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ECOWAS ratifies Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline IGA

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ECOWAS heads of state and government ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) governing the development of the African Atlantic Gas Pipeline (AAGP) at their summit in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 19 July. The ratification by member states marks a formal step forward for the pipeline project, which would link Nigeria to Morocco along Africa's Atlantic coast, traversing multiple West African countries en route.

The IGA ratification moves the AAGP from a diplomatic ambition to a legally grounded intergovernmental commitment. An IGA at this level establishes the political and regulatory framework within which commercial agreements, engineering studies, and financing arrangements can advance. It does not constitute a construction contract, a final investment decision, or an open procurement process — but it removes a key political uncertainty that has historically constrained progress on the project.

The pipeline has been framed as a transformative piece of regional energy infrastructure, with the potential to monetise Nigerian gas reserves, improve energy access across participating West African states, and create an export corridor toward European markets via Morocco. The sheer length of the route — crossing more than a dozen countries along the West African coastline — makes it one of the most complex pipeline development undertakings proposed on the continent. Engineering, right-of-way negotiations, environmental assessments, and financing structures all remain to be defined and executed.

For the broader energy sector, the ECOWAS ratification signals that member governments are prepared to coordinate on a shared legal and governance basis. This is a prerequisite for attracting the multilateral financing and international contractors that a project of this scale would require. The next material milestones to watch are the appointment of a project development structure, the commissioning of front-end engineering studies, and the engagement of development finance institutions whose participation would typically be needed to underwrite sovereign risk across the corridor.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The IGA ratification is a political milestone, not a commercial trigger — Norwegian service companies should monitor the project and invest in relationship-building with Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) and the Moroccan Office National des Hydrocarbures et des Mines (ONHYM), the two anchor state entities, rather than approaching procurement at this stage. When feasibility and FEED studies are commissioned, pipeline engineering and subsea specialists will find early entry points worth tracking. Partners with West African government relations capability should position now for when project development structures are formalised.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Pipeline:** Monitor for FEED and pre-FEED study tenders on an Atlantic-coast pipeline corridor that will require specialist route engineering, materials specification, and integrity management expertise across multiple jurisdictions.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Offshore sections of the pipeline route along the West African shelf may require subsea tie-in and installation expertise — track project development entity formation for early technical engagement opportunities.
- **LNG:** If pipeline development timelines slip or financing stalls, Nigerian gas monetisation may revert toward LNG increments — maintain visibility on NNPC's parallel LNG expansion plans as a hedge.

- **Drilling/Well Services:** Upstream gas development in Nigeria to supply the pipeline will require incremental well workover and production optimisation activity — watch for associated upstream contracting rounds tied to supply commitments.
- **Service:** Project management, environmental and social impact assessment, and local-content compliance consulting will be among the first professional services procured once a development entity is established — relationship-building with ECOWAS project offices is warranted now.

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