



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

UK Offshore Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment



OESEA3 Appendices 1 - 4

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Appendix 1: Environmental Baseline

Introduction

The following Appendix provides environmental information as required under Schedule 2 of *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004* (Regulation 12(3)). The baseline is described under a series of headings which relate to issues identified by the SEA Regulations on which to judge the “...likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects...” These include:

- Biodiversity, habitats, flora and fauna (including plankton, benthos, cephalopods, fish and shellfish, marine reptiles and marine and other mammals): Appendix 1a
- Geology, substrates and coastal morphology: Appendix 1b
- Landscape/seascape: Appendix 1c
- Water environment: Appendix 1d
- Air quality: Appendix 1e
- Climate and meteorology: Appendix 1f
- Population and human health: Appendix 1g
- Other users, material assets (infrastructure, other natural resources): Appendix 1h
- Cultural heritage: Appendix 1i
- Conservation of sites and species: Appendix 1j

and the interrelationships of the above.

The environmental baseline considers all the above headings in a UK context, before providing more detailed information on key features specific to UK Regional Seas, as defined below and shown in Figure A1.1.

The previous Offshore Energy SEAs used the draft regional sea boundaries defined by JNCC (2004) as a means of considering the broad scale biogeographical regions within UK waters. Iterations to the draft regional seas (e.g. Verling 2009) were underway during the last SEA, and subsequently, a number of other regional subdivisions have been used to delineate the UKCS. These include those used for marine spatial planning, those defined by OSPAR, MSFD sub-regions, and those used in Charting Progress 2 to describe and report on the condition of the UK marine environment. The latter regions were modified from those used in the first Charting Progress on the basis of updated knowledge on the distribution of features, and to align more with WFD water bodies and MSFD sub-regions. This SEA uses a modified version of the Charting Progress 2 boundaries to distinguish several important areas including: the Atlantic

South West Approaches (Regional Sea 5), and the Faroe-Shetland Channel (Regional Sea 9), Rockall Trough and Bank (Regional Sea 10), and Atlantic North West Approaches (Regional Sea 11).

Figure A1.1: Regional Sea subdivisions used in OESEA3

