



The Virtuous Cycle

Our collaboration with a local partner drives a series of successes in West Africa

■ When ION bought GX Technology (GXT) in 2004, one of the things we talked about was a virtuous cycle – that often imagined, but frequently elusive condition that occurs when one success leads to another. We think we’re starting to see these virtuous cycles in many areas of the company, including West Africa.

■ Our push into West Africa began several years ago with a series of BasinSPAN programs offshore Nigeria, Angola, and the Congo. Known collectively as AfricaSPAN™, these programs forged the local relationships and built the geologic insights we needed to operate successfully in the region. Over time, our SPAN clients began to ask us to evaluate their legacy 3D seismic datasets and see whether we might be able to ‘do something’ to improve their quality. While Nigeria has been a hydrocarbon center for decades, the opportunities there grow more challenging with each passing year. Prospects are located in deeper waters and deeper within the geologic column. Oil trapping mechanisms are often associated with subtle changes in rock types. Target reservoirs are difficult to discriminate from the steeply dipping shales that are interbedded among them. And echoes off

the seafloor, called multiples, can interfere with the recorded seismic signals.

■ In short, this is just the kind of complex environment in which ION likes to operate. It also is the kind of place where the full suite of our imaging skills can be brought to bear. Our expertise in areas like multiple elimination, Gaussian beam migration, and the cutting-edge reverse time migration (RTM) technique is proving invaluable as we take on the complex imaging challenges of the West African margin.

■ As demand for our GXT data processing services grew, we knew we needed a local partner to help us better navigate the complex business climate within Nigeria. We turned to a long-standing provider of geological data management solutions – Bulwark Services Ltd. – and forged an alliance that has served us well since its formation in May 2005. Over the last three years, GXT-Bulwark Services Nigeria has expanded its customer base, service offerings, and employee population. Today, our geophysical services center in Port Harcourt is capable of handling jobs of the highest complexity and delivering a product that is the equal of any



GXT service center around the world. Our Port Harcourt center also reflects our commitment to sustainability, including transferring advanced technologies and best practices to local communities where we operate. Our Port Harcourt center is managed by our local Nigerian partner and staffed primarily with geophysical professionals of Nigerian heritage.

■ We believe that we have only begun to scratch the surface of what the ION family of companies can achieve in West Africa. RXT has just moved a large VSO crew into Nigeria and has begun acquiring data under a multi-year contract for a supermajor; separately, GXT was awarded the full-wave processing portion of this project. The entire West African margin provides numerous opportunities for transition zone (TZ)

imaging. And we are already receiving inquiries about FireFly surveys in the Niger Delta area. Even with all this progress in only a short period, it appears the virtuous cycle has only just begun.

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