ECOFIN AGENCY · ETHIOPIA · DRILLING

Marriott Drilling wins Corbetti geothermal contract

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British firm Marriott Drilling Group has secured a contract to drill up to four exploration wells at Ethiopia's Corbetti geothermal project, with drilling operations scheduled to begin in 2027. The contract award marks a concrete step forward for a project that targets an initial 50 MW power plant, with total installed capacity eventually reaching 150 MW.

Corbetti is one of Ethiopia's flagship geothermal development sites, and the project is positioned to help the country diversify an electricity system that is currently dominated by hydropower. Geothermal capacity would provide a more weather-independent baseload generation source, reducing Ethiopia's vulnerability to seasonal rainfall variability that periodically constrains hydro output. The 150 MW ultimate target represents a meaningful addition to the national grid for a country working to expand electricity access across a large and growing population.

The instrument here is a signed drilling contract awarded to Marriott Drilling Group, a UK-based specialist drilling contractor. Up to four exploration wells are planned under the scope of work, with the programme designed to confirm subsurface resource potential before any final investment decision on surface power plant infrastructure. The 2027 start date gives project stakeholders a defined timeline but also signals that development remains in the exploration and appraisal phase rather than full field development.

For Norway's oil and gas service sector, geothermal drilling shares meaningful technical overlap with conventional well services, including rotary drilling

equipment, wellhead systems, casing and cementing, and mud engineering. Companies with transferable downhole and surface well-services expertise may find Corbetti a relevant reference point as African geothermal development accelerates, particularly given the high-temperature, high-enthalpy conditions typical of the East African Rift system where Corbetti is located.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The signed drilling contract with Marriott Drilling Group makes this an active procurement environment, and Norwegian well-services and drilling-equipment companies with high-temperature geothermal experience should assess whether subcontracting or supply opportunities exist within Marriott's scope. Partners without direct geothermal credentials should monitor the project and use the 2027 drilling window as a relationship-building timeline with both Marriott and the Corbetti project developer. If exploration results are positive, a surface plant FID would open further procurement rounds relevant to power infrastructure suppliers.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Norwegian drilling-equipment and well-services firms should approach Marriott Drilling Group now to assess subcontract or equipment-supply roles within the four-well Corbetti exploration programme ahead of the 2027 start.
- **Service:** Wellhead, casing, cementing, and mud-engineering specialists with high-temperature experience can position themselves as qualified suppliers for a rift-system geothermal programme where downhole conditions are technically demanding.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Limited direct relevance at this stage, but companies with subsurface instrumentation and reservoir monitoring technology may find geothermal data acquisition a transferable application worth tracking.
- **Pipeline:** Steam and brine surface gathering systems will be required if exploration is successful; pipeline and process-piping suppliers should monitor the project for an eventual FID and EPC tender.

Original source: Ecofin Agency →

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