



Impact Assessment
Agency of Canada

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March 15, 2024

The Committee for the Regional Assessment of Offshore
Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador
OffshoreWindNLEolienneExtracotiereTNL@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

Dear Committee:

This letter is in response to your correspondence dated February 6, 2024, requesting the Agency's advice on how to assess cumulative effects for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The objectives outlined in the Committee's terms of reference refer to including the consideration of cumulative effects in the regional assessment's analysis. Within this general requirement, and the guidance described in Appendix A2 of the terms of reference, the Committee has significant discretion on the consideration and analysis of cumulative effects.

Please find attached a copy of the requested presentation which provides high-level principles of cumulative effects assessment which can be applied within regional assessment. In addition, the Agency's *Policy Framework for Assessing Cumulative Effects under the Impact Assessment Act*, which outlines the overall policy direction for cumulative effects assessment under the Act, may be of use (available at this [link](#)). Also of relevance is the Agency's current technical guidance for assessing cumulative effects (available at this [link](#)), which is in the process of being updated and is focused on project assessments, but which provides key concepts that may be beneficial to the regional assessment context.

For the Committee's information, the Agency has a research program that supports research related to the field of impact assessment. This program has funded research related to cumulative effects which the Committee may find useful (available at this [link](#)), including research on incorporating social impacts and on considering health, social, and economic values. The Open Science and Data Platform (available at this [link](#)) also provides valuable information related to the cumulative effects of human activities and can be searched by effect-type key words or area.

Canada 

If the Committee believes that it may be of value, the Agency would be pleased to work with the Committee Secretariat to organize a discussion with federal authorities working on cumulative effects with the aim of providing further guidance to the Committee on cumulative effects assessment in the context of the regional assessment.

We thank the Committee for its continued efforts and welcome any further questions or requests.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Stewart Lindale, Director
Regional and Strategic Assessment
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Assessment and Environmental Management
Eastern Canada



Cumulative Effects in Regional Assessments



Brent Parker

*Director General Review Panels and
Regional and Strategic Assessment, Impact
Assessment Agency*

Government of Canada

Presentation Overview

- Regional Assessments under the *Impact Assessment Act*
- Goals and Outcomes of Regional Assessments
- Cumulative Effects Consideration in Regional Assessments
- Agency Regional Assessments



Regional Assessments (RA) under the *Impact Assessment Act (IAA)*

- RAs under the Act are studies of existing/ anticipated development to inform planning and management of effects (cumulative) and inform project impact assessments
- They go beyond project-specific assessments to understand the regional context and provide more comprehensive analysis to help inform decision-making
- Under IAA they have the overall objective of improving impact assessment effectiveness and efficiency
- RA Policy Framework
 - Guides the planning and conduct of RAs

Potential Regional Assessments Outcomes

Planning

- Contribute to future development plans and objectives in a region
- Provide regional context for evaluating future developments and (cumulative) effects
 - Identify general (non-project specific) measures to address regional issues
 - Define mitigation and follow-up needs for future projects
- Contribute information and analysis for future project IAs and other regulatory processes (baseline data, understanding of potential effects / concerns)

Assessment

Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) in RAs

When a CEA is undertaken as part of a RA, the following should be taken into consideration:

- CEs are a key component of the rationale for, and focus of, RAs under the IAA. Paragraph 6(1)(m) of the IAA encourage the assessment of CEs of physical activities.
- The Agency's Policy Framework for Assessing CEs under the IAA is oriented to designated projects but serves as a useful resource for CEA in RAs.
- The approach and level of effort applied to assessing CEs in an regional assessment is established on a case-by-case basis and could be different for each valued component.

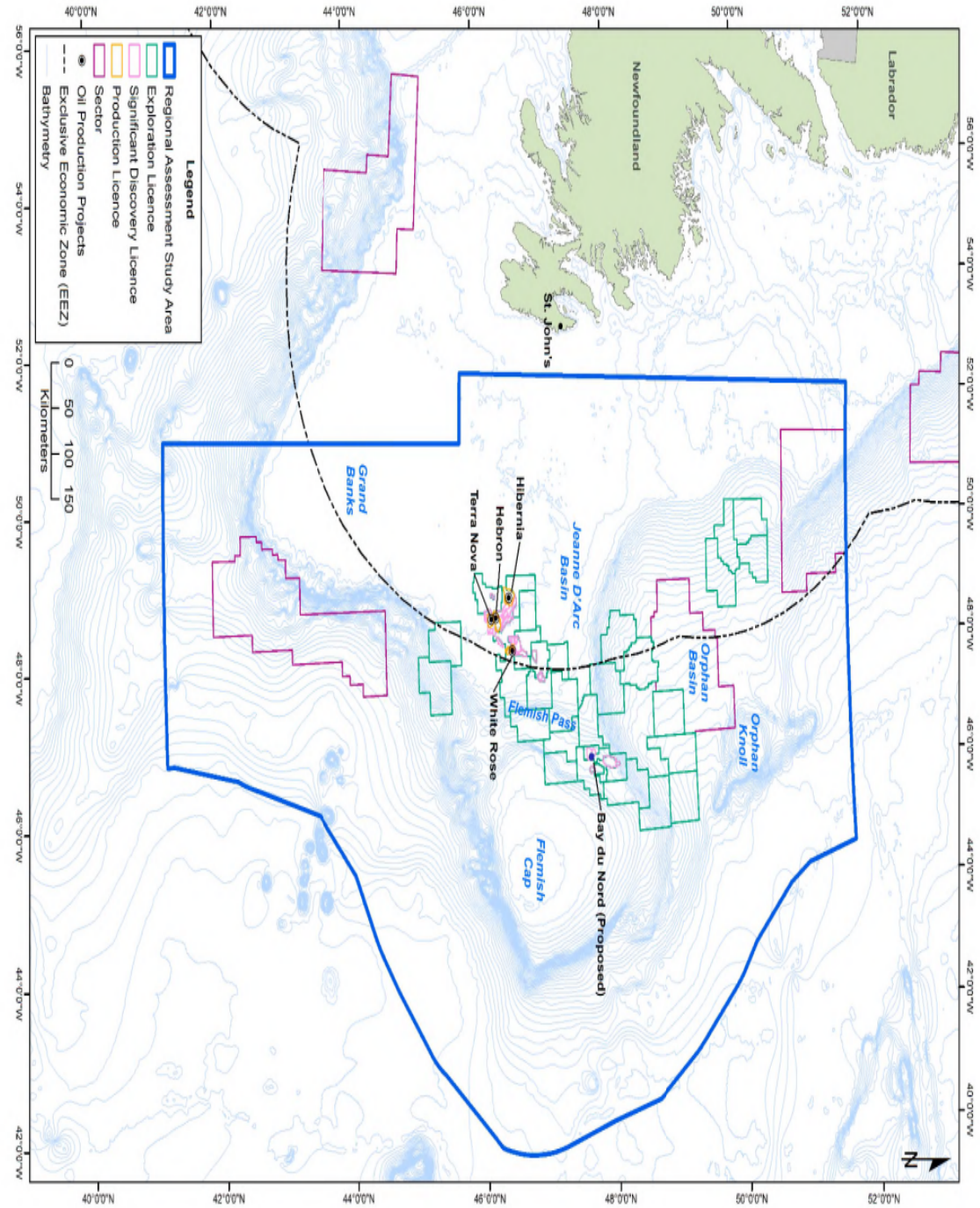
All CEAs should include scoping, analysis, mitigation, describing CEs, and follow-up and all documentation must clearly explain and justify the methods used in the assessment.

The Agency's Regional Assessments

- There are currently three active regional assessments which have been undertaken by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada:
 - Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador (*Completed*)
 - Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia (*In-Progress*)
 - Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador (*In-Progress*)

Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador

- **Status:** Completed (*Currently in the follow-up phase*)
- **Launched:** April 15, 2019
- **Purpose:** To facilitate a more effective and efficient assessment process for exploratory drilling projects in the defined offshore Study Area, while also ensuring that the highest levels of environmental protection continued to be applied and maintained.



Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Assessment Study Area

Offshore Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling East of Newfoundland and Labrador

Cumulative Effects Consideration in this RA

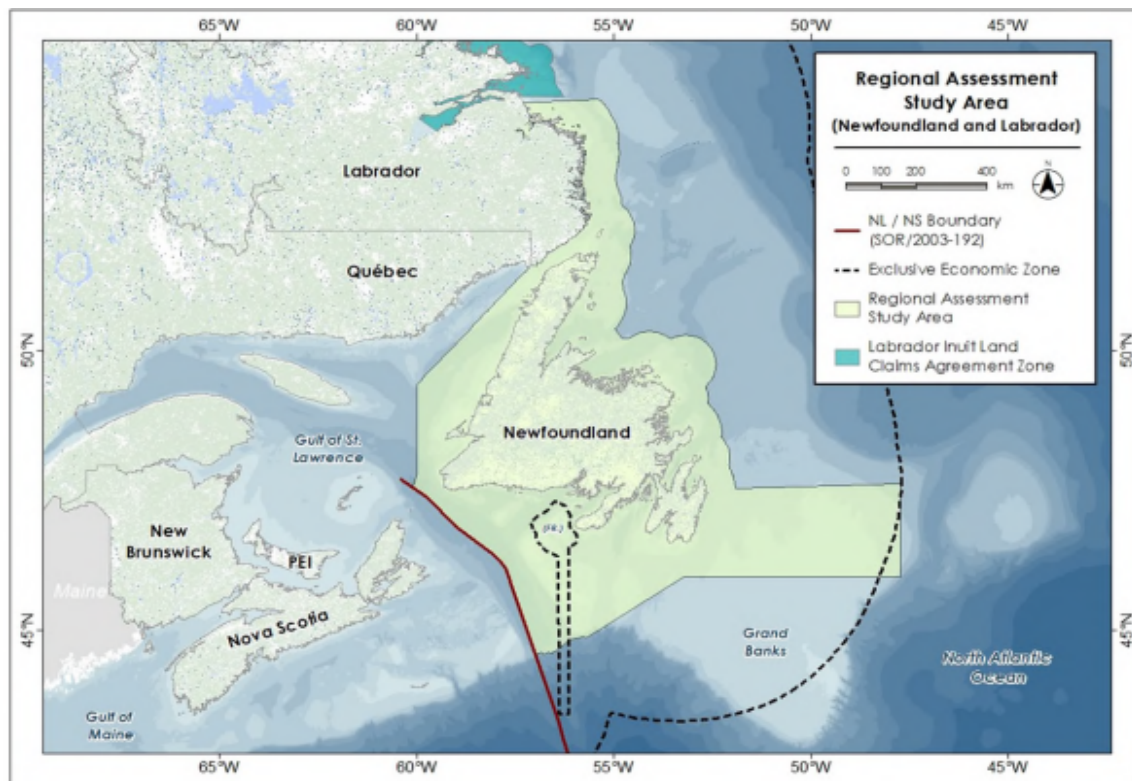
- The Terms of Reference required the Committee to consider cumulative effects resulting from offshore exploratory drilling combined with other physical activities.
- The RA analyzed past drilling and other activities in the study area, and modeled future drilling scenarios (low, medium, high) from 2020-2028.
- Committee recognized the need to manage these effects through planning for offshore oil and gas activities in the study area, and to inform related regulatory and marine planning processes.
 - GIS system developed to support ongoing work overlaying activities, environmental components and sensitive areas to id cumulative effects

Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland, Labrador and Nova Scotia

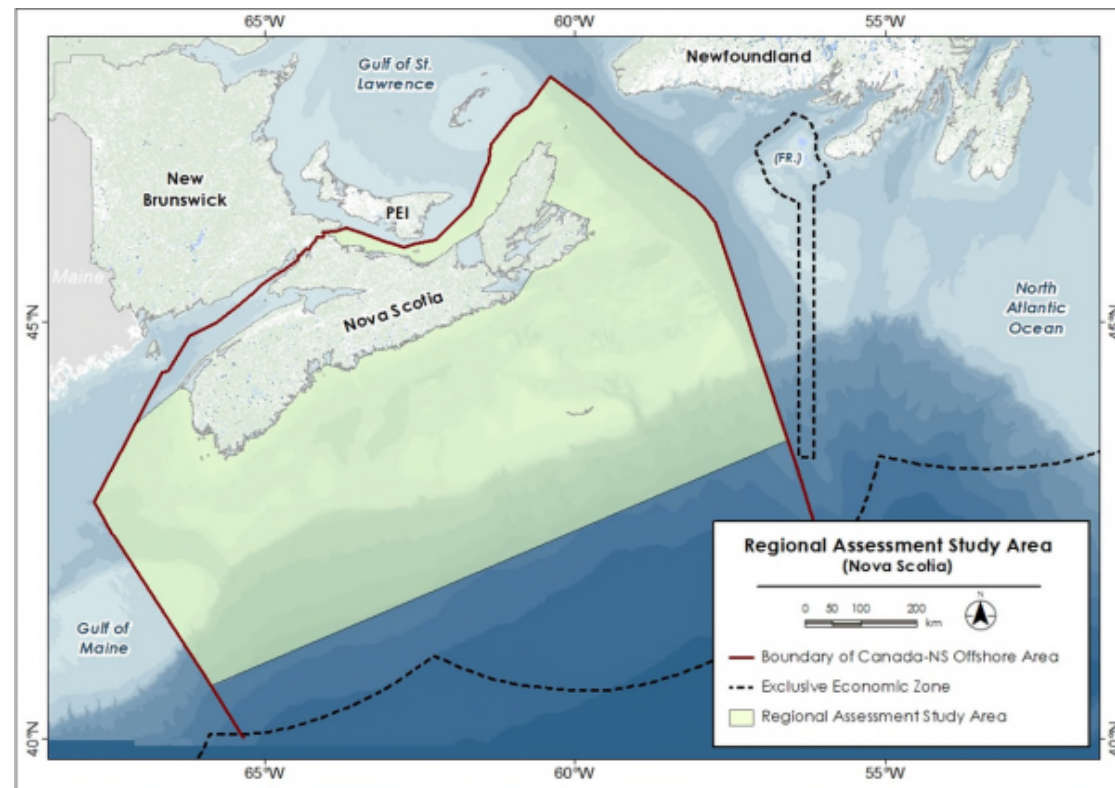
- **Status:** *Conduct Phase – Ongoing*
- **Purpose:** To help identify optimal areas for wind development and, to inform land tenure/licensing processes and decisions for future offshore wind development.
- **Requested by:** NS and NL Governments

Offshore Wind Regional Assessments (NL and NS)

Study Areas



Newfoundland and Labrador OSW RA



Nova Scotia OSW RA

Offshore Wind Regional Assessment NL and NS: Cumulative Effects Considerations

Provide information, knowledge, and analysis related to environmental, health, social, and economic conditions and potential cumulative effects generated.

Provide an understanding of the regional context to evaluate the potential cumulative effects of future development activities.

Consider the relationship between wind development and other existing /future physical activities, including examining the potential for resulting cumulative effects.

Identify and recommend mitigation and follow-up measures for addressing potential project-specific and cumulative effects; inform planning and licensing processes.

Conclusion

RAs offer important benefits for assessing and managing cumulative effects

- Identify mitigation that can reduce contribution of future projects to CEs in the region;
- Recommend other effects-management approaches for managing at a regional scale;
- Highlight locations where current /potential accumulation of activities/effects may be of concerns for CEs.
- Allows future projects and their effects to be placed in a regional context.

More Information can be found on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry

General Information on Regional Assessments under IAA:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/regional-strategic-assessments/regional-assessment-impact-assessment-act.html>

Information on completed or ongoing RAs, including RA Requests:

<https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/exploration?showMap=false&search=#2029207075>