



Backgrounder

Nova Scotia Energy provided funds to the OEER Association (Offshore Energy Environmental Research) for a period of one year to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of offshore renewable energy, specifically tidal energy, in the Bay of Fundy.

The SEA is a special future-oriented environmental assessment process that takes place before specific projects are considered. It is used as a tool to:

- a) Structure the public and government debate in the preparation of policies, plans and programs;
- b) Feed this debate through a robust assessment of the environmental consequences and their interrelationships with social and economic aspects;
- c) Ensure that the results of the assessment and debate are taken into account during decision making and implementation.

The Fundy Tidal Energy SEA process included:

Development of a Stakeholder Roundtable

The Roundtable advised the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on implementation of the SEA process, review research and consultation findings, discuss key issues and questions, and provided input to the SEA Report. Members were drawn from a wide range of community, resource use, environmental, industry, government and First Nations interests.

Preparation of a Background Report for the Fundy Tidal Energy SEA

The TAG commissioned the preparation of an SEA Background Report that pulled together existing information about ocean renewable technologies and potential development scenarios and about the bio-physical and socio-economic environment in and around the Bay of Fundy. The report identified potential interactions between these development scenarios, the marine and coastal ecosystem, and resource uses and users, and particularly the fisheries. The Report was made available to the public and written submissions were invited.

Community Forums

Forums were held in August 2007, in communities around the Bay of Fundy and in HRM. The purpose was to share information about technologies and possible development scenarios and to gather issues and concerns to address through the SEA. The TAG visited the same communities for a second time in May 2008 to seek feedback on the recommendations of the Fundy Tidal Energy SEA.

Preparation of the SEA Report

Directed by the TAG, and with advice from the Stakeholder Roundtable, the Process Lead prepared the SEA Report that was submitted to Nova Scotia Energy on May 1st, 2008.

Preparation of a Community Response Report

The TAG prepared a Community Response Report that consisted of feedback received from SEA participants who attended the second round of Community Forums and those who provided written submissions in response to the SEA Report. The Community Response Report was submitted to Nova Scotia Energy on May 16th, 2008.

SEA Newsletters

The TAG kept stakeholders and other interested individuals and organizations informed about the process through *Currents*, a monthly newsletter, from July 2007 to May 2008.

The Province of Nova Scotia has made a commitment that no tidal energy project will be permitted to go in the water until the SEA Report has been reviewed by Nova Scotia Energy Minister Richard Hurlburt. Mr. Hurlburt is expected to provide a written response to the Report in June 2008.