

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5639U
UKOP Doc Ref:1280168



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

PREMIER OIL UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: SC048705

Date: 16th June 2023

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero

AB1 Building
Crimon Place
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
TOLMOUNT EAST TO TOLMOUNT PIPELINE INSTALLATION - PL6249**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2369/0 (Version 2), dated 6th June 2023 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**

TOLMOUNT EAST TO TOLMOUNT PIPELINE INSTALLATION - PL6249

PL/2369/0 (Version 2)

Whereas PREMIER OIL UK LIMITED has made an application dated 6th June 2023, 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/4442.

Effective Date: 16th June 2023



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 16 June 2023 until 31 December 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 deposits

75,400 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).

Grout bags deposits

47 tonnes of grout contained within 25 kilogramme capacity biodegradable bags. (The number of bags deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus bags must be returned to land).

Concrete mattress deposits

121 [Number] concrete mattresses, each measuring 6 metres x 3 metres x 0.15 metres. (The number of mattresses deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus mattresses must be returned to land).

177 Grout Gabions

4 Location of pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials

Within an area bounded by the coordinates

Block/Quad: 42/28d



Start: Location:

54 degrees 03 minutes 54.50 seconds North
00 degrees 28 minutes 43.47 seconds East

End: Location:

54 degrees 02 minutes 24.61 seconds North
00 degrees 26 minutes 23.47 seconds East

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 Energy Security & Net Zero
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:

- 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 Assessment 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

- i) The installation of a new 4km pipeline system comprising a 12" production flowline and service umbilical pipeline.
- ii) The installation of the new a production jumper, control jumper, umbilical jumper and control jumper electrical flying lead.
- iii) A new Gas Production Manifold and Subsea Isolation Valve (SSIV)
- iv) Permanent deposits of 75,400t of rock, 121 concrete mattresses, 1880 grout bags and 177 grout gabions.

Description of the Project



The installation of a new 4 km 12" production flowline (PL6249) and services umbilical (PLU6248) linking the newly drilled Tolmount East Well (DRA/954) to the Tolmount Minimum Facilities Platform (MFP) as described and assessed in the Tolmount East Environmental Statement (ES) (D/4265/2021). The only change to the original ES is the addition of the SSIV installation which was required by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which adds a very small area of additional seabed infrastructure but provides further mitigation to any incident with additional control options.

An initial pipeline corridor pre-lay survey and debris clearance has been completed. The Key stages of the Tolmount East to Tolmount MFP include:

a) A Pipelay Vessel (PV) will lay the 12" production pipeline from the Tolmount East Manifold location to near Tolmount East SSIV location (close to Tolmount Platform). Operations are scheduled to take place mid to end of June and last for approximately 10 days.

b) A Construction Support Vessel (CSV) will carry out the installation of the SSIV, Manifold and umbilical during September 2023. This is expected to take approximately 17 days.

c) A Fall Pipe Vessel (FPV) will carry out rock installation along the pipeline/umbilical route. This is likely to require three visits to the field to complete operations and is scheduled to last 14 days during September 2023.

d) A Dive Support Vessel (DSV) will complete tie-in and commissioning activities and is estimated to take 27 days and starting early November.

e) Tie-in complete Tolmount East is anticipated to be from November 2023.

The prefabricated 12" production flowline to be surface laid between the Tolmount East and Tolmount MFP will be laid using a dedicated dynamic position (DP) reel-lay vessel. The directionality of the pipe lay will most likely be from the Tolmount East to Tolmount MFP, while the umbilical direction will be from the Tolmount MFP to the Tolmount East. The pipeline will be installed onto the seabed empty. The pipeline will carry all gas and fluids generated from the Tolmount East well (predominantly gas with some condensate and produced water). 12" spools will complete the pipeline and will be installed by a DSV in Q3/Q4 2023. The manifold will be connected via jumper lines to the Tolmount East wellhead and will be covered in a future application.

The umbilical will be surface laid parallel to the pipeline with minimal separation and will be installed using a construction vessel. The pipeline and umbilical will be installed next to each other for most of the route which will then be covered by a single rock berm for the majority of the route. To give sufficient protection to the line from other sea users the entirety of pipeline and umbilical will be protected by rock placement. The volume of rock required will be less than the worst-case assessed as the pipeline and umbilical will be laid alongside each other. Other deposits including



grout bags, concrete mattresses and rock bag will also be required to secure spooling and lines at either end of the pipeline in the manifold/wellhead area and at the Tolmount MFP area. The long-term disturbance of the seabed from the operations will have a direct impact an area of 0.0431 km² and indirect area 0.4 km².

No cumulative interactions are foreseen with any other existing or approved projects. There is no risk to human health from the works to install the pipelines or depositing the protective materials on the seabed. There is no credible potential for a major accident or disaster to affect this project.

Any wastes associated with the project will be handled appropriately and no significant impacts are anticipated. The project is not at risk from natural disasters given its location in UK offshore waters.

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 Tolmount East is located within the Southern North Sea in UKCS Block 42/28, approximately 37 km from the English coastline, and 153 km from the UK/Netherlands Median Line, in a water depth of ranging from 50 to 52 metres (m). The Tolmount East field lies within a uniform area characterised by a relatively flat seabed predominantly comprised of silty sand sediments with varying proportions of shell fragments, whole shells and gravel. A series of sandwaves are present within the area. The wave height within the Tolmount East area ranges from 1.5 - 2.1 m.

Recent surveys indicate that sediments in the area consist predominantly of circalittoral coarse sediments. Site surveys reported a generally low abundance and

diversity of epifauna with occasional hermit crabs, sea star and brittle stars. Epifaunal diversity and abundance increases slightly with the presence of pebbles and cobbles. Infauna with the area indicates low to moderately high richness and diversity including polychaete worms, molluscs, crustaceans and echninoderms. Other conspicuous fauna included the sea urchin and bivalves.

No evidence of Annex I Habitats or Feature of Conservation Importance (FOCI) have been found in the vicinity of the pipeline route. The Tolmount East Well is located 1.3 km west of the SNS SAC and in the vicinity (<40 km) of five Marine Protected Areas (MPA) including, Holderness Offshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA), Flamborough Head SAC, Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA and Holderness Inshore MCZ.

Fish spawning and nursery activity will occur in the area, which may coincide with the drilling operations. Harbour porpoise, white-beaked dolphin, minke whale, bottlenose dolphin and Atlantic white-sided dolphin have been recorded in the vicinity of Tolmount East. Densities of these species range from high to medium throughout the



year with some areas with no data available. Grey and harbour seals may be encountered within the vicinity of the well location which is 37 km offshore. Seabird vulnerability in Block 42/28 is ranges from very high to medium throughout the year. The project area is primarily used for pelagic and shellfish and the effort in the area is rated moderate.

There are a number of installations located in the vicinity of the Tolmount East pipeline route. The closest non-dangerous wrecks within 40 km of the proposed operations are located approximately 3 km, 4 km, 7 km and 8 km away from Tolmount East. None of the wrecks are protected and there are no Historic Marine Protected Areas (HMPA) or war graves in the vicinity of the well. There are no military exercise areas in the vicinity of the Tolmount East. There are three submarine cables within 40 km of the Tolmount East pipeline route. The nearest submarine cable is the active Westernmost Rough power cable sited approximately 32 km away. There are a number of renewable energy developments within 40 km of the Tolmount East well including, the Westernmost Rough Wind Lease Area, the Hornsea Project Four Lease Area and the Humber Gateway Wind Lease Area. The Tolmount area is located in close proximity to several Carbon Capture Storage (CCS) licence areas. Shipping density in the area is considered to be high.

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 change to 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 atmospheric emissions, seabed disturbance, physical presence, planned discharges and accidental spills. Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact from the change to the project on population and human health.

There is a 500 m radius safety zone around the Tolmount East well excluding unauthorised access of vessels and prohibiting access to fishing vessels. No additional impacts to fisheries are identified as part of the pipeline installation operations between the Tolmount East Manifold and Tolmount East MFP. The pipeline and umbilical will be laid next to each other and will be covered by a single rock berm to give sufficient protection to the line from other users of the sea. No likely significant effects in terms of physical presence from the project are expected.

Seabed disturbance will occur from the installation of the production flowline and service umbilical, the installation of the gas production manifold and subsea isolation valve, the surface laying of spools and jumpers and short sections of pipelines, and the introduction of the protection materials. The disturbance of the seabed will result in the smothering and mortality of benthic fauna which will result in some short-term temporary impacts. None of the disturbance events are expected to cause significant



impact to benthic receptors with a large area of similar seabed in the project area. The most risk is from direct impact resulting from the installation of infrastructure on the seabed and with some smothering. It is expected that the benthic communities will regenerate in the area over time.

The introduction of hard surface substrate to the area will have a direct impact on the benthic communities, with the natural habitat and communities lost. This will be a permanent habitat change. It is however, anticipated that the new infrastructure will create a new habitat for benthic organisms.

Underwater noise from routine pipelay operations is considered to have a negligible impact on marine mammals and fish species as the majority of noise is of low frequency. No piling operations are required during the installation of any of the subsea infrastructure.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the proposal. Chemical use will be required during the pipelay and commissioning operations, however, this is minor with predominantly PLONOR chemicals and seawater with some additional chemicals. All chemicals will be risk assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively prior to use.

The main risk of accidental release of hydrocarbons is resulting from a loss of diesel inventory from a vessel. The assessment showed that the probability of a diesel spill from a vessel involved in the project is very low, with numerous mitigation measures and procedures in place. It is concluded that an accidental release of a hydrocarbon during the project is not considered to have the potential to cause a major environmental incident (MEI). Therefore, the risk of an oil spill event that could have a significant impact on the environment is minimised.

The proposed operation will utilise seven vessels, and atmospheric emissions have been assessed from the diesel used for each vessel, and the time spent on location. The total atmospheric emissions from the vessels undertaking the project work, accounts for 0.0282% of the total UKCS CO₂ emissions (using 2018 as a baseline). The emissions may result in a deterioration of the local air quality, but due to the relatively short duration of the work, and that the exposed conditions in the area will rapidly disperse the emissions, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant impact.

2) 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.

3) 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

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adverse effects on the environment:

N/A