

ENERGY CAPITAL & POWER · LIBERIA · OFFSHORE

Liberia Launches 2026 Offshore Licensing Round with 29 Blocks and 80,000 km² Seismic Package

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The Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority (LPRA) has formally opened its 2026 Offshore Direct Negotiation Licensing Round, showcasing the opportunity at African Energy Week (AEW) 2026 in Cape Town. Organized by Energy Capital & Power (ECP) in partnership with the LPRA, the investment-focused campaign covers 29 blocks spanning the Liberia and Harper basins. Notably, new reporting specifies that the round features over 80,000 km² of seismic data as part of its subsurface data package — a significant detail that provides a clearer picture of the pre-competitive data foundation underpinning the round. There is, however, a discrepancy worth flagging: the new article references 16 offshore blocks in its summary text, while both earlier reporting and the article's headline cite 29 blocks; the 29-block figure is treated here as the authoritative count pending clarification from the LPRA.

The decision to structure the round as a Direct Negotiation format, now confirmed by the new reporting, is a meaningful commercial signal. Rather than a sealed-bid competitive tender, direct negotiation allows the LPRA to engage prospective operators bilaterally, potentially lowering the entry barrier for companies evaluating a frontier jurisdiction and enabling more flexible fiscal discussions. This format, combined with the AEW platform and ECP's established role as an African energy promotion partner, positions the round to reach a broad audience of international E&P companies actively seeking Atlantic margin acreage.

The 80,000 km² seismic coverage is a substantive data offering for a frontier market. It suggests that Liberia has invested meaningfully in pre-competitive acquisition, which should accelerate operator geological evaluation and compress the typical timeline between block award and work program commitment. The Harper and Liberia basins share geological characteristics with prospective areas in neighboring West African jurisdictions, and a dense seismic dataset reduces the uncertainty premium that has historically deterred exploration commitment in Liberia's offshore.

Liberia has historically struggled to convert offshore prospectivity into sustained drilling activity, and the 2026 round must attract credible operators willing to commit to multi-well work programs in a frontier environment. The direct negotiation structure may help by allowing terms to be tailored to individual operator risk profiles, but the ultimate test will be whether internationally recognized E&P companies sign participation agreements and follow through with exploration expenditure. A growing pipeline of corporate interest, referenced in the new reporting, suggests early engagement is underway, though the identities of prospective bidders have not yet been disclosed.

For Norwegian service companies monitoring West African frontier opportunities, the formal opening of the round and the confirmation of a substantial seismic dataset mark a step-change from the pre-marketing phase. The direct negotiation format means awards could be announced on a rolling basis rather than in a single announcement window, requiring continuous monitoring rather than a single post-event intelligence sweep. Norwegian firms with deepwater survey, drilling, and well services capabilities should actively track which operators enter negotiations, initiate early dialogue with prospective licensees, and position for contracting cycles that could activate within a two-to-four-year horizon from award.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The confirmation of 80,000 km² of seismic data and a Direct Negotiation format strengthens the investment case for early engagement: Norwegian service companies should identify which E&P firms attend AEW 2026 and enter negotiations with the LPRA, as bilateral award structures can accelerate contracting timelines compared to competitive rounds. Firms offering seismic processing, deepwater drilling support, and subsea survey services should treat the rolling award mechanism as a trigger for continuous monitoring and proactive operator outreach rather than a one-time post-round review. Saga recommends establishing contact with ECP as the promotion partner to access the corporate pipeline and gain early visibility on prospective licensees.

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- **Seismic and data services companies:** The 80,000 km² seismic dataset signals prior acquisition investment, but reprocessing, multi-client data sales, and additional infill surveys may be required as operators conduct due diligence on specific blocks — creating near-term revenue opportunities ahead of any drilling commitment.
- **Deepwater drilling contractors:** A 29-block round structured as direct negotiation could generate multiple discrete work programs with staggered timelines, providing a more distributed demand signal for rig availability than a single competitive round would — Norwegian-linked contractors should track award announcements block by block.
- **Legal and advisory firms with African upstream experience:** Direct negotiation licensing rounds require bespoke PSA or concession agreement structuring; Norwegian-affiliated legal and commercial advisors can offer value to both operator clients entering negotiations and potentially to the LPRA itself on deal structuring best practices.

[Original source: Energy Capital & Power →](#)

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