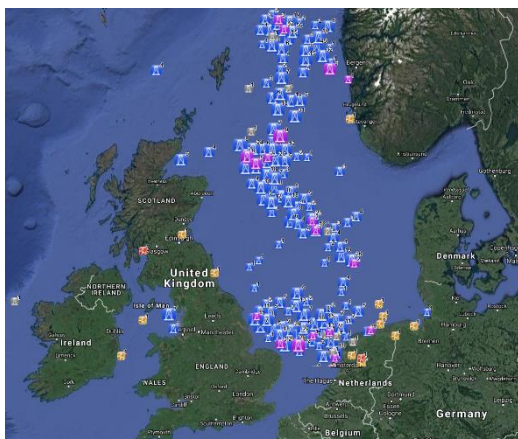


The questions that remain about offshore decommissioning

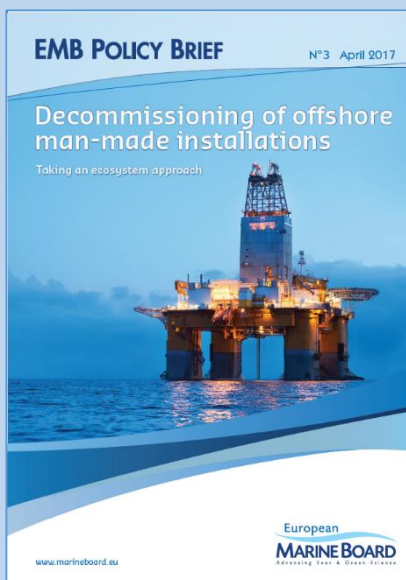
We are entering a legacy era for the offshore oil and gas industry. As operations ramp down, scientific evidence holds the key to reducing economic cost and environmental impact of full decommissioning.

Recent estimates suggest that there are currently around 1,350 oil and gas installations in the North Sea and North Atlantic regions and 1,800 offshore wind turbines in North Sea region alone. And this number is rising. The total cost of full decommissioning of oil and gas installations in the North Sea alone for the period 2015 to 2040 is estimated at between US\$70 and US\$82 billion. The numbers of installations requiring decommissioning is also set to increase dramatically as renewable energy devices begin reaching the end of their operational life, and as plans for exploiting renewable energy sources in the near future grow. Globally, industry and governments are embracing different decommissioning approaches, from full removal to the production of artificial reefs.



Recent estimates suggest that there are currently around 1,350 oil and gas installations in the North Sea and North Atlantic regions and 1,800 offshore wind turbines in North Sea region alone. Source of pic: EMODnet Human Activities Portal

The question of what is best for the environment is still to be answered



- What are the consequences for biodiversity of removing hard substrates that have been in the marine environment for a number of years?
- Has human intervention added a new layer of diversity by introducing these structures to the marine ecosystem? What are the key indicators to consider this?
- Will different installation types, locations, durations and build materials effect their relative impact on the ecosystem?
- Are current contractual and design considerations regarding decommissioning and recycling or re-use suitable and sufficient?

More information in the EMB Policy Brief 3 “Decommissioning of offshore man-made installations: Taking an ecosystem approach”, free to download at:

<http://www.marineboard.eu/science-strategy-publications>

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