



## Oceans North Comments on the Draft Agreement to Conduct a Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador

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25<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Agreement to Conduct a Regional Assessment of the Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Oceans North supports the efforts to mitigate climate change, particularly the required paradigm shift to renewable energy provision. Canada's 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan includes the commitment to achieve net-zero electricity by 2035 through the expansion of non-emitting energy. This will lay the groundwork to net-zero emissions by 2050.

The goal of the Regional Assessment is:

*"To provide information, knowledge and analysis regarding future offshore wind development activities in the Study Area and their potential effects, in order to inform and improve future planning, licencing and impact assessment processes for these activities in a way that helps protect the environment and health, social and economic conditions while also creating opportunities for sustainable economic development."*

The following text details our comments on the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Regional Assessment (RA) of the Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Section 1.2(a) of the agreement states:

*"Providing information, knowledge and analysis related to environmental, health, social and economic conditions and the potential effects of offshore wind development activities in the Study Area, with consideration and weaving together of both Indigenous knowledge and scientific information."*

The language used in this Section insinuates that Indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge are different from one another, however, Indigenous knowledge systems are scientific in nature. As the goal of the RA is to provide information, it is important to acknowledge and understand the origin of such information. We advise that the language in this Section change to become *"...both Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Western scientific*

*information*". This issue is again repeated in Section 3.3 with the text that states "...and knowledge (both Indigenous and scientific)..." and we ask that the language here be changed.

Further, we advise that Two-Eyed Seeing (*Etuaptmumk* in Mi'kmaw) be used to guide the Regional Assessment throughout the entire process. Two-Eyed Seeing is the gift of multiple perspectives; a conceptual framework coined by Mi'kmaw Elder Dr. Albert Marshall in 2004 for unifying knowledge systems. It is described as "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all".<sup>1,2</sup>

In Sections 1.4-1.5 of the agreement, the Study Area for the Regional Assessment is defined. We suggest renaming this Regional Assessment to the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and southern Labrador.

We suggest the inclusion of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), such as the Hawke Channel Closure, in the Regional Assessment Study Area map. These OECMs contribute towards Canada's protected areas targets and any new activity undertaken in or near these areas may impact their contribution to these targets. In addition, the OECM criteria adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity require that that OECM management is consistent with the ecosystem approach with the ability to adapt to achieve expected biodiversity conservation outcomes, including long-term outcomes, and including the ability to manage a new threat (Criterion B, managed) and the area achieves, or is expected to achieve, positive and sustained outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. Threats, existing or reasonably anticipated ones are addressed effectively by preventing, significantly reducing, or eliminating them, and by restoring degraded ecosystems. Mechanisms, such as policy frameworks and regulations, are in place to recognize and respond to new threats (Criterion C, effective).<sup>3</sup> A failure to include these areas in the regional assessment process as management measures means that any impacts of wind in these areas will have to be assessed separately to adhere to the agreed criteria. It is also recommended that the committees involved in this Regional Assessment work closely with DFO as they develop their regional draft marine protected area network and marine spatial planning initiatives.

Finally, Section 6.2 of the agreement states:

*"The Committee will complete its work and submit its Report (all components) to the Ministers within 18 months of the public announcement of the appointment of its members."*

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<sup>1</sup> Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. 2012. Two-eyed seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together Indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2(4), 331-340.

<sup>2</sup> Reid, A.J., Eckhert, L.E., Lane, J-F., Young, N., Hinch, S.G., Darimont, C.T., Cooke, S.J., Ban, N.C., & Marshall, A. 2021. "Two-Eyed Seeing": An Indigenous framework to transform fisheries research and management. *Fish Fish*, 1-19.

<sup>3</sup> CBD 2018. Protected Areas and Other Effective Areas-based Conservation Measures. CBD Distr. GENERAL CBD/SBSTTA/22/L.2 6 July 2018. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/9b1f/759a/dfcee171bd46b06cc91f6a0d/sbstta-22-l-02-en.pdf>

We believe that 18 months is too short a timeline given the needed amount of consultation with Indigenous groups, government, industry, academia, and the public. We acknowledge that fast action is needed to mitigate the effects of climate change. However, this should not be at the detriment to participants or the marine environment. As an example, our experience with the Northeast Newfoundland Shelf Regional Assessment for exploratory drilling, which was advanced at a timeline to serve the proponents demonstrated that a truncated assessment process results in lack of trust in the process itself. We recommend that the timeline be adjusted so the RA process produces robust, trustworthy, and inclusive information.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

*(original signed by Amanda Joynt)*

Amanda Joynt  
Senior Policy Advisor  
Oceans North