North Sea Transition Authority

Guidelines for Licence Relinquishment Reports (Updated February 2026)

The licence administrator is notified of whether or not a relinquishment report is required through the Licence End Letter (full relinquishments) or the Relinquishment Letter (partial relinquishments). If a relinquishment report is required, the licence administrator shall send a relinquishment report to the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA) within three months of the effective date given in the letter.

Please e-mail relinquishment reports to:
- Seaward Licence Reports to relinquishment.reports@nstauthority.co.uk
- Landward Licence Reports to onshore@nstauthority.co.uk

The report should contain a full summary of the work carried out on the licence, including descriptions of any newly acquired seismic and reprocessed data, any studies and the results from these, and an account of the prospectivity for the relinquished area. The NSTA requires a report that provides sufficient, credible information within an acceptable format (preferably PDF). The report should include:

1. Licence information:

Licence number: (e.g. P.????; PEDL??? etc)
Licence round:
Licence type: landward/traditional/frontier/promote/innovate phase A or B/innovate C
block number/s:

2. Licence synopsis:

Licence status (e.g. *end phase A or phase B; end of initial term; other reasons for relinquishment).*
Include a summary of the award and participants, the work obligations (depending on the term of the licence) and any significant licensee/operator changes and licence extensions agreed.
Outline the prospectivity identified at the time of application and whether or not any undeveloped discoveries were analysed.

3. Work programme summary:

If the licence was in the initial term, specify the exact work programme agreed for the licence, and what was undertaken.

If the work programme included reprocessing seismic data, give clear seismic examples of pre- and post-processing as figures, and describe any noticeable uplifts in the seismic data. Similarly, for new seismic data acquired and interpreted give clear seismic comparison examples of older and newly acquired seismic data as figures. Specify whether the data was of sufficient quality to address the geology of the block(s). Give brief details of the results of any news wells drilled on the licence.

4. Database:

The report should include a map of the seismic and well database utilised in the evaluation of prospectivity and/or discoveries.

5. Prospectivity update:

Provide a brief review of all prospectivity presented in the original licence application (lead and prospect summaries provided in Appendix B of the application document would suffice), and a more detailed review of prospectivity following any reprocessing/new seismic data, etc. This should include structure maps and examples of the seismic interpretation. If any drilling has taken place, show examples of the revised or new interpretation/mapping incorporating the well results.

6. Further technical work undertaken:

Give a summary of any further detailed technical analysis or studies undertaken to de-risk the prospectivity on the licence. This may include, for example, inversion, rock physics, AVO, spectral decomposition, more detailed well analysis, etc.

7. Resource and risk summary:

Include a summary table of recoverable resources associated with the remaining undrilled prospects and Leads. An example is shown below.

8. Conclusions:

Comment on any remaining potential prospectivity on the licence, and the reason for relinquishment.

9. Clearance:

It is important that the submitting operator or administrator confirms the following within the report:
[OPERATOR/ADMINISTRATOR] confirms that the NSTA is free to publish this report. All third party ownership rights (on any contained data and/or interpretations) have been considered and appropriately cleared for publication purposes.

The NSTA will consider withholding publication of the report until after the next licensing round, only on a clear request in the covering email from the operator.

10. Maps and figures:

As a minimum, provide:

- a location plot
- a structure map at an appropriate scale (but must cover for offshore two minutes of latitude and two minutes of longitude, or, for onshore, sufficient National Grid co-ordinates to enable georeferencing of the prospects within the licence) on appropriate horizon(s)
- illustrative seismic sections (see above)
- illustrative geoseismic cross section(s).

11. Submission of zipped shapefile of prospect/discovery polygon:

In addition to the relinquishment report in PDF format, a zipped digital shapefile or feature class outline should be provided for each feature (e.g. lead, prospect or discovery). The spatial data should be supplied in a format compatible with ArcGIS and should include a clear statement of the coordinate reference system (CRS) used.

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All figures, including maps and seismic lines, need to be of suitable resolution to be clearly legible in the final report. Maps and seismic examples should not be less than full page width. Maps should follow standard geoscience best practices and must include at a minimum: a scale bar, suitable and legible grid coordinates, block outlines, outlines of the licence and where appropriate any lead(s), prospect(s) and discovery(ies), contours with legible contour labels and contour interval clearly marked.

Where figures are based on published literature this should be clearly cited in the figure caption and a reference section should be added to the report giving a full reference of the source. Figures should be sufficiently modified to warrant inclusion in the report, unchanged copies of figures from published sources cannot be included.

Resource and risk summary										
Prospect Lead Discovery Name	PLD	Stratigraphic level	Unrisked recoverable resources						Geological Chance of Success %	Risked P50 MMboe
			Oil MMbbls			Gas BCF				
			Low	Central	High	Low	Central	High		
Venus	P	Paleocene	4	6	10	90	130	160	22	
Pluto	P	Piper	5	11	21				17	
Mars	L	Cretaceous	3	17	33				12	
Earth	D	Jurassic	5	7	9				100	