



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales**

Ebost/Email:

lucie.skates@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

By e-mail

Benjamin Bryant (Energy Development) Benjamin.Bryant@beis.gov.uk

Wednesday 12th October 2016

Dear Sir or Madam,

TRANSPOSITION OF THE REVISED EIA DIRECTIVE - PREPARATION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Natural Resources Wales are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the above consultation, which we understand aims to gather views from consultee stakeholders on the potential cost implications of transposition of the revised EIA Directive, which will be effected via amendments to the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipe-lines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999.

The statutory purpose of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is set out under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. In the exercise of its functions under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, NRW must pursue sustainable management of natural resources in relation to all of its work in Wales, and apply the principles of sustainable management of natural resources in so far as that is consistent with the proper exercise of its functions. NRW's duty (in common with the other public bodies covered by the Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015) is to carry out sustainable development. This means, in general terms, looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants, and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone. NRW are also advisors to the Welsh Government on the natural heritage and resources of Wales and its coastal waters.

NRW's comments are therefore provided in the context of NRW's statutory purpose, functions, powers and duties, including our role as a statutory consultee under the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipe-lines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999.

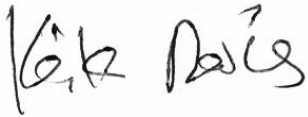
Given NRW's relatively limited involvement in advising on offshore oil and gas environmental impact assessments and the fact that the questionnaire provided by BEIS was originally designed with industry stakeholders in mind, we have limited our comments to the two key questions outlined in the consultation documents.

1. ***Potential cost implications to NRW arising from the proposed amendments to the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipe-lines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999.*** NRW are of the view that there will be no major cost implications to NRW arising from the proposed amendments.
2. ***Whether some specific new provisions / requirements in the revised Directive are ostensibly already met, largely met or partially met under the extant regime (i.e. because of the way the current EIA Directive has been implemented offshore).*** NRW consider that BEIS's interpretation of the revised Directive is a matter for your legal advisors and those of the other competent authorities and therefore have no further comment to make at this time.

These comments are made without prejudice to any advice we may need to give, or decisions we may need to take, in a project specific context in respect of any current or future oil and gas exploration and production project.

I hope that you find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss any of the points we have raised, please contact Lucie Skates (lucie.skates@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk) in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Davies'. The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and a small mark above the 'i' in 'Davies'.

Keith Davies
Manager Planning, Landscape, Energy and Climate Change