

ABWP Phase I Decommissioning

Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture

Volume 2, Chapter 6



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Appendix 6.1	Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Report

Statement of Authority

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Arklow Bank Wind Park (ABWP) Phase I	Arklow Bank Wind Park (ABWP) Phase I comprises: - Offshore infrastructure seaward of High Water Mark (HWM), including: - Seven Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) with a combined capacity of 25.2 MW; - One meteorological (met) mast; - Inter-array cables connecting the WTGs and met mast; and - One offshore export cable connecting WTG T4 with landfall at HWM. - Onshore infrastructure landward of HWM including: - One onshore cable connecting landfall at HWM with the onshore substation; and - One onshore substation compound, where the onshore substation and ancillary infrastructure are located.
ABWP Phase II	ABWP Phase II comprises: - Offshore Infrastructure, including: 53 or 47 WTGs and two Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs) located within the "Array Area"; - Inter-array cables connecting WTGs with the OSPs; and - Two offshore export cables; - Onshore grid connection infrastructure, including a 220 kV substation at Shelton Abbey with an associated connection to the existing National Electricity Transmission Network; - Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) at South Dock, Arklow Harbour; and - EirGrid Upgrade Works.
Additional mitigation	Actions that will be required to reduce the significance of environmental effects of the Proposed Works, which will be dependent on the significance of effects assessed in the EIAR. Also referred to as secondary mitigation in Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2024). IEMA is now the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP).
Arklow Energy	Arklow Energy Limited, the entity seeking planning permission for the Proposed Works, i.e. the applicant.
Automatic Identification System (AIS)	A system by which vessels automatically broadcast their identity and key statistics including location, destination, length, speed and current status. Most commercial vessels and European Union fishing vessels over 15 metres (m) in length are required to carry AIS.
Beam trawl	A towed fishing gear held open by a rigid beam and used mainly to target demersal species such as flatfish.
Commercial Fishing	Any form of fishing activity legally undertaken where the catch is sold for taxable profit.
Cooperation Agreement	A formal agreement – which may also be referred to as a disruption agreement - between the Applicant and a fisher, intended to reduce disturbance or displacement to a fishery caused by the Proposed Works Offshore. Such agreements may be supported by monetary payment only where loss or access results from Proposed Works Offshore activities and that loss of access results in an evidenced financial loss, or a demonstrable risk of financial loss, to active fishing vessels.
COVID-19 Pandemic	The COVID-19 pandemic was a global outbreak of coronavirus, an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, first identified in 2019.
Cumulative effect	The addition of many minor or insignificant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects (EPA, 2022). Cumulative effects within this EIAR comprise those arising from the Proposed Works with other developments, i.e. plans and projects that are 'reasonably foreseeable' (Planning Inspectorate (PINS), 2024).

Term	Meaning
Decommissioning	The final closing down and putting into a state of safety of a development, project or process when it has come to the end of its useful life (EPA, 2022).
Demersal otter trawl	A towed net held open by water pressure on two otter boards and fished along the seabed to target species such as nephrops and mixed demersal fish.
Demersal species	Demersal fish are species that live and feed on or near the seabed. Includes species such as haddock, cod, whiting and flatfish.
Designated sites	Unless otherwise specified, the term 'designated' is used to refer to international sites, European sites and national sites (that are legally designated, or are going through the process of designation (MDB, 2017).
Detailed Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP)	The contractor-developed version of this Outline LMP, to be prepared before Proposed Works Offshore commence and maintained as a live document until completion.
Detailed Offshore Decommissioning Management Plan (DEMP)	The contractor-developed version of this Outline Offshore DEMP, to be prepared before Proposed Works Offshore commence and maintained as a live document until completion.
Detailed Offshore Waste Management Plan (WMP)	The contractor-developed version of this Outline Offshore WMP, to be prepared before Proposed Works Offshore commence and maintained as a live document until completion.
Detailed Vessel Management Plan (VMP)	The contractor-developed version of this Outline VMP, to be prepared before Proposed Works Offshore commence and maintained as a live document until completion.
Dredgers	Vessel equipped with dredges for the purpose of catching molluscs that live on or in the seabed (e.g. clams, oysters, scallops, mussels). Dredges are made of a robust steel frame, often with a toothed bar across the lower edge, and a heavily reinforced or chain link bag.
Effect	The consequence of an impact on a receptor. For example, in the offshore environment, vessel activity (activity) results in increased levels of underwater noise (impact), with the potential to disturb marine mammals (effect).
Embedded mitigation	Mitigation measures included as part of the Proposed Works. Include modifications arising through the iterative design process; and standard industry practice that would occur even without input from the EIA process, e.g. actions undertaken to meet other existing legislative requirements, or actions that are standard practices used to manage commonly occurring environmental effects. Correspond to primary and tertiary mitigation defined in Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (now Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP)) (2024).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	Process of assessment of the effects of a project or development proposal on the environment. In the planning area, it is undertaken by a planning authority or An Coimisiún Pleanála during the consideration of applications for planning permission, taking account of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The projects which require EIA are listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EIA Directive, as amended (Office of the Planning Regulator, n.d.).
Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)	A report or statement of the effects, if any, that Proposed Works, if carried out, would have on the environment. It is prepared by the developer to inform the EIA process (Office of the Planning Regulator, n.d.).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Presentation	Presentation scoping the likely environmental impacts of the Proposed Works to be further considered in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The EIA Scoping Presentation is included in Volume 3, Appendix 1.1 of the EIAR.
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	Area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, subject to the specific legal regime established in this Part (UNCLOS, 1982). The EEZ in Ireland extends up to 200 nautical miles (nm) from the outer edge of the Territorial Sea.
First sales value	The value obtained when fish or shellfish are first sold after landing, typically used as an indicator of economic importance.
Fishery	A group of vessel voyages which target the same species or use the same gear.

Term	Meaning
Fishing effort	A measure of fishing activity, often described in terms of time spent fishing, gear deployed, or spatial intensity of activity.
Fisheries liaison	Communication and engagement between the project and the fishing industry to exchange information and address fisheries issues.
Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO)	An individual (or individuals) identified with the responsibility of liaising with the fishing industry to provide communication associated with the Proposed Works Offshore. Liaison duties are undertaken while at sea or from an onshore location.
Fishing Ground	An area of water or seabed targeted by fishing activity.
Fleet	A physical group of vessels sharing similar characteristics (e.g. nationality).
Gear Type	The method/equipment used for fishing.
Geographic Information System (GIS)	Array of technological tools presented on a spatial basis for the management, analysis and display of geographic data (MDB, 2017).
High Water Mark (HWM)	Level reached by the sea level at high tide.
Impact	A change brought about by the Proposed Works.
Inter-array cables	Subsea power lines that link individual wind turbine generators (WTGs) together in an offshore wind farm, forming an electrical network. In ABWP Phase I, inter-array cables connect WTGs and the met mast to each other and have an overall length of 7.4 km.
International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) statistical rectangles	ICES standardise the division of sea areas to enable statistical analysis of data. Each ICES statistical rectangle is '30 min latitude by 1 degree longitude' in size (approximately 30 nm x 30 nm). A number of rectangles are amalgamated to create ICES statistical areas.
Inter-related effects	Effects resulting from the interaction between effects on different environmental aspects.
Landings	Quantitative description of the amount of fish returned to port for sale, in terms of value or weight.
Maritime Area Consent (MAC)	State-issued right required to occupy a specific part of the maritime area for development. Maritime Area Consents (MACs) are managed by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA).
Maximum design scenario (MDS)	Represents 'realistic worst case' assessment parameters for each impact.
Mitigation measures	Measures to avoid, prevent or reduce impacts (EPA, 2022). Distinction is made between embedded and additional mitigation, see separate definitions for these.
Multi-purpose fishing vessel	Vessels that are equipped or can be readily adapted to work more than one type of fishing gear as the seasons or opportunities change.
Offshore export cable	Subsea power cable that transports the total generated power from an offshore wind farm to the onshore power grid. In ABWP Phase I, the offshore export cable connects the wind turbine generator (WTG) T4 to landfall with an approximate overall length of 15.6 km. At landfall, the offshore export cable transitions to the onshore cable connecting to the onshore substation.
Offshore Site	Part of the site where Proposed Works Offshore are proposed to take place. In this application for planning permission, the Offshore Site comprises the Sub Lease Area, where the ABWP Phase I wind turbine generators (WTGs), met mast and inter-array cables are located, and the offshore export cable 10 m corridor connecting WTG T4 to the landfall at high water mark (HWM) near Arklow Harbour.
Pathway	The route by which an effect is conveyed between a source and a receptor (EPA, 2022).
Pelagic species	Pelagic fish are species which live and feed within the water column. Includes species such as herring, sprat and mackerel.
Pelagic trawl	An otter or pair trawl that is towed in mid water.

Term	Meaning
Pots	A general term to describe traps used to catch crabs, lobster, larger species of prawns (e.g. Nephrops) and some molluscs (e.g. whelks and octopus).
Precautionary principle	The approach aims at ensuring a higher level of environmental protection through preventative decision-taking in the case of risk. The general principles of risk management remain applicable when the precautionary principle is invoked. These are proportionality between the measures taken and the chosen level of protection; non-discrimination in application of the measures; consistency of the measures with similar measures already taken in similar situations or using similar approaches; examination of the benefits and costs of action or lack of action; review of the measures in the light of scientific developments (MDB, 2017).
Proposed Works	The Proposed Works include decommissioning of ABWP Phase I offshore infrastructure (Proposed Works Offshore) and decommissioning of ABWP Phase I onshore infrastructure (Proposed Works Onshore).
Receptor	Any element in the environment which is subject to impacts (EPA, 2022).
Residual effect	The final predicted effect / impact remaining after mitigation (EPA, 2022).
Shellfish	For the purposes of this assessment, shellfish is considered a generic term to define molluscs and crustaceans; fish with a hard outer case or shell.
Significance	The importance of the outcome of the impact (or the consequence of change) for the receiving environment (EPA, 2022).
Static gear	Any form of fishing gear that operates without being towed or moved through the water (i.e. crustaceans pots, long lines, set nets, traps).
Statutory consultee	An organisation or authority stipulated by legislation to be notified by a competent authority or developer if an application is made which might give that organisation a cause for concern. These are specified in the applicable legislation, e.g. Article 28 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) (EPA, 2022).
Sub Lease Area	Area where the ABWP Phase I WTGs, met mast and inter-array cables are located, as defined in the Sub Lease granted by Sure Partners Limited (SPL) to Arklow Energy Limited (Arklow Energy) to construct and operate ABWP Phase I.
The Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Study Area	Area covered in the characterisation of the baseline environment and considered in the assessment of potential environmental effects relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture. The study area used to assess fisheries activity relevant to the Proposed Works Offshore, focused principally on ICES rectangles 34E3 and 34E4.
Transboundary effects	Potential environmental effects that may occur across jurisdictional boundaries (MDB, 2017).
Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)	A satellite-based monitoring system used to track the activity of larger fishing vessels and assess spatial fishing effort.
Wind Turbine Generator (WTG)	Structure that converts the kinetic energy of ocean winds into electrical energy. ABWP Phase I includes seven GE Energy 3.6s WTGs with a rated capacity of 3.6 megawatts (MW) per WTG.
Zone Of Influence (ZoI)	The potential geographic area that could be affected by the implementation of the Proposed Works, having regard to the source-pathway-target risk assessment concept. In the context of this chapter, ZoI is a term applied in cumulative effects assessment

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ABWP	Arklow Bank Wind Park
ACP	An Coimisiún Pleanála
AIS	Automatic Identification System
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
CEA	Cumulative Effect Assessment
COLREGS	The Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea
COWRIE	Collaborative Offshore Wind Research into the Environment
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment
DCEE	Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
DECC	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
DEMP	Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DRM	Dispute Resolution Mechanism
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMODNet	European Marine Observation and Data Network
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FLO	Fisheries Liaison Officer
FLOWW	Fisheries Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables group
FMMS	Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy
GIS	Geographic Information System
HWM	High Water Mark
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Seas
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
JUB	Jack Up Barge
MAC	Maritime Area Consents
MARA	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority
MDS	Maximum Design Scenario
MMMP	Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MP	Monopile
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
OMF	Operations and Maintenance Facility

Acronym	Meaning
OPRED	Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
OREDP II	Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II
OREI	Offshore Renewable Energy Installations
RAM	Restricted in their Ability to Manoeuvre
SAR	Search and Rescue
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SFPA	Sea Fisheries Protection Agency
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TP	Transition Piece
UK	United Kingdom
UKFEN	UK Fisheries Economic Network
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VMP	Vessel Management Plan
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WMP	Waste Management Plan
WTG	Wind Turbine Generators
ZoI	Zone of Influence

Units

Unit	Meaning
km	Kilometre
nm	Nautical mile
€	euro
t	tonne

6 COMMERCIAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1.1 Arklow Energy Limited (Arklow Energy) is seeking planning permission to decommission Arklow Bank Wind Park (ABWP) Phase I (referred to hereafter as 'the Proposed Works Offshore'). The Proposed Works Offshore include decommissioning of ABWP Phase I offshore infrastructure (Proposed Works Offshore) and decommissioning of ABWP Phase I onshore infrastructure (Proposed Works Onshore).
- 6.1.1.2 This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) work undertaken to date for the Proposed Works Offshore as described in **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Proposed Works Description**.
- 6.1.1.3 The Proposed Works Offshore will be undertaken within the Offshore Site (see **Volume 2, Chapter 3**), which includes:
- The Sub Lease Area, located on the long narrow Arklow Bank sand bank, situated approximately 10 km off the coast of Arklow, south-east Ireland, where seven wind turbine generators (WTGs) and foundations, associated scour protection, 7.4 km of inter-array cables and one met mast are located; and
 - A 10 m wide cable corridor along the 15.6 km offshore export cable route connecting WTG T4 to the landfall point at High Water Mark (HWM).
- 6.1.1.4 This chapter considers the potential impacts and effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture that could result from the Proposed Works Offshore.
- 6.1.1.5 This chapter describes the methodology, datasets that have informed the EIA, baseline conditions, including future baseline, mitigation measures and the residual significant effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture that could result from the Proposed Works Offshore.
- 6.1.1.6 The assessment is informed by the following chapters:
- **Volume 2, Chapter 1: Introduction;**
 - **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Proposed Works Description;**
 - **Volume 2, Chapter 5: Marine Biodiversity** (where potential impacts on the ecology of species of commercial importance are assessed); and
 - **Volume 2, Chapter 7: Shipping and Navigation** (where impacts on navigational safety, including those relevant to fishing activity, are assessed).
- 6.1.1.7 The chapter also draws on information contained within the following appendix:
- **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1: Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Report.**
- 6.1.1.8 The chapter is also supported by:
- **Volume 3, Appendix 3.6: Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS).**

6.2 Legislative and Policy Context

6.2.1 Overview

- 6.2.1.1 The full relevant legislation and policy context for the Proposed Works Offshore has been detailed in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**. This section sets out the legislation and planning policy that is relevant to the commercial fisheries and aquaculture assessment.

6.2.2 Legislation

- 6.2.2.1 International and national legislation relevant to the commercial fisheries and aquaculture assessment is that described in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**. No other legislation specific to commercial fisheries and aquaculture is considered relevant to inform the commercial fisheries and aquaculture assessment.

6.2.3 Policy Context

National Policy Context

National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

- 6.2.3.1 The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHPLG), 2021) provides the overarching policy framework for marine activities in Ireland and is of particular relevance to commercial fisheries and aquaculture.
- 6.2.3.2 Fisheries Policy 1 requires that, where significant adverse impacts on access for existing fishing activities may arise, proposals must demonstrate that such impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated, in order of preference. While Proposed Works Offshore are temporary in nature, they may result in short-term restrictions within the Sub Lease Area and offshore export cable route, and therefore this policy is directly applicable.
- 6.2.3.3 Fisheries Policy 2 states that where significant impacts on fisheries are identified, a FMMS should be prepared. For Proposed Works Offshore, mitigation measures are expected to be proportionate to the scale and duration of the works, with a focus on effective fisheries liaison and minimisation of disruption.
- 6.2.3.4 Fisheries Policy 4 supports proposals that enable and/or maintain access to fishing grounds and supporting the long-term viability of fishing activities. In the context of the Proposed Works Offshore, decommissioning will involve the removal of infrastructure and is expected to result in temporary and reversible effects, with no long-term loss of access to fishing grounds.
- 6.2.3.5 Co-existence Policy 1 requires that proposals consider how marine space can be shared with existing users, including commercial fisheries. Where temporary displacement or disruption cannot be avoided, proposals must demonstrate how impacts are minimised or mitigated. This is particularly relevant to temporary displacement effects that may arise during Proposed Works Offshore.
- 6.2.3.6 The NMPF also includes specific policies relating to aquaculture. Aquaculture Policy 2 requires that non-aquaculture developments demonstrate compatibility with aquaculture production areas and that impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated where necessary. The Proposed Works Offshore are not located within a licensed aquaculture site. However, a mussel aquaculture site is located within the wider Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Study Area (see **Section 6.4.3**), approximately 4.5 km from the offshore export cable route. Potential indirect effects, such as temporary increases in suspended sediment concentrations or vessel activity, are therefore considered within this assessment in line with policy requirements.
- 6.2.3.7 **Table 6.1** provides details of the NMPF policies relevant to Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture and how and where they are covered in the EIAR, see also **Planning Report** submitted in support of the application for planning permission for Proposed Works.

Table 6.1: Summary of the NMPF polices relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Summary of relevant NMPF provisions	How and where considered in the EIAR
Section 16 - Fisheries	
Fisheries Policy 1: Proposals that may have a significant adverse impact on access for existing fishing activities must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference, avoid, minimise or mitigate such impacts.	Considered in Section 6.6 (Assessment of Impacts), including assessment of loss of or restricted access to fishing grounds and displacement of fishing activity, with embedded mitigation outlined in Section 6.4.6 (Embedded Mitigation).
Fisheries Policy 2: Where significant impacts on fishing activity are identified, a Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) should be prepared.	A project-specific FMMS has been prepared (Volume 3, Appendix 3.6). Its implementation is described in Section 6.4.6 (Embedded Mitigation) and applied within impact assessments in Section 6.6
Fisheries Policy 4: Proposals should enable / maintain access to fishing grounds and supporting long-term viability of fishing activities.	Considered in Section 6.5 (Baseline Characterisation) and Section 6.6 (Assessment of Impacts), which demonstrate that effects are temporary and reversible, with no long-term loss of access to fishing grounds and protection of ongoing fishing activity.
Section 9 - Aquaculture	
Aquaculture Policy 2: Proposals that may impact aquaculture production areas should demonstrate that impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated.	Considered in Section 6.4.3 (Assessment Scope) and Section 6.5 (Baseline Characterisation), with indirect impact pathways assessed under effects on commercially exploited species in Section 6.6 .
Section 6 – Co-existence	
Co-existence Policy 1: Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered the use of space alongside existing activities, including fisheries, to support co-existence.	Considered in Section 6.6 (Assessment of Impacts) and through fisheries liaison and mitigation measures set out in Section 6.4 (Embedded Mitigation) and the FMMS (Volume 3, Appendix 3.6).

Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II (ORED II)

6.2.3.8 The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II (ORED II) and its associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), 2022; updated 2024) provide strategic context for the development of offshore renewable energy in Ireland. The SEA identifies baseline environmental conditions and potential interactions between offshore renewable energy developments and marine receptors, including commercial fisheries. While ORED II does not set project-level policy requirements, it provides relevant contextual information that has informed the understanding of the receiving environment for the Proposed Works Offshore.

Local Policy Context

6.2.3.9 The Proposed Works Offshore lie within the jurisdiction of Wicklow County Council. There is no local policy of specific relevance to commercial fisheries and aquaculture and accordingly, local policy is not considered further.

6.3 Consultation and Engagement

6.3.1.1 The EIA Scoping Presentation was issued to prescribed bodies in March 2026 (see **Volume 2, Appendix 1.1: EIA Scoping Presentation**).

6.3.1.2 **Table 6.2** sets out the key comments raised specific to this chapter in response to the EIA Scoping Presentation and/or at meetings with relevant stakeholders held during the preparation of this EIAR, with details of how these comments have been addressed, see **Stakeholder**

Consultation and Engagement Report prepared in support of the application for planning permission.

- 6.3.1.3 Targeted engagement with commercial fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders was undertaken between March and June 2026 through the appointed Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO). **Table 6.2** summarises the key issues raised relevant to this chapter and identifies where these have been considered within the EIAR.

Table 6.2: Summary of EIA scoping presentation feedback and any additional feedback relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Comment	How and where considered in the EIAR
Fisheries and aquaculture vessel owners, March – June 2026	
A briefing letter was issued to 35 registered fisheries and aquaculture vessel owners identified as potentially active within or in the vicinity of the Offshore Site. The FLO subsequently held nine informal meetings and one telephone discussion with stakeholders. A summary of the draft FMMS was circulated to stakeholders and feedback invited on the proposed liaison arrangements, works phasing and redress process.	Engagement with fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders has informed the commercial fisheries and aquaculture assessment and the development of the FMMS.
ACP, Inspector's Report (ACP 321635-25) - Matters arising, 7 May 2026	
Requested assessment of the potential impacts on commercial fisheries, alongside shipping and navigation.	Potential impacts on commercial fisheries and aquaculture have been assessed in this chapter. Potential impacts on shipping and navigation are assessed separately in Volume 2, Chapter 7: Shipping and Navigation .

6.4 Impact Assessment Methodology

6.4.1 Overview

- 6.4.1.1 **Volume 2, Chapter 1** sets out the overarching approach that has been used in this EIAR. This section describes the assessment scope, baseline characterisation method and criteria used to determine the sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of effects and sets out the significance criteria that have been used for the commercial fisheries and aquaculture assessment.

6.4.2 Relevant Guidance

- 6.4.2.1 This chapter has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance documents:
- Environmental Protection Agency (2022). Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR);
 - Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (2018). Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment;
 - Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (2018). Guidance on Marine Baseline Ecological Assessments and Monitoring Activities for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects;
 - Environmental Working Group of the Offshore Renewable Energy Steering Group and Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (2017). Guidance on Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) Preparation for Offshore Renewable Energy Projects;
 - European Commission (2017). Environmental Impact Assessment of projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report;
 - Seafood / Offshore Renewable Energy Working Group (various, 2023 to 2025). Seafood–ORE Engagement Guidance and Annual Reports;
 - Seafood/ORE Working Group. Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) (DECC / Seafood-ORE Working Group);

- Seafood/ORE Working Group. Use of Fishing Vessels for Commercial Work on ORE Projects – A Guide to Registration (DECC / Seafood-ORE Working Group);
- Seafood/ORE Working Group Annual Report 2024 (DECC / Seafood-ORE Working Group);
- Seafood/ORE Working Group Annual Report 2025 (DECC / Seafood-ORE Working Group);
- Guidance Note for Developers applying for a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) (MARA, latest guidance note and toolkit materials, 2025);
- The Maritime Navigation Safety & Emergency Response Guidance Documents for Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREI) (Department of Transport / Irish Coast Guard published 4 June 2025 and updated 24 September 2025);
- Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group (FLOWW) (2025). Best Practice Guidance for Offshore Renewables Developments;
- Blyth-Skyrme, R.E. (2010) (COWRIE). Options and Opportunities for Marine Fisheries Mitigation Associated with Windfarms;
- Seafish and UK Fisheries Economic Network (UKFEN) (2012). Best practice guidance for fisheries economic impact assessment;
- Department of Transport / Irish Coast Guard (2025). Maritime Navigation Safety & Emergency Response Guidance Documents for OREI (published 4 June 2025; updated 24 September 2025); and
- Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) (2025). Guidance Note for Applicants applying for a MAC.

6.4.3 Assessment Scope

Technical Scope

- 6.4.3.1 The approach to assessment was presented in the EIA Scoping presentation and has been refined during the preparation of this EIAR (see **Volume 2, Chapter 1**).
- 6.4.3.2 Effects that are not considered likely to be of moderate/major significance been scoped out of the assessment and these impacts will not be considered further.
- 6.4.3.3 **Table 6.3** summarises the impacts considered as part of the assessment, while a summary of the effects scoped out of the assessment is presented in **Table 6.4**.
- 6.4.3.4 Whilst no potential impacts are scoped out of the EIAR with regards to commercial fisheries, the NMPF Aquaculture Policy 2 requires that non-aquaculture proposals demonstrate compatibility with aquaculture production areas, defined as licensed aquaculture sites. The nearest identified mussel aquaculture site is located approximately 4.5 km from the offshore export cable route. The Proposed Works Offshore do not overlap with this, or any other, licensed aquaculture site.
- 6.4.3.5 Given the separation distance between the Proposed Works Offshore and the nearest aquaculture site, and the localised and temporary nature of Proposed Works Offshore, no direct interaction pathways exist between the Proposed Works Offshore and aquaculture infrastructure or operations (e.g. access, displacement or gear interaction).
- 6.4.3.6 However, a potential indirect pathway exists via temporary changes in water quality (e.g. suspended sediment concentrations) arising from seabed disturbance. This pathway is considered further under 'effects on commercially exploited species'.

Table 6.3: Impacts scoped into the assessment commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Impact	Potential effects scoped into the assessment
Loss of fishing grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds	Proposed Works Offshore activities, including the presence of vessels and temporary safety or exclusion zones, may result in temporary loss of or restricted access to fishing grounds, leading to short-term disruption to fishing operations.
Displacement of fishing activity into other areas	Temporary restriction of access to fishing grounds during Proposed Works Offshore may result in redistribution of fishing effort to adjacent areas, leading to increased fishing pressure and potential gear conflict with other fishing vessels.
Interference with fishing activity	The presence of vessels and offshore activities associated with Proposed Works Offshore may interfere with normal fishing operations, including temporary disruption, delays or avoidance behaviour.
Increased fishing gear snagging risk	The presence of partially removed or remaining infrastructure during decommissioning may increase the risk of interaction with fishing gear, potentially resulting in gear damage or loss.
Effects on commercially exploited species	Proposed Works Offshore, including seabed disturbance and vessel operations, may result in temporary disturbance to commercially exploited fish and shellfish species, with potential implications for fishing activity. Given the separation distance and localised nature of Proposed Works Offshore, significant effects on aquaculture production are not anticipated. However, a potential indirect pathway via temporary changes in water quality (e.g. suspended sediments) is considered under 'effects on commercially exploited species'. Potential effects on fish and shellfish ecology are assessed in Volume 2, Chapter 5 , with the implications of such effects for commercial fishing activity assessed within this chapter.

Table 6.4: Impacts scoped out of the assessment commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Impact	Potential effects scoped into the assessment
Loss of or restricted access to aquaculture sites	The Proposed Works Offshore do not overlap with any licensed aquaculture sites. The nearest site is located approximately 4.5 km from the closest point of the offshore export cable route; therefore, no loss of access or exclusion effects are anticipated.
Interference with aquaculture operations	Proposed Works Offshore will not occur within or in close proximity to aquaculture sites. No direct interaction between decommissioning vessels and aquaculture operations is anticipated. Potential indirect effects associated with temporary changes in water quality are considered under 'effects on commercially exploited species'.
Displacement of aquaculture activity	Aquaculture operations are fixed to licensed sites and cannot be displaced. No impact pathway exists.
Gear interaction or damage	Aquaculture infrastructure is not located within or near the Proposed Works Offshore. Therefore, there is no potential for interaction between Proposed Works Offshore activities and aquaculture gear.

Spatial Scope

- 6.4.3.7 For the purpose of recording fisheries landings, ICES Division 7a is divided into statistical rectangles which are consistent across all Member States operating in the Irish Sea. The Offshore Site is located within the south-western portion of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Division 7a (Irish Sea) statistical area; within Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters. The Offshore Site located inside the 12 nautical mile (nm) territorial seas limit.

- 6.4.3.8 The Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Study Area (referred to hereafter as 'Study Area') is shown on **Figure 6.1, which** has been defined with reference to the ICES rectangles within which the Offshore Site is located, these are:
- ICES Rectangle 34E3: the nearshore rectangle within which the majority of the offshore export cable route is located; and
 - ICES Rectangle 34E4: the rectangle within which the Sub Lease Area and a small section of the offshore export cable route located.
- 6.4.3.9 The Study Area defined above has been used to characterise commercial fishing activity and aquaculture installations relevant to the Proposed Works Offshore. Commercial fisheries data, including landings statistics, are commonly reported at the scale of ICES rectangles across EU Member States, and therefore this approach provides a consistent and appropriate basis for defining the Study Area. It is noted that the Offshore Site occupies only a portion of these ICES rectangles; however, where relevant, data have been considered at a broader scale to provide appropriate spatial context.

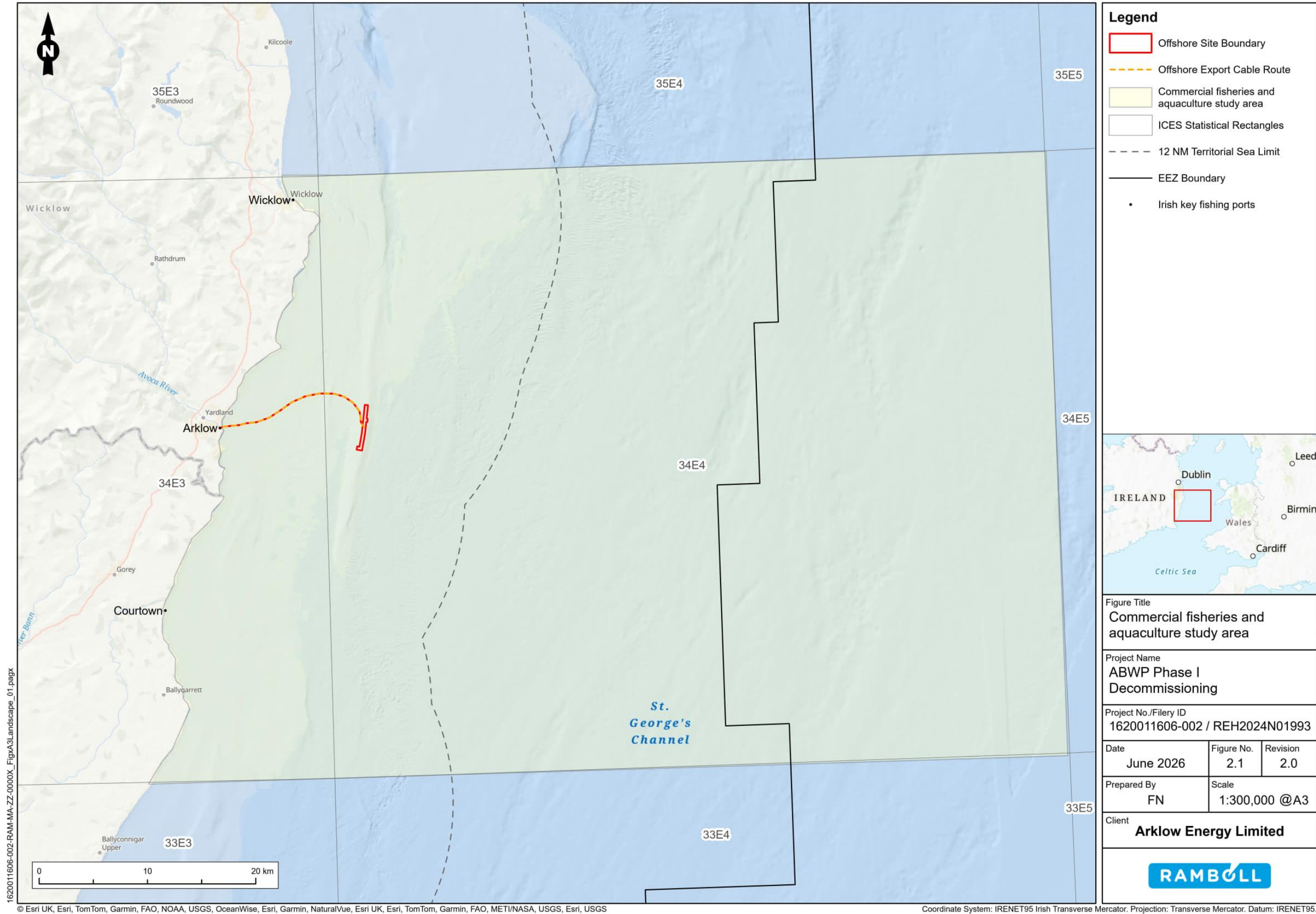


Figure 6.1: Proposed Works Offshore Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Study Area

Temporal Scope

6.4.3.10 The assessment has considered impacts arising during Proposed Works Offshore which would be temporary and short-term (up to weeks/months) in nature, as well as any long-term residual impacts that may continue / arise following the completion of Proposed Works Offshore.

6.4.4 Baseline Characterisation Method

Desk Study

6.4.4.1 Information on commercial fisheries and aquaculture within the Study Area was collected through a detailed desktop review of existing studies and datasets. These data sources and reports are summarised in **Table 6.5** and presented in full in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**. Key data sources include the Irish Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA), Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM; Ireland's Seafood Development Agency), the Irish Marine Institute and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA).

6.4.4.2 Information on fishing activity across the area of the Proposed Works Offshore has also been provided by the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) appointed by Arklow Energy.

Table 6.5: Summary of key data resources

Description	Spatial Extent	Temporal Coverage	Source / Author
Landings statistics			
Landing statistics data for Irish-registered vessels, with datasets for: year (2020-2024), weight of landing (tonnes) and first sales value (€) and either: - Port of landing; or - Species	Ireland	2020-2024	SFPA
Landings statistics data for Irish-registered vessels, with data query attributes for: species, weight of landing (kg) and first sales value (€) at the following geographic scales: - All ICES divisions - Irish Sea (7a) indicating port of landing - Irish Sea (7a) indicating ICES rectangle of catches	Ireland	2015 to 2021	SFPA
Spatial data			
Fishing vessel route density, based on vessel Automatic Identification System (AIS) AIS positional data. AIS is required to be fitted on fishing vessels ≥15 m length.	All Europe	2019 to 2022	EMSA
Fishing vessel effort data indicating high and low fishing effort. The data are available for all EU vessels of 12m and larger, operating inside the Irish EEZ; outside this zone only Irish Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data are routinely available within the data sets.	Ireland	2014 to 2018	Marine Institute
Polygon data indicating fishing grounds for Irish vessels operating inshore.	Ireland	Undefined	Marine Institute

Baseline Data Limitations and Assumptions

6.4.4.3 A range of different data limitations and uncertainty exist for all the commercial fisheries datasets assessed within this Chapter and within **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**. The level of uncertainty and confidence of each dataset is defined in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**.

- 6.4.4.4 The principal limitation is that reliable, verifiable landings statistics are not formally reported for the under 10 m vessel fleets, as formal logbooks are not required to be maintained and submitted. This leads to incomplete landing statistics datasets, where data for under 10 m vessels is either included (i.e. through sales notes), estimated or completely omitted. This limitation of data for the under 10 m fleet is also noted for the AIS and VMS datasets, as discussed further below.
- 6.4.4.5 Additional limitations are associated with the spatial resolution of landings data. ICES rectangles represent relatively large geographic areas and may not accurately reflect fishing activity within the footprint of the Proposed Works Offshore. Furthermore, landings data by ICES rectangle are not available post-2020. However, landings data remain available by port of landing and species, and datasets have been sourced up to 2024 to ensure the most recent information is included. The baseline has also been informed by publicly available fisheries datasets, including spatial fisheries mapping, and information provided by the FLO, gathered via direct engagement with fishers. Given that the spatial extent of key fisheries (e.g. whelk) has been informed through these sources, the absence of recent ICES rectangle landings data does not materially constrain the baseline characterisation.
- 6.4.4.6 A further limitation relates to the availability of recent landings data for EU (non-Irish) fleets. More recent datasets are not available at the ICES rectangle scale (e.g. 34E4 and 34E3), and data at broader ICES division scale (i.e. Irish Sea) are of limited value in identifying activity specific to the Proposed Works Offshore. This is because the Proposed Works Offshore occupy a very small proportion (less than 0.1%) of the Irish Sea, and therefore such data do not allow meaningful interpretation of localised fishing activity.
- 6.4.4.7 Limitations of VMS data are primarily focused on the coverage being limited to vessels 12 m and over. It is important to be aware that where mapped VMS data may appear to show inshore areas as having lower (or no) fishing activity compared with offshore areas, this is not necessarily the case because VMS data do not include vessels typically operating in inshore area (i.e. which typically comprises of vessels <12 m in length). This is particularly important when assessing the activity across the Offshore Export Cable Route infrastructure boundary for the potting fleet.
- 6.4.4.8 Despite the data limitations and uncertainties, a good range of fisheries data has been available from a range of sources including:
- Fisheries dependant data from SFPA, EU DCF, ICES and MMO;
 - Scientific stock assessments from Marine Institute and BIM and ICES;
 - Officially amalgamated datasets covering logbook declarations, sales notes for vessels under 10 m, gatherer docketts and co-op data as assessed by Marine Institute and BIM.
- 6.4.4.9 Overall, the range of available data sources, supported by industry consultation and expert judgement, provides a robust basis to characterise the baseline environment and to assess potential effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture associated with the Proposed Works Offshore.

6.4.5 Assessment Criteria

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.4.5.1 When defining sensitivity, reference has been made to the criteria levels set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**. To determine sensitivity of the receptor specific to commercial fisheries and aquaculture, the susceptibility of the receptor to change, its ability to recover and adapt, and its inherent value have also been considered, as presented in **Table 6.6**.

Table 6.6: Definition of terms relating to the sensitivity of the receptor specific to commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Sensitivity	Definition	Example Indicators
Very high	Receptor is very highly vulnerable to impacts arising from the Proposed Works Offshore, with very limited ability to adapt to even short-term disruption. Recoverability is very low or not possible. Or: No alternative fishing grounds are available.	- Area represents the only or critical fishing ground. - Gear type and fishing method are highly location-specific with no feasible alternatives. - Full economic dependency on the affected activity. - Even short-term disruption would result in significant loss of income or viability.
High	Receptor is highly vulnerable to impacts arising from the Proposed Works Offshore, with limited ability to adapt to disruption. Recoverability is limited or may require extended time. Or: Limited alternative fishing grounds are available or fleet has restricted operational range.	- Area represents a core fishing ground. - Gear type or vessel capability limits relocation. - High economic dependency on affected grounds. - Disruption would result in noticeable economic loss and limited recovery options.
Medium	Receptor has moderate vulnerability to impacts arising from the Proposed Works Offshore and a moderate ability to adapt to disruption. Recoverability is achievable over time. Or: Alternative fishing grounds are available but with some constraints.	- Grounds contribute materially to income (e.g. seasonal importance). - Relocation possible but with some loss of efficiency or increased competition. - Moderate operational constraints (gear, vessel size).
Low	Receptor has low vulnerability to impacts arising from the Proposed Works Offshore and is able to adapt to short-term disruption. Recoverability is high. Or: Good availability of alternative fishing grounds and fleet is operationally flexible.	- Area represents a small proportion of activity. - Similar grounds available within normal range. - Flexible gear use or target species.
Negligible	Receptor is not sensitive to impacts arising from the Proposed Works Offshore and can readily adapt without measurable consequence. Or: Extensive alternative fishing grounds are available and activity is not dependent on the affected area.	- No reliance on affected grounds. - Activity distributed across multiple areas. - Disruption would not materially affect operations.

6.4.5.2 For the purposes of this assessment, vulnerability relates to the susceptibility of a receptor to experience a change arising from the Proposed Works Offshore, while recoverability reflects the ability of the receptor to return to pre-impact conditions or levels of activity following exposure to an effect.

Magnitude of Impact

6.4.5.3 When defining magnitude of impact, reference has been made to the criteria levels set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**. In assigning magnitude, the spatial extent, duration, frequency, reversibility and severity of impacts arising from the Proposed Works Offshore have been considered.

6.4.5.4 For commercial fisheries and aquaculture receptors, these factors have been interpreted with reference to fisheries-specific considerations, including the extent of overlap with fishing

grounds, duration of disruption to fishing activity, availability of alternative grounds, and potential effects on commercially exploited species, as presented in **Table 6.7**.

Table 6.7: Definition of terms relating to the magnitude of an impact in relation to commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Magnitude of impact	Definition	Example Indicators
High (Adverse)	Impact results in substantial disruption to fishing activity and/or a notable reduction in availability of commercially exploited species, occurring over a prolonged duration and/or large spatial extent relative to the Study Area. Fishing activity may be prevented within the affected area during the works.	- Disruption occurs over an extended period such as months or across a fishing season. - Temporary exclusion from core fishing grounds may occur. - Disruption may coincide with peak fishing periods. - Access to alternative grounds may be limited. - A reduction in catch rates or resource availability that would be evident from fisheries data, landings information or stakeholder feedback may occur.
Medium (Adverse)	Impact results in moderate disruption to fishing activity and/or a measurable change in availability of commercially exploited species, occurring over a moderate duration and/or spatial extent. Fishing activity may continue but with reduced efficiency.	- Disruption occurs over a defined but limited period such as weeks to months. - Partial restriction of fishing grounds may occur. - Temporary displacement may lead to increased fishing pressure or gear conflict. - Localised or temporary changes in catch rates may occur.
Low (Adverse)	Impact results in minor disruption to fishing activity and/or slight changes in availability of commercially exploited species, occurring over a short duration and/or limited spatial extent.	- Disruption is short-term, such as days to weeks. - Works are small-scale or localised. - Fishing activity is largely unaffected. - Only minimal or short-term changes in catch rates may occur.
Negligible (Adverse)	Impact results in very slight or imperceptible changes to fishing activity and no meaningful change in availability of commercially exploited species. Duration and spatial extent are minimal.	- Impacts are of very short duration such as days. - There is minimal spatial overlap with fishing grounds. - No measurable change in fishing activity or catch occurs.
No change	No impact is predicted. No interaction pathway exists between the Proposed Works Offshore and the receptor.	There is no overlap with fishing activity and no mechanism for affecting the fishery or resource.

6.4.5.5 Proposed Works Offshore will result in the removal of offshore infrastructure, which may provide some long-term benefit to commercial fisheries through the restoration of access to fishing grounds, reduction in gear interaction risk and recovery of seabed habitats following completion of the works. Any such benefits are expected to occur following completion of the works and are anticipated to be localised and of low magnitude. As no significant beneficial effects are predicted, beneficial magnitude categories are not considered further within this assessment.

6.4.5.6 EIA Regulations and guidance require that the duration of impacts is defined to support the assessment of significance. In the context of commercial fisheries and aquaculture, duration is considered in relation to the period over which fishing activity may be disrupted, rather than ecological recovery times. Given the temporary nature of the Proposed Works Offshore, duration categories have been defined to reflect short-term and seasonal patterns of fishing activity.

6.4.5.7 For the purposes of this assessment, the following timeframes are considered appropriate:

- Short-term: Impacts lasting from days to weeks, typically associated with discrete decommissioning activities. These effects are temporary and fishing activity is expected to resume shortly after works are completed;
- Medium-term: Impacts lasting weeks to several months, for example where activities extend over a defined campaign period or coincide with part of a fishing season. Fishing activity may be disrupted during this period but is expected to recover within the same or subsequent season; and
- Long-term: Impacts lasting beyond the completion of decommissioning works, for example where residual infrastructure remains or where changes to fishing patterns persist.

Significance of Effect

6.4.5.8 The significance of the effect upon commercial fisheries and aquaculture is determined by correlating the magnitude of the impact and the sensitivity of the receptor. The method employed for this assessment is presented in **Table 6.8**.

Table 6.8: Matrix used for the assessment of the significance of the effect in relation to commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Sensitivity of receptor	Magnitude of impact				
	No change	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	Neutral	Negligible	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor
Low	Neutral	Negligible or minor	Negligible or minor	Minor	Minor or moderate
Medium	Neutral	Negligible or minor	Minor	Moderate	Moderate or major
High	Neutral	Minor	Minor or moderate	Moderate or major	Major
Very high	Neutral	Minor	Moderate or major	Major	Major

6.4.5.9 Following the classification of an effect using this methodology, a clear statement will then be made as to whether that effect is significant or not significant. Major and moderate effects are considered to be significant, whilst minor and negligible effects are considered to be not significant. However, professional judgement will also be applied in reaching conclusions as to the significance of effects. Typical definitions for the classification of effects are shown in **Table 6.9**.

Table 6.9: Significance definitions relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Significance classification	Definition	Significant effect
Major	A large and detrimental change to a valuable/sensitive receptor, likely exceeding an accepted threshold. These effects may represent key factors in the decision-making process. Potentially associated with sites and features of national importance or likely to be important considerations at a regional scale. Major effects may relate to features that are unique and irreplaceable.	Significant
Moderate	A medium scale change that, although not beyond an accepted threshold, is still considered to be generally unacceptable, unless offset by significant positive benefits of the project. If adverse, these effects are likely to be important at a regional or local scale and on their own could influence decision making. A positive moderate effect is a medium scale change that improves baseline conditions sufficiently to contribute to guideline targets.	Significant

Significance classification	Definition	Significant effect
Minor	A minor adverse change that remains within legal and planning policy limits. These effects might be raised as local issues and could be relevant to the detailed design of a project, but they are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process.	Not significant
Negligible	A very small change that is so inconsequential it can be considered acceptable to disregard. These effects fall below perceptible limits, lie within normal variations, or fall within the margin of forecasting error. They are unlikely to influence decision-making.	Not significant
Neutral	No noticeable change or effects within normal bounds of variation.	Not significant

6.4.6 Key Parameters for Assessment

Maximum Design Scenario

- 6.4.6.1 The maximum design scenario (MDS) for each impact identified in **Section 6.4.3** has been selected as that having the potential to result in the greatest effect on an identified receptor or receptor group. The MDS presented in **Table 6.10** has been selected from the parameters provided in **Volume 2, Chapter 3** and methodology outlined in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**.

Table 6.10: MDS relevant for the assessment of potential impacts on commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Impact	MDS	Explanation
Loss of fishing grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds	The Proposed Works Offshore may be undertaken within a single continuous campaign or staged across multiple campaigns. For the purposes of this MDS, it is assumed that Proposed Works Offshore may be undertaken over a temporary period, with activities being intermittent and spatially progressive. Two main offshore decommissioning campaigns may be undertaken: 1. Removal of seven Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) and one meteorological (met) mast, undertaken across a period of approximately 10 weeks; and 2. Removal of seven Transition Pieces (TPs) / Monopile (MP) foundations, scour protection removal and inter-array and offshore export cable removal, and post-decommissioning surveys. Undertaken across a period of approximately 15 weeks. Works undertaken between May and October, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. A buoyed work area will be established around the Sub Lease Area, with access discouraged for vessels not engaged in the Proposed Works Offshore. The work area has an extent of approximately 1,605 m (width) by 4,817 m (length). Where gaps between campaigns may exceed one year, the work area will be removed, allowing access to resume in the interim. Removal of inter-array cable of approximately 7.4 km length. Removal of offshore export cable of approximately 15.6 km length. Removal of scour protection at up to eight foundation locations. Localised dredging (if required based on bathymetric conditions to allow decommissioning vessel access) with a maximum spatial extent of 287,831 m² and volume of 191,827 m³.	During Proposed Works Offshore, fishing activity may be temporarily displaced from the Sub Lease Area due to the presence of a marked work area (within which access would be discouraged for safety reasons), and from both the Sub Lease Area and Offshore Export Cable Route due to the presence of vessels and offshore works. The assessment considers a scenario where activities are staged across multiple years. This reflects a realistic worst-case for commercial fisheries receptors, where repeated disturbance and disruption to fishing activity over time may result in greater overall effects.
Displacement of fishing activity into other areas	As detailed above for 'Loss of fishing grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds'.	Temporary displacement may occur where fishing vessels avoid areas subject to active works or the presence of the work area. Displacement is expected to vary spatially and temporally as works progress.

Impact	MDS	Explanation
Interference with fishing activity	Proposed Works Offshore may be undertaken within a single continuous campaign or staged across multiple campaigns. For assessment purposes, the following maximum vessel activity is defined on a per-campaign basis: • Pre-decommissioning surveys: up to 20 vessel trips • Pre-dredging surveys: up to 48 vessel trips • Dredging (if required): up to 64 vessel trips • WTG and met mast removal: up to 12 vessel trips • TP/MP removal: up to 10 vessel trips • Scour protection removal: up to 80 vessel trips • Inter-array cable removal: up to 16 vessel trips • Offshore export cable removal: up to 19 vessel trips • Post-decommissioning surveys: up to 20 vessel trips Multiple vessel types may operate concurrently, including a Jack-Up Barge (JUB), tugboats, barges, multicat vessels and survey vessels.	Fishing activity may be temporarily disrupted by the presence and movement of decommissioning vessels and associated offshore operations. Interference is greatest where vessel density and activity levels are highest.
Increased fishing gear snagging risk	As detailed above for 'Loss of fishing grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds'.	Temporary snagging risk may arise during Proposed Works Offshore where infrastructure is exposed or partially removed. Risk is expected to reduce following completion of Proposed Works Offshore.
Effects on commercially exploited species	As detailed in Volume 2, Chapter 5 .	Proposed Works Offshore may result in temporary disturbance to seabed habitats and associated fish and shellfish species. The implications of these effects are assessed in Volume 2, Chapter 5 and considered here in terms of commercial fisheries.

Embedded Mitigation

- 6.4.6.2 As set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 1** several embedded mitigation measures have been adopted as part of the Proposed Works Offshore to reduce the potential for impacts on commercial fisheries and aquaculture.
- 6.4.6.3 Embedded mitigation includes the following measures as identified in the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (formerly IEMA) Impact Assessment Guidelines (IEMA, 2024):
- “measures included as part of the project design” (also referred to as primary mitigation in IEMA, 2015); and
 - “actions that would occur with or without input from the EIA feeding into the design process. These include actions that will be undertaken to meet other existing legislative requirements, or actions that are considered to be standard practices used to manage commonly occurring environmental effects” (also referred to as tertiary mitigation in IEMA, 2015).
- 6.4.6.4 Embedded mitigation measures have been taken into account as part of the initial assessment presented in **Section 6.4.7** (i.e., the initial determination of impact magnitude and significance of effects assumes implementation of these measures). This ensures that the measures that Arklow Energy is committed to are considered in the assessment of effects. This approach is in line with EPA guidance, which states that ‘in an EIAR, it may be useful to describe avoidance measures that have been integrated into the project proposal’ (EPA, 2022).
- 6.4.6.5 Where an assessment identifies likely significant adverse effects, additional mitigation measures may be applied. These are “actions that will require further activity to achieve the anticipated outcome (EPA, 2022)”, also referred to as secondary mitigation measures in IEMA (2024).
- 6.4.6.6 The embedded mitigation measures relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture are outlined in
- 6.4.6.7 **Table 6.11** and will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of the planning permission issued under Section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Table 6.11: Embedded mitigation relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture implemented as part of the Proposed Works Offshore.

Embedded mitigation	Description
Development and adherence to the Detailed Offshore Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP)	Volume 3, Appendix 3.4: Outline Offshore DEMP presents standard industry practice and legal requirements for environmental management and mitigation that will be implemented as part of the Proposed Works Offshore. The outline Offshore DEMP also summarises any required additional mitigation identified in relevant EIAR chapters, serving as a framework for the future decommissioning contractor(s) to develop in detail before decommissioning works commence.
Development and adherence to the Detailed Vessel Management Plan (VMP)	Volume 3, Appendix 3.5: Outline VMP defines best-practice vessel management measures, including transit routes, speed restrictions, timing of activities, pollution prevention, and crew environmental awareness, to minimise disturbance, collision risk, and ecological harm.
Development and adherence to the Detailed Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS)	Volume 3, Appendix 3.6: FMMS sets out standard industry practice measures for fisheries liaison and coexistence with the fishing industry throughout the Proposed Works Offshore programme. The FMMS has been prepared in line with relevant policy and good practice guidance and includes measures to avoid or reduce disruption to commercial fisheries, regardless of impact significance. Where significant effects are identified within the EIAR, the FMMS also provides the framework for implementation of any additional mitigation measures identified through the assessment.

Embedded mitigation	Description
Development and adherence to the Detailed Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP)	Volume 3, Appendix 3.7: Outline LMP identifies required lighting and marking throughout the Proposed Works Offshore in line with relevant standards and legal requirements.
Development and adherence to the Detailed Offshore Waste Management Plan (WMP)	Volume 3, Appendix 3.8: Outline Offshore WMP establishes a clear framework for the identification, handling, and management of wastes arising from Proposed Works Offshore, ensuring compliance with standard industry practice and relevant waste legislation, and the principles of the waste hierarchy.

6.4.7 Assumptions and Limitations of the Assessment

- 6.4.7.1 Limitations associated with the data used to inform the description of the baseline environment are described in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**. These limitations have been addressed through the careful interpretation of available datasets, cross-referencing between multiple data sources, and engagement with fisheries stakeholders. As the assessment is informed by a combination of quantitative data, consultation and professional judgement, the identified limitations are not considered to materially affect the robustness or reliability of the impact assessment presented in **Section 6.6**
- 6.4.7.2 At the time of assessment, the design and execution methodology for the Proposed Works Offshore are sufficiently well defined to inform a robust impact assessment. Notwithstanding this, a MDS approach has been adopted, in accordance with established EIA practice, to ensure that the assessment captures the realistic worst-case parameters of the Proposed Works Offshore.

6.5 Baseline Characterisation

6.5.1 Overview

- 6.5.1.1 This section describes the existing baseline environment and future baseline conditions relevant to commercial fisheries and aquaculture. A detailed characterisation of the baseline is presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**, with a summary of the key findings provided in this section.

6.5.2 Overview of Commercial Fisheries Landings by Port of Landing and Species

- 6.5.2.1 **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1** provides data on Irish vessel landings by port and species for the period 2020 to 2024.
- 6.5.2.2 Kilmore Quay and Howth dominate landings by value, with values an order of magnitude higher than the remaining ports. Mid-tier values are observed for Dún Laoghaire and Wicklow, while Wexford and Arklow record lower values, and Courtown and Greystones contribute comparatively small amounts. The trends for each port are summarised below:
- Kilmore Quay: Consistently the highest values across the period, peaking in 2020 and remaining strong thereafter. Average annual first sales value: €14,192,479.
 - Howth: Second-highest overall, with values broadly stable across the period. Average annual first sales value: €12,623,063.
 - Dún Laoghaire: More variable year-to-year, with a notable peak in 2022. Average annual first sales value: €3,725,166.
 - Wicklow: Moderate and relatively consistent values, generally within the low millions annually. Average annual first sales value: €3,163,338.
 - Wexford: Lower overall values, with a peak around 2022 and otherwise approximately €1–2 million annually. Average annual first sales value: €1,422,964.

- Arklow: Similar scale to Wexford but generally lower, with a slight decline in later years. Average annual first sales value: €1,147,720.
- Courtown: Consistently low values, remaining below €1 million. Average annual first sales value: €431,204.
- Greystones: The lowest values overall, with modest landings recorded in later years. Average annual first sales value: €195,924.

6.5.2.3 SFPA landings data are also available by species; however, these data represent total landings into Irish ports from all sea areas by all vessels, and do not distinguish the geographic origin of the catch. As such, the data provide a useful indication of the relative economic importance of different species at a national level but are not spatially specific to the Study Area. Overall, species-level landings data indicate that a small number of species account for the majority of first sales value landed into Irish ports (see Figure **6.2**), with pelagic species such as Atlantic mackerel *Scomber scombrus* and blue whiting *Micromesistius poutassou* dominating by volume (**Figure 6.3**), and higher-value species, such as Norway lobster *Nephrops norvegicus* and anglerfish *Lophius* spp., contributing disproportionately to total value. This reflects the importance of both species composition and market price in determining landings value, rather than landed weight alone. While whelk *Buccinum undatum* represents a relatively small proportion of total national landings value, it is a key target species within the Study Area, and therefore of particular relevance to this assessment.

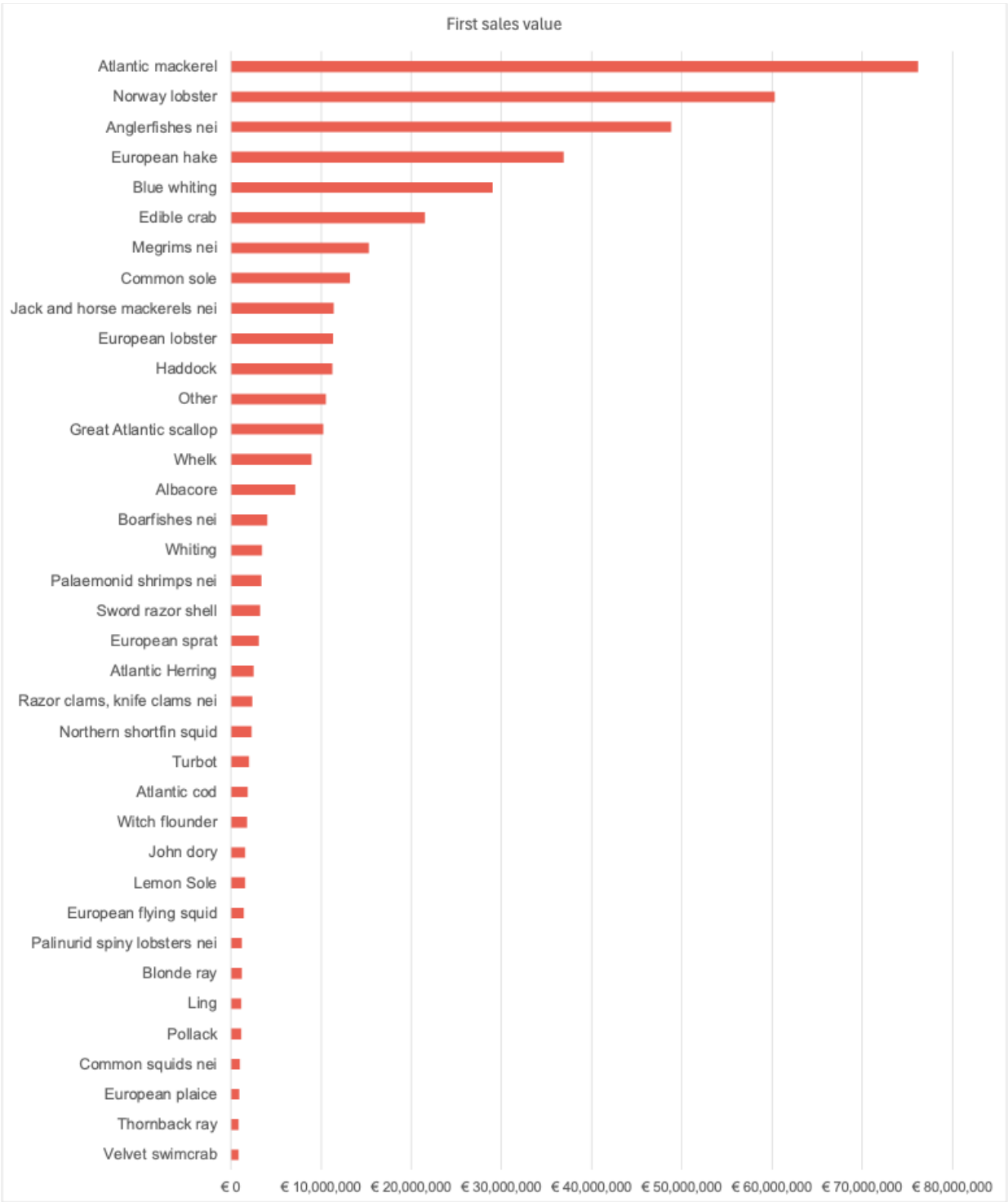


Figure 6.2: Average annual first sales value (€) of landings by Irish vessels into Irish ports, by species (2020–2024).

Data source: SFPA, 2025

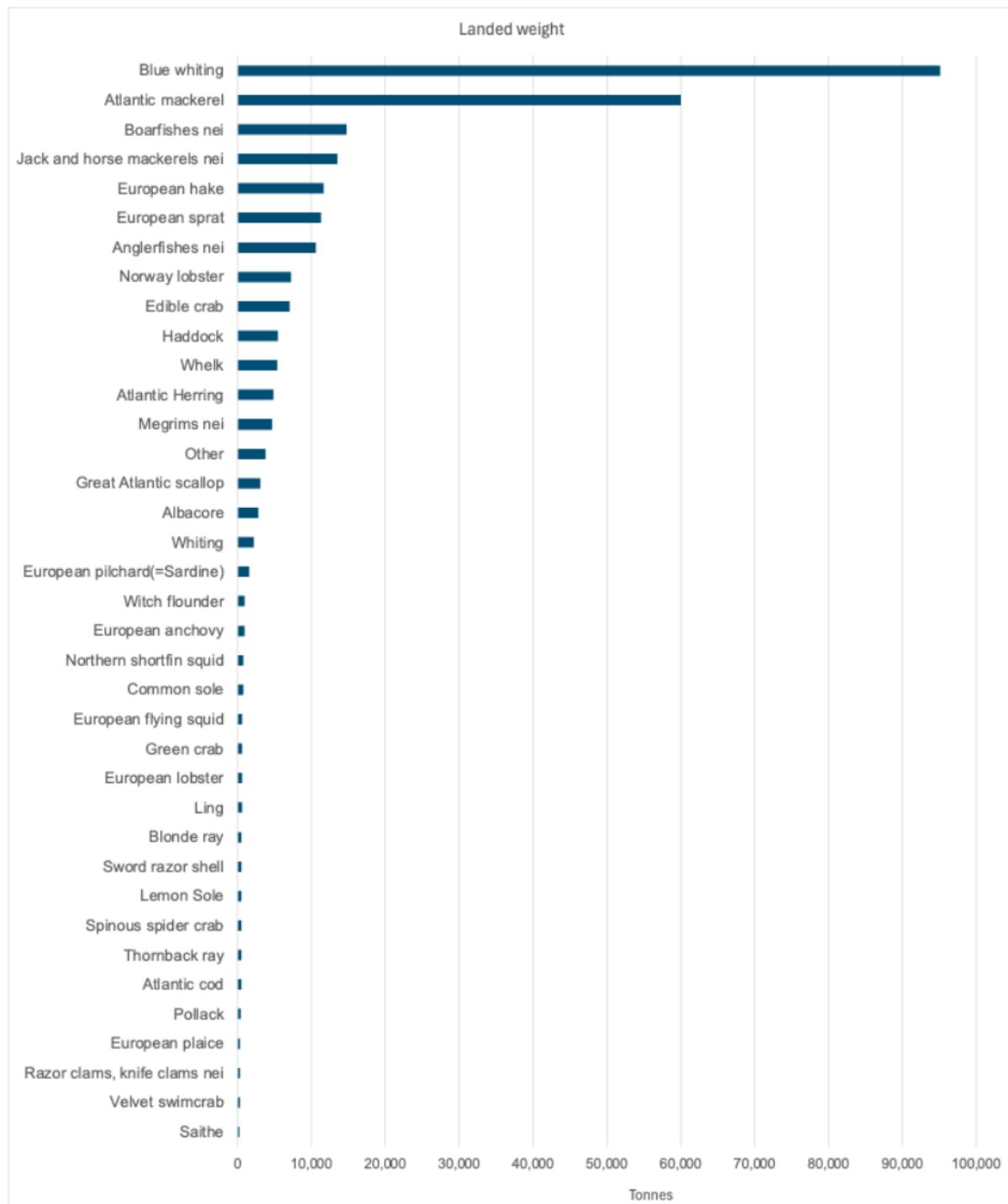


Figure 6.3: Average annual weight (tonnes) of landings by Irish vessels into Irish ports, by species (2020–2024).

Data source: SFPA, 2025

6.5.3 Overview of Commercial Fisheries Landings by ICES Rectangle

- 6.5.3.1 An indication of the principal species targeted within the Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Study Area is provided in **Figure 6.4**, based on landings data by ICES rectangle (average 2015 to 2020). Data for subsequent years are not available at this spatial resolution.
- 6.5.3.2 As shown in **Figure 6.4**, whelk is the principal species targeted within the Study Area, accounting for most landings in ICES rectangles 34E3 and 34E4. This fishery is undertaken

predominantly by Irish vessels using potting gear. On average, approximately 1,240 tonnes of whelk are landed annually from the Study Area, with an estimated first sales value of €1.9 million (based on €1,500 per tonne). It is noted that this estimate is based on the most recent ICES rectangle data available (2015 to 2020).

- 6.5.3.3 Potting for whelk within the Study Area occurs year-round and represents the dominant fishing activity in the vicinity of the Proposed Works Offshore, particularly within inshore areas. In addition, some multi-purpose local fishing vessels seasonally deploy other gear types to target species including crab and lobster (pots), whitefish species (trawls and nets), and pelagic species such as herring and sprat. Consultation undertaken to inform ABWP Phase II assessment (SSE Renewables, 2024) indicates that most vessels engaged in the whelk fishery are under 12 m in length.

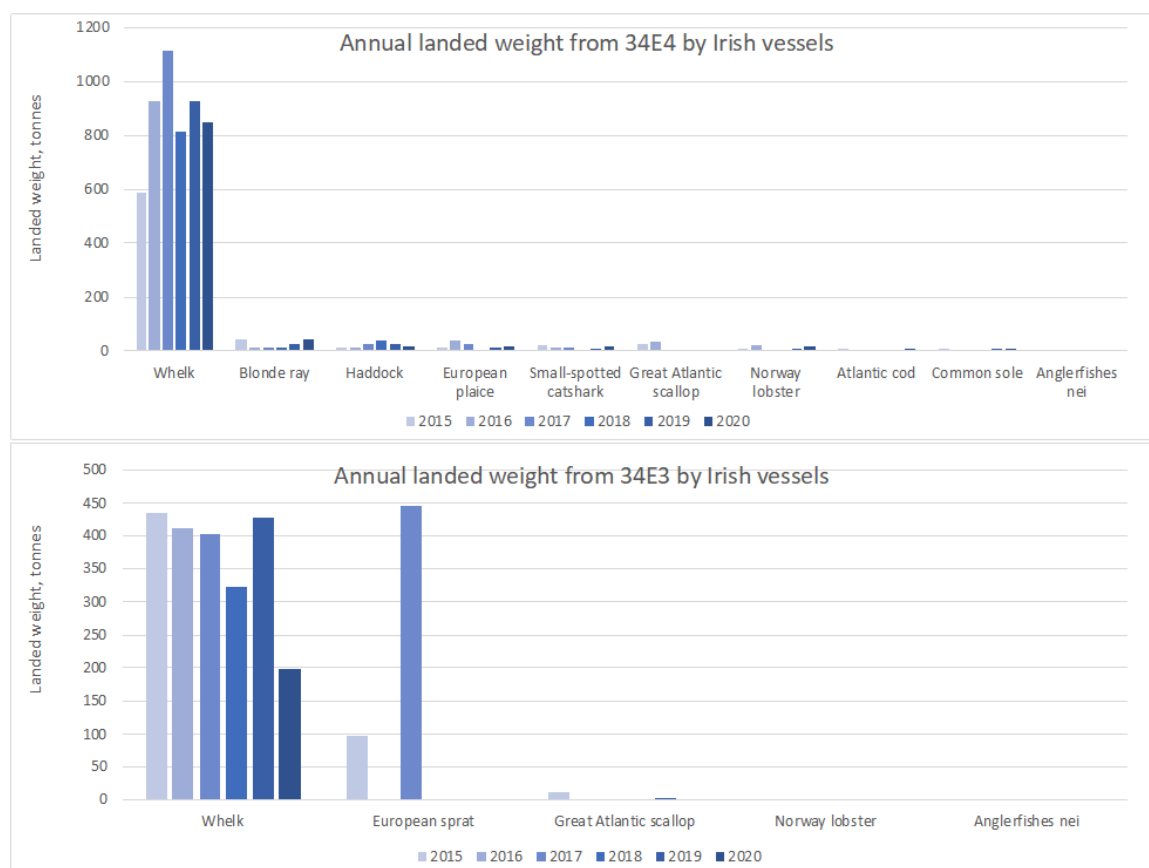


Figure 6.4: Weight of landings by Irish vessels from ICES rectangles 34E3 and 34E4 by species (2015–2020).

Data source: SFPA, 2025

6.5.4 Fishing Grounds

- 6.5.4.1 This section describes the spatial distribution and intensity of fishing activity within the Study Area, based on available mapping data and information presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**. The assessment draws on a combination of VMS data for vessels 12 m and over, and inshore fisheries mapping for smaller vessels (typically under 15 m in length), which together provide an overview of fishing activity across different fleet segments and gear types.

- **Potting fishery:** Potting is the dominant inshore fishery within the Study Area, with activity primarily focused on whelk grounds extending along the coast from north of Wicklow to south of Arklow. Lobster and crab fisheries are more limited and spatially restricted. Mapping shown in **Figures 2 and 3** in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1** indicates that potting activity is concentrated inshore, with overlap between whelk fishing grounds and

the offshore export cable route, while the Sub Lease Area lies largely outside core potting areas. VMS data for vessels over 12 m show only limited activity near the Proposed Works Offshore; however, these data under-represent the local fleet, and inshore mapping provides a more accurate representation of fishing activity. Overall, potting is the inshore receptor of most relevance to the offshore export cable route;

- **Mussel seed fishery:** Consultation undertaken to inform ABWP Phase II assessment (SSE Renewables, 2024) also identified that areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Works Offshore support a seed mussel fishery. Mussel dredgers participating in this fishery must hold a valid mussel seed authorisation. Fishing generally takes place in the autumn, subject to seed availability. Mussel beds in the vicinity of Arklow Bank are primarily located in inshore areas off Wicklow, to the north and west of the Sub Lease Area. There is no overlap with the Sub Lease Area and only limited overlap with the offshore export cable route;
- **Other fisheries:** Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data for Irish vessels over 12 m in length indicates that fishing activity within the Study Area is either absent or occurs at very low levels across all other gear types, including demersal otter trawls, beam trawls, scallop dredges, inshore netting, and pelagic trawls. Similarly, activity by non-Irish vessels is very limited (see **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**).

6.5.4.2 The shallow nature of the Sub Lease Area across Arklow Bank is considered to limit its suitability for mobile fishing gears. This is supported by VMS data presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**. Where limited activity is recorded, consultation indicates that this primarily represents vessels transiting to and from inshore fishing grounds, rather than active fishing, which is corroborated by AIS data (see **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1, Figure 15**) and is consistent with the navigational baseline presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 7.1: Navigational Risk Assessment**.

6.5.5 Aquaculture Operations

6.5.5.1 An aquaculture site is located off the coast of Arklow, Co. Wicklow, approximately 4.5 km from the closest point of the offshore export cable route. The site is owned by the Irish Mussel Seed Company and is a mussel farm focused on harvesting mussel seed. The farm was granted a licence from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (licence number T32/027), which is valid until June 2029. The mussel farm is made up of semi-permanent structures marked by eight navigation buoys which are fixed to the seabed via screw-in anchors (Wicklow County Council, 2022).

6.5.5.2 The location of the mussel farm is presented in **Figure 4.1** in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**. The site has an approximate surface area of 0.64 km² and a perimeter of 3.3 km. The mussel farm uses suspended structures to collect mussel seed, which is grown for approximately five to six months before being harvested and sold for further growth.

6.5.6 Future Baseline Conditions

6.5.6.1 Following the completion of Proposed Works Offshore, the commercial fisheries and aquaculture baseline can be expected to evolve both on a natural basis and in response to global trends such as climate change and other anthropogenic activities, e.g. the potential development of ABWP Phase II represents a reasonably foreseeable change in the local marine environment. While this may influence the spatial distribution of fishing activity in the future, such effects are considered separately within the cumulative impact assessment in **Section 6.7**.

6.5.6.2 An assessment of future baseline conditions, where Proposed Works Offshore are not executed, has been undertaken and is described within this section.

6.5.6.3 Potting for whelk is the principal fishing activity within the Study Area, undertaken predominantly by the local inshore fleet and largely concentrated in nearshore waters. While stock information is limited, there is potential for localised depletion, which may influence future fishing patterns. In such circumstances, some redistribution of fishing effort to alternative grounds may occur; however, given the shallow nature and limited suitability of Arklow Bank, a

significant increase in fishing activity within the Sub Lease Area is not anticipated. Areas outside the Proposed Works Offshore may, however, become of greater importance over time. Mussel seed fishing grounds are expected to remain broadly consistent with current distributions, occurring primarily in inshore areas with limited overlap with the offshore export cable route and no overlap with the Sub Lease Area.

6.5.6.4 Commercial fisheries activity is subject to ongoing variation and change in response to a range of natural and management-driven factors. These include:

- Brexit: there have been two schemes to support the Irish fishing industry due to the reduction in the TACs and quotas as a result of Brexit:
 - Tie up scheme: for one month in 2021 and for two months in 2022; and
 - Decommissioning scheme: in 2023 which saw approximately 40-42 vessels enter decommissioning, equating to 20% of the offshore fleet. This included Irish vessels that fished in the Irish Sea.
- Market demand, including changes in consumer behaviour and external influences such as the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Market prices, which influence targeting of higher value species;
- Stock abundance, including changes driven by recruitment, fishing pressure and environmental conditions;
- Fisheries management measures, including changes in regulations and controls on fishing activity;
- Environmental management, including potential restrictions within designated sites;
- Technological developments and improved fishing efficiency; and
- Increasing emphasis on sustainability and certification within seafood markets.

6.5.6.5 Recent changes associated with the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union have resulted in adjustments to quotas and access arrangements. However, as the key fisheries within the Study Area predominantly target non-quota shellfish species, these changes are not considered to have materially affected fishing activity within the Study Area.

6.5.6.6 Over the longer term, environmental change, including climate change, has the potential to influence the distribution and availability of commercially targeted species. Changes in sea temperature, oceanographic conditions and storm frequency may affect fishing patterns, including the timing, location and intensity of fishing activity. However, for the predominantly inshore shellfish fisheries within the Study Area, including whelk, such changes are expected to occur gradually and are unlikely to result in abrupt shifts in fishing activity over the short to medium term.

6.5.6.7 The variability and trends in commercial fisheries activity are an important consideration in defining the baseline environment and underpin the use of multiple years of data in the assessment. Based on the available information, the current baseline is considered to be broadly representative of future conditions in the absence of the Proposed Works Offshore.

6.5.7 Summary of Sensitive Receptors

6.5.7.1 The receptors identified as sensitive to the Proposed Works Offshore are summarised in **Table 6.12**.

6.5.7.2 For the purposes of this assessment, fisheries receptors with limited or low levels of activity within the Study Area (including scallop dredge, pelagic trawl, beam trawl and demersal otter trawl fleets) are considered collectively under a single receptor grouping ('other fisheries') to ensure a proportionate and efficient assessment. These fisheries have been grouped on the basis of the baseline evidence, including landings data, spatial fisheries mapping and insights from the FLO, which indicates comparatively low levels of activity within the Study Area relative to the key receptor groups assessed individually.

Table 6.12: Summary of commercial fisheries and aquaculture sensitive receptors

Receptor	Description	Rationale for inclusion
Potting fishery	Irish potting vessels (primarily under 12 m in length) targeting whelk year-round, and brown crab and lobster seasonally within inshore waters.	This fleet undertakes fishing activity within the Study Area, including areas overlapping the Proposed Works Offshore, and potting for whelk represents the primary commercial fishing activity in the vicinity of the Proposed Works Offshore. Activity is concentrated within inshore areas, including the offshore export cable Route, with very limited activity within the Sub Lease Area.
Mussel seed fishery	Irish vessels authorised to harvest mussel seed using dredges, typically operating seasonally in inshore waters subject to stock availability and licensing.	This fishery operates within the wider Study Area, with activity recorded in proximity to the Proposed Works Offshore. Activity may overlap the offshore export cable route. activity does not take place in the Sub Lease Area.
Scallop dredge fishery	Irish dredging vessels targeting king scallop within inshore and nearshore areas.	These fleets operate within the Study Areas and wider Irish Sea (ICES Division 7a), within which the Proposed Works Offshore are located. Activity by these fleets is understood to be very low in proximity to the Proposed Works Offshore.
Pelagic trawl fleet	Irish pelagic trawlers targeting sprat and herring within ICES Division 7a.	
Beam trawl fleet	Irish and Belgian beam trawlers targeting plaice, sole and mixed demersal species.	
Demersal otter trawl fleet	Irish demersal otter trawlers targeting Nephrops, haddock and mixed demersal species.	
Aquaculture mussel cultivation	Licensed mussel aquaculture site located within the wider Study Area, comprising suspended cultivation structures used for the settlement and on-growing of mussels.	Aquaculture receptors are not included as operational receptors (e.g. access, displacement or gear interaction), as no interaction pathway exists between the Proposed Works Offshore and aquaculture infrastructure or operations. However, a potential indirect pathway exists via effects on commercially exploited species (i.e. cultivated mussels), for example through temporary changes in suspended sediment concentrations or water quality. On this basis, aquaculture is considered within the assessment of effects on commercially exploited species, where relevant.

6.6 Assessment of Impacts

6.6.1 Overview

6.6.1.1 This section includes the assessment of the impacts to commercial fisheries and aquaculture arising from the Proposed Works Offshore. A summary of the effects is presented in **Table 6.15**.

6.6.2 Loss of Fishing Grounds or Restricted Access to Fishing Grounds in the Sub Lease Area

6.6.2.1 Proposed Works Offshore within the Sub Lease Area will involve the removal of offshore infrastructure, including wind turbine generators, foundations, inter-array cables and associated scour protection, together with associated seabed preparation (if required), survey activities, vessel operations and temporary safety or exclusion zones during active works.

Receptor Sensitivity

6.6.2.2 The following receptors are considered in relation to potential loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Sub Lease Area:

- Potting fishery: Potting vessels operate predominantly within inshore waters, with fishing grounds extending along the coast and overlapping primarily with the offshore export cable route rather than the Sub Lease Area. While the fishery is of moderate economic importance within the Study Area, the Sub Lease Area does not represent a core fishing ground. Alternative fishing grounds are widely available within the normal operating range of vessels. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**;
- Mussel seed fishery: The mussel seed fishery is spatially discrete and occurs in inshore areas, primarily to the north and west of the Sub Lease Area. No overlap between identified mussel seed beds and the Sub Lease Area has been identified. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **low**; and
- Other fisheries: Other fleets, including beam trawl, demersal otter trawl, scallop dredge and pelagic trawl, operate at a regional scale and exhibit limited or negligible activity within the Sub Lease Area. These fleets are generally mobile, with access to extensive alternative fishing grounds and operational flexibility. The sensitivity of these receptors is therefore considered to be **low**.

Magnitude of Impact

6.6.2.3 The magnitude of impact has been assessed with reference to the criteria set out in **Section 6.4**, taking into account the spatial extent of fishing activity, the duration of the works and the degree of overlap with established fishing grounds.

6.6.2.4 Baseline evidence presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1** demonstrates that the Sub Lease Area supports very limited commercial fishing activity across all fleet types. Spatial analysis of inshore fisheries mapping, VMS data and AIS data indicates that:

- Potting activity, including the whelk fishery, is primarily concentrated inshore and overlaps with the offshore export cable route, rather than the Sub Lease Area;
- Mobile gear fisheries (including beam trawl, demersal otter trawl and pelagic trawl) show very limited or no activity within the Sub Lease Area, with more concentrated activity occurring elsewhere in the region; and
- Vessel traffic is predominantly associated with inshore transit routes, with comparatively low density across the Sub Lease Area itself.

6.6.2.5 The Sub Lease Area is therefore not identified as a core or regularly used fishing ground for any fleet operating within the Study Area.

6.6.2.6 The impact is therefore:

- Of very limited spatial extent, affecting an area with negligible fishing activity;
- Of short-term and intermittent duration, associated with decommissioning activities; and
- Unlikely to result in any measurable disruption to fishing activity or change in catch rates.

6.6.2.7 While it is recognised that sporadic or unrecorded fishing activity may occur, particularly by vessels under 12 m in length that are not fully represented within available datasets, any such interaction would be minimal and temporary in nature.

6.6.2.8 In accordance with the defined criteria, the magnitude of impact is therefore assessed as **negligible adverse**.

Significance of Effect

- Potting fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Sub Lease Area is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds

from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is considered to be negligible to minor adverse. While baseline evidence indicates that the Sub Lease Area is not actively fished, a precautionary approach has been adopted to account for potential sporadic or unrecorded potting activity, particularly by smaller vessels (<12 m) which may not be fully represented in available datasets. On this basis, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is conservatively assessed as **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms;

- Mussel seed fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Sub Lease Area is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on the mussel seed fishery is considered to be **Negligible Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms; and
- Other fisheries: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Sub Lease Area is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on all other fisheries is considered to be **Negligible Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

- 6.6.2.9 Given that the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore is considered not significant in EIA terms, no additional mitigation measures are proposed. Therefore, the residual effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore is considered to be **Negligible to Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.6.3 Loss of Fishing Grounds or Restricted Access to Fishing Grounds in the Offshore Export Cable Route

- 6.6.3.1 Proposed Works Offshore within the offshore export cable route will involve the removal of the offshore export cable, cable recovery operations, survey activities, vessel operations and temporary and localised restrictions on access as works progress along the offshore export cable route. Offshore export cable removal works will be undertaken within a temporary moving work area managed through Notices to Mariners and support vessels to maintain safe navigation and minimise interactions with other sea users.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.6.3.2 The following receptors are considered in relation to potential loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the offshore export cable route.
- Potting fishery: Potting vessels operate predominantly within inshore waters, with fishing grounds extending along the coast and overlapping directly with the offshore export cable route. This area represents an actively fished corridor for the whelk fishery, with evidence from fisheries activity surveys, landings data and consultation confirming regular use. While alternative fishing grounds are available, relocation may reduce efficiency and increase competition in adjacent areas. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**;
 - Mussel seed fishery: The mussel seed fishery occurs in inshore areas, with some overlap between identified mussel seed beds and sections of the offshore export cable route. Activity is seasonal and dependent on stock availability and licensing. While spatially constrained, vessels can relocate between licensed areas where available. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**; and
 - Other fisheries: Other fleets, including beam trawl, demersal otter trawl, scallop dredge and pelagic trawl, operate at a regional scale and exhibit limited activity within the offshore

export cable route. These fleets are mobile and have access to extensive alternative fishing grounds. The sensitivity of these receptors is therefore considered to be **low**.

Magnitude of Impact

- 6.6.3.3 The magnitude of impact has been assessed with reference to the criteria set out in **Section 6.4**, taking into account the spatial extent of fishing activity, duration of works and degree of overlap with established fishing grounds.
- 6.6.3.4 Baseline evidence presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1** demonstrates that the offshore export cable route overlaps with inshore fishing grounds, particularly those targeted by the potting fleet. Spatial analysis of fisheries activity mapping, VMS data, AIS data and consultation indicates that:
- Potting activity, including the whelk fishery, is concentrated along the inshore corridor coinciding with the offshore export cable route;
 - Mussel seed fishing may occur in proximity to sections of the cable route, depending on seasonal availability of stock; and
 - Activity from other fisheries is limited within the cable route, with more substantial activity occurring elsewhere within the Study Area.
- 6.6.3.5 During Proposed Works Offshore, temporary restrictions on access will be required within discrete sections of the offshore export cable route where active works are taking place. These restrictions will move progressively along the cable route as works advance.
- 6.6.3.6 For the potting fishery:
- The impact will be localised but directly overlap actively fished grounds;
 - The duration of disruption will be short-term and intermittent, associated with the progression of works; and
 - Displacement may result in increased fishing pressure or gear conflict in adjacent grounds.
- 6.6.3.7 For the mussel seed fishery:
- Overlap with the cable route is limited and seasonal; and
 - Disruption would be temporary and dependent on timing relative to fishing activity.
- 6.6.3.8 For other fisheries:
- Impacts are expected to be limited, reflecting low levels of activity within the cable route and the ability of these fleets to operate elsewhere.
- 6.6.3.9 In accordance with the defined criteria:
- The magnitude of impact on the potting fishery is assessed as **medium adverse**;
 - The magnitude of impact on the mussel seed fishery is assessed as **low adverse**; and
 - The magnitude of impact on other fisheries is assessed as **negligible adverse**.

Significance of Effect

- Potting fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the offshore export cable route is medium adverse. Therefore, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is considered to be **Moderate Adverse**, which is **Significant** in EIA terms;
- Mussel seed fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Offshore Export Cable Route is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on the mussel seed fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms; and

- Other fisheries: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Offshore Export Cable Route is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on all other fisheries is considered to be **Negligible Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

- 6.6.3.10 Potting fishery: Given that the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on the whelk potting fishery is considered significant in EIA terms, additional mitigation measures are proposed.
- 6.6.3.11 To reduce potential effects on the whelk potting fleet operating along the offshore export cable route during Proposed Works Offshore, the FMMS (see **Volume 3, Appendix 3.6**) will not only set out principles for co-existence and details mitigation measures, but also include the implementation of Cooperation Agreements and associated payments, in line with standard offshore renewable energy industry practice.
- 6.6.3.12 With respect to any cooperation agreements and associated payments, an evidence-based procedure will be followed. This will include provision of evidence and data, including:
- Copy of the relevant vessel registry, fishing licences and entitlements;
 - Sight of vessels' fishing charts and GPS plotter records to provide clear historic evidence of activity within the Offshore Export Cable Route;
 - Evidence of sales notes and/or fishing accounts where available for an agreed time period; and
 - Fishing vessel and/or fisheries landings data held by fisheries authorities.
- 6.6.3.13 With the implementation of the above additional mitigation measures, including the FMMS and associated Cooperation Agreements, the duration and extent of disruption experienced by the whelk potting fleet would be reduced through proactive fisheries liaison. While the physical impact (i.e. temporary restriction of access to fishing grounds) would remain, the economic consequences for affected receptors would be offset through the implementation of Cooperation Agreements. On this basis, the residual effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore on the whelk potting fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.
- 6.6.3.14 Mussel seed fishery and other fisheries: Given that the effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore is considered not significant in EIA terms, no additional mitigation measures are proposed. Therefore, the residual effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds from Proposed Works Offshore is considered to be **Negligible to Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.6.4 Displacement of Fishing Activity into Other Areas

- 6.6.4.1 Displacement of fishing activity into other areas may occur where temporary restrictions on access to fishing grounds are implemented during decommissioning works within the Sub Lease Area and offshore export cable route. This may result in fishing effort being redistributed to adjacent areas, potentially leading to increased fishing pressure or gear conflict.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.6.4.2 The following receptors are considered in relation to displacement of fishing activity into other areas:
- Potting fishery: Potting vessels operate across defined inshore fishing grounds, with gear deployed on the seabed for extended periods. This form of static fishing gear is particularly vulnerable to gear conflict interactions where displacement results in relocation of pots into already utilised grounds. While alternative fishing grounds are available, these may already

be subject to fishing effort, limiting the ability to relocate without interaction with other fishers. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**.

- Mussel seed fishery: The mussel seed fishery is highly spatially constrained and dependent on the presence of seed beds, which vary seasonally and geographically. Opportunities for relocation are therefore limited, although the fishery is intermittent and of relatively short duration. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**.
- Other fisheries: Other fleets, including beam trawl, demersal otter trawl, scallop dredge and pelagic trawl, operate over a wide geographic area and have access to extensive alternative fishing grounds. These fleets are mobile and adaptable, with the ability to redistribute effort without significant constraint. The sensitivity of these receptors is therefore considered to be **Low**.

Magnitude of Impact

- 6.6.4.3 The magnitude of impact has been assessed with reference to the criteria set out in Section 6.4, taking into account the spatial extent of displacement, duration of works and the level of overlap with actively fished grounds.
- 6.6.4.4 Potting fishery: For the potting fishery, displacement may result in relocation of gear into adjacent inshore fishing grounds that are already utilised by other potting vessels. This may lead to gear conflict and increased fishing pressure. However:
- Displacement would be temporary and localised;
 - Alternative fishing grounds are available within the normal operating range; and
 - The scale of displacement is limited by the relatively small spatial footprint and progressive nature of the works.
- 6.6.4.5 On balance, the magnitude of displacement for the potting fishery is considered to be **low adverse**.
- 6.6.4.6 Mussel seed fishery: For the mussel seed fishery, displacement effects are limited by the seasonal and location-specific nature of fishing activity. Given the limited overlap with decommissioning works and the intermittent nature of the fishery, any displacement would be minimal. The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be **negligible adverse**.
- 6.6.4.7 Other fisheries: For other fisheries, activity within the Sub Lease Area and Offshore Export Cable Route is limited. Given the wide operational range of these fleets and availability of alternative fishing grounds, any displacement would be minimal and readily accommodated. The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be **negligible adverse**.

Significance of Effect

- Potting fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of displacement of fishing activity into other areas is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of displacement of fishing activity from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms;
- Mussel seed fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of displacement of fishing activity into other areas is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect is considered to be **Negligible Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms; and
- Other fisheries: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of displacement of fishing activity into other areas is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect is considered to be **Negligible Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

- 6.6.4.8 Given that the effect of displacement of fishing activity into other areas from Proposed Works Offshore is considered not significant in EIA terms, no additional mitigation measures are

proposed. Therefore, the residual effect of displacement of fishing activity into other areas from Proposed Works Offshore is considered to be **Negligible to Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.6.5 Interference with Fishing Activity

6.6.5.1 Interference with fishing activity may occur as a result of the presence and movement of vessels associated with decommissioning works within the Sub Lease Area and offshore export cable route. This may include temporary disruption to fishing operations due to vessel traffic, restricted manoeuvrability and the potential for interaction with deployed fishing gear.

Receptor Sensitivity

6.6.5.2 The following receptors are considered in relation to interference with fishing activity:

- Potting fishery: The potting fleet deploys static fishing gear which remains unattended on the seabed, marked by surface buoys and lines. This configuration limits the ability of fishing vessels to rapidly adapt to or avoid interactions with project vessels. As such, there is potential for interference where vessels transit through areas of deployed gear. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**;
- Mussel seed fishery: The mussel seed fishery involves mobile dredging activity undertaken over defined areas and time periods. Vessels engaged in this activity are able to manoeuvre and avoid interaction with project vessels. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **low**; and
- Other fisheries: Other fleets, including beam trawl, demersal otter trawl, scallop dredge and pelagic trawl, are mobile and operate over a wide geographic area. These vessels have the ability to alter course and avoid interaction with project vessels in accordance with standard maritime navigation practices. The sensitivity of these receptors is therefore considered to be **low**.

Magnitude of Impact

6.6.5.3 The magnitude of impact has been assessed with reference to the criteria set out in **Section 6.4**, taking into account the scale of vessel activity, duration of works and level of interaction with fishing operations.

6.6.5.4 Proposed Works Offshore will involve a range of vessels operating within the Sub Lease Area and along the offshore export cable route. These vessels will undertake removal operations, surveys and associated support activities, resulting in temporary increases in vessel traffic within the Study Area.

6.6.5.5 As confirmed in **Volume 3, Appendix 3.6**, appropriate fisheries liaison and management measures will be implemented, including communication of planned activities, timing and locations of works, and adherence to relevant navigational regulations. Project vessels will comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS), reducing the likelihood of conflict with fishing vessels.

6.6.5.6 Potting fishery: For the potting fishery, potential interference may arise from interaction between project vessels and surface marker buoys and lines associated with static gear. However:

- Vessel activity will be temporary and localised;
- Works will be progressive in nature; and
- Embedded mitigation measures will reduce the likelihood of interaction.

6.6.5.7 The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be **low adverse**.

6.6.5.8 Mussel seed fishery: For the mussel seed fishery, the potential for interference is limited due to the mobility of vessels and the seasonal nature of activity. Any interaction with project vessels

would be temporary and avoidable. The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be **low adverse**.

- 6.6.5.9 Other fisheries: For other fisheries, vessels are highly mobile and capable of avoiding interaction with project vessels. Compliance with navigational regulations and implementation of fisheries liaison measures will further reduce the likelihood of interference. The magnitude of impact is therefore considered to be low adverse.

Significance of Effect

- Potting fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of interference with fishing activity is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of interference with fishing activity from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms;
- Mussel seed fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of interference with fishing activity is low adverse. Therefore, the effect is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms; and
- Other fisheries: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of interference with fishing activity is low adverse. Therefore, the effect is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

- 6.6.5.10 Given that the effect of interference with fishing activity from Proposed Works Offshore is considered not significant in EIA terms, no additional mitigation measures are proposed. Therefore, the residual effect of interference with fishing activity from Proposed Works Offshore is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.6.6 Increased Fishing Gear Snagging Risk

- 6.6.6.1 Increased fishing gear snagging risk may arise where fishing gear interacts with subsea infrastructure or temporarily exposed cables during Proposed Works Offshore within the Sub Lease Area and offshore export cable route. This may result in damage to, or loss of, fishing gear.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.6.6.2 The following receptors are considered in relation to increased fishing gear snagging risk:
- Potting fishery: Potting gear is static and typically deployed on the seabed, with limited penetration into the substrate. As such, the potential for interaction with subsea infrastructure is lower compared to mobile fishing gears. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **low**;
 - Mussel seed fishery: The mussel seed fishery uses mobile dredging gear that interacts directly with the seabed. This increases the potential for interaction with subsea infrastructure where present. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**; and
 - Other fisheries: Other fleets, including beam trawl, demersal otter trawl and scallop dredge, operate mobile gear that is actively towed across the seabed and may penetrate the substrate. These gear types are more susceptible to interaction with subsea infrastructure. The sensitivity of these receptors is therefore considered to be **medium**.

Magnitude of Impact

- 6.6.6.3 The magnitude of impact has been assessed with reference to the criteria set out in **Section 6.4**, taking into account the presence of infrastructure, duration of exposure and likelihood of interaction with fishing gear.

- 6.6.6.4 During Proposed Works Offshore, snagging risk may arise where cables or associated infrastructure are temporarily exposed prior to removal. Proposed Works Offshore will involve the removal of offshore infrastructure, including export cables and associated cable protection. On completion of Proposed Works Offshore, above-seabed infrastructure will be removed, resulting in a long-term reduction in snagging risk.
- 6.6.6.5 Fisheries liaison and management measures, as set out in the FMMS (**Volume 3, Appendix 3.6**), will ensure that fishing vessels are informed of the location and timing of works. This will reduce the likelihood of interaction with exposed infrastructure. The FMMS will also set out a procedure for managing gear interaction, including appropriate processes for reporting, investigation and resolution of any incidents involving loss of or damage to fishing gear, including consideration of claims where justified.
- 6.6.6.6 The impact is therefore:
- Of local spatial extent, limited to areas where decommissioning works are active;
 - Of short-term and intermittent duration, associated with temporary exposure of infrastructure; and
 - Fully reversible, with snagging risk reduced or removed upon completion of decommissioning works.
- 6.6.6.7 In accordance with the defined criteria, the magnitude of impact is therefore assessed as **low adverse** for all fisheries.

Significance of Effect

- Potting fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of increased fishing gear snagging risk is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of increased fishing gear snagging risk from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is considered to be **Minor adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms;
- Mussel seed fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of increased fishing gear snagging risk is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of increased fishing gear snagging risk from Proposed Works Offshore on the mussel seed fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms; and
- Other fisheries: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of increased fishing gear snagging risk is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of increased fishing gear snagging risk from Proposed Works Offshore on all other fisheries is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

- 6.6.6.8 Given that the effect of increased fishing gear snagging risk from Proposed Works Offshore is considered not significant in EIA terms, no additional mitigation measures are proposed beyond those already embedded and set out in the FMMS, including fisheries liaison, communication of works and procedures for addressing gear interaction. Following completion of Proposed Works Offshore, the removal of infrastructure will eliminate any residual snagging risk associated with the Proposed Works Offshore. Therefore, the residual effect of increased fishing gear snagging risk from Proposed Works Offshore is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.6.7 Effects on Commercially Exploited Species

- 6.6.7.1 Effects on commercially exploited species may arise as a result of Proposed Works Offshore, including seabed disturbance, underwater noise and vibration, and temporary increases in suspended sediment concentrations. These effects may influence the distribution, behaviour or availability of fish and shellfish species, which may in turn affect commercial fishing activity.

- 6.6.7.2 While aquaculture receptors are scoped out in terms of direct interaction pathways (e.g. access, displacement or gear interaction), they are considered here solely in relation to indirect effects on commercially exploited species, such as changes in water quality.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.6.7.3 The following receptors are considered in relation to effects on commercially exploited species:
- Potting fishery: The potting fleet operating within the Study Area primarily targets shellfish species, including whelk, crab and lobster. The majority of vessels are under 12 m in length and operate within relatively constrained inshore areas, limiting their ability to adapt to changes in resource distribution. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**;
 - Mussel seed fishery: The mussel seed fishery targets discrete and spatially variable mussel beds. Fishing opportunities are dependent on the presence and condition of these beds, which may vary seasonally. The fishery has limited flexibility to relocate where suitable beds are not present. The sensitivity of this receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**;
 - Aquaculture mussel cultivation: Mussel cultivation is dependent on the condition of cultivated mussels and the surrounding water quality, including suspended sediment concentrations and hydrodynamic conditions that influence feeding and growth. While aquaculture infrastructure is fixed in location, the sensitivity of this receptor in this assessment relates specifically to the susceptibility of cultivated mussels to changes in environmental conditions. The sensitivity of the receptor is therefore considered to be **medium**; and
 - Other fisheries: Other fleets, including demersal and pelagic trawlers, operate over a wider geographic area and target a range of species. These fleets are more adaptable to changes in species distribution and availability. The sensitivity of these receptors is therefore considered to be **low**.

Magnitude of Impact

- 6.6.7.4 The magnitude of impact has been assessed with reference to the criteria set out in **Section 6.4** and is informed by the findings of **Volume 2, Chapter 5**, where potential impacts on the ecology of species of commercial importance are assessed.
- 6.6.7.5 Decommissioning activities may result in:
- Temporary disturbance and loss of seabed habitat;
 - Localised increases in suspended sediment concentrations and sediment deposition;
 - Sediment contaminant remobilisation;
 - Short-term underwater noise; and
 - Temporary disturbance associated with vessel activity.
- 6.6.7.6 The assessment presented in **Volume 2, Chapter 5** concludes that effects on species of commercial importance during Proposed Works Offshore are of negligible to minor adverse significance, reflecting the localised, short-term and reversible nature of the works.
- 6.6.7.7 As the availability of commercially exploited species is directly linked to the condition and distribution of these species, the assessment of fisheries and aquaculture receptors draws upon the conclusions of **Volume 2, Chapter 5**. Given that ecological effects are predicted to be localised, temporary and reversible, indirect effects on fisheries receptors are also expected to be limited in extent and duration.
- 6.6.7.8 For aquaculture receptors, potential effects relate primarily to changes in water quality (e.g. suspended sediment concentrations) which may influence mussel feeding, growth and condition. As set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 5**, increases in suspended sediment concentrations are predicted to be localised and temporary, with rapid dispersion and dilution.

6.6.7.9 In this case, given the temporary and localised nature of Proposed Works Offshore, and the absence of any predicted significant effects on species of commercial importance, the magnitude of impact is defined on a receptor-specific basis as follows:

- Potting fishery: **low adverse**;
- Mussel seed fishery: **low adverse**;
- Aquaculture mussel cultivation: **low adverse**; and
- Other fisheries: **negligible adverse**.

Significance of Effect

- Potting fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of effects on commercially exploited species is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of changes to commercially exploited species from Proposed Works Offshore on the potting fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms;
- Mussel seed fishery: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of effects on commercially exploited species is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of changes to commercially exploited species from Proposed Works Offshore on the mussel seed fishery is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms;
- Aquaculture mussel cultivation: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium and the magnitude of effects on commercially exploited species is low adverse. Therefore, the effect of changes to commercially exploited species from Proposed Works Offshore on aquaculture mussel cultivation is considered to be **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms; and
- Other fisheries: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is low and the magnitude of effects on commercially exploited species is negligible adverse. Therefore, the effect of changes to commercially exploited species from Proposed Works Offshore on all other fisheries is considered to be **Negligible Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

6.6.7.10 Given that the effect of changes to commercially exploited species from Proposed Works Offshore is considered not significant in EIA terms, no additional mitigation measures are proposed. Therefore, the residual effect of changes to commercially exploited species from Proposed Works Offshore is **Negligible to Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

Cumulative Effects

- 6.7.1.1 As indicated in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**, cumulative effects result from the addition of many minor or significant effects, including effects of other projects, to create larger, more significant effects (EPA, 2022).
- 6.7.1.2 The assessment of cumulative effects on Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture presented in this section has followed the methodology set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 1**, which, in summary comprises:
- **Stage 1: Establish the long list of other developments to consider**, based on the location of other plans and projects (other developments) located within the cumulative Zone of Influence (ZoI). The cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture has been defined as 25 nm (approximately 46 km) from the Proposed Works Offshore. This is informed by consultation with the FLO, who identified that vessels operating within the Study Area typically originate from ports ranging from Courtown to Wicklow. This ZoI is considered appropriate as it reflects the typical spatial extent over which local fishing vessels operate and within which interactions with the Proposed Works Offshore and other projects and plans are most likely to occur. While this ZoI provides a proportionate spatial basis for the assessment, it is recognised that some fishing fleet receptor activity may

occur over a wider regional scale. However, developments located beyond this ZoI are not considered likely to contribute materially to cumulative effects on the local fisheries receptors identified within this assessment.

- **Stage 2: Establish the short list of other developments to consider**, gathering key information on the other developments that is publicly available, considering the presence of potential pathways for cumulative effects and applying the Stage 2 screening criteria outlined in **Table 6.13**;

Table 6.13: Stage 2 screening criteria

Stage 2 Screening Criteria	
1	Development expected to be constructed / operational before commencement of Proposed Works is to be included as part of the baseline and hence screened out of the assessment.
2	Development not anticipated to temporally overlap or not anticipated to introduce potential for sequential cumulative effects and hence screened out of the assessment.
3	Development not anticipated to introduce physical effect-receptor pathway overlap and hence screened out of the assessment.
4	Development not anticipated to introduce non-physical effect-receptor pathway overlap and hence screened out of the assessment.
5	Low data confidence / low certainty that development will be realised and hence screened out of the assessment.
6	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists and hence screened into the assessment.

- **Stage 3: Information gathering.** Gathering additional publicly available information on shortlisted developments to inform the assessment of the potential cumulative effects in more detail; and
- **Stage 4: Assessment.** Applying the same methodology used to assess the potential environmental effects of Proposed Works alone.

6.7.1.3 Stages 1 and 2 are presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 1.2: Cumulative Screening**, and the short list i.e. the other developments screened into the assessment of potential cumulative effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture are outlined in **Table 6.14**, and are also shown on **Figure 6.5**. These comprise primarily offshore wind farms and associated site investigations within the Irish Sea that:

- Fall within the defined ZoI;
- Have potential for temporal overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore; and
- Present a plausible pathway for cumulative interaction with commercial fisheries receptors.

Table 6.14: Other developments screened into the assessment of potential cumulative effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Other developments shortlisted (ID)	Type	Tier and status	Distance (km)	Pathway for Cumulative Effect
Arklow Bank Wind Park Phase II Site Investigations (SI04)	Site investigations	Tier 1 Approved (valid to July 2029)	0	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to potential temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional survey vessels may operate within the Offshore Site / its vicinity, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.

Other developments shortlisted (ID)	Type	Tier and status	Distance (km)	Pathway for Cumulative Effect
ABWP Phase II (ORE01)	Offshore wind farm	Tier 1 Planning application submitted	0	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional vessels will be operating within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.
Wicklow Sea Wind Ltd - Cable Route Site Investigations. Site investigations for an export cable corridor from a Celtic Sea offshore windfarm (OWF) to the Wicklow coast (SI06)	Site investigations	Tier 1 Application submitted	0.11	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to potential temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional survey vessels may operate within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.
Wicklow Sea Wind Ltd., Site Investigations for the proposed Wicklow Project offshore wind farm, off County Wicklow (SI07)	Site investigations	Tier 1 Application submitted	5.53	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to potential temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional survey vessels may operate within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.
Codling Wind Park site investigations (SI11)	Site investigations	Tier 1; Approved, undergoing Judicial Review	19.89	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to potential temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional survey vessels may operate within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.
Codling Wind Park (ORE02)	Offshore wind farm	Tier 1 Application submitted	21.54	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional vessels will be operating within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.
Site Investigations for the proposed Dublin Array Offshore Wind Farm (SI08)	Site investigations	Tier 1 Approved (valid to January 2028)	22.93	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to potential temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional survey vessels may operate within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.

Other developments shortlisted (ID)	Type	Tier and status	Distance (km)	Pathway for Cumulative Effect
Dublin Array (ORE03)	Offshore wind farm	Tier 1 Planning application submitted	36.97	Potential pathway for cumulative effects exists due to temporal / spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore, as additional vessels will be operating within the vicinity of the Offshore Site, potentially introducing access restriction, displacement or affecting commercially exploited species.

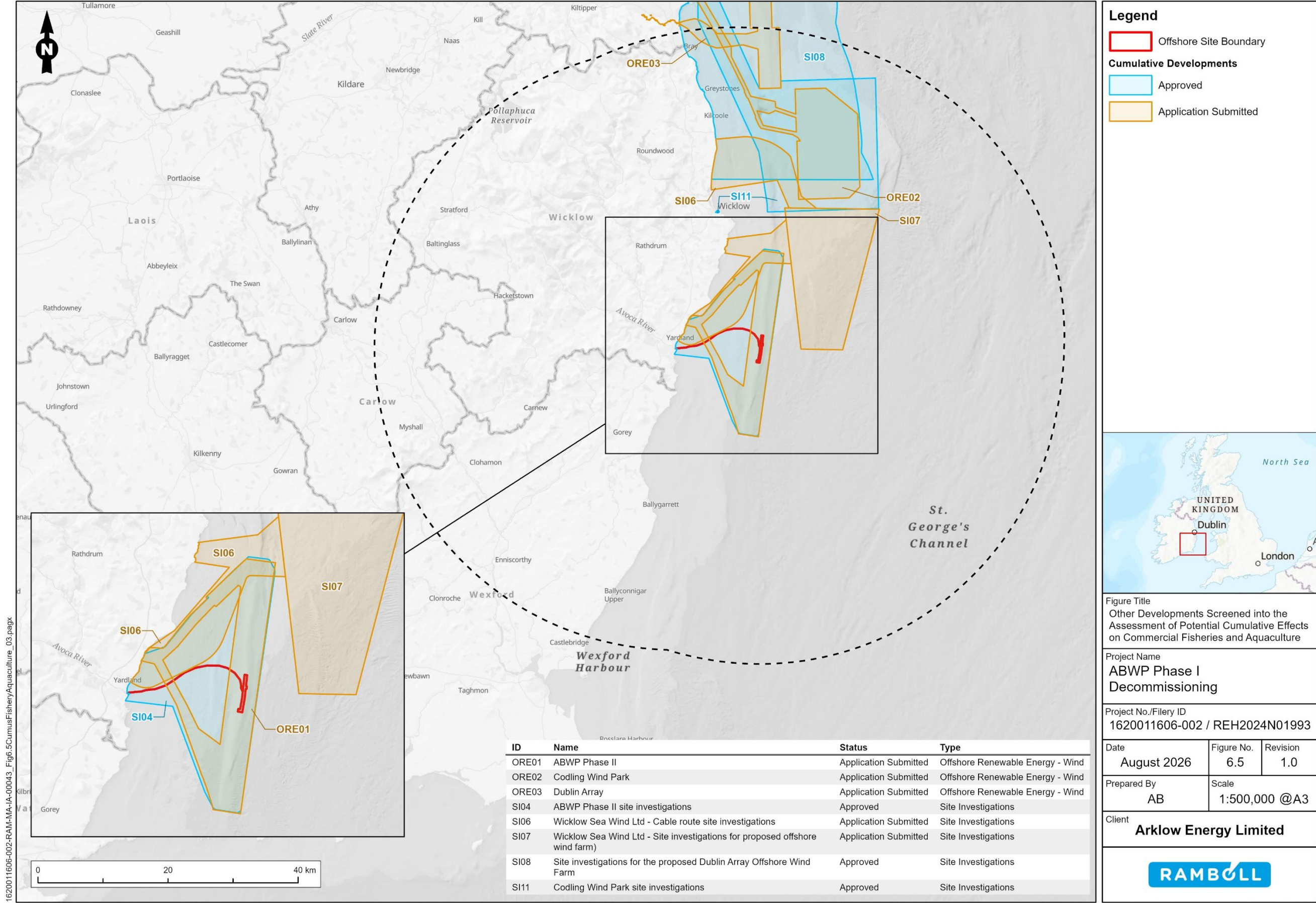


Figure 6.5: Other developments screened into the assessment of potential cumulative effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture

6.7.1.4 A number of the impacts considered for the Proposed Works Offshore alone, as outlined in **Table 6.3**, have not been considered within the assessment of potential cumulative effects. This is because they are highly localised, temporary, subject to standard project-level mitigation, and/or are not expected to interact materially with effects arising from other projects and plans. These impacts include:

- Interference with fishing activity; and
- Increased fishing gear snagging risk.

6.7.1.5 Accordingly, the impacts taken forward into the assessment of potential cumulative effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture are:

- Loss of or restricted access to fishing grounds;
- Displacement of fishing activity into other areas; and
- Effects on commercially exploited species.

Loss of or Restricted Access to Fishing Grounds

Receptor Sensitivity

6.7.1.6 The sensitivity of receptors to loss of or restricted access to fishing grounds within the Sub Lease Area in the Proposed Works Offshore alone assessment is presented in **Section 6.6** and remains applicable to the cumulative assessment. Sensitivity is assessed as:

- **Medium** for the potting fishery;
- **Medium** for the mussel seed fishery; and
- **Low** for all other fisheries.

6.7.1.7 The potting fishery and mussel seed fishery are considered to have medium sensitivity, reflecting their reliance on spatially defined inshore fishing grounds. All other fisheries are considered to have low sensitivity, reflecting their broader spatial range and limited interaction with the Study Area.

Magnitude of Cumulative Impact

6.7.1.8 When assessed cumulatively with Tier 1 projects, including offshore wind farms (e.g. ABWP Phase II, Codling Wind Park and Dublin Array), and associated site investigations within the Irish Sea, the magnitude of impact on the potting fishery is considered to be **low adverse**. This reflects the temporary and localised nature of Proposed Works Offshore, combined with the implementation of project-level mitigation measures across developments.

6.7.1.9 Export cable corridors associated with the Proposed Works Offshore and the identified cumulative offshore wind developments represent the primary pathway for interaction with the potting fleet, particularly where they overlap with inshore whelk fishing grounds. However, Proposed Works Offshore are short-term and spatially limited and are not expected to result in sustained restriction of access to fishing grounds.

6.7.1.10 For the mussel seed fishery, the cumulative magnitude of impact is also considered to be low adverse, reflecting the discrete and localised nature of seed mussel beds and the limited overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore.

6.7.1.11 For all other fisheries, the cumulative magnitude of impact is considered to be **negligible adverse**, as fishing activity within the Study Area is either limited or absent.

6.7.1.12 Therefore, it is considered that the cumulative magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds with Tier 1 projects and plans, from the Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Low adverse** for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and **negligible adverse** for all other fisheries.

6.7.1.13 There are no Tier 2 / 3 projects identified within the cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Significance of Cumulative Effect

- 6.7.1.14 Tier 1: Although a potential pathway for cumulative effects has been identified, cumulative interactions would be temporary, localised and of limited spatial extent. Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and low for all other fisheries and the cumulative magnitude of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds is low adverse for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and negligible adverse for all other fisheries. Therefore, the cumulative effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds with Tier 1 projects and plans (including ABWP Phase II, Codling Wind Park, Dublin Array, and associated site investigations), from Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Minor Adverse** for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and **Negligible Adverse** for all other fisheries, which is not significant in EIA terms.
- 6.7.1.15 Tier 2 / 3: There are no Tier 2 / 3 projects identified within the cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

- 6.7.1.16 Therefore, the residual effect of loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds, from Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Minor Adverse** for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and **Negligible Adverse** for all other fisheries, which is not significant in EIA terms. No additional mitigation is therefore required beyond that already embedded within the Proposed Works Offshore design and standard mitigation measures.

Displacement of Fishing Activity

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.7.1.17 The sensitivity of receptors to displacement of fishing activity in the Proposed Works Offshore alone assessment is presented in Section 6.6 and remains applicable to the cumulative assessment. Sensitivity is assessed as:
- **Medium** for the potting fishery;
 - **Medium** for the mussel seed fishery; and
 - **Low** for all other fisheries.
- 6.7.1.18 The potting fishery is considered to have medium sensitivity, reflecting its reliance on established inshore fishing grounds and limited operational range. The mussel seed fishery is also considered to have medium sensitivity due to its dependence on discrete and spatially constrained fishing grounds. All other fisheries are considered to have low sensitivity, reflecting their wider spatial distribution and operational flexibility.

Magnitude of Cumulative Impact

- 6.7.1.19 When assessed cumulatively with Tier 1 projects, including offshore wind developments (e.g. ABWP Phase II, Codling Wind Park and Dublin Array), and associated site investigations within the Irish Sea, the magnitude of displacement of fishing activity for the potting fishery is considered to be low adverse. This reflects the temporary and localised nature of Proposed Works Offshore and associated activities, combined with the limited spatial overlap with core inshore fishing grounds. Whilst multiple developments may influence fishing patterns at a wider Irish Sea scale, these effects are not expected to result in sustained or widespread redistribution of fishing effort within the ZoI.
- 6.7.1.20 For the mussel seed fishery and all other fisheries, the cumulative magnitude of displacement is considered to be negligible adverse, reflecting the limited spatial overlap with the Proposed Works Offshore and the highly localised nature of these fisheries.
- 6.7.1.21 Although a potential pathway for cumulative displacement has been identified, the cumulative overlap between the Proposed Works Offshore and Tier 1 projects would be temporary and geographically dispersed, such that opportunities for fishing activity within the wider Study Area

would remain available throughout the decommissioning period. Therefore, it is considered that the cumulative magnitude of displacement of fishing activity with Tier 1 projects and plans, from the Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Low adverse** for the potting fishery and **negligible adverse** for the mussel seed fishery and all other fisheries.

6.7.1.22 There are no Tier 2 / 3 projects identified within the cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Significance of Cumulative Effect

6.7.1.23 Tier 1: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and low for all other fisheries and the cumulative magnitude of displacement of fishing activity is low adverse for the potting fishery and negligible adverse for the mussel seed fishery and all other fisheries. Therefore, the cumulative effect of displacement of fishing activity with Tier 1 projects and plans (including ABWP Phase II, Codling Wind Park, Dublin Array, and associated site investigations), from Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Minor Adverse** for the potting fishery and **Negligible Adverse** for the mussel seed fishery and all other fisheries, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.7.1.24 Tier 2 / 3: There are no Tier 2 / 3 projects identified within the cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

6.7.1.25 Therefore, the residual effect of displacement of fishing activity, from Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Minor Adverse** for the potting fishery and **Negligible Adverse** for the mussel seed fishery and all other fisheries, which is not significant in EIA terms. No additional mitigation is therefore required beyond that already embedded within the project design and standard mitigation measures.

Effects on Commercially Exploited Species

Receptor Sensitivity

6.7.1.26 The sensitivity of receptors to effects on commercially exploited species in the Proposed Works Offshore alone assessment is presented in **Section 6.6** and remains applicable to the cumulative assessment. Sensitivity is assessed as:

- **Medium** for the potting fishery;
- **Medium** for the mussel seed fishery; and
- **Low** for all other fisheries.

6.7.1.27 The potting and mussel seed fisheries are considered to have medium sensitivity, reflecting their dependence on the availability and condition of commercially targeted shellfish species. All other fisheries are considered to have low sensitivity, reflecting their broader target species range and spatial flexibility.

Magnitude of Cumulative Impact

6.7.1.28 When assessed cumulatively with Tier 1 projects, including offshore wind developments (e.g. ABWP Phase II, Codling Wind Park and Dublin Array), and associated site investigations within the Irish Sea, potential effects on commercially exploited species may arise through temporary seabed disturbance, increases in suspended sediment concentrations, and underwater noise associated with Proposed Works Offshore.

6.7.1.29 These effects are expected to be localised and short-term in nature and are not anticipated to result in measurable changes to fish or shellfish populations at a scale relevant to commercial fisheries. The cumulative magnitude of impact on commercially exploited species is therefore considered to be low adverse for all fisheries.

6.7.1.30 Therefore, it is considered that the cumulative magnitude of effects on commercially exploited species with Tier 1 projects and plans, from the Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **low adverse** for all fisheries.

6.7.1.31 There are no Tier 2 / 3 projects identified within the cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Significance of Cumulative Effect

6.7.1.32 Tier 1: Overall, it is considered that the receptor sensitivity is medium for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and low for all other fisheries and the cumulative magnitude of effects on commercially exploited species is low adverse for all fisheries. Given the localised and temporary nature of ecological effects identified within **Volume 2, Chapter 5**, cumulative effects on commercially exploited species available to fisheries and aquaculture receptors are also predicted to remain low and not significant in EIA terms. Therefore, the cumulative on commercially exploited species with Tier 1 projects and plans (including ABWP Phase II, Codling Wind Park, Dublin Array, and associated site investigations), from Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Minor Adverse** for the potting and mussel seed fisheries and **Minor Adverse** for all other fisheries, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.7.1.33 Tier 2 / 3: There are no Tier 2 / 3 projects identified within the cumulative ZoI for commercial fisheries and aquaculture.

Additional Mitigation and Residual Effect

6.7.1.34 Therefore, taking into account the localised, temporary and reversible nature of ecological effects identified within **Volume 2, Chapter 5**, the residual effect on commercially exploited species, from Proposed Works Offshore, is considered to be **Minor Adverse** for all fisheries, which is not significant in EIA terms. No additional mitigation is therefore required beyond that already embedded within the project design and standard mitigation measures.

6.8 Transboundary Effects

6.8.1.1 **Volume 3, Appendix 1.3: Transboundary Screening** presents the screening of potential transboundary effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture using PINS screening criteria (PINS, 2025) using information contained within this EIAR chapter.

6.8.1.2 As stated in **Volume 3, Appendix 1.3**, the approximate distance between the Offshore Site and the nearest maritime boundary is 33 km to the UK (Wales), which is within the Study Area, which extends to approximately 25 nm (< 50 km) from the Offshore Site.

6.8.1.3 Given the mobile nature of fish, there is potential for commercially exploited species from other states to be present within the ZoI of Proposed Works Offshore. However, potential effects are anticipated to be highly localised, even for migratory commercially exploited species, and unlikely to become significant. In addition, given the limited presence of foreign fishing vessels within the Study Area, together with the short-term and reversible nature of the Proposed Works Offshore, potential impacts on commercially exploited species or on non-Irish fishing fleets are unlikely to become significant.

6.9 Summary

6.9.1 Summary of Effects

6.9.1.1 This chapter has assessed the potential impacts on commercial fisheries and aquaculture from Proposed Works Offshore. The assessment has been informed by analysis of fisheries datasets, a review of available information and stakeholder consultation, as presented in **Volume 3, Appendix 6.1**.

6.9.1.2 **Table 6.15** presents a summary of the potential impacts, embedded mitigation measures and residual effects. The impacts assessed include:

- Loss of, or restricted access to, fishing grounds within the Sub Lease Area and offshore export cable route;
- Displacement of fishing activity into other areas;
- Interference with fishing activity;
- Increased fishing gear snagging risk; and
- Effects on commercially exploited species.

6.9.1.3 The assessment concludes that the majority of impacts on commercial fisheries and aquaculture receptors are of **Negligible** to **Minor adverse** significance and are not significant in EIA terms.

6.9.1.4 A **Moderate Adverse** effect has been identified in relation to temporary loss of access to fishing grounds for the potting fleet along the offshore export cable route during Proposed Works Offshore. However, with the implementation of additional mitigation measures, including cooperation agreements and associated evidence-based procedures as set out in the FMMS (**Volume 3, Appendix 3.6**), this effect is reduced to **Minor Adverse**, which is not significant in EIA terms.

6.9.1.5 Overall, it is concluded that there will be no significant residual effects on commercial fisheries and aquaculture arising from the Proposed Works Offshore.

6.9.2 Summary of Additional Mitigation and Monitoring

6.9.2.1 **Table 6.15** presents a summary of additional mitigation proposed. No monitoring is considered to be required.

6.9.2.2 Embedded mitigation measures presented in the FMMS (**Volume 3, Appendix 3.6**), including implementation of an FLO, adherence to a Fisheries Liaison Plan, promulgation of Notices to Mariners and compliance with standard navigational practices, will minimise potential disruption to commercial fishing activity during Proposed Works Offshore.

6.9.2.3 Additional mitigation is proposed in relation to the potting fleet operating along the offshore export cable route, where Cooperation Agreements and associated payments will be implemented in accordance with the FMMS (**Volume 3, Appendix 3.6**). This will be supported by an evidence-based process to identify affected vessels and quantify any disruption.

6.9.2.4 No additional mitigation or monitoring is considered necessary for other receptors, as all residual effects are assessed to be not significant in EIA terms.

Table 6.15: Summary of potential impacts and residual effects

Impact	Embedded mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity of receptor	Magnitude of impact	Significance of impact	Additional mitigation or monitoring	Residual effect
Loss of fishing grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds in the Sub Lease Area	Development and adherence to the Detailed Offshore DEMP (see outline version in Volume 3, Appendix 3.4).	Potting fishery	Medium	Negligible adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Low	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
		All other fisheries	Low	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
Loss of fishing grounds or restricted access to fishing grounds in the Offshore Export Cable Route	Development and adherence to the Detailed VMP (see outline version in Volume 3, Appendix 3.5).	Potting fishery	Medium	Medium adverse	Moderate Adverse (significant)	Yes Implementation of FMMS including fisheries liaison, activity planning and Cooperation Agreements to minimise disruption and offset economic effects	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		All other fisheries	Low	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
Displacement of fishing activity into other areas	Development and adherence to the Detailed Fisheries Management and Mitigation Strategy (FMMS) (see Volume 3, Appendix 3.6).	Potting fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Medium	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
		All other fisheries	Low	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
Interference with fishing activity	Development and adherence to the Detailed Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) (see Volume 3, Appendix 3.7).	Potting fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Medium	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
		All other fisheries	Low	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)
Interference with fishing activity	Development and adherence to the Detailed WMP (see outline version in Volume 3, Appendix 3.8).	Potting fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Low	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)

Impact	Embedded mitigation	Receptor	Sensitivity of receptor	Magnitude of impact	Significance of impact	Additional mitigation or monitoring	Residual effect
		All other fisheries	Low	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
Increased fishing gear snagging risk		Potting fishery	Low	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		All other fisheries	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
Effects on commercially exploited species		Potting fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		Mussel seed fishery	Medium	Low adverse	Minor Adverse (not significant)	No	Minor Adverse (not significant)
		All other fisheries	Low	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse (not significant)	No	Negligible Adverse (not significant)

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