

French Oil Giant Total Gains Siberian Shale Oil Exploration Rights

By [The Moscow Times](#)

April 03, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

French oil major Total has secured the rights to explore three hard-to-recover oil blocks in West Siberia, according to a statement on the website of the region's governor.

Total will join other majors, ExxonMobil, Statoil and Royal Dutch Shell, to develop Russian shale oil, a key driver in Moscow's efforts to at least maintain its oil output at more than 10 million barrels per day.

A spokeswoman for Total in Moscow declined immediate comment.

Total has long eyed Russian shale oil, the world's largest by estimated resources. The U.S. Energy Information Administration puts the possible resources at 75 billion barrels, more than the 58 billion barrels held by the United States, current leader in shale oil production.

Interfax news agency, citing a local subsoil watchdog, said that a subsidiary of Total had received the licenses for the Vostochno-Kovensky, Tashinsky and Lyaminsky-3 blocks

in Khanty-Mansiisk district, Russia's main oil producing region.

Total has also signed a memorandum to develop shale oil in Russia with Russia's No.2 oil producer LUKoil.

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