OFFSHORE TECHNOLOGY · UPSTREAM

ExxonMobil Commits $1bn to Usan Infill Project on Nigeria's OML 138

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ExxonMobil and its partners have committed $1 billion to launch the Usan Infill Project, located within Oil Mining Lease 138 (OML 138) offshore Nigeria. The investment targets on-block operations, signalling a significant capital allocation to an existing deepwater asset rather than a greenfield development — a distinction that carries its own set of service and supply chain implications.

Infill drilling programmes of this scale are typically designed to maximise recovery from a proven reservoir by adding new production wells into an already-producing field infrastructure. For the Usan field, which has been in production since 2012 via a floating production, storage and offloading vessel, an infill campaign means the core topside and subsea architecture is already in place, but well intervention, new subsea tiebacks, and drilling activity will need to be mobilised. The $1 billion commitment underscores that operators remain willing to deploy substantial capital into Nigerian offshore assets when the fiscal and regulatory environment supports it.

Nigeria's upstream sector has faced a complex decade marked by regulatory reform, including the passage of the Petroleum Industry Act, divestments by international oil companies from onshore and shallow-water acreage, and ongoing questions around deepwater fiscal terms. Against that backdrop, a billion-dollar deepwater commitment from ExxonMobil and partners sends a constructive signal — both for Nigerian energy ambitions and for the international service sector that supplies the technical capability to execute such projects.

For Norwegian oil and gas service companies, the Usan Infill Project represents a concrete near-term opportunity rather than a speculative future prospect. Infill drilling campaigns require drilling rigs, well services, subsea engineering, and potentially additional umbilicals, risers, and flowlines if new satellite wells require tieback infrastructure. The FPSO already on location may also require modifications or capacity upgrades depending on the number of new wells and their expected flow rates. Each of these workstreams is a potential entry point for Norwegian companies with deepwater West Africa track records.

Procurement and contracting activity for a project of this size will likely be phased, with early-stage engineering and FEED work preceding drilling and installation contracts. Norwegian companies that have not yet established relationships with ExxonMobil or its co-venturers on OML 138 should treat this announcement as a trigger to initiate or accelerate engagement — either directly with the operator or through established local and international EPCI contractors active in the Nigerian deepwater market. Monitoring tender announcements through Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board channels will be essential as the project progresses toward execution.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The $1bn Usan Infill Project is an active deepwater opportunity where Norwegian service companies can pursue drilling, subsea, and FPSO-related contracts in the near term. Partners should initiate operator engagement now, as FEED and contracting activity is likely already underway. Companies without existing OML 138 relationships should consider approaching established EPCI contractors as a route to market.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Infill drilling requires rig mobilisation and well services — Norwegian drilling contractors and BHA/MWD specialists should engage ExxonMobil's Nigeria procurement team directly.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** New infill wells may require additional subsea tieback infrastructure, creating demand for umbilicals, risers, flowlines, and subsea tree installation services.

- **FPSO:** Increased well count could necessitate FPSO modifications or production capacity upgrades, representing an opportunity for Norwegian topside and marine engineering firms.
- **Well Services:** Infill campaigns generate sustained demand for cementing, completions, and well intervention services across multiple well slots.
- **Pipeline:** Satellite well tiebacks, if required, will need flexible or rigid flowline installation — Norwegian pipeline contractors with West Africa deepwater experience should monitor tender activity closely.

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