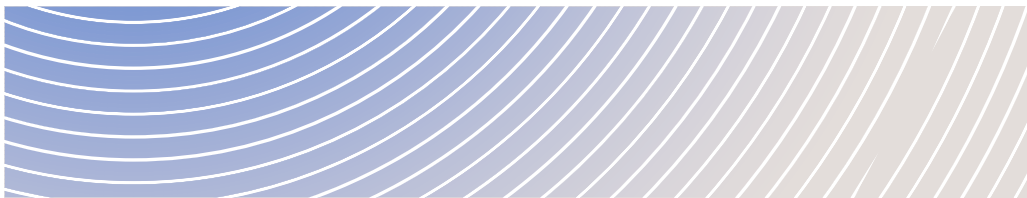




Follow-up Program Report for 2022- 2023



REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATORY
DRILLING EAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

June 21, 2023



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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation/Acronym	Definition
CHS	Canadian Hydrographic Service
C-NLOPB	Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board
CSAS	Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
ECCC-CWS	Canadian Wildlife Service, a branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada
ESRF	Environmental Studies Research Fund
G&C Agreement	Grants and Contribution Agreement
GIS Tool	Geographic Information System Decision Support Tool
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
Government of NL	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
IAAC	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
MPA	Marine protected area
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
Ministerial Regulation	Regulations Respecting Excluded Physical Activities (Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Exploratory Wells)
Ministerial Response	Ministerial Response to the Regional Assessment Committee Report for Offshore Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador
MRPR	Ministerial Response Progress Report (the Regional Assessment Ministerial Response Progress Report)
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



NRCan	Natural Resources Canada
PCA	Parks Canada Agency
Registry	Canadian Impact Assessment Registry
Regional Assessment	Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador
RA Final Report	Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador Final Report
RA Follow-up Advisory Committee	Regional Assessment Follow-up Program Advisory Committee
RA Follow-Up Program	Follow-up Program for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration Drilling East of Newfoundland
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
Steering Committee	The Regional Assessment Follow-up Program Steering Committee. This committee includes representatives from: IAAC, NRCan, the Government of NL's Department of Industry, Energy and Technology, the C-NLOPB, ECCC and DFO
Study Area	The Regional Assessment Study area as defined in Figure 1.1 of the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador Final Report.

1. Introduction

On April 15, 2019, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) announced the launch of the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador (the Regional Assessment) and the appointment of a Committee to conduct the Regional Assessment (the RA Committee). The purpose of the Regional Assessment was to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal impact assessment process for future offshore exploratory drilling projects in the defined offshore Regional Assessment Study Area (the Study Area) while ensuring the highest standards of environmental protection continue to be applied and maintained.

On February 29, 2020, the RA Committee submitted its [Report on the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador](#). This Report detailed the knowledge gained by the Committee, including its associated analysis and engagement activities, the conclusions reached and the subsequent recommendations.

On June 4, 2020 the [Regulations Respecting Excluded Physical Activities - Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Exploratory Wells](#), a Ministerial regulation under the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) that sets out requirements for future exploratory drilling projects in the Study Area, came into force. Subsequently, the Impact Assessment Agency (IAAC) posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (the Registry) the [Ministerial Response to the Regional Assessment Committee Report for Offshore Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) (Ministerial Response). In this document, the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (Government of NL) responded to the recommendations in the Final Report of the RA Committee and committed to establishing a Regional Assessment Follow-up Program (RA Follow-up Program).

The RA Follow-up Program monitors and reports on the implementation and effectiveness of the various outcomes of the Regional Assessment, including commitments made in the associated Ministerial Response. The RA Follow-up Program will also ensure that the information and analysis remain valid and up-to-date, and that it continues to fulfill its intended function of informing decision-making as it pertains to future exploratory drilling and associated activities in the Study Area.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Regional Assessment Follow-up Program Report is to provide updates on the initiatives and outputs of the RA Follow-up Program for the reporting period of 2022-2023. The Ministerial Response Progress Report (MRPR) included in Section 4 reports on the progress being made on the commitments by the government agencies and departments named in the Ministerial Response. This includes IAAC, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), ECCC, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) and the Government of NL. The report also provides and evaluation the overall effectiveness of the follow-up program (Section 5).

3. Summary of Activities 2022-2023

The RA Follow-up Advisory committee met 5 times during the 2022-2023 reporting period. On June 1, 2022, the RA Follow-up Advisory committee submitted the following recommendations to the Steering Committee regarding the long-term plan for the GIS decision support tool:

- The GIS decision support tool should be housed and maintained by the Canada \ Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (CNLOPB)
- The GIS tool should be subject to a full review at a minimum every 3 to 5 years. This timeline recognizes that new data may be subject to a peer review process. Furthermore, the advisory committee recommends that existing layers in the GIS tool should be updated as required (i.e.) as new information is made available or at least annually.

C-NLOPB is working to secure funding for a long-term solution to house the GIS tool within a new Data Management System. Discussions are ongoing between the C-NLOPB and the Agency to develop a strategy for migrating the RA GIS Tools data sets into the C-NLOPB Data and Information Hub. Once a long-term solution has been secured, C-NLOPB will refine its approach to reviewing and updating the GIS tool.

In the 2021-2022 RA Follow-up Report, the Steering Committee committed to developing a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the RA follow-up program and to report on the results of this evaluation beginning in this 2022-2023 annual report. On December 8, 2022, the Steering Committee solicited advice from the Advisory Committee on its draft framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the RA follow-up program. On February 6, 2023, the RA Follow-up Advisory Committee submitted advice and recommendations on the Framework. On March 14, 2023 the Steering Committee finalized the effectiveness framework in consideration of the advice provided by the Advisory Committee. The results of the 2022-2023 RA follow-up program effectiveness evaluation is presented in Section 5.

On March 31st, 2023 the first two-year terms of the advisory committee members expired. The following members elected to renew for an additional two-year term:

- Bevin Ledrew
- Frédéric Dwyer-Samuel
- George Russell
- Marcy Cloud
- Ray Finn

The Steering Committee has started undertaking work to replace the three members that did not renew their terms.

Table 1 provides an overview of the change of status for the 42 commitments made in the Ministerial Response for the given reporting period. A description of the statuses is included in Table 2.

Table 1: Commitment status dashboard for the commitments outlined in the Ministerial Response.

Status	Number of Commitments	
	2021-2022	2022-2023
Completed – Fully Met	10	14
Completed – Ongoing Monitoring	12	12
Progress Ongoing	20	16

4. Ministerial Response Progress Report

The Ministerial Response Progress below builds off of commitments and work plans identified in the initial 2021 [Ministerial Response Progress Report](#). A summary of changes to commitment status can be found in Table 1. Each commitment has been assigned a status based on the description in Table 2. The commitments in this report follow the format of those outlined in the Ministerial Response. Table 3 below provides an overview of the actions taken, or accomplishments made towards achieving the commitment during the 2020-2021 reporting period.



Table 2: Status description to track the commitments outlined in the Ministerial Response.

Status	Description
Completed – Fully met	Commitment was fully completed. No more actions or monitoring required.
Completed – Ongoing Monitoring	Commitment was completed but ongoing monitoring is required.
Progress Ongoing	Commitment has not been completed but progress has been made or actions were taken towards achieving the commitment and ensuring it remains on track for completion.

Table 3: Updates to the Ministers commitments outlined in the Ministerial Response to the recommendations of the Regional Assessment of Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Commitment	Status
Committee Recommendations in Relation to the Regulation	
1. Mitigation and Follow-up Measures (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
2. Trained Seabird Observers (ECCC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted compliance verification according to ECCC requirements for standardized training of observers, including the evaluation of two proposed training programs. Reviewed the data collected by trained observers as part of exploratory drilling programs (see #29 for more details). 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
3. Fisheries Communications Plans (C-NLOPB & IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
4. Pre-drilling Notifications (C-NLOPB & IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of stakeholders maintained by the C-NLOPB was reviewed and will be updated periodically to ensure that communications from proponents reaches all parties in a timely manner (as outlined in the Ministerial Regulation). 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
5. Migratory Bird Mitigation (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
6. Seabird Monitoring (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
7. Training on Seabird Strandings (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met

Commitment	Status
8. Activities in Marine Refuges and Closure Areas (DFO, C-NLOPB & IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
9. Consultation in Regulatory Development (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
10. Notification Requirements (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
11. Application of Exclusion (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
12. Review of Ministerial Regulation (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review process will occur within five years of the coming into force of the regulation – See 2021 MRPR 	Progress Ongoing
13. Adequate and Appropriate Modeling (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of the RA Follow-up Program Report (2022-2023), no projects have been proposed by proponents under the Ministerial Regulation. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
Committee Recommendations for the Regional Assessment Follow-up Program	
14. Annual Follow-up Program Report (IAAC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA Follow-up Program Report finalized and published on June 21, 2023 	Progress Ongoing
15. Long-term plan for the GIS Decision-support tool (IAAC, Government of Canada & Government of NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated version of the GIS tool prepared and released in May 2021. Arrangements made for the continuation of the online hosting and maintenance of, and software licence for, the GIS system up to March 31, 2023. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring

Commitment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RA Steering Committee continues to explore and discuss options for the long-term maintenance and hosting of the GIS, and the appropriate frequency of future GIS updates. On-going identification of new and updated datasets for future GIS updates, with the advice of the Advisory Committee. 	
<p>16. Ministerial Response Progress Report (IAAC, Government of Canada & Government of NL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment was fully met – See 2021 MRPR 	Completed – Fully Met
<p>17. Reviews and Reports (IAAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the commitments of parties, as outlined in the Ministerial Response, continue to be tracked and publicly reported in the annual Ministerial Response Progress Report. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>18. Incorporating Diverse Perspectives (IAAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the RA Follow-up Advisory Committee were appointed in July 2021. The Committee members represent a diversity of perspectives from Indigenous communities, the oil and gas industry, the fishing industry, environmental non-government organizations, academic interest groups, and the public. The RA Follow-up Program will continue to seek and incorporate diverse perspectives through engagement processes. Where appropriate, public comment periods will be held for reviewing and providing comments on key documents. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>19. Use of Studies and Scientific Reviews (DFO & ECCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee continues to track the status and completion of these on-going studies referenced by the RA Committee, and other relevant studies, for inclusion in a future update of the GIS tool, expected in 2023-2024. The development of predictive density maps remains ongoing, due to the large amount of data and analytical processing that is required to complete the maps. Given current progress, CWS anticipates that the modelling will be completed by early-mid summer 2023. <p>ECCC's species-specific predictive modelling for seabirds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlas of Seabirds at Sea for Eastern Canada includes data up to 2020, and is now available on OpenData at Atlas of Seabirds at Sea in Eastern Canada 2006 – 2020 – Open Government Portal. 	Progress Ongoing

Commitment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry survey data is now entered into the Eastern Canada Seabirds at Sea (ECSAS) database. • Existing tracking data from ECCC and partners has been compiled, and preliminary maps highlighting seasonal seabird use (combining both tracking and at-sea survey data) have been completed but require a peer-reviewed process. • Work on predictive maps is ongoing, as additional data sources (e.g., aerial surveys) were incorporated. Due to our comprehensive approach aimed to support a suite of initiatives, across a wide geographic range, and with the most available data, this is taking a bit longer than anticipated. Aiming to have preliminary maps produced by early-mid summer 2023 • Grants and Contribution agreements were signed with three Indigenous groups (NunatuKavut Community Council, Qalipu First Nation and Miawpukek First Nation) and work plans were developed and implemented in 2022 to enhance capacity regarding seabird conservation and songmeter deployment to detect Leach's Storm petrel (see #22, below). • Grants and Contributions with Nunatsiavut Government accomplishments included further boat-based at-sea survey training, aerial surveys training (Feb 2023) and initiation of tagging projects to look at year-round movements of priority species. <p>DFO's marine mammals species distribution modelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation of all marine mammal and sea turtle sightings data in NL region has been completed. The marine mammal data has also been amalgamated into a single database for Atlantic Canada. DFO is now in the process of mapping acoustic whale detections to add to the existing sightings data, for modelling. Environmental data was gathered from trips to deploy acoustic receivers and record oceanic data, as well as from existing sources, such as DFO's Canadian Hydrographic Service website, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website, and others. Several habitat models will be implemented in the coming months. • Progress is ongoing and there continues to be good exchange of information between proponents, regulators, and DFO. 	
Committee Recommendations for Specific Departments or Agencies	

Commitment	Status
<p>20. Scope of Factors for Assessment of Designated Projects (IAAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of factors will continue to be monitored through the RA Follow-up Program – See 2021 MRPR. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>21. Atlantic Salmon (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant progress has been made towards the achievement of the Environmental Studies Research Fund (ESRF) project goal of determining the likelihood that Atlantic salmon from different rivers will enter areas of interest to oil and gas production/exploration activities including the timing, duration and specific areas where this is likely to occur. In 2021 and 2022, cooperation among project collaborators (Ocean Tracking Network, Unama ki Institute of Natural Resources, and Atlantic Salmon Federation), Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management groups, the province of Quebec, and DFO (Newfoundland and Labrador, Gulf, and Maritimes regions) resulted in the successful deployment of 2671 acoustic tags on Atlantic Salmon smolt (n=2120) and kelt (n=551) across 37 Canadian rivers in 5 provinces. In addition, 183 satellite tags have been deployed on multi-sea winter adults in West Greenland in 2021 and 2022. 168 acoustic receivers have been installed along the western boundary of the Regional Assessment Area (RAA), in addition to 4 wave glider missions (2 each in 2021, 2022) and the release of 10 drifters in 2022. This represents a significant enhancement in operational capacity to detect salmon in offshore waters, and within the C-NLOPB RAA. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>22. Leach’s Storm-petrels and other Relevant Species (ECCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating population status and trend of three major Leach’s Storm-Petrel colonies in Atlantic Region (Gull Island, Great Island, Green Island) was completed in 2022 Ongoing support was provided to monitor adult survival and reproductive success at key site across Atlantic Region Maps identifying Leach’s Storm-Petrel foraging areas during incubation have been produced Approach using genomic and biochemical markers to assign stranded juvenile birds to colony of origin has been successfully developed Studies manipulating light characteristics and storm-petrel attraction were conducted in 2022; data are being analyzed and will help inform mitigation measures 	Progress Ongoing

Commitment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public opinion research study investigating people's perceptions toward Leach's Storm-Petrels was completed in March 2022 to inform outreach and education/conservation efforts and is available online at https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/environment climate change/2022/134-20-e/index.html • The development of the <i>Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (or Conservation Standards)</i> model for Leach's Storm-petrel in Atlantic Canada is an ongoing initiative undertaken by a Working Group comprising 25+ Leach's Storm-petrel experts from Canada, USA and Europe. To date, the working group has identified conservation goals and assessed known pressures and conservation strategies. A document summarizing the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (or Conservation Standards) model for Leach's Storm-petrel in Atlantic Canada process and identifying key activities to reduce threats will be submitted as a deliverable by end of April 2023. • Three Indigenous groups (NunatuKavut Community Council, Qalipu First Nation and Miawpukek First Nation) deployed Automated Recording Units to detect presence of breeding LESP within their territories. • A map of lightscape across eastern NL including the Regional Assessment study area was finalized to inform on the impacts of excess energy in the form of light pollution in the offshore and inform future mitigation measures; an index of lightscape from vessel traffic has been completed which further contributes to final lightscape map. 	
<p>23. Data Accessibility (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) atlas of interactive maps was publicly launched on the MSP website on January 31, 2023, under the name of the Canada Marine Planning Atlas, accessible at: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/planning-planification/atlas/index-eng.html. It was showcased at the pavilion of the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) Congress (IMPAC5), February 3 to 9, 2023 • MarineCollab (formerly named the MSP Platform) is a SharePoint-based platform used to share information and collaborate with external partners (e.g. Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments, Indigenous governments and communities) involved in marine planning and conservation processes. Building on the success of the two regional pilot projects, the platform is now in use by every DFO MSP region. While not a data warehouse, the Platform provides MSP partners with access to 	Completed – Fully Met

Commitment	Status
<p>knowledge and information products derived from the data, including but not exclusive to fisheries, with linkages to other tools such as the MSP Atlas and Open Data Portal.</p>	
<p>24. Commercial Fisheries Data (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFO and C-NLOPB continue to hold regular meetings multiple times per year. Additionally, data experts in both organizations collaborated on adding petroleum data to the Canada Marine Planning Atlas. Using web mapping services published by the C-NLOPB, petroleum data is featured under the Add Data widget of the Canada Marine Planning Atlas. • The Eastern Canada Commercial Fishing was published to Open Data Canada on September 14, 2021. This dataset delineates catch per unit area by species and gear type for commercial fisheries from 2009 to 2018 for Eastern Canada DFO Regions. Catch per unit is generalized to 10 km² hexagons as total catch weight, in kg, per hexagon. DFO staff in NL Region are updating the commercial fisheries dataset to include information from 2012 to 2021. • Both this fisheries dataset and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization fishing zone boundaries are featured on the Canada Marine Planning Atlas published in January 2023. 	Completed – Fully Met
<p>25. Knowledge Sharing Protocol (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Chief Data Steward leads a national Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) Working Group as part of the national Data Governance Framework. • The group has worked with Subject Matter Experts (including Access To Information and Privacy, Legal) to develop a suite of data sharing agreement templates and a decision tree. • DSA templates cover one-time data sharing, data shared externally, data received from an external organization, and two-way data sharing with an external organization. Additional data sharing agreement templates and processes, including those involving Indigenous data, will be developed as required. • In addition to the DSA work, the Office of the Chief Data Steward is in the process of developing (or adopting/adapting as appropriate) guiding principles, requirements (roles and responsibilities), and assessment tools as part of the departmental data ethics and artificial intelligence policy suite which will guide DFO handling and use of data received. The Office is also pursuing opportunities to engage departmental working groups, other government departments, and Indigenous stakeholders to co-develop elements of the policy suite having potential implications for Indigenous communities. 	Progress Ongoing

Commitment	Status
<p>26. Information Gathering and Sharing Protocol (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) atlas of interactive maps was publicly launched on the MSP website on January 31, 2023, under the name of the Canada Marine Planning Atlas, accessible here: https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/planning-planification/atlas/index-eng.html While, version 1 of the Atlas was developed after extensive user testing, DFO plans to provide 12 to 18 months for partners and stakeholders to familiarize themselves with the application before soliciting feedback on potential changes to develop a version 2 of the Atlas. 	Completed – Fully Met
<p>27. Accessibility of Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles Data (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress is ongoing and there continues to be good exchange of information between proponents, regulators and DFO. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>28. Standards for Marine Mammals Observers (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFO is finalizing the process to establish standards of qualification for marine mammal observers. Expected project delivery in 2023. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>29. Surveys of Stranded Birds (ECCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document to provide guidance on developing survey protocols for stranded birds was developed and provided to the C-NLOPB and operators in March 2021. Field datasheet to support collection of data from systematic stranded bird survey and opportunistic encounters was developed and provided to the C-NLOPB and operators in March 2021. Data entry form that enables entry of both types of stranded bird data (opportunistic encounters and systematic surveys) was developed and provided to limited number of individuals/groups collecting data on stranded birds in May 2022. The stranded bird database was completed in March 2023 and will be provided to operators for use. This database will allow the digitization of data and better documentation and review of stranded bird data through the CWS permitting process. A template was developed for documenting data verification of systematic stranded bird data submissions and for communicating data inconsistencies to operators; 517 industry-led systematic surveys (2020 and 2021) were verified and are ready for integration into new database. Resources to support seabird observer training for quantifying stranded birds were developed and shared with known trainers. 	Progress Ongoing

Commitment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources to support stranded bird awareness training were developed and shared with the C-NLOPB and operators (updated annually). 	
<p>30. Information Availability and Data Gaps (C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the overall environmental risks, information availability and any data gaps for the specific area as part of the land tenure decision-making process will continue to be monitored through the RA Follow-up Program. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>31. Special Areas Initiatives (DFO & ECCC)</p> <p>ECCC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECCC continues to engage with DFO and PCA to ensure existing ECCC-CWS information is available to inform decisions related to protected area establishment. Foundational work to collect information continues to be underway. Future activities to support this commitment may continue to require resources to support MPA and marine ‘Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures’ (OECM) establishment. <p>DFO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFO, in collaboration with the Canada-Newfoundland Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB), has developed operational guidance for minimizing impacts by offshore exploration drilling on cold water corals and sponges, including in OECMs. This Guidance considers best available scientific information and advice, international best practices, regional industry practices, and feedback from interested parties. It takes a balanced approach to maintain high levels of environmental protection during exploratory drilling programs in Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore area. Guidance materials (full report, summary and brochure) are finalized and are being prepared for web based publication. Best available information from a variety of sources, including science, Indigenous and community knowledge, continues to inform Government of Canada MPAs and OECM establishment and management processes. Following work of a Federal MPA Protection Standard Task Group to clarify the details of the 2019 MPA Protection Standard, the Government of Canada announced additional details on its federal MPA Standard at the Fifth International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) on February 8, 2023. The following activities are subject to the MPA Protection Standard: oil and gas exploration, development and production; mineral exploration and exploitation; disposal of waste and other 	Progress Ongoing

Commitment	Status
<p>matter, dumping of fill, and deposit of deleterious drugs and pesticides; and bottom-trawl gear. To further strengthen the MPA Protection Standard, the Government of Canada also announced its intent to enhance restrictions on certain vessel discharges within MPAs. The Government of Canada's 2022 Guidance for Recognizing Marine Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) was published in December 2022. The 2022 Guidance applies to existing and future federal marine OECMs, including marine refuges. In line with the 2019 federal OECM Protection Standard, the Guidance requires that existing and foreseeable activities be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that risks to the area's biodiversity conservation benefits have been avoided or mitigated effectively.</p>	
<p>32. Availability of Spill Imagery (C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ECCC and the C-NLOPB facilitates the sharing of information as part of the emergency response to pollution incidents. The C-NLOPB may request advice and assistance from ECCC in the preparedness for or response to an environmental emergency. • The MOU has been reviewed and is being updated to ensure the provision of spill imagery is captured as a deliverable during an environmental emergency response. • ECCC can bring together relevant experts in the field of environmental protection to support environmental emergency response and preparedness and provide digital sensitivity maps using geospatial resource databases, and other tools, which can be shared with Indigenous Groups and stakeholders. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>33. Guidance on Mitigating Effects to Corals and Sponges (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFO, in collaboration with the Canada-Newfoundland Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB), has developed operational guidance for minimizing impacts by offshore exploration drilling on cold water corals and sponges, including in Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs). This Guidance considers best available scientific information and advice, international best practices, regional industry practices, and feedback from interested parties. It takes a balanced approach to maintain high levels of environmental protection during exploratory drilling programs in Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore area. Guidance materials (full report, summary and brochure) are finalized and are being prepared for web based publication. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring

Commitment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFO continues to work with the C-NLOPB and proponents on implementation of the operational guidance, which is intended to be evergreen and updated in response to new science, regional experience, and advancement of best practices. 	
<p>34. Updates to Seismic Sound Mitigation or Standards (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFO is in the process of developing draft amendments to the Statement of Canadian Practice with respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment (the Statement) and will be consulting federal partners and stakeholder prior to the publication. The proposed amendments will incorporate new science and international best practices for seismic sound mitigation. Anticipated publication of the draft amendments to the Statement is 2023. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>35. Baseline Data on Contaminants Levels (DFO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed. 	Completed – Fully Met
<p>36. Land Tenure Decisions (C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of the information and analysis of the Regional Assessment and outcomes of the RA Follow-up Program in land tenure decisions is being monitored regularly. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>37. Strategic Environmental Assessments (C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently no new SEAs or updates to existing SEAs in the RA Study Area. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>38. Exploratory Drilling Scenarios (Government of Canada, Government of NL & C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The anticipated number of wells to be drilled on an annual basis between 2023 and 2024, as well as the spatial distribution of those wells, do not exceed the RA Committee’s exploratory drilling scenarios. At this time, based on planned industry activity, it is not expected that the drilling scenarios will require an update before 2025. 	Progress Ongoing
<p>39. Cumulative Effects (Government of Canada, Government of NL & C-NLOPB)</p>	Progress Ongoing

Commitment	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFO's Newfoundland Region is in the initial stages of a Cumulative Impact mapping exercise. Data layers on stressors and habitat are being identified and collected for initial model runs in the coming fiscal year. 	
<p>40. Benefits Plans (C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The C-NLOPB has considered and accepted this recommendation. Making Exploration Benefits Plans public is now a regulatory requirement. Benefits Plans will be made available on operator's websites. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>41. Diversity Plans (C-NLOPB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The C-NLOPB has considered and accepted that Diversity initiatives must be included in Exploration Benefits Plans, which are now required to be made publicly available on the operator's websites. 	Completed – Ongoing Monitoring
<p>42. Greenhouse Gas Emissions (ECCC & IAAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Sector GHG Analysis of Offshore NL Exploratory Drilling report is expected to be posted for comment this spring. 	Progress Ongoing

5. Follow-up Program Effectiveness Evaluation

The purpose of the follow-up program effectiveness evaluation is to:

- Support accountability between the parties named in the terms of reference for the RA follow-up program;
- Identify gaps or improvements that may warrant an amendment to the terms of reference for the RA follow-up program; and
- Support ongoing learning for future post-RA activities.

To determine the effectiveness of the RA follow-up program, the program's results are compared against targets that measure the achievement of the desired outcomes of the RA follow-up program. Annex I contains a logic model depicting how the RA follow-up program's inputs and activities serve to achieve the desired program outcomes.

For the 2022-2023 reporting year, 7 targets were met, 4 targets were not applicable, and 0 targets were not met (Table 1). The targets for ensuring new and emerging information is considered in decision-making and fulfilling the Ministerial Commitments were fully met. The targets for ensuring the highest standards of environmental protection continue to be maintained over time were not applicable for the reporting year as no exploratory drilling projects have begun operating under the Ministerial Regulation. Evaluating the effectiveness of this program outcome is anticipated to be possible in the 2023-2024 annual RA Follow-up Report. Based on the applicable targets for the 2022-2023 reporting year, the follow-up program was effective in achieving the desired program outcomes.

Table 1: Performance measurement table for the 2022-2023 reporting year for the RA follow-up program.

Program Outcome	Indicators	Targets	Results and Comments
New and emerging information is considered in decision-making (Logic Model Outcome 1B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIS Tool continues to be updated and is used to inform decision-making for exploratory drilling projects Indigenous groups and stakeholders (including the RA FUP Advisory Committee) are engaged in reviewing and providing comments on key products of the RA FUP 	RA FUP Advisory Committee reviews information and makes recommendations regarding the GIS Tool.	Target met. The RA FUP Advisory Committee submitted recommendations on the long-term plan for the GIS tool in June 2022.
		The RA FUP Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the Steering Committee.	Target met. The RA FUP Advisory Committee submitted recommendations on the effectiveness evaluation framework in February 2023.
		The Steering Committee receives and considers advice, recommendations or comments on key documents of relevance to the RA	Target met. The Steering Committee is undertaking work to adopt the recommendations on the GIS tool. The advisory committee's advice on the effectiveness framework was discussed and considered by the Steering Committee.

<p>Governments ensure the highest standards of environmental protection continue to be maintained over time.</p> <p>(Logic Model Outcome 1A)</p>	<p>The Ministerial Regulation and the RA FUP are operationalized in collaboration with the C-NLOPB, IAAC, NRCan, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, DFO, and ECCC</p>	<p>Operators of exploratory drilling projects that are exempt from a federal Impact Assessment comply with the Ministerial Regulation</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>No exploratory drilling projects operating under the Ministerial Regulation.</p>
		<p>Results of follow-up programs are submitted to the C-NLOPB.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>No exploratory drilling projects operating under the Ministerial Regulation.</p>
		<p>Information collected supports the 5-year review of the Ministerial Regulation.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>No exploratory drilling projects operating under the Ministerial Regulation.</p>
		<p>Actions are taken to address any gaps or potential improvements that are identified during the 5-year review of Ministerial Regulations.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>No exploratory drilling projects operating under the Ministerial Regulation.</p>
<p>Demonstrate progress towards and completion of Ministerial Commitments</p> <p>(Logic Model Outcomes 2A and 2B)</p>	<p>Annual public-facing report tracks and reports on the progress of commitments</p>	<p>Departments submit annual summary of progress made on commitments to IAAC</p>	<p>Target met.</p> <p>Department's annual summaries are contained within this report.</p>
		<p>Report is posted to the Registry on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Target met.</p>
	<p>Annual progress is made on the commitments of the Ministerial Response to the RA Committee's Report until fully completed.</p>	<p>Commitments designated as "Ongoing Progress" provide detailed updates and/or updated work plans until completed.</p>	<p>Target met.</p>
		<p>For commitments that cannot be completed, appropriate actions are taken, or adequate rationale is provided and publicly reported on</p>	<p>Target met.</p> <p>No commitments have been identified as unable to be completed.</p>

Annex I. Logic Model for the RA Follow-up Program

