

BERR

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UK OFFSHORE ENERGY SEA

**SYNTHESIS OF INPUT TO
SEA SCOPING**

APRIL 2008

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR OFFSHORE OIL & GAS LICENSING AND
WIND LEASING**

BERR OFFSHORE ENERGY SEA SYNTHESIS OF INPUT TO SEA SCOPING

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Introduction

This report is a compilation summarising the responses received following a scoping exercise undertaken by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of a draft plan for further offshore oil & gas licensing and wind leasing in UK waters.

The aim of the scoping exercise was both to inform the Consultation Bodies/Authorities and other stakeholders of the Draft Plan and associated SEA process and to request feedback.

The scoping consultation was undertaken by direct mailing to the statutorily defined Consultation Bodies and Authorities, and OSPAR representatives of adjacent states. The scoping document was also placed on the BERR SEA website (www.offshore-sea.org.uk) with an alert sent to registered users. The scoping consultation took place between December 2007 and February 2008.

The following consultation questions were asked:

1. Consultees are invited to highlight additional initiatives which they consider relevant to the consideration of the Draft Plan.
2. Consultees are invited to draw attention to and provide (where possible) additional information and data sets which they consider of potential relevance to this SEA.
3. Are there any objectives that you feel should be included, modified or removed?
4. Are the indicators for each objective suitable? If not please suggest alternatives?
5. Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to assessment and consultation?

Responses were received from 35 organisations listed below, with joint responses being received from Defra and the MFA, and from the CCW and JNCC:

- Airtricity (AT)
- The British Wind Energy Association (BWEA)
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
- Centrica (CENTRICA)
- Chamber of Shipping (CoS)
- Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Marine and Fisheries Agency (DEFRA)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- DONG Energy Power (DONG)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- English Heritage (EH)
- E.ON UK (E.ON)
- Fisheries Research Services (FRS)
- Historic Scotland (HS)
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
- Marine Conservation Society (MCS)
- Marine and Fisheries Agency (MFA)
- National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)

- Natural England (NE)
- Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee (NSFC)
- North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (NWNWSFC)
- nPower (nP)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Royal Yachting Association (RYA)
- Cardigan Bay Save Our Seas Group (SOS)
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- SLP Energy (SLP)
- TCI Renewables (TCI)
- Vestas Wind Systems (VWS)
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS)
- The Crown Estate (CE)
- The Wildlife Trusts (WT)
- Trinity House (TH)
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK)

Stakeholder responses are summarised in this report and full copies of the responses are available on the SEA website. A number of respondents made similar comments and in the interests of brevity these have been combined below for each of the consultation questions asked, with the various organisations indicated by their abbreviations listed above. In addition to responses to the specific consultation questions asked, a number of additional comments were received and these are summarised after question 5 responses.

The stakeholder scoping input to the SEA process and information base is welcomed and the SEA Team would like to thank stakeholders for their responses. Input will be taken forward into the SEA process and discussed with the SEA Steering Group. The minutes of the SEA Steering Group (and the Environmental Report) are publicly available on the BERR SEA website.

Responses to Question 1 - additional initiatives

#	Organisation(s)	Initiatives raised
1	AT, BWEA, nP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the European Offshore Wind Action Plan • the European Wind Technology Platform • the EU Commission TEN-E project on Energy Infrastructure • initiatives by Carbon Trust and the Environmental Technologies Institute
2	BWEA, nP	<p>Suggested BERR liaison with governmental agencies at national and European levels responsible for marine navigation and shipping, air traffic, military activity, oil and gas exploitation, fishing, dredging, and ports and harbours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint BERR/Ofgem • Offshore Electricity Transmission Licensing Regime • the Transmission Access Review • the revision of the MCA's Maritime Guidance Note 275

#	Organisation(s)	Initiatives raised
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development of a new guidance note on Navigation in the Vicinity of Offshore Renewable Energy Installations.
3	CoS	Reference should be made to the requirements of international shipping under the International Maritime Organisation's Safety of Life At Sea (SOLAS) Convention.
4	CCW, JNCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU Environmental Liability Directive Local Development Plans (in Wales) and Local Development Frameworks (in England) Wales Coastal Tourism Strategy Wales Spatial Plan Links to the recently announced Severn Barrage feasibility study Recent announcements have been made that the WAG Sustainable Renewable Energy Route Map will be published in February 2008. This will replace the consultation document listed in the table on page 47.
5	DfT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOLAS Chapter V and particularly; Regulation 9 Hydrographic Services; Regulation 10 Ship's Routeing; Regulation 11 Ship Reporting Systems; and Regulation 12 Vessel Traffic Services. The EU Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System Directive 2002/59/EC, and the associated UK legislation of the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002 No 1473) and The Merchant Shipping (Vessel Traffic monitoring and reporting Requirements) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 No 2110) respectively.
6	EH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) project work commissioned by English Heritage on submerged and buried landscapes conducted by the University of Birmingham in the region of Dogger Bank and elsewhere by Wessex Archaeology. The ALSF project to develop Historic Seascape Characterisation is also of relevance to this SEA.
7	E.ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Assembly's Energy Route Map Consultation document is due to be released in its final version early 2008. Technical Advice Note (TAN 8) which sets out the Welsh Assembly Government policy on renewable energy. The proposed setting up of the IPC, and the implications of this. A review of national policy in conjunction with the setting up of the IPC is scheduled.
8	FRS	The implementation of the WFD in Scottish transitional and coastal water bodies.
9	NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding Sanctuary (http://www.finding-sanctuary.org/) Countryside Act 1968 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Environmental Protection Act 1990 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 The Rural White Paper, 2000

#	Organisation(s)	Initiatives raised
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Rural White Paper, 2004 Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements should also be listed (e.g. PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, and PPS 22 Renewable Energy). Landscape Character Assessments – most notably Joint Character Areas (JCAs) and County Assessments and District Assessments (many, but not all, will identify environmental protection objectives). The Severn Barrage feasibility study BERR/Ofgem Offshore Transmission Regulatory Regime 2007/08
10	RSPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government commitment to halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010 (made at the Gothenburg Summit in 2001). The EU Marine Strategy Directive. Due for imminent adoption by the EU.
11	RYA	UNCLOS requirements and protection of the public right of navigation.
12	SNH, SOS, RSPB, RYA	The Marine Bill for the UK (http://www.defra.gov.uk/Environment/water/marine/uk/policy/marine-bill/next.htm) and Scotland (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/01/03100237)
13	NFFO	The Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group (FLOWW).
14	DONG, NSFC, TH	Unaware of additional initiatives that should be considered.

Responses to Question 2 - additional information/data sets

#	Organisation(s)	Information sources/data sets
1	AT	Extensive survey work is undertaken by individual offshore wind farm developers during project development and operation. Much information, and links to other marine data initiatives, can be found at http://data.offshorewind.co.uk
2	BWEA, nP, VWS, DONG, AT	<p>Research from existing operating offshore wind farms across Europe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.ens.dk/sw42149.asp, http://www.ens.dk/sw42531.asp, http://www.ens.dk/sw42535.asp, (BWEA, nP), http://www.ens.dk/graphics/Publikationer/Havvindmoeller/uk_vindmoeller_okt05/index.htm (DONG), http://data.offshorewind.co.uk (AT). Data collected by the current Round 2 wind farm investigations. (BWEA, nP) Further inputs relating to the human environment should be included (BWEA, nP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aviation and airways mapping

#	Organisation(s)	Information sources/data sets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ helicopter routes ○ information on air traffic control and air defence radar systems and their coverage ○ various MOD safeguarding areas ○ airports ○ ports ○ harbours ○ marinas ○ areas of yachting interest ○ fishing grounds
3	CEFAS	It would be useful to map and review the data collected for previous SEAs to determine its spatial and temporal coverage.
4	CoS	The MCA report 'Future vessel routing and traffic management study for UK waters'.
5	CCW, JNCC	Disturbance of species interim guidance is available at: http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4145
6	DEFRA, MFA	Cefas have detailed maps of important fish spawning grounds and the MFA collects data on fish stocks and fishing grounds.
7	DfT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MCA guidance 'Proposed UK Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (ORI) – Guidance on Navigational Safety and Emergency Response Issues' assessing the impact on the navigational safety and emergency response of offshore renewable energy installation developments. • 'Methodology for Assessing the Marine Navigational Safety Risks of Offshore Wind Farms' published by BERR. • BERR shipping database (www.maritimedata.co.uk) • The Radar/SAR studies conducted at North Hoyle and Kentish Flats wind farms. • Please also see the MCA website: (http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-safety_information/nav-com/offshore-renewable_energy_installations.htm, http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-safety_information/nav-com/mcga-dqs-hmp-hydrography.htm)
8	EH	ALSF project deliverables (including work to be completed in April 2008) (www.english-heritage.org.uk/maritime).
9	EH, E.ON, RSPB, SLP	The COWRIE dataset.
10	FRS	<p>OSPAR recent reports specific to offshore wind (http://www.ospar.org/v_publications/welcome.asp):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background document on Construction or Placement of Installations and Structures in the OSPAR Area (excluding those for oil and gas and for wind energy). <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>. • Problems and Benefits Associated with the Development of Offshore Wind-Farms. <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>.

#	Organisation(s)	Information sources/data sets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSPAR Database on Offshore Wind-farms - 2005 Update. <i>Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Series</i>. • Review of the Current State of Knowledge on the Environmental Impacts of the Location, Operation and Removal/Disposal of Offshore Wind-Farms. <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>. • OSPAR Database on Offshore Wind-farms - 2006 Update. <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>. • An Overview of the Environmental Impact of Non-Wind Renewable Energy Systems in the Marine Environment. <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>. • OSPAR Database on Offshore Wind-farms - 2007 Update. <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>. • Placement of CO₂ in Subsea Geological Structure. <i>Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Series</i>.
11	CCW, FRS, HS, JNCC, SEPA, SNH	The Scottish Government's marine renewables SEA: (http://www.seaenergyscotland.co.uk/).
12	MCS	MCS has been undertaking surveys of basking sharks and cetaceans between Milford Haven and Cornwall during the past year, data for which is available to BERR.
13	NE	<p>A collation exercise to identify and gather together all existing data for each of the seven Areas of Search (AoS) has been completed and the reports are available from Natural England (leigh.jones@naturalengland.org.uk). A survey including new biological and acoustic data to fill gaps identified by the data collation exercise is due for dissemination in May 2008.</p> <p>See the Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee (http://www.esfjc.co.uk/start.html) (especially for surveys on <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> in the Wash and mussel and cockle beds) and the North East Sea Fisheries Committee (www.neseafish.gov.uk) for information around the Flamborough area.</p> <p>UKSeaMap provides a broader picture and has produced a new map of the sea that shows 44 large-scale 'marine landscapes' - (www.naturalengland.org.uk/press/releases2007/070207.htm)</p> <p>In relation to seascape characterisation around England:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England's Landscape Character Programme and the resultant Joint Character Areas (produced at a Regional scale at approx. 1:250,000 – 1998/9) – <i>Countryside Character Volumes 1 – 8: The Character of England's natural and man-made landscape</i> (1999), The Countryside Agency • 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland', (2002), The Countryside Agency and SNH • 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', second edition (2002), The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; • 'Guidance on the Assessment of Offshore Wind Farms: Seascape and Visual Impact Report', (2005), DTI.

#	Organisation(s)	Information sources/data sets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Landscape Character Assessments may be available (at an appropriate scale for the study) from local authorities, and elsewhere.</i> <p>Currently available landscape related information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A map showing National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Heritage Coasts (http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/Beyond_The_View_part2_tcm2-31062.pdf) Joint (landscape) Character Areas (JCAs) (http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/CC/jca.asp) Landscape Character Assessments (County and District etc. – information is available at (Landscape Character Assessment database) (www.landscapecharacter.org.uk) Tranquillity maps: (http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/tranquillity/national-and-regional-tranquillity-maps) Light Pollution: (http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/light-pollution) CQC websites: (http://www.cqc.org.uk/, http://www.cqc.org.uk/results_head99-03.html)
14	CoS, RYA, TH	Information on routes taken by leisure craft is available in the RYA's 'UK Coastal Atlas of Recreational Boating – Recreational Cruising Routes, Sailing and Racing Areas around the UK Coast'.
15	NSFC	Information held by DEFRA covering the location and importance of fishing to the over 15 metre fleet.
16	RSPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EURING (European Union for Bird Ringing, database managed by the BTO) Migration Atlas (BTO) Seabird 2000 (JNCC etc) Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) (BTO/WWT/RSPB/JNCC) – primarily land-based counts so of limited value away from the coastal strip (≤ 1km, depending on weather conditions). European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) data (JNCC) – much of it limited by geographical extent, coarse spatial resolution and age (high proportion > 10 yrs old) County Bird avifaunas and county recorders for information on arrival and departure dates for migrants, also coastal passage of birds Bonn, Bern and OSPAR have produced recommendations, at least in terms of developing wind energy. the Marine Stewardship report, <i>Safeguarding Our Seas</i> Government response to the Review of Marine Nature Conservation, <i>Safeguarding Sea Life</i>.
17	RYA	Work undertaken by the British Marine Federation (BMF) on Economic Value of the Marine Leisure Industry.
18	SEPA	The Scottish Government's second National Planning Framework for consultation for the spatial development of Scotland to 2030.

#	Organisation(s)	Information sources/data sets
19	SNH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNHi on the SNH website: http://www.snh.org.uk/snhi/. • The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway (http://www.searchnbn.net/) • The Mapping European Seabed Habitats (MESH) website (http://www.searchmesh.net/) • Outputs of the UK Marine Monitoring & Assessment Strategy (UKMMAS – http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/science/ukmas-ri-doc.htm)
20	CE	The Crown Estate is in the process of identifying offshore areas with potential for offshore windfarm development based on CE's commercial understanding. A map of these areas will be provided to BERR for use in the SEA.

Responses to Question 3 – comments on objectives

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on objectives
1	AT, EA, NE, SEPA, SNH, SOS, TCI, WT, RSPB, SOS	<p>Biodiversity, habitats, flora and fauna:</p> <p>First objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective could be amended to read: 'Avoids significant impact to conservation sites' and to add in a second, reading: 'Avoids significant impact to, or disturbance of, protected species'. (SNH) • Objective should read: 'Avoids significant <i>long-term</i> impact to conservation sites, and protected species.' (TCI) • It may be useful to define 'conservation sites' more clearly in order to distinguish which sorts of designations are included in the assessment. (SEPA, NE) • Objective should be modified to read: 'Avoids significant impact to conservation sites – <i>including proposed and future sites</i> – and protected species; <i>avoids damage to areas that include features that meet protected status criteria particularly where no sites have been designated for a particular feature yet and/or the network is not complete</i>'. (WT, RSPB) • 'Avoids impact to conservation sites that may result in delayed damage to habitat and protected species.' (SOS) <p>Second objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objectives should not just focus on 'avoiding significant impacts', but also on <i>enhancing</i> the status of the environmental components – e.g. for Biodiversity, the objective could be upgraded to '<i>Contributes to the enhancement of the conservation value of the wildlife and wildlife habitats in the</i>

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on objectives
		<p><i>United Kingdom</i>'. (EA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This objective is vague and indicators could be difficult to measure. (NE) <p>Additional objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional objective: '<i>To better understand and mitigate the effects that activities arising from this plan or programme may have on habitats and species of conservation interest</i>'. (NE) There should be a new objective: 'Ensuring no damage to ecosystem structure and functioning.' (WT, RSPB) There is a need to include objectives relating to the wildlife environment more generally, to provide protection for sites not currently designated. (SOS) <p>Other comments relating to Biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on commercial fish species should be considered (AT) The objectives should be broadened to cite European Protected Species to help ensure adequate consideration of the effects of seismic exploration (and similar activities) on cetaceans. (SNH) The objectives should make more explicit reference the UK's marine objectives (WT, RSPB) The objectives are limited in their focus on conservation sites, or those which are currently viewed as being 'valued ecosystem components'. (SOS)
2	CEFAS, TCI	<p>Geology and soils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First objective should read: 'Protect the <i>long-term</i> quality of the seabed and sediments'. – The objective needs to include temporal reference to differentiate between short-term construction impacts and long-term operational impacts. (TCI) There should be an objective to avoid significant effects on seabed morphology and sediment transport. (CEFAS)
3	NE, JNCC, CCW,	<p>Landscape/seascape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Landscape/seascape objective should be replaced with: '<i>To conserve the character and qualities of the seascape/landscape, recognising its diverse features and distinctiveness at different scales – including designated and non-designated areas</i>' and an additional objective be inserted as: '<i>To accord with, and deliver, the Aims and Articles of The European Landscape Convention.</i>' (NE) Coastal/intertidal and terrestrial objectives need to be explicitly identified (NE) since, unlike previous oil and gas SEAs, it is

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on objectives
		likely that many of the contentious issues in relation to offshore windfarm developments will be associated with the coastal/land based infrastructure. (CCW, JNCC)
4	TCI,	Water resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective should read: '<i>To protect water quality and aquifer resources</i>'. (TCI)
5	SEPA	Climatic factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEPA would recommend that 'minimises' is replaced with 'reduces' for greater clarity.
6	AT, CEFAS, CCW, JNCC, NFFO	Population and human health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety should be given greater attention as a SEA topic or as discrete objectives. (AT) This topic should include fishermen with objectives to avoid disruption, disturbance and nuisance. (CEFAS) Commercial fisheries should be a dedicated topic. (NFFO) An objective covering recreation should be added. (CCW, JNCC)
7	BWEA, nP, CEFAS, DfT, TH, RYA, SEPA, NSFC, FRS, AT, CoS	Material Assets: Modified objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective should be modified to: 'Balances other United Kingdom resources of economic and amenity value against the need to develop offshore energy resources'. (BWEA, nP) Change Objective: 'Protects other United Kingdom resources of economic and amenity value' to 'Promote in-combination development'. (FRS) SEPA would recommend that 'promotes waste reduction' is replaced with 'reduces waste' for greater clarity. (SEPA) New objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be a new objective for other users e.g. fishing activities, navigation routes, military etc. (CEFAS) There should be an objective to quantify the importance of fishing and have full regard to any consequences for fishing which may arise. (NSFC) Navigation and MOD activities are essential considerations. (AT) Commercial and recreational navigation should be included as a separate topic. The Objective of such a topic should be to avoid disturbance to existing navigational users, avoid increasing risk to navigational users and preserve the right of navigation and free passage under our international obligations. (RYA)

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on objectives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Safety of Navigation' should be a priority objective. This would include a review of the economic and environmental (human & physical) impacts of prolonged steaming distances, restraints on shipping channels, increased collision risks and restrictions on pollution-prevention methods or Search & Rescue options in the event of an emergency. (CoS) <p>Other comments relating to Material assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detail can be included on specific sectors: e.g. shipping, fishing, aviation, defence, aggregate extraction, dredging, and recreation. The resolution of spatial conflict between these sectors and offshore energy development must be addressed. (BWEA, nP) Topic must address other users. (DfT) and potential economic and environmental issues arising from ship to ship and ship to structure encounters. (TH) Change SEA Topic: 'Material Assets etc.' to 'Other legitimate users of the sea and natural resources'. (FRS)
8	HS	<p>Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HS is content with the proposed SEA objective.
9	CEFAS, CCW, JNCC, DONG, EH	<p>General comments relating to objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative impacts of offshore wind farms with both other wind farms and other activities should be included as a separate topic with an objective to avoid significant impact. (CEFAS). Consideration should be given to a new topic with objectives to develop designs and layouts sympathetic to the existing marine environment and to allow synergies with other users. Instead of minimising adverse impact the objectives should be to avoid adverse impact. (CCW, JNCC) The draft objectives presented in the report provides a useful assessment framework. (DONG) EH agree with the objectives offered. (EH)

Responses to Question 4 – comments on indicators

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on indicators
1	MCS, RSPB, WT, SNH, TCI, CCW, JNCC, SOS	<p>Biodiversity, habitats, flora and fauna:</p> <p>First indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify this indicator to read: 'Site condition monitoring reveals no changes to habitat conditions that may result in delayed

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on indicators
		<p>damage to conservation status'. (SOS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify this indicator to read: 'Site condition monitoring reveals no decline in conservation status <i>or loss of range (distribution) and facilitates and promotes recovery and enhancement wherever possible.</i>' (RSPB, WT) • Modify this indicator to read: "Site condition monitoring reveals no decline in conservation status attributable to offshore oil and gas and windfarm activities.' (TCI) • This indicator is inappropriate with respect to Natura sites. Site conditioning alone only reveals damage once it has taken place. (SNH) • Additional indicator should be: 'Every activity on or affecting a Natura site is compliant with the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended'. (SNH) • Should the second biodiversity objective proposed in Q3 be accepted, a suitable indicator might be, 'Every activity with the potential to impact upon or disturb a protected species is compliant with the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, as appropriate'. (SNH) • This indicator suggests a development should proceed and just be monitored (MCS) <p>Second indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify this indicator to read: 'For all environments minimal loss of diversity or decline in population (measures as % of relevant biogeographic population) attributable to offshore oil and gas and windfarm activities'. (SOS) • Modify this indicator to read: 'For selected 'valued ecosystem components' no loss of diversity or decline in population (measures as % of relevant biogeographic population) attributable to offshore oil and gas and windfarm activities <i>and promotion of recovery and enhancement wherever possible.</i> ' (RSPB, WT) • Modify this indicator to read: 'For selected 'valued ecosystem components' no net loss of diversity or decline in population (measures as % of relevant biogeographic population) attributable to offshore oil and gas and windfarm activities'. (TCI) • This indicator could be subjective and at odds with the Habitat Directive. An alteration such as, 'no permanent impact on designated areas (inclusive of related shore developments)' is required. (MCS)

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on indicators
		<p>Other comments relating to Biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear what the 'selected valued ecosystem components' are under Biodiversity, habitats, flora and fauna. (CCW, JNCC)
2	AT, SLP, CEFAS, TCI, NE	<p>Landscape/seascape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify first indicator to read, 'No significant impact on nationally-designated areas (inclusive of related shore developments)'. (TCI) The definition of 'permanent' impact in 'landscape/seascape' category is ambiguous due to limited life and lease duration of wind farms. (AT, SLP, TCI) The Landscape/seascape topic should include public perceptions. (CEFAS) Landscape/seascape indicator should be replaced with one which takes into account all or some of the following: (NE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of land take resulting in potential change in seascape and landscape character Extent of the visual resource potentially effected by the particular developments Number of areas of landscape sensitivity affected by proposed developments (e.g. offshore wind developments) Area of seascape/landscape restoration and enhancement associated with the proposed developments. Differentiation should be made between larger and smaller arrays. (TCI)
3	EA, TCI	<p>Water resources and Climatic factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For water resources, the first indicator should be, 'No adverse change in water quality and aquifer resources' - seems more suited to an offshore SEA. (TCI) For water resources, the indicator is unclear whether an adverse change could be directly connected to the proposed activities. (EA) For climatic factors, an additional indicator might be. 'Reduction in direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions by weight'. (TCI)
4	CEFAS, SEPA	<p>Population and human health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic should include fishermen. Indicators are changes to fishing areas utilised and techniques used. (CEFAS) Seascape and nuisance indicators should be more clearly defined (SEPA)
5	BWEA, nP, CEFAS, DfT, FRS, SEPA,	<p>Material assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detail should be added to the SEA indicator of spatial conflicts. (BWEA, nP) Appropriate indicators should be included to promote

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on indicators
	SLP, TCI	<p>sustainable use of the sea's resources. (CEFAS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be specific reference to navigational issues. (DfT) • Change Indicator: 'Spatial Conflict' to 'Live spatial planning capable of addressing changes in technology, policy and prioritisation of site selection'. (FRS) • 'Spatial conflicts' should be more clearly defined in terms of what these are and how they will be measured. (SEPA) • 'Progress in reducing volumes of waste to landfill' could be simplified and tightened to 'reduce volumes of waste'. (SEPA) • Marine Spatial Planning should be considered in relation to infrastructure conflicts (to be included in Marine Bill and by Crown Estate). (SLP) • Second indicator should read, 'Progress in reducing volumes of spoil disposal at sea'. (TCI)
6	HS, EH, TCI	<p>Cultural Heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For clarity, you may either wish to add a target to measure progress against this indicator, or rephrase the indicator along the following lines, 'no adverse impact upon the condition of...' (HS) • First indicator should read, 'Condition of nationally designated sites and features (including impact on their setting)'. (TCI) • The indicators should ensure reference extends beyond the condition of designated sites, as the proportion of such sites in the marine historic environment record is very small. (EH)
7	CEFAS, DEFRA, MFA, EA, NSFC, SEPA	<p>General comments relating to indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative impacts of offshore wind farms should have indicators at larger spatial and temporal scales. (CEFAS) • Consideration should be given to a new topic to develop designs and layouts sympathetic to the existing marine environment and to allow synergies with other users. Indicators could be spatial conflicts, no adverse change in species and habitat composition, abundance and distribution. • In many areas it is unclear what the indicator is (e.g. no defined parameters for 'adverse'). (DEFRA, MFA) • Indicators should be used to focus on the potential effects of proposed activities, rather than general trends that could be attributable to other factors. (EA) • While not a statutory requirement, SEPA encourages the setting of targets to sit alongside indicators. This allows for effective long term monitoring of environmental effects. (SEPA) • The indicators for each objective are felt to be suitable. (NSFC)

Responses to Question 5a – comments on assessment approach

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
Assessment scope		
1	MCS, NFFO, WDCS, CEFAS, CCW, JNCC, SNH, E.ON, FRS, HS, WWF-UK, BWEA, nP, SLP	<p>The £3 million budget is insufficient to fill existing benthic and cetacean data gaps in offshore areas both above and below 60. (MCS).</p> <p>25m is recommended as the focus for the SEA, as deeper areas are unlikely to be commercially viable within the outlined timescale. (SLP)</p> <p>The timescale of 1 year is too short. (MCS, NFFO)</p> <p>The area of SEA 8 is too large. An oil and gas SEA should be undertaken separately to an offshore wind SEA. Suggested it takes place in 2009 so the SEA Energy Steering Group can focus on a specific sector at a time; not the whole UKCS. (MCS, WDCS)</p> <p>Will each SEAs Environmental Report be issued separately, or will they all be incorporated into one large document? (E.ON)</p> <p>The assessment should be broken down into pre-development, site preparation, construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning. Each of these phases will need to be addressed individually as each phase will have specific environmental concerns. (FRS)</p> <p>It may be more prudent if separate SEAs are undertaken for each component of the Draft Plan, as the nature and scale of many of the likely significant environmental effects from each part differ.</p> <p>Materials and construction plant/expertise are limited and it would therefore be useful if the future plans within the SEA Draft Plan are presented in the context of all constraints. (CEFAS)</p> <p>The SEA is described as an 'integrated offshore energy SEA'. This could be misleading as the SEA does not cover all 'offshore' energy. By only undertaking SEA of certain types of the offshore energy generating industries, BERR are limiting the assessment of alternatives which should be covered in the 'Mode or Process' (page 29) section of the SEA.</p> <p>It would be helpful in the Environmental Report to clearly describe any changes made to the draft plan as a result of the environmental assessment, and to clearly set out any recommendations/expectations for lower level plans, projects or activities that are identified as mitigation measures. Also, identify in the report who will be responsible for taking forward mitigation measures as the plan is implemented. (HS)</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
		<p>RSPB support the proposal that the SEA be updated on a rolling programme. The draft plan deals with three very different activities and more details should be included.</p> <p>SEA8 should include an improved suite of alternatives to the Draft Plan than those featured in previous SEAs. (WWF-UK)</p> <p>When undertaking the current SEA, BERR should ensure that comments on previous environmental reports or scoping documents are taken into account (CCW, JNCC, SNH) and lessons from Round 1 and 2 leasing should be incorporated (BWEA, nP)</p>
Spatial conflicts/Human Environment		
2	BWEA, nP, AT, CENTRICA, DfT, FRS, HS, TH, NFFO, NE, E.ON, NSFC, RYA	<p>Where it is likely that there will be conflict with other stakeholders, the assessment should endeavour to resolve the situation by stating where development is and is not suitable. If this cannot be done the assessment should propose an agreed method for the resolution of any conflict with agreement from the relevant government departments and agencies to engage in this process (BWEA, nP, AT) – the SEA should engage with relevant stakeholders to assess likely unsuitable areas for development (nP).</p> <p>The SEA should consider oil and gas/OWF conflicts (CENTRICA, BWEA).</p> <p>Where there is spatial conflict or local environmental concern that threatens the development of offshore wind, the SEA should consider how the UK would make up the resulting renewable shortfall – the relative environmental impact of a comparable onshore development could be considered (CENTRICA).</p> <p>There should be a reference to navigational issues within the Draft content of the Environmental Report section 5 'Summary of Assessment'. The heading 'Interaction with shipping' should be featured as a SEA topic within the Assessment Framework Draft Objectives and in the working list (DfT).</p> <p>Navigation should be a specific topic reflected in the Contents of the Environmental report as outlined on page 32 of the consultation document (RYA).</p> <p>Change 'Material Assets' to 'Other legitimate users of the sea and Natural Resources', and include (FRS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial implications of exclusion of fishing activities in vicinity of infrastructure, and safety risks of interactions between fishing gear and subsea infrastructure. • Interactions with shipping, military and other human uses of the offshore environment which is currently under

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
		<p>Population and Human Health.</p> <p>It is essential that the Draft Plan & Environmental Report recognises and gives due weight to the contribution made to the UK by shipping and safeguards. It is important that the siting of future offshore developments takes a risk based approach to minimise conflicts with shipping and considers the impact of increased carbon emissions by ships needing to divert to avoid offshore developments (TH).</p> <p>The fishing industry, developers and government should mutually identify potential broad areas and eventually specific sites for development.</p> <p>The SEA must identify productive fishing grounds and the activities of the fishing fleet of relevant member states. Coordinated effort at the EU level is required to address windfarm influence on shared fishing resources.</p> <p>Offshore banks should be considered when siting offshore energy as there is likely to be reduced fishing/shipping here (NFFO).</p> <p>Proposals for offshore SEAs which overlap with potential windfarm sites identified in the SEA scoping document require greater cohesion with government policy.</p> <p>There are still no established principles regarding fishing in the vicinity of windfarms or transit routes, and as a result economic opportunities for operators may be compromised.</p> <p>Safety implications of all infrastructure should be discussed and agreed with the fishing industry and maritime authority (NFFO).</p> <p>Liaison with the fishing industry in Rounds 1 and 2 was not sufficient and local and regional impacts should be taken into account (NSFC).</p> <p>Further information should be provided on the activity scenarios and on the alternatives with spatial and/or temporal restrictions. (HS)</p> <p>It is essential that the SEA seeks to recognise the economic importance of traditional and well established shipping routes (whether or not they have formal recognition at a national or international level).</p> <p>For landscape/seascape, the following need to be assessed (NE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct effects or physical change to seascape and landscape, for example through development on the coastal edge or construction of onshore grid connection, or changes to the fabric of the seascape below the water;

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indirect effects on the character and quality of the seascape, for example through the development of offshore turbines, substations and masts causing changes in the perception of the seascape; Direct effects on the visual amenity of visual receptors, for example changes in available views of the sea and their content, for residents and visitors caused by the development of offshore wind farms; and Indirect effects on visual receptors in different places, for example an altered visual perception leading to changes in public attitude, behaviour and how they value or use a place (Quality of Life).
Cumulative Effects		
3	BWEA, nP, AT, CENTRICA, HS, NE, RSPB, WT, MFA, Defra, SEPA	<p>There should be more detail as to how potential cumulative impacts will be viewed, measured and decided upon (BWEA, nP, AT) as these will increase in importance during further rounds (CENTRICA, BWEA).</p> <p>The assessment should consider short-, medium- and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects. (HS)</p> <p>The 'Inter-relationship between issues' must look at in-combination effects of onshore and offshore turbines, infrastructure, particularly related to wind energy developments.</p> <p>The SEA must take a clear view on the possible cumulative effects/in-combination effects arising from a range of development scenarios. (NE)</p> <p>The assessment will need to consider the implications of the Draft Plan not only for '<i>...relevant [present] existing environmental problems...</i>' as stated on page 31, but also evaluate the cumulative and future effects of the proposed activities on, e.g. the designation of marine sites (MPAs). (RSPB, WT).</p> <p>RSPB recognise there are data limitations which make assessing cumulative impacts difficult, though a robust qualitative/semi-quantitative study should still be possible. It is unclear how the assessment will consider the impacts of multiple offshore licences (RSPB). Specific concerns are effects on terns, gannets and red-throated diver – transboundary cumulative effects may be felt if windfarms develop along migration routes.</p> <p>There are two areas that would help identify the most suitable lease sites and facilitate the licensing process if they were covered in sufficient detail by the SEA (MFA, Defra):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of a 'worse case' scenario i.e. based on a maximum number of anticipated leases for wind farms operating in geographical areas as a whole e.g. Greater

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
		<p>Wash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of potential interactions with other industries operating in geographical areas. <p>The SEA should consider potential cumulative impacts of OWF, CCS and O&G developments. A GIS of SEA baseline data could help identify compatibility issues (SEPA).</p>
Landfall		
4	CCW, JNCC, SNH, NE, CENTRICA	<p>It is not clear from the scoping document how far inland impacts associated with activities will be assessed. In particular, impacts associated with cabling, cable landfall and associated coastal/terrestrial infrastructure should be taken into account when reaching conclusions in the environmental report. (CCW, JNCC, SNH)</p> <p>Grid connections should be assessed at a strategic level within this SEA and the importance of assessing the turbines, transmission lines, sub-stations and access roads should be recognised. (NE)</p> <p>The SEA should be developed in close collaboration with government proposals for grid reinforcement as it would be clearly not be appropriate to consider major offshore wind developments in areas where grid connection would not be possible. (CENTRICA)</p>
Licensing		
5	EA, WWF-UK, NFFO, NE, CCW, JNCC	<p>Consideration of options that specifically bar from leasing/licensing the areas considered of greatest environmental sensitivity should be given. It would be helpful to clarify whether the 'activity scenarios' will themselves represent alternatives for consideration. (EA)</p> <p>SEA should consider the potential need for licensing due to species disturbance. (CCW, JNCC)</p> <p>The Draft Plan (Section 1.1) includes the intention to store gas in offshore geological reservoirs. Question whether the strategic risk assessment required prior to identify potential candidates and awarding licences for such storage, is appropriate to be assessed as an add-on to the limited remit of exploration licensing. (WWF-UK)</p> <p>Consent for development should take a minimum of 4 years to allow the fishing sector to find areas less disruptive to their activities.</p> <p>The use of Fishing Industry Liaison Representatives (FILRs) and Developer Fishing Industry Liaison Officers (DFILOs) should be a formal licence condition. The (renamed) positions are outlined in Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
		<p>(FLOWW) Recommendations for Fisheries Liaison. (NFFO)</p> <p>The SEA should identify suitable and unsuitable areas for development. (NE)</p> <p>The SEA should be part of the process that identifies potential areas for development. Under the oil and gas system variations on two approaches have been undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclusive rights are granted to lease/licence holder, or • licensees work up potential prospects (Promote Licence) <p>Would a 'block' approach to leasing be more appropriate? (CEFAS)</p>
Environment and Heritage Protection		
6	HS, MCS, NE, RSPB, WWF-UK, NFFO, EH, EA	<p>HS is content that the historic environment is scoped in to the assessment. It would be helpful to describe the source of impact on known or postulated archaeological heritage, as is provided for a number of the other environmental topics, for example, physical damage or disturbance to historic environment features from infrastructure, effects on the setting of coastal historic environment sites from nearshore developments etc and heritage features should be taken into account when collecting baseline data.</p> <p>With regard to the Working List of Offshore Energy SEA issues, the list of 'Potential Sources of Significant effects' could also include interactions with coastal processes and Introduction of hard substrata (e.g. scour protection) in an area of soft substrata. (NE)</p> <p>Add non-native species to the biodiversity etc list. Offshore wind structures will provide a stepping stone for non-native species as the MBA showed for groynes in the South. (MCS)</p> <p>BERR should attempt to include the full range of impacts resulting from renewables and oil/gas licensing i.e. to include the climate change implications from end use of the licensing product. (WWF-UK)</p> <p>Climate change is an additional potential source of significant effect as it will affect the distribution of marine biodiversity. The impact categories at the end of Section 5 will need to be defined further when they are applied to biodiversity issues, e.g. impact should be defined in terms of % population reduction. (RSPB)</p> <p>Will an 'unknown impact' as described on p. 32 be treated with a precautionary principle approach? (FRS). The SEA should fully apply the precautionary principle (RSPB).</p> <p>The Environmental Report should define the impact categories, 'Significant positive' to 'significant negative'. (EA)</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on assessment approach
		<p>How has the significance for the effects listed been derived? What effects were considered as less significant and how were these scoped out? This contradicts the statement on p. 30 'At this stage no activities, potential effects or receptors have been scoped out.'</p> <p>Areas of high and low environmental risk should be assessed in relation to development, to identify suitable areas which have fewer consenting barriers (NE).</p> <p>The scoping document makes limited mention of the MPA network (which contains existing and proposed Natura 2000 sites) and future Marine Conservation Zones (RSPB) and it is not clear whether the Draft Plan will exclude these from future energy licensing rounds (WT). Recently proposed SACs overlap with potential windfarm sites identified in the SEA scoping report (NFFO).</p> <p>The RSPB would expect the existing buffer zones set up during Round 2 to be retained for future offshore wind leasing rounds. This SEA should address the data gaps and uncertainties regarding the extent of these zones. Until such uncertainties have been addressed, we would expect the buffer zone to be extended to the rest of the coast, i.e. the area covered by this SEA.</p> <p>It is possible that early wrecks exist in the SEA area – the recent find of a 13th cent. BC wreck off the Devon coast demonstrates this. (EH)</p>
Alternatives		
7	CCW, JNCC, SNH, NE	<p>The debate on comparing the total lifecycle impacts of energy sources needs to happen at some point in the near future. The assessment of alternatives should consider whether oil and gas licensing should be ruled out in some blocks to allow renewable energies to be built as oil and gas activities can limit the options for siting of offshore windfarms due to radar and other safety issues. (CCW, JNCC, SNH)</p> <p>Alternatives for wider energy efficiency measures or other forms of energy generation should be included. (NE)</p>

Responses to Question 5b – comments on consultation approach

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on consultation approach
1	CoS, SOS	<p>The Chamber agrees with the proposed approach to consultation. (CoS)</p> <p>A proactive approach is needed to consultation – an extensive list of potential consultees needs to be drawn up and respondents</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on consultation approach
		should be copied relevant papers backed up with usual public notices.
2	TH	We concur with the proposed approach to consultation on the Draft Plan & Environmental Report. It is suggested that all who have responded to this consultation should be notified (by e-mail) when the Environmental Report is available for comment.
3	SOS	There should not be a reliance on web-based notification. Consultation should be wider and include a greater range of organisations and the public.
4	CCW, JNCC	BERR should ensure that comments on previous environmental reports or scoping documents are taken into account. A review of the information gaps highlighted or identified in the Environmental Reports from SEAs 1-7 and R2 SEA should be undertaken, highlighting where gaps have been addressed or not and where uncertainties still exist.
5	DfT	It needs to be made very clear from the outset who may be affected by the proposals and therefore who would be included as a consultee. It is also not clear who is responsible for informing the consultees – developer/BERR or MFA?
6	EA	The assessment and consultation approach is in line with relevant SEA Directive requirements and UK guidance.
7	E.ON	Whilst the proposed approach to the consultation is clearly in line with the cabinet office code of practice, further information regarding the actual process is required. How will public consultation responses be addressed, in particular with regard to 'general' (i.e. non-specific) responses? Will each SEAs Environmental Report be issued separately, or will they all be incorporated into one large document? The composition of the steering group needs to include representatives of key strategic interests – energy supply, natural environment, aviation/military, navigation, fishing, offshore wind industry, seabed owner and oil/gas, and should concentrate on resolving issues/conflicts in order to avoid room for objections at a later date.
8	DONG	There should be an early engagement with stakeholders to develop a relationship and dialogue on a regional and project level.
9	BWEA	All relevant parties should be engaged with so that their views can be integrated into the process which should ease the path from SEA to site award, consenting, construction and operation.
10	FRS	The scientific community should be provided with the option to factor in monitoring of the general marine environment at the design stages of offshore structures.
11	HS, SEPA	The 12 week period proposed for consultation on the

#	Organisation(s)	Comments on consultation approach
		Environmental Report is appropriate. HS considers that the consultation period commences on receipt of the relevant documents by the SEA Secretariat.
12	MFA, Defra	It is assumed you will continue to work with Defra's Marine Bill team so that areas including Marine Management Organisation and Marine Spatial Planning are fully considered.
13	RSPB	It is essential that the outcomes of the consultation are clearly identified in the Environmental Report. COWRIE should be an explicit part of this SEA process, in the same way that experts were a successful element of the Scottish Marine Renewables SEA. Expert opinion of those on the SEA steering group should be reflected in decisions by BERR.
14	RYA	RYA wish to be included in future consultations.
15	SNH	The consultation appears comprehensive and robust.
16	WT	The Wildlife Trusts seek clarification as to whether the draft plan will be modified further before producing a final plan and if so, if the Final Plan will include the detail which we believe is lacking from this document. At what stage will the SEA be carried out, i.e. on the draft or final plan?
17	NFFO	Consultation with the fishing sector should continue throughout the lifecycle of a windfarm.

Other comments

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
1	BWEA, nP	Lessons from round 1 and 2 need to be incorporated in the scope of future programmes. Human environment issues needs greater consideration. The SEA should consider tidal and wave renewables though these technologies have not yet been implemented in the UK.
2	CENTRICA, BWEA, AT	The positive aspects of OWF development should be considered (jobs in manufacturing, construction and maintenance [CENTRICA, AT], the development of UK ports and harbours [BWEA]), and all impacts considered in the context of climate change (BWEA, AT) and security of supply (AT).
3	CEFAS	What is the likelihood/timescale for the Round 1 and 2 projects being realised? BERR conducted a screening exercise for potential rounds of offshore wind leasing to understand major constraints and issues, and whether there are any gaps for strategic planning – what was the outcome of this, who was consulted, why is this information not included within the

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
		<p>SEA scoping document?</p> <p>Is it the intention that the SEA will be used to identify suitable areas for future offshore wind farm development?</p>
4	DEFRA, MFA	<p>There are two areas that would help identify the most suitable lease sites and facilitate the licensing process if they were covered in sufficient detail by the SEA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of a 'worse case' scenario i.e. based on a maximum number of anticipated leases for wind farms operating in geographical areas as a whole e.g. Greater Wash • Consideration of potential interactions with other industries operating in geographical areas.
5	EA	<p>The baseline review and the review of initiatives are not used to identify key environmental issues for the SEA. The information gathered should be used to provide focus to the SEA approach.</p> <p>SEA objectives selected should be more clearly linked to any key environmental sensitivity identified for the areas of study. The Draft Objectives presented (page 27) address all of the issues required by the SEA Directive, but they need to discuss priorities or key issues.</p> <p>Objectives should be more positive and proactive, and identify opportunities for the leasing and licensing activities to provide environmental improvements.</p> <p>Alternatives identified for review should be expanded to include more scenarios, including those protecting more sensitive offshore locations.</p> <p>Consideration of cumulative impacts needs to be highlighted – in particular, with regards the impacts of clusters of licensed activities, and related impacts of tidal or wave energy installations, or offshore carbon dioxide repositories.</p> <p>Most activities subsequent to licensing/leasing will take place outside one nautical mile from the coast. This is an important consideration when reviewing baseline sensitivities and assessing impacts of the proposed development, and should be raised in the main body of the Environmental Report.</p>
6	EH	<p>In the section "Other SEA surveys and studies" we concur with the opinion that archaeology should be included in the Offshore Energy SEA and refer to the previous SEA Environmental Reports completed as representing good practice.</p>
7	E.ON	<p>Will the assessment be carried out in-house, or will consultants be employed to undertake the assessment? If consultants are used, how will they be engaged?</p> <p>Is there likely to be any peer review of the findings of the environmental study prior to issuing this into the public domain, or will the consultation be in a staged manner?</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
		Offshore gas storage is mentioned but the relevant licensing regime is not covered under section 2.4, "Oil and Gas Licensing Process" or elsewhere. In the final plan it will be necessary to reflect the offshore gas and LNG unloading regime to be introduced under the Energy Bill, currently before Parliament.
8	FRS	<p>General comments:</p> <p><i>Front Page</i> "Strategic environmental assessment for offshore oil & gas licensing and wind leasing" - The title on the front page should include the storage of gas underground hydrocarbon reservoirs.</p> <p><i>Page 3 Section 2.1</i> "In addition, to include the storage of gas in underground hydrocarbon reservoirs in the seaward licensing rounds in UK waters." - How will this influence offshore carbon storage?</p> <p><i>Page 6 Section 2.5 Paragraph 2</i> "It does not include Scottish territorial waters, where it is understood there is limited scope for development and consequently no overarching plan or programme for offshore windfarms. It is anticipated therefore that the leasing arrangements for any such development in Scottish territorial waters will be conducted on an individual site basis." - Why have an SEA to guide a plan and programme of works for the Renewable Energy Zone and England and Wales territorial waters and then adopt the EIA process directly for Scottish territorial waters?</p> <p><i>Page 10 Section 4</i> Tabulate the summary information for each of the SEAs to allow a better comparison between each SEA and a consistency in the terminology and recording of information.</p> <p><i>Page 29 Consideration of alternatives</i> "The following initial alternatives for the Draft Plan for future offshore wind leasing, oil and gas licensing and gas storage have been identified: 1. Not to offer any areas for leasing/licensing 2. To proceed with a leasing and licensing programme 3. To restrict the areas offered for leasing and licensing temporally or spatially"</p> <p>Option 3 has already been implemented with the exclusion of the Scottish territorial sea.</p> <p>What discharges, if any, would be associated with the recovery of stored hydrocarbons and what legislation would be used to regulate the storage of gas in hydrocarbon reservoirs?</p> <p>What legislation would be used to regulate the storage of gas in hydrocarbon reservoirs?</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
9	HS	<p>HS notes that the environmental assessment will consider the potential impacts of the draft plan on the historic environment. Simply for information, the “historic environment” is defined in Section 16(3) of the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 as “... any or all of the structures and places in Scotland of historical, archaeological or architectural interest or importance”. SHEP 1 (Section 2)1 builds on this definition by identifying that the historic environment encompasses built heritage features (ancient monuments, archaeological sites and landscapes, historic buildings, townscapes, parks, gardens and designed landscapes, as well as marine heritage) and the context or setting in which they sit, and the patterns of past use, in landscapes and within the soil, and also in our towns, villages and streets. The historic environment also has less tangible aspects recognised as the historical, artistic, literary, linguistic and scenic associations of places and landscapes.</p> <p>HS expects the environmental assessment to take cognisance of these features, both in the collection of baseline data and in considering the likely impact of the draft plan on the historic environment.</p>
10	NE	<p>NE believes that previous SEAs have been limited in their inclusion of seascape issues and this is an area in which NE wishes to actively engage. The SEA summaries in the scoping document seem to be light on coastal/coastline designations. The summaries are strong for SEA 8, but the same approach is needed for the East and Western coastlines, especially in relation to Protected Landscapes (AONBs, Heritage Coasts and National Parks).</p> <p>It is unclear how far ranging the assessment of alternatives should be.</p>
11	NWSFC	<p>In spite of the previous SEA for Round 2, the interaction of offshore windfarm developments with fishing has been controversial and full of conflict. This conflict must be resolved in future rounds at an earlier stage.</p> <p>The fishing industry should be involved in consideration of the location of windfarm developments from the earliest stage of a development to minimise impacts on the fishing industry. In coastal areas that is SFC Districts within 6 miles, and in areas close to fishing ports, there is always a variety of local inshore fisheries and any development is likely to have an impact on these local industries. Fishing effort is not evenly distributed across vast areas, and local communities around the coast are still highly dependant on fishing, the areas they use are very specific and windfarm developments to date have had a negative impact on fishing.</p> <p>For round 3, the lesson from rounds 1 and 2 of the offshore windfarm industry is that liaison with the fishing industry has failed to properly consult with fishermen and take into account the impacts that offshore windfarms would have on regional and local patterns of fishing. The cumulative impact of offshore windfarm development will increase navigational risk for fishermen, reduce fishing opportunities and ultimately cause a loss of jobs.</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
		<p>Areas in close proximity to major ports and energy distribution networks are now full and the windfarm industry has to find ways of locating in areas where it will have less impact on existing usage of the sea. This may mean locations further offshore or locations close to the coast which are still significant distances from the ports from which they will be serviced. The fishing industry will not find acceptable, further displacement from their favoured grounds which have often been used in the same way for decades or hundreds of years while other area of less fishing value are unused.</p>
12	RSPB	<p>It is unclear from Section 2 of the scoping report whether the UK Offshore Energy Plan will include proposals for a coastal buffer zone to protect sensitive habitats and species, e.g. to ensure that feeding seabirds are adequately protected.</p> <p>The Scottish Marine Renewables SEA proposed that if interest increased in offshore wind in Scottish waters, an SEA would be carried out (see Section A2.2.1, pg.12 of that SEA – www.seaenergyscotland.net/public_docs/ER_SECTION_A_&FrontCover_MAR07.pdf). There should be a strategic and planned approach to the location of individual wind farms in Scottish territorial waters and an SEA of that plan carried out.</p> <p>It is important to add further detail to the Draft Plan as it covers licensing for three very different activities.</p> <p>We welcome the receptor-based approach to the assessment. The ‘Hierarchy of Options’ box provides some theory on how alternatives should be determined and assessed. The SEA process seems to be so far be missing out the consideration of alternative modes or processes, as illustrated by the initial alternatives identified. There does not appear to be consideration of the fact that different alternatives will probably need to be considered for each activity.</p>
13	SEPA	<p>Alternatives: Generally SEPA is content with the strategic alternatives proposed. It would be useful to clarify what alternatives are anticipated in respect of temporal or spatial restrictions (alternative 3). A description of the alternatives considered and the findings from their assessment should be clearly set out in the Environmental Report.</p> <p>Relationship of SEA with Decision Making: SEPA understands that information derived from the assessment will be used in licensing. It is unclear from the Scoping Report how the plan will take account of the Environmental Report in terms of making these decisions. It would be useful for the Environmental Report to be clear about how the SEA process and the plan preparation process are integrated. Due to the strategic nature of the programme, it may well be that some of the effects cannot be identified with certainty (section 4.4). It is important therefore to identify where this is the case and to be clear where SEA of plans at the lower level will need to provide a more detailed assessment, including identification of mitigation options, or where other regimes (such as EIA) will consider environmental effects in</p>

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
		detail. This is to ensure that such issues are not omitted from future work and to act as a point of reference for lower tier planning.
14	WDCS	<p>WDCS would expect to see detailed arguments for each proposal, as to where the demand was coming from and why it was deemed necessary to meet that demand from marine area resources rather than alternatives, and the consideration of alternative locations within the marine area should be properly explained.</p> <p>WDCS expect to see more emphasis on mitigation measures, cumulative effects and in-combination and long term effects.</p>
15	JNCC, CCW	<p>It would be useful to have set appendices 2 and 3 out in a similar and consistent way to give a comprehensive review of legislation that applies to both parts of the energy sector.</p> <p>Appendix 2 should refer to the Habitats Regulations, the potential need for a species disturbance license and potential for consents for operations likely to damage SSSIs. In Wales consent from CCW under section 28(4)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) is required before the activity can be undertaken.</p> <p>It would be useful to define and be consistent in the use of the term 'offshore' and 'nearshore'.</p>
16	WT	<p>WT would like to see the lack of knowledge surrounding cetaceans and seabirds addressed. Furthermore, it is not clear from the scoping report whether the Draft Plan will include proposals for a buffer zone around sensitive areas, or retain the existing ones set up during Round 2 (offshore wind farm licensing SEA).</p> <p>(WT) It is not clear how the potential effects of CCS will be assessed within the scoping report. This is a new technology and little is known about its effectiveness or long-term potential.</p> <p>There appears to have been a misinterpretation of the legislation and aims of the SEA Directive, in that BERR are proposing to refer to this SEA for all future Offshore Plans. The scoping report does not make it clear that future Plans will need a fresh assessment of their potential effects on the marine environment.</p> <p>The Wildlife Trusts seek clarification as to whether the draft plan will be modified further before producing a final plan and if so, if the final plan will include the detail which we believe is lacking from this document. At what stage will the SEA be carried out, i.e. on the draft or final plan?</p>
17	NFFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of advice regarding compensation and mitigation with each developer having different approaches. • Government and developers should be required to support the collection of spatially discrete data. • There should be a standard protocol for site investigations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence of fisheries costs and earnings pre-development (spatial and temporal patterns, qualifying/reference periods)

#	Organisation(s)	Additional comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ground rules for surveying ○ Post-construction monitoring ○ Reference fleets to validate scientific information • Likely to be direct and indirect displacement given different fishing fleets and gears – there may be a concentration of fishing effort and conflicts between fishing methods.
18	DfT	<p>Page 4, 2.3: The statement, “when all necessary statutory consents are obtained by the developer, The Crown Estate can grant a site lease for a development”, suggests the opposite of the process in place at present.</p> <p>No comment is made on the duration of the lease options for Round 3.</p> <p>Pages 10 to 23 have very limited comments on shipping activities. Shipping is excluded completely from overviews for SEA 1 and SEA 3.</p>
19	SOS	<p>It is important that the Environmental Report devotes space to making explicit interpretations of key terms and how these have been contested. i.e. term ‘sustainable growth’ (Section 2.2. ‘Context’, p.3, of the Scoping Report, with respect to UK energy policy goals refers to ‘helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth’.).</p>
20	WWF-UK	<p>WWF-UK does not consider that three alternate variations on the same theme is an adequate assessment of alternatives to the Draft Plan. The scoping report (p.29) mentions “activity scenarios” to help aid assessment – we would anticipate a full range of scenarios incorporating various elements of renewable and non-renewable options. Appropriate alternatives should be presented in the environmental report and assessed accordingly, as required within the SEA Directive.</p> <p>Inclusion of CCS (section 2.2 of the scoping document) confuses the objective of the draft plan, as a separate strategic process will be required in addition to subsequent detailed risk assessment – see OSPAR decision 2007/02.</p>