

EAST AFRICA

Uganda

The Lake Albert oil project moves toward first oil. EACOP financing has been controversial; Chinese operators are central to the development phase. Beyond upstream sits Lake Victoria, where a Norwegian-led blue-economy play has space.

SAGA'S POSITION

Saga does not maintain a permanent office or partner here. We work with operators, regulators and counterparties on a case-by-case basis, coordinated from our Cape Town office and supported by our partners' senior in-market relationships.

The country today

Uganda has a population of around 48 million. The political moment is decisive but constrained. The Museveni government is monetising Lake Albert oil. TotalEnergies and CNOOC are executing the Tilenga and Kingfisher developments. The East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) is in advanced construction toward its commissioning target. Underneath the headline is geopolitical turbulence: major Western banks have withdrawn from EACOP financing and several insurers have pulled climate-related cover; the project has faced cost overruns and civil-society legal challenges in the UK and Uganda.

For a Norwegian principal, Uganda is not a near-term completion-vendor opportunity. Uganda is a patient play: blue-economy work, aquaculture scaling, fisheries surveillance and post-first-oil production optimisation. The oil story is interesting; the geopolitics are choppy.

Energy — oil and gas

Uganda holds substantial proved reserves in the Lake Albert Basin. Tilenga is the largest field; Kingfisher follows; Mputa, Kasamagya and Nzizi are satellites. No production exists yet. First oil is targeted from Tilenga and Kingfisher in the near term, ramping over the following years. The export route is EACOP to the Tanzanian coast.

Lake Albert crude is onshore, light, undersaturated, low-pressure and water-sensitive. Well drilling in low-pressure regimes with heterogeneous pay and high water cut translates into completion challenges similar to tight-gas applications.

UNOC (Uganda National Oil Company) holds participating interest in Tilenga and Kingfisher. TotalEnergies operates Tilenga; CNOOC operates Kingfisher. Fiscal terms follow a PSC framework. Local-content mandate requires meaningful skilled-labour and supplier-procurement participation. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and the Petroleum Authority of Uganda manage regulation.

Lake Albert fields are greenfield-transitioning-to-development. First wells will be drilled in the near term. Tight-oil and water-sensitive thesis is strong: seismic interpretation shows thin, compartmentalised pay; modelling predicts high water-cut wells. Coil-tubing stimulation, multilateral laterals and inflow-control devices are planned completion strategies. However, the bulk of development drilling sits with the operators' in-house teams. External tech procurement is limited to specialty items. Innovation pathways run through major service companies, not independent vendors. UNOC has limited capex for technology trials. A Norwegian completion principal would

need TotalEnergies or CNOOC as anchor — which is unlikely at the development-drilling stage. Post-development operational efficiency offers secondary upside in artificial-lift optimisation, production-data analytics and reservoir surveillance.

Risks dominate. EACOP financing has been a difficult chapter; non-Western lending is filling the gap, with cost-overrun pressure. Civil-society legal challenges remain a variable. Lake Albert development schedule itself can slip in a frontier basin. Equity-side risk from major shareholders is a tail variable.

The blue economy

Lake Victoria is Africa's largest inland fishery. Uganda's sector yields a substantial annual catch dominated by Nile perch and tilapia. The artisanal fleet is large, predominantly small craft. Nile perch is exported, primarily to European markets; tilapia is sold fresh and dried domestically and regionally. IUU is severe, with illegal transboundary fishing and banned gear use causing stock depletion and conflict. The Lake Victoria fisheries economy supports many hundreds of thousands of people.

Aquaculture is nascent but growing. Freshwater operations include tilapia, catfish and carp in small ponds and cage systems. Government targets ambitious scaling. Hatchery infrastructure exists but faces disease pressure and limited access to improved genetics. Feed supply relies on imports and limited local mills. Norwegian fisheries-development cooperation is exploring tilapia genetics and hatchery improvements in the Lake Victoria region.

Uganda is landlocked. Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika are transit routes. Electricity supply is hydroelectric-dependent. Lake Albert oil development will reduce hydro reliance.

The intersection with Saga's mandate is substantial but focused on aquaculture and fisheries management. Lake Victoria production directly informs co-investment plays in hatchery genetics, disease control and catch-data management. IUU detection and cross-border fisheries monitoring is a clear technology opportunity. Lake Albert oil development will displace fishing communities; resettlement and livelihood-restoration advisory could be a Saga service offering. Aquaculture cage-system expansion offers technology-transfer and financing opportunities.

The Norwegian–Uganda corridor

Norway's embassy in Kampala opened in 1972. The bilateral relationship is long-standing. Equinor was an early foreign operator in Lake Albert, discovered Tilenga and was lead developer until selling down. Equinor maintains a footprint in Kampala and Hoima. Earlier oil-and-gas cooperation programmes wound down; fisheries cooperation remains active in Lake Victoria fisheries management, aquaculture pilots and disease-control research.

For a Norwegian technology principal, the practical introduction pathways are layered but complicated by geopolitics. Equinor's long presence and current operational footprint provide credible entry to TotalEnergies and UNOC. Norwegian climate commitments and ESG pressures create some tension on continued upstream involvement. Norwegian fisheries-development cooperation is the clearest channel for aquaculture and fisheries work. The dominant non-Western footprint in Lake Albert and EACOP means Western technology adoption faces some procurement-preference bias. Political climate: the government is pro-development and receptive to partnerships that accelerate monetisation.

What Saga sees

Lake Albert oil is not a strong near-term completion-vendor play. TotalEnergies and CNOOC control development drilling; completion strategies are locked in. Water-cut management is the dominant technical challenge, but the bulk of procurement runs through major service companies. A Norwegian completion principal's entry is advisory or post-first-oil optimisation, not development-stage vendor. EACOP financing dynamics and geopolitical complications create material downside risk to project execution and operator appetite for innovation.

Adjacent blue-economy and AI plays are stronger and clearer. Lake Victoria fisheries surveillance and IUU detection (near-term) is a satellite vessel-monitoring and cross-border-enforcement play; Norwegian fisheries-development cooperation co-funds. Aquaculture hatchery genetics and disease control (medium-term) partners with universities. Lake Albert oil resettlement and livelihood restoration (medium-term) is advisory on community-impact mitigation. Artificial-lift and production optimisation (longer-term) is post-first-oil recurring-revenue opportunity.

The near-term window is blue economy, not oil. Revisit if EACOP commissioning slips materially, equity dynamics shift, or operators accelerate artificial-lift optimisation post-first-oil.

How we work in Uganda

Saga works in Uganda through standing relationships at Equinor's Lake Albert operations and the Norwegian fisheries-development ecosystem. We connect with UNOC technical teams, the Ministry of Energy leadership and district authorities on livelihood-restoration advisory. We offer fisheries-management strategy, aquaculture technology transfer and post-first-oil production-optimisation advisory. We are positioned as Norwegian partners who understand both operator interests and community-impact mitigation. If you are representing a principal in aquaculture technology, fisheries surveillance or lake-resource management — and you have patience for a medium-term engagement — Uganda is worth a conversation.

At a glance

- **Population:** ~48 million
- **Hydrocarbons:** Oil; substantial Lake Albert reserves; Tilenga and Kingfisher first oil in scope
- **Principal NOC:** UNOC
- **Norwegian footprint:** Embassy Kampala · Equinor Lake Albert presence · long-standing fisheries-development cooperation
- **Saga focus areas:** Lake Victoria fisheries surveillance and IUU detection · Aquaculture hatchery genetics and tilapia production scaling · Lake Albert oil resettlement and livelihood restoration · Post-first-oil production optimisation and artificial-lift technology · University partnerships