



MEMBER COUNTRY PROFILE

Country name	United Kingdom
Organisation:	Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED)
Country Representative(s):	Saravanan Marappan, Ben Bryant
Primary Contact:	OPRED@energysecurity.gov.uk
Regime scope:	<p>The responsibilities for the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering security of energy supply• Ensuring properly functioning energy markets• Encouraging greater energy efficiency• Seizing the opportunities of net zero to lead the world in new green industries. <p>OPRED, part of DESNZ, is the environmental and decommissioning regulator for the offshore oil and gas, offshore gas unloading and storage, offshore carbon dioxide storage and offshore hydrogen storage activities (collectively referred as 'offshore energy activities').</p>
Governance arrangements:	DESNZ is a UK Government department
Legislation type:	The UK's offshore environmental regulatory regime is a comprehensive framework of protection measures which has been developed over several years to minimise the impact of offshore energy activities on the environment.
Links to relevant legislation:	Oil and gas: offshore environmental legislation
Extent of government approval:	All activities that could potentially impact on the marine environment are subject to rigorous assessment, and offshore energy projects are controlled through the issue of various licenses, permits, consents or approvals.
Nature of duties imposed:	A precautionary approach is taken to the environment and all applications to the permitting regime are subject to appropriate consideration by OPRED's Environmental Management Team with input from statutory nature conservation advisors and subject to public participation where relevant. Across the permitting regime, conditions are used to impose the Best Environmental Practice (BEP) and encourage the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT).



	<p>All operators have a general duty to ensure compliance with any conditions set under the permitting regime and the OPRED Offshore Inspectorate Team are responsible for reviewing that compliance and investigating any identified non-compliant activities.</p>
Physical objects in the regime:	<p>The UK's offshore environmental regulatory regime applies to approximately 300 fixed and floating installations and their associated infrastructure including pipelines, together with all Mobile Offshore Drilling Units operating on the UK Continental Shelf.</p>
Compliance assurance mechanisms:	<p>As detailed above, all offshore energy activities are controlled by the issue of activity specific permits, consents or authorisations containing legally binding conditions. OPRED actively ensures that industry is complying with the conditions included in environmental approvals by reviewing permit compliance returns and undertaking a series of prioritised environmental inspections using a risk-based approach undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced inspectors.</p>
Financial basis:	<p>Costs for the Environmental Management Team, the Offshore Environmental Inspectorate Team, and the Decommissioning Team along with the administrative support provided to the teams, are recoverable through fees paid by the operators.</p>
Environmental regulation responsibilities:	<p>OPRED is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the environmental and decommissioning regulatory regime for offshore energy projects on the UK Continental Shelf, and for administering and ensuring compliance with the regulatory regime• Handling domestic and international policy relating to developing the environmental and decommissioning regulatory framework for offshore energy projects• DESNZ Strategic Environmental Assessment for offshore oil and gas, offshore gas unloading and storage, offshore carbon dioxide storage offshore hydrogen storage and offshore renewables (including wave, wind and tidal)
Oil spill response:	<p>Offshore oil and gas operators are responsible for and must be able to respond to pollution incidents from their offshore installations and infrastructure. As such, all exploration and production activities that could give rise to an oil pollution incident on the UK Continental Shelf must be covered in the operators respective Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP). The OPEP is a fit for purpose operational document that sets out the procedures for responding to offshore spill incidents in an effective and efficient manner and is supported by the National Contingency Plan.</p>
Transparency:	<p>DESNZ' website https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero, provides a wide range of information about our</p>



	<p>regulatory regime. This includes information on offshore environmental submissions from operators and our offshore environmental inspection work. A full range of comprehensive guidance notes on our regulatory functions are also provided.</p>
Research:	<p>The department has maintained an active Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) research programme; identifying information gaps (some of which are outlined in previous SEA Recommendations) and commissioning new research where appropriate. This has been part of the department's offshore SEA programme since 1999. More information is available at:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/offshore-energy-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea-an-overview-of-the-sea-process#offshore-energy-sea-research-programme</p>
Profile date:	<p>March, 2024</p>