



**Flemish Pass Exploration Environmental  
Assessment Conditions Closure Report  
2023 Pre-Clearance Coral and Sponge Survey**

**Executive Summary**

**August 2023**

Equinor Canada Ltd (Equinor) conducted a preclearance survey program in the Flemish Pass area offshore Newfoundland and Labrador (Equinor 2023). The preclearance survey program consisted of a survey of the seabed using a remotely operated underwater vehicle to collect video and photographic images of benthic habitat to identify corals, sponges and marine enclosures at future catchment sites. All operations were conducted in accordance with Equinor's requirements and applicable regulations.

In 2016, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared to meet the requirements of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 (CEAA 2012), as the proposed drilling programs for the Project include activities designated by the Regulations Designating Physical Activities. On February 1, 2018, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change issued a decision statement concluding that, with the implementation of the applicable conditions, the designated project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects. In accordance with subsection 53(2) of CEAA 2012, the decision statement established 49 conditions relating to environmental effects referred to in subsection 5(2) of CEAA 2012, with which Equinor must comply.

The conditions are grouped according to the following themes:

- General Terms and Conditions [Conditions 2.1 – 2.12]
- Fish (including marine mammals and sea turtles) and fish habitat [Conditions 3.1 to 3.13]
- Migratory birds [Conditions 4.1 – 4.5]
- Aboriginal and commercial fisheries [Conditions 5.1 – 5.4]
- Accidents and malfunctions [Conditions 6.1 – 6.11]
- Implementation schedule [Conditions 7.1 – 7.2]
- Record keeping [Conditions 8.1 – 8.2]

The conditions cover a wide range of activities, including the development and implementation of programs, plans and procedures, stakeholder engagement, implementation of monitoring and mitigation measures, and document control. Each of the 49 conditions applies to all wells unless otherwise specified. While no exploration drilling activity was conducted within the 2023 scope of work, Equinor maintained ongoing compliance with conditions, mitigation measures and follow-up programs as applicable to the coral and sponge survey.

Condition 2.1 covers the entire program and states:

“The proponent must ensure that the measures it has taken to meet the conditions set out in this decision statement during all phases of the designated project are carefully and carefully considered, promote sustainable development, are informed by the best available information and knowledge at the time the proponent takes action; including community and indigenous traditional knowledge, is based on methods and models recognized by standards bodies, is undertaken by qualified persons and has applied the best economically and technically feasible technologies.”

Equinor has met all applicable conditions set out in the decision statement by developing and implementing compliance plans. Equinor as a company has included its own corporate policies and programs to assist in compliance and implementation of conditions, including Equinor's vision of zero harm, Equinor's values – open, collaborative, courageous and caring, execution of the combined investigation program in accordance with Equinor's management systems, development and compliance with the compliance and environmental protection monitoring plan, and ongoing engagement with regulatory departments and agencies. Indigenous groups and stakeholders.

In accordance with condition 2.8 of the Decision Statement, Equinor prepared the Closure Report of the

Conditions of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 for the 2023 Pre-Clearance Coral and Sponge Survey for submission to the Board and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency).

The close-out report documents:

- the activities undertaken by Equinor to comply with each of the conditions set out in the decision statement;
- how Equinor's actions to meet the conditions were considered carefully and carefully, promoted sustainable development, were informed by the best information and knowledge available at the time, based on methods and models recognized by standards bodies, undertaken by qualified people and applied the best economically and technically feasible technologies available;
- how Equinor considered the views and information received during the consultation on the implementation of the conditions for conditions requiring consultation;
- Results of follow-up program requirements Executive Summary Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 Conditions Close-out Report;
- any modified or additional mitigation measures implemented or proposed by Equinor for potential subsequent wells as part of the Project;

Throughout all phases of the 2023 preclearance survey program, Equinor has complied with the conditions set out in the Decision Statement, where applicable. Where consultation was a requirement of a condition set out in the decision statement, Equinor notified stakeholders and/or Indigenous groups prior to the opportunity to provide comments, provided a reasonable period of time to receive such comments, considered all views and information presented during the consultation, and responded to questions and concerns in a timely manner. Equinor has implemented communications plans for Aboriginal and commercial fisheries. Monitoring and surveillance programs were implemented to verify the accuracy of the predictions made during the environmental assessment for fish and fish habitat, including marine mammals and sea turtles, as well as migratory birds. For the 2023 pre-clearance survey a stranded bird monitoring program was conducted on board the designated vessel to verify environmental assessment predictions and the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

All waste discharges complied with the Offshore Waste Treatment Guidelines (NEB et al., 2010) and the Fisheries Act, the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 and, where applicable, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

The selection of chemicals was consistent with the Guidelines for the Selection of Offshore Chemicals for Drilling and Production Activities on Frontier Lands (NEB et al., 2009).

Equinor has complied with the conditions set out in the decision statement, if any. The predictions of environmental effects presented in the EIS remain valid and no remedial actions are proposed for subsequent wells that may be drilled as part of the project.

## References

Equinor Canada Ltd. 2023. Flemish Pass Exploration Environmental Assessment Conditions Closure Report – 2023 Pre-Clearance Coral and Sponge Survey.

NEB et al. 2009. Guidelines for the Selection of Offshore Chemicals for Drilling and Production on Federal Lands. 18 pp.  
Available from: <http://www.cnsopb.ns.ca/pdfs/chemicalguidelines.pdf>.

NEB et al. 2010. Offshore Waste Treatment Guidelines. 35 pp.  
Available from: <https://www.neb.gc.ca/bts/ctrg/gnthr/2010ffshrwstgd/index-eng.html>.