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Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

CNR INTERNATIONAL (U.K.) LIMITED
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Registered No.: 00813187

Date: 29th March 2021

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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www.gov.uk/beis
bst@beis.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020**

**NINIAN - Ninian Central Platform - DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 3/03-C89 -
Black Panther**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference DR/2068/0 (Version 1), dated 9th February 2021 has been issued under regulation 6 of the above Regulations. The screening direction notice, and any relevant conditions and comments are attached. A copy of this screening direction will be forwarded to the application consultees, the Oil and Gas Authority and published on the gov.uk website.

If you have any queries in relation to this screening direction or the attachments, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] or email the Environmental Management Team at bst@beis.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020**

**SCREENING DIRECTION CONFIRMING THAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT IS NOT REQUIRED**

**NINIAN - Ninian Central Platform - DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 3/03-C89 -
Black Panther**

DR/2068/0 (Version 1)

Whereas CNR INTERNATIONAL (U.K.) LIMITED has made an application dated 9th February 2021, under The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020, and whereas the Secretary of State has considered the application and is satisfied that the project is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment; in exercise of the powers available under regulation 6, the Secretary of State hereby directs that the application for consent in respect of the project need not be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment, provided that the project is carried out as described in the application for the screening direction and in accordance with the conditions specified in the attached schedule.

In giving a screening direction under regulation 6 of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State accordingly gives his agreement to the Oil and Gas Authority to the grant of consent for the project as detailed in the application.

Effective Date: 29th March 2021



THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2020

SCHEDULE OF SCREENING DIRECTION CONDITIONS

The grant of this screening direction is conditional upon the screening direction holder complying with the following conditions.

1 Screening direction validity

The screening direction shall be valid from 29 March 2021 until 31 December 2021.

2 Commencement and completion of the project

The holder of the screening direction must notify the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (hereinafter called the 'Department') of commencement and completion of the project within two days:

- a) of commencement of the project and
- b) of completion of the project.

Notification should be sent by email to the Environmental Management Team Mailbox: bst@beis.gov.uk

3 Prevention of pollution

The holder of the screening direction must ensure that appropriate measures are taken to minimise discharges, emissions and waste, in particular through the appropriate use of technology; and to ensure that necessary measures are taken to prevent incidents affecting the environment or, where they occur, to limit their consequences in relation to the environment.

4 Inspections

Should the Department consider it necessary or expedient for an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to investigate whether the conditions of the screening direction are being complied with, the holder of the screening direction shall afford the inspector with such facilities and assistance as the inspector considers necessary to exercise the powers conferred by the regulations. The holder of the screening direction shall additionally ensure that copies (electronic or paper) of the screening direction and any other relevant documents are available for inspection by the inspector at:

- a) the premises of the holder of the screening direction; and
- b) the facilities undertaking the project covered by the screening direction.



5 Check monitoring

Should the Department consider it necessary or expedient to undertake an independent monitoring programme to assess the impact of the project covered by the screening direction, the screening direction holder shall afford the Department with such facilities and assistance as the Department considers necessary to undertake the work.

6 Atmospheric emissions returns

Following completion of the project covered by the screening direction, the holder of the screening direction shall report all relevant atmospheric emissions, such as combustion emissions, extended well test emissions or flaring and venting emissions relating to a well test, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting forms. In the case of atmospheric emissions relating to drilling projects undertaken from a fixed installation, they should be included in the annual EEMS reporting forms for the fixed installation.

7 Unauthorised deposits

Following completion of the project covered by the screening direction, the holder of the screening direction shall recover any materials accidentally or temporarily deposited on the seabed, such as debris, temporary containers, structures or deposits, or scientific instruments, and shall return the materials to land. If it is not possible to recover any of these deposits, full details of the materials remaining on the seabed must be reported to the Department in accordance with the requirements of Petroleum Operations Notice No.2 (PON2).

8 Screening direction variation

In the event that the holder of the screening direction proposes changes to any of the particulars detailed in the application for a screening direction, the holder must notify the Department immediately and submit an application for a post screening direction amendment. The post screening direction must be in place prior to the amended proposals taking effect.



COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION FOR SCREENING DIRECTION

Section 1

The attention of screening direction holders is drawn to the following provisions regarding The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2020.

1) You are deemed to have satisfied yourself that there are no barriers, legal or otherwise, to the carrying out of the project covered by the screening direction. The issue of a screening direction does not absolve the screening direction holder from obtaining such authorisations, consents etc that may be required under any other legislation.

2) The Department would draw your attention to the following comments:

The Department has no comments.

3) All communications relating to the screening direction should be addressed to:

Out-of-hours emergency screening direction variations:

Telephone Met Office out-of-hours service (0330 135 0010) and ask to be connected to the Department's On-call Response Officer (Offshore Environmental Inspectorate).

Routine communications

bst@beis.gov.uk

or

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax [REDACTED]



SCHEDULE OF SCREENING DIRECTION DECISION REASONS

The Secretary of State has decided that, based on the information provided, the project is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The main reasons for this decision are:

1) Decision reasons

This document provides a summary of the assessments undertaken by OPRED to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for this project. This document summarises the information considered, the potential impacts and sets out the main reasons for the decision made.

In considering whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required or not, the following have been taken into account:

The information provided by the developer.

The matters listed in Schedule 5 of The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Regulations 2020) (the Regulations).

The results of any developer assessments of the effects on the environment of the project; and

Any conditions that the Secretary of State may attach to the agreement to the grant of consent.

Characteristics of the Project

Having regard, in particular, to the matters identified at paragraphs 1(a) to (g) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations, the characteristics of the project include the following:

Summary of project

Slot recovery at the 9 5/8" casing using Water Based Mud (WBM)

Drilling of an 8 1/2" side-track section using Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud (LTOBM)

Wellbore clean-up

Completion and installation of Xmas Tree

Description of project

Development Well 3/03-C89 (Black Panther) will be drilled as a side-track from donor



well 3/03-C89RD from the Ninian Central Platform (NCP) with operations expected to last 28 days. The well will be completed as a Water Injector well to support production in the Ninian area. The well will be re-entered within the existing 95/8" casing using water-based mud (WBM) with the remaining section drilled using low toxicity oil-based mud (LTOBM). There will be no discharge of cuttings or associated chemicals to the sea as they will be re-injected. However, should re-injection facilities become unavailable cuttings will be skipped and shipped to shore for disposal. Once all slot recovery, drilling, cementing and clean-up operations have been conducted an Xmas Tree will be installed on the well. The well will then be handed over to production prior to bringing the well online through production facilities on the Ninian Central Platform.

No cumulative impacts are expected to occur with any other existing or approved projects.

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters. The risk of a major accident such as a well blowout has been assessed. The Developer has control measures in place to reduce the risk of a major accident occurring and the probability of such an event occurring is very low.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

Location of the Project

Having regard in particular to the matters identified at paragraphs 2(a) to (c) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations, the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the project has been considered as follows:

Ninian Central Platform (NCP) is in Block 3/3 in the Northern North Sea approximately 121 km east of Shetland and approximately 23 km west of the UK/Norwegian median line in a water depth of approximately 133 m. The project is in an area characterised by sand and muddy sand. The wave height within the Ninian Central Platform area ranges from 2.11-2.4 m. Recent surveys indicate that sediments in the area consist predominantly of offshore circalittoral sand. Seabed photography showed that visible fauna has remained relatively unchanged since the pre-decommissioning survey carried out in 2011 and that epifauna and mobile megafauna are generally sparse across the area. Site surveys identified taxa including hermit crabs, starfish, and sea urchins. No evidence of sub tidal reefs, submarine structures or any potential Annex I Habitats have been found in the vicinity of the NCP. Pockmarks were also recorded in the area, which can indicate the presence of the Annex I. There are no marine protected areas within 40 km from the NCP and therefore it is unlikely that the project will have any effect on protected sites.

Fish spawning and nursery activity will occur in the area, which may coincide with the drilling operations. Minke whale, killer whale, harbour porpoise and Atlantic white-sided dolphin have been recorded in the vicinity of the NCP. Densities of these



species range from high to low throughout the year. Seals are not expected to be seen at the remote location. Seabird vulnerability in Block 3/3 is predominantly low all year round except for September and October when sensitivity is medium. The project area is primarily used for demersal fishing and the fishing effort in the area is rated low to moderate.

The Ninian field is in an area of major oil and gas developments and infrastructure and there are several oil and gas fields nearby. Block 3/3 features a Ministry of Defence restriction as it lies within military training grounds, but there is no known concurrent activity and the well is being drilled from the existing Ninian Central Platform. There are no scheduled monument war graves, Historic Marine Protected Areas of wrecks located within the vicinity of the NCP. There are no known cables in the vicinity of the NCP and no planned renewable energy developments. Shipping density in the area is low.

Given the location of the project, it is not likely that the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations will be affected by the project.

Type and characteristics of the potential impact

In accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 5 to the Regulations, the likely significant effects of the project on the environment have been considered. Potential effects on the environment from the activities associated with the project were assessed, including impacts arising from atmospheric emissions, seabed disturbance, physical presence, planned discharges and accidental spills.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

There is a 500 m radius safety zone around the Ninian Central Platform excluding unauthorised access of vessels and prohibiting access to fishing vessels. The drilling project is a side-track from an existing well and as such there are no cuttings from the re-entry section. Cuttings will be generated from the sections drilled with LTOBM and these will be re-injected via the Cuttings Re-Injection package. There will be no cuttings discharged to sea and there are no seabed impacts are expected.

Discharge of offshore chemicals associated with the re-entry of the well, cementing and completion operations have been assessed as not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Offshore chemicals associated with LTOBM will be re-injected and no wastewater containing residual base oil from the LTOBM will be discharged from the wellbore clean-up operations and therefore will have no interaction or impact on the environment.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the drilling operations at the Ninian Central Platform. The nearest boundary (UK/Norwegian median) is located approximately 23 west km of the operations. It is not considered likely that any planned operational discharge (chemicals) will be detectable at this distance from the



well location.

Although not a planned activity, a worst-case major accident scenario resulting from a potential well blow-out was modelled and assessed. Although the consequences of an oil spill can be severe, the probability of a large oil spill from the proposed operations is low. Therefore, it is considered that the control measures in place to prevent loss of well control minimise the risk of an oil spill which could have a significant impact and the proposed operations carried out as planned are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The emissions associated with the project result from power demand for the proposed operations. Drilling facilities are integrated on the platform and use the electricity generated by the offshore combustion installations. It is expected the emissions will be rapidly dispersed and are not likely to have a significant impact.

Drilling operations will be conducted from the existing Ninian Central Platform and therefore there is no increase in the infrastructure footprint. No cumulative impacts are expected to occur. The Field has been developed for several years and the locations of the Ninian platforms are well known to other marine users and marked on the appropriate navigational charts. It is considered that the drilling of the well from the platform is not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore oil and gas activities or other users of the sea.

There is no aggregate extraction, dredging, or dumping activity. There are no planned, consented or operational wind farms within Block 3/3. Additionally, both fishing activity and shipping activity within Block 3/3 is considered relatively low. There are no charted wrecks located in the vicinity of the proposed Columbus development well location. The project is in the vicinity of other oil and gas developments, but there are no expected cumulative impacts with other oil and gas activities. Cumulative impacts have been assessed as not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Decision

Taking the above considerations into account, the Secretary of State has concluded that the project is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment and that an environmental impact assessment is not required.

2) Mitigation of significant effects

The following are features of the project or measures envisaged that the developer has proposed to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment:

Not Applicable