



ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CANADA – NOVA SCOTIA OFFSHORE PETROLEUM BOARD FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA

DECEMBER 10, 2024

Introduction

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) has existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with both Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Maritimes and Gulf Regions, and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). Under these MOUs, there exists a deliverable to present an Annual Progress Report to the Executive Committee. The purpose of the Annual Progress Report is to summarize the progress of joint projects defined in the 2024 Work Plan. The intent of this report is to meet that purpose.

Discussion

In 2024, the CNSOPB, DFO, and ECCC agreed to continue to work collaboratively on a tri-partite work plan, with the objective of continuing to enhance current mechanisms and practices for delivering environmental protection and conservation measures in the offshore environment that are of mutual interest. Most collaborative efforts in 2024 were focused on preparing for regulation and oversight of offshore renewable energy.

The 2024 Work Plan included a total of six projects. Table 1 provides a summary of the progress for each project. The details regarding progress made on each project in 2024 are outlined in Appendix 1.

TABLE 1: Summary of Progress on Work Plan Projects

PROJECT	LEADS/CO-LEADS	ALL / MOST DELIVERABLES COMPLETED	SOME DELIVERABLES COMPLETED	NO SIGNIFICANT DELIVERABLES COMPLETED
1- Joint Priority Setting, Planning and Coordination	CNSOPB, ECCC, and DFO	X		
2 – Regulatory Activities	CNSOPB, ECCC and DFO	X		
3 – Marine Planning and Conservation	CNSOPB, ECCC and DFO	X		
4 –Spill Preparedness and Oversight	CNSOPB and ECCC	X		
5 – Offshore Renewable Energy Planning	CNSOPB, ECCC, and DFO	X		
6 – Reporting on Progress	CNSOPB	X		

Progress was made on all of the work plan projects planned for 2024. Collaborative activities on-the-water in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area were not required in 2024 due to the limited offshore activity (post-abandonment monitoring for the Sable Offshore Energy Project only). Highlights of the 2024 collaborative efforts include offshore renewable energy regulatory planning, a number of DFO-led marine planning and conservation collaborative efforts, and progress on finalizing updates to the ECCC-CNSOPB MOU Annex A: Cooperation Concerning Environmental Emergencies.

As a supplement to the information in Table 1, a summary of the status and progress of each project in the Work Plan is included in Appendix 1.

Representatives from the three organizations reviewed and discussed the status of the various projects from the 2024 Work Plan and planned the projects for the 2025 Work Plan, in December 2024.

Approvals

For Fisheries and Oceans Canada:

Wendy Williams

Regional Director
Aquatic Ecosystems
Maritimes Region

Date

Alain Hebert

Regional Director
Aquatic Ecosystems
Gulf Region

Date

For Environment and Climate Change Canada:

Mullane, Jennifer Digitally signed by Mullane, Jennifer
Date: 2025.01.07 16:18:53 -04'00'

Jennifer Mullane

Manager
Regional Analysis and Relations & Indigenous Affairs
Atlantic Region

Date

For the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board:



January 10, 2025

Dena Murphy

Director
Operations/Health, Safety & Environment

Date

APPENDIX 1

STATUS REPORT ON CNSOPB/DFO/ECCC 2024 JOINT PROJECTS

The following summarizes progress on the six projects defined in the 2024 CNSOPB/DFO/ECCC Work Plan.

Project 1 – Joint Priority Setting, Planning and Coordination

Deliverables:

- Discussion of issues/areas requiring collaborative work, and an estimate of associated workloads.
- Development of a joint 2024 Annual Work Plan, coordinated by the CNSOPB with DFO and ECCC.
- Implementation Committee members will continue to identify the lead individuals from their agencies who will coordinate Work Plan projects.
- The CNSOPB will proactively collaborate with DFO and ECCC on the development of external communications materials related to process changes, projects, emergency response and other initiatives where there is potential for overlap in jurisdiction and responsibilities. The three organizations will work together to meet shared goals and ensure timely and effective communication with the general public.

Timing: Ongoing

Project Team Leaders:

Dena Murphy (CNSOPB)
Jennifer Mullane (ECCC)
Wendy Williams (DFO Maritimes)
Alain Hebert (DFO Gulf)

Coordination Team:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)
Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)
Patrick Sutton (ECCC)

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- The Joint 2024 Work Plan was finalized and signed by all parties.
- Communications between existing and new staff members designated to work on MOU-related projects was ongoing throughout the year as-needed.
- Given the low level of oil and gas activity, there weren't any situations that arose warranting tri-party development of external communication materials.

Project 2 - Regulatory Activities

Deliverables:

- The CNSOPB will continue to participate in the development of Recovery Strategies, Action Plans and Management Plans, as well as listings for Species at Risk through participation in workshops, meetings and responses to consultation requests.
 - Team co-leads: Heidi Schaefer (DFO Maritimes), Robert Jones (DFO Gulf), Kim Mawhinney (ECCC), Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB).

- DFO will collaborate with the CNSOPB regarding the ongoing review and potential update to the Statement of Canadian Practice with Respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound on the Marine Environment.
 - Team co-leads: Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes), Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)
- The CNSOPB will collaborate with ECCC and DFO on post abandonment monitoring as needed.
 - Team co-leads: Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB), Lilianne Kydd (ECCC) and Mike Wambolt (DFO Maritimes)

Timing: Ongoing

Annual Status Update

- DFO is engaging on the potential listing of Sei Whale, Atlantic Population pursuant to the *Species at Risk Act*, which is within the CNSOPB jurisdictional area, and the CNSOPB will be participating in the consultation processes.
- Technical discussions on the Statement of Canadian Practice with Respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment are planned for early 2025.
- The CNSOPB advised DFO and ECCC of the follow-up monitoring that occurred at the Alma-2 former wellhead location and the results of the monitoring.

Project 3 – Marine Planning and Conservation

Deliverables:

- The CNSOPB and DFO will collaborate on initiatives and governance structures developed under the *Oceans Act*.
- The CNSOPB, DFO and ECCC will collaborate in support of the planning, establishment and ongoing management of protected and conserved areas in the DFO Maritimes and Gulf Regions.
- The CNSOPB, DFO and ECCC will collaborate on the federal bioregional Marine Conservation Network processes.
- ECCC is committed to ongoing participation in migratory bird monitoring within MPAs and more broadly within the bioregion, by way of at-sea surveys (i.e., air and vessel-based) and telemetry data in support of evidence-based planning.

Timing: Ongoing

Project Team Leaders:

Luke Gaulton (DFO Maritimes)
 Richard Ruest (DFO Gulf)
 Dena Murphy (CNSOPB)
 Becky Whittam (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
 Carole Godin (DFO Gulf)
 Karel Allard (ECCC)
 Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)

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- DFO and the CNSOPB collaborated on the Guidance Document for Marine Refuges (offshore petroleum only), as well as the draft Scotian Shelf-Bay of Fundy Bioregional Marine Refuge Management Plan.
- The CNSOPB continues to participate on all committees for AOIs and MPAs in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area.
- The CNSOPB remains engaged in the process for development of the federal bioregional Marine Conservation Network, including being a member of the newly established Marine Refuge Coordination Committee, as well as providing comments on the Marine Conservation Network Plan for the Scotian Shelf-Bay of Fundy Bioregion.
- The CNSOPB reviewed and provided comment on the DFO- led document “Canada’s Ocean Noise Strategy”.

Project 4 – Spill Preparedness and Oversight

Deliverables:

ECCC-CNSOPB

- Finalize the update to the MOU Annex A: Cooperation Concerning Environmental Emergencies to account for the Spill Treating Agents Offshore Regime and other coordination activities as necessary.

Timing: Ongoing

Project Team Leaders:

Dena Murphy (CNSOPB)
Matthieu Dussault (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

Courtney Raymond (ECCC)
Stuart Lee (ECCC)
Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)

Annual Status Update

- Progress has been made on drafting changes to the ECCC-CNSOPB MOU Annex A, and it is anticipated to be completed in early 2025.

Project 5 – Offshore Renewable Energy Transition Planning

Deliverables:

- All parties will review the MOU to identify any potential changes that may be needed for offshore renewable energy.
- The CNSOPB, DFO and ECCC will provide expert advice related to their respective mandates on the work associated with the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia.
- The CNSOPB will lead, in collaboration with DFO and ECCC, the development of Offshore Wind Site Assessment Guidelines.
- DFO will provide regular updates to the CNSOPB and ECCC on its Marine Spatial Planning work that relates to offshore wind.

- All parties will work together, where appropriate, on matters related to the preparation for offshore renewable energy and keep each other informed of the activities of their respective agencies in this regard.

Timing: Ongoing

Project Team Leaders:

Dena Murphy (CNSOPB)
Luke Gaulton (DFO Maritimes)
Michael Hingston (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)
Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)
Kim Mawhinney (ECCC)

Annual Status Update

- The MOU documents are currently being reviewed and edited to incorporate offshore renewable energy. Although the language throughout the MOUs will have revisions, the intent of the documents are not expected to change significantly from the existing MOUs. Updated MOUs are anticipated in Q1 2025.
- All parties have been providing expert advice related to their respective mandates on the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia.
- The CNSOPB has reviewed the amended Accord Acts and the draft Canada Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations (foundation for the Accord Act Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations) to identify which clauses may benefit from guidance and the type of guidance anticipated. CNSOPB staff have been researching the site assessment requirements and associated guidance of other global offshore wind regulators. The CNSOPB also anticipates making use of external expert offshore wind consultant(s) to compile additional information about site assessment requirements and guidance in other jurisdictions that will inform the CNSOPB's preparation of site assessment guidance.
- All parties have been meeting monthly to discuss regulation of offshore renewable energy (offshore wind) and have been keeping each other informed of the activities of their respective agencies in this regard.

Project 6 - Reporting on Progress

Deliverables:

- Operations staff of DFO, ECCC and CNSOPB will discuss each deliverable and provide updates regarding progress and resourcing throughout the year.
- An Annual Report will be prepared for the Executive Committee.

Timing: Annual Report - December 15, 2024

Project Team Leader:

Dena Murphy (CNSOPB)

Project Team Resources:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)

Jennifer Mullane (ECCC)

Wendy Williams (DFO Maritimes)

Alain Hebert (DFO Gulf)

Annual Status Update

- Progress was made on each deliverable, with updates between parties throughout the year
- This report fulfills the requirement for an Annual Progress Report.