

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5727U
UKOP Doc Ref:1287803



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

PERENCO UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: 04653066

Date: 28th July 2023

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero

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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
PIPELINE PL23**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2388/0 (Version 1), dated 23rd 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**

PIPELINE PL23

PL/2388/0 (Version 1)

Whereas PERENCO UK LIMITED has made an application dated 23rd 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/4596.

Effective Date: 28th July 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 28 July 2023 until 31 July 2024.

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

Concrete mattress deposits

79 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).

Rock Filter Units

41 Rock Filter Units (The number of units 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

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

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 Energy Security & Net Zero
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/2388) relates to a 2023 pipeline remediation campaign involving the placement of deposits (Rock Filter Units (RFUs) and concrete mattresses) on the seabed to limit pipeline exposures as well as provide free span remediation.

Summary of project

The deposit of up to 79 concrete mattresses and 41 RFUs on gas pipeline PL/24 at one section of the pipeline.

Description of project

The PL23 gas pipeline connects the Leman 27A platform to the Bacton Gas Terminal



in the southern North Sea. The pipeline traverses blocks traversing UKCS blocks 48/30c, 49/27a-c, 49/26a and b, 49/27a, 52/3, 52/4a and 52/5a. The deposits are approximately 25 kilometres (km) north-east from Bacton on the Norfolk coast and 70 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 carry out the placement of up to 79 concrete mattresses and 41 RFUs by a vessel crane and placed in location with the use of an ROV and acoustic positioning. Perenco intend to limit pipeline exposures and provide freespan remediation with the deposits. The earliest commencement date of operations is 31st July 2023 and the latest completion date is 31st July 2024.

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 the Leman 27A platform to the Bacton Gas Terminal in the southern North Sea. One locations have been identified for remediation, the location is within the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC and the Southern North Sea SAC.

At its closest point the PL23 pipeline is located approximately 87 km west of the UK / Netherlands median line and 16km from the UK mainland. The water depth in the vicinity of the deposit areas vary between 40 and 50 m and the seabed sediments are gravelly sand. The proposed PL23 concrete mattress and RFU deposits will not be placed on top of any known or recorded biogenic reef areas.

The deposit location is within the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton (HHW) SAC/, designated for sub-tidal sandbank slightly covered by seawater at all times and Sabellaria spinulosa reef features. It is also within the Southern North Sea (SNS) SAC, designated for Harbour Porpoises. 1,528 m² of the seabed will be impacted within the SACs. 0.00008% of the HHW SAC and 0.000004% of the SNS SAC. No potential areas of Sabellaria spinulosa have been identified in the vicinity of the PL23 deposits.



Harbour porpoise and white-beaked dolphin have been sighted in the area. Surveys indicate a moderate cetacean presence during the potential operational period. Spawning for herring, lemon sole, mackerel, plaice, sandeels, nephrops and sprat 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 low to 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 Southern North Sea (SNS) have extensive oil and gas infrastructure. The closest operational offshore wind farm, East Anglia North Tranche One West (Norfolk Vanguard West), located approximately 21 km to the south 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. The protected wreck Roine lies 0.4 km from the proposed PL23 deposit location. 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.

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. The deposit vessel is likely to cross the Greater Wash SPA when transiting to and from port. Common scoter and red throated diver can be vulnerable to disturbance particularly during the overwintering period, but it will be restricted to existing navigational routes with control measures in place to



reduce noise and disturbance with no likely significant effect on the site.

The project has the potential to deposit 79 concrete mattresses and 41 RFUs at a single location on the pipeline. This will cause seabed disturbance and loss of soft sediment habitat in an area of up to 1,528 m² 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 impact area equates to 0.00008% of the HHW SAC and 0.000004% of the SNS SAC. Operations may result in temporary re-suspension of sediments; however, species have adapted to a naturally dynamic marine environment in the SNS. The impact is localised, and the deposits are not expected to significantly impact the SAC from associated loss or disturbance.

It is considered that the proposed operations of remediation and to 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 and no 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.