

LUSAKA TIMES

Zambia Plans \$1.2 Billion Petroleum Refinery at Ndola Copperbelt Site

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Zambia's government is moving forward with plans to construct a new petroleum refinery adjacent to the existing Indeni facility in Ndola, located in the Copperbelt region, at an estimated cost of \$1.2 billion. The project will be developed through the state-owned Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), with IDC Chief Executive Officer Cornwell Muleya confirming that investors are already on standby to participate in the venture.

The Indeni refinery has long been Zambia's primary petroleum processing facility, and the decision to build a new plant on the same site signals a strategic intent to modernise and expand domestic refining capacity rather than rely on imported refined products. By anchoring the new refinery next to established infrastructure, the government appears to be leveraging existing logistics, utilities, and land access to reduce greenfield development costs and accelerate the project timeline.

At \$1.2 billion, this represents one of the more significant energy infrastructure commitments Zambia has announced in recent years. The IDC's role as project vehicle suggests a blended public-private approach, with the government retaining strategic oversight while drawing in private capital to fund construction and operations. Muleya's reference to investors being 'on standby' indicates that commercial discussions are already at an advanced stage, though formal agreements and financing structures have not yet been publicly disclosed.

For the broader regional energy landscape, a functional large-scale refinery in Ndola would have implications beyond Zambia's borders. The Copperbelt sits at a logistical

crossroads serving Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and neighbouring landlocked states, meaning refined product output could serve regional demand and reduce the import dependency that currently exposes the area to foreign exchange pressures and supply chain disruptions.

The project's execution timeline, technology selection, and final financing structure remain to be confirmed. However, the government's public commitment through the IDC and the reported investor interest suggest the initiative has moved beyond early-stage planning. Stakeholders in engineering, construction, and energy services will be watching for procurement announcements and project milestones as the IDC works toward financial close.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies with downstream and refinery engineering capabilities should monitor IDC procurement channels closely as the project moves toward financial close and contractor selection. Partners specialising in process plant construction, project management, and industrial infrastructure financing are well positioned to engage early-stage discussions with the IDC. Given the blended public-private structure, there may also be openings for Norwegian firms with experience in structured project finance or technology licensing to support feasibility and FEED phases.

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- **Service:** Engineering and project management firms should engage IDC now to position for FEED and EPC contractor selection on a \$1.2 billion greenfield refinery.
- **Pipeline:** Refinery commissioning will require product distribution infrastructure upgrades; pipeline and terminal specialists should assess connectivity gaps between Ndola and regional markets.
- **LNG:** If the refinery incorporates gas processing or uses natural gas as a feedstock or fuel source, LNG and gas handling technology providers may find an entry point during detailed design phases.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Limited direct relevance at this stage, but downstream refinery expansions in landlocked Zambia may drive upstream production incentives elsewhere in the region worth monitoring.
- **Drilling:** Increased domestic refining capacity could stimulate upstream exploration activity in Zambia to supply local feedstock, warranting longer-term monitoring by drilling service companies.

[Original source: Lusaka Times →](#)

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