OFFSHORE MAGAZINE · MOZAMBIQUE · DRILLING

Coral North drilling leads Africa offshore surge

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Development drilling is underway at Mozambique's Coral North project, marking a significant operational milestone as operators across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond advance offshore drilling campaigns simultaneously. The activity signals a broad recovery in offshore drilling demand, with rigs being committed and campaigns structured across multiple basins.

In Mozambique, Coral North represents a continuation of the ultra-deepwater LNG development strategy anchored by the Coral Sul FLNG vessel, which achieved first gas in 2022. Development drilling at Coral North is designed to bring additional gas volumes to the existing Coral Sul FLNG infrastructure, extending the productive life and throughput capacity of the asset. The campaign underscores the operator's confidence in the resource base and in the commercial framework underpinning the broader Area 4 concession.

Offshore Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, operators are advancing separate drilling campaigns, reflecting renewed appetite for West African offshore activity after a period of restrained capital expenditure. Both countries have seen intermittent exploration and development interest in recent years, and concurrent campaign execution points to tightening rig demand in the Atlantic-facing West African market. Rig scheduling and logistics across this stretch of coastline require coordinated planning, particularly as the regional drilling contractor market has consolidated.

The article also notes rig capacity being secured in India and appraisal plans moving forward in Timor-Leste, illustrating that the offshore drilling recovery is not confined

to Africa but is a globally distributed phenomenon driving demand for specialized rigs, well services, and subsea support across multiple jurisdictions simultaneously. For African operations specifically, the concurrent activity in Mozambique, Gabon, and Côte d'Ivoire places pressure on the regional supply chain for drilling consumables, well services personnel, and marine support vessels.

For service companies with established African logistics and personnel infrastructure, the timing of these overlapping campaigns creates both opportunity and execution risk. Operators running parallel programs in geographically dispersed locations will seek suppliers capable of delivering consistent service quality across jurisdictions, with reliable local content compliance and supply chain redundancy. The Coral North campaign in particular, given its deepwater LNG development context, is likely to involve sophisticated well construction requirements including managed pressure drilling capability, deepwater cementing, and subsea wellhead systems — though the article does not specify the precise well service contracts engaged. Market participants will be monitoring rig utilization data and contract announcements from Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire closely as those campaigns progress toward execution.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The Coral North development drilling campaign and concurrent West African programs represent active operational phases where well services, subsea equipment, and marine support procurement is live or imminent — Norwegian service companies with deepwater LNG and West African credentials should monitor contract award announcements and position for upcoming tender cycles. For Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire, relationship-building with the operating consortia and local agents is advisable now, ahead of formal procurement. No open tenders are confirmed in the article, so direct procurement outreach is premature.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Coral North's development drilling phase creates demand for deepwater drilling services, managed pressure drilling capability, and wellhead systems from established ultra-deepwater contractors.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Subsea tie-back and wellhead infrastructure requirements at Coral North, feeding the existing Coral Sul FLNG vessel, are relevant for subsea hardware and installation service providers.
- **Well Services:** Concurrent campaigns in Mozambique, Gabon, and Côte d'Ivoire create parallel demand for cementing, completion fluids, and wireline services — regional logistics capability will differentiate suppliers.
- **LNG:** Coral North drilling directly supports throughput to the Coral Sul FLNG asset, making LNG process and topside service companies relevant for any associated brownfield work on the floating unit.
- **Service:** Overlapping multi-country campaigns tighten marine support and logistics capacity in West and East Africa; vessel operators and offshore logistics providers should assess regional availability now.

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Saga Advisory

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

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN