

Oil and Gas in Kenya

The exploration for oil in Kenya began in the 1950s, with the first oil well in the country being dug in 1960. The first firms involved in prospecting for oil in Kenya were BP (British Petroleum) and Royal Dutch Shell (or simply Shell). Through the 1980s several attempts to strike oil were made by companies the likes of Amoco and Total, but the findings were either too meagre to be commercially viable or non-existent. At the time, drilling was mainly in Lamu, parts of Turkana and Mandera.

In 2012, Kenya made an oil discovery in north-west Turkana, at the *Ngamia* site, a discovery which made Kenya the second country after Uganda to discover oil in East Africa. A later discovery was made at Twiga, after which other branches of *Ngamia* and *Twiga* have been discovered. In 2013 production of the discovered oil began at a rate of 3,200 barrels per day. It is estimated that *Ngamia* and *Twiga* could each contain about 250 million barrels of commercial scale oil. As at the end of 2015, the country had discovered the potential to drill over 600 million barrels of oil. Analysts place the value of the oil discovered at about \$10 billion. In March 2016, the announcement of the discovery of more potentially commercial scale oil was made in Kerio Valley in the Rift Valley region of Kenya.

The discovery of oil for any net importing nation brings with it feelings of economic relief. Oil imports are necessitated by the need to generate electricity, refine the oil for vehicle and aviation use and obtain by-products such as tar and asphalt for road construction. Kenya has made discoveries of deposits of both oil and gas in the over the last 10 years...

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