MEES · LIBYA · UPSTREAM

Orlen drills third exploration well in Libya

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Poland's Orlen is preparing to drill its third exploration well in Libya this month, according to Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC), which confirmed the development following a meeting with company representatives.

The NOC announcement signals continued upstream exploration activity in Libya despite the country's complex operating environment. Orlen, the Polish energy major that absorbed PGNiG in a corporate consolidation, has been building a measured exploration presence in the country, with this third well representing a step-up in its Libyan drilling programme.

Libya holds Africa's largest proven crude oil reserves, and international oil companies have been gradually returning to exploration activity following years of disruption tied to the country's prolonged political instability. The NOC has actively pursued re-engagement with existing licence holders and sought to attract new entrants as part of efforts to rebuild production capacity, which has fluctuated significantly due to field shutdowns, blockades and infrastructure constraints.

The progression from a first and second well to a third within the same exploration campaign suggests Orlen has obtained sufficient subsurface data to justify continued drilling, though no results from previous wells, nor details on the acreage, block classification, or well targets, were disclosed in the NOC statement. The timing — described as this month — indicates drilling operations are either imminent or already under mobilisation.

For the broader Libyan upstream sector, sustained commitment from an international operator of Orlen's scale carries significance. Exploration drilling programmes typically require a chain of local and international service contracts covering rig provision, mud and cementing services, wireline logging, and logistics, all of which represent active procurement opportunities as operations advance. The NOC's public communication of the milestone also reflects its ongoing effort to signal stability and openness to international partners.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is an active drilling programme at the third-well stage, making it appropriate to monitor procurement channels for well services, drilling fluids, logging, and logistics contracts that typically follow at this stage. Norwegian well services and drilling contractors with regional Middle East-Africa presence should track NOC and Orlen tender activity. Direct procurement outreach may be warranted now given the confirmed operational status of the programme.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** A three-well exploration campaign creates rig and drilling services demand — Norwegian contractors with North Africa rig assets or mobilisation capability should monitor Orlen and NOC tender pipelines.
- **Service:** Well services including wireline logging, cementing, and mud engineering are typically contracted per-well — Norwegian oilfield service firms should identify Orlen's Libya procurement route and register interest.
- **Pipeline:** If exploration results prove commercial, early-stage tie-in and flowline scoping work may follow — pipeline engineers should monitor for appraisal announcements.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Libya's upstream is predominantly onshore and shallow, but any offshore acreage in Orlen's portfolio warrants monitoring for future subsea or floating production requirements.

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