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Namibia drills 25 Orange Basin wells since 2022

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Namibia has drilled 25 exploration and appraisal wells in the Orange Basin since 2022, marking a significant acceleration in offshore activity in one of the most closely watched frontier basins on the African continent. The drilling campaign reflects sustained operator commitment to appraising the substantial discoveries made in the basin, most notably the Venus and Graff finds that drew international attention to Namibia's deepwater potential.

The Orange Basin sits along Namibia's southern Atlantic coastline and extends into South African waters. The concentration of drilling activity since 2022 underscores how rapidly the basin has moved from early exploration to intensive appraisal, as operators work to define resource volumes and assess commerciality ahead of any development decisions.

The pace of well activity — averaging roughly eight to nine wells per year over the period — represents a material increase in rig demand and associated well services requirements in a country that had seen comparatively limited offshore drilling prior to the Venus discovery. Each well programme typically requires a full complement of subsea drilling support, including drill ships or semi-submersibles, remotely operated vehicles, well intervention equipment, and specialist cementing and completion services.

As appraisal programmes progress, operators will need to move toward concept selection and front-end engineering if the discoveries are to be developed. That process typically triggers demand for FEED studies, subsea production system

design, pipeline and riser engineering, and early FPSO or floating production unit scoping. The scale of the resources under appraisal in the Orange Basin suggests that any development sanction would rank among the most significant deepwater projects on the continent.

Namibia's Ministry of Mines and Energy has been active in promoting the basin and structuring licensing terms to attract continued investment. The 25-well milestone signals that the initial wave of exploration risk has given way to a more systematic appraisal phase, which typically precedes the longer and costlier development engineering cycle. How quickly operators move to final investment decisions will depend on reservoir characterisation results, oil price assumptions, and the pace of regulatory and infrastructure planning by the Namibian government.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian drilling and well-services companies should monitor the Orange Basin appraisal programme closely, as the sustained 25-well campaign creates ongoing demand for drill ships, ROV support, cementing and completion services. The transition from appraisal to FEED — likely within the next two to three years if results support commerciality — will open opportunities for subsea, FPSO and pipeline engineering firms to engage with concept selection processes. Relationship-building with the named operators and Namibia's upstream regulator is the priority action at this stage.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Twenty-five wells in three years represents sustained rig and well-services demand; monitor operator drilling schedules and rig contract awards for direct bidding opportunities.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** As appraisal matures, subsea production system and FPSO scoping studies will follow; early engagement in concept selection and FEED positioning is the right timing.
- **Pipeline:** Any Orange Basin development will require export pipeline and riser engineering; monitor FEED announcements for the first tendering signals.

- **Service:** ROV, well intervention and inspection services are in active demand across the ongoing appraisal campaign; direct outreach to drilling operators is warranted now.

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