

Our Ref: 01.01.01.01-6794U
UKOP Doc Ref:1418494



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment
& Decommissioning

PERENCO UK LIMITED
8 HANOVER SQUARE
LONDON
W1S 1HQ

Registered No.: 04653066

Date: 21st October 2025

Department for Energy Security &
Net Zero

AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1BJ

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax

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

Dear Sir / Madam

**THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION, PRODUCTION, UNLOADING
AND STORAGE (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2020
PIPELINE PL23**

A screening direction for the project detailed in your application, reference PL/2582/0 (Version 3), dated 17th October 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.

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**

PIPELINE PL23

PL/2582/0 (Version 3)

Whereas PERENCO UK LIMITED has made an application dated 17th October 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/5723.

Effective Date: 21st October 2025

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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 22 October 2025 until 30 September 2026.

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. Notification should be sent by email to the Environmental Management Team Mailbox: opred@energysecurity.gov.uk

3 Nature of stabilisation or protection materials

Rock Bags 112 Bags of inert rock (Rock Filter Units - RFUs) containing minimal fines (The number of bags deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus bags must be returned to land).

Concrete mattress deposits 28 concrete mattresses, each measuring 5.6 metres x 3 metres x 0.5 metres. (The number of mattresses deposited should be the minimum required to provide the necessary protection, and any surplus mattresses must be returned to land)

4 Location of pipeline and stabilisation or protection materials

The deposits will be placed in multiple locations as detailed in the application documentation

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

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.

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

The project is to deposit concrete mattresses and rock filler units over areas of exposed pipeline on PL23, the works will be undertaken via NSTA consent PWA/5723. The intention is to provide protection to the exposed pipeline and provide extra weight to prevent buoyancy and further exposure and de-burial.

Description of the project

As part of their regular monitoring of infield and export pipelines Perenco observed areas of pipeline which are no longer buried and are exposed on the seabed. Some of these exposures are large enough that they meet risk criteria meaning that intervention is required. This intervention will protect the pipeline, provide stability, minimise buoyancy and prevent further exposure, ensuring the long-term integrity of the pipelines. These works will involve the targeted placement of flexible concrete mattresses and rock filter units (which are bags of small rocks) over parts of the exposed pipe. The mattresses and RFUs will be deposited via an ROV support vessel. The minimum number of deposits have been proposed which minimise the area of seabed impact whilst also ensuring effective stabilisation and protection of the pipeline.

This application is one part of a wider campaign by Perenco to place protective deposits over their pipelines in the Southern North Sea. Through this campaign Perenco are looking to deposit concrete mattresses and RFUs over parts of the following pipelines: - PL22, PL23, PL24, PL28, PL448 and PL450.

This application (PL/2582) proposes to deposit 28 Mattresses and 112 rock filter units (RFUs) over pipeline PL23

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:-

PL23 is the export pipeline for all gas produced within both the Leman and Indefatigable fields and is located between the Leman 27A platform in Block 49/27 and the Bacton Gas Terminal on the Norfolk coast. Approximately 6km from the Norfolk coastline and 61 km from the UK Netherlands median line. The water depth varies from 23 to 38 metres and the seabed sediments in the deposit locations are a variable mixture of circalittoral sands (EUNIS MD5&MC5), circalittoral mixed sediments and circalittoral coarse sediments (MD3). The seabed is characterised by highly mobile sandy sediments in a tide swept dynamic environment. The powerful hydrodynamic regime in the area creates a complex landscape of sandbanks, sandwaves and changing seabed depths which create a particularly challenging environment for buried pipelines and infrastructure.

The tide predominantly flows in a south easterly direction with residual current flow to the east with modelling showing the tidal flow to be 0.356 metres per second (ms⁻¹) and 0.065 ms⁻¹ for spring and neap peak flows respectively. The annual mean significant wave height in the vicinity of the deposits location ranges from 1.51 m to 1.80 m and dominant wind directions between the south west and north west.

Some of the deposits will be in marine protected areas, these are the:

Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is designated for the protection of harbour porpoise

North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef (NNSBSR) and the Haisborough Hammond and Winterton SACs which are designated for the protection of subtidal sandbanks and reef which occurs in the form of biogenic sabellaria spinulosa aggregations.

Multibeam Survey footage suggests the deposits will be placed on mobile sediments as indicated by ripple features and scour depressions. This habitat is part of the annex 1 subtidal sandbank feature in both the HHW and NNSBSR SACs.



The survey information does not suggest there is likely to be any Sabellaria reef located in the deposit locations meaning there is no overlap with the annex 1 reef MPA feature. Furthermore, the operator will collect ROV footage of each deposit location prior to placement to check whether any sabellaria structures are present. If Sabellaria is present the operator will attempt to microsite the deposits away from the reef to minimise damage.

A wide range of seabird species utilise the area with the species composition and numbers varying throughout the year with the more common species in the breeding season being kittiwake, guillemot and lesser black backed gull whilst in summer it is guillemot, fulmar and razorbill. Due to the wide area and time frame over which the deposits will occur seabird vulnerability to oiling varies from low sensitivity to high sensitivity.

The area is important for a variety of fish species with the area acting as a nursery and spawning ground for several species such as cod, herring, nephrops, plaice and sole. Plaice and sole are known to spawn at high intensities in the region.

Cetacean abundance in the SNS is relatively low compared to the northern and central North Sea, with the exception being harbour porpoise and white beaked dolphin which are the most common species. Harbour porpoise in particular has been observed in relatively high densities in the operational area hence the area's designation as an SAC for harbour porpoise.

There is a considerable amount of human activity in the vicinity of the pipeline works. Fishing occurs at variable intensities along the pipelines with a mix of demersal trawling and shellfisheries operating in the area. Shipping levels are considered high with large numbers of cargo vessels and ferries between the UK and continental Europe traversing the works area with offshore supports vessel activity also being high.

There is high density of oil and gas infrastructure in the vicinity of the proposed works. PL23 pipeline route crosses over the Hewett gas field operated by Eni and the Leman gas field operated by PUK. A number of gas fields in the surrounding area have been suspended or ceased production, these include the Camelot fields in Blocks 53/01 and 53/02 and Dawn field in Block 48/29 which have ceased production. Due to the high oil and gas activity in the area, there are also a number of pipelines, flowlines and umbilicals that pass through the Leman and Hewett development areas and neighbouring facilities, six of which intersect the PL23 pipeline at various points along its length including the decommissioned PL29 and inactive PL206, the intersections are not located near any of the deposit locations bar PL29 approximately 750 m south east from deposit location 5 and 950 m south from deposit location 6.

The PL23 pipeline sits within Carbon Storage license area CS009 for the Deposit 1 Location (Exploration Operator: PUK), Deposit 2 and 3 are located within CS008 (Exploration Operator: ENI UK Limited). These both form a part of the SNS Area 4 Carbon Storage area. (Figure 3.12; Crown Estate, 2025). The nearest operational

windfarm is Dudgeon located approximately 26 km north west of deposit 6 along PL23. The Dudgeon extension offshore windfarm area is located 22km north of deposit 4 and is in the planning phase. The consented Norfolk Vanguard West is located 14 km southeast of deposit 1 and 16 km east of deposits 2 , and 22 km east of deposits 3 and 4. The Norfolk Boreas Transmission Asset is located 16 km south of deposit 6 and is in the consented phase. (Figure 3.12; Crown Estate, 2025). Perenco UK Limited: PL23 Pipeline Deposits 2025 (PLA/1166) Doc Ref: P1474-04-02 Page No: 42 The PL23 does not cross any active telecommunications cables, the closest cable is the TAMPNET active cable 11 km west of deposit location 1 (Figure 3.12; KIS-ORCA, 2024)

Some of the deposits lay within an MOD practice range which require MOD to be notified of any structure. There are a large number of wrecks in the region of the works but none within 500m of the deposits.

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.

The mattresses and RFUs will be lowered onto the pipelines from an ROV support vessel. The vessel will notify other sea users of it's presence and advise a 500m avoidance area around the vessel to minimise the risk of interaction. There will thus be some small scale impact to vessel traffic but this is limited to the 3 days of operation after which vessel movements will return to normal. Furthermore, the deposits are intended to reduce the risks associated with fisheries interaction with the exposed pipeline as free-spanning pipelines represent a significant risk of snagging and entanglement.

The placement of the deposits i.e. mattresses and RFUs, will cause disturbance to the seabed in the immediate area. The deposits will cover the natural sandy seabed overlaying it with a hard surface which will support different species and create different habitat characteristics compared to the pre-existing seabed. The total area of seabed to be covered mattress and RFUs deposited as part of this application is 1019m² and over the whole SNS pipeline deposit campaign it is 2090 m². This represents a very small proportion of the respective seabed sediment types found in the wider geographic area of the southern North Sea. The deposits will also be placed directly over the existing pipeline, meaning of this 2090m² of impacted seabed a large part proportion is comprised of either pipeline or the scoured and highly disturbed seabed immediately adjacent to the pipeline.



The placement of the pipeline deposits will also create a secondary impact through the creation of a small sediment plume, which will increase turbidity and sedimentation in the immediate vicinity. The naturally high sediment loads, mobile sandy substrate and small size of the plume mean that these impacts will not be significant.

Both the Haisborough Hammond and Winterton SAC and North Norfolk Sandbanks and Saturn Reef SAC have conservation objectives to restore the extent and distribution of the subtidal sandbank feature within the site. This restore objective is driven by the view that the site is in unfavourable condition which is partly due to the presence of existing or consented energy infrastructure e.g. offshore windfarms and oil and gas, which has caused the loss of sandbank habitat. Whilst the SNS pipeline deposit campaign will cause some further change to the extent of sandy habitat in the SACs, the area of seabed that will be covered by mattresses and RFUs is so small that it cannot make a significant change to the overall condition, populations or ecological function of the SAC either alone or in-combination. Namely the area of the deposits in the NNSBSR SAC from this project alone are 84m², the whole SNS pipeline deposit campaign results in 554m² which equates to <0.00001% of the estimated area of sandbank in the site. The area of the deposits in the HHW SAC from this project alone are 935.4m², the whole SNS pipeline deposit campaign results in 935.4m² which equates to 0.00014% of the estimated area of sandbank in the site. Given that of the area covered by deposits a large proportion is already characterised by existing pipeline, the effect of the deposits on the SACs will not be significant.

The pipeline deposits will cover an area of the Southern North Sea (SAC) of approximately 952.2m² from this project alone, the area of the whole SNS pipeline deposits are 1589.2m², which equates to < 0.0000043% of the site. Whilst the deposits will change the character of the immediate area, from sandy sediment to a hard surface, this change is not expected to alter the prey availability or supporting habitats of harbour porpoise to an extent where the condition of the population or the objectives of the site could be affected.

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. 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 vessels 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 works will be 56.57 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) which accounts

for 0.000419% of the total offshore oil and gas UKCS CO₂ emissions (using 2023 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 are no planned discharges of offshore chemicals associated with the works

Whilst a number of other activities are occurring in the wider region which have an interaction with the seabed, the minor and small-scale nature of the effects resulting from the deposit campaign mean that it will not cause any significant increase in cumulative impact.

The operations are in accordance with the English East and Offshore East 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:

n/a