

AFRICAN ENERGY CHAMBER

Cameroon's SNH Awards Five Exploration Blocks to Octavia and Murphy West Africa

Saga deep read · 27 April 2026 · Score 50

Cameroon's national oil company, Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH), has awarded five oil and gas exploration blocks to Octavia Energy Corporation and Murphy West Africa, signalling a deliberate effort to reinvigorate the country's upstream sector after a period of subdued exploration activity. The awards mark one of the more significant licensing moves Cameroon has made in recent years and reflect growing operator confidence in the country's hydrocarbon prospectivity.

Murphy West Africa is a subsidiary of Murphy Oil Corporation, a US independent with a track record in deepwater and frontier exploration across multiple basins. Octavia Energy Corporation, while a smaller player, has been positioning itself as an Africa-focused upstream entrant. The involvement of both an established international operator and an emerging African-focused independent suggests SNH is pursuing a portfolio approach — balancing technical capacity with local content ambitions — in line with trends seen across other West African licensing rounds.

Cameroon's upstream sector has faced structural headwinds over the past decade, including declining output from mature fields, limited fresh capital commitment from majors, and a difficult security environment in parts of the country. The current licensing push appears designed to counteract these pressures by attracting new entrants willing to conduct modern seismic acquisition and commit to exploration drilling programmes. The five-block award, if followed by active work programmes, could materially increase drilling activity over the next three to five years.

The broader context matters for service companies monitoring West Africa. Cameroon sits between the prolific Gulf of Guinea deepwater province to the west and the nascent Central African rift basin to the east. Its offshore holds underexplored deepwater acreage, while onshore and shallow-water blocks in the Rio del Rey and Douala basins have historically produced. New block awards in any of these sub-basins would require seismic vessels, drilling rigs, well services, and eventually subsea or FPSO infrastructure depending on discovery size and location. The pace at which Octavia and Murphy convert licences into firm work commitments will determine when commercial opportunities materialise for the supply chain.

For Norwegian service companies, Cameroon has historically been a secondary market compared to Nigeria, Angola, or Mozambique, but SNH's renewed momentum — combined with a wider regional trend of African governments aggressively repackaging acreage to attract post-energy-transition investment — warrants closer attention. Monitoring the specific block locations, water depths, and committed work programme obligations will clarify where and when contracting windows open.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies should begin tracking the specific block locations and water depths awarded to Octavia and Murphy West Africa, as deepwater acreage would create near-term opportunities for seismic acquisition and, further down the cycle, subsea and FPSO contracting. Companies with West Africa regional offices or existing Cameroon relationships — particularly in well services and drilling — should engage SNH and the new block holders now to position ahead of work programme commitments. The appropriate posture is monitor and selectively engage rather than immediate bid activity.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Murphy Oil's deepwater exploration history makes early rig contracting discussions relevant for any offshore blocks awarded, particularly if water depths exceed 200 metres.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Depending on block locations in the Douala or Rio del Rey basins, any commercial discovery would likely require floating production infrastructure, creating a future FPSO or subsea tie-back opportunity.
- **Service:** Seismic acquisition and well services companies should approach both Octavia and Murphy West Africa now to understand committed work programme timelines and position for early contracting.
- **Pipeline:** Onshore or shallow-water block awards in the Rio del Rey basin could generate pipeline and export infrastructure requirements if existing terminal capacity proves insufficient for new production.
- **LNG:** Cameroon already operates the FLNG Hilli Episeyo vessel; material new gas discoveries from these blocks could support expansion discussions or a second floating LNG train, warranting monitoring by LNG-focused Norwegian players.

[Original source: African Energy Chamber →](#)

Saga Advisory

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

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN