



News release:

2009-06-25

Drilling into magma at Krafla.

Drilling of the first IDDP well at Krafla, Iceland, continued in March this year. Yesterday, the drill rig encountered molten rock at 2104 m depth. The drillstring got stuck but circulation of cold water through the drillstring has been maintained. Today, the drillstring is being pulled out and the situation is under full control. Similar incidents of drilling into magma have been met in another well at Krafla, and also in Hawaii. The Iceland Deep Drilling Project (IDDP) team will study the situation in detail during the next few days and then decide on the continuation of the project.

The aim of the Iceland Deep Drilling Project (IDDP) is to drill into geothermal resources at supercritical conditions, i.e. extremely high temperatures and pressure assumed to exist below 3.5 km depth at Krafla. The drilling of this well so far has been funded by Landsvirkjun and Alcoa, and the intention was to continue drilling to 3.5 km depth before the IDDP program would take over the well and deepen it to 4.5 km. Evidently, this unexpected incident of hitting magma at only 2.1 km depth may affect the IDDP program at Krafla, but a thorough study of the situation will be undertaken. Potentially, this situation might enable a serious test of so-called engineered geothermal systems (EGS), where cold water is pumped into a neighboring well to be retrieved in the IDDP well as superheated steam. Further information of the IDDP drilling will be revealed at www.iddp.is and at www.icdp-online.org.

The IDDP consortium is composed of Landsvirkjun, HS Orka hf, Reykjavik Energy, Orkustofnun, Alcoa Inc. and Statoil New Energy AS. The International Continental Scientific Drilling Program (ICDP) and the US National Science Foundation (NSF) support the science program. The Iceland Drilling Company Ltd (Jardboranir hf) drills the well. Consultants to the IDDP program include personel from the IDDP consortium, the Iceland GeoSurvey (ISOR), Mannvit, and others.