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Consents given under the Petroleum Act 1998 and Reviews under the Assessment of Environmental Effects Regulations 1999

Encana UK Limited

Buzzard Development

Encana (U.K.) Limited submitted an Environmental Statement (ES) on 9 June 2003 and intend to develop the Buzzard field (UKCS Blocks 19/5, 19/10, 20/1 and 20/6), which is located in the Southern Halibut Basin, Outer Moray Firth approximately 57 km North-east of St Fergus.

The Buzzard Development will comprise of installing a three piled steel platform and drilling between 46 to 76 wells. The oil will be exported via an 18" pipeline into the Forties line and onto Cruden Bay. The gas export option will either be an 8" or 12" line to SAGE or 10" or 16" line into FRIGG. First production is planned for the latter half of 2006 and to last approximately 17 to 20 years.

The wells will initially be drilled over a wellhead platform using a heavy-duty jack-up; later in field life modular drilling units and semi-submersible rigs will be used. The wells will be drilled using a combination of water based mud (WBM) and where required the lower sections with oil based mud (OBM). The WBM mud contaminated cuttings will be discharged to sea and the OBM contaminated cuttings will be shipped to shore for treatment and disposal. Flaring during well clean-up will be required for the first eight wells after which fluids will be routed through the production stream.

The 18" oil export line will be to the Forties pipeline some 30 km away. The line will not be trenched and buried. The 10" or 16" gas line to either SAGE (1.5 km away) or FRIGG (18 km away) will require trenching, burying and potentially rock dumping.

A description of the environment was provided in the ES and a separate section dealt with the environmental assessment methodology.

Key environmental statement sensitivities identified by the EIA and presented within the Environmental Statement were:

- Physical presence of the platform, drilling rigs and pipelines.
- Seabed disturbance caused by deposition of drill cuttings, installation of jackets, rig movements, pipelaying.
- Noise and vibration - primarily from piling and drilling activities
- Atmospheric emissions - from rig installation, drilling activities and production, including power generation and acid gas disposal.
- Discharges to sea - drill cuttings, chemicals, relatively small volume of produced water, drainage and chemicals.
- Waste
- Loss of containment - oil spill modelling identified the areas most likely to be at risk and should a spill occur, the potential impacts.

These risks have been assessed in detail and mitigation measures and prevention procedures have been put in place to minimise any potential impacts. Both cumulative and transboundary impacts were identified and discussed in the ES.

An Appropriate Assessment screening exercise was undertaken to assess the potential impacts from the project on bottlenose dolphins in the Moray Firth. The results of the screening indicated that there was unlikely to be a significant effect on the bottlenose dolphins.

Conclusion:

An environmental statement was submitted to cover the proposed field development, which considered the potential environmental impacts of the development. Following consultation with the statutory consultees and the provision of additional information for clarification purposes, it is considered that this project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the receiving environment, including any habitats and species protected under relevant conservation legislation.

Recommendation:

Based on the information presented in the ES and further information received it was advised that project consent be given on 10 November 2003.

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