

GABONREVIEW - ECONOMIE (GABON) · GABON

Gabon rewrites oil and gas codes amid fuel crisis

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Gabon's government is revising its oil and gas regulatory codes, a move driven in part by a recent domestic fuel supply crisis that has pushed sector governance back to the top of the political agenda. The overhaul is at preparation stage — no draft legislation has been ratified or enacted — but the stated direction signals a meaningful shift in how Gabon intends to manage its hydrocarbon sector going forward.

The revised codes are designed around two principal objectives: strengthening Gabon's energy sovereignty and redefining the operational conditions under which oil and gas companies are permitted to work in the country. The fuel supply tensions that prompted renewed urgency have underscored a long-standing concern among Gabonese authorities that existing regulations leave the state with insufficient levers to direct domestic energy availability and capture maximum value from the country's resources.

For international operators already active in Gabon, the regulatory revision introduces a period of uncertainty. New codes typically bring changes to fiscal terms, local content requirements, operator obligations, and the allocation process for acreage. Until draft legislation is published and subject to consultation, the precise direction of these changes remains unclear. However, the framing around energy sovereignty suggests the incoming framework will tilt further toward state control and domestic supply obligations than the current code.

Gabon has been an oil-producing nation for decades and remains a member of OPEC, though output has declined from peak levels. The country's upstream sector

continues to attract international interest, and any regulatory reset will directly affect the commercial calculus for existing concession holders and prospective entrants alike. A revised gas code, if it mirrors regional trends, could also open new pathways for monetising associated and non-associated gas resources that have historically been underutilised.

For Norwegian service companies, the current moment is one to monitor carefully rather than act upon. A regulatory framework under revision creates both risk — project timelines can stall during legislative uncertainty — and opportunity, as updated codes sometimes accelerate new licensing rounds or unlock previously unattractive acreage. Tracking the progression from preparation to published draft, and then to enacted legislation, will determine when commercial engagement becomes viable.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This item reflects an early-stage regulatory process — no contracts, tenders, or FIDs are in play. Norwegian service companies should monitor the legislative timeline and maintain existing relationships with operators active in Gabon so they are positioned when any new licensing round or project acceleration follows enactment. Engagement with the Norwegian Embassy in Libreville or industry bodies tracking OHADA-zone regulatory changes would be appropriate preparatory steps.

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- **Drilling:** A revised licensing framework may trigger new exploration rounds; monitor for block awards that would generate well programmes requiring rig and drilling services.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Regulatory reset could unlock gas monetisation and satellite field tie-backs that were commercially marginal under the old code — watch for concept-select decisions post-enactment.
- **LNG:** If the revised gas code introduces obligations or incentives to reduce flaring and monetise associated gas, small-scale LNG or gas-to-power solutions could become relevant procurement targets.

- **Pipeline:** Strengthened domestic supply obligations under the new code may require expanded midstream infrastructure, including in-country product and gas pipelines — a segment worth tracking.
- **Service:** Heightened local content requirements are a common feature of sovereign-focused code revisions; Norwegian service firms with in-country presence or local JV structures will be better placed than those operating purely from offshore.

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