

JEUNE AFRIQUE ÉCONOMIE

Dangote Eyes Tanzania Mega-Refinery to Fill East Africa Refining Gap

Saga deep read · 26 April 2026 · Score 50

Aliko Dangote, Africa's wealthiest industrialist and the force behind Nigeria's landmark 650,000-barrel-per-day Lekki refinery, is now turning his attention eastward. His next target is Tanga, Tanzania, where he is pursuing plans for a large-scale refinery complex that would be the first of its kind in a region conspicuously absent from Africa's refining map. East Africa remains the only sub-region on the continent with no operational refineries, leaving countries entirely dependent on imported refined products — a structural vulnerability that drives up fuel costs and limits energy security across the region.

Dangote has been vocal in calling on East African governments to take a more active role in de-risking the investment case, urging them to make binding commitments that would give international investors the confidence needed to commit capital at this scale. The appeal is strategically timed: East Africa is experiencing a wave of upstream oil and gas development — Uganda's EACOP corridor, Tanzania's own offshore gas sector, and Kenya's upstream ambitions — that collectively points toward a regional energy economy that will require far greater processing infrastructure than currently exists. A Tanga refinery would sit at the intersection of these dynamics, potentially processing both domestically produced crude and imported feedstock.

The Tanga location is not accidental. Tanzania's northern port city offers deep-water access, proximity to the Ugandan crude export route, and connectivity to landlocked markets in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. If the project advances to a final investment decision, it would rank among the most significant

downstream projects on the continent outside of Nigeria, requiring substantial engineering, procurement, and construction capacity across multiple disciplines — from tankage and pipelines to utilities, marine infrastructure, and processing units.

While Dangote's Nigerian refinery was largely self-financed and domestically anchored, the Tanzania project will require a broader coalition of government guarantees, development finance institution support, and private equity. The call on governments to convince international investors suggests the project is still in its early structuring phase, with commercial and offtake frameworks yet to be finalised. Nevertheless, the scale of ambition and Dangote's track record mean this is not speculative noise — it is a project the regional energy industry will be watching closely over the next 12 to 24 months as feasibility and financing structures take shape.

For the broader East African energy sector, the Tanga refinery concept signals a potential shift in how the region manages its downstream exposure. Combined with ongoing LNG infrastructure discussions in Tanzania and Uganda's crude pipeline nearing completion, the region is entering a period of significant capital deployment in energy infrastructure — creating a window for international service and engineering companies to position themselves ahead of formal tender processes.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies should begin early monitoring of Tanga project development, as a refinery of this scale will require subsea and marine infrastructure, pipeline engineering, tankage construction, and specialist well and process services. Companies with downstream EPC experience or East Africa regional presence should engage with Dangote Industries and Tanzanian government counterparts now, ahead of any formal procurement process. The project's financing complexity means a 12-24 month positioning window exists before serious contractor engagement begins.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Pipeline:** Tanga's landlocked hinterland connectivity requires extensive product pipeline infrastructure — Norwegian pipeline engineering firms should assess routing and offtake distribution opportunities early.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Marine terminal and offshore mooring infrastructure for crude import and product export at Tanga port represents a concrete subsea and marine systems opportunity.
- **LNG:** Tanzania's parallel LNG development trajectory means Norwegian LNG technology and process specialists could bundle service offerings across both upstream gas and downstream refining projects in-country.
- **Service:** Large-scale refinery construction will demand specialist inspection, integrity management, and commissioning services where Norwegian firms hold recognised technical competence.
- **Drilling/Well Services:** If the refinery catalyses domestic crude processing, upstream drilling activity feeding Tanzanian feedstock to Tanga could accelerate — well services companies should track licence activity in the region.

[Original source: Jeune Afrique Économie →](#)

Saga Advisory

General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN