

Our Ref: 12.04.05.15/1552C
UKOP Doc Ref:1237685



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

NEPTUNE E&P UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: 01483021

Date: 16th November 2022

Department for Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

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Crimon Place
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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
CYGNUS ALPHA PRODUCTION INCREASE**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2286/0 (Version 3), dated 15th November 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**

CYGNUS ALPHA PRODUCTION INCREASE

PR/2286/0 (Version 3)

Whereas NEPTUNE E&P UK LIMITED has made an application dated 15th November 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, PCON/1799/2.

Effective Date: 16th November 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 16 November 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:

Not Applicable.

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

1) Decision reasons

The following provides a summary of the assessments undertaken 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 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

An increase in the production of oil (condensate) and gas at the Cygnus Field for the period 2022 to 2028 due to higher production than originally forecast from the existing well stock and the additional production from the drilling of the 10th and 11th Cygnus Wells.

Description of project

This project consists of an increase in oil (condensate) and gas at the Cygnus field during 2022 due to improved reservoir performance from the existing well stock and bringing the 10th and 11th Cygnus wells into production in 2023 which is expected to accelerate production of existing reserves. Minor topsides pipework modification is required to accommodate the infill wells. When compared to the 2022 baseline the revised oil and gas consents show an increase in production for 2022 to 2024 with a decrease in 2025 to 2028. For 2022 to 2028, the average change in production will not exceed the 500,000 m³/day gas or 500 tonnes/day oil threshold.

No cumulative 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.

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 Cygnus Field is located approximately 162 kilometres (km) northeast from the English coastline and 36km west from the UK/Netherlands boundary line. The operations are part of the development of the existing Cygnus field in UKCS blocks 44/11 and 44/12.

The project is in an area characterised by a predominantly sandy seabed and shallow well mixed waters with a water depth of 22 metres (m) Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT). Wave heights within the Cygnus area ranges from 1.51 - 2.1m and the annual mean wave power is between 12.1 - 18kW/m. The Cygnus Field is located within the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Southern North Sea SAC.

The Dogger Bank SAC is designated due to the presence of the Annex I habitat 'Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time'. The Dogger Bank covers 12,331 km² and is an extensive sublittoral sandbank in the SNS formed by glacial processes and submergence through sea-level rise. Across the Cygnus field, visible epifauna were sparse, consistent with mobile sandy sediments. Overall, the results of the species ranking and fidelity scores suggested a homogenous stable faunal community representative of the sandy sediments within the wider area.

As mentioned, the project is also within the Southern North Sea SAC which is designated as an area of importance for harbour porpoise. Harbour porpoise has been spotted in moderate densities in July, August and November and in low densities in April, May and June. Minke whale, long-finned pilot whale *Globicephala melas* and white-beaked dolphin have also been recorded in the vicinity of the Cygnus field. Minke whale have been recorded at low densities in May, July and August and long finned pilot whales in low densities in August. The Grey and Harbour seal density maps published by the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU), confirms a sparse population of grey and harbour seals in the Cygnus Field.

Seabird sensitivity during the operational period (July to November) ranges from low to extremely high in November.

Fishing intensity in the vicinity of the Cygnus field is recorded as low on the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) interactive tool. There are number of species of fish spawning and/or nursery activities throughout the year in the Cygnus area.

The nearest cable to the proposed operation is the MCCA Active TAMPNET cable located approximately 0.27km away. The nearest wind lease area to the proposed operations is the Dogger Bank A Offshore Wind Farm Project located approximately 14 km to the northwest, with the Viking link offshore cable operations located approximately 50km distant. The Tranche A cable and corridor boundary is located approximately 24km northwest of the proposed operation. The nearest area of optimal aggregate resource is located approximately 90km southwest from the proposed operations. The nearest protected wreck is the Filey Bay wreck, located



170km southwest from the proposed operations and there are two un-named dangerous wrecks located within 20km from the proposed operations.

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, specifically impacts resulting from atmospheric emissions and discharges to sea.

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 predicted change in oil (condensate) and gas volumes from the Cygnus field are within the capacity of the existing facilities of the Cygnus A platform, with only minor topsides pipework modification required to accommodate the infill wells and no change in the existing footprint. There is an existing 500 m radius safety zone around the Cygnus Alpha Platform.

No new chemical applications will be required as a result of the increase in production and whilst there will be an increase in the usage of two corrosion inhibitor applications, one has a zero discharge and there is no overall requirement to increase the currently permitted quantities.

An increase in the produced water volume is expected, however assuming an oil in water concentration in line with current permit (25 mg/l) this equates to an increase from 0.23 tonnes to 0.39 tonnes being discharged. The Cygnus OIW performance in the past 3 years has been consistently less than the worst case and actual increase is therefore anticipated to be lower.

The increase in production will not result in a change to the power generation, flaring or venting strategies at Cygnus Alpha, however there will be an associated increase in power demand from the gas compression system. The emissions were assessed as having a localised impact in the immediate area and it is expected the emissions will be rapidly dispersed and are not likely to have a significant impact.

As a result of the increase in production the Cygnus field carbon intensity in 2022 is anticipated to decrease and although as production declines carbon intensity will increase, the proposed wells are forecast to slow the decline and the carbon intensity will remain well below the North Sea average.

The potential volume lost and probability of rupture of the export pipeline is unaffected by the production consent change; and production rate of the proposed infill wells will not exceed the blowout rate currently modelled. Therefore there are no changes to the assessment of the impacts from unplanned releases of hydrocarbons. 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 there is no potential for a Major Environmental Incident (MEI).

It is considered that the increase in production from the Cygnus 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.

The nearest boundary line (UK/Netherlands) is located approximately 36 km north-west of Cygnus Alpha and there are no expected transboundary effects from the proposed increase in production.

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.