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**Manufacturing**



## New NetApp Copy-Free Transition Helps Oil and Gas Producer Overcome Complex Challenges

In an industry that has experienced turbulent changes to prices, oil and gas producer Repsol Sinopec Resources UK needed a way to upgrade its storage platform whilst operating within tight cost constraints and maintaining operational efficiency and data security. By turning to NetApp and the storage vendor's new copy-free transition methodology, the company achieved its aims at a fraction of the cost and time associated with traditional upgrade methods, while gaining a robust platform that readies it for a hybrid cloud storage future.

### **DYNAMIC OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION**

Repsol Sinopec is an oil and gas exploration and production company, operating 38 fields on the UK continental shelf, with 12 offshore installations and two onshore terminals. The company is headquartered in Aberdeen, Scotland.

The company is a joint venture between Repsol and Addax Petroleum UK Limited, a subsidiary of China Petrochemical Corporation, more commonly known as the Sinopec Group.

Another NetApp solution delivered by:



“Using the brand-new copy-free transition process to achieve both the hardware refresh and upgrade to ONTAP with minimal business disruption was the perfect option. It reduced risk, slashed migration time, and cut costs and was something we were able to fully justify.”

Andrew Bentley  
Infrastructure Lead, Repsol Sinopec Resources UK

## CHALLENGE

### Overcoming cost constraints

The oil and gas industry has undergone turbulent changes in the last few years, following the plunging price of oil from approximately \$120 a barrel to around \$30 a barrel at its lowest peak.

These changes have been driven by Middle Eastern politics; geopolitical movements between Russia, the United States, and others; and pricing decisions made by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The impact has been global, but in the North Sea regions where Repsol Sinopec Resources UK exclusively operates, the impact has been dramatic. Employment within the industry has been severely affected; at one point an estimated 150 jobs were lost each day.

Repsol Sinopec Resources UK had to make major adjustments to operate in this straitened environment, including realising cost reductions and operational efficiencies, without business disruption and while maintaining a primary focus on safe operations.

Over the years, the company's storage platform had developed through upgrades based on

NetApp® storage. The relationship with NetApp started 15 years earlier, with the purchase of file storage and Fibre Channel shelves in 2001. It has upgraded regularly while expanding and refreshing the storage through use of various models of disk shelf supporting both SATA and SAS drives.

However, the company's existing storage platform was nearing end of life, and the cost of maintenance and support was not justifiable given the cost constraints it was facing following the plunging energy prices.

Andrew Bentley, infrastructure lead, Repsol Sinopec Resources UK, says, “It was incumbent on us as an IT team to consider all options and not just simply renew the support and maintenance. We needed to be able to fully justify the expenditure.”

If the company simply renewed its maintenance contract, this would postpone a hardware refresh that would need to be carried out relatively soon anyway. This would also have cost more in the long term. The company also wanted to position itself for future hybrid cloud services.

The company explored some new storage technologies, but as a long-term NetApp customer, it ultimately chose the NetApp copy-free transition methodology to migrate to two ONTAP® clusters on FAS8040 storage. Copy-free transition significantly reduces migration effort and cost by enabling the reuse of existing shelves, and the time required for performing the transition is reduced because no data copying is required.

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Potentially lengthy migration of several months reduced to just 10 hours
- One-third cost savings on maintenance and support
- ROI within 12-18 months
- Minimal business disruption
- First use of copy-free transition in EMEA

“We now have a platform to begin consuming hybrid cloud storage services. In fact, you could say that NetApp copy-free transition not only has cut costs and provided stability, flexibility, and performance, but also has helped us prepare for the future.”

Andrew Bentley  
Infrastructure Lead, Repsol Sinopec Resources UK

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## BENEFITS

### Migration reduced from months to hours

The use of copy-free transition was a significant milestone in that it was the first use in EMEA. Repsol Sinopec Resources UK achieved a successful migration from 7-Mode FAS3270s to ONTAP clusters on FAS8040 with the help of NetApp consultants, who worked closely with the company to make sure of a pain-free and relatively fast migration, with the production migration completed within 10 hours.

Bentley explains, “This deployment was the first copy-free transition completed in EMEA. Its success reduced the impact and risk of a traditional ONTAP migration, and we were able to achieve it within only a single working day. Essentially we reduced our migration from months to hours.”

### Perfect option and 12 to 18 month ROI

Repsol Sinopec Resources UK’s IT team was facing a perfect storm of needing to do something regarding its storage platform while being challenged to contribute to the business’s cost reduction targets.

By adopting a copy-free transition approach, the company was able to successfully address all these challenges. For instance, it invested in new controllers, new disk shelves to replace those set to reach end of service life during 2017, and three years support and maintenance for less than the cost of a single year’s support and maintenance renewal.

“Using the brand-new copy-free transition process to achieve both the hardware refresh and upgrade to ONTAP with minimal business disruption was the perfect option. It reduced risk, slashed migration time, and cut costs and was something we were able to fully justify. We’re expecting an ROI within 12 to 18 months,” adds Bentley.

### High performing, cost effective, and stable

“Copy-free transition is superior to traditional migration methods. There was no business disruption, and we now have a stable, capable, high-capacity, and cost effective storage platform,” says Bentley.

The new NetApp production cluster is used to store and share unstructured data ranging from generic business documents to petro-technical data output from seismic interpretation and important industry-modelling data. It also supports SAP ERP and data warehousing and real-time data collection.

The NetApp cluster is also used for document control applications and data from hydrocarbon accounting, purchasing and maintenance applications, SharePoint data, and user data and server images for its Citrix XenApp environment.

Bentley elaborates, “The NetApp cluster supports important workloads, and as such, performance and availability are very important.”

## BENEFITS

### Platform for a hybrid cloud storage future

There is one more important benefit that helps support the company's future storage moves. Bentley explains, "The ONTAP clusters on FAS8040 provide a foundation for cloud-based storage. We now have a platform to begin consuming hybrid cloud storage services. In fact, you could say that NetApp copy-free transition not only has cut costs and provided stability, flexibility, and performance, but also has helped us prepare for the future."

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## SOLUTION COMPONENTS

### NETAPP PRODUCTS

FlexPod Hyper-V clustered virtual environment running a dual-control NetApp FAS2240

FAS2552 with clustered Data ONTAP for disaster recovery

### PARTNER

[Q Associates](#)

<http://www.netapp.com/us/solutions/flexpod/index.aspx>

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