

Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia

Public and Stakeholder Participation Plan

UPDATED: February 29, 2024

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Please note that the Committee’s working language is English.

This Participation Plan is available in French upon request

1.0 Introduction

Under the conditions of its Agreement and Terms of Reference (TOR), the Committee established for the Regional Assessment (RA) of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia (“the Committee”) has prepared this Public and Stakeholder Participation Plan (the Plan) to outline the engagement approach for public and stakeholder participation throughout the conduct of the RA.

There are three participation plans that have been developed for this RA. In addition to the Public and Stakeholder Participation Plan, the Committee has also developed:

1. Indigenous Participation Plan
2. Fisheries Participation Plan

All three plans are posted to the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (the Registry). Additional information on the Committee operational procedures and the confidentiality procedure is complementary to all three participation plans and are available on the RA Registry page: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83514>.

Links relevant to the information provided in this Plan are provided in Appendix A.

1.1 Engagement Objectives

The overall objective of engagement during the RA is to collect information, including Community knowledge and scientific information from public and stakeholder participants that will inform the Committee’s analysis and recommendations for the RA.

To facilitate this overall objective the Committee will strive to:

- Encourage public and stakeholder participants to actively participate in the RA;
- Identify various opportunities for participation in the RA; and
- Establish an open and constructive dialogue with public and stakeholder groups.

1.2 Regional Assessment Background

On April 5, 2022, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the Minister) announced that a Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia would be carried out under the *Impact Assessment Act (IAA)* to help inform future project-specific federal impact assessments for offshore wind projects in these areas. Early planning included an engagement program conducted in the summer and fall of 2022 to provide information on the regional assessment process and to gather feedback to inform the development of a draft Agreement and TOR. The draft Agreement and TOR underwent a public review and comment period in October/November 2022 and final versions were posted the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (the Registry) when the RA was announced in March 2023.

A five-member, independent Committee was established pursuant to subsection 93(1) of the *IAA*. The Committee will conduct the RA in accordance with the *IAA*, the Agreement and the TOR. A Secretariat was also established to provide administrative and technical support to the Committee during the conduct of the RA.

2.0 Identification of Stakeholder and Public Participants

During the planning phase, the Agency undertook a widespread exercise to develop comprehensive stakeholder lists; one for government stakeholders (federal and provincial agencies), and one for non-government stakeholders. This exercise involved reaching out to public stakeholders and organizations, and to various federal and provincial government departments, to develop an initial distribution list. Through outreach emails and engagement sessions completed during the planning phase, all stakeholders were encouraged to continue to participate and to inform any additional groups or individuals they thought may be interested.

The Agency also undertook a media campaign using radio and social media advertising to raise awareness of a regional assessment planning phase. The contact list has grown from these efforts, and the Committee and its Secretariat will continue to add to the list as the RA progresses. Anyone wishing to be added to the Contact List to receive regular updates and information related to the RA, please contact OffshoreWindNS-EolienneExtracotiereNE@iaac-aeic.gc.ca.

2.1 Advisory Groups

The Agency also initiated a preliminary call for interest, in February 2023, for individuals with expertise in one or more fields related to the RA to indicate their interest in participating on one or more Advisory Groups during the conduct of the RA. Responses to this call for interest were used to further identify organizations or individuals interested in participating in the RA. The Advisory Groups are:

1. Indigenous Knowledge Advisory Group
2. Scientific and Community Knowledge Advisory Group
3. Fisheries and Other Ocean Uses Advisory Group

A description of the Scientific and Community Knowledge Advisory Group is provided in Appendix B. The purpose of the Advisory Groups is to enable the Committee to bring together multiple subject matter experts with different perspectives to discuss specific topics of interest (e.g., marine birds, fisheries, marine mammals). These discussions will be more focused and comprehensive than general engagement approaches. The Committee will seek assistance from Advisory Groups to:

- identify, provide and support the use of Indigenous knowledge, Community knowledge, and scientific information in the conduct of the RA, as appropriate; and,
- identify and evaluate information and knowledge gaps and recommend approaches to address these gaps.

Expressions of Interest for Advisory Groups will be accepted from individuals throughout the conduct of the RA. An Expression of Interest Form is posted on the Registry site and a link is provided at the end of this document in Appendix A. An updated list of Advisory Group members for Scientific and Community Knowledge Advisory Group is available in Appendix B.

3.0 Engagement Planning

3.1 Communications to Participants

Engagement will be with Indigenous peoples, governmental (federal, provincial, and municipal) and non-governmental organizations, and individuals that have information, knowledge or interests relevant to the RA. This will include members of the public, industry, environmental and community organizations, and any other person or group with information and interests related to the RA and who wishes to participate, as well as members of the Advisory Groups. Engagement on various topics will also take place with relevant government departments.

Participants can submit questions and comments, including requests to be added to the (non-government) Contact List, to the Committee via the RA email: OffshoreWindNS-EolienneExtracotiereNE@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or via the public commenting tool, available on the RA Registry page. The email and the public commenting tool are monitored regularly by the Secretariat and any communications received will be forwarded to Committee members on a weekly basis. All correspondence will be posted to the Registry (subject to any confidentiality considerations). These tools can be used during any point of the RA process.

General Committee communications (e.g., general information, updates etc.) are sent via the RA email. Updates and other relevant information are also posted to the RA Registry page for public access and review and may include but are not limited to:

- Participation Plans
- Committee Meeting Summaries
- Monthly Updates of the Committee
- Committee Procedures
- Engagement Materials
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Reports

3.1.1 Federal and Provincial Agencies

The Contact List will be used to communicate general information to federal and provincial authorities. However, the Committee will use direct written correspondence when formally requesting information or advice from provincial and federal authorities. These requests for information will be posted to the Registry..

3.2 Engagement Approach

The Committee has identified various ways and methods to approach engagement based on feedback and views gathered during the planning phase of the RA, and from comments submitted as part of the public comment period on the draft Agreement and TOR.

During the conduct of the RA, the Committee will be committed to support and tailor involvement, as needed, based on feedback throughout the conduct of the RA. Engagement approaches may therefore be modified or new approaches integrated, and this Plan will be updated accordingly.

In general, engagement activities could include, but are not limited to:

- Communications (to the Committee) via the public comment tool on the RA Registry site;
- Communications (to and from the Committee) via the general RA email;
- Communication (from the Committee) via official notices and updates posted to the RA Registry site;
- General engagement/information sessions, either in-person or virtual; and/or
- Focused Advisory Group meetings on a particular topic of interest.

Engagement sessions will be offered in-person and/or virtually throughout the RA. The Committee understands the logistical task involved in scheduling engagement sessions with multiple stakeholders and participants and will strive to provide as much advance notice as possible and multiple options for days and times (for public sessions) to facilitate maximum participation.

Background materials considered relevant to upcoming discussions and agendas will be distributed beforehand and draft meeting notes will be circulated to all attendees for review following each meeting/session.

The Committee recognizes that participant time and capacity is limited. Where possible and acceptable for participants, the Committee is open to joining with other groups and organizations that may also be engaging on offshore wind to reduce the number of meetings, material review and feedback required by participants. Options will be explored throughout the conduct of the RA.

All engagement sessions and meetings will be logged in Appendix D of this Plan, which will also act as part of the public record of engagement.

3.2.1 General Engagement Sessions

General engagement sessions will include a larger public invitation for participation via a general email to the Contact List; and/or a notice on the RA Registry page; and/or a posting in the *Information Sessions* section of the RA Registry page. Where possible media options (e.g., Facebook and Twitter; local news, and radio) will also be utilized.

Anyone can participate in these general sessions.

3.2.2 Federal and Provincial Authorities

In the execution of the RA, the Committee will rely on the advice of many federal and provincial authorities, who have an obligation to provide the Committee with relevant information and expertise under the provisions of the IAA and the RA Agreement. The Committee will engage with these agencies in the manner that it believes to be the most efficient to conduct its work.

The Committee may hold individual meetings with key government departments on specific topics or initiatives including briefing sessions where government departments may provide the Committee with background information relevant to the RA.

Government departments may also attend larger open engagement sessions and can participate in one or more Advisory Groups if they have demonstrated relevant expertise.

3.2.3 Advisory Groups

Advisory Group sessions will involve invitations to members that have submitted an Expression of Interest Form and have shown relevant expertise. The Expressions of Interest will be used to develop a roster of experts that the Committee will refer to and select from based on the topic to be discussed.

Composition and activities of Advisory Groups may therefore vary from time to time, based on the needs, work or expertise required and requested by the Committee during the conduct of the RA. There will be no set schedule for Advisory Group meetings; it will be decided on an as-needed basis.

3.3 Timing of Engagement

There is no pre-determined schedule for engagement sessions, general meetings, or meetings with Advisory Groups. As the RA progresses the Committee will conduct engagement based on information needed and feedback from participants.

3.4 Engagement Topics

In conducting their analysis, the Committee will engage on topics as per section A1.6 of the TOR which includes:

- existing environmental, health, social and economic conditions;
- information and knowledge gaps;
- positive and adverse effects, including cumulative effects of future offshore wind development activities;
- effects on any Indigenous peoples, and any impact that they may have on the rights of the Indigenous peoples recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;
- mitigation and follow-up measures;
- existing legislation, regulations, guidelines and standards, and associated approvals or authorizations;
- sustainability and climate change;
- intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors; and

- scientific information, Indigenous knowledge — including the knowledge of Indigenous women — and Community knowledge.

The Committee may, based on its analysis and engagement activity, further refine or add to the list of components listed above.

4 Confidentiality

The Committee will endeavour to be as transparent as possible with the information it considers in the conduct of the RA. As such, if a Participant holds information relevant to the RA that they want to share with the Committee but wishes for that information to remain confidential, the Committee will follow the process outlined in the *Procedures for Requesting Confidentiality*.

Additional information related to confidentiality is provided on the RA Registry page in the Committee's *Confidentiality Procedure*.

Appendix A: Key Links

RA Registry: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83514>

Confidentiality Procedure: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/152086>

Operational Procedures: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/152087>

Final Agreement and Terms of Reference: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/147038>

Preliminary Call for Interest for Advisory Group Members: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/146787>

Expression of Interest Form (for Advisory Groups): <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/document/146788>

Public Comment Tool: <https://www.iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83514/participation>

Appendix B: Scientific Information and Community Knowledge Advisory Group

The Scientific Information and Community Knowledge Advisory Group will assist the Committee by:

- Sharing scientific information, including technical information and advice, and Community knowledge relevant to the RA
- Providing advice and expertise related to environmental, health, social and economic components and issues
- Gathering and analyzing relevant data and information and conducting analyses
- Providing input on the development, implementation and updating of the Public and Stakeholder and the Fisheries Participation Plans

This Advisory Group will be comprised of representatives from federal and provincial government departments and agencies and non-governmental organizations and individuals, including Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous organizations. These representatives will have information and expertise related to, and/or community knowledge of, the following components:

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Marine Fish and Fish Habitat (including species at risk)
- Avifauna (including birds, bats, and associated species at risk)
- Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles (including species at risk)
- Protected and Special Areas (established and proposed)
- Visual Aesthetics / Viewscapes and Acoustic Environments
- Physical and Cultural Heritage (including structures, sites or things of historical, archaeological, paleontological, or architectural significance)
- Health
- Communities
- Economy

Appendix C: Roster for Scientific Information and Community Knowledge Advisory Group

Affiliation	Contact Person(s)
Natural Forces	Amy Pellerin
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)	Anica Madzarevic
Coldwater Lobster Association	Bernie Berry
Fishing industry Nova Scotia, various groups and experience	Brian Giroux
JASCO Applied Sciences	Bruce Martin
Dominion Diving Ltd.	Cam Howlett
Shell Canada Energy/Atlantic Canada Offshore Developments (ACOD)	Candice Cook-Ohryn
Mersey Consulting Ltd.	Craig Chandler
Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy	Daniel J. Hasselman
DOF Subsea Canada	David Long
Ecology Action Center	David Neira
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Maritimes Region	Emma Marotte
Membertou First Nation/SBM-DP Energy Indigenous Affairs Advisor	Eric Christmas
Oceans North	Gemma Rayner
Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association	Ginny Boudreau
Black Bawks Data Science	Grant Humphries
SOAR - Sustainable Ocean Applied Research	Greg Trowse
LeeWay Marine	Greg Veinott
Coldwater Lobster Association (Exec. Director)	Heather Mulock
Oceana Canada	Isabelle Jubinville
BBA Engineering and Environmental	Jason Day
Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy (FORCE)	Joel Culina
John F. Kearney & Associates	John Kearney
Canadian Coast Guard, Atlantic Region	Kate Hendry
Canadian Coast Guard, Atlantic Region	Quinn Gallagher
eDNAtec	Mark Ploughman
Guys Co. Inshore Fishermens Assoc	Melinda Cole
East Coast Environmental Law	Tina Northrup
East Coast Environmental Law	Mike Kofahl
Worley Canada Services Ltd	Mike Paulin
Dalhousie University	Mohamad Alikhani
Kwilmu'kw Maw-Klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO)	Patrick Butler
NORTHGREEN CAPITAL, INC	Philip S. Bassil
Coldwater Lobster Association (LFA 34 Advisory Committee Co-Chair)	Robert Harris
Strum Consulting	Scott Dickey
Canadian Integrated Ocean Observing System (CIOOS) Atlantic	Shayla Fitzsimmons
Sabik Offshore	Stewart Erwin

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Affiliation	Contact Person(s)
Net Zero Atlantic	Sven Scholtysik
Fugro Canada Corp.	Todd Ralph
Coldwater Lobster Association (President)	Tommy Amirault
Nova Scotia Swordfishermen's Association	Troy Atkinson
Kings College	Ian Stewart
Nexus Coastal Resource Management	Chris Milley
ECCC	Christine Gilroy
Oceans North	Curtis Martin
University of Montreal	Renata Fontoura
National Research Council	Denise Sudom
ECCC	Michael Hingston
DND	CarolLee Giffin
CMAR	Jenny Weitzman
Atlantic Groundfish Council	Vanessa Byrne
Perennia	Gregor Reid
Xodus Group	Delia Warren
PGS	Jason Norman

Appendix D: Public and Stakeholder Engagement Activities and Tracking Log

Activity	Date	Topic(s) Discussed
MILESTONE: Regional Assessment Initiated (March 23, 2023)		
Briefing – Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC)	May 8/9	Regional Assessment Agreement and Terms of Reference
Briefing - NRCan		Overview of NRCan offshore wind programs for Atlantic Canada
Briefing - Natural Resources and Renewables (NRR)		Overview of NRR roles related to Offshore Wind Development from Nova Scotia
Briefing - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)		Overview of DFO sectors and mandates related to offshore wind
Briefings – NRCan and NRR	June 8, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accord Acts Amendments • Context and overview of Offshore Wind including Joint Management; Accord Act Amendments & Bill C-49; Federal Offshore Renewables Legislative Framework for Projects
Briefing – DFO	June 9, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine Spatial Planning Atlas
Briefing – Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)	June 15, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects of OSW; data availability; and ECCC mandate
Briefing – IAAC (Operational Policy)	June 16, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-Based Analysis Plus
Briefings – IAAC, Net Zero Atlantic, Province of NS; CNSOPB; and DFO	June 19/20, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Offshore Wind Road Map (IAAC; Net Zero Atlantic; NS Associate Deputy Minister of the Office of Priorities and Planning) • Fisheries Advisory Committee (CNSOPB) • Marine Spatial Planning Atlas (DFO)
<i>Virtual Open House Sessions</i>	<i>Early July 2023</i>	<i>Open House Sessions offered virtually to provide an introduction to the Regional Assessment process and the Committee members, and to answer questions</i>
Meeting of the Advisory Groups	July 25, 27, 28 2023	Introductory Meetings to discuss Advisory Group feedback and current focus
Briefings – NS NRR and Net Zero Atlantic (NZA)	August 16/17, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Offshore Roadmap and Near-shore Investigation (NS NRR) • Questions and answers with industry representatives (NS NRR) • NZA offshore wind activities (NZA)
Briefing – Parks Canada	August 18, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach for buffer zones for protected areas (NPs, NPRs, NMCAs and NHSs)

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Activity	Date	Topic(s) Discussed
Briefings – Offshore Wind Developers and Marine Renewables Canada (MRC); Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI); NS Environment and Climate Change (NS ECC)	September 6/8, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in offshore wind industry (MRC and OSW Developers) • Interest in offshore wind industry (NSPI) • Climate Plan (NS ECC)
Briefing – New York State Energy Research and Development Authority	September 14, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing fisheries compensation, cumulative effects and marine spatial planning in offshore wind developments
Briefings – NRCAN, NRR, CNSOPB, Offshore Wind Developer	September 25/27, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accord Act Amendments and Recent Studies (NRR and NRCAN) • Canmet (NRCAN) • CNSOPB role in energy development (CNSOPB) • Interest in offshore wind industry (OSW Developer)
<i>In-Person Open House Sessions</i>	<i>October 2023</i>	<i>Open House Sessions offered in Guysborough, Sheet Harbour, Port Hawkesbury, Inverness, Sydney, Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Focus was to provide information on offshore wind and the Regional Assessment and to gather input on potential future locations for offshore wind development in the Study Area</i>
Briefings – NRCAN, NRR, and NZA	October 12/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Accord Act amendment process (NRR and NRCAN) • Discussion on coordinated engagement initiatives (NRR) • Value Mapping Nova Scotia's Offshore Wind Resources (NZA)
<i>In-Person Open House Sessions</i>	<i>November 2023</i>	<i>Open House Sessions offered in Wolfville and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Charlottetown, PEI, and Moncton, New Brunswick. Focus was to provide information on offshore wind and the Regional Assessment and to gather input on potential future locations for offshore wind development in the Study Area</i>
Briefing – Offshore Wind Developer	November 17, 2023	Interest in offshore wind industry (OSW Developer)
Briefing – Skyte Consulting (Denmark) and Kurt Fish Sales (Scotland)	November 23, 2023	Lessons Learned from Offshore Wind Industries – Denmark and Scotland
Briefing – Offshore Wind Developer	November 24, 2023	Interest in offshore wind industry (OSW Developer)

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Activity	Date	Topic(s) Discussed
Feedback Request to Scientific Information and Community Knowledge Advisory Group	December 2023	Request for feedback on potential future areas of future offshore wind development in the Study Area. NOTE: Feedback received is now posted on the Regional Assessment Registry page , and will be used to help inform the Interim Report.
Meeting – Lindy Weilgart (OceanCare/Dalhousie)	December 1, 2024	Discussion on underwater sound, effects to marine mammals, mitigation measures and literature availability on this topic
Briefing – CNSOPB	January 11, 2024	Underwater surveys for mapping purposes – lessons and methodology from oil and gas
Meeting – NRCAN and NRR	January 11, 2024	Discussion on Information Request results
Meeting – CNSOPB	January 11, 2024	Discussion on fisheries compensation
Briefing – NRCAN	January 17, 2024	Questions and comments on the recent Canmet preliminary considerations analysis for offshore wind
<i>In-Person Open House Sessions</i>	<i>January 2024</i>	<i>Open House Sessions offered in St. Peter's, Cheticamp and New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Focus was to provide information on offshore wind and the Regional Assessment and to gather input on potential future locations for offshore wind development in the Study Area</i>
Meeting – East Coast Environmental Law	January 23, 2024	Meeting to discuss submission to the Committee and overall timeline and engagement process of the Regional Assessment
Briefings – CNSOPB, DFO	February 6, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Priorities for offshore wind areas (CNSOPB) • Presentation of SeaFOAM results (DFO)
Meeting – East Coast Environmental Law	February 6, 2024	Follow-up on community engagement sessions and discussion on recent ECE Law submission and Minister's response to the Committee's request sent in Oct 25
Meeting – NRCAN and NRR	February 27, 2024	Discussion on socio-economic approach for offshore wind and Nova Scotia
MILESTONE: Committee submits Interim Report to Ministers (March 23, 2024)		
PROPOSED <i>In-Person Open House Sessions</i>	<i>April/May/June 2024</i>	<i>Open House Sessions to engage on proposed future locations for offshore wind development in the Study Area (as proposed in the Interim Report) and gather input on what should be considered for mitigation and monitoring measures</i>
Feedback Requests to Scientific Information and Community Knowledge Advisory Group	April/May/June/July 2024	<i>To Be Determined</i>
MILESTONE: Review and Comment Period of the DRAFT Final Regional Assessment Report (September 23, 2024 – November 23, 2024)		
MILESTONE: Committee submits Final Regional Assessment Report to Ministers (January 23, 2025)		