JEUNE AFRIQUE ÉCONOMIE · PIPELINE

Morocco's ONHYM Targets Accelerated Progress on Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline

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Amina Benkhadra, Director General of Morocco's National Office of Hydrocarbons and Mines (ONHYM), has outlined an ambitious roadmap to advance the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline (NMGP), one of Africa's most consequential energy infrastructure projects. Speaking to Jeune Afrique Économie, Benkhadra signalled that ONHYM is actively refining its investor attraction strategy across three critical workstreams: finalising an intergovernmental agreement, securing project financing, and launching construction on priority sections of the route.

The NMGP, which would stretch approximately 5,600 kilometres along West Africa's Atlantic coastline, is designed to transport natural gas from Nigeria's prolific Niger Delta fields northward through more than a dozen countries before reaching Morocco and eventually European markets. The pipeline has long been regarded as a transformative project for regional energy security and economic integration, but progress has historically been slow due to the sheer complexity of multi-sovereign negotiations, financing requirements running into tens of billions of dollars, and challenging subsea and onshore engineering conditions along the route.

Benkhadra's comments suggest a deliberate shift in strategy — rather than waiting for full end-to-end agreement, ONHYM appears to be prioritising the most technically and commercially viable sections of the corridor first. This phased approach could unlock early construction activity and demonstrate momentum to hesitant investors and development finance institutions. The intergovernmental agreement, once

signed, would provide the legal and regulatory framework necessary to underpin private and multilateral financing discussions. Fundraising efforts are understood to be targeting a mix of international development banks, Gulf sovereign wealth funds, and strategic industrial partners.

For the broader energy sector, the NMGP represents a potential structural shift in how West and North African gas reaches global markets. Nigeria holds some of the world's largest proven gas reserves, much of which remains undermonetised due to inadequate export infrastructure. A functioning pipeline corridor would also reduce gas flaring volumes in Nigeria, create new revenue streams for transit countries, and position Morocco as a critical hub connecting African hydrocarbon production to European buyers navigating post-Russia energy diversification.

Challenges remain substantial. The offshore sections of the pipeline, particularly along the Gulf of Guinea and through environmentally sensitive coastal zones, will require sophisticated subsea engineering. Onshore sections crossing multiple jurisdictions — each with distinct regulatory, security, and land rights frameworks — present their own complexity. Financing structures will need to satisfy lenders across a highly heterogeneous sovereign risk profile. Benkhadra's stated focus on priority sections implies that ONHYM is well aware of these constraints and is engineering a sequenced delivery model to manage them.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian subsea and pipeline contractors should monitor this project closely as ONHYM moves toward a phased construction model — the offshore sections along the Gulf of Guinea represent a natural entry point for Norwegian deepwater and pipeline-lay expertise. As intergovernmental agreements are finalised and financing structures take shape, early pre-FEED and FEED engagement could position Norwegian firms advantageously ahead of formal tendering. Companies active in West Africa should consider direct outreach to ONHYM and Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) project offices to establish technical credibility now.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Pipeline:** Offshore and nearshore pipeline-lay contractors should track ONHYM's priority section announcements to identify early tender opportunities along the Gulf of Guinea corridor.
- **Subsea:** Subsea engineering firms can offer FEED and route survey services for the deepwater sections, where Norwegian technical standards carry strong reputational weight with development finance lenders.
- **FPSO:** If floating infrastructure is considered for offshore gas aggregation points along the route, Norwegian FPSO operators are well positioned to propose integrated production and transfer solutions.
- **LNG:** Should pipeline delays persist on certain sections, Norwegian LNG technology providers could propose modular small-scale LNG solutions as interim gas monetisation alternatives for transit countries.
- **Service:** Well services and project management consultancies can engage early with NNPC and ONHYM on feasibility and environmental impact assessments, building relationships ahead of larger contract awards.

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