

INP MOÇAMBIQUE · MOZAMBIQUE · DRILLING

Saipem 12000 drillship arrives to drill Coral Norte wells

Saga deep read · 28 October 2026 · Score 74

The Saipem 12000 drillship arrived in Cabo Delgado province on 25 October to begin the production well drilling campaign for the Coral Norte project in Mozambique. The vessel's arrival marks the mobilisation phase of drilling operations for one of East Africa's most significant gas developments, with Mozambique's national petroleum regulator INP (Instituto Nacional de Petróleo) leading the commission responsible for verifying the technical, safety, and environmental conditions of the drillship prior to authorising its operation in-country.

INP's verification role reflects the regulatory process Mozambique requires before a drilling platform can be formally licensed for operations in its waters. The commission is assessing whether the Saipem 12000 meets the technical and environmental standards set by Mozambican authorities — a prerequisite step before the drilling campaign can formally commence. The source article does not specify the number of production wells planned, the target drilling schedule, or contract values associated with this campaign.

Coral Norte is a deepwater gas development in the Rovuma Basin off northern Mozambique, associated with the broader Area 4 concession. The arrival of a dedicated drillship signals that the project is advancing into the production well phase, which follows the earlier installation of the Coral Sul FLNG vessel — already producing and exporting LNG from the same basin. Coral Norte represents the next development tranche in the basin, and the mobilisation of the Saipem 12000 confirms that the drilling programme is now physically underway rather than in planning.

Cabo Delgado province has faced significant security challenges in recent years, and the continuation of major offshore industrial activity signals that operators view the offshore environment as sufficiently stable to proceed with capital-intensive field development. The INP-led inspection commission represents standard Mozambican regulatory practice, and its completion is the immediate gateway to spudding the first production well.

For Norwegian oil and gas service companies, the Saipem 12000's arrival confirms active drilling operations are beginning at Coral Norte, making this a live operational programme rather than a planning exercise. Well services, drilling fluids, inspection and certification, subsea equipment supply, and logistics support are all functions typically required during a production well drilling campaign of this nature.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

With a drillship now physically on location and INP conducting pre-operational verification, the Coral Norte drilling campaign is entering its active phase — Norwegian well services, drilling support, and subsea supply companies should assess whether procurement windows are open with the Area 4 operator or Saipem as drilling contractor. Partners with existing relationships in Mozambique's offshore supply chain should initiate direct contact with procurement teams, while those without a local presence should prioritise relationship-building with INP and the operator now that operations are confirmed live.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Saipem 12000 is on location as drilling contractor; Norwegian drilling services and well engineering firms should identify subcontract or supply opportunities within Saipem's vendor chain for this campaign.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Production well drilling at Coral Norte will require subsea wellhead and completion equipment; Norwegian subsea suppliers should confirm whether procurement for this equipment is still open or already contracted.
- **Service:** INP-led technical and safety verification creates demand for third-party inspection, certification, and HSE advisory services — a natural entry point for Norwegian firms with offshore regulatory expertise.

- **LNG:** Coral Norte production wells feed future LNG offtake volumes in the Rovuma Basin; Norwegian LNG technology and process firms should monitor project milestones to position for any future FLNG or onshore LNG tie-in scope.
- **Pipeline:** Subsea flowline and pipeline tie-back work associated with Coral Norte production wells may generate procurement opportunities; Norwegian pipeline contractors should monitor engineering progress and tender releases.

[Original source: INP Moçambique →](#)

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