

Regional Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area

Public Engagement Plan

Updated: July 2026

Contents

Regional Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area	1
Public Engagement Plan.....	1
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Context	3
1.2 Goal and Objectives	3
2. Engagement	4
2.1 Scope	4
2.2 Approach	5
2.3 Activities and Methods	5
2.4 Documentation and Reporting.....	7
2.5 Engagement Timeline.....	7
3. Confidentiality.....	8
Annex A: Key Links	9
Annex B – Meeting Minutes Template	10
Annex C – Summary of Meetings Template.....	11

1. Introduction

This document is the **Public Engagement Plan** (the Plan) for the Regional Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area (the RA). The purpose of the Plan is to provide a structured and documented approach for engaging participants during the conduct phase of the RA.

There are two engagement plans that have been developed for this RA. In addition to this Plan, IAAC has also developed an Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Plan (IEPP). Both plans are posted to the RA site on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (the Registry) here: <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/90228?&culture=en-CA>. Additional links relevant to the information provided in this Plan are provided in Appendix A.

This **Public Engagement Plan** will be posted to the RA Registry at the beginning of the conduct phase.

1.1 Context

On February 11, 2026, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced that a Regional Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area would be carried out under the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) to help inform future project-specific federal impact assessments for offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling. The RA is led by IAAC in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Department of Energy (NSDoE), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER).

A draft Terms of Reference was posted for public comment from May-June 2026. The final Terms of Reference was posted on July 8, 2026, and the RA entered the conduct phase with a timeline to completion for December 2026.

This Plan supports the public participation approach that is outlined in section 7.0 of the Terms of Reference.

1.2 Goal and Objectives

Opportunities for public participation are different for each regional assessment process and can involve different approaches depending upon the nature of the activity being assessed by the RA and the scope of the RA. The primary goal is to provide opportunities for participant involvement to ensure that a regional assessment is informed by the knowledge, values, concerns, and priorities of participants.

The objectives of the public engagement program for this RA are to:

- gather information, perspectives, and expertise relevant to the Study Area from a variety of participants;
- identify regional issues and concerns related to offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling;

- identify gaps in knowledge related to the Study Area and offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling;
- contribute knowledge related to mitigative measures for offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling; and
- ensure engagement activities are transparent, accessible, and proportionate to the scope and timeline of the RA.

The outcome of the public engagement program will help shape recommendations including possible areas for further study and considerations towards a potential exclusion regulation. Participant input will be documented and shared and will be reflected the final RA report, where appropriate.

2. Engagement

2.1 Scope

Engagement activities will focus on gathering information and perspectives relevant to the RA Study Area and offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling activities at a regional scale. This will include, but may not be limited to, engagement with the following groups:

- **Government:** National and regional federal departments, and provincial and municipal governments with responsibilities, expertise, data, programs, or regulatory interests related to the geographic scope of the RA and Nova Scotia including:
 - Oceans and marine ecosystems;
 - Fisheries;
 - Navigation and marine safety;
 - Species at risk;
 - Climate and environmental effects;
 - Energy and natural resources; and
 - Emergency preparedness and response.
- Academic institutions and researchers;
- Industry;
- Fisheries organizations and associations;
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS);
- Interested members of the public; and/or
- Other organizations with relevant expertise or information.

Early engagement activities with government departments will be initiated during the development of the Terms of Reference. Funding will be provided to participants once the conduct phase is initiated and the majority of engagement will therefore take place over the conduct phase of the RA from July to September.

2.2 Approach

The RA will use a tiered approach to engagement whereby activities will be tailored to the interests, expertise, and anticipated role of participants. This is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Approach Summary

Participant Group	Engagement Topics/Discussions
Government	Technical and mandate-specific input and regional and jurisdictional perspectives
Industry	Operational and technical knowledge as well as advances in emergency response, contingency planning and mitigation measures
Fisheries	Fisheries knowledge and observations, and considerations for fish and fish habitat
NGOs/ENGOS/other organizations	Issue-specific perspectives and information
Academia	Scientific knowledge and research findings
General Public	Values-based feedback, concerns, and input

All engagement will focus on broad regional considerations rather than project-specific issues.

A variety of methods will be offered for participants to provide feedback (refer to section 2.3), and an Issues and Comment Tracking Table will be maintained to track overall feedback and comments that will inform the RA analysis.

2.3 Activities and Methods

2.3.1 Targeted (Active) Outreach

IAAC will conduct targeted outreach via e-mail to individuals, organizations, and communities possessing knowledge, expertise, data, or perspectives relevant to the RA. Potential participants will be identified through previous engagement processes and from submissions received during the public comment period on the draft Terms of Reference.

Participants will be engaged through a variety of methods depending on preference and may include:

- in-person meetings and hybrid meetings to allow both in-person and virtual participation;
- technical discussions with subject-matter experts;
- presentations about the RA and content to initiate discussions;
- follow-up discussions; and/or
- written submissions.

Feedback from participants will be documented in meeting minutes which will (once reviewed by all attendees) be posted to the RA Registry site. A **Summary of Meetings** will also be posted to the RA

Registry site and updated monthly. The summary will include information about the date, attendees and main discussion topics.

Any presentation materials used for meetings will be posted to the RA Registry site.

2.3.2 Passive Outreach

IAAC will use a range of public outreach methods to share information about the RA including:

- general media (e.g., radio, newspaper) at a provincial scale;
- social media posts (e.g., FB, Twitter);
- News Releases of upcoming events (e.g., public comment periods, information sessions etc.); and/or
- **RA Registry site** which will be used for general RA updates and other relevant information that will be posted to the RA Registry page regularly for public access and review and may include but is not limited to:
 - Participation Plans;
 - Summary of Meetings;
 - Meeting Minutes;
 - Engagement Materials including presentations;
 - Information materials such as **Frequently Asked Questions** documents; and/or
 - Relevant Reports for information purposes.

Feedback or input from participants can be provided via the RA General e-mail which will be monitored daily. Participants can also use the Commenting Tool on the RA Registry page to provide feedback and/or input.

2.3.3 Virtual Information Sessions

Two virtual, evening information sessions will be held – one in August and one in September 2026. These sessions will be used to inform attendees about the RA progress, provide a summary of offshore oil and gas exploratory drilling and to offer a question/answer and comment period. To initiate and inform the discussion, attendees will be asked to provide early and high-level input via a short questionnaire when registering for the sessions.

The sessions will be advertised on social media and general media 2 weeks prior to the session date and will be posted on the Information Sessions tab of the RA Registry site.

The results from these sessions will be posted as a **What We Heard Summary** to the RA Registry page.

2.3.4 Public Comment Periods

Two Public Comment Periods will be held for the RA. The first will be for the draft Terms of Reference and the second will be for the draft RA Report. Both documents will be posted to the RA Registry site for

review. Outreach via general and social media will be used to inform participants of the public comment period.

Feedback and comments during public comment periods can be provided via the Commenting Tool and/or the RA General e-mail. All feedback will be documented and a **What We Heard Summary** will be posted to the Registry site following each comment period.

2.4 Documentation and Reporting

All engagement activities will be documented using standardized templates. Records may include:

- Meeting agendas;
- Meeting minutes/notes;
- Meeting Summary;
- Written submissions;
- Comment tracking tables;
- Issues Tracking Table and
- Feedback forms and questionnaires.

Engagement results will be consolidated into three main documents as noted in section 2. These are:

- **What We Heard Summaries:** These summaries will present key themes, identify major issues and concerns, and summarize information received. They will be used in relation to feedback from public comment periods.
- **Comment Tracking Tables:** These tables will be used to table all comments received during public comment periods to allow for analyses, and development of responses as require. The Comment Tables will be used to develop the **What We Heard Summaries**.
- **Issues Tracking Table:** This table will be used throughout the RA to track issues and concerns as they are raised during engagement and will be used to inform the RA analysis and RA report.

2.5 Engagement Timeline

Time Period	Engagement Activities
May-June	Public Comment Period on Draft Terms of Reference (20 days) FAQ posting
July 2026	Posting of Final Terms of Reference Conduct initial outreach Develop engagement materials FAQ posting Early meetings with participants Posting of the What We Heard Summary for Terms of Reference Public Comment Period
August 2026	Continuation of meetings and technical discussions First general virtual session FAQ posting

Time Period	Engagement Activities
September 2026	Continuation of meetings and technical discussions Second general virtual session FAQ posting Posting of What We Heard Summary from virtual sessions
October 2026	Review and analysis of engagement input
November – December 2026	Public Comment Period on Draft RA Report (30 days) Posting of Final RA Report
January 2027	Posting of the What We Heard Summary for Draft Report Public Comment Period

3. Confidentiality

The IAAC will endeavour to be as transparent as possible with the information it considers in the conduct of the RA. As such, if a participant holds information relevant to the RA that they want to share with the IAAC but wishes for that information to remain confidential, the request can be provided at the time the information is shared.

Annex A: Key Links

RA Registry site: <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/90228?culture=en-CA>

Information Sessions tab: <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/90228/session?&culture=en-CA>

RA General E-mail address: NSOffshoreDrilling-NEForageEnMer@iaac-aeic.gc.ca

Annex B – Meeting Minutes Template

REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF OIL AND GAS EXPLORATORY DRILLING IN THE CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA OFFSHORE AREA

MEETING NOTES - Participant Engagement Session

Date: XXXX

Location: XXXX

Attendees:

RA Team - XXXX

Participants:

XXXXX

Key Discussion Points	
Agenda Item/ Topic	Discussion
	-
	-
	-
Q&A	
	-
Action Items	-

Annex C – Summary of Meetings Template

Regional Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploratory Drilling in the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Area

Participant Engagement – Summary of Meetings

Last updated: XXXX

This table summarizes the meetings that the Impact Assessment Agency Regional Assessment Team and participants.

Date	Meeting Participants	High-level Summary of Main Topics Discussed