

# Angola, hotbed for foreign investors - mergermarket

LONDON: Despite a 36% decline of African mergers and acquisitions in the first half of 2011 compared to the same period last year, there are some positive trends that involve Angola, according to data from mergermarket.

Angolan investors have started paying more attention to foreign opportunities, as also shown by the fact that two out of the top three completed transactions involve Sonangol, the state-owned oil company, acquiring two Portuguese players, namely COBA - Consultores de Engenharia e Ambiente and Escom SA for undisclosed sums. InterOceanico, the Angolan investment firm, and Angolan bank Banco Internacional de Credito (BIC) have also been mentioned as potential buyers for assets in Portugal. Financial services is a sector that entices Angolan firms, the data also demonstrates.

## Magnet for overseas investors

However, Angola still remains a magnet for overseas investors, especially in the oil and mining and telecommunication sectors. The block oil assets of Marathon Oil and Exxon and the privatisation of Angola Telecom are some of the examples. mergermarket intelligence also shows that there is appetite by smaller European firms, such as Travelstore and Visabeira, to make acquisitions in Angola.

"Even though Angola follows the African declining trend in M&A," says Giovanni Amodeo, mergermarket global editor-in-chief, "it is positive to note that there are a lot of transactions on the making and investors see plenty of opportunities out there."

Over the past year, on the back of rising oil prices, the country's economic fortunes have bounced back robustly, and the ambitious infrastructure and social development plans are back on track. For companies considering investing in Angola, this is reassuring news.