

**REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OF OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATORY DRILLING
EAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Session on GIS
September 11, 2019
QUESTIONS AND ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
PARTICIPANT INPUT FORM**

Name and Affiliation: Susanna Fuller, Oceans North

1) Do you have any suggestions on available environmental datasets or other information sources that should be accessed and used in the RA, or around key data gaps?

- Canadian and Convention on Biological Diversity Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas both of which are a compilation of ecological data and expert advice. (<https://www.cbd.int/ebsa/>)
- Link to Global Fishing Watch which Canada has recently supported, so that there is relative realtime fishing and vessel information available (<https://globalfishingwatch.org>).
- Data sources should be made clear as well as contact information and date of data acquisition.
- Published information on known or anticipated impacts to individual or cumulative aspects should be available on each of the data pages.
- Consideration should be given to updating the data base on an annual basis so that the information remains current.
- As wells are drilled, the location of these should be added to the database so that cumulative impacts can be tracked over time.

2) Do you have any suggestions around the analytical capabilities that the GIS tool should include, related to the presentation and analysis of environmental data, and/or to the potential environmental effects and required mitigation?

- Given that many proponents have stated corporate policies to protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, data on protected areas including fisheries closures and in particular VME closures under NAFO and marine refuges in Canada should be made clear as areas of higher protection and higher vulnerability to industrial activity.
- Where possible biodiversity hotspots should be identified so that proponents can also made decisions on when and where exploratory drilling should be avoided.
- Analytical information should designate high risk areas including for cumulative impacts. This includes high risk in terms of impacting other economic activity in the area, both national and international fisheries activities in particular.

3) Do you have any suggestions around the nature and format of the eventual product that the Committee will develop and submit to the Minister?

- The format of this assessment is a considerable improvement over hard copies. This should serve as a template for strategic and regional assessments under the new Impact Assessment Act.
- The database should ultimately link to a large environmental database including species at risk, species distribution, and Indigenous knowledge where appropriate protocols are in place.

4) Do you have any suggestions on where the GIS platform should be housed, such that the system gets maintained and updated at regular intervals?

- Ideally there is a coordinating body, under the IAA, that works with DFO, ECCC and provincial governments where relevant as well as Indigenous governments and communities so that data is coordinated, accessible and feeds into impact assessments.

5) Do you have any other input or recommendations that you would like to provide to the Committee on this topic?

- The technical aspect of this RA, and in particular the GIS platform should be brought to discussions and practical applications for transboundary EIAs currently being discussed at the UN as part of the negotiations on the new treaty for biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. Canada should submit a side event for the IGC4 in March / April perhaps together with the IOC.

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- The GIS database should be used to establish spatial planning in the Study Area.

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