

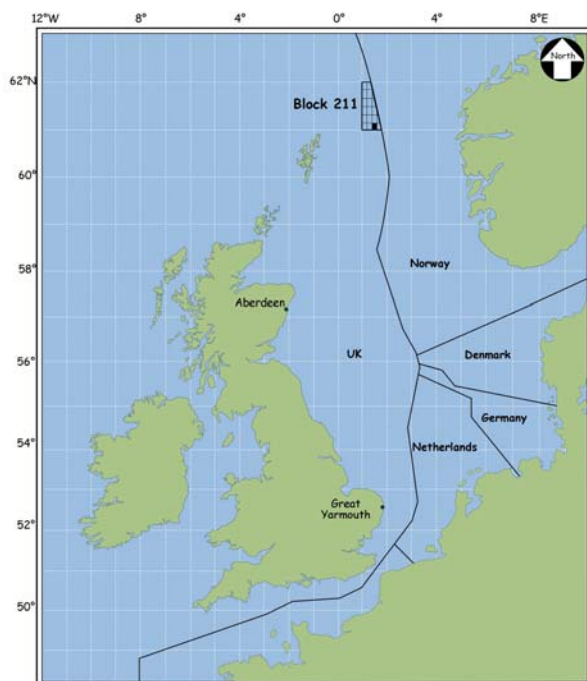


PROJECT EXPERIENCE HUTTON PRE- AND POST-DECOMMISSIONING SURVEYS

In 2002/2003 Kerr McGee North Sea (UK) Ltd (KMUK) decommissioned the Hutton tension leg platform (TLP). As part of the environmental management of the decommissioning operation, KMUK carried out a programme of environmental work to predict, control, and monitor the environmental impacts of the decommissioning operation. As part of this programme two environmental surveys were carried out; one before the decommissioning work started, and one just after the decommissioning work was finished. ERT was contracted by KMUK to design and execute these surveys, carry out the physical, chemical and biological analysis of environmental samples, and prepare a full interpretative environmental report.

THE PRE-DECOMMISSIONING SURVEY

The pre-decommissioning survey was designed by ERT to meet the objectives set by our client whilst working within the accepted North Sea guidelines for cuttings pile surveys (OLF, 2000). The survey design was ratified in advance by the Department of Trade & Industry, Fisheries Research Service and Joint Nature Conservation Committee and was carried out in April/May 2001.



The strategy for the initial survey was primarily focused on obtaining a point of reference for the environment surrounding the TLP from which to evaluate the effects of the decommissioning activities and the programme of work. The biological, physical, chemical and toxicological reference data obtained for the seabed sediments were presented in the initial report. In addition, comparisons with data collected from seven previous environmental surveys undertaken by ERT at this site since 1979.

The pre-decommissioning survey also studied the geophysical and geotechnical properties of the cuttings pile to provide sufficient environmental data

to allow KMUK to assess the environmental impact of the decommissioning process and recommend the best practicable option whilst minimising environmental risk.

POST-DECOMMISSIONING SURVEY

The post-decommissioning survey was undertaken in June 2003 following the removal of all seabed structures and subsequent over-trawling operations. The study assessed the impacts of the decommissioning process and closely followed the sampling strategy of the pre-abandonment survey so that direct comparisons could be made. This study was able to assess any changes to the chemical and biological zones in the area as a direct result from the disturbance caused by the decommissioning process.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

ERT plans to produce a review document summarising the findings of the pre- and post-abandonment environmental monitoring studies undertaken around the Hutton TLP. This report would highlight the key environmental monitoring issues to be considered as part of other abandonment strategies.

Reference:
OLF (2000). *A guidance document for physical, chemical and biological characterisation of offshore drill cuttings piles, version 2.* Norwegian Oil Industry Association, OLF. 10 May 2000.