US Shale Gas Industry Analysis

Description: Shale gas has emerged as one of the sought after investments areas in the energy sector, especially in the US. Combined with the technical advances that have helped access huge and previously inaccessible natural gas reserves and the production capability in the industry, there has been increased interest in the US shale gas industry, both on the production and exploration side. The first commercial shale gas well was drilled in the US in 1821 in the Devonian Fredonia Shale formation in Fredonia, New York.

The scope, potential and importance of shale gas production was however overshadowed by the much larger volumes produced from conventional gas reservoirs. The Barnett field in the Dallas Fort Worth area of Texas has been historically the major shale gas producing area of the US. This area saw significant drilling activity in the late 1990s and has grown to be one of the largest natural gas fields in the US. This area had a production of 1.83 TCF in 2010, accounting for more than a third of all shale gas production in the US. The Barnett field has a productive use of about 5,000 square miles.

The technical expertise and information gained from over a decade of production from developing the Barnett Shale play in Texas has been immense. This has played a major role in improving the efficiency of shale gas development around the country. The Marcellus Shale in the eastern United States has also been an important one and other well locations that are suitable and have potential for economical gas production is being identified. This has been achieved by using surface, subsurface geology techniques and seismic techniques to generate maps of the subsurface.

Combined with the technical advances that have helped access huge and previously inaccessible natural gas reserves and the production capability in the industry, there has been increased interest in the US shale gas industry, both on the production and exploration side. In recent months and years we have seen many multibillion dollar shale gas development deals over the past year. American and global companies have shown an interest in the industry that is seen to have much potential. Between 2008 and 2012, the country saw investments of about US$ 130 Billion in tight oil and shale gas projects and about a fifth of these came from abroad through joint ventures.

The prospects for shale gas production are significant and hold much promise but there are considerable aspects of uncertainty with respect to the size and economics of this resource. While there are many large shale formations, some formations such as the Marcellus are so large that it has been possible to do extensive production testing on only a limited portion of the entire formation. Moreover most of the shale gas wells drillings have been recent and this gives rise to apprehensions and considerable uncertainty regarding their long term productivity. Though there have been achievements with regard to development of well drilling and completion technology there is uncertainty in the future course of development of technology that would enable the country to substantially increase well productivity and reduce production costs.

“US Shale Gas Industry Analysis” Report Highlights:

- US Shale Gas Industry Overview
- Shale Gas Exploration, Technical and Technology Aspects
- Investments in Shale Gas Exploration & Production
- US Shale Gas Sector Dynamics
- Shale Boom to Drive LNG Export Projects

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