

Our Ref: 01.08.06.15/289C  
UKOP Doc Ref:1372708



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

REPSOL RESOURCES UK LIMITED  
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Registered No.: 00825828

Date: 2nd December 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  
PIPER CHANGE TO PRODUCTION**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2515/0 (Version 3), dated 2nd December 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**

**PIPER CHANGE TO PRODUCTION**

**PR/2515/0 (Version 3)**

Whereas REPSOL RESOURCES UK LIMITED has made an application dated 2nd December 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/8067/0 (Version 3).

Effective Date: 2nd December 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 1 January 2025.

#### **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:

#### **PR/2515/0 (Version 3) - 2nd December 2024**

Please review information in section 5.2.4. (Table 5.3) to ensure all appropriate designated sites are identified with the correct designated features / species / habitats. A variation to the permit should be raised before 31st January 2025 to address this.

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:

-

### **Summary of the project**

Increase in oil and gas production and extension to production consent at the Piper field for 2025-2027 inclusive due to drilling of three sidetrack wells 15/17-R9, 15/17-F (with 15/17-P38 as a contingency geological sidetrack) and 15/17-C (with 15/17-P47 as a contingency geological sidetrack).

### **Description of the project**

The Piper field is an oil and gas field located in the central North Sea region. The Piper B platform also processes fluids from the Tweedsmuir subsea tieback located some 53km south of the Piper B platform. The following wells, drilled from the Piper B





platform, are considered enabling projects to the change in production requested:

Target 15/17-R9 - (DRA/1086)

Target 15/17-F and 15/17-P38 contingency geological sidetrack (fallback) - (DRA/1087)

Target 15/17-C and 15/17-P47 contingency geological sidetrack (fallback) - (DRA/1088)

The proposed infill wells are planned to become operational at various stages in 2025 and 2026. These projects will lead to an increase in production in the years 2025 - 2027 as compared to the current baseline consent for 2024.

### **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 Piper B platform which is located 155 km from the Scottish coastline and 70 km from the UK/ Norway median line. The Piper platform is located in Block 15/17.

Water depths in the vicinity of the Piper field are approximately 146 m. Winds from the south and west predominate from September to March. Wind speed within Block 15/17 ranges from 8.0 to 8.5 m/s, 100 m above sea level in summer to 12.5 to 13.0 m/s in winter.

The Central Fladen NC MPA is the closest protected site to the Piper field, located approximately 38 km northwest and designated for burrowed mud (sea pens and burrowing megafauna and tall sea pen components) and sub-glacial tunnel valley representative of the Fladen Deep. The Scanner pockmark Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 42 km southeast of the Piper field and is a designated Annex I habitat for submarine structures made by leaking gases. Pockmarks have been identified by local site survey in the vicinity of the Piper field however, none of these displayed any signs of active gas seeps such as bacterial mats or bubbles and no associated Methane Derived Authigenic Carbonate (MDAC) structures were observed. Based on available information, none of the specified Annex I habitats are known to occur in Block 15/17.

The Piper field is located within the Scottish National Marine Plan area.

Environmental survey data supporting the application was taken from the adjacent block (15/16) in 2020 and supplemented with ROV survey footage from around the Piper platform in 2022 and 2023. These surveys indicate the sediments in the vicinity of the Piper field are sandy with fine sediment and a large component of shell with some small gravel. The broadscale European Nature Information System (EUNIS)



habitat type is expected to be deep circalittoral mud (A5.37). The benthic community is considered typical for this area of the North sea. The OSPAR listed threatened and/or declining habitat 'Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities' and Ocean quahog ( *Arctica islandica* ) have been identified in the wider area, however, these were not observed in the most recent surveys adjacent to the Piper platform.

The Piper platform is located in International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) rectangle 45F0 (Block 15/17) in an area of spawning and nursery grounds for several commercially important species. Sightings of cetaceans occur year-round but are most common during the months of July and August. Seals are not expected to be seen at the remote location. Seabird oil spill sensitivity ranges from low to very high in block 15/17 with very high sensitivity in December and high sensitivity in September and October. The project area is primarily used for demersal, shellfish and pelagic fishing, with demersal fishing being the highest group by tonnage and shellfish being the highest group by value. Overall, fishing effort from ICES 45F0 represents 1% of the UK total in 2022. Shipping intensity at the project location is rated 'moderate'. The surrounding area comprises other oil and gas infrastructure within 6.8km. There are no military restrictions within 40 km of the area and no active cables in the vicinity. A marine renewable energy Crown Estate Lease site is located 48km from the platform and the field is located 19km west and 46km northeast of licenced areas for Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS). No scheduled monuments (including protected wrecks) or Historic Marine Protected Areas are identified close to the platform however, 13 other wrecks/ obstructions are identified within 10 km of the platform.

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, 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.

The Piper field has been in operation since 1976, surrounded by 500m safety zones. Shipping in the area is moderate and mainly related to oil and gas activity and as such, their presence and that of associated supply vessels is unlikely to significantly impact other sea users.

It is anticipated that the production plant will run more efficiently with the proposed increased production levels. There are no other changes to the production system required. The change in oil and gas levels over the three years requested (2025, 2026 and 2027) represents an overall increase from the current consented levels for 2024, however, it is not expected there will be any significant increase in the



atmospheric emissions from power generation as a result of the increase in production which have been applied for at the Piper field. The requested increase and extension to production is not expected to result in an increase in the total quantity of oil and gas to be extracted over the lifetime of the Piper field.

There will be a reduction of the volume of produced water produced of up to 310m<sup>3</sup> / day in 2025, however, the reduction in the volume of produced water is not anticipated to impact on current oil in produced water levels, chemical application rates are not expected to change and no new chemical applications are anticipated.

The company do not anticipate that any additional flights or boat trips will be required to support the changes in production, and thus no increase in diesel consumption and consequent emissions from this source.

The change in production will be carried out in accordance with the Scottish National Marine Plan objectives and the change to production is not anticipated to have a significant impact on atmospheric emissions, physical presence, planned discharges and accidental spills.

There is no increase in the risk from accidental events as a result of the change to production.

## **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.