

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-4899U  
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Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

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Registered No.: 00811900

Date: 11th March 2022

Department for Business, Energy  
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[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**

**Forvie North Electrical Umbilical replacement PLU5152**

I refer to your amended application dated 9th March 2022, reference PL/2198/1 (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](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**

**Forvie North Electrical Umbilical replacement PLU5152**

**PL/2198/1 (Version 1)**

Whereas TOTALENERGIES E&P UK LIMITED has made an application dated 9th March 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.

Effective Date: 11th March 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 15 November 2021 until 31 August 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**

Grout bags deposits

25 tonnes of grout contained within 25 kilogramme capacity non-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

64 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).

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

Within an area bounded by the coordinates 60 31 21.55' North 01 52 00.17' East and 60 30 42.49' North 01 50 01.13' East.

### **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:

PL/2198/0 (Version 2) 12th November 2021

The Department note the following comments:

Non-biodegradable grout bags must be recovered upon decommissioning, these have only been allowed in this case due to TotalEnergies commitment to this and due to risk of damage to the umbilical from grout breakdown if non-biodegradable used. The number deployed must be minimised where possible due to this.

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**

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 Assessment 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**

Installation of 2310 m electrical umbilical, including trenching and backfilling; Permanent deposits of concrete mattresses and grout bags; Temporary deposits associated with installation operations. PL/2198/1 was submitted to extend the screening direction to 31st August 2022 due to operational delays.

### **Description of the Project**

The installation of the replacement electrical umbilical and associated permanent and temporary deposits at the Forvie North field and Forvie PLEM will be undertaken by one vessel and is expected to take up to 10 days to complete between November 2021 and August 2022. The Forvie North Field is a subsea tieback to the Forvie Subsea Manifold, from where production is routed to the Alwyn North Platform (UKCS block 3/09) for processing and export. The field is controlled from Dunbar





platform (UKCS block 3/14).

To install the electrical umbilical it will be laid on the seabed using a reel-lay method before being trenched into the seabed using Controlled Flow Excavation (CFE) or jetting. The CFE/jetter is then run over the umbilical to lower to required depth (of 600 mm). The CFE/jetter will then make passes either side of the umbilical to back-fill the trench. The width of the trench corridor is not expected to exceed 20 m.

Concrete mattresses and 25kg grout bags will be utilised for stabilisation and protection of the electrical umbilical within the 500 m zone of Forvie North and Forvie PLEM with deposits anticipated to be recovered upon decommissioning.

Temporary deposit of a clump weight and beacon is required for the vessel to maintain dynamic positioning which will be recovered at the end of the project. The maximum area impacted is 0.47 km<sup>2</sup>

No cumulative interactions are foreseen with any other existing or approved projects. There is no risk to human health from the works to install the electrical umbilical and or deposit the stabilising and protecting materials on the seabed.

There is no credible potential for a major accident or disaster to affect this project. Any wastes associated with the project will be handled appropriately and no significant impacts are anticipated.

The project is not at risk from natural disasters given its location in UK offshore waters.

### **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 approximately 125 km east of the Scottish coast and 15 km west of the UK/Norwegian median line, in an area of the Northern North Sea (NNS) where the water depth is approximately 109-117 metres (m). The surface current speed in the area is approximately 0.17 m/s and the wave height ranges from 2.41 - 2.7 m, which is typical of this area of the NNS. Site-specific surveys identified the sediment as comprising of poorly sorted very fine sand to coarse silt. Considerable scarring and disturbance of the seabed in the form of trawl scars, anchor scars and drilling mud related to previous fishing and drilling activity is apparent in the wider Dubar area. Persistence of these features indicates the relatively low sediment mobility in the area.

Benthic fauna identified by the site surveys was generally sparse with annelids, crustaceans, molluscs and echinoderms found. Seapens were observed although in sparse occasional individual numbers. Seapens can indicate the presence of the OSPAR habitat 'Seapens and burrowing megafauna communities', however numbers



are considered low in the area and therefore unlikely to constitute towards habitats of conservation importance.

The project is not located in any protected areas. The closest protected area is the Pobie Bank Reef Site 85 km to the West.

The project is located in an area of considerable oil and gas development.

There are no historic Marine Protected Areas (HMPAs), scheduled monuments (including wrecks) or war graves located within block 3/15 and the closest wreck site is the Fairline 6km to the west in block 3/14 and a unknown wreck 9km southeast in block 3/20. Operations are unlikely to effect either wrecks.

There are no submarine cables in the vicinity of operations and the project is not located within an area of military activity.

The project will take place during spawning seasons for cod, sandeel, saithe, haddock, whiting, and Norway pout and within the nursery area of several fish species.

Harbour porpoise have been recorded during the period in which the project works are planned. Seabird abundance is low for the period in which the project works are planned. The area is described as high intensity fishing area and fishing effort is predominantly focussed on demersal and pelagic species.

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 on the environment from the activities associated with the project were assessed, including impacts arising from atmospheric emissions, seabed disturbance and physical presence. Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

Power generation on board the vessel will generate atmospheric emissions which are expected to result in a short-term deterioration in air quality in the immediate area. This localised effect is expected to be temporary given the meteorological conditions at the offshore location, which are expected to result in rapid dispersion of emissions. The installation activities are expected to take up to 10 days which represents a contribution of <0.005% to the total mass of CO<sub>2</sub> generated from UK offshore activities in 2018. The impacts arising from atmospheric emissions on local air quality and climate are not considered to be significant.

Seabed disturbance from the installation activities is estimated to impact a total area of 47,385 m<sup>2</sup>. This is likely to result in displacement or mortality of sedentary



organisms along with resuspension of sediment however is considered to be minor. Seapens are sensitive to seabed disturbance; however, although there is the potential for individuals to be impacted there are not expected to be any effects at the population level.

The proposed operations could potentially impact sandeel spawning areas; however, any impact is expected to be localised and minimal.

The trenching methodology selected requires significantly less permanent deposits than if the electrical umbilical were to be surface laid on the seabed.

The potential impacts will not extend to any protected sites. The ecological impact from the project is not expected to be identifiable given the wider area of similar natural seabed environment available. Seabed disturbance from the installation activities are not considered likely to have a significant impact.

The majority of installation activities will take place within two existing 500 m radius safety zones, which exclude the unauthorised access of vessels. This prohibits access to fishing and shipping vessels. The rest of the laying and trenching will extend beyond these existing safety zones, and the Developer will undertake notification of and communications with other marine users of the vessels' presence. The physical presence of the vessel is not considered likely to have a significant impact.

The installation activities will generate underwater noise through vessel engine use, which is anticipated to have a negligible impact.

There are no expected transboundary impacts as a result of the project and no additional cumulative 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:

Not applicable.