

Africa Oil, Tullow spud Kenya well

Canada's Africa Oil Corp has begun drilling at its Ngamia onshore prospect in Kenya with partner Tullow Oil.

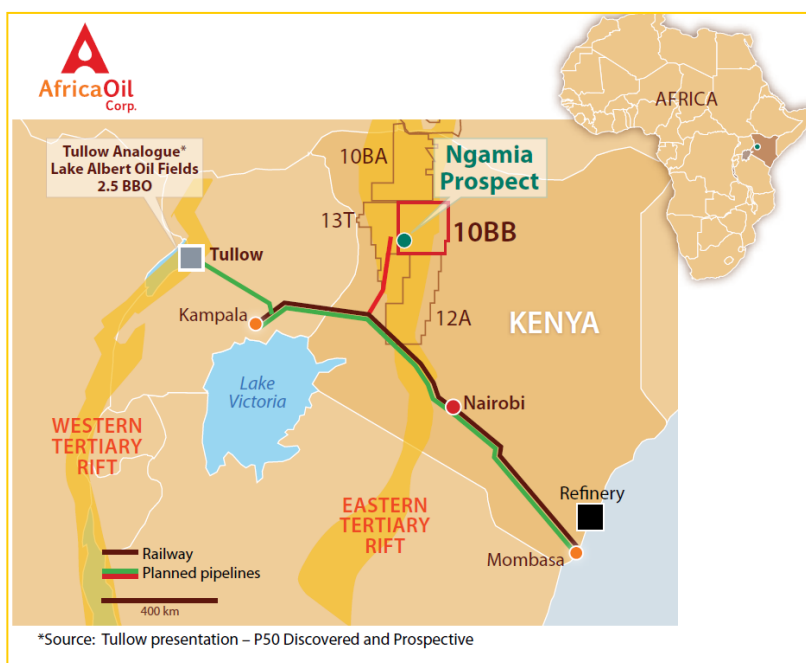
On January 25, the company announced that it had spudded the Ngamia-1 well on Block 10BB, which is located in the country's Lokichar basin. Live oil was encountered by the nearby Loperot-1 well in 1992, the company added.

Tullow Oil is the block operator with a 50% working interest, with Africa Oil holding the remaining stake. Ngamia-1 will be the first well drilled on the block by the partnership, and will mark the start of a multi-well drilling programme on Block 10BB and adjacent blocks.

Drilling and evaluation is now expected to take between 60 and 90 days.

"We are very excited to be drilling our first well with Tullow," Africa Oil's president and CEO, Keith Hill, said.

"They've had enormous success with the Lake Albert Rift Basin project, where in excess of one billion barrels have been discovered, and this shares many geological similarities with our Kenyan assets. Our Ngamia prospect could be a play opener for another great success in the region."



Although Kenya has so far failed to discover any commercially viable oil and gas deposits, interest in the country's hydrocarbon potential has soared following the growing number of fresh large-scale discoveries in neighbouring Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique.

Recently a senior Kenyan Energy Ministry official, Hudson Adambi, said that a number of exploration blocks in the semi-desert areas of Mandera in the country's north had been abandoned after failing to show commercially exploitable reserves.

However, there is much more optimism over the Ngamia prospect, which is thought to be similar to a number of oil prospects drilled by Tullow and its partners early in the exploration programme in Uganda's Lake Albert Rift. ■