NAIJAPRENEUR · NIGERIA · DRILLING

Nigeria Active Rigs Hit 46, Up 300% Since 2021

Saga deep read · 12 November 2026 · Score 58

Nigeria's active drilling rig count has reached 46, representing a rise of more than 300 percent compared to 2021 levels, according to the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC). The figure marks a substantial recovery in upstream drilling activity across Africa's largest oil producer and signals renewed operator confidence in the country's hydrocarbon sector.

The NUPRC, which oversees upstream licensing and operational compliance following the enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act, has been tracking rig utilisation as a key performance indicator for sector activity. A quadrupling of active rigs over a roughly four-year period points to accelerated well programmes across multiple operators and concessions, though the commission did not break down the figure by operator, basin, or well type in the reported data.

Nigeria's upstream sector experienced a prolonged period of subdued drilling investment in the years leading up to 2021, constrained by low oil prices, regulatory uncertainty ahead of the Petroleum Industry Act's passage, and security concerns in the Niger Delta. The rebound in rig counts suggests those headwinds have eased sufficiently to unlock deferred well programmes and new drilling campaigns. Increased activity by both international oil companies and indigenous operators is consistent with the broader trend of asset consolidation and production optimisation that has characterised the Nigerian market since 2022.

A rig count at 46 active units remains below the peaks recorded during Nigeria's earlier upstream expansion cycles, but the trajectory is positive. Sustained activity at

current or higher levels would be necessary to arrest the country's production decline and move output closer to the government's stated ambition of returning to and surpassing 2 million barrels per day. The NUPRC's public reporting of rig metrics also reflects a broader push toward transparency and performance accountability within the reformed regulatory framework.

The drilling rebound has direct implications for the full spectrum of oilfield services and equipment supply chains operating in Nigeria. Increased well activity drives demand for drilling contractors, well services, mud and chemicals, tubulars, and associated logistics. As operators sustain and potentially expand their well programmes, procurement cycles for these services are likely to remain active, reinforcing Nigeria's position as one of the most dynamic upstream markets on the continent.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

With 46 active rigs and a strong upward trajectory, Nigeria's drilling market warrants active monitoring and direct relationship-building with both IOC and indigenous operators planning well programmes. Norwegian well services, drilling equipment, and mud-engineering companies should map current contract cycles and position for upcoming tender opportunities as operators sustain expanded drilling campaigns.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Rising rig count points to sustained demand for drilling contractors and rig equipment; map which operators are running multi-well programmes to target frame agreements.
- **Service:** Well services including cementing, completions, and wireline will follow rig activity closely — engage with active operators to understand near-term well campaign schedules.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** If a share of the 46 active rigs is offshore, monitor whether new well results accelerate subsea tie-back or FPSO utilisation decisions by operators.
- **Pipeline:** Increased upstream well activity may require additional flow-line and infield pipeline work; track field development plan approvals at NUPRC for procurement signals.

Original source: naijapreneur →

Saga Advisory

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

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN