

Sakhalin-1 Operator May Be Changed

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The ExxonMobil-led Sakhalin-1 oil and gas project could see a change of operator, Interfax quoted an official from Russia's budget watchdog as saying Tuesday.

"Today their [foreigners'] place may be taken up by Russian companies," Interfax quoted an Audit Chamber representative, Mikhail Beskhmel'nitsyn, as saying, when asked whether he would rule out the possibility of dismissing Exxon as the project operator.

But he added that the chamber is not discussing Sakhalin-1's license withdrawal.

Exxon has long been in heated debates with Russian authorities and the state-run gas export monopoly Gazprom over gas sales from Sakhalin-1.

The project budget has also yet to be confirmed for this year.

Both Exxon and Japan's Sakhalin Oil and Gas Development Company, or Sodeko, hold 30 percent stakes in Sakhalin-1, whose three deposits hold an estimated 2.3 billion barrels of oil.

State-owned oil company Rosneft and India's ONGC own the remaining 40 percent.

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