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PETROCI completes first crude lifting on CI-26 block

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PETROCI CI-26 has carried out its first crude lifting as operator of the CI-26 block offshore Côte d'Ivoire, marking a significant operational milestone for the state-owned hydrocarbons company in its capacity as a producing operator rather than a minority participant.

The lifting represents a step forward in Côte d'Ivoire's stated ambition to deepen national content in the management of its hydrocarbon resources. PETROCI, the national oil company, taking on the operator role signals a deliberate policy shift toward greater state control over upstream production activities, a trend observed across several West African producer nations in recent years.

Details on the volume of crude lifted, the destination of the cargo, or the identity of any co-venturers on the CI-26 block were not disclosed in the available reporting. Similarly, the article does not specify the production infrastructure involved — whether a floating production unit, fixed platform, or other facilities — nor does it provide water depth or reservoir data for the block.

Nonetheless, the event carries commercial weight. A first lifting as operator confirms that production operations on CI-26 have reached a stage where liftable volumes have accumulated, and that PETROCI has the operational and logistical capability to execute a cargo lifting independently. For the Ivorian upstream sector, this marks a transition from PETROCI functioning primarily as a state partner in joint ventures led by international oil companies to assuming direct operational accountability.

Côte d'Ivoire has been working to revitalise its upstream sector following a period of declining output from its mature offshore fields. The country has attracted renewed interest from international operators in recent licensing rounds, and the development of blocks such as CI-26 forms part of that broader effort to sustain and grow hydrocarbon production. PETROCI's growing operational confidence — demonstrated by this lifting — may influence how future joint venture arrangements on new acreage are structured, with the national company potentially seeking operator status on a wider range of assets.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is an early-stage operational milestone with limited procurement signals; Norwegian service companies should monitor CI-26 development closely and engage PETROCI at a relationship-building level to position for future well services, subsea, or production management scopes as the block matures. No open tenders or FIDs have been reported, so procurement outreach is premature. Tracking PETROCI's growing operator ambition across its portfolio will be important for identifying which service categories it may seek external expertise in.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Subsea:** Monitor CI-26 for subsea tie-back or flowline scopes as PETROCI builds operational confidence and may seek specialist subsea execution partners.
- **FPSO:** If CI-26 utilises or plans floating production infrastructure, PETROCI's operator status could open dialogue on FPSO management, leasing or brownfield upgrade services.
- **Drilling:** An operatorship milestone may precede infill or appraisal drilling campaigns; drilling contractors should build PETROCI relationships ahead of any rig tender.
- **Service:** Well services and production chemistry providers should engage PETROCI early, as a new operator typically requires third-party technical support to sustain plateau production.

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