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Petroleum Geology of Offshore Mauritania and Western Sahara

The MSGBC and Aaiun basins cover some 900,000sq km offshore Northwest Africa, extending almost 2,000km along the margin from southern Morocco and the Canary Islands, south through Western Sahara, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea Bissau and Guinea to the Guinea Fracture Zone.

The pace of industry activity in these basins is increasing dramatically providing a wealth of new data including the recent deepwater discovery of 30° API oil by the Chinguetti-1 well in Mauritania. Although it is premature to speculate on the status of Northwest Africa as a "Deepwater Petroleum Province" there is sufficient evidence to provide grounds for cautious optimism.

This paper reviews both recent and historical data in an attempt to define the geographic extents and characteristics of the various deepwater petroleum systems which are thought to be present in the region.