

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-4946U
UKOP Doc Ref:1180031



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

PERENCO UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: 04653066

Date: 14th December 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**

PIPELINE PL23 -Area 1 Urgent Deposits

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2220/0 (Version 3), dated 13th December 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**

PIPELINE PL23 -Area 1 Urgent Deposits

PL/2220/0 (Version 3)

Whereas PERENCO UK LIMITED has made an application dated 13th December 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 PA/3873.

Effective Date: 14th December 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 14 December 2021 until 31 December 2021.

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

Rock deposits

8, 000 tonnes of clean, inert rock material, containing minimal fines, (The quantity of rock deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary stabilisation or protection, and any surplus rock must be returned to land).

OR

Concrete mattress deposits

10 concrete mattresses, each measuring 6 metres x 3 metres x 50 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).

Rock filter units

A total of 40 (4 tonnes) rock filter units. (The number of rock filter units deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus rock filter units must be returned to land).

4 Location of pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials

At the locations details in the PL SAT.

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 Monitoring

The results of any pre or post-placement surveys carried out to confirm the necessity for the deposits covered by the screening direction and/or to confirm the accurate positioning of the stabilisation or protection materials, should be forwarded to the Department following completion of the surveys

8 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.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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).

12 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.

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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:

The deposits hereby given approval relate only to the urgent workscope in Area 1 as detailed in PL/2220. Perenco shall seek separate agreement from OPRED to the further planned works which are currently under consideration under PL/2211.

Long-term management of pipeline remediation

Given the increasing requirements for pipeline remediation, by Perenco, within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which are designated for benthic habitats and species, OPRED would like to discuss an approach to the longer-term management of Perenco's permanent deposits within the sandbank MPAs.

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

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Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
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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

Characteristics of the project

This screening direction (ref: PL/2220) relates to a change to the project for which a screening direction was previously given (PL/2086 and DEP/1981) for the placement of deposits urgently due to a significant pipeline free span which Perenco believes if left unremediated will have an imminent risk of pipeline damage. In addition Perenco have also submitted a separate screening direction(PL/2211) which is for the remainder of the workscope which was not completed under PL/2086 and will be undertaken in the early part of 2022, this screening direction considers the urgent deposits require under PL/2220.

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

Summary of project

The deposit of an additional 10 mattresses

The deposit of an additional 40 Rock Filter Units (RFU); **or**

The deposit of 8,000 tonnes of inert rock

Under PA/3873.

Description of project

PL23 is a gas export pipeline from Lemn AP platform to the Bacton gas terminal and is routinely inspected to monitor the development of exposures and freespan and remediation works on the pipeline are identified and undertaken as necessary. Pipeline inspection surveys at PL23 completed in August and December 2021 identified the development a further freespan at one of the locations for planned remediation under PL2211 created by the collapse of a rock berm that was previously installed a number of years ago which requires urgent remediation to prevent damage to the pipeline. Perenco plans to carry out the placement of 40 rock filter unit (RFU) and 10 concrete mattresses at 3 locations within the freespan to strengthen the historical rock berm sections, to produce a more stable base and prevent further collapse in the near future. However due to the urgency of the works Perenco have also identified an alternative option to account for materials availability, the second option would be the placement of upto 8,000 tonnes of rock, these will be located in



"area 1" between KP 7.750 and KP/7.950. The commencement date of operations is the 14 December 2021 and a completion date of 31 December 2021.

Freespan correction and the prevention of pipeline buoyancy are essential to ensure pipeline integrity (and prevent pipeline failure) and protect the safety of other users of the sea. Fishing vessels are particularly vulnerable to snagging hazards such as these and remediation works will minimise the risk considerably by reducing the height and length of the identified spans.

No significant cumulative or in combination impacts are expected to occur between this project and other existing projects. It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters, or unplanned major accident scenarios and there is no risk to human health.

Location of the project

Having regard, in particular, to the matters identified in Schedule 5 2(a) to (c) of the Regulations, the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the project has been considered as follows. The PL23 pipeline is in the southern North Sea and connects the Bacton Gas Terminal on the North Norfolk Coast to the Leman AD platform in UKCS Block 49/27. The route of the PL23 pipeline crosses UKCS Blocks 48/30, 49/26, 49/27, 52/3, 52/4 and 52/5. At its closest point the PL23 pipeline is located approximately 59 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line. The project is within the area of the already developed Inde and Leman fields. The water depth in the vicinity of the deposit areas vary between 12 and 40 m and the seabed sediments are coarse sands with gravels.

The faunal communities found in the area are those typically associated with sublittoral coarse sediment, sand, mud, and mixed sediments. Characterising species generally include the polychaetes *Ophelia borealis* , *Polycirrus* , *Lagis koreni*, *Scoloplos armiger* and *Nephtys cirrosa* , and the amphipod *Bathyporeia guilliamsoniana* . The whole area is faunally heterogeneous on a small spatial scale, and infaunal communities are similar between nearshore and offshore sandbanks, and between crest, flanks, and troughs.

The project location is within the marine protected areas; North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef (NNS) Special Area of Conservation (SAC), with sub-tidal sandbank and reef features and the Southern North Sea SAC, designated for harbour porpoise and adjacent to the Haisborough Hammond and Winterton (HHW) SAC which is designated for the protection of Annex 1 habitat (reef features).

No areas of *Sabellaria spinulosa* reefs were identified during the pipeline inspection surveys. In addition, the deposits will be made in areas where the pipeline and some existing deposits are already in place, therefore the potential impact on undisturbed sediments has been kept to a minimum.

Approximately 9.5 km of the overall PL23 pipeline route is Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), which has been designated for the protection of



seabed features, such as chalk beds, however no deposit locations are within the MCZ.

Harbour porpoise and white-beaked dolphin have been sighted in the area with surveys indicating that there is a low cetacean presence in December. Spawning for herring, *nephrops*, *plaice* and sandeels may coincide with the project works. The project area is not within a commonly fished ground and fishing effort is historically very low. Seabird sensitivity in the area is very high during the period of operations. Oil and gas activity in the vicinity of the project is high and the Inde and Leman areas of the SNS have extensive oil and gas infrastructure. The closest offshore wind farm, North Vanguard West, is located approximately 15km to the south west and is currently in the planning stage. Due to the proximity of key ports around the Norfolk and Lincolnshire coasts, the density of shipping traffic is high in the southern North Sea but low at the project location itself.

The nearest Royal Airforce Practice and Exercise Area (PEXA) is approximately 17 km north of the pipeline. It is not considered to be likely that this will be affected by the project. There are no active dredging or dredge disposal sites or charted wrecks.

Given the location of the project, it is not likely that 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 Schedule 5 paragraph 3 of 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 physical presence of a vessel on location and seabed disturbance.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health. The physical presence of the single vessel involved will not have an exclusion area, however the vessel will be subject to navigational provisions and able to move away in an emergency. The project is in a very low-level fishing area and so the impact to other users of the sea is not expected to be significant. Noise and atmospheric emissions impacts are not considered to be significant.

The urgent remediation programme has the potential for the deposit of 10 concrete mattresses and 40 RFUs or up to 8,000 tonnes of rock along the pipeline. This will cause seabed disturbance and loss of soft sediment habitat in an area of up to 2,000 m² along the pipeline corridor however the urgent deposits will be laid on the existing rock berm and not directly on the seabed and account for the maximum area from either of the two options noting that only one option will be used. This is a conservative estimate as it assumes that all the deposit material from each will be used, including contingency amounts. This is a relatively small area compared to the wider southern North Sea with similar soft sediment habitat. The total area of impact



within each marine protected area is 0.002000 km² for the North Norfolk Sandbank and Saturn Reef SAC and the Southern North Sea SAC. The placement of the deposits could have a permanent impact on the local sediment faunal communities, potentially smothering any flora and fauna directly beneath it, however all deposits will be made on the existing rock berm in an area already subject to impact. No notable species of conservation importance (i.e., areas of *Sabellaria spinulosa* reefs) were identified during the recent pipeline inspection surveys.

Given the above, it is not anticipated that the proposed deposits will significantly reduce the extent and distribution of subtidal sandbank communities or reef aggregations across the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC. The structure and function of the sandbanks will also not be significantly adversely impacted by the pipeline deposit operations. The proposed placement of deposits is also not likely to significantly adversely impact harbour porpoise in the SNS SAC.

There are no expected transboundary impacts because of the project and no significant cumulative or in combination impacts have been identified given the other known 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

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:

n/a