

BRIEFING NOTE #2: 10th October 2016

Environmental Assessment of Offshore Hydrocarbon Activities



Anne Merrild Hansen, Arctic Oil and Gas Research Centre, Ilisimatusarfik and Sanne Vammen Larsen, The Danish Centre for Environmental Assessment, Aalborg University conducted a study of Environmental Impact Assessment regulation of offshore hydrocarbon exploration in Greenland.

They concluded that offshore EIAs of offshore exploration in Greenland in general are well regulated and that the legislation fulfils international recommendations. There are however significant variations between Greenlandic, Danish, Norwegian, Canadian and Alaskan jurisdictions and the study points to a number of issues with the aim of strengthening the legislation. These are:

- *Whether environmental assessment related to decision-making on licencing areas can be strengthened and how this will influence the need for EIA in the lifecycle of oil projects;*
- *Whether public participation during the process of identifying new licencing areas should be strengthened;*
- *Whether social impacts should be integrated into environmental assessments or be conducted separately;*
- *Whether it should be specified what public participation should focus on in different phases of the EIA;*
- *Whether the public authorities should take a greater responsibility for public participation (potentially with financial support from operating companies);*
- *Whether the financial support system for the public related to the EIA could be improved by development of more specific guidelines;*
- *Whether a report should be required in relation to the EIA, describing how the public have influenced decision-making and process;*
- *Whether a clear grievance guide could be made for EIAs?*
- *Whether there should be requirements made regarding the use of alternatives and assessment of the significance in EIAs?*
- *Whether authorities should be able to further define the format of data in baseline studies and EIAs so that data easier can be shared in common databases and potentially be made publicly available.*

The results were discussed during a workshop with stakeholders in Greenland, held in Nuuk in March 2016. The workshop led to identification of several areas of attention particularly emphasised as important by the stakeholders based on their insights and expertise in the field. More information about the study and findings can be found in the study reports (in Danish only).

The reports can be downloaded here:

http://vbn.aau.dk/files/241780210/Hovedrapport_Endelig_version.pdf

http://vbn.aau.dk/files/228850342/060116_Bilagsrapport_2.pdf

http://vbn.aau.dk/files/209588524/Bilagsrapport_1.pdf