

THE NAMIBIAN · NAMIBIA

Namibia National Assembly passes Petroleum Amendment Bill

Saga deep read · 21 October 2026 · Score 58

Namibia's National Assembly has approved the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Amendment Bill, advancing the country's upstream regulatory framework at a critical moment for its emerging oil sector. The bill passed with 50 votes in favour, supported by the ruling Swapo party and the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters. All other opposition parties walked out in protest, signalling that the legislation remains politically contested despite clearing its legislative hurdle.

The bill now proceeds to a third reading at the committee stage before it can be enacted into law, meaning final passage is not yet confirmed. The nature of the amendments — whether they relate to licensing terms, state participation, fiscal provisions, or environmental requirements — is not specified in the available reporting, and Norwegian partners should avoid drawing premature conclusions about the bill's commercial implications until the full text is published and reviewed.

Nevertheless, the vote marks a meaningful step forward in the legislative process governing Namibia's petroleum sector, which has attracted significant international attention following major offshore discoveries in recent years. A clearer, updated legal framework is generally a prerequisite for final investment decisions and the structured procurement processes that follow. The political resistance to the bill, however, suggests stakeholders should monitor for amendments or delays during the committee stage that could alter its final form.

For Norwegian energy service companies watching Namibia, the legislative trajectory matters because the country's emerging deepwater development programme —

centred on large-scale finds that have drawn the attention of major international operators — will ultimately require world-class subsea, FPSO, drilling, and well-services capabilities. The legal and regulatory environment underpins operator confidence and, by extension, the pace at which procurement activity materialises. Any shift in licensing terms, cost-recovery provisions, or local-content obligations written into the amended bill could directly affect how international operators structure their contracting strategies.

At this stage, the instrument is a legislative approval at an intermediate parliamentary stage — not a final enacted law, not a block award, and not a procurement event. Norwegian companies should treat this as a monitoring signal and focus on relationship-building with operators and Namibia's national petroleum company rather than initiating procurement outreach. Tracking the bill's final text through the committee stage will be essential to understanding whether its provisions open or constrain commercial opportunities for foreign service suppliers.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is a legislative development at an intermediate stage — the bill has not yet been enacted — so Norwegian service companies should monitor the committee process and final text closely rather than initiating procurement outreach. Once enacted, the amended framework will shape licensing, fiscal terms, and potentially local-content requirements that directly affect how international operators structure contracts for Namibia's offshore developments. Relationship-building with operators active in Namibia and with the Ministry of Mines and Energy is the appropriate action at this point.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Track whether the final bill alters cost-recovery or operator obligations that would accelerate or delay FIDs on Namibia's deepwater projects, which would drive FPSO and subsea contracting timelines.
- **Drilling:** Monitor local-content provisions in the amended bill, as new requirements could affect rig crew composition and procurement strategies for upcoming exploration and appraisal campaigns.

- **Well Services:** A clearer regulatory framework could shorten the path to production drilling contracts; use this period to pre-position with operators and establish in-country compliance readiness.
- **Pipeline:** Any clarification of export infrastructure obligations or state participation terms in the bill could influence onshore and offshore pipeline development planning — worth tracking at committee stage.

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