AMI AGENCE MAURITANIENNE D'INFORMATION (MAURITANIA) · MAURITANIA

Murphy Oil expands Africa footprint with Mauritania and Cameroon contract signings worth $200 million

Saga deep read · 03 November 2026 · Score 65

Murphy Oil is executing a broad Africa upstream strategy simultaneously across West and Central Africa, having signed exploration and production contracts in both Mauritania and Cameroon within weeks of each other in late 2026. In Mauritania, the American independent signed contracts covering blocks C10 and Tiof, with the relationship elevated to the highest level of government when President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani received a Murphy Oil delegation at the Presidential Palace in Nouakchott on 3 November 2026. The delegation was headed by Christopher Charles Olson, First Executive Vice President in charge of Exploration and Geology, signalling the company's strategic commitment to its Mauritanian acreage. The signing ceremony was presided over by Minister of Energy and Petroleum Mohamed Abdel Vetah, and the presidential meeting was attended by both the Minister Delegate to the Office of the President, El Nani Ould Ichrough, and Minister Abdel Vetah.

In Cameroon, Murphy Oil has signed four petroleum contracts with the Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH), headed by Chief Executive Adolphe, with the financial commitment for the combined work programmes across the four contracts — including operational periods — estimated at 200 million US dollars, equivalent to approximately 112 billion CFA francs. The Cameroon signings, reported on 13 November 2026, follow the Mauritanian agreements by a matter of days, confirming that Murphy Oil is pursuing a coordinated multi-country exploration push across the African continent rather than isolated opportunistic acreage grabs.

The diplomatic groundwork underpinning Murphy Oil's Mauritanian entry was laid through coordinated institutional engagement in the weeks preceding the signings. On 22 October 2026, Minister Abdel Vetah held two separate high-level meetings on the same day: one with Corina R. Sanders, Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Nouakchott, and another with Ibou Diouf, the World Bank's Resident Representative in Mauritania. The convergence of US bilateral diplomacy and multilateral development finance engagement, immediately ahead of contract signings and a presidential reception, suggests Mauritania was actively constructing a multi-institutional support structure around its upstream expansion. Around the same period, Mauritania also signed two separate financing agreements with France covering vocational training and civil protection — evidence that the government is managing multiple international partnerships across sectors simultaneously.

Mauritania has been building its upstream profile steadily, hosting the BP-operated Greater Tortue Ahmeyim Phase 1 LNG project, which achieved first LNG production in 2024, with the Société Mauritanienne des Hydrocarbures et de Patrimoine Minier (SMHPM) acting as the national oil company in upstream partnerships. The addition of Murphy Oil across blocks C10 and Tiof represents a parallel exploration track beyond the flagship LNG development. Specific technical details — water depth, block location, and work programme obligations — have not been disclosed for the Mauritanian contracts; comparable details for the four Cameroon blocks have similarly not been published beyond the headline financial commitment figure.

Taken together, the Mauritania and Cameroon signings establish Murphy Oil as one of the more active American independents pursuing new African frontier and emerging exploration positions in the current cycle. The $200 million work programme commitment disclosed for Cameroon alone provides a concrete scale reference for the type of expenditure Murphy Oil is prepared to deploy across its African portfolio. With exploration and production contracts now executed in both countries and senior executive engagement confirmed at the highest political levels, Murphy Oil will move toward seismic acquisition and exploratory drilling programmes — sequences that draw on a wide range of specialist technical and logistics services across both the West African offshore and Central African basins.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Murphy Oil's confirmed $200 million work programme commitment in Cameroon, combined with its concurrent Mauritanian block signings, establishes a material and geographically spread African procurement pipeline that Norwegian service companies with offshore seismic, drilling, or well-intervention capability should actively track across both SNH and Murphy Oil's Houston and regional procurement networks. The multilateral and bilateral diplomatic architecture supporting the Mauritanian contracts — involving the World Bank and US Embassy — suggests a well-supported operating environment that could accelerate timelines and broaden financing options for approved contractors entering the supply chain. Norwegian companies with existing West or Central African references are well-positioned to engage early as Murphy Oil moves toward seismic and exploratory drilling phases in both countries.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Offshore seismic acquisition companies:** Murphy Oil's exploration-phase contracts across multiple African blocks represent near-term demand for 2D/3D seismic surveys; early engagement with Murphy Oil's exploration team and SNH in Cameroon is advisable as work programmes are defined.
- **Drilling contractors and well services companies:** The $200 million Cameroon work programme and the Mauritanian dual-block position indicate exploratory drilling campaigns will follow seismic; companies with West and Central African rig availability or well services logistics should position for tender readiness.
- **Subsea and marine support companies:** Mauritania's offshore blocks and Cameroon's coastal basin acreage may require subsea survey, ROV, and marine logistics support during exploration phases, creating opportunities for companies with established African offshore operational capability.
- **Project finance and risk advisory firms:** The World Bank's concurrent engagement in Mauritania alongside US bilateral channels suggests a multilateral financing architecture may emerge; advisors familiar with IFC and World Bank upstream instruments could support both operators and contractors in structuring project risk.

Original source: AMI Agence Mauritanienne d'Information (Mauritania) →

Saga Advisory

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

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN