

According to the Greek Hydrocarbon Management Company (EDEY), US giant ExxonMobil could begin drilling at its licenses offshore Crete a year earlier than planned as the company plans to adopt a more direct approach when exploring for natural gas.

Such was the case at Cyprus' Block 10, for which ExxonMobil conducted seismic surveys before skipping the 3D survey stage to go straight ahead with drilling that led to the discovery of the Glafkos deposit.

A consortium of ExxonMobil and Helleniq Energy (former ELPE) holds licenses for two offshore Crete blocks, one west of the island, the other southwest. The consortium has commissioned PGS to conduct 2D seismic surveys at both these licenses. They are in full progress and are expected to be completed by the end of January.

According to the original plan, ExxonMobil and Helleniq Energy are to follow up with 3D surveys at the end of 2023 or early in 2024. However, if ExxonMobil, the blocks' operator, decides to skip the 3D surveys, initial drilling offshore Crete will begin sooner, in 2024, instead of 2025.

Elsewhere, in the Ionian Sea, a consortium of Helleniq Energy and Energean expects to have the results of 3D surveys at three blocks, Ionio, Kyparissiakos, and Block 2, by the end of 2023 or early in 2024. It will then decide if it will continue with initial drilling.