



Oil & Gas
Authority

Decommissioning Strategy



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1. Foreword

The OGA has been set up to influence, promote and regulate the UK oil and gas industry and has been provided with a range of new powers to enable it to do so. The development of a series of strategies represents a key step in setting the strategic direction of how the OGA and industry will work to maximise economic recovery (MER) from the United Kingdom Continental Shelf (UKCS) and was one of the core recommendations of the Wood Maximising Recovery Review.

The MER UK Strategy underpins our work and came into force in March 2016. It describes how MER should operate in practice, setting out a legally binding central obligation to take the steps necessary to secure the maximum value of economically recoverable hydrocarbons.

It also sets out a range of supporting obligations – including in the area of decommissioning - as well as the required actions and behaviours of collaboration and cost reduction.

In support of the MER UK Strategy the OGA is, in collaboration with industry and the MER UK Boards, developing this series of strategies.

The purpose of these strategies is to drive the direction of a new way of working across the oil and gas lifecycle. The strategies will also be followed by accompanying delivery programmes, providing further direction and detail on the implementation of each strategy.

2. Executive summary

The OGA is committed to achieving the maximum economic extension of field life and ensuring that decommissioning is executed in a safe, environmentally sound and cost effective manner. These achievements may also deliver significant value and a competitive market advantage to the UK on the global decommissioning stage.

Decommissioning industry excellence is essential to deliver this priority and requires a clear strategy and a delivery programme, with concerted effort and strong stakeholder commitment across the industry.

The Decommissioning Strategy supports the MER UK Strategy and the OGA Corporate Plan. It is designed to ensure the industry explores all viable options for infrastructure use prior to decommissioning and that decommissioning is executed in the most cost effective way without prejudice to, and in balance with, the maximisation of value from economically recoverable reserves.

The oil and gas industry in the UK is largely unfamiliar with large scale decommissioning projects, but much can be learned and transferred from other sectors and industries. Innovation and transformation are underway in the industry and will continue to be important for ultimate success, but more immediate incremental improvements and challenges to traditional approaches can also bring significant results.

The current status of the industry and some of the key opportunities and risks are described in Section 4. These opportunities and risks have shaped the decommissioning priorities.

These priorities are:

- **Cost certainty and reduction** in a technically competent, safe and environmentally responsible manner
- **Decommissioning delivery capability** in terms of supply chain expertise and capacity, effectively supported by appropriate business models, contracting arrangements and industry alignment
- **Decommissioning scope, guidance, and stakeholder engagement** by working with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and other relevant parties to identify and evaluate opportunities to optimise and define parameters for decommissioning scope and to improve industry engagement with the organisations that regulate the decommissioning process.

Equally important are the methods by which these priorities will be managed and results delivered. These are described in Section 5 and include:

- Tripartite work (government, industry and OGA) – The role of the MER UK Forum and the role of the MER UK Decommissioning Board
- OGA specific work - The role of the OGA in decommissioning, including decision quality, improved cost estimating, and appropriate interface, stakeholder and communication management.

Section 6 describes the key deliverables planned for 2016 and 2017, of both an incremental and transformative nature. These deliverables will provide input and structure to the Decommissioning Delivery Programme which will follow this document.

Section 7 provides a conclusion and the next steps.

3. Introduction

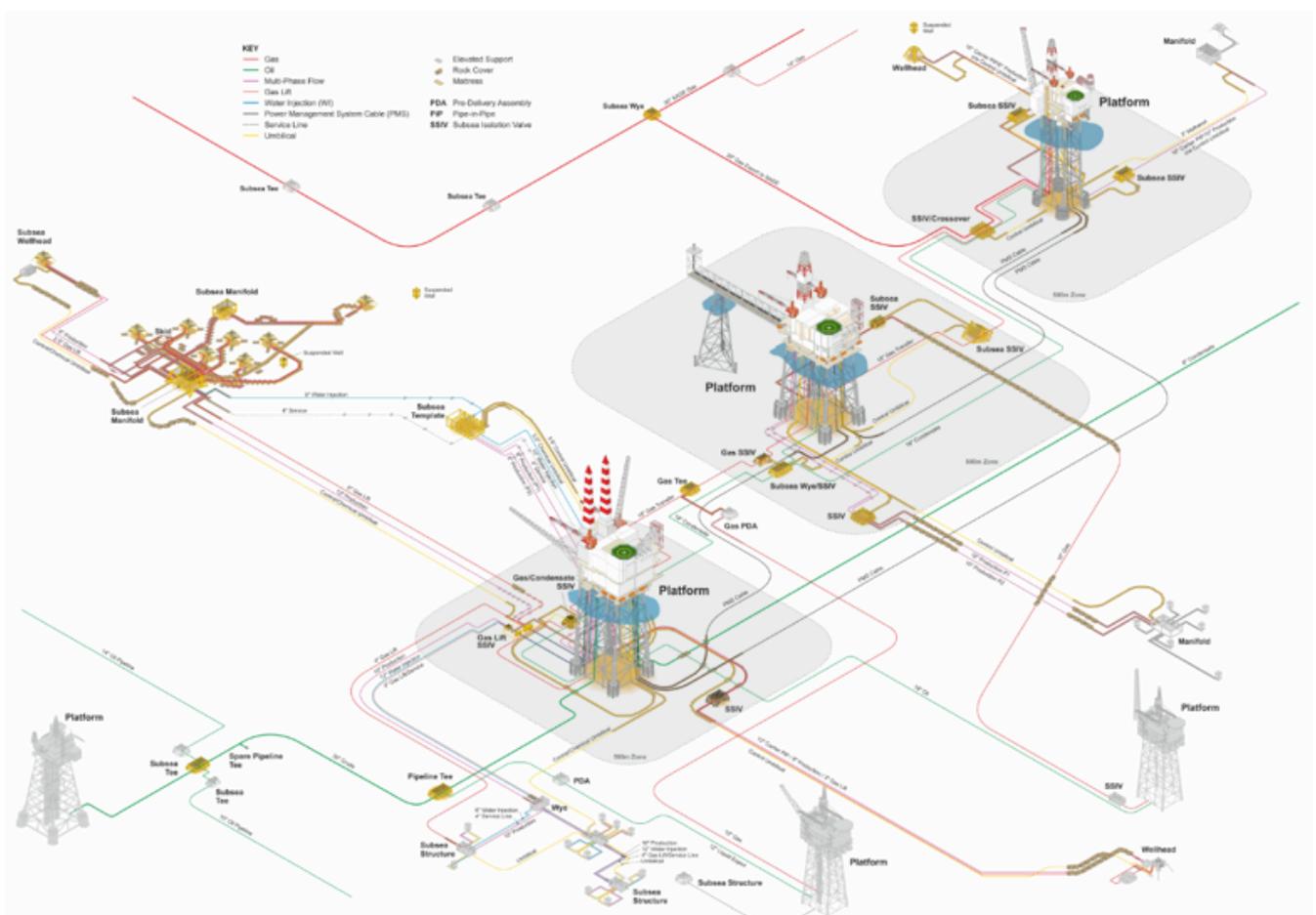
The UKCS decommissioning challenge is significant. It will be expensive and span several decades. It must be carried out safely and with care to protect the environment. However decommissioning presents significant opportunities for innovation, cost reduction and development of UK skills and capability.

Estimates of scope, complexity and cost vary but there are over 250 fixed installations, over 250 subsea production systems, over 3,000 pipelines and approximately 5,000 wells, all of which require to be decommissioned.*

The UK oil and gas infrastructure is also highly integrated, with installations relying on each other to produce hydrocarbons and to transport this resource back to shore. This complexity and integration will require careful planning and execution at a regional and area level, beyond individual assets.

Figure 1 below, provided by the industry's operator community, illustrates an example of a single integrated field, comprising three large fixed structures, a number of connected subsea developments, and overall integration with other assets and transportation systems.

Figure 1: A typical large integrated UKCS field



* Source - Royal Academy of Engineering

4. Current status, opportunities and risks

Decommissioning is a relatively immature activity in the UKCS. In accordance with the principles of MER UK, there is a need to significantly reduce decommissioning costs through increased efficiency and, more importantly, industry transformation.

This Decommissioning Strategy summarises current cost projections and outlines efficiency improvements and transformative options that will support the delivery of MER UK outcomes.

The current mid-point cost estimate for UKCS decommissioning to 2050, prepared by an independent industry expert for the OGA and DECC, is approximately £47 billion (in today's money), with a stated uncertainty range of +/-40%. Significant uncertainty surrounds this estimate and range, and validations will be required. A cost reduction target of at least 35% below the mid-point has been adopted by the OGA as the MER target.

These significant estimates and ambitious targets highlight the need for an integrated and effective Decommissioning Strategy and Decommissioning Delivery Programme to not only drive short-term solutions, but to identify and implement medium to longer term improvements in execution and cost efficiency. This strategy and the subsequent delivery programme will concentrate primarily on influencing and promoting new and improved methods and behaviours. In addition, the exercising of powers granted under the Energy Act, 2016 may be equally important to ensure the industry and the OGA jointly deliver on their obligations.

The decommissioning strategy is focused on three main priorities.

Cost Certainty and Reduction

Driving targeted cost efficiency programmes including innovative and regional approaches with extensive and effective knowledge sharing and best practice adoption.

Decommissioning Delivery Capability

Developing an efficient and exportable low-cost and profitable decommissioning delivery capability supported by a competent and efficient supply chain, a selection of business execution models, all designed to appropriately allocate risks, align industry participants and drive down costs.

Decommissioning Scope, Guidance and Stakeholder Engagement

Working with DECC and other relevant parties to identify and evaluate opportunities to further optimise and define parameters for decommissioning scope and improve industry engagement with the regulators.

Delivering on these priorities will require not only increased collaboration and efficiency, but also the design and implementation of more transformative solutions across commercial, operational, technical and environmental aspects to address constraints, liabilities and risks.

4.1 Decommissioning and MER UK: the current situation

The impact of a lower oil price has led to considerable uncertainty in the oil and gas industry. While many operators are looking at bringing forward Cessation of Production (CoP) dates, the desire remains to delay decommissioning expenditures where possible and appropriate. Capital spent on decommissioning results in less investment in value generating activities.

The large liabilities for decommissioning can also negatively impact the ability to transfer assets to many small to medium sized operators, leading to premature CoP and a failure to maximise the value of economic recovery.

High decommissioning costs are driven by a number of factors. For example, there is the immaturity of the decommissioning industry and a lack of direct experience by operators and the supply chain. It is recognised, however, that decommissioning projects differ from traditional oil and gas investment projects and managing these differences can be key in realising value and cost effectiveness.

The Decommissioning Strategy is designed to ensure that the obligations within the MER UK Strategy are met, including the exploration of all viable options for infrastructure use prior to decommissioning, and that decommissioning is executed in the most cost effective way without prejudice to the maximisation of value from economically recoverable reserves or to regulatory compliance.

4.2 Decommissioning and the OGA Corporate Plan: our way forward

The OGA Corporate Plan describes how the OGA will work with industry and DECC to develop new, fit-for-purpose technical, commercial, regional and operational solutions to reduce costs and develop competitive capabilities, while ensuring health, safety and environmental compliance. Eight areas of work were identified within the Corporate Plan and how they are incorporated into the strategy is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

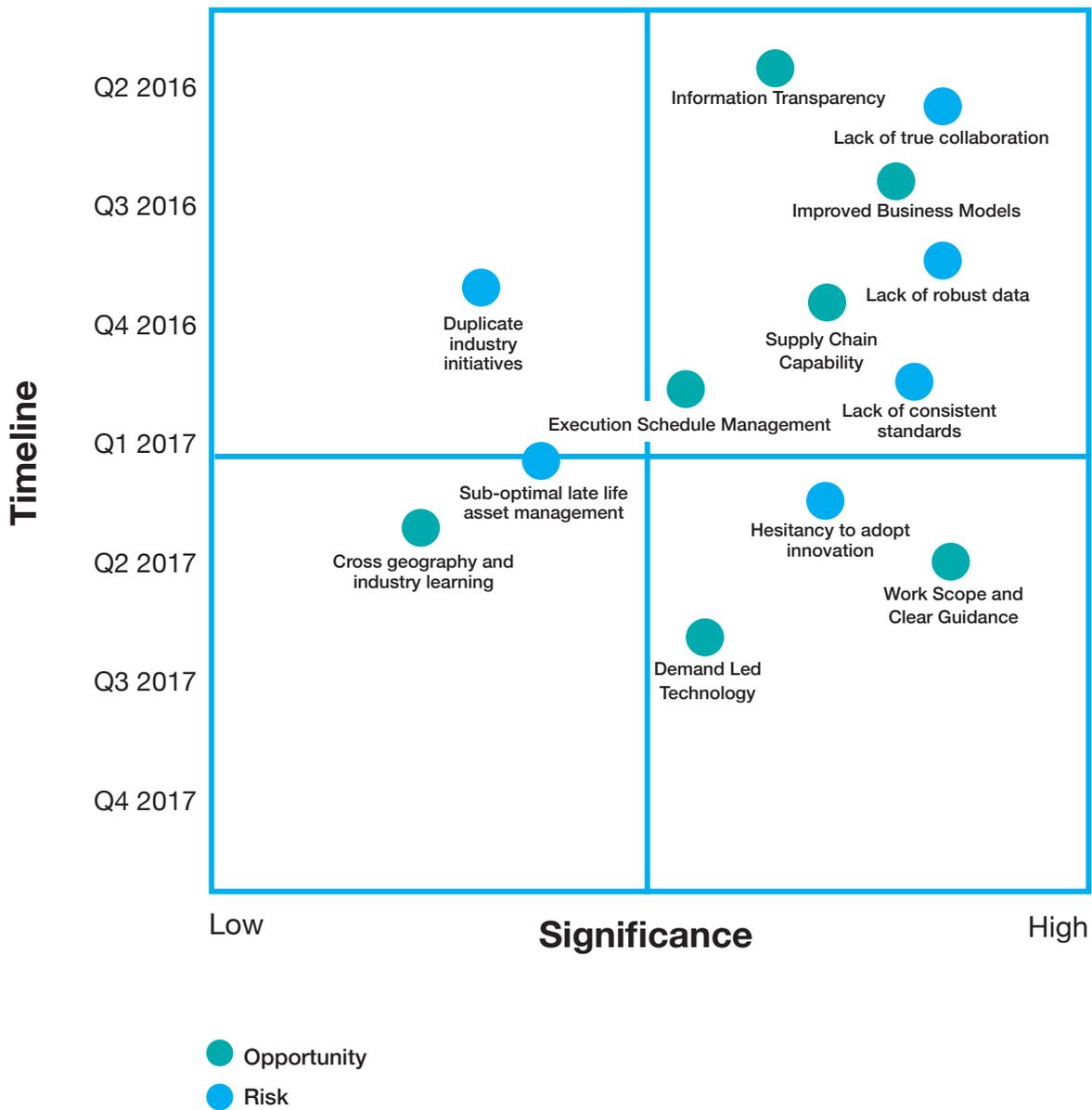
Figure 2: Decommissioning Strategy Overview

Why	Purpose	Achieve the maximum extension of field life and to ensure that decommissioning, when executed, is done in a safe, environmentally sound and cost effective manner.							
	Strategic Priorities	Decommissioning Costs Achieve >35% cost reduction from 2015 base	Delivery Capability Develop demand led supply positions		Guidance and Stakeholders Optimise scope, guidance, and engagement				
What	Strategic Themes	- Market transparency and knowledge sharing - Improved execution efficiency - Continuous improvement	- Develop transparency and collaboration - Radical business models to improve efficiency - Creation of a globally recognised supply chain		- Develop an evidence based fit-for-purpose scope - Assess policy impacts on cost outcomes - Share geographic differences and practices				
	This means	Proactively promoting and influencing technological improvements and changes to maximise economic recovery and value through a strong relationship between Government, Industry, Academia and the OGA	Establishing and maintaining a healthy and sustainable pipeline of value-led opportunities by making available appropriate funding mechanisms and structures		Delivering sustained revenue from UKCS by increasing recovery, reducing production and maintenance costs and by extending life of existing assets in the North Sea, technology exports, and reduced cost through decommissioning technology				
How	Actions	Sector strategy Work with industry and DECC to develop a UKCS decommissioning strategy and publish corresponding plans	MER UK Board Establish and sustain the MER UK Decommissioning Board and set clear priorities and work streams	Roadmap and benchmarking Prepare demand led roadmap and plans, in detail to 2025, and outline to 2050 with benchmarking metrics and cost estimates	Investment and cost efficiency Working with DECC and the wider industry to progressively improve cost estimates and cost efficiency plans	Supply chain and tech development Support Supply Chain and Technology Boards, sharing demand-led opportunities for deployment of low-cost competitive solutions through effective collaboration	Create the right conditions Support Oil & Gas UK and Decom North Sea with DECC to a) maintain or improve industry guidance on regulations, and avoid increased burdens and b) develop UKCS stakeholder plans	Decommissioning plans and funding Introduce early stage planning and link to enhanced asset stewardship and surveys to maximise economic recovery, reduce costs, enhance investment and improve execution	Promote and share knowledge Support Oil & Gas UK and Decom North Sea to promote UKCS capability and share good practice

4.3 Decommissioning: the opportunities and risks

There are several opportunities to reduce decommissioning costs significantly, in support of MER UK outcomes. There are also some key risks. The relative impact and timing on when the decommissioning effort will focus on these topics are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Opportunity and Risk Matrix



5. Implementing the strategy

5.1 Introduction

This Decommissioning Strategy will be implemented and delivered in line with the Energy Act 2016 and the MER UK Strategy. This implementation will rely heavily on the structure, goals, objectives and bodies created as part of the MER UK Strategy, but will also require separate yet complementary activities to be planned and pursued by the OGA in close collaboration with DECC as the environmental regulator and competent authority for approving decommissioning programmes.

5.2 The MER UK Decommissioning Board

The MER UK Decommissioning Board has been established and reports to the MER UK Forum.

This board, and the leveraging of its membership and expertise, will be crucial for the delivery of the Decommissioning Strategy. The board has identified three primary themes of focus, aligned with the overall Decommissioning Strategy priorities. These are:

- Cost Certainty and Reduction
- Decommissioning Delivery Capability
- Decommissioning Scope, Guidance and Stakeholder Engagement

Cost certainty and reduction will initially focus on ensuring that the industry is in possession of robust and transparent data around cost estimates, uncertainty ranges, demand profiles, execution methodologies and best practices. Data capture, analysis and benchmarking will commence with the UK decommissioning sector, but will be enhanced through collaboration across geographies and with other global decommissioning sectors, and complementary industries. Examples of these industries are likely to include other sector decommissioning, the salvage industry and other centrally managed large public sector programmes.

Best practices, education materials, learnings and tools will be captured, assured and shared with industry stakeholders through the use of existing industry knowledge sharing portals. This initial focus will be on the most expensive areas of decommissioning spend and the areas where there are the greatest potential for meaningful cost reductions, such as well abandonment, post-CoP operating expense, and infrastructure removals.

The cost data will be used to inform the OGA's enhanced stewardship model and annual survey content and assist the OGA in its obligation to assess whether operator execution methods and cost estimates represent the most cost effective solutions, with regard to other MER UK obligations. OGA will separately publish its strategy and delivery programme for stewardship which will describe this in more detail.

Decommissioning delivery capability will also initially focus on capturing and sharing existing data on supply chain expertise and competencies. The forecast demand profiles provided by operators will be shared across the industry to enable a transparent, predictable, and sustainable decommissioning market, which may stimulate investment. This market will require a set of radically different business models, relative to the existing investment models. These models will be developed to reduce cost significantly through appropriate allocation of risks and liabilities, and alignment through a balance of risk and reward. The development of a technically competent, efficient and cost effective decommissioning capability means the UK will be well-placed to gain global recognition and create export opportunities. This is dependent on creating the right commercial cultures, behaviours and conditions to become globally competitive and innovative.

Deliverables will include examples and tools to assist the decommissioning industry develop and implement appropriate and cost effective risk allocation, contractual and commercial positions, all designed to drive down costs, while maintaining or improving safety and environmental expectations.

Decommissioning scope, guidance and stakeholder engagement will encourage industry to engage with the OGA and DECC at an early stage in order to deliver evidence-based cost efficient and fit-for-purpose scope options for late-life and decommissioning activities. Defining scope and ensuring industry has clarity on guidance can potentially redefine the "right thing to do" and eliminate unnecessary work, releasing value, and reducing costs. The OGA will work with others, in particular DECC as the regulator and competent authority, to undertake analysis and review of current positions. This work will assist in communicating to operators the value in early engagement with those regulating decommissioning to ensure guidance is understood and to learn from others, while ensuring full compliance with existing legislation. Existing DECC guidance, complemented by the new OGA guidance, will be issued to assist the industry to act in accordance with decommissioning policy.

5.3 Further OGA support

In addition to working closely with the Decommissioning Board, the OGA will also be pursuing complementary initiatives either unilaterally, or with other industry stakeholders.

This includes the identification and implementation of demand-led technology. The initial focus will be the identification of opportunities or needs for technology adoption, adaptation and development. Transfer of existing technology can be equally or more transformative than new technology development and these opportunities will be sought, assured and proposed. The actual development and implementation of the technologies will be led by the MER UK Technology Leadership Board, but the identification of technology needs within decommissioning will greatly assist in its acceptance and adoption.

Demand-led decommissioning forecasts will also be valuable for the MER UK Supply Chain, Exports and Skills Board to assist with building capability including skills, new business models, exports and imports positions.

Other initiatives, also designed to support and deliver the strategy, include:

- Development and publication of an enhanced management process for late life and decommissioning
- Development and publication of a robust cost estimating process for decommissioning
- Development and implementation of an internal and external communication management process
- Examination and assessment of more transformative possibilities designed to significantly change the cost outcomes of decommissioning projects, including business models, contracting strategies, and Government-led initiatives
- Assessment of facilitating measures to help avoid premature decommissioning and allow extension of field life, including asset transfers to lower cost operators
- Examination and assessment of the potential for increased re-use and alternative use for existing facilities, including carbon capture and storage.

5.4 Decision Quality

Delivering the Decommissioning Strategy will be aided by the implementation and use of a Decision Quality (DQ) process.

DQ is designed to achieve several things, but the key is alignment and commitment across all stakeholders. Specifically, DQ will assist in identifying key decisions that need to be made and their dependencies by examining and ensuring:

- The problem or decision is properly framed and understood
- The values or decision-making criteria are known, agreed and documented
- The options available as outcomes to the decision are identified, before being evaluated
- Information required to assist in the option evaluation is identified and captured
- Robust analysis of the options, using the gathered information and evaluation criteria is undertaken and documented
- Decision stakeholders are brought along with the process as it develops so all parties, including the decision maker, are “decision-ready” when the recommendation is presented

DQ will not only improve the quality of decision making, and the decisions themselves, it will also increase the “stickiness” of the decisions, making them less likely to be re-visited, unless significant external changes occur. This will greatly assist in predictability and robustness of decommissioning plans.

5.5 Stakeholder engagement and interface management

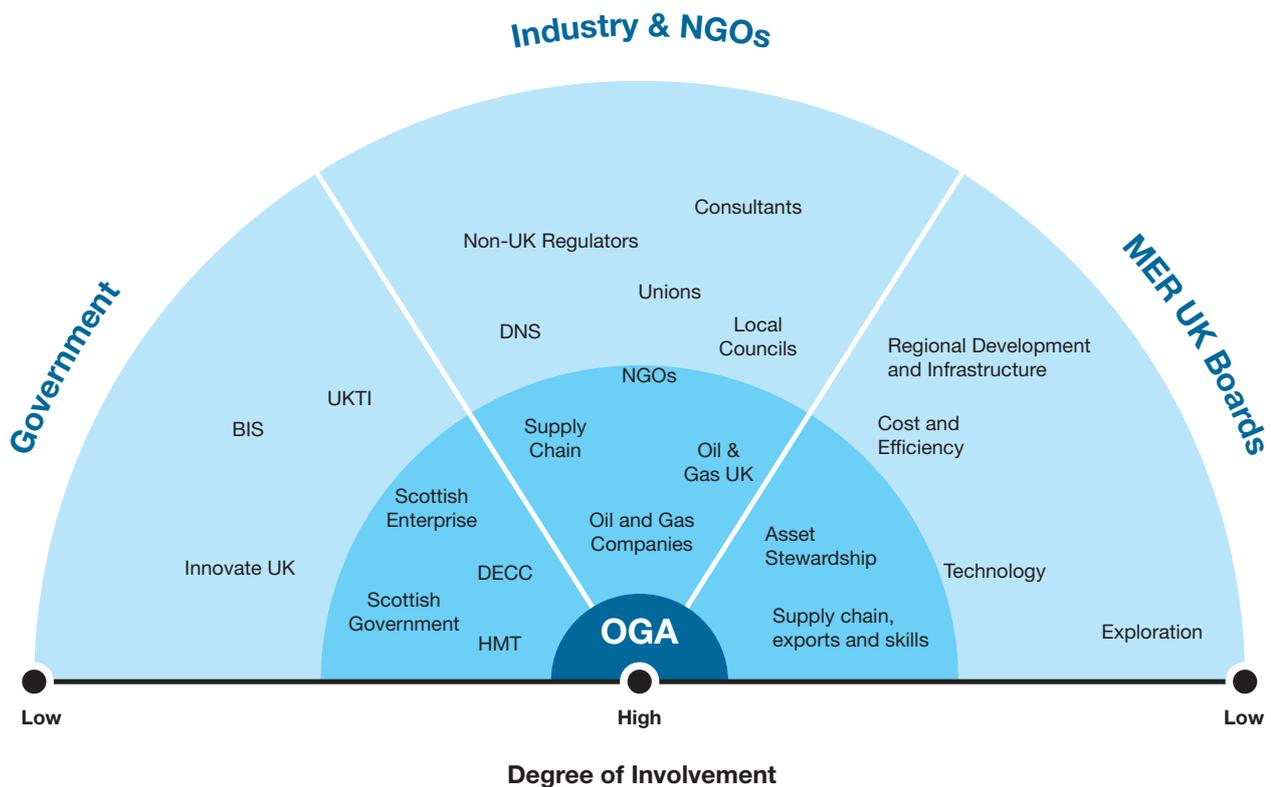
The OGA and the MER UK Decommissioning Board will not be able to implement this Decommissioning Strategy alone and will require buy-in and assistance from various internal and external individuals, groups and other stakeholders.

The management of these interfaces with key stakeholders will be carried out using an interface management process that will help focus discussions, ensure information needs are identified early and increase the probability that the interfaces are productive.

For the purposes of this process, an interface is defined simply as something that is required from one party and provided to a second party to help the second party fulfill their obligations or deliver their work product. This can be information, input, actions, or packages of work.

Key interface parties, and their relative degree of involvement with the OGA are indicated in Figure 4 below. The decommissioning stakeholders are very diverse, reflecting numerous groups and interests. Managing interfaces between all stakeholders will be complex and demanding, particularly in the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) area. The OGA will aim to simplify and align positions, and will work very closely with DECC.

Figure 4: Stakeholder Engagement



BIS	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DNS	Decom North Sea
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
UKTI	UK Trade & Investment

6. Strategic objectives and KPIs

The OGA Corporate Plan 2016 – 2021 defines the following OGA priority in improving decommissioning cost efficiency.

OGA Priority

Achieving the maximum extension of field life and ensuring that decommissioning is executed in a safe, environmentally sound and cost effective manner and that the UK gains competitive advantage.

Decommissioning, as previously mentioned, is a relatively new discipline in the UKCS and not only important for the overall success of the OGA and the UKCS, but also represents an opportunity for the UK to establish a recognised exportable expertise in an immature global sector.

The OGA will work with the industry to capture, develop, improve and promote technical, operational and commercial solutions to reduce costs and build international recognition while ensuring regulatory compliance. These solutions will capture the benefits of collaboration, cost effective late-life asset management during the transition from normal operations to decommissioning and in economies of scale in decommissioning execution.

Meaningful reductions in cost will require appropriate considerations of decommissioning scope to enable the industry to be better informed in selecting decommissioning work plans and help “do the right thing” and avoid unnecessary work over and above the current basic requirements. In addition, a radical improvement in supply chain capability and business model design will be needed to facilitate appropriate allocation of contracting risks and liabilities, supporting reimbursement methodologies and alignment of contracting party priorities.

The following KPIs are contained within the OGA Corporate Plan 2016 – 2021.

KPI	Target	Timing	Who
Decommissioning costs	>35% reduction vs 2015 base case*	2020	Industry with OGA support
Policy positions	Maintain or improve	2018	Industry with DECC advice and OGA input as required
Supply chain market	Develop demand-led supply positions	2016 to 2021	Industry with OGA support

* target to be reviewed by the Decommissioning Board

6.1 Cost certainty and reduction (decommissioning costs)

The primary KPI for decommissioning is the cost reduction in late-life asset management and the execution of decommissioning projects by at least 35% relative to the 2015 base case cost, premised upon existing methodologies and approaches.

This reduction in cost is essential if premature CoP is to be avoided and if an exportable expertise is to be developed.

The 35% overall cost reduction will not be achievable across the entire work scope, nor immediately, but some areas are more favourable than others and will enable this overall target to be achieved. These areas include well abandonment, topsides removal and post CoP operating expense, which together currently constitute approximately 70% of the total costs.

It is important to recognise that the current decommissioning cost estimates have been increasing in recent years and significant uncertainty remains.

The short to medium term focus for cost reduction and efficiency in decommissioning will be non-transformative, to help ensure that the current estimates are appropriate and complete. Significant cost improvements will be possible from cost information sharing and transparency of good practice in execution.

The majority of decommissioning activity, while potentially occurring earlier given the current commodity prices, remains likely to occur only after 2018, with a potential peak of activity in the early 2020s. Interim KPIs will be required, therefore, and these include:

2016

Calibration and publication of a base-line cost estimate, working with DECC, Oil & Gas UK and industry experts, covering the full decommissioning scope, but with a particular focus on the next 10 years of activity

Identification and agreement of cost reduction targets by major Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) element

Identification of cost reduction enabling technologies, to be assessed and plans for deployment developed

Identification and assessment of potential transformative business and execution models for decommissioning

Preparation and publication in an industry portal a minimum of three industry level tools to assist in cost effectiveness.

2017

Documentation of detailed area plans and associated cost saving targets

Drive information sharing and technology adoption for cost saving technologies

Preparation and publication in an industry portal a minimum of three industry level tools to assist in cost effectiveness.

6.2 Decommissioning delivery capability (supply chain market)

The primary decommissioning delivery capability KPI is the delivery of demand-led supply positions for successful execution of late-life management and decommissioning projects in the UKCS.

Work on preparing for transformative solutions is considered appropriate as a short term goal and is being developed in line with industry status and gap analyses. The most attractive transformative effort is the development of new business and contracting models, designed to align stakeholders, eliminate the adversarial relationships of traditional investment projects and appropriately allocate risk and reward.

This multi-faceted KPI will require close interface with the MER UK Supply Chain, Exports and Skills Board. Results will begin to be delivered in 2016, with the following intermediate KPIs:

2016

- Preparation and publication of a supply chain gap analysis between current and future required capabilities for late-life asset management and decommissioning
- Development and publication of transformative business models, including potential liability allocations and risk and reward schemes, designed to reduce costs by at least 20%
- Publication of demand led supply chain requirements 2017 through 2020, with transparency of data and scope
- Preparation and publication in an industry portal a minimum of three industry level tools to assist in supply chain development or business model design.

2017

- Implementation of at least one transformative business model, potentially as a pilot, as identified in 2016
- Publication of an export focused expertise and capability report
- Preparation and publication in an industry portal a minimum of three industry level tools to assist in supply chain development or business model design.

6.3 Decommissioning scope, guidance and stakeholder engagement (policy positions)

The primary KPI for decommissioning scope, guidance and stakeholder engagement is to develop the necessary evidence base for decommissioning scope, with a view to moving from a predominantly case by case approach and introducing industry-based solutions, where appropriate.

In the near term, OGA decommissioning efforts, working with DECC, will deliver on some specific KPIs:

2016

- Identification and characterisation of decommissioning scope areas that may support MER UK outcomes if re-examined and clarified
- Identification and assessment of potential transformative actions that would enable significant cost reductions in decommissioning
- Study and report on applicability of alternative comparative assessment methods and principles in helping guide positions and quantification of benefits; for example Net Environmental Benefits Analysis (NEBA) and Best Practical Environmental Options (BPEO)
- Preparation and publication of OGA decommissioning guidance on the Energy Act 2016
- Preparation and publication in an industry portal a minimum of three industry level tools to assist in guidance interpretation and compliance.

2017

- Publish a template for creating an appropriate stakeholder engagement plan for compliance
- If found appropriate in the 2016 study and report, implement an applicable alternative comparative assessment method and principles in helping guide policy positions and quantification of benefits; for example NEBA and BPEO
- Preparation and publication in an industry portal a minimum of three industry level tools to assist in policy interpretation and compliance.

7. Conclusion

The OGA priority on decommissioning is to achieve the maximum economic extension of field life and to ensure that decommissioning, when executed, is done in a safe, environmentally sound and cost effective manner.

This strategy describes the starting point for a long-term and significant journey. As learning occurs and as successes are delivered, the shape of the strategy may evolve to acknowledge and accommodate the emerging environment. The overarching goals of the strategy, however, will remain.

In summary the strategy:

- Is focused on delivering on three primary themes
 - » Cost efficiency and reduction, in a technically capable, safe and environmentally responsible manner
 - » Decommissioning delivery capability in terms of supply chain expertise and capacity, ably supported by appropriate business models and stakeholder alignment
 - » Decommissioning scope, guidance and stakeholder engagement to ensure that parameters of the decommissioning scope are appropriate to support the goals of decommissioning, in a manner acceptable to industry stakeholders.
- Will be delivered in part by leveraging the input, experience and expertise of the MER UK Decommissioning Board, DECC and others
- Will be assisted by the implementation and use of effective Decision Quality and interface management processes.

The strategy will be developed into an accompanying delivery programme. This will focus on discrete deliverables, will be used to manage and measure progress on delivery of the strategy and the positive impacts of the efforts.

8. Acknowledgements

This Decommissioning Strategy has been compiled with the help, input and advice of many people and organisations. The OGA would like to acknowledge the following specific contributors:

The MER UK Decommissioning Board, comprising representation from the following organisations:

- AMEC Foster Wheeler
- Awilco Drilling
- BP
- BIS
- Centrica
- ConocoPhillips
- DECC
- Decom North Sea
- Halliburton
- NERC
- Oil & Gas UK
- Perenco
- Petrofac
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Government
- Shell
- Talisman-Sinopec
- UKTI
- Wood Group

The MER UK Decommissioning Board theme leads and supporting teams

Supportive organisations, including:

- Accenture
- AECOM
- ARUP
- Aker Solutions
- Babcock International
- Genesis
- HMRC
- HMT
- Marathon Oil
- Petromall
- Wood Mackenzie

