

WEST AFRICA

Nigeria

Saga's volume market. NNPC JV's, the indigenous majors and the marginal-field awardees form the largest cluster of brownfield-tech buyers on the continent. Lagos is in the calendar every quarter.

SAGA'S POSITION

Saga maintains a long-standing in-country partner relationship. Engagements are coordinated from Cape Town with our local partner. Partner names disclosed under NDA on principal engagement.

The country today

Nigeria has a population of around 230 million and the largest economy in West Africa. It remains the continent's leading oil producer, with substantial proven reserves in both crude and natural gas, and a maritime Exclusive Economic Zone that fronts a long stretch of the Atlantic. The macro environment under the Tinubu administration is complex — inflation has moderated from recent peaks, employment pressures remain acute, and the naira, though stabilised from earlier depreciation cycles, is still subject to FX volatility.

Nigeria sits on Saga's map because the Niger Delta — Africa's most mature petroleum system — contains a large cluster of fields, operated by indigenous companies and NOC partnerships, where production is in steady decline due to water cut, pressure depletion and corrosive carbonate pay. That is where modern completion and stimulation technology creates measurable value.

Energy — oil and gas

Nigeria's reserve base is large enough to support a multi-decade production profile, but actual output has run below stated targets for several years. The shortfall reflects facility downtime, pipeline integrity issues and underinvestment in brownfield workover — precisely the gaps where foreign completion and stimulation technology has a role to play.

The Petroleum Industry Act (2021) restructured upstream governance, separating NNPC as a commercial entity from the regulator (NUPRC). NNPC holds participating interests in most onshore and shallow-water fields and operates significant joint ventures with the historic IOCs. The regulator has moved toward a concession-based fiscal model in deepwater and tightened PSCs in mature onshore acreage.

Recent divestments have accelerated indigenisation. Major IOCs have sold or are selling onshore and shallow-water positions to Nigerian independents — Seplat, Aiteo, Heritage, Oando and a wider group of marginal-field licensees — who now hold material acreage and are actively evaluating foreign completion and formation-damage-mitigation technology.

The Niger Delta province is dominated by tight, heterogeneous carbonates with water sensitivity and corrosive pay. Mature fields require stimulation, intelligent completion and selective re-completion strategies. Indigenous operators inheriting producing properties from the IOCs are facing the classic brownfield mix — accelerating water cut, pressure depletion driving lift requirements, and zone-by-zone management of corrosive intervals.

The opportunity landscape:

A marginal-field redevelopment cycle is active. Operators are drilling for incremental reserves and evaluating well remediation on tight-pay, water-sensitive fields. Mechanical multilateral drilling and water-shutoff completion technology are proven value drivers in similar geology. NNPC is also under sustained cost-reduction pressure: water-handling costs consume a large share of brownfield budgets on high-water-cut assets, and waterflood optimisation and selective re-completion have a demonstrable role. Gas-supply commitments to industrial users and power are driving a continued well-head programme into 2026.

The risks:

Oil theft and pipeline integrity remain endemic in parts of the Niger Delta. Facility downtime delays capex greenlight. Regulatory enforcement, while improving, remains subject to political pressure. A repeat of past naira depreciation cycles would chill local-currency cash-call funding and slow discretionary opex.

The blue economy

Nigeria's maritime fisheries are vast but fragmented. Artisanal and semi-industrial operations dominate by employment and volume; foreign-flagged distant-water vessels add another layer; data quality is poor and IUU is endemic. Aquaculture is significant — Nigeria is a major regional producer of catfish and tilapia — and cage-based marine aquaculture is nascent in southern coastal zones.

Lagos is one of Africa's largest container hubs. Decommissioning of mature offshore hardware presents incidental opportunity for vessel charter and subsea services. For a Norwegian principal, the blue-economy play in Nigeria is secondary to oil-and-gas. Practical entry points are post-decommissioning asset repurposing and port-logistics software.

The Norwegian–Nigeria corridor

Norway maintains an embassy in Abuja and a mission in Lagos. Bilateral relations are cordial and transactional. Norwegian development cooperation is focused on public-sector reform, health and education. Equinor's exit in 2024 removed the most visible Norwegian energy footprint, but a generation of NNPC and indigenous-operator engineers were trained inside Norwegian-influenced technical environments and that institutional memory remains.

Yara has distribution and retail operations. Wider Nordic countries have minimal upstream footprint. The non-Western flows — China, Gulf, India — are present in procurement and infrastructure, but they are not blocking factors for a Norwegian technology principal with a credible commercial proposition. Nigeria's OPEC+ membership and EITI participation signal a degree of governance maturity and openness to foreign technical engagement.

What Saga sees

The Nigerian thesis is grounded in physics. The Niger Delta brownfield portfolio faces natural aquifer influx and pressure depletion that drive water-cut acceleration, well abandonment and production loss. The operators managing these assets have capital discipline and operate in a competitive margin environment. They are open to proven foreign completion technology where the entry path is credible and the timeline is realistic.

The marginal-field redevelopment cycle is the inflection point. A 2–3 well design study with an indigenous operator on a tight-pay analogue would de-risk the broader West African thesis. Reference-customer credibility from elsewhere on the continent and the Gulf carries weight in Nigeria, and a pilot with an indigenous operator

would unlock wider regional access.

The regulatory environment, while imperfect, is credible by regional standards. Government take and fiscal flows are published. Operator relationships are increasingly professional. The window over the next 12–24 months is real: commodity prices provide capex headroom, and indigenous operators have fresher balance sheets post-acquisition. The risk of waiting is another commodity cycle and another budget reset.

How we work in Nigeria

Saga works in Lagos through a senior in-market partner — not a fly-in model. Our partner maintains the day-to-day relationships across NNPC, indigenous operators and the wider service ecosystem. For a Norwegian principal, we provide market entry strategy, technical due diligence on operator capability, commercial representation with NNPC and indigenous partners, deal structuring, and on-the-ground project management — delivered jointly by Saga and our Lagos partner.

If you are weighing Nigeria as an entry market, talk to Saga before you go further.

At a glance

- **Population:** ~230 million
- **Economy:** Largest in West Africa
- **Hydrocarbons:** Oil and gas; substantial reserves in both
- **Principal NOC:** NNPC (Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited)
- **Norwegian footprint:** Embassy Abuja, mission Lagos; long-running Norwegian-trained technical community at NNPC and indigenous operators; Yara distribution; development cooperation in education and public-sector reform
- **Saga focus areas:** Marginal-field brownfield stimulation and water-shutoff completion · NNPC cost-reduction and workover optimisation · Indigenous operator technology adoption pathways