

OFFSHORE MAGAZINE · EGYPT · DRILLING

SLB, Viridien launch major Egypt offshore seismic push

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SLB and Viridien have begun large-scale ocean-bottom node seismic surveys offshore Egypt, targeting the Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf of Suez in what are described as some of the region's largest OBN seismic programs to date. The campaigns are designed to acquire new subsurface data to support future exploration and drilling activity as Egypt accelerates its offshore gas exploration drive.

Ocean-bottom node acquisition represents a step up in data quality compared with conventional streamer surveys, delivering richer imaging of complex subsurface geology — a critical capability in the Eastern Mediterranean where deep carbonate and salt structures require high-fidelity models before wells can be confidently sited. The Gulf of Suez, a more mature hydrocarbon province, stands to benefit from improved reservoir characterisation that could unlock incremental drilling targets in an area with established production infrastructure.

Egypt has been pushing aggressively to reverse a decline in domestic gas output and attract fresh exploration capital following the success of the Zohr field and subsequent Eastern Mediterranean discoveries. New seismic data is a prerequisite for relicensing rounds and for operators seeking to high-grade acreage before committing exploration budgets. By running programmes at this scale, Egyptian authorities and their industry partners are signalling that a meaningful exploration drilling cycle is being prepared — not merely contemplated.

For the international service and supply chain, the significance of these surveys lies in what follows. Seismic acquisition is typically the first step in a multi-year sequence

that leads from data interpretation to prospect identification, well planning, drilling, and ultimately field development. Large, high-quality OBN datasets shorten the decision cycle for exploration-stage operators and build the technical confidence needed to sanction wells. The Egyptian programmes therefore function as an early indicator of where drilling activity — and associated service demand — is likely to concentrate over the next three to five years in the Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf of Suez corridors.

At this stage the programmes represent data acquisition campaigns, not exploration licences or drilling contracts. No block awards, licence rounds, or procurement tenders have been announced in connection with these surveys. The commercial opportunity for the broader service industry remains in the future, contingent on the subsurface results and subsequent operator decisions.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

These surveys are pre-competitive data programmes — no drilling contracts or tenders have been announced, so procurement outreach is premature. Norwegian service companies active in well services, drilling, and subsea should monitor Egypt's forthcoming licensing rounds and exploration well announcements that will follow once seismic interpretation is complete. Establishing early relationships with operators active in the Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf of Suez now will position firms advantageously for the drilling and development phases that these datasets are intended to unlock.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Track Egypt's exploration licensing rounds and rig demand forecasts for the Eastern Mediterranean and Gulf of Suez as OBN data matures into drillable prospects over 2026-2028.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Monitor subsurface results from these OBN programmes to identify deepwater Eastern Mediterranean discoveries that could require floating production solutions.

- **Well Services:** Position early with operators interpreting the new seismic data, as exploration well programmes in Egypt will require wireline, cementing, and completion services once locations are sanctioned.
- **Pipeline:** Gulf of Suez incremental discoveries identified through improved reservoir imaging may require tie-back infrastructure, representing a potential scope for pipeline engineering firms.

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