



MINUTES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Thursday, June 12, 2025 Via Teams

The Environmental Services Association Maritimes (ESAM) Annual General meeting was held on Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 3:00 PM. The meeting was held virtually using Teams.

Those present:

Penny Allen - ESAM Chair/President
Josh Perry - Secretary
Melissa Glover- ESAM Treasurer
Amanda White - ESAM Director
Karen Gilbert - ESAM Director
Stephen Sauveur - ESAM Director
Christine Plourde - ESAM Director
Troy Young - ESAM Director
Sandra Williams - Pathfinder Group, acted as recording secretary
Terry Thibodeau - Seamark Renewable Energy
Janetta Fraser - Harris Industrial Testing Service
Annie Cormier - CBCL
Scott Elliot - Aquaterra Resource Services
David Robinson - Aquaterra Resource Services
Abby van der Jagt - ALS Global

Absent:

Rob McCullough - ESAM Director

CALL TO ORDER

ESAM President Penny Allen welcomed all attendees and called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM. She noted that all members can subscribe to ESAM eblasts by visiting the ESAM website and subscribing to it. She also mentioned ESAM's premiere members, AGAT Laboratories, ALS Laboratories, Bureau Veritas and Belairdirect.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved, seconded, and carried that,

“the Agenda be approved.”

YEAR IN REVIEW

For the 2024-2025 membership year, Penny reviewed the following:

Events Summary:

- AGM was held virtually and was attended by board members.
- Technical training event on contaminated sites was held in September.

- A fall mixer was held in September in Halifax and a holiday mixer was held in November in Fredericton.
- A curling Bonspiel was scheduled for March but unfortunately was cancelled due to poor registration numbers.
- Several lunch and learns were held throughout the year.

Membership - Penny reviewed the government members of ESAM, the new members that joined this past year (Design Point), our current agreements and touched upon our involvement with the Supplier Advisory Council (SAC). She noted that Mr. Terry Thibodeau, former ESAM Board member and CREF mission coordinator, would be providing an update on ESAM's involvement with the Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum (CREF) later in the meeting.

CREF 2025 - Terry briefed the attendees on the following:

Background:

- The Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum (CREF) is the largest annual meeting of the Caribbean renewable energy and energy efficiency key stakeholders. It has grown since its inception in 2009 and is a cornerstone gathering in the Caribbean cleantech sector.
- CREF highlights opportunities in energy generation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency developments across the Caribbean and offers a platform to engage with government ministers, financial institutions, utility executives, international developers, and technology providers active in the region.
- Attendees include high-level government representatives and leaders, sector executives, and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as CDB, IDB, and WB. Around 500 prospects from 37 countries attended CREF 2025. Most Caribbean countries were represented by their governments or utilities, or both.
- The delegation was organized and supported by the Environmental Services Association Maritimes (ESAM), with funding from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).
- For CREF 2025, eleven (11) organizations from Atlantic Canada confirmed participation. This delegation consisted of eight (8) companies that attended in person and three (3) that participated virtually.

Delegate Activities and Support:

- **Business Matchmaking:** A contact database was developed, refined to over 700 prospects for CREF 2025. Delegates completed profiles and need assessments. Matchmaking identified prospects based on sectors, technologies, and priorities. Prospects were contacted via email, phone, and WhatsApp.
- **Meeting Management:** Schedules were managed using **TeamUp**, providing delegates with real-time access to their personalized agendas and prospect details. Calendar invitations were sent to confirmed prospects.
- **Pre-Mission Briefing:** A virtual briefing was held on May 2, 2025, covering logistics, event overview, and onboarding to a WhatsApp group for real-time communication.
- **Mission Secretariat Support:** The team was present throughout the mission to introduce parties, re-arrange meetings, identify opportunities, and ensure group events were maximized.
- **Value-Added Activities:** Organized to enhance delegate experience and support deeper engagement.

- **Kick-off Meeting & Luncheon:** Hosted at Canada's Consulate in Miami, providing access to the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS), including the Consul General and Senior Trade Commissioners. Discussed regional business environments and opportunities.
- **Atlantic VIP Reception:** An invitation-only informal networking event for delegates and priority prospects. Attended by 9 guests from key regional organizations and government entities.
- **Group Presentations:** Briefings with key multilateral institutions provided insights into programs, funding, and regional opportunities. Sessions were held with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and The World Bank.
- **Atlantic Canada Mission Booth:** A booth designed by ESAM provided space for promotional material and generated leads during networking events.

Delegate Outcomes and Meetings achieved:

- Around 333 specific prospects were identified for the 11 companies. Delegates rated 239 prospects as high or medium priority.
- Communications (over 1,000 emails, phone calls, WhatsApp) yielded good results.
- In total, approximately 142 prospective client meetings were arranged for the delegation, including group meetings.
- The total exceeded the minimum contractual target of 6 meetings per delegate (66 total).
- For the 8 delegates who attended in person, there was an average of over 15 meetings per delegate. Some delegates had as many as 19 and 22 meetings.
- Seven (7) meetings were also arranged with the Trade Commissioner Service, not counted towards the main total.
- Notable meetings included those with the Honourable Stephenson King, Senior Minister of Saint Lucia, who met with several delegates and committee members.

Key Findings:

- **In-Person Effectiveness:** Participants perceive in-person meetings as significantly more effective than virtual meetings for building relationships, trust, and accelerating deal flow.
- **Virtual Meeting Challenges:** Coordinating virtual meetings *after* the in-person event was more difficult than expected, requiring substantial follow-up and causing some prospect confusion.
- **Value of Early Arrival:** Delegates arriving early for pre-CREF side events and meetings secured many high-value meetings before the official start of the forum.
- **Importance of Timing:** Earlier recruitment efforts are crucial to allow companies time to plan and access highly sought-after individuals and the Trade Commissioner Service.
- **Matchmaking Timelines:** Having delegates confirmed eight weeks prior to the mission exponentially enhances the quality and quantity of business matchmaking results.
- **Consulate Luncheon:** Provided a valuable opportunity to connect with Trade Commissioners and reinforce the importance of follow-up.
- **Matchmaker Value:** Using a matchmaker to organize meetings is a helpful tool that increases the chances for successful meetings and potential future business.

Recommendations for future Missions:

- **Increased Promotion:** Conduct future **CREF Information Webinars** in the spring and fall to generate interest, provide market overviews, and introduce the event.

- **Speaking Opportunities:** Continue to work with conference organizers to identify and secure **speaking slots for Atlantic Canadian delegates** to increase their exposure.
- **Recruitment Push:** Target participation levels similar to 2025 for CREF 2026, with a strong coordinated recruitment push, potentially including targeted sessions for New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador.
- **Mandatory Practice Sessions:** Strongly recommend or require delegates to participate in **practice sessions** to enhance preparation and confirm mission mechanics.
- **Delegation Size:** An ideal delegation size of **10-12 companies** is recommended for optimal return on investment and manageability.
- **Enhanced Follow-up:** Encourage delegates to prioritize follow-up and consider implementing a **formal scheduled follow-up program** as part of future missions.
- **Group Session Planning:** Limit general group presentations to 2-3 and schedule them to maximize delegate availability and impact.

Following his presentation, Terry responded to some questions. President Penny Allen thanked Terry for his work with CREF on behalf of ESAM and his presentation to the attendees.

Communications - concerning ESAM communications, Penny stated that our LinkedIn account continued to grow. In 2024 - 2025, it grew from 1711 followers to 1836 followers. Visitors increasingly were accessing LinkedIn on their mobile devices. Career opportunities posted on LinkedIn site are popular. It is a free service to ESAM member companies and organizations. Seventeen percent of ESAM's LinkedIn followers are from the environmental services and twenty percent reside in the Maritimes.

ESAM's scholarship program entered its fourth year, and it has continued its partnership with the Pathfinder Group.

Finance - Treasurer Melissa Glover reviewed with the membership the year end financials and Budget. She noted that for 2024-25, net income had surpassed its pre-Covid numbers with the income from CREF being the main driver (80%). Revenue continues to trend upward, and ESAM was under budgeted for its operating and event expenses. It also used some monies from its strategic project fund. Melissa concluded her presentation by reviewing the proposed budget for 2025-2026 and noted that ESAM continued to remain debt free since its 2017/2018 fiscal year.

LOOKING FORWARD

The initiatives for the coming year included the following:

- Continue to work to increase presence, representation and events in New Brunswick and PEI.
- Enhancing dialogue and mutual support with Municipalities
- Increasing engagement and collaboration both federally and provincially to identify areas of opportunity and future projects.
- Diversification - A marketing study was completed along with an ESAM Members survey. Seamark renewable energy was retained to undertake a strategic planning exercise.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Penny thanked the following companies/individuals for their continued support and assistance to ESAM:

- Johnson Insurance/Belairdirect - Trish Harkin. Substantial, long-term supporter of ESAM and major financial contributor.

- Scott Elliot, Aquaterra - Website/communications support and eblasts.
- Charlotte Clarke, DesignPoint - Former Board member of ESAM. She continues to provide ESAM with Social Media support through LinkedIn.

Penny also thanked and recognized our premier members (Bureau Veritas, AGAT Laboratories, Belairdirect and ALS) and our prominent members (AECOM, Stantec, WSP and Environsphere).

BUSINESS SESSION

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

It was moved, seconded, and carried that,

“the minutes from the 2024 AGM be approved.”

APPROVAL OF THE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

It was moved, seconded, and carried that,

“the President’s report for the 2024-2025 membership year be approved.”

APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

It was moved, seconded, and carried that,

“The year-end financial statements for the month ending March 2025 be approved.”

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President Penny Allen stated that there were several Board positions that needed to be filled for the 2025-2026 membership year. To date, only two applications have been received. She presented the following slate of members to fill the position,

Annie Cormier and Abby van der Jagt

Penny asked three times for any further nominations. After receiving none, Annie Cormier and Abby van der Jagt became members of the ESAM Board for the 2025-2026 membership year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:53 PM.