JEUNE AFRIQUE ÉCONOMIE · PIPELINE

Nigeria-Morocco Atlantic Pipeline Advances as €23 Billion Trans-African Gas Corridor

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A proposed 6,000-kilometre gas pipeline linking Nigeria to Morocco is gaining renewed attention as one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects in Africa. Originally conceived in 2016 when King Mohammed VI visited Abuja to strengthen Morocco's partnerships across the continent, the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline (NMGP) carries an estimated price tag of €23 billion and is expected to become operational by 2031. The project would traverse 13 African countries along the Atlantic coast, making it one of the longest pipeline systems ever proposed on the continent.

The strategic rationale behind the pipeline is substantial. Nigeria sits atop some of Africa's largest proven natural gas reserves, much of which is currently flared or underutilised due to insufficient domestic and export infrastructure. The pipeline would provide a direct overland and offshore route to carry Nigerian gas northward through West African coastal nations before ultimately connecting to European markets via Morocco and potential subsea links across the Strait of Gibraltar. For the 13 transit countries, the project offers the prospect of domestic gas offtake, industrialisation opportunities, and transit revenues.

The timeline to 2031 is ambitious given the project's complexity. Routing a 6,000-kilometre pipeline through 13 sovereign nations requires alignment on legal frameworks, right-of-way agreements, environmental permitting, and financing structures across multiple jurisdictions. International development finance institutions and sovereign wealth participation are expected to play a role, though the precise funding structure has not been finalised. Execution will likely be phased, with early sections in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea receiving priority engineering attention.

For the broader West African energy landscape, the pipeline represents a potential structural shift. Countries along the route — many of which currently rely on expensive liquid fuel imports for power generation — could gain access to cheaper piped gas, supporting industrial growth and energy transition goals. Morocco, as the northern anchor and a country with growing renewable energy infrastructure, positions itself as both a transit hub and a potential integration point between African gas supply and European demand, particularly as Europe seeks to diversify away from Russian supply.

Despite the geopolitical and commercial logic, the NMGP faces persistent headwinds. Security conditions across parts of the Sahel and West African littoral, financing gaps at this scale, and coordination challenges among 13 governments have all slowed progress since the project's inception nearly a decade ago. Nonetheless, renewed European interest in African gas following the 2022 energy crisis has injected fresh diplomatic momentum, and both Nigeria and Morocco have continued to advance bilateral discussions.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian pipeline and subsea contractors should monitor tendering activity closely as the project moves toward feasibility and front-end engineering phases, given that 6,000 km of pipeline across varied terrain and potential offshore segments represents substantial scope for Norwegian technical expertise. Financing and EPC structures are not yet defined, making this a project to track and position for rather than bid on immediately — early engagement with both Nigerian and Moroccan national energy entities would be advisable.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Pipeline:** A 6,000 km multi-country pipeline system will require onshore and potential nearshore pipeline engineering, installation, and integrity management services where Norwegian contractors hold strong credentials.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** If offshore segments are developed to gather Nigerian gas at source before feeding the pipeline, subsea tiebacks and riser systems could create entry points for Norwegian subsea firms.
- **LNG:** Delays or financing gaps in the pipeline could sustain parallel LNG export demand from Nigeria, keeping floating LNG and LNG infrastructure opportunities relevant for Norwegian service companies in the interim.
- **Service:** Multi-jurisdictional pipeline projects of this scale require extensive metocean surveys, geotechnical studies, and HSE framework development — areas where Norwegian consultancies can engage early in the project cycle.

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