

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5117U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1230042



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

SHELL U.K. LIMITED  
SHELL CENTRE  
LONDON  
SE1 7NA

Registered No.: 00140141

Date: 10th October 2022

Department for Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

AB1 Building  
Crimon Place  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax

[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  
NELSON PIPELINE PL934 MAINTENANCE**

I refer to your amended application dated 6th October 2022, reference PL/2246/1 (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**

**NELSON PIPELINE PL934 MAINTENANCE**

**PL/2246/1 (Version 1)**

Whereas SHELL U.K. LIMITED has made an application dated 6th October 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/4022.

Effective Date: 10th October 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 May 2022 until 31 July 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](mailto:bst@beis.gov.uk)

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

Rock deposits

40 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**

Within an area as described 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 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.

## **8 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.

## **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:

N/A

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:

### 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 considered:

- 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 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

PL/2246/1 - This update extends the screening direction expiry date until 31 July 2023. No other changes made and the following information remains valid.

- Contingency deposit of up to 40 tonnes of rock for stabilisation of pipeline PL934 following inspection activities.

### Description of the Project

The Nelson export gas pipeline requires wall thickness measurements to be undertaken which will entail some location excavation and the potential for post-inspection stabilisation using up to 40 tonnes of rock to be deposited via drop bottom bags deployed from a Dive Support Vessel (DSV). The works are expected to take approximately 14 days to complete between 1 May 2022 and 31 July 2023.



No cumulative impacts are expected to occur with any other existing or approved projects. The risk of accidents with environmental effects, namely a release of diesel from the project vessel is very low. There is not likely to be any significant impact of the project on population and human health. It is not considered likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters. No pollution or nuisances are foreseen from the project.

### 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 in an offshore oil and gas licenced area, approximately 174 km east from the Aberdeenshire coastline and 54 km west of the UK/Norway median line, in an area where water depth is approximately 89 m and the seabed type is characterised as medium and fine sands with a low to moderate proportion of fines (silt and clay). Water circulation in the project location is anticlockwise. It is driven by the influx of Atlantic waters through the Fair Isle Channel moving southward along the Scottish and English coasts, with offshoot currents travelling east across the North Sea and a northward outflow through the Norwegian Trough. Within the region, there is an annual mean significant wave height between 2.11-2.40 m.

There are no protected sites within the vicinity of Nelson and the nearest such site is the East of Gannet and Montrose Fields (EoGaMF) Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (NCMPA), located approximately 22km to the south. The EoGaMF conservation area is designated for the infaunal bivalve, ocean quahog which inhabits sandy and muddy sediments. Juvenile ocean quahog were reported at all stations sampled during the Gannet A to Gannet D survey at densities estimated to be 'common' or 'abundant'. Adults were recorded in four grab samples in low numbers (2019 survey). No sensitive habitats were recorded in a 2013 survey, although ocean quahog was recorded in the area. Surveys identified the dominant epifauna taxa as polychaete species, sea urchin and brittle star.

The project works will take place during spawning of fish and shellfish species but given the limited area of seabed impact no significant impacts are anticipated. Sightings of cetaceans have been recorded during the period for which the project works are planned, and more frequently during the summer months. No significant impact to cetaceans is expected. Seabird Sensitivity to oil pollution is described as low for the period when project works are planned. With regard to commercial fishing the project area has a relatively low intensity fishing area.

There are a number of other oil and gas infrastructure in the surrounding area within a 40km radius, with the closest being Forties Bravo. Shipping traffic is very low. The project location is not in proximity to an aggregate extraction site or an offshore renewables site. There are no military exercise areas in proximity to the project location. There are 11 wrecks within 40km of the project location with the closest





being located 1.2km to the south.

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 to the environment from the activities associated with the change to the project were assessed, with focus on the predominant impacts resulting from atmospheric emissions from vessel use, and seabed disturbance from deposits on the seabed.

Emissions to air will occur from the combustion equipment on the DSV. The quantity of carbon dioxide equivalent from the vessel use amounts to 0.006% of the 2018 total emissions from offshore oil and gas activity. The impact of the vessel emissions will be mitigated by optimising vessel efficiency and hence minimising fuel use and avoiding the unnecessary operation of power generation/combustion equipment. Significant environmental effects on climate or local air quality are not expected from the project.

The area of permanent disturbance resulting from deposits of rock is minimal (0.00004km<sup>2</sup>). The main receptor impacted by seabed disturbance will be the sessile benthic communities. Physical disturbance can cause mortality or displacement of benthic species in the impacted zone. It is not considered that the impacts from smothering by rock or associated sediment displacement on a small number of ocean quahog individuals will result in a significant effect on the population viability of this species or affect the conservation objectives for the EoGMF conservation area which is located 22km to the south. Overall, recovery of the benthos in adjacent areas to the proposed activity is expected to occur following the operations and given the short time-span of operations and relatively small area anticipated to be permanently impacted, the impact to benthic habitats and species is considered to be low.

There are no expected transboundary impacts because of the project.

#### 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:

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N/A