

LIBREVILLE, November 26 (Infosplusgabon) - Global engineering, procurement and construction firm EPCM announced the launch of the Energy Service Zone Nouakchott project during a Mauritanian country spotlight session at the MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power 2023 conference this week. The development project will aim to provide infrastructure to key players in Islamic Republic of Mauritania's hydrocarbons sector while incentivizing foreign direct investment into the country.

The project was launched by Alexandra Gazendam, Director of EPCM, during a discussion on Focus on Mauritania: Road Show on Exploration & Opportunities, and followed EPCM announcing the presentation of the project concept to the Ministry of Petroleum, Mines and Energy seven months prior.

Gazendam explained that the "Ministry of Petroleum, Mines and Energy will act as the project owner," and that, "In terms of timeline, the government intends to launch the procurement process in the beginning of 2024, and we are inviting all interested investors."

"We've talked a lot about the enormous potential and exceptional qualities of Mauritania and the time is now to ensure we have basic infrastructure to enable the potential of this country," stated Gazendam, adding, "We see this project as a catalyst for foreign direct investment and an opportunity to empower the local private sector."

The session itself served as a bridge between government decision-makers, data-experts, and industry leaders, offering a platform for the speakers to exchange insights, share information, and outline the future of energy exploration and development in Mauritania.

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“We are in the context of the energy transition, and we are considering exploring the potential our basin offers to make Mauritania a preferred investment destination,” stated Moustapha Bechire, General Director of Hydrocarbons for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania’s Ministry of Petroleum, Mines and Energy, adding, “We have created our hydrocarbons code, established a formal local content code - effective from next year - and are also revising the investment code. We continue the policy by promoting data and promoting hubs, especially in Nouakchott, in an area dedicated to energy.”

With proven gas reserves of 80 trillion cubic feet (tcf) and an estimated output of 10 million tons of Liquefied Natural Gas per year, development of the BirAllah Conventional Gas Field, offshore Mauritania, is poised to transform the West African country’s energy landscape. Meanwhile, straddling the maritime border between Senegal and Mauritania, Greater Tortue Ahmeyim (GTA) – set to start commercial production in 2024– is estimated to contain up to 30 tcf of recoverable gas resources, establishing the basin as a world-class gas province.

“Geology holds no concept of geographical borders,” stated Elisabeth Gillbard, Geologist for energy data and analytics company, TGS. “We know we’ve got an amazing source system across the whole north part of the MSGBC. Offshore Mauritania alone, there have been 11 major discoveries and almost every well has oil or gas shows within them. It’s a very active source system.”

During the panel session, Chems Dine Sow Deina, Exploration Manager of Mauritania’s National Oil Company, the Société Mauritanienne des Hydrocarbures (SMH), spoke on the importance of exploration in Mauritania’s offshore basin, highlighting the region’s petroleum systems and geological gas plays. “Exploration must continue as it is a very stable basin, and if there is a discovery, it will likely be significant,” Deina stated, highlighting the GTA, BirAllah, and Banda fields as some of the country’s major discoveries in recent years.

In addition to the massive GTA and BirAllah projects, gas developments in the Banda and Pelican prospects – both of which comprise 1.2 tcf of gas reserves – pave the way for heightened power generation opportunities, with specific focus placed on electrification in the projects’ development plans. As such, the potential of smaller gas fields in Mauritania’s offshore were highlighted as an exceptional opportunity for the development of a West African energy hub.

“There will be a shortfall in the electricity production in the coming years, so the intent here is to

have these small fields developed for small gas-to-power schemes,” stated Elhanefy Eybih, Operations and Exploitation Manager at SMH, adding, “The intention also is to have the ability to develop other opportunities such as chemicals, small scale LNG, or competitive natural gas.”

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