

# BEYOND DISCOVERY: WHY AFRICA'S NEXT ENERGY CHALLENGE IS COMMERCIALIZATION

*What Namibia's Kudu Gas Project and Kenya's LNG Infrastructure Ambitions Reveal About the Future of African Energy Infrastructure*



Over the past few weeks, I have found myself reflecting on two projects that are nearly 4,000 kilometres apart: **Namibia's Kudu Gas Project** and **Kenya's proposed LNG Public-Private Partnership (PPP)**.

At first glance, the two projects appear fundamentally different. Kenya has no major producing gas field but is considering LNG import infrastructure because it recognizes the role natural gas can play in industrial development and energy security. Namibia has gas resources but must still solve the same commercialization challenge.

Africa is entering a new phase where the ability to commercialize resources may matter even more than the discovery itself.

**Namibia's Kudu project is built around a domestic offshore gas resource (~1.3 Tcf).** The concept is relatively straightforward: produce natural gas offshore, transport it to shore, and convert it into electricity to support domestic demand and regional energy security.

**Kenya's LNG PPP takes a different route since the country has no commercial gas deposits.** The project seeks to import liquefied natural gas (LNG), re-gasify it, and distribute gas to power producers and industrial users through dedicated infrastructure.

Namibia's project begins with gas while Kenya begins with infrastructure. However, both projects are attempting to solve the same challenge: **how to build a sustainable, bankable energy value chain capable of supporting long-term economic growth.**

This distinction is important because energy projects are often viewed primarily through an engineering lens - wells, pipelines, terminals, power plants, and processing facilities. The real challenge lies in creating an ecosystem where producers, infrastructure owners, financiers, regulators, power generators, industrial consumers, and governments are aligned behind a commercially viable project.

For decades, the African energy conversation has celebrated every new oil or gas find with expectations of future prosperity. But history has repeatedly shown that resources alone do not create wealth:

- Infrastructure does.
- Investment does.
- Markets do.
- Institutions do.

For Namibia, the question is how best to monetize domestic gas resources. For Kenya, the question is how to create sufficient demand and infrastructure to justify LNG imports at scale. Both require long-term planning, significant investment, effective regulation, and strong stakeholder engagement.

Namibia stands at a unique crossroads. The country has the rare opportunity to develop gas infrastructure, power generation, export facilities, industrial users, and local content frameworks at the same time that major offshore discoveries are attracting global attention. Few African countries have the opportunity to design such an ecosystem from the ground up.

The lesson extends far beyond these two projects.

Across Africa, countries are increasingly focused on energy security, industrialization, and economic diversification. Whether the starting point is a domestic gas discovery or imported LNG, success ultimately depends on the ability to connect energy resources to real economic activity.

In many cases, the most important decisions are made long before the first pipe is laid, the first valve is installed, or the first drilling rig arrives on location.

They are made during project conceptualization, feasibility studies, transaction structuring, risk allocation, environmental and social planning, financing negotiations, and stakeholder consultations.

## **TSAVO's Strategic Advisory Division**

As I reflect on projects such as Kudu and Kenya's LNG, I believe this is where the next frontier of opportunity lies for African energy companies. It is also one of the reasons **TSAVO Oilfield Services** has begun expanding its capabilities beyond traditional oilfield and geothermal services into **Strategic Advisory**.

As we continue to grow, we see Strategic Advisory not as a departure from our technical roots, but as a natural extension of them. Rather, a recognition that successful projects require participation along the length of the value chain - from concept development and investment planning through to execution and operations. Historically, companies like ours enter the value chain when equipment is required, drilling commences, or field operations begin. **Yet projects such as Kudu and Kenya LNG demonstrate that some of the most important decisions are made years before the first valve, pipeline, or drilling tool is ever procured.**

As Africa continues to develop its energy infrastructure, the conversation can no longer be limited to resource discovery alone. The future belongs to those who can build complete value chains - creating reliable energy systems that support industrial growth, attract investment, create jobs, and deliver lasting economic value:

The next decade of African energy development will not be defined by the countries that discover the most resources. It will be defined by the countries that build the strongest value chains:

- Discovery creates opportunity.
- Infrastructure enables commercialization.
- Value chains create prosperity.
- The countries that successfully connect all three will shape Africa's energy future.

Africa's future energy winners will be those that convert resources and infrastructure into complete value chains. The race has already begun. Countries that move fastest from discovery to commercialization will shape Africa's energy future.



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*Sources: Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy (Namibia), BW Energy and PPP Kenya.*

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