

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm

Annex C to Appendix 3: Assessment of the implications of the implementation of the Structures Exclusion Zone in relation to commercial fisheries

Relevant Examination Deadline: 4B

Submitted by Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Date: April 2019

Revision A

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Date of Approval:	April 2019
Revision:	A

Revision A	Original Document submitted for internal review
N/A	
N/A	
N/A	

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1 Assessment of the implications of the implementation of the Structures Exclusion Zone in relation to commercial fishing

1.1 Introduction

- 1 Vattenfall Wind Power Limited has proposed the implementation of a structures exclusion zone within the Thanet Extension Offshore Windfarm (TEOW) Red Line Boundary (RLB). The proposed exclusion zone would be located in the north west corner of the RLB. Note that the Structures Exclusion Zone (SEZ) relates to above sea structures only and therefore cables may still be installed in the zone.
- 2 This document provides an assessment of the implications of the implementation of such exclusion zone in relation to commercial fishing and evaluates whether it would result in a material change to the outcomes of Environmental Statement, Volume 2, Chapter 9: Commercial Fisheries, Document Reference 6.2.9.
- 3 The safety implications of the SEZ on commercial fisheries vessels are addressed in Appendix 1 of this Deadline 4B submission – Navigation Risk Assessment – Addendum.

1.2 Local fishing activities

- 4 From consultation undertaken by the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) with local fisheries stakeholders, and as described in Chapter 9: Commercial Fisheries, local fishing vessels using various fishing methods target grounds within the RLB, including in areas in the north west section of the RLB, where the structures exclusion zone is to be located.
- 5 A summary of local fishing activity in areas relevant to the exclusion zone is given below by fishing method:
 - Potting: The structures exclusion zone overlaps with one of the discrete areas identified during consultation as a key potting ground and with a small section of the wider potting grounds (Figure 1).
 - Netting: As shown in Figure 2, the structures exclusion zone coincides with a section of the drift netting grounds identified during consultation in the north west area of the RLB (Figure 2). In addition, it overlaps with a section of the wider areas identified as static netting grounds during consultation (Figure 3).

- Trawling: The operational range of trawlers is wider compared to that of other methods used by the local fleet. As noted in the TFA Written Representation (Document Rep1-134) the grounds to the north of Thanet Offshore Windfarm (TOW) are consistently worked by trawlers operating from Ramsgate and Whitstable with grounds in the north western part of the RLB being important and productive areas to some vessels.
- 6 An overall indication of the activity of local vessels (all methods) in the area of the SEZ is given in Figure 4 to Figure 9. This has been derived from Succorfish data provided by TFA (originally presented as Figures 3.21 – 3.29 in Annex 9-1: Commercial Fisheries Technical Report, Document Reference: 6.4.9.1). As shown both fishing activity and vessel movements have been recorded within the SEZ.

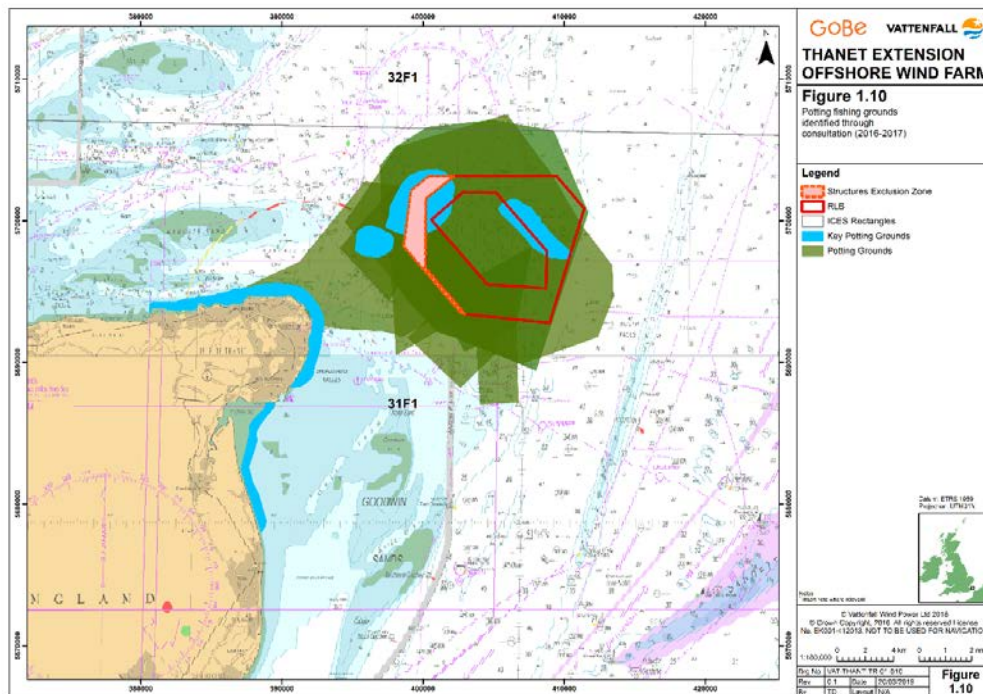


Figure 1: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on potting grounds

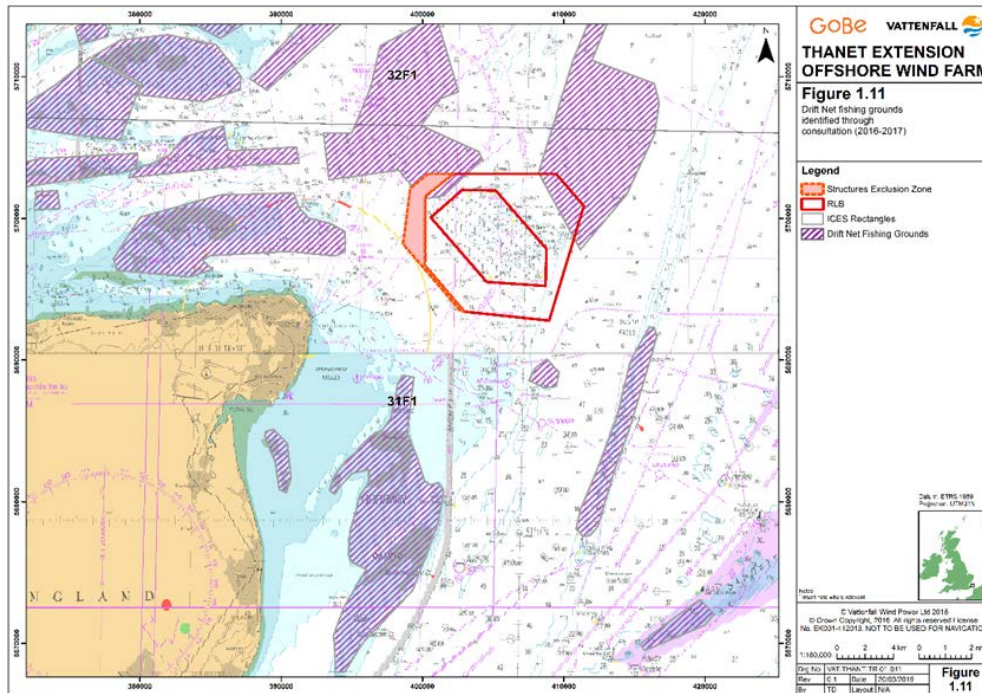


Figure 2: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Drift Netting grounds

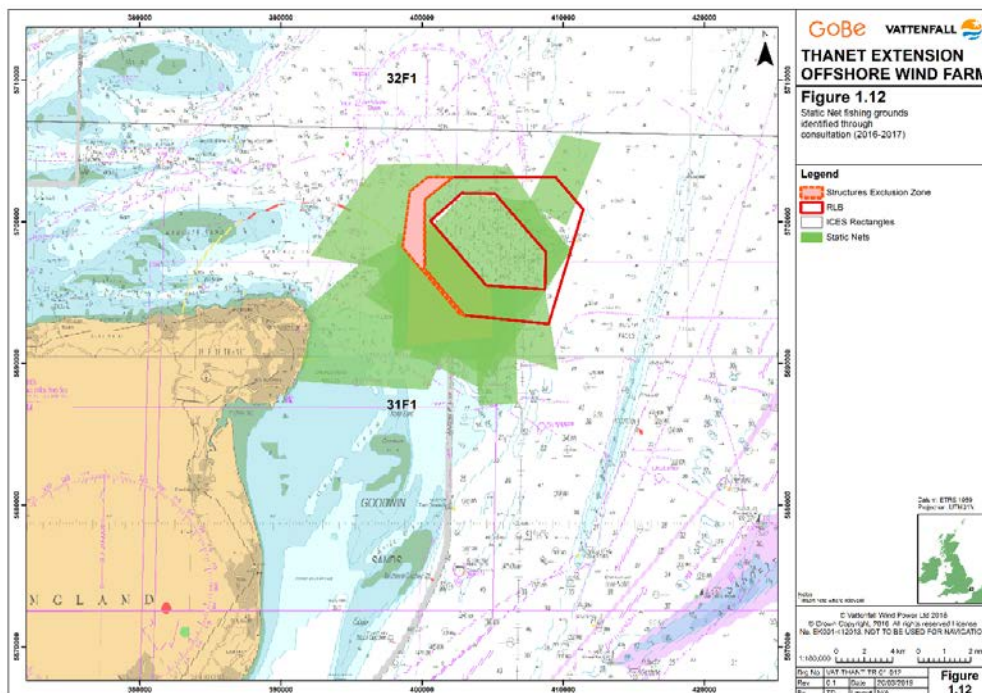


Figure 3: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Static netting grounds

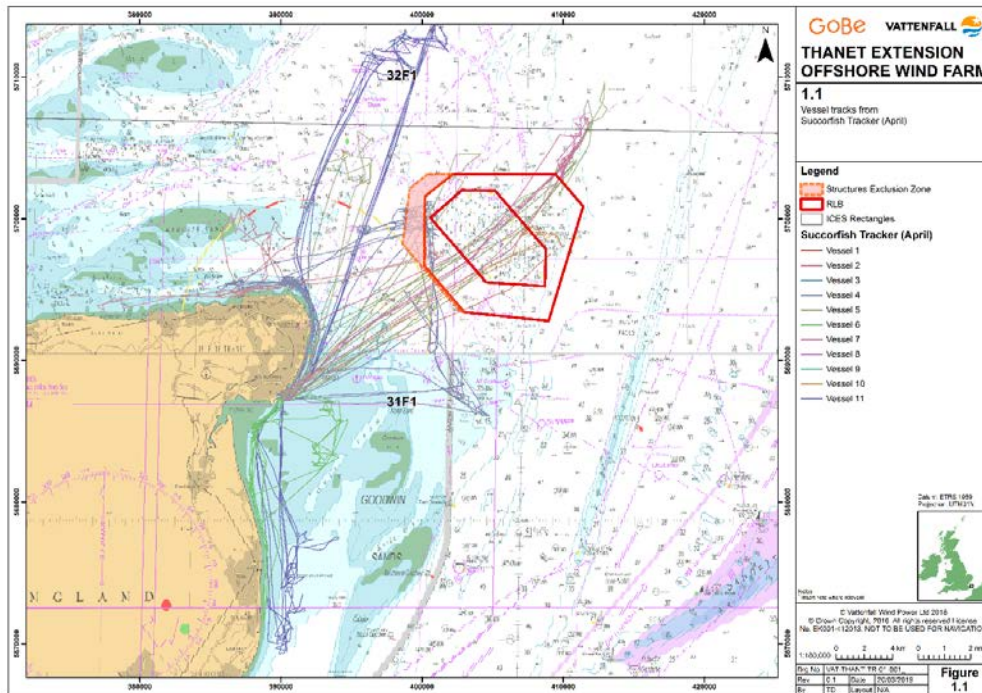


Figure 4: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Succorfish Tracks (TFA) April 2017

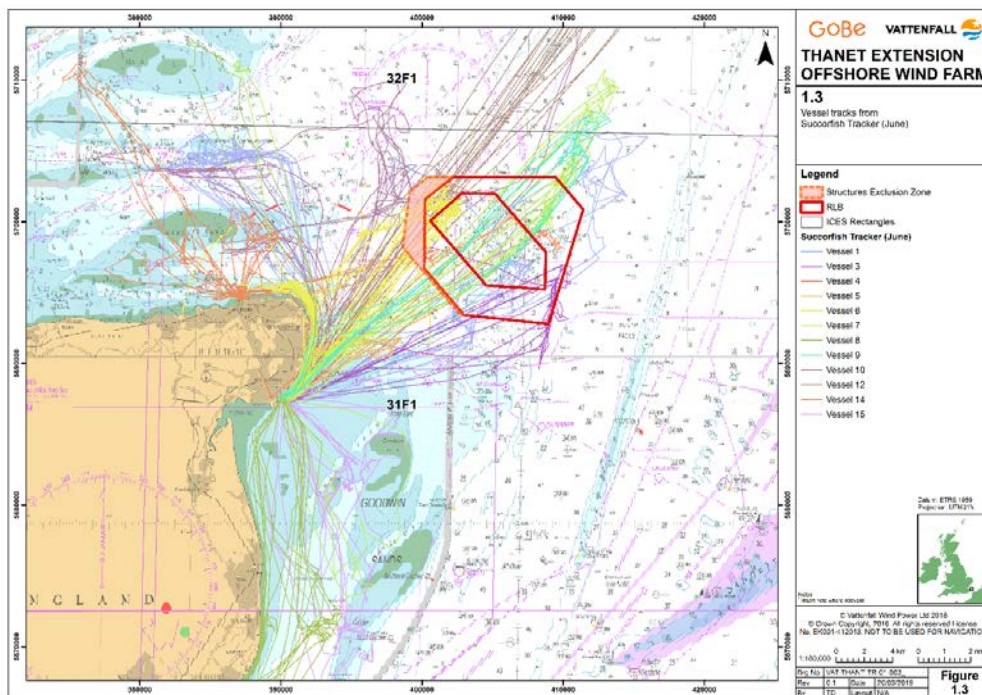


Figure 5: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Succorfish Tracks (TFA) June 2017

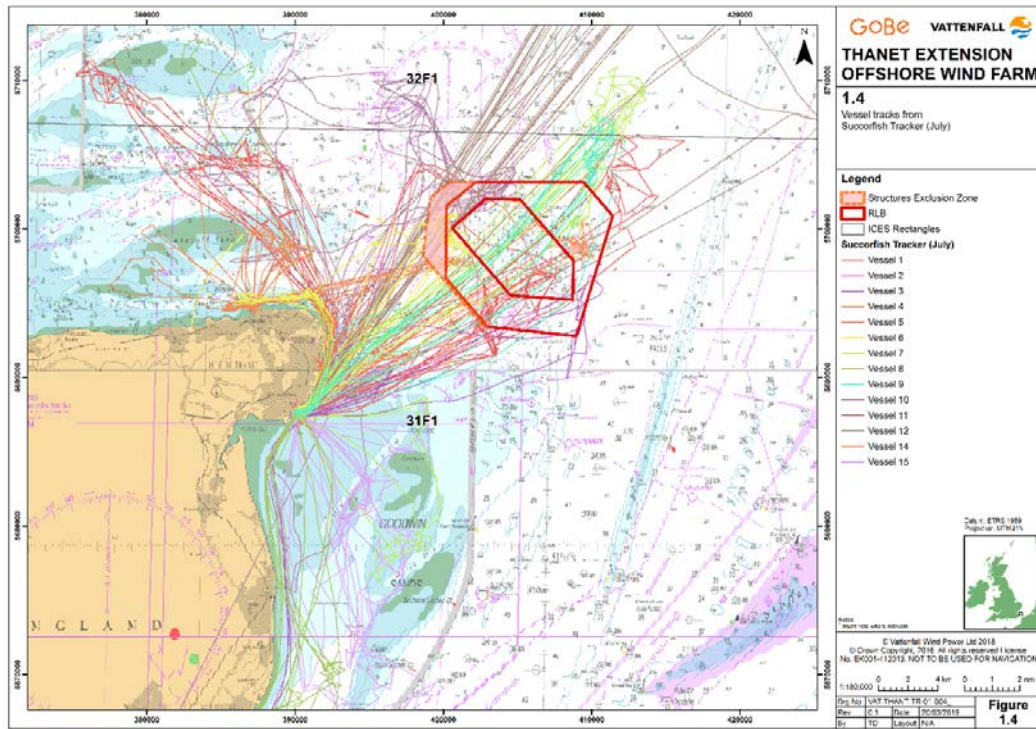


Figure 6: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Succorfish Tracks (TFA) July 2017

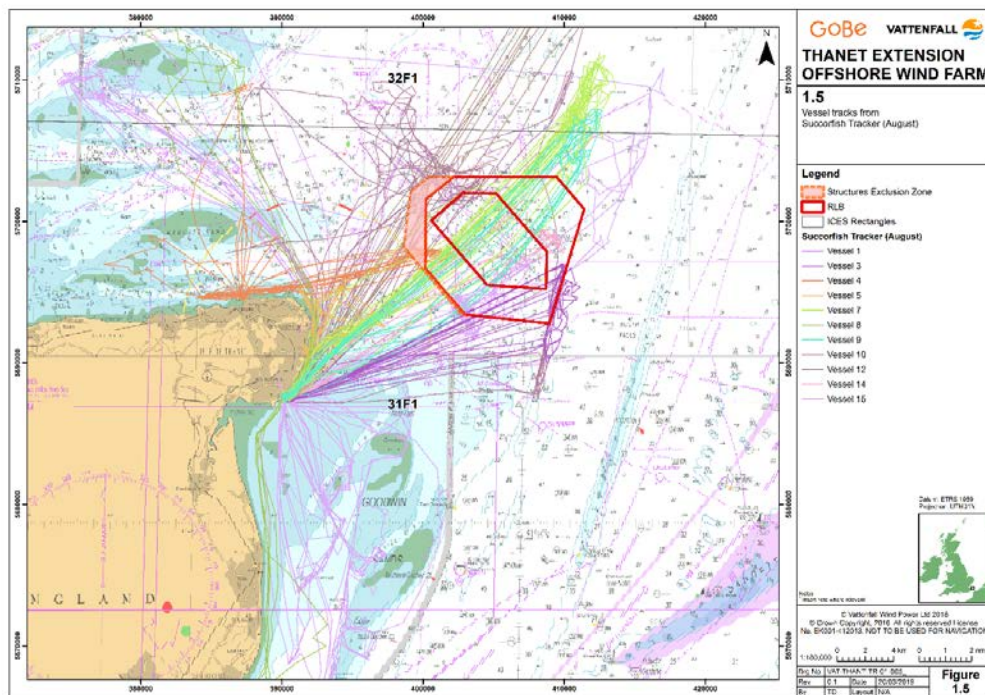


Figure 7: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Succorfish Tracks (TFA) August 2017

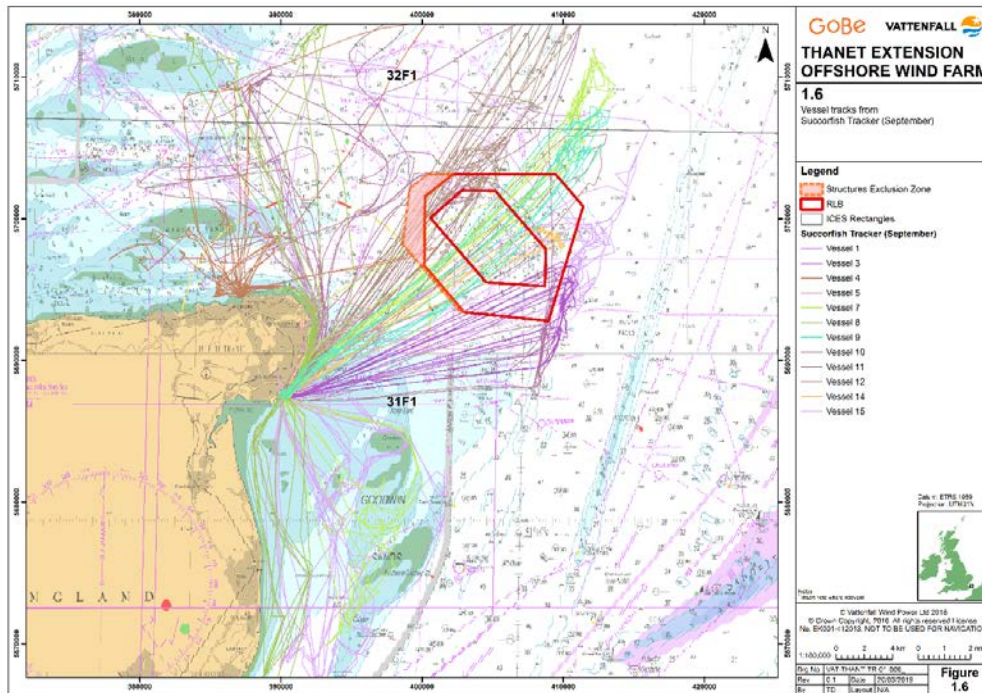


Figure 8: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Succorfish Tracks (TFA) September 2017

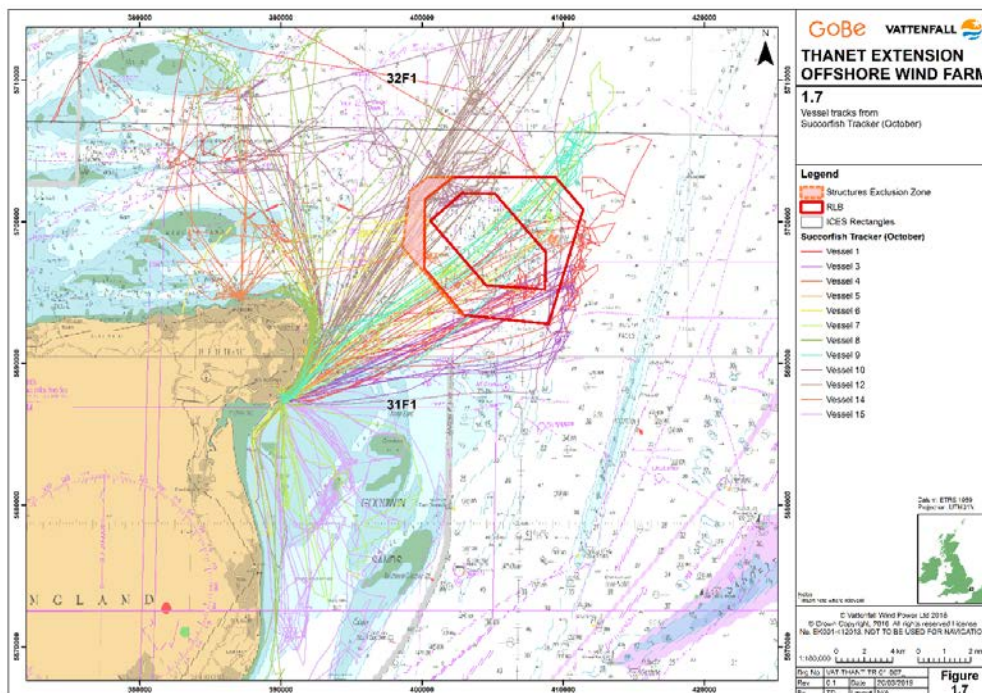


Figure 9: Structures Exclusion Zone overlaid on Succorfish Tracks (TFA) October 2017

1.3 Implications in respect of the outcomes of the Impact Assessment

- 7 The implementation of the SEZ will result in a decrease in disturbance to fishing activity in the north west section of the RLB both during construction and during operation as no above sea structures would be installed in that area. This could in turn reduce potential impacts associated with the TEOW on local vessels highly dependent on grounds located in the exclusion area. Note however that the Environmental Statement, Volume 2, Chapter 9: Commercial Fisheries, Document Reference: 6.2.9 assesses impacts by fishing fleet and fishing method, rather than by individual vessel.
- 8 With this in mind and given the relatively small extent of the exclusion area in the context of the overall available grounds to the various fishing methods used by the local fleet, it is not considered that the proposed exclusion area would result in a material change to the outcomes of the impact assessment presented in the Environmental Statement, Volume 2, Chapter 9: Commercial Fisheries, Document Reference: 6.2.9. The change will mitigate by reducing the overall area of potential loss to fishing fleets and therefore magnitude of effect, and in particular will mitigate in some part for netting vessels that exploit that area.
- 9 It is important to note that the implementation of the SEZ would not result in a change to key worst case parameters relevant to the assessment of impacts on commercial fishing such as maximum number of turbines or minimum spacing between turbines, and would not reduce overall significance, but would be considered to reduce the magnitude of the impact of potential loss of grounds such that the impact would be reduced in scale, but the effect may not decrease in significance with regards the EIA Regs.