

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-2940U
UKOP Doc Ref:1212589



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

SERICA ENERGY (UK) LIMITED
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Registered No.: 04073712

Date: 30th June 2022

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

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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
BRUCE**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2254/0 (Version 2), dated 21st June 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



**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**

BRUCE

PR/2254/0 (Version 2)

Whereas SERICA ENERGY (UK) LIMITED has made an application dated 21st June 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 Oil and Gas Authority to the grant of consent for the project as detailed in the application, Production Increase 13-22.

Effective Date: 30th June 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

This screening direction shall be valid from 1 July 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:

There are no comments at this time.

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:

The information provided by the developer.

The matters listed in Schedule 5 of The Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Unloading and Storage (Environmental Impact Regulations 2020) (the Regulations).

The results of any preliminary verifications or assessments of the effects on the environment of the project; and

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 Bruce 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 Bruce field, due to the proposed well intervention on wells well M1, M4, M5 in 2022. The increase in production is proposed for 2022 and 2023 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 Bruce complex is located in the Northern North Sea in Block 9/9, consisting of three jackets with fixed bridge-linked platforms. The production, utilities and accommodation modules (PUQ) are housed on one platform, while the second platform 'D' was previously used for drilling activities. The third platform comprises of compression and generation (CR). The field is located approximately 330 km northeast of Aberdeen (148 km from the nearest coastline in Shetland) and 17 km west of the nearest transboundary line between the UK and Norway in approximately 122 metres (m) of water. Typical current speed is between 0.15 and 0.3 m/s.

The Bruce Field lies in an area of sand, with areas of muddy sand to the north and southwest of the development. Environmental baseline survey data show fine sands with a fine (silt and clay) component with shell fragments observed. The sand is underlain by areas of very soft to firm clay and medium dense to very dense clayey silty fine sand. Sediment sorting was poor but overall sediments were considered homogenous and representative of the fine sandy sediments of this area of the NNS.

The area of the NNS generally falls within a deep-water infaunal assemblage, characterised by high densities and species richness. Seabed survey conducted in the Bruce area in 2001 concluded that the composition of the macrofauna was representative of macrobenthic communities in the area of the North Sea, with stations dominated by the polychaete *Paraprionospio pinnata*, and Polychaete worms represented circa 50% of species identified. There were indications of moderate modification in the benthic community close to the Bruce platform. A 2011 survey confirmed the findings of the 2001 survey, but with an increase in species richness and diversity, denoting recovery over time. Results also suggest that hydrocarbon and heavy metal contamination related to drilling discharges from the Bruce platform area have decreased across the survey area since 2001. An ROV survey was conducted in 2015, consisting of video footage and still images taken within the Bruce field demonstrating fine sand and mud, subjected to bioturbation by burrowing macrofaunal and of mud and sand, with varying proportions of shells, shell fragments and gravel. The presence of shells and gravel enabled the plumose



anemone to settle in high numbers around the Drilling Platform.

There is no Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Marine Protected Area or other conservation area within 40km of the platform complex. The closest Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (NCMPA) is the Central Fladen which is located over 100 km to the southwest. There are no areas of potential Annex I habitats identified by baseline surveys in the area.

The Bruce platform lies within ICES area 48F1, this overlaps with the spawning ground for haddock, Norway pout, saithe, whiting, cod and sandeel. The platform also lies in nursery areas for whiting, blue whiting, Atlantic mackerel, herring, sandeels, ling, anglerfish, haddock, Norway pout and also for European hake.

Seabird vulnerability is low throughout the year in the area, although there is a paucity of data for many months of the surveyed oil and gas blocks in the vicinity.

Harbour porpoise, minke whale, white beaked dolphin and killer whale have been sighted in the area of operations. All of these species are found in low densities although not consistently throughout the year, although harbour porpoise have been recorded as high density in February, with low densities in June, July and December. Since the Bruce field of operations is located approximately 157 km offshore, grey and harbour seals may be encountered from time to time but it is not likely that they use the area with any regularity or in great numbers.

The complex falls within International Council of the Sea (ICES) rectangle 48F1, and fishing effort is dominated by trawling gear, the largest quantity (tonnes) being demersal species. The Bruce area of operations is not considered to be of commercial importance to the fishing industry and fishing effort for all species in this area is low in comparison with the remainder of the North Sea's fleet fishing effort.

The shipping intensity in UKCS Blocks 9/8 and 9/9 is very low, whereas UKCS Block 3/29 (Rhum) experiences low shipping intensity. The complex has a 500m statutory safety exclusion zone around it. There are no documented military activities within the area of Bruce operations, the closest being immediately north of the Moray Firth, approximately 195 km southwest of Bruce. There are no known historic marine protected areas, no submarine cables in the block, aggregate extraction, or renewable energy development in the immediate vicinity. The nearest (unknown) wreck is 7.3km southwest of the Bruce PUQ platform. The nearest oil and gas development is Brae Bravo installation (now decommissioned), 17km 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 Bruce well will not require a change in operational processes. There will be no change to combustion plant or fuel consumption with no change to atmospheric emissions. There will be no impact on flaring because of the increases. Emissions disperse rapidly with no significant impact but all greenhouse gas emissions impact climate.

The proposed increase in production has been enabled by well intervention works which commenced in May 2022 and are due to continue into July 2022.

Assuming a best-case scenario which sees maximum increase in production, there will be a requirement for additional demulsifier and export corrosion inhibitor chemical volumes. The demulsifier is expected largely to partition to the oil phase and be exported to shore. 100% discharge via the deoiler package will be modelled as a worst-case scenario although produced water is re-injected into a dedicated well as long as the PWRI package is available. The export corrosion inhibitor is not expected to be discharged and will be risk assessed as such. The volume of topside scale inhibitor will initially decrease then rise again when PW volumes increase again. Changes to chemical volumes will be risk assessed in detail in a variation to the associated chemical permit. However, the effect of the variation in topside scale inhibitor use and discharge is considered to be negligible as the risk assessment process will ensure no significant impact upon the environment.

A LWIV (Light Well Intervention Vessel) will be used to undertake well intervention and work-over operations commencing in May 2022 but there were no modifications to the production system and production operations continue to be moderated as before. As a result of this project and therefore no significant impact on the environment.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the operations.

It is considered that the increase in oil gas production from the Bruce field is not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore activities or 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

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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