

Amerada Hess Limited

BLOCK 204/10-B

Pursuant to Regulation 5(8) of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gives notice that, being content that the requirements of the above Regulations have been satisfied, she has, pursuant to Licence P1028, granted a consent to Amerada Hess Limited to the getting of petroleum and the drilling of an exploration well in Block 204/10-B (hereafter referred to as "the project") subject to Amerada Hess Limited conducting operations in respect of the project in accordance with the relevant environmental statement. The consent for the well was given on 28 April 2004 and shall remain in force for a period of two years.

Background

Amerada Hess Limited proposes drilling an exploration well in block 204/10-B. The drilling of the well is to enable further evaluation of the reservoir structure with a view to potential development if hydrocarbons are found in commercial quantities. The expected hydrocarbon is oil. Should the well confirm the presence of hydrocarbons, a well test may be carried out to establish the well performance and well characteristics. The well test will be less than 96 hours and less than 2000 tonnes of oil will be produced. The well will be drilled using seawater with high viscosity bentonite sweeps and WBM with 742 tonnes of cuttings and 496 tonnes of WBM drilling muds to be discharged. The well will be plugged and abandoned at the end of the drilling programme.

Sensitivities

The environmental statement identifies a range of potential environmental hazards and outlines proposed mitigation measures, including:

- Drilling discharges
- Noise generation
- Atmospheric emissions
- Hydrocarbon spills
- Other issues (vessel discharges, physical presence and seabed scouring from anchors)
- Cumulative and transboundary impacts

Recommendation

Overall the environmental statement is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed operation. It is recommended that consent is given to the project.