AFRICAN ENERGY CHAMBER · NAMIBIA · OFFSHORE

Namibia Urged to Fast-Track Upstream Policy for Oil Boom

Saga deep read · 12 November 2026 · Score 64

Namibia risks losing momentum on its offshore oil boom unless the government accelerates petroleum legislation, introduces competitive licensing frameworks, and streamlines regulatory approvals, according to the African Energy Chamber. The advisory body argues that without faster policy action, the country's significant offshore discoveries may fail to translate into sustained production and economic growth.

The African Energy Chamber's warning centres on three interconnected policy gaps. First, existing petroleum legislation is viewed as insufficiently modern to handle the scale and complexity of Namibia's emerging offshore sector. Second, the licensing framework needs to be made more competitive to attract the range of operators, contractors, and service companies required to develop discoveries at pace. Third, approval processes across exploration, appraisal, and development phases are described as too slow, creating uncertainty for investors and developers already committed to the basin.

Namibia has emerged as one of Africa's most significant new frontier hydrocarbon provinces following a series of major offshore discoveries made in recent years. The scale of resources identified has prompted substantial international interest, with major operators moving through appraisal programmes. However, the gap between discovery and production remains a critical period during which regulatory and fiscal conditions can either accelerate or stall development. The African Energy Chamber's position is that Namibia is currently at that inflection point, and that policy decisions

made now will determine whether the country captures the full economic value of its resource base.

Streamlining upstream approvals is highlighted as particularly urgent. Lengthy permitting timelines increase carrying costs for developers and can delay final investment decisions, pushing back first-oil dates and reducing the net present value of projects for all stakeholders, including the state. Competitive licensing — meaning terms that balance government take with sufficient commercial returns for operators — is presented as a parallel requirement, since overly restrictive fiscal terms could cause developers to reprioritise capital toward other basins.

The Chamber frames these reforms not merely as procedural improvements but as prerequisites for Namibia converting geological success into economic transformation. Infrastructure requirements, local content obligations, and revenue management frameworks are all downstream of the upstream policy environment. If the legislative and licensing foundation is not strengthened promptly, the capacity to plan, finance, and execute development projects across the value chain — including subsea systems, floating production infrastructure, and associated facilities — will remain constrained. The message from the African Energy Chamber is clear: Namibia's offshore opportunity is real, but it is not self-executing, and the window for establishing the right policy conditions is narrowing.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The story is at the advocacy and policy stage — no contract, FID, or tender has been announced. Norwegian service companies should monitor Namibia's legislative calendar and regulatory developments closely, and use this period to build relationships with operators active in the basin and with Namibian government stakeholders. Procurement outreach is premature until a licensing round is formally launched or development contracts are tendered.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Track regulatory milestones that will trigger FEED and EPCI tenders for Namibia's offshore development; position early with active operators during appraisal phase.

- **Drilling:** Monitor licensing round announcements that would create new exploration and appraisal drilling demand requiring rig and well-services contracting.
- **LNG:** Assess whether gas monetisation terms are addressed in forthcoming legislation, as associated and non-associated gas volumes could support LNG or FLNG concepts.
- **Pipeline:** Watch for onshore and offshore infrastructure planning tied to first-oil timelines, which will define pipeline and umbilical installation scopes.
- **Service:** Engage with industry bodies and operator representatives now to position for local content compliance support and well-services frameworks once licensing terms are confirmed.

Original source: African Energy Chamber →

Saga Advisory

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

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN