

CAVERTON HELICOPTERS

# Transforming national oil and gas logistics



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# NIGERIA'S Aviation Enthusiast



17 years in the making, Caverton Helicopters has helped transform the nation's oil and gas logistics industry with its extensive aerospace expertise

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With November 1925 marking the first landing of any aircraft in Nigeria, the 93 years since have seen aviation become both a critical element of the country's transportation network and a major economic backbone.

This period has played rise to rapid national development, Nigeria now showcasing the spoils of West Africa's most innovative and modernised aerospace progressions as the home of 20 airports, 23 active domestic airline operators and a further 22 foreign carriers.

In tandem with this headway, as expected has come diversification, evident in the rise of sub-sectors such as helicopter logistics. A branch that is now integral to the success of the region's oil and gas industry, this was previously dominated by international businesses prior to the turn of the millennium – a status quo that piqued the curiosity of local firm Caverton

## COLLABORATION IS KEY

**Caverton Helicopters' partners include:**  
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**Caverton Helicopters' clients include:**  
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and the Nigerian  
National Petroleum  
Corporation.

Offshore Support Group (COSG).

"An already-active player in the marine sector, we knew that the helicopter market was monopolised by two major players and that neither of them were Nigerian companies," explains Rotimi Makanjuola. "We became intrigued to know why no national entity had ventured into the market, realising that infrastructure played a major part, and this really got the cogs whirring."

With its interests firmly captured, COSG proceeded to apply for land to build a hangar and construct a heliport. It was from this exploration that Caverton Helicopters was born as a division of the COSG group, an independent business that Makanjuola himself helps to head up as the organisation's Chief Operating Officer.

"We figured we were already in the oil and gas support sector, so why not give it a shot – the opportunity was there," he adds.





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**A formidable player**

Makanjuola's role was fundamental to the organisation's initial success, tasked with overseeing the construction of the aforementioned heliport, an initiative that the COO describes as the catalyst to kickstarting his passion for aerospace logistics.

"I was never an aviator," he admits. "I was fascinated by helicopters and flying but never thought this industry would shape my career."

"When I finished studying for my auditing and management masters at Cass Business School I returned to Nigeria to join the family business and was swiftly thrown into the shipping and trading of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) that had little, if anything, to do with aerospace."

Having helped facilitate the birth of Caverton Helicopters, however, the COO is able to look back fondly at how far the charter, shuttle and industrial

## CAVERTON HELICOPTER'S FLEET IS COMPRISED OF SIX DIFFERENT VEHICLE MODELS:

- **H125 AStar** – A single engine helicopter with the best performance in its category, accommodating five passengers.
- **AW139** – Built by Leonardo Helicopters, this is designed with inherent multi-role capability, capable of carrying up to 12 passengers at very high speed.
- **Bell 407 GXP** – The most advanced light single-engine helicopter on the market, integrating speed, performance, reliability and manoeuvrability.
- **Bell 412 EP** – An advanced technology-designed twin-turbine helicopter with excellent reliability and dependability, derived from the Bell Huey series.
- **DHC6-400 & DHC6-300** – Operating on a dedicated passenger transfer basis, these are high-winged, unpressurised, twin-engine aircraft that can carry up to 20 people.
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Post Assurance Brokers has been the broker of choice to Caverton Helicopters, providing insurance services to the company for the past 10 years covering all its operations from Lagos to Duala, Cameroon.

We are very proud of the growth and leadership position Caverton Helicopters currently occupies in West Africa, we look forward to more collaborations and further expansion of the organisation.

Our relationship with Caverton Helicopter is of partnership to cater for the insurance needs of the company without any breakdown in its operations. As an organisation that values professionalism we are confident in our future work together, as the company excels in all its endeavour.

Congratulations Caverton Helicopters.

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maintenance company has come.

“Officially founded in September 2002, the business currently operates out of a 10,000 square metre flight facility at the Murtala Muhammad International Airport and has positioned itself as one of the leading indigenous oilfield services companies in Nigeria,” he adds.

What’s more, the division also operates several purpose-built facilities such as the Ozumba Heliport in Victoria Island, its NAF Base in Port Harcourt, and two further sites in Warri and Cameroon.

Leveraging this expansive footprint, the business is able to provide a selection of dedicated helicopter offerings, from offshore and onshore logistics and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) solutions to private charters and executive ground handling services.

“What differentiates Caverton Helicopters from other industry

providers in Sub-Saharan Africa is our ability to provide a formidable asset base, along with the right infrastructural support and technology to improve efficiency,” Makanjuola states.

### Inspiring industry innovation

Alongside these facilities, Caverton’s asset base equally constitutes the soon to be completed world-class MRO centre, a secondary company site situated at the Murtala Muhammad International Airport and one that is set to be four times the size of the former.

“What’s really exciting for us, however,” reveals Makanjuola, “is that the brand new Caverton Flight Training Academy, a separate building housed next to the MRO centre, will host the first helicopter level D Full-Flight Simulator to be installed in Africa, something that we’ve been working on extensively in partnership with Thales.”



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As a leading domestic aviation company in the onshore service sector, Caverton Helicopters Limited provides high quality helicopter logistics support to major players in the oil and gas industry. We feel honoured to be one of its registered logistics vendors since 2014 and partnering with the company has been indeed interesting and rewarding.

Caverton Helicopters Ltd is also a major helicopter logistics service provider in the domestic aviation industry in Nigeria, which it entered into over 15 years ago – presently the company is making conspicuous, remarkable and satisfactory progress and is now the aviation operator of choice and market leader in the industry in Nigeria.

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Caverton Helicopters was set up to take on international players in Nigeria's helicopter services market

Named the Reality H Full Flight Simulator and renowned as the world's most advanced commercial helicopter simulator, this is no less than a flagship investment for Caverton, set to be used to both meet the rising demand for helicopter pilot training and help eliminate related challenges.

"The simulator will enable pilots that fly AW139 twin-engine helicopters, one of the most popular models in the region, to be fully immersed in a realistic virtual environment representing Nigeria's operational areas," Mekanjuola continues.

"Our staff will be able to learn to handle a multitude of system failures and overcome very complex malfunctions should they arise in the real world, and ultimately we believe this will increase the safety awareness of pilots."

Coupled with this, the company's existing training practices are rigorous, partnering with accredited and renowned overseas training providers to deliver courses that meet the necessary industry standards, while also working with the government to train pilots sponsored by the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF).

The simulator in particular, however, will serve to uphold a large range of modern educational needs, from type rating, recurrent training and proficiency checks for both visual flight rules (VFR) and instrument flight rules (IFR) that include offshore missions and VIP operations to unprepared landing sites.

Further, it will be certified to meet European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Level D standards, the highest qualification for any such simulator.



Caverton recently invested in a state-of-the-art simulator to meet the demand for helicopter pilot training



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### Reputable and responsible

Caverton's emphasis on the importance of training in bolstering safety across Nigeria's aviation sector is just one example of the firm's esteemed attitudes in each of its endeavours, attitudes that are again reflected by its broad partnerships with many of the country's leading educational institutions.

"We've worked with a number of universities, having constructed the Caverton Hall lecture theatre at the Federal University of Technology in Minna, Niger State, for example," Makanjuola reveals, also citing the company's construction of a 500-seat lecture theatre for the University of Lagos and a 500-seat lecture theatre at the Al-Sarudeen University in Illorin, Kwara State.

Education aside, the company also readily partakes in a broad variety of corporate social responsibility practices.

"We're conscientious in



implementing a CSR plan that's geared towards improving the lives of disadvantaged individuals by partnering with credible private, government and non-governmental organisations," Makanjuola adds.

Asked if any such initiatives spring

to mind, the COO cites a number of programmes that Caverton Helicopters has been involved in of late: "We're a partner in Standard Chartered Bank's 'Seeing is Believing' project aimed at combating blindness, as well as the American Foundation for AIDS

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**“It’s undoubtedly going to be a busy year ahead... and each of these initiatives will keep us flying in more than one sense of the word”**

Research (AMFAR) that undertakes AIDS prevention, treatment and research, and we donate to the National Sickle Cell Foundation (NSCF) to pay for joint replacement surgery for persons with avascular necrosis of the hip and shoulder joints.”

Nigerian sport is additionally a beneficiary of the generosity that is embedded into the corporate culture of Caverton Helicopters, the business also having sponsored a number of promising Nigerian athletes during the summer of 2015 at the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles.

Each of these activities combined, Caverton’s influence extends far

beyond the domain of Nigerian oil and gas logistics, standing as an admirable proponent of social upliftment and development across a range of different verticals.

And, for this reason, both local communities and Caverton Helicopters itself have good reason to be excited for the remainder of 2019 and beyond with Makanjuola relatively optimistic about the current climate.

“We’re hoping for continued stability in the price of oil,” he reveals. “If it does, then we’ll definitely be expecting to see boosted investor confidence and increased exploration.”

Poised to take advantage of any progressive developments, the firm for now remains focused on the completion and inauguration of both its 40,000 square metre MRO facility and the accompanying full flight simulator training centre, two facilities that will consolidate the company’s position as a true market innovator.

“It’s undoubtedly going to be a busy year ahead,” Makanjuola reveals, “and each of these initiatives will keep us flying in more than one sense of the word.” ■



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