

Q&As

Core Announcement

Q: Why is this public review being launched now?

A: The public review marks the next step following receipt of the Bay du Nord Development Application and completeness review by the C-NLOER, prior to its assessment of whether the application meets applicable legislative and regulatory requirements. Public input is an important part of that process.

Q: Was there any work completed by the C-NLOER prior to receipt of the Development Plan Application?

A: Significant work was completed by C-NLOER staff prior to the Development Application submission by Equinor. This includes pre-engagement technical overview sessions, topic-specific technical sessions, subsurface workshops and early technical assessment of geoscience and engineering models. Once the proponent submitted the Development Application, C-NLOER staff completed an initial review to confirm it contained the required information.

Q: What is a Development Application?

A: A Development Application is a formal submission a company must make before a project can move forward, including the Development Plan, Benefits Plan, Concept Safety Analysis, and Socio-Economic Impact Statement. It sets out how the project will be designed, built, and operated, and must demonstrate that the project can be implemented safely, responsibly, and in compliance with the law.

Q: What is the purpose of this review?

A: The review is designed to gather input from the public on key elements of the Development Application, including the Development Plan, Benefits Plan, safety analysis, and socio-economic impacts. This input will help inform the Regulator's assessment and recommendations.

Q: Has the Bay du Nord project already been approved to proceed?

A: No. The submission of a Development Application is not the same as project approval. The role of the C-NLOER is to assess the Development Application based on evidence and determine whether it meets regulatory requirements before making a recommendation to governments. Additionally, the submission of the Development Application does not represent a commitment to proceed by the proponent.

Process & Timeline

Q: When will the public review take place?

A: The public review will run for 60 days, from June 22 to August 20, 2026.

All information sessions will be held from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. NST.

Monday, June 22 - Virtual

Tuesday, June 23 – Clarenville, NL

Wednesday, June 24 – Marystown, NL

Thursday, June 25 - Virtual

Tuesday, July 7 – Corner Brook, NL

Wednesday, July 8 – Gander, NL

Thursday, July 9 – St. John's, NL

Written submissions to the process will be accepted until August 20th, 2026.

Q: Where can I find more information as the review progresses?

A: Information about the application, review process and participation opportunities will be posted on the C-NLOER website at www.cnloer.ca. Updates will be posted throughout the review to support transparency and public awareness. Members of the public can also submit their questions through the C-NLOER website, and answers will be posted online.

Q: What happens after the public review ends?

A: After the public review concludes on August 20, the independent facilitator will provide the C-NLOER with a “What We Heard” report summarizing public input gathered through the review process. C-NLOER staff will complete their technical assessment, and a recommendation will be provided to the C-NLOER Board for a decision. If approved, the Development Plan proceeds to federal and provincial governments for final decision.

Q: When will a final decision be made?

A: Following the regulator's assessment and recommendation, approval of the Development Plan would require a Fundamental Decision from government.

Scope & Limits of Review

Q: What is the C-NLOER's role?

A: The C-NLOER's role is to independently assess the Development Application and determine whether it meets all legislative and regulatory requirements. If the Development Plan is approved by C-NLOER Board Members, it will go to the federal and provincial governments for a decision about final approval.

Q: What is the C-NLOER reviewing?

A: The C-NLOER is reviewing the Bay du Nord Development Application submitted by Equinor to assess whether it meets legislative and regulatory requirements related to safety, environmental protection, resource management and industrial benefits.

Q: What is included in the C-NLOER's assessment of the Development Application?

A: The C-NLOER will assess whether the Development Application meets legislative and requirements related to safety, environmental protection, resource management and industrial benefits.

Q: Will comments be made available to the public?

A: Yes. All written comments will be posted to the C-NLOER website.

Q: Will in-person sessions be recorded?

A: Written transcripts of each in-person and virtual session will be made available on the C-NLOER website.

Q: What is NOT part of the review?

A: The public review does not examine broader issues such as climate policy, government fiscal regimes, or decisions already made through previous regulatory processes, including the federal environmental assessment.

Benefits & Economy

Q: What is the difference between the Benefits Plan and the Benefits Agreement?

A: The Benefits Plan is a regulatory requirement - it's about ensuring fair access to jobs and opportunities, and it's reviewed and monitored by the C-NLOER. The Benefits Agreement is a commercial deal between Equinor and the provincial government - it covers financial and economic terms and is outside the regulator's role. The Benefits Agreement is posted on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's website: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/em/files/Bay-du-Nord-Benefits-Agreement-.pdf>

Q: Is the Benefits Agreement with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador part of this review?

A: No. The Benefits Agreement between the project proponents and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is separate and not part of the C-NLOER's public review.

Q: Does the C-NLOER consider royalties and/or equity options when reviewing the Benefits Plan?

A: No. There are Royalty and Equity Option agreements in place between Equinor and the provincial government. The C-NLOER is not party to those agreements.

Q: Is approval of the Benefits Plan a simple yes/no (approval of the document as is)?

A: No. The C-NLOER can apply conditions to its approval.

Q: Is the Benefits Plan a Fundamental Decision?

A: No. The Benefits plan requires approval by Regulator Members but does not require ratification by governments.

Q: What economic factors are considered?

A: The review considers the Benefits Plan and Socio-Economic Impact Statement to assess compliance with the Accord Acts.

Technical & Safety

Q: What technical areas are being assessed by the C-NLOER?

A: The C-NLOER assessment includes field development design, reservoir management, offshore safety systems, risk assessments, and overall project execution plans.

Q: How is safety addressed?

A: Safety is central to the review, including evaluation of offshore safety systems and emergency response capability.

Environmental Questions

Q: Are environmental impacts being reassessed?

A: The project has already undergone a four-year environmental assessment by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada which included public participation and Indigenous consultation. The C-NLOER and federal government departments including the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) also participated. The Minister of ECCC issued a decision statement with 137 legally binding conditions, and determined that, with the application of the conditions, the project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects. The C-NLOER is responsible for ensuring those legally binding conditions are reflected in the project and enforced.

Independence & Process Integrity

Q: What is the role of the independent facilitator?

A: The facilitator leads engagement sessions, gathers input, and prepares a summary report for the C-NLOER, ensuring the process is fair, transparent, and impartial.

Q: How do you ensure the review is unbiased?

A: The process is guided by legislated requirements under the Accord Acts, informed by public input, and supported by independent facilitation and technical analysis by C-NLOER staff.

Local Engagement

Q: The summer months are difficult for Indigenous groups and fish harvesters. How will participation be supported?

A: We've taken steps to engage early and provide flexible participation options, recognizing the realities of summer schedules. Our goal is to ensure that Indigenous groups and fish harvesters have meaningful opportunities to share their views in a way that works for them.

Follow-up & Accountability

Q: What happens if concerns are raised during the review?

A: All concerns are documented and considered during the technical assessment. The Regulator's decision will reflect whether the application meets regulatory requirements, including addressing identified issues.

Q: Can the project be rejected?

A: Yes. The C-NLOER will assess the application against legislative and regulatory requirements, and recommendations will reflect whether those requirements are met.