

SPDC and Infrastructural Development The Osubi Airstrip Success Story



The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited
(Operator of the NNPC/Shell/Elf/Agip Joint Venture)





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Forward

As the country's greatest foreign exchange earner, the Petroleum Industry in Nigeria is of such strategic importance that all stakeholders need to know as much about it as possible. Knowledge about the Upstream sector of the Industry has therefore, become an imperative for a wide range of stakeholders; officials of all three tiers of government, law makers and other decision makers, the general public and our staff.

We at The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) of Nigeria Limited are the pioneers and leaders of that Industry. We have, today, the largest acreage in the country from which we have proven more than 50% of the country's oil and gas reserves and a capacity to produce some 50% of the nation's oil.

One of our affiliates, Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO) is also the pioneer company in the country's deep offshore, where we have literally shown the industry the way with the first major discovery in that frontier exploration area. As I write this, SNEPCO has been making huge discoveries deep-offshore

Our primary position in the industry places on us a responsibility to share our knowledge and experience in all three areas of sustainable development. In response to this challenge, we have published a series of 15 briefing notes.

It is my pleasure to recommend them to you.

- Cover: Osubi Airstrip, an SPDC plane in the foreground

NOTE

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The Osubi success story

As one of the main hubs of oil and gas production activity in Nigeria, Warri has long been a candidate for an airport that could facilitate the movement of personnel and material, and meet other logistics requirements.

In the 1960s, an airstrip was built at Ugborikoko/Effurun, one of the adjunct towns to Warri. At the time of building the airstrip, the area was a green field location, but with urbanisation and growth, it soon became surrounded by a built-up area. The airstrip could not cope with the increasing volume of traffic, the runway and other facilities could not be expanded to meet standards set by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO.)

In 1975, the Federal Government acquired a site at Osubi to build an airport but the project did not see the light of day. Several years later, a consortium of oil companies including the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) decided to build a modern airstrip and returned to the same site. However, after failing to reconcile the separate interests of potential partners, the NNPC/Shell/Elf/Agip Joint Venture decided to do it alone.

SPDC began the construction of Osubi Airstrip in 1997 through a contract awarded to Julius Berger. Situated on 360-hectares of land, the project was to be implemented in three phases, ranging from construction of runway and apron to installation of permanent facilities and building of a hangar.



But before the workmen turned the first sod, SPDC conducted a wide ranging environmental impact assessment study, which was approved in July 1997 by the then Federal Environmental Protection Agency.

SPDC's Corporate Aviation Adviser at the time Captain Ray Reynolds, said of the challenges: "Building a modern airstrip in the middle of nowhere



The old airstrip (above) and the new (below)

was a very big challenge, which took commitment and dedication to achieve. We had to move men, materials and heavy equipment there and that was difficult. The old airstrip was still functioning at the time and we had to manage the risks inherent in operating from the old facility while building its ultra modern successor at Osubi."

The airstrip was formally commissioned on April 17, 1999, after the first phase, to operate an aerodrome licence (private). Phase 2 has similarly been completed - clear indication that a modern airstrip has indeed come to stay in the hub of the Niger Delta.

The third phase of building a hanger and associated facilities is underway.

A World Class Airstrip

Osubi Airstrip is modern in every sense of the word. The runway is 1800 metres long with two stop-ways each measuring 150 metres.

The airstrip handles an average of 28 (maximum of 35) aircraft movements excluding helicopter

operations every day with over 1000 passengers. In fact, in the first six months of the opening of Osubi Airstrip, more than 100,000 passengers passed through just as it handled 3,500 aircraft movements. Osubi Airstrip is reckoned among the busiest aviation facilities in Nigeria.

Socio-economic Benefits

- Osubi Airstrip has opened up Warri for businesses and investors who are assured of a quick, convenient and safe means of travel.
- It has encouraged the local communities around it to set up small businesses to service the needs of travellers.
- It has generated employment opportunities to locals.
- It has promoted safe air travel and general aviation operations with its ultra modern navigational and landing facilities.
- It has encouraged tourism and helped to grow the hospitality industry in the local area.



Departure Lounge of the new airstrip

Testimonies of Success



"It has one of the best facilities in the country in terms of security and runway lighting. It is well maintained and the runway and the terminal are truly first class.

"It has opened up greater business and employment opportunities for local communities. Strategically located between Port Harcourt and Lagos, the airstrip could also be conveniently used for emergency landings.

"The airstrip is great and I hope SPDC is going to build a second one soon."

Captain Dapo Olumide Aero Contractors.



"The airstrip has been very useful to the host communities. It has provided employment for the teeming youths of unemployed in the areas and has opened up the area to more businesses. To Nigeria as a country, this is a

modern airstrip with high international standards which adds to the level of development of the country."

Patrick Otimeyi, Station Manager, DANA Airline, Osubi Airstrip. (Runs shuttles from Osubi to Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja.)



Osubi Airstrip and the Osubi Community

In 1997, SPDC needed to provide a modern airstrip for our western Niger Delta operations to replace an airstrip that had become unsafe due to growing urbanisation. The new airstrip was designed to allow the use of modern and larger aircraft. It was also hoped that the airstrip would promote investment, generate employment opportunities and encourage the socio-economic development of the area.

SPDC acquired some 1,000 hectares of land from nine communities for the construction of the airstrip and paid N195 million (\$1.9 million) in compensation for the land and its economic features.

In addition, a number of social amenities, such as potable water, roads and market stalls, were provided to the communities by the company.

The airstrip is now operational and has proved a great success. But the real success of the project belongs to the communities themselves and the use to which they have put the compensation.

The Osubi community provided about 50 per cent of the land area for which compensation was paid. The community decided to use part of the money received to provide electricity for themselves, thereby encouraging economic growth. A large community hall is also under construction. This activity has encouraged individuals in the community to make investments and the economy has consequently grown.

Other communities involved in the Osubi airstrip have taken note of these developments, and the Okuokoko and Okudiete communities have also provided themselves with electricity and community halls.





Captain Ian Scott in the cockpit of SPDC's Eurocopter at Osubi



