

Science Management Board

April 19, 2007

1. Opening Remarks

The Deputy Minister opened the fourth meeting of the Science Management Board (SMB). He introduced John Leggat as the discussion leader and gave a brief overview of key announcements affecting the delivery of the Science Program including the termination of the NDI agreement and the federal Budget 07-08. He then noted that the meeting would focus on the Science Human Resource Strategy and its importance in guiding the Science Program for the future.

The Board approved the agenda (Annex) with the addition of a short discussion on the status of the work undertaken by P. Sprout and J. Jones to explain stock assessment in the context of ecosystem-based management.

The Board adopted the meeting minutes from October 4, 2006.

2. Montebello Science Renewal Workshop

W. Watson-Wright introduced this agenda item. S. Labonté presented *Science Renewal Workshop: Key Outcomes and Recommendations*.

Discussion

Board members noted that the workshop was very successful: it engaged many DFO scientists, national and regional client-sector managers, universities, and other government agencies and helped the department move forward with Science Renewal. Workshop participants were supportive of the ecosystem approach and recommended the development of ecosystem research initiatives (ERIs), in partnership with other agencies where possible, as a key next step.

The SMB discussed the need to operationalize the ecosystem approach and to effectively align it with departmental priorities. It was stressed that while developing and implementing the ecosystem research initiatives (ERIs), consideration should be given to existing priority areas (such as LOMAs). The SMB discussed the implementation of the ecosystem approach and how it converges (or not) with existing LOMAs. The Deputy Minister stressed the need to align our business to make Integrated Management real and to engage broadly.

3. Five-Year Research Agenda

W. Watson-Wright introduced the revised draft *Five-Year Research Agenda* (the Agenda), which reflects input from the Science Management Board, regional management committees, and DFO scientists. S. Labonté presented *DFO Science Five-Year Research Agenda: An Integrated Research Agenda focused on Priorities and Excellence*. The revised draft Agenda, which was presented at the Science Renewal Workshop in Montebello in February 2007, was strongly supported by workshop participants. They agreed that the priority areas reflect the key issues facing the Science Program in the next five years and are a good anchor for DFO's research program.

At their March 27-29, 2007 meeting, the National Science Directors Committee agreed that the research plans of the Centres of Expertise, combined with six plans for ERIs and a plan for Climate Adaptation, would form the core of the Science Research Plan.

Discussion

Board members agreed that the revised draft Agenda was a very good and comprehensive document. It is critical that the draft Agenda now be translated into a plan that is fully operational. It was noted that DFO Science is working with the full range of its scientists to demonstrate how their expertise can be used effectively to support the ecosystem approach.

The Board discussed the need to engage the broad scientific community (other government agencies and universities) to ensure DFO has the necessary human and financial capacity to effectively deliver the Research Agenda. Developing effective communications to clarify the scope of DFO's research program and its anticipated outcomes is a key next step and DFO Science is already working with universities to ensure their training reflects DFO's future needs from scientists. It was recommended that DFO define its own parameters for a successful

research program, clearly describing what it is expected to achieve, and develop the necessary performance measurement tools so DFO can determine for itself if the program has been successful. It was stressed that client-sectors must be involved in the development of the ERIs from the outset. It was noted that implementing the ecosystem approach is a top priority of the department and we must now move forward with a meaningful research plan that addresses the priorities and demonstrates progress quickly. The plan needs to address the question as to how the research agenda will evolve with time and changing external factors.

ACTION: Science Sector will move forward with the development of the Research Plan and its associated roll-out strategy. The draft Ecosystem Research Initiatives (ERIs) will be developed in collaboration with client sectors and be brought at an early stage (early summer) to DMC to discuss the relevance of alignment with LOMAs.

4. Update – Stock Assessment in the Context of Ecosystem-based Management

P. Sprout updated SMB on the outcomes of the RDG-led discussions about stock assessment in the context of ecosystem-based management. The initial results were presented at the Science Renewal Workshop in February 2007 with revisions incorporated into the presentation that will be made to DMC soon.

Discussion

Key outcomes of the RDG-led discussion that will be presented to DMC include:

- single species stock assessments have changed dramatically in the last 10 years and, as factors such as ecosystem dynamics become relevant, they are incorporated into the stock assessments and
- single species stock assessments often form the basis of ecosystem assessments and will not be abandoned.

A strategic discussion has been scheduled for DMC to develop a series of strategies that will help effectively align stock assessments with ecosystem-based management principles.

ACTION: P. Sprout to arrange DMC presentation of the forward agenda for stock assessment in the context of ecosystem-based management.

5. Presentation on the DFO Science Centre of Expertise for Aquatic Risk Assessment

Dr. Nicholas Mandrak, Director of the Centre of Expertise for Aquatic Risk Assessment (CEARA) made a presentation on CEARA including its structure, priorities, key activities, and partnering arrangements.

6. Science Human Resource Strategy

W. Watson-Wright presented the draft Science Human Resource Strategy.

Board members agreed that the draft Strategy is excellent, very comprehensive, and ambitious. The linkages with the Public Service Strategy are clear and in some ways the Strategy goes beyond the Public Service Strategy because it provides a transition strategy not just a recruitment strategy. The Strategy also needs to take official languages into account. Partners play a role in delivering the DFO Science Agenda and this should be taken into account in the recruitment component of the Strategy.

The Board suggested looking at the historical complement to determine if replacement numbers will meet departmental challenges. SMB also recommended staggering future hiring to ensure DFO is not in the same unfortunate position in 20 years and developing clear HR requirements so as to help ensure that we hire the right expertise for tomorrow. Regional plans must be cohesive and consistent with the national Strategy.

The Board recognised the changing nature of employment and discussed the need to develop creative solutions to recruitment, retention, and succession planning that make focus on making DFO an attractive employer. It was also noted that the Strategy must make explicit that its purpose is to attract the necessary skill sets necessary for the changing science community. The necessary skill set includes:

- the ability of future employees to explain the complexity of their work in a meaningful way to managers;

- the ability to adapt to and work in a changing environment; and
- effective leadership that both trains/mentors new scientists and bridges the gap to the new Science culture.

The Board discussed the need to retain access to skilled scientists and technicians know-how after retirement through such instruments as emeritus programs and formal mentoring. The need for social scientists in the Department was also discussed.

ACTION: Science Sector to bring the HR Strategy to DMC in May 2007.

ACTION: Science Sector to develop a clear, concise statement of skills future employees (ability to interact, communicate, collaborate, work as a team, etc.) need for inclusion in all documents (such as the HR Strategy, Science Renewal communications, Five-Year Research Agenda).

7. Proposed Agenda Items for Next Meeting – for discussion

Key items for possible discussion: Federal S&T Strategy; size and capacity; Data Management, especially with respect to partnering (universities and other agencies) and the Research Agenda; Scientific Advice; review of the challenges facing SMB through high level look at threats, opportunities; potential to harness capacity in NGOs and make interactions less reactive and mutually beneficial; how Science engages with external groups.

ACTION: Science Sector to review minutes of the first 4 meetings and provide options for future SMB agendas.

8. Conclusion

The Deputy Minister closed the meeting by thanking all the Board members for another enjoyable and productive meeting. He noted that it is clear that the Department is making headway and he commended the Science team for its work.

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

Chair, Science Advisory Council – Dr. Arthur Collin

Senior DFO Research Scientist – Dr. Richard Beamish

Senior DFO Research Scientist – Dr. Ken Lee

Science Sector

Serge Labonté

Kim Darling

Helen Joseph

Andrea Raper

Consultant

Discussion Leader – John Leggat, CFN Consultants

DFO Science Management Board Agenda
Thursday, April 19, 2007, Deputy Minister Boardroom

Chair: Larry Murray, Deputy Minister
Discussion Leader: John Leggat, CFN Consultants

- 09:00 **TAB 1 – Opening Remarks – Larry Murray**
- Introduction – Wendy Watson-Wright
 - Review of issues from October 4, 2006 meeting, plans for today
- 09:30 **TAB 2 – Montebello Science Renewal Workshop**
- Presentation on the key conclusions and recommendations – Serge Labonté
 - General discussion on the Way Forward
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 **TAB 3 – Five Year Research Agenda**
- Presentation of the final draft of the Research Agenda – Serge Labonté
 - General discussion and approval of the Research Agenda
 - Presentation to Minister
 - Development of the Research Plan and Engagement Strategy
- 11:30 **TAB 4 – Science Human Resource Strategy**
- Presentation of the Strategy – Wendy Watson-Wright
- 12:00 **Working Lunch**
- CEARA – Centre of Expertise for Aquatic Risk Assessment – Nick Mandrak
- 13:00 **TAB 4 – Science Human Resource Strategy (continued)**
- General discussion on the Strategy
 - Actions, Priorities and Implementation plans
 - Approval of the implementation plan
- 14:45 Break
- 15:00 **TAB 4 – Science Human Resource Strategy (continued)**
- General discussion on the Strategy
 - Actions, Priorities and Implementation plans
 - Approval of the implementation plan
- 16:00 **Closing**
- Future work of SMB, next meeting
 - Concluding Remarks – Larry Murray
- 16:30 End of Meeting

Supporting Documents

Tab 1 – Minutes, October 4, 2006 meeting
Tab 2 – Deck on the Montebello workshop
Tab 3 – Deck on Five Year Research Agenda
Tab 3 – Five Year Research Agenda document
Tab 4 – Deck on the Science HR Strategy
Tab 4 – Science HR Strategy document