

AFRICA OIL+GAS REPORT

ExxonMobil Nigeria Marks 20 Years at Erha While Doubling Usan Output

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ExxonMobil Nigeria is marking the 20th anniversary of first oil at the Erha deepwater field while simultaneously pursuing a significant production increase at the nearby Usan field, according to Jagir Baxi, the company's Lead Country Manager for Nigeria. Baxi outlined at least four concrete takeaways from ExxonMobil's deepwater Nigeria portfolio, signalling that the supermajor remains committed to its offshore Nigerian position despite years of divestment speculation around its shallow-water assets.

Erha, located in OML 133 in water depths of around 1,000 metres offshore Nigeria, produced its first oil in 2006 and has been a flagship deepwater asset for ExxonMobil and its co-venturers ever since. The field's two-decade operational track record makes it one of the more mature deepwater FPSOs in the Gulf of Guinea, raising pertinent questions around life extension, subsea integrity management, and potential infill drilling — all areas where sustained service demand is likely. Reaching a 20-year milestone on an FPSO of this type typically triggers formal asset integrity reviews and intervention campaigns.

The more immediate commercial signal, however, is the planned doubling of output at Usan. The Usan FPSO, also in OML 138 and operated by TotalEnergies with ExxonMobil as a key partner, has historically produced well below its design capacity. A concerted push to double throughput implies either successful infill well programmes, improved reservoir management, new subsea tiebacks, or a combination of all three. Each pathway carries significant procurement and contracting activity across well services, subsea engineering, and topside processing.

Baxi's framing of four distinct strategic takeaways suggests ExxonMobil is presenting a structured, forward-looking investment narrative for its deepwater Nigeria portfolio at a time when IOCs are under pressure to demonstrate value from existing acreage rather than pursue greenfield exploration. For service companies tracking Nigeria, this indicates a preference for brownfield optimisation work — a space that rewards incumbents with existing mobilisation and local content credentials, but that also creates opportunities for competitive re-tendering as asset strategies are refreshed.

Nigeria's deepwater sector continues to attract attention as the country works to stabilise its production base above two million barrels per day. With the Petroleum Industry Act now in force and fiscal terms for deepwater under renewed scrutiny, ExxonMobil's visible commitment at Erha and Usan provides a degree of confidence to the broader supply chain that deepwater Nigeria remains an active operating environment through the late 2020s.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies with FPSO integrity, subsea intervention, and well services capabilities should monitor ExxonMobil and TotalEnergies contracting pipelines on OML 133 and OML 138 closely, as both Erha life extension and Usan output doubling will generate near-term procurement activity. Companies already holding Nigerian local content credentials or operating through established in-country partners are best positioned to bid or sub-contract on upcoming campaigns. Those without a Nigeria presence should assess entry via partnership with an existing NCDMB-compliant operator.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **FPSO:** Erha's 20-year anniversary creates a natural trigger for topside integrity assessments and potential life-extension contracts on the FPSO hull and processing systems.
- **Subsea:** Doubling Usan output likely requires new subsea tiebacks or manifold interventions, presenting opportunities for subsea engineering and installation firms with Gulf of Guinea experience.

- **Drilling:** Infill well drilling is a probable component of the Usan production increase strategy, creating rig and well-services demand that Norwegian drilling contractors should track.
- **Service:** Brownfield optimisation at both fields will drive demand for production chemistry, integrity inspection, and asset management services suited to mature deepwater infrastructure.

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