

Our Ref: 01.08.06.15/385C
UKOP Doc Ref:1181457



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

REPSOL SINOPEC RESOURCES UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: 00825828

Date: 17th December 2021

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Dear Sir / Madam

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

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2214/0 (Version 2), dated 16th 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**

BLAKE FIELD PRODUCTION

PR/2214/0 (Version 2)

Whereas REPSOL SINOPEC RESOURCES UK LIMITED has made an application dated 16th 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.

Effective Date: 17th 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

This screening direction shall be valid from 1 January 2022.

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 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 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

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 oil and gas production from the Blake field.

Description of project

This project consists of an increase in oil production of less than 500 tonnes per day and gas production of less than 500,000 cubic meters per day at the Blake field, due to the proposed drilling of well B2z (attic well) in 2022. The increase in production is proposed for 2022 and is requested in the production consent.

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

There is no change to the assessment of a major accident. 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.

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters.

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:

The field is located in Block 13/24 with the processing facility, the Bleo Holm Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel in Block 13/28 in the central North Sea (CNS) approximately 56 kilometres (km) from the Scottish coast of the UK and 190 km from the UK/Norway median line, in an approximate water depth of 110 metres (m). Typical current speed is 0.1ms⁻¹ for both the Atlantic and Fair Isle Dooley current. Surface tidal currents range between 0.11 to 0.5ms⁻¹.

The sediment around the FPSO is composed of sands, gravels and muds and muddy beds of the Fladen and Witch Grounds. Surveys in the area have shown fine sands and very soft silty sandy clays with boulders.

The faunal communities of the central North Sea are dominated by polychaetes, bivalve species, brittlestars, crabs, shrimp and starfish and deep silty areas including sea pens. Surveys near the FPSO confirmed these faunal groups with polychaetes being dominant but in addition molluscs, amphipods and worms were noted. Their distribution was largely uniform and confirmed the same faunal communities as previous surveys.

The closest areas protected for Annex I habitat are the Moray Firth Special area of Conservation (SAC) designated for the protection of sandbanks slightly covered by seawater as well as bottlenose dolphin, approximately 120km away and the Scanner Pockmark, designated for a large seabed depression, made by leaking gases, 140 km away. The SACs are now referred to as sites of national importance retaining the same protection under UK as EU regulation. There are no reefs or other Annex I habitats. Pockmarks with active methane seeps are common in the Witch and Fladen grounds but located at least 40km from the FPSO which has small inactive shallow pockmarks. The closest Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area is the Southern Trench designated for seabed sediment, morphological features and minke whales 28km south west of the FPSO.

Fish spawning species include cod, lemon sole, Norway pout, Nephrops, plaice, sandeel, sprat and whiting with herring spawning in the ICES rectangle 45E8 but which is not found in the FPSO area itself. It is also a nursery area for several fish species with a high probability of anglerfish and Norway pout in their first year of life. Surveys indicate fine sand sediments favoured by sandeel species but less so by



Nephrops. Several species listed are Priority Marine Features.

Seabird vulnerability is extremely high in February, very high November and December, high in October and low to medium for the remaining months, broadly similar to the neighbouring blocks.

Harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin, grey and harbour seals, all Annex II species (of national importance) have been sighted in block 13 along with minke whale, common dolphin, white-beaked dolphin, white-sided dolphin, Risso's dolphin, killer whale and pilot whale. All of these species are found in low to high densities throughout the year.

Block 13/28 falls within International Council of the Sea (ICES) rectangle 45E8, and fishing effort is dominated by trawling gear, the largest quantity (tonnes) being demersal species. Fishing activity is at its lowest in April. The period of greatest fishing activity is November, but the largest catch is March while the highest value fishing is January. The closest aquaculture site for shellfish and finfish is approximately 120km away.

The FPSO has a 500m statutory safety exclusion zone around it. Shipping density in the area is moderate. The project location is not within a military activity zone, there are no known wrecks or historic marine protected areas, no submarine cables, aggregate extraction or renewable energy development (though wind plan option areas are indicated outside the block and the nearest oil and gas development is 19km away.

Given the location of the project, it is not likely that the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) or (viii) 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 of the atmospheric emissions on the environment from the activities associated with the project were assessed. Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

Production from Blake B2z (attic well) will not require a change in offshore personnel hours with no change to the frequency of helicopter and vessel trips. There will be no change to combustion plant or fuel consumption with no change to atmospheric emissions.

There will be minimal increase in venting from cargo tanks or cold flaring with a reduction in FPSO flaring by 7% between 2021 and 2022. The return of the automatic pilot flare in 2021 has reduced venting and current and further control measures are proposed to monitor, manage and reduce emissions. Emissions



disperse rapidly and are not considered to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

The proposed increase in production is accommodated by a subsea crossover, installed in 2019 diverting Blake hydrocarbons into the Ross processing system with the Ross field expected to be shut in during 2022. There will be no modifications to the production system as a whole as a result of this project and therefore no significant impact on the environment.

Produced water will continue to be discharged. There is expected to be a minor decrease of oil and water volume discharged and concentration will continue to be maintained within current permitted discharge levels. Chemicals will remain the same apart from use of a new scale treatment product for both the attic well and production flowlines and chemicals are risk assessed to ensure no significant impact upon the environment.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the operations.

It is considered that the increase in oil gas production from the Blake field is not likely to have a significant environmental impact with other offshore activities, other users of the sea, the seabed, marine life or cetacean species and no cumulative impacts are expected to occur.

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.