

BUSINESSDAY NIGERIA — ENERGY · NIGERIA

Nigeria urged to drill deeper, revive mature fields

Saga deep read · 20 October 2026 · Score 50

Nigeria must accelerate well drilling in both frontier and mature basins to arrest a persistent decline in proven oil reserves, according to analysis published by BusinessDay Nigeria. The country is consuming reserves faster than it is replacing them, and without a significant uplift in drilling activity, the depletion trend is expected to continue. The article frames this as a structural challenge requiring coordinated action across new acreage and legacy fields simultaneously.

The case for reviving mature fields rests on the large volumes of hydrocarbons that remain in place across Nigeria's onshore and older offshore assets. Many of these fields were developed with recovery technologies that left substantial reserves behind, and improved drilling techniques, enhanced oil recovery methods, and infill campaigns could materially extend their productive lives. At the same time, frontier basins — areas that have seen limited exploration — represent a longer-term reserve replacement opportunity that requires fresh seismic work and exploration wells to de-risk.

The reserve decline problem is compounded by years of underinvestment driven by above-ground risks, including regulatory uncertainty ahead of and following the Petroleum Industry Act, security challenges in the Niger Delta, and operator portfolio rebalancing globally. While the PIA was intended to improve the investment climate, the article implies that legislative progress alone has not been sufficient to reverse drilling momentum. Nigeria's oil output has also struggled with production losses from infrastructure theft and sabotage, making reserve replacement even more urgent as a foundation for any output recovery.

For international oil and gas service companies, the prescription outlined — more wells, more basins, more recovery work — translates directly into demand for drilling rigs, well services, and subsurface expertise. If Nigerian operators and the government respond to this pressure with increased capital allocation, the tendering pipeline for drilling campaigns and field rehabilitation projects could expand materially over the next two to three years. The scale of the challenge described suggests a sustained workload rather than a one-off uplift, covering both complex new wells and the workovers and recompletions typically associated with mature field redevelopment.

The article does not reference specific projects, contracts, or operators by name, nor does it cite drilling targets, reserve volumes, or investment figures. The analysis is therefore a strategic signal rather than a procurement event — confirmation that the underlying demand rationale for Nigeria's drilling services market remains strong, even if near-term deal flow depends on operators committing capital. Norwegian service companies with established Nigeria footprints or regional positioning should treat this as a market-direction indicator and engage with operators and NNPC Ltd to understand where capital is being allocated ahead of any formal tender processes.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is a market-direction signal, not a procurement event — no contracts, tenders, or FIDs are referenced. Norwegian drilling, well services, and enhanced recovery specialists should use this as a basis for proactive engagement with Nigerian operators and NNPC Ltd to map upcoming drilling programmes and mature-field rehabilitation plans. Outreach to procurement teams is premature; the priority is relationship-building and monitoring operator capital budgets for 2025-2026.

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- **Drilling:** Increased well counts across frontier and mature Nigerian basins would expand rig demand — monitor operator capex announcements and NNPC Ltd drilling plans for early positioning.

- **Well Services:** Mature field revivals typically require workover rigs, recompletion services, and production logging — companies with this capability should map which legacy assets are candidates for rehabilitation campaigns.
- **Subsea/FPSO:** Deeper drilling in offshore frontier areas could generate new subsea tie-back and FPSO requirements if exploration wells are successful — track any licensing round or exploration drill programme announcements.
- **Service:** Enhanced oil recovery and reservoir management services are directly relevant to the mature-field revival agenda — Norwegian companies with EOR expertise should engage with operators on pilot programme opportunities.

[Original source: BusinessDay Nigeria — Energy →](#)

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