

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-3727U
UKOP Doc Ref:1161591



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

SHELL U.K. LIMITED
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LONDON
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Registered No.: 00140141

Date: 24th September 2021

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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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
ARRAN, PIPELINE PL4645 & PLU4650, ADDITIONAL DEPOSITS (DATE
CHANGE)**

I refer to your amended application dated 24th September 2021, reference PL/2075/2 (Version 1).

It has been determined that the proposed changes to the project is not likely to result in a significant effect on the environment, and therefore an environmental impact assessment is not required.

A screening direction is therefore issued for the changes to the project. An amended schedule of conditions, comments, and main reasons for the decision on the amended application, 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**

**ARRAN, PIPELINE PL4645 & PLU4650, ADDITIONAL DEPOSITS (DATE
CHANGE)**

PL/2075/2 (Version 1)

Whereas SHELL U.K. LIMITED has made an application dated 24th September 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: 24th September 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 1 April 2021 until 31 January 2022.

2 Commencement and completion of the project

The holder of the screening direction must confirm the dates of commencement and completion of the project covered by the screening direction. Notification should be sent by email to the Environmental Management Team Mailbox: bst@beis.gov.uk

3 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials

Grout bags deposits

27 tonnes of grout contained within 25 kilogramme capacity biodegradable bags. (The number of bags deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus bags must be returned to land).

Concrete mattress deposits

170 concrete mattresses, each measuring 6 metres x 3 metres x 15 centimetres. (The number of mattresses deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus mattresses must be returned to land).

Temporary grout bag deposits

10 x 1 Tonne grout bags each measuring 1m². These grout bags must be removed before the expiry date of this direction.

4 Location of pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials

As detailed in the application (ref: PL/2075/0 version 2)

5 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.

6 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.

7 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.

8 Deposit returns

The holder of the screening direction shall submit a report to the Department following completion of the deposit covered by the screening direction, confirming the quantity of materials deposited and the estimated area of impact, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting form. Where no deposits are made, a 'nil' return is required.

9 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).

10 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

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amendment. The post screening direction must be in place prior to the amended proposals taking effect.

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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:

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. 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:

- 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 relevant 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:

This screening direction (ref: PL/2075/2) relates to a change to the project for which a direction was previously given (ref: PL/2075/1).

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.

Project outline:

To extend the date of the direction to cover deposits of the following materials:

Deposit of up to 170 concrete mattresses; and
Deposit of up to 1,080 biodegradable grout bags

Temporary deposit of 10 x 1 Tonne grout bags

Description of project

The original screening direction (ref: PL/1826) relates to installation of new pipeline infrastructure required to enable to the extraction of oil and gas from the licenced Arran field and were completed in 2020. The extracted hydrocarbons would be



conveyed via pipeline infrastructure to the Shearwater surface installation for processing and export. The original screening direction for the project involved installation of pipelines, subsea structures, pipeline umbilical's, trenching and backfilling of pipelines and rock protection. The works subject of the original direction were carried out in 2020.

This screening direction (ref: PL/2075/1) relates to the requirement to extend the date of the direction to install additional protective and supporting deposits to the Arran field pipeline infrastructure. Additional concrete mattresses and grout bags are required to cover some of the pipeline which was laid on the seabed as certain lengths of the pipeline could not be trenched in 2020 due to logistical issues with the vessels doing the work. Further, additional deposits are required due to engineering changes to some of the pipeline infrastructure where it crosses a third-party pipeline. These engineering changes were unforeseen during planning of the wider project.

The screening direction (ref: PL/2075/2) relates to the requirement to extend the expiry date of direction to install temporary grout bags as support for the well-head cocoon doors when opened. These grout bags are to be removed before expiry of the direction.

The project is intended to take place by 31st January 2022. Works will be undertaken using specialised vessels for installing the protection and support materials, and a guard vessel to ensure safety. The project is not at risk from natural disasters given its location, or unplanned major accident scenarios.

There are a number of oil and gas surface installations within 40 kilometres (km) from the pipeline location, including Mungo, Elgin, Erskine and Lomond. However, given the small geographical scale of the project, no cumulative interactions are foreseen with any other existing or approved projects.

There are no significant risks to human health anticipated, nor will there be a production of waste from the project. No pollution or nuisances are foreseen from the use of materials to protect and support the pipeline infrastructure.

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 offshore oil and gas licenced areas, approximately 229 km east from the Aberdeenshire coastline in Scotland and 4 km west of the UK/Norwegian median line, in an area where water depth is approximately 80-90 m and the seabed type is characterised as sand with abundant shell fragments. The predominant current in the location originates from well mixed coastal water, Atlantic inflow from the north and the Fair Isle/Dooley current from the Orkney Islands. The expected wave heights for the project area are 2.1 to 2.4 m. The project is not located in or close to any protected areas. The closest protected area is the East of



Gannet and Montrose Fields, 33 km west of the project location.

Site-specific surveys identified the seabed as consisting of a very similar, fine sand seabed across all sample stations located in the project area. The survey results revealed that there was a diverse faunal community which was moderately distributed. Ocean quahog were recorded during historic sampling analysis, with the majority consisting of juvenile specimens, however no specimens were recorded in the most recent site survey.

The project works will take place during peak spawning of mackerel, and Norwegian lobster. The project location is within an area of high intensity spawning for mackerel. Sightings of cetaceans have not been recorded during the period for which the project works are planned. The project area is not within a commonly fished ground and fishing effort is predominantly focussed on demersal and 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 near 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 seabed disturbance due to the installation of concrete mattresses and grout bags.

The installation of protective concrete mattresses and grout bags will result in a small increase in the affected seabed area. The seabed area impacted by the increase in deposits will rise from 0.09151 square km to 0.093982 square km. The addition of 10 x 1 Tonne temporary grout bags will result in an additional 10m² area of impact. The area impacted is worst-case and includes a contingent allowance of concrete mattresses and grout bags that may not be used. The installation of such deposits on the seabed will cause loss of natural habitat and alteration of the benthic environment and organisms which would have been found there. Sessile organisms will be more prone to be affected by the project works as they will not be able to avoid the potential impacted area of seabed. The installation of such types of deposits will also provide opportunity for organisms that inhabit hard surfaces, such as sponges, soft corals and tubeworms. Given the local nature of the works to deposit materials and the abundance of the wider natural environment, impacts to the benthic environment and the organisms which inhabit such an environment are considered not to be significant. Although recovery of impacts of this nature have been difficult to monitor, some studies have shown that similar impacts from different industry on a similar scale have shown recovery in less than a year.



Ocean quahog have been observed through site surveys, but their abundance is low and the population of the species will not be significantly impacted. The project will not have a significant impact on the mackerel spawning period given that the species is a pelagic spawner, meaning that the project works will not interact with spawning as the works are focussed on the seabed. Norwegian lobster eggs are carried by the mother at all times. Given that the species is mobile and able to avoid disturbance, it is expected that the impact to this spawning species will not be significant.

The physical presence of the vessels involved with the work programme will not have an exclusion area attributed to them and would be able to move away from location in an emergency. The project is in a low-level fishing effort area and so the impact to other users of the sea is not expected to be significant.

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 all the above determinations into account, the Secretary of State has concluded that the project is not likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

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.