

Acceptance decision

Exmouth SLB MC3D MSS Environment Plan

This document provides notification of NOPSEMA's decision made under regulation 10 of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009 (Environment Regulations) to accept an environment plan.

Submission information

Titleholder¹:	Schlumberger Australia Pty Ltd
Environment plan:	Exmouth SLB MC3D MSS Environment Plan [SLB-MC-151002-1, Revision 2]
Application number:	BA8B2A
Date first submitted to NOPSEMA:	02/10/2015
Activities type(s)²:	Seismic activity
Activity overview: <i>As described in the accepted environment plan.</i>	Schlumberger Australia Pty Ltd proposes to undertake a three-dimensional (3D) marine seismic survey (MSS) named Exmouth SLB15 MC3D MSS, in Commonwealth waters of the Exmouth Sub-Basin, approximately 15 km off the Exmouth coast of Western Australia (WA) and 5.8km from the Muiron Islands in waters from 30-1500m deep.

The activity (seismic data acquisition) will run for approximately 300 days in total during September 2016 to September 2018. The activity will not be continuous during this period and allowances have been made for the possibility that the survey may be interrupted (i.e. for commercial, weather, environmental or other reasons). The activity however will be completed by the end of September 2018.

Activities conducted within the operational area include: acoustic emissions ramp-up for 'soft start', acoustic emissions on sail lines, miscellaneous maintenance operations, refuelling and vessel turns at the end of each sail line.

Undershooting of existing offshore petroleum infrastructure may be required to obtain complete data coverage of the underlying geology. The undershooting seismic source vessel will travel along one side of the infrastructure and discharge the acoustic source, whilst the seismic survey vessel will run parallel on the opposite side of the infrastructure, acquiring data. During the undershoot operation, the main seismic survey vessel will not be discharging its airguns.



The equipment and methods used to conduct the survey are standard for seismic surveys and conform to what has been previously used for similar studies in the same marine region. A seismic survey vessel will traverse a series of pre-determined survey lines or 'sail lines' within the Operational Area at a speed of approximately 4-5 knots (8-9 km per hour) during data acquisition. As the vessel traverses the sail lines, a series of sound pulses will be discharged every 8-10 seconds and travel through the water column and into sub-seabed rock formations. The sound waves will be reflected from buried rock layers, recorded on towed hydrophones and the data analysed to assess the subsurface geology for potential oil and gas reservoirs. The recording array will be made up of up to 12 streamers spread 1.1 km wide and 8km long, and is positioned below the ocean surface.

Decision:	Accepted
Decision date:	09/08/2016
Decision made by:	Representative of NOPSEMA: Environment Manager - Seismic & Production Operations



Basis of decision

NOPSEMA has assessed the environment plan in accordance with its assessment policies and procedures. Having regard to all information provided by, and referred to in the environment plan, NOPSEMA is reasonably satisfied that the environment plan meets the criteria set out in regulation 10A of the Environment Regulations.

Next steps for the petroleum activity

An environment plan summary must be provided to NOPSEMA within 10 days of this acceptance. regulation 11(4) requires that this document provide material from the accepted environment plan.

Once the summary document has been prepared to NOPSEMA satisfaction it will be published on NOPSEMA's website. NOPSEMA aims to have all environment plan summary documents published within 20 days of acceptance. This timeframe may vary should the document require amendment by the titleholder.

The titleholder is required to notify NOPSEMA 10 days prior to the commencement of the activity. This notification will be published on NOPSEMA's website.

Titleholder environmental performance requirements

A titleholder is required to undertake a petroleum activity in accordance with the accepted environment plan. It is an offence under the Environment Regulations to act in a manner contrary to the accepted environment plan. A titleholder must submit a revision to the environment plan in response to a new or increased environmental impact or risk, or a significant modification or stage of the activity not provided for in the accepted environment plan.

How to get further information

If you have any further questions regarding the activity it is suggested you contact the titleholder's nominated liaison person for the activity.

If you would like to access any further information regarding this decision, or would like to contact NOPSEMA please email environment@nopsema.gov.au.

¹ A titleholder includes an applicant for a petroleum access authority, petroleum special prospecting authority, pipeline licence, greenhouse gas search authority or greenhouse gas special authority under sub-regulation 9(2).

² Activity type as listed in the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Regulatory Levies) Regulations 2004