

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6360U
UKOP Doc Ref:1367996



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

ENI ENERGY E&P UK LIMITED
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Registered No.: 01483021

Date: 29th October 2024

Department for Energy Security &
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Dear Sir / Madam

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

Cygnus rock apron repair and extension

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference DR/2500/0 (Version 6), dated 29th October 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**

Cygnus rock apron repair and extension

DR/2500/0 (Version 6)

Whereas ENI ENERGY E&P UK LIMITED has made an application dated 29th October 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 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.

Effective Date: 29th October 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 1 November 2024 until 31 December 2025.

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 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials

Rock deposits

29,896 tonnes of clean, inert rock material, containing minimal fines, (The quantity of rock deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary stabilisation or protection, and any surplus rock must be returned to land).

4 Location of stabilisation or protection materials

As described in the application.

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 Monitoring

The results of any pre or post-placement surveys carried out to confirm the necessity for the deposits covered by the screening direction and/or to confirm the accurate positioning of the stabilisation or protection materials, should be forwarded to the Department following completion of the surveys.

8 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.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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).

12 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

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:-

Summary of the project

Deposition of stabilisation material to maintain and expand the existing rock apron placed at the site ahead of drilling operations from a jack-up rig (this application is for the stabilisation material placement only, not the drilling activities).

Description of the project

This project is for the placement of up to 29,896 tonnes of rock to repair and extend the existing rock apron a further 5,472 m² at the location of the Cygnus platform. This will allow for drilling rigs to locate and drill at Cygnus in 2025 but this has not been assessed as part the current project. The current project only considers the placement of rock.

It is not considered to be likely that the project will be affected by natural disasters. The risk of a major accident such as an accidental diesel release from a vessel. 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 of 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:-

The proposed rock placement project is located at the Cygnus field, next to the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform in the Southern North Sea, in UKCS Block 44/12, approximately 162 kilometres (km) from the UK coastline, and 36 km from the UK/Netherlands Median Line, in a depth of approximately 22 metres (m).

Site specific surveys confirmed that surficial seabed sediments are generally slightly gravelly sand and sand, with a small area of gravelly sand.

The wave height in the area ranges from 1.81 to 2.10 m.

The Cygnus field is located within the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is designated due to the presence of the Annex I habitat ' *Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time* ' and the Southern North Sea (SNS) SAC which is designated for Harbour porpoise.

Low to moderate densities of harbour porpoise and white-beaked dolphin have been identified throughout the year. Low densities of minke whale and long-finned pilot whale have been recorded in the area throughout the year. The Cygnus field is 162 km offshore and therefore, grey and harbour seals may be encountered in low numbers.

Seabird oil sensitivity in the vicinity of the Cygnus field ranges from low to extremely high throughout the year.

The proposed operations will coincide with fish spawning and/or nursery activity for a number of commercial fish species.

The project area is primarily used for demersal and shellfish fishing and the fishing effort in the area is rated low.

There are several oil and gas fields nearby. The nearest marine cable is less than one kilometre away. The nearest renewable energy site is the Dogger Bank Offshore Wind Farm Project located 14 km to the northwest. There are no known wrecks of historical importance or military activity within the vicinity of the proposed operations. Shipping density in the area is high.

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 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.

Impacts associated with drilling operations will be assessed when the planned activities are finalised and do not form part of this application. This application is only for the deposit of stabilisation material ahead of drilling operations.

All the proposed activities will take place within the Cygnus Alpha Wellhead Platform 500-m safety zone and therefore impacts to other sea users due to physical presence are not expected.

There will be disturbance of the seabed as a result of the placement of up to 29,896 tonnes of rock, acting as a rig stabilisation material on top of an existing rock apron and extending the rock apron at the planned drilling site. The placement of the deposits will result in a new disturbance of 5,472 m² which represents an impact on 0.00004% of the Dogger Bank area SAC and 0.00001% of the SNS SAC area. The loss of habitat will be contained within the 500-m zone of the Cygnus AWHP, which is already impacted by the oil and gas activity taking place within it. Therefore, the loss of this habitat is not expected to have a likely significant effect on neither site.

In-combination impacts on the Dogger Bank SAC seabed considering other projects is estimated at 0.41% of the area and for the SNS SAC it is estimated at 0.12% of the area. The loss of habitat contributed by this project is considered very small in relation to the available habitat in the sites. The loss of habitat contributed by this project is also considered very small in relation to the combined effect of other projects. As such, cumulative impacts arising from this operation are not expected.

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

Although not a planned activity, a worst-case major accident scenario resulting from a diesel release from a vessel was modelled and assessed. The probability of a large diesel spill from the proposed operations is low. Therefore, it is considered that the control and safety measures in place minimise the risk of a diesel spill which could have a significant impact and the proposed operations carried out as planned are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the operations. The nearest boundary (UK/Netherlands Median Line) is located approximately 36 km of the operations.



Atmospheric emissions directly attributable to the planned activities are expected to rapidly disperse and are not likely to have a significant impact.

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:

Not applicable.