

NRM set to deliver first

Uganda is on course to deliver the first drop of oil through the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). What started as a dream 100 years ago, will become a reality this year, thanks to unwavering determination by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government, writes **Martin Kitubi**.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) government will make history this year delivering the first oil which many of the previous regimes, including



Nick Mugira, the Managing Director for Inspecta Africa

the colonialist, failed to do. The oil journey, which started with the hunt for commercially viable oil resources,

has not been an easy one, with ups and downs, stalemate and campaigns against the projects, among others.

Many doubted the country's ability to not only find oil, but also secure funds to deliver the projects, let alone the human resource to spearhead the development.

The colonialist, who started the search for oil resources in the 1920s in Uganda, they had declared the country an unsuccessful expedition. Despite establishing the presence of sedimentary sequences in the Albertine, the colonial regime had given up on the quest for oil in the 1950s.

On February 1, 2022, Uganda had a defining milestone that culminated in the Final Investment Decision (FID), which marked the start of the development stage of Uganda's oil and

gas sector. The FID unlocked more than \$10b in upstream and midstream investments, including the EACOP, Tilenga and Kingfisher oil projects.

First oil in sight

Dr Ruth Nankabirwa, the Minister for Energy and Mineral Development, the lead entity in oil development, explained that first oil is in sight, given the progress of the infrastructure under construction. According to the minister, the road to first oil shows the determination of the NRM government to improve the lives of Ugandans, and contribute to energy liberation for Africa. The minister emphasised the strategic role of EACOP in enabling the transportation of crude oil to international markets and strengthening

oil

regional energy trade. "We commit to develop this resource in an environmentally friendly manner. We are progressing very well in terms of development. All the projects are on course and we will achieve first oil as planned," she said.

Testing start

The latest project report indicated the civil works for EACOP project have hit the peak period, with over 12,000 workers deployed in both Uganda and Tanzania.

As the work intensifies, the government and its partners have commenced testing EACOP facilities in Tanzania to prepare them for first oil expected in July this year.

At the marine storage terminal in Tanga, which will store Uganda's crude before export, the four oil tanks have been erected and hydrotested with thermal insulation ongoing.

According to the project schedule, more tests, dubbed commissioning activities, will commence this month and run up to March 2025.

During this period, the commissioning contractors will start the Electrical Instrumentation Telecommunications and Safety (EITS) tests at Pump Stations One in Hoima, as well as Pump Station 4 and, both located in Tanzania.

The EACOP facility will have a total of six pump stations, two located in Hoima and Sembabule districts of Uganda, while four others will be in Tanzania.

During this first quarter of 2026, the contractor will carry out pipeline hydro-testing, Tanga Terminal EITS as well as tests at the Jetty and load out facility which will load Uganda's crude oil onto vessels for the global market.

Kent Energies, a UK firm and Inspecta Africa, a Ugandan company, will undertake the EACOP commissioning activities as joint venture partners.

Alex Nyombi, director for Development and Production at the Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU), confirmed the development explaining that, "We are progressing well as planned with the ongoing developments. At the Kingfisher project, we commenced on the pre-commissioning tests, which are a must and important for oil pipelines to ensure safety, integrity, and efficiency."