

Our Ref: 01.08.06.15/584C
UKOP Doc Ref:1372141



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

ITHACA OIL AND GAS LIMITED
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Registered No.: 01546623

Date: 28th November 2024

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero

AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ





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
ALBA**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PR/2530/0 (Version 2), dated 26th November 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  on  or email the Environmental Management Team at opred@energysecurity.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

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**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

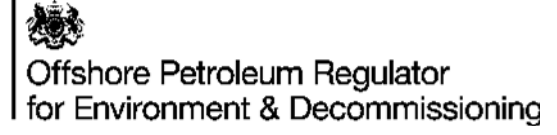
PR/2530/0 (Version 2)

Whereas ITHACA OIL AND GAS LIMITED has made an application dated 26th November 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/8138/0.

Effective Date: 28th November 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

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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.

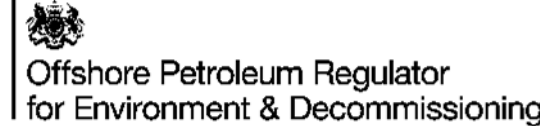
7 Unauthorised deposits

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

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



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 from the Alba field as a consequence of a production well being converted to a water injection well and production being restored from a well.

Description of the project

This project consists of an increase in oil production of less than 500 tonnes per day and gas production of less than 500,000 cubic meters per day at the Alba field due to the A44 well being converted from a production well to a water injection well and production being restored from the A69 well following a scale squeeze. This meets the definition of "project" under the Offshore EIA regulations (2020). The existing production consent is valid until 31st December 2024 and this application seeks to extend this to 31st December 2025.

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No cumulative impacts are expected to occur with any other existing or approved projects currently, from the project.

There is no change to the assessment of a major accident. 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.

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

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 Alba field is located in Block 16/26 in the central North Sea, approximately 40 km from the UK/Norwegian median line and 179 km northeast of Scotland's coastline.

The mean water depth in the Alba field is approximately 138 m and the wave height ranges from 2.11 - 2.40 m.

Sediments across the Alba field area are predominantly comprised of fine material, with moderate proportions of sand and minimal coarse material. The sediments across the Alba field were classified as 'circalittoral fine mud'.

A survey of the area showed that the area had a moderately diverse macrofaunal community, dominated by the polychaete *Paramphinome jeffreysii*. Other abundant species recorded included the bivalve molluscs *Thyasira equalis* and *Adontorhina similis*, and the polychaetes *Levinsenia gracilis* and *Paradoneis eliasoni*. Epifauna were present in low density across the Alba field, and comprised of sea pens, hermit crabs and starfish. Due to the visible infauna and presence of faunal burrows, the habitat 'seapens and burrowing megafauna in circalittoral fine mud' which is a Priority Marine Feature is present in the Alba field. No pockmarks or any other Annex I habitats were recorded during surveys across the Alba field.

Minke whale, killer whale, white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin and harbour porpoise have all been recorded in the vicinity of the Alba field. Densities of the species are categorised as low to moderate, with the exception of harbour porpoise which are observed in high density in May. Grey and harbour seals may be encountered but due to the distance from shore, it is unlikely that the area is visited regularly or in high numbers. Density maps show the presence of grey and harbour seals in the area of the platform as <0.001% of the mean at sea population per 25 km².

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Seabird oil sensitivity in the vicinity of the Alba field is low throughout the year except for November and December where there is no data.

The Alba field is not situated within any conservation areas, with the nearest area of conservation interest being the Norwegian Boundary Sediment Plain NC MPA which lies 34 km to the east. This site is designated for the presence of ocean quahog *Arctica islandica* aggregations, including sands and gravels as their supporting habitat.

The Alba field lies within ICES rectangle 45F1, which is a spawning area for cod, mackerel Norway lobster and Norway pout. The Alba field is situated within nursery areas for anglerfish, blue whiting, cod, European hake, haddock, herring, ling, mackerel, Norway lobster, Norway pout, sandeel, spotted ray, spurdog and whiting. The area is mainly targeted for shellfish, followed by demersal species and fishing effort would be considered low. The operations take place in an established 500 m zone and thus fishing activity will not be impacted.

The Alba field is not within a MoD practice and exercise area and there are no military restrictions. Shipping activity within the area is relatively low. There are no war graves, Historical Marine Protected Areas (HMPAs) or features of cultural importance within the immediate vicinity of the Alba field, however there are seven wrecks within a 20 km radius of the Alba field. The closest wrecks are approximately 1 km and 3 km from the Alba Northern Platform.

There are no offshore windfarms within 40 km of the Alba field. The closest renewable development is the CS012 Carbon Capture and Storage licence area, which is located approximately 10 km north of the Alba field.

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 and 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 or on population and human health.

The proposed increase in oil and gas production from the Alba field is the result of the A44 well being converted from a production well to a water injection well and production being restored from the A69 well following a scale squeeze. The increases are within the design capacity of the existing Alba facilities and no modifications will be required as a result of this change. The addition of another water injector well is not expected to require the addition of another water injection pump with the overall increase in power demand expected to be minimal. No increase in

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flaring is predicted due to the increase in production. An increase in oil production may also result in a marginal increase in venting, due to an increase in storage operations at the Alba FSU. The proposed increase in production does not require any of the currently approved chemical volumes to be increased.

Chemicals treatments on the Alba FSU are not expected to increase as a result of the proposed increase in production. The overall volume of produced water and chemically treated seawater may increase as a result of the change in production. The oil in water concentration of the produced water is low (less than 15 mg/l) and is expected to remain constant in 2025. There are no requirements for an increase in chemicals due to the increase in production.

The probability of an accidental event leading to a release from the platform or a loss of the inventory will not increase as a result of the revised production.

There are no expected transboundary impacts as a result of the project and no cumulative impacts have been identified given the other known existing and approved projects in the wider area.

The requested increase in 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 Alba field.

It is considered that the increase in production from the Alba field is not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore activities or other users of the sea, the seabed, marine life or cetacean species and no cumulative impacts are expected to occur. The proposals are in line with the policies of the Scottish Marine Plan.

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