



Oil & Gas
Authority

25 July 2017

Press Announcement

The OGA launches 30th Offshore Licensing Round focusing on mature areas of the UKCS

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) has launched the 30th Offshore Licensing Round with 813 blocks or part blocks on offer in mature areas of the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) totalling an area of 114,426 km² (28,275,280 acres).

Blocks are on offer in the Southern, Central and Northern North Sea, the West of Shetland and East Irish Sea, featuring a large inventory of prospects and undeveloped discoveries. The round will make use of the new Innovate Licence, developed by the OGA in collaboration with industry to create flexible, variable licences.

To support companies in their technical assessments, the OGA recently released around 140 datapacks on undeveloped discoveries which are included in the latest round offering. Of these, around 60 contain 'technical montages' which provide the discovery's history, static and dynamic information and digital subsurface data.

In addition, regional geological maps covering the Central North Sea and Moray Firth were also made freely available on 19 July, together with a number of supporting datasets and studies. These can be accessed online via the [Data Centre](#) on OGA's website, as can an updated set of [relinquishment reports](#) and [geospatial data](#).

Andy Samuel, OGA Chief Executive, said: "The 30th Licensing Round offers companies a significant opportunity to rebuild their portfolios; taking advantage of the flexible Innovate Licence, technology and improvements to the UKCS fiscal regime. These factors combined mean now is a very good time to invest on the UKCS.

"We are encouraging companies to take a fresh look at large areas of acreage, some of which has not been available since 1965, and make best use of the



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recently released information and new data packs to inform their applications."

The 30th Round is open for 120 days until 21 November 2017. Decisions are expected to be made in Q2 2018. This round follows on from recent successful rounds, with 12 licenses awarded to 10 companies in the Supplementary Round earlier in July and the 29th Offshore Licensing Round which awarded 25 licences for 111 blocks or part blocks to 17 companies for frontier areas of the UKCS in March 2017.

This round will be followed by the 31st Offshore Licensing Round, which is expected to once again focus on frontier areas of the UKCS, including those areas covered by the 2016 UK Government-funded seismic acquisition project of South West Britain and the East Shetland Platform. More than 13,500 km of new seismic data and approximately 20,000 km of reprocessed legacy seismic data is scheduled to be released to industry once the current 30th Round has closed.

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Notes to Editors:

- The 30th Offshore Licensing Round closes for applications at 14:00 GMT on 21 November 2017.
- 813 blocks are on offer. A full list of the blocks on offer can be viewed [here](#).
- On 22 August 2017, the OGA and the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) will jointly host a Technology Forum at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre to focus on how technology can help unlock future oil and gas developments in the 30th Offshore Licensing Round. The event will be free to attend, to register your interest please click [here](#).
- Mature areas of the UKCS were last on offer in the 28th Offshore Licensing Round in 2014, which was one of the largest rounds in five decades.
- Details of the technical montages and datapacks covering relinquished discoveries are available on the OGA website and all data packs are available to download or



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order on media via [Common Data Access \(CDA\)](#) and can be accessed via the [OGA's interactive maps](#).

- [Relinquishment reports](#) are also available on the OGA's interactive maps.
- Further information on OGA Licensing Rounds, including application guidance is available [here](#).
- Following the OGA's transition to an independent government company on 1 October 2016, decisions previously held by ministers, including exploration and production decisions and approvals, are now held by the OGA Chief Executive, Andy Samuel.
- The OGA's Exploration Strategy, developed in collaboration with industry and the MER UK Exploration Task Force, is available [here](#).
- The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (formerly Department of Energy and Climate Change), Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) Unit undertook a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to help inform offshore energy licensing and leasing decisions by considering the environmental implications of the plan / programme. The SEA was subject to an 8-week public consultation during March and April 2016. On 13th July 2016 OPRED published the Post Consultation Report and Post Adoption Statement concluding the SEA process.
- The SEA concluded that there are no overriding environmental considerations to prevent the achievement of the plan / programme. However, the SEA made a number of recommendations regarding precautions, with the area offered restricted spatially through the exclusion of certain areas together with a number of mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and offset significant adverse impacts on the environment and other users of the sea. The excluded areas will not be part of the offer.
- OPRED will carry out a screening exercise in accordance with the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) to determine whether the activities proposed to be carried out are likely to have a significant effect on the management of a Special Area of Conservation Area (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA). Where the screening exercise determines that there is a potential for likely significant impact, OPRED will undertake an Appropriate Assessment to determine whether the activities could have any adverse effects on the integrity of such SACs or SPAs. Licences will only be awarded where it has been ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of such SACs and SPAs. OPRED and Health & Safety



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Executive (HSE) will also consider whether applicants meet the safety and environmental requirements of the Offshore Safety Directive, and will make recommendations accordingly for or against the award of each licence.

- Licences that are awarded in the round may contain conditions to protect environmental sensitivities, and the interests of other sea users. In addition, activities carried out under the licences will be subject to a range of legislation which is designed to protect the marine environment and other users of the sea, including regulations which apply the Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives in relation to offshore oil and gas activities.
- The model clauses (draft) to be applied to licences issued in the 30th Licensing round can be found [here](#).

For more information, please contact the OGA press office:

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