

Our Ref: 01.08.06.15/588C
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Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

SHELL U.K. LIMITED
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Registered No.: 00140141

Date: 21st April 2021

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax

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
PRODUCTION INCREASE AT CUTTER FIELD - 2021 ONLY**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2095/0 (Version 3), dated 16th April 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**

PRODUCTION INCREASE AT CUTTER FIELD - 2021 ONLY

PR/2095/0 (Version 3)

Whereas SHELL U.K. LIMITED has made an application dated 16th April 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: 21st April 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

This screening direction shall be valid from 21 April 2021.

2 Change to production level(s)

The holder of the screening direction shall ensure that the change in the level(s) of production do not exceed the amended level(s) detailed in the application for the screening direction, and in the application for consent relating to the approval for the getting of petroleum issued under the relevant production licence Model Clause.

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, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting forms.

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 amendment 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:

No comment.

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



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

The following provides a summary of the assessments undertaken by OPRED to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for this project, 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:

- a) the information provided by the developer;
- b) the matters listed in Schedule 5 of The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Regulations 2020) (the Regulations);
- c) the results of any preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment of the project; and
- d) 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 the Project

Increase in production of gas at the Cutter field for the year 2021.

Description of the Project

Water wash operations will enable an increase in produced gas from the Cutter field for the year 2021. The field suffers from salt scaling and sand production, so both wells at the Cutter field will be treated with a water wash, supplemented with chemicals supplied from a vessel. The increase in produced gas will be for 2021 only. The production change and enabling works will not require modifications to the Cutter platform or processing facility at Clipper. Transit of support vessels will not be altered as a result of the production change. Some alteration in the quantities of processing chemicals is anticipated at the Clipper installation.



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

There is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health. It is not considered likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters. No pollution or nuisances are foreseen from the project. There is an associated waste stream linked to the project in the form of entrained oil in water, but this will be processed onshore, treated and disposed of accordingly.

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:-

The project is located in an offshore oil and gas licenced area, approximately 65 km east from the English coastline and 84 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line, in an area where water depth is approximately 24 m and the seabed type is characterised as medium sand to pebble. The predominant current in the location originates from Atlantic inflow from the west, resulting in a south-easterly movement along the coast towards the English Channel. The project is located in the southern North Sea SAC (designated for protection of harbour porpoise) and within 5 km of the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC (designated for protection of sandbanks and reefs).

Site-specific surveys identified the seabed as consisting of medium sand to pebble, with gravelly sand and sediment having been identified in accumulations throughout the project area over the historic site surveys undertaken. The epifaunal community present in the area which is classed within Circalittoral coarse sediment was typically sparse, although the density of epifauna appeared to increase with the presence of coarse material. Species recorded included sea stars (*Asterias rubens*), Gobiidae, flatfish, squat lobsters (Decapoda), and whelk (Buccinidae). Some sessile epifauna were seen on the occasional pieces of coarse sediments; these included dead man's fingers (*Alcyonium digitatum*), anemones (*Actiniaria*), keel worms (*Serpulidae*) and hydroids (*Hydrozoa*). *Sabellaria spinulosa* on stable circalittoral mixed sediments was recorded along one transect in the area. The *S. spinulosa* aggregations observed were determined to be of 'low' reefiness in terms of percentage cover and elevation but of 'medium' reefiness in terms of total area covered. As Cutter is in an area with high levels of natural sediment disturbance it is likely that *S. spinulosa* reefs may be periodically destroyed by storm events leading to a cyclical shift in biotopes.

The project works will take place during peak spawning of mackerel, sole and Norwegian lobster. Sightings of cetaceans have been recorded during the period for which the project works are planned, but sightings are more frequent during summer months. Seabird sensitivity is described as extremely high during winter months. The project area is not within a commonly fished ground and fishing effort is



predominantly focussed on shellfish species. The area is described as a low intensity fishing area. There is a large amount of other oil and gas infrastructure in the surrounding area. The project location is not within a military activity zone, aggregate extraction location, or any renewable energy infrastructure projects.

Given the location of the project, the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) and (viii) of Schedule 5 are not likely to 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 to the environment from the activities associated with the change to the project were assessed, with particular focus on the predominant impacts resulting from atmospheric emissions, planned discharges and accidental events.

The increase in produced gas from the Cutter field for 2021 will not result in any routine flaring nor will any increase in venting at the processing installation be required. No power generation changes are anticipated for the increase in production of gas and there is no alteration to support vessel requirements. Atmospheric emissions from the change in production will therefore not have a significant impact on the environment.

Alterations in the existing production chemical use and discharge associated with the process of gas from the Cutter field will be expected. But the alterations will not change the existing fate modelling and risk to the environment. Therefore, no significant impact from chemical use and discharge is expected. Oil in water from the associated hydrocarbon production at the field is processed and sent to shore for treatment and disposal at the onshore terminal. The increase in gas from the field has no associated liquid hydrocarbon change attributed to it. The existing accidental event spill modelling is applicable and due to the extremely low volumes of oil released in such an unplanned event there is no significant impact likely to occur. The asset is included in an emergency response plan, and this would be enacted in the event of a major accident/spill scenario. The receptors outlined in the location of the project section, will not be affected by the increase in production from the field.

There are no expected transboundary impacts as a result of the project, and no cumulative impacts have been identified given the other known existing and approved projects in the wider area.

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

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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.