

Consents given under the Petroleum Act 1998 and Reviews under the Assessment of Environmental Effects Regulations 1999

BG plc

BLOCK 22/5-b

Pursuant to Regulation 5(8) of the above Regulations, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry gives notice that, being content that the requirements of the above Regulations have been satisfied, a consent has been granted to BG plc to the getting of petroleum and the drilling of an exploration well in Block 22/5-b (hereafter referred to as "the project") subject to BG plc conducting operations in respect of the project in accordance with the relevant environmental statement.

Background

BG plc proposes drilling an exploration well in block 22/5-b. The drilling location lies 3.8km from the Norwegian median line and 2km northeast of the Armada platform. The expected hydrocarbons are gas and condensate. The well is planned to be drilled from the semi-submersible rig Sedco 714 in August 2004 and is expected to last 104 days. A logging programme will inform the decision as to whether to abandon the well or to develop NW Seymour as the second Seymour field well. There is a contingency for running a well test to establish the quantity of reserves in the reservoir, with flaring lasting up to 30 hours and producing 240 tonnes condensate and 1,132,674 m³ gas. The well will be drilled using WBM and OBM, with 1408 tonnes of WBM cuttings to be discharged. OBM cuttings will be contained and shipped to shore for processing. If the well is a success it will be tied back to the Armada installation by a production flowline on the seabed. If the well is unsuccessful, it will be plugged and abandoned.

Sensitivities

The environmental statement identifies a range of potential environmental hazards and outlines proposed mitigation measures, including:

- Flaring

- Discharge of drilling mud, completion fluid and hydrotest fluid
- Discharge of drilled cuttings
- Seabed disturbance
- Noise disturbance
- Conservation areas
- Interactions with other sea users
- Transboundary impacts
- Cumulative impacts

Recommendation

Overall the environmental statement is satisfactory and adequately assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed operation. It is recommended that consent is given to the project.

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