

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5878U
UKOP Doc Ref:1317451



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

CNOOC PETROLEUM EUROPE LIMITED
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Registered No.: 01051137

Date: 20th December 2023

Department for Energy Security &
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AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

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OPRED@energysecurity.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020
SCOTT, Scott JD Platform, DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 15/22a- 15/22-ST31
planned well**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference DR/2432/0 (Version 2), dated 30th November 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 OPRED@energysecurity.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**

**SCOTT, Scott JD Platform, DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 15/22a- 15/22-ST31
planned well**

DR/2432/0 (Version 2)

Whereas CNOOC PETROLEUM EUROPE LIMITED has made an application dated 30th November 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 applications, WONS/16029/0/IDA/1 (Version 1), WONS/16029/0/GS/1 (Version 1) and WONS/16029/0/C/1 (Version 1).

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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 20 December 2023 until 30 September 2024.

2 Commencement and completion of the project

The holder of the screening direction must notify the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (hereinafter called the 'Department') of commencement and completion of the project within two days:

- a) of commencement of the project and
- b) of completion of the project.

Notification should be sent by email to the Environmental Management Team Mailbox: OPRED@energysecurity.gov.uk

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, extended well test emissions or flaring and venting emissions relating to a well test, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting forms. In the case of atmospheric emissions relating to drilling projects undertaken from a fixed installation, they should be included in the annual EEMS reporting forms for the fixed installation.

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:

N/A

3) All communications relating to the screening direction should be addressed to:

OPRED@energysecurity.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:

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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 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:

The overall project scope is to sidetrack well ST31 from the J14 well at the Scott platform. In order to do this, well ST113 pilot hole will be drilled, which would be abandoned (in accordance with the OEUK Guidelines) prior to starting sidetrack operations at well ST31. Both ST113 well (if drilled) and ST31 well are planned as sidetracks from J14 well.

ST31 is an infill target which will be drilled from the Scott platform as a sidetrack from the ST113 well. If the pilot hole is not drilled, the ST31 well will be drilled as a sidetrack from well J14.

Both drilling scenarios has been presented in the application as a worst case



assessment drilling the pilot hole (ST113) and well ST31, and drilling ST31 well only.

Both wells will be drilled using Oil Based Mud (OBM) with either the OBM and cuttings remaining downhole (via cuttings reinjection unit (CRU) to well J15) or they will be skipped and shipped to shore if CRU is unavailable. There will be no discharges to the marine environment.

The well will be drilled from the Scott platform and all work will be undertaken within the existing 500m safety zone.

The project is expected to last 279 days which includes contingency to account for any operational and/or weather delays.

Description of Project

The Scott platform is located in the central North Sea, approximately 81km from the UK/Norwegian median line and 140 km from the Scottish mainland. The Scott, Telford and Rochelle oil and gas fields are produced at the Scott platform, which comprises two independent bridge linked platforms. Wells ST113 and ST31 will be drilled from the drilling facilities at the Scott platform. There will be no discharge of OBM from the operation, with all drill cuttings either reinjected into well J15 or skipped and shipped to shore. The wells will be drilled within the already established 500m safety zone which surrounds the Scott platform. Operations are expected to last 279 days. The proposed project area is within a well-developed area of the Central North Sea and cumulative impacts from atmospheric releases and oil and chemical releases have been assessed.

It has been concluded that there will be no cumulative impacts expected to occur with this project due to there being no discharge of OBM, the proposed mitigation and the short duration of the project.

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters and the risk of a major accident such as a well blowout has been assessed. The Developer has control measures in place to reduce the risk of a major accident occurring and the probability of such an event occurring is very low.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact from the project on population and human health.

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:

Wells ST113 and ST31 are located in the Scott field, which is located in Block 15/22a, approximately 81km from the UK/Norwegian median line and 140 km from the Scottish mainland. Samples taken from within the Scott area are represented by homogenous fine material (silt and clay or mud) with low but variable proportions of sand and minimal coarse material. Sample locations around the site were classified



as 'circalittoral fine mud'.

Mean water depth is approximately 140 m at the platform area and the wave height ranges from 2.11 - 2.4m. Numerous strings of pockmarks were observed which were interpreted to be relict, likely originating from gas seep features. There was no evidence of the Annex I leaking gases or submarine structures made by leaking gases during any survey of the area.

A survey of the area showed that the area had a moderately diverse macrofaunal community, dominated by burrowing anemone and polychaete. Two clusters of macrofaunal communities were noted with the difference in each thought to be attributed to the slight variations in sediment type across the survey area. The epifauna within the area is sparse, comprising sea pens, mobile crustaceans such as hermit crab and squat lobsters. Juvenile ocean quahog were also present in low densities within the platform area. The data also shows the presence of burrowing megafauna, with the slender sea pen observed (<15cm). These sea pens were observed along the survey route and was considered 'frequent' on the SACFOR scale. Burrow densities were observed to be common or frequent in ROV footage, and the habitat 'sea pen and burrowing megafauna' is potentially present.

Minke whale, long finned pilot whale, common dolphin, white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin and harbour porpoise have all been recorded in the vicinity of the Scott area. Densities of the species are categorised as low to moderate, with the exception of the common dolphin, harbour porpoise and white beaked dolphin which are observed in high density from May to September/October. Grey and harbour seals may be encountered but due to the distance from shore, it is unlikely that the area is visited regularly or in high numbers. Density maps show the presence of grey and harbour seals in the area of the platform as 0-1 individuals per 25km².

Seabird oil sensitivity in the vicinity of the Scott field is low to extremely high throughout the year.

The Scott platform is not situated within any conservation areas, with the nearest area of conservation interest being the Scanner Pockmark SAC which lies 45km to the east. This site is designating for the Annex I habitat 'submarine structures made by leaking gases'. The nearest NCMPA is the Central Fladen NCMPA which is 64km to the north, which is designed for the protection of burrowed mud including sea pens and burrowing megafauna.

The Scott field lies within fishing designated ICES rectangle 45F0, however the drilling of wells ST31/ST113 do not extend out with the 500m safety zone, where fishing vessels are already excluded. The proposed operations will coincide with fish spawning and/or nursery activity for a number of species. The proposed project is primarily used for demersal fishing and shellfish, with fishing effort in the area accounting for 1.46% of the overall UK fishing effort and 0.88% of value. It is not anticipated that the drilling of wells ST113 and ST31 will have a significant impact on the fishing industry in the area.



The location of the proposed activity is not within a MoD practice and exercise area and there are no military restrictions. Shipping activity within the area is relatively low. There are three wrecks within 10km of the Scott platform area, but none are wrecks designated under the Protection of Military Remains or are of Historical Importance. The closest renewable development is the Acorn Carbon Capture and Storage area, which is located 36km south-west of the platform. It is not anticipated that the operations at Scott will have a significant impact on either the wrecks, cables or windfarms.

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 change to 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 in place a 500 m radius safety zone around the Scott platform, which excludes unauthorised access of vessels and prohibits access to fishing vessels. No additional impacts to other marine users are identified as part of the drilling of well ST31/ST113. The wells are being drilled from the platform and therefore no significant effects are likely in terms of physical presence from the project.

There will be no seabed disturbance as a result of the project activities. Cuttings from the well sections will either be skipped and shipped to shore or reinjected downhole, so there will be no discharge of OBM to the marine environment.

Noise generated from the project activities will not be significant, and it is concluded that the project is not expected to have a likely significant effect on the site in relation to harbour porpoise and the supporting habitats and prey.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the proposal to drill the wells. The nearest boundary (UK/Norwegian median) is located approximately 81km from the proposed well location. It is not considered likely that any planned operational discharge (cuttings and chemicals) will be detectable at this distance from the Scott platform.

The well(s) to be drilled are production wells, and an assessment has been included within the project proposal to assess as a worst case, a well blow out within the Scott field, and the subsequent potential for a Major Environmental Incident (MEI). The assessment concluded that there is a potential for an MEI to occur, however the risk of an oil spill event as a result of a well blow out from wells ST31/ST113 is minimal,



and the developer has suitable mitigation in place to prevent such an occurrence.

The proposed drilling operations will utilise the existing Scott power generation equipment. Atmospheric emissions are regulated under the platforms PPC and ETS Permits. It is not expected that the emissions due to the drilling of the wells will have a significant impact on air quality.

It is considered that the drilling activities for the Scott wells are not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore activities or other users of the sea and no cumulative impacts are expected to occur.

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 adverse effects on the environment:

n/a