



## Developing a petroleum resource

All fact sheets should be read in conjunction with the [Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006](#) (the OPGGS Act), associated regulations, relevant guidelines and policies (available on [NOPTA's website](#)).

This fact sheet provides information about the processes for applying for a production licence and field development plan (FDP). It must be read in conjunction with the legislation and regulations.

### What approvals are required?

Before petroleum recovery operations can commence (outside of exploration and appraisal), you must have:

- (i) a petroleum production licence granted by the Joint Authority
- (ii) a FDP accepted by the Joint Authority
- (iii) a rate of recovery approval from the Joint Authority and equipment and procedures approval.

Further information on rate of recovery and equipment and procedures is on [NOPTA's website](#).

A titleholder should also consider if a pipeline licence and/or an infrastructure licence is required.

Approvals relating to safety, well and facility integrity, and environmental management will also be required from [NOPSEMA](#).

### Which legislation applies?

A titleholder may apply for a production licence under Part 2.4 or Schedule 4 of the OPGGS Act. Schedule 4 relates to the [Offshore Petroleum \(Royalty\) Act 2006](#).

Part 4 of the [Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas \(Resource Management and Administration\) Regulations 2011](#) (RMA Regulations) applies to FDPs and rates of recovery.

### When do I apply?

#### Grant of a Production Licence:

- An exploration permit holder with a declared location can apply for a production licence over block(s) within the location at any time up to two years after the location was declared (or up to a maximum of 4 years where allowed by the Titles Administrator).
- A retention lease holder can apply for a production licence over block(s) within the lease at any time up to the expiry date of the lease.

#### Acceptance of FDP:

- A production licence applicant can apply at any time after submitting the licence application.
- A production licence holder can apply at any time.

Development drilling should not begin until the FDP is accepted.

Please allow **up to six months** for a production licence application or FDP application to be determined. The time taken will depend on the quality of the submission.

### What is the process?

Before a titleholder submits a production licence or FDP application (including FDP variation), they should discuss timeframes and process with NOPTA.

#### Step 1 – Preliminary FDP (pFDP) feedback

As there is no further information process for a FDP, NOPTA offers to review the FDP in preliminary (draft) form before a titleholder submits the FDP application.

- There is no application form or application fee for a pFDP. It is not provided to the Joint Authority.
- NOPTA will review the pFDP and provide gap analysis feedback against the RMAR requirements.
- This process generally takes 5 weeks.
- The applicant is expected to address NOPTA's feedback in preparing the final version of the FDP.

#### Step 2 – Production Licence application

To be validly made an application for a production licence must be:

- in the approved form (application forms are available on NOPTA's website at <https://www.nopta.gov.au/forms/forms.html>)
- accompanied by any information or documents required by the approved form.
- submitted in the approved manner (refer to NOPTA's website at <https://www.nopta.gov.au/forms/index.html>); and
- accompanied by the applicable application fee.

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

NOPTA may request further information from the applicant to support the licence assessment process.

If the application relates to a Royalty Act title, the State will consult with the applicant on the rate of royalty and make a recommendation to the Joint Authority.

#### Step 3 – FDP application

The FDP application must include:

- A validly executed application form.
- Proof of payment of the application fee.
- The FDP (including contents set out below).



For further information on submission requirements and information required to accompany applications for acceptance of a FDP, refer to the [NOPTA Forms Guidance–Petroleum](#).

Production licence and FDP applications are submitted to [titles@nopta.gov.au](mailto:titles@nopta.gov.au). NOPTA provides advice to the Joint Authority as the decision-maker. The Joint Authority may apply conditions to a production licence or FDP.

## Supporting information – Production licence

The supporting information must include evidence that the block(s) contains petroleum and set out details of the applicant's proposals for work and expenditure in relation to the block(s). For example:

- (a) **Block(s) contains petroleum** – this should include:
- a summary of the exploration history of the block(s), including discovery well(s) and results
  - a summary of the geology of the block(s), including a discussion of stratigraphy and structure
  - a summary of appraisal well(s) and results
  - a summary of seismic data covering the block(s) and the outcomes of any processing/reprocessing
  - depth structure maps and seismic amplitude images, as appropriate
  - a discussion of remaining prospectivity.
- (b) **Work and expenditure** – this should include:
- the planned timeframes for construction of infrastructure and commencement of production
  - a Gantt Chart of the project schedule
  - the estimated budget for the project
  - the estimated life of the project.
- (c) **Title background** – Please provide an overview of the title history and a brief summary of the work undertaken to date in the block(s).
- (d) **Project overview** – Please provide an overview of the project including relevant petroleum pool(s)/field(s), drilled and proposed wellhead locations, and project and facility (production, export) details with supporting schematics.
- (e) **Spatial data** – Please provide spatial data regarding the pool(s)/field(s) within the block(s) in ESRI or Geodatabase format; and a coordinate listing (latitude, longitude, and datum) of the pool(s)/field(s) in Excel format.

- (f) **Stakeholder consultation** – Please provide a summary of consultation with key stakeholders, and identify each stakeholder, the date(s) they were contacted, any issues they raised, how these will be managed and any intended future consultation.

Stakeholders should be similar to those who would be consulted for an environment plan, including relevant government agencies and other titleholders.

## Supporting information – FDP

The minimum content requirements for FDP are set out in Reg. 4.07 of the RMA Regulations.

The FDP is generally expected to include:

- an executive summary
- a detailed description of the reservoir
- details of the proposed reservoir development including well locations, design, and completions
- details and schematics of all development concepts considered and rationale for the chosen concept.
- an overview of the project and details of the project schedule including a Gantt Chart
- details of proposed field operations
- a petroleum resource maturation plan
- an overview of future planned abandonment and remedial action

For the Joint Authority to accept FDP, the FDP must also demonstrate that the titleholder will manage the field in a manner that is:

- consistent with good oilfield practice
- compatible with optimum long-term recovery of the petroleum.

## Variation of FDP

While a variation may need to be submitted in other instances, a titleholder must apply for acceptance of a variation of an FDP if (regulation 4.08)

- the titleholder intends to make a major change.<sup>1</sup>
- there is a new titleholder for the licence unless that new titleholder agrees in writing to continue operations in accordance with the current accepted FDP.

For a major change, the application for a variation to the accepted FDP must be made at least 90 days before the major change (Reg. 4.09).

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1. A major change under Reg. 4.01 includes, but is not limited to, the following proposed actions by a titleholder:

- Change to the development strategy or management strategy of a field or pool
- Changes the plan for development of additional pools in the field.

- Cessation of production, permanently or for the long term, before the date proposed in the FDP.
- Introduction of new methods for petroleum recovery, such as enhanced recovery and injection of fluids.



A variation of FDP follows the same process and timeframes as the acceptance of FDP. Titleholders are encouraged to make use of the pFDP gap analysis feedback process offered by NOPTA.

## No recovery - Termination of a production licence

Under section 166 of the OPGGS Act the Joint Authority has a discretionary power to terminate life-of-field production licences if no petroleum recovery operations have been carried on at any time during a continuous period of at least five years (noting this excludes any period where operations were not carried on because of circumstances beyond the licensee's control). This power is applied on a case-by-case basis.

Generally, petroleum recovery operations are considered to be all actions required to recover petroleum. This includes action preparatory to undertaking petroleum recovery operations, for example significant investment in capital, drilling wells for the purpose of production and the construction of production platforms and facilities.

## More information

If you have any specific questions, please contact NOPTA via [titles@nopta.gov.au](mailto:titles@nopta.gov.au).

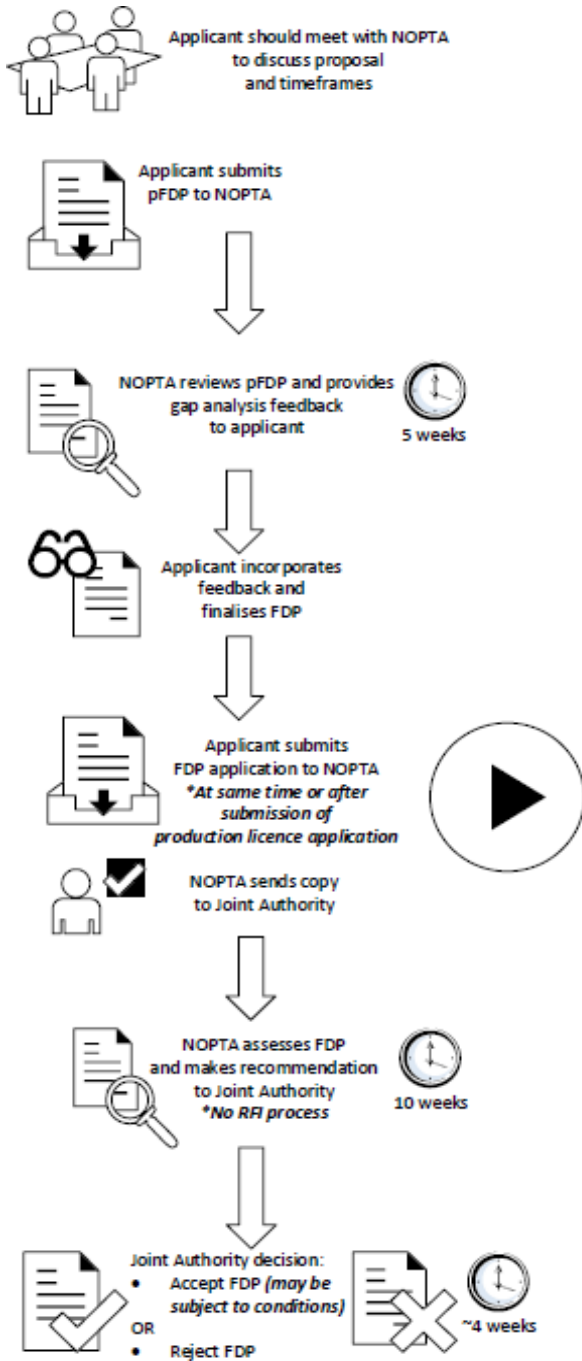
**Please note:** this document is intended as a guide only and should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases.

## Version history

Version	Date	Comment
2.0	17/02/2023	Update to layout, format and links.



## Field development plan



## Production licence

