



December 20th, 2024

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
Regional Assessment Committee
Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia

Dear Members of the Regional Assessment Committee,

RE: Feedback on the Draft Final Report of the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia

Net Zero Atlantic appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft final report of the Regional Assessment (RA) of Offshore Wind (OSW) Development in Nova Scotia. We commend the Committee for producing a comprehensive and insightful document. The series of outreach efforts to communities and stakeholders was a significant undertaking and has established a strong foundation for continued collaboration. We too support an inclusive approach to developing Nova Scotia's OSW industry.

Our input is shaped by our work in offshore wind, collaborating with experts and stakeholders. Below is a selection of our completed and ongoing projects:

- **March 2024 - 2026:** [Atlantic Canada Offshore Wind Grid Integration and Transmission Study](#)
- **June 2024 - June 2025:** [Assessment of Atlantic Canadian Ports to Support Offshore Wind Development](#)
- **March 2022 - March 2025:** [Capacity Building for the Sustainable and Inclusive Development of Nova Scotia's Offshore Wind Resource](#)
- **November 2024:** [Nova Scotia Offshore Wind R&D Forum](#)
- **September 2023:** [Creating a Workplan for Offshore Wind Pathways to Market Studies](#)
- **April 2023:** [Value Mapping Nova Scotia's Offshore Wind Resources](#)
- **November 2021:** [Access to U.S. Markets \(Offshore Wind\)](#)
- **March 2021:** [Assessing the Economic Impacts of Developing the Port of Sheet Harbour into an Offshore Wind Hub](#)
- **March 2021:** [Stimulating Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia](#)

Information on all of our projects are available on our [research portal](#).

Feedback Section

Our comments below are organized into three themes.

Theme 1: Collaborative Research and Knowledge Sharing

Recommendation T1-1: Develop a Scotian Shelf Collaborative Research Initiative


Net Zero Atlantic agrees that effective development of OSW in the region requires a convening function that:

- articulates research priorities,
- ensures collaboration among stakeholders and users of the marine environment,
- promotes sharing and dissemination of results, and
- facilitates the involvement of necessary expertise in the research and/or its oversight.

The importance of a convening body to foster collaboration in OSW R&D emerged as a key theme at our Nova Scotia Offshore Wind R&D Forum in November 2024. This forum gathered nearly 250 experts to discuss challenges, present research, and explore potential solutions. The positive response to the forum demonstrated the region's breadth and depth of expertise, along with a collective enthusiasm for identifying research priorities, collaborating, and sharing results. Participants provided thought-provoking presentations and diverse perspectives, leaving the single-day event united in their determination to address the challenges ahead and promote an inclusive, sustainable offshore wind industry.

Building on this momentum, Net Zero Atlantic will release a synopsis report summarizing key insights from the R&D Forum and proposing actionable recommendations. This report will contribute to the collaborative roadmap for advancing OSW in Nova Scotia and will be available in early 2025.

Based on our experience in this field, we also agree with the RA Committee that stable, multi-year funding is necessary to support and maintain the convening function. To minimize overhead and administration costs, while leveraging existing capacity, networks, and experience, we recommend funding an organization active in this space to take on the convening function. Net Zero Atlantic hopes to be considered for this role.

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping, horizontal, rounded rectangular bars in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange.

Recommendation T1-2: Fund Mi'kmaw Ecological Knowledge Studies (MEKS)

Net Zero Atlantic fully endorses the RA's recommendation to fund MEKS and wants to highlight the importance of sustained support for this work. Based on our experience partnering with the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) in the OSW space, we recommend providing funding to both organizations for permanent, dedicated positions. These roles would ensure long-term capacity to conduct MEKS and facilitate meaningful broad participation in OSW development.

Recommendation T1-3: Create a shared repository of data and sources

Net Zero Atlantic agrees with the recommendation to establish a shared repository of research, with the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER) serving as the central holder of the database. Net Zero Atlantic's "[Atlantic Canada Offshore Wind Grid Integration and Transmission Study](#)" is already creating a foundational database that could contribute to this effort. This database for the Atlantic Region is being developed with input from CNSOER, so that future data management efforts can be made easier.

Recommendation T1-7: Open discussions with the State of Maine

Net Zero Atlantic supports the RA's recommendation for actively engaging in conversations with our counterparts in Maine and suggests expanding collaboration to include other New England states. Collaborative research on environmental, technical, and economic issues would benefit both regions as we move from referencing work completed in dissimilar jurisdictions to deepening our understanding of our specific systems. Net Zero Atlantic's CEO, Alisdair McLean, recently visited Portland, Maine and Boston to explore opportunities for interregional collaboration, underscoring our commitment to developing cross-border partnerships.

Knowledge Gap Requiring Attention

Climate Change Impacts: Section 9.1.6 discusses the need to monitor and understand the impact of climate change on the ecosystem of the RA Study Area. We recommend that this research also address the implications of climate change on OSW resource availability. The presentation, "[Estimating the offshore wind resources off Nova Scotia](#)," contributed by William Perrie of Bedford Institute of Oceanography to the Nova Scotia OSW R&D Forum, is an excellent example.

The importance of this research is underscored by recent shifts in North American electricity trade patterns, where drought-induced reductions in hydropower generation in both Western and Eastern Canada have significantly affected electricity exports to the United States ([US](#)

[Energy Information Administration, Nov 2024](#)). Enhanced understanding of how OSW can integrate into broader energy systems and mitigate risks associated with climate-induced variability will be important for long-term energy planning and resilience in Canada and beyond.

Theme 2: Socio-Economic Feasibility and Consequences

Recommendation T2-1: Establish a Port Advisory Group

Net Zero Atlantic agrees with the recommendation to create an OSW Port Coordination Group. We recommend that Net Zero Atlantic's project, "[Assessment of Atlantic Canadian Ports to Support Offshore Wind Development](#)" serve as the foundation for the group. The project's scope includes initiating each of the five recommended actions, with an EOI, cost estimates for each port at AACE International class 5 standard, recommendations regarding the capability of port infrastructure to support the region's offshore wind goals, and considerations for potential investment strategies for the region. The project management committee includes representatives from the OSW industry and could be expanded to include additional experts and stakeholders. The group could use the project's report, expected mid-year 2025, as a starting point for developing specific investment plans and securing required financing.

Recommendation T2-4: Initiate socio-economic studies for key communities

Net Zero Atlantic agrees with the RA Committee that research should start to understand the socio-economic impacts of OSW on key communities. Through over 70 workshops in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, Net Zero Atlantic has heard that socio-economic impacts are a top priority for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. We appreciate the Committee's reference to the engagement program we have underway with CMM, UINR and Cape Breton Partnership, and we're ready to extend it as recommended.

Knowledge Gap Requiring Attention

OSW Grid Integration: We acknowledge that grid integration lies outside the RA Committee's direct mandate but, like port infrastructure, it is an essential consideration for establishing a successful OSW industry in the region. Paths to market are critical, and the electric grid serves as the backbone for delivering OSW energy to end users. Taking action to ensure appropriate, timely investments in the transmission grid is vital for attracting OSW investment to the region. Section 8.6.4 identifies two ongoing grid studies, and the recommendations from both studies will require consideration by provincial and federal levels of government. We recommend that the RA Committee add an "Electric Grid" box to Figure 10.2 to emphasize that the grid is as important as "Ports", "Supply Chain" and "Labour".

Theme 3: Project Development

Recommendation T3-1: Establish a 25 km coastal buffer zone

While Net Zero Atlantic supports the establishment of a coastal buffer zone in the absence of project-specific solutions, we have two recommendations:

- (1) We recommend that Nova Scotia performs a sensitivity analysis to assess the impacts of varying the buffer distance (e.g., 10 km – 25 km). This analysis should evaluate how different buffer distances could affect the size of the Potential Development Areas (PDAs), providing a clearer understanding of trade-offs and opportunities.
- (2) The report would benefit from a table that details the available area for each PDA based on varying water depths (e.g., 0-60 meters, 60-70 meters, and 70-80 meters). This information is helpful for understanding the bathymetry of the PDAs and would provide stakeholders with a clearer picture of development potential for fixed-bottom turbines.

In Closing

Net Zero Atlantic's work to date has led us to many of the same conclusions identified by the RA Committee in their Draft Final Report of the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia. We believe our recommendations will contribute to the foundation needed to support the sustainable and inclusive development of Nova Scotia's offshore wind resource. We thank the RA Committee for considering our feedback and look forward to actively contributing to the continued advancement of Nova Scotia's offshore wind industry. Please contact us should you have any questions that we may be able to address.

Kind regards,

Alisdair McLean

Chief Executive Officer

Net Zero Atlantic

