

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

Madagascar launches upstream overhaul with licence regularisation and new legal framework

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Madagascar's government has moved beyond broad regulatory signalling into concrete structural reform of its upstream oil sector, with OMNIS confirming that decisions taken by the Council of Ministers on 6 January 2026 are now being implemented. The measures centre on the regularisation of mining licences and contracts that had lapsed or expired — a longstanding governance gap that had left parts of Madagascar's exploration acreage in legal limbo and deterred sustained capital commitment from international operators.

Note on timeline: the existing story referenced Council of Ministers decisions dated 28 April, while the new OMNIS source cites 6 January 2026 as the triggering date. These may represent two separate decision points in an ongoing reform sequence, or the earlier date may reflect a discrepancy in sourcing. OMNIS frames the January 2026 decisions as the foundation of the current overhaul, suggesting they carry the primary legislative weight.

The regularisation of expired licences and contracts is a materially significant step. It resolves title uncertainty over acreage that may otherwise have been stranded in administrative grey zones, and it establishes a cleaner baseline from which a credible licensing round can be constructed. OMNIS has framed the outcome explicitly as creating a 'clear, secure and fully favourable legal framework' for the revival of exploration and production — language that goes further than the earlier framing

around investor appeal and governance improvement, and points toward active preparation for exploration activity rather than purely legislative housekeeping.

Madagascar has long been characterised as a frontier market with meaningful sedimentary basin potential onshore and offshore, but regulatory uncertainty and governance gaps have historically prevented the country from attracting sustained upstream capital. By addressing expired contracts directly, the government is removing one of the most concrete obstacles to re-engagement by operators who may have held or previously considered Malagasy acreage. For companies tracking the Indian Ocean rim and East African exploration frontier, this shift from framework reform to active licence regularisation represents a step-change in the credibility of Madagascar's upstream investment environment.

The investment case remains pre-procurement — no block awards, operator entries, or tender processes have been announced in the available source material — but the reform sequence now has enough substance to warrant active monitoring rather than passive observation. Norwegian service companies should treat OMNIS as the primary institutional counterpart, track any forthcoming licensing round notices, and begin preliminary mapping of Madagascar's basin inventory and existing operator landscape in anticipation of procurement activity that could follow if exploration momentum builds.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The regularisation of expired licences moves Madagascar's upstream reform from the abstract to the operational, making it a more credible near-term watch item for Norwegian service companies tracking frontier African markets. Firms should now prioritise direct engagement with OMNIS, monitor for licensing round announcements, and map existing and prospective operators entering Malagasy acreage as potential client targets. No procurement activity has been announced, but the pace of reform justifies elevating Madagascar from passive monitoring to active market preparation.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **State entity - OMNIS:** OMNIS is the confirmed institutional counterpart managing licence regularisation and the reformed legal framework. Norwegian companies should establish direct contact with OMNIS to position ahead of any licensing round, pre-qualification process, or operator tendering activity.
- **International E&P operators:** Licence regularisation may trigger re-entry by operators who previously held or considered Malagasy acreage. Identifying which operators are returning or entering Madagascar following the January 2026 reforms would allow Norwegian service firms to align business development efforts with early-stage exploration programmes.
- **Legal and regulatory advisors:** The new legal framework creates demand for international legal and commercial advisory services to help operators interpret revised licensing conditions and contract terms. Norwegian firms with legal or commercial support capabilities could partner with local or regional advisors active in Madagascar.

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

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