



North Sea
Transition
Authority

ACE FAQs

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General Consents Queries

Q. What is the Annual Consents Exercise (“ACE”)?

A. ACE is the process to apply to produce Oil and Gas, and to Flare and Vent Gas in the UKCS, Onshore & Facilities for the upcoming year following expiration of current consents.

Q. How will I know when and how to apply?

A. NSTA published guidance and key deadlines for submitting applications for the Annual Consents Exercise on the NSTA website ([North Sea Transition Authority \(NSTA\): Annual Consents Exercise 2023 - Consents - Licensing & consents \(nstaauthority.co.uk\)](#)). This webpage is our key point of communication going forward with details of supporting requirements to assist industry to plan with certainty.

Q. What should I do if I can’t meet the deadlines?

A. If you are unable to meet a deadline, please email consents@nstaauthority.co.uk for the attention of the NSTA Consents & Authorisations Manager with the background, ensuring this action is taken before the deadline, requesting guidance on next steps – at the very earliest opportunity.

Q. Do the deadlines apply to all onshore, terminal, and offshore annual consents?

A. Yes, the deadlines are the same for all application types.

Q. Will the NSTA email reminders be stopped?

A. Correct, reminders were stopped in 2022, and the NSTA has no current plan to reintroduce this process for ACE or wider field consents.

Q. How many Energy Portal contacts can I have in my team?

A. NSTA advises Operators to have a minimum of two working contacts on the UK Energy Portal who can action applications should they be returned.

Q. How do I access applications to prepare and amend?

A. Please speak to your Team Co-Ordinator who can include people and assign permissions to each person. In addition, please see the link to the Field Consents System user guidance - [field-consents-system-user-guidance-update-june-2021-final.docx \(live.com\)](#). Whilst the document was issued in 2021, it can still be consulted as a guide. However, if in doubt, please contact the consents team or view the how-to videos to which links are provided in the webinar links section of this webpage.

Q. Why have I received an application back in my workbasket?

A. If an application has been returned to you, please check comments boxes for any queries and comments which require a response. Please ensure that queries and comments are addressed promptly. Failure to do this will delay your application progressing.

Production Consents (PCONs)

Q. How do I apply?

A. Applications for the continuation of production in the year following expiry of the current consent are to be submitted using the template for new applications. They cannot be processed via the template for revisions to existing consents.

Q. What happens if I submit an application using the wrong template?

- A. If you have submitted your application using the wrong application template, you will be requested to withdraw this application and will be charged for it along with the additional cost for the correct application. If in doubt, please contact us for advice.
- Q. How long a production consent duration should I apply for and what does NSTA expect the maximum and minimum rates to be based on?
- A. Please contact your NSTA Area Team point of contact and they will be able to discuss the appropriate consent duration and rates for your individual field with you ahead of your application in the portal. This will streamline the review process and help ensure we do not have to pass the consent application back to you for revision.

Flare and Vent Consents (FCONs and VCONs)

- Q. How do I apply?
- A. Applications for the continuation of Flaring and/or Venting in the year following expiry are to be submitted using the **new application template**, they cannot be processed as revisions to existing consents.
- Q. What happens if I apply using the wrong template?
- A. If you have submitted your application using the wrong application template, you will be requested to withdraw this application and will be charged for it along with the additional cost for the correct application. If in doubt, please contact us for advice.
- Q. How do I include a field to a joint Flare/Vent consent?
- A. Approval from the relevant NSTA Engineer and other parties in the joint consent is required. Written evidence from each field in the joint consent, stating that they are content with the field being included in the joint consent, is to be attached to the application being submitted via the Energy Portal (in the Additional Info section).
- Q. If you add more than one field to the consent, do you have to fill in a breakdown for each one or a summary for all fields listed?
- A. No.
- Q. How long a Flare or Vent consent duration should I apply for and what does the NSTA expect the maximum and minimum rates to be based on?
- A. Please contact your NSTA Area Team point of contact prior to submitting your application and they will be able to discuss the appropriate consent duration (maximum duration is 1 year) and rates for your field(s). This will streamline the review process and help ensure we do not have to pass the consent application back to you for update.
- Q. If the application is submitted prior to the Flare and Vent deadline, are we to provide 12 months of actual data prior to that date?
- A. ACE flare and vent applications automatically request reporting from Oct 22 - Sept 23. In this section only include months that have completed data. Use the functionality to delete any months that do not have actual data available at the time of submission. .
- Q. Are you anticipating that the ERAP and the flare and vent Management Plan are one in the same?
- A. ERAP is an emissions reduction, so that includes power generation, flare and vent. Therefore, the flare and vent Management Plan would be a subset of the ERAP.
- Q. If an ERAP is achieving its aims, can an Operator develop the ERAP as they see fit?

- A. The NSTA has not given a check list for writing an ERAP, there are guidelines in the flare and vent guidance however the ERAP should be developed and owned by the Operator and should be embedded within your organisation.
- Q. What is Molecular Weight in applications for?
- A. Oil and Gas works in different measurements. Inerts are derived from the reservoir.
- Q. Do you expect a vent consent for any venting from crude storage tanks?
- A. Yes, we expect that a consent will be needed for releases from any discrete tank vents. But please contact the NSTA if you need to discuss any aspect.

Onshore Consents

- Q. How long a production consent duration should I apply for and what does the NSTA expect the maximum and minimum rates to be based on?
- A. Please contact your NSTA Area Team point of contact and they will be able to discuss the appropriate consent duration and rates for your individual field with you ahead of your application in the portal. This will streamline the review process and help ensure we do not have to pass the consent application back to you for revision.
- Q. How long a Flare or Vent consent duration should I apply for and what does the NSTA expect the maximum and minimum rates to be based on?
- A. Please contact your NSTA Area Team point of contact and they will be able to discuss the appropriate consent duration and rates for your field(s) with you ahead of your application in the portal. This will streamline the review process and help ensure we do not have to pass the consent application back to you for revision.
- Q. When requesting a further production consent are there any requirements prior to the application submission?
- A. Yes, the NSTA will require a FDPA to be submitted prior to the application submission.

Facility Consents

- Q. How do I apply?
- A. New Flare and Vent Consent applications for Facilities are to be submitted via email to consents@nstauthority.co.uk. The Facility operator should apply for consents on behalf of the licensees using the terminal.
- Q. How long a Flare or Vent consent duration should I apply for and what does OGA expect the maximum and minimum rates to be based on?
- A. Please contact your NSTA point of contact consents@nstauthority.co.uk and they will be able to discuss the appropriate consent duration (maximum duration is 1 year) and rates for your Facility with you ahead of submission of your application. This will streamline the review process and help ensure we do not have to pass the consent application back to you for revision.

EIA Requirements

- Q. When should I apply to DESNZ EMT for an EIA (ES) or a Screening Direction.
- A. Please ensure all DESNZ EMT requirements are applied for prior to submitting your application to the NSTA. For any questions regarding your requirements please contact DESNZ EMT directly.

- Q. What are the EIA requirements for my production, flare and vent application.
- A. The Energy Portal application will ask the following question - “Does the activity as described in the consent application constitute a project under the Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020?”
- *If 'Yes' is selected, you must take steps to secure the necessary agreement from DESNZ before any Field Consent may be issued.*
 - *If 'No' is selected, and a Field Consent is issued but it is subsequently determined that the Field Consent includes project activity that has not secured SoS' agreement, the consent may be withdrawn (as invalid) which may have consequences for ongoing field operations.*
- Q. What happens if the NSTA do not receive a response from DESNZ EMT regarding my project.
- A. If your application is for a project under the EIA regs 2020, the NSTA will not be in a position to issue a consent under that application without prior approval from the Secretary of State (DESNZ EMT).