

Geotechnical and Foundation Design Considerations

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API Foreword

The API Subcommittee on Offshore Structures (SC 2) voted to adopt a modified version of ISO 19901-4:2003 as American National Standard ANSI/API Recommended Practice 2GEO. These modifications from the ISO standard have been incorporated directly into the text and marked with a change bar in the margin.

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 19901-4 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 67, *Materials, equipment and offshore structures for petroleum, petrochemical and natural gas industries*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Offshore structures*.

ISO 19901 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Specific requirements for offshore structures*:

- Part 1: Metocean design and operating considerations
- Part 2: Seismic design procedures and criteria
- Part 3: Topsides structure
- Part 4: Geotechnical and foundation design considerations
- Part 5: Weight control during engineering and construction
- Part 6: Marine operations
- Part 7: Stationkeeping systems for floating offshore structures and mobile offshore units

ISO 19901 is one of a series of standards for offshore structures. The full series consists of the following International Standards.

- ISO 19900, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — General requirements for offshore structures*
- ISO 19901 (all parts), *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Specific requirements for offshore structures*
- ISO 19902, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Fixed steel offshore structures*
- ISO 19903, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Fixed concrete offshore structures*
- ISO 19904, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Floating offshore structures*
- ISO 19905-1, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Site-specific assessment of mobile offshore units — Part 1: Jack-ups*
- ISO/TR 19905-2, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Site-specific assessment of mobile offshore units — Part 2: Jack-ups commentary*
- ISO 19906, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Arctic offshore structures*

Introduction

The API offshore structures standards constitute a common basis covering those aspects that address design requirements and assessments of all offshore structures used by the petroleum and natural gas industries worldwide. Through their application the intention is to achieve reliability levels appropriate for manned and unmanned offshore structures, whatever the type of structure and the nature of the materials used.

It is important to recognize that structural integrity is an overall concept comprising models for describing actions, structural analyses, design rules, safety elements, workmanship, quality control procedures and national requirements, all of which are mutually dependent. The modification of one aspect of design in isolation can disturb the balance of reliability inherent in the overall concept or structural system. The implications involved in modifications, therefore, need to be considered in relation to the overall reliability of all offshore structural systems.

The offshore structures International Standards are intended to provide a wide latitude in the choice of structural configurations, materials and techniques without hindering innovation. Sound engineering judgment is therefore necessary in the use of these International Standards.

The overall concept of structural integrity is described above. For foundations, some additional considerations apply. These include the time, frequency and rate at which actions are applied, the method of foundation installation, the properties of the surrounding soil, the overall behavior of the seabed, effects from adjacent structures and the results of drilling into the seabed. All of these, and any other relevant information, need to be considered in relation to the overall reliability of the foundation.

The design practice for the foundations of offshore structures has proved to be an innovative and evolving process over the years since the 1950s. This evolution is expected to continue and is encouraged. Therefore, circumstances can arise when the procedures described herein (or elsewhere) are insufficient on their own to ensure that a safe and economical foundation design is achieved.

Seabed soils vary. Experience gained at one location is not necessarily applicable at another. The scope of the site investigation for one structure is not necessarily adequate for another. Extra caution is necessary when dealing with unfamiliar soils or foundation concepts. This document is intended to provide wide latitude in the choice of site investigation techniques and foundation solutions, without hindering innovation. Sound engineering judgment is therefore necessary in the use of this document.

For an offshore structure and its foundations, the action effects at the interface between the structure's subsystem and the foundation's subsystem(s) are internal forces, moments and deformations. When addressing the foundation's subsystem(s) in isolation, these internal forces, moments and deformations may be considered as actions on the foundation's subsystem(s) and this approach is followed in this document.

Some background to and guidance on the use of this document is provided for information in Annex A. Guidance on foundations in carbonate soils is provided for information in Annex B. There is, as yet, insufficient knowledge and understanding of such soils to produce normative requirements.

Petroleum and natural gas industries — Specific requirements for offshore structures —

Part 4: Geotechnical and foundation design considerations

1 Scope

This document contains requirements and recommendations for those aspects of geotechnical and foundation engineering that are applicable to a broad range of offshore structures, rather than to a particular structure type. Such aspects are

- site characterization,
- soil and rock characterization,
- design and installation of foundations supported by the seabed (shallow foundations),
- identification of hazards,
- design of pile foundations, and
- soil-structure interaction for risers, flowlines, and auxiliary subsea structures.

Aspects of soil mechanics and foundation engineering that apply equally to offshore and onshore structures are not addressed. The user of this document is expected to be familiar with such aspects.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

API RP 2A-WSD, 21st Edition, *Recommended Practice for Planning, Designing and Constructing Fixed Offshore Platforms — Working Stress Design*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

drained condition

condition whereby the applied stresses and stress changes are supported by the soil skeleton and do not cause a change in pore pressure

3.2

effective foundation area

reduced foundation area having its geometric center at the point where the resultant action vector intersects the foundation base level

3.3

seafloor

interface between the sea and the seabed