

July 4, 2024

ELECTRONIC MAIL

To: Michael Hingston

Subject: Request for Advice - Committee for the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador

Dear Michael Hingston:

The federal Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources and provincial Ministers of Industry, Energy and Technology, Environment and Climate Change and for Intergovernmental Affairs established a Committee, pursuant to subsection 93(1) of the *Impact Assessment Act* (the IAA), to conduct the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador

On March 23, 2023, the Regional Assessment Agreement was posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry Internet site: [Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador \(iaac-aeic.gc.ca\)](https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca). This commenced the 18-month work period for the Committee.

In accordance with section 5 of the Committee's Agreement, and with section 23 of the IAA, the Committee can request specialist or expert information or knowledge, from any department or agency¹, which must then be made available to the Committee. This may include providing information, knowledge or advice related to any matter relevant to the Regional Assessment.

Attached to this correspondence is the Request for Advice form that contains further detail on the request. The Committee requires your department to complete and return no later than August 16, 2024. You can contact the Committee to discuss the due date if needed. Your department is encouraged to provide as much detail as practicable in responding to the questions in this request.

As per the Committee's [Operational Procedure](#), the information submitted to the Committee in response to this Request for Advice will be made public on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry Internet Site. Please do not include any information that cannot be shared publicly. The Committee's [Confidentiality Procedure](#), outlines the procedures in place regarding participants confidential information.

¹ All subsequent references to department mean department or agency.

If you have any questions regarding the regional assessment process or this request, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee at OffshoreWindNL-EolienneExtracotiereTNL@iaac-aeic.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

The Committee for the Regional Assessment of Offshore wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador

/Attachment

ATTACHMENT: July 4, 2024

Advice Record

Response due by August 16, 2024

Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Newfoundland and Labrador

Department/Agency	Environment and Climate Change Canada
Lead Contact	Michael Hingston
Email	Michael.hingston@ec.gc.ca

Overview of Request:

As a result of input received to date from the Committee’s [Interim Report: Preliminary Recommendations \(iaac-aeic.gc.ca\)](#), as well as the Committee continually looking forward to their draft and final reports (due September 30, 2024 and January 23, 2025, respectively), the Committee has further questions and clarifications for ECCC. The Committee expresses their gratitude to ECCC in providing information to date in response to their previous ‘Request for Advice’, as it has been greatly beneficial to their work thus far.

Subject matters that the Committee wishes to gain further insight or clarification on includes:

- Data and information gaps related to species occurring in the Focus Area and any expert recommendations for addressing those.
- Key trends over time.
- Cumulative effects on aerofauna that occur in the Focus Area.
- Which species or populations are most sensitive or susceptible to potential impacts of offshore wind.
- Expert recommended avoidance or mitigation measures that could help to alleviate impacts of future offshore wind on aerofauna.

Data Gaps and Ongoing Research

The Committee will be reporting on data and information gaps, and recommendations on how these could be addressed in their Report. The following information and advice from ECCC could support the Committee:

- An overview of completed, ongoing or planned research programs ECCC is involved in or aware of that could result in a better understanding of aerofauna in the Focus Area and/or the impact of offshore wind in the Focus Area.
- Details on the current spatial and temporal resolution of CWS data on marine birds.

- The Committee would also appreciate expert advice on:
 - What spatial and temporal resolution would CWS suggest for data required to determine the impacts of OSWD projects on marine birds or other aerofauna in the Focus Area?
 - What recommendations would CWS make that would allow for the collection of data at the appropriate spatial and temporal scale?

Key Trends Overtime

As per the Agreement, the Committee will be reporting on existing conditions for all components, including aerofauna. If available, the following information and advice from ECCC would be useful:

- An overview of key trends indicating the health of species that occur in the Focus Area. Information provided could be broad (e.g., national, or regional trends for key species that occur in the Focus Area) and could focus on species more likely to interact with offshore wind and/or species of conservation concern.
- An overview of key trends indicating health of populations that occur in the Focus Area. This could focus on trends at significant areas (e.g., bird colonies, IBAs, etc.)
- Uncertainties related to these trends and advice on priority data gaps that should be addressed prior to offshore wind occurring in the focus area.
- Any other information or advice ECCC considers relevant and important for the Committee's consideration on this topic.

Cumulative Effects

- An overview of any existing programs or initiatives related to cumulative effects that could be leveraged to fill data and research gaps, as well as any specific recommendations there may be for the Committee to consider which would help further ongoing or upcoming work (i.e., a copy of the presentation from the cumulative effects meeting that took place on June 19, 2024 and any other sharable information on this ongoing work).
- Recommendations on how to contribute to the management of cumulative effects effectively and reasonably under a regional assessment.
- An overview of any previously completed cumulative effects assessments in the Focus Area and /or Study Area including information such as the name of the study, list of all valued components assessed, findings of the study in bullet or tabular form, and a link to study protocols and final reports.
- Information on any other existing or planned human activities that could impact valued components assessed under the Regional Assessment in the Focus Area (air quality and GHGs, marine fish and fish habitat, avifauna, marine mammals, and sea turtles, protected and special areas, fisheries and other ocean uses, visual aesthetics and viewscales, acoustic environments, physical and cultural heritage, health, communities and economies).
- A list of any datasets and associated metadata that could be used for a cumulative effects assessment of the above valued components in the Focus Area and a discussion on the availability of relevant long-term data and/or analysis.

Sensitivity to Impacts

As per the Agreement, the Committee will be reporting on the analysis of effects, mitigation and follow up for the components they assess.

As previously discussed with ECCC, the Committee expects the forthcoming standardized colony setback parameters and assessment of species-specific vulnerability could effectively identify species most sensitive to impacts of offshore wind in the Focus Area. If not already addressed in this upcoming product, it would also be useful if ECCC:

- Provided a clear indication of species and/or populations they advise could be particularly sensitive to offshore wind and/or cumulative effects in the Focus Area and explain why (e.g., in the meeting with the Committee, ECCC referenced the Northern Gannet)
- Provided information on sensitive times/periods for each of the species they identified as occurring in the Focus Area.

Expert recommendation on avoidance and mitigation

- Provide a recommendation in writing for alternate buffers or specific approach for identifying appropriate buffers that would be a starting point before project assessments with rationale that the Committee could consider.
- Provide any other recommendations that should be taken to alleviate impacts of OSW on aerofauna in the Focus Area.

Additional Information

There may be additional information that ECCC sees as relevant, beyond what the Committee has requested. ECCC is welcome to identify any additional information as they deem appropriate for consideration in the Regional Assessment, and work with the Committee to provide this information in a useful format.

Use of Data and Information in this Request

The Committee wishes to acknowledge that while this information provided by your department will be important to help provide an overview of existing conditions for the above-mentioned components, the Committee understands that this information should not be interpreted as a complete description of the entire Focus Area. The Committee is aware of the limitations of some of these data, and therefore should not be used in a way that infers that there are no gaps or areas of uncertainty within the Focus Area related to the existing environmental descriptions. The Committee encourages ECCC to identify these gaps and uncertainties in various portions of the Focus Area. The identification of these knowledge gaps can be used to help form recommendations around how to address these gaps in the future for potential offshore wind developments. The Committee would also like to note if any work is ongoing, but cannot be publicly shared, ECCC can request

confidentiality. If the confidential information can be utilized to some degree (beyond the Committee's consideration) please explain conditions of use.

Name of Departmental / Agency
Responder

Title of Responder

Date