



2026 WORK PLAN

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA OFFSHORE ENERGY REGULATOR

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA

AND

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER) will collaborate on the projects outlined below, with the objective of enhancing current mechanisms and practices for delivering environmental protection and conservation measures in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area. The Work Plan does not preclude DFO, ECCC, and the CNSOER from working on other priority issues or projects in 2026.

Project 1 – Joint Priority Setting, Planning and Coordination

Project Description:

The CNSOER, DFO and ECCC all have legislative and regulatory responsibilities related to offshore energy activities in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area. As such, it is desirable that the agencies develop a set of focus areas for collaborative work and develop strategies to ensure resources are available to carry out this work.

To achieve this outcome, the three Parties have agreed to meet as required, and at least annually, to discuss and plan for anticipated workloads and to identify priorities. These meetings will be led by the Implementation Committee Chair.

Deliverables:

- Discussion of issues/areas requiring collaborative work, and an estimate of associated workloads.
- Development of a 2027 Annual Work Plan, coordinated by the CNSOER with DFO and ECCC.
- Implementation Committee members will continue to identify the lead individuals from their agencies who will coordinate Work Plan projects.
- The CNSOER 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 (CNSOER)

Sarah Moore (ECCC)

Wendy Williams (DFO Maritimes)

Alain Hebert (DFO Gulf)

Coordination Team:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOER)

Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)

Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)

Jacey Scott (ECCC)

Project 2 – Regulatory Activities

Project Description:

There are several ongoing activities that require regular collaborative work by the CNSOER, ECCC, and DFO in 2026 and in years to follow.

Deliverables:

- If there are project-specific environmental assessments submitted for petroleum activities as a result of Call for Bids NS25-1P, all parties will work together on the EA process under the Accord Acts (i.e., seismic program EAs).
- The CNSOER 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.
- DFO will collaborate with the CNSOER regarding the updates to the Statement of Canadian Practice with Respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment.

Timing: Ongoing

Project Team Leaders:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOER)
Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
Michael Hingston (ECCC)
Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)

Project Team Resources:

Janice Ray (CNSOER)
Robert Jones (DFO Gulf)
Heidi Schaefer (DFO Maritimes)
Mike Wambolt (DFO Maritimes)
Tania Morais (ECCC)

Project 3 – Marine Planning and Conservation

Project Description:

Under the *Oceans Act*, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, on behalf of the Government of Canada, has the responsibility to lead and facilitate the development and implementation of integrated management plans and a national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) for Canada's marine waters. This includes commitments under Canada's Marine Conservation Targets for 30% marine protection by 2030. The Minister may also establish marine environmental quality guidelines, objectives, and criteria. Within the Maritimes and Gulf Regions of DFO, there are a number of marine planning and conservation initiatives that require CNSOER awareness, involvement, and/or collaboration.

Deliverables:

- The CNSOER, DFO, and ECCC will collaborate on initiatives and governance structures developed under the *Oceans Act*.
- The CNSOER, DFO, and ECCC will collaborate in support of the planning, establishment and ongoing management of protected and conserved areas in DFO Maritimes and Gulf Regions.
- The CNSOER, DFO and ECCC will collaborate on the federal Marine Conservation Network Plan for the Scotian Shelf-Bay of Fundy marine bioregion.
- 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 (CNSOER)

Joseph Crocker (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)

Carole Godin (DFO Gulf)

Karel Allard (ECCC)

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOER)

Project 4 – Spill Preparedness and Oversight

Project Description:

ECCC, DFO, and CNSOER have independent but related mandates regarding preparedness and oversight to environmental emergencies related to offshore activities. This project facilitates the exchange of information to ensure a coordinated approach.

Deliverables:

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

Timing: Q1 2026

Project Team Leaders:

Dena Murphy (CNSOER)

Matthieu Dussault (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

James Porter (ECCC)

Stuart Lee (ECCC)

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOER)

Project 5 – Offshore Renewable Energy Planning and Regulation

Project Description:

In January 2025, the CNSOER's mandate was officially expanded such that it is now the independent, lead, and lifecycle regulator for all offshore energy projects and activities in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area. The CNSOER provides a single point of contact for offshore energy proponents and facilitates engagement, communication, cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among all relevant government departments and agencies as well as critical stakeholders to ensure informed, timely, and consistent review and oversight of all energy related activities in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area. In recognition of the many instances of overlapping jurisdictional authority, the CNSOER will collaborate and coordinate with DFO and ECCC as they plan, prepare, and conduct various activities and initiatives to avoid any duplication of effort, to exchange expert knowledge and advice, and to ensure that regulatory processes are in line with the requirements and expectations of all parties.

Deliverables:

- MOUs will be finalized with changes to address offshore renewable energy.
- The CNSOER may issue a contract for a Regional Assessment for Offshore Wind Site Assessment Activities in early 2026. DFO and ECCC will be involved in reviewing the draft and final reports for adherence to their respective regulations.

- The CNSOER is responsible for running land tenure processes, including the Call for Information and Call for Bids processes for offshore wind and will collaborate with and seek input from DFO and ECCC during these processes.
- The CNSOER may receive authorization applications for offshore wind site assessment in the 2026 calendar year. If so, the CNSOER will collaborate with DFO and ECCC in the review of any applications received with a goal of streamlining regulatory reviews to ensure that authorization applications and conditions of authorization meet the requirements and expectations of all parties.
- The CNSOER will seek expert advice and input from DFO into ongoing studies pertaining to coexistence of the offshore wind industry and the commercial fishing industry and to work collaboratively to develop mitigation and adaptation measures to optimize coexistence.
- DFO, ECCC and the CNSOER will undertake planning and mitigation related to federal fisheries, wildlife and ecosystem science research and monitoring surveys.
- DFO will provide regular updates to the CNSOER and ECCC on its marine planning and conservation work that relates to offshore wind.
- DFO and the CNSOER will discuss offshore wind mitigation within *Fisheries Act* marine refuges bilaterally with the aim of providing updates to the annual (2026) Marine Refuge Coordination Committee meeting.
- ECCC and DFO will inform the CNSOER of ongoing data collection campaigns and scientific studies conducted to inform the assessment of environmental effects of offshore wind energy development on migratory birds, marine wildlife, fish and fish habitat, and commercial fisheries in the Nova Scotia offshore area. The parties will work collaboratively to establish baseline survey requirements and develop appropriate and practical mitigation measures and follow-up monitoring programs.
- 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 in tri-party monthly meetings scheduled by the CNSOER.

Timing: Ongoing

Project Team Leaders:

Dena Murphy (CNSOER)

Luke Gaulton (DFO Maritimes)

Mona Sidarous (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOER)
Janice Ray (CNSOER)
Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
Mike Wambolt (DFO Maritimes)
Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)
Michael Hingston (ECCC)
Jacey Scott (ECCC)

Project 6 – Reporting on Progress

Project Description:

The Implementation Committee Members will keep the MOU Executive Committee signatories advised of the status of projects. An annual progress report will be finalized by December 15, 2026.

Deliverables:

- Operations staff of DFO, ECCC, and CNSOER will discuss each deliverable and provide updates regarding progress and resourcing throughout the year.
- The 2026 Progress Report will be provided to the Executive Committee.

Timing: Annual Report - December 15, 2026

Project Team Leader:

Dena Murphy (CNSOER)

Project Team Resources:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOER)
Sarah Moore (ECCC)
Wendy Williams (DFO Maritimes)
Alain Hebert (DFO Gulf)

Approvals:

Whereas the parties have signed this MOU on the dates indicated below.

for: **Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator**



Christine Bonnell-Eisnor
Chief Executive Officer

February 12, 2026
Date

for: **Environment and Climate Change Canada**



Tristan Landry
Regional Director General
East and Central Regions

Digitally signed by Landry,
Tristan
Date: 2026.02.18 16:52:09
-05'00'

Date

for: **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**



Céline Gaudet
Regional Director-General (Gulf Region)

MAR 02 2026
Date



Doug Wenzell
Regional Director-General (Maritimes Region)

MAR 05 2026
Date