

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5386U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1237918



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

PERENCO UK LIMITED  
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Registered No.: 04653066

Date: 17th November 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  
PIPELINE PL23**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2328/0 (Version 2), dated 14th 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](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**

**PIPELINE PL23**

**PL/2328/0 (Version 2)**

Whereas PERENCO UK LIMITED has made an application dated 14th 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, PA/4364.

Effective Date: 17th 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**

The screening direction shall be valid from 17 November 2022 until 31 October 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

27,330 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**

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 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**

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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

This provides a summary of the assessments undertaken by OPRED (Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning) to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required for this project. It 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 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 in Schedule 5 1(a) to (g) of the Regulations, the characteristics of the project include the following:

This screening direction (ref: PL/2328) relates to a 2022 pipeline remediation campaign involving the placement of deposits (rock) on the seabed to secure and support degrading rock berms supporting PL/23.

### Summary of project

The deposit of 27,330 tonnes of rock on gas pipeline PL/23 at four locations Under PA/4364

### Description of project

The PL23 gas pipeline, located in the southern North Sea connects the Leman 27A platform to Bacton Gas Terminal onshore, traversing UKCS blocks 48/30c, 49/27a-c,





49/26a and b, 49/27a, 52/3, 52/4a and 52/5a. It exports gas from Leman and Indefatigable fields. At its closest point the PL23 pipeline is located approximately 40 kilometres (km) north-east from Bacton on the Norfolk coast and 71 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line and is routinely inspected to monitor the development of exposures and freespans with remediation work on the pipeline identified and undertaken as necessary.

Perenco plans to carryout the placement of up to 27,330 tonnes of rockby dynamically positioned vessel (deployed from a fall pipe with ROV and acoustic positioning) to secure existing rock berms subject to scour at 4 locationson the same section ofpipeline PL23. The rock berm was installed in 2009 and extended in 2012. It is situated within one site protected for conservation interest.Theearliest commencement date of operations is 18 November 2022 and the latest completion date for31st October 2023.

Scour correction is essentialto ensure pipeline integrity, prevent failure through berm collapse and protect the safety of other users of the sea. Fishing vessels are particularly vulnerable to snagging hazards such as these. Remediation is proposed by filling in the scour bowl at a 1 in 5 slope either at or below the seabed to allow sand migration to continue across the structure, minimising the risk of collapse.

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 population or 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 PL23 pipeline connects production from the Indefatigable and Leman fields in the southern North Sea to Bacton onshore Gas Terminal. Four locations along the same section of pipeline have been identified for remediationwithin the Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

At its closest point the PL23 pipeline remediation location is approximately 71 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line and 43 km from theBacton on the UK mainland.Winds predominate from the south and north west with strengths increasing to 32ms<sup>-1</sup> in winter.The water depth in the vicinity of the deposit location is 38 m and the seabed sediments are course sand and gravels classed as slightly gravelly sand by British Geological Survey and EUNIS habitat deep circalittoral sand. The faunal communities found in the area are those typically associated with this sediment with a diverse range of polychaetes, amphipods, bivalves and echinoderms.



The project is located in the Southern North Sea SAC, designated for harbour porpoise and coincides with the area where porpoise move to in summer season, 1.3km from Haisborough Hammond and Winterton SAC and 2.2km from the North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC both designated for Annex I sandbank and Sabellaria spinulosa reef. While there is a low confidence potential that Sabellaria is present within the vicinity of the pipeline deposit location, sonar can confuse reef with rock berm, and it is unlikely in an area subject to scour.

Cetaceans are species of national importance (Annex IV listed, Habitats Directive) with ten species sighted in the southern North Sea (SNS). Harbour porpoise, the qualifying species of the SNS SAC and white-beaked dolphin regularly occur, Minke whale a frequent seasonal visitor and white bottlenose dolphin and white sided dolphin are uncommon. Harbour porpoise along with grey and harbour seal are also Annex II listed species. Grey seal may forage at the project location but in low density during August and September (breeding) and February and March (moulting). Harbour seal can forage up to 50km with the largest colony at The Wash and likely to be low density (1 individual per 25km<sup>2</sup>) at the project site.

Spawning for cod (peak February March), lemon sole, mackerel (peak May to June), plaice (peak January and February), sandeels, nephrops (peak April to June), sole (peak April) and sprat (peak May and June) may coincide with the project works. Cod is IUCN and OSPAR listed as threatened, Nephrops and sprat UK BAP priority marine species. The project area is not within a commonly fished ground and fishing effort is historically very low.

Several Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are located on the Norfolk coast, 43km from the project with peak numbers associated with foraging, after breeding season, wintering birds and migrating species. Species include northern fulmar, northern gannet, great/ Arctic skua, common/ herring/ lesser black backed gull, black legged kittiwake, sandwich tern, common guillemot, razorbill and Atlantic puffin with sooty shearwater and pomarine skua with black legged kittiwake and Atlantic puffin IUCN red listed as threatened and declines in northern fulmar, Arctic skua, black legged kittiwake noted with increases in other species. Sensitivity to a diesel spill from the deposit vessel is low to extremely high during the period of operations.

Oil and gas activity in the vicinity of the project is high and the project area of the Southern North Sea (SNS) has extensive oil and gas infrastructure. The closest operational offshore wind farm, East Anglia North Tranche One West (Norfolk Vanguard West) is located approximately 19km to the south west which has been submitted for decision. The pipeline does not cross licensed offshore dredging, dumping or aggregate areas or telecoms cables with no charted or protected wrecks near it. Due to the proximity of key ports around the Norfolk and Lincolnshire coasts, the density of shipping traffic is high with fishing vessels and ferry/ cargo/ offshore support vessels. There are no Royal Airforce Practice and Exercise Areas (PEXA) in the vicinity.

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 to 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 project is in an area of high shipping and other vessel activity. The single vessel involved will not have an exclusion area but will be subject to navigational requirements and able to move off location. Given the duration and scale of the project impact to other users of the sea is not expected to be significant.

The project has the potential to deposit 27,330 tonnes of rock on the pipeline. This will cause seabed disturbance and loss of soft sediment habitat in an area of up to 5,888m<sup>2</sup> along the pipeline corridor. This is a conservative estimate as it assumes that all the deposit material 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.

The deposit of 27,330te of rock is in an area with low confidence Sabellaria presence due to scour with sonar results more likely to indicate existing rock berm. This deposit is also within the SNS SAC which equates to an area of loss of 0.00002% of the total area. Operations may result in temporary re-suspension of sediments; however, species have adapted to a naturally dynamic marine environment. Due to the small and localised nature of the impact of the proposed activities, the deposits are not expected to significantly affect the supporting habitat and processes and availability of prey of harbour porpoise, the qualifying feature of the Southern North Sea SAC. It is not anticipated there will be any discernible impacts on the SAC from associated seabed disturbance from the project or with other development.

The short-term 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 impact harbour porpoise, the qualifying feature of the SNS SAC.

It is considered that the proposed operations to stabilise rock berms on the same section of PL23 in order to remove snag hazard and prevent failure of the gas pipeline at the specified locations is not likely to have a significant impact. There will be no impact cumulatively with other activities, other users of the sea and no cumulative or transboundary impacts are expected to occur. The proposal aligns with the policies in the East Offshore National Marine Plan.



## 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.