According to data from PAU, it is estimated that between $15b and $20b will be invested in Uganda’s oil and gas sector in the next five years, which will create thousands of jobs and business opportunities, writes Moses Kigongo.

As Uganda’s oil and gas sector progresses from the exploration part of the Upstream phase to the development stage with the focus of achieving first oil by 2023, more employment opportunities are up for grabs by Ugandans and their companies in the country.

The latest status of employment, as of the end of May, stood at 11,679 people, of which 11,054 (95%) were Ugandans, said the upstream enterprise development officer at Petroleum Authority of Uganda (PAU), Peter Bintu. He explained that contracted companies directly employed 808 of whom 72% were Ugandans, while contract workers stood at 11,935 of which 96% were Ugandans.

Bintu revealed that the authority continues to monitor the available human capacity through the National Oil and Gas Talent Register (NOGTR). He observed that during May, 117 workers applied for registration, of which 96 were male and 21 female. Cumulatively, the total number of registered workers since 2018 is 8,181 of which 1,177 females,” revealed Bintu. He made the remarks while talking about the status of employment during a recent media tour of the Kingfisher project in Kikuyu district.

According to data from PAU, it is estimated that between $15b and $20b will be invested in Uganda’s oil and gas sector over the next five years, which will create thousands of jobs and business opportunities. He also talked about the status of registered companies, saying the total number of registered companies reached 120 on the National Supplier Database (NSD). Bintu explained that companies such as koji, Qova and Mota-Engil also posted 32 jobs on the system. And showed that the number of jobs each company posted, including 22 (from Kelocon), 6 (Q-Sourcing) and four (Mota-Engil) to prove his case.

This brings the total number of jobs posted on the system to over 700, according to PAU officials.

On the issue of participation of Ugandan enterprises and use

of Ugandan goods and services, statistics from PAU indicated that the cumulative value of contracts reviewed since 2021 stood at $7b. Out of the contracts, $1.7b (25%) is earmarked for Ugandan companies.

PAU data indicates that as at the end of May, contracts in Uganda companies accounted for direct Tier 1 contracting were to a tune of $1b and contracts given to Ugandan companies through sub-contracting from international companies are $575.5m.

The above details lead to a cumulative total number of applications received by the NSD since its deployment in 2017 to 8,591 companies, of which 2,535 were Uganda entities and 520 foreign entities, as of the end of May.

**IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES**

Sarah Bunge, the manager corporate affairs at Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC), says there are so many developments taking place in the Albertine region lately. For example, she says, there is the Kabalega International Airport, whose civil works is almost 97.5% complete.

With rigs (drilling equipment) already erected, the Kingfisher and Tilienga projects have also achieved significant progress to enable the country to produce its first oil by 2023.

Amos Mubiru, the manager corporate affairs at SRC Uganda, which was contracted to construct the Kabalega International Airport, said the airport will be ready to host any big cargo planes and international flights.”

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**OIL PROJECTS EMPLOYING 93% UGANDANS**

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The second anchor project of Kabalega International Park, which is a petroleum-based industrial park that will host a number of factories, such as the oil refinery development with the intention of supporting industrialisation and employing thousands of Ugandans who will be working in the different petroleum-based factories and businesses in the area.

The airport and industrial park will also support the development of other sectors, such as tourism and agriculture, since tourists will be flying into the country to visit some of the tourist sites, such as Buga farm, and the great rift valley escarpment (where Lake Albert is found), among others.

"And all these tourists will need to use Uganda’s local food hence boosting the agricultural sector in the region," Gloria Sekigumi, the manager corporate affairs at PAU, said.

James Amade, the civil works structural supervisor for Tilienga Industrial Park, said the Tilienga project is developing different facilities which serve different functions.

For example, the Civil Processing Facility (CPF) is one of the key facilities being constructed to separate oil from the water, sand, salts, or additives during the production stage of the upstream project and the Construction Support Base (CSB) where workers of the CPF will be camping among others.

Amade noted that, currently, the CSB is accommodating less than 1,000 workers because it is still under construction, but it will accommodate over 4,000 people once complete.

The project will also have a drilling support base to work on the three rigs that have so far been procured by Total Energies-Uganda (that is managing the Tilienga project).

"So far, one rig has been assembled and is expected to be launched this month," Sekigumi revealed.

Ambrose Ogwang, the drilling engineer at NOGCU Uganda, also talked about some of the drilling activities’ developments in the Kingfisher project area. He indicated that the pilot well has so far been drilled (from well pad 2) in the area.

However, Ogwang explained that actual production has not yet been done, though it is expected once they handover the well pads, preparations will be made for oil production to start by 2025.