

Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) Order 2024

Management Plan

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Overview

Background to fishery

The cockle fisheries within the Kent and Essex IFCA district are some of the oldest and most important cockle fisheries in Europe. Cockle harvesting has been a mainstay in the Thames Estuary for centuries providing a key industry for the local coastal fishing community. The modern-day cockle fisheries provide income and jobs for a large number of fishermen, local processors and wider support companies. Cockles are sold into national and international markets usually as a canned product.

Historically, the cockle fishery was a year-round hand-raked fishery, focused on South Essex and North Kent beaches. Local fishermen would sail to the main harvesting grounds, allow their vessels to dry out on the beach and then hand-rake cockles into small net bags which were then transferred to baskets. The fishing vessels would then re-float on the flood tide, travel back to their home ports, and cook the cockles in shore-side sheds before selling them direct to the public. Over time, the industry became more mechanised and hydraulic dredges began to be used by the industry in the 1960s. The development of new harvesting systems saw the introduction of the solids handling pump in the early 1990s which have been further developed into the suction dredges used by the fleet today.

The cockle fishery takes place within a complex mosaic of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the cockle stocks provide food for a wide range of bird and fish species, whilst also providing other wider environmental benefits such as filtering seawater and CO₂ capture. As the fishery occurs within the boundary of the Essex Estuaries European Marine Site, Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRAs) are completed on an annual basis in order to ensure the compatibility of the fishery with the designated features of the site. Biannual stock assessments are used to assess the cockle stocks within the site and help inform a number of key technical, temporal and spatial management measures that manage the impact of the fishery within the site.

Legislative context

The Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 provides a framework for managing the demands put on our seas, and aims to ensure clean healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas, by putting in place effective systems for delivering sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment.

The Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has clearly defined duties under sections 153 and 154 of the Act to manage sustainable fisheries and conserve the wider marine environment within the coastal waters of the Kent and Essex district.

- 1) Kent and Essex IFCA must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district, in doing so it must:
 - a) seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way.
 - b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation.
 - c) take any other steps which in the Authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.
- 2) Kent and Essex IFCA must also seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered.

As a 'Competent and Relevant Authority' the Kent and Essex IFCA is required to perform its duties in regard to a range of transposed European Union legislation:

- a) the 'Habitats Directive' Council Directive 92/43/EEC,
- b) the 'Water Framework Directive' Council Directive 2000/60/EC
- c) the 'Marine Strategy Framework Directive' Council Directive 2008/56/EC.

This Management Plan relates to the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery.

On 28 September 2024, the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 1994 came to an end after being in force for 30 years. Following a substantial review of all cockle fishery management within the Kent and Essex IFCA district, new management was developed to manage both the main cockle beds within the Thames Estuary under the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) Order 2024 (T24), and the areas of the district outside of those beds under a permit byelaw.

This Management Plan will be subject to an annual review as part of the November Authority meeting of Kent & Essex IFCA which reports on that season's T24 fishery. Any significant issues, actions or changes to the management plan would be identified in this review as well as an appropriate process and time scale to address the issue. Where the Authority identifies a significant change to the Management Plan, this would be outlined in a consultation document and a consultation would be run that would last for a minimum of 28 days. The consultation will be sent to all stakeholders on the KEIFCA stakeholder distribution list and advertised on the KEIFCA website. Stakeholder responses to the consultation and the potential impacts of the proposed changes will be considered by the Authority at an appropriate Authority meeting.

Marine conservation objectives

As a 'Competent and Relevant Authority' KEIFCA has a statutory responsibility to ensure that any fishing activity does not damage, disturb or have an adverse effect on the wildlife and habitats that the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) legally protect. Any management introduced should contribute to furthering the conservation objectives of the site, so ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained.

Currently, there are 14 MPAs in the Thames area that are of relevance to the fishery (Figures 1 and 2). Special Area of Conservation (SACs) are designated to protect habitats in their own right, while Special Protected Areas (SPAs) are designated to protect habitats that are important to designated birds. Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) sit alongside the internationally designated SACs and SPAs and are designated for wide range nationally important habitats and species.

Fishing for cockles within T24, irrespective of the gear type, requires that a habitats regulations assessment (HRA) be carried out, which is submitted to Natural England who provide statutory conservation advice. The conservation advice concludes whether the cockle fishery is likely to have a significant effect on the MPA designations, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Opening of the cockle fishery is therefore dependent on Natural England's Conservation Advice.

The MPAs below overlap with the Thames cockle fishing area and are required to be included within the HRA assessment to allow fishing to commence. The HRA requirement places a significant burden on the IFCA, requiring substantial resources in terms of staff time. Passing the requirements of the HRA or Appropriate Assessment for the MPAs in question, is likely to pose limitations on the gear types, TAC, fishing effort (hours), footprint and spatial distribution in future cockle fisheries in the Thames.

Impacts avoidance and mitigation in MPAs, aims to reduce the amount of impact on sensitive designated habitats, but also manages the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) set for the fishery on an annual basis, to ensure that at least two-thirds of the cockle stocks are left to reproduce and be available as bird food. The latter is aimed as management for SPAs, while spatial management of fishery footprints tends to be management for SACs and MCZs.

SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SACs)

SACs were initially designated under the Habitats Directive and transposed into UK law. The SACs shown in Figure 1 overlap with the Regulating Order.

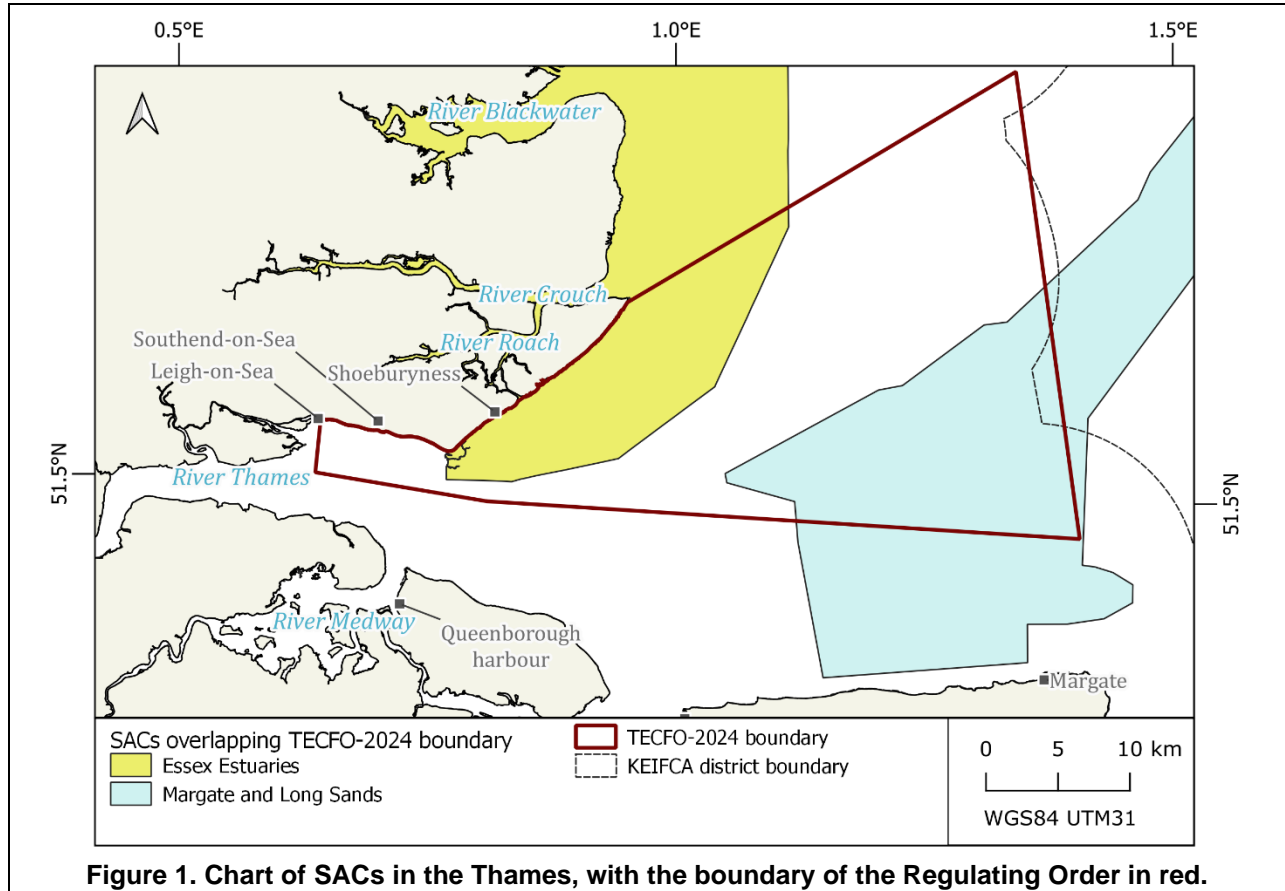


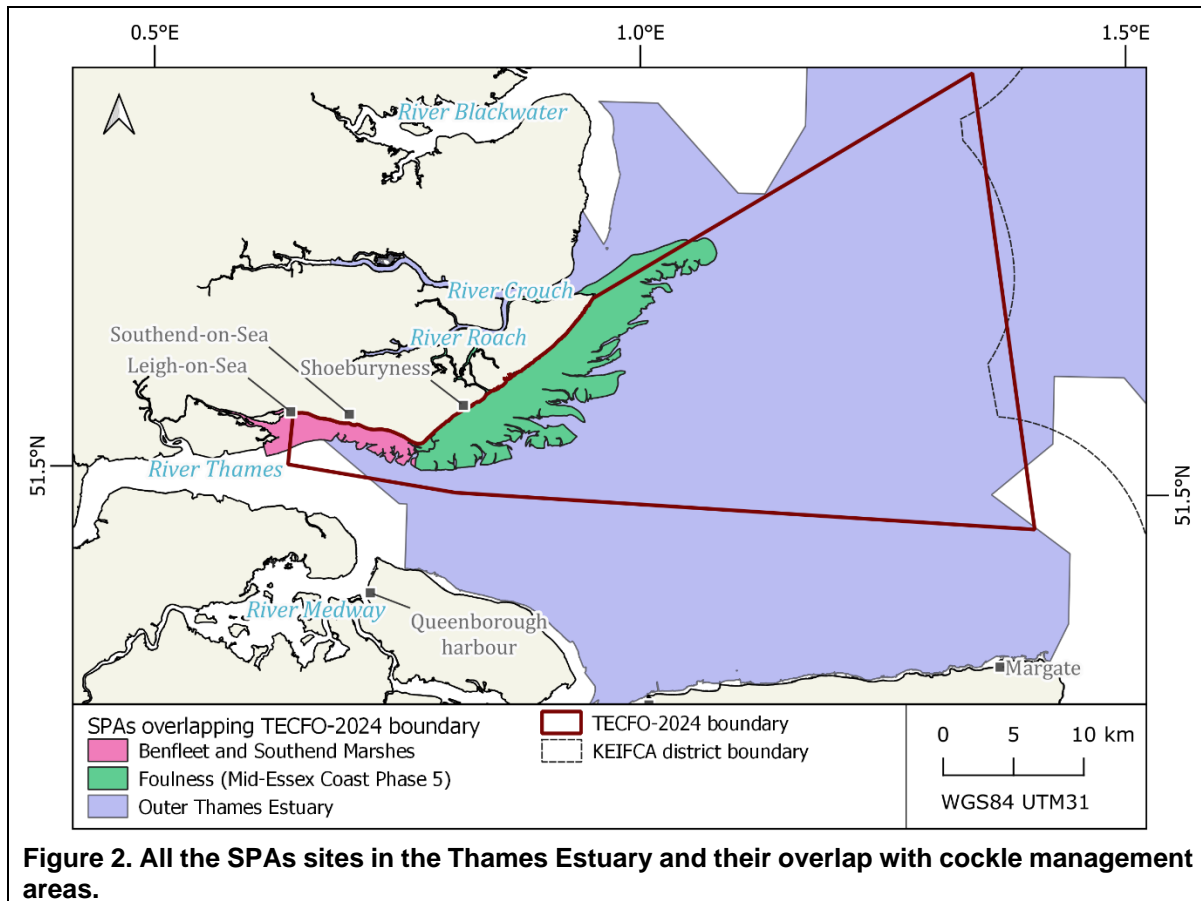
Figure 1. Chart of SACs in the Thames, with the boundary of the Regulating Order in red.

The SACs include 11 distinct designated habitats including:

1. Saltmarsh
2. Intertidal coarse sediment
3. Intertidal mixed sediment
4. Intertidal mud
5. Intertidal rock
6. Intertidal sand and muddy sand
7. Intertidal seagrass beds
8. Subtidal coarse sediments
9. Subtidal mixed sediments
10. Subtidal mud
11. Subtidal sand

SPECIAL PROTECTED AREAS (SPAs)

The vast majority of the Thames Estuary cockle grounds are protected under SPA designation. A Special Protection Area (SPA) is a designation under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. In Kent and Essex, SPAs are also designated as RAMSAR sites and covered by the same conservation advice from Natural England. SPAs overlapping with cockle grounds in the Thames include the sites shown in Figure 2.



A Special Protection Area (SPA) is a designation under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. In the Thames these SPAs have conservation objectives aimed at protecting the seabirds and waders and their habitats and food sources, such as cockles. These features include:

1. Mudflats and Sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (Intertidal mudflats and sandflats),
2. Intertidal gravel and sand,
3. Seagrass
4. Red throated diver
5. Common Tern
6. Little Tern

Geographical description of the fishery

The fishery is located within the Thames Estuary bounded by a series of lines which delineate the boundary of the Port of London Authority in the north and east. The southern boundary runs along the middle of the Thames Estuary and the western boundary is just below Canvey Island. The total area of the T24 fishery is 837 km².

The fishery is divided into harvesting areas. Areas 1-6 cover Southend Foreshore, the Maplin Sands and Foulness Sand. Area 7 is the East Barrow, area 8 the West Barrow. These beds vary spatially according to spatfall, exploitation, sediment changes and other external factors and it is possible that beds may change in the future. Figures in Annex 1 show the definitive map of the Regulating Order.

Management aims and objectives

KEIFCA's overall aim, or vision, in its management of the Fishery is to:

seek to maintain both sustainable cockle fisheries in the KEIFCA district as well as the wider ecosystem it relies on; through this, support a viable local cockle industry, recognising its important long-term contribution to coastal communities, and providing skilled employment.

To achieve this aim, KEIFCA has identified and will pursue, four interlinking management objectives. Under each objective a series of questions has been developed to provide a practical framework to help focus future improvements and assess progress of the fishery.

1) Creating a well-managed fishery

- a) Does the fishery have a simple framework that is easy for fishers, Authority members and other stakeholders to understand and work within?
- b) Is the fishery easy and cost-efficient to administer, and not create too much paperwork for applicants to fill in?
- c) Does the fishery have clear rules and regulations and is it straightforward for KEIFCA officers to enforce and fishers to comply with?

2) Creating an environmentally responsible fishery

- a) Does the management of the fishery help ensure the cockle stock population is fished within clear limits that take into account stock assessments and breeding stock?
- b) Does the management of the fishery assess and monitor the impact of the fishery on the seabed, and strive to make the impact as small as possible?
- c) Does the management of the fishery consider the impact of the cockle fishery on the wider ecosystem and support internationally recognised accreditation systems?

3) Helping support a prosperous and resilient local coastal economy

- a) Does the fishery provide a framework that will help sustain a viable long-term cockle industry in the KEIFCA district?
- b) Does the fishery help support local skilled employment?
- c) Does the fishery help assist long-term investment and growth in the local economy, supporting local shore side infrastructure and supply chains?
- d) Does the fishery 'add value' to the cockles that are caught in the cockle fishery?

4) To strengthen and support our dynamic local coastal community

- a) Does the fishery provide fair opportunities for individuals and businesses, and help support young or new fishers?
- b) Does the fishery help encourage businesses to invest in a safe and skilled workforce?
- c) Does the fishery help support the heritage and culture of the cockle fishery, including supporting local tourism associated with the Thames cockle fishery?

Managing the fishery – overall management framework

TECFO 2024 structure and licencing

The T24 is a 28-year order that will last until 2053. For licencing purposes, it is split into four 7-year licencing cycles. Licences are issued and renewed annually to the same licence holders from year 1 to year 7 in each cycle. The licence application process for the following 7-year cycle then takes place in the year prior to the end of the current cycle. Before starting the licence application process for the next 7 years, KEIFCA reviews and agrees both the number of licences it will issue in the next 7-year cycle as well as the application criteria weighting and process that applicants will use to apply for a licence. Both reviews assess all relevant information and ask stakeholders for feedback on any proposed changes. A licence holder from a previous 7-year cycle shall have no legitimate expectation of being granted a licence for a following 7-year cycle.

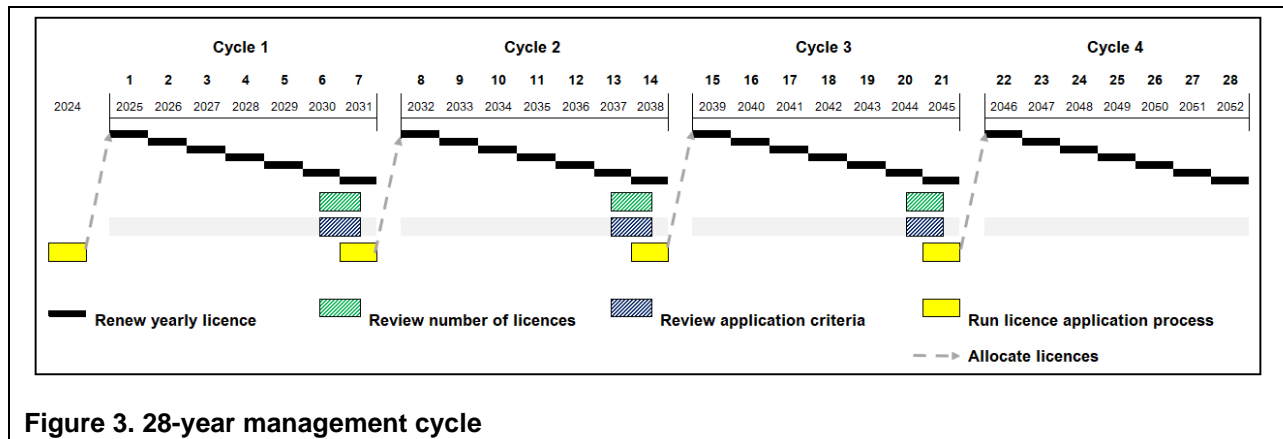


Figure 3. 28-year management cycle

Background of licences, regulations and licence conditions

The Order relating to the Fishery generally prohibits unlicensed cockle fishing and allows for regulations and restrictions to be imposed (with the consent of the Secretary of State) which prohibit or regulate cockle fishing. Regulating Orders also encourage long term investment in the Fishery.

Under the Order, a licence is required to fish for cockles within the Fishery and it is an offence to fish for cockles within the area of the Fishery without a licence. KEIFCA may issue licences under the Order (Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967) in such numbers and to such persons, and operative for such periods, and may authorise the dredging, fishing for or taking of shellfish at such times, in such manner and to such extent as it may determine. This includes the setting of licence conditions, daily and annual quotas and cockle size limits, and the determination of fishing times, areas and methods. No applicant may hold more than one licence for the fishery.

It is the aim of KEIFCA to licence at least 14 vessels to participate in the Fishery on an annual basis, up to a maximum of 20 vessels. The justification for this range of licence numbers has been based on:

- a) The types of businesses and scale of industry which has been established to facilitate the fishery in a practical/logistical sense and;
- b) The potential impact upon the seabed and cockle stocks from using the suction dredge fishing gear used within the KEIFCA district.

Under the provisions of the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 KEIFCA may, with the consent of the appropriate Ministers:

- a) revise the tolls leviable under the Order
- b) make or change regulations made under the Order

- c) adopt or change any policy as to whom, and under what conditions, they propose to issue licences

Dynamic and reactive management of a commercial fishery in the marine environment which will by nature experience conditions that are difficult to predict, is best achieved through the imposition of licence conditions. KEIFCA will use licence conditions to manage the fishery effectively and efficiently.

Allocation of licences

Licences are allocated to applicants in accordance with the Licence Allocation Procedure (LAP), which can be found in Annex 2, subject to the Transitional Period (Annex 5). All applications submitted as part of the LAP are subject to a technical evaluation by officers upon receipt as detailed in Annex 3. Following technical evaluation, applications are subject to scoring, by an Applications Panel, against the specified application criteria and grade descriptors which are detailed in Annex 4. Following the recommendations of the Applications Panel, all licences must be confirmed by the Authority prior to the first year of issue. The Authority's decision regarding the issue, or not, of a licence is final.

After the first 7-year licencing cycle, in addition to following the LAP, all applicants who have held a licence in the preceding 7-year cycle will be required to complete a Business Report, outlining the progress they have made against their Business Plan, as part of their 7-year application. The report would be scored against the Business Report grade descriptors (Annex 6) and the Business Plan score (Annex 4) and would be split evenly between the assessment of progress against the previous 7-year plan and the assessment of the next 7-year plan. This requirement will be incorporated into the LAP when this management plan is reviewed ahead of the second licencing cycle.

Selling of a licence holding company

If the majority shareholding of a company issued with a licence is to change, KEIFCA must be notified in writing no less than 3 months in advance. Where this change of ownership may result in multiple licences being held by the same parent company, ultimate parent company or individual, KEIFCA may work with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in order to undertake any relevant investigation. No licence would be renewed prior to any investigation being concluded.

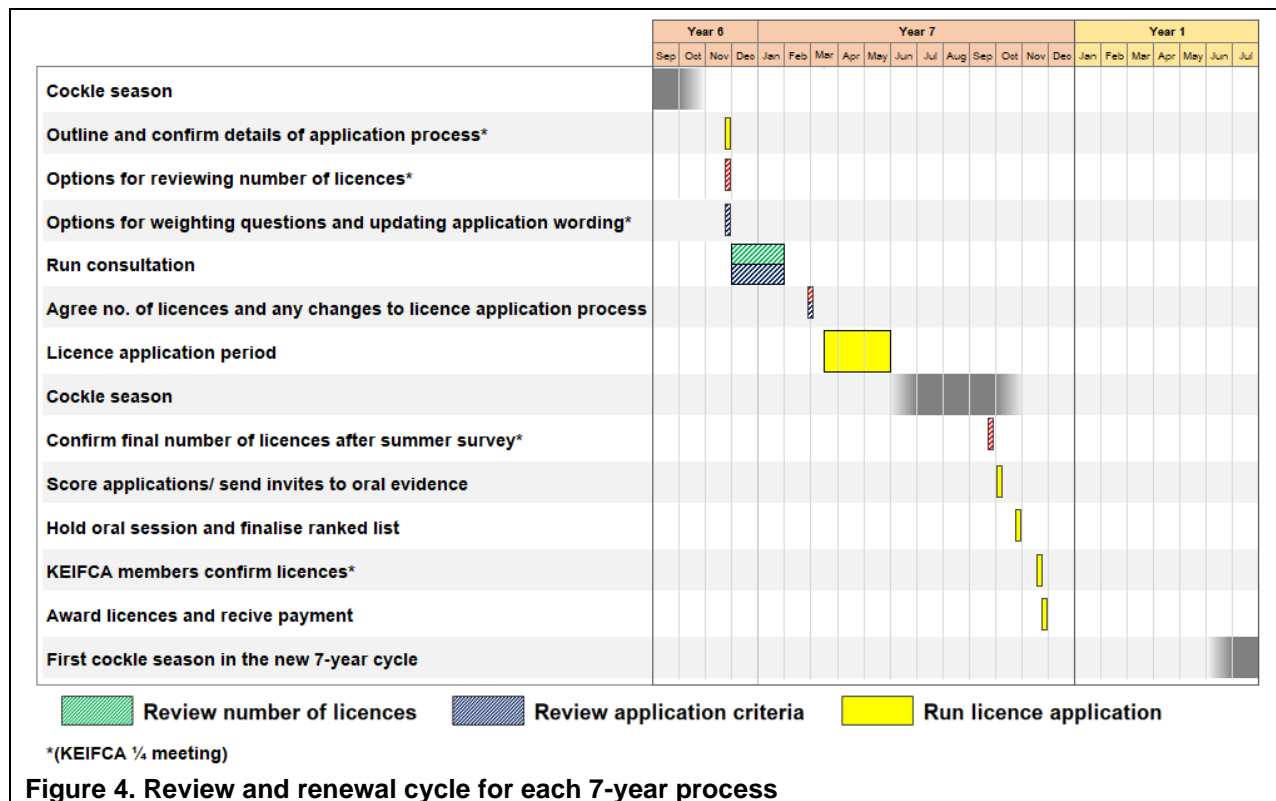
Should any investigation result in:

1. the CMA raising concerns that any sale will have an impact on market share, or
2. the new company structure failing the FPPA

then the Authority will decide upon the right of renewal for that licence for the remainder of the 7-year cycle.

Monitoring and revising the number of licences, licence application process and licence reporting process

It is important to periodically assess and adapt the process of issuing and reporting on licences to ensure the system is as relevant, appropriate and effective as it can be. This Management Plan includes review procedures within each 7-year cycle that provide an opportunity to reflect on the current system and if necessary, adapt processes for the next 7-year cycle. The process is outlined in Figure 4 below.



Before starting the licence application process, KEIFCA will review and agree:

- a) the number of licences it will issue in the next 7-year cycle
- b) the application process and documents applicants will use to apply for a licence
- c) the licence reporting process and documentation that successful applicants will follow

Both reviews will follow the same basic process and be run concurrently.

At the November Authority meeting in year 6 of each cycle, Members will confirm the key dates in the application process (e.g. start and finish dates for licence application, meeting dates etc) and the panellists on the application panel, as well as consider any proposed changes to:

- a) the number of licences to be issued in the next 7-year cycle.
- b) the licence application process including the application forms and the weighting of criteria.

Authority members will review the papers and agree a consultation document for any proposed changes. The consultation document will be sent to all stakeholders on the KEIFCA stakeholder distribution list and advertised on the KEIFCA website. The Ministry of Defence will also be contacted as a consultee with regards to this process. The consultation will last for a minimum of 28 days.

Stakeholder responses to the consultation and the potential impacts of the proposed changes will be considered by the Authority at an appropriate Authority meeting. The Authority will use this information to agree the number of licences to be issued in the next 7-year cycle and any changes that it regards as necessary to the licence application process. The number of licences agreed would become the default number of licences issued in the next 7-year cycle, however, the number of licences would only be confirmed by the Authority following the September surveys in year 7 of the cycle after considering cockle stock levels within the fishery.

Throughout this process the Authority will consider the management aims and objectives, and the questions which accompany them when developing and reviewing any options or changes. The agreed process and documents will then be used in the licence application process.

Annual Fishery Management

Stock assessment surveys and Total Allowable Catch (TAC)

Stock assessment surveys are normally carried out twice a year in the Spring and Autumn using a standard methodology. Surveys will estimate the cockle biomass of each year class from each management area within the Fishery.

A Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the opening of the fishery is established each year based on the results of the Spring survey, taking into account the previous year's spatfall and over-winter survival as well as the 10-year average growth of cockles across the length of the fishing season.

Once the survey is complete the results are assessed, and the tonnage of cockle is calculated. The TAC is then set using adult cockles (within the 1 year to 3-year classes) within the rule of thirds management approach – a third of cockles for the fishing industry, a third for the bird food requirements and a third left on the ground for the following year. This approach aims to provide food for the requirements of the overwintering birds and a TAC for the fishermen as well as ensuring long term sustainability of the population. This has been the approach to managing the cockle fisheries within the Thames since 2000 and has provided a long-term sustainable fishery since then. The TAC is split equally amongst the fleet and is operationalised by converting the TAC into a number of trips per boat of a specified quantity of cockles.

Stakeholder engagement and communication

A licence holders meeting will be held prior to the May KEIFCA quarterly meeting during each year in order to discuss survey results with the industry prior to final management decisions being made by the Authority.

Membership of the group needs to represent the licence holders and KEIFCA, but not be too large to work in detail together. As a result, a maximum of two representatives per licence holder will be permitted at these meetings, one of whom must be a company director or the licence holder themselves. In addition, other people/organisations will be invited to meetings as required by KEIFCA.

A summary of the licence holders meeting along with the survey results from the spring stock assessment and officers' recommendations regarding the annual management of the fishery will be presented at the May KEIFCA quarterly meeting. This meeting is the primary mechanism for the setting of annual management measures in addition to, and in regard to, the regulations and licence conditions.

The outcomes of the May Authority meeting will be communicated to all licence holders in writing, along with confirmation of the management measures which will apply for that year.

Changes to any licence conditions, bed closures, payments and general fishery operations will be communicated to all licensees in writing.

Annual renewal of licences

Persons who have held a licence in the preceding season of the current 7-year cycle, will be notified by letter of the need to renew for the coming season. This notification will be sent out by KEIFCA as soon as possible after the end of the preceding season along with details of how to apply. Applications for the coming season must be received by KEIFCA by the deadline specified within the letter.

Failure to apply to renew a licence in any year when licences are available will result in the person losing their right to renew for the remainder of the 7-year cycle. Any licence not renewed on an annual basis will be issued for the remainder of the 7-year cycle to the applicant who is next on the ranked list from the previous 7-year period application process.

Licence fees

Section 3 of the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 allows KEIFCA as the grantee to recoup the costs of setting up and running the order, as well as impose tolls for the benefit of the fishery. The licence fee is reviewed annually, in May, and applies a cost-recovery mechanism based on the costs of running the fishery (annual monitoring, management and enforcement costs) and furthering the vision and the objectives of the management plan.

As part of the annual licence fee review, consideration will be given to increasing the licence fee at each review, in line with the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) or other appropriate measure of inflation.

Under the Regulating Order the Authority will be required to review the fishery every 7 years and efforts will be made to better analyse and utilise historic data as well as set up new systems and processes to collect a range of data intended to help Members make management decisions. Efforts will also be made to simplify the collection of information and to better manage and store data as well as work with the industry to develop and trial new solutions that further the vision and the objectives of the management plan.

Issue of licences

Licences will only be issued, following the annual renewal process, after the Authority has considered stock levels within the regulated fishery. Limitation of fishing effort and catches will be applied equally to all licence holders.

All licenses will include a condition that the removal of cockles will only be permitted within specified areas of the regulated fishery and during specified fishing periods. A list of specified areas and periods authorising the dredging, fishing or taking of cockles from within the area of the regulated fishery, by licensed persons, will be provided to each licence holder.

No vessel will be named in a licence unless such a vessel is; owned by the licence holder; is a British Registered Fishing Vessel and is in possession of the relevant licence issued by the Marine Management Organisation. The production of the Registration Certificate, the Small Fishing Vessel Certificate and the relevant MMO licence must accompany any application by the owner for a licence. The vessel's Name, Port Letters and Number shall be clearly displayed as provided for in The Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Regulations 1993 (SI No. 3138).

Fishing may not be permitted under any annually renewed licence if, in any year, there are outstanding legal challenges regarding the licensing of fishing operations within T24.

Reporting of activity

Having regard to KEIFCA's need to assess the level of exploitation of the regulated fishery all holders of licences will be required to provide by the Tuesday of every week, a daily record for the preceding week of actual catch taken, areas fished, fishing effort, damage rates and any other such data that KEIFCA may require to effectively manage, and report upon, the fishery.

Regulation and Enforcement

a) Regulation

The principles of good regulation will be adopted in the Fishery. KEIFCA will be transparent, accountable, proportionate, consistent and targeted in its regulatory and enforcement activities. These principles are explained further in the KEIFCA Enforcement and Prosecution Policy.

KEIFCA will support licensees' compliance with the restrictions and regulations, as well as the licence conditions, in the Fishery through engagement, education and enabling. Should any licensee commit a

breach of the restrictions and regulations or licence conditions they will be dealt with in accordance with the KEIFCA Enforcement and Prosecution Policy.

b) Enforcement

The full range of enforcement tools will be used to achieve compliance in the Fishery and tackle illegal activity. This includes but is not limited to providing advice and guidance, issuing warnings, offering formal cautions, issuing Financial Administrative Penalties (FAP's) and taking prosecutions.

When deciding on a suitable enforcement response consideration is given to the desired outcome of the response. Actions may be taken to stop an activity, restore or remediate, bring into compliance, punish and/or deter or a combination of all of these.

Public interest factors are considered for each case in determining the suitable responses to offences. These include intent, environmental effect, previous history and attitude.

Shellfish hygiene monitoring

Shellfish harvesting areas are classified according to the extent of microbial (faecal) contamination as shown by monitoring of *E. coli* in shellfish flesh. Treatment processes are stipulated according to the classification status of the area. Classification of shellfish waters in the KEIFCA district can be viewed on the following website:

<https://www.cefas.co.uk/data-and-publications/shellfish-classification-and-microbiological-monitoring/england-and-wales/classification-zone-maps/>

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has a statutory responsibility for ensuring that monitoring and subsequent classification of cockle stocks occurs. This is conducted in collaboration with the Environmental Health teams at the councils across the district and London Port Health. In the event of monitoring results highlighting the need for a closure of the fishery, KEIFCA will follow any closure notices issued by the FSA and suspend the harvesting of cockles until the bed closure is lifted. KEIFCA will work with FSA and local councils during any such closures to facilitate the reopening of beds when safe to do so.

Annex 1 – Maps

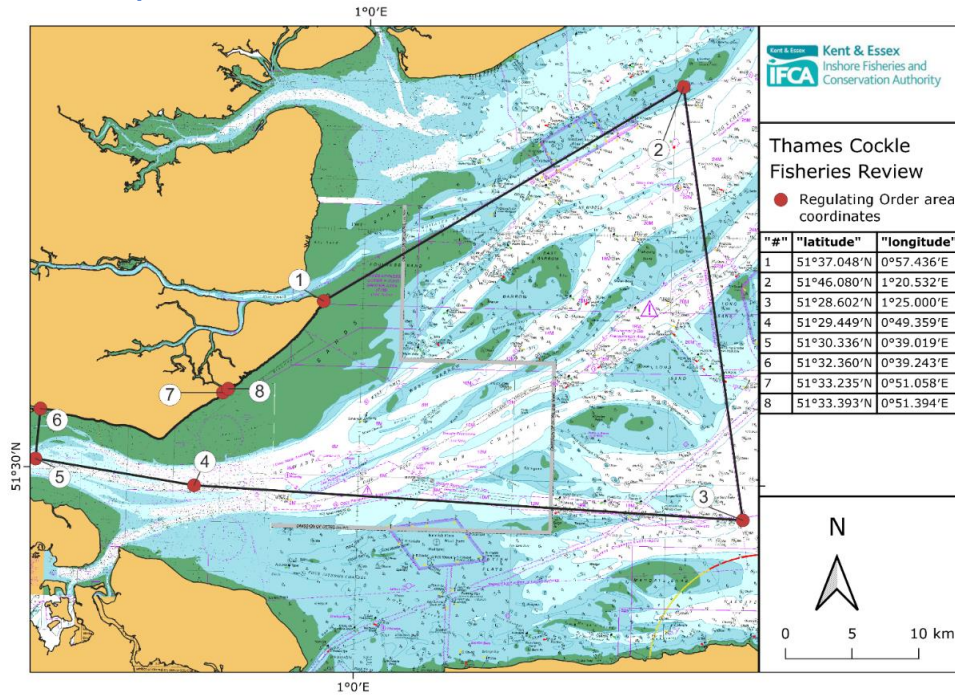


Figure 5. Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024, Definitive Map

Table 1. Coordinates for TECFO 2024 boundary

sequence	latitude	longitude
1	51°37.048'N	0°57.0436'E
2	51°46.080'N	1°20.532'E
3	51°28.602'N	1°25.000'E
4	51°29.449'N	0°49.359'E
5	51°30.336'N	0°39.019'E
6	51°32.360'N	0°39.243'E
7	51°33.235'N	0°51.058'E
8	51°33.393'N	0°51.394'E

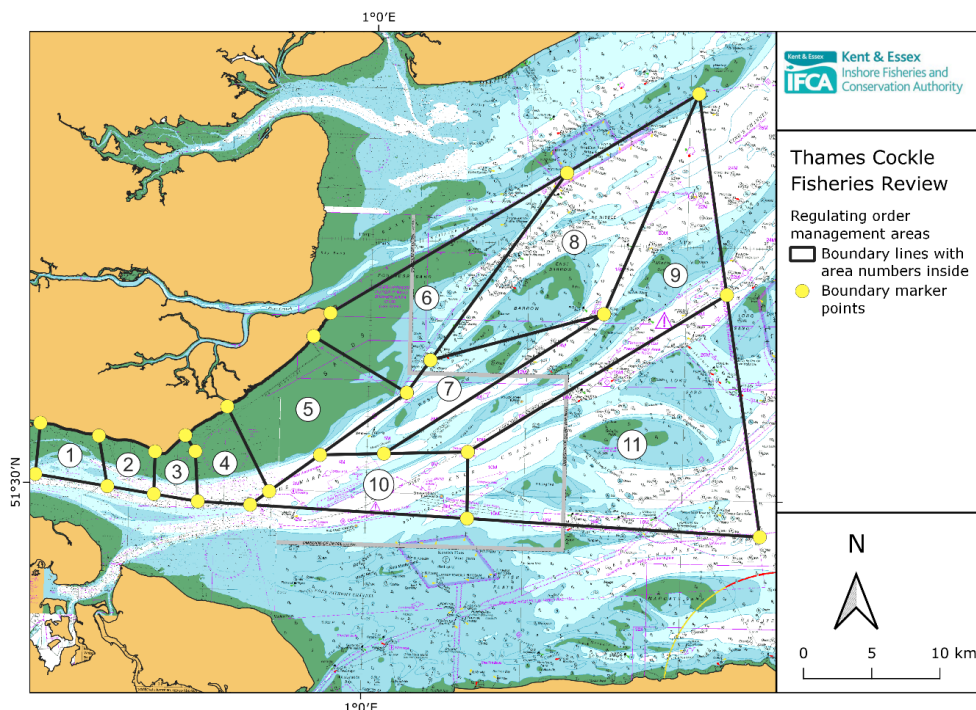


Figure 6. Location of management areas within TECFO 2024

Table 2. Coordinates for each management area

Area	sequence	latitude	longitude
1	a	51°32.360'N	0°39.243'E
	b	51°30.336'N	0°39.019'E
	c	51°29.944'N	0°43.605'E
	d	51°31.926'N	0°42.972'E
2	a	51°31.926'N	0°42.972'E
	b	51°29.944'N	0°43.605'E
	c	51°29.690'N	0°46.564'E
3	a	51°31.368'N	0°46.564'E
	b	51°29.690'N	0°46.564'E
	c	51°29.449'N	0°49.359'E
	d	51°31.430'N	0°49.116'E
4	a	51°32.046'N	0°48.454'E
	b	51°31.430'N	0°49.116'E
	c	51°29.449'N	0°49.359'E
	d	51°29.377'N	0°52.688'E
	e	51°29.933'N	0°53.861'E
	f	51°33.235'N	0°51.058'E
5	a	51°33.235'N	0°51.058'E
	b	51°29.933'N	0°53.861'E
	c	51°33.978'N	1°02.412'E
	d	51°36.112'N	0°56.402'E
	e	51°33.393'N	0°51.394'E
6	a	51°36.112'N	0°56.402'E
	b	51°33.978'N	1°02.412'E
	c	51°42.835'N	1°12.241'E
	d	51°37.048'N	0°57.436'E
7	a	51°31.428'N	0°57.022'E
	b	51°31.546'N	1°01.069'E
	c	51°37.280'N	1°14.800'E
	d	51°35.290'N	1°03.865'E
	e	51°33.978'N	1°02.412'E
8	a	51°35.290'N	1°03.865'E
	b	51°37.280'N	1°14.800'E
	c	51°46.080'N	1°20.532'E
	d	51°42.835'N	1°12.241'E
9	a	51°31.546'N	1°01.069'E
	b	51°31.698'N	1°06.378'E
	c	51°38.148'N	1°22.578'E
	d	51°46.080'N	1°20.532'E
	e	51°37.280'N	1°14.800'E
10	a	51°29.377'N	0°52.688'E
	b	51°29.066'N	1°06.439'E
	c	51°31.698'N	1°06.378'E
	d	51°31.428'N	0°57.022'E
11	a	51°31.698'N	1°06.378'E
	b	51°29.066'N	1°06.439'E
	c	51°28.602'N	1°25.000'E
	d	51°38.148'N	1°22.578'E

Annex 2 –Licence Allocation Procedure (LAP)

This procedure will be used to allocate licences to successful applicants under the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) Order 2024. The LAP consists of three consecutive stages:

1. Applying for a licence
2. Assessing licence applications
3. Awarding of a licence

Each licence will be for a maximum of 1 year and must be renewed annually to enable fishing throughout that 7-year cycle. A person may not hold more than one licence within the T24.

A ranked list of no more than $n+5$, where n is the number of licenses available for that 7-year cycle, will be created according to this procedure in 2024. The ranked list will be valid for seven fishery years from 1st January 2025 until December 31st 2031. Applications will be opened again in March 2031, to create a new ranked list of $n+5$ which is valid for the following seven fishery years from 1st January 2032 until December 31st 2038. This same process will occur every seven years until the expiration of the Order in 2052.

If for any reason a licence is not renewed during the 7-year cycle, the licence may be offered to the next ranked applicant on the list for no more than the remainder of the current 7-year cycle, pending the successful completion of a series of updated checks (the applicant will be asked to submit a current version of TECFO-001 and TECFO-002 application forms). If these checks are not passed successfully by the applicant, then the licence may be offered to the next ranked applicant pending the same checks. This process may continue until an applicant is successful.

STAGE 1. APPLYING FOR A LICENCE

At the November Authority meeting in year 6 of each cycle, Members will confirm the key dates in the application process (e.g. start and finish dates for licence application, meeting dates etc) and the five KEIFCA members and two independent experts that will sit on the Applications Panel. The window for licence applications will last a minimum of 4 weeks, and the TECFO-001 7-year cycle licence application form will be kept on the KEIFCA website. The opportunity to apply for a licence will be advertised on the KEIFCA website. Applications must be received by KEIFCA by the closing date set out in the advertisement. KEIFCA will issue a confirmation of receipt for each application received and each application form will be time stamped. Applications will not be accepted after the specified closing date and time.

STAGE 2. ASSESSING LICENCE APPLICATIONS

The process of scoring and ranking licence applications will be undertaken by the Applications Panel. The Applications Panel would evaluate and score each application against the grade descriptors for each question. Total scores will be used to rank applications and licences would be awarded in descending scores starting with those with the highest scores until all available licences have been issued. The members of the Application Panel would be suggested and confirmed at the November Authority meeting in year 6 of the cycle prior to the start of the application process. The Applications Panel would follow standing orders and would be chaired by the KEIFCA chairman or vice-chairman.

Checking application forms and technical evaluation of answers

Upon receipt, applications will first need to pass a series of pass/ fail checks and a Fit and Proper Persons Assessment (FPPA) as described in Annex 3 before officers undertake an initial technical evaluation of the applications against the descriptors as described in Annex 4. As part of this process officers will rank all the replies for an individual question and look to seek any specific technical advice required to make an informed evaluation decision (e.g. technical details about engines, or effectiveness of CO₂ reduction plans etc) and may carry out verification with both the applicant as well as a range of regulators and partners.

These partner organisations will not be party to any application and/or scoring details outside of their verification requirements. Officers may need to contact applicants for clarification or evidence of commitments made within their application during this process.

Scoring and initial ranking of applications

A meeting with the Applications Panel, will then be held and each panel member will evaluate and score all the replies from a specific question against the grade descriptors (Annex 4). Different members will score different questions with each member scoring at least 2 questions, but no panel member scoring all the questions. The Applications Panel scores for each question will then be averaged, weighted, and added together to result in a total mean score per application (Annex 4 Table 1). The total mean score will be used to make a draft ranked list of the applications.

Moderation and ranking of applications

The Applications Panel will then meet to moderate and agree the scores and then rank the applications. The meeting will first look to address any mitigations from the FPPA, agree the applications that may be excluded from the process, i.e. those which score less than half the top applications marks or receive an Unacceptable or Major reservations score from one of the questions, and then review the scoring and ranking of each application.

If the final scores are similar or identical for two or more applications and at the cut-off point where applicants would or would not receive a licence, the relevant applicants would be invited to a meeting of the Applications Panel and asked to orally run through their application and answer questions on their application from the Panel.

The Applications Panel may also invite applicants to the oral evidence meeting to clarify key points in their application.

Any applicants invited to the oral evidence session would be sent a letter outlining the purpose of the session and the nature of the questions that could be asked.

Oral evidence session and final ranking of applications

At the oral evidence session, the Chair would initially ask the same questions as laid out in the application form before other members would then have the opportunity to ask the applicant follow-up questions on each part of the application.

After all the applicants have given evidence, the Applications Panel, led by the Chair, will review each application in turn, running through the questions in order. The Panel would then review each question in turn and come to a decision as to whether the score for that question allocated in the previous meeting should go up, go down or stay the same. The Chair would look for a unanimous decision but if one can't be reached the decision would be brought to a vote.

The new question scores would then be added to reach a total. Total scores will be used to rank applications and licences would be awarded in descending scores order starting with those with the highest scores until all available licences have been issued.

If the final scores of two applications are the same, the Chair would ask members of the Applications Panel to vote for the application that in their opinion was the strongest overall and should be ranked higher. Applications Panel members would use the vision, management objectives and evaluation questions as a guide, and would be asked to provide a rationale for their choice.

The scoring process used at the oral evidence meeting is based upon the scoring system used for all applications. However, the oral evidence meeting is only used to decide the final ranking of those applicants invited to give oral evidence.

The ranked list of applicants will be held within KEIFCA. Individual applicants who are successfully placed on the $n+5$ list will be informed of their place on the list. Applicants who are not successfully placed on the $n+5$ list will be informed that they are not successful. The recommendations made by the Applications Panel are final.

STAGE 3. AWARDING OF LICENCES

Pre-approval for a licence

Prior to the award of the licence, a KEIFCA officer may contact the short-listed applicant and ask for any supporting documents that were described in their application. The applicant will have 10 working days to supply this information.

If any issues arise with the information provided, a KEIFCA officer may invite the shortlisted applicant to a Post Evaluation Clarification Meeting. During this meeting officers will seek further clarification from the applicant on their bid in-line with the details provided within the application response. A minimum of three of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Chief Officer, and Assistant Chief Officer would attend the meeting as well as any other officers invited by the Chair and minutes would be taken.

Should the answers not be to a satisfactory level, KEIFCA reserves the right to review the scores previously allocated and would bring the matter to the full Authority meeting for a final decision. The Authority would review all the evidence and then decide whether to continue to issue the licence to the applicant or to remove the application from the process as misleading information or unsubstantiated claims were used in the application process.

Confirmation of ranked applicant list and successful applicants by full authority

At the November meeting in year 7 of the 7-year cycle, a paper outlining the application process, the agreed ranked list of the $n+5$ applications would be laid in front of the Authority for agreement. If there are any issues with a specific licence application, confirmation of that licence may be withheld and the matter addressed at a later Authority meeting. A confirmation decision by the Authority is final.

Awarding licences

In the event that the allocation of a licence is confirmed, KEIFCA will write to the applicant advising them of the offer of a licence. The applicant must accept the offer in writing and will be required to complete a TECFO-002 form to provide details of the vessel and master for the 1st year of the licence. This acceptance and the completed TECFO-002 form must be accompanied by the payment of the appropriate annual fee and must be received by KEIFCA by the date specified in the offer letter.

KEIFCA will not issue a licence until payment is made and if payment has not been received (and cleared as necessary) by 5:00pm on the payment deadline, the offer of a licence will lapse and KEIFCA will be entitled to offer the licence to the next ranked applicant. An applicant who allows the offer of a licence to lapse in this way will lose the right to renew for the remainder of the 7-year cycle.

FALSE AND MISLEADING INFORMATION DISCOVERY FOLLOWING ISSUE OF A LICENCE

If any evidence comes to light, after a licence has been issued, that the information provided in a licence application form was misleading or false, a meeting will be arranged and KEIFCA officers would seek further clarification from the applicant on their licence application. A minimum of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Chief Officer, and Assistant Chief Officer would attend the meeting and minutes would be taken.

Should the answers not be to a satisfactory level, KEIFCA reserves the right to review the scores previously allocated and would bring the matter to the full Authority meeting for a final decision. The Authority would review all the evidence and then decide whether to continue to issue the licence to the applicant or to submit an application to the Minister to revoke the licence.

Following revocation of the licence by the Minister, the licence may be issued to the next ranked application, in the same manner as the other licences for the remainder of the 7-year cycle following a series of updated checks (the applicant would be asked to submit a current version of TECFO001 and TECFO002).

Annex 3 – Officer technical evaluation of license applications

Each application will be evaluated by officers as described in this methodology. The evaluation comprises of three stages:

- Stage One – Application Verification
- Stage Two – Fit and Proper Persons Assessment (FPPA)
- Stage Three – Evaluation of submission against scoring descriptors (Annex 4)

STAGE ONE – APPLICATION VERIFICATION

Applications will be subject to an initial verification check to confirm that the:

- a) Applications have been submitted on time and are sufficiently complete to enable them to be evaluated in accordance with this document.
- b) If the applicant is a company, a series of Companies House checks would be undertaken to confirm the relevant details of the applicant.
- c) The applicant owns a registered fishing vessel which is capable of carrying the maximum quantity of catch allowed under the licence and is certified by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to undertake dredging.

Applications that do not meet any of a) – c) may be rejected at this stage.

STAGE TWO – FIT AND PROPER PERSONS ASSESSMENT (FPPA)

Each applicant will need to declare whether they, their organisation or any person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation have any relevant unspent criminal convictions and cautions or have influenced or attempted to influence the decision-making process of KEIFCA; or have obtained or attempted to obtain confidential information that may confer upon the organisation undue advantages in the licence application process, or have negligently provided misleading information that may have a material influence on decisions concerning exclusion, selection or award of a licence.

If the applicant does declare any of the above, then they are offered the opportunity to provide details and explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion.

Declarations under the 'Mandatory Exclusions' section

Only in exceptional circumstances will an applicant who answers affirmatively to these questions be considered for a licence. If the applicant does make a declaration, this would be the first matter to discuss at the Applications Panel meeting to moderate and agree scoring and ranking of the applications.

Declarations under the 'Discretionary Exclusions' section

If an applicant answers affirmatively to this question, the nature, context and number of occasions as well as the steps taken by the applicant to prevent a reoccurrence will be taken into consideration by the Applications Panel when considering the final ranking position of an application. The rationale behind the final ranking and decision would be documented.

Annex 4 – Scoring of licence applications

Each application will be scored by the Applications Panel as described in this methodology. The scoring covers six areas:

1. Business Plan
2. Fishing experience
3. Landing and cooking cockles in the district
4. Support of skilled employment
5. Reducing the impact of fishing operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed
6. Plans to reduce CO₂ emissions and improve the wider environment

An application shall be assigned weighted scores as set out in the table below. The total scores achieved for the experience and track record section will be added to the scores for the business plan and socioeconomic and environmental criteria to give an overall score. The overall scores will then be used to rank the applications.

Example of scoring table

Question	Mark from question	Divide mark by 100 (a)	Question weighted score (b)	Total score for that question (a) x (b)
Business Plan			23	
Fishing experience track record			36	
Landing and cooking cockles caught in the district			6	
Support of skilled local employment			12	
Reduce the impact of fishing operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed			18	
Plan to reduce CO ₂ emissions and improve the wider environment			5	
Total Overall Score				

1. BUSINESS PLAN

Applicants are required to submit a business plan covering the 7 years of the licence, and answering the questions contained within this section. In submitting the business plan, applicants are requested to provide evidence of their experience, achievements, and benefit outcomes. The business plan will be awarded appropriate marks based on the following basis:

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Exceptional response with value added</p> <p>The business plan submitted by the licence applicant exceeds the requirements by demonstrating exceptional experience, competence, and capability in delivering the key details and requirements of the plan whilst delivering value additional to the requirement in supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community.</p> <p>Application (a) meets the requirement in an exceptional manner with a robust plan that delivers an overall extremely effective and detailed plan including the relevant commitment, understanding and resource or (b) meets the requirements with at least an acceptable plan that overall includes the relevant commitment, understanding and resource and provides evidence of factor(s) that will add exceptional value above the requirements.</p>	100
<p>Very good business plan / significant value added.</p> <p>The applicant's business plan (a) meets the requirement in a very good manner with a robust plan that delivers an overall effective and detailed plan including the relevant commitment, understanding and resource or (b) meets the requirement with at least an acceptable plan that overall includes the relevant commitment, understanding and provides evidence of factor(s) that will add significant value to supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community.</p>	93
<p>Good business plan / some value added.</p> <p>The applicant's business plan (a) meets the requirement with a plan that delivers an overall effective plan including the relevant commitment, understanding and resource or (b) meets the requirement with at least an acceptable plan that overall includes the relevant commitment, understanding and resource and provides some evidence of relevant factor(s) that will add significant value to supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community.</p>	85
<p>Acceptable business plan - satisfies the requirement.</p> <p>Applicant's business plan meets the requirement with an acceptable plan that overall includes the relevant commitment, understanding and resource and quality, notwithstanding that there may be minor issues which are easily resolvable and in any event which do not have a material impact on the overall acceptability of the plan.</p>	80
<p>Minor reservations.</p> <p>Applicant's business plan meets the requirement with a plan that overall includes the relevant commitment, understanding and resource but which may give rise to some minor reservations in one or more areas which may be resolvable but, if not, may have an impact on the overall acceptability of the plan.</p>	70
<p>Major reservations.</p> <p>Applicant's business plan overall fails to meet the requirement and/or gives rise to one or more serious concerns about the relevant commitment, understanding, and/or resources irrespective of any added value above the requirements or elements of the requirements.</p>	30
<p>Unacceptable.</p> <p>Applicant's business plan overall fails to meet the requirement and/or contains insufficient information to evidence overall meeting the requirement, including the relevant commitment, understanding and/or resources irrespective of any added value above the requirements or elements of the requirements.</p>	0

2. EXPERIENCE AND TRACK RECORD

Either provide evidence of holding a TECFO licence:

Provide evidence of your relevant experience of cockle dredging in the Thames. Holding a TECFO licence	Held a TECFO licence 8 times in the last 8 years
Score	100

Or, provide evidence of holding a KEIFCA cockle permit:

The number of times an applicant has held a KEIFCA cockle permit is used to arrive at an initial score

Held a cockle permit to fish under the KEIFCA Cockle Fishery Flexible Permit Byelaw in the last 8 years	7 or more times	5 or more times	3 or more times	2 times	One time	Applicant's response overall fails to meet the requirement and/or contains insufficient information to evidence overall meeting the requirement
Score	81	61	41	31	21	0

The applicant's experience is then assessed against the grade descriptors and the score added to the score from the number of times a permit has been held (this gives a maximum score of 100)

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Excellent: Applicant provides evidence to show that they have comprehensive expert knowledge and significant, long-term, regular, and current, experience of skippering and running a cockle suction dredge boat in the Thames cockle fishery built up over a large number of cockle seasons, including landing large volumes of cockles per trip.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence to show that they have extensive knowledge and experience built up over a large number of years of fishing in the Thames, including working within MPAs and working safely on MOD firing ranges.</p>	19
<p>Very Good: Applicant shows that they have broad knowledge and experience of skippering and running a cockle suction dredge boat in the Thames cockle fishery built up over a number of cockle seasons, including landing large volumes of cockles per trip.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence to show that they have broad knowledge and experience built up over a number of years of fishing in the Thames, including working within MPAs and working safely on MOD firing ranges.</p>	15
<p>Good: Applicant shows that they have knowledge and experience of skippering and running and a cockle suction dredge boat in the Thames cockle fishery and landing large volumes of cockles per trip.</p> <p>Applicant provides some evidence to show that they have knowledge and experience of fishing in the Thames, including working within MPAs and working safely on MOD firing ranges.</p>	9
<p>Fair: Applicant shows that they have basic knowledge and some experience of skippering and working on a cockle suction dredge boat in the Thames cockle fishery.</p>	4
<p>Not met requirement: Applicant's response overall fails to meet the requirement and/or contains insufficient information to evidence overall meeting the requirement</p>	0

KEIFCA shall use the remaining detail from each section of the application form and score the applications using the following descriptor tables.

3. LANDING AND COOKING COCKLES IN THE DISTRICT

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Applicant provides evidence to show that between 71-100% of cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery over the reference period have been cooked in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to landing cockles harvested from the Thames in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to cooking cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery in the KEIFCA district.</p>	100
<p>Applicant provides evidence to show that between 51-70% of cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery over the reference period have been cooked in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to landing cockles harvested from the Thames in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to cooking cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery in the KEIFCA district.</p>	80
<p>Applicant provides evidence to show that between 31-50% of cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery over the reference period have been cooked in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to landing cockles harvested from the Thames in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to cooking cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery in the KEIFCA district.</p>	60
<p>Applicant provides evidence to show that between 10-30% of cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery over the reference period have been cooked in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to landing cockles harvested from the Thames in the KEIFCA district.</p>	40
<p>Applicant provides evidence to show that less than 10% of cockles harvested from the Thames cockle fishery over the reference period have been cooked in the KEIFCA district.</p> <p>Applicant provides evidence of regular and long-term commitment to landing cockles harvested from the Thames in the KEIFCA district.</p>	20
<p>Unacceptable - The information submitted by the applicant does not satisfy the requirements of the question. The response provided fails to demonstrate sufficient relevant experience, competence, and capability in this area.</p>	0

4. SUPPORT OF SKILLED EMPLOYMENT

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Exceptional response with value added - The information submitted by the applicant exceeds the requirements outlined in the question by clearly demonstrating tangible investment and commitment to training skilled staff, and with training delivered to an exceptional standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear staff structure including a detailed and comprehensive list of employees, clearly outlining the number of staff resident in KEIFCA district and outlining which staff are on seasonal or permanent, full time or part time contracts. • A detailed and comprehensive overview of the training provided to staff including any induction training and any staff performance, review or evaluation system and tickets or qualifications gained by staff. • Thorough and comprehensive examples of applicants providing support to young fishers such as apprenticeships, mentoring or equivalents including how the applicant practically trained and supported the young fishers development over a number of years. <p>Overall, the application answers questions in the application to a high level and meaningful actions have clearly been taken to support skilled local employment that are additional to the requirements.</p>	100
<p>Good response with some value added - The information submitted by the applicant fully satisfies the requirements by demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear staff structure including detailed and comprehensive list of employees, clearly outlining the number of staff resident in KEIFCA district and outlining which staff are on seasonal or permanent, full time or part time contracts. • A detailed and comprehensive overview of the training provided to staff including any induction training and any staff performance, review or evaluation system and tickets or qualifications gained by staff • Thorough and comprehensive examples of applicants providing support to young fishers such as apprenticeships, mentoring or equivalents including how the applicant practically trained and supported the young fishers development over a number of years <p>Overall, the application answers some questions in the application to a high level and some meaningful actions have clearly been taken to support skilled local employment that are additional to the requirements.</p>	80
<p>Acceptable response - satisfies the requirement - The information submitted by the applicant satisfies the requirements by demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear staff structure including a list of employees, clearly outlining the number of staff resident in KEIFCA district and outlining which staff are on seasonal or permanent, full time or part time contracts. • An overview of the training provided to staff including any induction training and any staff performance, review or evaluation system and tickets or qualifications gained by staff <p>Overall, the application answers questions in the application to an adequate level and some actions have clearly been taken to support skilled local employment.</p>	60
<p>Minor reservations - The information submitted by the licence holder does not fully satisfy all requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear staff structure including a list of employees, clearly outlining the number of staff resident in KEIFCA district and outlining which staff are on seasonal or permanent, full time or part time contracts. • An overview of the training provided to staff including any induction training and any staff performance, review or evaluation system and tickets or qualifications gained by staff • Examples of applicants providing to support young fishers such as apprenticeships, mentoring or equivalents including how the applicant practically trained and supported the young fisher's development over a number of years <p>Overall the information submitted does not satisfactorily answer one or more of the application questions leading to minor reservations as to the extent of the meaningful actions that have been taken to support skilled local employment or to deliver the required outcomes.</p>	40
<p>Major reservations - The information submitted by the licence holder does not satisfy the requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear staff structure including a list of employees, clearly outlining the number of staff resident in KEIFCA district and outlining which staff are on seasonal or permanent, full time or part time contracts. • An overview of the training provided to staff including any induction training and any staff performance, review or evaluation system and tickets or qualifications gained by staff • Examples of applicants providing to support young fishers such as apprenticeships, mentoring or equivalents including how the applicant practically trained and supported the young fishers development over a number of years <p>Overall, the information submitted does not satisfactorily answer several application questions leading to reservations as to the extent of the meaningful actions that have been taken to support skilled local employment or to deliver the future plans. The application leaves the KEIFCA application panel with serious concerns about the applicant's ability to deliver the required outcomes.</p>	20
<p>Unacceptable - The information submitted by the applicant does not satisfy the requirements of the question. The response provided fails to demonstrate sufficient relevant experience, competence, and capability in this area.</p>	0

5. REDUCING THE IMPACT OF FISHING OPERATIONS

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Exceptional response with value added - The information submitted by the applicant exceeds the requirements outlined in the question by clearly demonstrating tangible actions taken to significantly reduce the impact of your fishing operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A detailed and comprehensive overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the cockle harvesting gear on the seabed. ● A detailed and comprehensive overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the number of damaged cockles returned to the sea as part of the cockle harvesting process. <p>Overall, the application answers questions in the application to a high level and meaningful actions have clearly been taken to reduce the impact of cockle harvesting operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed that are additional to the requirements.</p>	100
<p>Good response with some value added - The information submitted by the applicant fully satisfies the requirements by demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A detailed and comprehensive overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the cockle harvesting gear on the seabed. ● A detailed and comprehensive overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the number of damaged cockles returned to the sea as part of the cockle harvesting process. <p>Overall, the application answers some questions in the application to a high level and some meaningful actions have clearly been taken to reduce the impact of cockle harvesting operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed that are additional to the requirements.</p>	80
<p>Acceptable response - satisfies the requirement - The information submitted by the applicant satisfies the requirements by demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the cockle harvesting gear on the seabed. ● An overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the number of damaged cockles returned to the sea as part of the cockle harvesting process. <p>Overall, the application answers questions in the application to an adequate level and some actions have clearly been taken to reduce the impact of cockle harvesting operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed.</p>	60
<p>Minor reservations - The information submitted by the licence holder does not fully satisfy all requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the cockle harvesting gear on the seabed. ● An overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the number of damaged cockles returned to the sea as part of the cockle harvesting process. <p>Overall, the information submitted does not satisfactorily answer one or more of the application questions leading to minor reservations as to the extent of the meaningful actions that have been taken to reduce the impact of cockle harvesting operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed.</p>	40
<p>Major reservations - The information submitted by the licence holder does not satisfy the requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the cockle harvesting gear on the seabed. ● An overview of the steps taken to significantly reduce the number of damaged cockles returned to the sea as part of the cockle harvesting process. <p>Overall, the information submitted does not satisfactorily answer several application questions leading to reduce the impact of cockle harvesting operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed. The application leaves the KEIFCA application panel with serious concerns about the applicant's ability to deliver the required outcomes.</p>	20
<p>Unacceptable - The information submitted by the applicant does not satisfy the requirements of the question. The response provided fails to demonstrate sufficient relevant experience, competence, and capability in this area.</p>	0

6. PLAN TO REDUCE CO₂ EMISSIONS AND IMPROVE THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Exceptional response with value added - The information submitted by the applicant exceeds the requirements by clearly demonstrating tangible outcomes, delivered to an exceptional standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a detailed and comprehensive baseline assessment of its organisation's CO₂ emissions from fishing to factory using a recognised audit system. ● significant, measurable steps that have already been taken to significantly reduce energy requirements and waste emissions both in the short and long-term (fishing to factory). ● The applicant has a detailed plan, with clear (SMART) milestones to continue to reduce both CO₂ emissions and waste emissions in the long-term and meet government targets to be carbon neutral by 2030. ● The applicant has taken clear steps to work with other companies or organisations to reduce energy requirements and emissions, especially in the onward supply chain. <p>Overall, the application answers questions in the application to a high level and meaningful actions have clearly been taken to reduce energy requirements and emissions that are additional to the requirements.</p>	100
<p>Good response with some value added - The information submitted by the applicant fully satisfies the requirements by demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a detailed and comprehensive baseline assessment of its organisation's CO₂ emissions from fishing to factory using a recognised audit system. ● significant, measurable steps that have already been taken to significantly reduce energy requirements and waste emissions both in the short and long-term (fishing to factory). ● The applicant has a detailed plan, with clear (SMART) milestones to continue to reduce both CO₂ emissions and waste emissions in the long-term and meet government targets to be carbon neutral by 2030. ● The applicant has taken clear steps to work with other companies or organisations to reduce energy requirements and emissions, especially in the onward supply chain. <p>Overall, the application answers some questions in the application to a high level and some meaningful actions have clearly been taken to reduce energy requirements and emissions that are additional to the requirements.</p>	80
<p>Acceptable response - satisfies the requirement - The information submitted by the applicant satisfies the requirements by demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a baseline assessment of its organisation's CO₂ emissions from fishing to factory using a recognised audit system. ● measurable steps that have already been taken to significantly reduce energy requirements and waste emissions both in the short and long-term (fishing to factory). ● The applicant has a plan, to continue to reduce both CO₂ emissions and waste emissions in the long-term. ● The applicant has taken some steps to work with other companies or organisations to reduce energy requirements and emissions, especially in the onward supply chain. <p>Overall, the application answers some questions in the application to a satisfactory level and some meaningful actions have clearly been taken to reduce energy requirements and emissions that are additional to the requirements.</p>	60
<p>Minor reservations - The information submitted by the licence holder does not fully satisfy all requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a baseline assessment of its organisation's CO₂ emissions from fishing to factory using a recognised audit system. ● measurable steps that have already been taken to significantly reduce energy requirements and waste emissions both in the short and long-term (fishing to factory). ● The applicant has a plan, to continue to reduce both CO₂ emissions and waste emissions in the long-term. ● The applicant has taken some steps to work with other companies or organisations to reduce energy requirements and emissions, especially in the onward supply chain. <p>Overall, the information submitted does not satisfactorily answer one or more of the application questions leading to minor reservations as to the extent of the meaningful actions that have been taken to reduce energy requirements and emissions or to the deliver future plans.</p>	40
<p>Major reservations - The information submitted by the licence holder does not satisfy the requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a baseline assessment of its organisation's CO₂ emissions from fishing to factory using a recognised audit system. ● measurable steps that have already been taken to significantly reduce energy requirements and waste emissions both in the short and long-term (fishing to factory). ● The applicant has a plan, to continue to reduce both CO₂ emissions and waste emissions in the long-term. ● The applicant has taken some steps to work with other companies or organisations to reduce energy requirements and emissions, especially in the onward supply chain. <p>Overall, the information submitted does not satisfactorily answer several application questions leading to reservations as to the extent of the meaningful actions that have been taken to reduce energy requirements and emissions or to deliver the future plans. The application leaves the KEIFCA application panel with serious concerns about the applicant's ability to deliver the required outcomes.</p>	20
<p>Unacceptable - The information submitted by the applicant does not satisfy the requirements of the question. The response provided fails to demonstrate sufficient relevant experience, competence, and capability in this area.</p>	0

Annex 5 Transitional Arrangements

As part of the T24 consultation, a suggestion was put forward to 'grandfather on' the 14 TECFO 1994 licence holders for the first 7-year cycle. The Authority members discussed this proposal and agreed to this along with attached conditions (see T24 Regulating Order for exact wording). If a TECFO 1994 licence holder does not want to use this transitional arrangement, then the licence would be issued following the full application process and the current licence holder could apply using that process along with any other applicants.

The transitional arrangements are designed to allow established companies and vessels which have taken part in the fishery in recent years to continue doing so for the first 7 years of the new Regulating Order. This is to allow time for those businesses which are set up under the current framework, to adapt to the new legislative landscape. The company and vessel must remain in the same legal and beneficial ownership throughout.

All TECFO 1994 licence holders will be contacted prior to the first 7-year cycle LAP beginning so that they can formally indicate whether they accept a transitional period licence or whether they instead will apply for a licence using the LAP.

Annex 6 –Business Report

When applying for the second 7-year cycle using the full Licence Allocation Process (LAP), the applicants will be required to answer the question below, briefly outlining the progress they have made against their business plan as part of their next 7-year application. The report will be scored against the grade descriptors below and the business plan score (Annex 3) will be split evenly between the assessment of progress against the previous 7-year plan and the assessment of the next 7-year plan.

Please provide details of your organisation’s delivery and progress against your 7-year business plan (2025-2031) taking into consideration the business plan grade descriptors. Please include a summary of the progress you expect to make in 2031 (Please note the Application Panel might ask follow-up questions on this progress during the scoring and ranking process).

Please give an overview of:

- Your fishing operation during this period (including brief details of your fishing vessel(s), key personnel involved in fishing and their experience in the cockle fishery).
- Your landing, transporting and cooking processes during this period, including the markets your cockles were sold into.
- How you supported local business and supply chains and the wider community (sponsoring/ support of local sports team/ charity etc).
- How you or your processor took steps to add value to the catch.
- The investment you made in your company and/or investment made in the district.

7-YEAR BUSINESS REPORT

Applicants are required to submit a 7-year business report covering the 7 years of the licence, and answering the questions contained within this section. In submitting the 7-year business report, applicants are requested to provide evidence of their experience, achievements, and benefit outcomes. The 7-year business report will be awarded appropriate marks based on the following basis:

Grade Descriptions	Score
<p>Exceptional response with value added</p> <p>The 7-year business report submitted by the licence applicant exceeds the requirements by demonstrating exceptional outcomes in delivering the key details and commitments of their business plan. The 7-year business report clearly illustrates how the applicant delivered value additional to the requirements outlined in the business plan descriptors, supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community.</p> <p>Application (a) meets the requirements in an exceptional manner with a thorough clear report that shows exceptional delivery and outcomes against the key details and commitments of their business plan (b) meets the requirements with at least a report that overall shows effective delivery and outcomes against the key details and commitments of their business plan and provides clear evidence of actions or outcomes that will add exceptional value or clearly surpass expectations.</p>	100
<p>Very good 7-year business report / significant value added.</p> <p>The 7-year business report submitted by the licence applicant (a) meets the requirement of a robust report that clearly demonstrates very good outcomes in delivering the key details and commitments of their business plan. The 7-year business report illustrates how the applicant delivered the requirements outlined in the business plan descriptors, supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community.</p> <p>(b) meets the requirement with a 7-year business report that overall shows delivery and outcomes against the key details and commitments of their business plan and provides evidence of actions or outcomes that will add value or are above expectations.</p>	93
<p>Good 7-year business report / some value added.</p>	85

<p>The applicant's 7-year business report (a) meets the requirement of a report that demonstrates good outcomes in delivering many of the key details and commitments of their business plan. The 7-year business report illustrates how the applicant delivered the requirements outlined in the business plan descriptors, supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community. (b) meets the requirement with at least an acceptable 7-year business report that shows delivery and outcomes against most of the key details and commitments of their business plan and provides evidence of actions or outcomes that might add value.</p>	
<p>Acceptable 7-year business report - satisfies the requirement.</p> <p>Applicant's 7-year business report meets the requirement with an acceptable report that demonstrates good outcomes in delivering many of the key details and commitments of their business plan, notwithstanding that there may be minor issues which are easily resolvable and in any event which do not have a material impact on the overall outcomes illustrated in the business plan. The 7-year business report illustrates how the applicant delivered many of the requirements outlined in the business plan descriptors, supporting local business and supply chains, adding value to the catch especially within KEIFCA district and supporting the wider community.</p>	80
<p>Minor reservations.</p> <p>Applicant's 7-year business report meets the requirement with an acceptable report that demonstrates moderate outcomes in delivering most of the key details and commitments of their business plan and which may give rise to some minor reservations in one or more areas which may be resolvable but, if not, may have an impact on the overall acceptability of the delivery outlined in the report.</p>	70
<p>Major reservations.</p> <p>Applicant's 7-year business report overall fails to meet the requirement and/or gives rise to one or more serious concerns in demonstrating the delivery of many of the key details and commitments of their business plan, irrespective of any added value above the requirements outlined in the business plan descriptors.</p>	30
<p>Unacceptable.</p> <p>Applicant's 7-year business report overall fails to meet the requirement and/or contains insufficient information to evidence the delivery of the key details and commitments of their business plan, irrespective of any added value above the requirements outlined in the business plan descriptors.</p>	0

Example of scoring table

Question	Mark from question	Divide mark by 100 (a)	Question weighted score (b)	Total score for that question (a) x (b)
7-year Business Report (2025-2031)			11.5	
7-year Business Plan (2032-2038)			11.5	
Fishing experience track record			36	
Landing and cooking cockles caught in the district			6	
Support of skilled local employment			12	
Reduce the impact of fishing operations on both cockle stocks and the seabed			18	
Plan to reduce CO2 emissions and improve the wider environment			5	

TOTAL OVERALL SCORE	
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