

Science Management Board

October 4, 2006

1. Opening Remarks

The Deputy Minister opened the third meeting of the Science Management Board. He noted the importance of the main agenda item for this meeting: the draft Five-Year Research Plan as the cornerstone of DFO's new research agenda. He also welcomed Jim Jones, Regional Director General-Gulf, to the Board.

The Board approved the agenda (attached as Annex) and adopted the meeting minutes from January 23, 2006.

2. Previous Business

A status update was provided for follow up items from the January 23 meeting:

- HR Strategy: draft to be discussed at the National Science Directors Committee meeting in November 2006.
- Science Workshop planned for February 2007.
- Lunch presentations on science topics will be planned for the next SMB meeting.
- Public Good, Private Benefit: to be discussed by new DG Committee on Policy.
- The revised Ecosystem Management Framework, with examples, was approved. SMB agreed that Oceans and Habitat Management examples could be added.

ACTION: S. Kirby to provide W. Watson-Wright with two examples of the ecosystem approach in the context of Large Ocean Management Areas.

3. Five-Year Research Plan (draft)

W. Watson-Wright introduced the draft *Five-Year Research Plan* (the Plan). It is NOT a broad Science Plan but a research plan and the first of its kind for DFO Science.

Key elements of the Plan:

- supports DFO and government-wide priorities and objectives
- reflects the need for a cohesive, nationally directed research program that addresses regional issues
- supports all science functions and will be integrated with plans being developed for the other functions
- recognizes that DFO cannot do it alone and provides for collaboration and partnerships
- gives clear rationales to guide implementation over the next 5 years

Discussion

The SMB agreed that the draft Plan is cross-cutting, collaborative and coherent. Generally, Board Members agreed that the Plan is consistent with the Transformational Agenda and provides client sectors with some linkages to an ecosystem-based management approach. The Board noted that the introduction should clarify that implementing the Ecosystem Science Framework requires a philosophical and cultural shift and that the key objective of the Plan is to provide better advice and information for policy and decision-makers.

The Board generally agreed that the approach outlined in the draft Plan helps move DFO Science from project-based studies to program-based research because it looks at all kinds of human impacts on the ecosystem not single industry impacts. The proposed Plan implies the need for flexible expertise that can be brought together around specific issues. As such, members agreed that the document must clarify that the proposed Plan changes not only *what* research will be undertaken but *how* research has traditionally been done. This includes clearly demonstrating how the research function will be integrated with the other science functions (especially monitoring), clarifying the objectives / goals and how they link to the research priorities, and more explicit links to the Ecosystem Science Framework.

Board members agreed that the eleven research priorities outlined in the draft Plan are comprehensive, moving in the right direction, and consistent with what other countries are doing. The Board agreed that the research priorities are sufficiently broad and strategic to guide research over the next five years and provide sufficient clarity around the research deemed necessary for resolving issues and making decisions. The language needs to be simplified to ensure it is more widely accessible. The research priorities appear to be flexible enough to respond to priorities as they emerge but the grouping and scope of each priority is inconsistent and difficult to understand. While the research priorities outlined in the Plan will likely enable scientists to apply their expertise in priority areas that support a broad range of DFO objectives and strategic outcomes, they should be regrouped, with clear sub-groupings to show a clear linkage to the ecosystem-based management approach.

Board members also discussed funding the Plan. Although Strategic Research Funds are needed to deliver the Plan, aligning regional A-Base funding with the final Plan will be essential. It was also stressed that external funding should be used to leverage the delivery of our research agenda.

The SMB noted key challenges include balancing the research program between the national and regional level. This includes linking the Plan to the long-term Human Resource Strategy and developing the necessary complement of expertise in cross-cutting teams that vary by region yet remain consistent with national objectives. Further, it is not clear how the Plan can be readily adapted to reflect emerging political and economic priorities. Finally, a comprehensive engagement and consultation strategy is needed to ensure resource users understand how their needs are reflected in the Plan.

ACTIONS: Science Sector to:

1. Revise draft Plan

- use more straight-forward language – must be accessible to all
- clarify that implementing the Ecosystem Science Framework requires a philosophical / cultural shift and include clear linkages to the Framework
- clarify that the Plan changes both what kind of research we do and how we will do it to better inform client-sector needs
- develop options for regrouping “research priorities” for SMB approval

2. Revise presentation deck

- add slide on philosophic / cultural shift
- add slide on HR implications

3. Presentation to DMC and Minister (target end of December 2006)

Engagement / Consultation Approach – Headquarters and All regions

The SMB noted the need for further discussions between Science Sector and client-Sectors.

The SMB agreed to the following internal engagement consultation approach for all regions. This is expected to be completed in December, before the presentation to DMC.

- Each RDG will lead regional consultations with the support of the ADM-Science or the SDG-Science Renewal. RDGs will be provided with the revised Plan and deck for these consultations.
- The internal consultations will include RMC members and senior scientists.
- Science Managers will be asked to meet with regional staff to address any issues raised.

An external engagement strategy will be discussed when internal discussions are complete.

4. Stock Assessment

As part of the discussion of the draft Five-Year Research Plan, Board members asked how stock assessment would be supported. It is not clear how the Department's approach to stock assessment can be reconciled with client demands within a broad ecosystem-based management approach. There are concerns that stock assessment is the cause of an ongoing shortfall in Science and our approach should be reviewed. The strategic direction of stock assessment in the context of ecosystem-based management should be discussed at DMC.

ACTION: P. Sprout to work with Regional Directors General, DGs Science and Fisheries and Aquaculture Management to prepare for a focused discussion on stock assessment at a future DMC meeting.

5. Conclusion

The Deputy Minister closed the meeting by thanking all the Board members for a very positive and productive meeting.

6. Attendees

Deputy Minister (chair) – Larry Murray

ADM, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management – Kevin Stringer (for David Bevan)

ADM, Oceans and Habitat Management – Sue Kirby

ADM, Science – Wendy Watson-Wright

Regional Director General, East – Jim Jones

Regional Director General, West – Paul Sprout

Senior DFO Research Scientist – Dr. Richard Beamish

Senior DFO Research Scientist – Dr. Ken Lee

Regrets: Chair, Science Advisory Council – Dr. Arthur Collin

Science Sector:

Serge Labonté

Kim Darling

Helen Joseph

Karen Davison

Sussex Circle:

Jim Mitchell, Facilitator

Nigel Chippindale, Reporter

DFO Science Management Board

Agenda

Wednesday, October 4, 2006

- 12:00 **Opening**
- Introductions and Agenda (Jim Mitchell)
 - Opening Remarks (Deputy Minister)
- 12:15 **Previous Business**
- Review of action items from previous meeting (Wendy)
 - Approval of the Ecosystem Science Framework
- 13:00 **The Strategic Research Plan** (Wendy/Serge)
- The Overall Approach
 - The 11 priorities and their implications for the Program Sectors
 - Priorities and implications for the Program Sectors
 - Relative importance of the priorities
- 15:15 Break
- 15:30 **Delivering the Research Agenda** (Wendy/Serge)
- Developing shared goals, synergies and cooperation across Sectors
- Addressing the financial challenges
 - Resolving the shortfall in vessel funding
 - Meeting the Minister's new direction
 - Other challenges to delivering the research agenda
- 17:30 **Closing**
- Next steps on the Strategic Research Plan
 - Future work of SMB, next meeting
 - Concluding Remarks (Deputy Minister)
- 18:00 End of Meeting