

# **Draft Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy Statement of Public Participation**

May 2025

# Introduction

1.1 In 2022, Scottish Ministers committed to updating the existing Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy (“SMP-OWE”). This Statement of Public Participation (“SPP”) summarises the background to sectoral marine planning and need to update the SMP-OWE, and proposals for engagement as part of the 12-week consultation on the updated Plan. This consultation will begin in May 2025. To be included in correspondence relating to this upcoming consultation, please email [SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot](mailto:SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot).

## Background

2.1 Marine planning in Scotland is governed by [Scotland’s National Marine Plan \(2015\)](#), a statutory plan developed in accordance with the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. It sets out strategic policies and general planning principles for the sustainable development of Scotland’s seas. Scotland’s National Marine Plan (2015) includes a requirement for sectoral marine planning for commercial scale offshore wind through Renewables 1 Policy.

2.2 Sectoral Marine Planning provides a framework for the sustainable development of offshore wind energy in Scotland’s marine environment, extending to cover the Scottish Territorial Waters (0-12 nautical miles) and the Scottish Offshore Marine Area (12-200 nautical miles). Sectoral Marine Plans provide Scottish Government the spatial strategy to steer offshore development.

2.3 The SMP-OWE was consulted on from December 2019 to March 2020 and was adopted by Scottish Ministers in October 2020. 15 spatial “Plan Options” were identified as suitable for the sustainable development of commercial-scale offshore wind projects. It examined three potential deployment scenarios with an upper (maximum) scenario of 10GW. Crown Estate Scotland (“CES”) used the SMP-OWE (2020) to inform the subsequent [ScotWind leasing round](#), in which a total of 20 projects were awarded Option Agreements (“OAs”) within the SMP-OWE’s 15 spatial Plan Options, for a potential generation capacity of 27.6GW (Figure 1). More information about the marine planning process is available at: [Sectoral marine plan for offshore wind energy - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).

2.4 The SMP-OWE (2020) advised that Scottish Ministers may choose to explore the demand for a future leasing round to enable innovative projects and projects aimed at the decarbonisation of the oil and gas sector in Scotland, and to help achieve the targets set out in the [North Sea Transition Deal](#). Areas of search for potential future seabed leasing were identified and consulted upon by the Scottish Government, and an [Initial Plan Framework](#) was produced in 2022. In March 2023, CES announced the results of [Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation \(“INTOG”\) leasing round](#), from which 12 projects, five for innovation (“IN”) and seven for Targeted Oil and Gas (“TOG”) are progressing with Exclusivity Agreements, with proposed combined capacities up to 449MW and 5GW respectively (Figure 1).

2.5 Scottish Ministers concluded that the SMP-OWE needed to be updated as part of the Iterative Plan Review (“IPR”) following the ScotWind leasing award by CES to consider the increased generating capacities. The updated SMP-OWE will also consider the INTOG leasing round outputs, as well as inclusion of the potential development of offshore wind test and demonstration sites, providing a spatial framework for future offshore wind development in Scottish waters.

2.6 The process to update the SMP-OWE includes the reassessment of potential environmental and socio-economic risks and opportunities of offshore wind development. Plan and project level mitigation measures to address impacts are also considered. The updated SMP-OWE will also include the assessment of proposed in-combination and cumulative impacts of the proposed development with existing offshore developments, including known cable routes, and other marine policies, on the environment, economy, marine users and on local communities.

2.7 The purpose of the draft updated SMP-OWE is to enable the sustainable development of offshore wind energy in Scottish waters, by balancing economic, social and environmental objectives through a systems-led assessment process that engages a range of stakeholders and is underpinned by evidence. The aims of the draft updated SMP-OWE are to:

- 1) Provide a strategic spatial framework for offshore wind development in Scottish waters by bringing together into one Plan:
  - The ScotWind Option Areas that were awarded lease options in 2022 based on the SMP-OWE (2020);
  - The INTOG Option and Exclusivity Agreement Areas that were awarded exclusivity agreements based on the INTOG IPF in 2023 and,
  - The potential development of up to 1GW of generating capacity from offshore wind test and demonstration sites.
- 2) Assess the potential national and regional level opportunities and constraints resulting from development within the plan option areas with a generating capacity of up to 37.4GW, providing greater clarity to industry, investors, consumers and the public.
  - Including proposed in-combination and cumulative impacts of the proposed development with existing offshore developments and other marine policies, on the environment, economy, marine users and on local communities.
- 3) Consider the in-combination impacts from the development of cable routes and supporting infrastructure; storage construction and maintenance of devices (commonly referred to as “wet storage”); Ministry of Defence and radar sites.
- 4) Support economic and investment opportunities of offshore wind and the competitive local supply chain opportunities in Scotland to support energy security, economic development, improved infrastructure, skills and jobs across Scotland, and increase investor confidence in the sustainability of Scottish projects.
- 5) Support an efficient and streamlined consenting and licensing process for offshore wind development in Scotland.

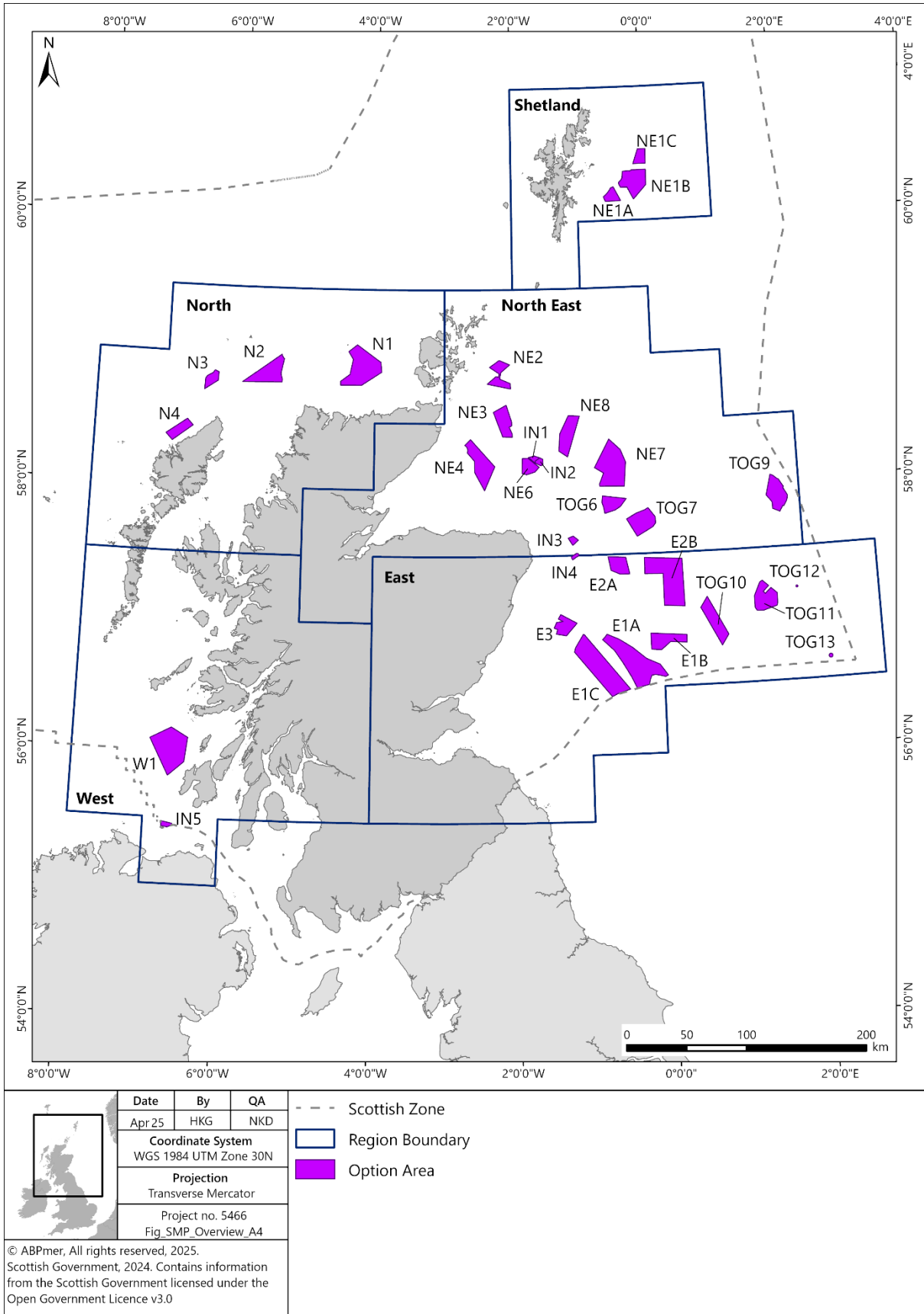


Figure 1 - Map showing the Option Areas for the Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy. Regional boundaries and areas comprising Scottish territorial waters are also shown on the map.

# Statement of Public Participation and purpose of consultation

3.1 The purpose of this Statement of Public Participation is to set out how we will engage and enable people to make their views on the development of the draft updated SMP-OWE heard.

3.2 The purpose of this consultation is to collect and understand the views of individuals and organisations on the potential impacts and opportunities of offshore wind deployment across Scotland. Responses will be analysed and will feed into the finalisation of the updated SMP-OWE, with key areas of influence being the implementation of the Plan and proposed mitigation measures. Responses will also feed into the wider evidence base for informing future decision-making in relation to offshore wind and marine planning.

3.3 The draft updated SMP-OWE and assessments will be available during the consultation period, with online and regional in-person events to be held to provide further opportunity to raise awareness of and engage stakeholders and the public on the development of the draft updated Plan. Locations have been selected based on locations of the Option Areas in the scope of the Plan and feedback received from the previous SMP-OWE consultation in 2020. Once confirmed, dates and venues of events will be shared with our mailing list and advertised locally.

3.4 During the consultation period, we will be seeking formal written responses on the draft updated SMP-OWE and the findings of the associated plan-level assessments, including:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (“SEA”)
- Habitats Regulations Appraisal Appropriate Assessment Information Report (“HRA AAIR”)
- Social and Economic Impact Assessment (“SEIA”)
- Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (“NCMPA”) Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal (“SA”) Report
- Partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (“BRIA”)
- Partial Island Communities Impact Assessment (“ICIA”)
- Regional Locational Guidance (“RLG”)

3.5 The Scottish Government is keen to build the views of statutory, sectoral, regional, voluntary and other bodies, as well as members of the public, into the planning process. Consultation is essential to the development and implementation of the updated SMP-OWE and it is important that all those with an interest have the opportunity to have their say in the development and implementation stages of developing the updated Plan.

## Methods of engagement

3.6 Though the SMP-OWE is not statutory, and publication of a SPP is only a legal requirement for statutory marine plans, this SPP for the draft updated SMP-OWE will continue to follow the revised [National Standards for Community Engagement](#), which set out best practice principles for effective community engagement.

3.7 Consultation on the draft updated SMP-OWE will continue to follow the [Government Consultation Principles](#) to meet the legal standard of the Gunning Principles. These are designed to make a consultation fair and worthwhile exercise.

The Gunning Principles:
Consult when proposals are at a formative stage
Give enough information for intelligent consideration
Give adequate time for response
Explain how consultation results have been taken into account in policy or legislation

3.8 Throughout the development of the updated SMP-OWE, various methods of engagement have been carried out with a range of stakeholders to consider the potential impacts on the marine environment and other marine sectors from the ScotWind and INTOG leasing rounds and the mitigation required to support the ambitious scale of development. This has included regular engagement with the Steering Group, as members have been given opportunities to comment on data used, the methodologies and conclusions of the technical assessments. Further details of Steering Group membership can be found in Annex A. The preparation of the Island Communities Impact Assessment has been supported by targeted engagement with representatives of affected island communities. Regular awareness sessions with specific stakeholder groups and wider audiences are also carried out.

3.9 Consultation on the updated SMP-OWE will provide the next opportunity for stakeholders to feed into the process of developing the updated SMP-OWE.

3.10 Public engagement channels will include:

- A series of in-person events, offering support with completion of consultation responses. Drop-in sessions and formal presentations of findings with question-and-answer sessions will be offered.
- Online events, also comprising presentations and question-and-answer sessions.

3.11 Digital and paper copies of all materials will be made available, including the Respondent Information Forms and Questionnaires for attendees to complete at events or take away for later completion and returned by post/email.

## Engagement on Previous Plan

3.12 The existing SMP-OWE (2020) was subject to two rounds of public consultation, one on the broader areas of search (“scoping” stage) and one on the proposed draft Plan Options (the suggested sites to be leased to developers), between December 2019 and March 2020, with feedback provided in the [Consultation Analysis Report](#). Feedback from consultation on the SMP-OWE (2020) informed the selection of Plan Options within the final Plan.

3.13 [Consultation](#) on the Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation Planning Specification and Context Report ran from 25 August 2021 to 20 October 2021, and sought responses and views to refine the Areas of Search for new offshore wind development within the plan and captured in the initial plan framework published in February 2022.

## How has the draft updated Sectoral Marine Plan been developed?

4.1 The sustainability of the draft updated SMP-OWE has been appraised by bringing together assessment of the environmental, social and economic impacts of the ScotWind, INTOG and potential future Test and Demonstration sites.

4.2 The draft updated SMP-OWE and assessments have been developed and supported by a cross-sectoral Steering Group. The role of the Steering Group is to provide advice on the technical assessment of potential impacts of the draft Plan. Full detail regarding the membership of these groups is provided in Annex A.

4.3 Development of the draft updated SMP-OWE follows on from the following previous steps undertaken to inform and implement the previous SMP-OWE (2020).

- 1) Opportunity and Constraint Analysis – Iteration 1
- 2) Opportunity and Constraint Analysis – Iteration 2 – Single Issue Constraint Analysis
- 3) Scoping Consultation
- 4) Opportunity and Constraint Analysis – Iteration 3
- 5) Identification of Draft Plan Options
- 6) Assessment of Draft Plan Options
- 7) Consultation on Draft Plan Options
- 8) Finalisation and adoption of the SMP-OWE (2020)
- 9) CES ScotWind Leasing Round (2021)
- 10) CES ScotWind Clearance Leasing

**Stage 1** – Scoping, screening and Identification of Plan Options for INTOG and Test and Demonstration Projects (2021 to 2022)

4.4 In 2021, an opportunity and constraint analysis undertaken to identify broad Areas of Search and Areas of Exclusion was made available for public comment and consultation. The result of this consultation was set out in the [INTOG Initial Plan](#)

[Framework \(“IPF”\)](#) alongside refinements to the Areas of Search, which was published in 2022. The INTOG planning process overlapped with the CES leasing process, allowing CES to offer applicants a form of exclusivity for an area of seabed earlier in the process.

4.5 Plan Options proposed for INTOG included and assessed in the draft updated SMP-OWE were identified via outcomes of the CES INTOG leasing round as specific project locations within the Areas of Search set out in the INTOG IPF.

4.6 Scottish Ministers agreed that the 20 ScotWind projects awarded Option Agreements within the SMP-OWE’s 15 spatial Plan Options, and the additional 12 INTOG projects receiving Exclusivity Agreements, would proceed to undergo reassessment for the updated SMP-OWE (Stage 2).

### **Stage 2 – Sustainability Appraisal and preparation of the draft updated Plan (2022 to 2025)**

4.7 Preparation of Sustainability Appraisal report on the Plan Options (comprising of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Socio Economic Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Appraisal and Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area Assessment) and preparation of the draft updated Plan, in consultation with the cross-sectoral Steering Group. Draft Regional Locational Guidance was also prepared.

4.8 The draft updated Plan will also be assessed for impacts on a wide range of areas, through the Islands Communities Impact Assessment (“ICIA”) and Business Regulatory Impact Assessment (“BRIA”) and the reports for these partial assessments will be published for consultation with the draft updated Plan.

4.9 Scottish Ministers will approve the draft updated Plan and Sustainability Appraisal for publication and consultation (Stage 3).

### **Stage 3 – Consultation (commencing May 2025)**

4.10 Formal statutory consultation on the draft updated Plan and Sustainability Appraisal assessments (for 12 weeks) via Citizen Space. Public events will be held in locations across Scotland and further detail is provided below.

### **Stage 4 – Consultation analysis (Summer 2025)**

4.11 Analysis of responses and preparation of the consultation analysis report. The draft updated Plan will be revised, in response to comments made during the consultation on the Plan and supporting information. A consultation analysis report will be published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing.

4.12 In the event that major changes are required to the draft updated Plan as a result of the consultation, further assessment and/or consultation may be required. This will result in revised timescales for final adoption and publication.

## **Stage 5 – Plan finalisation (Autumn 2025)**

4.13 Presentation of the updated Final Plan for approval and adoption by Scottish Ministers, followed by publication of the updated Plan (along with relevant supporting information, Appropriate Assessment and Post Adoption Statement) as soon as possible thereafter. Final versions of the ICIA and BRIA will also be prepared.

## **Stage 6 – Post adoption statement, implementation and monitoring (Autumn 2025 onwards)**

4.14 After Plan adoption, an SEA Post-Adoption statement will be produced in line with relevant Environmental Assessment legislative requirements. The updated Final Plan will not undergo any further iterative plan review.

## **How you can get involved**

5.1 The consultation will be published in May 2025 and run for a period of 12 weeks. You will be able to view the documents:

- Online at <https://consult.gov.scot/>;
- At our public events

5.2 Only written representations will be considered by Scottish Government officials, for which a completed Respondent Information Form is required for responses to be counted. You will be able to submit your written responses via the following mechanisms:

- Online via [www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations);
- By email to [SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot](mailto:SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot); or
- By post to the Sectoral Marine Planning Team, Offshore Wind Directorate, Scottish Government, Area 3G South, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

### Public Events

5.3 During the 12 week consultation period, Scottish Government officials will be holding a series of open meetings for stakeholders and members of the public to raise awareness of, and encourage further discussion of the draft updated SMP-OWE and Sustainability Appraisal assessments.

5.4 The intention is to have 17 public consultation events across Scotland, during Spring 2025. These events will take the form of an afternoon drop-in session, followed by an evening presentation to provide more in-depth information, for those who are interested in the detailed aspects of the draft updated SMP-OWE and Sustainability Appraisal assessments.

5.5 The events will aim to:

- Raise awareness of the sectoral marine planning process and ensure that interested parties' views and knowledge are taken into account;
- Raise awareness of the draft updated SMP-OWE and development process;

- Explain how we have assessed the potential economic, social and environmental impacts of the draft updated SMP-OWE;
- Raise awareness of the statutory consultation process, encourage participation and outline how to provide response(s);
- Answer queries regarding the draft updated Plan and supporting documents; and
- Outline next steps.

5.6 Locations are provided below and further details of the locations and timings of these events will be provided in due course (once the details have been confirmed). These events will be advertised via social media, e-mail, on our website and locally using existing networks, organisations and local press (where possible). Attendees will not be expected to sign up for these events in advance or register their attendance on the day.

<b>SMP Region</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>North (5)</b>	Stornoway Carloway/Shawbost, Lewis Ullapool Kinlochbervie Scrabster
<b>North East (3)</b>	Kirkwall, Orkney Inverness Buckie
<b>East (5)</b>	Dundee Aberdeen Pittenweem Peterhead Edinburgh
<b>West (3)</b>	Oban Islay Colonsay
<b>Shetland (1)</b>	Lerwick

5.7 Further details, including dates and locations, will be provided in due course, and will also be available on Scottish Government webpage. Three online sessions will also be held throughout the 12-week consultation period.

## Contact us

6.1 To view the draft updated Plan, Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents and submit your views, please visit:

[Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

6.2 The Sectoral Marine Planning team have a distribution list, which will be used to alert people to upcoming events and progress with the updated SMP-OWE. If you, or your organisation, would like to be kept informed in this way, or if you have any comments on our approach to consultation and the SPP please contact us using the details provided below.

**Write to:**

Offshore Wind Directorate  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

**Email:** [SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot](mailto:SectoralMarinePlanning@gov.scot)

**Visit:** [Offshore Wind Directorate - gov.scot](#)

## Annex: Sectoral Marine Planning Steering Group membership list

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Sector/Interest</b>
Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)	Aviation
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)	Local Authorities
Crown Estate Scotland (CES)	Seabed Leasing
Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)	UK Government (Offshore Energy)
Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)	Enterprise
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Historic Environment, Cultural Heritage
Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)	Nature Conservation (Public Body)
Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	Navigational Safety
Ministry of Defence (MoD)	UK Government (Defence)
National Electricity Systems Operator (NESO)	Electricity Systems
NatureScot (NS)	Nature Conservation (Public Body)
North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA)	Oil and Gas
Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB)	Navigational Safety
Offshore Energies UK (OEUK)	Oil and Gas
Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups (RIFGs)	Fisheries
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland (RSPB Scotland)	Nature Conservation (eNGO)
Salmon Scotland (SS)	Aquaculture
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Environment Protection
Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Fisheries
Scottish Renewables (SR)	Renewables
Scottish Environment LINK (SE Link)	Nature Conservation (eNGO)
Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA)	Fisheries
Scottish Whitefish Producers Association (SWFPA)	Fisheries
South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)	Enterprise
UK Chamber of Shipping (UKCoS)	Shipping
Visit Scotland (VS)	Tourism

## Acronyms List

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
BRIA	Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment
CES	Crown Estate Scotland
GW	Gigawatt
HRA AAIR	Habitats Regulations Appraisal Appropriate Assessment Information Report
ICIA	Island Communities Impact Assessment
INTOG	Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation
IPF	Initial Plan Framework
IPR	Iterative Plan Review
MW	Megawatt
NCMPA	Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area
OA	Option Agreement
RLG	Regional Locational Guidance
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEIA	Social and Economic Impact Assessment
SMP-OWE	Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy
SPP	Statement of Public Participation



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