OFFSHORE TECHNOLOGY · EGYPT · DRILLING

Saipem wins $181m Scarabeo 9 drilling deals

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Saipem has secured two offshore drilling contracts with a combined value of approximately $181m for its Scarabeo 9 semi-submersible drilling rig, with operations scheduled to begin in 2027. One of the contracts covers work offshore Egypt, placing the award within the African energy market. The second contract is located offshore Suriname in South America.

The Scarabeo 9 is a sixth-generation semi-submersible drilling unit operated by Saipem, the Italian energy services group. Semi-submersible rigs of this class are typically deployed in deepwater and harsh-environment settings, though the specific water depths for these two contracts were not disclosed in the announcement. The Egypt contract represents continued activity in the Eastern Mediterranean, a basin that has attracted sustained offshore drilling investment in recent years on the back of significant gas discoveries.

Saipem did not break down the individual contract values between the Egypt and Suriname assignments, nor did it disclose the identity of the operators engaging the rig for either location. The combined $181m figure covers both scopes, and the work is expected to commence in 2027, suggesting the rig may be fulfilling existing commitments or undergoing scheduling transitions before mobilising to these new assignments.

Egypt remains one of the most active offshore drilling markets on the African continent, with the Mediterranean shelf hosting multiple gas development programmes. The award of a deepwater-capable semi-submersible to Egyptian

waters signals that operators are continuing to pursue more technically demanding well programmes in the country, beyond the shallow-water activity that has historically dominated the basin.

For the broader drilling services market, the dual-contract announcement demonstrates demand for high-specification floating rigs across multiple geographies, with operators in both Africa and Latin America competing for available semi-submersible capacity ahead of a 2027 start. Rig availability for this class of asset remains a key variable as project pipelines in several African basins move toward final investment decisions.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian drilling and well-services companies should monitor the Egypt scope closely as the Scarabeo 9 mobilisation in 2027 will create demand for subsea equipment, well-intervention tooling, and specialist drilling fluids or cementing services. The operator has not been named yet, so the immediate action is to track which IOC or NOC is running the Egyptian programme and begin relationship-building ahead of the procurement window. Norwegian subsea and riser-equipment suppliers may find the high-specification nature of the semi-submersible relevant to their product portfolios.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Monitor the Egypt operator identity and prepare for potential 2026 tender activity for rig-support and well-services scope tied to the Scarabeo 9 campaign.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** High-specification semi-submersible operations offshore Egypt may require riser systems, wellheads, and subsea completion equipment — track procurement timelines as the 2027 start approaches.
- **Service:** Drilling fluids, cementing, and directional-drilling service providers should identify the Egyptian operator and position for subcontract opportunities within the Saipem-led programme.
- **LNG:** If the Egyptian well programme targets gas, successful appraisal results could feed future LNG or pipeline export discussions — worth monitoring as a downstream signal.

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