ENERGY CAPITAL & POWER · UPSTREAM

Gambia's GNPC Pitches Onshore and Offshore Blocks at MSGBC Forum

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The Gambia National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) used the MSGBC Energy event as a platform to present the country's upstream oil and gas opportunities to international investors, highlighting both onshore and offshore acreage as available for foreign participation. The pitch centred on what GNPC described as attractive fiscal terms, signalling the government's intent to accelerate exploration activity and draw in international oil companies and their service partners.

The MSGBC basin — spanning Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea-Conakry — has emerged as one of West Africa's more active frontier exploration zones following significant gas discoveries in neighbouring Senegal and Mauritania in recent years. Gambia occupies a relatively early-stage position within this regional story, and GNPC's appearance at a dedicated basin event reflects Banjul's effort to raise its profile among operators and financiers who are already engaged elsewhere in the MSGBC corridor.

The corporation highlighted both onshore and offshore opportunities, though the article does not specify block designations, acreage sizes, water depths, or the precise structure of the fiscal incentives on offer. What is clear is that GNPC is actively marketing its acreage rather than waiting for unsolicited interest, a posture that typically precedes a formal licensing round or direct negotiation process with selected partners.

For international service companies assessing the MSGBC region, Gambia remains at an earlier development stage than neighbours Senegal and Mauritania, where upstream activity has already translated into tangible infrastructure and contracting opportunities. However, early engagement with an NOC during its investment promotion phase can position service firms advantageously when drilling campaigns and development decisions eventually materialise. Companies already working in the broader MSGBC corridor are best placed to extend their regional footprint into Gambia with limited incremental cost.

The fiscal terms referenced by GNPC — while unspecified in detail — are a deliberate signal to de-risk the investment case for potential entrants. Governments in frontier exploration jurisdictions routinely use competitive royalty rates, tax holidays, and cost-recovery provisions to offset the geological and political risk premium that investors apply to less-proven basins. Whether the terms are genuinely competitive will require direct engagement with GNPC and review of the relevant petroleum legislation, which Norwegian service companies' operator clients will likely undertake before committing to exploration programmes.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies should treat this as an early-stage monitoring opportunity, with direct relevance once an operator commits to an exploration drilling programme onshore or offshore Gambia. Firms already active in Senegal or Mauritania — through FPSO, drilling, or subsea contracts — are best positioned to extend relationships and logistics into Gambia at low incremental cost. Saga recommends tracking any forthcoming licensing round announcement from GNPC as the trigger point for more active market entry preparation.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Monitor GNPC's licensing timeline; early positioning with a rig contractor or drilling services provider active in the MSGBC region could secure first-mover advantage when exploration wells are sanctioned.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Offshore block promotion suggests eventual deepwater or shallow-water development potential; FPSO operators with existing MSGBC assets should assess whether Gambian acreage fits an extended regional deployment strategy.

- **Service:** Well services and geoscience firms can engage GNPC now at low cost to build relationships and understand data availability, positioning ahead of any seismic acquisition or exploration drilling campaign.
- **Pipeline:** Onshore acreage promotion opens a longer-term question about domestic gas infrastructure if commercial discoveries are made; pipeline engineering firms should file Gambia under early-watch rather than active pursuit.

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