DRILLING CONTRACTOR · ETHIOPIA · DRILLING

Marriott Drilling wins Corbetti geothermal contract, Ethiopia

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UK-based Marriott Drilling Group has signed a contract to drill up to four geothermal exploration wells for the Corbetti project in Ethiopia, with operations scheduled to begin early next year. The wells will be drilled within the Corbetti Caldera, located near Shashemene in the Oromia region, targeting one of East Africa's most closely watched geothermal development opportunities.

The contract award follows a change in project ownership structure: Taranis Operations has acquired a majority interest in the Corbetti geothermal power project, with the Private Infrastructure Development Group retaining a stake. The combination of new majority ownership and a signed drilling contract signals that the project is advancing beyond earlier development phases, though the article does not specify total project capacity, well depths, or contract value.

Corbetti has long been flagged as a significant geothermal resource in the East African Rift System, a geological formation with substantial power generation potential. Ethiopia has pursued geothermal development as part of its broader strategy to expand domestic electricity generation and reduce dependence on hydropower, which is vulnerable to seasonal variability. The Corbetti project sits within that national priority framework, and the involvement of a private infrastructure finance group alongside an operator acquiring majority control suggests a structured move toward project financing and eventual production.

For the drilling services sector, the Marriott contract is a signed agreement — not an MoU or a letter of intent — covering up to four wells. That scope implies a multi-well

campaign with associated logistics, fluid management, and potentially specialist well services across a campaign that could extend through much of next year depending on execution pace. Geothermal drilling shares technical characteristics with oil and gas well construction — rotary drilling rigs, casing, cementing, and wellbore integrity disciplines all apply — though formation temperatures and fluid chemistry present distinct challenges that require adapted equipment and procedures.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The Marriott contract is signed, making this an appropriate moment for Norwegian well services and drilling consumables suppliers to investigate whether Marriott's supply chain for the Ethiopian campaign is open to competitive procurement — particularly for casing, cementing services, and drilling fluids suited to high-temperature geothermal conditions. Partners with rig equipment, wellhead, or downhole tool portfolios should monitor the project's progress and consider direct engagement with Marriott Drilling Group as the mobilisation date approaches early next year.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Marriott's multi-well geothermal campaign creates near-term demand for drilling equipment, rig consumables, and HSE services — Norwegian drilling contractors and tool suppliers should assess Marriott's procurement openings ahead of early-2025 mobilisation.
- **Well Services:** High-temperature geothermal wells require specialist cementing and casing services; Norwegian well integrity and completion specialists with relevant thermal credentials should approach Marriott directly now that the contract is confirmed.
- **Service:** Logistics and supply chain support for a remote caldera location in Oromia will require robust planning; service companies with African remote-operations experience can position themselves as preferred partners to Marriott or Taranis Operations.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Not directly applicable to this geothermal project, but Norwegian companies tracking East Africa energy infrastructure should note Corbetti as an indicator of growing private capital appetite for Ethiopian energy assets.

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