

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-3610U
UKOP Doc Ref:1361811



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

EQUINOR UK LIMITED
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LONDON
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Registered No.: 01285743

Date: 12th September 2024

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero

AB1 Building
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Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

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www.gov.uk/desz
opred@energysecurity.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

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

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2490/0 (Version 2), dated 9th August 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.

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**

UTGARD

PR/2490/0 (Version 2)

Whereas EQUINOR UK LIMITED has made an application dated 9th August 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, PCON/8094/0.

Effective Date: 12th September 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

This screening direction shall be valid from 12 September 2024.

2 Change to production level(s)

The holder of the screening direction shall ensure that the change in the level(s) of production do not exceed the amended level(s) detailed in the application for the screening direction, and in the application for consent relating to the approval for the getting of petroleum issued under the relevant production licence Model Clause.

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, using the appropriate Environmental Emissions Monitoring System (EEMS) reporting forms.

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 at this time.

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 assessment undertaken 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:

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Summary of the project

The Sidetrack well G-1 AH has been drilled to drain a large area of unproduced hydrocarbons in the Utgard field which has resulted in an increase in production for the Sleipner T installation. The sidetrack well is not targeting new volumes or segments of the field, as it is targeting volumes originally identified in the Field Development Plan, but they are not being produced as expected by the original wells.

Description of the project



The Utgard field is a transboundary gas and condensate field. All associated production operations are within Norwegian waters with all wells tied back to the Sleipner T (SLT) platform. There is no subsea infrastructure placed on the UKCS seabed. One of the wells bottom hole location terminates within the UKCS. Although all production operations are licenced under the Norwegian licence area, the Utgard field's production licences are split proportionately between the Norwegian and UK licence areas determined by the delimitation of the transboundary reservoir.

Sidetrack well G-1 AH (G-2 in WONS) commenced production in April 2024. A second sidetrack will commence in late 2024/early 2025 contributing to an increase in the forecast year on year production figures.

The 2024 production figures showed a small increase in the maximum oil consent due to the drilling of the G-1 AH sidetrack lifting production; however, that uplift was offset by the G-4 H well ceasing production during the year. As production is forecast to increase in 2025 compared to 2024 due to the new G-4 AH sidetrack well due to start-up in Q1 2025, the 2025 consent application has requested a year-on-year increase.

The proposed Oil consent will increase by 242 tonnes/day and the gas consent by 344.023 1,000m³/day.

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 associated EIA project is located at the Sleipner T platform where all processing and production of the Utgard field take place. This development is located 215 km from the east coast of Scotland and is less than 0.1 km west of the UK/Norway median line.

The transboundary Utgard field crosses into the UKCS block 16/8a.

Water depths in the vicinity of the Utgard field range from approximately 100 m to 130 m (LAT) and the water depth at the Utgard well is 115 m. The prevailing winds in the NNS are from the southwest and north-northeast. Wind strengths in winter are typically in the range of Beaufort scale force 4-6 (6-11 m/s) with higher winds of force 8-12 (17-32 m/s) being much less frequent.

The Norwegian Boundary Sediment Plain NC MPA is the closest protected site to the Utgard field, located approximately 21 km south-east and designated for ocean quahog aggregations in addition to the sands and gravels which act as their supporting habitat. The Scanner pockmark Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 34 km southwest of the Utgard field and is a designated Annex I habitat for submarine structures made by leaking gases. There are no known pockmarks in the vicinity of the Utgard field.



As there are no operations within UK waters, an assessment of the baseline environmental conditions within the geographical area has been made. It is not deemed material to the decision process for the requested increase in production.

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 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 of the project on population and human health.

There will be no discharges to sea in UK waters.

There continues to be no physical presence in the UK waters or on the UKCS seabed.

There is no increase in the risk from accidental events.

There will be no atmospheric emissions in the UKCS however transboundary impacts may occur. Utgard produces an average of 65,794 tonnes of CO₂ per year (estimated average for the years 2020-2031), which equates to approximately 0.319% of the overall annual offshore emissions for the UK and 0.141% of the annual Norway CO₂ emissions from the oil and gas industry. The average CO₂ emissions from the SLT platform are not expected to change during the production from the Utgard Field. The forecast total CO₂ emissions from Utgard from 2020 through to 2031 is 789,523 T.

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