

Offshore Wind in Nova Scotia



August 2026

This information document includes a brief overview of the development of Nova Scotia's offshore wind sector followed by topics raised by stakeholders during meetings with the Government of Nova Scotia. Topics have been consolidated and grouped by themes. The information document may be updated from time to time as new or more information becomes available.

About Offshore Wind

Offshore wind is a source of clean, renewable energy and developing this sector in Nova Scotia can help reduce the province's use of fossil fuels. It is one of many solutions needed to help us meet our climate change goals of phasing out coal and achieving 80% renewable electricity by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050.

Nova Scotia's offshore wind speeds are among the fastest in the world and our designated wind energy areas alone have the capacity to generate up to 60 gigawatts (GW) of new electricity supply, with capacity factors of up to 60%. Nova Scotia is exploring the potential of offshore wind and is planning to offer licences for up to 5 GW of offshore wind capacity through its first Call for Bids, which will lead to the delivery of the first commercial-scale offshore wind projects in Canada in the early 2030s. Building offshore wind farms around Nova Scotia will create a new local source of renewable electricity, strengthen long-term energy security, and grow our green economy.

The benefits:

- supports the development of green hydrogen and other clean energy industries.
- provides a reliable source of renewable electricity. Offshore wind is more consistent than onshore wind and offshore wind turbines are typically larger than onshore turbines, so the potential electricity that can be generated is greater.
- creates sustainable jobs and supports businesses in the Nova Scotia supply chain.
- reduces fossil fuel dependency in Nova Scotia.

Theme 1: Nova Scotia's interest in developing offshore wind and the location of future offshore wind turbines

Size of Nova Scotia's offshore wind industry:

The Province aims to licence up to five gigawatts of offshore wind in the first Call for Bids as part of an initial phase of development. The rollout will be careful, phased, and based on lessons from other jurisdictions.

Benefits of offshore wind for Nova Scotia compared to developing wind turbines on land or on islands:

Offshore wind can produce more consistent and stronger wind speeds than most onshore land locations. That means that while it is more expensive to build and operate, it can produce more energy output and support larger-scale renewable energy production over time. Nova Scotia has limited space on land that is well-suited for large-scale wind development that is required to support the Province's renewable energy goals and priorities, including Wind West.

About designated Wind Energy Areas and where future offshore wind projects will be located:

Four Wind Energy Areas were designated jointly by the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada in July 2025.

The four designated Wind Energy Areas were informed by the Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia, which was led by an independent Committee. The Regional Assessment Committee identified these areas as potential development areas for offshore wind in its final report, which was provided to the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada in January 2025. From spring 2023 to winter 2025, the Regional Assessment Committee gathered available information and data and engaged with the public, Indigenous groups, commercial fishers, and other interested parties, to inform their recommendations to governments regarding responsible and efficient offshore wind development.

In its final report, the Regional Assessment Committee made over thirty recommendations to governments, including the identification of eight potential development areas for governments to consider. The final report is publicly available and can be found at the following link: [Regional Assessment of Offshore Wind Development in Nova Scotia Final Report](#).

Following the submission of the final report, the Province of Nova Scotia and Government of Canada further considered and evaluated the eight potential development areas recommended by the Regional Assessment Committee. In March 2025, Governments proposed the designation of five Wind Energy Areas, released a discussion paper on the proposed Wind Energy Areas, and undertook a public engagement process. The Wind Energy Area Discussion Paper can be found at the following link: [Wind Energy Area Discussion Paper](#).

Following the public engagement and review of feedback from the public, Indigenous groups, commercial fishers, industry, and other interested parties, the Province of Nova Scotia and Government of Canada decided to only designate four of the five proposed Wind Energy Areas. Furthermore, governments reduced the spatial area of the Sydney Bight and French Bank Wind

Energy Areas so that their landward boundaries were no closer than 25 km and 20 km from land, respectively.

In September 2025, governments issued Strategic Direction to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator to initiate a Call for Bids process for offshore wind energy. The Strategic Direction instructed the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator to focus on identifying parcels within three of the four Wind Energy Areas – Sydney Bight, Middle Bank, and French Bank – for a first Call for Bids.

As part of the Call for Bids process, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator will identify specific parcels within the designated Wind Energy Areas on which eligible developers can submit bids. Then, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator will evaluate bids to determine which companies should be awarded submerged land licences. A submerged land licence, and subsequent activity authorizations issued by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator after conducting an environmental assessment, are required before a developer can undertake any development activities in relation to a project.

At this point, it is too early in the process to know exactly where future projects may be located.

Marine Protected Areas and location of offshore wind turbines:

Currently, none of the designated Wind Energy Areas overlap with existing Marine Protected Areas. To date, Marine Protected Areas, like St. Anns Bank for example, have not been considered for offshore wind development.

Governments understand the interest in exploring all potential options. In determining the currently designated Wind Energy Areas, governments considered technical data and information, existing ocean uses and users, marine protection and conservation, and public feedback to determine the suitability for future offshore wind development. Depending on future energy needs and the growth of Nova Scotia's offshore wind sector, additional areas may be considered for designation as Wind Energy Areas in the future.

Decisions related to the management of Marine Protected Areas, including permissible activities, fall under federal jurisdiction.

Theme 2: Project Layout, Turbine Technology, and Safety Zones

Layout and concentration of offshore wind turbines:

Turbines will be located within the seabed parcel awarded via the submerged land licence. Parcels will be located within designated Wind Energy Areas and identified by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator through the Call for Bids process. Only after a developer receives a submerged land licence, completes detailed studies, and submits the appropriate activity authorizations to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator for approval, which would encompass an anticipated project design or layout, will the exact project layout be known.

Consideration of fixed or floating technologies for offshore wind turbines:

Both options are possible in Nova Scotia's offshore. The Strategic Direction provided to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator includes instructions to identify seabed parcels that would be appropriate for both fixed-bottom and floating offshore wind development. The Strategic Direction is available via the following link: [Strategic Direction Letter](#).

- **Fixed-bottom** technologies are generally used in water less than 60-70 m deep.
- **Floating** technologies are used in deeper water.

For example, the French Bank Wind Energy Area is only suitable for floating offshore wind technologies due to its water depth.

Final technology choices will be made by successful bidders based on site conditions and will be subject to regulatory review and approval from the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator.

Consideration of different types of foundations for offshore wind turbines:

Developers may use foundations such as monopiles, gravity-based structures, or floating platforms for their turbines (for more information please refer to the [offshore wind technology scan](#) prepared by CanmetENERGY). These choices will be subject to review by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada as part of the relevant regulatory approval processes.

Lifespan of offshore wind turbines:

Offshore wind turbines typically last between 20 and 30 years (for more information refer to the [offshore wind technology scan](#) prepared by CanmetENERGY). Integrity management will be a key factor examined by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator before any turbines are installed in Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area.

Buffer and safety zones during construction and operation activities:

At this time, there are no legislated safety zones or exclusion zones during project construction or operation. The use of navigational safety zones is a well-established safety measure in other jurisdictions and industries if there is a risk of potential collision, and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator may establish navigational safety zones during various phases of a project's lifecycle.

The [Canada Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations](#) under the *Canadian Energy Regulator Act* would enable the establishment of navigational safety zones of up to 500 m to be established around a facility. These regulations will set the base for environmental protections and safety regulations administered by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator, which will include similar navigational and safety zone requirements.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator's Fisheries Advisory Committee is expected to be a productive forum for discussion of these specific concerns. It is expected that navigational safety zones may only be required during construction and decommissioning activities and may be reduced in size during operations.

Coastal rescue or emergency response issues:

Emergency response planning is critical to ensuring the highest standards are met for any offshore wind projects proposed in Canada. For any project proposed in the Canada-Nova Scotia offshore area, a developer will be obligated to develop and maintain an emergency response plan that is reviewed and approved by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator.

The emergency response plan would set out the operator's processes, procedures, and resources for preparing for, managing, and responding to any emergency that may arise while executing any authorized work or activities associated with a project.

The [Canada Offshore Renewable Energy Regulations](#) under the *Canadian Energy Regulator Act* set out the emergency response plan requirements. These regulations will set the base for environmental protections and safety regulations administered by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator, which will include similar emergency response requirements.

Theme 3: Impacts to the Environment and Fisheries

Potential impacts to fisheries other than displacement from offshore wind development:

Harvesters and other interested parties have raised important questions about the potential environmental effects of offshore wind development on fisheries, including potential effects on fish habitat, fish movement, fish migration, and larval distribution. Some of these impacts will be considered as part of project reviews that are conducted later in the process. What we can say now:

- Principles in the *Accord Acts* note that during the submerged land licence issuance process, importance shall be given to the consideration of effects on fishing activities.
- The potential impacts to fish and fish habitat will be considered as part of the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator's recommendation to Ministers regarding the Call for Bids, and the subject of future impact assessments and permitting processes (e.g., Impact Assessments under the *Impact Assessment Act*, activity authorizations issued by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator, and legislative requirements under the *Fisheries Act* and *Species at Risk Act*).
- Ecological changes that may affect fish and fish habitat will be considered during project-specific assessments and reviews, and through discussions with the fishing and seafood industry related to fisheries coexistence and compensation.
- Experience from other jurisdictions is expected to help inform assessments, monitoring programs, and avoidance and mitigation measures.

Governments will continue to explore and pursue efforts to improve our understanding and knowledge of the potential environmental effects of offshore wind development and implement measures to avoid and minimize potential impacts where possible.

Environmental effects of subsea cables and electromagnetic fields on fish and marine invertebrates:

The potential environmental effects of subsea cables, including how electromagnetic fields may affect animal movement, will be the subject of future project-specific studies and assessments. Information from other jurisdictions and future monitoring programs will help to assess the potential for impacts to aquatic species in Nova Scotia's offshore.

Environmental effects of vibrations and benthic disturbances during construction and operation activities:

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator and other regulatory agencies will review and consider existing research in this area as part of project-specific assessments. Developers may use mitigation and monitoring measures, such as bubble curtains, during construction activities, to minimize the potential impacts of sound, as seen in other jurisdictions.

Effects of offshore wind turbines on water temperature:

Changes to water temperature associated with offshore wind development continue to be an area of active research but are expected to be small and localized, and within the range of natural variation. Our goal is to generate clean energy in a way that protects the marine environment, supports coastal communities, and strengthens our climate resilience. Offshore wind development is an important part of that future and we intend to move forward responsibly and guided by science.

Theme 4: Coexistence and Compensation

Parties responsible for compensating fishers that may be impacted by offshore wind development:

Through project-specific assessments, developers will be required to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts of their projects on existing ocean users and uses, including commercial fisheries. Furthermore, we expect project developers to prioritize coexistence with the fishing and seafood industry. In instances where residual impacts exist, compensation may be required. In these cases, it is expected that developers (i.e., submerged land licence holders) will be responsible for providing compensation for eligible economic losses that are directly attributable to project development. This expectation aligns with what occurs in other jurisdictions.

The provincial and federal government via the Nova Scotia Department of Energy and Natural Resources Canada are developing a fisheries compensation policy to provide guidance to fishers, developers, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator, and Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, on fisheries compensation for the potential impacts from offshore wind development. The governments have been actively engaging with interested parties on the development of this policy.

Requirements for offshore wind developers to demonstrate they have the financial capacity to covers decommissioning costs:

To receive an authorization from the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator to construct, operate, and maintain, and subsequently decommission a project, developers must demonstrate that they have the financial resources to carry out the proposed activity and demonstrate that they have responsibility to cover any liability for debris from a project.

Moreover, a decommissioning and abandonment plan is required to be approved by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator before an authorization can be issued to a developer.

Fish harvesters continued involvement in the decision-making process:

Governments have regular engagement with key stakeholders and interested parties, including commercial fish harvesters. The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator also has a Fisheries Advisory Committee, which is intended to facilitate a two-way dialogue between the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator and representatives of the commercial fishing industry on matters that fall within their regulatory authority and scope of responsibility. To this extent, the Fisheries Advisory Committee serves as a mechanism to put forward advice and recommendations with respect to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator's regulatory activities and allow both parties to learn about, meet, discuss, and address issues faced by the offshore energy and fishing industries coexisting within the same ocean environment. Continued participation in this process is encouraged.

There are also multiple opportunities for harvesters and interested parties to provide feedback through formal engagement processes administered by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator, including through:

- a Call for Information, which takes place before developers can bid on seabed parcels and receive a submerged land licence;
- an Impact Assessment, which takes place during the proposal of a project, and as developers apply to receive the appropriate regulatory authorizations; and
- any environmental assessments conducted by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator before it issues an authorization.

Based on experiences in other jurisdictions, developers are also likely to engage with harvesters and interested parties, either directly or through a third-party, throughout the lifecycle of a project.

Theme 5: Research and Studies

Available local studies and existing data on migration, breeding, etc.:

DFO publishes scientific information on aquatic species and their habitat, including [recent work on the four Wind Energy Areas](#). Additional species-specific data may be available through DFO's Maritimes regional office.

The Government of Canada launched the Offshore Wind Predevelopment Program in 2024, which includes Regional Marine Data Collection Campaigns that aim to help fill data gaps and to establish the necessary baseline data to set the enabling conditions for responsible and efficient offshore wind development. The Campaigns will collect relevant geoscientific (e.g., seabed sampling, bathymetry, and seabed photography), meteorological and oceanographic (e.g., wind, water, and wave data), and marine wildlife and habitat data (e.g., species presence) in areas off the coasts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Relevant hydrographic and geological data can be found through the following links:

- [Canadian Hydrographic Service: NONNA Data Portal](#)
- [Geological Survey of Canada: Expedition Database](#) (for marine and coastal field surveys)

Any project with more than ten turbines will undergo a federal Impact Assessment, requiring the developer to evaluate potential environmental effects and identify information gaps.

Nova Scotia's involvement with other jurisdictions:

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator is a highly experienced regulator and is continuously increasing its knowledge base since receiving its new mandate to regulate offshore renewable energy. For example, it is an active participant in a number of international forums where regulators from around the world share real-time experience and lessons learned. This ensures that regulatory knowledge comes from global expertise.

The Nova Scotia Department of Energy participates in regular research and development forums. Two were recently hosted by Net Zero Atlantic in October 2024 and September 2025, and a third will occur in September 2026. These activities allow Nova Scotia to learn from other jurisdictions and understand research priorities. These types of forums were highlighted in the Regional Assessment's [final report](#), and research will continue throughout the lifecycle of offshore wind projects.

Purpose of the fact-finding mission to Scotland:

The purpose of the mission to Aberdeen, Scotland in September 2025 was to understand how offshore wind developers and fisheries have coexisted in Scotland, and how compensation programs were designed when impacts occurred.

Some Scottish projects are located much closer to shore, which creates different conditions and challenges than what is anticipated to occur in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia is taking a phased approach, starting with up to five gigawatts, and working carefully and thoughtfully as we move forward. There is strong historical knowledge from the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator who has worked closely with the fishery for decades, and we also are drawing on expertise from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, and the Regional Assessment Committee's final report to identify key areas of concern in advance of future development.

Theme 6: Community and Fishery Considerations

Offshore wind development and the longevity of the fishing and seafood industry:

The Province recognizes the longstanding cultural and economic importance of fisheries. The goal is for fishing and offshore wind to coexist and provide long-term benefits to coastal communities. This is why the process will include phased development, thorough regulatory review, and continuous monitoring.

Concerns regarding overfishing or increased competition:

Coexistence and collaboration are guiding principles to avoid unnecessary overlap and effects. Governments are prioritizing spatial planning to avoid the most productive fishing areas. Fishers are encouraged to continue to participate in the land tenure process and other engagement processes to share feedback.

Contact Information:

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