**Member Country Profile – United Kingdom**

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| **Organisations:** | Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED)  Department of Business and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) |
| **Country Representatives:** | Wendy Kennedy  Chief Executive, OPRED  Profile Date: September 2018 |
| **Contact:** | [BST@beis.gov.uk](mailto:BST@beis.gov.uk) |
| **Regime Scope:**  The Department of Business and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) works to make sure the UK has secure, clean, affordable energy supplies and promote international action to mitigate climate change.  As part of this, the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) regulates the environmental aspects of offshore oil and gas exploration and production, offshore gas unloading and storage and offshore carbon dioxide storage activities, from exploration through production and/or storage to decommissioning, in order to minimise any potential impacts in the offshore environment. | |
| **Administering Agency/Arrangements:**  BEIS is a UK government department. | |
| **Legislation Type:**  The UK’s regulatory regime is a comprehensive framework of protection measures which has been developed over a number of years in order to minimise the impact of oil and gas activities on the environment. This is embodied in the bespoke oil and gas legislation consistent with and in large part derived from the legislative framework of the European Community. | |
| **Links to Relevant Legislation:**  <https://www.gov.uk/oil-and-gas-offshore-environmental-legislation>  <http://www.hse.gov.uk/osdr/index.htm> | |
| **Extent of Government Approval:**  All activities that could potentially impact on the marine environment are subject to rigorous assessment, and significant activities 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 detailed consideration by the Environmental Management Team with recourse to supporting advice from the Statutory Advisors. Across the permitting regime, conditions are used to impose the Best Environmental Practice (BEP) and encourage the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT).  All operators have a general duty to ensure compliance with any conditions set under the permitting regime and the Offshore Environmental Inspectorate Team are responsible for reviewing that compliance and investigating any identified non-compliant activities. | |
| **Physical Objects in the Regime:**  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. | |
| **Assurance Mechanisms:**  As detailed above, all oil and gas, offshore gas unloading and storage and offshore carbon dioxide storage activities are controlled by the issue of activity specific permits, consents or authorisations containing legally binding terms and 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. | |
| **Financial Basis:**  Costs for both the Environmental Management Team and the Offshore Environmental Inspectorate, along with the administrative support provided to both teams, are recoverable through fees paid by the offshore oil and gas operators. | |
| **Environmental Regulation Responsibilities:**  The Offshore Environment Unit is responsible for developing the environmental regulatory framework for offshore oil and gas exploration and production, offshore gas unloading and storage and offshore carbon dioxide storage on the UK Continental Shelf, and for administering and ensuring compliance with the regulatory regime.  We do this by:   * liaising with international bodies (such as the [EU](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm) and [OSPAR](http://www.ospar.org/)), other government departments and the devolved administrations, and stakeholders on the development of policy and regulation * implementing domestic legislation, international agreements and agreed codes of practice to make sure offshore oil and gas exploration and production, offshore gas unloading and storage and offshore carbon dioxide storage activities do not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or other users of the sea * maintaining an appropriate and up-to-date understanding of the impact of offshore oil and gas exploration and production, offshore gas unloading and storage and offshore carbon dioxide storage activities, and making sure this is reflected in the impact assessment process and environmental monitoring programmes * inspecting offshore installations to ensure regulatory compliance * providing a response to offshore environmental incidents * investigating and enforcing where there is evidence of regulatory non-compliance | |
| **Oil Spill Response:**  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. | |
| **Transparency:**  BEIS’ website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy> provides a wide range of information about our regulatory systems and activities. 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. | |
| **Profile Date:** | September 2018 |