offset against profits from the same business.

Groups of companies

Under group relief measures, current-year unutilized losses, capital allowances and donations may be transferred by one company to another within the same group, subject to meeting certain specified conditions. A group generally consists of a Singapore-incorporated parent company and all of its Singapore incorporated subsidiaries. Two Singapore incorporated companies are members of the same group if one is 75% owned by the other or both are 75% owned by a third Singapore incorporated company.

Transfer pricing

There is specific legislation governing the arm's length principle to be applied to related-party transactions. The IRAS may make adjustments to the profits for income tax purposes in cases where the terms of commercial or financial relations between two related parties are not at arm's length. Aside from certain limited cases, taxpayers with related party transactions need to prepare contemporaneous transfer pricing documentation.

Dividends

Dividends paid by a Singapore tax-resident company are exempt from income tax in the hands of shareholders, regardless of whether the dividends are paid out of taxed income or tax-free gains.

Anti-avoidance legislation

The IRAS may disregard or vary any arrangement that has the purpose or effect of altering the incidence of taxation or of reducing or avoiding a Singapore tax liability. The IRAS may also tax profits of a nonresident in the name of a resident as if the resident was an agent of the nonresident, if the profits of the resident arising from business dealings with the nonresident are viewed as less than expected as a result of the close connection between the two parties.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

Plant and machinery

Capital allowances or tax depreciation are given for capital expenditures incurred on the acquisition of plant and machinery used for the purposes of a trade or business. The qualifying plant and machinery are normally written off in equal amounts over three years when claimed.

The cost of the following may, however, be written off in the year of acquisition: computers or other prescribed automation equipment, generators, robots, certain efficient pollution control equipment, certified energy-efficient equipment or approved energy-saving equipment, certain industrial noise and chemical hazards control equipment.

Businesses that incur expenditure on acquiring qualifying IT and automation equipment may qualify under the productivity and innovation credit (PIC) scheme – see Section D.

Expenditure on automobiles (other than commercial vehicles and cars registered outside Singapore and used exclusively outside Singapore) generally does not qualify for capital allowances.

Capital expenditures on fixtures, fittings and installations integral or attached to a building are usually considered to be part of the building and do not

qualify as plant and machinery. Unless an industrial building allowance or land intensification allowance (see below) applies, this type of expenditure does not qualify for capital allowances.

Land intensification allowance incentive

The land intensification allowance (LIA) incentive grants an initial allowance of 25% and an annual allowance of 5% on qualifying capital expenditure incurred on or after 23 February 2010 by businesses on construction or renovation of a qualifying building or structure, upon meeting certain conditions. The user of the building or structure must carry out one of the specified qualifying activities as its principal activity in the building or structure. The application window period for the LIA incentive is from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2020.

Intellectual property

Writing down allowances (WDAs) are granted for capital expenditures incurred on the acquisition of specified categories of intellectual property (IP) on or before the last day of the basis period for the tax year 2020, but only if the legal and economic ownership of the IP lies with Singapore companies. The allowances are calculated on a straight-line basis over five years. The legal ownership requirement may be waived for IP rights that were acquired on or after 17 February 2006 if the Singaporean company has substantial economic rights over the IP but the foreign parent holds the legal title.

An accelerated WDA over two years will, on approval, be granted to an approved media and digital entertainment (MDE) company in respect of the acquisition of approved IP rights pertaining to films, television programs, digital animations or games, or other MDE contents on or before the last day of the basis period for the tax year 2018.

Businesses that incur qualifying expenditure on the acquisition or in-licensing of IP rights may also qualify under the PIC scheme (see Section D).

Disposal of assets qualifying for capital allowances

Allowances are generally subject to recapture on the sale of a qualifying asset if the sales proceeds exceed the tax-depreciated value. If sales proceeds are less than the tax-depreciated value, an additional corresponding allowance is given.

D. Incentives

The following tax incentives, exemptions and tax reductions are available in Singapore.

Pioneer companies and pioneer service companies

The incentive is aimed at encouraging companies to undertake activities that have the effect of promoting the economic or technological development in Singapore. A pioneer enterprise is exempt from income tax on its qualifying profits for a period of up to 15 years.

Development and expansion incentive

This incentive is available to companies that engage in high value-added operations in Singapore but do not qualify for pioneer status, and to companies whose pioneer status has expired. Development and expansion incentive (DEI) companies enjoy a concessionary tax rate of not less than 5% on its incremental income derived from the provision of qualifying activities. The maximum initial relief period is 10 years, with possible extensions not exceeding five years at a time, subject to a maximum total incentive period of 20 years.

If a DEI company engages in one or more qualifying activities, and oversees, manages or controls the conduct of any activity on a regional or global basis, its total incentive period may on approval be extended beyond 20 years, with possible extensions not exceeding 10 years at a time, subject to a maximum incentive period of 40 years.

Investment allowances

On approval, investment allowances are available to companies that engage in qualifying projects. These allowances are granted in addition to the normal tax depreciation allowances and are based on a specified percentage (up to 100%) of expenditures incurred on productive equipment.

Global trader program

The global trader program (GTP) is aimed at encouraging international companies to establish and manage regional or global trading activities with Singapore as their base. Under the GTP, approved companies enjoy a concessionary tax rate of 5% or 10% on qualifying transactions conducted in qualifying commodities and products (including energy, agricultural, building, industrial, electrical and consumer products, and carbon credits), qualifying transactions in derivative instruments and qualifying structured commodity financing activities. Income derived from qualifying transactions in liquefied natural gas, as specified by the relevant authority, enjoys a 5% tax rate.

A sunset clause of 31 March 2021 applies to the GTP scheme.

Finance and treasury center incentive

The finance and treasury center (FTC) incentive is aimed at encouraging companies to use Singapore as a base for conducting treasury management activities for related companies in the region. Income from the provision of qualifying services to its approved network companies and from the carrying on of qualifying activities on its own account is subject to tax at a rate of 10% (or such other concessionary rate) for a period of up to 10 years, with possible extensions of up to 10 years at a time. "Approved network companies" are offices and associated companies of the company granted the tax incentives that have been approved by the relevant authority for purposes of the incentive.

A sunset clause of 31 March 2016 applies to the FTC scheme.

Approved royalties, technical assistance fees and contributions to R&D costs

Approved royalties, technical assistance fees and contributions to R&D costs paid to nonresidents may be exempt from WHT.

Headquarters program

The "headquarters program" consists of an international headquarters (IHQ) award and a regional headquarters (RHQ) award. The program applies to entities incorporated or registered in Singapore that provide headquarters services to their network companies on a regional or global basis. Under the IHQ and RHQ awards, companies may enjoy incentive rates of 0% to 15% for a specified period on qualifying income, depending upon the level of commitment to Singapore.

This commitment is demonstrated by various factors, including headcount, business spending and quality of people hired.

R&D incentives

Liberalized R&D deductions are available from tax year 2009 to tax year 2025. A tax deduction can be claimed for undertaking R&D carried out in Singapore in any business area – there is no longer a requirement for the R&D to be related to the trade or business carried on by the company – and an additional 50% tax deduction is allowed for certain qualifying R&D expenditure. If the companies outsource their R&D activities to an R&D organization in Singapore, the tax deduction available is at least 130% of the amount of R&D expenses incurred.

Businesses that incur qualifying R&D expenditure may also qualify under the PIC scheme (see below).

Productivity and innovation credit (PIC)

Businesses that incur qualifying expenditure in the following six activities will qualify for an enhanced deduction or allowance for tax years 2011 to 2018:

- ▶ R&D
- ▶ Eligible design activities
- ▶ Acquisition and in-licensing of IP rights
- ▶ Registering patents, trademarks, designs and plant varieties
- ▶ Acquiring and leasing of productivity and innovation credit (PIC) IT and automation equipment, including expenditure on cloud computing services
- ▶ External training and qualifying in-house training

All businesses can claim a deduction or allowance of 400% of the first SGD400,000 of their expenditures per tax year on each of the above activities from their taxable income, subject to the following caps:

- ▶ For tax years 2011 and 2012 – a combined cap of SGD800,000 of eligible expenditure for each activity
- ▶ For tax years 2013 to 2015 – a combined cap of SGD1.2 million of eligible expenditure for each activity
- ▶ For tax years 2016 to 2018 – a combined cap of SGD1.2 million of eligible expenditure for each activity

A PIC+ scheme is also available to support businesses that are making more substantial investments to transform their businesses. Under the scheme, which is effective for expenditure incurred in the tax years 2015 to 2018, the expenditure cap will be increased from SGD400,000 to SGD600,000 per qualifying activity per tax year, and the expenditure caps may also be combined. To qualify, the entity's annual turnover must not exceed SGD100 million, or its employment size must not be more than 200 workers. The criterion will be applied at the group level if the entity is part of a group.

Qualifying entities with at least three local employees have an option to convert up to SGD100,000 of eligible expenditure for each tax year into a non-taxable cash grant. The conversion rate is 60% for the tax years 2013 to 2018 (30% for the tax years 2011 and 2012).

Businesses that invest a minimum of SGD5,000 per tax year in PIC qualifying expenditure will, subject to conditions, receive a dollar-for-dollar matching cash bonus from the Singapore government. The bonus will be capped at SGD15,000 over the three tax years of 2013/2014/2015.

Tax certainty on gains on disposal of equity investments

To provide upfront tax certainty, gains derived from the disposal of ordinary shares by companies during the period 1 June 2012 to 31 May 2017 (apart from a few exceptions) will not be taxed if the qualifying divesting company had legally and beneficially owned at least 20% of the ordinary shares in the investee company for a continuous period of at least 24 months prior to the disposal of the shares.

Deduction for acquisitions of shares of companies

A Singapore company may claim a deduction if it and/or any one or more of its acquiring subsidiaries incurs capital expenditure during the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2015 (both dates inclusive) in acquiring the ordinary shares in another company, subject to specified conditions. The amount of deduction granted is 5% of the capital expenditure, to be written off over five years. For this purpose, the capital expenditure is capped at SGD100 million for all qualifying acquisitions that have acquisition dates within one basis period.

A 200% tax deduction will be granted for certain transaction costs incurred on the qualifying acquisition, subject to an expenditure cap of SGD100,000 per relevant tax year.

E. Withholding taxes

Interest

In general, WHT at a rate of 15% is imposed on interest and other payments in connection with any loans or indebtedness paid to nonresidents.

However, interest paid by approved banks in Singapore on a deposit held by a nonresident is exempt from tax if the nonresident does not have a permanent establishment (PE) in Singapore and does not carry on business in Singapore by itself or in association with others, or the nonresident person carries on any operation in Singapore through a PE in Singapore but does not use the funds from the operation of a PE in Singapore to make the deposit. In addition, tax exemption applies to interest paid for qualifying debt securities issued during the period to 31 December 2018 to nonresidents who do not have a PE in Singapore. The exemption also applies to nonresidents who have a PE in Singapore but do not use the funds obtained from the operations of the PE to acquire the debt securities.

In respect of any payment for any arrangement, management or service relating to any loan or indebtedness performed by a nonresident outside Singapore or guarantee in connection with any loan or indebtedness provided by a nonresident guarantor, such payments are exempted from tax. Interest and qualifying payments made by banks, finance companies and certain approved entities to nonresident persons are also exempt from WHT, during the period from 17 February 2012 to 31 March 2021, if the payments are made for the purpose of their trade or business and not with the intent of avoiding any tax in Singapore.

Royalties

A 10% WHT is imposed on payments made to nonresidents in respect of royalties for the use of, or the right to use, intangible property and on payments for the use of, or the right to use, scientific, technical, industrial or commercial knowledge or information.

However, payments made to a nonresident and borne by a person resident in Singapore or a Singapore PE for use of or the right to use software, information or digitized goods, not involving the right to commercially exploit the copyright, will not be subject to WHT. Examples are shrink-wrapped software, software downloaded from the internet by end-users and software bundled with computer hardware.

Rent and hire

A 15% WHT is imposed on rent and other payments to nonresidents for the use of movable property. However, payments made to nonresidents (excluding PEs in Singapore) for the charter hire of ships are exempted from tax.

Services

Payments made to a nonresident professional for services performed in Singapore are subject to a final WHT of 15% on the gross income, unless the nonresident professional elects to be taxed at 20% of net income.

In general, a 17% WHT is imposed on payments made to nonresident companies for assistance or services rendered in connection with the application or use of scientific, technical, industrial or commercial knowledge or information and for management or assistance in the management of any trade, business or profession.

Where services are performed outside Singapore, such services are exempt from tax.

Tax treaties may override these WHT provisions.

Dividends

Singapore does not levy WHT on dividends (see Section B).

Branch remittance tax

There is no branch remittance tax in Singapore.

F. Financing considerations

Singapore does not impose any specific debt-to-equity restrictions. To secure a deduction for interest and borrowing costs, such costs must be wholly and exclusively incurred on loans that are used to acquire income-producing assets. For borrowing costs, the deduction is further subject to certain specified conditions.

G. Transactions

Capital gains

Capital gains are not taxed in Singapore. However, in certain circumstances the IRAS might consider transactions involving the acquisition and disposal of real estate or shares to be trading gains; any gains arising from such transactions are taxable. The determination of whether such gains are taxable is based on a consideration of the facts and circumstances of each case.

However, certain gains on the disposal of equity investments are not liable to Singapore tax – see Section D above.

H. Indirect taxes

Goods and services tax

Singapore currently imposes a goods and services tax (GST) at the rate of 7% (the prevailing standard rate) on the following transactions:

- ▶ Supplies of goods and services (apart from zero-rated and exempt supplies described below) in Singapore, made in the course or furtherance of a business by a taxable person (i.e., a person who is registered or is required to be registered for GST)
- ▶ Imports of goods into Singapore unless the imports qualify for import reliefs or relate to the importation of certain investment precious metals which is an exempt import with regard to GST

Exports of goods (subject to conditions and documentation requirements) and provision of international services as prescribed under the GST legislation qualify for zero-rating relief (i.e., taxed at 0%). The sale and lease of residential property, the provision of certain prescribed financial services and the sale of qualifying investment precious metals are all exempt from GST.

Businesses that make taxable supplies (i.e., standard-rated supplies and zero-rated supplies) exceeding SGD1 million per annum are required to register for GST unless exemption from GST registration has been granted. Businesses that are not liable for GST registration may still apply for GST registration on a voluntary basis (subject to conditions).

While a GST-registered business is required to charge GST on its standard-rated supplies of goods and services, it can generally recover the GST incurred on its business expenses as its input tax, subject to satisfying conditions prescribed under the GST legislation. Input tax is generally recovered by deducting it against the output tax payable, which is GST charged on standard-rated supplies made, in the GST returns. If the input tax claimable exceeds the output tax payable, the net GST amount will be refundable to the GST-registered person.

Singapore operates various schemes that aim to ease the administrative burden associated with GST compliance, as well as to improve the cash flow of businesses. Examples of such schemes include:

- ▶ Major exporter scheme (MES) – allows for the suspension of GST payable on the importation of non-dutiable goods into Singapore
 - ▶ Zero-GST warehouse scheme – similar to the MES scheme, this scheme allows for the suspension of GST payable on the importation of non-dutiable goods into a zero-GST warehouse approved and licensed by the Singapore Customs
-

- ▶ Approved marine fuel trader (MFT) scheme – allows approved MFT businesses to enjoy the suspension of GST on their local purchases of marine fuel oil
- ▶ Licensed warehouse scheme – a “licensed warehouse” is a designated area approved and licensed by the Singapore Customs for storing dutiable goods, with the suspension of the customs duty and import GST
- ▶ Import GST Deferment Scheme (IGDS) – allows approved IGDS businesses to defer their import GST payments until their monthly GST returns are due

Import and excise duties

Singapore imposes customs or excise duties on a limited range of goods, including, alcoholic beverages and preparations, tobacco and tobacco products, petroleum (motor spirits), and specified motor vehicles.

Export duties

There are no duties on goods exported from Singapore.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty is payable on documents that relate to immovable property, stocks and shares. It is applied on the amount or value of the consideration. The rate of duty varies depending on the type of document.

For documents relating to immovable property, the following rates are applied:

- ▶ For every dollar of the first SGD180,000 – 1%
- ▶ For every dollar of the next SGD180,000 – 2%
- ▶ For every dollar exceeding SGD360,000 – 3%

A flat rate of 0.2% applies to stocks and shares.

Different rates apply to lease agreements and mortgages.

Sellers of residential and industrial properties may be liable for seller's stamp duty depending on when the property was acquired and the holding period. In addition, buyers of residential properties (and residential land) may be required to pay additional buyer's stamp duty on top of the existing buyer's stamp duty.

I. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

Singapore does not impose any restrictions on the remittance or repatriation of funds into or out of Singapore.

Forms of business presence in Singapore

Forms of business presence in Singapore may include companies, foreign branches and partnerships (including limited liability partnerships and limited partnerships). The most suitable form of business entity depends on commercial and tax considerations.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |

A. At a glance

The fiscal regime that applies to the upstream oil and gas industry in South Africa consists primarily of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT) and royalties. Summary elements are as follows:

- ▶ Royalties¹ – 0.5% to 5%
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – None
- ▶ CIT – 28%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E²
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, RD³

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the upstream oil and gas industry in South Africa consists in essence of a combination of CIT and royalties. The Tenth Schedule to the Income Tax Act specifically deals with the taxation of upstream exploration and production. The Mineral and Petroleum Resources Royalty Act imposes royalties on upstream oil and gas companies.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

1 A royalty payment is calculated according to the two critical determinants of gross sales and EBIT. "Gross sales" is the transfer of all mineral resources as defined in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Royalty Act. "EBIT" is defined as earnings before interest and taxes and is the aggregate of gross sales and so much of any amount allowed to be deducted in the Income Tax Act. Various inclusions and exclusions apply to gross sales and EBIT. The royalty is payable semiannually by way of estimated payments on a basis similar to provisional tax for income tax purposes. Royalties are deductible for income tax purposes.

2 D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

3 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely; RD: R&D incentive.

Essential definitions in the Tenth Schedule

An “oil and gas company” means any company for which one of the following is true:

- a. A company that holds any oil and gas right (meaning any reconnaissance permit, technical cooperation permit, exploration right or production right)⁴
- Or
- b. A company that engages in exploration or post-exploration activities in respect of any oil and gas right

“Exploration” means the acquisition, processing and analysis of geological and geophysical data or the undertaking of activities in verifying the presence or absence of hydrocarbons (up to and including the appraisal phase) conducted for the purpose of determining whether a reservoir is economically feasible to develop.

“Post exploration” means any activity carried out after the completion of the appraisal phase, including:

- ▶ The separation of oil and gas condensates
- ▶ The drying of gas
- ▶ The removal of non-carbon constituents, to the extent that the activities are preliminary to refining

“Oil and gas income” means the receipts, accruals or gains derived by an oil and gas company in respect of exploration or post-exploration activities in terms of any oil and gas right, including leasing or disposing of that right, thereby including commercial royalty income and capital gains.

Determination of taxable income of an oil and gas company

Oil and gas companies are generally taxed at the normal corporate tax rate, subject to the provisions of the Tenth Schedule, which provides for a number of rate caps, allowances and incentives in the determination of oil and gas income. Under the Tenth Schedule, the rate of tax may not exceed 28%.

An oil and gas company may engage in activities other than exploration or post exploration. However, these other activities are separately taxable in terms of the general provisions of the Income Tax Act without regard to the Tenth Schedule.

Foreign currency differences

Currency gains and losses (whether realized or unrealized) for the purposes of the Income Tax Act are determined with reference to the functional currency (i.e., the principal trading currency) of that company and the translation method used by the oil and gas company for the purposes of financial reporting.⁵ Accordingly, if a company’s functional currency is US dollars but it also transacts in UK pounds or South African rands, gains or losses in respect to the transactions will be accounted for in US dollars for tax purposes.

Once taxable income and tax due have been calculated in the functional currency, the tax figure is then translated to rands at the average exchange rate for the year concerned for purposes of payment to the South African tax authorities (SARS).

C. Incentives

Capital allowances

An oil and gas company may deduct all expenditures and losses actually incurred (whether revenue or capital in nature). The only exclusion is in relation to expenditures or losses incurred for the acquisition of an oil and gas right, although certain concessions exist in relation to farm-in and farm-out transactions (see Section F).⁶

4 As contemplated in Schedule 1 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 2002.

5 Paragraph 4(1) of the Tenth Schedule.

6 Paragraph 5(1) of the Tenth Schedule.

A further deduction is permitted over and above the expenditure actually incurred, including:⁷

- ▶ 100% of all capital expenditures incurred in respect of exploration activities
- ▶ 50% of all capital expenditures incurred in respect of post-exploration activities

As a result, an oil and gas company may recognize a deduction equal to 200% and 150% of its capital expenditures related to exploration and post-exploration, respectively.

As a general rule, any expenditure or loss (including administrative expenses) that is incurred by an oil and gas company in respect of exploration is regarded as capital in nature because it has a direct or causal relationship with the exploration activities. Acquisition of an oil and gas right does not qualify for additional allowances.

Carryforward of losses

Losses incurred during the exploration phase may be offset against oil and gas income generated in the post-exploration phase. There is no ring-fencing between oil or gas fields in this regard. Any balance of assessed loss remaining may be carried forward without limit.

Losses in respect of exploration or post-exploration may only be offset against oil and gas income of that company and income from the refining of gas acquired from South African wells. Ten percent of any excess loss may first be offset against any other income (e.g., interest income that does not constitute oil and gas income) and any balance must be carried forward to the succeeding year. Thus, a vertically integrated gas production and refining company may typically offset its exploration and post-exploration costs against new wells, refining income and incidental interest income earned on a current account used for production operations, up to the total thereof. Similarly, refining losses of such a company may, by inference, be fully offset against profits from production (typically, in respect of wells whose production is sold rather than refined). However, a vertically integrated oil production and refining company would not be entitled to set off production losses from refining income.

Fiscal stability

In recognition of the need for oil and gas companies to have certainty as to the tax treatment of future revenues, and in conformity with international practice, the Minister of Finance may enter into a fiscal stabilization contract with an oil and gas company. Such a contract binds the State of South Africa and guarantees the provisions of the Tenth Schedule as of the date that the contract is concluded.⁸

An oil and gas company may unilaterally rescind any such agreement (usually to pursue a more favorable dispensation if the Tenth Schedule is further changed to the taxpayer's benefit.)⁹

D. Withholding taxes (WHT)

Dividends

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Income Tax Act, the Tenth Schedule provides that the rate of dividends tax may not exceed 0% of the amount of any dividend that is paid by an oil and gas company out of amounts attributable to its oil and gas income.

Interest

With effect from 1 March 2015, a new withholding tax on interest was introduced in South Africa, calculated at the rate of 15% of the amount of any interest that is paid by any person to or for the benefit of any nonresident to

7 Paragraph 5(2) of the Tenth Schedule.

8 Paragraph 8(1) of the Tenth Schedule.

9 Paragraph 8(4) of the Tenth Schedule.

the extent that the amount is regarded as having been received or accrued from a South African source.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the Income Tax Act, the rate of WHT on interest may not exceed 0% on any interest paid by an oil and gas company in respect of loans applied to fund exploration or post exploration expenditure.

Royalties

A 15% withholding tax currently applies to royalties on intellectual property paid to nonresidents.

Technical services

With effect from 1 January 2016, South Africa will impose a withholding tax on service fee payments made by residents to nonresidents at the rate of 15%. However, this withholding tax will apply only in respect of services sourced in South Africa, not foreign-sourced services.

Service fees are defined to include amounts accrued in respect of technical, managerial and consultancy services. An exemption from the withholding tax on service fees is provided where the payment for the service is connected to a permanent establishment in South Africa of the nonresident, or the payment constitutes remuneration for employees' tax (PAYE) purposes.

Branch remittance tax

No branch remittance applies (and the former higher rate on branches has been eliminated).

Withholding of amounts from payments to nonresident sellers of immovable property

In the case where a nonresident sells an interest in an oil and gas right, it may be subject to a withholding of 5% to 10% of the amount payable by the purchaser. This is an advance payment of tax and not a final tax, and under certain circumstances may be waived by the Tax Commissioner.

E. Financing considerations

Transfer pricing

The South African tax law includes transfer-pricing provisions (including thin capitalization considerations), which are based on the internationally accepted principles of transfer pricing. These provisions allow the South African tax authorities to treat any term or condition of a cross-border related-party transaction differently, but only to the extent that the term or condition differs from those that would exist between unrelated parties. In addition, exchange control regulations discourage unreasonable pricing by requiring that many foreign contracts, such as license agreements, be approved by the Department of Trade and Industry before payment is allowed.

Cross-border loan funding

Recent amendments to the Income Tax Act included a limitation on interest payments if a controlling relationship¹¹ exists.¹² Under these rules, an annual limitation is placed on the amount of interest deductions available, pursuant to a defined formula. Any interest not allowed will be carried forward to the following year and be deemed to be incurred in the following year. There appears to be no limitation on the ability to carryforward the disallowed interest indefinitely.

10 Part IVB of the Income Tax Act.

11 "Controlling relationship" means a relationship between a company and any connected person in relation to that company holding at least 50% of the equity shares or voting rights.

12 Section 23M of the Income Tax Act, which comes into effect from 1 January 2015.

F. Transactions

Asset disposals

Subject to the specific provisions relating to the disposal of an oil and gas right¹³ (see next subsection), the disposal of exploration and post-exploration properties is subject to the general capital gains tax (CGT) rules. A capital gain, in essence, is the amount by which the proceeds realized on the disposal of an asset exceed the base cost of the asset. Sixty-six percent of a capital gain realized on the disposal of an asset is taxable. In the case of a resident company, the effective tax rate is 18.6% (28% of 66%).

Farm-in and farm-out – rollover relief and CGT

The general CGT rules are subject to the Tenth Schedule in the case of the disposal of an oil and gas right by an oil and gas company.

The Tenth Schedule provides special rules relating to the disposal of oil and gas rights at any stage of the exploration and post-exploration process and refers to “rollover treatment” and “participation treatment,” either of which can be elected by the disposing company and the acquiring company together in writing.¹⁴ If no election is made, normal CGT rules apply.

Rollover treatment

Rollover treatment can apply where the market value of the right disposed of is equal to or exceeds:

- ▶ The base cost of that right for CGT purposes
- ▶ The amount taken into account by the seller as a deduction in terms of Section 11(a) or 22(1) or (2), in the case of trading stock

The company is deemed to have disposed of the right for an amount equal to the CGT base cost or the trading stock deduction (as the case may be) so that, from the seller's perspective, the transaction is tax neutral. The purchaser is deemed to have acquired the right at the same base cost or trading stock amount as previously existed in the hands of the purchaser.¹⁵

Participation treatment

If the company that disposes of an oil and gas right holds it as a capital asset and the market value of the right exceeds its base cost, the difference is deemed to be gross income accruing to the seller. The purchaser is entitled to deduct the same amount in determining its taxable income derived from oil and gas income (notwithstanding the general prohibition on the deduction of the cost of acquisition of oil and gas rights).¹⁶ The provision effectively allows losses to be shifted to the purchaser (at the price of gross income for the seller).

The Tenth Schedule makes no provision in respect of other components of a farm-in or farm-out transaction, such as the disposal of physical assets and cost-sharing arrangements. Unless the agreement is disguised as a consideration for the mining right, it is felt that the consideration constitutes:

- ▶ A recoupment of expenditures formerly incurred by the seller
- ▶ An expenditure incurred by the purchaser in respect of exploration

The question of whether an oil and gas company holds an oil and gas right as a capital or trading asset must always depend upon the facts of, and intention behind, that company's investment. As a general rule, however, it is probable

13 In terms of the Tenth Schedule.

14 Paragraph 7(1) of the Tenth Schedule.

15 Paragraph 7(2)(ii) of the Tenth Schedule.

16 Paragraph 7(3)(a) of the Tenth Schedule. It appears that the actual proceeds or expenditures incurred in respect of the disposal are irrelevant in determining the tax consequences in a participation election. Subparagraph (3)(a) apparently applies in a situation where the purchasing entity is not an oil and gas company as defined, but it is probable that relaxation is unintentional.

that, in terms of South African taxation principles, most oil and gas companies acquire their rights as capital assets, notwithstanding that they frequently anticipate using the disposal of undivided shares of those rights to limit financial and commercial risk.

Selling shares in a company

The CGT implications of the disposal of shares depend on the nature of the company and the tax residency of the shareholders. South African tax residents are subject to CGT on any capital gain realized on the disposal of shares held as capital assets. The tax liability is calculated on the basis outlined in "Asset disposals" above.¹⁷

Shareholders that are not tax resident in South Africa are only subject to CGT on any capital gain realized on the disposal of shares if 80% or more of the market value of the shares is attributable directly or indirectly to immovable property situated in South Africa. Oil and gas rights are considered to be immovable property for this purpose. Hence, the sale of oil and gas company shares could often trigger CGT when sold by a foreigner seller.

G. Indirect taxes

Import and export duties

Special rebates exist for oil and gas rigs and related equipment used in exploration and post-exploration activities. These rebates require regulatory permits.

VAT

The normal VAT rules apply to oil and gas companies. Briefly, VAT liability enables rand-based expenditures to qualify for VAT credit as input VAT.

Sales of crude oil are zero-rated (i.e., no VAT charge applies). Gas does not qualify for zero-rating.

Other transaction taxes

The normal rules in respect of securities transfer tax apply to oil and gas companies. Subject to certain group reorganization relief rules, the transfer of beneficial ownership of certain marketable securities (e.g., shares and rights to dividends in South African companies) is subject to securities transfer tax at 0.25% of the transaction or market value.

H. Other

Local participation requirements may apply for grants of oil and gas rights in South Africa. Typically, a grant is subject to State participation through the national oil company (PetroSA).

¹⁷ Assuming they are companies and not natural persons.

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South Sudan became an independent state in 2011 and is still formulating its legislation now. As a result, the tax laws, regulations and other legislation in South Sudan are still evolving. Readers should obtain updated information and seek professional advice before engaging in any transactions.

Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|--|---|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal system applied in South Sudan revolves around production sharing contracts (PSCs). The recently enacted Petroleum Act 2012 introduced general petroleum regulations, including the composition of fiscal provisions. Supplementary legislation, including a model PSC, is currently under development.

Under the Petroleum Act 2012 an investor is subject to production sharing (approach and instruments not yet specified), surface rental fees, cost-based fees for particular services, bonuses or royalties, as agreed in each PSC. An investor is also subject to general corporate taxes and customs duties payable by all industries (subject to the PSC provisions). The Petroleum Act also envisages other indirect fiscal instruments and other charges, such as those for training, the financing of the community infrastructure, etc.

The basic elements of the fiscal regime constitute the following:

- ▶ Production sharing contract – Applies
- ▶ Rentals – Apply
- ▶ Bonuses – Apply
- ▶ Royalties – Apply
- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – rate is 10%, 15% or 20% depending on size of company turnover
- ▶ Ring-fencing rules – don't apply

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

The CIT rate depends on the magnitude of a taxpayer's business, whether it is small (annual turnover of up to SSP1 million; SSP = South Sudanese pound), medium (annual turnover of up to SSP75 million) or large (annual turnover SSP75 million or more). Small, medium and large businesses are subject to tax at rates of 10%, 15% and 20%, respectively.

These rates apply to income from oil and gas activities. Taxable income consists of worldwide income for resident companies (for nonresident companies, just the profits sourced in South Sudan), less permitted deductions.

Exploration costs are deductible over the useful life of the asset, based on actual costs incurred, units extracted and estimated total extractable units.

Losses can be carried forward for five years, but carryback is not available. A loss from oil and gas operations can be offset against any profits available during the successive five-year period.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas in South Sudan.

C. Incentives

The Investment Promotion Act provides for various tax incentives, including capital allowances ranging from 20% to 100% of eligible expenditure, deductible annual allowances ranging from 20% to 40% and depreciation allowances ranging from 8% to 10%. Tax incentives and duty exemptions are requested through an application to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

A foreign tax credit is granted to any resident company paying foreign taxes on income from business activities outside South Sudan.

D. Other

Social security

Employers are subject to social security contributions. The rates are not established by law, but the rate is typically 17% of employees' salaries.

VAT

VAT is not applicable, but the country employs a sales tax system. Sales tax applies on the importation of goods, the production of goods and the supply of specified services. The standard rate is 5% on goods and services, but a rate of 15% applies during periods of austerity budgeting (generally, periods when there is no oil production).

Domestic supply obligations

The Petroleum Act envisages domestic supply obligations. Both market price and special terms are envisaged for the pricing of gas supplied.

Community Development Plan and Fund

An investor is obliged to establish a fund to finance community development activities in a contract area. The activities mainly comprise construction of infrastructure, such as schools, roads, hospitals, etc.

Training

The law obliges investors to organize industry training for nationals, including postgraduate training and scholarships.

Gas flaring

Gas flaring or venting is prohibited, unless specifically authorized or in the event of an emergency. Investors are therefore obliged to invest in necessary facilities in order to utilize any gas they produce.

Transfer pricing

Transfer pricing legislation applies on cross-border transactions between related parties. The comparable uncontrolled price method is preferred; where this is not possible, the resale price method or the cost plus method can be used.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Spain to the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of the general corporate income tax (CIT) regime with some special rules and surface tax.

Special CIT rules

Entities engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons are subject to the following special CIT rules:

- ▶ Advantageous depreciation regime for intangible assets
- ▶ Higher tax rate applicable for the income derived from the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons

Furthermore, the following tax rules apply for entities whose sole business purpose consists of the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon sub-storage:

- ▶ Reduction of the taxable base, based on the depletion factor reserve
- ▶ Specific regime for offsetting tax losses

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

CIT is imposed on the taxable income of companies and other entities and organizations that have a separate legal status. Spain-resident entities are taxable on their worldwide income, including the profits from their foreign branches. Nonresident entities are taxable only for Spanish-sourced income, which includes income from any kind of business activity conducted in Spain through a branch, office or other permanent establishment (PE).

As a general rule, the tax base is calculated by adjusting certain provisions established in the CIT Law, from the accounting profit or loss determined in accordance with Spanish generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

For residents and nonresidents that conduct business activities in Spain through a PE, the general corporate income tax rate is 28% (30% until 31 December 2014 and 25% from 1 January 2016 onwards). Newly incorporated entities that carry out business activities are taxed at a 15% tax

rate in the first tax period in which the taxable base is positive and in the following tax year. However, for entities engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon sub-storage owned by third parties, the applicable tax rate is 33% (35% until 31 December 2014 and 30% from 1 January 2016 onwards).

Functional currency

The euro is generally used as the functional currency for accounting purposes. However, oil and gas companies are permitted to use US dollars as the functional currency.

Nevertheless, the annual accounts of a company and also the CIT return must be expressed in euros. If the functional currency of a Spanish company is a currency other than the euro, the financial statements are required to be converted into euros. Differences arising from the conversion of the foreign functional currency into euros are recorded in a special equity account called conversion differences account.

Determination of taxable income

“Taxable income” is the company’s gross income for the tax year, as reduced by certain deductions. It is determined from the annual financial statements prepared under GAAP.

In general, all necessary expenses incurred in producing income during the year and depreciation on income-producing property may be deducted from gross income to arrive at taxable income. However, certain items are not deductible from gross income, such as:

- ▶ CIT.
- ▶ Penalties and fines.
- ▶ Gifts and donations.
- ▶ Expenses derived from transactions with related persons or entities that, as a result of a different tax classification, do not generate income or income is exempt or taxed at a nominal rate lower than 10%.
- ▶ Depreciation charges that exceed the maximum rates prescribed by law, unless it can be demonstrated that the rates used correspond to the actual depreciation incurred. However, for the 2013 and 2014 fiscal years, tax deductibility of the depreciation of tangible, intangible and real estate assets of large-sized companies (i.e., companies whose net turnover has exceeded €10 million in the previous tax period) was limited up to 70% of the corresponding expense. Depreciation expense exceeding the referred limitation will be tax deductible to the choice of the taxpayer, on a straight-line basis during a 10-year period or during the useful life of the asset, from the first tax period started in the 2015 fiscal year.
- ▶ Expenses incurred for gifts to clients and suppliers exceeding the amount of 1% of annual net revenues
- ▶ Impairment losses on (i) property plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets, including goodwill, (ii) securities representing interest in owner’s equity of companies, and (iii) debt securities, except inventories or receivables. These losses will be integrated in the taxable base during the useful life of the depreciable assets or when the assets are transferred or written off.
- ▶ Losses derived from intragroup transfers (within the mercantile group) of tangible and intangible assets, real estate investments, debt instruments and securities representing the holding in equity of entities. The tax deductibility of these losses is deferred until sale (or when the selling entity or the acquiring entity stop being members of the same group) or via depreciation throughout the useful life of the assets.

Participation exemption regime and foreign tax relief

The exemption method may be used to avoid double taxation on dividends received from abroad and on capital gains derived from transfers of shares of foreign companies if the following requirements are met:

-
- ▶ At the time of the distribution of the dividend or the generation of the capital gain, the Spanish company has owned, directly or indirectly, at least 5% of the share capital of the company or when the acquisition value of the participation is higher than €20 million (for first-tier subsidiaries).
 - ▶ One-year minimum holding period. For dividends, the one-year period can be completed after the distribution. In addition, the time period in which the participation is held by other group entities is taken into account for purposes of the computation of the one-year period.
 - ▶ Minimum level of (nominal) taxation of 10% under a foreign corporate tax system similar to the Spanish CIT. This requirement is deemed to be met if the subsidiary is resident in a tax treaty country.

The exemption will not apply to capital gains derived directly or indirectly from (i) entities passively holding assets, (ii) Spanish or European Union (EU) Economic Interest Agrupations or (iii) CFCs obtaining more than 15% of passive income as defined by the CFC rules (which implies checking compliance with the substance requirements at the level of the CFC).

The above participation exemption regime is extended from 1 January 2015 onwards to dividends and capital gains derived from Spanish subsidiaries, instead of applying the tax credit for the avoidance of double taxation.

The exemption method is also applicable in the case of income obtained by foreign branches of a Spanish company, provided that the requirements above are met.

If the exemption method does not apply, a tax credit is allowed for underlying foreign taxes paid by a subsidiary on the profits out of which dividends are paid and for foreign withholding taxes (WHT) paid on dividends. Such tax credit is equal to the lesser of the following:

- ▶ The Spanish corporate tax that would have been payable in Spain if the foreign income had been derived in Spain
- ▶ The actual income tax paid abroad on the foreign-sourced income

Capitalization reserve

From 1 January 2015, Spanish CIT tax payers can reduce their taxable base in an amount equal to 10% of the increase of their net equity on a given year, provided they book a non-disposable reserve for the same amount for a five-year term.

The increase of the net equity is calculated as the difference between the net book value of the company at the beginning (excluding for this purpose the accounting result of the previous year) and at the end of the financial year (excluding for this purpose the accounting result of the current year) minus some equity adjustments (as described below), with the limit of the positive taxable base prior to the utilization of any tax losses (any amount exceeding this limit will be carried forward the following two years).

The main equity adjustments are:

- ▶ Shareholder contributions
- ▶ Share capital increase/shareholders contributions made as a consequence of a shareholder loan waiver
- ▶ Legal/statutory reserves
- ▶ Net equity variation corresponding to the re-evaluation of the Deferred Tax Asset registered by the Company as a consequence of the new CIT rate
- ▶ Net equity increase derived from transactions involving the own shares of the company

The above 10% reduction cannot exceed the 10% of the previous positive taxable base. Any excess over this 10% of the positive taxable base can be carried forward in the subsequent two fiscal years.

Transfer pricing

Spanish tax law includes the arm's length principle and the requirement of documenting all related-party transactions.

The arm's length principle applies to all transactions (domestic or international) carried out by taxpayers with related parties.

The following are the principal aspects of the Spanish transfer pricing regime:

- ▶ Taxpayers must use arm's length values in their tax returns. As a result, taxpayers bear the burden of proof on transfer pricing issues.
- ▶ OECD guidelines and pricing methodology apply.
- ▶ The law provides for secondary adjustments. Under this measure, if the agreed value in a transaction differs from the normal market value, the difference between the values is re-characterized by following a substance-over-form approach. From 1 January 2015, the secondary adjustment will not take place if the values are reinstated by the parties involved.
- ▶ Advance pricing agreements (APAs) may be negotiated. APAs are proposed to have retroactive effects within the statute of limitation period.
- ▶ New specific statutory documentation requirements, in line with the guidelines of the EU Joint Transfer Pricing Forum, have been in force since February 2009.
- ▶ Penalties and delay interest may be imposed. Also, a specific penalty regime is applicable in the case of failure to meet the documentation requirements.

Administration

The tax year is the same as the accounting period, which can be different from the calendar year but may not exceed 12 months. The tax return must be filed within 25 days after 6 months following the end of the tax year. In April, October and December of each calendar year, companies must make installment payments on account of CIT equal to either of the following:

- ▶ 18% of the tax liability for the preceding tax year.
- ▶ An amount calculated by applying a percentage of the CIT rate to the profits for the year (up to the end of the month preceding the date of the payment) and then subtracting from the result the tax withheld from payments to the company and advance payments of tax previously made. This alternative is compulsory for companies with turnover of more than €6,010,121.04 in the immediately preceding tax year.

For CIT installment payments to be filed during 2015, the proportion of the CIT rate will be determined as follows:

- a. 5/7 of the CIT rate (20%) to be applied by companies whose net turnover within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year is less than €10 million
- b. 15/20 of the CIT rate (21%) to be applied by companies whose net turnover within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year amounts between €10 million and €20 million
- c. 17/20 of the CIT rate (24%) to be applied by companies whose net turnover within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year amounts between €20 million and €60 million
- d. 19/20 of the CIT rate (27%) to be applied by companies whose net turnover within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year is more than €60 million

For entities with a net turnover equal to or higher than €20 million, a minimum payment of these CIT installments applies for payments falling due in fiscal year beginning in 2015, where this payment cannot be lower than the result of applying a 12% rate to the accounting result for the relevant period. The resulting amount can be exclusively reduced by the previous CIT installments. When 85% or more of the entity's gross revenues consists of income deemed as exempt under the participation exemption a reduced 6% rate is to be applied.

Also for CIT installments due in 2015, all entities that have received dividends from foreign subsidiaries exempt from taxation will include the 25% of the gross dividend in the taxable base. In case of Spanish subsidiaries, 100% of the dividends exempt from taxation will be included in the taxable base.

Late submission of a CIT return or late payment on account will result in the imposition of surcharges (up to 20%), and also the accrual of late penalty interest if the return is filed more than 12 months after the deadline for its voluntary submission.

Other issues

No special terms apply in relation to signature bonuses, production bonuses or other lump sum payments. Rental, fees and royalties are subject to the general tax rules.

Entities co-owning an exploitation concession will be allocated the pro-rata share of the activity income and expenses and of the gains and losses from the transfer of assets.

Spanish law does not recognize the concept of a national oil company, nor of production sharing agreements.

An R&D tax credit is not allowed for exploration, prospecting or drilling for hydrocarbons and minerals.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Special CIT rules applicable to oil and gas companies

There are special CIT rules applicable to oil and gas companies. Some of them (depreciation of intangible assets and higher tax rate) are applicable to any company engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon sub-storage, regardless of the fact that they also perform other activities.

However, some other special corporate tax rules – in particular regarding a depletion factor reserve and a specific tax losses compensation regime – are only applicable to companies whose corporate business is solely the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon sub-storage. These two rules are discussed further next.

Depletion factor reserve

Companies whose corporate purpose is solely the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon sub-storage are entitled by law to a reduction of their tax base, in respect of the depletion factor reserve, which, at the discretion of the entity, may be either of the following:

- ▶ 25% of the amount of the consideration for the sale of oil and gas products and for the provision of storage services, up to a limit of 50% of the tax base prior to this reduction
- ▶ 40% of the amount of the tax base prior to this reduction

Some accounting and material requirements should be met to benefit from the above reductions.

In particular, the amounts of the depletion factor reserve that reduce the tax base must be invested in the activities of prospecting, research or exploitation of oil and gas performed within 10 years or in “the abandonment of fields and the dismantling of marine rigs”. For these purposes, consideration could also be given to prospecting, research or exploitation carried out within the four years before the fiscal year in which the tax base is reduced by the depletion factor reserve.

The taxpayer must disclose, in the notes to its financial statements for the 10 years following that in which the appropriate reduction was made, the amount of the reduction, the investments made with a charge to it and the depreciation or amortization taken, as well as any decrease in the reserve accounts that were increased as a result of a reduction of the tax base and its use.

Specific tax losses compensation regime

Until 31 December 2014, tax losses may be carried forward for 18 years. From 1 January 2015, tax losses that are pending to be offset as of that date can be carried forward with no time limit.

However, for the fiscal years from 2011 to 2015, important restrictions to offset carryforward losses apply for companies with a net turnover higher than €20 million, as follows:

- ▶ Companies whose net turnover within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year amounts to between €20 million and €60 million may only offset tax losses up to a maximum amount of 50 % of the positive taxable base (75% in 2011, 2012 and 2013)
- ▶ Companies whose net turnover within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year is more than €60 million may only offset tax losses up to a maximum amount of 25% of the positive taxable base (50% in 2011, 2012 and 2013)

From 1 January 2016, a general restriction to offset losses of 60% of the positive taxable base will apply (70% from 2017 onwards). In any case, a minimum €1 million threshold is set.

Finally, companies whose corporate purpose is solely the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons, or hydrocarbon sub-storage, will apply specific rules to offset tax losses. These entities do not have a time limit for offsetting tax losses and are not subject to the above restrictions of 50%/25%. However, only 50% of each tax loss can be offset in a single tax year.

Amortization of intangible assets

Companies engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of oil and gas (exclusive business purpose is not required) have a special regime applicable to intangible assets.

In particular, intangible assets may be amortized at a maximum annual rate of 50%. Such intangible assets can include exploration expenses, such as prior geological, geophysical and seismic works, costs incurred to prepare access routes to the drilling site and for land preparation, exploration evaluation works, development test drilling, restoration and conservation of wells.

There is no maximum amortization period for intangible assets or prospecting expenses.

Higher tax rate applicable for hydrocarbon activities

For residents and nonresidents that conduct business activities in Spain through a PE, the general CIT rate is 28% (30% until 31 December 2014 and 25% from 1 January 2016 onwards). However, for entities engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons or hydrocarbon sub-storage owned by third parties, the applicable tax rate is 33% (35% until 31 December 2014 and 30% from 1 January 2016 onwards).

If a company is engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons or hydrocarbon sub-storage and also carries out other activities, the applicable tax rates are 33% for the former activities and 28% for the latter. Note that, in this case, the company would not be allowed to apply the special rules mentioned earlier in this Section C under "Depletion factor reserve" and "Specific tax losses compensation regime."

Entities exclusively engaged in hydrocarbon storage activities and other possible activities, but not in the above activities of exploration, investigation and exploitation, will be taxed at the general 28% tax rate and will not be entitled to any special benefits.

Branch remittance tax

In addition to CIT, nonresident entities operating in Spain through a PE are subject to a branch remittance tax at a rate of 20% until 31 December 2015 (19% from 1 January 2016 onwards), unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- ▶ Branches of EU resident entities, other than tax haven residents, are exempt from the tax
- ▶ Branches can be exempt from the tax if a double tax treaty does not mention the tax and if the other tax treaty country provides reciprocal treatment

Ring-fencing

In Spain, residents and nonresidents that conduct business activities through a PE may offset losses against any of its profits. Therefore, Spain does not generally apply ring-fencing in the determination of corporate tax liability.

However, if an entity is engaged in the exploration, investigation and exploitation of hydrocarbons or hydrocarbon sub-storage and also carries out other activities, the losses from hydrocarbon activities would be ring-fenced and are not allowed to be offset against profits of other businesses, and vice versa.

Group taxation is applicable for companies taxed on identical tax rates. Therefore, entities taxed under the special hydrocarbon regime cannot be part of a tax unity with other group entities carrying out activities subject to the general CIT rate (28% in 2015).

D. Withholding taxes

The general rule for withholding tax (WHT) is that nonresident entities operating in Spain without a PE are taxable at a general rate of 24% (24.75% until 31 December 2014), unless an applicable double tax treaty provides a lower WHT rate. The general rate for EU resident is 20% (19% from 1 January 2016 onwards).

Royalties

WHTs apply at the general rate of 24% on royalty payments (24.75% until 31 December 2014). 20% rate could apply if the recipient is EU resident. However, from 1 July 2011, royalties paid to associated entities resident in the EU or to PEs located in the EU are exempt from withholding tax if specific conditions are met (an applicable double tax treaty may anyway establish a reduced WHT rate should the conditions not be met).

Interest and dividends

WHTs apply at a rate of 20% on interest and dividend payments (21% until 31 December 2014 and 19% from 1 January 2016 onwards). An applicable double tax treaty may anyway provide for a lower WHT rate.

Under certain circumstances, interest and dividends paid to entities resident in another EU Member State are wholly exempt from WHT.

E. Financing considerations

Finance costs are generally deductible for corporate tax purposes, with the exceptions discussed below.

Interest expense deductibility limitation

The general limitations for interest deductibility rules are as follows:

- ▶ The net financial expenses not exceeding 30% of so-called "operating profit" may be taken as deductible for Spanish CIT purposes. "Operating profit" is defined as a parameter economically similar to EBITDA, increased by
-

dividend income and participation in benefits derived from entities participated at least in a direct or indirect 5%, or whose acquisition value is higher than €20 million, excluding stock acquired in an intra-group leveraged acquisition when the interest deductibility is denied under the new CIT rules¹

- ▶ The concept “net interest expense” is defined as the excess of interest expense over interest income for the fiscal year. Interest expense that is considered non-deductible under the rules relating to intra-group leveraged transactions is not taken into account for these purposes.
- ▶ The net financial expense equal to or below €1 million is fully deductible.
- ▶ If the net financial expense of the fiscal period does not exceed the 30% threshold, the difference may be carried forward and increase the threshold for the following five years.
- ▶ Any excess interest that cannot be deducted can be carried forward (subject to the same deductibility limitation) with no time limit (until 31 December 2014, a temporary limitation of 18 years applied in this regard).
- ▶ From 1 January 2015, interest from loans to purchase shares can only be deducted up to 30% of the operating profit of the acquiring entity. This new rule applies to transactions implemented after 20 June 2014. The limit applies where (i) the acquired and acquiring entities are merged within a four-year period or (ii) the acquiring entity is taxed within a tax unity. In such cases, for the purposes of the above-mentioned restriction, the operating income generated by the acquired entity or any other entity included in the tax unity within a four-year period after the restricted leveraged acquisition will be excluded.

This limitation will not apply (escape clause) in the year of the acquisition, if the acquisition debt does not exceed 70% of the consideration for the shares. This limitation will not apply in the subsequent years if the acquisition debt is at least “proportionally amortized” within an eight-year period until it is reduced to 30% of the total consideration.

Finally, from 1 January 2015 intra-group profit sharing loans are characterized as equity instruments for Spanish tax purposes. Consequently, expenses derived from the same would not be deductible at the level of the borrower for CIT purposes (this rule will not apply to profit-sharing loans granted before 20 June 2014). Symmetrically, under certain circumstances, interest income deriving from intra-group profit sharing loans qualifies as dividend that is exempt for CIT purposes for the lender.

Interest paid by branches to their head office

Interest paid by branches to their head office is not tax deductible in order to determine the taxable base of the branch in Spain.

F. Surface tax

An additional tax called “surface tax” applies to oil and gas companies. This tax should be calculated yearly, based on the number of hectares of a company’s exploration or exploitation sites.

In the case of research licenses, amounts paid as a surface tax are considered for accounting purposes as part of an intangible asset; they are therefore depreciated as such.

In the case of exploitation licenses, amounts paid as a surface tax are considered as an expense of the tax year for accounting purposes and are deductible for CIT purposes.

¹ From 2012, tax deductibility of interest expenses on intra-group financing is disallowed when the financing is entered into for (i) the acquisition of shares in entities when the seller belongs to the same group of companies, and (ii) the capitalization of entities belonging to the same group as the borrower. However, interest deductibility is allowed when the taxpayer proves that there are bona fide commercial reasons that justify the intra-group leveraged transaction.

G. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is potentially charged on all supplies of goods and services made in Spain and its territorial waters (within the 12-nautical-mile limit from the shore). The standard VAT rate in Spain is 21% as from 1 September 2012 (18% previously).

If a Spanish branch is constituted, it is deemed as a PE for VAT purposes, and the branch will therefore have to comply with Spanish VAT obligations, such as registration for VAT and filing of VAT returns.

A nonresident EU company that is required to register for VAT purposes in Spain can register directly with the Spanish tax authorities; however, for practical purposes, it is advisable to appoint a Spanish fiscal representative. Nonresident companies that are not from another EU Member State that wish to register for VAT purposes in Spain are required to appoint a Spanish fiscal representative.

VAT incurred by an entity that is VAT registered in Spain is normally recoverable on its periodic VAT returns. The refund of the credit VAT can, in general, be requested at the end of each calendar year; however, under certain circumstances, this refund can be requested on a monthly basis.

Customs duties

All goods imported into Spain from outside the EU are potentially liable to customs duty. The rate of customs duty is based on the classification of the goods and whether the goods qualify for preferential rates.

Natural gas and associated products imported into Spain from outside the EU are subject to normal customs import procedures. In addition, import VAT is payable at the standard rate.

Excise duty

In Spain, the retail sale of certain hydrocarbon products is subject to a special indirect tax.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

The fiscal system applied in Sri Lanka is based on Petroleum Resources Agreements (PRAs) which are production sharing agreements. Sri Lanka has a model agreement issued by the Government in 2013. The following are envisaged by the model agreement and guidelines issued in this regard:

- ▶ Royalty
- ▶ Signature bonuses
- ▶ Production bonuses
- ▶ Production split
- ▶ Training for nationals
- ▶ Utilization of local goods and services

B. Fiscal regime

Income tax

Contractors carrying out petroleum operations under PRAs are deemed to be resident in Sri Lanka and are subject to a concessionary income tax rate of 12%. The rate applies to taxable income determined as total proceeds received by the contractor from the sale or other disposition of its share of production, less the costs and expenses that are allowed for recovery.

However, contractors would normally be eligible for reliefs available under the Strategic Development Projects Act, which provides, depending on the level of investment, full or partial exemptions from the following taxes:

1. Income tax
2. Value-added tax
3. Economic service charge
4. Customs duty
5. Excise duty
6. Nation building tax
7. Ports and airports development levy
8. Taxes under the finance acts

The above reliefs will also be available to subcontractors working with the contractor.

Royalties

Royalties are based on a progressive sliding scale linked to average daily production rates (in million barrels of oil equivalent). The rates and production tiers are not distinguished for oil and natural gas. The royalty rates as envisaged in the model contract vary from 1% to 10% with a 1% step, with the production rates being biddable.

Cost recovery

The cost recovery ceiling for petroleum is 80% of the value of petroleum produced and saved. The costs are recovered with priority given first to production costs, then to exploration costs, and finally to development costs. The unrecovered portion of the costs can be carried forward to subsequent years until full cost recovery is achieved within the duration of the PRA.

Profit production sharing

The production remaining after cost recovery is treated as “profit production” to be further split between the Government and contractor. Profit production sharing for petroleum is based on a progressive sliding scale linked to average daily production rates. The contractor’s share of profit production as envisaged in the model contract varies from 90% to 10% with a 10% step, with the production rates being biddable. The production rates are distinguished for oil and natural gas.

Signature bonuses

A contractor is required to pay a signature bonus of minimum US\$1,000,000 for deep-water blocks and US\$200,000 for shallow-water blocks. Signature bonuses are not cost-recoverable.

Production bonuses

The model contract envisages production bonuses, payable when the prescribed production tiers are achieved. The tiers are distinguished for oil and for gas and are linked to average daily production from the contract area. Both the amount of bonuses and production tiers are biddable. Production bonuses are not cost-recoverable.

Surface rental fees

The surface rental fees do not apply in Sri Lanka.

Ring-fencing

In Sri Lanka, there is no clear definition of “ring-fencing” for PRA contractors – meaning that PRA contractors do not need to determine the tax base or the amount of tax separately for each PRA activity.

According to Sri Lanka’s income tax law, if the taxpayer is conducting activities in multiple locations, it can report corporate income tax on a consolidated basis.

For cost recovery purposes, the cost recovery is ring-fenced to the agreement area.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

Several incentives are currently available to oil and gas companies in addition to the reliefs available under the Strategic Development Projects Act, which are discussed in Section B above. Such incentives include, amongst other things, the following.

1. Accelerated depreciation
 2. Uplifts for research and development expenditure
 3. Deductibility of interest costs
 4. Claiming of costs incurred on unsuccessful wells
-

5. Indefinite carryforward of prior year losses
6. Exemption from import duties on certain plant and equipment
7. Relaxation of exchange control regulations

In addition to the above, the Government offers various non-tax incentives to contractors when negotiating PRAs with a view of promoting the upstream sector and boosting the commercialization of hard-to-reach oil fields.

Exports of petroleum products are exempt from export duties and any other taxes.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|--|---|

A. At a glance

The principal fiscal elements applying to Syria's oil and gas industry are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) rate – 28%¹
- ▶ Withholding tax (WHT) – payable for services²
- ▶ Nonresident WHT – Applies³
- ▶ Withholding tax on Syrian entities and individuals – Applies⁴
- ▶ Dividends – Subject to WHT in some circumstances⁵
- ▶ Movable capital tax – 7.5%⁶
- ▶ Wages and salaries tax – 22%⁷
- ▶ Royalties – 7%
- ▶ Bonuses – 5%
- ▶ Resource rent tax – Not applicable

- 1 The standard CIT rates range from 10% to 28%, with certain companies taxed at flat rates. A municipality surcharge tax of 10% and a reconstruction tax of 5% of the tax due are imposed in addition to the normal tax rate.
- 2 In general, branches of foreign companies are subject to the nonresident withholding tax; however, if a branch imports goods produced by its parent company and sells the goods on behalf of the company in Syria, it is subject to the normal CIT rates.
- 3 This tax is withheld from specified payments made to nonresident companies, regardless of whether the company has a branch in Syria. The payments subject to the tax include payments under turnkey contracts (for details, see Section D).
- 4 WHT is imposed on income derived by Syrian individuals or entities from certain contracting, construction work and services and supply work (for details, see Section D).
- 5 WHT is not imposed on dividends paid by Syrian companies if the profits out of which the dividends are paid have already been subject to tax.
- 6 A municipality surcharge tax of 10% and a reconstruction tax of 5% of the tax due are imposed in addition to the normal tax rate. The tax on movable capital is a WHT that is imposed on certain payments to resident and nonresident companies and individuals, including various types of interest payments. WHT is imposed on income derived by Syrian individuals or entities from certain contracting, construction work and services and supply work (for details, see Section D).
- 7 Resident employers other than branches of foreign companies withhold wages and salaries tax from salaries, wages and fringe benefits or other remuneration paid to resident and nonresident Syrian employees. The first SYP10,000 of annual income is exempt.

- ▶ Various other indirect taxes – Payable
- ▶ Net operating losses:
 - ▶ Carryback – Not allowed
 - ▶ Carryforward – five years
 - ▶ Investment incentives – Not applicable.

Oil and gas are considered to be among the most important resources in the Syrian Arab Republic. Thus, the Government has always paid special attention to oil and gas fields and their development. The Syrian Petroleum Company (SPC), replaced later by the General Petroleum Corporation (GPC), is the Government body responsible for supervising and monitoring operating companies working in Syria.

Given the fact that Syria does not currently have sufficient experience to explore the country's oil and gas fields fully, foreign explorers and developers are often asked to assist in excavating these raw materials from Syrian soil. Accordingly, foreign companies are present in Syria and provide their services to the Syrian Government and other oil and gas companies. Oil and gas foreign companies are either operating companies or service companies.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

Foreign operating companies are contracted by the GPC with a production sharing agreement (PSA), through which profits generated from the exploration and development of oil are divided between the foreign company and the GPC. As per these PSAs, contracting companies do not pay CIT prior to the discovery and development phase, as the GPC is responsible for paying such taxes during this phase. However, once oil is discovered and developed, both the contractor companies and the GPC will be subject to CIT.

The CIT rates that apply to contracting companies are as set out in the table below.

| | Tax rate |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Between SYP0 and SYP50,000 | Exempted |
| Between SYP50,001 and SYP200,000 | 10% |
| Between SYP200,001 and SYP500,000 | 15% |
| Between SYP500,001 and SYP1,000,000 | 20% |
| Between SYP1,000,001 and SYP3,000,000 | 24% |
| More than SYP3,000,001 | 28% |

Additionally, a municipality surcharge tax of 10% and a reconstruction tax of 5% are imposed on any tax due.

Production sharing agreement

A PSA is an agreement signed between the GPC as a representative of the Syrian Government and an oil and gas company (a contractor). Generally, fiscal uncertainty clauses are not included in a PSA. According to a standard agreement, total production is divided into the following three parts:

- ▶ Royalty percentage paid to the Government
- ▶ Cost oil percentage
- ▶ Profit oil percentage

Cost oil and profit oil are calculated as a percentage of production volume. The percentages of cost oil and profit oil generally vary based on the particular PSA. The contractor incurs the actual costs related to the production of oil. The actual cost incurred is then compared with the cost oil percentage, and any costs incurred beyond the limit of the cost oil percentage are recovered from the GPC. Recoverable costs are any costs related to the production of oil.

Wages and salaries tax

Oil and gas companies are obliged to pay payroll taxes on the salaries and benefits remunerated to their employees. The tax rates are as set out next:

| | Tax rate |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Between SYP10,000 and SYP15,000 | 5% |
| Between SYP15,001 and SYP20,000 | 7% |
| Between SYP20,001 and SYP25,000 | 9% |
| Between SYP25,001 and SYP30,000 | 11% |
| Between SYP30,001 and SYP38,000 | 13% |
| Between SYP38,001 and SYP50,000 | 16% |
| Between SYP50,001 and SYP75,000 | 19% |
| More than SYP75,000 | 22% |

Royalties

As indicated above and in accordance with the PSA, the Government receives a share of the profits generated from the exploration and production of oil. Although oil and gas companies share these profits with the Government according to a specified allocation stipulated in the PSA, these profits are not considered royalties.

However, oil and gas companies do sometimes pay royalties outside Syria. In such cases, the oil and gas companies are required to withhold a 7% (income tax) and 3% (wages & salaries) as WHT.

Exchange control regulations

Prior to September 2005, Syria had many different exchange rates that governed its local transactions (i.e., an import exchange rate, an export exchange rate and a neighboring countries exchange rate). These rates were unified into one exchange rate, called the free exchange rate, in September 2005. The exchange rate of the Syrian pound has decreased due to the crisis which started in early 2011 and had an impact on the Syrian economy in general and the level of imports and exports in particular.

The rate of the Syrian pound has experienced declines since the crisis began. The central Bank of Syria oversees the exchange rate's stability, monitors private banks and determines the Syrian pound.

Repatriation of profits abroad

Foreign currency transactions are highly regulated in Syria. Foreign currency repatriation is restricted and is only permitted in special cases. Only companies with projects licensed under specific investment laws are allowed to repatriate annual profits or capital. Oil and gas companies can be licensed under the investment law and, accordingly, can repatriate their profits. In addition, the Central Bank of Syria has issued a resolution by which companies licensed under the investment law can transfer their proceeds to their foreign partners outside Syria.

Dividends

There is no WHT on dividends in Syria as long as the profits from which they are paid have already been subject to tax. However, dividend income from non-Syrian companies is subject to a 7.5% tax in addition to a 10% administrative fee and 5% reconstruction tax are imposed on the tax due.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

Exploration

All companies that have a PSA with the public establishment for oil refining and distribution and that are in the exploration phase are exempt from paying CIT as no profit has been realized, and are only subject to payroll taxes.

Losses

Losses may be carried forward for 5 years for purposes of a deduction from taxable income. Losses may not be carried back.

D. Withholding tax

Service companies are registered as branches of foreign companies. These companies are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade. As per Income Tax Law No. 24 of 2003, foreign branches of foreign companies are not subject to CIT. Instead, these service companies are subject to WHT or nonresident tax.

The rates for the above-mentioned nonresident tax were amended in Income Tax Law No. 60 of 2004. The current withholding rates are as follows:

- ▶ 2% for all onshore supplies
- ▶ 3% for mixed services (supplies + services), plus 1% of wages and salaries tax
- ▶ 7% for pure onshore services, plus 3% of wages and salaries tax

This tax is required to be withheld by the foreign company on behalf of its customers and remitted to the Syrian tax authorities at the appropriate time. In addition, these branches of foreign companies are obliged by law to withhold the tax at the above rates when dealing with their local suppliers and service providers. Furthermore, Law No. 34 of 2008 concerning foreign companies obliged all branches of foreign companies to submit their annual audited financial statements to the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade within 90 days of the end of each fiscal year. However, no annual tax return is required to be filed for branches of foreign companies operating in the Syrian Arab Republic.

WHT is imposed on income derived by Syrian individuals or entities engaged in contracting, construction work and services and supply work that is performed with, or for the benefit of, the Syrian public, joint ventures (involving the private and public sectors), the private and cooperative sectors (e.g., those sectors that relate to farmers, agricultural associations and other businesses engaged in agriculture or farming), and foreign companies. The WHT rates are as indicated above.

E. Financing considerations

On 6 April 2009, the Ministry of Oil issued Letter No. 12257 regarding the application of Decision No. 93 of 2008. Decision No. 93 discusses the exchange rate that should be used when calculating the tax amount due on profits resulting from a PSA signed with the Syrian Petroleum Company. The Central Bank of Syria issued this decision on 30 June 2008 in response to a query raised by one of the operating companies in Syria. This decision obliged operating companies that have a PSA with the Syrian Petroleum Company to adopt the quarterly exchange rate issued by the Central Bank of Syria when calculating the tax amount due on profits resulting from the PSA (usually operating companies in Syria use a monthly exchange rate by adopting the exchange price of the first day in the month).

F. Indirect taxes

VAT

Generally, VAT is not applicable in Syria.

Customs duties

Customs duties are based on a basic duty plus a unified tax surcharge. The cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value of imported material is usually calculated at the free exchange rate. Duty rates are progressive and range from 1% to 100%, depending on the Government's view of the necessity of a product.

Permits must be obtained from the Ministry of Economy and Trade for the import of nearly all items. Generally, import permits are valid for six months in the private sector. Oil and gas companies often obtain some concessions under the terms of the PSA. In this regard, where a contractor or operating company, or one of its contractors or non-Syrian subcontractors, is permitted to import, it might be exempted from customs duties and import license fees with respect to various items, including (but not limited to) equipment, machinery and vehicles. All such concessions and the terms of such concessions should be granted as specified in the PSA.

Consumption tax

Consumption tax is imposed on both imported products and local products (e.g., vehicles, gold, appliances, imported carpets, alcoholic drinks, soft drinks, tea, oil and margarine, cacao, cement, sugar, salt and bananas). The consumption tax rates range from 1.5% to 40%.

The tax is imposed on:

- ▶ The value of the product that has been used for determining the custom duties, in addition to the custom duties paid and other fees imposed on the "imported product." The tax should be levied upon the receipt of the product from the customs department.
- ▶ The sales value defined in the invoice. The tax should be levied when selling the products to merchants.

Consumption tax is also imposed on luxury hotels, restaurants and tourist transportation services. Tax rates range from 3% to 30%. The tax should be levied when the services are rendered. Consumption tax for each month should be transferred to the tax authorities within 10 days after the completion of the relevant month, using manual or electronic forms approved by the tax authorities.

Stamp duty

Stamp duties are imposed on contracts signed by two parties or on any documents that include legal obligations between two parties. The stamp duty rate may be a fixed rate, which varies according to the type of transaction, or a proportional rate based on the value of the document subject to the duty. The value of the document is generally determined by the total value of the contract or agreement.

Stamp duty should be paid to the tax authorities within five days of signing the contracts. Any delay will be subject to a penalty equal to two times the amount of the stamp duty.

Stamp duty payable can be either:

- ▶ A percentage, from contracts with a fixed amount: 0.4% for each copy or
- ▶ A lump sum, for contracts that do not mention the amount: SYP500 for each copy

Property tax

The Ministry of Finance excludes real estate dealers from Law No. 24 of 2003 and subjects them to Law No. 41 of 2005, which states that real estate sold will be taxed on its estimated value stated in the tax authority's records. The tax rate applied will differ based on the type of the real estate (i.e., land, residential or commercial). The seller should bear this tax, and it is due to the tax

authorities very soon after finalizing the selling agreement. The title of the sold real estate will not be transferred to the buyer unless the seller pays the tax due.

The seller should submit a statement describing the sale of real estate within 30 days of the date sold, and the tax should be transferred to the treasurer within 30 days of the submission of the statement.

Tax on income from movable capital

This tax is levied on the following types of income:

- ▶ Interest from bonds and loans issued by Syrian institutions
- ▶ Dividends from non-Syrian companies
- ▶ Interest from bonds issued by the Syrian Government or foreign Governments
- ▶ Liabilities documented with real estate guarantees
- ▶ Deposits of all kinds
- ▶ Guarantees and monetary bonds issued by legal entities
- ▶ Lottery prizes exceeding SYP1 million

Additional municipality surcharge tax and administrative fees

Legislative Decree No. 35 of 2007 sets out additional municipality surcharge taxes and additional administrative fees and grants the provincial council of each governorate the right to determine the additional rates without exceeding a maximum limit of 10%. Executive and implementation instructions for the Decree were issued and published in Syria's *Official Gazette of Syrian Arab Republic* on 6 March 2008 (also the effective date).

On 22 October 2012, Decision No. 93 was issued and became effective on 1 January 2013. The major points of this formal decision and its implementation instructions are as follows:

- ▶ 10% of the current capital revenue tax
- ▶ 10% of the real estate revenue tax
- ▶ 5% of the stamp duty
- ▶ 10% of customs fees
- ▶ 1% penalty levied on previously applied penalty when additional charges as set are not implemented
- ▶ SYP25 on each loan that exceeds SYP5,000 from any of the joint stock, public or private banks; amount is paid once upon signing the loan contract, opening an overdraft account or letter of credit and when renewing the loan facility
- ▶ 2% on each accommodation invoice of international and first class hotels

Rebuilding contribution

Law No. 13 imposed an additional 5% on different kind of taxes not limited to:

Taxes and fees that are subject to the additional 5% rebuilding contribution starting from 1 August 2013 are:

- ▶ Consumption tax
 - ▶ Stamp duty
 - ▶ Contract stamps
 - ▶ Withholding/nonresident tax (income tax portion only)
 - ▶ Real profit tax (annual tax return)
 - ▶ Tax on movable capital (deducted directly from bank interests)
 - ▶ Tax on leasing contracts
 - ▶ Tourist facilities tax
 - ▶ War effort tax
-

Taxes and fees which are not subject to the additional 5% rebuilding contribution are:

- ▶ Administration fees
- ▶ Province fees
- ▶ Wages and salaries tax

The “Martyr Stamp”

Decision no.47 of 2014 imposed a new stamp of SYP 25 on all documents and contracts without any additions starting 1 January 2015.

G. Other

Public Establishment for Oil Refining and Oil Derivatives Distribution

Legislative Decree No. 14 dated 14 February 2009 is related to the creation of the Public Establishment for Oil Refining and Oil Derivatives Distribution. This organization plays a supervisory role over companies involved in the refining and distribution of oil derivatives.

As per Article 3 of the Decree, this establishment is required to handle the following tasks:

- ▶ Suggest strategies for refining oil, petrochemical industries and the distribution of oil derivatives, including the use of natural gas in automobiles and houses.
- ▶ Work on the establishment of new refineries in accordance with the Government's plans in this regard.
- ▶ Prepare and develop agreements to attract investors in the areas of oil refining and storage and distribution of oil derivatives.
- ▶ Determine the preferences for financing investments in projects related to oil refining and distribution of oil derivatives, based on their national importance.
- ▶ Coordinate and cooperate with local, Arab and international training institutes to develop the local capabilities and develop human resources in the related institutions.
- ▶ Coordinate Arab and international bodies in the field of oil refining and the distribution of oil derivatives.
- ▶ Follow the latest scientific and technological developments in the field of oil refining and distribution of oil derivatives.
- ▶ Evaluate the environmental impact of related activities and projects with the coordination of the Public Organization for Environmental Affairs.
- ▶ Coordinate the competent authorities regarding importing and exporting activities related to associated bodies.
- ▶ Supervise operating companies involved in the refining and distribution of oil derivatives.

The Public Establishment for Oil Refining and Oil Derivatives Distribution replaces the Homs Refinery Company.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|--|---|

A. At a glance

The principal elements of the fiscal regime applying to the petroleum industry in Tanzania are as follows:

- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – 30% or 25%¹
- ▶ Capital gains tax (CGT) – 30%²
- ▶ Branch tax rate – 30%
- ▶ Withholding tax (WHT):
 - ▶ Dividends – 5% or 10%³
 - ▶ Interest – 10%⁴
 - ▶ Royalties – 15%⁵
 - ▶ Management, technical and professional fees – 5% or 15%⁶

1 The 25% rate applies to a newly listed company in the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange. The rate is applicable for three years following the listing. 30% of the issued shares must be held by the general public.

2 Capital gains are treated as business income for companies and are taxed at the regular CIT rate.

3 The 10% rate is the general rate for both residents and nonresidents. The 5% rate applies to dividends paid by companies listed on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange. The 5% rate applies to a resident recipient company that owns at least 25% of the voting capital of the payer of the dividends. Dividend WHT is a final tax.

4 This tax applies to residents and nonresidents. It is a final tax for resident individuals and nonresidents. Resident companies credit the WHT against their annual CIT. If a resident strategic investor pays interest to a nonresident bank, the interest is exempted from WHT.

5 This WHT applies to both residents and nonresidents. It is a final tax for nonresidents only.

6 The 5% rate applies to resident technical services providers in the extractive industry (mining, oil and gas); this means services in respect of earth moving, engineering and construction and includes geological, geotechnical and metallurgical services, seismic survey, data interpretation, drilling or any such service. The WHT is a final tax, in other words, the basis for taxation for entities receiving such payments is 5% on the turnover (not 30% of profit), with the liability settled by way of withholding. A 15% rate applies to nonresidents.

- ▶ Insurance premiums – 5%⁷
- ▶ Rent, premiums and similar considerations – 10% or 15%⁸
- ▶ Natural resources payments – 15%
- ▶ Branch remittance tax – 10%⁹
- ▶ Alternative minimum tax (AMT) – 0.3%¹⁰
- ▶ Net operating losses (years):
 - ▶ Carryback – 0%
 - ▶ Carryforward – Unlimited

Various indirect taxes apply also to petroleum industry activities.

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Tanzania to the petroleum industry is the same regime that applies to other industries. It consists of CIT, CGT, value-added tax (VAT), import duty and royalties. It includes some tax exemptions on import duties and relief on VAT for exploration companies.

The Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) is the institution established by the Government for the development of the exploration, prospecting and production of oil and gas. The TPDC acts on behalf of the Tanzanian Government; including entering into production sharing agreements (PSAs) with investors in the oil and gas industry, signing the agreements and acting as a regulator of the industry.

Corporate tax

In Tanzania, a resident corporation is subject to income tax on its worldwide income at the rate of 30%. A nonresident corporation is taxed on its Tanzanian-sourced income only, which is also taxed at the 30% rate. However, a new company is taxed at a reduced rate of 25% if 30% of its equity shares have been issued to the public and it is listed on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange.

Corporations having perpetual tax loss for three consecutive years are liable to Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) at a rate of 0.3% of turnover. The payment due is computed from the third year of the perpetual tax loss.

Corporate tax is imposed on net taxable income. Taxable income is determined based on audited financial statements and is calculated as gross revenue less tax-deductible expenses allowable under the Income Tax Act 2004. Allowable deductions include expenses incurred wholly and exclusively in the production of income within one contract area operated by the same company.

Expenditure of a capital nature is not tax deductible, but a tax depreciation allowance based on statutory rates is available. In the context of the oil and gas industry, this is mostly in the form of a capital allowance available in respect of depreciable assets – see further in Section C below.

Ring-fencing

Tanzania applies ring fencing in the determination of corporate tax liability and carried-forward tax losses for oil and gas companies effective from 1 July 2013. Profits are taxed on a “contract area”¹¹ basis. Activities carried out by the same company in different contract areas are treated as separate operations and are taxed separately. Tax losses from one contract area are restricted to that area and cannot be offset against profits from another contract area.

⁷ This tax applies to nonresidents only.

⁸ The 10% rate applies to residents. The 15% rate applies to nonresidents. This WHT is a final tax for nonresidents and for individuals not engaged in business.

⁹ This tax applies to the after-tax profits of branches of foreign companies.

¹⁰ This is a tax on turnover, which applies to companies and branches with perpetual tax losses for three consecutive years.

¹¹ “Contract area” in respect of petroleum operations means the area that is the subject of a petroleum agreement; and whenever any part of contract is relinquished pursuant to a petroleum agreement, “contract area” represents the area as originally granted.

Capital gains or losses

Capital gains on the disposal of depreciable assets are treated as business income for the corporate entity and are taxed at the normal corporate tax rate of 30%. However, CGT does not apply to companies listed on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange.

Gains from the realization of investment assets are taxed at 30%. Capital losses from the realization of investment assets are only deductible against capital gains from the same investment assets and not from ordinary income. Net capital losses can be carried forward for use in subsequent years.

For CGT on share transfers, see respective section.

Functional currency

Income accounting must be reported in local currency, namely Tanzanian shillings (TZS). However, upon application and approval by the Tanzania Revenue Authority, an entity can account for income in a foreign currency under the terms and conditions in the approval.

Transfer pricing

The tax law includes provisions to ensure that Tanzanian sourced taxable income is determined using arm's length pricing. Recently introduced regulations impose particular procedures to be applied which are broadly consistent with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) model in determining transfer prices but contain strict reporting provisions.

Transfer pricing (TP) guidelines provide guidance to taxpayers about the procedures to be followed in determining arm's length prices consistent with the Act and transfer pricing regulations that take Tanzania's business environment into consideration. The TP guidelines provide a general overview of issues and factors to be considered in arriving at an acceptable arm's length price.

Additional petroleum tax

Some of the PSAs provide for payment of additional petroleum tax (APT) calculated on the basis of a development area in accordance with the provisions of the PSA. APT is calculated for each year of income, and it may vary with the real rate of return earned by the company on the net cash flow from the development area in question. The rate for APT is either 25% or 35% and it is possible for both rates to apply in the same year on the respective bases. The APT due must be paid in cash at the time and in the manner that the Commissioner of Income Tax may reasonably require.

It should be noted that APT has not yet been introduced in practice, but the requirement is retained in the relevant PSAs entered into by oil and gas exploration companies with the Government of Tanzania.

Royalty regimes

Petroleum royalties are administered and collected under the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act 1980. Royalties are collected by the TPDC and are paid to the Tanzanian Government at the following rates:

- ▶ For onshore projects – 12.5%
- ▶ For offshore projects – 5% (as per the 2008 model PSA) and 7.5% (as per the 2013 model PSA)

Signature and production bonuses

The model agreement for 2013 envisages a minimum signature bonus payment of US\$2.5 million and a production bonus of at least US\$5 million payable when production starts.

Local content requirements

The PSA requires compliance with the Local Content Policy. The policy provides for a greater use of domestic goods, services and materials and employment of Tanzania nationals.

Unconventional oil and gas

There are no special terms that apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas in Tanzania.

C. Capital allowances

For tax purposes, depreciable assets include assets with a limited effective life that decline in value over time. Examples of depreciable assets include plant and equipment, mining petroleum permits, retention leases and licenses that are categorized under Class Four of the Income Tax Act 2004.

Natural resource exploration and production rights and assets in respect of natural resource prospecting, exploration and development expenditures are depreciated at the rate of 20%.

Equipment used in prospecting and exploration of minerals or petroleum falls under Class Eight and is entitled to 100% deduction in the year the costs are incurred in accordance with the Third Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 2004.

D. Incentives

Exploration

Please refer to C above.

Tax holidays

Tanzania does not have a tax holiday regime other than for companies operating in the country's export processing zones.

Tax losses

Income tax losses can be carried forward indefinitely subject to the ring-fencing rules. Tax losses may not be carried back by petroleum companies, although a carryback may be allowed for companies in the construction industry.

A change of control may lead to losses incurred prior to the change no longer being permitted for deduction.

Research and development

A tax deduction in respect of R&D expenditure is limited to improvement of business products or processes and agricultural improvements.

E. Withholding taxes

Technical services

With effect from July 2014, the withholding tax regime that applies to the mining sector in relation to resident providers of technical services and management fees has been extended to the oil and gas sector. Under this regime a 5% withholding tax is to be deducted from payments to resident providers of technical services and for management fees; this withholding tax is a final tax.

Dividends

Dividends paid by a Tanzanian entity are subject to WHT at a rate of 10%; the tax is due on an accrual basis. However, companies listed on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange pay WHT at a reduced rate of 5%, and the same rate applies to resident recipient companies that own at least 25% of the voting capital of the payer of the dividends.

WHT on dividends is deducted at source and is a final tax.

Interest and royalties

Interest and royalties paid to nonresidents are subject to a final Tanzanian WHT of 10% and 15%, respectively, unless altered by a relevant double tax agreement. If a resident strategic investor pays interest to a nonresident bank, the interest is exempted from WHT.

Branch remittance tax

A branch remittance tax (i.e., repatriated income of a domestic permanent establishment (PE)) is applicable at a rate of 10%. Repatriation of branch profits can be effected freely without any restrictions.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

The total amount of interest deduction (for corporations that are 25% or more foreign-owned for a year of income) is limited to the sum of interest with respect to debt that does not exceed a debt-to-equity ratio of 7:3.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The disposal of natural resources, exploration, and production rights and assets in respect of natural resource prospecting, exploration and development expenditures is regarded as a disposal of a depreciable asset. The difference between the written-down value and the consideration price is treated as business income and is taxed at a corporate tax rate of 30%.

Farm-in and farm-out

Under a PSA, an entity may assign or transfer to a corporation or firm any of its rights, privileges or obligations, provided that the Government is notified and given written copies of the assignments and agreements. Any assignment shall be binding to the assignee. There is a requirement to pay a transfer fee (or assignment fee) based on the amount of the consideration. In particular the Model PSA 2013 prescribes a transfer fee on the consideration as per below:

- ▶ For every dollar of the first US\$100 million: 1%.
- ▶ For every dollar of the next US\$100 million: 1.5%
- ▶ For every dollar thereafter: 2%

Selling shares in a company (consequences for resident and nonresident shareholders)

Any share transfer in a Tanzanian company is subject to 30 % CGT (disposal of a domestic investment asset). An installment is payable for registration of the transfer (10 % of the gain in case of a resident seller, 20 % of the gain in case of a nonresident seller - which is credited against the final tax payable).

From July 2012, indirect share transfers may be taxed. Where the underlying ownership of an entity changes by more than 50% as compared with the ownership at any time during the previous three years, the entity is treated as realizing any assets owned and any liabilities owed by it immediately before the change.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

Under Tanzanian law, all persons who make taxable supplies of goods and services and whose turnover in any given year is TZS40 million or more must register for VAT. The standard rate of VAT is 18% for all taxable goods and services, including the importation of taxable goods and services.

VAT is a multi-staged tax that applies at each transaction point throughout the supply chain.

All exported goods and some services are zero-rated. For example, services provided to related parties even though they are exported are subject to VAT at a standard rate of 18%. Specified goods and services that are exempt from VAT include fuel and financial services. Some persons or institutions are VAT-relieved, including companies engaged in exploring and prospecting for oil and gas.

Both Tanzania-resident and nonresident entities engaged in the oil and gas industry may be subject to VAT on services and products supplied, with the exception of imports or supplies used solely for the purpose of exploring and prospecting for oil and gas (which are VAT-relieved). For special relief to apply to these entities, certain administrative procedures need to be followed prior to obtaining approval of a transaction to be VAT free.

VAT applies to all taxable supplies of goods and services made or imported by a taxable person in the furtherance of business, and "supply" includes:

- ▶ Making a gift or loan of goods
- ▶ Leasing or letting goods for hire
- ▶ Barter trade and exchange of goods
- ▶ Appropriating goods for personal use or consumption by a taxable person or any other person

Entities below the VAT registration threshold may choose to register voluntarily for VAT. A registered entity may recover the VAT charged on goods and services acquired for the furtherance of its business as an input tax. Input tax is generally recovered by being offset against VAT payable (output tax) on taxable supplies.

The Value Added Tax (VAT) Bill 2014

Tanzania has issued a VAT Bill 2014, which was discussed by parliament in November 2014. Before enacting the VAT Act, existing/new regulations have to be (re)issued.

Import duties

All goods, equipment and materials entering Tanzania from overseas are subject to customs import duties, unless specifically exempt. The general rate of customs duty applied to the customs value of imported goods ranges from 0% to 25%.

However, special exemptions apply for companies engaged in the exploration and prospecting of oil and gas in relation to imported capital equipment and other items necessary for the oil and gas business.

Export duties

There are no duties applied to goods exported from Tanzania except for raw cashew nuts and raw hides and skins.

Excise duty at the rate of 10% is levied on charges and fees raised by financial institutions in respect of services provided by such institutions, as well as telecommunication services providers for money transfer services.

Excise duties

Excise duty is levied on some goods manufactured in Tanzania, such as soft drinks, beer and tobacco, and on selected imported goods, including petroleum products.

Excise duty is also applicable on money transferred through a bank, a financial institution or a telecommunication company at a rate of 0.15% of the amount transferred that exceeds TZS30,000 (approximately US\$20).

Stamp duty

Stamp duty applies to specified transactions. Generally, a stamp duty is imposed under different heads of duty, the most common being stamp duty on lease agreements and the most significant being conveyance duty on the transfer of property (e.g., land, buildings, certain rights, goodwill).

Stamp duty differs depending on the types of instruments or transactions. Stamp duty on transfers/conveyances is at a rate of 1% of the consideration given.

I. Other

Pay as you earn (PAYE)

Resident individuals, including expatriates, are taxed on their worldwide income based on the resident tax rates, while nonresidents pay tax on Tanzanian-sourced income only. The resident minimum tax rate is 12%, and the maximum is 30%, while the nonresident tax rate is 15% on employment income and 20% on total income. Employers have the responsibility to withhold and pay the tax due from employees' entire remuneration on a monthly basis.

Skills development levy

Employers are obliged to pay a 5% skills development levy (SDL) based on the monthly gross remuneration for all employees (excluding benefits in kind). This requirement applies to employers with a minimum of four employees.

Workers' compensation

Employers in the private sector are required to contribute 1% of their annual wage bill to the Workers Compensation Fund, established under the Workers Compensation Act No. 20 of 2008. The manner of administering this levy is yet to be regulated; however, on the basis of the announcement published by the Ministry of Labor in 2014, employers are to comply from July 2014.

National Social Security Fund

It is mandatory for all employees, including expatriates, to register and contribute to one of Tanzania's national social security schemes. The common schemes in Tanzania are NSSF and PPF.

The NSSF is a pension scheme that requires employees to contribute 10%, and the employer contributes 10% of the employees' monthly gross salaries. The PPF is a pension scheme that provides for flexibility of the 10% contribution by both, employer and employee –an employee could contribute only 5%, while the employer contributes 15% based on the employees' monthly basic salaries.

Local municipality council services levy

The local municipal authorities impose a service levy, at a rate of 0.3% of turnover or sales, payable on a quarterly basis.

Double tax treaties

Tanzania has double tax treaties with the following countries: Canada, Denmark, Finland, India, Italy, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and Zambia. Several treaties are being negotiated. The East African Treaty is pending ratification.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
|---|---|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Thailand's oil and gas fiscal regimes are classified as Thailand I, Thailand II and Thailand III regimes. Each regime incorporates different benefit-sharing structures.

- ▶ Royalties – 5% to 15%¹
- ▶ Bonuses – Progressive rate²
- ▶ Production sharing contract (PSC) – 50%³
- ▶ Income tax rate – 50%⁴
- ▶ Investment incentives – TH, O⁵

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Thailand to the petroleum industry consists of a combination of petroleum income tax, production sharing and royalties. Annual bonus and special remuneration benefits (SRBs) also apply to petroleum concessions granted under the Thailand II and Thailand III regimes, respectively.

Petroleum income tax

Companies engaged in petroleum exploration and production in Thailand are subject to petroleum income tax at the rate of 50% of annual profits, in lieu of corporate income tax (CIT), which is imposed under general tax laws. Petroleum income tax is regulated under the petroleum income tax law.

Taxation consequences are classified according to the regimes commonly known within the oil and gas industry as the Thailand I, Thailand II and Thailand III fiscal regimes. Each regime incorporates different benefit-sharing structures (see below for details).

1 For petroleum concessions granted under the Thailand I and Thailand II regimes, 12.5%; and 5% to 15% under the Thailand III regime.

2 Petroleum concessions granted under the Thailand II regime are subject to an annual bonus at progressive rates.

3 PSCs apply only to contractors that operate in the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area (JDA).

4 The income tax rate for projects in the JDA is 0% for the first 8 years, 10% for the next 7 years and 20% thereafter.

5 TH : tax holiday; O : other – deepwater incentives (depth greater than 200 meters).

Ring-fencing

Ring-fencing applies in respect of projects taxed between Thailand I, Thailand II and Thailand III regimes, as described next.

Thailand I regime

The majority of the concessions awarded prior to 1982 are subject to the Thailand I tax regime. Benefits are shared in the following manner:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Royalty | 12.5% of the value of petroleum sold. |
| Petroleum income tax | 50% of annual profits. Taxable profit is subject to ring-fencing. All projects in Thailand I and Thailand II can be offset against one another, but cannot be offset with projects in Thailand III. |

Thailand II regime

Petroleum concessions under the Thailand II regime are awarded in conjunction with an announcement from the Industry Ministry. They are subject to the following benefit-sharing structure:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Royalty | 12.5% of the value of petroleum sold. |
| Annual benefits | The petroleum concessionaire undertakes to limit deductible costs and expenses to no more than 20% of annual gross revenue, or annual benefits are paid to the Government for the excess portion of deductions claimed. |
| Annual bonus | Concessionaire pays an annual bonus to the Government at progressive rates, which depend on production volume. |
| Petroleum income tax | 50% of annual profits. Taxable profit is subject to ring-fencing. All projects in Thailand I and Thailand II can be offset against one another, but cannot be offset with projects in Thailand III. |

Thailand III regime

Petroleum concessions awarded after 14 August 1986 are subject to the Thailand III fiscal regime. This regime also applies to petroleum concessions where the concessionaire has exercised an option to be regulated by the Thailand III regime. The benefit-sharing structure can be characterized as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Royalty | Sliding scale (5% to 15% of the value of petroleum sold) based on production levels, calculated on a block-by-block basis. |
| Special remuneration | The concessionaire pays SRBs to the Government based on a percentage of annual petroleum profit. The percentage can vary from 0% to 75%, depending on annual revenue per meter drilled. |
| Petroleum income tax | 50% of annual profits. A midyear income tax payment (50% of projected annual tax) is also required. Taxable profit is subject to ring-fencing. All projects in Thailand III can be offset against one another, but cannot be offset with projects in Thailand I and Thailand II. |

Accounting period

The first accounting period officially commences on the date of the first sale or disposal of petroleum, subject to a royalty. Effective from that date, the company has a duty to file petroleum income tax returns and pay any tax due.

The accounting period is of a 12-month duration. Nevertheless, under the following circumstances an accounting period may be shorter than 12 months:

- ▶ For the first accounting period, when the company can choose any year-end date
- ▶ When the company ceases operations
- ▶ When the Director-General of the Revenue Department permits a change to the year-end date

If a company transfers its assets or rights relating to petroleum operations to another party prior to the commencement of the first accounting period, the law considers the transfer date to be an accounting period for the purpose of this transitional situation (commonly known as a “one-day” accounting period). The company is then required to file an income tax return and pay any income tax due on the transfer transaction.

Determination of profit

Petroleum income tax is levied on annual profits, based on taxable revenues less deductible expenses. “Taxable revenues” include revenue from the sale of petroleum,⁶ the value of the petroleum disposed, the value of petroleum delivered in lieu of a royalty, revenue from the transfer of assets or rights relating to petroleum operations and any other revenue arising from petroleum operations (e.g., interest on surplus funds deposited with financial institutions in a savings deposit or similar account).

“Tax-deductible expenses” generally include expenses that are normal, necessary, not excessive and that are paid in total, specifically for petroleum operations, regardless of whether they are paid inside or outside Thailand. Capital expenditures (inclusive of pre-production expenditures and losses incurring prior to the first accounting period), surface reservation fees and income tax, and penalties and surcharges imposed under the petroleum income tax law are not deductible. A deduction for expenditures of a capital nature is available in the form of depreciation expenses (see below).

Inventory valuation

Closing or ending inventory may either be valued at cost or at the lower of cost or market value. The accounting method used to determine the cost may not be changed unless permission is obtained from the Director-General of the Revenue Department.

Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions must be translated into Thai bahts (THB) at the rates of exchange on the transaction dates. Assets and liabilities denominated in a foreign currency remaining at the year-end date are translated into bahts at the latest average buying or selling rate (as appropriate), as announced by the Bank of Thailand.

Donations

Donations to public charities are limited to 1% of taxable profit, after deducting any tax loss carried forward.

⁶ The term “petroleum” includes crude oil, natural gas, natural gas liquid, by-products and other naturally occurring hydrocarbons in a free state, whether solid, semisolid, liquid or gaseous; it includes all heavy hydrocarbons that can be recovered at source by thermal or chemical processes but does not include coal, oil shale or other kinds of rocks from which oil can be extracted by application of heat or chemical process.

Tax return filings and payment

Annual tax return

A concessionaire must file a petroleum income tax return (Por Ngor Por 70) and pay the related tax within 5 months after the year-end date. The tax return must be accompanied by the audited financial statements for that year. If the concessionaire holds both Thailand III concessions and non-Thailand III concessions (i.e., Thailand I or Thailand II, or both), it is required to file two separate tax returns: one return for profits generated from the Thailand III concessions and the other for profits generated from Thailand I or Thailand II concessions, or both.

Half-year tax return

In addition to the annual return, concessionaires holding petroleum concessions under the Thailand III regime must file a midyear tax return and pay half of their projected annual income tax within two months after the midyear. This requirement does not apply to concessionaires holding only Thailand I and Thailand II concessions. The interim tax is creditable against the annual tax payable at the end of the year.

Production sharing contracts

PSCs apply only to contractors that operate in the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area (JDA), which is governed under Malaysia-Thailand Joint Authority.

Annual profits arising from the exploration and exploitation of any petroleum in the JDA are exempt from income tax for the first eight years of production, subject to income tax at a rate of 10% for the next seven years and thereafter at a rate of 20%. If the contractor is subject to tax in Malaysia, the tax payable is reduced by 50% of the amount of the tax charge.

The primary features of PSCs are:

- ▶ Royalty – 10% of gross production of petroleum
- ▶ Notional expenditure – 50% of gross production of petroleum is treated as a notional deductible expenditure
- ▶ Share profit – the remaining portion of gross production of petroleum after deducting royalty and notional expenditure is divided equally between the Joint Authority and the contractor
- ▶ R&D contribution – 0.5% of both the notional expenditure and the share profit must be paid to the Joint Authority

Royalty regimes

Petroleum royalties are collected under the Petroleum Act. Royalties are applied to both onshore and offshore production. The royalty can be paid in cash or in kind, and the rate is likely to differ between the Thailand I and Thailand II regimes and the Thailand III regime.

Royalty rate for Thailand I and Thailand II regimes

If the royalty is paid in cash, it is generally levied at a rate of 12.5% of the value of the petroleum sold or disposed.

If the royalty is paid in kind, a volume of petroleum equivalent in value to one-seventh of the petroleum sold or disposed, or equivalent to 14.28% of the gross revenue, is payable in kind.

The royalty paid on products sold domestically cannot be treated as a tax-deductible expense; however, the royalty payable in respect of exported crude oil qualifies as a tax-deductible expense.

The royalty payable on products sold domestically under the Thailand I and Thailand II regimes is creditable against income tax but may not exceed the tax payable.

Royalty rate for Thailand III regime

If the royalty is paid in cash, a sliding scale determines the amount of the royalty payable. The scale is as set out in the table below.

| Monthly sales volume | Rate % |
|---------------------------|--------|
| 0-60,000 barrels | 5.00 |
| 60,001-150,000 barrels | 6.25 |
| 150,001-300,000 barrels | 10.00 |
| 300,001-600,000 barrels | 12.50 |
| More than 600,000 barrels | 15.00 |

The volume of royalty paid in kind is equivalent in value to the royalty paid in cash, as set out above.

A deep-sea, offshore exploration block (deeper than 200 meters) is only subject to 70% of the royalty that would otherwise be payable according to the table above.

Royalties charged on both domestic and export sales qualify as tax-deductible expenses but may not be used as a tax credit.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

"Capital expenditure" in this context is defined as expenditure incurred for the purpose of acquiring assets or benefits, whether directly or indirectly, if such assets or benefits aid the business for a period of more than one year. It includes expenditures and losses incurred prior to the first accounting period, which are to be depreciated at rates not exceeding the prescribed rates.

The rates are as set out below.

| Type of asset | Rate % per year |
|---|-----------------|
| Buildings: | |
| Durable building | 5 |
| Temporary building | 100 |
| Aircraft and accessories | 33.33 |
| Cost of acquiring concession and petroleum reserves | 10 |
| Cost of acquiring lease rights: | |
| No agreement or renewable | 10 |
| Limited lease period | Lease period |
| Other capital expenditures not mentioned above: | |
| Tangible capital expenditures | 20 |
| Capital expenditures for deep sea exploration blocks (deeper than 200 meters) | 20 |
| Intangible capital expenditures incurred by a company that entered into a gas sale agreement with Petroleum Authority of Thailand before 1979 | 20 |
| Others not stated above | 10 |

D. Incentives

Tax holiday

A contractor that conducts exploration in the JDA and signs a PSC with the Joint Authority is granted a tax holiday for the first 8 years of production.

Tax losses

Tax losses incurred may be carried forward for 10 years. The 10-year period begins at the same time as the first accounting period, and a one-day accounting period (see Section B) is not counted as an accounting period for this purpose. No carryback of losses is allowed.

Regional exploration incentives

A concessionaire pays a royalty equal to 70% of the full royalty that would otherwise be payable for the petroleum produced from a production area within a designated offshore exploration area. An offshore exploration area is an exploration block, designated by the Department of Mineral Fuels, that has a water depth in excess of 200 meters. The offshore deepwater block is allowed to deduct capital expenditure at the rate of 20%.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends and profit remittance tax

Generally, dividends and remittance profits paid to overseas shareholders are subject to a 10% withholding tax (WHT). However, dividends and remittance profits distributed from profits incurred from petroleum income are exempt from income tax and WHT.

Interest

Interest paid to a company located overseas is subject to a 15% WHT. However, if the overseas country has a tax treaty with Thailand and the receiver is a financial institution, the rate may be reduced to 10%.

Royalties and technical service

Under Thai tax law, a resident entity is required to deduct 15% WHT on royalties or technical services paid to overseas residents. However, the rate may be reduced to 5%, 8% or 10% depending on the type of royalty and the particular countries involved.

F. Financing considerations

Thailand does not have thin capitalization rules. However, interest is not treated as a deductible expenditure for petroleum income tax calculation purposes.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals and farm-in and farm-out

Transfer between unrelated parties

If a concessionaire transfers its assets or rights relating to petroleum operations to another party, the concessionaire must determine the profits on that transfer; the concessionaire is subject to petroleum income tax on the profit at the rate of 50%. Such profits are calculated as the excess of the transfer price over the net book value of the assets or rights transferred. Profits are, however, deemed to be “earned” only if cash or benefits are paid as consideration for the transfer.

Accordingly, profits are not deemed to be earned under a farm-in arrangement. This is on the basis that, the Petroleum Income Tax Act (PITA) expressly states that if a new participant in a concession is required to incur expenses for the purpose of petroleum exploration and development in order to acquire a petroleum interest but such expenses are not paid to the existing participants, these expenses are not regarded as income of the existing participants.

Transfer between related parties

If the transfer is made between related parties (i.e., a parent company and its subsidiary company or between two fellow subsidiaries with a common parent company), it is deemed that neither profit nor loss arises from the transfer. The purchaser inherits the seller's cost base, such that any taxable gain or loss is effectively deferred until the asset or interest is sold outside the group.

Selling shares in a company

Profits incurred from share disposals between Thai resident companies are subject to CIT in Thailand at the rate of 20%. Profits incurred from share disposals between nonresident companies are not subject to Thai tax. However, a gain arising from the sale of shares by a nonresident to a Thai resident is subject to Thai WHT at 15%, unless the gain is protected by the relevant tax treaty.

H. Indirect taxes**Import duties**

Equipment brought into Thailand for use in petroleum operations is exempt from import duty and VAT if it is brought by a concessionaire or a direct contractor.

VAT

VAT is levied on the value added at each stage of production and distribution, including servicing. The current rate is 7% of the domestic sale or service. VAT on exports is imposed at the rate of 0%.

A VAT registrant is obliged to submit VAT on a monthly basis by the 15th day of the month following the supply subject to VAT. VAT paid by a supplier of goods or services (input tax) is credited against VAT collected from customers (output tax). The excess of VAT claimable over VAT payable can be refunded in cash or carried forward to offset any future output tax. Goods sold or services provided in the JDA are exempt from VAT.

Export duties

Export duties are only levied on some specific products prescribed by the Customs Department, such as rice, wood and rubber.

Excise duties

Excise duties are levied on some products manufactured in Thailand, such as cars, electricity products, drinks, liquor and tobacco. Refined products are subject to excise tax, and the rate depends on the type of the product. Crude oil is not subject to excise tax.

Stamp duty

Thailand imposes a stamp duty of 0.1% on the total remuneration or value of service contracts if the service contract is concluded in Thailand, or concluded outside Thailand but brought into the country at a later date. If the agreement is signed within Thailand, the liability to pay the stamp duty arises when the agreement is executed, and the stamp duty must be paid within 15 days after execution. However, if the agreement is executed outside Thailand, it is subject to stamp duty within 30 days after the agreement is brought into Thailand.

Registration fees

The concessionaire is subject to the following registration fees:

- ▶ Application fee – THB50,000 per application
 - ▶ Surface reservation fee – THB200,000 per annum
 - ▶ Demarcation survey fee – THB500 per kilometer, or a fraction thereof
 - ▶ Boundary mark onshore – THB1,000 per mark
-

I. Other

Companies that engage in petroleum exploration and production in Thailand are governed by two principal laws: the Petroleum Law and PITA. Petroleum companies are also governed and regulated by the Department of Mineral Fuels within the Ministry of Energy. Since petroleum companies are not regulated under the Foreign Business Act, they can be wholly owned by a foreigner without obtaining a business license from the Ministry of Commerce.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Royalties ■ Profit-based special taxes ■ Corporate income tax | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production sharing contracts □ Service contract |
|--|--|

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

Companies engaged in upstream operations in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) are subject to a special fiscal regime, principally governed by the Petroleum Taxes Act (PTA). In summary, the following taxes, levies and imposts apply to companies engaged in the exploration and production of oil and gas:

- ▶ Petroleum Profits Tax (PPT) – 50% of taxable profits (petroleum operations in deepwater blocks: 35%)
- ▶ Unemployment Levy (UL) – 5% of taxable profits
- ▶ Supplemental Petroleum Tax (SPT) – The applicable rate of tax is based on the weighted average crude price and is applied to the gross income from the disposal of crude oil, less certain incentives (see section B); not applicable on gas sales
- ▶ Petroleum production levy (PPL) – Lower of 4% of income from crude oil for producers of more than 3,500 BOPD or proportionate share of local petroleum subsidy
- ▶ Petroleum Impost (PI) – Proportionate share to defray expenses of the Ministry of Energy and Energy Affairs (MOEEA)
- ▶ Royalties – The applicable rate varies and is dependent on the particular agreement with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GOTT) (see Section B)
- ▶ Green Fund Levy (GFL) – 0.1% of gross revenue
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, U¹
- ▶ Investment incentives – L²

B. Fiscal regime

Upstream

Generally, companies engaged in business activities in T&T are subject to Corporation Tax at a rate of 25%. Companies engaged in the business of manufacturing petrochemicals, liquefying natural gas and transmission of natural gas are subject to corporation tax at the rate of 35%.

1 D: accelerated depreciation; U: capital uplift or credit.

2 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely (only with regard to PPT).

Companies engaged in upstream operations in T&T are subject to a special fiscal regime, principally governed by the PTA.

An entity engaged in the business of exploring for, and the winning of, petroleum in its natural state from the underground reservoir in T&T, on land or in a marine area, must do so either under an exploration and production license (license) or a production sharing contract (PSC).

Companies engaged in upstream petroleum operations are subject to various taxes, levies and imposts, of which the most significant are PPT of 35%/50%, UL of 5% and SPT at rates based on the weighted average crude oil price.

Generally, businesses operating under a license may be consolidated for tax purposes; however, those conducted under a PSC are ring-fenced (with the exception of the 2006 version PSC, also referred to as "tax-paying PSC").

PSCs, with the exception of tax-paying PSCs, mandate that the GOTT settle the T&T tax liabilities of the operations out of GOTT's share of profit oil or profit gas. The tax-paying PSCs require the operator to settle its own tax liabilities out of its share of profit oil or profit gas.

Petroleum profits tax

The PTA provides that PPT is payable each financial year on the profits or gains (or amounts deemed to be profits or gains) of any person accruing in or derived from T&T or elsewhere, whether received in T&T or not, in respect of, among other things, "production business."

The PTA defines "production business" as the business of exploring for and winning petroleum in its natural state from an underground reservoir. For these purposes, petroleum is defined as any mixture of naturally occurring hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon compounds. The definition of "production business" includes the physical separation of liquids from a natural gas stream and natural gas processing from a natural gas stream, produced by the production business of a person engaged in separation or processing activities. It does not include the liquefaction of natural gas.

PPT is charged at a rate of 50% on the taxable profits of any person in respect of a production or refining business. "Refining business" is defined as the business of the manufacture from petroleum or petroleum products of partly finished or finished petroleum products and petrochemicals by a refining process. PPT is charged at a reduced rate of 35% on petroleum operations in deepwater blocks. A deepwater block is a block where at least half of the acreage therein is more than 400 meters below sea level.

PPT is assessed on an annual basis, and the PPT return is due on or before 30 April of the year following the year of income. Taxes are due and payable quarterly (i.e., 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December each year).

Expenses that are wholly and exclusively incurred in the production of taxable income are deductible in arriving at the taxable profits for PPT purposes, except where specific provisions govern the treatment of expenditures.

Restrictions or limitations apply to the deductibility of certain expenses. For instance, the deductibility of management charges paid to nonresidents of T&T is restricted to the lesser of the management charges or 2% of the tax-deductible outgoings and expenses, exclusive of special allowances and such management charges.

In arriving at the taxable profits for PPT purposes, in addition to expenses wholly and exclusively incurred in the production of income, accumulated tax losses and certain allowances are also available (see Sections D and C, respectively).

Unemployment levy

The UL is charged at a rate of 5% on taxable profits as calculated for PPT purposes. In contrast to PPT, carried-forward losses cannot be carried forward for UL purposes. The UL is not deductible in the calculation of taxable profits, is assessed on an annual basis and is payable in quarterly installments.

Supplemental petroleum tax

SPT is imposed on windfall profits, calculated on gross income from the sale of crude oil (including condensate). Income from the disposal of natural gas is not subject to SPT. The tax is charged on the gross income of marine and land operations at varying rates based on the weighted average annual crude oil price.

The rates of SPT are as follows:

| Weighted average crude prices US\$ | A | B | C |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Marine | New Field Development ³ | Land and Deepwater Block |
| 0.00-50.00 | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 50.01-90.00 | 33% | 25% | 18% |
| 90.01-200.00 | SPT rate = base SPT rate ⁴ + 0.2% (P ⁵ – US\$90) | | |
| 200.01 and over | 55% | 47% | 40% |

In calculating the SPT liability, the following deductions, discounts and credits are allowed:

- ▶ Deduction of royalties and the overriding royalties paid from crude disposals assessed to SPT
- ▶ Sustainability incentive, which is a discount of 20% on the rate of SPT for either:
 - ▶ Mature marine oil fields⁶
 - ▶ Small marine oil fields⁷

The MOEEA must certify mature marine oil fields and small marine oil fields.

- ▶ Investment tax credit of 20% of qualifying capital expenditure incurred in either:
 - ▶ Approved development activity in mature marine oil fields and mature land oil fields
 - ▶ Acquisition of machinery and plant for use in approved enhanced oil recovery projects
- ▶ The MOEEA must certify all development activities carried out in mature marine and land oil fields and enhanced oil recovery projects.

SPT returns and applicable taxes are due on a quarterly basis.

PSCs are subject to SPT on disposals of crude oil, unless the contract expressly exempts the contractor.

3 New fields in shallow marine areas shall be approved and certified for development by the MOEEA. "New field" means an area within the license, sub-license or contract area, consisting of a petroleum reservoir or multiple petroleum reservoirs, all grouped on or related to the same individual geological structural feature or stratigraphic conditions from which petroleum may be produced and where the total recoverable reserves are not more than 50 million barrels of oil equivalent, that comes into production after 1 January 2013, and where recoverable reserves are certified by the MOEEA before the commencement of production and the beginning of each financial year.

4 Base SPT rate is equal to the SPT rate applicable at the crude price range of US\$50.01 to US\$90.00.

5 P = weighted average crude oil price in US\$.

6 Mature land oil fields or mature marine oil fields are oil fields that are 25 years or older from the date of first commercial production.

7 Small marine oil fields means a field that has production levels of 1,500 barrels or less of oil equivalent per day.

Petroleum production levy

The PPL only applies to a production business if the business produces petroleum at a daily average rate in excess of 3,500 barrels and the person is beneficially entitled to receive the proceeds of the sale of the petroleum. Petroleum for these purposes does not include petroleum in the gaseous state.

PPL is calculated as the lesser of either 4% of the income from the crude oil disposed or the share of the subsidy prescribed by the MOEEA. It is payable monthly. No deductions are available in calculating PPL.

Petroleum impost

Every licensee and party to a PSC is liable for PI in respect of all crude oil and natural gas won and saved. PI rates are determined by the MOEEA and published in the *Official Gazette*. The tax is imposed to defray the administrative cost of the MOEEA and is payable annually.

Royalties

Every exploration and production licensee must pay a royalty at a rate stipulated in the license on the net petroleum won and saved from the licensed area. Historically, applicable royalty rates have ranged from 10% to 15% for crude oil and US\$0.015/mmcf for natural gas.

Green fund levy

The GFL is a tax imposed at the rate of 0.1% of the gross sales or receipts of the company. It is payable on a quarterly basis.

GFL is not deductible in arriving at the taxable profits for PPT and UL purposes.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Allowances

In arriving at the taxable profit for PPT and UL purposes, the following are the allowances available.

Signature bonuses

Signature bonuses may be capitalized and written off over five years on a straight-line basis.

Production bonuses

Production bonuses are deductible when paid.

Supplemental Petroleum Tax

SPT is deductible when paid.

Royalties

Royalties are deductible when paid.

Work-over allowance

This allowance provides for the deduction of costs, both tangible and intangible, incurred for work overs, maintenance or repairs on completed wells and qualifying sidetracks. These costs must be approved by the MOEEA.

Dry-hole allowance

Dry-hole allowance applies to all expenditures, both tangible and intangible, incurred on a dry hole and for development of a dry hole. The expenditure is available as an allowance in the financial year in which such development dry hole or dry hole is plugged and abandoned and certified by the MOEEA. The allowance is limited to the difference between the expenditure and the allowance claimed under tangible and intangible costs.

Tangible drilling costs⁸

Expenditure of a tangible nature incurred in respect of the production business carried on by any person must be capitalized, and the applicable capital allowance must be claimed. Tangible drilling costs include costs incurred in respect of plant and machinery, related costs, import duty and installation costs. Tangible allowances are available from the year of expenditure as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Initial allowance | Year 1 – 50% of costs |
| Annual allowance | Year 2 – 30% of costs |
| | Year 3 – 20% of costs |

Intangible drilling and development costs⁹

Expenditure of an intangible nature incurred in respect of production business must be capitalized, and the applicable capital allowance must be claimed. Intangible drilling and development costs include all expenditure incurred in exploration operations and exclude all tangible drilling costs and acquisitions for rights. In addition, they include costs incurred in connection with working the oil wells or searching for, discovery of and winning access to deposits.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Initial allowance | Year 1 – 50% of costs |
| Annual allowance | Year 2 – 30% of costs |
| | Year 3 – 20% of costs |

Exploration costs

Allowance of 100% of costs is available in the period from 2014 to 2017. If such allowance is claimed, the following cannot be claimed:

- ▶ Initial/annual allowance
- ▶ Deepwater uplift
- ▶ Deep horizon uplift

Deep horizon uplift

In computing the taxable profits of a person who incurs, from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017, capital expenditure in respect of the drilling of exploration wells in deep horizon¹⁰ on land or in shallow marine area, that person shall be granted capital allowances on his exploration expenditure calculated by reference to an amount equal to 140% of such expenditure,¹¹ but shall not apply to expenditure incurred in respect of an exploration dry-hole, finance, administrative and other indirect costs.

Deepwater allowance

The PTA provides that in computing the taxable profits of a person who incurs, on or after 1 January 2006, capital expenditure on drilling exploration wells in a deepwater block, the person is granted a capital allowance for exploration expenditure equal to 140% of the expenditure. It should be noted that the PTA defines deepwater as that part of the submarine area that has a water depth more than 400 meters. In addition, a deepwater block is defined as 50% or more of a licensed area or contract area that lies in deepwater.

8 *Unrelieved Allowances (prior to 1 January 2014) will continue to be amortized according to the rules effective prior to 1 January 2014.*

9 *Unrelieved Allowances (where a person has an unrelieved balance of expenditure as of 1 January 2014), shall be claimed on 20% straight line basis.*

10 *“Exploration wells in deep horizon” means any exploration wells drilled at and beyond a true vertical depth (TVD) of 8,000 feet on land or 12,000 feet in shallow marine areas.*

11 *Exploration work in respect of the drilling of the wells in deep horizon shall be certified in writing by the MOEEA.*

Heavy oil allowance

This allowance is for all costs incurred on heavy oil projects (i.e., oil 18 degrees API or lower) and includes tangible and intangible drilling costs, as follows:

- ▶ Year 1 – 60% of costs
- ▶ Years 2 to 6 – 18% of costs.

It should be noted that when an election is made to claim a heavy oil allowance, no additional claim may be made in respect of tangible drilling costs and intangible drilling and development costs.

Capital gains

The taxation of capital gains is not specifically addressed under the provisions of the PTA. Notwithstanding, other principal pieces of legislation, such as the Income Tax Act (ITA) and the Corporation Tax Act (CTA), impose tax at specified rates on “short-term capital gains.” Short-term capital gains are defined as gains arising on the disposal of assets within 12 months from the date of acquisition.

D. Incentives

PPT losses

Tax losses that cannot be wholly offset against income for the same year may be carried forward and offset against income from succeeding years, without restriction. No loss carrybacks are allowed. Carried forward losses can be carried forward only for PPT purposes.

E. Withholding taxes

Withholding Tax (WHT) is levied at source on distributions and on payments made to nonresidents (if the person or company is not engaged in trade or business in T&T).

The term “payment” is defined as a payment without any deductions whatsoever, other than a distribution, with respect to interest, discounts, annuities or other annual or periodic sums, rentals, royalties, management charges, or charges for the provision of personal services and technical and managerial skills, premiums (other than premiums paid to insurance companies and contributions to pension funds and schemes), commissions, fees and licenses, and any other such payments as may from time to time be prescribed.

In summary, WHT is levied if all of the following conditions are met:

- ▶ A payment, as defined in the ITA, is made
- ▶ The payment is made to a nonresident of T&T
- ▶ The nonresident is not engaged in trade or business in T&T
- ▶ The payment is deemed to arise in T&T

The applicable rate of WHT with regard to payments is 15%. The applicable rate of WHT on distributions made is 10%, but if the distribution is made to a parent company, the rate is 5%. However, if there is a double taxation agreement in force, the rate of WHT is the lower rate provided in the treaty, if applicable.

Branch operations

In addition to the taxes outlined above, an external company (i.e., branch of a nonresident company) that carries on a trade or business in T&T is liable for WHT at the rate of 5% on the deemed distribution of profits to its head office.

Double tax relief

If it is established that WHT applies under domestic legislation, the provisions of an applicable double tax treaty may provide relief from the domestic provision. The GOTT has successfully negotiated various double tax arrangements that seek to provide, among other things, relief from T&T tax.

The GOTT has entered into tax treaties with Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the US and Venezuela.

In addition to the above, a multilateral arrangement (the Caricom Treaty) has also been entered into with the following members of Caricom: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Unilateral relief

A credit is available to residents for foreign taxes paid on foreign-sourced income. The credit may not exceed the T&T tax payable on the underlying foreign-sourced income.

F. Financing considerations

Investment income

Interest received on bank deposits and certificates of deposits held at financial institutions in T&T, as well as interest on bonds and similar instruments, are taxable.

Dividends received from nonresident companies paid from profits not derived from or accruing in T&T are subject to tax. Dividends received by resident companies from other resident companies are tax exempt.

Foreign-exchange controls

T&T has a floating exchange rate regime. Commercial banks and licensed foreign-exchange dealers set the exchange rate. Residents may hold foreign currencies for their own account. Profits may be repatriated without the approval of the Central Bank of T&T.

Debt to equity rules (thin capitalization)

In general, no thin capitalization rules apply in T&T. However, if a local company pays or accrues interest on securities issued to a nonresident company and if the local company is a subsidiary of, or a fellow subsidiary in relation to, the nonresident company, the interest is treated as a distribution and may not be claimed as a deduction against the profits of the local company.

G. Indirect taxes

VAT

VAT is taxable on the entry of goods imported into T&T and on the commercial supply within T&T of goods or prescribed services by a registered person.

The tax rate is 15%, except in the case of an entry or a supply that is zero-rated. It should be noted that natural gas, crude oil, and specified vessels and rigs used in offshore drilling and exploration are zero-rated goods and, therefore, are subject to VAT at the rate of 0%.

Companies and other businesses are required to register for VAT if their turnover exceeds TT\$360,000 a year. A company that is registered for VAT may recover any VAT incurred in relation to its operations.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

- Service contract
-

A. At a glance

Tunisian oil and gas tax legislation is mainly governed by the Hydrocarbons Code (HC). This is one of the main legal frameworks for oil and gas prospecting, exploration and exploitation in Tunisia.

The HC was promulgated by Law 99-93 dated 17 August 1999 and has been amended several times by the following acts:

- ▶ Law 2002-23, dated 14 February 2002
- ▶ Law 2004-62, dated 27 July 2004
- ▶ Law 2006-80, dated 18 December 2006
- ▶ Law 2008-15, dated 18 February 2008

The HC has also been amended by several decrees enacted by the State to clarify the applicability of the HC's provisions.

Prior to the promulgation of the HC, oil and gas activities were governed by Law 85-9, dated 14 September 1985. Moreover, prior to the promulgation of the HC and law 85-9, each license had its own convention, comprising the sole legal and tax framework governing the related activities. In this respect, exploitation concessions awarded and developed prior to the effective date of the HC are excluded from the application of the provisions of the HC and the regulations issued for its implementation.

In this way, Tunisian legislation has promoted stabilization of the tax framework governing investment in the oil and gas industry. In fact, according to Article 3 of the HC and from its effective date, holders of valid prospecting or exploration permits and/or exploitation concessions granted but not yet developed are entitled to opt, with regard to such permits and concessions, for the application of the provisions of the HC and the regulations issued for its implementation. The exercise of the aforementioned option shall be subject to written notification, stamped and signed by the holder of the permit and/or exploitation concession, addressed to the authority in charge of hydrocarbons no later than six months after the effective date of the HC.

Nevertheless, the provisions of the HC are applicable to hydrocarbon licenses awarded after the promulgation of the code.

Because of the particularity of each permit or exploitation concession agreement, the following sections only detail the applicable tax rules in accordance with the HC. In this respect, the HC has defined two types of tax regimes:

- ▶ The concession regime
 - ▶ Production sharing contracts (PSCs)
-

The main taxes applicable in this sector are:

- ▶ Corporate tax
- ▶ Royalties on production
- ▶ Registration duties
- ▶ Turnover taxes
- ▶ Local taxes

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Tunisia consists of a combination of royalties (MET), corporate profits tax and an export duty on crude oil, oil products and natural gas. Each is described below.

Royalties (MET)

An oil and gas entity is subject to the disbursement of a portion of its production, commonly referred to as royalties in respect of oil production. Generally, for gas the royalty due is paid in cash.

The royalties production percentage should vary according to the R-factor, determined as following:

$$R = \frac{\text{Total accumulated revenues}}{\text{Total accumulated expenditures}}$$

“Total accumulated revenues” is equivalent to the total turnover for all fiscal years prior to the considered fiscal year, reduced by the sum of tax charges due or paid for all fiscal years preceding the considered fiscal year.

“Total accumulated expenditures” is equivalent to the total amount of prospecting and production expenses, research and development costs and administrative costs.

All depreciation and tax charges due or paid must be excluded from the calculation of the total accumulated expenditures.

The royalties production percentage used should vary according to the nature of the hydrocarbons as follows:

| For liquid hydrocarbons | | For gaseous hydrocarbons | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2% | $R \leq 0.5$ | 2% | $R \leq 0.5$ |
| 5% | $0.5 < R \leq 0.8$ | 4% | $0.5 < R \leq 0.8$ |
| 7% | $0.8 < R \leq 1.1$ | 6% | $0.8 < R \leq 1.1$ |
| 10% | $1.1 < R \leq 1.5$ | 8% | $1.1 < R \leq 1.5$ |
| 12% | $1.5 < R \leq 2$ | 9% | $1.5 < R \leq 2$ |
| 14% | $2 < R \leq 2.5$ | 10% | $2 < R \leq 2.5$ |
| 15% | $R > 2.5$ | 11% | $2.5 < R \leq 3$ |
| | | 13% | $3 < R \leq 3.5$ |
| | | 15% | $R > 3.5$ |

However, in the case of non-participation by the national oil company (ETAP) in an exploitation concession, the rate of the proportional royalty applicable to the said concession may not be less than 10% for liquid hydrocarbons and 8% for gaseous hydrocarbons.

Corporate income tax

According to Article 107.2 of the HC, for oil and gas entities the taxable income is determined for corporate income tax (CIT) purposes in accordance with the rules set out by the Individual and Corporate Income Tax Code (ICITC).

For hydrocarbon activities, the determination of taxable income is calculated separately by the holder from its other activities in Tunisia, in accordance with Article 106 of the HC.

Ring-fencing

Tunisia applies the ring-fencing principle in determining an entity's corporate tax liability in relation to its oil and gas activities. In this respect, hydrocarbon income tax is determined separately for each concession.

Profits tax levied on taxable profit

A concession holder should maintain Tunisian tax records of its hydrocarbon activities in TND currency and in accordance with the local legislation for each concession.

Taxable profit is equivalent to non-exempt income less deductions. Non-exempt income includes sales income (determined with reference to accounting data for sales) and non-sale income (certain items are specifically mentioned in the Tax Code). Deductions include expenses to the extent that they are economically justified and documented in accordance with Tunisian legislation.

The income tax from hydrocarbon activities should be determined using a variable rate based on the R-factor, according to Article 101.3 of the HC.

The CIT rate used will vary according to the nature of the hydrocarbons as follows:

| For liquid hydrocarbons | | For gaseous hydrocarbons | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 50% | $R \leq 1.5$ | 50% | $R \leq 2.5$ |
| 55% | $1.5 < R \leq 2$ | 55% | $2.5 < R \leq 3.0$ |
| 60% | $2 < R \leq 2.5$ | 60% | $3.0 < R \leq 3.5$ |
| 65% | $2.5 < R \leq 3.0$ | 65% | $R > 3.5$ |
| 70% | $3.0 < R \leq 3.5$ | | |
| 75% | $R > 3.5$ | | |

However, in the case of participation by ETAP in an exploitation concession at a rate equal or greater than 40%, the CIT rate applicable to the profits generated from said concession is set to 50%.

During the prospecting and exploration stage, oil and gas companies will not generate any hydrocarbon activities profit.

Exploration costs incurred can be treated at the choice of the holder, either as deductible expenses in the fiscal year during which they were incurred, or capitalized and depreciated from the first fiscal year of production at a maximum rate of 30%. In general, most oil and gas companies operating in Tunisia use the capitalization method.

Development costs are deductible through the depreciation of constructed fixed assets. This is discussed in section C below.

Export duty

Export duty (also known as Customs Service Duty, or RPD) is determined based on the price fixed every month by the Directorate General of Energy.

However, any amount paid for the RPD levied on the export of hydrocarbons produced by a company or on its behalf is considered as an advance of corporate income tax due by the entity for the fiscal year during which the said amount was paid, or, otherwise, for subsequent fiscal years.

Production sharing contracts

Exploration permits as well as any resulting exploitation concessions are granted by the State to ETAP, within the PSC framework, as the holder of the concession for which the production will be carried out.

For its activities of exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, ETAP is entitled to enter into a PSC with private contractors that are able to demonstrate the necessary financial and technical potential to conduct exploration and production activities. The contractor finances at its sole risk the entirety of the prospecting, exploration and exploitation activities on behalf and under the supervision of ETAP.

In the case of production of hydrocarbons, ETAP will have to assign to the contractor a quantity of the said production within the limit of a percentage specified in the PSC to enable the contractor to recover the expenses incurred under the contract with ETAP, including expenditures incurred relating to the prospecting permit (recovery oil).

In addition, and as remuneration, the ETAP assigns to the contractor a percentage of the remaining production agreed upon under the PSC (profit oil/gas). The profit oil/gas allocated to the contractor should be adjusted according to the R-factor, increased over the time the contractor has recovered all the incurred prospecting, research and appraisal, development and exploitation expenditures.

According to Article 114.1 of the HC, in consideration of the share of the production made available to ETAP after deduction of the Recovery Oil and Profit Oil/Gas, the contractor shall be deemed to have paid the corporate income tax (i.e., the contractor tax will be paid by ETAP). Such tax is set for every fiscal year to the value of the production quantities taken by the contractor as Profit Oil/Gas.

According to the HC, the CIT due will be directly settled by ETAP on behalf of the contractor. The amount should be credited to the contractor's CIT account with the revenue authorities.

C. Capital allowances

Depreciation

For tax purposes, "depreciable assets" include assets that have a limited useful life and that decrease in value over time. In this respect, expenditures which should be capitalized consist of the following:

- ▶ Geological and geophysics studies
- ▶ Drilling costs
- ▶ Charges incurred for the installation of equipment

According to Article 111 of the HC, the annual rate of amortization should not exceed 30%.

However, for an asset retirement obligation (ARO), the holder of the exploitation concession is entitled to an allowance on the site abandonment and restoration costs. In order to be deducted from taxable income, the ARO should only be provided for during:

- ▶ The last three years for sites located onshore
- ▶ The last five years for sites located offshore

Special allowances

According to Article 109 of the HC, subject to the holder's election the following expenses incurred may be treated either as expenses deductible from the taxable income, or capitalized and amortized annually:

- ▶ Prospecting and exploration expenses
- ▶ Dry-hole costs
- ▶ Well abandonment costs
- ▶ Drilling costs for wells producing hydrocarbons in non-commercial quantities
- ▶ Preliminary set-up costs related to the start-up activities of exploration and exploitation incurred in compliance with the relevant convention

D. Incentives

An oil and gas entity is entitled to build up a deductible reinvestment reserve within the limit of 20% of its taxable income to finance the following:

- ▶ Prospecting and/or exploration expenditures on the same permit and/or other prospecting or exploration permits held by the holder. However, the financing rate of the reserve may not exceed 30% of the expenditure amount.
- ▶ Prospecting and/or exploration expenditures incurred in addition to initial contractual commitments on the same permit or other permits held by the holder. However, the financing rate of the reserve may not exceed 50% of the additional prospecting and/or exploration expenditure.
- ▶ Expenditure for the construction of pipelines for the transportation of hydrocarbons.

In this respect, the concession holder should use the reinvestment reserve to finance one of the projects realized by him, and related to one of his permits/concessions as described above.

Any reserve built up during a given fiscal year that has not been reinvested in whole or in part during the three fiscal years following the year of its build-up is subject to income tax at the rate applicable to the income from which it was built up, increased by late-payment penalties.

E. Withholding taxes

Oil and gas entities should withhold tax on payments made locally or to nonresidents. The entity should withhold tax as following:

i. Payments to residents

- ▶ 1.5% on payments under agreement in consideration of goods and services, the amounts of which exceed TND1,000.
- ▶ 15% on payments in consideration of rent, fees and royalties for individuals, and 5% on fees due to entities and individuals subject to corporate tax.
- ▶ 5% on dividends paid to individuals (0% for resident companies).
- ▶ 20% on interest and on attendance fee.
- ▶ WHT on salary should be determined based on the annual salary including premiums, indemnities and other advantages in kind after deduction of 10% for professional expenses. The income tax charge due on the annual income should be determined according to the scale's table as follows:

| Annual salary (TND) | Tax rate | Effective tax rate |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------|
| 0-1,500 | 0% | 0 |
| 1,500-5,000 | 15% | 10.5% |
| 5,000-10,000 | 20% | 15.25% |
| 10,000-20,000 | 25% | 20.12% |
| 20,000-50,000 | 30% | 26.05% |
| > 50,000 | 35% | |

In this respect, the annual income tax charge should be divided by 12 to determine the monthly withholding tax charge.

ii. Payments to nonresidents

- ▶ 5% on dividends
- ▶ 20% on interest or attendance fee paid to individuals or entities
- ▶ 20% on salaries paid to non-resident employee who spent less than six month in Tunisia for an occasional work

- ▶ 5% on interest paid on loans obtained from nonresident banks
- ▶ 15% on other payments
 - ▶ For capital gains the WHT is equal to 25% (starting from 1 January 2014) of the capital gain realized, but the capital gains tax may not exceed 5% of the sales price. For non-resident individuals the capital gains tax is 10% of the capital gain realized, but the capital gains tax may not exceed 2.5% of the sales price
 - ▶ Nonresidents established in Tunisia, and exercising their activity for a period not exceeding six months, are subject to income tax or to CIT through WHT in respect of amounts due to them under the following rates:
 - ▶ 5% of gross revenue for construction
 - ▶ 10% of gross revenues for assembly operations
 - ▶ 15% of gross revenues or gross revenue for other services

The WHT mentioned above could be decreased by a double-taxation agreement.

The applicable rate is 25% when the beneficiary is a resident of a tax haven.

Listed by a decree, the tax havens identified are: Delaware (United States); Anguilla (UK); Bermuda (UK); Cayman Islands (UK); Gibraltar (UK); Montserrat (UK); Turks and Caicos Islands (UK); British Virgin Islands (UK); Guernsey (UK); Jersey (UK); Saint-Martin (France); Saint-Martin (Netherlands); Netherlands Antilles (Netherlands); Curacao (Netherlands); Cook Islands (New Zealand); Niue (New Zealand); Antigua and Barbuda; Aruba; Barbados; Belize; Costa Rica; Dominique; Granada; Liberia; Marshall Islands; Nauru; Panama; Philippines; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; St. Lucia; Samoa; Uruguay; Vanuatu.

In case the Tunisian entity (i.e., oil and gas entity) has not performed the WHT on the payment made to a nonresident, the WHT due by the Tunisian entity is calculated based on the "taken in charge" tax formula, as follows: $100 \times t/100 - t$ (where t is the withholding tax rate due to the common regime).

F. Branch tax on the profit transfer

Tunisian permanent establishments of foreign companies (including oil and gas Tunisian permanent establishments) should pay tax of 5% on profits realized in Tunisia (such profits are assumed to be distributed for the benefit of the head offices residing outside Tunisia).

The withholding tax is due at the rate of 25% for establishments whose head-offices are located in tax havens. Please refer to Section E for the full list of tax havens.

The branch tax is paid in conformity with the provisions of applicable double tax treaties (which could exempt the Tunisian permanent establishment from branch tax).

Technical services

Technical services provided by nonresident contractors are subject to withholding tax at 15%, subject to the provisions of any applicable DTA, and to the rate of 25% where the beneficiary is resident of a tax haven. Please refer to section E for the full list of tax havens.

Moreover, the parent company of the holder is exempt from the withholding tax due for the studies and technical assistance afforded to the holder.

G. Financing considerations

Interest charged on loans and/or credit amounts not exceeding 70% of these investments shall be deductible only if the loans or credit amounts pertain to development investments. Interest charged on loans and/or credit amounts pertaining to prospecting and exploration investments are not considered deductible expenses.

H. Transactions

Asset disposals

The transfer of a license, in whole or in part, should not trigger any tax consequences.

According to Article 105.1 of the HC, in the case of a transfer in whole or in part of the rights and obligations resulting from a prospecting permit, an exploration permit or an exploitation concession, such transfer shall not be subject to any tax, duty or levy of any nature existing at that date or which may subsequently be created.

Moreover, according to Article 110.1.c of the HC, in the case of a transfer in whole or in part of the rights and obligations resulting from a prospecting permit, an exploration permit or an exploitation concession of hydrocarbons, the transferee may depreciate only the expenditure incurred by the transferor that has not yet been recovered or depreciated.

I. Indirect taxes

VAT

According to Article 7 of the Tunisian VAT code, most goods and services are subject to VAT at a standard rate of 18%. Other services are subject to the same tax whether at a rate of 12% or at a rate of 6%, depending on the nature of the service rendered.

Oil and gas companies are, however, eligible for VAT suspension pursuant to Article 100 of the HC. This VAT suspension will only be applicable if the entity obtains a valid VAT suspension certificate provided by the local tax authority, in order to be exempted from VAT.

Import duties

Oil and gas entities are entitled to import the following goods free of duties and any other taxes, rights and levies due on imports of goods, including VAT, with the sole exception of the RPD and the royalty for electronic data processing:

- ▶ All apparatus, tools, equipment, materials and vehicles to be effectively used in prospecting and exploration activities
- ▶ Vehicles used for company transportation

This exemption is not applicable to merchandise and goods available in Tunisia of a similar quality and of a comparable price to those goods being imported.

Export duties

Please refer to section B for export duties on hydrocarbons.

Stamp duty

Stamp duty is generally capped at an insignificant amount.

Registration fees

Oil and gas entities are subject to a fixed registration tax for the hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation convention, appendices, and for the associated amendments, additional acts, particular agreements or production sharing agreements concluded pursuant to the said convention.

However, supply, work and service contracts associated with all the activities of the concession holder exercised within the framework of the said particular conventions, and dealing with the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, are subject to registered fees at the rate of 0.5% of the contract value.

J. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

According to Article 127 of the HC, a concession holder or contractor (oil and gas entity) can undertake its activities as residents or as nonresidents. The holder or the contractor established under Tunisian law is deemed to be a nonresident where their share capital is held by nonresidents and subscribed to by means of importing convertible currencies for at least 66% of the share capital.

Moreover, according to the same article, subsidiaries created in Tunisia by legal entities having their registered office abroad shall be considered nonresidents with regard to exchange regulations. The said subsidiaries shall be financed through the import of convertible currencies.

During a production phase, the nonresident holder or the contractor is allowed to retain foreign sales proceeds from the export of hydrocarbons. However, if the concession holder or contractor does not have the necessary funds available in Tunisia, it will be required to repatriate to Tunisia on a monthly basis a sum equal to the amount due to the Tunisian State and in lieu of local operating expenditure.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts

- Service contract**

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Uganda consists of a combination of income tax, VAT, Stamps Act (for transfer taxes), excise duties and production sharing agreements (PSAs).

However, Uganda is in the process of updating its energy policy, laws and regulations. The Petroleum (Exploration, Development and Production) Act 2013 and Petroleum (Refining, Conversion, Transmission and Midstream Storage) Act 2013 were recently enacted into law and are now operational; further changes to Uganda's legislation are also expected.

The foregoing 2013 Act (which effectively repeals the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act 1985) provides for the following:

1. Regulation of petroleum exploration, development and production activities in Uganda.
2. Establishment of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda to monitor and regulate exploration, development and production activities.
3. Establishment of the National Oil Company to manage the state's financial interests in the petroleum subsector, including; the management of State participation in the sector, marketing of the country's share of petroleum received in kind and managing the business aspects of state participation.
4. Regulation of licensing and participation of commercial entities in petroleum activities.
5. An open, transparent and competitive process of licensing, although the Act also empowers the responsible Government minister to receive direct applications if the following circumstances occur:
 - a. Where no applications are received in response to the invitation for bids.
 - b. The application is in respect of a reservoir within a licensed block that extends into an unlicensed block.
 - c. Uganda's national interest would be promoted.
6. Creation of a conducive environment for the promotion of exploration, development and production in relation to Uganda's petroleum potential.
7. Rules for efficient and safe conduct of petroleum activities – for instance, no flaring of gas is allowed beyond what is necessary for normal operation safety without approval of the minister.

8. Rules for the cessation of petroleum activities and the decommissioning of infrastructure. Contractors will be required to prepare and submit decommissioning plans to the petroleum authority before the expiry of a petroleum production license, detailing how the affected areas will be restored. Contractors will also be required to make regular payments into the decommissioning fund to enable implementation of the decommissioning plan. Payments into the decommissioning fund are recoverable by the contractor as operating costs under the relevant PSA.

The major elements of the fiscal regime applicable to the petroleum industry in Uganda are as follows:

- ▶ Royalties – Percentages are provided in each PSA and depend on barrels of oil per day (BOPD).
- ▶ Bonuses – Most contractors are required to pay a signature bonus.
- ▶ PSA – In addition to issuing licenses to contractors, the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act provides for the entry into a PSA by contractors and the Government. The PSA details specific obligations and requirements of the parties to the agreement. These include work programs and financial obligations; health, safety and environment (HSE) requirements; and other data and reporting obligations. Details of the various PSAs are kept confidential.
- ▶ Income tax rate – 30%. Ascertaining chargeable income from petroleum operations is done on a block-by-block basis. There is no consolidation.
- ▶ Resource rent tax – There is a provision for surface rentals in most PSAs.

B. Fiscal regime

Corporate income tax

A contractor and subcontractor are subject to corporate income tax on their non-exempt worldwide taxable income at a rate of 30%. "Taxable income" amounts to gross income less deductions. The gross income of a contractor is the sum of his cost oil and his share of profit oil and any other proceeds and credits earned from petroleum operations. "Cost oil" is defined as a contractor's entitlement to production as a means of cost recovery under a petroleum agreement.

Limitation on deductions

A contractor is allowed a deduction for expenses incurred in relation to petroleum operations undertaken in a contract area in a year of income, but only against the cost oil derived by the contractor from operations in the same contract area.

Where in a year of income the total allowable deductions exceed the amount of cost oil arising from the operations in a contract area, the excess is carried forward to the next year/s of income until fully deducted, or the petroleum operations in the contract area cease.

The expenditures that may be deducted for the purposes of ascertaining the taxable income of the contractor from petroleum operations are prescribed in the Eighth Schedule to the Income Tax Act.

Decommissioning costs reserve and decommissioning expenditure

Under a decommissioning plan, the amount of decommissioning costs reserve incurred by a contractor in respect of petroleum operations during a fiscal year is deductible in that year. The decommissioning plan must be approved under a petroleum contract.

Decommissioning expenditure in a year of income is not deductible, except to the extent that the total amount in the current and previous years of income exceeds the total amount calculated according to the formula:

$$A + B$$

Where:

A = the total amount deductible under subsection (1) in the current year and previous years of income; and

B = the total amount deductible under this subsection in previous years of income.

If, at the end of decommissioning of a contract area, the total amount deductible exceeds the decommissioning expenditure actually incurred by the contractor, the amount of the excess is included in the contractor's production share for the year of income in which decommissioning ends.

Transfer of interest in a petroleum agreement

If an initial contractor (a transferor contractor) disposes of an interest in a petroleum agreement to another entity or person (transferee contractor) whereby the new party becomes a new contractor in the applicable petroleum agreement, the following rules apply:

- a. Any excess costs under Section 89C(2) attributable to the interest at the date of the disposal are deductible by the transferee contractor, subject to the conditions prescribed in that section.
- b. The transferee contractor continues to depreciate any allowable contract expenditure attributable to the interest at the date of disposal in the same manner and on the same basis as the transferor contractor would if the disposal had not occurred.
- c. The cost base for the purposes of calculating any capital gain or loss on disposal of an interest in a petroleum agreement will be determined in accordance with Part VI of the Act.
- d. In a subsequent disposal of the whole or part of the interest disposed under paragraph (c), the cost base for the purposes of calculating any capital gain or loss on disposal of the interest is the amount of the transferor contractor's capital gain on the prior disposal of the interest if any, less the sum of:
 - i. The excess costs up to the date of the disposal that are deductible by the transferee contractor under paragraph (a).
 - ii. The depreciation of capital expenditure incurred up to the date of disposal that is deductible by the transferee contractor under paragraph (b).
- e. The amount of the transferor contractor's capital loss on disposal of the interest, if any, is treated as income of the transferee contractor on the date of the transfer of the interest.
- f. In the case of a depreciable or intangible asset, the transferee contractor continues to depreciate or amortize the asset in the same manner and on the same basis as the transferor contractor would if the disposal had not occurred.
- g. In the case of any other asset, the transferee contractor's cost base for the asset is the transferor contractor's cost base immediately before the disposal.

Tax accounting principles

A contractor must account on an accrual basis.

Except as may be otherwise agreed in writing between the Government and a contractor, and subject to the provisions of Section 89L of the Income Tax Act, all transactions shall be accounted for at arm's length prices, and a contractor shall disclose all non-arm's length transactions in return for a specified period, if required to do so by the Tax Commissioner.

A contractor shall, for purposes of taxation:

- ▶ Maintain accounts for a contract area in Uganda shillings (UGX) and in United States dollars (US\$), and, in the case of any conflict, the accounts maintained in US\$ shall prevail.

-
- ▶ Use the exchange rates prescribed for conversion of currencies as follows:
 - ▶ The Government or a contractor shall not experience an exchange gain or loss at the expense of, or to the benefit of, the other, and any gain or loss resulting from the exchange of currency will be credited or charged to the accounts.
 - ▶ Amounts received and costs and expenditures made in UGX, US\$ or any other currency shall be converted into UGX or US\$, as the case may be, on the basis of the average of the buying and selling exchange rates between the currencies in question, as published by the Bank of Uganda, prevailing on the last business day of the calendar month preceding the calendar month in which the amounts are received and costs and expenditures paid.
 - ▶ In the event of an increase or decrease, one time or accumulative, of 10% or more in the rates of exchange between UGX, US\$ or the currency in question during any given calendar month, the following rates will be used:
 - ▶ For the period from the first of the calendar month to the day when the increase or decrease is first reached, the average of the official buying and selling exchange rates between US\$, UGX or the currency in question, as issued on the last day of the previous calendar month.
 - ▶ For the period from the day on which the increase or decrease is first reached to the end of the calendar month, the average of the official buying and selling exchange rates between US\$, UGX or the currency in question, as issued on the day on which the increase or decrease is reached.

A contractor shall maintain a record of the exchange rates used in converting UGX, US\$ or any other currency.

Allocation of costs and expenses

Costs and expenses incurred by a contractor in respect of activities that would only qualify in part as contract expenses are allocated to the books, accounts, records and reports maintained for that purpose, in a manner that:

- ▶ Avoids any duplication of costs
- ▶ Fairly and equitably reflects the costs attributable to the petroleum operations carried out
- ▶ Excludes any costs and expenses that would be allocated to activities that do not constitute petroleum operations

Any exploration, development or production expenditure associated with a unit development involving a discovery area that extends into a neighboring country is allocated on the basis of the petroleum reserves attributable to that portion of the discovery area located in Uganda.

Valuation of petroleum

For the purposes of determining a contractor's gross income derived from petroleum operations from a contract area, petroleum is valued and measured in accordance with the provisions of regulations to be presented by the Minister of Finance to Parliament.

Petroleum revenue returns

"Petroleum revenues" means tax charged on income derived by a person from petroleum operations, Government share of production, signature bonus, surface rentals, royalties, proceeds from sale of a Government share of production, and any other duties or fees payable to the Government from contract revenues under the terms of a petroleum agreement.

The procedures relating to furnishing a return of income, cases where a return of income is not required and extension of time to furnish a return of income all apply to a contractor, subject to the following modifications:

-
- ▶ A contractor must furnish a return for a year of income not later than one month after the end of the year.
 - ▶ A contractor must furnish a return not later than seven days after the end of every month in respect of the provisional payments required under collection and recovery provisions of the law (Section 89P(B)).
 - ▶ Not less than 30 days before the beginning of a year of income, a contractor must furnish a return including particulars for each calendar quarter of the year, estimated to the best of the contractor's judgment, and shall furnish updates of the return within seven days after the end of each of the first three calendar quarters in the year.
 - ▶ The Tax Commissioner may require any person, whether taxable or not, to furnish a return on the contractor's behalf or as an agent or trustee of the contractor.
 - ▶ In addition to a return furnished on a contractor's own behalf, the commissioner may require a contractor acting as an operator in a contract area to furnish a return in respect to that area on behalf of all contractors with an interest in the petroleum agreement.
 - ▶ A return must include particulars of Government petroleum revenues and other taxes prescribed by the Tax Commissioner.
 - ▶ A return required for any period must be furnished whether or not Government petroleum revenues or other taxes are payable for the period.
 - ▶ The Tax Commissioner may make provision permitting or requiring a contractor to submit returns electronically.

In addition to a return of income, a contractor must file an annual consolidated petroleum revenue return with the Tax Commissioner at the end of each year of income, not later than 90 days after expiry of the year of income.

A person who fails to furnish a return of income for a tax period within the time required commits an offense and is liable to pay a penal tax equal to 2% per annum of the tax payable for that period.

Application of ITA provisions dealing with assessments, self-assessments and additional assessments

The above provisions apply to a contractor subject to the following modifications:

- ▶ An assessment made by the Tax Commissioner on a contractor may relate to petroleum revenues and not just to chargeable income.
- ▶ To make an assessment on chargeable income, the Commissioner can go as far back as three years instead of the normal five years.
- ▶ The provisions dealing with self-assessment apply to a contractor, notwithstanding that a notice has not been published by the Commissioner in the *Official Gazette*.

Objections and appeals relating to petroleum revenues are determined in accordance with the Income Tax Act.

Collection of other revenues

The provisions of the Income Tax Act relating to collection, recovery and refund of tax apply to contractors with the following modifications:

- a. Petroleum revenues and other taxes charged in any assessment are payable within seven days after the due date for furnishing a return.
 - b. A contractor must, in each calendar quarter, make a provisional payment consisting of:
 - i. In the case of income tax, one-quarter of the contractor's estimated income tax for the year.
 - ii. In the case of petroleum revenues other than income tax, the amounts payable for the quarter under the petroleum agreement.
 - c. Unless otherwise agreed between the Government and a contractor, all payments or refunds of petroleum revenues, other than those payable in kind, and other taxes, shall be made in US\$.
-

- d. A contractor must pay petroleum revenues, other than those payable in kind or payable to the Government's nominee under the terms of a petroleum agreement, and other taxes, to the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA).
- e. Subject to paragraph (f) below, "refunds" applies to refunds of petroleum revenues and other taxes payable to the Government.
- f. Late payment, for refunds of Government petroleum revenues and other taxes payable to the Government, will bear interest for each day on which the sums are overdue during any month, compounded daily at an annual rate equal to the average rates published by Bank of Uganda plus five percentage points.
- g. Where a contractor has paid government petroleum revenues in kind and the amount payable subsequently needs to be adjusted, the adjustment will be made in cash unless otherwise agreed between the Government and a contractor.
- h. A payment of petroleum revenues made by a contractor will be allocated by the Commissioner against amounts payable in the order in which they become due and in such a way as to minimize any interest or penalties payable by a contractor.

Failure to furnish returns

A contractor who fails to furnish a return or any other document within the time prescribed by the Income Tax Act is liable to a fine of not less than US\$50,000 but not exceeding US\$500,000.

A contractor who files false or inaccurate returns commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than US\$50,000 but not exceeding US\$500,000 or its equivalent in UGX. Where fraud is proved, the fine will be not less than US\$500,000 or its equivalent in UGX.

Where a contractor convicted of an offense under the previous paragraph fails to furnish the return or document to which the offense relates within a period specified by the court, or furnishes false or inaccurate returns, that contractor is liable to a fine not exceeding US\$100,000.

Making false or misleading statements

A contractor or person who makes a statement to an officer of the URA that is false or misleading in a material particular, or omits from a statement made to an officer of the URA any matter or thing without which the statement is misleading in a material particular, commits an offense and is liable on conviction:

- ▶ Where the statement or omission was made knowingly or recklessly, to a fine not less than US\$500,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both.
- ▶ In any other case, to a fine not less than US\$50,000 and not exceeding US\$500,000.

A reference here to a "statement made to an officer of the URA" is a reference to a statement made in writing to that officer acting in the performance of his or her duties under the Income Tax Act, and includes a statement made:

- ▶ In a return, objection or other document made, prepared, given, filed or furnished under that Act
- ▶ In information required to be furnished under the Act
- ▶ In a document furnished to an officer of the URA otherwise than pursuant to the Act
- ▶ In answer to a question asked by an officer of the URA
- ▶ To another person with the knowledge or reasonable expectation that the statement would be conveyed to an officer of the URA

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances (Eighth Schedule of the Income Tax Act)

Classification of expenses for income tax purposes

The Income Tax classifies expenses for income tax purposes as:

- ▶ Petroleum capital expenditures – these are contract expenses that qualify as development and production expenditures
- ▶ Petroleum operating expenditures – these are contract expenses that qualify as exploration expenditure and operating expenses.

Petroleum capital expenditures shall be depreciated for income tax purposes and allowed as a deduction in any year of income using the straight-line method over the expected life of the petroleum operations or over a period of six years, whichever is the lesser – except in respect of those expenditures that include the costs of transportation facilities installed up to the delivery point and include, but are not limited to, pipelines, compressors and storage facilities, which are depreciated on a unit-of-production basis.

Deductions shall commence at the later of the year of income in which the capital asset is placed into service or the year of income in which commercial production commences from the contract area.

Definition of allowable contract expenditures

For each year of income, beginning with the year of income in which commercial production commences from the contract area, allowable contract expenditures that shall be deductible for the purpose of the calculation of income tax payable by a contractor shall consist of the sum of:

- ▶ Petroleum operating expenditures
- ▶ Allowable deductions for depreciation of petroleum capital expenditures
- ▶ Any operating loss from previous years of income

The expenditures that may be deducted for the purposes of ascertaining the chargeable income of the contractor from petroleum operations are prescribed in the Eighth Schedule to the ITA.

D. Withholding taxes

The rate of tax applicable to a participation dividend paid by a resident contractor to a nonresident company is 15%.

The rate of withholding tax (WHT) applicable to a nonresident subcontractor deriving income under a Ugandan-sourced services contract, where the services are provided to a contractor and directly related to petroleum operations under a petroleum agreement, is 15%. However, consideration needs to be given to the double taxation agreements that Uganda has with Denmark, India, Italy, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

A contractor is also required to withhold tax at 6% in respect of payments aggregating to UGX1 million or more that are made to a resident subcontractor.

WHT on international payments

An entity is required to withhold 15% from a payment it makes to another entity if the payment is in respect of a dividend, interest, royalty, rent, natural resource payment or management charge from sources in Uganda.

The tax payable by a nonresident person is calculated by applying the 15% rate to the gross amount of the dividend, interest, royalty, natural resource payment or management charge derived by the nonresident person.

Interest paid by a resident company in respect of debentures is exempt from WHT under the Uganda Income Tax Act if the following conditions are satisfied:

- ▶ The debentures were issued by the company outside Uganda for the purpose of raising a loan outside Uganda.
-

- ▶ The debentures were widely issued for the purpose of raising funds for use by the company in a business carried on in Uganda.
- ▶ The interest is paid to a bank or a financial institution of a public character.
- ▶ The interest is paid outside Uganda.

So Uganda WHT relating to the oil and gas industry can be summarized according to the table below.

| | Residents* | Nonresidents |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Dividends | 15% | 15% |
| Interest | 15% | 15% |
| Royalties | 6% | 15% |
| Management and technical fees | 6% | 15% |
| Natural resource payment | 6% | 15% |
| Lease of equipment | 6% | 15% |
| Payment by government entities | 6% | – |
| Professional fees | 6% | 15% |

* *Contractors are designated withholding agents and required to withhold 6% tax on payments for goods or services exceeding in aggregate UGX1 million to any resident person.*

WHT on sales of assets to Uganda residents

A resident person who purchases an asset from a nonresident person shall withhold 10% tax on the gross payment for the asset.

Branch remittance tax

In Uganda, tax is chargeable on every nonresident company that carries on a business in Uganda through a branch that has repatriated income for the relevant year of income. The tax payable by a nonresident company is calculated by applying a 15% WHT to the repatriated income of the branch for the year of income. If a downstream oil and gas entity is a branch of an overseas company, it is affected by this clause, in addition to the other relevant tax clauses.

E. Indirect taxes

VAT

A VAT regime applies in Uganda. All taxable transactions (i.e., those that are not exempt) are subject to VAT. The VAT is applied at rates between 0% and 18%.

Goods and materials imported into Uganda are generally charged for VAT at the rate of 18%. However, the VAT paid at importation is reclaimable if the Uganda entity is VAT registered.

A Uganda resident entity should register for VAT and charge 18% VAT on fees for contract work, but it can recover any tax paid (input VAT) against VAT charged (output VAT). It pays the difference to the tax authorities (or can claim the difference if the input VAT exceeds the output VAT).

A nonresident entity may also be required to apply for registration. A nonresident person who is required to apply for registration but who does not have a fixed place of business in Uganda must appoint a VAT representative in Uganda and, if required to do so by the Tax Commissioner, lodge a security with Commissioner's office. If a nonresident person does not appoint a representative, the Commissioner may appoint a VAT representative for the nonresident person.

The VAT representative of a nonresident person shall:

- ▶ Be a person ordinarily residing in Uganda

-
- ▶ Have the responsibility for doing all things required of the nonresident under the VAT Act
 - ▶ Be jointly and severally liable for the payment of all taxes, fines, penalties and interest imposed on the nonresident under the VAT Act

Common transactions and arrangements that have VAT implications include:

- ▶ Importation of equipment and vessels
- ▶ Sale or lease of equipment in Uganda
- ▶ Sale of products in Uganda
- ▶ Asset disposals

No VAT is charged if products are exported. Thus, no VAT is charged on either crude oil or refined petroleum products that are exported from Uganda because all exports are zero-rated for VAT purposes. To qualify as VAT-free, though, exports must be supported by evidence that the goods have actually left Uganda.

According to Ugandan VAT law, the supply of refined petroleum fuels, including motor spirit, kerosene and gas oil, spirit-type jet fuel and kerosene-type jet fuel, is exempt from VAT but is subject to excise duty. The supply of liquefied petroleum gas is also exempt from VAT. The supply of crude oil is, however, subject to VAT at the standard rate of 18%.

The VAT registration threshold is UGX50 million (equivalent to about US\$25,000). However, entities trading below this threshold can choose to register voluntarily for VAT.

F. Customs duties

On 2 July 2009, the East African Community (EAC) *Gazette* was issued to amend the Fifth Schedule (Exemption Regime) of the EAC Customs Management Act 2004, exempting machinery, spares and inputs (but not including motor vehicles) imported by a licensed company for direct and exclusive use in oil, gas or geothermal exploration and development, upon recommendation by a competent authority of a partner state. This notice came into force on 1 July 2009.

Some imports of heavy machinery are exempt from import duties under other legislation.

Otherwise, the general rate of customs duty applied to the customs value of imported goods varies from 0% to 25%, depending on several factors including the type of commodity and its end use, constituent material and country of origin. Import duties apply to most imports at a maximum rate of 25% if the imports originate outside East Africa.

A WHT of 6% also applies to non-exempt imports, but this WHT may be offset against the final income tax of the importer (i.e., as an advance corporation tax). VAT at 18% is also charged on every import of goods other than an exempt import, and on the supply of imported services other than an exempt service.

G. Export duties

With the exception of hides and skins, there are no duties applied to goods exported from Uganda.

H. Excise duties

Excise duties are applied to some goods manufactured in Uganda, as well as petroleum products, alcohol and tobacco. Excise duties on most refined petroleum products vary between UGX200 and UGX850 per liter. Excise duty is not generally levied on goods bound for export.

I. Stamp duties

Stamp duty is charged on various legal documents and agreements (e.g., share transfers and issues). The rate of duty ranges between 0.5% and 1%, although a fixed amount of UGX5,000 may apply, depending on the subject matter.

Generally, stamp duties are imposed under different heads of duty, the most significant of which are duties on the transfer of property (e.g., land, tenements and certain rights, including rights to extract and goodwill). Plant and equipment may also be subject to duty if conveyed with other dutiable property.

A transfer of shares in a company that predominantly holds land interests may also be subject to stamp duty on the underlying land interests.

The so-called "investment trader facility", which enabled investors, upon execution of insurance performance bonds, to claim input VAT incurred before they start actual production of taxable supplies has been scrapped. Companies can only register for VAT purposes, at the earliest, three months before the expected date of production of taxable supplies and can only claim input VAT incurred in the previous six months.

The Stamps (Amendment) Act 2009 has amended the Schedule to the Stamps Act prescribing the stamp duty rate payable on insurance performance bonds to be a fixed amount of UGX50,000 and not 1% of the bond's value.

Payroll and social taxes

Employment income includes an employee's wages, salary, leave pay, payment in lieu of leave, overtime pay, fees, commission, gratuity, bonus, or the amount of any traveling, entertainment, utilities, cost of living, housing, medical or other allowance. The employer must deduct income tax under the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system on a monthly basis, and it must be remitted to the URA by the 15th day of the month following the month of deduction.

The combined employer and employee contribution by a member to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is 15% of the total employee cash emoluments. Five percent is deducted from the employee's salary, and 10% contributed by the employer. Employees' contributions to the NSSF are not deductible for PAYE purposes. Payments to the NSSF must be made by the 15th day of the month following the month of deduction.

J. Capital gains tax

Refer to "Transfer of interest in a petroleum agreement" in Section B.

K. Financing considerations

Uganda's income tax system contains significant rules regarding the classification of debt and equity instruments and, depending on the level of funding, rules that have an impact on the deductibility of interest. These rules can have a significant impact on decisions made in respect of financing oil and gas projects.

Thin capitalization

Thin capitalization measures apply to the total foreign debt of Ugandan operations of multinational groups (including foreign related-party debt and third-party debt). The measures apply to Ugandan entities that are foreign-controlled and to foreign entities that either invest directly into Uganda or operate a business through a Ugandan branch.

The measures provide for a safe harbor foreign-debt-to-foreign-equity ratio of 1:1. Deductions are denied for interest payments on the portion of the company's debt exceeding the safe harbor ratio.

The debt or equity classification of financial instruments for tax purposes is subject to prescribed tests under the law. These measures focus on economic substance rather than on legal form. If the debt test contained in the new measures is satisfied, a financing arrangement is generally treated as debt, even if the arrangement could satisfy the test for equity.

L. Transactions

Selling shares in a company (consequences for resident and nonresident shareholders)

A share disposal is generally subject to the capital gains test (CGT) regime if the shares are a business asset. If the transaction involves a Uganda-resident company disposing of shares at a gain, tax applies at the rate of 30%. The Income Tax Amendment Act 2010 subjects disposal of shares in a private company to capital gains under general clauses of the Income Tax Act, which also covers petroleum transactions.

Similarly, Uganda's income tax law imposes a tax on a gain derived by either a resident or a nonresident from the disposal of shares in a company whose property principally consists directly or indirectly of an interest or interests in immovable property located in Uganda.

M. Other

Uganda Investment Authority

The Government monitors investment into Uganda through the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA). The Government's policy is generally to encourage foreign investment, and there has been a recent trend toward relaxing controls on the purchase of real estate by investors. Incentives are granted for certain levels of investment.

Domestic production requirements

Exploration entities must comply with other domestic production requirements provided for by other regulatory bodies such as the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, the National Oil Company, and its proposed regulatory bodies that are yet to be set up.

Licensing oil exploration contracts

In Uganda, the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, 2013 provides the framework for regulating oil exploration.

An entity is required to obtain a petroleum exploration license or a petroleum production license, or both, as the context requires. The application for a license is made to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. The Minister may require other information about the controlling power over the company, especially if the company is controlled by individuals resident outside Uganda. The petroleum exploration license is usually granted for four years and is renewable for two years.

If petroleum has been discovered in the contract area, the person who has made a discovery may apply for a petroleum production license over any block or blocks in that area that can be shown to contain a petroleum reservoir or part of a petroleum reservoir.

An application for a production license must be accompanied by a report on the petroleum reservoir, a development plan and any other relevant information. A petroleum production license is first granted for 25 years and is renewable thereafter.

An annual charge is made in respect of the license. The annual charge is payable upon grant of the license and thereafter on the anniversary of the grant, until termination of the license. The holder of a license is also required to pay a royalty in accordance with the license.

The Petroleum (Exploration and Production) (Conduct of Exploration Operations) Regulations S.I.150 -1 sets out guidelines for offshore operations, pollution prevention and control, use of explosives, and health and safety.

The guiding principles in relation to expenditures incurred during exploration and subsequent production are governed by the PSA with the Government, represented by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. An expenditure incurred during exploration is allowed, but only against production of oil. Uganda is in the process of rolling out a national policy, but the discussions have not yet been concluded.

Foreign-exchange controls

There are no foreign-exchange controls in Uganda.

Business presence

Forms of business presence in Uganda include locally incorporated companies, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial considerations, the tax consequences of each business should be taken into account when setting up a business in Uganda. Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

 Service contract

A. At a glance

The fiscal regime that applies to the oil and gas industry in Ukraine consists of a combination of corporate profit tax (CPT) and royalties. In addition, the following apply:

- ▶ Export duty – No duty for oil; and UAH400 per 1,000m³/tonne for natural gas, or 35% of the customs value if it exceeds UAH400 per tonne/1,000m³ (not levied on exports to Energy Community states).
- ▶ Bonuses – Oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) permits are generally purchased at an auction. The starting bidding price of each subsoil use permit is calculated by the State, case by case, based on the amount and value of the deposit's resources. It may not be lower than 2% of the projected total net profit of a well or deposit, excluding capital investments. In certain cases (e.g., prior exploration and evaluation of deposits at the bidder's cost, the production sharing agreement (PSA) regime, gas or oil production by companies where no less than 25% of shares are state-owned), there is no auction; here, the E&P permit price is the starting bidding price and, in case of PSAs, 1% of the starting bidding price calculated as stated above.
- ▶ PSA – Available.
- ▶ CPT rate – 18%.
- ▶ Domestic supply obligations – These apply to: companies with 50% or larger State participation; companies where more than 50% of the shares are contributed to the capital of other State-controlled companies, their branches and subsidiaries; and, in some cases, the parties to so-called "joint activity" with the above entities are subject to domestic supply obligations. These entities must sell oil, gas condensate that they produce as well as liquefied gas at specialized auctions. Natural gas produced by these entities is sold to a special entity authorized by the Cabinet of Ministers.
- ▶ National oil company (NOC) – No mandatory NOC participation rules apply.

Royalties:¹

- ▶ Crude oil – 21% or 45%
- ▶ Condensate – 21% or 45%
- ▶ Natural gas – 11% – 70%

¹ Adjustment coefficients may apply to the royalties rates. Additional amounts of hydrocarbons extracted under investment projects approved by the Cabinet of Ministers that envisage an increase of extraction of mineral resources on depleted fields are taxed at 2% of value of additional amounts of hydrocarbons.

- ▶ Capital allowances – PD²
- ▶ Investment incentives – AC³

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in Ukraine to the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of CPT, royalties, excise tax, export and import duty, VAT and other taxes generally applicable to Ukrainian taxpayers.

Corporate profit tax

Ukrainian resident companies are subject to CPT on their worldwide profit at a rate of 18%. The same rate applies to profit from oil and gas activities.

Starting 2015, Ukrainian corporate taxation has been overhauled. CPT accounting was brought closer to financial accounting. From 2015 there are no special tax accounting rules for oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) expenses (see Section C for more details). There are certain practical issues related to the transition to the new tax rules.

Ring-fencing

Ukraine does not generally apply ring-fencing in determining a company's CPT liability in relation to oil and gas activities. Profit from one project can be offset against losses from another project held by the same Ukrainian legal entity; and, similarly, profit and losses from upstream activities can be offset against downstream activities undertaken by the same Ukrainian entity. Branches of foreign companies are generally taxed as separate entities for CPT purposes.

However, PSAs are ring-fenced for tax purposes. There is some uncertainty with respect to the ring-fencing of joint activity agreements.

Ukraine does not have tax consolidation or grouping rules for different legal entities.

CPT basis

CPT basis is defined as pre-tax financial result calculated in accordance with Ukrainian GAAP/IFRS, subject to several tax adjustments (e.g., in relation to deductions of interest, royalties, depreciation, transfer pricing).

The rules regarding recognition of oil and gas E&P expenses are not always clear and in some cases contradictory. Depending on the types of cost, they could be capitalized and recognized for tax purposes via depreciation, treated as a tax-deductible cost of sales when oil or gas is sold, or treated as a tax-deductible cost if the project is liquidated (see below).

Under Ukrainian GAAP, oil and gas exploration costs are generally capitalized as an intangible asset in financial accounting and amortized after commercial viability of the project is determined. There is currently practical uncertainty about whether this type of asset can qualify as an intangible asset for tax purposes.

Oil and gas exploration costs may also be deductible if:

- ▶ Incurred prior to obtaining exploration license for a block
- ▶ Further exploration of a block is not foreseen
- ▶ Production of determined reserves is not technically possible and/or economically viable
- ▶ The term of a license has expired and will not be extended

Expenses for drilling dry holes are deductible. Depreciable costs are discussed in Section C below.

2 PD: partial deductibility – starting 2015, capital expenses may be recognized as deductible or depreciable in the same manner as in financial accounting. However, there is continuing uncertainty over treatment of certain capital expenses.

3 AC: decreasing adjusting coefficients to royalties are applicable to qualifying entities. Tax treatment of expenses for pilot production/further exploration at production stage is unclear.

Transfer pricing

Ukrainian transfer pricing rules have been changed from 1 January 2015. Currently, TP rules apply for CPT purposes. It is not clear whether and how transfer pricing rules will apply to VAT.

“Controlled transactions” include (i) commercial transactions with nonresident related parties, (ii) commercial transactions for sale of goods through nonresident commissioners, and (iii) commercial transactions with nonresidents registered in low-tax or non-transparent jurisdictions from the list approved by the government. Transactions between related parties that involve intermediaries that are i) unrelated to such parties, and ii) do not: undertake significant functions, use significant assets, assume significant risk, are considered as controlled for transfer pricing purposes.

The transaction is deemed to be controlled if the total annual income of a taxpayer and/or its related parties exceeds UAH20 million (approximately US\$782k) and total annual volume of group of transactions between the taxpayer and/or its related parties and a counterparty exceeds UAH1 million (approximately US\$ 40k) or 3% of annual pre-tax income of such taxpayer.

Five methods, including compared uncontrolled price, resale minus, cost plus, transactional net margin and profit split, are used for determining the arm's-length profit derived from controlled transactions.

There is an obligation to file transfer pricing reporting and to prepare transfer pricing documentation. Transfer pricing report must be filed by 1 May of the year following the reporting year.

Production royalties

Rent payments for the use of subsoil resources for production of minerals (“royalties”) are payable by all subsoil users producing mineral resources in Ukraine (including during the exploration stage). Royalties on hydrocarbons are calculated as a percentage of the value of produced hydrocarbons.

The value of produced gas is determined as the maximum price of natural gas sold to industrial consumers set by the National Committee that implements State Regulations in Energy Sector (NERC).⁴

The value of produced oil and condensate is determined based on the average price of one barrel of Urals oil per metric ton as determined by an international reporting agency (Urals Mediterranean and Urals Rotterdam quotations). It is converted into Ukrainian *hryvnia* (UAH) as of the first day of the month following the reporting quarter.

The Ministry of Economy must publish the sales price of hydrocarbons determined as described above on its website by the 10th day of the month following the reporting quarter.

4 *The value of natural gas sold to the special entity authorized by the Cabinet of Ministers to accumulate natural gas for the needs of consumers is a purchase price determined by NERC.*

| Royalties ⁵ | |
|---|----------------------|
| Mineral resources | Rates, % of value |
| Oil | |
| Extracted from fields located entirely or partly up to 5,000 meter depth | 45% |
| Extracted from fields located entirely below 5,000 meter depth | 21% |
| Condensate | |
| Extracted from fields located entirely or partly up to 5,000 meter depth | 45%* |
| Extracted from fields located entirely below 5,000 meter depth | 21%* |
| Natural gas (any type) | |
| Extracted from fields located entirely or partly up to 5,000 meter depth | 55% |
| Extracted from fields located entirely below 5,000 meter depth | 28% |
| Extracted from offshore fields on the continental shelf or in the exclusive (sea) economic zone | 11% |
| Extracted from fields located entirely or partly up to 5,000 meter depth and sold to the special entity authorized by the Cabinet of Ministers to accumulate natural gas for domestic consumers | 70% ⁶ |
| Extracted from fields located entirely below 5,000 meter depth and sold to the special entity authorized by the Cabinet of Ministers to accumulate natural gas for domestic consumers | 14% |
| Extracted under the joint activity agreements ("JAA") | 70% |

Royalties are subject to adjusting coefficients as follows:

| Qualifying criteria ⁷ | Adjusting coefficient |
|---|-----------------------|
| Extraction of off-balance-sheet gas | 0.96 |
| Extraction of off-balance-sheet oil and condensate | 0.95 |
| Extraction of mineral resources from subsidized deposits | 0.01 |
| Extraction of natural gas from fields approved by the State expert evaluation on the basis of geological explorations carried out at the taxpayer's expense | 0.97 |
| Extraction of oil and condensate from fields approved by the state expert evaluation on the basis of geological explorations carried out at the taxpayer's expense | 0.96 |
| Extraction of gas from wells registered in the State Register of Wells after 1 August 2014 within two years after wells' registration (coefficient applies starting March 2015) | 0.55 |

5 Additional amounts of hydrocarbons extracted under investment projects approved by the Cabinet of Ministers that envisage an increase in extraction of mineral resources on depleted fields are taxed at 2% of value of additional amounts of hydrocarbons (conditions apply).

6 The rate of 70% applies starting April 2015

7 More adjusting coefficients apply to the production of gas, which is sold to the special entity authorized by the Cabinet of Ministers to accumulate natural gas for the needs of consumers. Also, reductions of taxable volume of gas apply.

Recirculation gas is exempt from royalties (although conditions apply).

Tax liabilities on the extraction of each type of mineral resource from one deposit during one reporting period are calculated according to the following formula:

$$T_i = V_{mr} \times P_{mr} \times S_r \times A_c$$

where T_i represents tax liabilities; V_{mr} stands for the amount of sales production – produced mineral resources within one reporting period (in units of weight or volume); P_{mr} stands for the value of one unit of sales production; S_r is the standard rate for royalties stipulated for oil and gas extraction activities, expressed as a percentage; and A_c is the adjusting coefficient, where applicable.

Royalties are deductible for CPT purposes.

Non-production royalties

Taxpayers that use subsoil to store oil, oil products and gas pay royalties for non-production subsoil use. For gas, the tax is calculated by applying the UAH rate to the active volume of gas that is stored in the reservoir bed. For oil, the tax is calculated by applying the UAH rate to the storage area.

| Types of subsoil use | Units of measurement | Rates/per year, UAH |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Use of reservoir beds for storage of natural gas and gaseous products | 1,000m ³ of active gas volume | 0.3 |
| Use of natural or artificial mines for storage of oil and liquid oil products | m ³ | |

Production sharing agreements

There has been no extensive use of PSAs in Ukraine. The first PSA with a nonresident investor was concluded in 2007. As of 1 January 2015, three more PSAs have been signed.

Under a PSA, the State retains the title to the subsoil resources and gives the investor the right to conduct E&P of subsoil resources. Part of the oil or gas produced under the PSA is used to recover the investor's expenses (cost recovery production), and the remaining part is distributed between the State and the investor as profit production. Prior to production distribution, all extracted hydrocarbons belong to the State.

Throughout the PSA duration, the investor is subject to special tax treatment under the Tax Code. PSAs are ring-fenced for tax purposes. If the investor is engaged in business activities outside of the PSA, they are taxable under the general tax rules.

Importantly, the State guarantees that the tax rules effective as of the date of signing the PSA will apply throughout its term, unless a tax is abolished or its rate decreases. In the latter cases, the new tax rules apply as they become effective. Local content rules apply to PSAs. A PSA may contain domestic supply obligations.

PSA tax registration and compliance

Both local and nonresident investors may enter into a PSA with the State (and a state-owned company if provided for under the tender conditions). Nonresidents entering into a PSA should register a representative office in Ukraine. The investor must also register the PSA as a taxpayer. A separate VAT registration is available.

If several investors participate in a PSA, they should appoint an operator for operational matters and may also appoint it responsible for tax registration, for keeping financial and tax accounting under the PSA and for accrual and discharging the taxes (except for VAT that could be administered either by operator or investors).

Taxes payable under the PSA regime

There is an exhaustive list of taxes the investor must pay under a PSA, namely:

- ▶ CPT
- ▶ VAT
- ▶ Royalties.

The investor is also obliged to administer Ukrainian payroll taxes (personal income tax (PIT) and unified social tax) and pay state duties or fees for soliciting a service or an action from Government authorities or agencies. The Tax Code is ambiguous as to whether a PSA investor must pay excise tax upon the importation of goods for PSA purposes.

Payment of other taxes and duties is substituted by production sharing between the State and the investor.

The Tax Code provides for a list of events that are tax-neutral for PSA purposes, which includes (among others):

- ▶ Distribution of profit and cost recovery production or its monetary equivalent between the investor and the State; distribution of the same by the operator among investors.
- ▶ Transfer of the State's share of profit production to the operator for sale.
- ▶ Sale of both profit production, including the State's share, and cost recovery production (except for VAT).
- ▶ Free-of-charge use of various types of property by an investor, including money, geological and other information, data, technologies and rights granted to the investor under the law.
- ▶ Transfer of the PSA-related property from the investor to the State upon expiration of the PSA or after full compensation of the property by cost recovery production; use of such property by the investor and its return to the state.
- ▶ Transfer of property between the parties to the PSA and the operator when required for PSA execution.
- ▶ Transfer of money/property by a foreign investor to its permanent establishment (PE) in Ukraine for PSA purposes.
- ▶ Free-of-charge provision of goods, works, services or money to an investor or by an investor, including provision of fringe benefits to employees, payment of bonuses and performance of social obligations.
- ▶ Relinquishment of subsoil field or its part.
- ▶ Use of production for PSA purposes, including flaring, as well as loss of production as a result of PSA activities.

Tax exemptions applicable to investors under a PSA do not apply to their contractors or subcontractors (except for some VAT and import/export tax incentives).

PSA taxes are paid according to special rules as outlined below.

CPT under the PSA regime

Under a PSA, CPT is payable quarterly and in cash only.

The tax basis for CPT purposes is the investor's taxable profit calculated under the following special rules:

- ▶ Taxable profit is calculated based on the value of the investor's share of profit production, less the unified social tax paid and less the investor's other expenses (including costs of works accumulated prior to the first profit production) under the PSA, provided these expenses are not subject to compensation by the cost recovery production.
 - ▶ Other income from activities under the PSA is explicitly excluded from the taxable object for CPT purposes.
 - ▶ The PSA parties are allowed to establish special rules for recognition of deductible expenses in the PSA. The PSA may envisage indexation of investor's other expenses incurred prior to the first sharing of production.
-

-
- ▶ Cost recovery production may not exceed 70% of the total production under PSA within a calendar quarter. The list of expenses compensated by cost recovery production is not explicitly determined by the law; however, the cost of fixed assets, field exploration, development and production are includable as expenses that should be compensated by the cost recovery production, when incurred. The law allows cost recovery of pre-effective costs borne after the official announcement of the results of a PSA bid
 - ▶ The cost of fixed assets not covered by the cost recovery production is depreciable under general rules.
 - ▶ For the investor's representative office, funds and property provided by the head office to finance the activities under the PSA are not taxable.
 - ▶ If the tax basis is negative, carryforward of losses is allowed throughout the PSA duration.

Withholding tax under the PSA regime

Withholding tax (WHT) does not apply to a nonresident investor's income derived under a PSA, when remitted by its PE in Ukraine. This WHT exemption does not cover the investor's subsidiaries in Ukraine that do not qualify as investors under the PSA. Furthermore, WHT exemption does not apply to other types of Ukraine-sourced income that may be payable – i.e., to any income derived outside of the PSA.

VAT and import/export taxation under the PSA regime

The investor's/operator's sale of production derived from the PSA and of the State's share of profit production transferred to the PSA operator for sale is subject to VAT under general rules.

Importantly, the investor's VAT registration under the PSA is not subject to cancellation, regardless of the absence of supplies or purchases subject to VAT during the previous 12 calendar months.

The operator under a multiparty PSA is entitled to recognize as its VAT credit input VAT paid (accrued) by any investor or operator upon the purchase or production of goods, services or fixed assets under the PSA in accordance with approved programs and plans. The investor (operator) is entitled to an automatic VAT refund. The procedure and timeframes for the VAT refund are established in the PSA.

There are several export and import tax exemptions:

- ▶ Importation of goods into the customs territory of Ukraine for PSA purposes is not subject to import taxes (except for excise tax)
- ▶ Importation of hydrocarbon raw materials, oil or gas produced under the PSA in the exclusive economic zone of Ukraine is not subject to import taxes (including VAT)
- ▶ Exportation of production acquired by the investor under the PSA is not subject to export taxes except for VAT, which is levied at a zero rate
- ▶ Exportation by the investor of goods and other tangible assets for the performance of the PSA is not subject to export taxes except for VAT, which is levied at a zero rate (conditions apply)
- ▶ Services provided by a nonresident in the customs territory of Ukraine to the investor for the PSA purposes are not subject to VAT

The above exemptions (except for export exemption) also apply to contractors providing goods and services for PSA purposes under contracts with the investor (conditions apply). Should the investor or contractor use the goods or services for any purpose other than the designated PSA purposes as a result of their own fault, the investor or contractor, as the case may be, will have to pay all previously saved import or export taxes.

Royalties payable under the PSA regime

The rates, payment and calculation procedure as well as reporting terms of royalties are established in the PSA. However, the royalties rate may not be lower than that prescribed by the Tax Code as of the date of the PSA.

Payroll taxes under the PSA regime

Payroll taxes, namely PIT and the unified social tax, apply under the general rules of taxation. The applicability of the stability clause to payroll taxes is uncertain.

Other taxes and contributions under the PSA regime

Under PSA law and the Tax Code, the production share of the State replaces other State and local taxes.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil and unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances**Productive wells**

Prior to 2015, productive oil and gas well construction costs were depreciable over 11 years. The annual depreciation rate depended on the year of oil and gas well operation and ranged from 3% to 18% of a well's historic value. Starting 1 January 2015, special rules for accounting and depreciation of productive oil and gas wells have been abolished. Currently oil and gas wells are depreciable with a minimum useful life of 15 years. Transition to new rules created various uncertainties in the treatment of existing wells.

Fixed assets acquisition and construction costs

The cost of other fixed assets is depreciable under general rules (16 groups for tangibles, with minimum depreciation terms of two to 20 years).

Several depreciation methods are available (straight-line, declining-balance, double-declining balance depreciation, and sum-of-the-years-digits).

Costs treated as intangibles

Certain costs (such as special license costs and geological information costs) may be treated as intangible costs and are amortized during the legally established term of use. If the title document does not provide for the term of use, the asset is amortized over two to 10 years, at the discretion of the taxpayer. General depreciation methods outlined above are applicable.

Successful exploration costs constitute a special type of intangibles and are amortized when production starts. As mentioned above, there is currently some uncertainty with respect to the treatment of amortization of this type of intangible asset for tax purposes.

Special allowances

There is no capital uplift or credit in Ukraine.

D. Incentives

Please refer to Sections B and H for a discussion about tax incentives – see, among others, VAT incentives for coal bed methane producers, and adjusting coefficients to royalties.

E. Withholding taxes

Interest, dividends, royalties, income from joint activity agreements and certain other kinds of Ukrainian-sourced income received by a nonresident are subject to WHT at the rate of 15%. The WHT rate on freight (or any other similar payment for carriage of goods by maritime, air, automobile or railway transport) is 6%. The tax rate on payments for advertising services provided by nonresidents is 20%, payable at the expense of the Ukrainian service recipient. There are also several WHT rates on payments for different insurance services. WHT rates can in some cases be reduced or eliminated by virtue of a double tax treaty.

Technical services

Technical services provided by nonresident contractors should not be subject to Ukrainian WHT, unless they fall within the definition of engineering.

If the services give rise to a PE, Ukrainian CPT will apply to nonresident's profit under the general rules.

Branch remittance tax

There is no branch remittance tax in Ukraine. However, the law could be interpreted in a way that WHT at the general rate of 15% should apply to repatriation of Ukrainian profit of the branch to its nonresident head office.

The possibility of eliminating this tax based on a double tax treaty is uncertain.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

If taxpayer's debt to a nonresident related party exceeds taxpayer's equity by at least 3.5 times (10 times for financial and leasing companies), the interest payable by such taxpayer may be deductible in an amount up to 50% of the sum of its financial result before taxation, financial expenses and depreciation according to financial accounting in the reporting year.

The remaining interest, annually reduced by 5%, may be carried forward indefinitely, subject to the same limitation.

G. Transactions

Subsoil use permit transfers

Under Ukrainian law, permits for subsoil use issued by the state to investors may not be granted, sold or otherwise transferred to any other legal entity or individual. The rights under the permit may not be contributed into charter capitals of joint ventures or into a joint activity. Thus, a sale of assets of a company does not result in the transfer of a permit for subsoil use.

However, subsidiary regulations allow changing the name of a permit holder as a result of a spin-off, resulting in a mere technical transfer of the special permit (although conditions apply).

Farm-in and farm-out

Ukrainian law does not recognize farm-ins and farm-outs because the permits issued by the State cannot be traded, and parts of that permit cannot be the object of any business transaction.

Historically, the most practicable way of benefiting from an existing permit held by a Ukrainian company was to enter into a "joint activity" with the permit-holding company. However, over recent years the Ukrainian tax authorities have been threatening to invalidate joint activity agreements to which Ukrainian permit-holding companies are a party. We are not aware of cases when joint activity agreements have actually been invalidated, yet this risk should be taken into account when choosing the operating option.

A quasi farm-in may be executed via a sale of shares of the permit holder to an interested party.

Selling shares in a company

Nonresident companies that dispose of shares in a Ukrainian company are subject to Ukrainian WHT at 15% on capital gains. If the cost of shares in the hands of nonresidents is not properly confirmed, WHT could potentially apply to the entire sale proceeds. The resident buyer acts as a tax agent. WHT could be eliminated by virtue of a double tax treaty.

There is no mechanism for administering WHT where the transaction is carried out between two nonresidents with settlements outside Ukraine if no Ukrainian intermediary is involved.

Resident companies that dispose of shares in Ukrainian companies are subject to Ukrainian CPT on the margin between the share sale price and share acquisition expenses. The tax rate is 18%.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

Starting 2015, a new electronic VAT administration system has been introduced in Ukraine.

Domestic trading in oil and gas is subject to VAT at 20%.

Importation of natural gas into the customs territory of Ukraine by state-owned company NAK Naftogaz is tax-exempt. Oil importation is subject to VAT at the general rate. The importer is entitled to credit input VAT for VAT paid on imports, subject to certain conditions. Exportation of oil and gas is subject to 0% VAT.

To recover VAT input incurred in connection with oil and gas E&P, an oil or gas exploration company has to be registered as a VAT payer in Ukraine. The company will be subject to mandatory VAT registration if the amount of its taxable supplies exceeds UAH1 million (approximately US\$63.3k). The company may voluntarily register as a VAT payer.

However, during the start-up stage, the oil or gas exploration company will not be entitled to a cash refund of accumulated VAT receivable: VAT input incurred in connection with oil and gas E&P can be accumulated to be offset against future VAT liabilities only. This is because Ukrainian law limits the right to receive a VAT refund for newly established companies (12 months) and companies whose supplies subject to VAT are lower than the claimed VAT refund (unless VAT input arises as a result of purchase or construction of fixed assets).

Furthermore, the oil or gas exploration company should monitor its supplies subject to VAT to maintain its VAT registration. The VAT registration can be cancelled if the taxpayer's tax return does not show transactions subject to VAT during 12 calendar months (but this does not apply to parties contracted within PSAs).

Supplies of natural gas to domestic consumers, to state-funded institutions that are not registered as VAT payers and to housing companies are accounted for VAT purposes on a cash basis.

Incentives

Materials and equipment for production of alternative fuels are exempt from VAT and customs duties upon importation into Ukraine, which applies to coal bed methane as one of the alternative fuel sources.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issues the list of items that could be exempt under this rule. In addition, exemptions apply only if the importer uses these materials and equipment for its own production purposes and no identical material or equipment with similar characteristics is produced in Ukraine.

There are also a few exemptions related to the importation of equipment that operates on alternative fuels (including coal bed methane).

Import duties

Import duties on natural gas, gas condensate, and crude oil are zero-rated.

However, refined products are subject to import customs duties at varying rates between 0% and 10% of their customs value.

Export duties

Ukraine imposes the export customs duties on gas exported to countries other than the members of Energy Community that are shown in the table below.

| Export specification | Rate |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Natural gas in a gaseous state | 35% of the customs value, but not less than UAH400 per 1,000m ³ |
| Liquefied natural gas | 35% of the customs value, but not less than UAH400 per tonne |

Excise tax

In Ukraine, crude oil and gas are not subject to excise tax.

However, importation or first sale of locally manufactured liquefied natural gas are excisable at the rate of €6 per 1,000 kilograms, whereas importation or first sale of locally manufactured liquefied propane/propane-butane and other gases are excisable at the rate €50 per 1,000 kilograms.

Importation and the first sale of locally manufactured refined oil products are also excisable, at rates depending on the type of product and varying from €30 to €202 per 1,000 kilograms. Excise tax exemptions apply.

Retail sale of excisable goods is subject to 5% tax.

Stamp duties

Stamp duty is levied by notaries and is generally capped at insignificant amounts, except when real estate is sold.

Registration fees

There are no significant registration fees.

I. Other significant taxes

Unified social tax

Unified social tax is levied on employees' salaries and administered by employers. The rate of employer contribution varies from 36.76% to 49.70% depending on the class of professional risk at work. For certain qualifying companies, the rate of employer contribution may be decreased by 60% (i.e., to 14.7% - 19.88%). The rate of employee contribution, which is withheld from salary, is 3.6%.

The tax basis for unified social tax is capped at 17 subsistence minimums for working persons, which from 1 January 2015 amount to UAH20,706 (approximately US\$1,310).

Personal income tax and military levy

The standard PIT rate is 15% for income in the form of salary, other incentive and compensation payments, or other payments and rewards. An increased rate of 20% applies for incomes of at least 10 times the minimum salary (i.e., currently UAH12,180) – but the higher PIT rate applies only to the excess amount. Different rates apply in certain instances (e.g., dividends paid by CPT payers - 5%; other dividends and passive income - 20%). The employer is obliged to withhold PIT from employees' payroll and remit it to the Treasury.

The Tax Code establishes social PIT benefits that are applicable to certain categories of employees (e.g., for parents with many children, disabled people, students). Ukrainian tax residents are eligible for a tax credit if they incur certain kinds of expense during a year (e.g., expenses on mortgages, education or medical treatment). A temporary, 1.5% military levy applies to the individual's income calculated in the same manner as for the PIT purposes.

Environmental tax

Ukrainian legal-entity PEs of nonresidents that perform oil and gas production activities in the customs territory of Ukraine, its continental shelf or its exclusive (sea) economic zone are subject to environmental tax if these activities cause:

- ▶ Pollution of air from stationary sources
- ▶ Pollution of water
- ▶ Waste disposal in designated places (except for recycling).

The rates vary significantly depending on the amount, nature of stationary pollutants, concentration of pollutants, object of pollution and level of hazard, etc. In 2015, tax rates for pollution of air or water as well as waste disposal, vary from UAH0.26 to UAH1,977,993 per tonne of pollutant.

Property tax

Starting 2015, a property tax is levied in the form of land tax, real estate tax (other than a land plot) and transportation tax.

Oil- and gas-producing companies are subject to property tax under general taxation rules.

Land tax rates are variable depending on the land plot, its location and its characteristics. Real estate tax is levied at up to 2% of the minimum monthly wage as of 1 January of the current year (approximately UAH25) per 1 square meter of residential and non-residential real estate. Industrial facilities and warehouse facilities are not subject to property tax. Transportation tax is payable on the vehicles used for less than five years with cylinder capacity over 3,000 cubic m.

Royalties for special water use

Entities using water under the regime of "special water use" pay royalties for their special use of water (which includes both intake and discharge). Special use of water can be based either on a special water use permit or on an agreement. The rate of levy depends on the volume of consumed water, the water source, the region and the purpose of special water use. The levy does not apply to seawater.

End consumer levy: surcharge to natural gas price

Until 1 January 2016, Ukrainian companies and their branches selling natural gas in Ukraine to consumers or using produced or imported natural gas as fuel or raw material pay the end-user levy of 2% or 4% of the price of the natural gas, depending on the consumer.

Transportation royalty

Companies that manage main pipelines and provide services for transporting natural gas, oil and oil products via pipelines through Ukraine pay a royalty for such transportation. This tax is mainly paid by national pipeline operators (UkrTransNafta and NAK Naftogaz). Royalties for transportation are calculated as a fixed rate in US\$ per unit. For oil and oil products, the tax basis is the actual amount of oil transferred through the territory of Ukraine via pipelines. For natural gas, the tax basis is determined by multiplying the agreed distance of a gas transportation route by the actual amount of natural gas transported via this route.

| Item | Rate, UAH* |
|---|---|
| Transit pipeline transportation of natural gas | US\$0,21/1,000m ³ of gas per 100km |
| Transit pipeline transportation of oil and oil products** | US\$0,56/tonne |

* Adjusting coefficients apply to royalties for oil and oil product transportation if the pipeline transportation tariff is changed by the government.

J. Other

Foreign-exchange controls

The official exchange rate of the *hryvnia* against the US dollar can be found on the website of the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU), available at www.bank.gov.ua.

The commercial exchange rate may differ from the official one. A wide variety of controls are imposed with respect to the use, circulation and transfer of foreign currency within Ukraine and abroad. These controls, which affect almost all international business transactions, include the following:

- ▶ As a general rule, transactions between Ukrainian residents and cash settlements within Ukraine may not be carried out in foreign currency. Cross-border settlements in hryvnia have recently been allowed, but for a limited list of cases only.
- ▶ All statutory accounting and tax reporting, as well as tax payments, must be in Ukrainian currency.
- ▶ Wages and salaries paid to Ukrainian citizens must be in Ukrainian currency
- ▶ Ukrainian companies must obtain an individual license (permission) from the NBU to engage in certain business transactions, including the opening of bank accounts and investing abroad.
- ▶ Ukrainian exporters must repatriate their export proceeds within 180 days of export. Similarly, Ukrainian importers must import goods within 180 days from the moment when the payment for such goods was made. Failure to comply results in penalties. The above term is currently shortened to 90 days.
- ▶ Mandatory sale of 75% of export proceeds has been introduced as a temporary measure.
- ▶ Payments for services rendered by nonresidents, as well as cross-border lease and royalty payments, are subject to price evaluation review if the total amount of the contract (or the total annual amount payable under several contracts for similar services between the same parties) exceeds €25,000 (effective March 2015, or its equivalent in another foreign currency). The governmental information, analysis and expert center in the foreign trade sphere for monitoring foreign commodities markets (SC Derzhzovnishinform, www.dzi.gov.ua) conducts the price evaluation reviews. Ukrainian currency may be used to purchase foreign currency.

Special rules apply to PSAs.

Gas to liquids

There is no special regime for gas-to-liquids conversion. Ukraine only imposes excise tax and export duties on liquefied gas. Refer to Section H for more detailed information.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
-

A. At a glance

The tax regime applied in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for oil and gas enterprises can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ Concessions:
 - ▶ Royalties
 - ▶ Profit-based special taxes
 - ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – see Section B for details
 - ▶ Capital gains tax (CGT) rate – see Section B for details
 - ▶ Branch tax rate – Not levied by the federal UAE Government nor the individual Emirates
 - ▶ Withholding tax – Not levied by the federal UAE Government nor the individual Emirates.
-

B. Taxes on corporate income

Although there is currently no federal UAE taxation, each of the individual Emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Quwain, Ras al Khaimah and Fujairah) has issued corporate tax decrees that theoretically apply to all businesses established in the UAE. However, in practice, these laws have not been uniformly applied. Taxes are currently imposed at the Emirate level on companies involved in the upstream sector in the UAE (actual production of oil and gas in the UAE) in accordance with specific (but confidential) concession agreements.

Generally, companies holding concession agreements also pay royalties on production. Tax rates are agreed on a case-by-case basis. Costs and expenses relating to oil and gas exploration, development and production, and business losses are generally deductible for tax purposes.

Note that this is merely how the practice has evolved in the UAE. There is no general exemption in the law. Anyone investing in the UAE should be aware of the risk that the law may be more generally applied in the future and of the remote risk that it may be applied retroactively.

The income tax decrees that have been enacted in each Emirate provide for tax to be imposed on the taxable income of all corporate bodies, wherever incorporated, and their branches that carry on trade or business, at any time during the taxable year, through a permanent establishment in the relevant Emirate. Corporate bodies are taxed if they carry on trade or business directly in the Emirate or indirectly through the agency of another body corporate.

Tax incentives

Some of the Emirates have free zones that cater for the oil and gas sector (non-production), which offer tax and business incentives. The incentives usually include tax exemptions at the Emirate level or a 0% tax rate for a guaranteed period, the possibility of 100% foreign ownership, absence of customs duty within the free zone and a "one-stop shop" for administrative services. The free zones across the Emirates include, but are not limited to, Masdar City (in Abu Dhabi), the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC), the Dubai Airport Free Zone (DAFZ), Dubai World Central (DWC) Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai Internet City (DIC), Dubai Media City (DMC), Dubai Studio City (DSC) and Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ). Approximately 30 free zones are located in the Emirate of Dubai alone.

Unconventional oil and gas

No unconventional oil and gas fields are currently developed in the UAE.

C. VAT

The introduction of a VAT regime in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has been considered for a number of years. However, actual implementation has not yet occurred. It is understood that a proposed VAT regime will reinforce the GCC as a single market and that a unified VAT law set at the GCC level will provide a framework under which the individual GCC Member States will implement and enforce their own domestic law within agreed derogation.

As there is currently no definite timetable for the introduction of VAT, businesses are not yet required to take any action in this respect. However, businesses should be mindful of the potential introduction in their dealings spanning the medium to long term. For example, if they are procuring a new accounting system, they should ensure their chosen package can be easily adapted to incorporate VAT accounting and reporting, and where they are entering new contracts they should ensure they address what will happen in the event that VAT is introduced part way through the life of the contract (for example, whether figures are VAT inclusive or exclusive).

D. Customs duty

The UAE is a member of the GCC Customs Union which is based on the principle of a single entry point upon which customs duty on foreign imported goods is collected, and therefore, goods moving between the GCC Member States should not be subject to customs duty. Goods considered to be of GCC origin for customs duty purposes are treated as “national products” and should also not be subject to customs duty when moved within the GCC Member States.

Under the GCC Customs Law, most foreign imports are subject to customs duty of 5% of the cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value of imported goods. There is no customs duty on the export of either foreign or national goods from the GCC Customs Union.

UAE free zones are generally seen as foreign territories for customs duty purposes (i.e., are not considered within the scope of the GCC Customs Union). Therefore, goods manufactured within a UAE free zone are not considered to be GCC national products for GCC customs duty purposes. Goods should not incur customs duty on import into a free zone, and there is no export duty applied on goods removed from a free zone. However, if goods leave a free zone for a destination within the GCC Member States, customs duty will be levied on the import at the first point of entry into the GCC Customs Union.

Concession Agreements may set out a general exemption from customs duty for goods imported into the UAE for petroleum operations.

E. Foreign-exchange controls

Neither the federal Government of the UAE nor the individual Emirates impose foreign-exchange controls.

F. Tax treaties

The UAE has more than 60 tax treaties currently in force, including treaties with Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia (limited), Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Vietnam and Yemen.

In addition, treaties with the following jurisdictions are in various stages of negotiation, renegotiation, signature, ratification, translation or entry into force: Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Brunei, Croatia, Ecuador, Fiji, Greece, Guinea, Hong Kong, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malawi, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, Palestine, Peru, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Uruguay and Uzbekistan.

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Tax regime applied to this country

Concession

Royalties

Profit-based special taxes

Corporate income tax

Production sharing contracts

Service contract

Where relevant, information reflects measures included in Finance Act 2015.

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies in the United Kingdom to the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of corporation tax, supplementary charge and petroleum revenue tax.

- ▶ Corporation tax rate – 30% ring-fence (21% non-ring fence¹) – Profits from oil and gas exploration and production are subject to the ring-fence rate
- ▶ Supplementary charge rate – 32% (reducing to 20% from 1 January 2015)
- ▶ Petroleum revenue tax rate – 50% (for fields that received development consent before 16 March 1993)²
- ▶ Capital allowances – D, E³
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, RD⁴

B. Fiscal regime

Corporation tax

UK tax-resident companies are subject to corporation tax on their worldwide profits, including chargeable gains, with credit for any creditable foreign taxes.

1 Reducing to 20% on 1 April 2015.

2 Reducing to 35% on 1 January 2016.

3 D: accelerated depreciation; E: immediate write-off for exploration costs.

4 L: losses can be carried forward indefinitely; RD: R&D incentive.

However, exemptions apply to certain dividends, profits or losses from overseas branches and gains or losses on disposals of substantial shareholdings. The taxable profits of a UK company are based on its accounting profits as adjusted for a number of statutory provisions.

Non-UK tax-resident companies are subject to corporation tax only if they carry on a trade in the UK through a permanent establishment (PE). In general, the UK for these purposes includes UK land and territorial waters only. However, the taxing jurisdiction of the UK is extended to include income from exploration or exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil of the UK continental shelf.

As a result, a non-UK tax-resident company that undertakes exploration or exploitation activities on the UK continental shelf is deemed to have a UK PE. The taxable profits of a UK PE are computed on the assumption that the PE is a separate entity dealing wholly independently with the nonresident company of which it is a PE.

The existence of a UK PE of a non-UK tax-resident company is subject to the application of any double tax treaty between the UK and the country of residence of the company, although the UK's double tax treaties normally preserve the UK's taxing rights in respect of exploration or exploitation activities.

A company is "UK tax-resident" if it is either incorporated in the UK or its central management and control is located in the UK. However, companies that are regarded as resident under domestic law, but as nonresident under the "tie breaker" clause of a double tax treaty, are regarded as nonresident for most tax purposes.

The current rate of corporation tax is 30% for ring-fence profits (see below) and 21% for non-ring-fence profits (although, as noted above, this latter rate is to reduce to 20% on 1 April 2015).

Ring-fencing

For corporation tax purposes, UK exploration and production activities (both onshore and offshore) are treated as a separate ring-fence trade from other trading activities, such as refining and marketing. As a result, a company's ring-fence trading profits are calculated separately from its profits from any non-ring fence trade. The main consequence of the ring-fence is that non-ring fence losses may not be offset against the profits from a ring-fence trade. However, losses from a ring-fence trade can be offset against non-ring fence profits.

Similar rules apply for capital gains purposes (i.e., non-ring fence capital losses cannot be offset against ring-fence capital gains, but ring-fence capital losses can be offset against non-ring fence capital gains, provided that a timely election is made).

Timing of corporation tax payments

Large ring fence companies are required to pay corporation tax on their ring-fence profits in three equal installments based on the estimated liability for the year. For a ring fence company with a calendar year-end, installment payments are due on 14 July and 14 October during the year, and on 14 January following the year-end.

Similarly, large companies are required to pay corporation tax on their non-ring fence profits in four equal installments, again based on the estimated liability for the year. For a company with a calendar year-end, installments are due on 14 July and 14 October during the year, and on 14 January and 14 April following the year-end.

Taxation of income

Strict rules determine whether sales of oil and gas are considered to be arm's length or non-arm's length. Arm's length sales are taxable based on the actual price realized, whereas non-arm's length sales are taxable based on the market value of the oil or gas sold. Specific valuation rules apply in determining the

market value of non-arm's length sales and the UK tax authorities, i.e., HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) maintains a database of statutory values for certain common crude oil types.

Nomination scheme

Anti-avoidance provisions exist to help prevent manipulation of the tax rate differential between exploration and production activities, and other activities, by the allocation of oil sales to lower-priced sales contracts, using hindsight (a process known as "tax spinning"). In particular, in certain circumstances these provisions require the taxpayer to "nominate" oil sales contracts within two hours of agreeing to the contract price.

Tariff receipts

In general, tariff receipts are taxed as part of a company's ring-fence trading profits for corporation tax purposes.

Relief for expenditures

To be deductible for corporation tax purposes, trading expenditure must be incurred wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the company's ring-fence or non-ring fence trade. In addition, no relief is available for qualifying trading expenditure until the company has actually commenced trading, which, in the case of ring-fence activities, is generally considered to be when a decision has been taken to develop a field. It is not considered that exploration, or the sale of a small quantity of oil as the result of unsuccessful exploration, constitutes the commencement of a trade. Most trading expenditure incurred prior to the commencement of a trade will typically qualify for relief in the period when the trade commences.

In addition, the corporation tax treatment of expenditure depends on whether it is capital or revenue in nature; this distinction depends, among other things, on the life cycle of the related fields. In particular, the exploration stage of a field mainly involves capital expenditure, including expenditure on intangible assets, such as oil licenses and drilling exploration and appraisal wells, whereas the production phase may involve a mixture of revenue and capital expenditure. At the end of the field's life, decommissioning expenditure is treated as capital in nature.

In general, revenue expenditure incurred wholly and exclusively for the purposes of the company's ring-fence trade is deductible as it is accrued, whereas relief is only available for capital expenditures to the extent that capital allowances are available (see Section C below for further details).

The Finance Act 2014 introduced targeted tax anti-avoidance legislation. In certain circumstances, this can restrict payments made by ring-fence oil companies on the lease of a drilling vessel, or accommodation vessel, that is employed directly or in connection with exploration or exploitation of the seabed or subsoil of the UK territorial sea, or UK Continental Shelf.

Losses

The UK loss rules distinguish between different types of losses, including trading losses, finance losses and capital losses.

Trading losses can be utilized by a company against its taxable profits (of any type) in the period when the losses arose, or the losses may be carried back one year against any profits. In addition, trading losses can be surrendered to other companies in the same group to offset their profits arising in the same period. If trading losses are not used by the company in its current or prior period or surrendered to another company, they are automatically carried forward to offset future profits of that company arising from the same trade.

In certain circumstances, the one-year carryback period is extended. In particular, under current legislation, losses arising in the year of cessation of trade or losses that arise from capital allowances for decommissioning expenditure (see Section C) can be carried back to 17 April 2002 for losses incurred in accounting periods beginning on or after 11 March 2008 (previously, the carryback period was restricted to three years).

Finance losses

Finance losses resulting from loan relationships can be utilized against profits in a number of ways. They can either be offset against profits of the same accounting period or non-trading profits of an earlier period or a subsequent period, or they can be surrendered to other companies in the same group in the same period by way of group relief. However, financing costs are not generally deductible for supplementary charge or petroleum revenue tax purposes.

Capital losses

Capital losses may be offset against any chargeable gains arising in the same accounting period and, to the extent they are not fully utilized, may then be carried forward to be offset against future chargeable gains. Capital losses cannot be used to reduce trading profits or any income other than chargeable gains.

An election can be made to transfer a chargeable gain or allowable loss to another company in the same group. However, no election can be made to transfer a ring-fence chargeable gain accruing on or after 6 December 2011 to a company not carrying on a ring-fence trade.

Special rules exist for members joining a group that prevent losses from being offset against gains in certain circumstances. In addition, special rules exist for ring-fencing, as noted above.

Currency issues

A company's taxable profits are generally calculated by reference to the functional currency of the company for accounting purposes. However, capital gains are generally calculated by reference to sterling (British pounds, GBP) except for gains on ships, aircraft, shares or an interest in shares, which are computed by reference to the company's functional or designated currency as appropriate.

Transfer pricing

The UK transfer pricing regime aims to ensure that, for corporation tax purposes, transactions between connected parties take place on arm's length terms. If arm's length terms are not used, these terms are imposed for tax purposes. Several methods for determining the arm's length price are available, and there are strict documentation requirements to support the method chosen and the prices reached. This is particularly relevant to the sale of oil and gas (see above), the provision of intercompany services, intercompany funding arrangements (see below), and bareboat and time charter leases in respect of vessels such as rigs and floating production, storage and offloading units (FPSOs).

In addition to transactions between a UK tax-resident company and a non-UK tax-resident company, the UK's transfer pricing regime also applies to transactions between two UK tax-resident companies and to transactions between a ring-fenced trade and a non-ring fenced trade within the same company. For example, the appropriation of crude oil from the exploration and production business of a company to its refining business would be subject to the rules.

The treatment of dividends

The UK adopted a dividend exemption system in respect of dividends received on or after 1 July 2009. Generally, the UK dividend exemption provides for a full exemption from UK corporation tax in respect of distributions that are not of a capital nature from either UK or foreign companies. If distributions do not meet the exemption, they will be subject to UK corporation tax.

Generally, a dividend will be treated as an exempt distribution if:

- ▶ The recipient company controls the company paying the dividend
 - ▶ The dividend is in respect of non-redeemable ordinary shares
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- ▶ The dividend is in respect of a portfolio holding (i.e., the recipient owns >10% of the issued share capital of the payer)
- ▶ The dividend is from a transaction not designed to reduce tax
- ▶ The dividend is in respect of shares accounted for as liabilities

Targeted anti-avoidance rules exist to prevent abuse of the exemption system.

Treatment of foreign branches

Companies resident in the UK are taxed on their worldwide profits, including the profits from their foreign branches. UK tax relief may be available for overseas taxes suffered by way of double taxation relief. Any excess foreign tax credits can be carried back three years or carried forward indefinitely against profits from the same branch. From 19 July 2011, each company subject to UK corporation tax has been able to make an irrevocable election to exempt the future profits and gains of all its foreign branches. The election takes effect from the start of the next accounting period after it is made.

Supplementary charge

“Supplementary charge” is an additional tax (32% from 24 March 2011, previously 20%, and now to be reduced back to 20% effective from 1 January 2015) on UK exploration and production activities. Taxable profits for supplementary charge purposes are calculated in the same manner as for ring-fence trading profits but without any deduction for finance costs. Finance costs are defined very broadly for this purpose and include the finance element of lease rentals and any costs associated with financing transactions for accounts purposes.

The due date for payment of supplementary charge is the same as that for ring-fence corporation tax.

Supplementary charge is not deductible for corporation tax purposes.

Field allowance

Field allowance is available in respect of certain ultra-high pressure high-temperature fields, certain ultra-heavy oil fields, certain smaller fields, certain deepwater gas fields, certain large deepwater oil fields and certain large shallow water gas fields that meet the relevant criteria. Field allowance reduces the company’s ring-fenced profits for supplementary charge purposes. The field allowances listed above relate to new fields.

Additionally, developed oilfield allowance is available against a company’s ring-fenced profits for supplementary charge purposes in relation to projects that result in additional reserves from existing fields where the capital cost of developing those additional reserves is greater than £60 per tonne. This is commonly referred to as the “brownfield allowance.”

The Finance Act 2014 introduced an allowance for onshore oil and gas projects, which reduces the profits of each qualifying project that are subject to supplementary charge by an amount equal to 75% of the capital expenditure incurred on that project on or after 5 December 2013.

In the 2014 Autumn Statement, the Government announced the introduction of a high-pressure high-temperature cluster allowance. If legislated, this allowance will exempt a portion of a company’s profits from supplementary charge equal to 62.5% of qualifying capital expenditure incurred from 3 December 2014 in relation to a determined cluster.

On 4 December 2014, the Government announced that there was to be a period of consultation on the potential introduction of a basin-wide Investment Allowance. This has now been introduced in Finance Act 2015 and gives an allowance against profits for supplementary charge purposes equal to 62.5% of qualifying investment expenditure incurred after 1 April 2015. The investment allowance is intended to replace all existing field allowances (other than the onshore allowance and the cluster allowance).

Petroleum revenue tax

Petroleum revenue tax, levied at a rate of 50% (for fields that received development consent before 16 March 1993),² is charged on a field-by-field basis rather than an entity-by-entity basis, and it only applies to fields that received development consent before 16 March 1993. Petroleum revenue tax is charged in six-month periods ending 30 June and 31 December and is based on profits calculated in accordance with specific statutory provisions rather than on accounting profits.

Income and expenditure are dealt with separately for petroleum revenue tax purposes. In particular, each participant is required to file returns in respect of its share of the oil and gas won and saved in each chargeable period, together with any other chargeable receipts such as tariff and disposal receipts.

However, expenditure must be claimed separately and does not become allowable until HMRC gives formal notice (which may be after the period when the expenditure is incurred).

Petroleum revenue tax is deductible for corporation tax and supplementary charge purposes, giving a combined headline effective tax rate of 80% for fields subject to petroleum revenue tax from 1 January 2015.

Timing of petroleum revenue tax payments

A participant is required to make a payment on account of its petroleum revenue tax liability for a chargeable period within two months of the end of that period. In addition, six installment payments must be paid based on one-eighth of the payment on account of the previous chargeable period, beginning two months into the chargeable period. Once an assessment has been raised, any petroleum revenue tax balance due, and not previously paid, is payable six months after the end of the chargeable period.

Income

As with corporation tax, strict rules apply to determine whether sales of oil and gas are considered to be arm's length (and taxable based on the actual price realized) or non-arm's length (and taxable based on statutory values).

Hedging

As petroleum revenue tax is a tax on oil won and saved, only physical hedging contracts with third parties result in a tax-effective hedge for petroleum revenue tax purposes (e.g., a physical forward sale to a third party).

Tariff receipts

Petroleum revenue tax is also chargeable on tariff and disposal receipts (e.g., rentals for the use of infrastructure) received by the participant for the use, or in connection with the use, of a qualifying asset on a taxable UK field. However, the taxable receipts may be subject to specific exclusions and exemptions.

Expenditure

Expenditure incurred in finding, developing and decommissioning a field, together with the costs of extracting and transporting the oil, is generally allowable for petroleum revenue tax purposes. There is no distinction made between capital and revenue expenditure for petroleum revenue tax purposes; however, certain types of expenditure are specifically prohibited, such as interest, production-related payments, subsidized expenditure or the cost of acquiring land and buildings. A supplement of 35% is available for certain types of expenditure incurred in any period, up to and including the period when the participant reaches a break-even position in respect of the relevant field.

Expenditure on assets that are used to earn tariff income is an allowable expense for petroleum revenue tax purposes, to the extent that the tariff income is subject to petroleum revenue tax.

Losses

If a loss accrues to a participant in a chargeable period, it can be carried back against profits from the same field in preceding chargeable periods (on a last-in, first-out basis) or, if no carryback claim is made, the loss is carried forward automatically against profits from the same field in future chargeable periods. Losses are offset against profits before any oil allowance is made (see below).

The carryback and carryforward of losses are indefinite. In certain circumstances, any losses from an abandoned field that cannot be relieved against the profits of that field can be claimed against the profits of another field.

Oil allowance

Oil allowance is a relief designed to prevent petroleum revenue tax from being an undue burden on more marginal fields, and it allows a certain amount of production to be earned free of petroleum revenue tax for at least the first 10 years of a field's life. The allowance is given after all other expenditure and allowances, with the exception of safeguard (see below).

The amount of oil allowance varies depending on the location of the field and the timing of the development consent. It is 125,000, 250,000 or 500,000 metric tons per chargeable period, which equates to 2.5 million, 5 million or 10 million metric tons, respectively, over the life of the field. The oil allowance is converted into a cash equivalent in each chargeable period based on the company's taxable income in the chargeable period. If the oil allowance due has not been fully used in a chargeable period, the excess remains available for future use, subject to the maximum allowance available for the field.

Safeguard

Similar to oil allowance, safeguard is also a relief designed to prevent petroleum revenue tax from being an undue burden on more marginal fields, and it allows a company to earn a specific return on its capital before being subject to petroleum revenue tax. Safeguard applies after all expenditure and other reliefs have been taken into account; it only applies for a certain number of periods and is now largely historical.

Deferral or opt-out of petroleum revenue tax

If a field is not expected to pay petroleum revenue tax, HMRC may accept that submission of petroleum revenue tax returns for that field can be deferred indefinitely. This is intended to avoid the needless disclosure of potentially sensitive expenditure information and to ease the compliance burden placed on the participants.

An election is available to take a specific field out of the charge to petroleum revenue tax (provided that all of the field participants agree to the election). The election to opt out of petroleum revenue tax should be successful if either no profits subject to petroleum revenue tax will accrue to any of the participants or the profits potentially subject to petroleum revenue tax will not exceed the participant's share of oil allowance for the field. The election is irrevocable.

Unconventional oil and gas

Finance Act 2014 introduced an allowance for onshore oil and gas projects (see the "Field allowance" subsection above) together with an extension to the ring-fence expenditure supplement in respect of losses from such projects (see Section D below).

These proposed measures cover both conventional and unconventional onshore oil and gas projects.

C. Capital allowances for corporation tax and supplementary charge

Expenditure on assets used in a ring-fence trade

A 100% first-year allowance (FYA) is available on most capital expenditure incurred for the purposes of a company's ring-fence trading, including expenditure on plant and machinery, together with expenditure on exploration, appraisal and development. A number of exclusions to the FYA regime apply, including expenditure on ships and plant and machinery for leasing.

For asset acquisitions, it is important to note that the amount of the purchase consideration that qualifies for capital allowances cannot generally exceed the amount of costs that qualified for relief in the hands of the seller. This means that relief is not available for premium paid-for license acquisitions.

FYAs are only given if the assets are used wholly and exclusively for the purposes of ring-fence trade; thus, an FYA can be withdrawn if the asset is sold or if it is no longer used in a ring-fence trade within five years of incurring the expenditure.

If an FYA is not claimed in the year when the expenditure is regarded as being incurred, it is not available in subsequent years and the expenditure instead attracts writing-down allowances of 25% a year for most intangible expenditures, 25% a year for plant and machinery, or 10% a year for expenditure on long-life assets or mineral extraction assets on a reducing-balance basis.

Expenditure on assets used in a non-ring-fence trade

Capital allowances of 18% per year on a reducing-balance basis are available on most expenditure on plant and machinery used in a non-ring fence trade. However, assets purchased on or after 26 November 1996, with a useful economic life of 25 years or more, attract capital allowances at a reduced rate of 8% per year.

Decommissioning

Most decommissioning expenditure is considered to be capital in nature for tax purposes and qualifies for a special 100% capital allowance. This includes expenditure on demolition, preservation pending reuse or demolition, and preparing or arranging for reuse (including removal). Specifically, this may include mothballing installations, plugging wells, dumping or toppling rigs, and restoring sites.

A special 100% capital allowance may be claimed in respect of ring-fence trades for pre-cessation decommissioning expenditure, subject to a number of conditions.

The rate of relief for decommissioning expenditure for supplementary charge purposes is restricted to 20% for decommissioning carried out on or after 21 March 2012.

The UK Government has the power to enter into deeds with ring fence companies guaranteeing the amount of tax relief available on decommissioning expenditure (both in a default and non-default scenario) based on the tax legislation in operation at the time of enactment of the Finance Act 2013.

Asset disposals

The disposal of an asset that attracted capital allowances may give rise to a balancing charge or an allowance for capital allowance purposes. This is generally calculated by comparing the sale proceeds received to the remaining capital allowances available in respect of the asset.

D. Incentives

Ring-Fence Expenditure Supplement

If a company has a ring-fence loss in a particular period but it, or other companies in its group, does not have ring-fenced taxable profits against which the losses can be offset, the company can claim Ring-Fence Expenditure

Supplement (RFES). This increases the ring-fence losses the company is able to carryforward to the next period by 10% (6% for periods commencing prior to 1 January 2012). It can be claimed for a maximum of six years (but these years do not have to be consecutive). The Government announced in the 2014 Autumn Statement that there is to be an extension of RFES from six years to 10 years. However, claims seven to 10 would only be available in respect of losses incurred/supplement generated after 5 December 2013. Finance Act 2015 enacted this measure effectively aligning the offshore RFES regime with that of the onshore RFES regime.

Tax holidays

The UK does not have a tax holiday regime.

R&D allowances

Exploration and appraisal expenditure incurred before a field is considered as commercial qualify for 100% R&D allowances for corporation tax and supplementary charge purposes, but not for any enhanced allowances. Enhanced tax relief may be available for qualifying R&D for expenditure not related to exploration and appraisal at a rate of 130% for large companies and 225% for small or medium-sized companies. In the 2014 Autumn Statement, the Government announced that the rate for small or medium-sized companies would increase to 230% and, if legislated, this would be effective from 1 April 2015.

In addition, a company can elect to receive a taxable pre-tax credit of 49% for ring fence companies, or 10% for non-ring fence companies, rather than the enhanced deduction noted above for R&D expenditure incurred on or after 1 April 2013. Again in the 2014 Autumn Statement, the Government announced that the 10% rate would increase to 11% and if legislated this would be effective from 1 April 2015. The enhanced deduction will no longer be available for R&D expenditure incurred on or after 1 April 2016. In certain circumstances if a company is in an overall loss position, then the pre-tax credit can result in a payment to the company or a credit against the tax liabilities of other group companies.

E. Withholding taxes

In general, withholding tax (WHT) applies at 20% on both interest payments and royalties, subject to any relief provided under an applicable double tax treaty.

The UK has an extensive network of double taxation agreements with overseas jurisdictions. Treaty relief for WHT on royalties can be claimed automatically. However, a nonresident recipient of interest must make a claim for repayment or an application for relief at source to the UK Centre for Nonresidents to benefit from treaty relief. In addition, there are a number of exemptions in respect of interest WHT, including exemptions for payments to other companies charged to UK corporation tax and payments to qualifying banks.

The UK does not levy WHT on dividend payments, and it has no branch remittance tax.

F. Financing considerations

Finance costs are generally deductible for corporation tax purposes but not for supplementary charge or petroleum revenue tax purposes. In addition, deductions for finance costs in computing the profits of a ring-fenced trade are only permitted if the money borrowed has been used to meet expenditure incurred in carrying on oil extraction activities or on acquiring a license from a third party.

If borrowing is from a connected party or is guaranteed by another group company, the UK's transfer pricing regime, which includes thin capitalization provisions, may apply. The effect may be to restrict deductions for finance costs to those that would have been available if the loan had been from an unconnected third party. This involves consideration of both the amount of the loan and the terms of the loan that could otherwise have been obtained from a third party.

Thin capitalization

There are no statutory or non-statutory safe harbor rules in the UK in respect of thin capitalization. Instead, the UK relies purely on the arm's length test for connected-party debt. The arm's length test can be a source of uncertainty, as neither UK legislation nor the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines offer practical assistance as to how to evaluate arm's length debt. HMRC is often willing to enter into discussions or provide advance clearance on potential thin capitalization issues when relevant funding arrangements are being put in place, in order to give some certainty as to the tax treatment likely to apply in specific circumstances.

G. Transactions

Capital gains

Capital gains realized by a UK tax-resident company on the sale of a chargeable asset are subject to corporation tax (21%⁵ for non-ring fence gains and 30% for ring-fence gains). There has historically been some uncertainty as to whether a ring-fence gain is subject to the supplementary charge. However, the Finance Act 2012 provided that ring-fence chargeable gains accruing on or after 6 December 2011 will be subject to the supplementary charge. A capital gain is usually calculated as the excess of sales proceeds less any qualifying capital expenditure. In addition, an allowance is available for inflation; the amount of the reduction is based on the increase in the retail prices index (RPI).

A non-UK tax resident is not normally subject to UK tax on its capital gains. However, if a non-UK tax resident realizes a gain from disposal of UK exploration or exploitation rights or assets (or unquoted shares in a company that derive the greater part of their value from such rights or assets), this gain is subject to UK tax.

Any unpaid tax can be assessed against the licensees of the fields owned by the company sold. Gains on the sale of assets situated in and used in a trade carried on by a UK tax-resident company or a PE in the UK are subject to corporation tax.

Farm-in and farm-out

If a license interest is farmed out for non-cash consideration (such as subordinated interests, development carry, license swaps or work obligation), the consideration must be valued. It is important that the farmor agrees to the value of any rights-based consideration to avoid a possible future challenge from HMRC. If all or part of the consideration given cannot be valued, the disposal is deemed to be for a consideration, equal to the market value of the asset.

Farm-outs of license interests relating to undeveloped areas (i.e., areas for which no development consent has been granted and no program of development has been served or approved) are deemed to be for zero consideration to the extent that the consideration consists of an exploration or appraisal work program. Otherwise, these proceeds are taxable.

Swaps

Swaps of license interests in undeveloped areas are also deemed to take place for zero consideration, to the extent that the consideration is in the form of another license relating to an undeveloped area.

Swaps of license interests in developed areas are deemed to take place for such consideration as gives rise to no gain or no loss.

Allowable base costs deducted from consideration received on disposal

Consideration given to acquire an asset can be deducted when computing a chargeable gain, as can incidental costs of acquisition and disposal and

5 Reducing to 20% on 1 April 2015.

expenditures to enhance the value of the asset. However, any expenditure allowed as a deduction against profits in calculating corporation tax is not allowable.

Complex rules apply that may “waste” the base cost deduction over the life of the license, thus reducing the base cost.

Ring-fence rules

Gains or losses arising on the disposal of an interest in an oilfield or assets used in connection with the field (but only if they are disposed of as part of a license transfer) are ring-fenced. Gains on disposals of shares, field assets disposed of outside a license transfer and disposals of licenses that do not have determined fields are not ring-fenced. Ring-fence gains cannot be offset by non-ring fence losses. Ring-fence losses can be offset against ring-fence gains, but they can only be offset against non-ring fence gains to the extent that a claim is made within two years for the loss to be treated as non-ring fence.

Reinvestment relief can be claimed if the proceeds of a disposal that falls within the ring-fence rules are reinvested in certain “oil assets,” including disposals made on or after 24 March 2010 and reinvestment in intangible drilling expenditure.

Substantial shareholding exemption

The “substantial shareholding exemption” (SSE) applies if a shareholding of more than 10% of a trading company’s share capital is disposed of, subject to certain conditions. Any gain is exempt from capital gains tax (CGT) if the vendor has held a “substantial shareholding” in the company for a continuous 12-month period, beginning not more than 2 years before the disposal. Numerous other detailed requirements must be met to qualify.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

The standard rate of VAT in the UK is 20%, with reduced rates of 5% and 0%. VAT is potentially chargeable on all supplies of goods and services made in the UK and its territorial waters. UK resident companies may be required to register for UK VAT if supplies exceed the VAT threshold or there is an intention to make future taxable supplies. As of 1 December 2012, the VAT threshold for nonresident companies has been removed, meaning all nonresident companies making taxable supplies in the UK must register for UK VAT. A nonresident company that is required to register for UK VAT can register directly with the UK tax authorities; there is no requirement to appoint a VAT or fiscal representative. VAT incurred by an entity that is VAT registered in the UK is normally recoverable on its periodic VAT returns provided it makes sales of goods located in the UK or provides services related to land or general services on a business-to-consumer basis.

A specified area is licensed for both onshore and offshore oil and gas exploration or exploitation purposes, often to a consortium of companies. One of the participating companies in a consortium usually acts as the “operating member” (the OM) under a joint operating agreement. In this situation, the OM incurs UK VAT on the supplies it receives for the consortium, so it is essential that it registers for UK VAT to obtain credit for the VAT charged. In addition, it is important for the “participating members” of the consortium to register for VAT to recover input VAT.

In the UK, the VAT treatment of the sale of hydrocarbon products produced as a result of a successful exploration and production program depends on the product itself, where it is sold and to whom it is sold. Natural gas and associated products imported into the UK (via a gas pipeline) from a field outside the UK territorial waters are subject to formal customs import procedures – although from 1 January 2011 the importation of natural gas has been exempt from import VAT.

Excise duty

Excise duty is payable on certain hydrocarbon products in the UK if these products are removed from an excise warehouse for "home use" (i.e., they are removed for domestic use). Products stored in an excise warehouse are afforded duty suspension. The rate of excise duty payable in respect of hydrocarbon products is based on the classification of the product.

Customs duty

All goods imported into the UK from outside the European Union are potentially liable to customs duty. The rate of customs duty is based on the classification of the goods and whether the goods qualify for preferential rates. However, customs relief and regimes may allow goods to be imported at a reduced or zero rate of duty, provided the goods are used for a prescribed use under Customs control, within a specified time limit. Normally, a business must seek prior authorization from HMRC to utilize any customs relief or regimes.

Insurance premium tax

Insurance premium tax (IPT) is a tax on premiums received under taxable insurance contracts. Two rates of IPT apply:

- ▶ A standard rate of 6%
- ▶ A higher rate of 20% for insurance supplied with selected goods and services

All types of insurance risk located in the UK are taxable, unless they are specifically exempt.

In respect of the oil and gas industry, onshore installations in the UK and those within the 12-mile limit are liable to IPT. However, IPT does not apply to installations located outside UK territorial waters. The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are also outside the UK for IPT purposes.

Appropriate allocations must be made when certain insurance policies cover both UK and non-UK risks, to determine the proportion of the premium that will be subject to IPT.

Stamp taxes

Stamp Duty applies in the UK at a rate of 0.5% on the consideration on the sale of shares and Stamp Duty Land Tax applies up to a rate of 15% on the consideration on the sale of an interest in UK land and buildings. The tax is generally payable by the purchaser. Relief is available for transfers between group companies and some other forms of reorganization. However, this relief is hedged around with anti-avoidance rules, so it is essential to seek specific advice before relying on the availability of a relief. In the case of land transfers to a company connected with the transferor, the market value is substituted for the consideration if it is higher.

A license may be an interest in land, but stamp taxes do not apply to licenses situated in territorial waters because, for these purposes, the territory of the UK ends at the low-water mark. Offshore structures fixed to the seabed may amount to an interest in UK land if they are connected to land above the low-water mark (e.g., a pier or jetty). It is generally considered that the section of an undersea pipeline on the seaward side of the low-water mark does not give rise to an interest in land, although this is not completely certain. The owner of the landward section, including any termination equipment and associated structures, generally possesses an interest in the land. On a sale, it is sometimes difficult to allocate the consideration between the interest in the land and buildings and any equipment, which may not be regarded as technically part of the land and buildings.

Looking forward, and as part of the Government- agreed devolution of some tax raising powers to Scotland, from 1 April 2015 Land and Buildings Transactions Tax is to be introduced in Scotland and will replace UK Stamp Duty Land Tax. Stamp Duty will continue to be administered across the whole of the UK.

I. Other

Forms of business presence

Forms of business presence in the United Kingdom typically include companies, foreign branches and joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated). In addition to commercial considerations, it is important to consider the tax consequences of each type of entity when setting up a business in the UK. Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies in the exploration and development of oil and gas projects.

Foreign-exchange controls

There are no foreign-exchange restrictions on inward or outward investments.

Anti-avoidance legislation

The UK's tax law contains several anti-avoidance provisions, which apply in certain areas (such as financing) where a transaction is not carried out for genuine commercial reasons. In addition, a general anti-abuse rule also exists which is intended to counteract tax advantages arising from tax arrangements that are considered to be abusive.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in the United States (US) consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), severance tax and royalty payments. In summary:

- ▶ Royalties:
 - ▶ Onshore¹ – 12.5% to 30%, negotiated or bid with the mineral interest owner
 - ▶ Offshore² – 18.75% effective for 19 March 2008 auction, 16.667% in certain previous lease auctions and 12.50% for older leases
- ▶ Bonuses:
 - ▶ Onshore – negotiated or bid with the mineral interest owner
 - ▶ Offshore – competitive bid process

1 Onshore mineral interests can be held by the federal Government (managed by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Agriculture's US Forest Service), states, Indian reservations (managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management), individuals, corporations and trusts.

2 Offshore mineral interests (Alaska, Gulf of Mexico and Pacific) are owned by the US Government and are managed by the Offshore Energy Minerals Management (OEMM), an office of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE), a bureau of the US Department of the Interior.

- ▶ CIT rate – 35%³
- ▶ Severance tax – Severance tax is payable to the US state where the product is extracted, including onshore and offshore state waters. The tax rates and the tax base vary by state; for example, states calculate the tax based on a flat amount per volume produced or as a percentage of gross receipts. Additionally, it is common for different tax rates to apply for different types of products produced
- ▶ Capital allowances⁴ – D, E⁵
- ▶ Investment incentives – L, RD⁶

B. Fiscal regime

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in the United States consists of a combination of CIT, severance tax and royalty payments.

Corporate tax

US resident corporations are subject to income tax on their worldwide income, including income of foreign branches, at a rate of 35%. Income of nonresident corporations from US sources that is not subject to withholding tax (WHT) or treaty protection is also subject to tax at 35%. The 35% rate applies to oil and gas activities and to non-oil and gas activities.

The US does not apply ring-fencing in the determination of CIT liability. Profit from one project can offset losses from another project held by the same tax entity, and, similarly, profits and losses from upstream activities can offset downstream activities or any other activities undertaken by the same entity. The US tax law allows a US parent corporation – and all other US corporations in which the parent owns, directly or indirectly through one or more chains, at least 80% of the total voting power and value of the stock – to form a consolidated group, which is treated as a single taxable entity.

Corporate tax is levied on taxable income. Taxable income equals gross income less deductions. Gross income includes all taxable ordinary and capital income (determined under tax law). Deductions include expenses to the extent that they are incurred in producing gross income or are necessary in carrying on a business for the purpose of producing gross income. However, expenditures of a capital nature are not generally immediately deductible.

Capital expenditures incurred by the oil and gas industry are recovered through deductions available for intangible drilling and completion costs (IDC and ICC), cost or percentage depletion for leasehold cost basis or accelerated methods of depreciating tangible assets (see Section C). Additionally, there may be deductions available for other types of capital expenditures – for example, expenditures incurred to establish an initial business structure (organization or start-up costs are capitalized and amortized over 15 years).

An overriding principle in the US taxation of the oil and gas industry is that almost all calculations involving assets are calculated on a unit-of-property (tax property) basis; this includes property basis, gain or loss on disposal, abandonment and property-related deductions (depletion, depreciation and amortization). Although the concept and actual determination of a unit of property (i.e., separate property) can be very complicated, in practice, a unit of property is frequently treated as equating to a lease or an oil and gas well.

Special deductions are allowed against income, including, in limited circumstances, percentage depletion and so-called “Section 199” deductions (see Section D below).

3 US federal rate; individual state tax regimes vary and include income, franchise, production and property taxes.

4 Capital allowances vary depending on the type of taxpayer and the nature of assets (see later discussion on integrated and independent producers).

5 D: accelerated depreciation; E: accelerated write-off for intangible drilling costs.

6 L: losses can be carried forward for 20 years; RD: R&D incentive.

Profits from oil and gas activities undertaken by a US resident company in a foreign country are generally subject to tax in the United States. The US tax may be reduced by foreign income tax paid or accrued if applicable (see later).

Alternative minimum tax regime

In addition to the regular tax system, the US imposes an alternative minimum tax (AMT) regime, which requires a separate calculation of alternative minimum taxable income (AMTI). The AMT rate for corporate taxpayers is 20%. AMT often affects oil and gas companies that have large IDC deductions, especially in years with low taxable income due to IDC deductions, loss carryforwards or low commodity prices.

There are numerous preferences and adjustments that are added to, or subtracted from, a company's regular tax income to determine its AMTI. Items that most commonly affect the oil and gas industry are depreciation, IDC and the last-in-first-out (LIFO) inventory method. These calculations are complicated, and they are not explained in detail in this chapter.

In brief, the taxpayer must recalculate taxable income and deductions under the prescribed alternative methods (generally involving earlier income inclusion and decreased deductions due to slower methods of recovery or longer recovery periods, or both).

The following are common recalculations required for AMT purposes for the oil and gas industry:

- ▶ The depreciation deduction is recalculated using a slower method.
- ▶ The IDC deduction is recalculated by capitalizing and amortizing the current-year IDC using either the 10-year straight-line (SL) or the unit-of-production ratio for AMT preference purposes. Additional computations (not detailed here) are required to determine the final amount of the AMT IDC preference. AMT IDC amortization is not allowed on any prior-year IDC expenditures.
- ▶ For independent producers, the treatment of IDC as a tax preference was repealed. However, the benefit of the repeal was limited. Therefore, an independent producer must still determine the amount of preference IDC to be added back for AMT purposes, if any.
- ▶ For integrated producers only, the adjusted current earnings (ACE) IDC adjustment is the excess of the IDC deducted for regular tax over the amount allowed for ACE IDC amortization, less the amount already added back as an AMT IDC preference. The ACE IDC amortization is calculated based on capitalizing all of the IDC and amortizing it over 60 months. The taxpayer may continue to amortize the IDC capitalized for ACE purposes until it is fully amortized, even if this causes the taxpayer to have a negative ACE IDC adjustment.
- ▶ LIFO is not allowed for ACE purposes.

State and local taxes

In the US, state and local taxes can be a significant cost of doing business onshore or in state waters. Each state has its own tax statute. The details of the various state requirements are numerous, and they are not included in detail in this chapter.

State income tax

Most states impose a tax based on the income of companies doing business within the state. Generally, state corporate taxable income is calculated by making certain state-specific additions and subtractions to federal taxable income. Alternatively, some states calculate state taxable income based on gross receipts, subject to state-specific definitions and modifications.

State taxable income is apportioned to an individual state based on a factor that generally compares the property, payroll or sales activity within the state to those same factors within and outside the state. Apportioned income is multiplied by the state income tax rate to determine the tax due. State income tax rates typically range from 0% to 12%.

State franchise tax

Many states impose a franchise tax on any company that is:

- ▶ Organized in the state
- ▶ Qualified to do business, or doing business, in the state
- ▶ Exercising or continuing the corporate charter within the state
- ▶ Owning or using any of the corporate capital, plant or other property in the state

Generally, the franchise tax rate is calculated by multiplying the value of the apportioned assets, capital stock or net worth employed in the state by the franchise tax rate. Franchise tax rates typically range from 0.15% to 1.0% of the taxable base.

Foreign entity taxation

The tax issues associated with inbound investment into the US for oil and gas ventures bring into play unique rules and regulations specific to the oil and gas area. Similarly, inbound investment,⁷ in general, has a defined set of tax rules and regulations governing the taxation of a foreign multinational, regardless of the industry.

Taking the rules for inbound investment into the United States first, a foreign multinational is generally subject to US tax on its US-sourced income under US domestic tax principles, unless a bilateral income tax treaty applies that supplants the ability of the US to tax certain types of income. For example, certain activities that take place in the US may give rise to a taxable trade or business under US domestic tax principles, while under an applicable income tax treaty, the activity may be exempt from US tax by agreement of the treaty parties. An example of this treatment may be rental of equipment to a US party on a net basis, whereby the lessee takes on most of the risks and costs associated with leasing the asset from the foreign party.

Further, regardless of whether a foreign multinational is attempting to apply an applicable income tax treaty or not, certain domestic tax provisions may apply, such as Section 163(j), which governs the amount of interest expense that is deductible in the US against US taxable income. Such amount is generally limited to a percentage of earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) after applying a complex formula set forth in the regulations under Section 163(j). Similar issues for inbound financing of US operations will entail debt/equity characterization, the conduit financing regulations and thin capital considerations.

Another area of the US federal income tax provisions that may be applicable to foreign multinationals investing in the US is set forth in Section 897. This section, known as the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act (FIRPTA) rules, sets forth the tax provisions for determining whether an investment in the US constitutes an investment in "US real property." If so, there are specific provisions that are meant to preserve the ability of the US to tax any built-in gain or appreciation that may arise while the foreign multinational owns the real property and subsequently disposes of it. The gain-triggering rules encompass such obvious transactions as a sale but also can be triggered by what would otherwise be a tax-free restructuring of the FIRPTA property owner.

The US federal income tax rules and regulations have a very complex subset, the Foreign Oil and Gas Income (FOGI) provisions, which deal with the credibility of foreign taxes paid in connection with both foreign extraction activity of a foreign branch of a US company, or a partnership in which a US company is a partner, or a controlled foreign corporation (CFC) owned by a US company, and foreign oil-related income, which includes processing, transportation, distribution, certain dispositions, and certain related services. These provisions would potentially be applicable to a foreign multinational to the extent it had a taxable US presence through which certain foreign oil and gas activity was

⁷ Any reference to "inbound investment" refers to an investment into the US by a nonresident foreign person, including a multinational foreign corporation.

conducted or controlled. Moreover, there are anti-deferment provisions, the US Subpart F provisions of the US federal Income Tax Code and Regulations, which prevent the deferment of income from US taxation on a current basis for income derived from the transportation, processing and sale of minerals and the products made therefrom. These rules are referred to as the foreign oil-related income provisions of Section 907 (FORI).

Similarly, there is a whole host of special federal income tax provisions (and state tax provisions), not discussed here, which are applicable to foreign multinationals investing in US oil and gas extraction activity.

Capital gains

Gains and losses resulting from the sale of capital assets by corporate taxpayers are subject to US tax at the ordinary rate of 35%. Capital gains or losses are determined by deducting the adjusted cost basis of an asset from the proceeds (money received or receivable and the market value of any property received or receivable).

Assets held for one year or less and inventory or assets held for sale in the ordinary course of business are treated as non-capital assets and generate ordinary income or loss upon their sale.

Non-inventory assets that are used in the taxpayer's trade or business for more than one year are considered trade or business assets. The disposition of trade or business assets generates ordinary losses or so-called "Section 1231" gains that may (subject to certain limitations) be treated as capital gains. However, the US tax authorities require that certain previously claimed ordinary deductions be recaptured as ordinary income at the time of sale if the property is sold for a gain. For example, if tangible assets are sold at a gain, the depreciation deducted must be recaptured up to the amount of the gain. Upon the sale of a leasehold interest, the taxpayer is required to recapture all IDC and depletion taken that reduced the tax basis, up to the amount of the gain realized on the property, if that property was placed in service after 31 December 1986. There are different recapture rules for property that was placed in service prior to 1 January 1987.

Although the tax rate is the same for ordinary income and capital transactions, capital losses are only deductible against capital gains and not against ordinary income. Net capital losses can be carried back three years and carried forward five years. Trade or business losses incurred in the ordinary course of business are deductible against taxable income.

Oil and gas leases held for more than one year generally result in trade or business gains and losses upon sale, subject to recapture as discussed above. Gains or losses on the disposition of property must be calculated for each tax property (i.e., property by property, not in total). Recapture is also calculated on a property-by-property basis.

Capital gains or losses derived by a US resident company on the disposal of shares in a foreign company are generally treated as US-sourced capital gains or losses. However, if the stock in the foreign corporation constitutes stock in a CFC when sold, or at any time during the five years prior to the date of sale, certain rules can apply to, in effect, re-source the income as foreign-sourced dividend income, to the extent of the selling shareholder's share of the accumulated earnings and profits of the foreign corporation. In addition, the selling shareholder may be entitled to a foreign tax credit on such earnings.

US companies with foreign branch active businesses (including oil- and gas-producing assets, in most cases) have capital gains or losses on disposal of foreign branch assets, which could be foreign-sourced or US-sourced depending on the facts. Moreover, even if the sale of a foreign branch asset, such as equipment, is classed as foreign under the sourcing provisions, additional rules could apply that recapture, as US-sourced income, a portion of the gain equal to the amount of depreciation taken in the US in prior tax years related to the foreign branch asset.

Functional currency

Under the US income tax law, taxpayers are required to calculate their taxable income using the US dollar.

Transfer pricing

US tax law includes measures to ensure that the US taxable income base associated with cross-border transactions is based on arm's length prices. Several methods for determining the arm's length price are available, and there are strict documentation requirements to support the method chosen and the prices reached. This is particularly relevant to the sale of commodities, intercompany services, intercompany funding arrangements, and bareboat and time charter leases.

Dividends

Dividends paid by US resident companies are taxable unless the recipient is eligible for a dividend-received deduction, or treaty provisions apply to reduce the tax rate.

For US resident corporate shareholders, all dividends received are included in the gross income. The company is entitled to a dividend-received deduction for dividends received from a US domestic corporation of 100% if it owns 80% to 100% of the payor, 80% if it owns 20% to 79.9%, and 70% if it owns less than 20% of the payor.

For corporate nonresident shareholders, dividends paid or credited to nonresident shareholders are subject to a 30% WHT (unless the rate is reduced by an applicable income tax treaty). The WHT is deducted by the payor on the gross amount of the dividend.

Royalty payments***Onshore leases***

Petroleum royalties are paid to mineral owners, which for onshore leases can be the state or federal Government, individuals, Indian reservations, corporations, partnerships or any other entity. Royalty payments are excluded from gross income of the working interest owner.

For onshore projects, wellhead royalties are paid to the mineral owner. Wellhead royalties are generally levied at a rate of 12.5% to 30% (based on the lease or contract) of the gross wellhead value for all of the petroleum produced.

Gross wellhead value is generally the posted spot price for the production location, or the actual revenue received, less any costs. The types of costs allowable are processing, storing and transporting the petroleum to the point of sale.

Offshore leases

For offshore projects, wellhead royalties are paid to the federal Government via the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) but are shared with the appropriate state if the well is located in state waters. The royalty is based on the percentage set at the time of the auction. As discussed above, this royalty is paid on the gross wellhead value of production.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas. And under the current US federal income tax rules, no specific special terms or provisions apply to treat unconventional oil or gas differently from conventional oil or gas for tax purposes.

C. Capital allowances

The oil and gas industry is capital intensive. For US tax purposes, costs associated with the acquisition of a lease (project), costs to develop a lease and production-related costs (opex) have various treatments. Production-related costs are generally deductible in the year they are paid or accrued for tax

purposes. Acquisition and development costs are generally capitalized expenditures for both book and tax purposes. It should be noted that there are exceptions that allow for deducting some of these capitalized expenditures, based on specific statutory authority.

It should also be noted that the rules that apply to foreign (non-US location) leases are different from those for US domestic leases. US domestic leases generally include leases up to the 200-mile limit in the Gulf of Mexico. Usually, owners of foreign leases are required to capitalize costs and depreciate or amortize such costs over longer time frames. Leasehold costs may only be recovered based on cost depletion (i.e., percentage depletion is not allowed on foreign leases).

Additionally, tax recovery rules vary significantly based on the designation of the company as an "integrated oil company," an "independent producer" or a "major integrated oil company."

An integrated producer is defined as a company that has exploration and production activity and either:

- ▶ Gross receipts in excess of US\$5 million in retail sales of oil and gas for the taxable year
- ▶ Refinery runs that average in excess of 75,000 barrels of throughput per day

An independent producer or royalty owner is defined as any taxpayer that is not an integrated producer.

In 2006, Congress created a subset of integrated producers called "major integrated oil companies," which is defined as producers of crude oil that have an average daily worldwide production of at least 500,000 barrels, gross receipts in excess of US\$1 billion for the last taxable year ended during the 2005 calendar year and at least a 15% ownership in a crude oil refinery. Currently, the rule regarding the amortization of geological and geophysical (G&G) costs is the only provision of the US federal tax law that utilizes the definition of a major integrated oil company.

Leasehold costs

Leasehold acquisition costs include costs to acquire the lease (e.g., lease bonus payments, auction bid payments, G&G costs incurred in years beginning before 9 August 2005, attorney fees and title transfer fees). These types of costs are capitalized to the property acquired and are recovered through depletion. Cost depletion attempts to match the deduction for the tax basis in the property with the rate at which the production occurs over the life of the reserves. Thus, the cost depletion rate is calculated as current year volumes sold, divided by the total volume of reserves in the ground at the beginning of the taxable year. This ratio is then multiplied by the remaining adjusted basis of the mineral property at the end of the year. Cost depletion is allowed for all types of taxpayers and for domestic and foreign mineral properties.

Independent producers and royalty owners who own US domestic property are allowed percentage depletion based on the statutory rates and limitations. For oil and gas production, the statutory rate is 15% of gross income, limited to 100% of the net income of the property, determined on a property-by-property basis. Percentage depletion is further limited to 1,000 barrels of production a day. Percentage depletion is prorated to the eligible property based on the ratio of 1,000 barrels to the total average daily production volume. The limited percentage depletion is compared with the cost depletion on a property-by-property basis. The taxpayer is allowed a deduction equal to the higher of the cost or percentage depletion on a property-by-property basis. Lastly, the taxpayer is subject to an overall taxable income limitation such that percentage depletion cannot exceed 65% of the taxpayer's taxable income (with certain adjustments). Any depletion limited by the 65% limitation can be carried forward to future years without expiration. The actual depletion deducted in the current year return is the amount that reduces the leasehold basis for the year.

G&G costs

Costs expended for G&G have different tax treatment depending on the taxpayer's classification, the date on which the costs were incurred and whether the lease is domestic or foreign.

For all taxpayers with tax years beginning before 9 August 2005, domestic and foreign G&G were treated as part of the leasehold costs and were depleted. G&G incurred in relation to foreign leases is still subject to these provisions.

For taxpayers that are not defined as major integrated oil companies, G&G incurred in taxable years beginning after 9 August 2005 is capitalized as an asset, separate from the leasehold cost, and amortized over 24 months using the half-year convention.

For taxpayers defined as major integrated oil companies, all of the above rules relating to domestic and foreign G&G costs apply to costs incurred before 18 May 2006. Additionally, for US leases, the amortization period has been extended to five years for G&G costs incurred after 17 May 2006 but before 20 December 2007. For G&G costs incurred after 19 December 2007, the amortization period has been further extended to seven years.

Development costs

Development expenditures include IDC and tangible property expenditures. IDC is a capitalizable cost, but the current US tax law allows taxpayers to make an election to deduct domestic IDC in the first year it is incurred. This is a taxpayer-level election, and, once it is made, it is binding for all future years. If this election is not properly made, the IDC is capitalized to the leasehold or tangible property basis and recovered through depletion or depreciation, as appropriate.

In almost all cases, a company will want to make the initial election to deduct domestic IDC because the present value benefit of the tax deduction is generally significant. If the taxpayer is an independent producer that has made the initial election to deduct IDC, the amount of the IDC deduction is equal to 100% of the IDC incurred in the current year. If the taxpayer is an integrated producer that has made the initial election to deduct IDC, the amount of the IDC deduction is equal to 70% of the IDC incurred in the current year, with the remaining 30% capitalized and amortized over a 60-month period, beginning with the month in which the costs are paid or incurred.

If the taxpayer made a proper initial election to expense the IDC, the taxpayer may make a year-by-year election to capitalize some or all of its otherwise deductible IDC. If the IDC is capitalized under this yearly election, it is amortized over a 60-month period beginning with the month in which such expenditure was paid or incurred. Some taxpayers may want to consider this yearly election to capitalize some or all of the IDC as part of their tax planning. Two examples of when the yearly election might be beneficial are when a taxpayer is paying AMT or when a taxpayer has a large net operating loss to carryforward.

IDC on property located outside of the US is capitalized and, based on taxpayer entity election, is either amortized over 10 years or depleted as part of the leasehold cost basis.

Tangible property is a depreciable asset. As such, it is depreciated using either the unit of production (UoP) method or the modified accelerated cost recovery system (MACRS). The UoP method uses a similar ratio used to calculate cost depletion multiplied by the adjusted basis of the tangible equipment; thus, depreciation is calculated over the entire productive life of the property.

The MACRS is based on the class life as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on a declining-balance method. For tangible equipment used in the US, the MACRS method is the percentage of the declining balance shown in the table on the next page, which is based on the recovery period of the asset. Congress has retroactively extended the depreciation provisions to provide for the temporary first-year depreciation deduction equal to 50% of the adjusted basis of certain qualified property. Qualified property acquired and placed in

service before 1 January 2015 (1 January 2016, in the case of certain property having longer production periods, and certain aircraft) will qualify for the additional first-year depreciation deduction.

Foreign assets may use the UoP method or the MACRS method, but they are required to use the straight-line (100%) declining balance over the longer alternative recovery period for MACRS. Over the years, the IRS has published revenue procedures⁸ that list the recovery periods of various types of tangible property. The following table gives examples of the typical oil and gas tangible equipment MACRS recovery periods for domestic assets.⁹

| Item | Kind of depreciating asset | Industry in which the asset is used | Period |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Oil and gas transportation asset, (including trunk line, pipeline and integrated producer-related storage facilities) | Gas supply or transportation | 15 years 150% |
| 2 | Petroleum and petroleum products distribution asset used for wholesale or retail sales | Marketing petroleum products | 5 years 200% |
| 3 | Oil production asset (including gathering lines, related storage facilities and platforms, excluding electricity generation assets) | Oil and gas extraction | 7 years 200% |
| 4 | Gas production asset (including gathering lines, related storage facilities and platforms, excluding electricity generation assets) | Oil and gas extraction | 7 years 200% |
| 5 | Onshore and offshore platform | Oil and gas extraction | 7 years 200% |
| 6 | Asset (other than an electricity generation asset) used to separate condensate, crude oil, domestic gas, liquid natural gas or liquid petroleum gas for product pipeline quality (i.e., gas processing compression or separation equipment, but not if the manufacture occurs in an oil refinery) | Gas processing (production) | 7 years 200% |
| 7 | Petroleum refining (including assets used in distillation, fractionation and catalytic cracking of crude into gasoline and its other products) | Petroleum refining | 10 years 200% |
| 8 | Onshore drilling equipment | Oil and gas drilling | 5 years 200% |
| 9 | Offshore drilling equipment: | | |
| | ▸ For contract drillers | Oil and gas drilling | 5 years 200% |
| | ▸ For oil and gas producers | Oil and gas drilling | 7 years 200% |

8 Rev. Proc 87-56;1987-2.C.B.674.

9 TAM 200311003.

| Item | Kind of depreciating asset | Industry in which the asset is used | Period |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 10 | LNG plant (including assets used in liquefaction, storage and regasification, connections, tanks, related land improvements, pipeline interconnections and marine terminal facilities) | Gas liquefaction and regasification | 15 years 150% |

Capital allowances for income tax purposes are not subject to credits unless they qualify as R&D costs.

D. Incentives

Exploration

IDC expenditures incurred for property located in the US are immediately deductible for income tax purposes for independent producers, and 70% is deductible for integrated producers. See also Section C.

Tax losses

Income tax losses can be carried forward for 20 years; however, the utilization of a carried-forward loss is subject to meeting detailed "continuity of ownership" requirements (broadly, continuity means no more than a 50% change in stock ownership within a three-year period). Tax losses may be carried back for two years.

Regional incentives

Various state and local governments may give incentives to continue production on properties that are marginally producing, such as waiving production or property taxes, or both.

Section 199 (manufacturing) deduction

Section 199¹⁰ was enacted in 2004 and became effective beginning in 2005. This manufacturing deduction is applicable to various industries, and the production of oil and gas is specifically listed as an extraction activity that qualifies for the deduction.

The manufacturing deduction was 3% at the time of enactment, increased to 6% for taxable years 2007 to 2009 and is fully phased in at 9% for taxable years beginning in 2010 for non-oil and gas industries. For the oil and gas industry, the rate was frozen at 6%.

The manufacturing deduction is based on the appropriate percentage of qualified production activities income (QPAI); but it is limited to 50% of production wages and it is further limited to taxable income. QPAI is calculated as the domestic production gross receipts (DPGR) less the cost of goods sold and other expenses and losses or deductions allocable to such receipts.

Working interest revenue and related hedging income and losses are included in DPGR. An example of income that does not qualify as DPGR is non-operating interest revenue (e.g., royalty income and natural gas transportation income). Receipts related to selling self-constructed DPGR real property assets may qualify as DPGR.

Expenses included in the calculation of QPAI are all expenses incurred for producing oil and gas, IDC, depletion, and company interest expense and overhead allocable to the activity.

Research and development

As of the date of this publication, the US federal tax law does not provide for an R&D credit for qualifying R&D expenditures.

¹⁰ 26 US Code §199.

For amounts paid or incurred before 1 January 2015, the US tax law provided for an R&D tax credit for qualified R&D expenditures. The R&D credit has had a long and varied history, and it generally allowed two calculation methods. The R&D credit regime in place for amounts incurred before 1 January 2015 allowed a company to choose the “old” method or an alternative simplified credit (ASC) method.

The ASC method was much simpler than the old method; it eliminated the base period limitations, thereby allowing more taxpayers to qualify for the credit, and significantly simplifying the calculation. The ASC required a company to calculate the average R&D expenditures for the three prior tax years. The R&D expenditures that qualified for credit were those in excess of 50% of the three prior years’ average expenditures. For amounts paid or incurred before 1 January 2015, the R&D credit under the ASC method was 14% if the taxpayer elected to reduce asset bases and deductions for expenditures, or 9.1% if the taxpayer elected not to reduce asset bases and deductions of qualified expenditures.

Additionally, certain states have adopted R&D credit regimes to create incentives for companies.

E. Withholding taxes

Interest, dividends and royalties

Interest, dividends, patent and know-how royalties paid to nonresidents are subject to a final US withholding tax (WHT) of 30%, unless modified by a treaty.

Branch remittance tax

The US imposes a branch profits tax of 30%, unless modified by a treaty.

Foreign-resident WHT

In general, if non-employee compensation is paid to a nonresident, the company must withhold tax on the payment and remit the withholding to the IRS. The withholding rate is 30%, unless it is reduced by a treaty.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

The US income tax system contains significant rules regarding the classification of debt and equity. These rules can have a significant impact on decisions made in respect of the financing of oil and gas projects, including the following:

- ▶ Thin capitalization measures apply to recharacterize debt as equity for related-party debt if the debt to equity ratio is too high. No guidance is provided by the IRS, but a debt-to-equity ratio of 3:1 is generally acceptable. Interest expense on any recharacterized debt is prohibited.
- ▶ Additionally, interest expense may be prohibited if it is paid on loans made or guaranteed by related foreign parties not subject to US tax on the interest, under Section 163(j).
- ▶ These thin capitalization measures apply to the total debt of US operations of multinational groups (including foreign and domestic related-party debt and third-party debt). The measures apply to all US entities and foreign entities with effectively connected income.

Section 163(j) provides for a safe harbor debt-to-equity ratio of 1.5:1. Interest deductions may be limited for interest payments on the portion of the company’s debt that exceeds the safe harbor ratio. The limitation is complicated, but it generally defers the company’s interest expense. Interest expense in excess of interest income is limited to 50% of the adjusted taxable income. “Adjusted taxable income” in this context is taxable income with interest expense, depreciation, depletion and amortization deductions added back. Any amount limited in the current year carries over to the following tax year and is once again subject to the 50% adjusted taxable limitation.

If the company's debt-to-equity ratio does not exceed the safe harbor ratio, interest is fully deductible, provided the company can satisfy the arm's length test, whereby the company must establish that the level of debt could be obtained under arm's length arrangements, taking into account industry practice.

The debt or equity classification of financial instruments for tax purposes is subject to prescribed tests under law. These measures focus on economic substance rather than on legal form.

The debt or equity measures are relevant to the taxation of dividends (including imputation requirements), the characterization of payments from nonresident entities, the thin capitalization regime, and the dividend and interest WHT and related measures.

The US does not impose interest quarantining. Corporate-level debt deductions may be used to offset all income derived by the borrowing entity regardless of the source or the type of income.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

The disposal of an oil and gas property generally results in a taxable event, unless the disposal qualifies as a statutory non-taxable event (e.g., like-kind exchange and involuntary conversions – see the next subsection). Depletion, depreciation, IDC deductions and IDC amortization are subject to recapture if the proceeds received upon disposal exceed the asset's adjusted basis at the time of disposition; any amounts recaptured are included in taxable ordinary income. If the proceeds are less than the adjusted basis of the asset, a tax loss may be allowed against ordinary income (see Section B).

Like-kind exchanges and involuntary conversions

The US tax statute generally allows taxpayers that exchange certain like-kind property to defer the gain. The taxpayer may have to recognize some or all of the gain immediately if the recapture rules apply. The gain that is deferred is not to be taxed until the newly acquired property is sold. Additionally, if assets are lost or damaged through an involuntary conversion (e.g., hurricane, flood or fire), taxpayers may replace the property with like-kind property and, similarly, may qualify to defer the gain. Specific rules must be followed to take advantage of the gain deferral treatment for both like-kind exchanges and involuntary conversions.

The oil and gas industry often uses these statutory provisions to exchange or replace property and defer potential gain. Gain deferral can be achieved in a variety of circumstances. For example, oil and gas mineral properties are considered to be real property for these purposes, and they can be exchanged for other mineral properties whether developed or undeveloped. Because mineral interests are considered to be real property, royalty mineral interests can be exchanged for working interests. They can also be exchanged for other non-mineral real property (e.g., ranch land). Note that IDC recapture rules may apply to these transactions.

Tangible lease and well equipment is like-kind to other tangible leases and well equipment. However, the rules relating to tangible property are much more restrictive in qualifying as like-kind.

Since mineral properties generally consist of both real property (reserves in the ground) and tangible property, care must be taken in dividing the exchange transaction into separate transactions and in ensuring that like-kind property is received in each exchange. Tangible equipment is not like-kind to the mineral interest. Any property received in the exchange that is not like-kind, including cash, may cause part (or all) of the gain to be recognized on a current basis.

The property received in a like-kind exchange or involuntary conversion uses the carryover basis from the property exchanged. The basis must be adjusted if non-like-kind property is received or any gain is recognized on the transaction.

Abandonment

If an oil and gas property is abandoned or considered worthless for tax purposes, then the adjusted basis remaining in the property may be deducted in the current tax year as a trade or business loss and may be offset against ordinary income.

Sharing arrangements – joint development of oil and gas property

It is common in the US oil and gas industry for entities to enter into sharing arrangements under which one party pays part or all of the development costs of the other party to earn an interest in the mineral property. Two of the most common sharing arrangements are farm-ins and carried interests. If structured properly, these arrangements can be entered into with little or no current income tax implications under the “pool of capital” doctrine. The arrangements must be structured so that the investment made by both parties relates to the same oil and gas property or properties. For example, assume Taxpayer X, owner of the mineral interest, structures an arrangement whereby Company A agrees to drill and pay all the costs for the first well on a tract. If Company A receives an interest in the same property as its only consideration, the arrangement should be accorded non-taxable treatment for both parties. If either party receives cash or non-cash consideration for entering into the arrangement, the “other” consideration is likely to be immediately taxable. For example, it is common for the mineral interest owner to receive cash at the time of entering into the sharing arrangement. While the sharing arrangement should be afforded non-taxable treatment, the mineral interest owner generally has a taxable event with respect to the cash received.

It is common for one party to pay a disproportionately larger share of the drilling and completion costs to earn an interest in the mineral property. These disproportionate costs, representing amounts in excess of the parties’ percentage interest, may not be fully deductible currently. As a result of these limitations on deductions, it is common to structure these arrangements to be treated as partnerships under US tax law. The partnership structure currently allows the taxpayers to obtain some or all of the deductions that otherwise may be limited. The tax partnership rules are very complicated, and care should be taken because the partnership structure may affect the economic outcome of the arrangement (see the discussion in Section J regarding forms of business presence).

Selling shares in a company (consequences for resident and nonresident shareholders)

Generally, a share disposal is subject to the capital gains tax (CGT) regime. Nonresidents that dispose of shares in a US company are not generally subject to US federal income tax because the domestic tax rules source the gain to the residence of the seller. However, the main exception to this rule is if the stock of a US company constitutes a “US real property interest,” in which case the company is treated as a US real property holding company. If it is determined that the stock of a US company constitutes a US real property interest, any resulting built-in stock gain is subject to tax.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT and GST

The United States does not have a VAT or GST tax regime.

Sales and use taxes

Most states and localities (e.g., cities, counties, parishes and transportation districts) impose a sales tax on sales, except on sales for resale. These taxes generally include both tangible personal property and enumerated services. The taxable base generally includes the total amount for which the tangible personal property is sold, including any services rendered by the seller in connection with the sale. Services purchased separately are not generally taxable, unless they are specifically enumerated as taxable.

In addition, most states and localities impose a "use" tax. Use tax is a tax imposed on the storage, use or other consumption of a taxable item purchased, for which sales tax has not already been charged by the seller. Sales and use tax rates typically range from 3% to 9% of the fair value of the taxable item sold.

If a company establishes "nexus" (a presence sufficient that the state has jurisdiction to impose a tax on the company) in a state, it will generally need to obtain a sales tax permit, collect the proper taxes from customers on behalf of the state and file sales tax returns. Although each state has slightly different nexus requirements, a company generally is subject to tax collection requirements if it leases, rents or sells tangible personal property in the state, furnishes services in the state that are taxable under the statute, holds property in the state for resale, maintains a business location in the state, operates in the state through full-time or part-time resident or nonresident salespeople or agents, or maintains an inventory in the state of tangible personal property for lease, rental or delivery in a vehicle owned or operated by the seller.

Property tax

Many states, counties and cities impose ad valorem tax on real or tangible personal property located in the jurisdiction on a specified date each year. Real property and personal property are valued by assessors at fair market value, and tax is assessed as a percentage of the fair market value. Generally, property is assessed according to its status and condition on 1 January each year. The fair market value of real and personal property must be determined by the following generally recognized appraisal methods: the market approach, the cost approach or the income approach.

Severance tax

Many states impose a tax on the extraction of natural resources, such as oil, coal or gas. Returns generally must be filed by each operator or taxpayer that takes production in kind. The operator must withhold tax from royalty and non-operator payments.

Petroleum products tax

Many states impose a tax on petroleum products delivered within the state. Generally, any company that makes a sale of petroleum products to a purchaser in a state that is not a licensed distributor, or does not hold a direct payment certificate, pays a tax based on the gross earnings derived from the sale of the petroleum products.

Other taxes

In addition to the above taxes, many states impose other state-specific taxes. For example, some states impose an inspection fee on petroleum products distributed, sold, offered or exposed for sale or use, or used or consumed in a state. The inspection fee can be imposed on fuels removed from a terminal using a terminal rack and must be collected by the owner of the inventory, or the position holder, from the person who orders the withdrawal.

Some states impose a tax based on the gross receipts of companies that transport natural gas by pipeline for hire, sale or use, in addition to all other taxes and licenses levied and assessed. Some states impose fees on underground storage tanks under the hazardous waste control law.

Import duties

All goods, equipment and materials that enter the US from overseas are subject to customs import duties. The US Customs and Border Protection (the CBP) regulates imports into the United States. The CBP directly processes the clearance of imported goods and enforces the customs regulations of the US. The CBP also enforces the laws of other Government agencies that may require special documentation at the time of import or may impose additional obligations upon importers (such as excise tax or other collections).

The customs duty applied to the customs value of imported goods may vary depending on several factors, including the type of commodity, its end use, the constituent materials and the country of origin. Duty rates may be ad valorem (at a percentage) or a specific amount (rate per unit or quantity), or a combination of both. For example, liquefied natural gas (LNG) is generally “free” of duty, greases are dutiable at 5.8% of the import value, while some petroleum products, such as motor fuel and motor fuel blending stock, attract a duty rate of US\$0.525 per barrel effective to 1 January 2016. Ethanol that is denatured is subject to an ad valorem duty of 1.9%, may be subject to an added duty if imported for fuel use and may be subject to a specific excise tax.

Upon importation into the United States and within 15 calendar days after arrival in US territory, the importer or its representative (a customs broker) must file an “entry” (CF-3461) for the release of the merchandise. Ten working days after the release of the merchandise, the importer is responsible for filing the “entry summary” (CF-7501) with accurate information, together with the appropriate duties, taxes and fees.

It is important to note that, under Section 484 of the Tariff Act, as amended,¹¹ the importer of record (IOR) is responsible for using “reasonable care” to enter, classify and value imported merchandise. The importer must also provide any other information necessary to enable the CBP to assess duties properly, collect accurate statistics and determine whether any other applicable legal requirement is met. Even when the IOR uses a customs broker to make the entries, the importer remains liable for the customs broker’s acts made on its behalf, including any broker errors.

Export duties

There are no duties applied to goods exported from the US.

Excise tax

The US federal excise tax is applied to some goods manufactured in the US, including petroleum products, alcohol, tobacco and some luxury products. Excise taxes are imposed on all the following fuels: gasoline (including aviation fuel and gasoline blend stocks), diesel fuel (including dyed diesel fuel), diesel-water fuel emulsion, kerosene (including dyed kerosene and kerosene used in aviation), other fuels (including alternative fuels), compressed natural gas (CNG) and fuels used in commercial transportation on inland waterways. It is important to note that some excise taxes other than fuel taxes affect the oil and gas industry, most notably environmental taxes, such as the oil spill liability tax.

The excise tax varies depending on the product. For example, the 2013 excise tax on gasoline was US\$0.184 per gallon, and on aviation gasoline it was US\$0.194 per gallon, while on diesel fuel and kerosene it was US\$0.244 per gallon. (Note that, as of this printing, the 2013 excise tax rates remain current for 2015; however, the rates may be subject to adjustment during the 2015 US Congressional sessions.)

Excise taxes may also be imposed at the state level and vary by product and state. For current information pertaining to state-level excise taxes, please consult with any of the oil and gas contacts listed for the United States.

The rate of the oil spill liability tax is presently US\$0.08 per barrel; this rate is scheduled to be in effect until 31 December 2016 and then increase to US\$0.09 until 31 December 2017. As this rate may be modified by Congress after this publication, readers are advised to consult with any of the oil and gas contacts listed for current rates. This tax generally applies to crude oil received at a US refinery and to petroleum products entering the US for consumption, use or warehousing. The tax also applies to certain uses and the exportation of domestic crude oil. The time when the tax is imposed, as well as the entity that is liable for it, depends on the specific operations of importing or exporting.

11 19 US Code §1484.

Stamp duty

The US does not have a stamp duty regime.

Registration fees

The US does not impose registration fees at the federal level. Some states impose a transfer tax on the transfer of title of tangible or real property.

I. Preference programs

Foreign trade zones

Foreign trade zones are established to encourage and expedite US participation in international trade; to foster dealings in foreign goods imported not only for domestic consumption, but also for export after combination with domestic goods; and to defer payment of duties until goods are entered into the commerce of the United States.

There are two kinds of foreign trade zones:

- ▶ General purpose zones (often an industrial park or port complex whose facilities are available for use by the general public)
- ▶ Subzones (normally, single-purpose sites when operations cannot feasibly be moved to, or accommodated by, a general purpose zone)

The main financial benefits of foreign trade zones include duty deferment, duty elimination on exports, duty reduction (inverted tariff relief) and local ad valorem tax exemption. Other benefits include lower administrative costs, lower security and insurance costs, no time constraints on storage, shorter transit time and improved inventory control. There are also community benefits such as the retention of existing jobs, attraction of new employment, investment in the local community, local improvements to infrastructure, and increased local purchases of goods and services.

Duty drawback

A drawback is a refund, reduction or waiver, in whole or in part, of customs duties and certain other taxes collected upon the importation of an article or materials that are subsequently exported or used in the production of goods that are exported. Several types of drawback are authorized under Section 1313, Title 19, of the US Code: manufacturing, unused merchandise and rejected merchandise.

Specific guidelines apply for a drawback between the members of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (NAFTA drawback claim). Under the NAFTA drawback regime, the rule known as “the lesser of the two” is sometimes applied. There are also specific collections that cannot be refunded, waived or reduced by a NAFTA country as a condition of export.

Other significant taxes

Other significant US taxes include payroll taxes paid by employers, including social security tax at the rate of 6.2% up to the annual wage limitation (for 2015, the limit is US\$118,500 per employee), and Medicare tax at the rate of 1.45% with no income limitation. Additionally, individuals with earned income of more than US\$200,000 (US\$250,000 for married couples filing jointly) pay an additional 0.9% in Medicare taxes.

J. Other

Foreign Investment Review Board

The US Government does not allow foreign companies to purchase offshore leases directly. Additionally, the Department of Commerce requires foreign parties to report investment in the United States on a quarterly and annual basis if certain criteria are met.

Forms of business presence

Forms of business presence in the US typically include companies, foreign branches, joint ventures (incorporated and unincorporated) and partnerships. In addition to commercial considerations, the tax consequences of each type of entity are important to consider when setting up a business in the US.

Unincorporated joint ventures are commonly used by companies for the exploration and development of oil and gas projects. Unincorporated joint ventures are treated as tax partnerships under US tax law, unless the joint venture owners elect to take production in kind and not be treated as a partnership. Partnership operations “flow through” the entity, meaning that the income and deductions are reported by the partners on their tax returns. Therefore, all US federal income tax is paid by the partners, not at the entity level. Additionally, there are very complex rules that must be followed that deal with partnership capital accounts.

There are various US reporting requirements for tax partnerships (e.g., a federal information tax return must be filed annually). In addition, if there are foreign partners, tax withholding and reporting may be required. Lastly, most states treat partnerships as flow-through entities and require information returns to be filed. But some states impose income tax at the partnership level or require the partnership to withhold, remit and file reports on partner distributions to out-of-state or foreign partners.

Pending legislation

As of the date of this printing, there are administrative proposals and anticipated legislation that may ultimately change oil and gas taxation significantly. Consideration should be given to these new or potential tax changes in US planning.

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Tax regime applied to this country

 Concession
 Royalties

 Profit-based special taxes

 Corporate income tax

 Production sharing contracts
 Service contract

A. At a glance

- ▶ Concession agreements – These apply
- ▶ Production sharing contracts – Not used
- ▶ Corporate income tax rate – 25%
- ▶ Royalties – None
- ▶ Bonuses – None
- ▶ Resource rent tax – None
- ▶ Capital allowances – See Section C
- ▶ Investment incentives – See Section D

B. Fiscal regime

According to Article 1 of Decree-Law No. 14,181, oil and natural gas reserves situated in Uruguayan territory, in any state, belong to the Uruguayan nation. Their exploration and exploitation (including research activities) may only be performed by the State.

ANCAP (*Administración Nacional de Combustibles, Alcohol y Portland*) is the State agency in charge of oil and gas activities. It is allowed to hire third parties on its behalf to perform exploration and exploitation activities, either individuals or legal entities, nationals or foreign, publicly or privately owned. Contractors' remuneration may be fixed in money or goods and they may freely export oil and gas corresponding to them according to contractual clauses.

In accordance with Article 16 of Decree-Law No. 14,181, the activities of exploration, exploitation, transportation and commerce in relation to oil and natural gas have been exempted from all national taxes, except for the following:

- ▶ Any applicable corporate income tax (CIT)
- ▶ Social security contributions

These exemptions apply exclusively to ANCAP and its direct contractors.

Corporate income tax

CIT applies to Uruguayan-sourced income, derived from activities performed, goods situated, or rights economically exploited in Uruguay and obtained by resident legal entities or nonresidents operating through a permanent establishment (PE) in Uruguay. CIT is applicable at a fixed 25% rate on net taxable income (gross fiscal income minus deductible expenses).

According to the general tax regime, expenses are deductible for CIT if appropriately documented, if necessary to obtain/maintain Uruguayan-sourced income and if subject to taxation (in Uruguay or abroad). Expenses should be real, and their amount in accordance with the economic advantage obtained by the taxpayer.

All of the expense should be deductible if the counterparty taxpayer is taxed at a rate of 25% or more; if not, the expense should only be deducted in proportion to the rates – for example, if the expense is subject to 12% withholding tax in Uruguay then 48% (12% out of 25%) of the expense should be deductible by the taxpayer.

Uruguayan companies should obtain certificates issued by foreign tax authorities or private audit firms abroad stating the effective income tax rate applicable to the counterparty's income, so that expenses can be deducted in proportion to effective foreign tax rates.

If the local company is a PE of a foreign entity, expenses incurred abroad may be deducted only if considered necessary to obtain and maintain Uruguayan-sourced income, and their origin and nature can be reliably determined. The same treatment should apply between a local company and its PE abroad, or between two PEs of a single entity with one located in Uruguay and another elsewhere. In any case, in order to allow the deduction, these expenses should have been actually incurred or the services actually rendered, and allocated according to technically sustainable criteria. For PEs, a pro-rata allocation of services is generally not allowed.

Additionally, transfer pricing regulations have been applied in Uruguay since 2007 for CIT purposes.

Nonresidents' income tax

As a general rule, companies should pay income tax on their Uruguayan-sourced income derived from their operations.

In case no PE arises in Uruguay, then the nonresident extractive company should be subject to a 12% nonresidents' income tax (NRIT) on the Uruguayan-sourced income derived from its activities. If a nonresident company is hired by a local CIT-paying client, tax should be withheld directly from the nonresident company by that client.

Services rendered inside Uruguay should be considered of Uruguayan source. Furthermore, technical assistance services rendered from abroad to corporate income taxpayers should also be considered as of Uruguayan source and thus subject to withholding tax.

If the company constitutes a PE in Uruguay, it should pay CIT on amounts of Uruguayan-sourced net taxable income at a 25% rate. As a consequence, the 12% NRIT should not apply in this case. As a PE, the company should register in Uruguay for tax purposes by appointing a local representative (jointly liable for the nonresident's tax responsibilities in the country). In addition, the PE should maintain sufficient accounting records for tax purposes.

Net wealth tax

Net wealth tax is levied on assets located inside Uruguay at the tax year-end, valued according to tax criteria. The deduction of certain liabilities is allowed (such as loans with local banks and accounts payable related to acquisition of goods and services, amongst others). The annual rate is 1.5% for legal entities.

Group relief

Uruguay does not allow so-called group relief.

Statute of limitations

The statute of limitations in Uruguay permits a period of five years to bring a case to court, but that period may be extended to 10 years in a case of tax fraud.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply for unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Capital allowances

For taxable income subject to a total 25% tax, investments in production facilities, pipelines and installations (tangible assets) used in extractive activities are depreciated over their estimated useful life. Urban buildings should be depreciated over a 50-year period. In general, tangible assets should be revalued according to the variation in prices measured through the national products producer price index (Spanish acronym "IPPN," an inflation index), published by the National Statistics Institute of Uruguay.

Intangible assets may be recognized for tax purposes if a real investment has been made and the seller has been duly identified. They cannot be revalued and should be depreciated over a five-year period. Goodwill cannot be depreciated for tax purposes.

Public works concessionaires may opt to depreciate concession investments over a 10-year period or during the useful life of the actual investments. In the latter option, the depreciation period cannot exceed the duration of the contract, and "useful life" should be justified through certification by a qualified professional.

D. Incentives

Tax losses

Losses may be carried forward for up to five years. It is compulsory to adjust the value of losses by applying the appropriate variation in the IPPN.

No loss carryback is allowed. Nor can losses be transferred to other taxpayers through mergers or any other means.

Decree No. 68/013

Decree No. 68/013 provides terms for hydrocarbon exploration in areas offshore Uruguay under the agreements awarded as a result of so-called "Uruguay Round II". The agreements are made between ANCAP and the oil companies selected.

According to the Decree, contractors that concluded their contracts under the terms of Uruguay Round II would have:

- ▶ A tax credit for VAT included in the acquisitions of goods and services required for hydrocarbon exploitation activities if the subcontractors are CIT or NRIT taxpayers.
- ▶ A right to import and re-export, free of any fee, tax, cost, right, quota, payment or any other restriction, the machinery, equipment, materials, tools, vehicles and inputs necessary for developing hydrocarbon exploitation activities.

Additionally, subcontractors that concluded their contracts under the Uruguay Round II could enjoy the following provisions:

- ▶ Exemption from CIT or NRIT for Uruguayan-sourced income derived from hydrocarbon exploitation activities
- ▶ VAT exemption for the sale of goods and the provision of services related to hydrocarbon exploitation activities
- ▶ A tax credit for VAT included in the acquisitions of goods and services related to hydrocarbon exploitation activities if the subcontractors are CIT or NRIT taxpayers
- ▶ Exemption from net wealth tax for the goods and rights related to hydrocarbon exploitation activities
- ▶ A right to import and re-export, free of any fee, tax, cost, right, quota, payment or any other restriction, the machinery, equipment, materials, tools, vehicles and inputs necessary for developing hydrocarbon exploitation activities.

This Decree became effective on 5 October 2012.

Promotion of investments

The promotion of investments has been regulated by Law No. 16,906 and, at present, by Decree No. 2/012. To qualify for tax incentives on investments, CIT-paying companies must be engaged in activities considered to be promoted (as described below).

Promotion has to be approved by the Executive Power, taking into consideration not only the amount of local investment, but also the extent to which the activities to be performed are aimed at achieving the following goals of increasing:

- ▶ Employment in the country
- ▶ Improvement in geographical decentralization
- ▶ Exports
- ▶ Use of environment-friendly technologies (such as wind energy)
- ▶ Research, development and innovation
- ▶ Specific indicators

Regarding CIT, the amount of the exemption depends on the total amount of investment, and can vary up to 100% of the investment, although the exemption may not exceed 60% of tax payable at fiscal year-end.

The benefits to be derived from the Government's promotion of investments scheme are granted for a period of time, determined by taking into account the amount of investment and, after certain conditions have been met, to be considered as a promoted investment.

If promotion is granted, in general the Executive Power also grants the following additional benefits:

- ▶ Net wealth tax exemption on movable assets and real estate (the latter for a period of 8-10 years).
- ▶ Import taxation exemption (VAT, customs duties and others). This exemption should only apply to goods that do not compete with national industries, and prior authorization by the Ministry of Industry has to be obtained.
- ▶ VAT on local acquisitions of goods and services related to real estate may be recovered through certificates of credit.

Free trade zones

Law No. 15,921 declared of national interest the promotion and development of free trade zones (FZs), which were created to promote investments, to expand exports, to use the Uruguayan workforce and to encourage international economic integration.

Companies established in an FZ may not carry on industrial or commercial activities or render services in Uruguayan territory (other than an FZ). Retail trading is also forbidden inside an FZ. At least 75% of an FZ company's personnel must be Uruguayan nationals (unless the Executive Power authorizes otherwise).

FZ companies are exempted from national and local taxes related to their activities in the FZ. The exemption does not cover:

- ▶ Social security contributions
- ▶ Taxes to be paid as withholding agent (such as personal income tax or NRIT) in certain cases

In general, goods and services introduced into an FZ, as well as products manufactured in them, may be sent abroad without restrictions. However, goods introduced into an FZ lose Uruguayan certificate of origin. As a consequence, MERCOSUR (the economic union formed by several countries including Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Venezuela and Uruguay) customs advantages are also lost.

Temporary admissions regime

Companies may request the local authorities to apply the "temporary admissions" regime, under which they import raw materials, subject them to an

industrial process, and then export them. The time between import and export of materials should not exceed 18 months.

Under this regime, raw materials may be imported without paying any customs duties, VAT or any other applicable taxation on imports. However, if raw materials are not exported in due time, customs duties, VAT or other applicable taxes should be paid, with the corresponding penalties and interests.

E. Withholding taxes

Dividends and other profit distributions

Dividends paid from a Uruguayan subsidiary to nonresidents (companies, individuals or branches) or to Uruguayan tax-resident individuals are subject to a 7% withholding tax (WHT), applicable on the total amount of dividends paid or accrued if the dividends are paid out of income subject to CIT. Dividends and branch remittances paid out of income not subject to CIT are exempt from tax. Dividends subject to withholding tax cannot exceed the taxable profit of the company.

For tax purposes, any capital redemptions paid or credited to NRIT taxpayers or personal income tax (PIT) taxpayers which exceed the nominal value of the shares for which redemption is being paid should be treated as dividends and thus subject to the above-mentioned withholding tax regime.

Royalties

In general, royalty payments to nonresidents should be subject to a 12% withholding tax.

Interest

Please refer to Section F below.

Technical assistance services

In general, a 12% withholding tax should apply to the payment of services to nonresidents if the services rendered could be considered as technical assistance services. The effective rate could drop to 0.6% if 90% of the local company's income is not subject to CIT.

All services performed by nonresidents inside Uruguayan territory should be subject to 12% withholding tax (whether technical or not).

Net wealth tax

CIT taxpayers should withhold 1.5% from the total amount of accounts payable owed to nonresidents as at 31 December each year. An exemption should apply for liabilities arising from imports of goods and loans.

VAT

VAT withholding may apply when services are performed by nonresidents inside Uruguayan territory, at a rate of 22%. The withholding tax amount may be recovered by the local VAT payer through its own tax liquidation if the service is directly or indirectly related to VAT-taxable operations.

F. Financing considerations

Thin capitalization

Uruguay has no thin capitalization rules. However, there is an exception by which financial operations between a parent and its branch are considered as equity accounts.

Interest taxation

In general, interest paid to nonresidents should be subject to a 12% withholding tax on the total amount of interest paid.

VAT at 22% should apply on local interest. Interest derived from public or private securities, bank deposits and warrants is VAT-exempted.

G. Transactions

Asset disposals

In general, the disposal of assets is taxable, or deductible at the 25% tax rate, for Uruguayan entities or nonresident entities with permanent establishments in the country. Disposal of fixed assets offshore should not be taxable for CIT purposes.

Disposals of capital participations

Direct transfers of a participation interest in a Uruguayan subsidiary owned by individual residents or any nonresidents should be taxed at a 12% rate applicable to 20% of fair market value (FMV). A third-party valuation should be undertaken to ascertain the FMV.

In order to pay this tax, nonresidents should register in Uruguay for tax purposes and appoint a Uruguay tax resident as a representative (jointly liable for the nonresident's tax responsibilities). Sales performed by CIT taxpayers should be taxable at 25% applicable on net taxable income.

Indirect transfers of a Uruguayan subsidiary's participation interest should not be taxable in any circumstances. Disposal of a participation interest in a foreign entity should also not be a taxable event in Uruguay.

H. Indirect taxes

VAT

In general, VAT is levied on circulations of goods and supplies of services inside Uruguayan territory, as well as on imports of certain goods. No VAT should apply for goods commercialized or services rendered abroad. The general VAT rate is 22%, although a minimum 10% rate should apply for some specific goods and transactions. On imports, VAT rates should be applied on normal customs value plus customs duty.

Advanced payments for imports may be required, as follows:

- ▶ Advanced VAT at 10% (for imports of goods taxed at 22%) or 3% (for imports of goods taxed at 10%) of total customs value plus customs duty. The VAT rate applicable depends on the customs item number of the goods to be imported. Some goods may be exempted from VAT on import.
- ▶ Advanced CIT at 15% or 4% of total customs value. The rate here again depends on the customs item number of the goods to be imported. Some goods may be exempted.

These advanced payments can be deducted from the company's tax liabilities.

VAT applicable on the importation of goods should be recovered by the taxpayer as input VAT. Input VAT directly or indirectly related to non-taxable operations for VAT cannot be recovered; in contrast, input VAT directly or indirectly related to taxable operations or exports can be recovered.

As long as the extracting company is VAT registered (as a PE, subsidiary or other structure), it can recover input VAT on local purchases of goods and services. Recoverable input VAT should be exclusively those amounts directly or indirectly related to taxable VAT operations or exports.

In the case of input VAT, refunds related to exports may be obtained monthly through the request of certificates of credit from the tax authorities. These certificates of credit may be used to pay a taxpayer's own taxes or social security contributions or to pay local suppliers from which the company originally purchased those goods and services (who may in turn use these to pay for their own taxes or social security contributions).

Imports of oil into Uruguay are VAT exempted, as well as the internal circulation of combustible materials derived from oil (except fuel oil and gas oil).

Excise Tax

Excise tax is an indirect tax levied on the first sale of certain luxury products performed within Uruguayan territory. Amongst its range of taxable goods is

the transfer of combustible materials derived from oil, for which excise tax rates vary from 0% to 133%.

The direct sale of oil is exempted.

Stamp Tax/Transfer Tax

There are no stamp or transfer taxes in Uruguay that should apply to petroleum extraction activities.

I. Other

Tax returns and tax assessments

Companies engaged in extraction activities must register with the Uruguayan tax authorities within 10 days before the beginning of any taxable activity.

Registration is not automatic; certain information must be filed with the tax authorities.

CIT and net wealth tax returns

Year-end tax returns and tax payments for CIT and the net wealth tax must be lodged/paid within four months after the end of the relevant fiscal year. For large taxpayers, tax returns must be filed along with audited financial statements. No interim returns are compulsory.

VAT returns

For large and medium-sized taxpayers, VAT returns should be filed monthly; for smaller taxpayers, an annual basis (within two months after fiscal year-end) is required.

Withholding tax returns should be filed monthly.

Companies are also obliged to perform monthly CIT, net wealth tax and VAT advanced payments.

Tax returns filings and tax assessments deadlines are fixed by tax authorities annually.

Tax authorities may audit any tax return within the period of limitations, regardless of the date these are actually filed.

Transfer pricing reporting and documentation requirements

Transfer pricing (TP) regulations in Uruguay are contained in the CIT laws and several related Executive Power Decrees. TP regulations were enacted in 2007 and became effective in 2009, based on the arm's length principle, and are in many aspects consistent with the OECD's Transfer Pricing Guidelines. The regulations allow advanced pricing agreements (APAs), but advanced customs valuations agreements (ACVAs) are not allowed at present.

Transfer pricing has become one of the most controversial issues for multinational companies in Uruguay when facing tax authorities' audits.

Local companies are required to submit TP information on an annual basis when meeting either of the following circumstances:

- ▶ When they engage in transactions included in this system for amounts exceeding 50 million indexed units (equivalent approximately to US\$6 million)

or

- ▶ When notified by the tax authorities

TP information should include:

- ▶ An informative return including a breakdown and quantification of transactions for the period that have been included in the TP system
- ▶ A copy of financial statements for the related fiscal year, when not required to be submitted under other provisions
- ▶ A TP study

TP information should be filed within nine months after fiscal year-end.

In case tax adjustments for CIT purposes should result from the TP submissions, the adjustments should be included in the corresponding return within four months after fiscal year-end.

According to local regulations, TP analysis may be performed considering either the local taxpayer or the nonresident counterparty.

If a TP study is performed abroad, the local company should obtain a document certified by an independent well-known auditor (duly translated if necessary) regarding the relevant study.

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Tax regime applied to this country

■ Concession

- Royalties
- Profit-based special taxes
- Corporate income tax

■ Production sharing contracts

- Service contract

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

This article describes the fiscal regime in force as of 1 January 2015, which is applicable to almost all subsurface users in Uzbekistan except for those operating under production sharing agreements (PSAs) signed with the Government of Uzbekistan.

The generally applicable fiscal regime that applies in Uzbekistan to exploration and production (E&P) contracts in the oil and gas industry consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), bonuses, subsurface use tax, excess profits tax (EPT) and other generally established taxes and contributions.

Bonuses

The subsurface users are subject to both a signature bonus and a commercial discovery bonus.

Subsurface use tax

Companies conducting extraction or processing of natural resources are obligated to assess and pay a subsurface use tax (similar to a royalty). The rates vary depending on the type of mineral extracted or processed.

Excess profits tax

Subsurface users extracting, producing and selling natural gas (export) and certain other products are generally subject to EPT.

Corporate income tax and infrastructure development tax

CIT is applied to all companies under the general tax regime at a rate of 7.5%. Companies are also subject to infrastructure development tax at a rate of 8% on net profit after CIT.

Investment incentives

Foreign companies engaged in exploration and prospecting for oil and gas are provided with certain tax incentives.

B. Fiscal regime

The generally applicable fiscal regime that applies in Uzbekistan to E&P activities in the oil and gas industry (except for PSAs) consists of a combination of CIT, bonuses, subsurface use tax, EPT, and other generally established taxes and contributions.

The taxes applicable to subsurface users are as set out in the table below.

| Applicable taxes | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Bonuses | Variable |
| Subsurface use tax | 2.6% to 30% |
| EPT | 50% |
| CIT | 7.5% |
| Excise tax | Variable |
| VAT | 20% |
| Infrastructure development tax | 8% |
| Contributions on revenue | 3.5% in total |
| Unified social payment | 25% (15% for small businesses) |
| Property tax | 4% |
| Land tax | Variable, depends on location and other characteristics of a land plot |
| Water use tax | Variable, generally immaterial |
| Other taxes and contributions | Variable |

Bonuses

Subsurface users are generally subject to both a signature bonus and a commercial discovery bonus.

Signature bonus

The signature bonus is a one-off payment levied on subsurface users for the right to conduct prospecting and exploration for mineral resources.

Depending on the type of the mineral resource, the amount to be paid to the Government varies from 100 to 10,000 times the minimum monthly wage (MMW), while for hydrocarbons it is 10,000 MMW. One MMW is set at UZS118,400 (approximately US\$49) as of 1 January 2015.

Commercial discovery bonus

The commercial discovery bonus is a fixed payment by subsurface users when a commercial discovery is made on the contract territory.

The base for calculation of the commercial discovery bonus is defined as the world market value of the extractable minerals duly approved by the competent state authorities (while for certain subsurface users having a market share dominance, an established value is used). The rate of the commercial discovery bonus is fixed at 0.1% of the value of approved extractable resources.

Subsurface use tax

The taxpayers of subsurface use tax are defined as legal entities conducting the extraction or processing of minerals. The taxable base is generally the average actual sales value of extracted (processed) minerals. The rates differ depending on the type of minerals extracted or processed (30% for natural gas, 20% for crude oil and gas condensate).

Excess profits tax

Subsurface users extracting, producing and selling natural gas (export), cathode copper, polyethylene granules, cement and clinker are generally subject to EPT (excluding white cement, and excluding cement and clinker produced using coal). In general, the taxable base is the difference between the selling price and the cut-off price set by legislation, as well as certain taxes.

Currently, the established tax rate is 50% for all the above products. EPT for natural gas is generally calculated as follows:

| Product | Taxable base (cut-off price) | Tax rate |
|-------------|--|----------|
| Natural gas | Selling price above US\$160 per 1,000 cubic meters | 50% |

Taxpayers are also obliged to transfer excess profit remaining after taxation to a special investment account at the time when the EPT payment is due. These special-purpose funds are disbursed only with the approval of the Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan for financing investment projects and for modernization and technical upgrading of main production, among other things. In other words, these funds are set aside from normal operations for specific purposes that are controlled by the Government.

Subsurface users operating under PSAs are not subject to EPT.

Corporate income tax

CIT is applied to all companies at the rate of 7.5% in respect of taxable income. "Taxable income" is calculated as the difference between aggregate annual income (after certain adjustments) and statutory deductions. The following items are generally not deductible for tax purposes:

- ▶ Non-business expenses
- ▶ Entertainment, business travel and certain voluntary insurance expenses in excess of established statutory limits
- ▶ Interest on overdue and deferred loans (in excess of normal loan interest rate)
- ▶ Losses resulting from misappropriations of funds or assets
- ▶ Audit expenses, if an annual audit was conducted more than once for the same period
- ▶ Charitable donations
- ▶ Litigation expenses
- ▶ Fines and other monetary penalties

Special deductions

Taxable profits may be reduced by certain special deductions, including the following:

- ▶ Amounts reinvested in main production in the form of purchases of new technological equipment, new construction, and reconstruction of buildings and facilities used for production needs (less current depreciation), up to 30% of taxable profits, over a five-year period
- ▶ Charitable donations of up to 2% of taxable profits
- ▶ Net excess profit if subject to EPT

Depreciation

The applicable depreciation rates in Uzbekistan are given in the following table:

| Assets | Rate (%) |
|--|----------|
| Buildings and structures | 5 |
| Trains, ships, airplanes, pipelines, communication equipment, and electric power lines and equipment | 8 |
| Furniture and production machinery and equipment | 15 |

| Assets | Rate (%) |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Cars, computers and office equipment | 20 |
| All other assets | 15 |

Intangible assets are amortized for tax purposes over the useful life of the asset, the life of the company, or five years (if useful life cannot be determined), whichever is the least.

Relief for losses

Tax losses can be carried forward for five years. However, the amount of losses carried forward that may be deducted each year is subject to a limit of 50% of taxable profits for the year. Losses incurred during a profits tax exemption period (i.e., a period during which a company might have been on a profits tax holiday (where exemption is granted for certain period of time) as a result of a special incentive) cannot be carried forward.

Groups of companies

The tax law does not allow offsetting profits and losses among members of a tax group.

Capital gains

Capital gains are generally included in taxable profits and are subject to tax at the regular CIT rate. Capital gains received by a nonresident from the sale of shares or participation interest in an Uzbek-resident legal entity are subject to withholding tax (WHT) at a rate of 20%. This rate may be reduced or eliminated by virtue of a double tax treaty between Uzbekistan and the country of residence of the income recipient.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special tax terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Investment incentives

In accordance with the Presidential Decree dated 28 April 2000 (as amended), "On measures of attraction of direct foreign investments into prospecting and exploration of oil and gas," foreign companies engaged in exploration and prospecting for oil and gas are supported by certain tax incentives, including, in part, the following:

- ▶ Exemption from all taxes and mandatory contributions for the period of exploration and prospecting
- ▶ Exemption from customs payments (including import customs duties, import excise tax and import VAT, but excluding a customs processing fee) on imported equipment and technical resources necessary for conducting prospecting and exploration

In accordance with the Presidential Decree, joint ventures involved in the production of oil and gas, established with the participation of foreign companies that were engaged in exploration and prospecting for oil and gas, are exempt from CIT for seven years from the commencement of oil and gas production.

By a special resolution of the Government (or investment agreement), a company with foreign investments may potentially be granted additional tax exemptions and other benefits, depending on the importance of the company's project to the Government, the volume of the investment to be made and other factors.

D. Withholding taxes

In the absence of a permanent establishment (PE) in Uzbekistan of a nonresident company, Uzbek WHT applies to a nonresident's income derived from Uzbekistan sources. The general WHT rate is 20% (dividends, interest,

insurance premiums – 10%; international communications and freight – 6%). Double tax treaties may also provide for either exemption from Uzbek WHT or application of reduced WHT rates.

Dividends and interest paid by Uzbek companies domestically (except for interest paid to Uzbek banks) are subject to 10% domestic WHT.

E. Financing considerations

There are no thin capitalization rules in Uzbekistan.

F. Indirect taxes

Import duties

The import of goods and equipment is generally subject to import customs duties at various rates (if any) based on the established list (according to customs classification codes). There are certain exemptions provided by the legislation.

Excise tax

Companies producing or importing excisable goods in the territory of Uzbekistan are subject to excise tax. The list of excisable products with the respective tax rates is established by legislation. Natural gas and liquefied gas producing companies must assess tax on the sale or disposal of the products at the rates of 25% and 26%, respectively, including export sales (but excluding sales to the general population).

Fuel products are indexed to certain rates depending on the type of products sold or disposed of and may not be less than certain minimum tax amounts established for each fuel product. The import of crude oil and oil products is subject to 20% excise tax (distillates – 30%).

VAT

VAT is imposed on the supply of all goods and services including imports, unless they are zero-rated or exempt. Hence crude oil, natural gas and gas condensate sold in the territory of Uzbekistan are subject to 20% VAT. Export sales of certain goods, including sales of crude oil, natural gas and gas condensate, are subject to zero-rated VAT, which means that the entities may generally offset respective input VAT against other taxes and contributions or recover it (based on certain administrative procedures and limitations). Imports of goods and equipment are generally subject to 20% import VAT.

Place-of-supply rule

The applicability of Uzbek (reverse-charge) VAT on “imported” works and services purchased from nonresidents is determined based on the deemed place of supply of a given supply. It is important to note that, under the place-of-supply rules, a service may be physically performed outside Uzbekistan but deemed to be supplied in Uzbekistan for VAT purposes. Examples of services taxed in this way include a supply of a service related to immovable property located in Uzbekistan or a consulting service performed outside Uzbekistan for a customer inside Uzbekistan. If the place of supply is deemed to be outside Uzbekistan, the underlying supply is not subject to Uzbek VAT.

The rules determining the place of supply for works and services are generally as follows:

- ▶ The place where immovable property is located for works and services directly related to such property
 - ▶ The place where works and services are actually carried out for works and services related to movable property
 - ▶ The place of business or any other activity of the customer for the following works and services: transfer of rights to use intellectual property, consulting services, audit services, engineering services, design services, marketing services, legal services, accounting services, attorney’s services,
-

advertising services, data provision and processing services, rent of movable property (except for rent of motor vehicles), supply of personnel, and communication services

- ▶ Otherwise, the place of business or any other activity of the service provider

Stamp duties

No stamp duty currently applies in Uzbekistan.

Registration fees

Insignificant fixed fees apply.

G. Other taxes and charges

Infrastructure development tax and associated charges

Infrastructure development tax at a rate of 8% is imposed on net profit less assessed CIT and certain other reductions (e.g., net excess profit if subject to EPT).

In addition, contributions to funds for pensions, roads and the reconstruction of educational and medical facilities are separate contributions assessed on sales revenue (net of VAT and excise tax) at the base rates of 1.6% for pensions, 1.4% for roads and 0.5% for the reconstruction of educational and medical facilities, i.e., 3.5% in total.

Property tax

Property tax is generally imposed at a rate of 4% on the average annual net book value of tangible fixed assets (and certain other assets).

Unified social payment

The unified social payment (social tax) is paid by employers at a rate of 25% (15% for small businesses) on the total payroll cost (except for certain exempt items).

Social contributions of individuals

The employer is obliged to withhold and remit a mandatory pension fund contribution from local employees at a rate of 7% from salaries and other taxable benefits. Employers also make mandatory monthly contributions to individual accumulative pension accounts of local employees at a rate of 1% of salaries and other taxable benefits of employees, and the amounts of such contributions are subtracted from accrued individual income tax.

Individual income tax

Employers are obliged to withhold and remit individual income tax to the Government at progressive tax rates (up to 23%).

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |

A. At a glance

The fiscal regime that applies to the petroleum industry in Venezuela consists of a combination of corporate income tax (CIT), royalty tax, indirect taxes and special contributions. In summary:

- ▶ CIT rate – 50% of net profits
- ▶ Royalties – Up to a maximum of 33.33% on the value of the crude oil extracted
- ▶ Tax on capital gains – 50%
- ▶ Alternative minimum tax (AMT) – 50% of gross profits

B. Fiscal regime

Oil activities in Venezuela

According to the Master Hydrocarbons Law, upstream activities are reserved for the Venezuelan State, which must perform the activities directly or through State-owned enterprises.

Upstream activities can be performed through joint venture corporations (empresas mixtas) in which the State owns more than 50% of the shares (qualifying the entities as State-owned enterprises). The National Assembly must approve the incorporation of any joint venture corporations and the conditions for their operation. These corporations are owned by Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA).

Corporate income tax

A joint venture corporation that undertakes oil activities is subject to a 50% CIT rate on its annual net profits from Venezuelan and foreign sources of income. "Annual net profits" are determined by subtracting the costs and deductions allowed by the income tax legislation from the gross receipts of the taxpayer. For Venezuelan-sourced income, these calculations are subject to the inflation adjustment rules. For financial years initiated after 18 November 2014, the adjustment by inflation shall be calculated considering the National Index of Consumer Prices (INPC). For previous financial years, the Index of Consumer Prices (IPC) shall apply.

Entities must determine their Venezuelan-sourced annual net profits separately from their foreign-sourced annual net profits. In the determination of the Venezuelan-sourced annual net profits, only costs and expenses incurred in Venezuela are allowed, provided the conditions established in the income tax law and regulations are met. Likewise, in the determination of foreign-sourced net annual profits, only costs and expenses incurred abroad may be deducted, provided relevant conditions are met. Only those losses related to goods that constitute fixed assets used for the production of income, derived by accident or force majeure, not compensated by insurance or other compensations will be deductible, provided that such losses are not attributable to the cost.

Royalties

According to the latest amendment of the Master Hydrocarbons Law (August 2006), the royalty to be paid to the State is equivalent to 30% of the extracted crude; however, it may be reduced to 20% if it is proven that the oil field is not economically exploitable. The amendment also creates the following additional taxes:

- ▶ An extraction tax equivalent to one-third of the value of the extracted liquid hydrocarbons
- ▶ An export registration tax of 0.1% of the value of the exported liquid hydrocarbons

An additional royalty is included in the law on the terms and conditions for the incorporation and functioning of joint venture corporations. It amounts to 3.33% of the crude oil extracted from the corresponding oilfield. The royalty tax rate is established in the mandatory bylaws of each joint venture company and is calculated on the value of the extracted crude oil delivered to PDVSA.

Furthermore, any company that develops activities related to hydrocarbons is subject to the royalty-like taxes set out next.

Superficial tax

Superficial tax applies to the superficial extension without being exploitative, the equivalent of 100 tax units (TU, where one TU currently approximates to US\$17 but is updated annually) for each square kilometer per year. This tax increases each year by 2% during the first five years and by 5% for each year following the 5th year.

Own consumption tax

The own consumption tax applies at a rate of 10% of the value of each cubic meter (m³) from products derived from hydrocarbons produced and consumed as fuel from operations, based on the price sold to the final consumer.

General consumption tax

The general consumption tax is a tax paid by the final consumers, which is withheld monthly and paid to the National Treasury, and the applicable rate is set annually by law. For products derived from hydrocarbons sold in internal markets, the tax is between 30% and 50% of the price paid by the final consumers.

Tax on capital gains

Internal income tax legislation provides that capital gains arising from the sale of stocks, quotas or participation by companies engaged in oil activities are subject to income tax at a 50% rate.

Tax on dividends

The portion that corresponds to each share in the profits of stock companies and other assimilated taxpayers, including those resulting from participation quotas in limited liability companies, is considered to be a dividend.

According to the Venezuelan income tax law, dividends distributed by a company for activities in the oil industry that in total value exceed the company's previously taxed net income are subject to tax at a 50% rate. For

these purposes, “net income” is defined as the income approved at the shareholders’ meeting, which is the basis for the distribution of dividends. “Taxed net income” is that income used for the calculation of the income tax liability. Net income from dividends is the income received as such, fully or partially paid, in money or in kind.

AMT

The AMT is the difference (if any) between 50% of the gross sales and the sum of the following taxes paid in the respective fiscal year:

- ▶ Income tax (50% of the fiscal year’s net profits)
- ▶ Royalty tax (up to a maximum of 33.3% of the amount of the crude oil extracted)
- ▶ Other taxes effectively paid based on income (municipal tax, among others)
- ▶ Special contributions allowed

If the taxes paid exceed the additional tax, there is no possibility for the taxpayer to credit the excess in future fiscal years.

Relief for tax losses

Operating losses from a Venezuelan source may be carried forward for three years, but the attribution may not exceed 25% of income obtained in subsequent periods. No carry-back is permitted.

Offsetting of losses against gains between different sources (foreign and local source income) is not allowed.

Income tax withholdings

Income tax withholdings in Venezuela are set out in the following table.

| Payment type | Entities affected | Tax rate (%) |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Interest | Resident individuals | 3 ¹ |
| Interest | Resident corporations | 5 ² |
| Interest | Nonresident individuals | 34 ³ |
| Interest | Nonresident corporations | 34 ⁴ |
| Royalties ⁵ | Non-domiciled corporations | 34 ⁶ |
| Royalties ⁵ | Nonresident individuals | 34 ⁷ |
| Professional fees | Resident individuals | 3 ¹ |
| Professional fees | Resident corporations | 5 ² |
| Professional fees | Nonresident individuals and corporations | 34 ⁸ |

1 WHT applies to payments of more than VEF10,583.24. The tax is imposed on the payment minus VEF317.50.

2 WHT applies to payments of more than VEF25.

3 WHT is imposed on 95% of the gross payment. Consequently, the effective WHT rate is 32.3% (95% × 34%).

4 In general, the WHT rate is determined at progressive rates up to a maximum of 34%. It is applied to 95% of the gross payment. Interest paid to foreign financial institutions that are not domiciled in Venezuela is subject to WHT at a flat rate of 4.95%.

5 Royalties paid to nonresidents are taxed on a deemed profit element, which is 90% of the gross receipt.

6 The WHT rate is determined at progressive rates up to a maximum of 34%. Because royalties paid to non-domiciled corporations are taxed on a deemed profit element, the maximum effective WHT rate is 30.6% (90% × 34%).

| Payment type | Entities affected | Tax rate (%) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Rent of immovable property | Resident individuals | 3 ¹ |
| Rent of immovable property | Resident corporations | 5 ² |
| Rent of immovable property | Nonresident individuals | 34 |
| Rent of immovable property | Nonresident corporations | 34 ⁹ |
| Rent of movable goods | Resident individuals | 3 ¹ |
| Rent of movable goods | Corporations | 5 ² |
| Rent of movable goods | Nonresident individuals | 34 |
| Rent of movable goods | Nonresident corporations | 5 |
| Technical assistance | Domiciled corporations | 2 ¹⁰ |
| Technical assistance | Resident individuals | 1 ⁷ |
| Technical assistance ¹¹ | Nonresident individuals ¹⁴ | 34 ¹² |
| Technical assistance ¹¹ | Non-domiciled corporations | 34 ¹³ |
| Technological services | Domiciled corporations | 2 ⁷ |
| Technological services | Resident individuals | 1 ⁷ |
| Technological services | Nonresident individuals ¹⁴ | 34 ¹⁵ |
| Technological services | Non-domiciled corporations | 34 ¹⁶ |
| Sales of shares ¹⁷ | Resident individuals | 3 ¹ |
| Sales of shares ¹⁷ | Corporations | 5 ² |
| Sales of shares ¹⁷ | Nonresident individuals | 34 |
| Sales of shares ¹⁷ | Nonresident corporations | 5 |

7 Because royalties paid to nonresidents are taxed on a deemed profit element, the effective WHT rate is 30.6% (90% × 34%).

8 Professional fees paid to nonresidents are taxed on a deemed profit element, which is 90% of the gross receipts. Consequently, the effective WHT rate is 30.6% (90% × 34%).

9 The WHT rate is determined by applying the progressive rates up to a maximum of 34%.

10 Technical assistance and technological services provided from local suppliers are treated as services.

11 Payments to nonresidents for technical assistance are taxed on a deemed profit element, which is 30% of the gross receipts.

12 Because payments to nonresidents for technical assistance are taxed on a deemed profit element, the effective WHT rate is 10.2% (30% × 34%).

13 The WHT rate is determined at progressive rates up to a maximum of 34%. Because payments to non-domiciled corporations for technical assistance are taxed on a deemed profit element, the maximum effective WHT rate is 10.2% (30% × 34%).

Other significant taxes

The following table summarizes other significant taxes:

| Nature of tax | Rate paid |
|---|---|
| VAT – imposed on goods and services, including imports; the national executive may exempt acquisitions of goods and services from tax for up to five years; the law provides an indexation system for input VAT during the preoperational period for enterprises engaged in certain industrial activities; input VAT generated during the preoperational phase of industrial projects intended primarily for export is refunded | 12% |
| Municipal tax – a business activity tax that is generally based on gross receipts or sales, where the rate varies depending on the industrial or commercial activity | 0.5% to 10% |
| Social security contributions – charged on the monthly salary of each employee up to a maximum of five minimum salaries | Employer: 9%, 10% or 11% Employee: 4% |
| National Institute of Cooperative Education contributions – required if an employer has five or more employees | Employer, on total employee remuneration: 2% Employee, on profit share received, if any, from employer at year-end: 0.5% |
| Housing policy contributions – charged on the monthly integral salary (as defined in the Labor Law; see also below) of each employee | Employer: 2% Employee: 1% |
| Unemployment and training contributions – charged on the monthly salary of each employee, up to 10 minimum salaries | Employer: 2% Employee: 0.5% |
| Science and technology contribution | 0.5% to 1% of gross income |
| Anti-drug contribution | 1% of operating income |
| Endogenous development contribution | 1% of financial profits |
| Contribution to the National Fund for Development of Sports, Physical Activities and Physical Education | 1% of net income or financial profits |

- 14 *Payments to nonresidents for technological services are generally taxed on a deemed profit element, which is 50% of the gross receipts.*
- 15 *Because payments to nonresidents for technological services are taxed on a deemed profit element, the effective WHT rate is 17% (50% × 34%).*
- 16 *The WHT rate is determined by applying the progressive rates up to a maximum of 34%. Because payments to non-domiciled corporations for technological services are taxed on a deemed profit element, the maximum effective WHT rate is 17% (50% × 34%).*
- 17 *This tax applies to transfers of shares of corporations non-domiciled in Venezuela that are not traded on national stock exchanges. The WHT rates are applied to the sales price.*

“Integral salary” includes any remuneration, benefit or advantage perceived by the employee in consideration for the services rendered, whatever its name or method of calculation, as long as it can be evaluated in terms of cash value, to include, among other things, commissions, bonuses, gratuities, profit sharing, overtime, vacation bonus, food and housing.

C. Financing considerations

Foreign-exchange controls

Under the foreign-exchange control system in Venezuela, the purchase and sale of currency in Venezuela is centralized by the Central Bank of Venezuela. This limits foreign currency trade in Venezuela and other transactions.

Debt-to-equity rules

Venezuelan income tax legislation establishes a safe harbor method that denies the interest deduction for interest payments to related parties domiciled abroad if the average of the payor’s debts (with related and unrelated parties) exceeds the amount of the average of its fiscal equity for the respective fiscal year.

D. Other tax issues

Transfer pricing

Under the transfer pricing rules, cross-border income and expense allocations concerning transactions with related parties are subject to analysis and special filings. The rules contain a list of related parties and acceptable transfer pricing methods.

Controlled foreign corporations

Under the controlled foreign corporation (CFC) rules, income derived by a CFC that is domiciled in a low-income-tax jurisdiction is taxable to its Venezuelan shareholders. The tax authorities have issued a list of low-income-tax jurisdictions and may invoke the “substance over form” rules contained in the Venezuelan Master Tax Code to challenge the form chosen by the parties.

Consequently, if a transaction is motivated solely by a desire for tax-avoidance or a reduction in tax liability, it may be disregarded for tax purposes.

Provisions

Provisions for inventory obsolescence and accounts receivable are not deductible; amounts are deductible only when inventories or accounts receivable are effectively written off.

Depreciation

In general, acceptable depreciation methods are the straight-line and the unit-of-production methods; the declining-balance and accelerated-depreciation methods are not accepted. Venezuelan law does not specify depreciation rates, but if the estimated useful life of an asset is reasonable, the depreciation is accepted. Estimated useful lives ranging from three to 10 years are commonly used.

There is no provision related to the minimum useful lives of the business assets of the oil companies and, generally, the tax depreciation is the same as the accounting and financial depreciation.

Tax indexation

Companies must apply an annual inflationary adjustment. A company carries this out by adjusting its non-monetary assets, some of its non-monetary liabilities and its equity to reflect the change in the consumer price index from the preceding year. These adjustments affect the calculation of depreciation and the cost of goods sold. Their net effect is recorded in an inflation adjustment account and is added to taxable income or allowed as a deduction.

Effective from tax years beginning after 22 October 1999, the tax indexation rules apply only to the reconciliation of Venezuelan-sourced income; thus, foreign-sourced non-monetary assets and liabilities are not subject to tax indexation.

Windfall oil price tax

Regulations applicable to this tax were modified in 2013 through the Law of Special Contribution due to Extraordinary and Exorbitant Prices of the Hydrocarbons International Market (the Windfall Oil Price Tax), published in *Official Gazette* No. 40,114 on 20 February 2013. The modification related to the increase in the monthly threshold of the Venezuelan liquid hydrocarbons basket for extraordinary and exorbitant prices of hydrocarbons.

This law establishes a special contribution payable to companies exporting, for sale purposes, certain hydrocarbons including liquid hydrocarbons, both natural and upgraded, and their derivatives. Mixed companies selling natural and upgraded liquid hydrocarbons and derivatives to PDVSA were expressly included.

The Law defines "extraordinary prices" as those where the monthly average of international quotes of the Venezuelan liquid hydrocarbons basket exceeds the price set out in the Annual Budget Law for the respective fiscal year, but is equal to or lower than US\$80 per barrel. The Law defines "exorbitant prices" as those where the monthly average of international quotes of the Venezuelan liquid hydrocarbons basket exceeds US\$80 per barrel.

In the case of extraordinary prices, when the monthly average of international quotes of the Venezuelan liquid hydrocarbons basket exceeds the price set out in the Budget Law for the respective fiscal year but is equal to or lower than US\$80 per barrel, the rate will be equivalent to 20%, to be applied on the difference between both prices.

In the case of exorbitant prices, the rate of the special contribution will vary as follows:

- ▶ When exorbitant prices are greater than US\$80 but less than US\$100, a rate equivalent to 80% of the total amount of the difference between both prices is applied.
- ▶ When the exorbitant prices are greater than or equal to US\$100 but less than US\$110, a rate equivalent to 90% of the total amount of the difference between both prices is applied.
- ▶ When the exorbitant prices are greater than or equal to US\$110, a rate equivalent to 95% of the total amount of the difference between both prices is applied.

This tax is settled by the Ministry of Popular Power for Energy and Petroleum and is paid on a monthly basis to the National Development Fund (FONDEN).

Where the Ministry of Popular Power for Energy and Petroleum has approved projects for either new reservoir developments or increasing the production of exploitation plans in ongoing projects, an exemption is available from these contributions, provided the total investment has not yet been recovered.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

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Tax regime applied to this country

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Production sharing contracts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royalties | <input type="checkbox"/> Service contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Profit-based special taxes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate income tax | |
-

A. At a glance

Fiscal regime

In Vietnam, the Petroleum Law, with its guiding Decree and Circulars, as well as other tax regulations, covers the fiscal regime applicable to organizations and individuals (referred to as contractors) conducting exploration and exploitation of crude oil, condensate (collectively referred to as crude oil) and natural gas in Vietnam. The principal elements of the fiscal regime are as follows:

- ▶ Bonuses – Defined in each production sharing contract (PSC)
- ▶ PSC – Based on production volume
- ▶ Corporate income tax (CIT) – 32%-50%
- ▶ Resource tax – Crude oil: 7%-29%; natural gas: 1%-10%
- ▶ Investment incentives – CIT rate of 32%, rate of recoverable expenditure is up to 70%
- ▶ Export duties – Crude oil: 10%
- ▶ Tax on transfer of capital in petroleum contract – 22%

The Vietnam Government has introduced the concept of “encouraged” oil and gas projects, which receive special incentives.

B. Fiscal regime

Contractors are permitted to participate in, and operate, the exploration, development and production of petroleum resources in Vietnam by entering into a PSC with Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (Petrovietnam). The PSC will be in accordance with the model contract issued by the Vietnamese Government.

Product sharing

Production sharing for crude oil is based on the profit oil that is computed by subtracting the resource tax and cost petroleum from the actual crude oil output.¹

The same principle is applicable to natural gas.

Bonus and commission

A bonus or commission is a lump-sum payment made, pursuant to a PSC, by foreign parties to the Government (via Petrovietnam). Such a payment is made:

- ▶ after the effective date of the PSC (signature commission)
- ▶ after declaration of the first commercial discovery
- ▶ after the first commercial production date.

In addition, nonresident parties to a PSC must also pay Petrovietnam a data fee and a training fee.²

Resource tax³

Crude oil and natural gas are subject to resource tax. The payable resource tax on crude oil or natural gas amounts to the average taxable output of crude oil or natural gas per day in the tax period, multiplied by the tax rate and the number of days of exploitation of crude oil or natural gas in the tax period.

The tax rates applicable to crude oil are as set out in the table below. There is a column in the table referring to “encouraged” projects, which are defined as:

- ▶ Projects where petroleum operations are conducted in deepwater and remote offshore areas
- ▶ Projects in areas where geographical and geological conditions are difficult
- ▶ Projects in other areas in accordance with the list of blocks decided by the Prime Minister
- ▶ Coal gas projects⁴

| Output (barrels per day) | Encouraged investment projects | Other projects |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Up to 20,000 | 7% | 10% |
| More than 20,000 to 50,000 | 9% | 12% |
| More than 50,000 to 75,000 | 11% | 14% |
| More than 75,000 to 100,000 | 13% | 19% |
| More than 100,000 to 150,000 | 18% | 24% |
| More than 150,000 | 23% | 29% |

The tax rates applicable to natural gas and coal gas are shown in the following table:

| Output (million cubic meters per day) | Encouraged investment projects | Other projects |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Up to 5 | 1% | 2% |
| 5 to 10 | 3% | 5% |
| More than 10 | 6% | 10% |

1 Model PSC issued under Decree 33/2013/ND-CP dated 22 April 2013, Article 6.1.

2 Ibid, Articles 9.1-9.4 and 10.1.

3 Resolution 712/2013/UBTVQH13 dated 16 December 2013.

4 The Petroleum Law No 18/VBHN-VPQH, Article 3.12.

Additional levy imposed on shared profit oil⁵

For petroleum contracts signed or approved from 1 January 2010, petroleum contractors are required to pay a surcharge imposed on quarterly shared profit oil when the quarterly average selling price increases by more than 20% of the base price. "Profit oil" is the crude oil volume after deduction of resource tax oil and recoverable expense oil. The base price is the estimated approved price of the same year. In formula terms, we have:

Additional levy = surcharge rate × [quarterly average selling price – (1.2 × base price)] × quarterly shared profit oil volume.

A surcharge rate of 30% is applicable to an encouraged oil or gas project when the quarterly average selling price increases by more than 20% of the base price. A surcharge rate of 50% is applicable to an oil or gas project when the quarterly average selling price increases from more than 20% up to 50% of the base price. A surcharge rate of 60% is applicable to an oil or gas project when the quarterly average selling price increases by more than 50% of the base price.

Corporate income tax⁶

Contractors are taxed at the rate of 32% to 50% on their taxable income according to the amended Corporate Income Tax Law, which came into effect on 1 January 2014. The specific rate is determined by the Prime Minister for each PSC. The amount of CIT payable is computed by multiplying the specified rate of tax by the taxable income.

"Taxable income" in this context is defined as revenue earned from exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in the tax period, but as reduced by deductible expenses; other incomes such as interest income are added to the taxable income. "Revenue earned" from exploration and exploitation of oil and gas is the total value of crude oil and gas that is actually sold under an arm's length contract in the tax period; if this is not known, the taxable price used to calculate the revenue earned is determined on the basis of the average price in the international market.

Deductible expenses include:

- ▶ Expenses actually incurred in relation to activities of exploration and exploitation of crude oil or gas to the extent that they do not exceed expenses that are calculated as revenue earned from the sale of crude oil or gas multiplied by the rate of recoverable expenses that is agreed in the petroleum contract. Under the 2000 amended Petroleum Law, the standard recovery rate is 70% for encouraged projects and 50% for other projects.⁷ If the rate of recoverable expenses is not mentioned in the petroleum contract, the deemed rate of 35% will be used⁸
- ▶ Expenses supported by legal evidence documents.

Non-deductible expenses include:

- ▶ Expenses that exceed the contractual rate of recoverable expenses
- ▶ Expenses that are not allowed as recoverable in the petroleum contract
- ▶ Expenses that are not allowed under the prevailing regulations on CIT

Ring-fences

In Vietnam, if a contractor enters into two or more petroleum contracts, it must fulfill its tax obligations for each contract separately.⁹ Therefore, a ring-fence may be understood as being applicable to each separate contract.

5 Circular 22/2010/TT-BTC dated 12 December 2010.

6 Circular 32/2009/TT-BTC dated 19 February 2009 on oil and gas taxation, Part II, Section III.

7 The Petroleum Law No 18/VBHN-VPQH, Article 25a.

8 Circular 32/2009/TT-BTC dated 19 February 2009 on oil and gas taxation, Part II, Article 14.2.

9 Circular 32/2009/TT-BTC dated 19 February 2009 on oil and gas taxation, Part I, Article 6.1.

Capital transfer tax¹⁰

From 1 January 2014, the gain from transfer of a participating interest in the petroleum contract is subject to capital transfer tax (CTT) at a rate of 22%. From 1 January 2016, the applicable rate will be 20% only.¹¹

The payable CTT equals taxable income multiplied by the tax rate. "Taxable income" is here determined as the transfer price less the purchase price of the transferred capital less transfer expenses.

Unconventional oil and gas

No special terms apply to unconventional oil or unconventional gas.

C. Incentives

Corporate income tax

The following incentives are available for encouraged projects:

- ▶ Recoverable expenses rate up to 70%¹²

Encouraged projects are:

- ▶ Projects where petroleum operations are conducted in deepwater and remote offshore areas
- ▶ Projects in areas where geographical and geological conditions are difficult
- ▶ Projects in other areas in accordance with the list of blocks decided by the prime minister or
- ▶ Coal gas projects¹³

D. Withholding taxes¹⁴

Nonresident contractors that provide services to a petroleum company operating in Vietnam are subject to foreign contractor tax (FCT), which comprises VAT and CIT. The applicable CIT rates are as shown in the table below.

| No | Business activity/industry | Deemed CIT rate |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Commerce: distribution, supply of goods, material, machinery and equipment distribution of goods, raw materials, supplies, machinery and equipment attached to services in Vietnam (including those provided in the form of on-the-spot-export (except for goods processed under processing contracts with foreign entities); supply of goods under Incoterms | 1% |
| 2 | Services, equipment lease, insurance, oil rig lease | 5% |
| 3 | Construction, installation, whether or not inclusive of raw materials, machinery and equipment | 2% |
| 4 | Other business activities, transport (including sea transport and air transport) | 2% |
| 5 | Lease of airplanes, plane engines, plane parts, ships | 2% |
| 6 | Reinsurance abroad, reinsurance commission, transfer of securities, certificates of deposit | 0.1% |
| 7 | Service in a restaurant or hotel, casino management | 10% |

10 Circular 32/2009/TT-BTC dated 19 February 2009 on oil and gas taxation, Part II, Section IV.

11 Amended CIT Law 32/2013/QH13 dated 19 June 2013, Article 1.6.

12 The Petroleum Law No 18/VBHN-VPQH, Article 25a.

13 The Petroleum Law No 18/VBHN-VPQH, Article 3.12.

14 Circular 103/2014/TT-BTC dated 2 August 2014.

| No | Business activity/industry | Deemed CIT rate |
|----|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 8 | Loan interest | 5% |
| 9 | Royalties | 10% |
| 10 | Financial derivatives services | 2% |

VAT¹⁵ will be generally computed as the amount before tax multiplied by the applicable tax rate on the services or goods that the foreign contractor provided. The standard VAT rate is 10% in Vietnam.

E. Indirect taxes

Export duties¹⁶

Exported crude oil and gas is subject to export duties. The payable export duties are calculated as the quantity of crude oil and natural gas actually exported, multiplied by the dutiable price, multiplied by the export duty ratio. "Dutiable price" is the selling price of crude oil and natural gas under an arm's length contract. "Export duty ratio" equals [100% – ratio of resource tax temporarily calculated in the tax period] multiplied by the export duty rates of crude oil and natural gas. The "ratio of resource tax temporarily calculated" equals the estimated payable resource tax by crude oil and natural gas divided by the estimated output of crude oil and natural gas, expressed as a percentage.

The export duty rate of crude oil is currently 10%.¹⁷

Import duties

The following goods imported and used for oil and gas activities will be exempt from import duties:¹⁸

- ▶ Machinery, equipment and transportation means necessary for oil and gas activities and certified by the Ministry for Science and Technology
- ▶ Supplies necessary for oil and gas activities and not available domestically
- ▶ Medical equipment and medicine used in oil rigs and floating projects and certified by the Ministry of Health Care
- ▶ Office equipment imported and used for oil and gas activities

VAT

VAT, at the rate of 5% or 10%, is imposed on most goods and services used for business. However, the following imported goods that are not available domestically are exempt from VAT:¹⁹

- ▶ Machinery, equipment and material imported for scientific research and technological development
- ▶ Machinery, equipment, parts, transport means, and material imported for the exploration and development of oil and gas wells
- ▶ Oil rigs and ships imported to form fixed assets or leased from abroad and imported for business activities and for re-lease

Unprocessed natural resources are exempt from VAT.²⁰

15 Circular 103/2014/TT-BTC dated 2 August 2014, Article 12.3a.

16 Circular 32/2009/TT-BTC dated 19 February 2009 on oil and gas taxation, Part II, Section II.

17 Circular 164/2013/TT-BTC dated 15 November 2013, Appendix I.

18 Decree 87/2010/ND-CP dated 13 August 2010, Article 12.10.

19 Circular 219/2013/TT-BTC dated 31 December 2013 on VAT, Article 4.17.

20 *Ibid*, Article 4.23.

F. Financing considerations

According to the CIT regime, interest expenses paid on bank loans utilized to finance taxable operations are generally tax-deductible. Interest expenses paid on loans borrowed from non-financial institutions or non-economic organizations are also deductible, provided that the interest rate does not exceed 150% of the rates announced by the State Bank of Vietnam.²¹

In case of medium- or long-term borrowing from overseas, the borrower must register the loan with the authority within 30 days from the signing of borrowing contract.²²

21 *Circular 78/2014/TT-BTC dated 18 June 2014 on CIT, Article 6.2.17.*

22 *Circular 25/2014/TT-NHNN dated 15 September 2014 on administration procedures in the State Bank of Vietnam, Article 7, Chapter II.*

Foreign currency

The following list sets forth the names and symbols for the currencies of the countries discussed in this book.

| Country | Currency | Symbol |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| Algeria | Dinar | DZD |
| Angola | Kwanza | AOA |
| Argentina | Peso | ARS |
| Australia | Dollar | A\$ |
| Azerbaijan | Manat | AZN |
| Bahrain | Bahraini dinar | BHD |
| Benin | CFA franc | XOF |
| Brazil | Real | BRL |
| Cambodia | Khmer Riel | KHR |
| Cameroon | CFA franc | XAF |
| Canada | Dollar | C\$ |
| Chad | CFA franc | XAF |
| Chile | Peso | CLP |
| China | Yuan Renminbi | CNY |
| Colombia | Peso | COP |
| Côte d'Ivoire | CFA franc | XOF |
| Croatia | Kuna | kn |
| Cyprus | Euro | € |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | Franc | CDF |
| Denmark | Krone | DKK |
| Ecuador | US dollar | US\$ |
| Egypt | Egyptian pound | EGP |
| Equatorial Guinea | CFA franc | GQE |
| Gabon | CFA franc | XAF |
| Germany | Euro | € |
| Ghana | Cedi | GHS |
| Greece | Euro | € |
| Greenland | Danish Krone | DKK |
| Iceland | Krona | ISK |
| India | Rupee | INR |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | IDR |
| Iraq | Iraqi dinars | IQD |
| Ireland | Euro | € |
| Israel | New Shekel | ILS |
| Italy | Euro | € |

Foreign currency

| Country | Currency | Symbol |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------|
| Kazakhstan | Tenge | KZT |
| Kenya | Shilling | KES |
| Kuwait | Kuwaiti dinar | KWD |
| Laos | Kip | LAK |
| Lebanon | Pound | LL |
| Libya | Dinar | LYD |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | MYR |
| Mauritania | Ouguiya | MRO |
| Mexico | Peso | MXN |
| Morocco | Dirham | MAD |
| Mozambique | Metical | MZN |
| Myanmar | Kyat | MMK |
| Namibia | Dollar | N\$ |
| The Netherlands | Euro | € |
| New Zealand | Dollar | NZ\$ |
| Nigeria | Naira | NGN |
| Norway | Krone | NOK |
| Oman | Rial | OMR |
| Pakistan | Rupee | PKR |
| Papua New Guinea | Kina | PGK |
| Peru | Nuevo sol | PEN |
| Philippines | Peso | PHP |
| Poland | Zloty | PLN |
| Qatar | Riyal | QAR |
| Republic of the Congo | Franc | XAF |
| Romania | Leu | RON |
| Russia | Ruble | RUB |
| Saudi Arabia | Saudi riyal | SAR |
| Senegal | CFA franc | XOF |
| Singapore | Dollar | S\$ |
| South Africa | Rand | ZAR |
| Spain | Euro | € |
| Sri Lanka | Sri Lanka Rupee | Rs |
| Syria | Syrian pound | SYP |
| Tanzania | Shilling | TZS |
| Thailand | Baht | THB |
| Trinidad and Tobago | Dollar | TT\$ |

Foreign currency

| Country | Currency | Symbol |
|----------------------|----------------|--------|
| Tunisia | Dinar | TND |
| Uganda | Shilling | UGX |
| Ukraine | Hryvnia | UAH |
| United Arab Emirates | UAE dirham | AED |
| United Kingdom | Pound sterling | £ |
| United States | US dollar | US\$ |
| Uruguay | Peso | \$U |
| Uzbekistan | Uzbekistan som | UZS |
| Venezuela | Bolivar | VEF |
| Vietnam | Dong | VND |

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