

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-4946U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1188505



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

PERENCO UK LIMITED  
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Registered No.: 04653066

Date: 7th February 2022

Department for Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

AB1 Building  
Crimon Place  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1BJ

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[www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis)  
[bst@beis.gov.uk](mailto:bst@beis.gov.uk)

Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING  
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS  
2020  
PIPELINE PL23**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2211/0 (Version 3), dated 4th February 2022 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](mailto: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**

**PL/2211/0 (Version 3)**

Whereas PERENCO UK LIMITED has made an application dated 4th February 2022, 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/3851.

Effective Date: 7th February 2022



## **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 10 February 2022 until 30 June 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](mailto:bst@beis.gov.uk)

#### **3 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials**

Rock deposits

49126 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).

#### **4 Location of pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials**

At the locations detail in the PL SAT within the following areas:-

- Rock Placement Area 2A (KP 13.100 to 13.398)
- Rock Placement Area 2B (KP 13.388 to 13.422)
- Rock Placement Area 2C (KP 13.343 to 13.500)
- Rock Placement Area 2D (KP 13.210 to 13.300)
- Rock Placement Area 2E (KP 13.214 to 13.255)

#### **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 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.

## **10 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).



## **11 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:

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**

#### **Characteristics of the project**

This screening direction (ref: PL/2211/0) 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. There were 2 locations along pipeline PL23 which required remedial intervention, Area 1 was remediated in December 2021 under PL/2220, Area 2 (under this application) requires deposits in 5 locations to reinforce the existing rock berm.

In addition 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 49,126 tonnes of clean graded rock, under OGA Consent PA/3851.

#### **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 requirement for further remediation due to deterioration in the existing rock berm. Perenco plans to carry out the placement of 49,126 tonnes of rock at 5 locations to strengthen the historical rock berm sections, to produce a more stable base and prevent further collapse in the near future, these will be located in "area 2" between KP 13.100 and KP13.325. The earliest commencement date of operations is 10 February 2022 and a completion date for 30 June 2022.

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 Southern North Sea SAC, designated for harbour porpoise and adjacent to the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef (NNS) Special Area of Conservation (SAC), with sub-tidal sandbank and reef features and 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 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 overall remediation programme has the potential for the deposit of upto 49,126 tonnes of rock along the pipeline. This will cause seabed disturbance and loss of soft sediment habitat in an area of up to 7202 m<sup>2</sup> along the pipeline corridor however the deposits will be laid on the existing rock berm and not directly on the seabed. This is a conservative estimate as it assumes that all the deposit material 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 the Southern North Sea SAC marine protected area is 0.007202 km<sup>2</sup>. 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. Due to the designated features of the Southern North Sea SAC, it is not anticipated there will be any discernible impacts on the SAC or protected species from seabed disturbance, in addition the short nature and low levels of noise associated with the operations are not likely to have a significant impact on harbour porpoise.

Given the above, the proposed placement of deposits is not likely to significantly adversely impact on harbour porpoise for which the SNS SAC is designated.

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: