

OIL FIELD AFRICA REVIEW · UGANDA · SUBSEA

Uganda names crude 'Pearl Sweet' as EACOP nears completion and June 2027 target holds

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Uganda has taken a symbolically significant step toward commercial oil production, with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni presiding over the official naming of the country's crude oil blend as 'Pearl Sweet' at the Kingfisher Development Area in Kikuube District. The name draws on Uganda's long-standing identity as the Pearl of Africa, while 'Sweet' refers to the crude's low-sulphur quality characteristics — a designation that will matter to refinery buyers and commodity traders as the country prepares to enter export markets. The ceremony marks a deliberate shift from project execution toward commercial and brand identity, signalling that Uganda's leadership regards first oil not as a distant milestone but as an imminent market event requiring preparation.

The naming ceremony adds political and ceremonial weight to the technical progress already reported by the Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC). As previously confirmed by UNOC Head of Compliance Kristina Kasebayo at African Energy Week 2026 in Cape Town, EACOP — the East African Crude Oil Pipeline designed to carry Ugandan crude overland to the Tanzanian coast — stands at 92% construction completion, with commercial production targeted for June 2027. President Museveni's direct involvement at Kingfisher, one of the two upstream fields alongside Tilenga that underpin the production programme, underscores the national priority attached to meeting that deadline. Kingfisher is developed by CNOOC in a joint venture framework with TotalEnergies and UNOC, while Tilenga is led by TotalEnergies.

The choice of the Kingfisher site for the naming event is operationally notable. Kikuube District sits within the upstream production zone, and holding a presidential ceremony there signals that field-level readiness is sufficiently advanced to host high-profile public events — a subtle but meaningful indicator of on-the-ground progress. The 'Pearl Sweet' branding will now become the commercial identity under which Uganda's crude is marketed to international buyers, making cargo marketing and offtake agreement activity the next visible milestone to watch ahead of first export.

For Norwegian oil and gas service companies, the confluence of the 'Pearl Sweet' naming and EACOP's near-complete construction status confirms that Uganda-Tanzania corridor activity is accelerating on multiple fronts simultaneously — upstream field readiness, pipeline commissioning, and now crude marketing. The pre-commissioning and operational ramp-up phase ahead of June 2027 will concentrate procurement demand in pipeline integrity, well completion, production optimisation, inspection, and export terminal services. These are domains where Norwegian firms carry recognised competitive depth. UNOC's outward-facing posture — demonstrated both at African Energy Week and through the presidential naming ceremony — indicates the national oil company is actively seeking to consolidate partnerships as first oil approaches. Norwegian service companies without an established presence in the Uganda-Tanzania corridor should treat the 'Pearl Sweet' launch as a signal that the project's commercial phase is no longer hypothetical, and should accelerate engagement with TotalEnergies, CNOOC, and UNOC procurement channels without delay.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The 'Pearl Sweet' naming marks Uganda's transition from project execution to commercial readiness, compressing the timeline for service and supply chain decisions ahead of the June 2027 first-oil target. Norwegian companies in pipeline integrity, production chemistry, inspection, and well completion should treat ongoing UNOC and operator tender monitoring as an immediate priority, while those without an East Africa footprint should use the crude's commercial launch as a prompt to initiate relationship-building with TotalEnergies, CNOOC, and UNOC procurement teams now.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Pipeline integrity and inspection firms:** EACOP at 92% construction means pre-commissioning and integrity verification contracts are imminent — Norwegian firms with ILI, corrosion monitoring, and pipeline inspection credentials should engage EACOP operators directly.
- **Well completion and production optimisation specialists:** Kingfisher and Tilenga fields must be production-ready by June 2027; Norwegian companies offering well completion, artificial lift, and production chemistry services should map procurement timelines with CNOOC and TotalEnergies now.
- **Crude marketing and cargo logistics advisors:** The 'Pearl Sweet' brand launch signals active offtake and cargo marketing preparation; Norwegian maritime and trading-adjacent service firms may find advisory and logistics angles emerging as Uganda seeks international buyers.
- **Export terminal and instrumentation suppliers:** The Tanzanian export terminal must be operationally synchronised with upstream first oil — valve, instrumentation, and metering suppliers with LNG and crude terminal references should pursue EACOP operator procurement contacts.

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