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

Venture North Sea Oil Ltd

Grouse Field Development

ES Title:	Grouse Field Development
Operator:	Venture North Sea Limited
Consultants:	Genesis Oil and Gas Consultants
Field Group (BERR):	London
ES Report No:	W/3908/2008
ES Date:	February 2008
Block No's:	21/19
Development Type:	Development well tied-back to the Kittiwake platform

Synopsis

Project Description

The proposed Grouse Field development is located in Block 21/19, 7km east of the Kittiwake platform in the central north sea. The development forms part of the Greater Kittiwake Area (GKA) development.

The project comprises of:

- The installation of a tied-back from the Grouse well to the Kittiwake platform via a 6" oil export line, 6" umbilical and 3" gas lift line, each being 7.1km in length.
- The installation of the pipelines is estimated to take 78 days.
- Preliminary analysis shows that rock dumping is not required, but there is a contingency of 10,000 tonnes.
- Pipeline testing will be conducted.
- Production will be an estimated oil flow rate of 10,000bbls/day and a gas rate of 3.25 Mscf/day.
- Produced water oil-in-water discharges
- Diesel oil spillage

Key Project Activities

The EIA identified the following activities as having the potential to cause an environmental impact:

- Installation of subsea infrastructure, including contingency rock dumping;
- Noise and emissions from pipelay and installation activities;
- Pipeline hydrotest discharge;
- Presence of subsea infrastructure;
- Increased production at Kittiwake; and
- Accidental spills

Key Environmental Sensitivities

The EIA identified the following environmental sensitivities:

- Low shipping activity (average of 2 vessels per day);
- Moderate fishing activity;
- Fish spawning area for lemon sole, Norway pout (peak February and March), and Nephrops (peak August to July);
- Nursery area for Norway pout, Nephrops, haddock and blue whiting;
- Seabird vulnerability is very high between September and November and high in the months of May and July;
- Low densities of cetaceans have been recorded in the Grouse area;
- Annex I Habitats: project is not in the vicinity of any SAC's designated for Offshore Natura 2000 habitat;
- Annex II Species: Harbour porpoise has been sighted in low numbers in the Grouse area. No SAC's have been designated with respect to Natura 2000 species in the vicinity of Grouse.

Key Potential Environmental Impacts

The following potential impacts and mitigation were addressed in the EIA:

- Seabed disturbance – The installation (using a trenching and backfill method) of the export and gas lift pipelines and the umbilical will disturb the benthic fauna and flora. The area impacted by the pipeline infrastructure will be 28, 400m². It is also anticipated that 30 mattresses and spot rock dumping consisting of 10,000 tonnes will be required. Rock dumping is likely to disturb the benthic fauna and change the local habitat from sand to rock. However, historically re-colonisation will occur, where the benthic communities will recover. The impact on the seabed is not considered to be significant.
- Obstacles to other marine activities – The presence of subsea infrastructure can have implications for fishing

vessels. However the infrastructure is designed to be fishing friendly and marked on admiralty charts.

- Noise – The pipelay and associated vessels will produce noise during installation, lasting approximately 18 days but any impact is considered insignificant due to the low densities of cetaceans and the short installation time.
- Atmospheric emissions – These will be produced during the installation of the subsea infrastructure from the installation vessels. The impacts from atmospheric emissions are not considered to be significant.
- Marine discharges – The only foreseeable discharges are associated with the proposed hydrotest of the pipeline. All chemicals are CEFAS registered and are not considered to be significantly harmful to the environment.
- Accidental events – The highest risk of a hydrocarbon spill is during bunkering operations, therefore all bunkering operations will only take place in suitable weather conditions, in daylight hours, with a continuous watch present. Venture also have an approved OSCP in place.
- Cumulative Impacts – The cumulative impacts from the proposed development are negligible due to the extent of existing infrastructure in the area.
- Biodiversity and Protected Habitats – The location of the project is within an area known for “submarine structures made by leaking gases”, an Annex I habitat listed in the EU Habitats Directive. However, surveys undertaken did not find any evidence of such habitats. If there is any evidence to suggest that this habitat is present, Venture will notify BERR immediately.
- Protected Species – The Harbour porpoise listed in Annex II to the EU Habitats Directive occur in the area of the proposed project. Operations associated with the proposed development are not considered to have an impact on any Harbour porpoise present.

Consultee(s):

The statutory consultees for this project were JNCC and FRS. The following comments were made:

JNCC: Further information was requested with regard to the method of pipeline installation, flaring and noise impacts marine mammals. This was satisfactorily provided and JNCC recommended that the ES be approved.

FRS: There are no fisheries related restrictions covering this Block during the proposed works period and overall it was concluded that with the implementation of the proposed mitigation and risk reduction measures, the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the marine environment. Recommendation for ES approval was

issued.

Public Consultation: No comments were received as a result of the public consultation.

Conclusion(s):

Following consultation and the provision of the additional information, we are satisfied that this project is not likely to have a significant impact on the receiving environment, including any sites or species protected under the Habitats Regulations.

Recommendation(s):

On the basis of the information presented within the ES and advice from consultees it is recommended that the ES should be approved.

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