



Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning

4th January 2024

Clarification: Decommissioning of pipeline bundles.

Section 10 of OPREDs guidance notes on the Decommissioning of Offshore Oil and Gas Installations and Pipelines explains that:

“Pipeline bundles

10.14 Pipeline bundles must be assessed using the same principles and approach as pipelines, with the policy objective of aiming to achieve a clear seabed and any decision underpinned by the evidenced and transparent consideration of options.

10.15 OPRED has promoted technology development for pipeline bundle decommissioning with operators as part of recent decommissioning approvals and operators are therefore advised to consider emerging technologies as part of their assessment process.”

For all pipeline decommissioning (including pipeline bundles) a comparative assessment must be completed. As part of this assessment, we expect both current and emerging technologies to be considered for pipeline bundles.

In the past a key barrier to bundle removal has been technical feasibility. We have been made aware that technology in this area has advanced and may allow for bundle removal in the near future. As a result, OPRED is currently undertaking a review of bundle decommissioning options.

This review will allow us to determine what technology is available and engage with industry, the supply chain and other stakeholders on a way forward for bundle decommissioning that aligns with our clear seabed policy.

We will engage with industry in early Spring via industry trade bodies, taskforces and working groups.

Until this process has concluded OPRED will not support a leave in situ proposal for a surface laid pipeline bundle.

To avoid delays and to enable operators to commence their decommissioning activities, we will allow operators to separate pipeline bundles and associated apparatus from the wider field Decommissioning Programme.

Operators should discuss individual cases with the appropriate OPRED decommissioning contact in the first instance.

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