Conditions for the award (cf. item 4a in the announcement)

In planning drilling activities, particular care must be taken in respect to fishery activities and marine organisms. In planning seismic surveys, the licensees must take particular care in respect to fishery activities and marine organisms at critical stages in their life cycles. Licensees are required to undertake mapping of possible coral reefs in the awarded blocks, and ensure that possible coral reefs will not be damaged by the petroleum activity.

Pursuant to the Report to the Storting no. 25 (2002 – 2003) there shall as a main rule be zero discharge of environmentally harmful components to the sea. It is further a goal to minimize the risk of environmental damage caused by discharge of other chemical components. For new installations the target of zero discharge of environmentally harmful components to the sea will apply immediately, for existing installations it will apply for all offshore operations. Action must be taken to achieve this target by 2005.

In due time and prior to the commencement of drilling, the operator shall, on behalf of the licensees, consult the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority (Statens Forurensningstilsyn) to clarify the need for a discharge permit.

When specific plans for drilling activities are available requirements relating to contingency plans in the event of an accidental oil spill will be stipulated according to the Pollution Control Act (Forurensningsloven) and the Regulations relating to this act. Approval for drilling is, among other factors, related to the contingency plans. In determining the extent of these requirements distance to the shoreline, distance to environmentally sensitive areas, and effects on other commercial interests will, among other aspects, be taken into consideration.

The operator shall, by means of risk analysis, cf. Regulations relating to management in the petroleum activities of 3 September 2001, identify the environmental considerations which the licensees deem to be critical to their preparation of an oil spill contingency plan. Cf. Regulations relating to conduct of activities in the petroleum activities of 3 September 2001, and identify the measures envisaged in order to reduce the risk of such pollution. The analysis of environmental risks shall also include an evaluation of the effects of operational discharges during exploration drilling.

In parts of the predefined area there is, in certain periods of the year, an extensive fishing for sandeels. This applies to the blocks: 2/3 and 6, 3/1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, 4/1 and 2, 7/2, 3, 6 and 9, 8/7, 8 and 9, and 16/12. In these blocks a maximum of two exploration wells will be permitted to be drilled simultaneously. At the time of awarding production licences in this area additional drilling restrictions for certain periods of the year could be introduced. In case of future developments of resources in this area, the licensees shall consider development solutions that are minimising the negative effects for the fishing of sandeels.

Among the announced blocks in the North Sea there are some blocks that have not earlier been licensed, and which are rich fishery areas. These are blocks 26/10 and 11, and 17/1, 2, 5 and 6. In connection with awards in these blocks separate conditions regarding fisheries can be set.

Pursuant to the Report to the Storting no. 38 (2001-2002) it is expected that the industry still will contribute to the biological monitoring of living marine resources in order to survey possible effects of the petroleum activity.

The Government also sees a need to improve the knowledge of occurrence of seabirds in areas that can be affected by discharges from petroleum activities. The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy will ask the licensees to present a monitoring program for seabirds in the Norwegian Sea in connection with the environmental impact assessment following plans for development and operation (PDO) for new stand alone developments in this area.
Including all the relevant references and data, the document discusses various aspects of the Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS) and its implications. It highlights the need for a geological evaluation by the applicant(s), the importance of financial capacity, and the requirement for relevant technical expertise. The document also mentions the award of production licences and the conditions for relinquishment of acreage. Specific conditions are attached to certain blocks, and the Ministry reserves the right to negotiate terms with the licensees. The document encourages good resource management and efficient exploration, with a focus on cost-effective exploitation and, as appropriate, the production of petroleum from the geographical area in question. It emphasizes the importance of the environment and how this expertise may actively contribute to the protection of the natural surroundings. The document also addresses the role of the licensees in preparing a PDO and the duration of the licence period after the expiry of the initial period. It outlines the process for the award of production licences, including the application fee and the deadline for submission. The document concludes with the Royal Oil Agency's contact information and the Royal Ministry of Petroleum and Energy's address in Stavanger. The full text is available in Norwegian, and an English translation is provided for the Royal Ministry of Petroleum and Energy's address in Stavanger.