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

Frequently Asked Questions: Regional Assessment Study Area

How were the boundaries of the Study Area determined?

The boundaries of the Study Area were based on the boundaries associated with the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator's past Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) and are based on the intersection of historic petroleum licences, offshore petroleum wells, marine conservation areas, and prospective geological features.

The boundary was extended to include additional offshore regions with potential for oil and gas development off Nova Scotia and were further informed by consideration of input and suggestions from Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders, and the public during the Indigenous and public review of the Draft Terms of Reference.

Marine protected areas are included within the boundaries of the Study Area – does this mean that there will be exploratory drilling happening in those areas?

No. The inclusion of marine protected areas and other conservation areas within the Study Area does not mean exploratory drilling will occur in those locations. These areas are included to ensure that the regional assessment considers the full range of environmental conditions, and valued components that may be relevant to offshore activities.

The presence of a marine protected area within the Study Area does not change the protections and restrictions that apply to those areas under applicable legislation and management measures.

Is the Study Area the only area where oil and gas can be found?

No. The Study Area does not represent all areas where oil and gas resources may exist. It identifies the geographic area being considered for the purpose of this regional assessment based on known geological characteristics, historical exploration activity, and existing petroleum licences.

There may be other offshore areas that contain petroleum resources; however, activities proposed outside the Study Area would not be covered by this regional assessment and would be subject to the applicable assessment and regulatory requirements.

Does inclusion in the Study Area mean exploratory drilling has been approved?

No. Inclusion within the Study Area does not mean that exploratory drilling has been approved or will occur in a particular location. The regional assessment is intended to outline the potential regional effects and inform future decision-making.