

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6408U  
UKOP Doc Ref:1382905



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

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Registered No.: 01051137

Date: 18th February 2025

Department for Energy Security &  
Net Zero

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Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING  
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS  
2020  
PIPELINE PL1877**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2516/0 (Version 6), dated 14th February 2025 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

[REDACTED]

**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**

**PIPELINE PL1877**

**PL/2516/0 (Version 6)**

Whereas CNOOC PETROLEUM EUROPE LIMITED has made an application dated 14th February 2025, 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/5167.

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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 18 February 2025 until 30 April 2025.

#### **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. The Department must be notified of the mitigation option undertaken within 7 days of completion of the project. 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**

Rock deposits

22 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 pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials**

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

## **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:

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





## **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 assessments 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 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:

To remediate an area of exposed pipeline on PL1877 and mitigate the snagging hazard of a previously laid concrete mattress.

The works will be consented under NSTA Deposit Consent Reference PA/5167.

### **Description of Project**

During a subsea inspection, an exposed section of PL1877 was identified as a previously laid concrete mattress had been moved. Following further assessment, three options have been considered for the reinstatement of pipeline protection and the removal of the snagging hazard caused by the mattress.

Option 1: The mattress will be repositioned on top of PL/1877 and secured in place

by deposition of rock over the top.

Option 2: The mattress will be recovered using either a mattress handling frame and/or a subsea work basket and 11 tonnes of rock will be placed directly onto the exposed pipeline. Due to the proximity of the mattress to PL/1877, the mattress may need to be moved prior to being recovered.

Option 3: The mattress will be left in its current position and 11 tonnes of rock will be deposited over it at its current location to remove it as a snagging hazard. An additional 11 tonne of rock will also be deposited over the exposed pipeline.

The rock will be deposited with 1:3 tapered edges on all sides in order to allow it to be over trawlable. An in-field assessment will be undertaken to determine the most suitable option with regards to the mattress, including the integrity of the mattress and the environmental conditions at the time of recovery.

Other than the matters considered further below, there is not likely to be any significant impact from 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 Scott field is located in Block 15/22a, approximately 81 km from the UK/Norwegian median line and 140 km from the Scottish mainland. Samples taken from within the Scott area are represented by homogenous fine material (silt and clay or mud) with low but variable proportions of sand and minimal coarse material. Sample locations around the site were classified as 'circalittoral fine mud'.

Mean water depth is approximately 140 m at the platform area and the wave height ranges from 2.11 - 2.40 m. Numerous strings of pockmarks were observed which were interpreted to be relict, likely originating from gas seep features. There was no evidence of the Annex I leaking gases or submarine structures made by leaking gases during any survey of the area.

A survey of the area showed that the area had a moderately diverse macrofaunal community, dominated by burrowing anemone and polychaete. Two clusters of macrofaunal communities were noted with the difference in each thought to be attributed to the slight variations in sediment type across the survey area. The epifauna within the area is sparse, comprising sea pens, mobile crustaceans such as hermit crab and squat lobsters. Juvenile ocean quahog were also present in low densities within the platform area. The data also shows the presence of burrowing megafauna, with the slender sea pen observed (<15 cm). These sea pens were observed along the survey route and was considered 'frequent' on the SACFOR scale. Burrow densities were observed to be common or frequent in ROV footage, and the habitat 'sea pen and burrowing megafauna' is potentially present.



Minke whale, long finned pilot whale, common dolphin, white-beaked dolphin, Atlantic white-sided dolphin and harbour porpoise have all been recorded in the vicinity of the Scott area. Densities of the species are categorised as low to moderate, with the exception of the common dolphin, harbour porpoise and white beaked dolphin which are observed in high density from May to September/October. 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% mean at sea population per 25km<sup>2</sup>.

Seabird oil sensitivity in the vicinity of the Scott field is low to extremely high throughout the year.

The Scott platform is not situated within any conservation areas, with the nearest area of conservation interest being the Scanner Pockmark SAC which lies approximately 44 km to the east. This site is designating for the Annex I habitat 'submarine structures made by leaking gases'. The nearest NCMPA to the proposed operations is the Turbot Bank NCMPA which is 81 km to the southwest, which is designated for the protection of sandeels.

The Scott field lies within fishing designated ICES rectangle 45F0. The proposed operations will coincide with fish spawning and/or nursery activity for a number of species. The project area is primarily used for demersal fishing and shellfish, with fishing effort in the area accounting for 1.02% of the overall UK fishing effort and 0.82% of value. It is not anticipated that the mattress deposit will have a significant impact on the fishing industry in the area.

The location of the proposed activity 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 eleven wrecks within 20 km of the Scott platform area, but none are wrecks designated under the Protection of Military Remains or are of Historical Importance.

The closest renewable development is the Acorn Carbon Capture and Storage area, which is located 30 km south-west of the proposed operations. It is not anticipated that the operations at Scott will have a significant impact on either the wrecks, cables or windfarms.

Given the location of the project, it is not likely that the areas identified at paragraphs 2(c)(i), (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii) of Schedule 5 to the Regulations will be affected by the change to 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 change to 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 from the change to the project on population and human health.

The operations will be undertaken from a dive support vessel and will exclude a small area of seabed from use by fishing vessels for a short period of time. The rock deposit is intended to reduce the risks associated with fisheries interaction with the exposed pipeline and the concrete mattress should its recovery not be possible.

The repositioning of the mattress, either for recovery or over PL1877, and subsequent rock deposits will cause disturbance to the seabed in the immediate area. The rock deposits will cover the soft silty mud, overlaying it with a hard surface which will support different species and habitat characteristics compared to the existing seabed. The total area of seabed to be disturbed by the mattress, subsea work basket and rock deposits is 81 m<sup>2</sup>. The mattress may also be placed over the existing pipeline so a proportion of the impacted seabed is comprised of either pipeline or the scoured and highly disturbed seabed immediately adjacent to the pipeline.

Fish, marine mammals and benthic species are not considered to be significantly impacted. Underwater noise from the operations is considered to have a negligible impact on marine mammals and fish species as the majority of noise is of low frequency and is not impulsive.

The main risk of accidental release of hydrocarbons is the loss of diesel inventory from a vessel. The assessment showed that the probability of a diesel spill from a vessel involved in the project is very low, with numerous mitigation measures and procedures in place. Subsea infrastructure will be shut in prior to the operations being undertaken. Therefore, the risk of an oil spill event that could have a significant impact on the environment is minimal.

The proposed operation is planned to utilise a single vessel and atmospheric emissions have been assessed from the diesel used for this vessel and the time spent on location. The total atmospheric emissions from the vessel when undertaking the Scott and Telford inspection, repair and maintenance campaign will be 3480 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) which accounts for 0.018% of the total offshore oil and gas UKCS CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (using 2022 as a baseline). The emissions may result in a deterioration of the local air quality, but due to the relatively short duration of the work, and that the exposed conditions in the area will rapidly disperse the emissions, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant impact.

There are no expected transboundary effects from the operations. There is no planned discharge of offshore chemicals associated with the mattress recovery or repositioning, or from the rock deposits.

There is no operational renewable energy site, nor any under construction and there are no known wrecks of historical importance or military activity within the vicinity of



the proposed operations.

The operations are in accordance with the National Marine Plan for Scotland's objectives and policies.

It is considered that the mattress mitigation measures and rock deposits are not likely to have a significant impact on other offshore activities or other users of the sea and no cumulative impacts are expected to occur.

## **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.