

Short Guide: Environmental Assessment Registration for Wind Projects

Environmental Assessment for Wind Projects

Wind energy projects that generate 2 MW of energy or more require a Class I environmental assessment (EA). Early engagement with the EA Branch will allow time to address questions and provide clarity and support on minimum requirements. It is strongly recommended that you set up an EA scoping meeting early.

Class I Environmental Assessment Process



<https://novascotia.ca/nse/ea/docs/EA--ClassI--Infographic.pdf>

Minimum Requirements

To officially register a project for an EA, Registration Documents submitted for review must include the information listed in Section 9(1A) of the Environmental Assessment Regulations.

This information ensures that the reviewers have a fair understanding of the project, its purpose, the impact on the area surrounding the proposed undertaking, as well as the socio-economic implications. More information on the legislated requirements can be found in the *Guide to Preparing an EA Registration Document for Wind Power Projects in Nova Scotia* available at <https://novascotia.ca/nse/ea/docs/EA.Guide-Proponents-WindPowerProjects.pdf>

Wind Environment Baseline Studies Checklist

Environment baseline studies are essential in evaluating the impact of a project. It is expected that proponents have completed and present the results of the following environmental baseline studies as part of their environmental assessment registration document (EARD). By doing so, the risk of delays and/or redesign is lowered.

The following table is intended to be a guide and is not a comprehensive list of studies required for wind power projects. Please contact the EA Branch to set up a meeting to discuss your renewable energy project ea@gov.ns.ca.

Type of Study/Survey	Details	Completed
Noise Levels	Noise modelling that incorporates baseline noise, per Wind Guide, and mitigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shadow Flicker	Shadow flicker modelling per Wind Guide and mitigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual Impact Assessment	Visual impact assessment per Wind Guide and mitigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural and Heritage Resources	Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment (ARIA): summary of accepted Communities Culture, Tourism and Heritage report. Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study (discuss if not complete)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Engagement	Summary of public sessions and engagement and discussion of how comments/issues were addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mi'kmaq Engagement	Summary of engagement actions and discussion of how comments/issues were addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Birds	At least one year of complete bird surveys (four seasons) including radar and acoustic monitoring, with adequate coverage of the entire site. Discuss second year of bird monitoring if not complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bats	At least one full year of complete bat acoustic monitoring (spring and fall) and field habitat assessment, with adequate coverage of the entire site. Discuss second year of bat monitoring if not complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wetlands	Identification and functional assessments of wetlands that may be impacted (directly or indirectly), per Wind Guide and ECC's Wetland Policy. Discussion of how wetlands, including wetlands of special significance, will be avoided to the extent possible and mitigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flora and Fauna Species and Habitats	ACCDC data, and core and critical habitat mapping included, and supported by field survey data, including targeted field surveys for species at risk with adequate site coverage. Discussion of mitigations. Duration and seasonality per Wind Guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fish and Fish Habitat	Fish habitat assessment following Fisheries and Oceans Canada advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surface Water	Field identification of watercourses and baseline water quality data. Discussion of impacts to water quality and mitigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Groundwater	Identification of groundwater users and baseline or general description of groundwater quality, any interactions with groundwater and impacts, and mitigations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weather Conditions	Description of ecoregion and climate norms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate Change	Description of greenhouse gas emissions, mitigations, and adaptation (planning and preparation for a changing climate) within relevant sections of the assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Quality	Discussion of air emissions (e.g., dust) and mitigations. Description of any monitoring programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geology	Description of geological setting, including surficial and bedrock, and known geohazards (PAG rock, karst topography)	<input type="checkbox"/>