

The Dane, the Brit and the Norwegian: A simple hydrocarbon migration story

Mathias D. Venberget, AkerBP

Denmark, United Kingdom and Norway share a common boarder in the Central Graben in the North Sea. In this area, the first hydrocarbon exploration well was drilled five years after Norway signed the boundary treaty with United Kingdom and Denmark in 1965. An excellent petroleum play exists within 30 km radius from the three-country boarder, but only two of the nations have had success in this area. The fields in the United Kingdom were shut down in 2012 after producing more than 100 million barrels of oil equivalent since 1995. The Norwegian fields are still in production and the Valhall Field has produced more than one billion barrels of oil equivalent since 1982 and the ambition is to produce another billion barrels over the next 40 years. Around the Valhall Field, discoveries are still being made with the latest discovery in 2022. In Denmark, there have been no success at all, which have resulted in that few exploration wells have been drilled. If the Danish foreign minister in 1965, Per Hækkerup, had used a hydrocarbon migration model during the negotiations of the shelf with his Norwegian counterpart, Halvard Lange, he may have stood on Denmark's claim to this part of the shelf. Hydrocarbon migration modelling was still the key issue when the last exploration well in this area was drilled on the United Kingdom side in 2011. Although United Kingdom and, especially, Denmark seems to have lost their appetite for hydrocarbon exploration in this area, that does not mean that there is nothing more to find.

References:

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