

Consultancy: Coordination of study on marine Impacts of oil and gas

1. Background

Despite its purported climate and environmental leadership, the UK is the second-largest oil and gas producer in Europe. The vast majority of production takes place offshore on the UK Continental Shelf, including part of the North Sea, the North Atlantic, and the Irish Sea.

The UN and the International Energy Agency warn that there can be no new investment in oil and gas supply if global temperatures are to be limited to 1.5°C. But over the next few years, the UK is likely to increase production by approving up to 30 new offshore projects containing 2 billion barrels of oil and gas.

While there is increasing public scrutiny over the climate impacts of the UK's oil and gas industry, scrutiny of the marine impacts of oil and gas projects largely remain the purview of specialist EIA consultancies, two statutory consultees and the environmental regulator OPRED. Alongside regular reviews of specific projects, BEIS is currently undertaking a new Strategic Environmental Assessment (OESEA4), covering oil and gas exploration and production, hydrocarbon and carbon dioxide gas storage, and offshore hydrogen production alongside renewables. The Environmental Report for this assessment is expected to be published in late 2021, with a consultation to follow.

2. Objectives

To strengthen the understanding of the marine ecological impacts of offshore oil and gas the UK, Uplift is seeking a consultant (or consultant(s)) to coordinate a flagship report that will commission and synthesise research on the marine impacts created over the life cycle of offshore oil and gas extraction, and the extent to which these are effectively considered in marine environmental impact assessments, monitoring, and management processes.

The full terms of reference of this flagship report will be developed with the input of experts and will likely include:

- Mapping of existing and proposed field developments against MPAs (and VMEs) in the UK
- A meta-analysis of EIAs submitted to the relevant regulator, identifying key gaps and issues
- Analysis of noise, light, and water pollution, and other direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of oil and gas extraction on marine ecosystems
- Impacts of oil and gas extraction on the whole range of marine ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration
- Oil spill modelling
- Opportunity costs to the blue economy of continued oil and gas extraction
- Analysis of the adequacy of existing marine impact assessments, monitoring, and management strategies in mitigating impacts of oil and gas extraction

The report would be published with the support and collaboration of a broad range of marine conservation groups.

3. Research Approach

Working closely with Uplift’s research team and partner organisations, including marine science experts, the consultant will:

- Identify and prioritise report focus areas with a range of marine experts;
- Commission and conduct literature reviews and data analysis to address focus areas and key research questions;
- Edit and curate report submissions, drafting the final copy for the report;
- Manage the design process for the report, alongside other visual and/or interactive content;
- Liaise with Uplift, partners, and contractors to coordinate the report's launch and an associated outreach engagement and communications strategy.

The consultant will deliver:

1. A full terms of reference for the report identifying focus areas and research required
2. An outreach, engagement, and communications plan for the report
3. The final report and any associated outputs

4. Indicative timeline (2022)

24th Jan	Contract start
28th Feb	Full terms of reference delivered
Feb-May	Research period
30th May	First draft delivered
20th June	Final draft delivered
July 2022	Report Launched

On agreement of the contract, exact timelines and a bullet point work plan will be agreed upon between Uplift and the consultant.

5. Budget

A consultancy fee of up to £25000, inclusive of VAT. Payment will be tied to the three deliverables. An additional research, visual storytelling, design, and roll-out budget will be available. This budget will be administered by Uplift in consultation with the consultant.

6. Application

Applicants will have significant experience in strategic research and/or research and report coordination. Experience in directly relevant subject areas to TOR are highly desirable.

Please apply by 17:00 on Monday 17th of January 2022 to daniel@upliftuk.org, with a CV which clearly outlines your relevant experience and skills, and a (up to) two-page outline of your proposed approach to the consultancy. This outline should include:

- An outline of the proposed approach to delivering the consultancy
- Proposed time spent for each stage of the research process
- Rates for consultant(s) and overall costing