TIDAL ENERGY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK

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Tidal Energy Community Engagement Handbook

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Introduction and Purpose of Guide

Successfully implementing tidal-based marine renewable energy projects in Nova Scotia will largely depend on the level of community engagement. However, in most instances community and stakeholder engagement is poorly planned and underfunded. The Tidal Energy Community Engagement Handbook was developed to support community and stakeholder engagement for the Community Feed-in Tariff program and to specifically support those projects related to tidal energy development.

This handbook provides a step-by-step guide to community engagement for usage by all stakeholders involved in tidal power development including municipal, provincial, industry and academic interests.

TIDAL ENERGY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Tidal energy research and development is not a recent phenomenon in Nova Scotia given its world-class tidal ranges in the Bay of Fundy. As early as 1607, a mill was powered by tidal energy in Port Royal, Nova Scotia. In 1915, Acadia University engineering professor, Ralph Clarkson, proposed a tidal energy project at Cape Split. While this project never materialized, tidal energy research and development continued and in 1984, the Annapolis Tidal Station opened in Annapolis Royal. This tidal barrage is only one of three tidal barrage stations in the world.

More recently, the Province of Nova Scotia has explored both large and small-scale tidal energy development. Its FORCE (Fundy Ocean Research Centre for Energy) site in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, is Canada's leading research centre for in-stream tidal energy. The introduction of its Community Feed-in Tariff program has initiated proposals to develop small-scale community-based tidal energy projects.

As tidal energy development becomes more prevalent in Nova Scotia, it will be necessary to engage the many stakeholders who might be impacted by its development. Engaging these stakeholders in discussions early in the process is critical to developing the social license fundamental to overall public acceptance of this renewable energy. The Tidal Energy Community Engagement Handbook provides a tool for building stakeholder acceptance of tidal energy development in Nova Scotia.

COMFIT: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED TIDAL ENERGY

WHAT IS COMFIT?

The Community Feed-in Tariff (COMFIT) is part of Nova Scotia's Renewable Electricity Plan, which sets out a detailed program to move Nova Scotia away from an electricity system dominated by imported coal to one that is based on sources that are greener and closer to home. It promotes local economic development, energy security and diversity, and cleaner energy production.

COMFIT provides an opportunity for small-scale power producers to receive an established price per kilowatt hour (kWh) for projects producing electricity from qualifying renewable resources. It is intended to encourage and support the development of renewable electricity projects by community-based groups such as municipalities, First Nations, cooperatives, universities, community economic development funds (CEDIFS) and not-for-profit groups, and is expected to add 100 megawatts of renewable electricity to the province's electricity production capacity. COMFIT requires 25 community-based investors. See Appendix B for the complete checklist of eligible COMFIT investors.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS UNDER COMFIT

Community engagement requirements under the COMFIT program are limited and require only two community engagement sessions. This can include a public meeting where stakeholders are made aware of a tidal energy project and have the opportunity to voice their concerns or it could be a municipal council meeting where community stakeholders have an opportunity to register their concerns. In either case, it is important that the information sessions are promoted broadly to the community and that a record of the meetings including documentation of the minutes is kept. The COMFIT program stakeholder engagement requirements are currently under review. Until these policies have been set, you should contact your COMFIT administrator. Nevertheless, we recommend going above and beyond the minimum requirements, if possible.

While two community engagement sessions is the minimal requirement under the COMFIT program, it is highly recommended that an overall engagement strategy is developed and that financial and human resources are secured to support a more comprehensive approach to engaging stakeholders.

PREPARING FOR ENGAGEMENT

There is an acute need at this time to engage communities directly targeted for tidal power developments in Nova Scotia to ensure that the objectives and timelines set out in the Nova Scotia Marine Renewable Energy Strategy are achieved. Failure to engage these communities effectively may lead to a loss of social license and resistance to development and ultimately the termination of project activities. Effective community engagement and communications are key components of ensuring the acceptance of tidal power developments in the Province, both small and large-scale.

Preparing for engagement requires an honest assessment of the resources available to develop an engagement strategy. The level of resources, both human and financial, will largely determine the scale and scope of the engagement strategy.

DEFINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a process that determines the local priorities of a broad range of community stakeholders. For community-based projects, local citizens, businesses and government need to be at the center of the engagement process in order to determine local priorities.

New ideas, new relationships and new ways of approaching community issues can be realized through effective engagement strategies. Community assets can be identified and capacity strengthened that can support tidal project development. But this will only occur with a thoughtfully developed engagement strategy.

Effective community engagement should be ongoing throughout the duration of a project. In the case of tidal energy development, it will be necessary to engage stakeholders at all project phases, including pre-deployment, deployment, operation and maintenance and decommissioning of the tidal energy device.

DEFINING COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER

Identifying community stakeholders, seeking methods for meaningful engagement and working to understand their values and perspectives are what is good community and stakeholder engagement.

A stakeholder can be defined as any person, group or organization that has a stake in a tidal energy development project and who can affect or be affected by the actions taking place prior, during or after the development, and also affect or be affected by the objectives and policies involved. At the initial stages of a tidal energy development, the stakeholder body might typically include owners (shareholders), developers, suppliers, employees, the three levels of government, unions and individuals and communities located in the vicinity. When the array is fully operational, creditors and energy end-users could be included as well.

THE CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Many frameworks exist to support community engagement. The framework supporting this handbook—The Continuum of Community Engagement—focuses on three levels of engagement that include: Information Sharing, Consultation and Involvement. Moving along the continuum, increased levels of community participation are required.

CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
Information Sharing	**Consultation**	**Involvement**
To educate and inform community stakeholders	To seek feedback, develop solutions, test ideas	To share and involve in decision-making
One way relationship →	Two way relationship → ←	Dynamic relationship ← →
Increasing level of influence and decision making →		

Adapted from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (www.oecd.org).

Key principles in the framework are outlined below:

Information sharing: in this stage information is shared with community stakeholders in order to build awareness of issues that may impact the community. In the case of tidal energy development, this might take the form of a public information session.

Consultation: in this stage community stakeholder input is sought on issues that impact them. In the case of tidal energy development, for example, it might be necessary to consult with local users of the marine resource to identify areas most suitable for tidal energy extraction.

Involvement: in this stage community stakeholders are directly involved in shared decision-making. In the case of tidal energy development, this might involve collaborative decision-making regarding whether or not to proceed with tidal energy development.

THE HANDBOOK

The handbook provides a series of steps to guide the development of your community engagement planning. These steps include the following:

1. Setting the Stage for Community Development

2. Developing the Community Engagement Plan

3. Implementing the Engagement Plan

The checklists and appendices provide templates that provide direct support for development of an engagement plan. These tools can be modified to suit the needs of your planning strategy. In using these tools / templates, please remember that community and stakeholder engagement cannot be approached in cookie-cutter fashion. A great deal of effort and planning should go into each step of the engagement process. The checklists and templates in this handbook provide a method for organizing and recording your community engagement planning.

STAGE 1:

Setting the Stage for Community Involvement

ESTABLISHING THE ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TEAM, FUNDING AND TIMEFRAME

Conducting and funding community engagement is ultimately the responsibility of the project proponent. However, proponents can and often should draw upon the expertise and advice of engagement professionals and community leaders to design and manage the engagement process.

Prior to engagement, consider the following:

1. Assess your company's in-house capabilities for conducting engagement, including staff expertise and experience and financial resources.

2. Set aside a dedicated pool of funding for engagement purposes and identify if there are any imposed time constraints, either regulatory or other, for the completion of parts or all of the engagement process. The amount of funding needed will depend on the nature of the community and engagement needs and the amount of in-house expertise available to devote to the process. Project funds and timeframe will drive what can be expected and provided. Constraints on funding and time need to be made clear up front. There is no point in planning for or starting a complicated and comprehensive process if there isn't the funding or time to accomplish it.

   Explore funding options for community engagement. Provincial, regional and local governments may have financial resources that local community groups may apply for to support engagement. The developer may also have funds to support involvement by local groups.

3. Assign a Community Engagement Coordinator and team to plan and manage the engagement process. While this task can be carried out by in-house company staff, it may be worth investing in the services of an independent professional engagement coordinator/facilitator. Doing engagement well can be time-consuming and require background research and a well thought-out strategy. Thus, it is important that this task be carried out by an individual or team with practical skills and experience in community engagement and the necessary time and resources available to devote to planning and implementation. In addition to bringing skills and experience, an independent professional coordinator also brings an air of objectivity, purpose and legitimacy to the process.

4. Consider establishing a stakeholder engagement planning advisory committee led by the Engagement Coordinator (see below).

5. Start the engagement planning process early in your project planning. Effective community engagement should occur early and often throughout the project development process. At the very least, COMFIT administrators will want to see that your community engagement was timed BEFORE any final decisions are made to allow community concerns and input to be considered in your project design.

SEEKING THE ADVICE OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEADERS

REGULATORS

One of the first contacts you should make is with the Department of Energy's COMFIT administrator. You will also need to contact other municipal, provincial and federal regulatory authorities who may require or request public consultation in relation to this project as part of federal or provincial environmental assessment processes or municipal bylaws. The purpose of this is to establish from the outset the minimum requirements to meet each of the regulatory authority's needs and expectations. Instead of holding separate consultations for each regulatory purpose, this may allow you to coordinate and meet all your regulatory consultation requirements through one process.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Next, you will want to meet with regional community leaders, including government officials, such as town and municipal councillors and planners, provincial and federal regional officials, and other community and interest group leaders. Introductory meetings with local leaders should take place before you begin any public communication or engagement about your project.

Community leaders are valuable resources and early engagement of community leaders is important for gathering information and gaining influential support.

1. Develop an initial list of community leaders (mayors, councillors, MLAs, MPs, etc.) and their contact information. Ask those on the initial list for suggestions of other community leaders who should also be consulted early on.
2. Meet with the local leaders. Initial meetings should be in-person, if possible. The best policy for working with community leaders is to make early and regular contact and be open and transparent in your communications. Community leaders serve as a communication link between project planners and the broader community. As a resident and elected or appointed official in a community, they are likely to be questioned by community members about your project and you will want them to be well-informed and able to answer questions accurately, effectively and with a supportive tenor. Community leaders should also be asked for background on the community and advice on how best to inform, engage with and gain support from different groups.
3. Once all these contacts are made you should ensure they are included on your priority list for receiving communications about your project and that they are kept up to date.

CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Consulting with community leaders may take the form of meetings with individuals or by establishing a stakeholder engagement planning advisory committee consisting of the Coordinator, provincial, municipal and local officials and/or other community leaders. Bringing together the key players into a single committee may be an efficient way to gain the perspectives and advice of different stakeholder groups and regulators. The role of the advisory committee will be to lead the design and evaluation of the engagement process and to meet periodically during the process to provide advice on changes to the engagement process.

Deciding if such a committee is warranted and who will serve on it will depend on the community's socio-cultural and political composition and the level of concern or diversity among stakeholders. At minimum, it should involve the Engagement Coordinator, a project manager and representatives of key governing bodies.

Once established, the first task of the committee is to develop a Terms of Reference (ToR). This should include:

- A vision/mission and objectives for the committee;
- Rules/procedures;
- Roles and responsibilities of the members;
- Workplan, including timelines and outcomes;
- Budget for the committee; and
- Frequency of meetings.

The ToR should be developed and approved by the committee members. This will ensure everyone is clear on the roles and responsibilities of each member involved as well as the committee as a whole.

Key Steps Checklist: Establishing the Engagement Planning Team

- ✓ Identify and allocate an appropriate budget and adequate timeframe for meaningful engagement.
- ✓ Assign a Community Engagement Coordinator and team to plan and manage the engagement process.
- ✓ Seek advice from local leaders.
- ✓ Consider establishing a community engagement planning advisory committee.
- ✓ Start the engagement planning process early in your project planning.

DEFINE THE COMMUNITY, RISK AND ISSUES

DEFINE THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY

To be effective, you first need to gather information about the community so you can select the most appropriate outreach and engagement tools. A well-designed engagement plan requires a good understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the area where the tidal project is proposed. Please note that while the project may be described as community-scale, the 'affected community' may extend well beyond the geographic community in which the project is based. The 'affected community' should be considered any individual or group that may be affected by or has an interest, positive or negative, in the outcomes of the project. This might also include those stakeholders involved in the local or regional supply chain, and research and development associated with the project.

Given the interconnected nature of marine environments, tidal energy development may have regional scale environmental and economic effects. Moreover, some users of the marine site in which the project will be located may be based out of other areas, such as fishers, recreational users and tourism operators.

Much of this information will already be known by your project and engagement planning teams, especially that regarding the local community. The key will be to establish a robust process for compiling and analyzing the information in a way that will inform the design of the engagement plan, and identify key stakeholders, opportunities and potential areas of concern, opposition and risk.

One method is to conduct a social baseline study. This involves exploring the political, economic and environmental context. Some of the key aspects to understand include:

1. The political, economic, social, and environmental context, including:
   - Community demographics (age, income distribution, social and ethnic diversity, education etc.), geographic distribution and employment status.
   - How is the project area used and valued (e.g. fishing, recreation, forestry, mineral extraction, Mi'kmaq traditional harvesting)?
   - Political and social values.
   - Environmental and economic issues and concerns (e.g. water and land issues, recreational uses, wildlife/biodiversity).
2. Community awareness and opinions regarding community-scale energy, renewable energy, tidal energy and the specific project.
3. History of your company and its representatives (staff, board) in the area (good and bad).
4. History of other development projects in the area (responses to other proposals, impressions towards other developers).

The outcome of this research should be a detailed community profile that can be referred to and updated as required to help you assess your engagement activities and make plans based on a solid understanding of your audience and possible issues that will affect your project.

IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE THE TARGET AUDIENCES FOR ENGAGEMENT

A stakeholder can be defined as any person, group or organization that has a stake in the tidal energy development and who can affect or be affected by any actions or decisions taking place prior, during or after the development.

Identifying the targets for engagement may be a challenge; however, it is important to include as many members of the 'affected community' as possible to avoid excluding individuals or groups that may be crucial to the process. Experience from wind energy development demonstrates that not addressing stakeholder issues, especially at the local level, can cause delays or cancellations in the overall development.

It is important to be thorough in identifying target audiences to ensure inclusive, credible and equitable representation in community engagement processes.

To start, list all potential stakeholders you are aware of. Some of the key targets will have already been identified and contacted (see above). Others will have been identified through the community profiling. In order to further expand the list, always ask your contacts 'who else should we talk to?' As the engagement process progresses, the list will continue to grow. At this stage, the goal is to develop as comprehensive a stakeholder list as possible. It is better to veer towards inclusivity, particularly during the early stages, than to risk excluding a potentially important group or individual.

The following questions aid in identifying stakeholders:

- Who is investing in the development?
- Who will the development affect, either positively or negatively?
- How and by whom is the project area used?
- What changes will the development bring and who will likely support or oppose such changes?
- What are the official leadership positions in the community and who is in these positions?
- Who is influential in the local community (formal or informal leaders)?
- What local, provincial or national environmental, social or trade organizations or other interest groups have a presence in the project area and/or may have interest in the project?
- What are the existing compatible or competing (if any) businesses or developments in the area, such as shipping, harbours, other renewable energy or eco-tourism companies?
- Are there any individuals or groups that have been involved in or outspoken on development projects in the past?
- Who are the local policy makers?
- Who are the representatives of the local / regional research community?
- Who else should or may want to be involved?

While the level and type of engagement may be different between types of stakeholders, it is important to be open and inclusive so that all members of the 'affected community' have adequate opportunity to participate. Be sure to include opportunities for both those directly affected by and those who just have an interest in the project or affected area. The latter often have a strong influence on public opinion and social licence. It is also worth making extra effort to engage the 'hard to reach' and 'too busy to participate' members of the community whose concerns, interests and input might otherwise be marginalized or overlooked. Otherwise you risk encountering delays or opposition down the road, which could have been mitigated if everyone had expressed their views earlier on.

DEFINE THE KEY ISSUES, CONCERNS, BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Once the different stakeholder groups have been identified, it is useful to prepare a profile of each to define their attributes and potential positions and issues/concerns. This will help identify risks and opportunities that each stakeholder type might pose to the feasibility of the project and determine the approaches and level of engagement best suited to each. It will also help identify potential barriers to participation in engagement activities (e.g. time availability, reluctance due to past experiences).

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL COMFIT PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS		
Community Leaders & Decision-makers	**Groups**	**Individual Stakeholders**
First Nations COMFIT administrator Municipal & town officials / council members Relevant municipal, provincial & federal staff Local MPs & MPPs Regional development agencies Community leaders Nova Scotia Power	Special interest groups with a presence or interest in the affected area • Ecology Action Centre • Nova Scotia Nature Trust • Nature Conservancy of Canada • Naturalist societies • Watershed associations • Other environmental groups • Community service groups • Fisheries, tourism & trade associations • Other community / user groups • Land/homeowners associations Local business development boards/chamber of commerce Community development associations	Individual community members & interested parties • Town/village-wide • County/municipality-wide • Watershed (system)-wide • Regional/provincial R&D Partners / Investors Affected landowners Individual recreational users • Fishers • Boaters, surfers, kayakers • Hikers • Bird & whale watchers Environmental experts / researchers (e.g. university professors) Port / harbour authorities Competing or compatible businesses & developments with a stake in the affected area • Shipping • Aquaculture • Mineral extraction • Manufacturing / engineering • Other renewable energy operators Local eco-tourism operators • Whale watching • Hiking, camping • Boating, canoeing, kayaking

Checklist of key attributes to consider:

- Demographic profile (age, income distribution, social and ethnic diversity, education, employment status).
- Potential concerns or issues from the project (environmental, social, economic).
- If and how they will be affected by the project.
- Likely pre-engagement attitudes / views: support, opposition or neutral.
- Awareness of community-scale energy, renewable energy, tidal energy and the specific project.
- History with your company and its representatives (staff, board) in the area (good and bad).
- History with other development projects in the area (responses to other proposals, impressions towards other developers).
- Existing relationships / conflicts with other groups, government agencies and marine users in the affected area, e.g. land-use conflicts, trust of governments.
- Level of influence they may potentially have on a project (ability to affect decision-making).
- Potential for alignment of interests with the proposed development (i.e. do they share any goals with and how willing are they to participate in the project?).

Key Steps Checklist: Defining the Community, Risk and Issues

- ✓ Define the affected community and develop a community profile.
- ✓ Identify and classify the stakeholders.
- ✓ Identify potential issues of concern to stakeholders and barriers and opportunities for engagement.

STAGE 2:
Developing the Community Engagement Plan

Whether you choose a simple consultation process or a multi-faceted approach, it is highly recommended that you create a detailed Community Engagement Plan, which can be used to maintain focus and track progress. Your community engagement plan should not be static. As the process progresses, it should be regularly reviewed and refined, as needed, based on community feedback and other performance evaluation measures.

(See Appendix C for Community Engagement Plan Template)

A successful community engagement plan includes:

- Clearly stated objectives and scope/boundaries of the engagement process;
- Background information on the community (community profile) and list of target audiences;
- Potential opportunities and challenges for engagement;
- Environmental, economic and social issues you anticipate will be raised by the community / different target audiences;
- Budget and timeframe for the engagement process;
- Approaches to engagement, including level of engagement and tools/techniques you will be using;
- Roles and responsibilities of those involved;
- Breakdown of schedule, budget, personnel, logistics and other resources for each task and activity; and
- Feedback and performance evaluation plan.

SETTING THE SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF ENGAGEMENT

Before commencing the design of the engagement plan, it is important to give careful thought to setting out clear and realistic boundaries and objectives for the engagement process. If the scope/boundaries and objectives are vague or unclear, you will have difficulty designing an effective strategy or measuring outcomes. Moreover, lack of clarity or communication of the objectives can lead to frustration from community stakeholders.

Overall "engagement objectives" need to be set to determine the main outcomes to be achieved. Objectives also need to be set for each level of community engagement selected and evaluated to ensure they are being met. Remember, it is always better to under promise and over deliver than over promise and under deliver.

To begin, your engagement team should ask yourselves the questions:

- Why is the engagement being conducted?
  - To meet minimum regulatory/COMFIT requirements.
  - To build broader developer-community ties and partnerships.
- What do you want to get out of it (outcomes)?
  - To share information about the project.
  - To find out about community needs or concerns.
  - To get community or regulatory approval to move the project forward.
  - To resolve contentious issues or to involve stakeholders in designing or making decisions about the project.
  - To develop partnerships or opportunities to involve stakeholders in the project.
- What specific information are you seeking from the community and will this information add value to decision-making?
- What decision(s), if any, is to be made based on the outcome of the process, how and by whom?
  - What has been decided and what is open to influence?
  - What level of decision-making influence or authority do you want to delegate to stakeholders regarding the project?
- What may other partners or parties of interest want or expect to get out of it? Are they compatible?
- Are there any funding or time constraints? Funds and time available for a project will drive what can be expected and provided. Constraints on funding and time need to be made clear up front. There is no point in promising, planning for or starting a complicated and comprehensive process if there isn't the funding or time to accomplish it.

Based on the answers, your team can develop a statement of objectives that clearly articulates the purpose, expectations and objective(s) of the engagement process. It is important for the statement of objectives to be simple, straightforward and understandable to all potential stakeholders. The statement can include a list of one or more objectives, as needed.

An objective needs to be:

- Specific and able to describe an action;
- Measurable;
- Achievable and accessible;
- Realistic, recorded and referred to during the process; and
- Time bound.

Before finalizing, you should solicit opinions from project managers, regulatory bodies and community leaders and refine the statement, as needed.

The final statement will need to be approved by your project managers or Board.

Key Steps Checklist: Setting the Scope and Objectives of Engagement

- ✓ Use the questions to identify the purpose and expectations of the engagement process.
- ✓ Set boundaries to foster realistic expectations. Consider legislation, geographic boundaries, time limitations and budget.
- ✓ Draft a clear straightforward statement of objectives.
- ✓ Meet with decision-makers and community leaders to gain their perspective on the purpose and expectations of engagement.
- ✓ Refine the objectives to what can be accepted by the majority of stakeholders.

SELECT THE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The selection of the level of community engagement will be driven by your objectives, and the needs and expectations of your company and the community.

The minimum level of engagement required for COMFIT projects by the Department of Energy is currently under review. Until these policies have been set, you should contact your COMFIT administrator. Nevertheless, we recommend going above and beyond the minimum requirements, if possible.

Drawing on the Continuum of Community Engagement, you will decide the level of engagement that will meet the needs of the community in relation to the project. The level of engagement may vary with each stakeholder group or type within the 'affected community' and at different stages in the engagement process.

In general, the more complex the project and community and the higher the community interest and expectations, the more participative and interactive the engagement should be. However, there are situations in which higher levels of community engagement are not recommended.

- **When your objective is not to involve the community in project design or decision-making.** Higher levels of engagement come with a higher commitment of time and effort on the part of the community members. In turn, participants have higher expectations that their participation will influence project design and decision-making. Thus, it is important to choose a level of engagement that is suited to the level of influence you expect to give to the community. It is better to offer a lower level of engagement (e.g. information sharing or consultation) than to mislead and waste the time of the community.

- **When all the key decisions have already been made. Be honest with the community about the purpose of the engagement.** If all the important decisions have already been made and nothing will be changed, it is too late for a genuinely participative process. This will only frustrate stakeholders, lead to antagonism and mistrust, and damage the credibility of future engagement efforts.

- **When there is not enough time or money.** Highly participatory and complicated community engagement processes often require long term commitment of time, energy and money to prepare and run. Sometimes there may be unavoidably tight timeframes that may limit the time available for engagement. If a process feels rushed, people are likely to feel their participation is undervalued and their contributions not taken seriously. It is better to do consultation well and start with lower expectations than to do more participative processes poorly or have to stop mid-way because time or money has run out.

Use the following table to help in identifying the appropriate level of engagement.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT			
Factor	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
Degree of Complexity • There are many different stakeholders with many different issues and concerns. • The project is complex or multi-staged. • The relationships among stakeholders are non-existent, poor or deteriorating.			
Degree of potential community concern / interest • There is a high level of unfavourable and / or contrasting perceptions and feelings toward the project among stakeholder groups. • There is a high degree of community uncertainty around how important issues will be resolved. • There is a likelihood of conflict in the future if the current community concerns and issues are not properly addressed. • The factual information currently circulating from different sources is contradictory or contested.			
Community interest / expectations to influence the project			
Ability for community to influence project design or decision-making			
Compatibility of high community involvement with statement of objectives			
Time and budget availability for community engagement			

In general, the more **Mediums** and **Highs** you check, the further along the engagement continuum your process should be.

Take the time to consider the Continuum in terms of what is most appropriate and feasible given your objectives and limitations. It is highly recommended that you seek the advice of and negotiate with the COMFIT administrator and community leaders to identify a mutually agreeable level of engagement to meet the needs of you and the community.

SELECT SUITABLE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Selecting the right tools and techniques to engage the community is an essential step for a successful engagement process. A community engagement technique is what is used to facilitate engagement or interaction with the community, such as a workshop, questionnaire, or a public forum. The techniques used will depend of the objectives and level of engagement chosen and the attributes of the target audiences. Typically, engagement plans will use multiple techniques to allow participation of different target audiences. Some engagement processes involve no more than one or two public meetings; others last much longer and involve sequences of information sharing and consultation events and several participatory processes. There are advantages and disadvantages to each technique. Given the tightknit and informed nature of tidal COMFIT communities in Nova Scotia and the number of earlier consultation efforts, there may be strong interest and benefit in trying the more participatory methods.

It is highly recommended that you seek the advice of the COMFIT administrator, community leaders and a community engagement expert or experienced facilitator to identify the most appropriate and feasible engagement techniques for the community.

EXAMPLES OF ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES		
Information Sharing	**Consultation**	**Involvement**
Printed materials (Fact Sheets, reports, briefing notes)	Public comment	Advisory committees
Displays	Focus groups	Deliberative dialogue
Web sites	Surveys	Consensus-building
Open houses	Public meetings	Participatory decision-making
One-on-one briefings	Interviews	Citizen juries
	Workshop	Delegated decision-making
	Field trips	
	Deliberate polling	

See Appendix E for details on some of the more common engagement techniques.

INFORMATION SHARING TECHNIQUES

Information sharing is a part of all engagement processes. It is essential for people to have timely, accurate and meaningful information about developments. Information sharing requires transparency and full disclosure of information relevant to the project to inform all stakeholders (see *Communications Strategy*). These techniques are often used to compliment or set the stage for more participatory consultation or engagement methods. Please remember: Information sharing is only a one-way process and by itself is NOT considered REAL engagement. Engagement requires the opportunity for the public to provide meaningful input towards planning and decision-making. Thus, information sharing should only ever be used in conjunction with Consultation or Involvement level techniques.

Examples include:

A project website: A website is an effective way to provide information on the tidal energy project and post updates, announcements and important documents. It can also be used as a way for the public to contact you with comments and question.

Open houses: An open house is an effective way to present information to the public. Careful consideration should be put into promoting this event and ensuring that it is held at a time of day accessible to most people and at a time that does not conflict with other major community events or stakeholder commitments. Examples would include stakeholders involved in seasonal activities such as the commercial fishery. A drawback to this method is that it is impossible to predict turnout, despite the amount of effort put into promotion.

Fact Sheets: Stakeholders will have many questions about tidal energy development. Many of these questions can be addressed by developing Fact Sheets to address the most common issues raised by stakeholders.

CONSULTATION TECHNIQUES

To be considered engagement, your process should at least use a consultation level technique. Stakeholders will expect to be consulted and have their voices and concerns heard and reflected back to them. Experienced facilitators should be used to lead group discussions. While structure and focus is important, be careful not to create processes that can be seen as too agenda driven. Make sure stakeholders feel they have the opportunity to identify the issues they would like to address.

Focus groups: The purpose is to collect in-depth information from a representative group of the community of interest. A facilitator will lead the group and keep them focused on the topic. The main advantage of this method is you can collect information from thorough discussion among a group 10-15 interacting people. This interaction often results in new ideas and strategies to address local issues of concern. However, it is best if this is combined with other methods to allow input from the broader public.

Surveys: Surveys can be costly but effective in gathering information from a range of stakeholders. Care must be taken in developing surveys and response categories must offer a full range of options.

Public meetings: This is the method used most frequently. Public meetings can be effective in enabling a wide range of views to be aired, questions asked and answers given. However, public meetings tend to deter many less vocal stakeholders from participating in discussion. Overall, public meetings are not an effective method for allowing interaction and discussion among stakeholders and the exploration of ideas and solutions to problems.

Workshops: Different than a focus group, the goal is problem-solving rather than information collection. A venue for a small number of invited participants selected for their knowledge and expertise. Workshops can include community mapping, asset mapping of local resources (including people and places), and other engaging techniques. It is a useful device for developing a better understanding of issues and problems, assessing potential solutions and building consensus. While it is not necessarily a forum for making decisions, a workshop can provide insights for consensus that you can apply in future activities.

INVOLVEMENT (PARTICIPATORY) TECHNIQUES

Given the more complex and interactive nature of these techniques, it is recommended that you engage an independent coordinator experienced with the chosen technique, and conflict resolution. Make sure committees, stakeholder groups and workshops are representative of the range of stakeholders and interests in the affected community as a whole.

Deliberative Polling: In this method, representative stakeholder groups are chosen to deliberate on issues relevant to the topic. Through a series of smaller group discussions and plenary discussions, consensus is developed around key issues and decisions and then shared with the public.

Stakeholder advisory committees, consensus-building or other stakeholder participatory decision-making process: Stakeholders work in partnership to develop alternative solutions to problems and work toward collectively preferred options. In the case of tidal energy development, this could imply working with stakeholders to choose the most preferred site location(s) for that development. These methods have proven very effective as they give ownership of decisions to stakeholders, but are not commonly used in Atlantic Canada.

PLANNING THE CHOSEN TECHNIQUES

Once the technique(s) have been selected, the next step in engagement planning is to assign roles and responsibilities for tasks and work out a timeline, budget, list of required personnel and resources, and other logistical needs for each activity and event.

Once that is set, you should begin investigating potential event venues/locations and times, advertising and media options and other communications needs.

ACTIVITY PLANNING BREAKDOWN TABLE

Technique	Targeted Stakeholders	Significant Dates	Responsibilities	Communication Logistics	Activity/ Event Logistics	Resources Required
e.g. public meeting	e.g. Town of Digby residents	Planning deadlines: Comment period deadlines: Date / time of event(s): Other dates:	Who does what? Activity Lead: Planning team members: Partners: Others:	e.g. notices, materials, media – when, who, where	when, where, # of people, speakers etc.	Budget: Equipment: Staffing: Others:

Template available in Appendix F

PLANNING TO MAXIMIZE PARTICIPATION

Regardless of the technique(s) you choose, from the earliest stages of your communication and engagement activities you should make every effort to ensure that all members of the community have a realistic opportunity to be informed, attend events and provide input about your project.

- Ensure all engagement activities and opportunities are advertised well in advance.
- All in-person engagement activities should include opportunities for discussion and dialogue. It is important to remember that engagement goes in both directions.
- Carefully consider those stakeholders that are hard to reach, have special needs or may have difficulty participating (e.g. too busy to participate) and make extra effort to include them in the process.
- Events should be scheduled at times and locations convenient to the various target audiences. This may require that events be held at multiple times and locations to facilitate the participation of different segments of the community. Consider when people are likely to be away or too busy to participate (e.g. seasonal activities and industries, holidays, daily work schedules), transportation limitations and accessibility and distance of venue locations.
- Provide both in-person (verbal) and written options for providing input. Different people have different preferences.

OVERCOMING CONSULTATION FATIGUE

- Try to coordinate and consolidate your engagement activities with other related engagement processes or activities that are expected to take place within your timeframe, if possible. For example, it may be possible to develop engagement activities at local events such as pancake breakfasts and community fairs.
- Do not overdo it. Base the scope of your activities on what is necessary to achieve your objectives.
- Build on previous related consultation or engagement activities. Do not repeat what has already been done.
- Make sure people feel their time is well spent. Make sure that any activity you do feels productive and results in tangible outcomes.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A key to a successful engagement plan is to decide where and how you plan to reach community members with information and notices about your project and events. Commonly used options include:

- Word of mouth;
- Social media: Blogs, Facebook, Website, Twitter;
- Public notices in local / regional newspapers, newsletters or radio or television stations;

- Press releases and media advisories;
- Media interviews/stories;
- Posters and bulletins posted in strategic places in the community (e.g. post office, library, local businesses);
- Displays at local events, community centres or shopping centres;
- Printed materials such as factsheets, reports or briefing papers made available at various locations (e.g. company office, municipal/town halls, internet, libraries, etc.); and
- Emails, regular mail, conversations, presentations and telephone calls directed at specific groups or individuals.

Careful consideration must be given to selecting the most cost-effective option or options for reaching the most members of the community. Please remember that what may be appropriate for one community or type of target audience, may not be for another. For example, do not assume everyone reads the local newspaper, listens to the local radio station, will see notices at the public library or post office, or has access to the internet. Thus, it is recommended that you provide multiple channels to access information.

FEEDBACK AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

It is good practice to develop a mechanism for evaluating the performance of your engagement activities and overall plan and ensure the engagement objectives have been met and achieved their purpose. Performance evaluation should be carried out throughout the engagement process to allow for continuous refinement and improvement of the process and outcomes. Start by selecting the indicators or measures you will use to assess performance against your stated engagement objectives. These can be a combination of quantitative and/or qualitative measures and should include measures of both the "process" and the "outcomes" of the engagement. Then select the methods you will use to collect and assess the data.

One important source of performance data is stakeholder / participant feedback. Always provide mechanisms (e.g. comment forms) for participants to provide feedback on how they felt about particular engagement activities / techniques. It is also useful to regularly check in with your key stakeholder and community leader contacts to see how they feel the process is going.

Feedback collection mechanisms may include:

- Distributing evaluation forms during events;
- Conducting telephone interviews with a random sample of stakeholders during and after the process; and
- Convening evaluation/summary meetings with the project team, decision makers and key stakeholders.

Sample Evaluation Questions for Stakeholders

- How did the community engagement activity or overall process meet your expectations? Were you satisfied with the final outcomes?
- Was the information provided during the community engagement accessible, understandable and delivered in a timely fashion?

- What other engagement activities would you suggest?
- Were the opportunities to participate in the community engagement activity / overall process sufficient?
- Do you have any suggestions about what we could have done differently, better or more of?
- What activities did you find the most effective?
- What did you find the least effective?
- Were you satisfied with how the results of the engagement activity / process were interpreted, applied and reported?

Sample Evaluation Questions for the Engagement Team

- Did attendance at public events or responses to requests for input meet your expectations?
- Have any criticisms about specific activities or the overall process been received? How many and from whom?
- Were you successful at engaging all the identified stakeholders?
- How do you know that the community engagement objectives have been met?
- What changes to the project have resulted due to the community engagement and why?
- What was learned from the process?

You should have a system in place to regularly and publicly report the engagement performance, the value created for the project as a result of it, and any commitments to next steps for continuous improvement (see *Following-Up with Stakeholders*)

Key Steps Checklist: Selecting, Planning and Evaluating Your Community Engagement Level and Techniques

✓ Use the Community Engagement Assessment Table as appropriate to your situational needs.

✓ Seek advice from the COMFIT administrator, community leaders and an experienced community engagement facilitator to identify the community engagement level and techniques that best suit the needs of your company and the majority of stakeholders.

✓ Select the appropriate level of engagement to meet the stated objectives and the needs of stakeholders.

✓ Select a combination of specific techniques that best match your objectives and the qualities of your stakeholders / participants.

✓ Prepare a plan outlining the needs and logistics for each technique / activity.

✓ Prepare a Communications Strategy.

✓ Develop a feedback and performance evaluation plan.

STAGE 3:
Implementing the Engagement Plan

This stage will involve:

- Guiding the engagement team through each task in the Plan to meet agreed deadlines;
- Preparing and delivering informational materials and engagement activities;
- Monitoring activities and emerging issues and developing responses;
- Making any necessary adjustments to the Plan and schedules; and
- Maintaining open communication with the project team, decision makers, media and stakeholders.

PREPARING INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS AND MESSAGING

Before you begin consultations, you should prepare key messages and background materials about the project (what and where is it and why you are doing it), your company, the main environmental and socio-economic issues (both positive and negative) you expect will be of concern to the various stakeholders, as well as experiences gained from similar projects elsewhere, if possible. All printed and verbal information about your project must be accurate, factual, up to date, consistent and accessible to all stakeholders as this is the information in which the community will be basing its opinions and responses. The language used should be simple and straightforward, technical terms should be clearly explained and jargon avoided. Graphics, diagrams and maps are useful to illustrate ideas where possible.

Printed information can take on a variety of forms (factsheets, displays, reports) and should be made available at all public events, by contacting the company and at key community locations (e.g. library, post office).

Ensure your team members are equipped with the main messages about your project to share with people at all times, including frequently asked questions. It is also recommended that you designate one or two well-spoken and informed spokespeople to communicate with media and important community officials/leaders. All spokespeople should be familiar with the key messages and able to respond to questions accurately and effectively.

SPREADING THE WORD

Once the engagement plan is finalized, you should start to advertise the upcoming engagement process using your chosen communications tools (see *Communication Strategy*). It is crucial that you provide sufficient advanced notice of engagement opportunities. Notices should include information on:

- The goals of the community engagement process;
- The key issues that the process will address and why;
- The company's approach in addressing these issues;
- Opportunities to participate (including practical information about how and when);
- Possible outcomes of the engagement process; and
- Timelines – advising whether or not the project will move forward,

Accurate contact information (phone, email, office location) should be provided on all printed material, websites and public notices.

All communications should encourage people to get in touch for further information about the project and engagement opportunities.

MOBILIZING SUPPORTERS

Throughout the planning and engagement process, you will be working to gain support from prominent and influential experts, businesses and community leaders. Once you have gained their support, these people can be a valuable resource in your community engagement activities; their opinions matter in the community.

Some ways you can use them include:

- Being on hand to speak or answer questions at open houses, public meetings or information booths;
- Taking supportive messages back to their constituents;
- Facilitating at participatory activities such as workshops; and
- Providing statements of support to use in informational materials and in the media.

Valuable supporters can include:

- Municipal, provincial or federal politicians;
- Key environmental NGOs and/or well-known / outspoken environmental and social activists;
- Other businesses that may be affected by the project (e.g. aquaculture, manufacturing, fishers);
- Academic experts from a University (e.g. Acadia, Dalhousie, Cape Breton) or Nova Scotia Community College; and
- Trusted community leaders.

DEALING WITH OPPOSITION AND EMOTIONAL SITUATIONS

Even the best planned community energy projects will likely meet with some level of opposition. Do not assume that because you are a community-based company and have held information sessions in the community on previous occasions, all stakeholders will unanimously embrace your project.

It is crucial for you to be respectful of all stakeholders' rights to closely examine and scrutinize your project, to have concerns or to be upset if the development will affect them.

The key is to:

- Be prepared. Identify whether to anticipate opposition, from whom and why based on initial contacts and community profiling;
- Start the dialogue early. Contact should be made with potential opposition leaders early with the goal of understanding each others positions and finding common ground;
- Give opponents a voice. Make sure those with opposing views are included in engagement activities;
- Clarify the facts. It is important to get your facts organized before you start communicating in the community about your project. Anticipate and prepare fact-based answers to expected misconceptions and points of opposition; and
- Have experienced facilitators on hand at public events if you anticipate organized or vocal opponents will try to disrupt or monopolize the event.

RECORDING AND MANAGING INFORMATION GATHERED

It is extremely crucial that you develop a consistent method for accurately recording and managing the information gathered at meetings. This includes:

- Names and contact information for those who have participated at each event and activity;
- Discussions, comments, concerns and questions; and
- Outcomes, recommendations and decisions made (participatory processes).

Audio or video recording is a useful technique for accurately recording discussions. However, many people may be uncomfortable being recorded. You will need to inform and get consent from all participants before you begin recording. If anyone objects, do not use recording devices. Also, always backup audio / visual recordings with written notes in case of technical problems.

It is recommended that you set up a database to manage and organize all the information gathered. This will make it easier and more efficient to assess and respond to the comments and document how decisions were made.

ANALYZING AND IMPLEMENTING STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The most crucial step in the engagement process is analyzing and deciding how to apply the input gathered from stakeholders. Key questions to ask are:

- What key issues, trends and strongly held views did different stakeholder groups identify?
- What questions and concerns were raised by stakeholders and how will you respond to them?
- What were the ideas, recommendations, decisions, opportunities and other outcomes of discussions?
- How will the input from the various stakeholders be weighed and considered in the context of the stated engagement objectives (Information Sharing and Consultation levels)?
- How will the outcomes / decisions made during the engagement process be implemented (Involvement level)?

DELIVERING SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSES AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Use a variety of forms of media to help stakeholders understand your project (including poster boards, videos, interactive computer programs, etc.).
- Have all visitors sign in when they arrive. This will provide you with the opportunity to build your contact list.
- When possible, have local community leaders available to speak or answer questions about why they are supportive.
- Have a senior company representative front and centre to greet guests as they arrive and provide them with a brief description of the set-up and agenda.
- Arrange refreshments in the centre of the room to encourage people to interact (rather than setting up at the back of the room which may isolate people).
- Use comment forms or questionnaires to collect feedback on the activity and process. Think of creative ways to encourage people to fill them out at the event such as the opportunity to win a prize. You should include pens, tables and chairs, or access to computers (to fill out online forms or surveys).
- Have an experienced MC or facilitator on hand at public events to keep the event on focus and schedule, to ensure a fair and respectful opportunity for people to express their views and to deal with emotional or disruptive situations.

DELIVERING SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

It is important for these activities to be run by a group facilitator, who is experienced in managing group dynamics and conflict resolution. Because of the different interests and personalities involved, there is the potential for:

- Arguments or conflict to develop between participants; and
- A dominant person or set of people (e.g. with a common agenda) to monopolize the opportunities to speak making it difficult for others to express their views.

These situations can be highly disruptive and if not properly dealt with may result in the withdrawal of participants and/or failure of the activity.

Before beginning, make sure all participants:

- Are aware of the stated engagement objectives and the specific purpose / focus of the activity;
- Have access to the necessary background information;
- Are familiar with the basic rules of engagement – the principles of openness, inclusivity, responsiveness and accountability that will guide the process in order to build trust and constructive relations (see *Community and Business Toolkit for Tidal Energy Development*);
- Agree to respect each other's view and maintain confidentiality, if required;
- Are informed as to how the information is being recorded (i.e. must disclose and get consent if they are being audio or video recorded); and
- Are informed how their input will be used and how and when responses/feedback and/or outcomes will be disclosed.

FOLLOWING-UP WITH STAKEHOLDERS

It is important that you acknowledge and respond to all comments and concerns made by community members in a considerate and timely manner. Reporting back to stakeholders demonstrates that you have listened to and valued their input. While it may not always be possible to accommodate everyone's concerns and recommendations, it is crucial for you to respond to each and explain the reasons behind subsequent decisions and actions.

RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES

It is important that you respond to all questions made by community members. Given that this project will involve a new technology in an ecologically significant marine environment, it is critical to respond effectively to all questions raised by stakeholders. The quality and timeliness of your response will set the tone for your interactions with stakeholders. It is important to establish a procedure for responding to public inquiries in a consistent and timely manner (within 48 hours is recommended). A good approach is to create a communications log to record every single inquiry and your response, ensuring you note the date and time and to designate one member of your team to act as the public contact.

ACKNOWLEDGING AND MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

Send thank-you letters, emails and/or telephone calls to people who attended and spoke at public events and participated in group activities. These can be powerful signals to assure people that you care about their thoughts and actions, and are also opportunities for further dialogue and relationship building.

Written comments (letters, emails) should be acknowledged and, if possible, an individualized response prepared for each.

DISCLOSING THE PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES OF ENGAGEMENT

You must have a system in place to regularly and publicly report your engagement performance, the value created for the project as a result of it, and any commitments to next steps for continuous improvement. Reporting is an invitation for further feedback from communities and a direct reflection of the principles of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability.

Updates and feedback should be provided regularly, especially following major engagement activities and decisions. These could include update reports, public information sessions, updates at town halls or other public events, or notices in the media or on the project website. Advisory committees or community leaders are also good tools for distributing updates to the broader community. Reporting will allow stakeholders to see what progress is being made and how their input is being used. It will encourage goodwill and further participation.

Stakeholders will want to know the following:

- What engagement was done (what techniques were used, what stakeholders were involved etc.) and how it achieves the stated engagement objectives;
- What key issues, trends and strongly held views were identified by different stakeholder groups;
- What questions and concerns were raised by stakeholders and how you have responded to them;
- Ideas, recommendations, decisions, opportunities and other outcomes of discussions;
- How the information has been/will be considered in the context of the stated engagement objectives (Information Sharing and Consultation levels);
- How any outcomes / decisions made during the engagement process will be implemented (Involvement level); and
- Next steps.

Tips for reporting back to stakeholders:

- Information and feedback from the community should be presented in a way that is clear and succinct.
- Include exact quotes used by people to show that input has been accurately recorded and backup of any summary statements or interpretations.
- Clearly explain the reasoning behind any decisions that have been made and how any issues/concerns have been / will be addressed.

The final outcomes of the engagement process, including final decisions, recommendations and how they came about, will need to be disclosed to decision-makers and stakeholders in a number of formats, including a comprehensive Engagement Process Report, a concise summary report, displays, website, social media and presentations. If possible, you should arrange a public meeting or meetings with key participating stakeholder groups to present and discuss the outcomes and collect feedback on the process.

Key Steps Checklist: Implementing Community Engagement

- ✓ Prepare informational materials and messages.
- ✓ Advertise the engagement process and activities as appropriate.
- ✓ Deliver engagement activities and events.
- ✓ Monitor and review progress of activities and the overall engagement process.
- ✓ Make any necessary adjustments to plans and schedules, as needed.
- ✓ Gather and collate input from stakeholders in a format that is easy to use and interpret.
- ✓ Analyze the input and decide how the results / outcomes will be used.
- ✓ Maintain communications with stakeholders and decision-makers, including responding to questions and feedback.
- ✓ Prepare a final feedback and evaluation report to communicate the outcomes of the engagement process and how stakeholder input has been / will be taken into account.

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APPENDIX A
Community Engagement Planning Checklist

Establishing the Engagement Planning Team

- ✓ Identify and allocate an appropriate budget and adequate time for meaningful engagement.
- ✓ Assign a Community Engagement Coordinator and team to plan and manage the engagement process.
- ✓ Seek advice from local leaders.
- ✓ Consider establishing a community engagement planning advisory committee.
- ✓ Start the engagement planning process early in your project planning.

Defining the Community, Risk and Issues

- ✓ Define the affected community and develop a community profile.
- ✓ Identify and classify the stakeholders.
- ✓ Identify potential issues of concern to stakeholders and barriers and opportunities for engagement.

Setting the Scope and Objectives of Engagement

- ✓ Identify the purpose and expectations of the engagement process.
- ✓ Set boundaries to foster realistic expectations. Consider legislation, geographic boundaries, time limitations and budget.
- ✓ Draft a clear straightforward statement of objectives.
- ✓ Meet with decision-makers and community leaders to gain their perspective on the purpose and expectations of engagement.
- ✓ Refine the objectiv es to what can be accepted by the majority of stakeholders.

Selecting, Planning and Evaluating Your Community Engagement Level and Techniques

- ✓ Use the Community Engagement Assessment Table as appropriate to your situational needs.
- ✓ Seek advice from the COMFIT administrator, community leaders and an experienced community engagement facilitator to identify the community engagement level and techniques that best suit the needs of your company and the majority of stakeholders.
- ✓ Select the appropriate level of engagement to meet the stated objectives and the needs of stakeholders.
- ✓ Select a combination of specific techniques that best match your objectives and qualities of your stakeholders / participants.
- ✓ Prepare a plan outlining the needs and logistics for each technique / activity.
- ✓ Develop a feedback and performance evaluation plan.

Implementing Community Engagement

- ✓ Prepare informational materials and messages.
- ✓ Advertise the engagement process and activities as appropriate.
- ✓ Deliver engagement activities and events.
- ✓ Monitor and review progress of activities and the overall engagement process.
- ✓ Make any necessary adjustments to plans and schedules, as needed.
- ✓ Gather and collate input from stakeholders in a format that is easy to use and interpret.
- ✓ Analyze the input and decide how the results / outcomes will be used.
- ✓ Maintain communications with stakeholders and decision-makers, including responding to questions and feedback.
- ✓ Prepare a final feedback and evaluation report to communicate the outcomes of the engagement process and how stakeholder input has been / will be taken into account.

APPENDIX B
Potential COMFIT Project Stakeholders Checklist

Decision-makers	Groups	Individual Stakeholders
✓ First Nations ✓ COMFIT administrator ✓ Municipal & town officials / council members ✓ Relevant municipal, provincial & federal staff ✓ Local MPs & MPPs ✓ Regional development agencies ✓ Community leaders ✓ Nova Scotia Power ✓ Others: ______________ ______________________ ______________________ ______________________	*Special interest groups with a presence or interest in the affected area:* ✓ Ecology Action Centre ✓ Nova Scotia Nature Trust ✓ Nature Conservancy of Canada ✓ Naturalist societies ✓ Watershed associations ✓ Other environmental groups ✓ Community service groups ✓ Fisheries, tourism & trade associations ✓ Other community / user groups ✓ Land / homeowners associations ✓ Others: ______________ ______________________ ______________________ ______________________ ✓ Local business development boards / chamber of commerce ✓ Community development associations ✓ Others: ______________ ______________________ ______________________ ______________________	*Individual community members & interested parties:* ✓ Town/village-wide ✓ County/municipality-wide ✓ Watershed (system)-wide ✓ Regional/provincial ✓ Others: ______________ *Individual recreational users:* ✓ Fishers ✓ Boaters, surfers, kayakers ✓ Bird & whale watchers ✓ Others: ______________ *Businesses & developments with a stake in the affected area* ✓ Shipping ✓ Aquaculture ✓ Mineral extraction ✓ Manufacturing / engineering ✓ Other renewable energy operators ✓ Others: ______________ *Local eco-tourism operators* ✓ Whale watching ✓ Retreats, camping ✓ Boating, canoeing, kayaking ✓ R&D Partners / Investors ✓ Affected landowners ✓ Environmental experts / researchers (e.g. university professors) ✓ Port / harbour authorities ✓ Others: ______________

APPENDIX C
Community Engagement Plan Template

1. **Background Information**

2. **Overall Engagement Process Budget and Timeframe**

3. **Roles & Responsibilities**

4. **Scope / Boundaries of Engagement**

5. **Statement of Engagement Objectives**

6. **Stakeholders / Target Audiences**
   See Appendix B for Stakeholder Checklist

7. **Anticipated Issues, Challenges and Opportunities**

8. **Community Engagement Approaches**
   Level of engagement & tools/techniques to be used

9. **Activity Breakdown Plan**
   See Appendix F for template

10. **Communications Strategy**
    See Appendix G for template

11. **Feedback and Performance Evaluation Plan**

APPENDIX D
Level of Engagement Assessment Template

Factor	Low	Medium	High
Degree of Complexity • There are many different stakeholders with many different issues and concerns. • The project is complex or multi-staged. • The relationships among stakeholders are non-existent, poor or deteriorating.			
Degree of potential community concern / interest • There is a high level of unfavourable and / or contrasting perceptions and feelings toward the project among stakeholder groups. • There is a high degree of community uncertainty around how important issues will be resolved. • There is a likelihood of conflict in the future if the current community concerns and issues are not properly addressed. • The factual information currently circulating from different sources is contradictory or contested.			
Community interest / expectations to influence the project			
Ability for community to influence project design or decision-making			
Compatibility of high community involvement with statement of objectives			
Time and budget availability for community engagement			

APPENDIX E

Continuum of Community Engagement Techniques

Inform	Tips	Pros	Cons
Printed Materials • Fact Sheets • Newsletters • Position Papers • Media Advertising • Brochures	• Keep it short & simple • Make it visually interesting & engaging but not too busy or slick • Proofread! • Develop a distribution list • Avoid jargon • Always include opportunities for comments (e.g. website, reply paid envelopes) • Explain public role & how comments will affect project decisions • Make sure materials are removed when past their use by date	• Can reach a large target audience • Facilitates control of messaging & information • Allows for technical & legal reviews • Useful as background resources for other engagement activities • Can generate public questions & interest	• Materials not read • Limited capacity to communicate complicated concepts • Information misinterpreted • Difficult to get public feedback • Basically one-way communication
Displays • Town /municipal meetings & offices • Post office • Libraries • Community / Shopping centres • Community events (e.g. pancake breakfasts)	• Establish regular sites if possible • Make sure personnel are knowledgeable & can answer questions accurately & effectively • Consider electronic displays, e.g. touch screens, video loop presentations • Make sure materials are removed when past their use by date • Always include comment forms or surveys for public to fill in • Include sign up sheet to join distribution list • Keep record of public comments/questions received	• Information is accessible to the public at relatively little cost • Opportunity to distribute printed materials • Opportunity to open dialogue with public, if staffed • Public use the distribution locations to look for printed materials • Public can ask questions, if staffed	• Distribution sites can get overcrowded with information & materials get lost • Not always possible to keep staffed with well-informed people • Not as effective if not staffed (see printed materials) • Need displays at multiple locations & times to reach broad community/stakeholders

Inform	Tips	Pros	Cons
Website	• Needs to be visible & easy to navigate • Keep information updated • Include online form/survey for public feedback/comments • Email & contact information	• Capable of reaching a large audience at low cost • Popular information resource	• Not all people will have access • Technical difficulties
Technical Experts Attendance at: • Briefings • Meetings • Workshops	• Technical resource persons must be perceived as credible by communities • Ensure technical resource persons have access to information about the communities' attitudes	• Build credibility & address public concerns about equity • Facts in dispute can be debated & consensus reached	• Resource availability may be limited • Technicians may not be prepared for working closely with communities & may lack empathy with community concerns

Continued on next page

Consult	Tips	Pros	Cons
Mailed Surveys and Questionnaires/Response Sheets • Blanket distribution • Random distribution • Selected distribution	• Surveys/questionnaires should be trialed before distribution • Collection and method of analysis to be considered & clarified • Level of engagement & parameters need to be clear	• Can gather information from people other than those with a special interest • Gather information from people who might not attend meetings • Can gather specific information • Statistically tested results have more credibility	• Response rate can be poor • Can be labour intensive • Questions may be misinterpreted • Results not trusted
Interviews • Face to face • Telephone	• Be clear & open about the intent • Consider questions carefully to gather relevant information • Ensure effective information recording methods • Be inclusive	• Gather clear understanding of public concerns & issues • Individuals feel inclined to provide input based on personalized format • Able to reach more people by varying timeframe for interviews	• Can be very time consuming • Participants can take their issues out on the interviewer • Participants are tired of being interviewed on a range of issues
Focus Groups	• Clear tasks • Relevant representation • Skilled facilitation	• Provides opportunity to test material • Verify prior assumptions • Raise unexpected additional benefits	• Participants may feel restricted by the approach • May be perceived as exclusive • May be costly

Consult	Tips	Pros	Cons
Open House • Communities engage at their own pace in a comfort-able environment • Drop in individually to view plans, ask questions, give opinions have an informal chat & a coffee, tea etc.	• Be there when you say you are going to be • Consider the demographics of the area & time sessions accordingly • Greet people at the door & explain the format, provide comments sheet • Give people a task e.g. "good/bad" dots to place on the displays to record their preferences	• Facilitates a wide variety of people • Break down perceived barriers • Fosters communication • More convenient for people • Engages people more effectively • Minimize aggressive approach to municipal government members	• Special interest groups may boycott or disrupt • Groups may use "dots" to lobby for special interests • Staff resource intensive • May not be accessible to people who rely on public transport
Field Trips Tour of project site or com-parable site for stakeholders, elected members, community groups, media	• Set up booking system to manage de-mand effectively • Make accessible to diverse groups • Provide itinerary/tour guide • Plan question/answer session • Plan refreshment break & provide water during the trip • Consider safety	• Opportunity to develop rap-port with stakeholders • Increase knowledge of issues & process for all involved • Unexpected additional benefits	• Number of participants can be limited by resource availability • Intention can be misinterpreted • Project site may reveal unin-tended conditions • Aggrieved participant may take the opportunity to mo-nopolize captured audience

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Involve	Tips	Pros	Cons
Workshops Commence with presentation & allow for interaction in small groups with feedback to larger group to bring all information together at the end of the workshop	• Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop • How you are going to manage the group – rules for engagement • Use trained facilitators & give them clear instructions to ensure the aims of the workshop are achieved • How are you going to feedback outcomes of workshop to participants	• Participants can use the opportunity to raise their concerns, needs, issues • Fosters equity & credibility • Opportunity to hear the "silent" voices • Special interest groups get to listen to other voices • Unexpected additional benefits • Relational benefits	• Small numbers of participants • Resistance to breaking up into small groups by some participants • Special interest groups monopolize the workshop • Participants alter the agenda • Facilitators not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behaviors • Information session format used rather than workshop format • Feedback not recorded effectively
Community Advisory Group A community advisory committee is a group of representatives from a community appointed to provide the developer with regular comments and advice on the project. They serve as the voice of the community and can also be an effective way to disseminate detailed information and decisions throughout a community.	• Ensure the sessions are managed by a skilled facilitator • Be clear about how the results will be used • Ensure a cross-section from the community • Consider current levels of expertise of participants	• Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue • Positions of interest can shift • Limitations & possibilities can be identified • Can dispel misinformation • Can build credibility • Can provide unexpected benefits	• Group selection can be mistrusted • Participants may not show up on the day • Sessions can loose focus • Cost can be extensive

Involve	Tips	Pros	Cons
Citizen Juries Groups of citizens selected to learn about an issue & then examine the data by questioning decision-makers, technicians, & interested parties—all of whom are witnesses to the process. The Jury makes recommendations based on their evaluation of the discussions.	• Ensure the sessions are managed by a skilled facilitator • Be clear about how the results will be used • Ensure a cross-section from the community • Consider current levels of expertise of participants	• Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue • Positions of interest can shift • Limitations & possibilities can be identified • Can dispel misinformation • Can build credibility • Can provide unexpected benefits	• Group selection can be mistrusted • Participants may not show up on the day • Sessions can loose focus • Cost can be extensive
Mediation / Negotiation / Dialogue Designed to create shared meanings through effective listening and reflective questioning	• Establish firm guidelines • Ensure the role of the mediator/negotiator & participants are clear • Seek commitment to the process	• Helps participants towards an understanding of others' viewpoints • Forward thinking approach sets new directions • Win/win outcomes • Promotes accountability on both sides	• Can be difficult to identify who the parties are & who & what they represent • Time & resource intensive • Knowledge & skill base required to facilitate mediation/negotiation not acknowledged

(Adapted from *Community Engagement Handbook: A Model Framework for Leading Practice in Local Government in South Australia*)

APPENDIX F
Activity Breakdown Plan Template

Technique	Targeted Stakeholders	Significant Dates	Responsibilities	Communication Logistics	Activity/ Event Logistics	Resources Required

APPENDIX G

Communications Strategy Template

Communication Tool	To Be Prepared By	Target Audience(s)	Distribution Details	Deadlines / Dates