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Nigeria targets 788,000 bopd shut-in oil recovery

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Nigeria's upstream regulator, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), has set its sights on recovering 788,000 barrels per day of shut-in crude oil production across 63 operators, in what would represent a substantial restoration of the country's output capacity if achieved.

Shut-in production at this scale reflects a prolonged accumulation of wells and facilities taken offline due to a combination of factors that have plagued Nigeria's upstream sector, including pipeline vandalism, oil theft, maintenance backlogs, and security challenges in the Niger Delta. With 63 operators implicated, the problem is sector-wide rather than concentrated in any single company or asset class, suggesting the NUPRC is pursuing a coordinated, industry-level intervention rather than targeting individual underperformers.

The 788,000 bopd figure is significant in absolute terms. Nigeria's production has struggled to consistently meet its OPEC quota in recent years, and recovering even a portion of this shut-in volume would materially improve government revenue, foreign exchange inflows, and investor confidence in the sector. The NUPRC's stated targeting of this volume signals regulatory intent to enforce production obligations and hold operators accountable for assets that remain idle.

For the regulator to achieve its stated targets, operators will need to mobilise well intervention services, integrity assessments on pipelines and flow stations, and in some cases full-scale workover programmes. The breadth of the operator list — 63 in total — means demand for these services could be distributed across a wide range of

asset types, from onshore creeks to offshore installations. The article does not specify a timeline for recovery, nor does it detail the specific assets or basins involved, but the regulatory pressure itself creates an expectation of increased activity across the Nigerian upstream landscape.

The NUPRC's initiative aligns with broader Nigerian government ambitions to reverse years of production decline and rebuild credibility with international investors following the passage of the Petroleum Industry Act. Whether the regulator has the enforcement mechanisms to compel 63 operators to act simultaneously remains an open question, but the public framing of specific targets is itself a form of regulatory signalling that is likely to accelerate internal planning at the operator level.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is a regulatory announcement rather than a signed contract, so Norwegian service companies should monitor developments and build relationships with the 63 operators now rather than approaching procurement teams. As operators respond to NUPRC pressure, demand for well intervention, workover rigs, and pipeline integrity services is likely to grow — companies with established Nigerian track records should position early. Saga recommends tracking which operators receive formal NUPRC compliance notices, as those will be the first to activate service procurement.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Drilling:** Workover and well intervention demand across 63 operators creates a broad market for drilling contractors with light or conventional rig capacity suited to both onshore and offshore Nigerian assets.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Shut-in offshore assets may require subsea inspection, repair, and maintenance campaigns before production can be restored, opening opportunities for ROV and IMR service providers.
- **Pipeline:** Pipeline vandalism and integrity failures are cited drivers of shut-in volumes, positioning pipeline inspection and rehabilitation specialists for near-term engagement with operators under regulatory pressure.

- **Service:** Well integrity assessment and production optimisation consultancies can offer rapid-mobilisation services to operators needing to demonstrate compliance progress to NUPRC.

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