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SpotLight UK North Sea: Could the UK blaze a trail for decommissioning?

As the UK's hydrocarbon resource declines, decommissioning the country's offshore oil and gas assets will be no small task. The UK Continental Shelf is home to over 250 fixed installations, 250 subsea production systems, over 3,000 pipelines and approximately 3,650 wells – all of which must be decommissioned by law. Given the GBP 58 billion price tag, half of which will be picked up by the state, officials are keen to position the UK as a leader in oil and gas decommissioning. However, the government's concurrent plan to maximise economic recovery of the UKCS, in addition to producers' renewed interest in utilising existing infrastructure for new projects, could jeopardise the UK's decommissioning push.

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