

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5224U
UKOP Doc Ref:1217294



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

PERENCO UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: 04653066

Date: 29th July 2022

Department for Business, Energy
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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
PIPELINE PL253**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2273/0 (Version 2), dated 27th July 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**

PIPELINE PL253

PL/2273/0 (Version 2)

Whereas PERENCO UK LIMITED has made an application dated 27th July 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, PA/4137

Effective Date: 29th July 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 1 August 2022 until 30 June 2023.

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

3 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials

Rock Filter Units

10 x 4 tonne rock filter units. The number of units deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus bags must be returned to land).

Concrete mattress deposits

29 concrete mattresses, each measuring 5.6 metres x 3 metres x 50 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

At the locations in the application.

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:

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]



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:

Characteristics of the project

This screening direction (ref: PL/2273/0) relates to a 2022 pipeline remediation campaign involving the placement of deposits (concrete mattresses and rock filter units RFUs) on the seabed to secure and support freespans at 5 locations on PL/253.

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 29 mattresses and 10 rock filter units (RFUs)

Under PA/4137

Description of project

The pipeline PL253 is a 24" gas pipeline which runs between a subsea Wye located approximately 1km East of the Trent platform in Block 43/24a and the Bacton Gas Terminal on the Norfolk coast and is routinely inspected to monitor the development of exposures and freespans and remediation works on the pipeline are identified and undertaken as necessary.

Perenco plans to carry out the placement of upto 29 mattresses and upto 10 rock filter units (RFUs) to secure and support freespans at 5 locations on PL253. The earliest commencement date of operations is 1 August 2022 and the latest completion date for 30 June 2023.

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 ETS pipeline PL253 runs between the Trent Subsea Wye, 195 km north of Great Yarmouth, and the Bacton Gas Terminal on the Norfolk Coast. The areas proposed for remediation are located approximately 34 km northeast of Bacton. All remediation locations lie within a short section of this pipeline between 38 km and 43 km from the shore. At its closest point the PL253 pipeline is located approximately 90 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line. The water depth in the vicinity of the deposit areas vary between 21 and 35 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, and mixed sediments, supporting various biotopes such as polychaetes, amphipods, bivalves and echinoderms.

The project location is 1km outside 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 approximately 12km from the Haisborough Hammond and Winterton (HHW) SAC which is designated for the protection of Annex 1 habitat (reef features).

Sabellaria spinulosa reefs is not considered to be present within the vicinity of the pipeline which is outside the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC and none were identified during the pipeline inspection surveys. In addition, some of 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.

Harbour porpoise and white-beaked dolphin have been sighted in the area with surveys indicating that there is a moderate cetacean presence during the potential operational period. Spawning for cod, *nephrops*, *plaice*, sandeels and sole 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 project area of the SNS have extensive oil and gas infrastructure. The closest operational offshore wind farm, Dudgeon, is located approximately 19km to the north west. 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 to medium at the project location itself.

There are no Royal Airforce Practice and Exercise Areas (PEXA) in the vicinity of the pipeline deposit locations There are no active dredging or dredge disposal sites or chartered 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 remediation programme has the potential for the deposit of 29 mattresses and 10 rock filter units (RFUs) along the pipeline. This will cause seabed disturbance and loss of soft sediment habitat in an area of up to 270 m² along the pipeline corridor. This is a conservative estimate as it assumes that all the deposit material from each 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 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 nearby 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 harbour porpoise in the SNS SAC.

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:

Not applicable for the proposed activities.