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Mozambique enters active offshore drilling phase as Coral Norte campaign advances

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Italian energy major Eni has officially announced the start of the drilling campaign for the Coral Norte FLNG project offshore Mozambique, confirming that active subsurface operations are now underway in the Rovuma Basin. The announcement resolves a key uncertainty from earlier reporting: Eni is the operator of the Coral Norte development, positioning the company — which also operates the adjacent Coral Sul FLNG — as the central procurement and contracting authority for the current campaign. Notably, the latest reporting from Mozambican outlet SAPO frames the campaign explicitly as Mozambique's direct entry into offshore drilling, underscoring the national significance of the milestone beyond its purely commercial dimensions.

Mozambique's national oil company ENH (Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos) is participating in the drilling and completion campaign, taking an active operational role rather than remaining a passive equity holder. ENH's involvement is consistent with the country's broader policy of building national content and state-company technical capability across the upstream value chain. The Mozambican state's framing of Coral Norte as a direct national entry into offshore drilling reinforces that ENH's participation is being positioned domestically as a sovereign capability milestone, not merely a revenue event — a distinction that will likely shape local content expectations and government engagement with international contractors throughout the campaign.

Coral Norte is a follow-on development to Coral Sul, which has established the Rovuma Basin as a proven deepwater LNG production province. Because Coral Sul demonstrated that FLNG production from this frontier basin is technically and commercially achievable, Coral Norte carries meaningfully lower development risk than a comparable greenfield concept. With the drilling campaign now formally initiated and receiving prominent domestic media coverage in Mozambique, the project has crossed from planning into active execution — a critical milestone on the path toward a final investment decision and eventual production.

The drilling and completion campaign represents one of the most technically demanding phases of any offshore LNG development. Deepwater well construction in the Rovuma Basin requires high-specification drillships, complex completion assemblies engineered for high-pressure reservoir conditions, and subsea wellhead systems designed to interface with future FLNG infrastructure. The scope covering both drilling and completion suggests the wells being executed are intended to be production-ready, not purely exploratory, signalling a meaningful level of project maturity and financial commitment from the consortium.

For international service companies, Eni's formal campaign start — now confirmed by both Eni and Mozambican domestic media — transforms Coral Norte from a watch-list opportunity into an active procurement event. Demand will span drillship operations, wellhead and completion equipment, subsea installation vessels, remotely operated vehicle services, and logistics chains running through the Port of Pemba. Norwegian companies with deepwater drilling, well services, and subsea credentials in comparable high-pressure, high-temperature environments are naturally positioned to engage — particularly those that can meet local content requirements and sustain a Mozambique-based operational presence. With European and Asian demand for non-Russian gas continuing to underpin long-term LNG contract appetite, the pace of Coral Norte's drilling campaign will be watched as a bellwether for whether the project can reach FID within the current market window.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The Mozambican government's framing of Coral Norte as the country's direct entry into offshore drilling signals that local content and national capability-building will be prominent conditions of contractor engagement, alongside Eni's own supply chain requirements. Norwegian drilling contractors, completion specialists, and ROV/subsea service providers should pursue supplier qualification immediately, prioritising demonstrable local content plans and East Africa deepwater references. Companies with existing Eni vendor relationships or in-country presence in Mozambique hold a measurable prequalification advantage as procurement activity intensifies.



YOUR SAGA CONTACT

Geir Tellefsen

Partner, Market Entry & Local Representation

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- **Drillship operators:** High-specification deepwater drillship demand is active now; operators with Rovuma Basin or comparable HPHT references should engage Eni's supply chain directly.
- **Completion and wellhead equipment suppliers:** Production-ready well scope signals demand for complex subsea completion assemblies and FLNG-compatible wellhead systems; qualification windows are open.
- **ROV and subsea services companies:** Subsea installation and ROV support will be required throughout the campaign; companies with East Africa deepwater track records and local logistics capability are well positioned.
- **Local content and workforce partners:** ENH's active operational role and Mozambique's national framing of the campaign elevate local content requirements; Norwegian firms should identify Mozambican JV or training partners early.

Original source: Club of Mozambique →

Saga Advisory

Partner contact: geir@saga-advisory.com · General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

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