

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-5726U
UKOP Doc Ref:1326881



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

ITHACA OIL AND GAS LIMITED
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Registered No.: 01546623

Date: 15th February 2024

Department for Energy Security &
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Crimon Place
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Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020**

ALBA, DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 16/26-A72Y sidetrack to B06

I refer to your amended application dated 2nd February 2024, reference DR/2387/2 (Version 2).

It has been determined that the proposed changes to the project is not likely to result in a significant effect on the environment, and therefore an environmental impact assessment is not required.

A screening direction is therefore issued for the changes to the project. An amended schedule of conditions, comments, and main reasons for the decision on the amended application, 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**

ALBA, DRILLING PRODUCER WELL 16/26-A72Y sidetrack to B06

DR/2387/2 (Version 2)

Whereas ITHACA OIL AND GAS LIMITED has made an application dated 2nd February 2024, 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, WONS/15540/0/GS/1.

Effective Date: 15th February 2024

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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 14 August 2023 until 31 May 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:

The Department has no comments.

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:

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

This post amendment screening direction (ref: DR/2387/2) relates to a second change to the project for which screening directions were previously issued.

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 (DR/2387/2):

The second change to the project is an extension to the end date, due to unforeseen operational and weather delays. The change to the project consists of the following:

- a) The end of the project date has been extended from 29 February 2024 to 31 May 2024.
- b) There are no other changes made to the drilling programme/project.

Summary of the Projects previously approved (DR/2387/0 and DR/2387/1):



- a) Drilling of the lower sections (12 " and 8 " sections) by re-entering and sidetracking from the existing A72Y wellbore
- b) Completion of the well
- c) Contingent sidetrack of one or more sections.
- d) An extension to the project end date to 29 February 2024.

Description of the Project

The application covers drilling the lower sections of the B06 well by re-entering and sidetracking from the existing A72Y wellbore. The drilling of the production well will be undertaken from the Alba North Platform (ANP). Drilling operations may take up to 78 days to complete and this has not changed as a result of the extended project end date to 31 May 2024. The slot recovery will be undertaken using water based mud (WBM) and the lower 2 sections of the well will be drilled using low toxicity oil based mud (LTOBM). The oil-based mud will be transported to shore for processing and disposal. The screening direction covers the period 14 August to 31 May 2024.

No cumulative impacts are expected to occur with any other existing or approved projects. The risk of a major accident and environmental effects from major accidents, 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. There is not likely to be any significant impact of the change to the project on population and human health. It is not considered likely that the change to the project will be affected by natural disasters. No nuisances are foreseen from the change to the project.

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 Alba field was discovered in 1984 and production began in 1994 with an estimated field life of 37 years. The Alba field is located in Block16/26 in the Central north sea approximately 179 kilometres(km) north east from the Scottish coastline and approximately 40km from the United Kingdom (UK)/Norway median line, water depths in the area are approximately 138m. The ANP is a conventional eight-legged structure, piled at four corners, supporting full drilling, production utilities and accommodation facilities. Produced fluids are exported by shuttle tanker via a Floating Storage Unit (FSU) which provides crude oil storage and offloading facilities and is located 3 km west southwest of the ANP.

The predominant current in the location is dominated by the Norwegian Atlantic flow. The project location is not within any protected areas, with the closest being



approximately 24 km distant.

Site-specific surveys identified the seabed as comprising of fine sediment with moderate portions of sand. The main sediment type is described as circalittoral fine mud. The biotope observed over much of the survey area with the Priority Marine Feature (PMF) seapens and burrowing megafauna in circalittoral fine mud. The most commonly observed benthic fauna included starfish, anemones, hermit crabs, heart urchins, brittle stars, polychaetes and crustaceans. No Annex I habitat was recorded in the survey.

The project works and timing will take place during a period when a number of fish species may be found to using the area as spawning or nursery locations. Sightings of cetaceans are most common between the months of July and September. Seals are not expected to be seen at the remote location. Seabirds sensitivity to oil is low throughout the year. The project area is primarily used for shellfish and demersal fishing, although fishing effort is low in the area. Shipping intensity at the project location is also low. The surrounding area comprises other oil and gas infrastructure within 20 km, but is not within a military activity zone, with no telecommunications cables, marine aggregate sites or renewable energy locations in proximity. There are a number of wrecks in proximity to the Alba location including two wrecks belonging to the Palmyra less than 1km east and 3km southeast of the ANP.

Given the location of the project, 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 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 project on the environment have been considered. Potential effects to the environment from the activities associated with the change to the project were assessed, with focus on the predominant impacts resulting from atmospheric emissions from platform, planned discharges to sea from chemical use, and accidental events such as an oil spill.

Offshore registered chemicals will be used and discharged during the drilling of the well. The use and discharge of the chemicals have been risk assessed and modelled in accordance with other regulatory requirements. The use and discharge modelling shows a low risk to the environment from the chemicals. Use and discharge of chemicals is not expected to have a significant impact on the environment. LTOBM will be skipped and shipped to shore for treatment and disposal.

The impacts of drilling discharges on water quality and benthic fauna is predicted to be minimal as affects will be localised and short-lived. Moreover, given that recovery of the seabed and the associated benthic communities is likely to begin once drilling has been completed, the environmental impact of the discharged chemicals and cement, within the impacted area, can be considered insignificant. Drilling operations



will be conducted from the existing ANP Installation such that there is no increase in the infrastructure footprint. It is considered that the drilling of the B06 well is 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.

Atmospheric emissions associated with the project will result from power demand for the proposed operations. It is expected the emissions will be rapidly dispersed and are not likely to have a significant impact.

The drilling operations are in accordance with the National Marine Plan for Scotland's objectives and policies.

In the event that an unlikely and unplanned accidental spill scenario from a well blow-out was realised the total volume of oil that would be released from the well has been estimated at 142, 612m³. The modelling suggests that beaching of oil would occur including on neighbouring member states and that a major environmental incident would be likely. All drilling activities will be carried out in accordance with the Offshore Safety Directive as per Ithaca's Well Examination Scheme and Guidance Document. An approved Oil Spill Emergency Plan to manage hydrocarbon releases will be in place prior to activities being undertaken. There are no other expected transboundary impacts because of the project.

Decision

1) Taking the above considerations into account, the Secretary of State has concluded that the change to 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:

n/a