

**Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Site Assessment Activities in the Governments
Designated Wind Energy Areas in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area**



Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator

Request for Proposals

**Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Site Assessment Activities in
the Government Designated Wind Energy Areas in the Canada-Nova
Scotia Offshore Area**

December 19, 2025

**Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Site Assessment Activities in the Governments
Designated Wind Energy Areas in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area**

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Document Changes:

Document Date	Changes	Revision #
December 15	Original	0
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1.0 Introduction

Since 1990, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board (CNSOPB) has been the lead and lifecycle regulator of offshore petroleum resources in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area. On January 31, 2025, the amended *Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation and Offshore Energy Management Act* and the *Canada–Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation and Offshore Renewable Energy Management (Nova Scotia) Act* (Accord Acts) came into force, expanding our mandate to include the regulation of offshore renewable energy. The CNSOPB was renamed and became the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER).

The CNSOER is an independent, joint agency created by the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia responsible for regulation of offshore energy projects and activities. Federally, the CNSOER is within the purview of Natural Resources Canada and provincially it is within the purview of the Nova Scotia Department of Energy.

As the lead and lifecycle regulator (LCR), we oversee the lifecycle of offshore energy projects, beginning with the administration of land tenure processes and issuance of exploration licences for petroleum exploration and submerged land licences for offshore renewable energy infrastructure. Our mandate spans geoscience and resource management studies; resource assessments; exploration and site assessment; construction and development; and production, operations and maintenance through to decommissioning and abandonment. In fulfilling our regulatory mandate, it is paramount that any activities conducted in our offshore area be completed in a safe, secure and environmentally conscious manner.

The CNSOER recently initiated the very first [land tenure process](#) for offshore wind energy – NS25-1R. Submerged Land Licences resulting from this process could be issued, pending Governments' Ministerial review and approval sometime in 2026. Successful developers would subsequently initiate planning for a variety of site assessment surveys to characterize the licence area, confirm project feasibility, and support project design and assessment of project impacts.

Pursuant to section 142.011(1) of the [Accord Acts](#), developers must apply and acquire an Activity Authorization from the CNSOER prior to conducting any site assessment activity in the marine environment. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations (C-NSORER) will require that applications for an Activity Authorization for site assessment activities include an assessment of environmental effects of the proposed activities. Although the regulations have not yet been published, we know that they are based on the [Canada Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations \(C-ORER\)](#), which include this requirement.

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Site assessment activities for offshore wind energy projects include but are not limited to:

- Deployment of metocean buoys for data collection.
- Geophysical and geotechnical surveys.
- Fish habitat surveys.
- Marine wildlife surveys.
- Fisheries surveys.
- Archaeological surveys; and
- Unexploded ordinance surveys.

These surveys and the equipment used are common in the marine environment for other purposes such as scientific research and fish stock assessments and other industry sectors (e.g., energy industry, fishing industry, etc.) and are considered relatively low risk. Environmental effects are generally associated with underwater noise, seabed disturbance, and vessel traffic/operation.

In the interest of regulatory streamlining, the CNSOER is proposing that a regional assessment of these activities be conducted that can be relied upon by developers to inform their site assessment planning and regulatory authorization applications, and by the regulator to inform their environmental effects determination. The intent for this work is to effectively reduce the time it takes to prepare and process Activity Authorization applications for the site assessment phase, and the burden of conducting repetitive reviews of low-risk activities.

We are soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to conduct a Regional Assessment (RA) of offshore wind site assessment activities that could occur in the governments designated offshore [Wind Energy Areas](#) (WEA). Although not yet defined, the RA would include two transmission corridors between the WEAs and the shore in the following approximate locations:

- to connect Sydney Bight WEA to shore; and
- to connect French Bank, Middle Bank, and Sable Island Bank WEAs to shore, along the existing abandoned gas pipeline corridor.

It is important to note that this assessment will be conducted pursuant to Section 142.018 (1) of the [Accord Acts](#) and will be a CNSOER-led RA as opposed to the recently completed [Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Energy Development in Nova Scotia](#) that was conducted by a 5-member committee pursuant to the *Impact Assessment Act*. Also, given that the activities and surveys conducted for offshore wind site assessment are well known and have been practiced for decades in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area along with the low-risk nature of with these activities, it is anticipated that this assessment can be completed within an efficient timeframe.

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The primary goal for this work is to modernize and streamline the Activity Authorization review process. Conducting this CNSOER RA is expected to achieve the following objectives:

- Build awareness and inform stakeholders and Indigenous groups on the nature of offshore wind site assessment activities (e.g., vessels and equipment used, duration, emissions, etc.) and the potential effects associated with these low risk activities.
- Avoid conducting full and repetitive assessments of environmental effects with each Activity Authorization Application for site assessment surveys.
- Minimize the burden on the CNSOER and on Indigenous groups, commercial fish harvesters and other stakeholders, by avoiding the review of multiple, lengthy assessment of environmental effects reports with essentially the same content; and
- Streamline engagement with Indigenous communities, commercial fisheries' representatives, and other key stakeholders associated with the site assessment regulatory authorization process.

2.0 Scope of Work

See Appendix A for the Scope of Work.

3.0 Schedule

Bidders are asked to provide a detailed schedule for the work based on their proposed methodology and tasks. Further, bidders are encouraged to devise innovative strategies to complete the RA before the end of the 2026 calendar year without compromising the integrity of the work. The table below denotes the schedule of contract award.

Activity	Timing
Submission of Proposal	January 23, 2026, 3:00 PM AST
Award of contract	February 3, 2026
Contract kick-off meeting	February 6, 2026, 10:00AM AST
Progress meetings	February 27, 2026 (then monthly)

4.0 Proposal Inquiries Contact

Proponents requiring further information on this Request for Proposals (RFP) should contact:

**Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Site Assessment Activities in the Governments
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Thierry Duhamel
Advisor, Offshore Renewables
Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator
27 – 201 Brownlow Avenue
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1W2

Telephone: 902-255-0220

E-mail: tduhamel@cnsor.ca

Inquiries should be received no later than **two** business days prior to the closing date of this RFP to allow sufficient response time. Otherwise, a response cannot be guaranteed. Questions should be directed in writing. Email is the preferred method of contact. Verbal questions and responses that are not later confirmed in writing with the RFP contact will not be considered an official response. Any questions from potential bidders will be communicated to all interested bidders by notification through the originally selected distribution channels.

5.0 Conditions of Responding

- All work must be completed and invoiced by December 31, 2026.
- Any concerns of not being able to complete the work before the end of the 2026 calendar year **MUST** be identified.
- Proposals must contain the following information and details:
 - Clearly state the name and address of the Proponent as well as a contact name.
 - Discussion of project scope and methodology that will be used in carrying out the work including:
 - how you propose to obtain details of the various offshore wind site assessment activities and surveys that may be conducted in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area (e.g., who will you engage with and what sources will you use?). It is important that this be a thorough list and considers new and emerging technologies.
 - a preliminary engagement plan demonstrating how you will engage with Indigenous groups, commercial fisheries' representatives, the offshore wind industry, and other key stakeholders throughout the RA to ensure the process achieves the goal of streamlining future regulatory processes (i.e., robust, and defensible process);

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- a detailed schedule of activities to achieve the milestones indicated in Appendix A; and
- what strategies you will employ to take an innovative approach to ensure an efficient RA process with a succinct and focused RA report that does not duplicate the information contained within other RAs conducted in the Atlantic Canada region.
- A breakdown of fees, by task and team member, including daily or hourly rates along with any disbursements, expenses and resources, must be provided and based on the schedule indicated in Section 3 and Appendix A. The CNSOER will consider an alternate schedule with a more streamlined timeline. Note that the cost estimate is to be presented in terms of time and materials in Canadian dollars (CAD). Any additional activities or services that arise as the contract progresses will only be reimbursed with prior approval from the CNSOER in the form of a change order.
- For fiscal budgetary purposes, bidders are asked to provide a cost estimate for all work, expenses and disbursements to be incurred by March 31, 2026, an estimate of costs for work, expenses and disbursements after March 31, 2026, and a total cost estimate for the entire scope of work. Furthermore, respondents must submit draft reports, including all information collected up to March 31, 2026 to the CNSOER.
- A brief description of the company and their relevant experience with regional, strategic, and class assessments and project assessments, particularly for offshore wind related activities. Offshore wind experience is not a requirement for bidding but is a valued asset.
- Identify the proposed project manager along with a brief professional biography describing their experience and qualifications.
- Identify key personnel assigned to the project and include their professional biographies, detailing their roles and responsibilities in similar projects.
- A list of any subcontractors (name, address, services provided) who are proposed for work on this project. The absence of such a list will be taken to mean that only “own forces” will be used.

The proposal should be concisely worded and should address, but not necessarily be limited to, the criteria listed in **Section 7.0**.

Proposals must be submitted in the format requested (See Section 8.0). Any Proposal that does not include all the requested information, adhere to the conditions of responding above, or is in any way incomplete may be disqualified or assessed solely on the basis of the information received. Any deviations from these conditions should be described in

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detail with an explanation as to why they are being proposed. It is the responsibility of the Proponents to obtain clarification of the requirements contained herein, if necessary, prior to submitting their Proposal.

Additionally, Proponents must note the following:

- For the purpose of this request, the RA project area includes all four governments' designated [Wind Energy Areas](#) as well as two conceptual transmission corridors: one to connect a potential future development in the Sydney Bight WEA and another that would follow the existing abandoned gas pipeline corridor that the remaining WEAs could utilize. Given the jurisdictional authority of the CNSOER, the project area is entirely within the marine environment – that is, there are no terrestrial components for consideration. It is important to note that transmission corridors have not been formally identified and there are currently no approved offshore wind projects. Representative transmission corridors will be identified in consultation with the successful consultant for the purposes of this RA.
- The CNSOER evaluation committee reserves the right to discuss any and all proposals, to request additional information from the Proponents, and to decline any and all Proposals that are submitted.
- The CNSOER will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Proponents in the preparation of their response to the RFP.
- The CNSOER will provide support to the consultant for engagement with stakeholders, Indigenous communities, commercial fisheries representatives, offshore wind industry representatives, and the public at large, as appropriate.
- All documents, materials, articles, and information submitted by the Proponent as part of, or in support of a proposal shall become upon submission, the property of the CNSOER and shall not be returned to the Proponent.
- The Proponent shall not disclose or make public any statements or material acquired or produced in relation to this Proposal or to the subsequent awarding of any contract without the prior written permission of the CNSOER.
- The CNSOER reserves the right not to proceed with the RFP or not to accept any Proposal.
- Acceptance of a Proposal will be subject to a standard CNSOER contract for services, to be prepared by the CNSOER.

6.0 Deliverables

The following deliverables are required as part of this project:

- Draft and Final Project Description Document

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- Draft and Final RA Scoping Document
- Draft and Revised Engagement Plan, including all necessary materials to support engagement.
- Draft RA and Final Report
- Monthly invoices

7.0 Evaluation of Proposal

If a proposal meets the Conditions of Responding Criteria it will be evaluated by a team using the Evaluation Criteria set out in the table below. Scores will be recorded for each criterion, and a total score will be determined.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (%)
Project Management: Proponent must identify the proposed Project Manager for the work including the individual's experience as a project manager and the approach and tools to be implemented.	10%
Project Plan, Approach and Methodology: Proponent demonstrates an understanding of the project service requirements and has outlined a comprehensive and effective methodology. The proposal describes the objectives, methodology, milestones and deliverables, and a sound approach in undertaking this project. Communication format and frequency between the Proponent and the CNSOER are clearly described. Proponent describes an achievable schedule and demonstrates the ability to complete the work on or before the desired completion date. Special consideration may be given to Proponents that offer innovative and effective strategies to complete the work within a streamlined timeline without compromising the integrity of the assessment.	30%
Experience and Knowledge: Qualifications, experience and capabilities of the company and delivery team; demonstration of knowledge relevant to this study.	30%
Proposal Presentation and Organization: The proposal includes all RFP requirements and tasks, demonstrates attention to clarity, grammar, presentation, and comprehensibility.	10%
Value: The project will offer good value for the allotted budget. The cost and level of effort are clear well-described.	20%
Maximum Possible Score	100%

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All Proponents will be advised in writing of the success or failure of their respective Proposals.

8.0 Submission of Proposal

The proposal should be submitted as a single electronic document by 3:00 PM AST “January 16th, 2026”. **Date has been extended to “January 23rd, 2026”**. Please ensure the proposal or cover letter is signed by an officer or equivalent with authority to bind the proponent to the statements made in the proposal.

The electronic copy should be submitted via email in PDF format to the contact provided in Section 4.0. The file name should include an abbreviated form of the Proponent’s name. The file size limit is 20MB.

Proposals must be received prior to the time of closing of this RFP. Proposals received after the time of closing will not be considered.

9.0 Conflict of Interest

Proponents are required to disclose, to the RFP contact, any potential or perceived conflict of interest issues prior to RFP closing date and time.

The CNSOER reserves the right to disqualify any Proposal that, in the CNSOER’s sole opinion, has an actual or potential conflict of interest or an unfair advantage, whether existing now or is likely to arise in the future. Alternatively, the CNSOER may permit the Proposal to continue and impose such terms and conditions, as the CNSOER’s sole discretion may require.

10.0 Amendment of Proposal

A Proposal that is submitted to the CNSOER by the Proponent in accordance with this RFP may be amended in writing, provided the revision is received in the same manner as the primary submission indicated in Section 8.0 and prior to the specified closing date and time.

11.0 Validity of Proposal

Any Proposal received by the CNSOER must remain open for acceptance for a period of not less than thirty (30) days after the Closing Date of this RFP. After the Closing Date, no amendments will be accepted.

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12.0 Requests for Information

The CNSOER reserves the right to request further detailed financial data to support the rates and other costs reflected in the budget submitted with the Proposal.

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Appendix A

Scope of Work

The CNSOER is seeking the services of a qualified consultant to conduct a Regional Assessment (RA) of all offshore wind site assessment activities and surveys that could occur in the governments' designated [Wind Energy Areas](#) in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area. Although not yet defined, the RA would include two conceptual transmission corridors between the WEAs and the shoreline: one to connect potential future development in the Sydney Bight WEA and another that would follow the existing [abandoned pipeline corridor](#) that the remaining WEAs could utilize.

In the interest of regulatory streamlining, the CNSOER is proposing that such an RA be conducted and can be relied upon by developers, to inform their site assessment planning and application submission to the CNSOER, and by the regulator to inform their environmental effects determination required by regulation. Effectively, this will reduce the time it takes to process Activity Authorization applications, and the regulatory and engagement burdens of conducting repetitive reviews of low-risk activities.

It is important to note that the RA will be managed by the CNSOER according to Section 142.018(1) of the [Accord Acts](#) rather than the *Impact Assessment Act*. This distinction, along with the well understood and low-risk nature of the activities being assessed will allow for the RA to be conducted in a more concise timeframe than previous regional assessments in the Atlantic Canada region and in a manner that is commensurate with the nature and risk associated with site assessment activities. Special consideration may be given to Proponents that offer innovative and effective strategies to complete the work in a more streamlined timeframe without compromising the integrity of the assessment.

The primary tasks associated with the RA would be:

- Describe all potential site assessment activities and surveys that developers may undertake to characterize their licence area in support of the planning, detailed design, and impact assessment of their proposed development. This should include any surveys to satisfy information requirements of the CNSOER's regulatory authorization process and the regulatory authorization processes of other federal departments (e.g., *Species at Risk Act* Permits, *Fisheries Act* Permits and/or Authorizations) that may be required to enable project development. The descriptions must include the nature and extent of all surveys and the types of vessels, aircraft, and equipment to be used and any emissions, waste, or discharges associated with these activities/surveys (e.g., noise emissions, domestic and hazardous wastes, etc.). It must also include a description of potential accidents and malfunctions.

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- Describe the regulatory regime for offshore wind site assessment activities, including any scientific research permits that may be required.
- Conduct a scoping exercise, including a discussion of pathways of effects, to focus the assessment on issues of greatest concern and/or those that are not otherwise effectively mitigated using standard industry / best practices.
- Engage with Indigenous groups, commercial fisheries representatives, the offshore wind industry, and other stakeholders to build greater awareness of the nature and extent of offshore wind site assessment activities; identify issues and concerns; and obtain input in the assessment of effects and development of relevant mitigative measures. This will include development of an engagement plan to be submitted to the CNSOER for review and comment.
- Describe standard industry / best practices employed for these activities and surveys in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area by research agencies and other industry sectors as well as those from other relevant jurisdictions that have been used within the offshore wind sector.
- Describe any additional recommended mitigative measures to avoid or minimize potential effects of site assessment activities and surveys that are specific to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area.
- Describe and assess potential cumulative effects and any recommended mitigative measures that developers should implement to minimize or avoid these effects.

Throughout the duration of the contract, the consultant will host monthly progress meetings with the CNSOER to discuss work from the previous reporting period, work in the next reporting period, project schedule and budget, and any issues and concerns that may have arisen. The scope of work includes the following reporting and documentation requirements:

- A detailed draft Project Description Document incorporating comments from the CNSOER. The draft Project Description document will be shared with key Indigenous groups, commercial fisheries representatives, the offshore wind industry, and other stakeholder groups. A final Project Description document will incorporate any comments or points of clarification resulting from the targeted engagement, and any follow-up comments from the CNSOER, and will be posted to the CNSOER registry.
- A draft Scoping Document, incorporating comments from the CNSOER, will be posted to the CNSOER's registry for a minimum 30-day public comment period. The consultant may conduct targeted engagement to prepare the draft document. A final Scoping Document, incorporating comments received and any follow-up comments from the CNSOER will be posted to the registry and will form the basis of the RA.
- A Project Engagement Plan, incorporating comments from the CNSOER. The consultant may opt to contact Indigenous communities, commercial fisheries

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representatives, the offshore wind industry, and other stakeholders to formulate effective and efficient strategies to facilitate and expedite engagement efforts.

- A draft Regional Assessment Report, incorporating comments from the CNSOER, will be posted to the CNSOER's registry for a minimum 45-day public comment period. A final Regional Assessment Report, incorporating comments received and any follow-up comments from the CNSOER will be posted to the registry.

As previously stated, Proponents are encouraged to propose innovative and effective strategies to conducting the RA (e.g., combining the Project Description, Scoping Document, and Engagement Plan in one document). Consultants are also encouraged to provide thoughtful and innovative report writing strategies to streamline the RA Report. This may include, but is not limited to:

- logical clarity and presenting effective arguments.
- avoid including extraneous information and detail, focusing on information related to reasons and evidence that support the arguments presented; and
- show the logical steps that lead from the baseline data to the significance determinations and the recommended actions.

The CNSOER, in consultation with the successful bidder, may establish a page limit for this report.

Where applicable and appropriate, the consultant should leverage background information (e.g., baseline information) that has already been compiled within the [Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia](#), the various [Strategic Environmental Assessments](#) conducted for oil and gas exploration, and geospatial data presented in Fisheries and Oceans Canada's [Marine Planning Atlas](#) and the CNSOER's [Wind Energy Area Spatial Data Viewer](#) and make reference to these resources accordingly.

Proponents are also encouraged to identify any value-added considerations; however, it is recommended that those be budgeted separately.

Detailed Requirements

In addition to the tasks specified above, the consultant will be required to complete the following tasks for this contract. Documents are to be submitted in accordance with their devised schedule but, to the extent possible, not later than the end of the 2026 calendar year.

1. A kick-off meeting (virtual or in-person) will be held at the start of the contract to review and confirm the scope and approach, progress reporting requirements, and invoicing. Either party may request a progress meeting at any time throughout the duration of the contract.

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2. Monthly progress meetings to review progress in the reporting period, activities in the following reporting period, estimate of percent complete, and any issues or concerns.
3. Meetings with Indigenous representatives / communities, commercial fisheries representatives, the offshore wind industry, and other stakeholders as appropriate to build awareness and obtain input and feedback. The CNSOER can provide support to the contractor as requested and where appropriate (e.g., industry and fisheries organization contacts, participation at meetings).
4. Submit draft documents for internal review by CNSOER and incorporate comments and feedback into the subsequent versions before posting for public review. The final report will incorporate comments and feedback from the Indigenous communities, commercial fishing industry, offshore wind industry, stakeholders, and the public as appropriate and in consultation with the CNSOER.
5. Invoices will be issued monthly and will include a breakdown of time, materials, and disbursement by task. All work, expenses and disbursements for the 2025-2026 fiscal year must be invoiced on or about March 31, 2026.

All work must be completed and invoiced by the end of December 2026.

Monitoring Proponents' Performance

Following contract award, the contractor and the CNSOER will confirm the schedule of tasks and activities which will be used as a means of tracking the overall Project schedule as well as measure performance. Bidders must provide a detailed schedule of tasks and key milestones in their submission based on a start of work as indicated below.

TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING /DUE BY
Contract Award	CNSOER	February 3, 2026
Kick-off Meeting	CNSOER / Contractor	February 6, 2026, at 10 am AST
Progress Meeting	Contractor	February 27, 2026, monthly
Invoicing	Contractor	Monthly

Importantly, Proponents are encouraged to devise innovative strategies to conduct the RA in a concise and efficient timeframe, without compromising the integrity of the work, and to provide a proposed schedule depicting the proposed tasks, deliverables, and milestones.