

AFRICA OIL+GAS REPORT · LIBERIA · OFFSHORE

Liberia Launches 29-Block Offshore Licensing Round for 2026 Direct Negotiation

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Liberia is advancing its upstream ambitions by putting 29 oil and gas blocks up for a 2026 Hybrid Direct Negotiation licensing round, with the round set to be formally featured at Africa Energy Week (AEW) 2026 in Cape Town. The move signals Liberia's intent to attract fresh capital and operator interest into its offshore acreage through a structured yet flexible licensing mechanism that combines direct negotiation with broader market outreach.

The choice of AEW 2026 as a launch platform is strategically significant. Africa Energy Week is one of the continent's most attended upstream deal-making forums, drawing international oil companies, national oil companies, financiers, and service providers. By presenting the round there, Liberia's petroleum authority is positioning the 29 blocks in front of a concentrated audience of decision-makers who are actively assessing African acreage opportunities. The hybrid direct negotiation format suggests the country is willing to engage bilaterally with interested parties rather than relying solely on competitive bid rounds, which can deter smaller or frontier-focused operators.

Liberia's offshore basin has seen intermittent international interest over the years but has not yet established a producing hydrocarbon sector. A 29-block offering represents a substantial acreage package, indicating that authorities are casting a wide net to identify partners across a range of block sizes and risk profiles. The direct negotiation element may also allow for more tailored fiscal and contractual terms,

which could appeal to companies assessing frontier risk against potential resource upside.

For the Norwegian service industry, the timing is worth tracking. Entry of new operators into Liberian offshore blocks would eventually generate demand across the full upstream service chain — from seismic acquisition and drilling to subsea engineering and logistics. While Liberia remains a pre-production frontier, the licensing round represents the upstream origination event that precedes all future service demand. Norwegian companies with West Africa exposure and relationships with frontier-focused operators are best placed to monitor which companies ultimately secure blocks and begin technical work programs.

The AEW 2026 venue in Cape Town also provides a practical engagement opportunity. Norwegian service companies attending the conference can use the Liberia licensing presentation as a direct touchpoint with incoming operators, positioning themselves early for potential frame agreements or technical partnerships before formal work programs are defined. Given the hybrid negotiation structure, block awards could move faster than in conventional competitive rounds, compressing the window between licensing and early exploration activity.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

Norwegian service companies should monitor which operators secure blocks through the 2026 round, as early-mover positioning with frontier-focused E&P firms can yield preferred supplier status before work programs are tendered. AEW 2026 in Cape Town offers a direct engagement window with Liberian authorities and incoming investors. Companies with West Africa frontier experience — particularly in seismic, drilling, and subsea early-phase studies — are best placed to act.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Track which operators acquire blocks and engage early on exploration drilling planning, as frontier acreage typically moves to well commitments within 2-4 years of licensing.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Monitor block awards for deepwater acreage that may require subsea architecture and FPSO concepts at the pre-FEED stage, where Norwegian engineering firms carry strong credibility.
- **Service:** Seismic and geoscience service companies should position at AEW 2026 to engage directly with incoming Liberian block holders who will need baseline data acquisition before exploration drilling.
- **Pipeline:** Early-phase infrastructure scoping for any gas-bearing discoveries will require pipeline and export concept studies — a niche where Norwegian consultancies can offer relevant West Africa analogues.
- **LNG:** If gas resources are encountered in future exploration, Liberia's lack of domestic monetisation infrastructure makes LNG or FLNG concepts a long-term but plausible planning consideration for Norwegian technology providers.

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

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