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

## Minke Field Development

The Minke Main Field is located entirely with the UKCS in block 44/24a in the Southern North Sea, equidistant from the two landfalls: Cromer on the English coastline, approximately 175 Km to the south-west; and Vlieland Islands to the south-east. The nearest international boundary is the UK/Dutch Median line, which lies just over 1Km to the east. The anticipated hydrocarbon reserve from the Minke Field is dry gas.

GDFB intend to drill a single deviated well 44/24a-F in a water depth of approximately 42.5m, over an 82 day period, including clean-up and well testing. A jack up drilling rig will be used to drill the well with Water Based Muds (WBM) planned for the entire well. However a contingency to use Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud (LTOBM) has been included for the 12.25" section. If WBM is used for all sections this will generate a total of 1,329 tonnes of cuttings, of which 162 tonnes will be discharged at the seabed and 1,167 discharged at the surface. If the LTOBM contingency is used then all cuttings will be contained and returned to shore for treatment and/or disposal. The well will be cleaned up and then tested for a maximum of 24hrs with a maximum of 1,631 tonnes of gas flared, resulting in 4,587 tonnes of $CO^2$ generated.

The well will be connected to the GDF Proned operated D15-A platform located in the Dutch sector by a 15K, 8" carbon steel pipeline and umbilical. However only 1Km of this pipeline is within the UKCS, with the remainder being within the Dutch sector. From D15-A the gas will be transported via the existing Noordgastransport (NGT) pipeline, which flows to Uithuizen in North Eastern Holland. The pipeline will be laid using a dynamically positioned vessel and will be jet trenched. Pipelay is scheduled to commence in February 2007 and is anticipated to take 6 weeks. Drilling of the well is scheduled for October 2006. First gas is expected in Q2 2007, with peak gas production anticipated to be 1.70 million standard cubic metres per day (54.6 MMscf/d) during the first two years of production. Field life for Minke is likely to by 10

years.

The ES identified the following potential areas of impact arising from the proposed development:- physical presence, seabed disturbance, noise & vibration, atmospheric emissions, marine discharges, solid wastes and non-routine hazards i.e spills. However these were considered further and it was concluded that whilst there would be some environmental impact from each stage of the development, this was unlikely to result in significant adverse, long-term impacts.

**Habitat Issues/ Sensitivities**

No habitat issues were identified, the nearest draft Special area of conservation ? the Dogger Bank dSAC being 7km distant. Although drilling will now be undertaken during a period of very high seabird vulnerability, there are adequate mitigation measures in place.

**Conclusions**

Following consultation, we are satisfied that the project is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact and, in particular, that it will not have a significant adverse effect on the marine environment in general or on any protected sites or species covered by the "Habitats Regulations".

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the project is given consent.