

Environmentally Sustainable Decommissioning through Constructive Dialogue and Responsible Action: The Case of Frigg Field - North Sea (Europe)

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Frigg Field is unique in many respects, first, it straddles across the United Kingdom and Norway sectors; secondly, it is one of the first major fields up for decommissioning in the North Sea; thirdly, it has a number of structures of both the steel and concrete variety. Each one of these ‘unique’ features poses significant problems and challenges. This paper looks at these problems and challenges and, more significantly, at how they have indeed been used as opportunities to create an innovative framework which may serve as a model for future decommissioning situations. The straddling nature of the field means that both the Norwegian and United Kingdom legislation have to be honoured at the same time ensuring that the work complies with international legislation. It will be shown that standards were not just met but were exceeded in many instances. Involvement of stakeholders in a meaningful manner was another major achievement of the process. Stakeholders were identified early and were involved in every step of the development of the decommissioning process. Use of professional facilitators meant that the stakeholders meetings were efficient and effective. All participants in the process namely, the operators (TotalFinaElf), the governments (United Kingdom and Norway) and the stakeholders (wide ranging in their interests and involvement) had the opportunity to develop a model that was transparent to all concerned but at the same time consistent with the requirements of all involved. The paper will show how legislation, science and community can work together to create impressive results. We will also indicate how gains from this exercise can be used as educational tools for the future.