

ReconAfrica Exploration Campaign Set To Start Later This Year

■ Justicia Shipena

ReconAfrica, a Canadian oil and gas firm, will begin drilling for additional wells later this year.

This follows after the Office of the Environmental Commissioner in the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism granted ReconAfrica an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) for a further 12 exploration and appraisal wells.

“The drilling campaign will commence later this year, as soon as our interpretation process has been completed,” said ReconAfrica’s Director of Communication and Stakeholder Relations, Ndapewoshali Shapwanale.

The PEL 73 licence, which covers 6.3 million acres (25,000 km²) in northern Namibia, is covered by the ECC.

Shapwanale said the ECC has given ReconAfrica permission to start drilling 12 further exploration and appraisal wells in the Kavango basin to unconstrained depths from 4 July 2023 to 4 July 2026.

Speaking to The Villager in a telephonic interview, she said the main goal of the next drilling programme is to create commercial accumulations of the oil, gas and natural gas liquids that were discovered in the first three stratigraphic test wells.

“Management’s current focus in the 3rd & 4th quarter of 2023 is developing and prioritising its prospect inventory in order to execute a multi-well drilling programme targeting both primary plays - the Damara Fold Belt and the Karoo Rift Basin - with initial emphasis on the Damara Fold Belt as detailed in the company’s June 26, 2023, news release,” ReconAfrica said in a statement it issued last week.

When asked if the Canadian company would abandon its earlier exploration wells, Shapwanale said the company’s licence area covered both the Kavango East and West regions and that moving on to the next well depends on the results in the process of exploring for oil and gas.

“Our site is at Kawe [village in the Kavango East region] and depending on whether we need to return to them, we will go back to those if not we will

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ReconAfrica Exploration

continue to explore the rest of our licence area depending on where geology leads us," she explained.

"We are extremely pleased about that and we look forward to this next phase in our activities," she said.

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism reviewed and approved ReconAfrica's application for an Environmental Clearance Certificate to begin the next phase of their oil and gas exploration work programme, which is to drill exploration and appraisal wells.

Environmental Commissioner Timoteus Mufeti said the planned drilling programme for exploration and appraisal wells aims to continue looking for oil and gas in the Kavango Sub Basin and related subbasins, as well as to find potentially profitable petroleum systems.

"As part of the progressive processes of de-risking the Kavango Sedimentary Basin (KSB), REN [Reconnaissance Energy Namibia] is proposing to drill prioritised exploration and appraisal wells designed to confirm the existence of economic oil or gas resources within the delineated targets based on additional 2D seismic survey data acquisition and interpretation, airborne geophysical surveys and the stratigraphic well data sets," Mufeti explained.

Namibia's economy, according to Mufeti, is heavily reliant on natural resources. However, his office is responsible for making sure that all classified and listed economic activity are checked for any environmental impacts.

As a result, he certified that Namibia has so far handled its environmental issues quite successfully and that this trend would continue in the future.

Mufeti continued by saying that his office is confident the potential negative impacts to the local specific drillings sites in the Kavango East and West regions, the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area and global interconnected ecosystems will be low and manageable.

He went on to say the approval of

ReconAfrica's ECC was done in line with approved precedures with the primary goal of managing various aspects of oil and gas exploration and production, environmental management, water, atmospheric pollution prevention, health, and labour, as well as other indirect laws linked to accessory services and engineering works.

Although there is growing pressure on nations, including Namibia, to switch from fossil fuels to low-carbon energy sources like hydropower, solar and wind, the Environmental Commissioner said the energy transition must be done in a way that will be just and affordable for developing nations like Namibia.

In light of this, he said there is no possible contradiction between the growth of Namibia's oil and gas sector and its promises to slashing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling climate change.

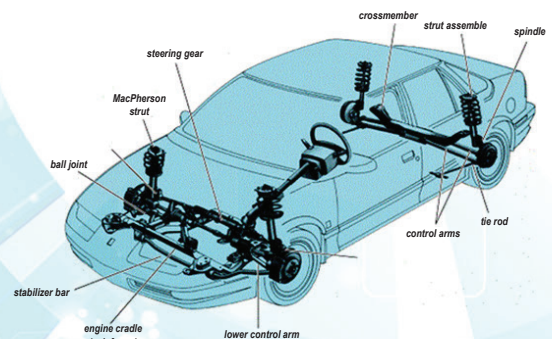
"The two can coexist and complement each other. Namibia is working towards reducing the effects of global warming on communities and sectors through short and long-term resilience and adaptation strategies," Mufeti said.

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