

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6167U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1339361



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

SHELL U.K. LIMITED  
SHELL CENTRE  
LONDON  
SE1 7NA

Registered No.: 00140141

Date: 25th April 2024

Department for Energy Security &  
Net Zero

AB1 Building  
Crimon Place  
Aberdeen  
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax

[www.gov.uk/desnz](http://www.gov.uk/desnz)  
[opred@energysecurity.gov.uk](mailto:opred@energysecurity.gov.uk)

Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING  
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS  
2020  
ARRAN AN4 TIE-IN  
PL6458 AND PLU6459**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2468/0 (Version 2), dated 24th April 2024 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](mailto: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**

**ARRAN AN4 TIE-IN  
PL6458 AND PLU6459**

**PL/2468/0 (Version 2)**

Whereas SHELL U.K. LIMITED has made an application dated 24th April 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, PA/4937.

Effective Date: 25th April 2024

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6167U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1339361



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning



# **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 1 May 2024 until 1 November 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: [opred@energysecurity.gov.uk](mailto:opred@energysecurity.gov.uk)

### **3 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials**

Grout bags deposits

80 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

60 concrete mattresses, each measuring 3 metres x 5 metres x 0.15 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).

### **4 Location of pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials**

Latitude: 57 Degrees 28 Minutes 58.37 Seconds North

Longitude: 02 Degrees 03 Minutes 02.06 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 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.

## **8 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.

## **9 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.

## **10 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).



## **11 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.

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6167U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1339361



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning



## 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](mailto: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 assessment 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 has 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 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**

Tie-in of the Arran AN4 well to the existing AN2 well via installation of PL6458 and PLU6459 and protection with:

Deposit of 60 concrete mattresses of dimensions 6m x 3m x 0.15m

Deposit of 3200 x 25kg hessian grout bags

and (not forming part of agreement to consent but authorised under this screening direction):

Deposit of 8 x 1 tonnes gabion baskets for wellhead cocoon support

Temporary deposit of ROV baskets and dead-mans anchors.



## **Description of the Project**

This project is the tie-in of the Arran AN4 well to the existing AN2 well via installation of PL6458 and PLU6459 to allow production via the Shearwater installation. The works will be undertaken by a Dive Support Vessel (DSV).

It is estimated that the project will take 14 days to complete but the screening direction has been requested from 1 May 2024 to 1 November 2024 to allow for delays.

No significant cumulative impacts are expected to occur with any other existing or approved projects. The risk of a major accidents and environmental effects from major accidents, such as diesel release from the DSV 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 project on population and human health.

It is not considered likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters.

No nuisances are foreseen from the project.

## **Location of the Project**

Having regard 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 project is in an offshore oil and gas licenced area, approximately 230 km east from the Aberdeen coastline in Scotland and 4 km west of the UK/Norway median line, in an area where water depth is approximately 84 m, and the seabed type is characterised as predominately fine sand. Water circulation in the project location is driven by the influx of North Atlantic waters through the Fair Isle Channel moving southwards along the Scottish coast. Within the region, the mean significant wave height ranges from 2.11m to 2.70 m.

The project location is not within any protected areas, with the closest UK area, the East of Gannet and Montrose Fields Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (ncMPA), designated for ocean quahog (and supporting habitat) and offshore deep-sea muds habitat being approximately 32 km distant.

The epifauna observed in the survey area were dominated by polychaetes. Methane Derived Authigenic Carbonate (MDAC) structures were observed approximately 1.5km north-west of the project location and at this distance are not expected to be impacted by the project. Ocean quahog was identified in the survey area, and these were predominantly juvenile in nature.



The project works and timing will take place at a time when a number of fish species may be found to use the area as spawning, juvenile or nursery locations. Sightings of cetaceans are most common in the months of June, July and October. Seals are not expected to be seen at the remote location. Seabirds are most common in the area during the months of May, June, August and September when expected density is 10 - 20 individuals per square km. The project area is used for fishing, but with a very low historical effort. Shipping intensity at the project location is low. The surrounding area comprises other oil and gas infrastructure, with the closest development within 12 km, but is not within a military activity zone, marine aggregate sites or renewable energy locations in proximity. There are two trenched communication cables in the vicinity of the project, with the closest being located approximately 1km from the project.

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 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 project were assessed, with focus on the predominant impacts resulting from installation of the pipelines and deposits, physical presence of the DSV vessel, atmospheric emissions from vessel use, and accidental events such as an oil spill.

The DSV has the potential to cause interference to other users of the sea, namely fishermen and vessel traffic, however the vessel will be located within a 500m safety zone. Its presence within the safety zone means only authorised vessels would be allowed within the 500 m radius of the vessel, therefore excluding other users of the sea. Given the low importance of the fishing area and the low vessel traffic, and that the drilling project is a temporary activity - the impact is deemed insignificant.

The main receptor impacted by seabed disturbance will be the benthic communities. Physical disturbance can cause mortality or displacement of benthic species in the impacted zone. The expected permanent impact area is 0.0013 km<sup>2</sup> due to change to placement of pipelines and protective deposits. The area of temporary impact due to sediment disturbance associated with placement of pipelines and protective deposits is 0.0016km<sup>2</sup>. The areas of impact are small in comparison to the surrounding area of similar habitat and no significant impact is expected at a population level.

Emissions to air will occur from combustion plant used on the DSV. The quantity of carbon dioxide equivalent from the DSV use amounts to 0.006% of the 2022 total emissions from offshore oil and gas activity. The DSV emissions will not have a detrimental effect to local air quality over the long-term, nor are they expected to inhibit the ability to reach wider climate change goals. The environmental effects from emissions to air are not expected to have a significant impact on the environment. The impact of the vessel emissions will be mitigated by optimising vessel efficiency



(i.e. minimising the number of vessels used and vessel trips required to achieve the project deliverables) and hence minimising fuel use and avoiding the unnecessary operation of power generation / combustion equipment.

In the event that an unlikely and unplanned accidental DSV diesel release scenario occurred response measure would be implemented as the Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP). Diesel is a non-persistent hydrocarbon and the relatively small potential release volume indicates no significant impact.

There are no planned expected transboundary impacts because of the project.

### **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:

N/A