



ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

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

NOVEMBER 24, 2023

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 2023 Work Plan. The intent of this report is to meet that purpose.

Discussion

In 2023, 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.

The 2023 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 2023 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 Transition Planning	CNSOPB, ECCC, and DFO	X		
6 – Reporting on Progress	CNSOPB		X	

Good progress was made on the work plan projects in 2023 with some deliverables not completed due to resource constraints. Collaborative activities on-the-water in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area were not required in 2023 due to the limited offshore activity (post-abandonment monitoring). Highlights of the 2023 collaborative MOU efforts include:

- Monthly meetings on offshore renewable energy planning; and
- DFO-CNSOPB progress on guidance for oil and gas in marine refuges.

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 various projects under the 2023 Work Plan in November 2023 and projects for the 2024 Work Plan. This included ongoing projects and any potential new projects.

Approvals

For Fisheries and Oceans Canada:

Wendy Williams

A/Regional Director
Aquatic Ecosystems
Maritimes Region

Date

Alain Hebert

Regional Director
Aquatic Ecosystems
Gulf Region

Date

For Environment and Climate Change Canada:

Jennifer Mullane

Manager
Regional Analysis and Relations & Indigenous Affairs
East and Central Region

Date

For the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board:



Dena Murphy

Director
Operations/Health, Safety & Environment

December 15, 2023

Date

APPENDIX 1

STATUS REPORT ON CNSOPB/DFO/ECCC 2023 JOINT PROJECTS

The following summarizes progress on the seven projects defined in the 2023 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 2023 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:

Lyndsay Vidito (ECCC)
Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)
Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)

Annual Status Update

- The Joint 2024 Work Plan was finalized and signed by all parties.
- There was no mid-year meeting of the Implementation Committee. The Committee convened on December 11, 2023, to discuss the progress report for 2023 and work planning for 2024.
- Similar to 2022, 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), Joselyn Maclellan (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), Brian Drover (ECCC) and Mike Wambolt (DFO Maritimes)

Timing: Ongoing

Annual Status Update

- DFO is currently conducting consultations on the potential listing of Harbour Porpoise (Northwest Atlantic population), Lumpfish and Ringed Seal which are within the CNSOPB jurisdictional area, and the CNSOPB will be participating in these consultation processes.
- There was no engagement related to the Statement of Canadian Practice with Respect to the Mitigation of Seismic Sound in the Marine Environment in 2023.
- The CNSOPB advised DFO and ECCC of the follow-up monitoring that occurred at the Alma-2 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 and DFO will collaborate in support of the planning, management and conservation of the Gully Marine Protected Area (MPA) and the St. Anns Bank MPA, the Fundian Channel - Browns Bank Area of Interest (AOI), and the Gulf Region Area of Interest (exact location to be determined). ECCC will actively participate in MPA Advisory Committee meetings, specifically for Gully MPA.
- The CNSOPB and ECCC will continue to participate in the federal bioregional marine conservation network development processes, including processes for new AOIs and “Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures”, including *Fisheries Act* Marine Refuges.
- 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:

Donald Humphrey (DFO Maritimes)
Richard Ruest (DFO Gulf)

Project Team Resources:

Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
Carole Godin (DFO Gulf)

Dena Murphy (CNSOPB)
Jennyfer Tolley (ECCC)

Karel Allard (ECCC)
Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)

Annual Status Update

- DFO and the CNSOPB began collaboration on the Guidance Document for Marine Refuges (Oil and Gas) and this document may be completed by the end of the year.
- The CNSOPB continued 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 marine refuges.

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:

James Porter (ECCC)
Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)
Rob Ronconi (ECCC-CWS)

Annual Status Update

- The CNSOPB provided comments to ECCC on the ECCC-CNSOPB MOU Annex A. ECCC and the CNSOPB need to discuss the closure of this work item.
- ECCC remains committed to finalizing the update to the ECCC-CNSOPB MOU Annex A: Cooperation Concerning Environmental Emergencies to account for the Spill Treating Agents Offshore Regime and other coordination activities. This item will be carried forward to the next workplan.
- On November 20-21, 2023, ECCC participated in the 2023 Offshore Environmental Forum hosted by Canada Oil Natural Gas Producers (CAPP). CNSOPB, CNLOPB, Federal and Provincial Governments, and industry representatives were part of this workshop.

Project 5 – Offshore Renewable Energy Transition Planning

Deliverables:

- All parties will review the MOU to identify any potential changes that may be needed for 2024 when CNSOPB/s mandate is officially expanded.
- 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 related 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)
 Donald Humphrey (DFO Maritimes)
 Michael Hingston (ECCC)

Project Team Resources:

Elizabeth MacDonald (CNSOPB)
 Glen Herbert (DFO Maritimes)
 Monik Richard (DFO Gulf)
 Brent Keeping (ECCC)

Annual Status Update

- There were preliminary discussions on the MOU documents in monthly renewables meetings and it is felt that changes to the MOUs will be required to add renewable energy but the language and intent of the documents will remain very similar and a moderate amount of editing will be required. This deliverable will carry forward into the 2024 Work Plan.
- 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 is in the research stage of development of Offshore Wind Site Assessment Guidelines.
- All parties have been meeting monthly to discuss regulation of offshore renewable energy and have been keeping each other informed of the activities of their respective agencies in this regard.

Project 6 - Reporting on Progress

Deliverables:

- Mid-year meeting for operations staff of DFO, ECCC, and CNSOPB to discuss each deliverable and provide updates regarding progress and resourcing.
- Annual report to the Executive Committee.

Timing: Mid-Year Meeting - July 15, 2023
 Annual Report - December 15, 2023

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

- A mid-year meeting did not take place however regular collaborative monthly meetings between all parties have taken place to discuss offshore renewable energy.
- This report fulfills the requirements for the Annual Progress Report.