

Offshore Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment 4 Scoping

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We are the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), and one of the world's largest engineering institutions with over 168,000 members in 150 countries. Our aim is to inspire, inform and influence the global engineering community to engineer a better world. We are a diverse home across engineering and technology and share knowledge to engineer solutions to global challenges like climate change. With our roots in electrical engineering, we have been championing engineering solutions and the people who deliver them for 150 years.

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) provides independent, impartial, and expert advice, spanning multiple sectors including Energy, the Built Environment, Transport, Manufacturing and Digital.

On behalf of the profession, the IET strives to inform and influence government on a wide range of engineering and technological issues. The organisation's membership spans a broad range of professional knowledge, and regularly offers unbiased, independent, evidence-based advice to policymakers via several channels. We believe that professional guidance, especially in highly technological areas, is critical to good policymaking.

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The IET welcomes the opportunity to comment on the BEIS Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) draft plan/programme. In March of this year, the IET published its first report in the 'IET Lighthouse series' which considers the wider co-ordination of the offshore energy system; [Offshore energy infrastructure landscaping – UK and neighbouring waters](#)

Following on from this report, subsequent and ongoing engagement with multiple stakeholders, the IET [Energy Policy Panel](#) will be responding to this consultation.

In considering this consultation, the IET Energy Policy Panel, would highlight the following:

- The role of SEA is balancing the needs for development with the needs for environmental protection – and there are many synergies with the IET Lighthouse project which highlights the need for coordinated development, across multiple and often disparate stakeholders and interests
- A coordinated approach, which encompasses all technologies; systems (energy, telecommunications, etc.); distribution and landing points is essential to achieve not only the Net Zero transition, but also environmental and societal impacts
- We note with some concern, that this consultation does not include interconnectors (domestic or international)
- There looks to be no section on accumulation of projects, and any view on this i.e. onshore impact such as landing points, landowners, and farmers - this is a key gap which needs to be considered and addressed
- There are a number of key interfaces between licencing (SEA) and other 'consented' factors – such interfaces need to be considered carefully and holistically

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Summary:

The IET offshore landscaping report focused on energy, however in this time of Climate and Nature emergency, the findings have clear synergies with the broader SEA offshore environmental scope, these include:

1. There is a very clear shared interest in the optimum use of the offshore resource; the need for close collaboration and consensus across multiple regulatory and market frameworks is essential i.e. all industry sectors, environmental, low carbon transition, and communities
2. Suitable incentives must be identified to engage all industry / sectors in planned coordination
3. The Baltic experience has shown that, with good co-ordination, appropriate legislation and proper planning, co-ordinated systems are achievable. SEA is a fundamental part of this and can support a collaborative and joined up approach
4. The offshore space is limited, and under heavy demand for use and protection – there needs to be a more joined up and holistic approach – effective and transparent marine spatial planning will be critical to success
5. Non-energy regulation can incentivise development in a manner contrary to optimised energy systems design; this needs to be addressed across the broader landscape. E.g. the ‘Habitats Regulations’, and ‘optimised energy systems design’ ‘potentially sterilising available landing points and thus preventing further offshore development to meet climate targets
6. Within the energy space, there are at least 50 high-profile industry initiatives with over 500 participants in various interest groups, and a significant number of smaller, particular interest or localised parallel initiatives. There is surprisingly little overlap between these groups. Informing the wider stakeholder and sector groups, illuminating the synergies and opportunities for better integration and coordination, must be a priority
7. It is imperative to differentiate between offshore site finding planning and optimum onshore connection points, but both must be considered in a co-ordinated energy system which recognises the twin challenges of climate and environment

