AFRICA OIL+GAS REPORT · NIGERIA

Indian Operator Buys ENI's Last Nigerian Shelf Asset

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An Indian operator has acquired ENI's final non-deepwater hydrocarbon acreage in Nigeria, marking the Italian major's complete exit from the Nigerian continental shelf. The transaction, reported by Africa Oil+Gas Report from Yenagoa, completes ENI's divestment of its shallow-water and onshore Nigerian portfolio — a strategic withdrawal that has been underway as the company concentrates its Nigerian exposure on deepwater positions.

The identity of the Indian buyer and the specific block or licence involved are not disclosed in the available text, nor are financial terms or the regulatory approvals required to close the deal. What is clear is that this represents the last piece of ENI's non-deepwater Nigerian hydrocarbon property to change hands, making it a structurally significant transaction for the Nigerian upstream landscape. The buyer joins a growing cohort of Asian and Indian national and independent operators that have absorbed IOC divestments across the Niger Delta and shallow offshore over the past decade.

ENI's retreat from the Nigerian shelf mirrors a broader pattern among European majors reassessing their exposure to onshore and shallow-water Niger Delta assets, where community relations, pipeline vandalism, and fiscal terms have historically weighed on returns. By shedding its last non-deepwater acreage, ENI sharpens its Nigerian portfolio around deepwater blocks, where security risks are lower and production profiles are more predictable. The incoming Indian operator, by contrast, is acquiring assets that require hands-on operational capability in a complex onshore and near-shore environment.

For the Nigerian upstream sector, the arrival of another non-IOC operator on shelf acreage continues a structural shift in asset ownership that began accelerating after the Petroleum Industry Act came into force. Indigenous and Asian operators now control a substantial share of the Delta's producing licences, reshaping the contractor and service ecosystem that supports those fields. Operational priorities, procurement practices, and investment cycles under new ownership can differ markedly from IOC norms, with implications for the service companies and infrastructure providers that support production.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Because this item describes a completed asset sale rather than a signed service contract, FID, or open tender, Norwegian service companies should monitor rather than pursue procurement outreach at this stage. The change of operator on a shelf asset typically triggers a vendor requalification cycle and a review of incumbent service contracts, so well services, production chemistry, and integrity management providers should initiate relationship-building with the incoming Indian operator's technical teams. Saga Advisory recommends tracking the regulatory approval process and any field development plan updates that follow ownership transfer, as these will signal when contracting activity becomes concrete.

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- **Drilling:** A new operator on legacy shelf acreage often reassesses well stock and schedules work-overs or recompletions — drilling contractors and well services firms should position early with the incoming Indian operator's subsurface team.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** If the acquired acreage includes any subsea tiebacks or floating production infrastructure, the ownership change may open a retendering window for inspection, maintenance, and modification services.
- **Service:** Vendor requalification following an IOC-to-independent transfer is standard practice; Norwegian service companies with Niger Delta track records should submit capability statements proactively once the operator's procurement contact is confirmed.

- **Pipeline:** Shelf assets in the Niger Delta commonly rely on third-party export pipelines; pipeline integrity and flow assurance specialists should monitor whether the new owner plans infrastructure upgrades or alternative export routes.

Original source: Africa Oil+Gas Report →

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