

OMNIS - OFFICE DES MINES NATIONALES ET DES INDUSTRIES STRATÉGIQUES (MADAGASCAR) ·
MADAGASCAR · SUBSEA

Madagascar approves Bemolanga bitumen road demo project

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Madagascar's Council of Ministers approved a road maintenance demonstration project on 2 June 2026, centred on the use of Bemolanga bituminous sandstone in road construction works in the Morafenobe district. The initiative is backed by the Road Fund and marks a practical step toward domestic utilisation of one of the country's known hydrocarbon-bearing formations.

The project is being jointly led by OMNIS (Office des Mines Nationales et des Industries Stratégiques), the National Laboratory for Public Works and Building (LNTPB), and the Ministry of Public Works, according to the announcement from OMNIS. The collaboration signals a government-backed push to commercialise Bemolanga's bituminous sandstone resources — not as a conventional crude oil feedstock, but as a construction-grade bitumen material for the country's road network.

Bemolanga is one of Madagascar's most prominent heavy hydrocarbon deposits, containing significant volumes of oil shale and bituminous sandstone. The decision to prioritise a road-application demonstration rather than extraction for energy production reflects a pragmatic, phased approach to monetising the resource under current infrastructure and financing constraints. Ministerial approval of the project suggests the government views this pathway as lower-risk and more immediately deliverable than pursuing full-scale upstream development.

The Road Fund's involvement as a financial backer is significant: it institutionalises the demand side of the equation, linking the Bemolanga resource directly to a funded, recurring national infrastructure budget. A successful demonstration in Morafenobe could open the door to broader procurement of Bemolanga-derived bitumen across Madagascar's road maintenance programme, giving the project a potential scale-up trajectory beyond its current pilot scope. The LNTPB's participation also suggests that technical validation and materials-testing standards will be integrated from the outset, which is a prerequisite for any wider national rollout.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is an early-stage government demonstration project — an MoU-level initiative rather than a signed upstream or infrastructure contract — so partner outreach to procurement is premature. Norwegian companies with expertise in heavy oil processing, bitumen handling, or resource characterisation should monitor progress and consider engagement with OMNIS at a relationship-building level. If the demonstration succeeds and Madagascar moves toward scaled extraction or processing of Bemolanga bituminous sandstone, opportunities in materials handling, flow assurance, and upstream development support could become relevant.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Service:** Companies with heavy oil or bitumen characterisation and laboratory testing capabilities could engage OMNIS and LNTPB early, positioning for any technical advisory role as the project scales.
- **Pipeline:** If Bemolanga bituminous sandstone moves toward extraction rather than direct road use, pipeline and fluid transport specialists should assess logistics from the remote Morafenobe district to processing or port facilities.
- **Drilling:** Any future transition from demonstration to extraction-phase development at Bemolanga would require well and core-sampling programmes — monitor for licensing or tender activity from OMNIS.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** No offshore angle is present at this stage; Bemolanga is an onshore heavy-resource play and current activity is road-application focused — maintain watching brief only.

[Original source: OMNIS - Office des Mines Nationales et des Industries Stratégiques \(Madagascar\) →](#)

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