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

Oilexco

Brenda Development 15/25

Background

Oilexco North Sea Ltd is planning to develop the Brenda field in the central North Sea, approximately 175km from Peterhead. The proposed Brenda development will consist of four horizontal wells located in Block 15/25b. The wells will be tied back via a 10" pipeline to the Balmoral platform where the produced fluids will be exported via the Forties Pipeline System. The drilling of a single appraisal well in the nearby Sheryl prospect in Block 15/25e is also assessed.

The drilling will start in November 2005 and is expected to last 60 days. Well clean up/well testing is not planned. A dynamically positioned (DP) pipelay vessel will be commissioned to undertake installation of the export and gas lift pipelines. Pipelay operations are expected to take 14 days to complete, when the pipelines will be laid together on the seabed ready for trenching. Trenching operations are expected to take 7 days to complete using a pipeline plough or mechanical trenching device which will be supported from a DP trenching vessel.

The wells will be drilled and completed using the Sedco 712 semi-submersible drilling rig.

The Brenda development well top hole sections will be drilled using WBM apart from the 12.25 and 8.5 inch sections where low toxicity oil based mud (LTOBM) will be used. It is currently planned to drill the Sheryl appraisal well entirely using WBM.

There will be 1567 tonnes of cuttings and 840 tonnes of WBM fluids to be discharged from the wells. Where LTOBM is used, full cuttings and mud containment will be carried out and shipped to shore for treatment and disposal. However, the alternative of offshore re-injection or thermal treatment offshore will be considered during detailed design.

Modifications will be required to the Balmoral platform due to the tie back of the Brenda Field Development but these will result in additional CO2 emissions of approximately 20 kilotonnes per annum and as such, will not result in substantial change under the Offshore Combustion Installation (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Regulations 2001.

Sensitivities

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

- Physical presence
- Seabed disturbance
- Noise and vibration
- Atmospheric emissions
- Marine discharges
- Loss of containment
- Solid Waste
- Cumulative impacts
- 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.

Webmaster: [Danny Stocker](#)

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