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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF WIND FARMS ON AERONAUTICAL RADAR SYSTEMS

Tuesday 28 April 2026

11:00 – 12:00 UTC

MODERATOR



John Wennes

Safety Programme Manager

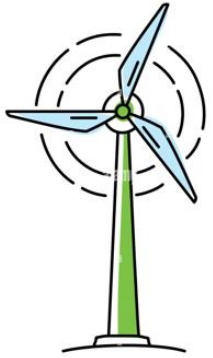
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PRESENTER



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Impact of Wind Farms on Radars

By Yahya Khaled - GM, ATDI Limited

April 2026

A technical webinar on wind turbine interference with primary and secondary surveillance radars



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Agenda

- ▶ Introduction & context – wind energy expansion and radar impact
- ▶ Radar fundamentals – PSR vs SSR, bands, receiver behaviour
- ▶ Mechanisms of wind turbine interference – reflection, shadowing, Doppler
- ▶ Operational impact on air traffic surveillance
- ▶ Assessment approaches – screening vs detailed analysis
- ▶ EUROCONTROL PSR/SSR quick assessment framework
- ▶ NTIA TR-08-454 and the combined methodology
- ▶ Modelling techniques and a detailed impact study
- ▶ Mitigation options and key takeaways

Why this matters – renewables meet airspace

- ▶ Wind capacity is scaling fast – national plans target tens of GW of wind near existing radar infrastructure
- ▶ Turbines within radar line of sight can generate clutter, false targets, tracking instability, and coverage loss
- ▶ UK MoD flight trials (2005) and US DoD report (2006) first quantified the operational effects
- ▶ EUROCONTROL GUID-0130 (2014) and NTIA TR-08-454 (2008) are the reference assessment frameworks
- ▶ The engineering is well understood – structured assessment lets wind and aviation coexist safely

Radar fundamentals – PSR vs SSR

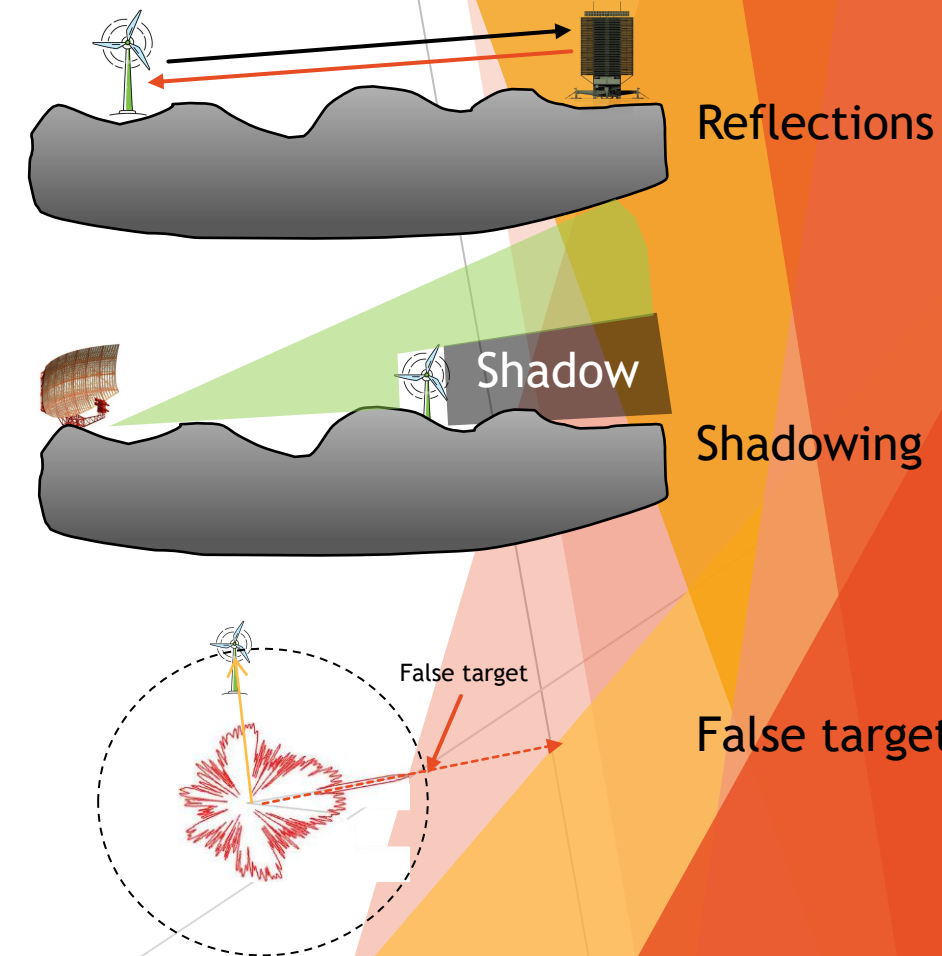
- ▶ Primary Surveillance Radar (PSR) – transmits RF energy and detects the **reflected** return from the target skin
- ▶ Relies on target radar cross section; vulnerable to any reflected energy from the environment
- ▶ Secondary Surveillance Radar (SSR) – interrogates an aircraft transponder on 1030 MHz; receives coded reply on 1090 MHz
- ▶ Does not rely on reflected energy – but interrogation and reply paths can still be blocked or reflected
- ▶ PSR and SSR are differently susceptible to wind turbine interference – the assessment must treat them separately. PSR/SSR often co-located.

Radar bands – primary radar services (radionavigation)

- ▶ Long range 23cm (**L-band**) radar (*Good propagations, big targets*)
 - ▶ 1215 - 1300MHz Radionavigation (Primary allocation)
 - ▶ 1300 - 1350MHz Aeronautical Radionavigation (Primary allocation)
- ▶ Medium range 10cm (**S-band**) radar
 - ▶ 2700-2900 MHz Aeronautical Radionavigation (Primary allocation)
 - ▶ 2900-3100MHz Radionavigation (Primary allocation)
- ▶ Short Range Precision 3cm (**X-band**) radar
 - ▶ 9000 - 9200MHz Aeronautical Radionavigation (primary allocation)
 - ▶ 9300 - 9500 MHz Radionavigation (Primary allocation)

How wind turbines interact with radar

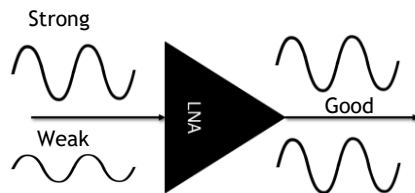
- ▶ Reflection and I/N degradation – turbine RCS raises the local noise floor, lifting the detection threshold
- ▶ False target generation – direct echoes from the tower and blades, and ghost targets via multipath (*main and side lobes*)
- ▶ Shadow zone and beam blockage – two-way path attenuation creates a wedge of reduced detection behind the turbine
- ▶ Doppler contamination – rotating blades produce Doppler returns that slip through MTI/MTD filters as false moving targets
- ▶ Receiver and processing overload – strong returns or high false-plot counts can saturate the receiver or overwhelm the tracker



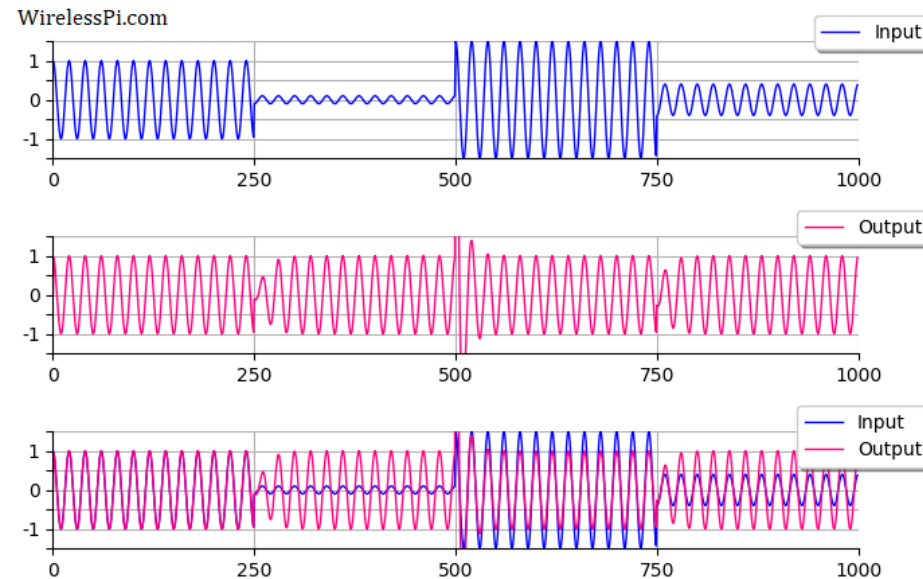
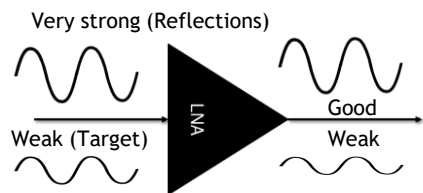
Receiver behavior - AGC (saturation)

- ▶ Hardware level
- ▶ Adaptive gain - detect weak signal and deal with strong signals
- ▶ Saturation/overload

Wanted

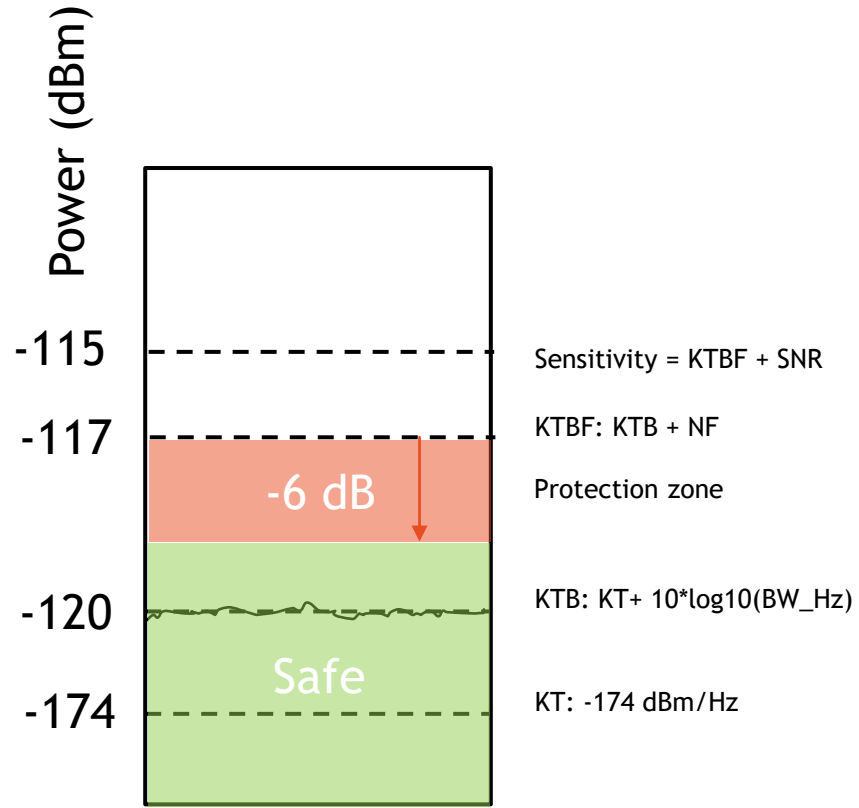


Wanted + Unwanted

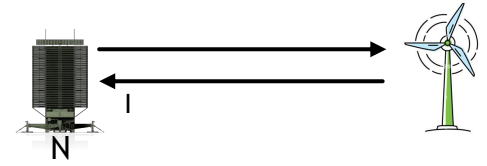
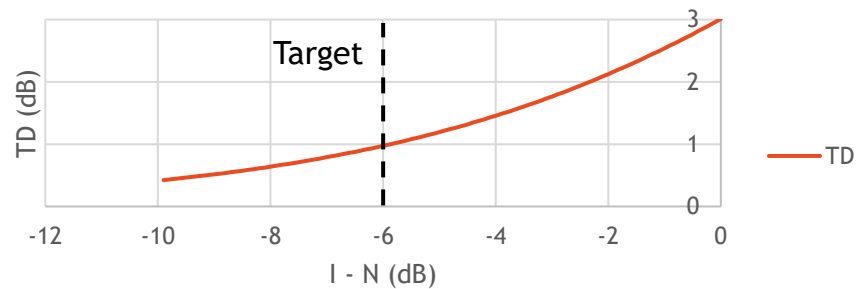


Receiver behavior - Noise degradation

- ▶ Noise/threshold degradation
- ▶ $N = KTBF$
 - ▶ KT: -174 dBm/Hz
 - ▶ B: Receiver bandwidth (1/Pulse duration)
 - ▶ F: Noise figure
- ▶ $I/N = I \text{ (dBm)} - N \text{ (dBm)}$
- ▶ $TD(\text{dB}) = 10 \times \text{Log}_{10}(1 + 10^{\frac{I/N}{10}})$
- ▶ Degradation > loss of sensitivity > loss of range



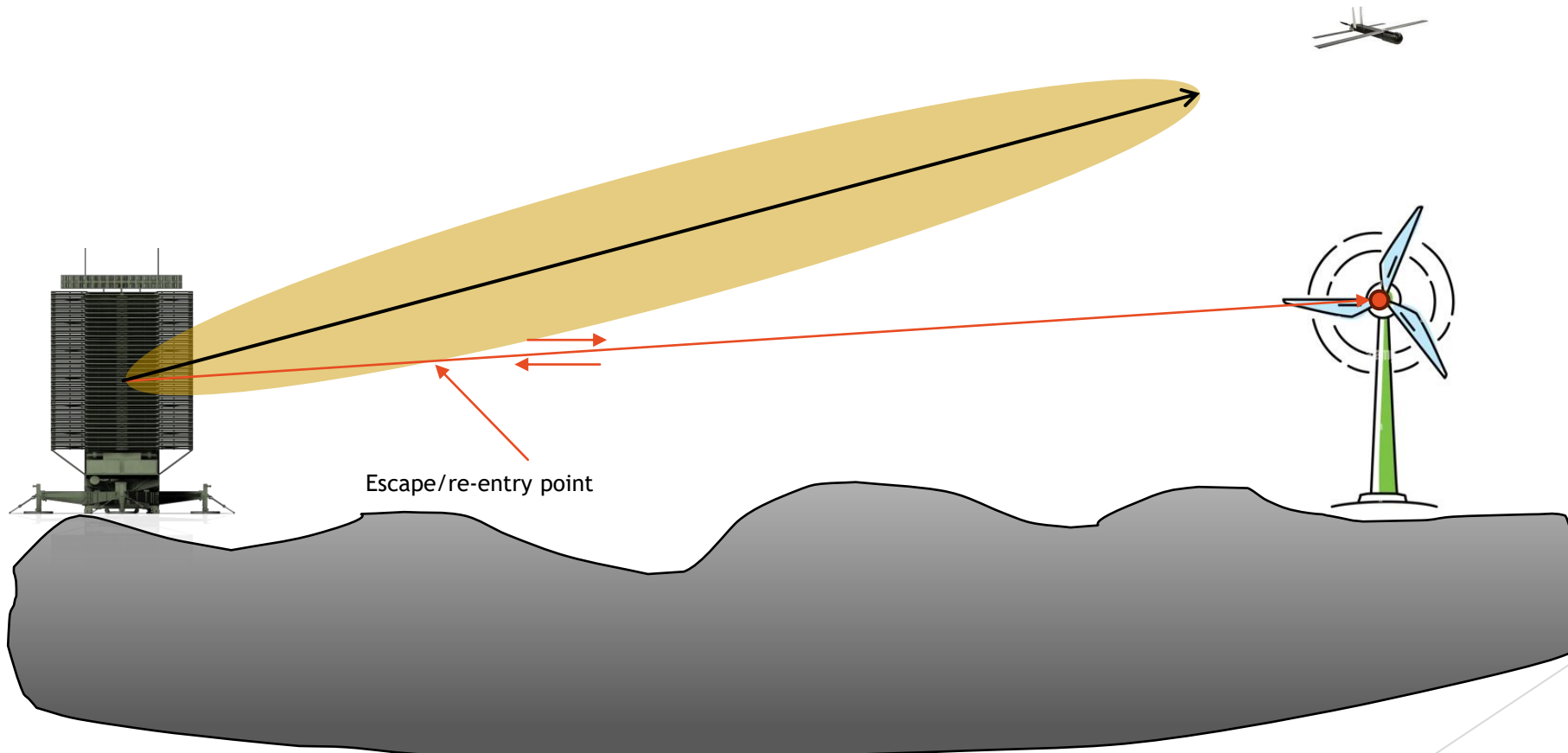
Threshold degradation calculations



Receiver behavior

- ▶ Noise floor and detection threshold – set above receiver thermal noise to control false alarms
- ▶ CFAR (Constant False Alarm Rate) – threshold adapts locally to keep false-alarm probability constant in varying clutter
- ▶ MTI / MTD filters – suppress stationary returns by comparing successive pulses in the time or Doppler domain
- ▶ Doppler discrimination – moving targets pass the filter; stationary terrain and buildings are rejected
- ▶ Plot extractor and tracker – group detections into plots and tracks; have finite processing capacity

Radar antenna radiation pattern - relevance



Antenna discrimination in the direction of WT can be computed from vertical antenna pattern

Radar antenna radiation patterns

Modern air-defense radars use phased-array antennas – a grid of radiating elements whose individual phases and amplitudes set the beam shape.

The radiation pattern – main lobe width, sidelobe levels and gain – is determined by the number of elements, their spacing, amplitude tapering and element pattern.

Key parameters drive the result:

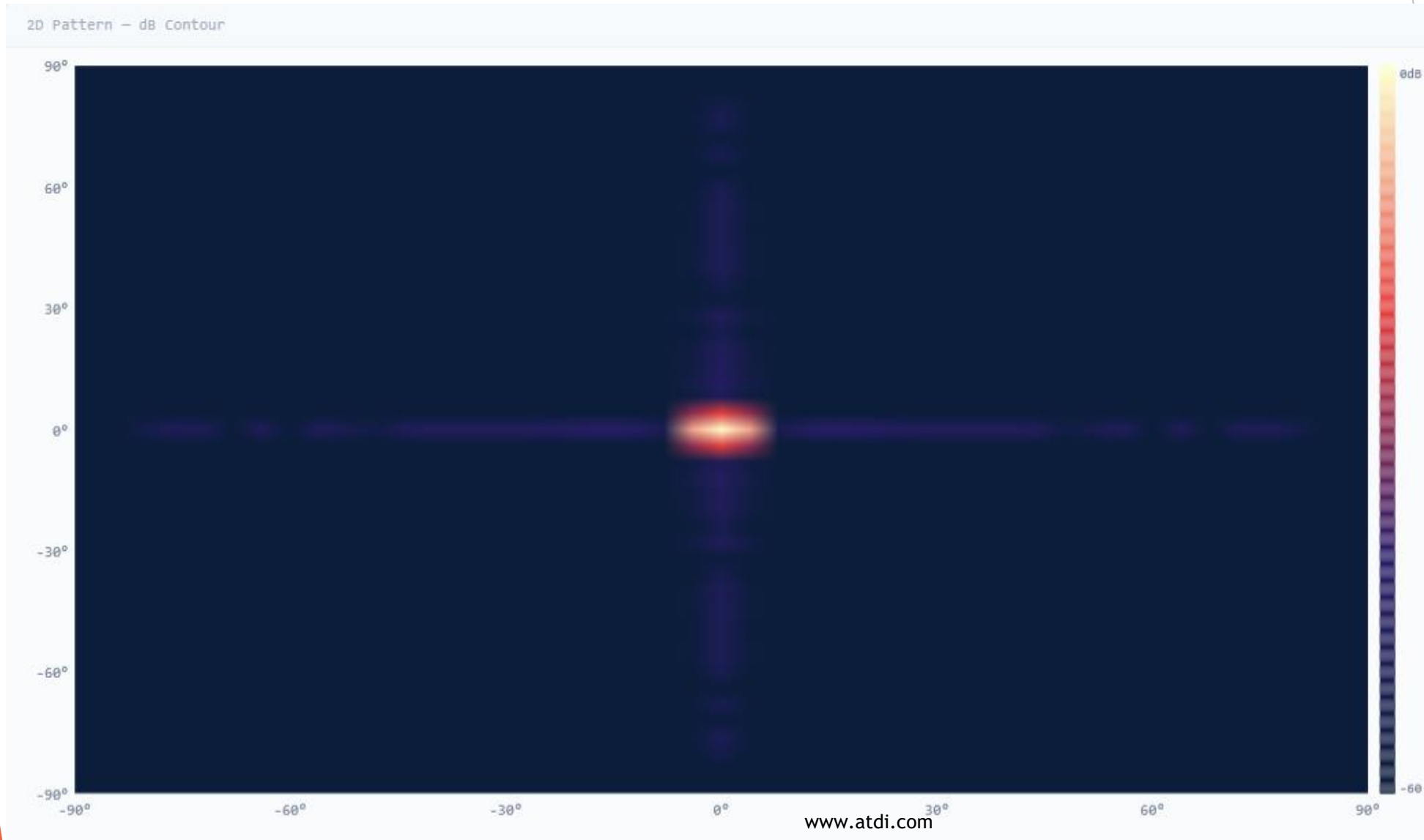
- Element count ($N_x \times N_y$) – sets aperture and peak gain
- Spacing (typically 0.5λ) – avoids grating lobes
- Amplitude taper – trades sidelobe level against beamwidth

Patterns matter for this assessment: the vertical 3 dB beamwidth sets the shadowing clearance criterion, and the sidelobe level bounds off-axis reflection susceptibility.

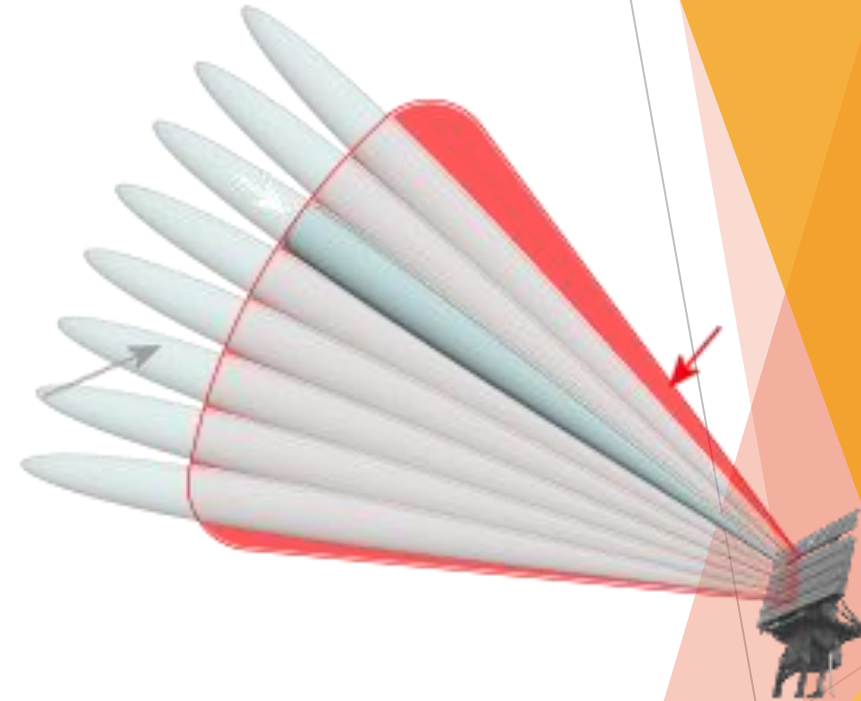
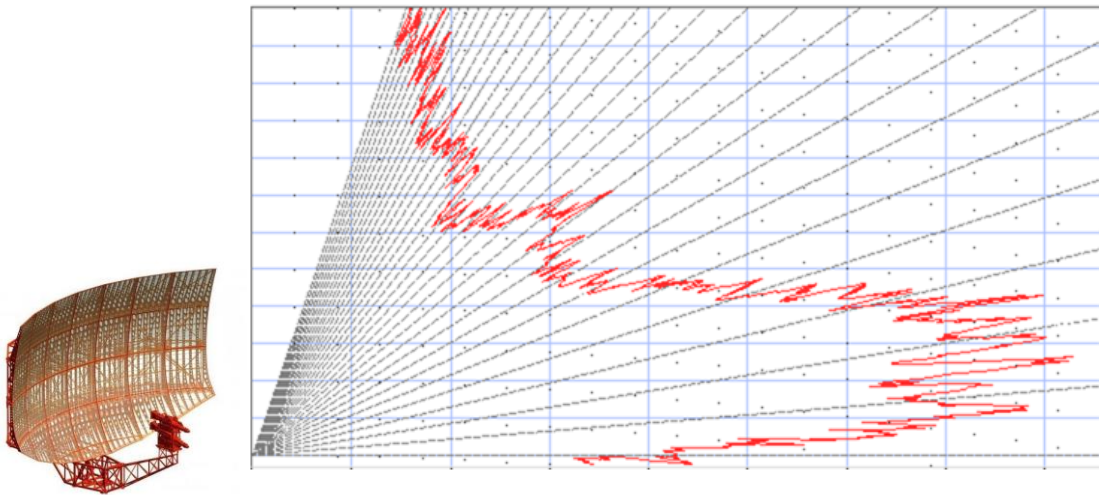
Radar	Spacing (λ)	Vert. elements	Horiz. elements
FPS-117	0.5	44	32
TPS-77	0.5	34	32
TPS-78	0.5	22	48
GM200	—	30	40



2D: main beam, side lobes



ATC Radars Vs modern radars



- ▶ Single broad vertical beam - single collision domain
- ▶ Multi-beams (Pencil beams) - multi collision domain
- ▶ Mitigation ready

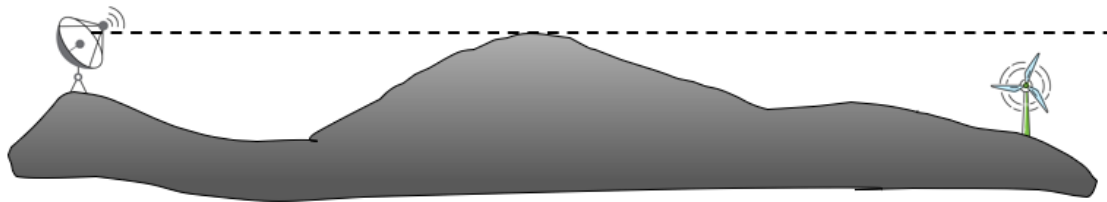
Propagation model

- ▶ Free space loss
- ▶ Visibility (FSL or nothing, K factor 1.33)
- ▶ Area - sub-path attenuation

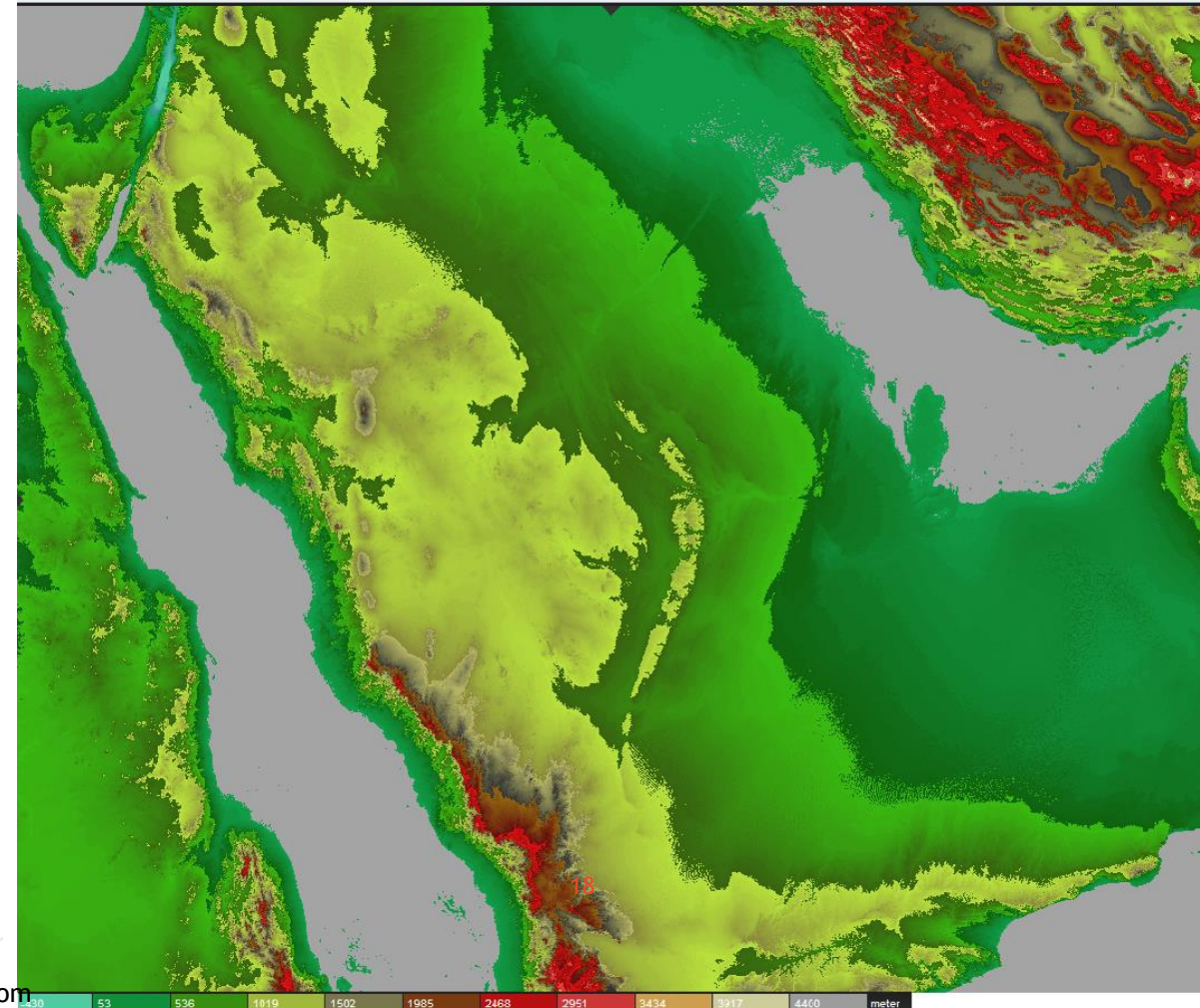
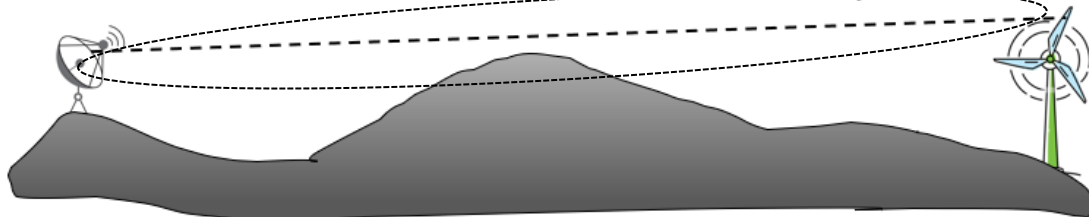
$$L_{sp} = 6.4 + 20 \log_{10}[v + \sqrt{(1 + v^2)}]$$

$$v = \sqrt{2} \cdot (H / R)$$

No visibility



Visibility

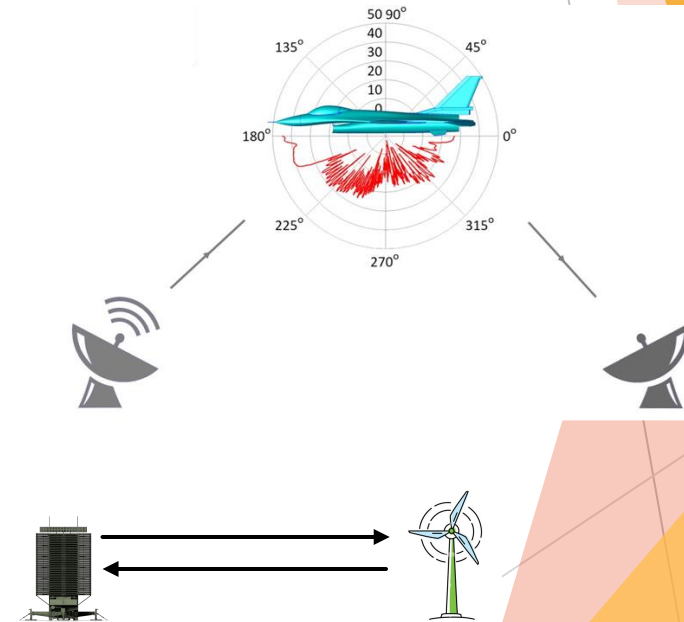


Bistatic geometry and self-interference

- Bistatic radar – transmitter and receiver at different locations, linked by a common scattering target (the wind turbine)
- The bistatic radar equation, expressed in logarithmic (dB) form as a link budget:

$$P_r[dBm] = P_t + G_t + G_r + \sigma_b - 20 \log_{10}(f_{\{MHz\}}) - 20 \log_{10}(R_{\{1, km\}}) - 20 \log_{10}(R_{\{2, km\}}) - L - 103.4$$

- Self-interference – the radar's own transmission bounces off the turbine back to the same receiver, so $R_1 = R_2$ and $G_t = G_r$
- The monostatic collapse doubles the path loss ($2 \cdot FSL$) – this is the dominant term driving the I/N calculation



Wind Turbine RCS Prediction

- ▶ Frequency, rotation and angle dependent
- ▶ Higher frequency is higher RCS
- ▶ Bigger size is bigger RCS

Parameter	L-Band	S-Band
Reference measured RCS (dBsm), 113 m rotor	40	48
Scaled RCS, 200 m rotor (dBsm)	44.6	52.5
Scaled RCS, 200 m rotor (m ²)	28,916	176,367

$$\sigma_{\text{target}} = 10 \cdot \log_{10} \left(10 \frac{\sigma_{\text{ref}}}{10} \cdot \left(\frac{D_{\text{target}}}{D_{\text{ref}}} \right)^2 \cdot \frac{f_{\text{target}}}{f_{\text{ref}}} \right) \text{ [dBsm]}$$

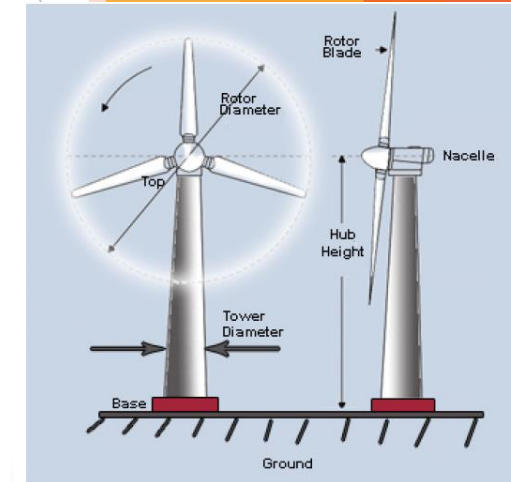
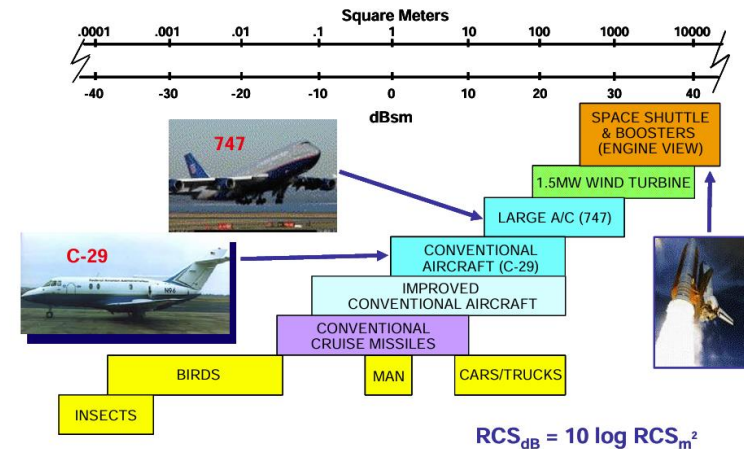
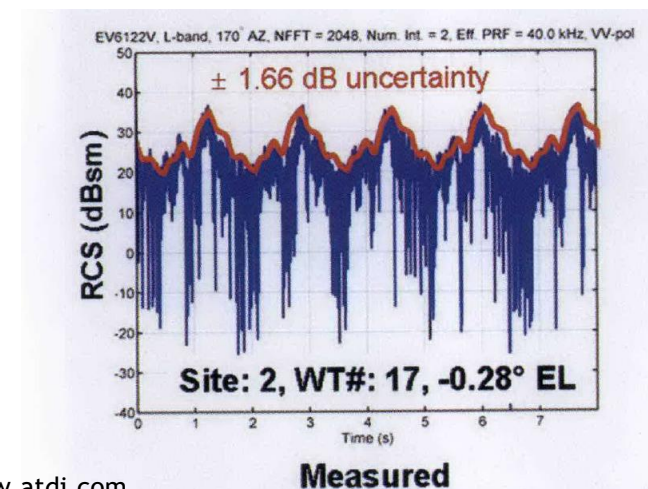


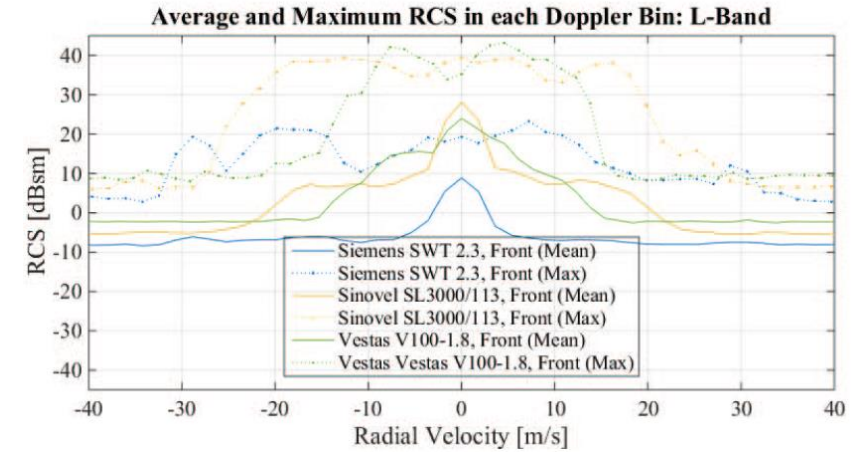
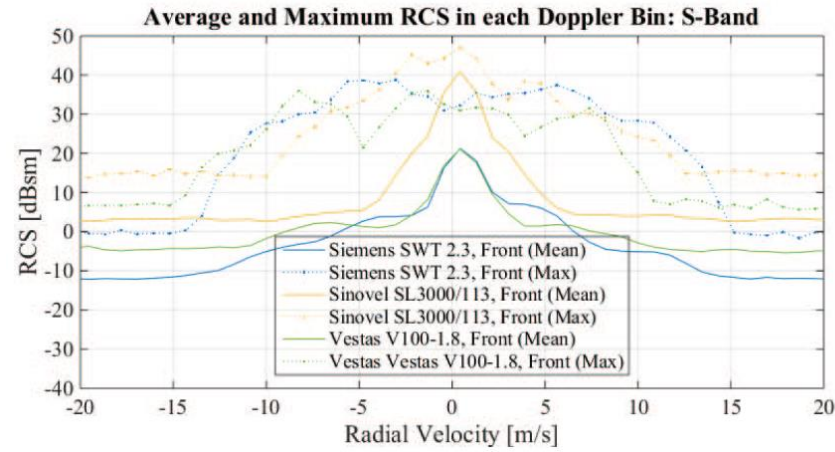
Figure 7. RCS values for several common objects



130 m 146.5 m 130-200 m
 2.3 MW 3.0 MW 1.8 MW



Fig. 2. a) Siemens SWT 2.3 MW b) Sinovel SL3000/113-HH90 c) Vestas V100-1.8 MW.

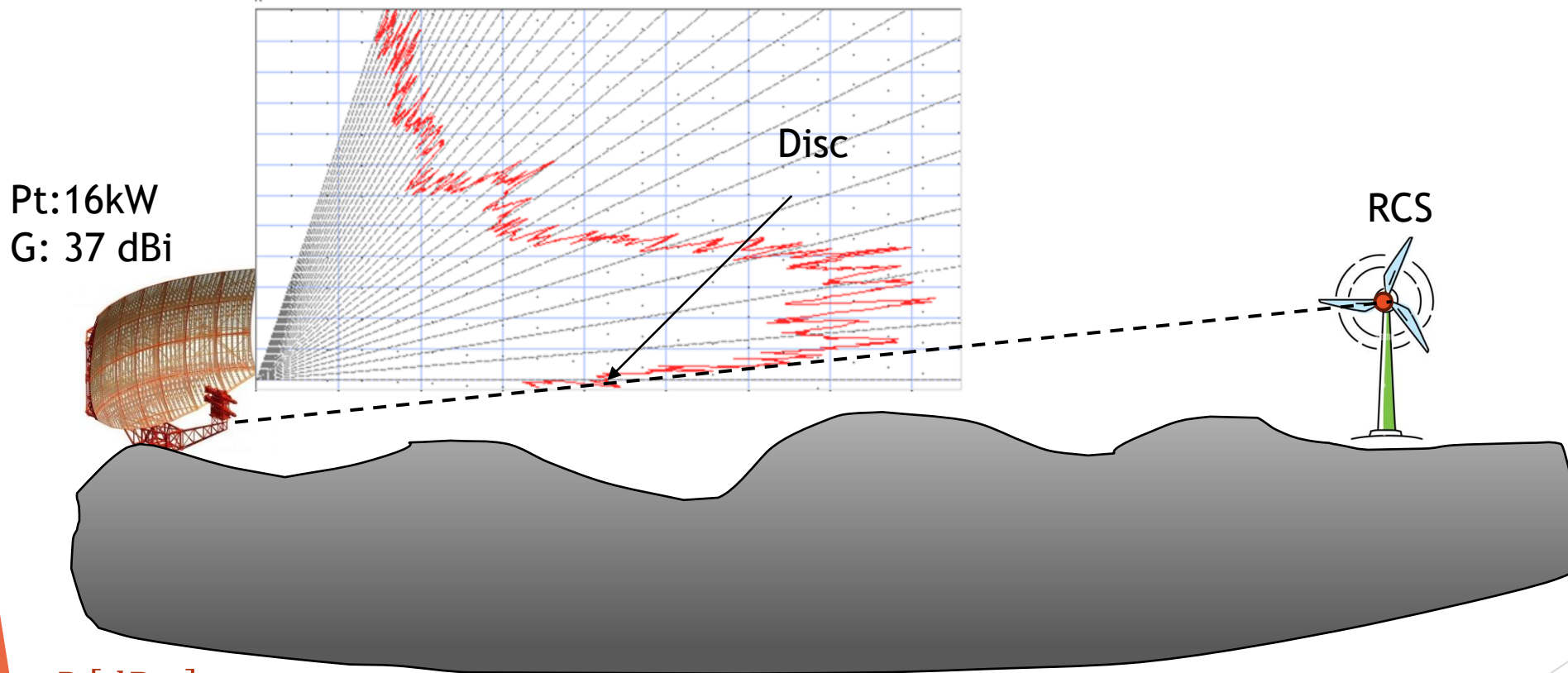


Source: Comparison of the Recorded RCS and Spectra of Three Different Wind Turbines on L- and S-band

Measured RCS

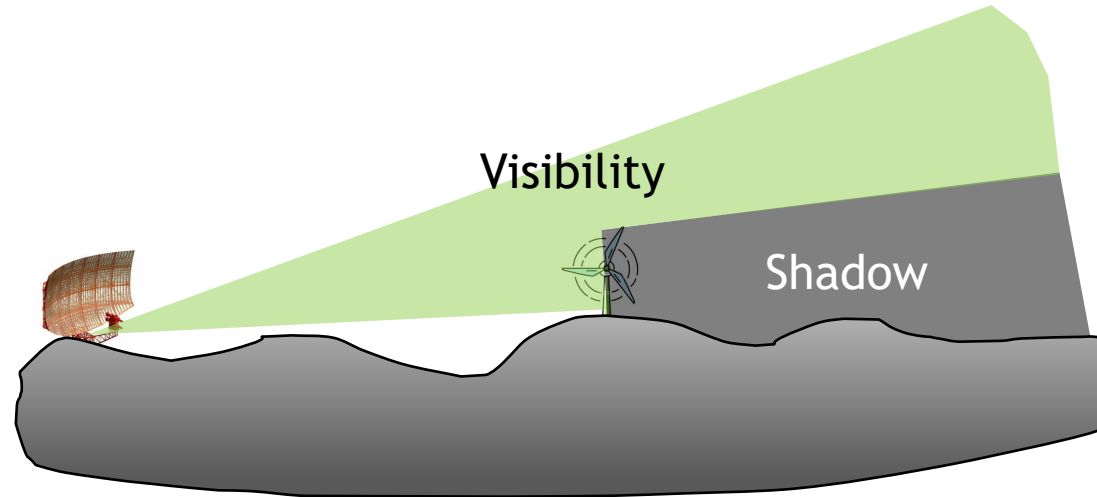
- ▶ Industrial sized wind turbines and corresponding RCS measurements

Reflection and I/N degradation



$$P_r [dBm] = P_t + G_t + G_r + \sigma_b - 20 \log_{10}(f_{\text{MHz}}) - 20 \log_{10}(R_{1, km}) - 20 \log_{10}(R_{2, km}) - L - 103.4$$

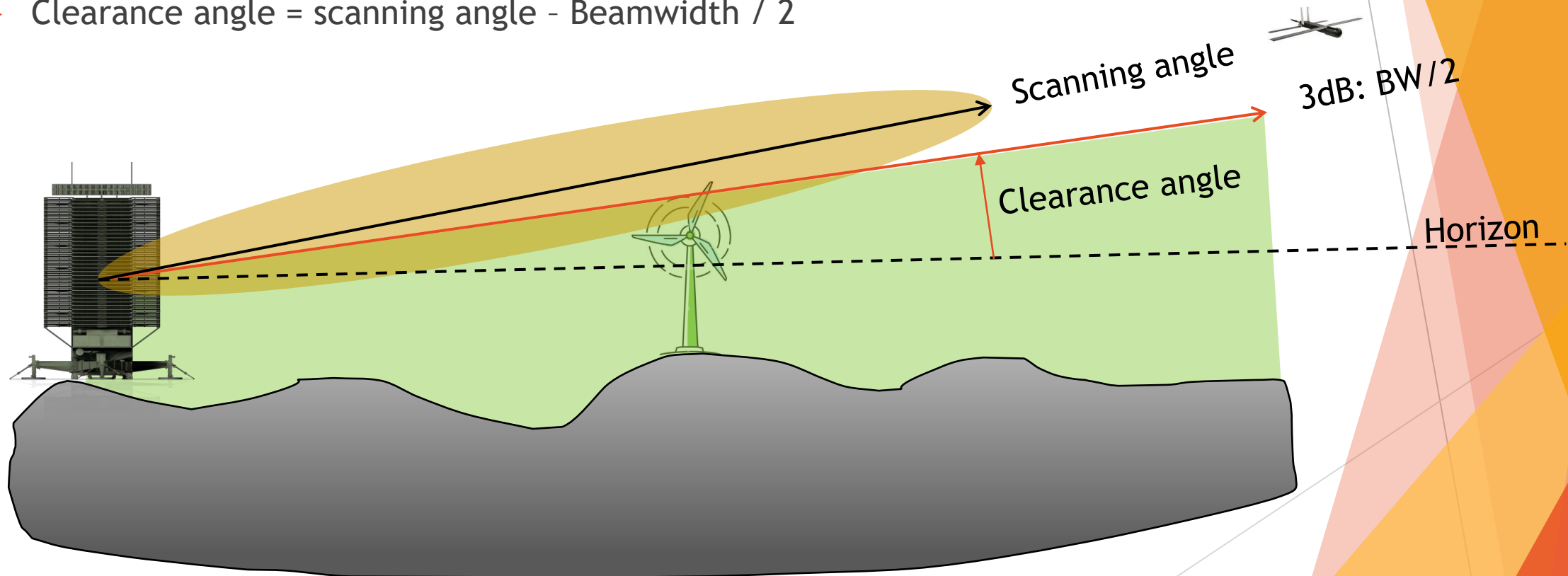
Shadow zone and beam blockage



- ▶ A turbine in the radar line of sight attenuates the signal on both the outbound and return paths (*considering terrain, earth curvature and K factor*)
- ▶ The shadow extends behind the turbine as a wedge; angular width depends on turbine size vs wavelength
- ▶ PSR suffers two-way path attenuation – detection loss is compounded on both legs of the round trip
- ▶ SSR loses the interrogation or reply path – aircraft in the shadow may fail to respond
- ▶ Severity depends on turbine height, range from the radar, and the minimum target altitude that must be protected

Clearance analysis

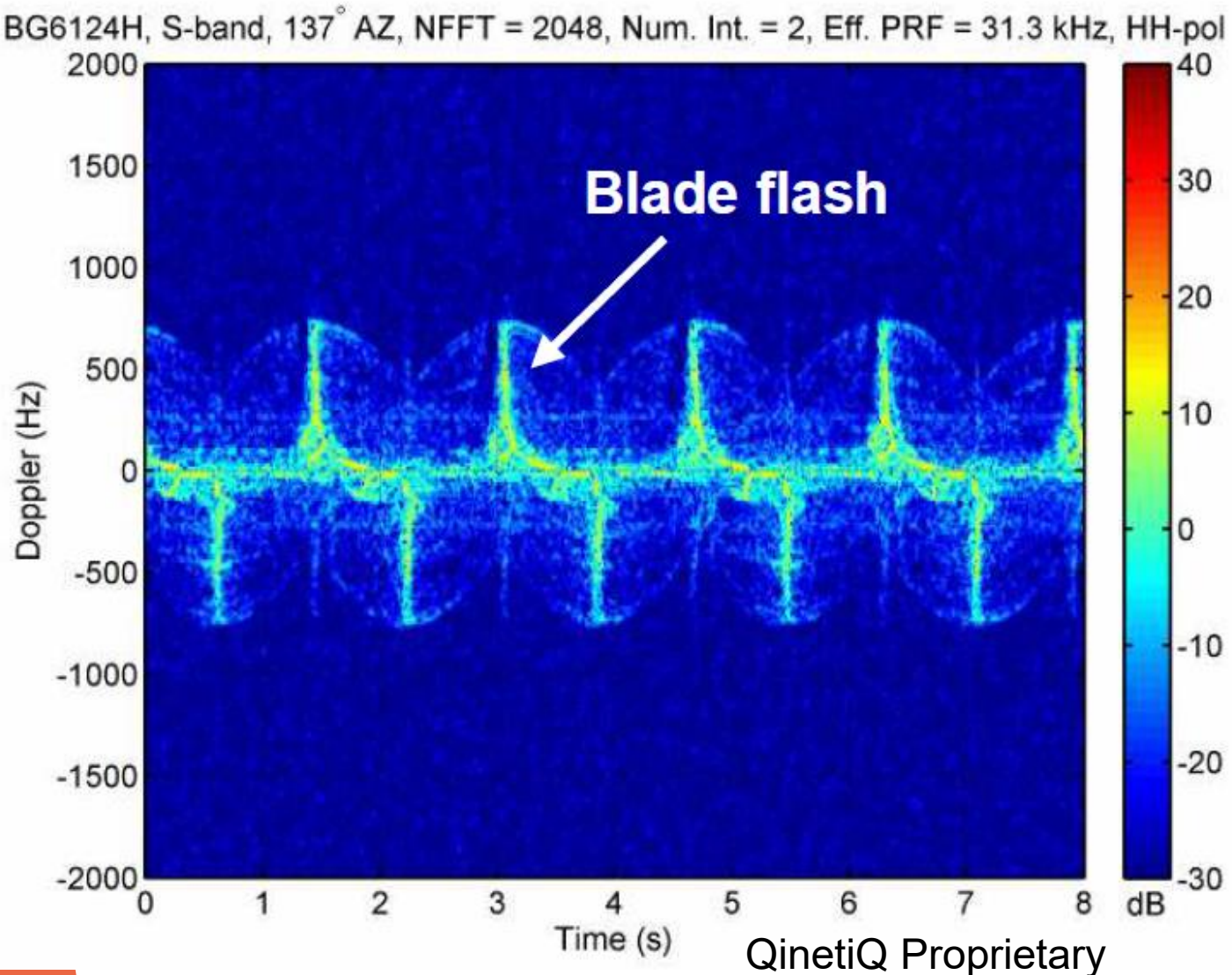
- ▶ The further away the WT the higher it can be before blocking
- ▶ Clearance angle = scanning angle - Beamwidth / 2



Doppler contamination from rotating blades

- ▶ Rotating blades impart Doppler shifts to the reflected signal – the spectrum spreads across harmonics of the rotation rate
- ▶ Modern multi-megawatt turbines reach blade tip speeds of 50-80 m/s – well above typical MTI velocity thresholds
- ▶ Blade returns pass through the filter and appear as moving targets, generating false plots and tracks
- ▶ Affects PSR only – SSR does not use Doppler processing and is immune to this mechanism
- ▶ Mitigation via the I/N criterion – if the reflected return is below the noise floor, the spectrum is irrelevant

Doppler



- ▶ 750 Hz doppler is
 - ▶ ~ 135 km/hr at 3 GHz
 - ▶ ~ 405 km/hr at 1 GHz
- ▶ For false target to take place
 - ▶ Reflected signal \geq threshold AND
 - ▶ Rotational AND
 - ▶ Line-of-sight

Operational impact on air traffic surveillance

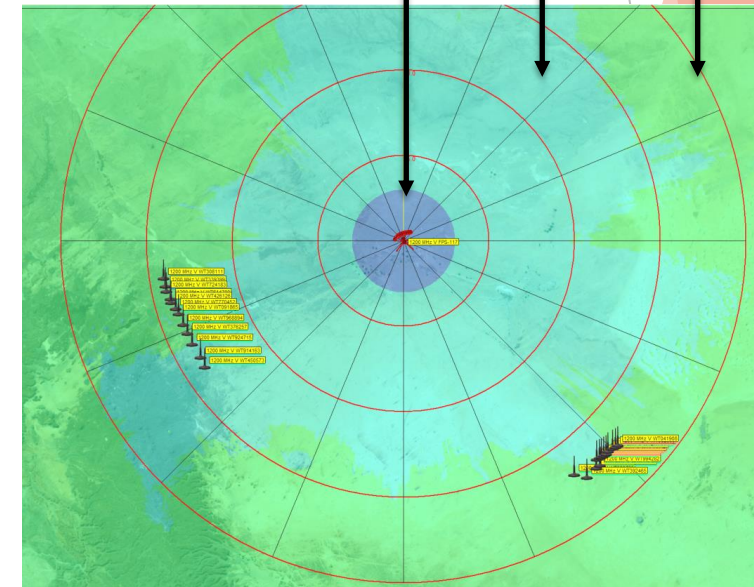
- ▶ Detection degradation – raised CFAR threshold reduces probability of detecting genuine low-RCS targets
- ▶ False plots and tracks – blade Doppler returns and ghost echoes trigger spurious aircraft reports
- ▶ Tracking instability – swap, split or lost tracks on real aircraft in the affected range-azimuth cells
- ▶ Coverage gaps – shadow wedges create altitude bands where targets are not seen
- ▶ Controller workload – more plots to resolve, lower trust in the picture, safety case impacted

Assessment approaches – screening vs detailed

- ▶ Not every turbine needs a full engineering study – assessment is layered to focus effort where it matters
- ▶ Safeguarding – a small exclusion zone around the radar where no turbine is permitted
- ▶ Screening – geometric checks on range, line of sight and terrain to clear benign cases early
- ▶ Simple engineering assessment – tractable calculations for turbines in intermediate zones
- ▶ Detailed analysis – full I/N and beam-clearance simulation for turbines close in or in clear line of sight

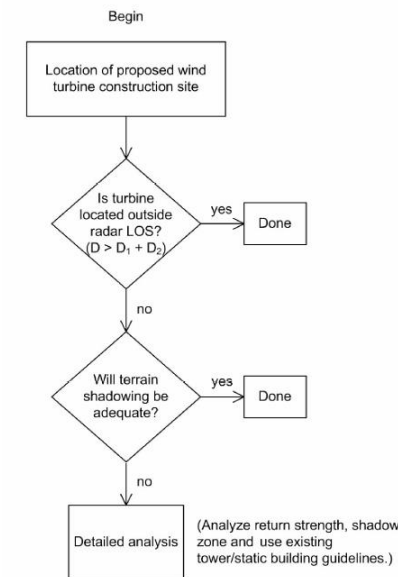
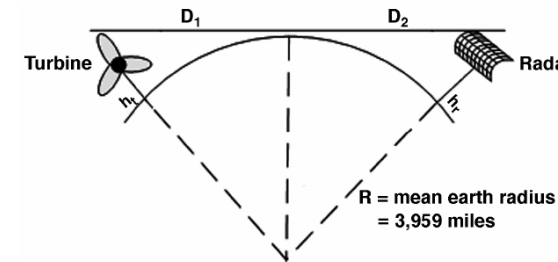
EUROCONTROL GUID-0130

Zone	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Description	0 - 500 m	500 m - 15 km and in radar line of sight	Further than 15 km but within maximum instrumented range and in radar line of sight	Anywhere within maximum instrumented range but not in radar line of sight or outside the maximum instrumented range.
Assessment Requirements	Safeguarding	Detailed assessment	Simple assessment	No assessment



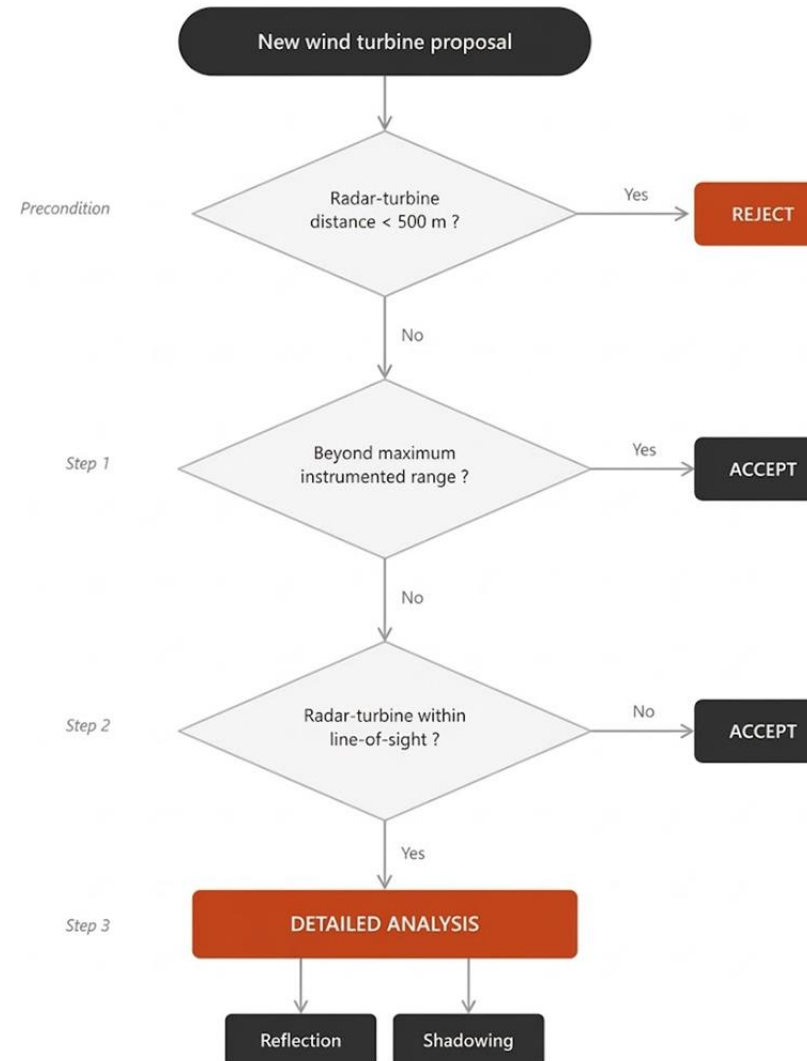
NTIA TR-08-454 – sequential screening

- ▶ Stage 1 – line of sight screening using a 4/3 effective earth radius model; cleared if beyond LOS
- ▶ Stage 2 – terrain shielding check including Fresnel zone clearance; cleared if adequately shielded
- ▶ Stage 3 – detailed engineering analysis of the two physical mechanisms: reflection and shadowing
- ▶ I/N acceptance thresholds – ultra-conservative ≤ -9 dB, conservative ≤ -6 dB



Proposed work-flow

- ▶ Fully automated using HTZ software
- ▶ Batch visibility analysis
- ▶ Batch I/N analysis
- ▶ Batch clearance analysis
- ▶ Final verdict
- ▶ Mitigation measurements



Single report with all computations

radar WT

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Mode	Tx callsign	W callsign	RCS	Rx callsign	Tx frequency (MHz)	Pr (dBm)	TD (dB)	WT height (m)	KTBF (dBm)	I/N (dB)	Seen (0/1)	Angle V (deg)	Distance (m)
2	Reflection	FPS-117	WT308111	45000	FPS-117	1200	-674.88	0	150	-129	-545.88	0	-0.06	70499
3	Reflection	FPS-117	WT308111	45000	FPS-117	1200	-644.19	0	350	-129	-515.19	0	0.1	70499
4	Reflection	FPS-117	WT339399	45000	FPS-117	1200	-673.2	0	150	-129	-544.2	0	-0.05	70293
5	Reflection	FPS-117	WT339399	45000	FPS-117	1200	-641.01	0	350	-129	-512.01	0	0.12	70294
6	Reflection	FPS-117	WT943306	45000	FPS-117	1200	-672.53	0	150	-129	-543.53	0	-0.05	70207
7	Reflection	FPS-117	WT943306	45000	FPS-117	1200	-640.21	0	350	-129	-511.21	0	0.12	70207
8	Reflection	FPS-117	WT724183	45000	FPS-117	1200	-672.53	0	150	-129	-543.53	0	-0.05	70207
9	Reflection	FPS-117	WT724183	45000	FPS-117	1200	-640.21	0	350	-129	-511.21	0	0.12	70207
10	Reflection	FPS-117	WT430922	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.58	0	150	-129	-540.58	0	-0.03	69478
11	Reflection	FPS-117	WT430922	45000	FPS-117	1200	-135.95	0.8	350	-129	-6.95	1	0.13	69479
12	Reflection	FPS-117	WT453511	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.58	0	150	-129	-540.58	0	-0.03	69478
13	Reflection	FPS-117	WT453511	45000	FPS-117	1200	-135.95	0.8	350	-129	-6.95	1	0.13	69479
14	Reflection	FPS-117	WT462393	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.58	0	150	-129	-540.58	0	-0.03	69478
15	Reflection	FPS-117	WT462393	45000	FPS-117	1200	-135.95	0.8	350	-129	-6.95	1	0.13	69479
16	Reflection	FPS-117	WT614700	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.58	0	150	-129	-540.58	0	-0.03	69478
17	Reflection	FPS-117	WT614700	45000	FPS-117	1200	-135.95	0.8	350	-129	-6.95	1	0.13	69479
18	Reflection	FPS-117	WT884889	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.96	0	150	-129	-540.96	0	-0.03	69594
19	Reflection	FPS-117	WT884889	45000	FPS-117	1200	-136.53	0.7	350	-129	-7.53	1	0.13	69594
20	Reflection	FPS-117	WT438817	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.96	0	150	-129	-540.96	0	-0.03	69594
21	Reflection	FPS-117	WT438817	45000	FPS-117	1200	-136.53	0.7	350	-129	-7.53	1	0.13	69594
22	Reflection	FPS-117	WT726656	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.96	0	150	-129	-540.96	0	-0.03	69594
23	Reflection	FPS-117	WT726656	45000	FPS-117	1200	-136.53	0.7	350	-129	-7.53	1	0.13	69594
24	Reflection	FPS-117	WT426126	45000	FPS-117	1200	-669.96	0	150	-129	-540.96	0	-0.03	69594
25	Reflection	FPS-117	WT426126	45000	FPS-117	1200	-136.53	0.7	350	-129	-7.53	1	0.13	69594

Acceptance criteria – I/N and shadowing

- ▶ Not within LOS? Accept
- ▶ Two criteria must hold for a Conditional Accept – reflection (I/N) and shadowing (beam clearance)
- ▶ $I/N \leq -6$ dB – reflected turbine return stays at least 6 dB below the receiver noise floor
- ▶ Covers all reflection effects – false targets, Doppler contamination and receiver overload all sit below detection
- ▶ Shadowing – elevation angle from radar to blade tip must be below the lower edge of the main beam
- ▶ Lower edge = scanning angle minus half the 3 dB vertical beamwidth, so blade tips sit under the main lobe

Mitigation options for rejected turbines

- ▶ Layout redesign – move or drop turbines to pull them out of the radar main beam or off the affected bearing
- ▶ Radar-absorbing cladding on tower and nacelle – reduces structural RCS and the I/N margin
- ▶ Stealth or radar-absorbing blade coatings – attenuates blade returns and limits Doppler contamination
- ▶ Fill-in radar – a supplementary sensor restores coverage inside the shadow wedge behind a wind farm
- ▶ Operational – PSR sector blanking, range-azimuth gating, antenna elevation adjustment where the operator accepts the trade-off

Key takeaways and questions

- ▶ Wind and radar can coexist – the engineering is well understood, and the assessment frameworks are mature
- ▶ Three mechanisms matter – reflection, shadowing, Doppler contamination
- ▶ Use a layered workflow – safeguarding, range and LOS screening before expensive detailed analysis
- ▶ Acceptance criteria – $I/N \leq -6$ dB reflection and beam-clearance shadowing, worst-case across all radars

To access the HTZ demo
▶ click here

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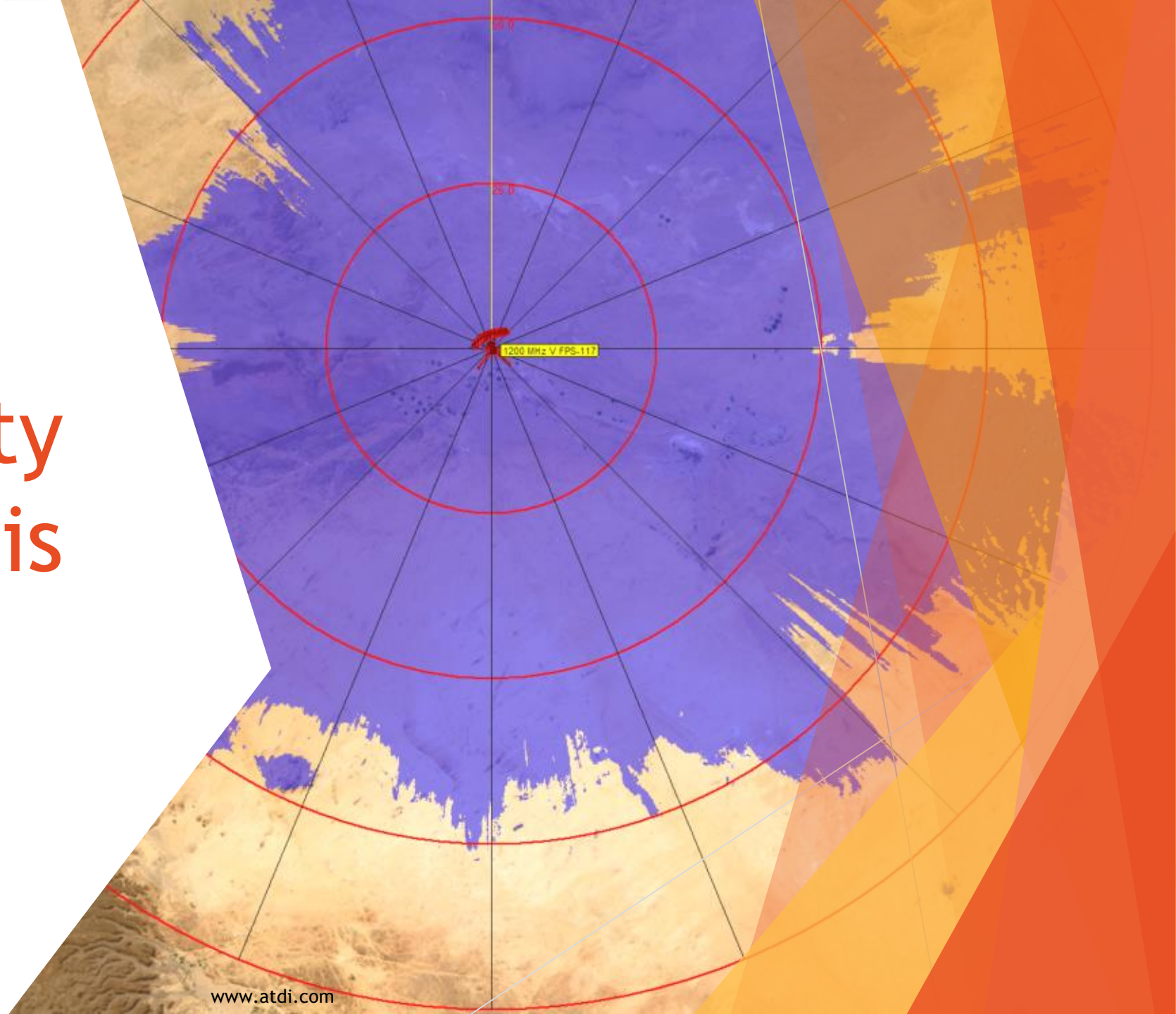
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HTZ Communications CNS Network Design & Optimisation

- ▶ Dedicated aeronautical propagation models
- ▶ Automated site network coverage, interference analysis and frequency planning
- ▶ Identifying shadowing/black spots and automatic site search
- ▶ Traffic analysis and network capacity management
- ▶ Surveillance functions including multi-lateration (TDOA)
- ▶ Ability to model ATC radars (VOR, ILS, MLAT, RADAR)
- ▶ Functions to model wind turbine interference or
- ▶ 5G towers on aeronautical radars
- ▶ ICAO building restriction compliance analysis and exclusion zones around the airports

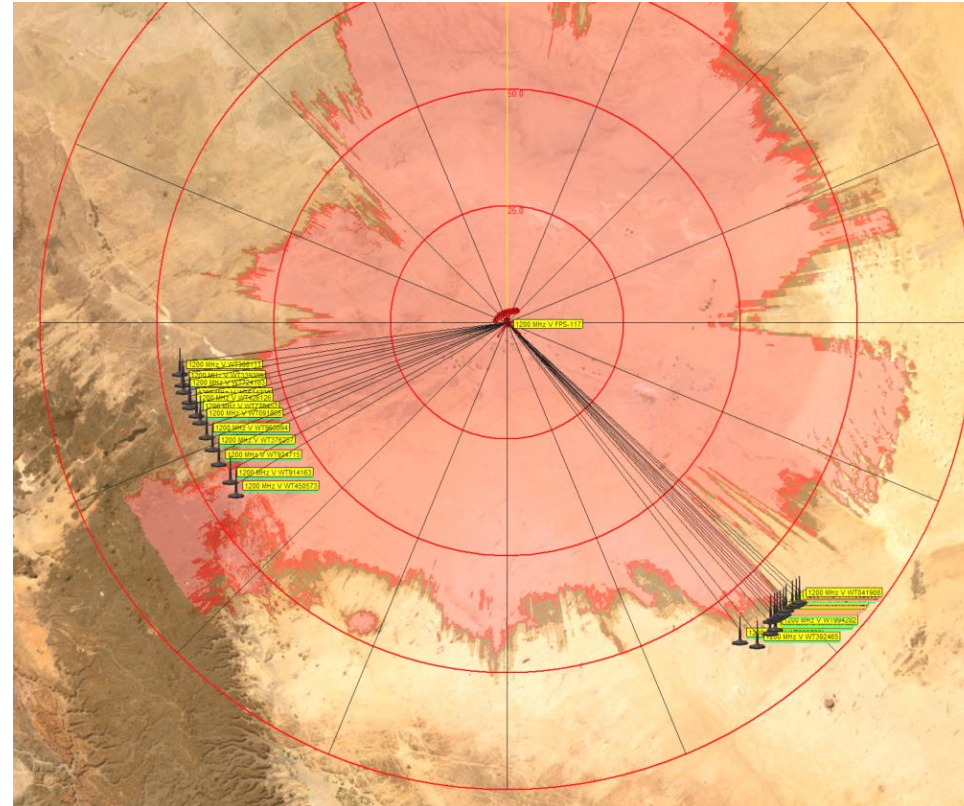


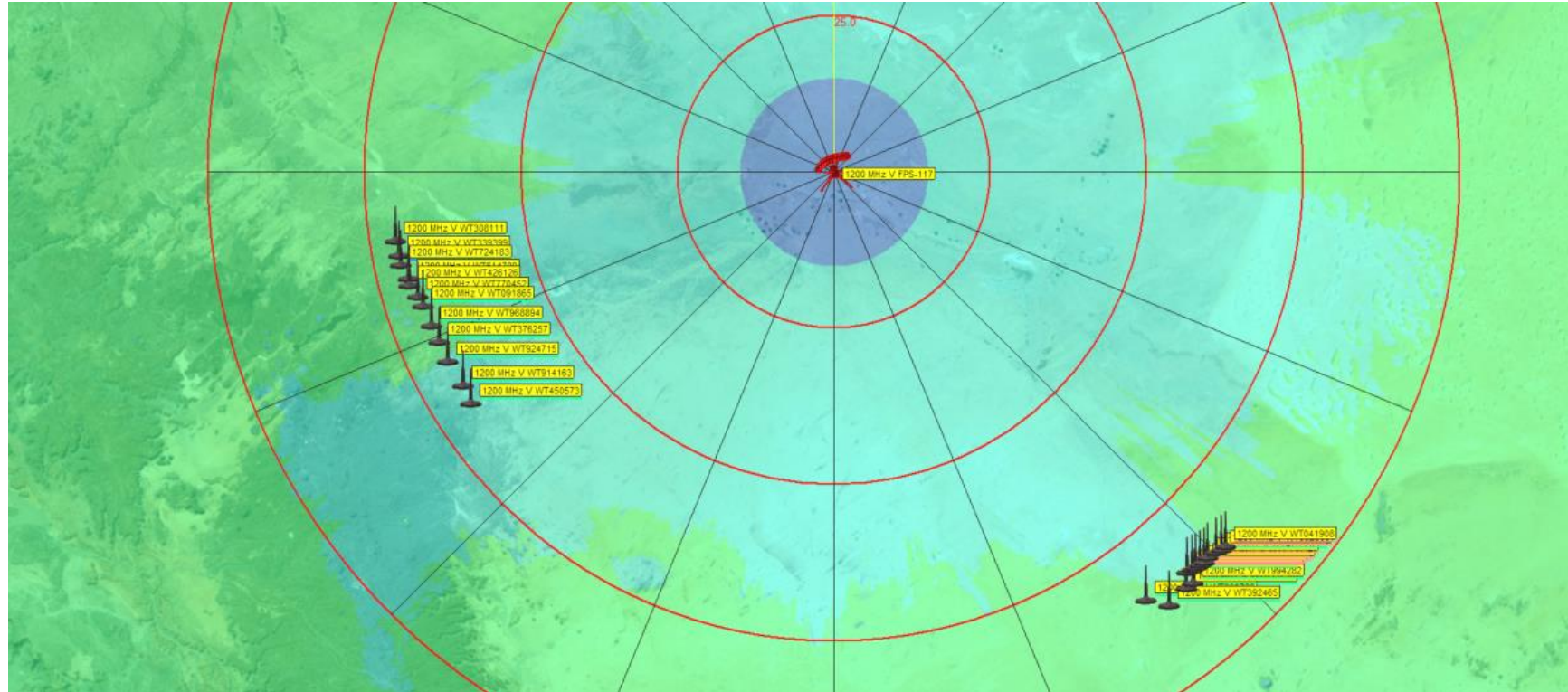
Visibility analysis



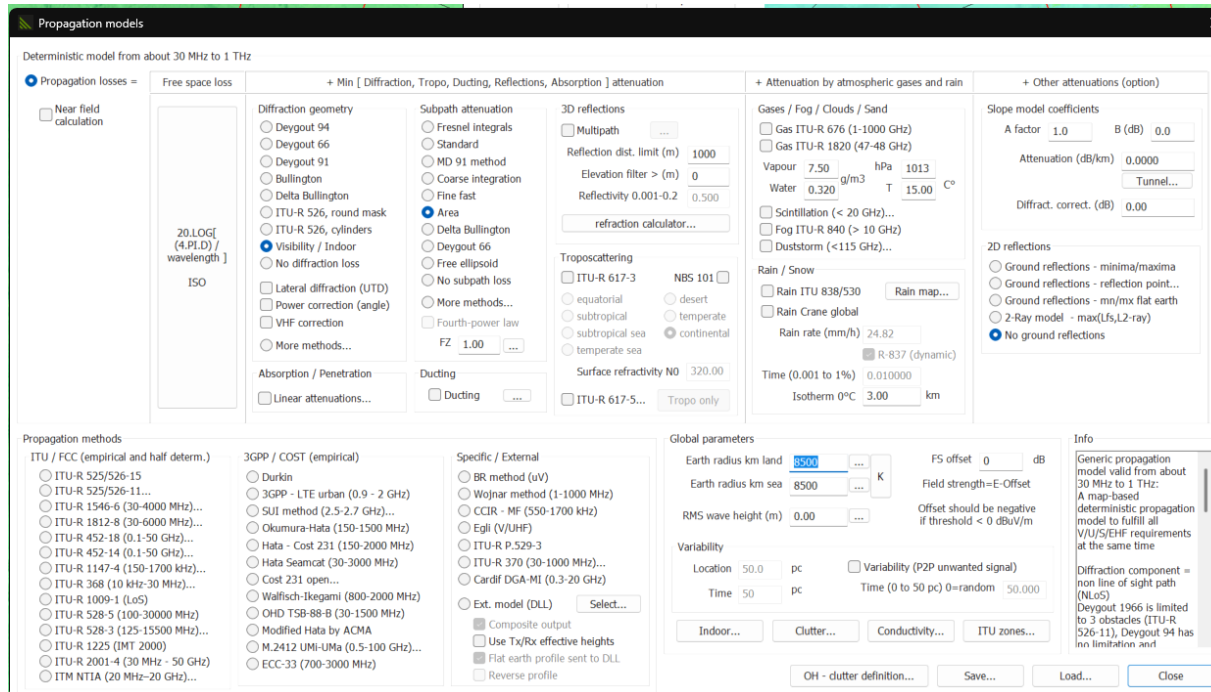
I/N analysis

- ▶ Full visibility, I/N and shadowing analysis

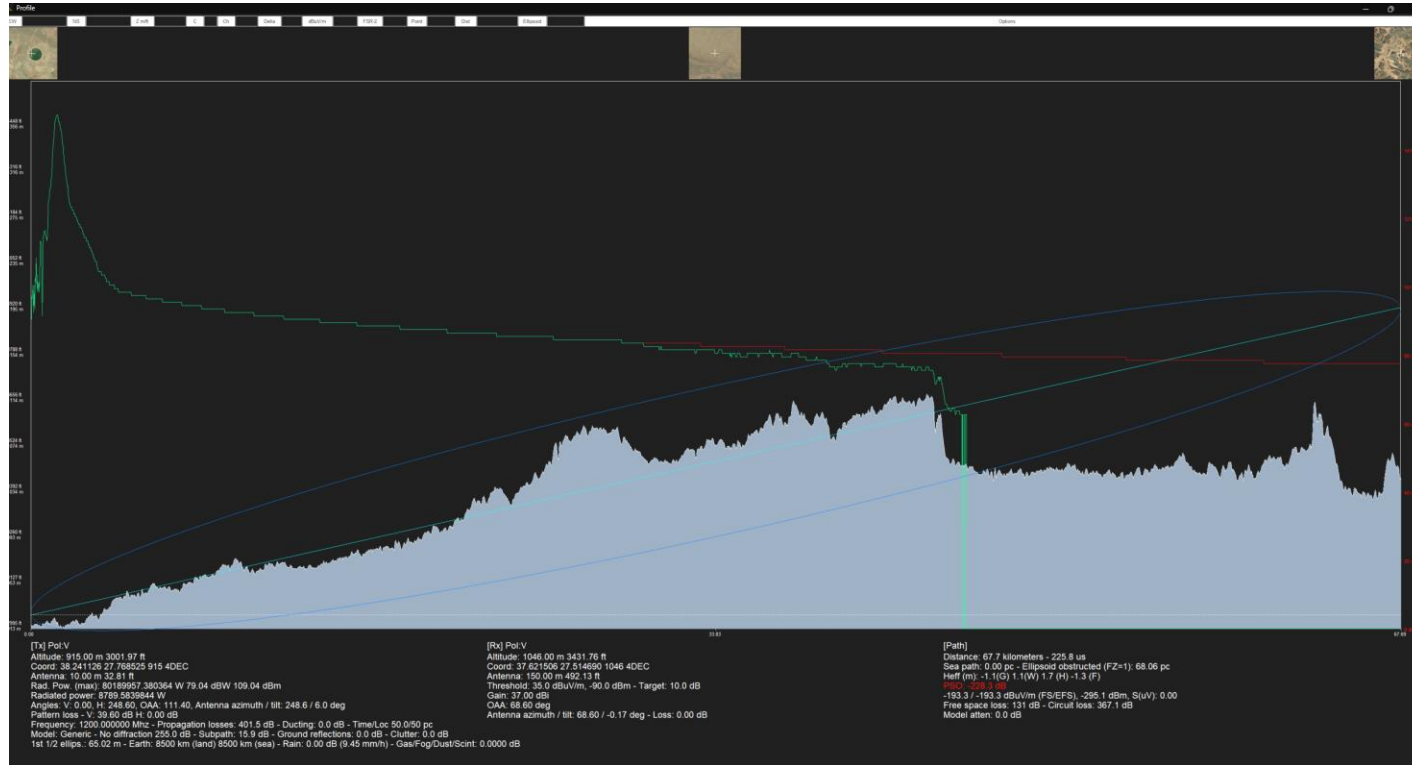




Euro-control zones



Propagacion models



Propagation losses



THANK YOU

CANSO **AT&T**

