

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5026U
UKOP Doc Ref:1197470



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

APACHE NORTH SEA LIMITED
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Registered No.: 04614761

Date: 28th March 2022

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

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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**

FORTIES, Forties FC Platform, DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 21/10-C47U

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference DR/2227/0 (Version 4), dated 25th March 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.

Yours faithfully

Signature valid

Digitally signed by Environmental Section
Date: 2022.03.28 14:26:49 BST
Reason: On behalf of the Department for
Business Energy and Industrial Strategy
Location: The Department for Business Energy
and Industrial Strategy

**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**

FORTIES, Forties FC Platform, DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 21/10-C47U

DR/2227/0 (Version 4)

Whereas APACHE NORTH SEA LIMITED has made an application dated 25th 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 agreement to the North Sea Transition Authority to grant of consent for the project as detailed in the application (WONS/13819/0/GS/1).

Effective Date: 28th 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 29 March 2022 until 31 December 2022.

2 Commencement and completion of the project

The holder of the screening direction must notify the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (hereinafter called the 'Department') of commencement and completion of the project within two days:

- a) of commencement of the project and
- b) of completion of the project.

Notification should be sent by email to the Environmental Management Team Mailbox: bst@beis.gov.uk

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, extended well test emissions or flaring and venting emissions relating to a well test, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting forms. In the case of atmospheric emissions relating to drilling projects undertaken from a fixed installation, they should be included in the annual EEMS reporting forms for the fixed installation.

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:

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

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 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 the 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

Slot recovery operation using seawater and sweeps
Drilling of a sidetrack 12.25" section and reservoir 8.5" section using Low Toxicity Oil Based Mud (LTOBM).
Well bore clean up and completion

Description of the Project

This project is the drilling of a sidetrack and completion of the existing Forties Charlie producer 21/10-C47U well to stacked targets C01RD and T330 in the Charlie Channel Complex sands (C01RD), and Supra Charlie and UMS Thin Beds (T330). The operations will be conducted from the Forties Charlie platform.

Seawater and sweeps will be used during slot recovery operations, and these will be discharged to sea. The existing well will then be abandoned with a cement plug. The 12.25" x 8.5" sections will be drilled using LTOBM with all cuttings and fluids re-injected to a donor well. Casings will then be run and cemented into place to provide structural strength. On completion of the drilling operations, wellbore clean-up operations will be undertaken.

If the well is unsuccessful, the well will be sidetracked to a backup a target location T203/T376.

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

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters. The risk of a major accident such as a well blowout has been assessed. 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.

Other than the matters considered further below, 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 proposed drilling project is located in the Forties field in the Central North Sea, in UKCS Block 21/10 extending into Block 22/6, approximately 159 kilometres (km) from the Aberdeenshire coastline, and 72 km from the UK/Norway Median Line, in a depth of approximately 128 metres (m).

The wave height in the area ranges from 2.11 to 2.4 m and the tidal energy is fairly low. Site specific surveys confirmed the seabed sediments in the area comprise of silty sands with accumulations of coarse sediment interpreted to be drill cuttings. Several areas of high reflectivity were interpreted as accumulations of small cobbles or coarse sediment and were not associated with significant height. An area of highly reflective disturbed seabed was recorded directly around the platform interpreted as drill cuttings.

The proposed operations will coincide with fish spawning and/or nursery activity for a number of species.

The closest MPA is the East of Gannet and Montrose Fields MPA, located 34km to the south designated for ocean quahog aggregations, offshore subtidal sands and gravels, offshore deep sea muds.

The project is in the National Marine Plan Area for Scotland.

No Annex I habitats or communities of conservation significance (including both methane-derived authigenic carbonates and potential stony reefs) were considered to be present within the Forties area.

Low densities of Atlantic white-sided dolphin, harbour porpoise, minke whale and white-beaked dolphin have been recorded in the area. Low numbers of Grey and harbour seals are anticipated to be in the area at any time.

Seabird vulnerability in the vicinity of the Forties field is low from February to October and very high in January and December.

The project area is primarily used for demersal fishing and the fishing effort in the area is rated moderate to high.

There are several oil and gas fields nearby. The central North Sea fibre optic cable passes through the Forties area via Forties Charlie and Bravo. There are no operational renewable energy sites, nor any under construction and there are no known wrecks of historical importance or military activity or shellfish water protected areas or active aquaculture sites within the vicinity of the proposed operations. Shipping density in the area is moderate.

Given the location of the project, it is not likely that the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) 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 on the environment from the activities associated with the project were assessed, including impacts arising from atmospheric emissions, seabed disturbance, physical presence, planned discharges and accidental spills.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health.

There is a 500 m radius safety zone around the Forties Charlie Installation, excluding unauthorised access of vessels and prohibiting access to fishing vessels. The drilling project is a sidetrack of an existing well from the Forties Alpha Installation and as such there will be no impact on the seabed. The Field has been developed for 40 years and the locations of the Forties platforms are well known to other marine users and marked on the appropriate navigational charts

The emissions associated with the project result from power demand for the proposed operations. Drilling facilities are integrated on the platform and use the electricity generated by the offshore combustion installations. It is expected the emissions will be rapidly dispersed and are not likely to have a significant impact.

There will be no cuttings produced from the slot recovery section. The cuttings generated from the sections drilled with LTOBM will be re-injected into a donor well using the cuttings re-injection system (CRI). If the CRI system is not operational the cuttings will be skipped and shipped. There will be no discharge of any cuttings to sea.

Discharge of offshore chemicals associated with the sidetrack of the well, cementing and completion operations have been assessed as not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Offshore chemicals associated with LTOBM will be re-injected.

The wellbore clean-up operations may result in the discharge of wastewater containing residual base oil from the LTOBM. This discharge has been assessed and is not considered to have a likely significant effect on the environment.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the drilling operations at the Forties Charlie. The nearest boundary (UK/Norway Median Line) is located approximately 72km away. It is not considered likely that any planned operational discharge (chemicals) will be detectable at this distance from the well location.

The drilling operations do not contradict any of the Scottish marine plan objectives and policies

Although not a planned activity, a worst-case major accident scenario resulting from a potential well blow-out was modelled and assessed. The probability of a large oil spill from the proposed operations is low. Therefore, it is considered that the control measures in place to prevent loss of well control minimise the risk of an oil spill which could have a significant impact and the proposed operations carried out as planned are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

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