Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – Assessing effects of downstream scope 3 emissions on climate

Supplementary guidance for assessing the effects of downstream scope 3 emissions on climate from offshore oil and gas projects

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Introduction

The Supreme Court concluded in the Finch judgment ("the judgment") that a decision to grant planning permission for an onshore oil development project ("the Horse Hill Development") at a site in Surrey was unlawful, because downstream greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions from combustion of the oil produced were not assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") as part of the planning decision (Finch Judgment, 2024).

In Finch, it had been agreed by the parties, including the developer and the local planning authority, that it was inevitable that the oil extracted would be sent to refineries and the refined oil would eventually undergo combustion, producing GHG emissions which would have an effect on the climate. It was noted in the judgment that the combustion of oil would fall under scope 3, category 11 (Use of sold products) of the GHG Protocol (GHG Protocol, 2001). It was also agreed that general estimates of combustion emissions can be made using methodology such as that described in guidance issued by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ("IEMA"). On that basis, the majority of the Supreme Court held that downstream GHG emissions from the combustion of oil were an effect of the project that had to be assessed in the Environmental Statement ("ES").

Climate change is a global problem and the concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere contribute to this global effect. Among other things, the judgment noted the following points:

- "*The object of an EIA is to ensure that the environmental impact of a project is exposed to public debate and considered in the decision-making process. The legislation does not prevent the competent authority from giving development consent for projects which will cause significant harm to the environment. But it aims to ensure that, if such consent is given, it is given with full knowledge of the environmental cost."* (paragraph 3)
- *"Climate change is a global problem precisely because there is no correlation between where GHGs are released and where climate change is felt. Wherever GHG emissions occur, they contribute to global warming. This is also why the relevance of GHG emissions caused by a project does not depend on where the combustion takes place… "* (paragraph 97)
- *"… It is not disputed that these emissions, which can easily be quantified, will have a significant impact on climate..."* (paragraph 7)

The EIA for the Horse Hill Development was carried out under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. However, the judgment was based on the Court's interpretation of the requirement in Article 3 of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU (collectively referred to as "the EIA Directive") to identify, describe and assess the direct and indirect significant effects of a project.

Offshore oil and gas production projects are subject to the Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020

("the Offshore EIA Regulations"), rather than the regulations central to the Finch judgment. However, the Offshore EIA Regulations were similarly enacted to transpose the EIA Directive. The Supreme Court's interpretation of the legal requirements in relation to EIA is therefore equally applicable to the Offshore EIA Regulations (Jackdaw / Rosebank Judgment, 2025). The legal conclusions in the judgment were also based on some agreed or undisputed facts, which may not apply to all projects that are considered under the Offshore EIA Regulations. Nevertheless, the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning ("OPRED") when reaching a decision on behalf of the Secretary of State, needs to ensure that the EIA process, as outlined in the Offshore EIA Regulations, is undertaken fairly, robustly and in line with the law as clarified by the judgment.

This supplementary EIA guidance has therefore been produced to provide guidance on the assessment of effects of downstream GHG emissions[1] on climate from an offshore oil and gas project seeking consent from the North Sea Transition Authority ("NSTA").[2] The guidance is primarily focussed on projects falling under Schedule 1 of the Offshore EIA Regulations (i.e. those requiring a mandatory ES) and which require development and production consent from the NSTA. Further information concerning other types of projects where an assessment of scope 3 emissions may be required is set out at the end of this guidance. This guidance is supplementary to the "Offshore EIA Regulations Guidance" (OPRED, 2021) and will be updated when required.

While this guidance is intended to assist developers in understanding the EIA process, it is not intended to provide a definitive statement of the law or to constitute legal advice, nor does it address all aspects of the Offshore EIA Regulations or the judgment. Developers remain responsible for ensuring that ESs are prepared by competent experts and should seek their own technical and legal advice as necessary.

Similarly, this guidance is not intended to be prescriptive as to the approach developers should take to assessment of scope 3 emissions. As set out in the Offshore EIA Regulations, it is for developers and their competent experts to assess the effects of a project on the environment in the first instance, and to set out that assessment in an ES. While this guidance sets out a number of expectations as to how that assessment could or should be done, OPRED accepts that alternative approaches may be possible or even preferable, either now or as approaches and scientific understanding develop over time.

Extent of Guidance

GHG emissions will often be described as scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 emissions as defined by the GHG Protocol, first published in 2001 (GHG Protocol, 2001). The purpose of the GHG Protocol was to establish a comprehensive global standardised framework for companies and

[1] GHG emissions include all gases that trap heat in the atmosphere.
[2] The North Sea Transition Authority is a business name of the Oil and Gas Authority.

organisations to assist with accounting and reporting GHG emissions. The GHG Protocol definition for each emissions scope is provided below:

- Scope 1 GHG emissions are direct emissions from operations that are owned or controlled by the reporting company;
- Scope 2 GHG emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased or acquired electricity, steam, heating, or cooling consumed by the reporting company; and
- Scope 3 GHG emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain.

The Finch judgment was primarily focussed on GHG emissions associated with the downstream combustion of hydrocarbons produced from a proposed oil and gas project seeking development and production consent. These downstream combustion emissions are captured within the definition for scope 3 GHG emissions and are sometimes referred to in shorthand as scope 3 emissions. However, the GHG Protocol defines 15 categories of scope 3 emissions, with categories 1 to 8 occurring upstream and categories 9 to 15 occurring downstream. Scope 3 GHG emissions include downstream emissions in their entirety and are not limited to emissions from the use of the sold product (scope 3, category 11).

The EIA Directive and the Offshore EIA Regulations do not refer to the concept of scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 GHG emissions but instead refer only to the (direct and indirect) effects of a project on the environment. As noted above, the Finch judgment determined that the downstream emissions resulting from the combustion of hydrocarbons produced from a project are an effect of the project.

Scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions are not the focus of this supplementary EIA guidance, however some aspects of the supplementary guidance are relevant to scope 1 and 2 emissions.

It should also be noted that the UK's Carbon Budgets, under the Climate Change Act 2008, are based on UK territorial emissions and the concept of scopes is not directly relevant for carbon accounting for the purposes of domestic targets, which must count each unit of emissions once, and does not take into account where the emissions sit within the value chains of different organisations. The UK’s territorial emissions are reported through the GHG Inventory and the UK’s territorial accounting approach is in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

Expectations on ES content for assessing effects of scope 3 emissions

This guidance does not concern the question of whether scope 3 emissions, and in particular emissions from the use of the sold products (scope 3, category 11), should be assessed in an ES for an offshore oil and gas project. In light of the judgment, OPRED’s firm position is that

as part of the assessment of the effects of a proposed project seeking development and production consent, the ES must consider scope 3 emissions from downstream activities associated with the production of hydrocarbons over the lifetime of the project.

Scope 3 emissions from downstream combustion of the hydrocarbons should be considered regardless of any evidence that also may be put forward as to the extent to which "substitution" may occur (i.e. whether the hydrocarbons extracted as a result of the project will replace, rather than be additional to, other hydrocarbons that would otherwise be extracted elsewhere). Substitution is not considered to be a factor affecting whether scope 3 emissions from a project's downstream activities are an effect that needs to be assessed in the ES (Whitehaven Judgment, 2024).

IEMA's guide to Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Evaluating their Significance provides useful six step assessment principles that a developer may wish to follow when assessing the GHG emissions associated with their project (IEMA, 2022):

1. Setting the scope and extent of the assessment;
2. Determination of the baseline;
3. Decide on the emissions calculation methodologies;
4. Data collection;
5. Calculate / determine the GHG emissions inventory; and
6. Consider mitigation opportunities and repeat steps 4 and 5.

The ES should set out, so far as is possible, an assessment of the effects of a project's scope 3 emissions. The scope and extent of any assessment of the effects of downstream scope 3 emissions must be transparent and clearly explained within the ES.

Scoping and Consideration of alternatives

The scoping stage of the EIA process, usually undertaken in tandem with the NSTA concept select process can help a developer set the scope and extent of an assessment for a project (see section 2.1.5 of the Offshore EIA Regulations Guidance). Early engagement and scoping can help to promote useful two-way feedback between the regulator and the developer, and crucially for a developer it may help to identify potential issues with their proposed project earlier at the scoping stage rather than later following the formal submission of an ES.

The ES should also describe the reasonable alternatives studied by a developer for a proposed project. Schedule 6(2) of the Offshore EIA Regulation requires (emphasis added):

"A description of the **reasonable alternatives** *(for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer and an indication of* **the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the project on the environment and including a comparison of environmental effects.***"*

The developer will be expected to set out how the effects of the selected option compares with environmental effects of any other reasonable alternatives considered and how it has been factored into the justification for the selected option. Alternatives should be considered in conjunction with section 2.2.2 of the Offshore EIA Regulations' Guidance.

Environmental Protection Objectives

The assessment of likely significant effects of a project on the environment, must as per Schedule 6(5)(d) of the Offshore EIA Regulations, *"take into account environmental protection objectives established in retained EU law or at national level*".

Environmental effects from scope 3 emissions from downstream activities largely relate to the impacts on climate from the release of GHGs. On 22 April 2016 the UK, as a Party to the UNFCCC, signed the Paris Agreement, which aims among other things, to "*Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change*" (Article 2(1)(a)). In addition, in order to achieve the long-term temperature goal, Parties to the Paris Agreement aim to "… *achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century, …*" (Article 4(1)). The UK ratified the Paris Agreement on 18 November 2016.

In the UK, the principal basis for giving effect to the reduction of territorial GHG emissions is through the Climate Change Act 2008, which sets binding carbon budgets and a net zero target by 2050. The expectation is that scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions are assessed by the developer for the impact of the project on climate, which should include consideration of the Climate Change Act 2008, and associated carbon budgets.

Global GHG emissions[3] are a relevant consideration to assessing scope 3 emissions and in understanding "the impact of the project on climate", as required under Schedule 6 of the EIA Regulations. OPRED would expect that these considerations will feature in any assessment of GHG emissions effects on climate.

Determination of the baseline

Schedule 6(3) of the Offshore EIA regulations requires (emphasis added):

"*A description of the relevant aspects* **of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario)** *and an outline of its likely evolution without implementation of the project as far as*

[3] Examples of useful sources https://globalcarbonbudget.org/; https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/faqs/IPCC_AR6_WGI_FAQ_Chapter_05.pdf

natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge."

A realistic and reasonable description of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) should be presented in the ES. Usually, the location of a project is important when determining a baseline scenario for which the effects of a project would be assessed against. However, it is accepted that GHGs have a global effect on climate. Therefore, when determining the baseline scenario for scope 3 emissions, the location of the emissions is not relevant and a global baseline scenario of GHGs must be considered in the ES.

It should also be noted that the baseline scenario for GHGs will not be static over the lifetime of a project where the quantity of GHGs affecting climate will be subject to both natural and anthropogenic change over the lifetime of a project. Therefore, a reasonable future estimate of global GHGs affecting climate over the lifetime of a project needs to be considered as part of the baseline scenario, as outlined in Schedule 6(3). That baseline scenario has to be based on available up to date environmental information and scientific knowledge on global GHGs and climate, which is well documented (IPCC, 2023; Lan, 2025; Lindsey, 2025; Jacobson, 2023; Met Office, 2025). Therefore, the scope 3 emissions estimated to be produced by the project, as outlined in "Estimating scope 3 emissions" section below, should be evaluated in the context of a global baseline scenario of GHGs.

Relevant scope 3 emissions

As noted within the "Extent of guidance" section, for the purpose of this supplementary EIA guidance, scope 3 emissions include downstream emissions in their entirety, as well as some upstream emissions.

Following the judgment, OPRED's firm position is that at a minimum, an ES should include an assessment of the downstream emissions that will arise from the use of hydrocarbons extracted as a result of the project (i.e. scope 3, category 11 emissions). The starting point for estimating these emissions should be a (rebuttable) presumption that all produced hydrocarbons over the lifetime of a project will eventually be combusted. OPRED expects that these downstream emissions from a new project will be presented in the ES against a no project ('do nothing') scenario (i.e. total quantity of scope 3 category 11 emissions from the project against zero scope 3 category 11 emissions for a no project scenario). Taking this approach confirms the absolute downstream emissions that may be associated with the combustion of the produced hydrocarbons over the lifetime of the project.

In addition, a developer may choose to present a scenario(s) for non-combustion use of hydrocarbons, where evidence can be presented to demonstrate that not all hydrocarbons produced will be combusted. For such scenarios the expectation would be for the scope 3, category 11 emissions to be broken down into emissions associated with the combustion and non-combustion use of hydrocarbons. Even if a developer chooses to present a scenario(s) for non-combustion use of hydrocarbons, and/or provides sufficient evidence to rebut the presumption of full combustion, it is OPRED's view that an estimate of scope 3, category 11

emissions should also be presented, based (as above) on the assumption that all produced hydrocarbons will eventually be combusted. This will ensure an appropriate degree of transparency and comparability between projects, to assist public understanding of and participation in the EIA process.

A developer may choose to further break down the scope 3 emissions into different downstream categories of the GHG Protocol relevant to the fate of the produced hydrocarbons, and provide an assessment of each relevant category. When presenting further assessment of other downstream scope 3 emissions categories, evidence must be provided to justify the selected categories, including evidence to support how emissions have been quantified for each of the selected categories. Many oil and gas developers already publish annual estimates of GHG emissions associated with relevant GHG protocol scope 3 categories associated with their business activities. Irrespective of the approach a developer takes, it is OPRED's view that an estimate of scope 3, category 11 emissions should always be presented as set out above, to support transparency and public participation.

Estimating scope 3 emissions

For the purpose of quantifying the environmental effects of scope 3 emissions, the assessment must consider the highest quantity of hydrocarbons expected to be produced (i.e. extracted from the field) over the lifetime of a project. Therefore, the estimate of scope 3 emissions must reflect the highest anticipated hydrocarbon production (the 'P10' data) specified in the application for development and production consent submitted to the NSTA.[4]

As set out in the "Relevant scope 3 emissions" section above, the starting point for assessment of scope 3, category 11 emissions should be the (rebuttable) presumption that all produced hydrocarbons will be combusted. Those category 11 emissions should be calculated using the highest anticipated hydrocarbon production (the 'P10' data) expected to be produced during the lifetime of the project multiplied by a suitable conversion factor. Suitable conversion factors for the combustion of the produced hydrocarbons could be taken from the most recently published Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions (DESNZ, 2025), or other suitable sources.

As above, developers may choose to estimate scope 3 emissions on the basis that not all hydrocarbons produced will be combusted. There is a wide range of published methodologies (IPIECA, 2016; GHG Protocol, 2013) and emissions conversion factors (DESNZ, 2025; GHG Protocol, 2013; IEA, 2013) available to estimate scope 3 emissions related to the non-combustion fate of the hydrocarbons. As above, it is acknowledged that oil and gas developers already use well-established methods to report estimates of relevant GHG protocol scope 3 categories associated with the business activities.

[4] In circumstances where a proportion of the hydrocarbons produced is used in the upstream production process, e.g. used as fuel for power generation (which will be covered by scope 1 emissions), estimates of scope 3 emissions should only take account of the net product to potentially avoid double counting of emissions.

The ES should explain and justify the methodology adopted and conversion factors used to estimate the scope 3 emissions from the different categories including the assumptions and associated uncertainties. Whichever methodology is adopted, it must follow the general principles applicable to EIA, including that it is current, credible, and widely accepted. It must be transparent in the ES as to how the total scope 3 emissions associated with the hydrocarbons produced from a proposed project have been estimated.

It is important that the methodologies utilised through the assessment are consistent to allow for a meaningful comparison of emissions over time and follow best practice guidance, such as the GHG Protocol (IEMA, 2022). The assessment of scope 3 emissions should provide a consistent use of units of measurement throughout the ES.

Evaluating significance of the likely effects

Regulation 14(1) requires that the Secretary of State must reach a conclusion on the significant effects of the project on the environment. Regulation 14(2) sets out matters that must be taken into account when reaching that conclusion. Therefore, the content and context in the ES, particularly regarding the effects on climate from GHG emissions, should be comprehensive, to aid the decision maker in reaching a conclusion on the significant effects of the project on the environment and a decision as to whether to agree to the grant of consent.

An ES for an offshore oil and gas production project must include an assessment of the significance of the likely effects of scope 3 emissions. The ES, when evaluating the significance of likely effects of the project on the environment must also consider and contain information on cumulative effects.

Schedule 6(4) of the Offshore EIA Regulations requires (emphasis added):

"An assessment of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment, including those resulting from—

(a) …

(e) the **cumulation** *of effects* **with other existing or approved projects***, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources."*

(f) the **impact of the project on climate** *(for example* **the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions***) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; …"*

The discussion of likely significant effects should be accompanied by an indication of the criteria used to determine whether an impact is ‘likely’ and whether it is ‘significant’. Where recognised criteria are used, they should be referenced.

The expectation is that assessment methodologies will use a form of matrix[5] that combines sensitivity of the receptor against magnitude of the impact to determine a level of significance associated with scope 3 emissions. Given the global effect of GHG emissions, the current state of the climate and the concentration of carbon dioxide and other GHGs in the atmosphere (WMO, 2025), the expectation is that the sensitivity level will be high.

As explained in IEMA's guidance, *"[a] key goal of EIA is to inform the decision maker about the relative severity of environmental effects such that they can be weighed in a planning balance. Therefore, it is essential to provide context for the magnitude of GHG emissions reported in the EIA in a way that aids evaluation of these effects by the decision maker."* (IEMA, 2022). OPRED therefore expects that ESs will both include a clear assessment of the magnitude of scope 3 emissions, as set out above, and provide appropriate context to support a determination of significance.

OPRED expects that ESs will consider how the GHG emissions associated with a proposed project impact climate at a global level and a national level. This will likely involve assessment of the project's emissions against global climate objectives at the project level and in cumulation with other global projects, as well as against national objectives and targets, where appropriate.

OPRED's current view is that characterising scope 3 emissions from a project solely in numeric terms against global GHG emissions would not on its own provide a meaningful expression of the global effect of those scope 3 emissions, because of the obvious difference in scale between individual projects and global emissions levels. Therefore, OPRED considers that an assessment of scope 3 emissions in relation to the current state of climate and global emissions-reduction pathways (IPCC, 2023) is more likely to support a reasoned conclusion on significance.

Given the global effect of GHG emissions, the ES must consider the cumulative effects of the proposed project with other existing and planned future projects, in a global context. If global-reduction pathways are used to contextualise magnitude of emissions as above, this approach should be inherently cumulative, as these pathways take into account a wide range of existing and planned projects and other activities. Alternatively, or in addition, developers may choose to use information from global oil and gas datasets and inventories.[6]

If a developer wishes to use substitution to help contextualise the scope 3 emissions, the developer should provide evidence to demonstrate that (i) hydrocarbons from the project will result in substitution of international hydrocarbon supplies into the UK; and (ii) there is no other demand for the international hydrocarbon supplies substituted by the project.

[5] Environmental Statements submitted to OPRED commonly include a methodology for assessing the environmental impacts and include a matrix considering magnitude vs sensitivity for determining significance.
[6] Examples of global oil and gas project inventories:
https://globalenergymonitor.org/projects/global-oil-gas-extraction-tracker/
https://www.globaldata.com/industries-we-cover/oil-gas/?utm_source=lgp2&utm_medium=26-48278&utm_campaign=gd-access-free-intelligence-homepage

Significance of environmental effects will always be considered by OPRED on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the information provided in the ES and subsequent EIA process. Nevertheless, developers should note that given the current state of the climate and the nature of the assessment of scope 3 emissions, that the residual environmental effects (after mitigation) resulting from scope 3 emissions could still be significant for the purposes of the Offshore EIA Regulations.

Mitigation Measures

Schedule 6(6) of the Offshore EIA Regulations further sets out that the ES should include (emphasis added): "*a description of the features of the project or measures envisaged in order to* **avoid, prevent, reduce or offset likely significant adverse effects** *on the environment"*.

Mitigation measures should be considered as early as possible for a proposed project, ideally at the scoping stage. In an ES, the developer must present a comprehensive description of the features of the project or measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset any likely significant adverse effects of the proposed project on the environment. Therefore, where the assessment of GHG emissions identifies a likely significant adverse effect from a proposed project, consideration must be given by the developer to identifying suitable mitigation measures.

In terms of mitigation hierarchy, suitable mitigation measures available to a developer to avoid, prevent or reduce any likely significant adverse effects on the environment from scope 3 emissions are expected to be limited. A developer may not have direct control over mitigation measures for avoiding, preventing or reducing scope 3 emissions, unlike the situation for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions. Typically, under EIA mitigation hierarchy, offsetting would only be considered if other mitigation measures to avoid, prevent or reduce likely significant adverse effects on the environment are not suitable.

OPRED is not recommending or discounting any specific mitigation measures, but any such proposals must not be speculative. A developer, when selecting suitable measures, will be expected to be accountable and responsible for the delivery of any proposed measures and a delivery plan for the measures would need to be provided in the ES. OPRED's current view is that emissions removal measures currently appear to be most appropriate for addressing any likely significant effects on the environment from scope 3 emissions. Any selected emissions removal measures would need to be transparent and easily verifiable at a project level (i.e. can be linked back to the proposed project). Confirmation of the permanence of any selected measures would need to be provided in the ES, including details of robust third-party monitoring, reporting and verification methodologies to ensure the measure is genuine and of high integrity, which may include UK Government removal standards as they are developed.

High Integrity Carbon Credits

The government sees a clear and appropriate role for the responsible voluntary use of high integrity carbon credits by companies. The UK Government's Principles for High Integrity

Voluntary Carbon and Nature Markets set out that the use of credits should be in addition to ambitious action within value chains, consistent with a science-aligned pathway to domestic and global climate and environmental goals. Further the Principles state that carbon credit buyers should set and disclose near and long-term targets, which should include a quantified and independently verified science-aligned target across scopes 1 to 3, to achieve net zero no later than 2050. At the time of this guidance, the UK government is currently consulting on the implementation of these Principles. Readers of this guidance are encouraged to refer to the consultation document (DESNZ, 2025) and any subsequent government response; however given the voluntary conditions outlined above, it is OPRED's current view that it is unlikely that the purchase of credits will be an effective mitigation measure for the purposes of the Offshore EIA Regulations.

Other Projects

Schedule 2 Projects

Projects falling under Schedule 2 of the Offshore EIA Regulations require a screening direction under Regulation 6. The information required in an application for a screening direction is set out in Regulation 6 and Schedule 4 to the Offshore EIA Regulations and is generally less exacting than the requirements for an ES.

Taking that into account, any specific requirements relating to scope 3 emissions for screening direction applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, developers should note that information concerning scope 3 emissions may be required for projects that would lead to an overall change in the total amount of hydrocarbons expected to be produced over the life of a field. In preparing any such information, developers should bear in mind the guidance set out above in relation to ESs.

Projects with an existing development and production consent

For projects with an existing development and production consent, it is possible that during the lifetime of a project a developer may need to apply to the NSTA to amend the daily production rate of the consent. Under such a scenario, any supporting application made under the Offshore EIA Regulations (whether an ES or a screening direction application) should confirm whether the change in daily production rate would alter the total amount of hydrocarbons to be produced over the lifetime of the project. If so, the ES or screening direction application should set out an assessment of the scope 3 emissions that will result from the increase or reduction in lifetime production levels as set out above.

Decision on whether to agree to the grant of consent

Section 1.7.2 of the of the Offshore EIA Regulations' Guidance sets out what information will be considered when reaching a conclusion on whether there are any significant effects of the project on the environment. When reaching a decision as to whether agreement should be given to the grant of consent the Secretary of State will consider the environmental effects of the project (as required by the Offshore EIA Regulations) and will form a view of the overall balance of advantage between any potential significant effects on the environment and wider benefits to the interests of the nation and any other relevant factors in proceeding with the project. In reaching this view the Secretary of State will usually consider, amongst other matters, the severity, extent, understanding and duration of the significant effects, the Government's overall energy and environmental objectives, and the potential economic and other advantages of the project proceeding. This includes an assessment of the extent to which the project aligns with the Government's stated objectives for the future of the North Sea.

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