

# Guidance: Regulatory Roadmap: Onshore oil and gas exploration in the UK regulation and best practice

*Updated:* Confirmation that powers related to onshore oil and gas licensing would be devolved to Wales.

These roadmap documents are intended as a first point of reference for anyone seeking to understand the permitting and permissions process for exploratory work in oil and gas development, onshore in the UK. The content is primarily for unconventional oil and gas operations, (specifically shale gas and coal bed methane developments) but many of the processes described will apply equally to conventional operations.

The roadmap provides a basic, indicative overview of the process, highlighting key pieces of legislation and regulation, and identifying required actions and best practices at various stages. Relevant regulatory websites should be referenced for detailed advice.

There is a separate roadmap document for each of the countries within the United Kingdom reflecting the different legislative frameworks that apply and various regulatory bodies that have responsibility for operations in each geographical area.

As recommended by the Smith Commission, it was agreed that powers related to onshore oil and gas licensing would be devolved to Scotland. The Scotland Act 2016 includes provisions for Scottish Ministers to exercise powers previously held by the Secretary of State or the Oil and Gas Authority, in relation to onshore licensing in Scotland. Responsibility for the onshore oil and gas licensing regime in Scotland transferred to Scottish Ministers on 9 February 2018.

For information on the regulation of onshore oil and gas (including shale gas) exploration in Scotland, please contact [Johann.MacDougall@gov.scot](mailto:Johann.MacDougall@gov.scot)

The Smith Commission also recommended that powers related to onshore oil and gas licensing would be devolved to Wales. The Wales Act 2017 includes provisions for Welsh Ministers to exercise powers previously held by the Secretary of State or the Oil and Gas Authority, in relation to onshore licensing in Wales. Responsibility for the onshore oil and gas licensing regime in Wales transferred to Welsh Ministers on 1 October 2018.

For information on the regulation of onshore oil and gas (including shale gas) exploration in Wales, please contact [Petrolewm.Petroleum@gov.wales](mailto:Petrolewm.Petroleum@gov.wales).

An overview diagram is presented for each country. On this diagram users can click individual boxes to access more detail. At the end of each section, users can click on a text hyperlink to take them back to the roadmap itself.

Depending on the user's version of Microsoft Word/Adobe Acrobat, all links may simply be clicked or may need the Control (Ctrl) key to be held down at the same time.

To use the Power Point version of the roadmap interactively, select full screen mode.