

Rwanda has made a groundbreaking discovery—oil reserves have been identified in Lake Kivu. The Rwanda Mines, Petroleum, and Gas Board (RMB) announced that 13 potential oil wells have been identified, signaling a promising future for the nation's energy sector.

Francis Kamanzi, RMB's Director General, shared the news with lawmakers on January 15, 2025, describing the find as a significant milestone toward oil exploration and extraction in Rwanda.

"The good news is that we have oil," Kamanzi stated. However, he cautioned that further studies are necessary to quantify the reserves and determine the feasibility of extraction. Kamanzi noted that the oil reserves in Lake Kivu could potentially surpass those in neighboring countries.

A Regional Game-Changer

Kamanzi drew comparisons between Rwanda's discovery and oil reserves found in Uganda, particularly in Lake Albert. He suggested that the oil basin likely extends into Lake Kivu. "Our Kivu is larger than the other lakes, and we may have more oil than surrounding countries," he explained.



This discovery comes after years of research. Oil exploration began in 2014 but was paused for a while. In 2019, Canadian company Black Swan Energy revived interest when they found that oil and gas reserves could be extracted easily from the eastern part of the lake. This discovery is connected to the methane gas found in the waters of Lake Kivu, as oil and gas are often found together.

Rwanda has already passed laws to regulate oil exploration and extraction. If the oil in Lake Kivu proves to be commercially viable, Rwanda will become the third East African country to discover oil, after Uganda and South Sudan.

The next phase of research will involve deeper drilling to confirm the quantity and quality of the oil. Experts estimate that this next stage of exploration could cost between 8 to 10 billion Rwandan Francs.

While the full scale of the discovery is still being studied, this finding could open the door for Rwanda to tap into a valuable resource. It's a step that could boost the country's economy in the years to come.

“This is a major step forward for Rwanda,” Kamanzi said, looking ahead to the potential benefits of this discovery for the country’s future.