

# Play-Based Exploration to Improve Performance

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Shell has a long tradition of regional geology, with several internationally respected regional geologists who have published significant treatises. However, much of this tradition was lost in the late 1990's, in part due to the advent of 3-D seismic and associated techniques, and an increasing asset focus. This combination of technology and business drivers enticed explorers to focus on the details of their 3-D seismic volume, neglecting regional geology and hydrocarbon plays.

It is recognised in Shell that this adversely effected exploration performance, and now there is a strong management-driven push to evaluate prospects in their hydrocarbon play and regional geology setting. To achieve this regional geology teams and a position of Principal Regional Geologist have been created, to: 1) build, maintain and "own" the Regional Geology corporate memory in key held and target New Venture basins, 2) promote standards and consistency in regional evaluation work and 3) actively leverage and input regional understanding across all exploration activities in close collaboration with the operational evaluation teams.

This is aided by the use of a number of proprietary and non-proprietary computer programmes (e.g. ArcGis) to facilitate the regional and play-based analyses. However, the principal tool is the application of geological concepts and knowledge in line with the techniques and values used by the Shell regional geologists of old. This increased focus on play-based exploration will not only improve exploration performance, it also makes Shell a more exciting and fun place for explorers to work.