Upstream Petroleum Regulation: Licensing Rounds, FDP Approval and Compliance Oversight

30 November – 4 December 2026
Dubai - Five-star CBD venue



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Introduction:

Upstream petroleum regulation determines whether acreage is awarded fairly, whether fields are developed to recover the resource efficiently, and whether operators report barrels, flared gas and abandonment liabilities truthfully. Where the roles of ministry, regulator and national company overlap, and where work programme, field development plan and reserves submissions are reviewed without clear criteria, state value leaks and disputes follow. This Core Concept course gives licensing, field development review, reserves reporting and operator compliance staff a practical method for the regulatory life cycle of an exploration and production licence. Participants build a Licence Compliance Framework and FDP Review Checklist for a case licence.

Course Objectives:

- Distinguish the statutory powers of the petroleum ministry, the upstream regulator and the national oil company and map decision rights across the licence life cycle
- Design licensing round rules, pre-qualification criteria and bid evaluation matrices for exploration blocks under concession and production sharing models
- Review annual work programmes, budgets and field development plans against minimum work terms, recovery efficiency and development concept criteria
- Audit reserves, production, metering and allocation submissions using PRMS classes and measurement oversight checks
- Set flaring and venting consent conditions, HSE interface arrangements and decommissioning security requirements for upstream licensees
- Build a Licence Compliance Framework and FDP Review Checklist with inspection plans, enforcement ladders and disclosure rules for a case licence

Target Audience:

- Upstream licensing and acreage management functions in petroleum ministries and regulators that run bid rounds and administer licence terms
- Field development and reservoir review functions that assess development plans, work programmes and recovery performance
- Reserves, production reporting and measurement oversight functions that check volumes, metering and allocation
- Operator regulatory affairs functions that prepare licence submissions, consents and regulator correspondence
- Operator compliance and assurance functions that track licence conditions, flaring consents and decommissioning duties
- National oil company governance functions that manage state participation and the interface with the regulator

Course Outline:

Day 1: Upstream Petroleum Regulation Landscape and Institutional Roles

- Petroleum Resource Ownership Principle and the Upstream Regulatory Mandate
- Ministry, Upstream Regulator and National Oil Company Decision Rights Matrix
- Petroleum Law, Implementing Regulations and Licence Instrument Hierarchy
- Exploration and Production Licence Life Cycle Map from Award to Relinquishment
- Upstream Regulatory Maturity Assessment for a Sample Petroleum Jurisdiction

Day 2: Petroleum Licensing Models, Bid Rounds and Award Criteria

- Concession, Production Sharing and Service Contract Models from a Regulator Viewpoint
- Licensing Round Design: Block Delineation, Data Rooms and Open-Door Versus Round Systems
- Pre-Qualification Criteria: Technical Capability, Financial Standing and HSE Record
- Bid Evaluation Matrix: Minimum Work Commitment Scoring, Signature Bonus and Tie-Break Rules
- Licence Assignment, Change of Control Consent and Relinquishment Schedules

Day 3: Work Programme, FDP Approval and Reserves Oversight

- Annual Work Programme and Budget Submission Review and Approval Workflow
- Field Development Plan Content Requirements: Subsurface Basis, Development Concept and Recovery Factor
- FDP Technical Review Panel Method and Conditional Approval Letters
- Reserves and Resources Reporting Under the SPE PRMS Classification
- Production Reporting, Metering Oversight and Hydrocarbon Allocation Audits

Day 4: Flaring, HSE Interface, Decommissioning and Enforcement

- Flaring and Venting Consent Conditions, Measurement Duties and Zero Routine Flaring Targets
- Upstream HSE Regulatory Interface: Safety Case Links and Incident Notification Routes
- Decommissioning Programme Approval and Financial Security Instruments for Abandonment Liabilities
- Local Content Reporting and National Petroleum Data Repository Submission Rules
- Risk-Based Licensee Inspection Planning and Graduated Enforcement Ladder

Day 5: Case Study: Licence Compliance Framework and FDP Review Checklist

- Case Licence Pack Review: Licence Terms, Work Commitments and Operator Submissions
- Case FDP Review: Development Concept Challenge and Conditional Approval Drafting
- Licence Condition Register and Compliance Monitoring Calendar Build
- EITI Standard Disclosure Plan for Licence Awards, Production Data and Beneficial Ownership
- Licence Compliance Framework and FDP Review Checklist Presentation to a Regulator Panel

Skills You Will Gain:

- Upstream Decision Rights Mapping
- Licensing Round Design
- Bid Evaluation Scoring
- Field Development Plan Review
- PRMS Reserves Classification
- Metering and Allocation Oversight
- Flaring Consent Setting
- Decommissioning Security Assessment

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a Licence Compliance Framework and FDP Review Checklist built on a case licence and ready to adapt at work
- Review a work programme or field development plan against explicit criteria rather than negotiating each submission from scratch
- Clarify where ministry, regulator and national oil company responsibilities end, reducing duplicated approvals and gaps in oversight
- Compare licensing, reserves and enforcement practice with peers from regulators, ministries, national oil companies and international operators

Conclusion:

Upstream petroleum regulation works when institutional roles are clear, licences are awarded on transparent criteria and every submission from work programme to decommissioning is reviewed against stated tests. The one week move from the upstream regulatory mandate and decision rights, through licensing models and bid rounds, to work programme, field development plan, reserves and measurement oversight, then to flaring, HSE interface, decommissioning, data and enforcement. The final day produces a Licence Compliance Framework and FDP Review Checklist for a case licence.