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Dear David,

Re: NSTA Road test on Regulations on the Retention of Carbon Storage Information and Samples

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of OEUK's members regarding this road test. We have also incorporated comments from EnerGeoAlliance, as the views of the members of that organisation were well aligned with those of OEUK's membership.

Looking at the road test in the round, and echoing our response to the consultation on this matter last year, our members reiterated their broad support for, and welcomed the general alignment between retention requirements for carbon storage licenses and those for petroleum licences. These offer operational efficiencies that are welcome given the significantly smaller commercial margins of carbon storage activities, compared to oil and gas production.

The integration of CCS licence and asset reporting into the NSTA's Digital Energy Platform was also welcomed, as this allows a consistent approach to be taken for all aspects of subsurface and surface information reporting.

A number of points of detail were also raised, which I share below.

1. We note that reporting deadlines for geophysical survey information acquired under a CS licence are proposed to be different to those required under a petroleum licence. It would be helpful to understand why that is, and to achieve alignment on timescales if practical, to avoid complexity in operational governance within licensees. Our members' preference would be to mirror the reporting timescales already in place for petroleum-related information.
2. Can the NSTA be more specific regarding what is to be retained, and the specific form and manner, so as to avoid costs of unnecessary retention; and to minimise reformatting activity required solely for the purposes of reporting? Clarity on which geophysical survey types and volumes (e.g. field, stacks, etc.) are to be retained would be particularly helpful in avoiding unnecessary storage costs, which may be significant given the large data volumes involved, especially in the context of store monitoring.
3. It would be helpful if the NSTA could clarify that the retention (and subsequent reporting and disclosure) requirements will apply only to information created after the relevant regulations

come into force. This is particularly important where retention and subsequent reporting obligations may relate to information that has been commercially licensed, and for which the carbon storage licensee must also comply with relevant data licence agreements, as these licence agreements typically include a requirement that the data be kept confidential.

4. While our members recognise the benefits of maintaining data online and immediately accessible, they also recognise the practicality, robustness, and low cost of retaining and sharing large data volumes on physical media, so long as that media is maintained as evergreen. In particular, tape media is a proven, robust method for long-term, low-cost storage of infrequently accessed data in a manner that is at very low risk of loss due to storage infrastructure issues or cyber-attacks. Carbon emissions associated with tape storage are presumed to be much lower than that for data held on-line also. For data stored for the long term that will only be accessed in exceptional circumstances, we propose physical media continues to be regarded as good practice as a storage method.
5. The lifecycle of a carbon storage asset is very different to that of a petroleum asset, leading to commercial and confidentiality concerns relating to information disclosure. Our members welcome the opportunity to contribute to the NSTA's forthcoming consultation on disclosure regulations for information and samples obtained under a carbon storage licence, so that these concerns can be taken into account.

A suitable period of confidentiality continues to be required in order to allow a sufficient return to be made on investments in data acquired under exploration and storage licenses, so as to encourage continued investment. Our members would not expect that confidentiality period to be less than that already in place for petroleum licences.

6. The retention period for rock samples acquired under a carbon storage licence appears to be significantly longer than that for rock samples acquired under a petroleum licence. For a store operational for 25 years, and with a minimum 20 year period of post closure monitoring, samples may need to be retained for upwards of 50 years, versus the five year period under a petroleum licence. Can the NSTA comment on why it would be reasonable for carbon storage licensees to be required to bear the costs of storage of such samples for such a long period?

We would welcome a discussion on the technical and other considerations relating to storage of core and cuttings, and the likely utility of such samples after many decades of storage, so that the basis for the associated retention requirement is clear. A process is also required to enable the timely disposal of samples that are agreed to be of no further value.

7. The scope of the retention requirement for physical samples is extremely broad. Could the NSTA clarify if samples of limited value such as core end trims, damaged sections, and offcuts are included in this requirement?
8. Our members note that physical samples (e.g. grab samples of the seabed) may be obtained to meet the requirements of other statutory bodies, particularly for monitoring requirements, and ask that retention requirements for physical samples be drafted to ensure that samples obtained for other bodies are not inadvertently included in scope.
9. We note that total storage resources information is interpretative and would require substantial explanation to be useful. We propose that this is not reported except at licence relinquishment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to this road test. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the points raised above at your convenience.

With best wishes,



Dr. Daniel Brown

Head of Data & Digital, Offshore Energies UK