

Offshore Wind Environmental Justice Technical Working Group (OSW EJ-TWG) Meeting Summary

Tuesday, December 12th, 2023, from 1 pm to 2:30 pm ET
Virtual Meeting

Background

This meeting summary describes key discussion points and action items from the Environmental Justice Technical Working Group (EJ-TWG) virtual meeting, which was held on December 12, 2023, through a virtual meeting platform.

There were 40 EJ-TWG members and other stakeholders in attendance through a Zoom meeting/conference line. Two staff from CBI and The Cadmus Group were also present to provide technical, facilitation, and logistics support.

This summary is organized to align with the structure of the meeting agenda ([Appendix A](#)). Opinions are generally not attributed to specific TWG members. This summary identifies areas of agreement as well as the different perspectives offered during meeting presentations and discussions.

Purpose

Goals for the meeting included:

- Continuing to build relationships among TWG members
- Reviewing survey results on suggested priorities based on the New York State's CLCPA Scoping Plan
- Prioritizing initial activities for the Offshore Wind EJ-TWG

Action Items

The following key next steps resulted from the meeting:

- NYSERDA and the facilitation team
 - Take the input provided during the meeting and create an action plan for 2024 next steps for the EJ-TWG that will be shared prior to the Q1 2024 EJ TWG meeting.
 - Share more detailed survey results explaining how the results were broken down by each sector (CBOs, developers, agencies).
- Offshore Wind EJ-TWG members
 - Share suggestions for member organizations if they feel organizations should be represented as part of the group.
 - Share any other suggestions, feedback, and questions regarding priorities and activities.
 - Submit for reimbursement within 30 days from Dec 12th.

Key Takeaways

Three priorities for TWG activities rose to the top based on the discussion during the meeting, survey results, and post meeting discussion:

1. **Equitably communicating workforce trainings, job opportunities, and business opportunities in offshore wind to environmental justice/disadvantaged communities**
 - a. Activity Option A: Create materials about types of jobs and career pathways, using information in NYSERDA reports and other industry resources, geared towards EJ communities to share with community members
 - b. Activity Option B: Create best practices guide for community organizations on raising awareness of opportunities for residents and businesses in the offshore wind industry in EJ communities
 - c. Activity Option C: Share case studies of successful pre-apprenticeship programs already implemented in offshore wind or in other industries that could be applicable to offshore wind, especially on specific topics such as re-entry for previously incarcerated people and helping residents from disadvantaged communities navigate union hiring
2. **Capacity building for communities**
 - a. Activity Option A: Create materials about offshore wind project development process and public input opportunities geared towards EJ communities to share with community members
 - b. Activity Option B: Provide opportunity for developers to share project updates, especially related to workforce, training, and community benefits agreements during EJ-TWG meeting
 - c. Activity Option C: Create grant writing workshops
3. **Contributing to efforts to establish people-centered policies, programs, and funding across local, State, and federal governments**
 - a. Activity Option A: Establish review committee to review relevant NYSERDA OSW studies. First task being to contribute to the review of NYSERDA's Master Plan 2.0 study "Empowering Potential Study," a catalogue of community assets, and engagement best management practices for engagement, by offering technical review of this study

Opening and Objective of Meeting

Melanie Gárate (Consensus Building Institute, CBI), the facilitator, shared the goals for the meeting and an overview of the agenda. The objective of the meeting was for members to continue to get to know one another and provide feedback on priorities to focus on for the Offshore Wind EJ-TWG.

Compensation Overview

The facilitator presented on the DAC compensation possibility for time spent actively participating in this TWG.

- Organizations who are based in areas designated as disadvantaged communities are eligible to receive compensation from NYSERDA for actively participating in this technical working group.
- Eligible organizations or individuals have 30 days from the date of the event (January 10, 2024) to submit the online DAC Stakeholder Reimbursement Form.
- The reimbursement form is here: https://nyserda.seamlessdocs.com/f/DAC_Stakeholder.

- Most organizations already have a supplier ID but if anyone is unaware of this, email PublicEngagement@nyserda.ny.gov.

Mentimeter

The facilitator conducted a Mentimeter poll asking two questions:

- Where in NY are you calling in from today?
- What's been the most reoccurring thought or question in your mind lately regarding offshore wind energy?

Results are in [Appendix B](#).

TWG Member Updates

The facilitator opened the floor for TWG member updates, explaining that these meetings are an opportunity for members to share information amongst each other. Members did not have updates to share but this will be a standing agenda item for future meetings.

EJ-TWG Priority Survey

In September, the facilitation team sent a survey to TWG members to get their input on priorities for the TWG and activities that the TWG should conduct. Jessica Dealy (NYSERDA) provided an overview of the survey results. The survey built on the work done by the Climate Justice Working Group and the Climate Action Council to develop the [Scoping Plan](#) for the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

- The survey asked TWG members to rank recommendations from the scoping plan to determine what specifically the Offshore Wind EJ-TWG should prioritize in the work/action plan.
- 18 members filled out the survey of the 33 members that were part of the TWG at the time the survey was conducted. Membership has grown slightly since then.
- Of those who filled out the survey, nine people were from nonprofit/community organizations, four were from government agencies, and five represented developers.

Recommendation Results and Member Feedback

The facilitator explained that the highest recommendation priority was co-designing programs or projects with and for communities (results in the presentation).

EJ-TWG members had the following feedback:

- Name and prioritize racial justice in conversation and/or deliverables created by the TWG, specifically that the focus is on Black, Indigenous, and people of color in recommendations and activities and don't use language such as "all."
- Share more detailed survey results explaining how the results were broken down by each subgroup (CBOs, developers, agencies).
- Develop different ways to gain EJ-TWG member feedback since a critical mass of the members did not respond to the survey.

- Incorporate other common languages into communication strategies, such as Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, and Bengali.

The facilitator shared that these survey results are not the final rankings but meant to be tweaked and recalibrated based on the conversations in this meeting. NYSERDA wanted to emphasize the value of participation and is eager to find ways to have more participation.

Activities Results and Member Feedback - Priority Recommendation 1

The facilitator shared the results for the activities related to priority recommendation 1: “co-design programs or projects with and for communities” (results in the meeting presentation).

EJ-TWG members had the following feedback:

- Once ready, NYSERDA share information about how effective the current advertising campaign about jobs in offshore wind has been. Are there opportunities to run ads in different languages?
- Interest was expressed in learning more about the program codesign examples NYSERDA ECE team shared
- Communities should be compensated to help NYSERDA ECE team train program teams on how to do equitable community engagement and other members supported this idea in chat

NYSERDA shared they have the following resources:

- NYSERDA’s Energy and Climate Equity (ECE) team has been working on a best practices guide for the lean energy transition.
- Equitable Engagement Toolkit (currently, an internal tool) used to train other NYSERDA teams on engaging with frontline communities and what the Climate Act designated as disadvantaged communities (DAC).
- Good example of co-designs: the Regional Clean Energy Hubs, co-design that will start soon to develop a Community-Owned Solar program, and co-design of Energy Equity Collaborative initiative and the DAC stakeholder services pool.
- Information on the jobs that are becoming available in offshore wind.
 - Suggestion from NYSERDA: **have an activity to develop digestible materials for a public audience that share this information. TWG members were in favor of pushing this forward as an action item.**

Another member of NYSERDA’s ECE team explained the use of “stakeholder” term for the DAC stakeholder pool, responding to a comment from the survey, which they have heard feedback on before. They understand the history of the negative tone as these groups have not historically had their feedback taken into account and NYSERDA is trying to correct for that as DAC stakeholders are a critical stakeholder group that NYSERDA is very interested in hearing from and values their input.

A member of NYSERDA’s ECE team was interested in hearing if there are any offshore wind programs this group would be interested in doing a co-design around.

Activities Results and Member Feedback - Priority Recommendation 2

For this recommendation “establish people-centered policies, programs, and funding across local, State, and federal governments”, only one activity was named and only two people voted for this (results in the meeting presentation). Members had a lot of feedback and excitement about how to create, advertise, and ensure that offshore wind jobs benefit environmental justice communities. EJ-TWG members had the following feedback and questions:

- Q: Clarification on “wind energy infrastructure”: does this mean turbines only or the transmission lines as well? A: *NYSERDA responded it can include port infrastructure, transmission lines, operations and maintenance facilities, and any other infrastructure that is impacted by the offshore wind industry.*
- **Do not reinvent the wheel and work with existing formations** that are working on policies and programs (E.g., NYRENEWS, NYC-EJA). OSW EJ TWG shouldn't make decisions about policies without consulting NY RENEWS coalition (321 groups) and other EJ spaces.
 - NYSERDA responded that they will send out a memo to all relevant working groups to ensure work is not duplicated once the list of priorities and activities is determined.
- **Clarify and explain what paid apprenticeships and training look like.** Offshore wind provides an opportunity to develop solid foundation rather than just including workforce development as a community benefit. They want to set up long-term community benefits with meaningful opportunities for community members, such as entrepreneurship opportunities with substantial investment in training and workforce.
 - It would be helpful to learn from **best practices from programs that are already implemented and working. It would be helpful to have successful case studies to share with suppliers about apprenticeships, training, and capacity building.** E.g, case studies of developer and union project labor agreements and case studies of apprenticeships withing OSW supply chain that are already engaging successfully with disadvantaged communities
- **Break into small working group on offshore wind jobs:** Identify what jobs are going to be available, what the tertiary qualifications are, and provide information in different languages. I.e., What are the actual job titles? What are the lead ups to the more senior level positions? What are the tertiary requirements (i.e., high school diploma)?
- **Coordinate upcoming programs among developers to prevent duplicating efforts as recently awarded projects include economic benefits such as workforce programs, EJ programs, and upstart projects with communities.**
- **Make information about jobs and careers more accessible as NYSERDA has skills studies and a starting point for a list of occupations.** In the recent accelerated RFP, NYSERDA is requiring that developers show the expected job count of unique occupations in offshore wind. New York State has identified [117 occupations](#) and NREL has been working on a broader effort, which is supposed to come out next year. This resource could be helpful: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-career-map>.
- **Create a workforce development path and eco-system that goes beyond offshore wind** - the green economy is larger than OSW. * Note that workforce development issues raised around barriers to joining unions will be addressed in the Equity Collaborative workforce development working group and can coordinate with OSW EJ TWG on OSW specific workforce issues.
- **Create a program or a way for people in the prison system to be trained in this industry.** This would be an example of a just transition.

- o One TWG member wrote “TWIC regulations, where applicable, may be an impediment for some roles.”
- o One member cautioned that there is usually a challenge for marginalized communities because money comes through the government, there are prevailing wage mandates, so labor is typically union labor. If people from marginalized communities do not have access to unions, the hiring goals for marginalized communities will not be realized.
- o Another TWG member shared this is an important strategy to think about as developers have contracting power to push opportunities into hands of people in EJ communities. NYSERDA, developers, EJ organizations, and others can come **together to advocate to suppliers in this ecosystem (vessel operators, manufacturers, etc.) to push to say they are going to hold suppliers to these certain hiring goals. This is a model used in the construction industry and would like to see it reach beyond that. Another TWG member responded that they have worked in workforce development for a long time, particularly in construction.**
- o One TWG member wrote they “would love to see the state set hard line standards for diversity in unionized workforce like they have for MWBE participation - doing that specifically in clean wind energy is a small enough piece to control, is realistically attainable and can move the needle!”

Activities Results and Member Feedback- Priority Recommendation 3

The facilitator shared the results for activities related to priority recommendation 3: “provide meaningful opportunities for public input in government processes and proceedings, mobilize citizen participation and action, and transition to program models that require little to no effort to participate and benefit” (results in the meeting presentation). EJ-TWG members had the following feedback:

- **Integrate this work into already established events to share information in accessible ways that will help increase capacity of front line communities.**
 - o A TWG member explained that they are involved in many groups like this and each meeting generates an enormous amount of work, especially for EJ communities that are already burdened. The facilitator emphasized this point and added it is important to **lean into trusted parties**. Front line communities don’t want to be left out but are also asked to participate a lot so it’s critical to meet them where they are.

Activities Results and Member Feedback - Priority Recommendation 4

The facilitator shared the results for the activities associated with priority recommendation 4 “work across intersecting issues and interests to address needs holistically” (results in the meeting presentation).

- NYSERDA responded that based on the conversation during the meeting, **it seemed like creating collateral for distribution by neighborhood stakeholders that emphasizes the local benefits of offshore wind projects would be a priority for this group.**

Activities Results and Member Feedback - Priority Recommendation 5

The facilitator shared the results for the activities related to priority recommendation 5 “find and support resource-constrained local governments” (results in the meeting presentation).

- Q: Given the need for prioritization based on capacity of the group, does everyone agree these should be ranked below other activities discussed? A: *Generally, members agreed.*
- Q: Would the suggested activity “Commission a study to identify resource-constrained local governments near ports and other entry points (e.g., substations, transfer stations, storage facilities) and identify these as priority areas for community benefit agreements for OSW developers” be specific to projects or for the state? A: *NYSERDA shared that the general thinking was that the TWG would help identify communities around areas that would be impacted by offshore wind development, offer advice, perhaps create a best practice guide on community benefits agreements, or activities like this so that communities could understand what was coming their way.*

EJ-TWG members had the following feedback:

- If the TWG conducts a study on resource constrained areas, they should consider resource constrained neighborhoods, not just local governments. New York City neighborhoods that are near ports may be resource constrained but they don’t have their own governing bodies.
- Incorporate joy and fun into the work.
- Adjust Zoom settings so that members can share reactions to express joy.
- Conduct assessments of individual’s own institutions. After the EJ Orientation for Developers hosted by UPROSE, people in the industry had more questions and wanted more information. This emphasized the point that a lot is expected out of this industry that hasn’t been necessarily trained on climate justice topics and this society is competitive, top down, and patriarchal, derived from a history of colonization. People need to be put in uncomfortable spaces and develop transformational relationships to do this work towards a just transition.

Adjournment

The facilitator encouraged all members to share ideas for building relationships and engaging deeper amongst the group.

NYSERDA thanked everyone for their input and highlighted that this is only the second meeting, and the group is still growing and is open to new member suggestions.

A member of NYSERDA’s ECE team also shared appreciation for what everyone shared today. They are trying to identify and create synergy with broader ECE efforts and address issues everyone raised with all of NYSERDA’s programs. They will coordinate this offshore wind-specific work with other efforts.

More information on the following meeting would be provided, in addition to the materials from this meeting.

If you have a topic or area you would like to see included in future EJ-TWG discussions or materials, please send it to Jessica Dealy, Jessica.dealy@nyserda.ny.gov.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

Offshore Environmental Justice Technical Working Group

December 12th, 2023; Time 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Eastern

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85712783396>

Agenda

Opening (5 mins)

- Opening and objective of meeting

Survey Results (70 mins)

- Overview of results
- Discussion of priorities for OSW EJ-TWG
- Next steps as per discussion

Closing (5 mins)

Appendix B: Mentimeter Results

NYS is large! Where in NY are you calling in from today?	What's been the most reoccurring thought or question in your mind lately regarding offshore wind energy?
New York City	Will priority populations benefit?
Washington DC	How can federal agencies support communities during the clean energy transition?
Manhattan	Getting people great jobs
Brooklyn	How we can mobilize for projects to quickly advance from an EJ/community benefits position?
Brooklyn	
Brooklyn	Implementation and timeline. Will be ready when the jobs come online?
Brooklyn	Which jobs will be available to new hires, either directly in OSW or in supply chains, that are on strong career paths?
New York City - Harlem	The headwinds facing OSW
Albany	Impacts and benefits on/for low income and communities of color.
Long Island	Minority contracting opportunities
Colorado	What information are we missing to help ensure offshore wind is developed equitably
Albany	equitable transition to renewable energy
New Jersey	The timeline is long. How do we not discourage communities when communicating that?
Manhattan	How to decolonize the space
Long Island	
Chelsea	What do good community engagement tools for OSW look like?
Southside of Williamsburg	
Queens	Which institutions have hard skills trainings for those seeking a career in the green economy
NYC	
Queens NY	Workforce impacts and growth.
Harlem	When will the larger work be fully funded.