**Supplementary 31st Round offers exceptional opportunity for Greater Buchan Area revival**

* [Greater Buchan Area map](https://itportal.ogauthority.co.uk/web_files/gis/ukcs_maps/Buchan-area-map.pdf)

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) has launched the Supplementary 31st Offshore Licensing Round, presenting an exceptional opportunity for oil and gas companies to collaborate to maximise economic recovery of up to 300 million barrels of oil equivalent (mmboe) in the Greater Buchan Area.

Situated in the Outer Moray Firth in the North Sea, the region features approx. 5,800 km2 currently unlicensed acreage, which includes a number of undeveloped discoveries and prospects. Companies are being encouraged to collaborate and partner with each other to progress the material exploration and development opportunity in the area.

The Buchan Field first came online in 1981 using the Buchan Alpha floating drilling rig which was on station for around 36 years. The rig, which reached the end of its design life, has been removed from location, however significant oil and gas resources are estimated to remain in the Buchan reservoir and the Greater Buchan region, making it a valuable area of the North Sea.

To maximise economic recovery of the remaining resources, the OGA wishes to develop an Area Plan with industry linked to a licensing round.

The Supplementary Round has been supported by advanced release of substantial information and data, including seismic data packages. The OGA is continuing to make more and more data openly available and this dataset included well data for 154 wells, 3D seismic surveys, relinquishment and technical reports. To date, there have been 1,122 downloads from the OGA’s website, totalling 7.4 Terabytes of data by 34 different companies.

A newly created ‘Buchan Field Production Dashboard’ is also available on the OGA’s Open Data site which shows the entire production profile since 1981. This can be viewed via the link: <http://data-ogauthority.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/buchan-sup-round-dashboard>

Prior to this, an information day on the Greater Buchan Area was held at the OGA’s Aberdeen office in November 2018, to promote the opportunity. The OGA was pleased with the interest which saw 34 companies attend.

Dr Andy Samuel, Chief Executive of the OGA, said this latest round should unlock new opportunities and maximise value from this targeted area: “There’s been excellent interest in the Greater Buchan Area. There’s much to play for from exploration through to development opportunities. We are encouraging prospective operators to look beyond individual opportunities and actively partner with other companies to establish a mutually beneficial Area Plan realising the full economic potential in the area.”

**Notes to editors:**

* 5,800 km2 is are on offer in the Greater Buchan Area. A map of the Greater Buchan Area can be found [here.](https://itportal.ogauthority.co.uk/web_files/gis/ukcs_maps/Buchan-area-map.pdf)
* A full list of the blocks on offer can be viewed on the [OGA licensing rounds webpage](https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/licensing-consents/licensing-rounds/).
* Companies have until the round will close for applications at 2.00pm on the 2nd of May 2019 to apply for blocks on offer in the Supplementary Licensing Round. Decisions are expected to be made as early as possible in Q3/4 in 2019.
* Further details of the exploration datapacks and reports are available on the [OGA Open Data Centre](http://data-ogauthority.opendata.arcgis.com/).
* Government-Funded Seismic and Well Data is available to download or order on media via [CDA’s UK Oil and Gas Data page](https://www.ukoilandgasdata.com/)
* Area Plans are a shared view amongst industry participants of the optimal way to achieve MER UK in a specific set of circumstances. More information on Area Plans can be found [here.](https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/exploration-production/area-plans/)
* Relinquishment reports provided by previous licensees are also available through the [OGA's interactive maps webpage](https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/Relinquishments)
* Further information on [OGA Licensing Rounds](https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/licensing-consents/licensing-rounds/), including a five-year plan of licence rounds and application guidance.
* The launch of this round follows the closing of the 31st Offshore Licensing Round in November 2018 which attracted 36 applications covering 164 blocks in frontier areas of the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS). A strong and diverse set of applications were received from 35 companies ranging from multinationals to microbusinesses.
* The next round, the 32nd Offshore Licensing Round is planned to open in the summer 2019, and will focus on mature areas of the UKCS.
* The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (formerly Department of Energy and Climate Change), Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) Unit undertook a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to help inform offshore energy licensing and leasing decisions by considering the environmental implications of the plan / programme. The SEA was subject to an 8-week public consultation during March and April 2016. On 13th July 2016 OPRED published the Post Consultation Report and Post Adoption Statement concluding the SEA process.
* The SEA concluded that there are no overriding environmental considerations to prevent the achievement of the plan / programme. However, the SEA made a number of recommendations regarding precautions, with the area offered restricted spatially through the exclusion of certain areas together with a number of mitigation measures to prevent, reduce and offset significant adverse impacts on the environment and other users of the sea. The excluded areas will not be part of the offer.
* OPRED will carry out a screening exercise in accordance with the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) to determine whether the activities proposed to be carried out are likely to have a significant effect on the management of a Special Area of Conservation Area (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA). Where the screening exercise determines that there is a potential for likely significant impact, OPRED will undertake an Appropriate Assessment to determine whether the activities could have any adverse effects on the integrity of such SACs or SPAs. Licences will only be awarded where it has been ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of such SACs and SPAs.
* The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will also consider whether applicants meet the safety and environmental requirements of the Offshore Safety Directive, and will make recommendations accordingly for or against the award of each licence.
* Licences that are awarded in the round may contain conditions to protect environmental sensitivities, and the interests of other sea users. In addition, activities carried out under the licences will be subject to a range of legislation which is designed to protect the marine environment and other users of the sea, including regulations which apply the Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives in relation to offshore oil and gas activities.

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