

Requirements for exploration operators

**Key requirements**

* Capability to plan, supervise, manage and undertake the proposed exploration operations including interfaces with contractors
* Arrangements for pollution liability
* Details of the management of environmental responsibilities (including the company’s environmental policy and environmental management system)
* Details of past record of compliance with environmental legislation
* Insurance coverage

**Information requirements**

There is no fixed amount of information the OGA requires to be satisfied of a proposed operator’s competence. Clearly a very small company with little experience should expect to come under greater scrutiny and provide more information than an established operator with a good record. Where the company has limited experience of planning, organising or supervising exploration activity, we will require a detailed understanding of the operator-contractor relationship and the in-house management responsibilities and control of the contracted support.

**Checklist of information**

Company details

* Registered name, address and company number
* Main UK place of business
* Contact details: telephone number, fax, email address and 24-hour emergency contact number

Previous operating experience

* Details of previous experience of supervising or carrying out drilling operations within the past two years: location and description of the proposed operator’s responsibilities for the operations
* In-house governance and management structure, geotechnical and drilling management expertise:
  + Lists of (a) the skills that exist in-house and (b) the skills to be contracted
  + List of the key personnel involved in decision-making, including their previous experience and the basis on which they are employed
  + Description and chart showing the management structure (including interfaces with contractors), hierarchy of decision-making responsibilities, and key contact point in an emergency

Environment

* Details of proposed pollution liability arrangements (this could be evidence the proposed operator of a licence has registered, or intends to register, its operatorship with the [Offshore Pollution Liability Association Ltd (OPOL)](http://www.opol.org.uk/).
* Details of the company’s environmental policy, including any environmental policy and environmental management statements
* A description of the company’s management structure (directors/managers/personnel), identifying specific responsibilities for environmental issues up to and including board level (an organisation chart is the best way to summarise the responsibilities)
* Details of the company’s environmental management system, i.e. in-house, ISO 14001 or EMAS, which must take account of DECC requirements in relation to securing compliance with OSPAR Recommendation 2003/5. Where an EMS has not yet been independently verified in accordance with OGA EMS guidance, the applicant must commit to complying with requirements before any offshore operations take place
* Details of the proposed operator’s environmental experience working in (a) similar environments to the UKCS and (b) other relevant operations
* A brief ‘high-level’ or summary environmental assessment to demonstrate the company is aware of sensitivities in the area within, and immediately adjacent to, the acreage of interest, and of the potential impacts that would have to be managed during execution of the proposed work

Use of contractors

* Name(s) of contractor(s)
* List of the areas of drilling management activity to be outsourced to contractors
* Description of operator’s relationship with the contractor (who is responsible for what, and who makes the decisions? Who will monitor and supervise the contractors? In particular, what arrangements are in place to deal with an emergency?)
* Details of contractor’s experience of planning and/or drilling wells, especially where relevant to the operations currently proposed (e.g. High Pressure High Temperature or deep water)

Proposed operator’s presence during drilling operations

* Written confirmation that at least one qualified representative from the proposed operator will be present, usually in the UK, for the duration of drilling operations

Insurance

* List of the contingencies covered by insurance