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Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

SPIRIT ENERGY NORTH SEA LIMITED
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Registered No.: 04594558

Date: 6th July 2021

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

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Dear Sir / Madam

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

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2143/0 (Version 2), dated 5th July 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**

CERES

PR/2143/0 (Version 2)

Whereas SPIRIT ENERGY NORTH SEA LIMITED has made an application dated 5th July 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: 6th July 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 1 August 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 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:

N/A

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]



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:

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, summarising 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 from the Ceres field for the years 2021-2022.

Description of the Project

The Ceres field is located in Block 47/9 of the Southern North Sea and is produced from a single well which ties back to the Cleeton Platform. Production is forecast to be higher than the existing field consent and an increase in production screening direction was applied for.

There will be no increase in the quantity of chemicals used and discharged as a result of this production increase. Air emissions from the Cleeton platform will not increase. Produced water at the Cleeton platform is re-injected and is not discharged



to sea. 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 and has not increased from that existing. 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 nuisances are foreseen from the project.

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 42 km east from the English coastline and 143 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line, in an area where water depth is approximately 29 m with sediments characterised as coarse gravelly shelly sand. The predominant current in the location originates from Atlantic inflow via the northern North Sea, resulting in a south-easterly movement along the coast towards the English Channel. The project is located within the Holderness Offshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), and 8 km west from the SNS SAC. The Holderness Offshore MCZ is designated for ocean quahog, sediments such as subtidal coarse sediment, subtidal mixed sediment and subtidal sand, as well as qualifying sediment features such as the North Sea Glacial Tunnel Valleys. The protected features of these sites are not expected to be impacted by the project.

Site-specific surveys found faunal communities to be dominated by polychaetes including *Hesionura elongata*, *Exogone hebes*, *Ophelia borealis* and *Stenothoe marina*. Low abundance of *Sabellaria spinulosa* was found in the site survey these are not expected to be reef forming colonies. The Ceres field is located in International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) rectangle 36F0, in an area of spawning grounds for herring *Clupea harengus*, cod *Gadus morhua*, plaice *Pleuronectes platessa*, common sole *Solea solea*, lemon sole *Microstomus kitt*, sprat *Sprattus sprattus* and sandeels *Ammodytes marinus*. This area is also a nursery ground for herring, cod, whiting *Merlangius merlangus*, plaice, lemon sole, mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), sandeels, and sprat. Harbour porpoise, minke whale, white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin and bottlenose dolphin have been sighted within the vicinity of the proposed operations. Grey and harbour seals may be present in the area. The most common bird species present in the area of the Ceres field are the kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*, razorbill *Alca torda*, common guillemot *Aria aalge*, herring gull *Larus argentatus*, Atlantic puffin *Fratercula arctica*, northern gannet *Morus bassanus*, lesser black-backed gull *Larus fuscus* and little tern *Sternula albifrons*. The project area is located within a moderate effort fishing ground which is predominantly focussed on shellfish. There are a number of oil and gas infrastructure in the surrounding area. The project is located within a known military practice and exercise area. There are a number of windfarm projects under development in the area and the closest subsea cable is located 28km to the



south-west of the project location.

The project does not involve any physical interaction with the sea or seabed at the Ceres location and as such no impacts on potential receptors are anticipated.

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 field for 2021-2022 will not result in any routine flaring nor will any increase in venting at the processing installation be required (flaring or venting for safety reasons may occur). 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 field will not be necessary and as such no additional impact from chemical discharge is expected. Oil in water from the associated hydrocarbon production at the Ceres field is reinjected into the reservoir at the Cleeton platform. The existing accidental event spill modelling remains valid since no change to the worst-case scenario results from this project. An Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) is in place for the Cleeton Installation and in the unlikely event of a hydrocarbon release to sea, the response would be undertaken in accordance with the OPEP. The project does not involve any physical interaction with the sea or seabed at the Ceres location and as such no impacts on potential receptors are anticipated.

There are no expected transboundary impacts because 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.