LE MONDE AFRIQUE · PIPELINE

ECOWAS Backs Nigeria-Morocco Pipeline Crossing Thirteen West African Nations

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The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has formally approved the construction of the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline, advancing a project that has been under discussion for roughly a decade. The approval marks a significant political milestone for what would become one of the most ambitious energy infrastructure undertakings on the African continent.

According to the source article, the pipeline would traverse thirteen West African countries before connecting to the existing Maghreb-Europe gas pipeline, effectively linking Nigerian gas reserves to European markets via the Atlantic coast of Africa. The scale and cross-border complexity of the project place it in a category of its own within the region's infrastructure landscape.

The project has faced prolonged delays since serious discussions began, with financing arrangements, intergovernmental agreements, and technical planning all requiring coordination across more than a dozen sovereign states. ECOWAS approval represents a consolidation of political will at the regional bloc level, which is typically a prerequisite for mobilising multilateral development finance and attracting international engineering, procurement, and construction contractors.

For the West African sub-region, the pipeline carries strategic importance beyond gas export revenues. Countries along the route stand to benefit from domestic gas offtake connections, which could support power generation and industrial development in nations where energy poverty remains a significant constraint on economic growth.

The link to the Maghreb-Europe pipeline also positions the project within broader European energy security discussions, particularly relevant given European efforts to diversify away from Russian gas supply.

While no construction timeline, financing structure, or lead developer has been specified in the current announcement, the ECOWAS endorsement is expected to accelerate formal feasibility and front-end engineering work. The sheer length of the route and the number of national jurisdictions involved mean that detailed ground surveys, environmental and social impact assessments, and compressor station planning will require sustained international technical input over a multi-year development period. Industry observers have long noted that financing and political coordination — rather than technical feasibility — have been the primary obstacles to progress, making the ECOWAS approval a meaningful signal to the investment community.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian pipeline and subsea service companies should treat this approval as the moment to engage early — establishing relationships with the project development offices, ECOWAS energy bodies, and likely lead operators before EPC contracts are scoped. Given the multi-country onshore and potentially nearshore routing, Norwegian expertise in pipeline engineering, integrity management, and large-scale project execution is directly applicable. Companies should monitor financing discussions closely, as multilateral development bank involvement typically triggers international competitive tendering that favours firms with strong HSE and technical credentials.

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- **Pipeline:** Early-stage engagement with project developers and ECOWAS energy secretariat to position for FEED and EPC contracts on a multi-country trunk line of exceptional length and complexity.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Any nearshore or offshore sections of the routing — particularly around the Niger Delta origin point or Atlantic coastal crossings — could require subsea tie-in or shore-approach expertise.
- **LNG:** Monitor whether LNG offtake or liquefaction components are added to the project scope as a hedge against pipeline financing delays, which have historically stalled similar long-distance gas infrastructure projects.
- **Drilling/Well Services:** Upstream gas supply commitments required to underwrite pipeline throughput may accelerate new well development in Nigeria, creating incremental demand for drilling and well service capacity.
- **Service:** Cross-border pipeline projects of this scale require extensive HSE, environmental assessment, and project management consultancy services where Norwegian firms carry recognised international credibility.

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