

ECOFIN AGENCY · ANGOLA · DRILLING

Angola halves licensing time, opens 100+ blocks

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Angola is preparing to overhaul its oil and gas licensing framework, with plans to open more than 100 blocks — predominantly onshore — and cut concession award times from six months to three months. The reforms are embedded in a 25-year national development plan expected to be finalised by the end of 2026, according to Ecofin Agency.

The scale of the proposed block opening is significant for a country that has historically concentrated upstream activity in its mature deepwater and ultra-deepwater offshore basins. The shift toward onshore acreage signals a deliberate push to diversify Angola's hydrocarbon portfolio and attract a broader range of investors and operators, including smaller independents that may find offshore economics challenging at current oil prices.

Under the proposed framework, oil and gas companies would face differentiated licensing terms depending on the nature of the project — though the specific criteria for those distinctions have not yet been disclosed. Halving the concession award timeline to three months would represent a meaningful reduction in administrative friction, a factor that has historically deterred some investors from frontier and onshore acreage in sub-Saharan Africa. The plan has not yet been ratified, and no formal licensing round has been announced; this remains a policy intention ahead of a development framework still under preparation.

For the broader Angolan upstream sector, the reforms arrive at a critical juncture. The country has been managing declining production from legacy offshore fields and

has signalled through state oil company Sonangol and the regulator ANPG that reversing that decline requires fresh acreage, faster processes, and new capital. A 25-year planning horizon also provides a degree of long-term policy visibility that international operators and service companies typically require before committing resources to frontier environments.

Norwegian oil and gas service companies should treat this as an early monitoring situation. No blocks have been awarded, no contracts signed, and no tenders issued. The value lies in tracking the development of the 25-year plan through 2026, engaging early with ANPG and Sonangol to understand which onshore basins are being prioritised, and positioning for relationships before licensing rounds are formalised. Companies with onshore drilling, well services, or logistics capabilities relevant to Angolan terrain should begin mapping potential operator partnerships now, so they are positioned to respond quickly once formal licensing activity begins.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is a pre-licensing policy development — no procurement outreach is appropriate yet. Norwegian service companies should monitor the 25-year development plan's progress toward finalisation in 2026, establish or deepen relationships with ANPG and Sonangol, and identify which onshore basins are likely to attract early licensing activity. Companies with onshore drilling, well services, or camp and logistics capabilities should begin internal readiness assessments so they can respond rapidly when formal rounds are announced.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Onshore drilling contractors and rig operators should track which basins are prioritised in the 25-year plan, as more than 100 predominantly onshore blocks represent a potential step-change in Angolan land drilling demand.
- **Service:** Well services companies — including wireline, cementing, and completion specialists — should engage with Sonangol and ANPG early to understand onshore well programme expectations before licensing rounds open.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** The onshore focus of this round may reduce near-term subsea demand, but any offshore blocks included in the 100+ should be flagged and monitored separately as licensing details emerge.
- **Pipeline:** Onshore block development at scale will require associated infrastructure — pipeline and processing specialists should assess Angola's existing onshore transport network gaps as a basis for future scope identification.

[Original source: Ecofin Agency →](#)

Saga Advisory

General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN