



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Science and Resources

Offshore petroleum exploration work-bid permits

Guideline

9 December 2025

Our purpose is to help the government build a better future for all Australians through enabling a productive, resilient and sustainable economy, enriched by science and technology.

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The purpose of this publication is to provide information on the grant, administration and management of offshore petroleum exploration permits under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (OPGGs Act). This guideline also assists applicants and titleholders to understand the expectations of the Joint Authority when making decisions on applications.

The Commonwealth as represented by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources has exercised due care and skill in the preparation and compilation of the information in this publication.

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1. Overview

- 1.1. An exploration permit granted *under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act (2006)* (OPGGS Act) authorises the titleholder to explore for and to recover petroleum on an appraisal basis, and to explore for potential greenhouse gas storage formations and injection sites within the permit area. Exploration activities, such as seismic data acquisition and exploration drilling, can occur subject to relevant regulatory approvals. This includes acceptance of an environment plan, well operations management plan and safety case as relevant by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).
- 1.2. The registered holder of a petroleum exploration permit (the permittee) is authorised in accordance with the OPGGS Act and conditions (if any) to which the permit is subject to:
 - a) explore in the permit area for a potential greenhouse gas storage formation.
 - b) explore in the permit area for a potential greenhouse gas injection site.
 - c) carry out such operations and execute such works in the permit area as are necessary for those purposes.
- 1.3. While the permittee is authorised to explore for potential GHG storage formations and injection sites, sections 312 and 312A of the OPGGS Act do not authorise a petroleum exploration permit holder to apply for a declaration of identified storage formation.
- 1.4. An exploration permit is awarded, subject to conditions, for an initial term of six years, which may be suspended, extended and/or varied in certain circumstances. At the end of the initial term, the exploration permit may be renewed for two further terms of five years each.
- 1.5. If a petroleum discovery is made during the term of an exploration permit please refer to Petroleum Discoveries Factsheet and Declaration of a location guideline for next steps.
- 1.6. NOPTA monitors compliance with work programs and additional conditions through mechanisms such as the annual titles assessment report. NOPTA will advise the Joint Authority on any non-compliance issues as appropriate.

Decision-maker

- 1.7. The relevant offshore petroleum Joint Authority is the decision maker on applications for the grant, renewal and surrender of petroleum exploration permits, as well as variation and suspension of, and exemption from permit conditions and the extension of permit terms.
 - a) The Joint Authority for an offshore area of a State (other than Tasmania) comprises the responsible Commonwealth Minister and the responsible State Minister. The responsible Commonwealth Minister is the Joint Authority for the offshore area of Tasmania and the Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands. The responsible Commonwealth Minister and the responsible Northern-Territory Minister comprise the Commonwealth-Northern Territory Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority.
- 1.8. Applications are assessed by NOPTA who then provide advice to the relevant Joint Authority.

Decision-making

- 1.9. The OPGGS Act provides that the Joint Authority is the decision maker for considering an application for a petroleum exploration permit. The Joint Authority must (or in some cases, may) have regard to certain matters when making decisions in respect of certain applications for or in respect of petroleum titles. These include:

- a) whether the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to:
 - (i) carry out the operations and works that will be authorised by the permit; and
 - (ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under this Act, or a legislative instrument under this Act, in relation to the permit.
 - b) the matters specified in section 695YB of the OPGGS Act as they apply to the applicant.
 - c) if the applicant is a body corporate, the matters specified in section 695YB as they apply to an officer of the body corporate.
 - d) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
- 1.10. The decision maker may also have regard to any other matter the Joint Authority considers relevant.
- 1.11. Where the Joint Authority, is not satisfied that the applicant has access to sufficient technical advice and financial resources or does not meet the suitability criteria (where relevant), the application must (or in some cases may) be refused.

Matters relating to the assessment of the suitability of an applicant can be found in the [Guideline: Applicant suitability](#).

Information gathering powers

- 1.12. Section 258 of the OPGGS Act provides the Titles Administrator powers to require applicants to provide further information about an application. Where further information is required, applicants will be notified in writing and the notice will specify the time within which the information is to be provided.
- 1.13. Failure to provide the required information may result in the Joint Authority deciding to refuse to consider the application or take any action (or further action) in relation to the application.

Application requirements

- 1.14. When preparing an application, the applicant should review the associated documents relevant to that application including:
- a) provisions within the OPGGS Act.
 - b) regulations.
 - c) subject matter guidelines and factsheets available on NOPTA's website.
 - d) [NOPTA Forms Guidance–Petroleum](#). This consolidated application guidance document covers submission requirements and details, forms execution (signatures), notification requirements and other government considerations such as foreign investment and prior usage rights.
 - e) application forms.

Submission requirements

- 1.15. To be validly made all applications must be:
- a) in the approved form.
 - b) accompanied by any information or documents required by the form.

- c) submitted in the approved manner.
 - d) accompanied by the application fee.
- 1.16. Applicants should also familiarise themselves with the [Factsheet: Declarations of experience and disclosures](#) and determine if a declaration or change of circumstances form is required to be submitted with an application.

For further information on submission requirements refer to the [NOPTA Forms Guidance–Petroleum](#).

2. Applying for an exploration permit

- 2.1. To responsibly manage resources, the Australian Government seeks to ensure applicants are capable, competent, able to responsibly manage their activities and meet all regulatory obligations from exploration through to decommissioning.
- 2.2. The Joint Authority awards exploration permits to the applicant who proposes an exploration strategy and work program that will significantly advance the assessment and understanding of the petroleum potential of the area and who has a satisfactory record of past performance.
- 2.3. The Joint Authority, in accordance with sections 105(3) and (4) of the OPGGS Act, must consider:
 - (a) whether the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to:
 - (i) carry out the operations and works that will be authorised by the permit; and
 - (ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under the OPGGS Act, or a legislative instrument under the Act, in relation to the permit; and
 - (b) the matters specified in section 695YB of the OPGGS Act as they apply to the applicant; and
 - (c) if the applicant is a body corporate – the matters specified in section 695YB as they apply to an officer of the applicant; and
 - (d) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

The decision maker may also have regard to any other matter the Joint Authority considers relevant.
- 2.4. The Joint Authority recognises the essential role of operational activities such as wells and seismic acquisition in the discovery of petroleum. However, depending on the nature of the area, an exploration well in the primary term or the acquisition of new seismic data may not place an applicant above another applicant who proposes a work program that is logical, coherent and supportable and is considered to be commensurate with the perceived prospectivity of the area.
- 2.5. The Joint Authority awards exploration permits subject to a set of standard conditions. If deemed appropriate, the Joint Authority may also place additional conditions on the permit—section 99 (1) of the OPGGS Act.

Detailed application requirements

- 2.6. To be validly made the application must be:
 - a) Accompanied by a correctly completed and executed application form, including any information or documents required by the application form—section 104(3) of the OPGSS Act.
 - b) Submitted within the timeframe specified in the Australian Government Gazette notice.
- 2.7. Applications should be compliant with the requirements published in the gazette notice inviting applications and meet the minimum expectations of the Joint Authority, as outlined in this guideline.
- 2.8. Applicants are expected to take into account all relevant matters, such as environmental protection, defence, navigation, native title rights and interests, fisheries and access restrictions applying in the proposed permit area.

- 2.9. Applicants are expected to have obtained and submitted any other approvals necessary to allow for the potential offer of an exploration permit. This includes approval by the [Foreign Investment Review Board](#) (FIRB).
- 2.10. Once an application is submitted, the composition and timing of the proposed work program cannot be amended through the submission of further information and other changes will not be accepted.

Technical and financial capacity and applicant suitability matters

- 2.11. In deciding to offer the grant of a petroleum exploration permit, the Joint Authority must have regard to:
- a) whether the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to:
 - (i) carry out the operations and works that will be or are authorised by the permit; and
 - (ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under the OPGGS Act, or a legislative instrument under the OPGGS Act, in relation to the permit.
 - b) the applicant's suitability to hold an exploration permit—that is, the matters specified in section 695YB as they apply to the applicant.
 - c) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
- 2.12. The Joint Authority may also take into account any other matters that it considers relevant. This will include the past performance of the applicant (see section below) and the project management experience and corporate governance arrangements.
- 2.13. Each applicant is required to provide relevant information to demonstrate it has sufficient technical advice and financial resources available to carry out the operations and works authorised by the permit, and discharge the obligations imposed under the OPGGS Act and regulations made under that Act.
- 2.14. Each applicant is also required to complete the relevant declaration of experience and disclosures (Form 8 and 9) relating to past conduct and suitability of the applicant and its key officers. If a Form 8 or 9 has previously been made, the previous Form 8 or 9 can be referenced.

Refer to the [Factsheet: Declarations of experience and disclosures](#), [Factsheet: Financial resources](#), the [Guideline: Applicant suitability](#) and section 1 of this guideline for further details on application submissions requirements, assessments and decision making against these criteria.

Past performance

- 2.15. Past performance of the applicant, parent company or subsidiary company, where applicable, and its directors is a factor the Joint Authority may consider during the decision-making process.
- 2.16. Past performance refers to:
- a) Matters outlined in section 695YB of the OPGGS Act as applicable to the applicant.
 - b) Any health, safety and/or environmental past performance records in Australia or internationally.

- 2.17. The Joint Authority may not offer to grant an exploration permit to an applicant if the applicant's past performance indicates a history of non-compliance with permit conditions or if the applicant does not demonstrate a proven ability to significantly advance the assessment and understanding of the petroleum potential of permit areas.

When considering past cancellations, the Joint Authority may have regard to the circumstances that led to the cancellation of the permit.

Refer to the [Factsheet: Declarations of experience and disclosures](#) and the [Guideline: Applicant suitability](#) and section 1 for further details on application submissions requirements, assessments and decision making against these criteria.

Following the Good Standing Policy being abolished, from 9 December 2025, there will be a transition period. During this period, if an applicant has an existing Good Standing Agreement, the Joint Authority will note this in relation to the cancellation or expiry in default that led to the Good Standing Agreement, during the decision-making process.

Technical evaluation

- 2.18. The technical evaluation should summarise the applicant's understanding of the geology and petroleum potential of the release area. It should include the concepts underlying the proposed work program, with sufficient detail to support that program. A sound technical evaluation should include an assessment of relevant data and clearly support the type and scope of surveying and the number and conceptual targets of wells to be drilled, if applicable.
- 2.19. The technical evaluation should include, but is not limited to, a description of:
- a) The applicant's assessment of the release area, including potential petroleum systems, and plays within the release area.
 - b) Any prospects and leads mapped within the release area, including supporting material such as images, interpreted seismic sections and horizon maps.
 - c) The data and/or studies the technical evaluation is based on.
 - d) Any geotechnical studies, seismic interpretation, mapping or any other work that has been undertaken as part of the technical evaluation.
 - e) Potentially useful nearby infrastructure.
 - f) How the applicant proposes to use any existing data or analytical techniques over the release area, including how these data and techniques are to be employed in the proposed work program.

Exploration strategy

- 2.20. The exploration strategy should link the technical evaluation with the proposed work program and should outline how the applicant proposes to use any existing data over the release area.
- 2.21. Applicants should propose an exploration strategy that has the potential to significantly advance the assessment and understanding of the petroleum potential of the release area. The exploration strategy should be consistent with the applicant's technical evaluation of the release area and the proposed work program for the six-year permit term.
- 2.22. The exploration strategy should explain how the release area will be explored over the permit term, including how the different work program elements will investigate the plays, prospects and leads identified in the technical evaluation of the area to support the development of any discoveries, using existing infrastructure where possible.

Work program

- 2.23. Proposed work program activities should be stated precisely to avoid ambiguity.
- 2.24. Work programs are divided into a 'primary' and 'secondary' term.
- 2.25. The first three-years of a work program are referred to as the primary term. The first three years of the permit term are combined, and the minimum work requirements must commence and be completed within that primary term. This requirement is specified in the conditions of an exploration permit.
- 2.26. Once awarded, the work program commitments for the primary term become guaranteed and cannot be reduced. Work activities that cannot be guaranteed should not be included in the primary term.
- 2.27. Permit years 4, 5, and 6 are referred to as the secondary term. Each year's work program becomes guaranteed upon entry and the minimum work requirements must commence and be completed within the permit year.

An example of a six-year work program:

Year	Start date	End date	Activity	Indicative cost \$A
1-3	01/01/2025	31/12/2027	Licence 2,000 km ² of 3D seismic data 2,000 km ² of 3D seismic reprocessing Geophysical and geological studies including seismic interpretation	00,000,000 000,000 000,000
4	01/01/2028	31/12/2028	Geophysical and geological studies including prospect and lead maturation studies	000,000
5	01/01/2029	31/12/2029	One exploration well	00,000,000
6	01/01/2030	31/12/2030	Geotechnical and geological studies	0,000,000

- 2.28. The proposed work program for the six-year term must be consistent with the exploration strategy and underpinned by the technical evaluation of the release area.
- 2.29. The proposed work program should be regarded as significantly advancing the exploration effort.
- 2.30. The early elements of the proposed work program should be sufficient to enable the later elements to proceed and be aligned with the exploration strategy. This includes the need for the number and timing of wells to be justifiable and be supported by the number and maturity of plays, prospects and/or leads identified i.e. the work program should be pursuable on a dry hole basis.
- 2.31. Proposed work program activities should only include work that will be undertaken within the permit area. Any work, studies or reprocessing proposed outside the permit area, must be clearly differentiated.
- 2.32. Work intended to appraise a known petroleum accumulation in an area may form part of the proposed work program. However, appraisal activities must be clearly differentiated from exploration activities.
- 2.33. Work associated with a known petroleum accumulation will only be considered as exploration work if the applicant provides a sufficient rationale to support an assessment that the activity

includes a significant exploration component. This rationale should be consistent with the overall exploration strategy and underpinned by the technical evaluation of the area.

- 2.34. A proposed work program may include activities to explore for a potential greenhouse gas formation and injection site. However, these activities must clearly be differentiated from petroleum exploration activities. Applicants should also be mindful of the notification requirements outlined in Part 6 of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas (Resource Management and Administration) Regulations 2011* (RMA Regulations), and that the right to apply for a declaration of identified GHG storage formation does not extend to petroleum exploration permit holders (see section 1.3) who cannot apply for a GHG holding lease or GHG injection licence.
- 2.35. Activities such as the preparation of environment plans, field development plans, resource certification and similar activities, are not considered to be exploration or appraisal activities, and therefore will not be assessed as part of the bid or be included on the title instrument (if awarded). These activities must be clearly differentiated.
- 2.36. The minimum acceptable work program for an area will vary depending on the size of the area, its perceived prospectivity, data availability and its location.
- 2.37. If a work-bid includes new seismic data acquisition, the bid must clearly describe the following:
 - a) Whether all existing data options i.e. new reprocessing or licencing reprocessed data been exhausted.
 - b) Consideration as to possible alternatives or opportunities to acquiring new seismic.
 - c) For bids with seismic in the first three years, justification as to why the acquisition of new seismic data must be undertaken in the primary term as a commitment.
- 2.38. Where a permit area is substantially covered by 3D seismic data, reprocessing this data or licencing reprocessed data is generally expected to form part of the proposed primary term work program and should be undertaken before acquiring new seismic data. Reprocessing the data would normally be expected to be from raw data or the quality-controlled traces and to use techniques not previously undertaken on the seismic data within the permit area.
- 2.39. It is expected that at least one exploration well will be proposed during the initial six-year permit term for well-explored areas with good data coverage.
- 2.40. The description of the proposed work program should include:
 - a) Indicative expenditure in Australian dollars for each activity at current market value. Calculations for operational activities should detail how the cost of the activities have been estimated.
 - b) The amount, type and details of the applicable dataset of any new processing or reprocessing the applicant proposes to undertake, including:
 - i) The number of line kilometres of 2D and/or square kilometres of 3D seismic data that will be processed and/or reprocessed within the permit area clearly stated.
 - ii) A map showing the indicative location of the 2D lines or 3D survey outline. All existing seismic surveys should be identified on this map.
 - c) If known, the parameters and methodology of the reprocessing that will be undertaken. The licensing or use of any existing exclusive or non-exclusive datasets and, if applicable, how these are proposed to be used in conjunction with any reprocessing or geophysical studies proposed in the work program.
 - d) The number of exploration wells proposed, including indicative plays and target play levels.
 - e) The nature, scope and objectives of all proposed studies.

- f) Descriptions and the conceptual locations/targets/purpose of other operational activity or surveying proposed.

Important notes on treatment of pre-bid evaluation of data

- 2.41. Reprocessing and interpretation of existing seismic data undertaken during the applicant's pre-bid evaluation of a release area will be considered in assessing the relative merit of proposed work programs where there are competing bids for a release area.
- 2.42. If an applicant licences available multi-client data or reprocesses available multi-client data as part of its pre-bid evaluation and does not propose that work as part of its guaranteed work program, details of pre-bid evaluation work should be provided and include details of the extent of the work undertaken, the results and how this has informed the exploration strategy and proposed work program.

Non-exclusive seismic data: multi-client surveys and reprocessing products

- 2.43. If an applicant proposes to licence non-exclusive multi-client seismic data, either new or reprocessed, as part of a work program, it should:
 - a) state whether the data is part of either:
 - i) an existing non-exclusive seismic survey or reprocessed data volume
 - ii) a planned or not-yet-completed non-exclusive seismic survey or reprocessing project.
 - b) state when the initial final processed or reprocessed data will become available for licencing.
 - c) ensure the:
 - i) data is in an industry standard format that is fit for purpose in meeting the objective of the work program
 - ii) applicant will be able to provide information to NOPTA to demonstrate that the work program obligation has been met
 - iii) data submission and release requirements can be met.
- 2.44. If the final processed dataset will not become available until after the closing date of bids, this will be assessed as new seismic acquisition or reprocessing for the purposes of the bid assessment.

Bid assessment

- 2.45. In deciding whether to offer to grant an exploration permit to an applicant, the Joint Authority:
 - a) must have regard to the matters specified in subsection 105(4); and
 - b) may have regard to any other matters the Joint Authority considers relevant.
- 2.46. The matters specified in subsection 105(4) are as follows:
 - a) whether the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to:
 - i) carry out the operations and works that will be authorised by the permit; and

- ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under the OPGGS Act, or a legislative instrument made under the Act, in relation to the permit;
 - b) the matters set out in section 695YB of the OPGGS Act as they apply to the applicant;
 - c) if the applicant is a body corporate, the matters specified in section 695YB as they apply to an officer of the body corporate; and
 - d) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.
- 2.47. In deciding whether to exercise its discretion to make an offer, the Joint Authority may take into consideration a broad range of factors (see 2.50 below). Where there are competing bids for a release area, these factors will include which bid is likely to progress the most comprehensive understanding of the petroleum prospectivity of the area.
- 2.48. Where there are multiple applicants for the grant of an exploration permit, in determining the applicant who is most deserving, the Joint Authority must have regard to the criteria in section 2.50 in relation to the proposed primary work program.
- 2.49. Where there is a single applicant, the Joint Authority may also have regard to the criteria in section 2.50 below.
- 2.50. For the purpose of section 105(3)(b) of the OPGGS Act, in no particular order, the Joint Authority may have regard to the following matters:
- a) The relevance of the proposed work program to the technical evaluation and exploration strategy.
 - b) The amount, type and timing of seismic data to be purchased or licenced.
 - c) The amount, type and timing of seismic data reprocessing or acquisition and processing to be carried out, including parameters and methodology.
 - d) The amount, type and timing of other surveying and data acquisition to be carried out.
 - e) The type, scope and objectives of the geophysical and geological studies, proposed within the area and how these studies align with other work program activities and the exploration strategy.
 - f) The number and timing of exploration wells proposed and their alignment with the perceived prospectivity of the area, supporting program of geological and geophysical work and the number of proposed plays and/or mapped prospects/leads identified.
 - g) The past performance of the applicant in Australia or internationally.
 - h) Significant proposed appraisal work over existing petroleum discoveries within the release area, if any.
- 2.51. If an applicant cannot be chosen based on the primary work program, the secondary work program will be assessed and ranked using the criteria above.
- 2.52. If two or more applicants are still considered to be equally deserving of the grant of an exploration permit, in accordance with section 106(6) of the OPGGS Act, the Joint Authority may invite the applicants to make a written proposal for additional work and expenditure.
- 2.53. If an applicant is made an offer for the grant of an exploration permit and declines the offer, the Joint Authority may make an offer to the second ranked applicant, where applicable.
- 2.54. There is no penalty or disadvantage should an applicant not accept an offer by the Joint Authority.

Refusal to grant an exploration permit

- 2.55. The Joint Authority may refuse to grant an exploration permit. The following considerations may be given weight when determining whether to offer a permit. The:
- a) Proposed work program is assessed to be inferior to that of a competing bid.
 - b) Proposed work program is assessed to be inadequate to significantly advance the exploration status of the area.
 - c) Proposed work program is not consistent with the technical evaluation.
 - d) Joint Authority is not satisfied the applicant possesses sufficient financial resources or has access to sufficient technical advice to carry out the operations and works—including the proposed work program—authorised by the permit, in addition to other guaranteed work program commitments in other titles under the OPGGS Act the applicant and/or parent company has an interest in.
 - e) Joint Authority is not satisfied the applicant is suitable to hold a petroleum exploration permit having regard to the matters in section 695YB of the OPGGS Act.
 - f) and other relevant matters such as corporate governance arrangements or relevant experience.
 - g) Joint Authority is of the view the past performance of the applicant in Australia or internationally is not satisfactory.

3. Petroleum exploration permit conditions and administration

- 3.1. Titleholders are expected to ensure that all obligations under the OPGGS Act, *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas (Regulatory Levies) Act 2003* (OPGGS Levies), the associated regulations, any directions and title conditions are met at all times.
- 3.2. Section 280 of the OPGGS Act makes it an offence for a person to carry on activities in an offshore area in a manner that interferes with the enjoyment of other rights and interests, to a greater extent than is necessary for the reasonable exercise of the person's rights and performance of that person's duties under the OPGGS Act. A person who contravenes section 280 may also be liable to civil penalties. It may also be grounds for cancellation of a title.
- 3.3. Titleholders must comply with the data management and reporting requirements of the RMA Regulations.
- 3.4. The OPGGS Act allows for a variation, suspension and/or exemption from compliance with work program condition/s. Where the Joint Authority considers the circumstances make it reasonable to do so, the Joint Authority may also grant an extension to the permit term where a condition has been suspended.
- 3.5. The Joint Authority acknowledges elements of an exploration work program, or its timing may need to change as:
 - a) Geological or technical knowledge is gained, requiring additional work i.e. technical grounds.
 - b) If the timing of an activity is impacted by force majeure circumstances.
 - c) New technology is used to fulfill previously stated exploration objectives.
- 3.6. All applications are considered by the Joint Authority on a permit-by-permit basis. Therefore, a separate application must be lodged for each permit. Application forms are available on NOPTA's website.

Further information on application requirements is at section 1.

- 3.7. Applications made under section 264 of the OPGGS Act may be submitted at any time but should not be made later than 60 days before the end of the primary term or the permit year.
- 3.8. In the event the Joint Authority forms the view that it proposes to refuse an application, the applicant will be afforded procedural fairness. The applicant will be issued a Notice of Intention to Refuse and be provided the opportunity to respond to the Joint Authority including to provide additional information, which will then be considered by the Joint Authority prior to making a final decision on the application.
- 3.9. Titles that have a 'prior usage right' for the purposes of section 359 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Protection Act 1999* (EPBC Act) will require consent from the Minister for the Environment before an extension to the permit term can be granted by the Joint Authority.

Refer to the [Australian Marine Parks website](#) for further information and a prior usage rights guideline.

Technical and financial capacity

- 3.10. Section 264(2AA) of the OPGGS Act provides that the Joint Authority may have regard to:

- (a) whether the technical advice and financial resources available to the permittee are sufficient to:
 - (i) carry out the operations and works that will be authorised by the permit, if the condition of the permit is varied or suspended or the permittee is exempt from compliance with the conditions; and
 - (ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under the OPGGS Act or a legislative instrument under the Act, in relation to the permit if the condition of the permit is varied or suspended or the permittee is exempt from compliance with the condition; and
 - (b) any other prescribed by the regulations; and
 - (c) any other matters the Joint Authority considers relevant.
- 3.11. An applicant should include with its application any relevant information to demonstrate sufficient technical advice and financial resources are available.

Refer to the [Factsheet: Financial resources](#) and the [Guideline: Applicant suitability](#) for further details on application submissions requirements, assessments and decision making against these criteria.

Further information on application requirements is at section 1 of this guideline.

- 3.12. Following review of the initial information provided, the Titles Administrator and/or the Joint Authority may request further information from an applicant.
- 3.13. When determining whether an applicant has sufficient financial resources and technical advice for the purpose of making a decision on its application, the Joint Authority may consider:
- a) Whether there has been any material change in the financial resources and technical advice available to the applicant since the title was granted or last renewed.
 - b) The impact of the application on the overall work program commitments.
 - c) Where future funding proposals have previously been identified to fund work program commitments, what progress has been made to date.

Work program commitments

Seismic data and reprocessing

- 3.14. A titleholder may meet a seismic surveying commitment by licensing an equivalent amount of non-exclusive multi-client seismic data if the final processed data becomes available after the date the permit was granted.
- 3.15. A titleholder may purchase and/or licence reprocessed seismic data to meet a seismic reprocessing work program commitment subject to the following conditions:
- a) The reprocessed data will only be accepted to the extent it meets, in part or in full, the original work program commitment.
 - b) The data must have been reprocessed after the date the permit was granted.
 - c) The reprocessing will be from raw data or the quality-controlled traces.
 - d) The reprocessing must utilise techniques not previously undertaken on seismic data acquired within the permit.
- 3.16. If an applicant proposes to licence data to use in its current form, or to reprocess as part of a work program commitment, it must ensure that:

- a) The data is in an industry standard form that is for purpose in meeting the objectives of the work program.
- b) It is able to provide information to NOPTA that demonstrates the work program commitment has been met.
- c) The data submission and release requirements can be met.

Credit

- 3.17. The Joint Authority places a standard condition on a title that enables the Titles Administrator, at its discretion and by written instrument, to credit activities undertaken within an earlier permit year as meeting the work program commitments of a later permit year.
- 3.18. It is the responsibility of the titleholder to obtain the Titles Administrator's agreement to credit an activity to a later permit year.

Suspension or a suspension and extension

- 3.19. Titleholders may apply to suspend any of the conditions to which the permit is subject or apply to suspend any of the conditions to which the permit is subject together with an extension of the permit term—a 'suspension and extension'.
- 3.20. The Joint Authority considers the work program as a whole when reviewing a suspension or suspension and extension application.
- 3.21. When proposing to suspend a permit year or years or extend the permit term, the length of suspension and/or extension should reflect the time that is reasonably required to complete all activities for the relevant permit year(s).
- 3.22. Titleholders should identify if a decision is required to be made in respect to the application before progressing the relevant activities and describe the proposed forward work program in periods from the date on which the application is approved.
- 3.23. Titleholders should also nominate as part of their application if the length of suspension and/or extension should apply from either the end date of the permit year or from the date of decision of the Joint Authority. The requested length of suspension/extension will only be applied from the date of approval if the application is approved after the end of the relevant permit year(s).
- 3.24. The Joint Authority will generally only consider a suspension with an extension of the permit term if the proposed work program for the subsequent year/s is reliant on the work to be undertaken in the suspended year i.e. the subsequent year consists of an exploration well or other operational activities.
- 3.25. If a suspension application is lodged in the final year of the permit term, the permit will remain in force until a decision is made by the Joint Authority. If the Joint Authority refuses the application, the permit will continue in force for at least two months, effective from the date the titleholder was notified of the refusal. This will ensure the titleholder has time to apply for a renewal of the permit or for the grant of a successor title prior to the expiry of the permit.
- 3.26. A suspension or a suspension and extension will not change the reporting date for the Annual Titles Assessment Report.

Refer 3.03 of the RMA Regulations.

- 3.27. A suspension of a permit year only suspends the deadline to complete the work program commitment activities. A suspension will defer the end date of the current permit year but will

not alter the end date of subsequent permit years. This generally results in permit years running concurrently.

An example of a 12-month suspension of year 4, without an extension

Year	Start date	End date	Activity	Indicative cost \$A
4	01/01/2028	31/12/2029	Geophysical and geological studies including prospect and lead maturation studies	000,000
5	01/01/2029	31/12/2029	One exploration well	00,000,000
6	01/01/2030	31/12/2030	Geotechnical and geological studies	0,000,000

- 3.28. A suspension and extension will defer the end date of the current permit year and all subsequent permit years.

An example of a 12-month suspension of year 4 and an extension of the permit term

Year	Start date	End date	Activity	Indicative cost \$A
4	01/01/2028	31/12/2029	Geophysical and geological studies including prospect and lead maturation studies	000,000
5	01/01/2030	31/12/2030	One exploration well	00,000,000
6	01/01/2031	31/12/2031	Geotechnical and geological studies	0,000,000

Force majeure

- 3.29. If the ability of a titleholder to meet a work program commitment is adversely impacted by an event that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled during the course of the exploration work program via experience or care the Joint Authority may approve a suspension or a suspension and extension on a force majeure basis.
- 3.30. An application on force majeure grounds must include substantial and compelling documentary evidence to demonstrate how the force majeure circumstance has adversely impacted the ability to complete the work program, and a Gantt chart showing the proposed schedule for the forward work program.
- 3.31. Commercial circumstances and common risks in the industry are not considered to constitute force majeure. These may influence the perceived commercial viability of an activity but would not normally prevent an explorer from adhering to its commitment. Such circumstances and risks may include, but are not limited to:
- avoidable delays in receiving processed/reprocessed data from contractors
 - failure to mature a drillable prospect
 - changes in oil price
 - difficulty attracting a farm-in partner

- avoidable delays in contracting a drilling rig/seismic vessel
- difficulty in raising capital
- disappointing exploration results
- the need to wait for the results of exploration work undertaken outside the permit area

Technical grounds

- 3.32. If the ability of a titleholder to meet an existing work program commitment is affected by new geological knowledge or unexpected technical challenges, the Joint Authority may approve a suspension or a suspension and extension on technical grounds.
- 3.33. If a titleholder proposes additional work activities to address new geological knowledge or unexpected technical challenges, the Joint Authority will generally expect this work to be varied into the work program through an above-commitment work variation.
- 3.34. An application on technical grounds must include compelling documentary evidence to demonstrate how these technical grounds have adversely impacted the ability to complete the work program, and a Gantt chart showing the proposed schedule for completion of the minimum work program activities in the requested suspension or suspension and extension period.

Merits

- 3.35. If the ability of a titleholder to meet a work program commitment is adversely impacted by an event or circumstances that do not constitute force majeure grounds or technical grounds, the Joint Authority may approve a suspension or a suspension and extension on a merit basis.
- 3.36. An application on merits grounds must include compelling documentary evidence to demonstrate the merits of the application and the event or circumstances that have adversely impacted the ability to complete the work program, and a Gantt chart showing the proposed schedule for completion of the minimum work program activities in the requested suspension or suspension and extension period.

Variations

- 3.37. Titleholders may apply to vary any of the conditions to which the permit is subject. In submitting variation applications titleholders should note that:
- Proposed work program activities to be varied into the permit should only include work that will be undertaken within the permit area. Any work, studies or reprocessing proposed outside the permit area must be clearly differentiated.
 - If a titleholder applies for a suspension and variation at the same time, this is expected to be lodged as a single application on the appropriate application form.
- 3.38. A titleholder may apply for:
- A work equivalent variation.
 - an above-commitment work variation.
 - a secondary work program variation.
- 3.39. If the Joint Authority agrees to vary a condition which requires the titleholder to drill an exploration well during the permit term, an exploration well is expected to be included in the primary term of the renewal program, should the titleholder elect to renew the permit.

Work equivalent

- 3.40. A titleholder may apply to replace a guaranteed work program activity with an equivalent work program activity.
- 3.41. The Joint Authority will generally only agree to a variation if the proposed replacement work program activity is a similar or superior technique and the activity meets or exceeds the objective of the original work program commitment.
- 3.42. It is the responsibility of the titleholder to ensure the Joint Authority has agreed to the work equivalent variation before commencement of the work.

Above-commitment

- 3.43. If a titleholder proposes to undertake significant above-commitment work that will have critical implications for the exploration of the permit area, the Joint Authority may agree to an above-commitment variation, to vary the work into the current permit year so that the work becomes guaranteed.
- 3.44. An application should be supported by:
 - a) technical evidence as to why the work program should be varied.
 - b) detailed outline of the proposed new activities.
 - c) a Gantt chart showing the proposed schedule for the forward work program.
 - d) documentary evidence, such as contracts with a relevant service provider to undertake the new activities, in support of the application.
- 3.45. When considering an application for an above-commitment work variation, the Joint Authority may also agree to either a suspension or suspension and extension to enable the titleholder sufficient time to undertake the new work.
 - a) A combined application for a suspension or suspension and extension and variation may be submitted to NOPTA.
- 3.46. In the case of an above-commitment work variation, generally the Joint Authority will consider up to a 12-month suspension or a 12-month suspension and extension, if supported by the circumstances of the application. However, a longer time frame may be requested, and the Joint Authority will consider this on a case-by-case basis and on its merits for circumstances such as when:
 - a) A titleholder has entered a permit year with a drilling commitment and is unable to mature a drillable prospect.
 - b) The proposed work is significant and assessed to have critical implications on the titleholder's forward work plans.
- 3.47. Where a titleholder has exhausted all available data and processing techniques and needs to acquire new seismic data in order to progress exploring the permit, an above-commitment work program variation may be applied for.
- 3.48. An application for an above-commitment work program variation to include new seismic data should include:
 - a) The number of line kilometres of 2D and line spacing and/or square kilometres of 3D seismic data that will be acquired and processed within the permit area, including:
 - i) Full fold numbers within the permit area.

- ii) A map showing the indicative location of the 2D lines or 3D survey outline, including any known leads and/or prospects. All existing seismic surveys should be identified on this map.
- iii) The parameters and methodology of the seismic acquisition and processing that will be undertaken.
- iv) A description of the existing data options and analytical techniques considered i.e. reprocessing/or licencing reprocessed data and explanation why these are not considered sufficient or appropriate for progressing exploration in the permit area.
- v) an explanation as to why new seismic data will significantly advance exploration of the permit area.

Secondary work program variation

- 3.49. A titleholder may apply to vary:
 - a) Individual permit years before entry into the relevant permit year.
 - b) Permit years 5 and 6 before entry into permit year 5.
 - c) The whole secondary work program before entry into permit year 4.
- 3.50. An application should be supported by exploration results from the primary term or previous permit years and technical evidence as to why the work program should be varied.

Exemptions

- 3.51. A titleholder may apply to be exempt from compliance with a work program condition. An exemption application may only be made on exceptional technical or force majeure grounds.
- 3.52. Commercial circumstances will not be considered as grounds for an exemption—refer section 3.31 of this guideline.
- 3.53. In deciding whether to exempt a titleholder from compliance with a work program condition, the Joint Authority will consider if the:
 - a) Titleholder has demonstrated a significant effort to identify and assess the petroleum potential of the permit and has provided substantial and compelling documentary evidence.
 - b) Objective of the original work program commitment has been met.
- 3.54. The Joint Authority will not exempt a titleholder from an activity if the following permit years are reliant on that work being undertaken.

Surrenders

- 3.55. A titleholder may apply for consent to surrender some or all of the blocks that the permit is in force over.
- 3.56. In deciding whether to consent to the surrender, the Joint Authority will consider the criteria in section 270 of the OPGGS Act, including:
 - a) The status of the work program—consent will usually be refused before the completion of the guaranteed primary term work program commitments.
 - b) Whether the titleholder has completed all guaranteed work program commitments up to and including the permit year in which the application has been made.

- c) Whether there are sufficient grounds, in the Joint Authority's view, to warrant the giving of consent to surrender despite non-compliance with any of the criteria outlined in subsection 270(3) of the OPGGS Act. In determining if sufficient grounds exist for a surrender in non-compliance, the Joint Authority may also consider:
 - vi) If the titleholder has demonstrated a significant effort to identify and assess the petroleum potential of the permit and has provided substantial and compelling documentary evidence.
 - vii) If the objective of the original work program commitment has been met.
 - viii) Other matters as considered relevant by the Joint Authority.
- 3.57. In undertaking its assessment, in accordance with the OPGGS Act, NOPTA consults with NOPSEMA.
- 3.58. Titleholders are expected to ensure any outstanding reports and data are lodged with the surrender application in accordance with the RMA Regulations.
- 3.59. If the Joint Authority gives consent to the surrender of the permit, the titleholder may, by written notice given to NOPTA, surrender the whole or part of the permit.
- 3.60. The surrender takes effect the day a notice is published in the Australian Government Gazette.

Refer to '[Guideline: Offshore petroleum decommissioning](#)' on NOPTA's website.

Expiry

- 3.61. An expiry takes effect on the day the permit ceases to be in force.
- 3.62. Titleholders are not required to lodge an application if it is intended to let a permit expire. However, titleholders may choose to notify NOPTA of this intention before the expiration date.
- 3.63. Prior to the permit expiry, the titleholder is expected to ensure that all
 - a) Conditions of the title, including any work program commitments have been met.
 - b) Relevant provisions of chapters 2, 4, 6 and part 7.1 of the OPGGS Act and the regulations have been complied with including the submission of all reports and data due and completion of any decommissioning obligations.
 - c) Any direction(s) given by the responsible Commonwealth Minister, NOPSEMA or the Joint Authority have been complied with.
 - d) All applicable fees, royalties and the annual titles administration levy have been paid, or appropriate arrangements have been made with NOPTA.

Refer to '[Guideline: Offshore petroleum decommissioning](#)' on NOPTA's website.

- 3.64. If the permit expires in default of the permit conditions, the titleholders will be recorded as having a past performance issue that will be used in the decision-making process, effective from the date of the expiry. After the expiry of the permit, NOPTA will:
 - a) Undertake a compliance check of the title. If any of the matters outlined in section 3.63 above are outstanding NOPTA will contact the titleholder.
 - b) Issue a formal notice of the expiry in the Australian Government Gazette—section 708 of the OPGGS Act.
 - c) Make an entry on the Register of Titles regarding the expiry of the title—section 471 of the OPGGS Act.

- d) Advise the titleholders in writing that the title has expired.

Cancellation

- 3.65. Titleholders must at all times comply with their obligations under the OPGGS Act, OPGGS Levies Act, the associated regulations, any directions and permit conditions. Failure to comply with any of these obligations, including work program commitments, is a ground for cancellation of the permit.

Refer to [Guideline: Offshore Petroleum Decommissioning](#) on NOPTA's website.

- 3.66. If there is/are a ground/s for cancellation, before making a decision the Joint Authority will issue the titleholder a written notice of intention to cancel the permit, setting out the details of the decision that is proposed to be made; reason/s for the proposed cancellation and invite a person to whom the notice is given to make a written submission to the Joint Authority about the proposed decision; and specifying a time limit for making that submission. Titleholders will be given at least 30 days to submit matters they wish to have considered by the Joint Authority in reaching its final decision.
- 3.67. Before deciding to cancel a title, the Joint Authority must:
- Consider any submissions made by the titleholder or other relevant persons.
 - Take into account any action taken by the titleholder to remove the ground(s) for cancellation or prevent its recurrence.
- 3.68. The titleholder(s) will be notified in writing if the Joint Authority cancels the title. A cancellation takes effect the day a notice is published in the Australian Government Gazette.

Good Standing Agreements

As of 9 December 2025, the Joint Authority will not offer nor enter into any further Good Standing Agreements (GSA). Instead, where a permit is cancelled or expires in default, the titleholder/s, the parent company (where applicable) and all associated company directors at the time of the cancellation or expiry will be considered to have a past performance issue that the Joint Authority must have regard to under section 695YB of the OPGGS Act and this guideline.

Amendments made to the OPGGS Act in 2021, which included the addition of section 695YB to the OPGGS Act, superseded 'Good Standing' policy. The OPGGS Act now requires that the decision-maker must have regard to the matters outlined in section 695YB of the OPGGS Act when making certain decisions. Among other matters, this includes if the person has had an application refused or of the person is or has been the registered holder of a title that was cancelled.

Refer to section 695YB of the OPGGS Act.

Refer to section 2.15 of this guideline for more information on past performance.

If a Good Standing Agreement is in force prior to 9 December 2025, the following information will be relevant for the duration of that GSA.

Satisfaction of a Good Standing Agreement

- 3.69. Companies that are subject to a GSA must notify NOPTA in writing and provide supporting evidence the GSA has been satisfied according to the terms of the GSA.

- 3.70. Companies may be required to submit audited accounts demonstrating the required expenditure commitments have been met. Once this information has been received (and accepted) and all deliverables completed and all data delivered, titleholders will receive confirmation the requirements of the GSA have been satisfied.
- 3.71. A GSA will be satisfied by fulfilment of the agreement in respect of:
- a) Qualifying permit/s: the completion of the guaranteed primary work program/expenditure of the GSA amount. The guaranteed work program expenditure may include above commitment operational activities that have been formally varied into the work program. The onus is on the GSA-holder to confirm the above commitment work will satisfy the requirements of sections 3.37–3.46 above.
 - b) Regional studies: the completion of the studies within the agreed timeframe (nominally three years from the date of the execution of the GSA) and the submission of all data and/or other deliverables to the Australian Government.
- 3.72. For the purposes of satisfying a GSA, non-acceptable expenditure includes:
- permit administration costs
 - costs associated with regulatory approvals, including environmental plans
 - expenditure on activities not on the work program (originally or as varied in)
 - expenditure on regional studies not agreed in advance with the Joint Authority.

Extensions

- 3.73. The Joint Authority may consider granting an extension to the timeframe in which a GSA must be satisfied, but only if the GSA holder can demonstrate it has attempted to satisfy the GSA at every opportunity.
- 3.74. An extension to the timeframe in which the GSA must be satisfied will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.75. A written request to extend can be submitted to NOPTA for Joint Authority consideration and decision.

Variation to terms and conditions

- 3.76. The Joint Authority may consider granting a variation of the terms and conditions of a GSA. This may include variation of the option to satisfy the GSA or to combine existing GSAs.
- 3.77. Variations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.78. A written request to vary a GSA can be submitted to NOPTA for the Joint Authority's consideration and decision.
- 3.79. If the request is to vary to the regional study option, the request should include details of the proposed regional study.

4. Renewing an exploration permit

Overview

- 4.1. A titleholder may apply to renew a work-bid exploration permit. Titleholders should refer to sections 122 and 123 of the OPGGS Act to determine the number of times a permit may be renewed and the maximum number of blocks that may be applied for.
- 4.2. It is the Joint Authority's expectation that the proposed work program will be supported by an exploration strategy that will significantly advance the assessment and understanding of the petroleum potential of the permit area during the five-year renewal term.
- 4.3. Titles that have a 'prior usage right' for the purposes of section 359 of the EPBC Act will require consent from the Minister for the Environment before a renewal can be granted by the Joint Authority.

Refer to the [Australian Marine Parks website](#) for further information and a prior usage rights guideline.

How to apply

- 4.4. An application must be made at least 90 days before the expiry of the permit. NOPTA may accept applications later than 90 days, but no later than the expiry date. A form for requesting an extension of time to lodge an application for renewal is available on NOPTA's website.
- 4.5. To be validly made the application must be accompanied by a correctly completed and executed application form, including any information or documents required by the application form.
- 4.6. An application is taken to be accompanied by the documents/information specified in section 4.5 above where they are given to the Joint Authority before the expiry date of the permit.
- 4.7. A renewal application should include:
 - a) a technical evaluation of the petroleum potential of the area
 - b) a work program and activities for the primary term
 - c) a work program and activities for the secondary term
 - d) an overview of compliance with the permit conditions, chapters 2, 4, 6 and part 7.1 of the OPGGS Act and the associated regulations
 - e) technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant.

Further information on application requirements is at section 1.

Criteria

- 4.8. If:
 - a) each of the following has been complied with: the conditions of the permit; Chapters 2, 4, 5A, 6 and Part 7.1 of the OPGGS Act; and the regulations
 - b) the Joint Authority is satisfied that the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to:
 - (i) carry out the operations and works that will be authorised by the permit; and

- (ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under this Act, or a legislative instrument under this Act, in relation to the permit
- c) the Joint Authority is satisfied of the matters (if any) prescribed by the regulations;
the Joint Authority must give the applicant a written notice (called an **offer document**) telling the applicant that the Joint Authority is prepared to renew the permit.

Work program

- 4.9. The proposed work program for the five-year renewal term must be consistent with the exploration strategy and underpinned by the technical evaluation of the area incorporating results and findings of the previous permit term.
- 4.10. The early elements of the proposed work program should be sufficient to enable the later elements to proceed and be aligned with the exploration strategy. This includes the need for the number of wells to be justifiable and be supported by the number and maturity of plays, prospects and/or leads identified i.e. the work program should be pursuable on a dry hole basis.
- 4.11. Work intended to appraise a known petroleum accumulation in an area may form part of the proposed work program. However, appraisal activities must be clearly differentiated from exploration activities.
- 4.12. Work associated with a known petroleum accumulation will only be considered as exploration work if the titleholder provides a sufficient rationale to support an assessment that the activity includes a significant exploration component. This rationale should be consistent with the overall exploration strategy and underpinned by the technical evaluation of the area.
- 4.13. Work intended to explore for a potential greenhouse gas formation and injection site may form part of the proposed work program. However, this work must clearly be differentiated from petroleum exploration activities. Applicants should also be aware of the notification requirements outlined in Part 6 of the RMA Regulations, and that rights of petroleum exploration permit holders do not allow the declaration of an identified GHG formation, and subsequent progression to a GHG holding lease or GHG injection licence (See section 1.4).
- 4.14. The first three years of a work program are referred to as the primary term. The first three years of the permit term are combined, and the minimum work program commitments must commence and be completed within the primary term.
- 4.15. Once the permit is renewed, the primary term work program becomes guaranteed and cannot be reduced. Work program activities that cannot be guaranteed should not be included in the primary term.
- 4.16. Permit years 4 and 5 are referred to as the secondary term. Each year's work program commitment becomes guaranteed upon entry and the minimum work requirements must commence and be completed within the permit year.
- 4.17. If a proposed work program for a renewal term includes new seismic data acquisition, the renewal application must clearly describe the following:
 - a) Whether all existing data options i.e. new reprocessing or licencing reprocessed data have been exhausted.
 - b) Consideration as to possible alternatives or opportunities to acquiring new seismic.
 - c) For work programs that propose new seismic data in the first three years, justification as to why the acquisition of new seismic data must be undertaken in the primary term as a commitment.

Refer to sections 3.43-3.48 for above-commitment variations.

- 4.18. Where a permit area is substantially covered by 3D seismic data, reprocessing this data or licencing reprocessed data is expected to form part of the proposed primary term work program and should be undertaken before acquiring new seismic data. The reprocessing would normally be expected to be from raw data or the quality-controlled traces and to utilise techniques not previously undertaken on seismic data within the permit area.
- 4.19. Where a titleholder can demonstrate it has exhausted all available data and processing techniques and needs to acquire new seismic data to progress exploring the permit area, acquiring or licensing new seismic may be included in the proposed work program. If the acquisition or licencing of new seismic data is proposed titleholders should clearly explain the reason/s and consider alternatives or opportunities.
- 4.20. It is expected that at least one exploration well will be proposed during the five-year renewal term. If a well is not proposed, technical justification should be provided in the application addressing why exploration drilling in the renewal term is not feasible.
- 4.21. If no exploration drilling was undertaken in the previous permit term, it is expected an exploration well will be proposed in the renewal term as a guaranteed work program commitment in the primary term.
- 4.22. Work program activities should only include work that is to be undertaken within the permit area. Any work, studies or reprocessing to be undertaken outside the permit area must be clearly differentiated.
- 4.23. The description of the proposed work program for the renewal term should include:
 - a) Indicative expenditure in Australian dollars for each activity at current market value. Calculations for operational activities should detail how the cost of the activities have been estimated.
 - b) The number of line kilometres of 2D and proposed line spacing and/or square kilometres of 3D seismic data that will be acquired and processed within the permit area, including:
 - i) Full fold numbers within the permit area.
 - ii) A map showing the indicative location of the 2D lines or 3D survey outline. All existing seismic surveys should be identified on this map.
 - iii) If known, the parameters and methodology of the seismic acquisition and processing that will be undertaken.
 - c) The amount, type and details of the applicable dataset of any new reprocessing the applicant proposes to undertake, including:
 - i) The number of line kilometres of 2D and/or square kilometres of 3D seismic data that will be reprocessed within the permit area clearly stated.
 - ii) A map showing the indicative location of the 2D lines or 3D survey outline. All existing seismic surveys should be identified on this map.
 - iii) If known, the parameters and methodology of the reprocessing that will be undertaken.
 - d) The number of exploration wells proposed, including indicative plays and target play levels.
 - e) Descriptions of the prospects and leads mapped within the permit area including images of seismic or other data based cross-sections and horizon maps.
 - f) The nature, scope and objectives of any studies.

- g) The licensing or use of any existing exclusive or non-exclusive datasets and, if applicable, how these are proposed to be used in conjunction with any reprocessing or geophysical studies proposed in the work program.
- h) Descriptions and the conceptual locations of targets and purpose of other operational activity or surveying proposed.

An example of a five-year work program:

Year	Start date	End date	Activity	Indicative cost \$A
1-3	01/01/2025	31/12/2027	2,000 km ² of 3D seismic data reprocessing Geophysical and geological studies including seismic interpretation	0,000,000 000,00
4	01/01/2028	31/12/2028	One exploration well	00,000,000
5	01/01/2029	31/12/2029	Geophysical and geological studies including prospect and lead maturation studies	0,000,000

Technical and financial capacity

- 4.24. The decision to offer the renewal of a petroleum exploration permit, must take into account whether the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to:
- a) carry out the operations and works that will be or are authorised by the permit
 - b) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under the OPGGS Act, or a legislative instrument under the OPGGS Act, in relation to the permit.
- 4.25. Applicants should include with their application any relevant information to demonstrate sufficient technical advice and financial resources available.

Refer to the [Guideline: Applicant Suitability](#) and section 1.

Refusal to renew

- 4.26. Section 126 of the OPGGS Act outlines the grounds for refusal to renew an exploration permit.
- Section 126(3) provides that the Joint Authority must refuse to renew a permit if the Joint Authority is not satisfied that the technical advice and financial resources available to the applicant are sufficient to;
- i) carry out the operations and works that will be authorised by the permit; and
 - ii) discharge the obligations that will be imposed under the Act, or a legislative instrument made under the Act, in relation to the permit.
- 4.27. The Joint Authority must refuse to renew the permit if:
- a) any of:
 - i) the conditions to which the petroleum exploration permit is, or has from time to time been, subject; or

- ii) the provisions of this Chapter, Chapter 4, Chapter 5A, Chapter 6 and Part 7.1; or
 - iii) the provisions of the regulations;
- have not been complied with; and
- a) the Joint Authority is not satisfied that there are sufficient grounds to warrant the granting of the renewal of the permit.
- 4.28. Where the Joint Authority intends to refuse to renew an exploration permit, consultation procedures apply under section 262 of the OPGSA.

5. Table of revisions

Date of commencement	Version no.	Purpose/changes made
December 2025	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-formatted to new departmental template. - Updates to reflect change of policies and alignment with the Future Gas Strategy.
July 2022	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to new department name.
2 March 2022	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to reflect amendments from the <i>Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Amendment (Titles Administration and Other Measures) Act 2021</i>.
February 2020	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to new department name.
July 2019	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates to reflect policy changes to acreage release and good standing agreements, as well as process clarifications.
May 2016	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates to reference prior usage right requirements under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>.
May 2015	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidating and streamlining of the Exploration Permit Guideline: Requirements of Bid and Renewal Applications, Exploration Permit Guideline: Assessment of Bid and Renewal Applications and the Exploration Permit Guideline: Permit Conditions and Administration into a single guideline. - Wholesale re-write to improve clarity of Joint Authority expectations. - Provision of additional flexibility through the primary term becoming a guaranteed three-year block of time. - Expanded options to satisfy a GSA.
November 2011	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated to reflect changes to OPGGS ACT—transfer to NOPTA. Slight Amendments to the financial requirements (paragraph 5.1.2)
November 2010	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wholesale re-write to improve clarity of Joint Authority expectations
October 2009	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to reflect: - OPGGS Act numbering - Grammatical errors