

AFRICA OIL+GAS REPORT · DRILLING

Saipem Wins ENI Offshore Drilling Contract for Baleine Expansion in Côte d'Ivoire

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Italian contractor Saipem has been awarded an offshore drilling contract by ENI for the expanded Baleine project in Côte d'Ivoire. The contract award signals continued momentum in the development of the Baleine field, which has established itself as one of West Africa's most actively progressed upstream projects in recent years.

The Baleine field, operated by ENI, has been on an accelerated development trajectory since its discovery, with the operator pursuing a phased approach to bring production capacity online in stages. The award of a new drilling contract to Saipem reflects ENI's commitment to expanding output at the field, though the specific contract value and scope of drilling activities were not fully disclosed in available reporting.

Côte d'Ivoire has emerged as a notable destination for offshore investment in the Gulf of Guinea, with the Baleine project serving as the country's flagship upstream development. ENI's sustained capital deployment at the field underscores the country's improved investment climate for international oil companies and the appetite for drilling services in the region. The contractor selection of Saipem, a well-established name in offshore drilling and engineering, points to the technical complexity and scale of the expanded development program.

For the broader West African offshore services market, the Baleine expansion represents an active and visible drilling campaign. As ENI moves forward with field expansion, demand for associated services — including well services, subsea

infrastructure, and logistics support — is expected to grow in parallel with the drilling program. Côte d'Ivoire's regulatory environment and ENI's track record of phased development at Baleine suggest the project will continue to generate procurement activity for international contractors over the coming years.

The contract award to Saipem also illustrates the competitive dynamics of the Gulf of Guinea drilling market, where major European contractors are actively pursuing offshore mandates as African national oil companies and IOCs accelerate development timelines. For service companies monitoring West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and the Baleine project specifically represent a sustained and near-term opportunity rather than a speculative long-cycle play.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies should monitor the Baleine expansion closely, as an active offshore drilling campaign with a named major contractor in place typically generates downstream demand for well services, subsea equipment, and marine logistics. Partners with existing Gulf of Guinea presence or ENI/Saipem relationships are best positioned to engage on subcontracting opportunities. Companies without a regional footprint should treat this as a signal to begin market entry conversations now rather than at peak activity.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Saipem's contract award opens potential subcontracting opportunities for Norwegian drilling services and equipment suppliers with an existing ENI or Saipem vendor relationship.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Field expansion drilling typically precedes or runs parallel to subsea tie-back and production infrastructure work, making this a trigger point to engage ENI on upcoming subsea scopes at Baleine.
- **Service:** Well services companies offering cementing, completion, or wellbore integrity solutions should approach Saipem directly as the contracted driller to explore supplier qualification.

- **Pipeline:** Expanded production at Baleine will require additional infield flowline and pipeline capacity, warranting early monitoring of ENI's infrastructure procurement plans for the next development phase.

[Original source: Africa Oil+Gas Report →](#)

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