

# Science Management Board

October 11, 2007

## 1. Opening Remarks

The Deputy Minister opened the fifth meeting of the Science Management Board (SMB). Her introductory comments stressed the key role the SMB plays in setting priorities and the importance of having these priorities for DFO. She also welcomed the meeting participants and thanked Jean-Guy Beaudoin for his role as facilitator.

The Board approved the agenda (Annex).

After a brief update on the status of all action items, the Board adopted the meeting minutes from April 19, 2007.

## 2. Science Management Board – Retrospective

W. Watson-Wright presented *Science Management Board – Retrospective and Forward Agenda*, which provided a brief overview of the Board's purpose, mandate and membership; a summary of the first four meetings, including agenda items and key decisions/directions; key SMB products; and potential issues for future SMB consideration. It was noted that the presentation provides a clear and comprehensive overview and it was recommended that the presentation be widely distributed throughout DFO.

### Discussion

Board members agreed that the SMB has been very effective in providing DFO management sectors with an opportunity to discuss / exchange information, integrate science into decision-making, and establish departmental priorities for Science.

The SMB discussion then focused around the provision of scientific advice, including needing to: provide integrated assessments where advice reflects a broader context; integrate across disciplines; focus on the ecosystem as the integrator; and ensure advice is more than just qualitative. It was noted that industry's ability to assist DFO in framing the questions for advice depends on clear direction. DFO will continue to work with:

- scientists to integrate information;
- client sectors to ensure management needs for scientific advice are clearly articulated;
- industry to inform the development of high-level, strategic questions.

The Board then discussed the Forward Agenda. Key issues included: evaluating the effectiveness of DFO Science Centres of Expertise (COEs) in integrating new and emerging issues; monitoring progress in the implementation of ecosystem science; the importance of partnering and communicating Science; establishing priorities for peer reviewed advice within a risk management approach; strategic outreach and its role in enhancing the credibility of the science program.

### **ACTION 1: The agenda for the April 2008 meeting of the SMB will include:**

- **Science Communication/Engagement Strategy**
- **Science Peer Review and Advice – processes, uptake, and priority setting**
- **Discussion paper on assessing the peer review framework for socio-economic advice**
- **Report Card on the implementation of the Ecosystem Research Initiatives and DFO Science COEs**

### 3. At-Sea Science

G. Da Pont, Commissioner / C. Gadula, Deputy Commissioner from the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) attended this portion of the meeting.

W. Watson-Wright introduced the item, indicating that this is a key challenge for the renewal agenda and that the at-sea component is critical to the DFO Science program.

S. Labonté presented *Fisheries and Oceans At-Sea Science Program: The Way Forward* which outlines: the extensive analysis that has already been undertaken; the challenges affecting the At-Sea Science program; the issues affecting future affordability; and the options for the way forward. It was noted that the list of research vessels presented to the Board should include the *Smith* and *GC-03*.

#### Discussion

G. Da Pont noted that CCG is taking steps to address the following chronic issues:

- ensuring operational overtime is included in the current round of bargaining;
- working with Treasury Board to secure funding for increased fuel costs; and
- covering vessel maintenance and refitting with Major Capital.

CCG still faces the key issues of:

- improving planning to ensure vessel readiness for critical science needs and
- revising the existing client-service model to ensure it is clear and transparent.

G. Da Pont indicated that CCG is developing a costing model to transfer the fixed costs to CCG to ensure budgets are aligned with CCG responsibilities.

Board members noted the following issues and concerns that must be addressed in the revised costing model:

- CCG must be a service provider that is fully accountable for delivering the required number of at-sea days with clear performance indicators;
- by transferring its vessel budget to CCG, DFO Science has essentially no other at-sea options;
- costing model must be able to accommodate an increased number of at-sea days, and the associated costs, that result from increases in DFO Science Program's responsibilities; CCG must continue to work with DFO Science to ensure at-sea science funding is sufficient and clearly articulated to Treasury Board
- while dedicated science vessels are essential, consideration should be given to chartering, where feasible
- increased costs resulting from regulated safety requirements or ISM standards must be more transparent

G. Da Pont responded to these concerns by noting:

- as a Special Operating Agency, CCG is obligated to have a transparent and accountable costing structure
- the implementation of a new costing model would ensure CCG is fully accountable for delivering a viable At-Sea Science program and that service level agreements would be

developed to reflect this accountability

- a new service costing model would replace the current system with a simplified, more transparent and accountable one; in exchange for fixed costs, Science would receive a guaranteed allocation of sea days; implementation of this new model would address the long-term affordability issues that have been raised
- science vessels must be dedicated to at-sea science and all funding submissions would be jointly developed with DFO Science
- CCG has extensively reviewed chartering and built-to-lease options and determined that they are not viable for the majority of science activities as few charter vessels have the necessary capacity to meet DFO's operational requirements and the high costs associated with built-to-lease vessels

Concern was expressed about whether the increased costs associated with the replacement research vessels were clearly identified. It was noted that ensuring the long-term affordability of these vessels is the priority and the funding request clearly identified the costs of operating the replacement vessels (based on the Statement of Requirement) EXCEPT operational overtime and increased fuel costs, which are being addressed separately by CCG.

Board members stressed that the Department has been grappling with this issue for 10 years and it is time to find new and creative ways to approach the issue. Maintaining an affordable science fleet within the department is crucial. The Board and CCG agreed that the key issue is the costing model and that it must be a client-service agreement that is clear and transparent.

Key elements of any future costing model will be ensuring the DFO Science Program's integrity is maintained and the At-Sea Science Program is affordable in the long-term. An interim solution is in place for fiscal year 2007-08. Fiscal year 2008-09 will be addressed in the result of the Budget Alignment Strategic Review. Fiscal year 2009-10 and beyond will be addressed by the new costing model.

**ACTION 2: DFO Science will work with CCG to develop a contingency plan for critical At-Sea Science programs to ensure program integrity.**

**ACTION 3: CCG will table its proposal for a new costing model in November 2007.**

**ACTION 4: Develop a vision for an At-Sea Science Program for Canada that includes other federal departments and universities and bring to the ADM S&T Committee.**

#### **4. Presentation on the DFO Science Centre of Expertise for Marine Mammalogy**

Dr. Mike Hammill, Director of the Centre of Expertise for Marine Mammalogy (CEMAM) made a presentation on CEMAM including its mandate, linkages to DFO's Strategic Outcomes, human and financial resources, key activities, and research highlights.

#### **5. DFO Science and Universities Workshop**

W. Watson-Wright presented "National Meeting: DFO Science & Canadian Universities August 30, 2007" that provided an overview of the discussion highlights, potential future collaboration in the areas of high priority research and human resources, and next steps resulting from the workshop. Key issues identified by the university community include: administrative barriers to integration of research activities and how social sciences fit with natural sciences. As a follow up

to the meeting, three areas of action are proposed:

- Further discussions between DFO and universities in regional and geographical forums.
- The development of a national inventory (federal and university) of marine and freshwater expertise, including existing collaborations and potential future collaborations.
- Increased promotion of collaborative programs such as DFO Academic Science Subvention Program and Interchange Canada.

### Discussion

DFO Science noted that all client-sectors benefit from increased liaison with potential university collaborations; as such, wherever possible, DFO Science will include FAM and OHM in meetings with universities.

The Board discussed the role of social sciences in DFO's decision-making, including how it can be done more effectively. Key points include the fact that DFO is ill-informed (generally) about socio-economic impacts, especially areas related to species-at-risk and further consideration should be given to how DFO can leverage advice through the Ocean Management Research Network. It was agreed that the issue of socio-economic research is an issue for DFO, not Science, and it is more appropriate for discussion by the Departmental Management Committee.

It was noted that the Interchange Canada Program provides considerable flexibility and further work may be required to ensure universities give the necessary accreditation to the resulting body of work. Further, inventories are resource intensive and any work should be focused on a few priority areas rather than a broad approach.

**ACTION 5: DFO Science to develop a proposal for an inventory in *a few priority areas* to test the feasibility of any expanded inventory work. The proposal should be linked to regional forums and augment existing inventories such as CNC/Score.**

## **6. Conclusion**

The Deputy Minister closed the meeting by thanking all the Board members for a productive meeting that was both helpful and a good investment of time. She noted that while considerable work has been done, the SMB must now ensure activities and outcomes are fully integrated. Future work of the SMB will focus on ensuring Science continues to link back to departmental priorities and is used effectively throughout the department.

**Attendees**

Deputy Minister (chair) – Michelle d’Auray  
ADM, Fisheries and Aquaculture Management – David Bevan  
ADM, Oceans and Habitat Management – Wayne Moore (for Sue Kirby)  
ADM, Science – Wendy Watson-Wright  
Regional Director General, East – Marc Demonceaux (for Jim Jones)  
Regional Director General, West – Bob Lambe  
Chair, Science Advisory Council – Ron Bulmer (for Dr. Arthur Collin)  
Senior DFO Research Scientist – Dr. Ken Lee

**Absent**

Senior DFO Research Scientist – Dr. Richard Beamish

**Science Sector**

Serge Labonté  
Jacqueline Gonçalves  
Kim Darling

**Consultant**

Discussion Leader – Jean-Guy Beaudoin

## **DFO Science Management Board Agenda**

**Thursday, October 11, 2007, Deputy Minister Boardroom**

Chair: Deputy Minister

Discussion Leader: Jean-Guy Beaudoin

- 08:30     **Opening Remarks – Michelle d'Auray**
- Introduction – Wendy Watson-Wright
- Review and approval of April 19, 2007 minutes, plans for today
- 08:50     **Science Management Board – Retrospective**
- Presentation of SMB accomplishments – Wendy Watson-Wright
  - General discussion on the Way Forward
- 10:00     Break
- 10:15     **At-Sea Science**
- Presentation of the DFO Science At-Sea program – Serge Labonté
- Overview of the program
  - Research vessels – Challenges and affordability
  - Discussion on key challenges and issues and on the Way Forward
- 12:30     **Working Lunch**
- CEMAM – Centre of Expertise in Marine Mammalogy – Mike Hammill
- 13:15     **DFO Science & Universities Workshop**
- Presentation on the key conclusions and recommendations – Serge Labonté
- General discussion on the Way Forward
- 13:40     **Closing**
- Forward Agenda
- Concluding Remarks – Michelle d'Auray
- 14:00     End of Meeting

### **Supporting Documents**

Minutes, April 19, 2007 meeting

Deck on SMB accomplishments

Deck of the At-Sea Science program and challenges

Deck on the DFO Science & Universities workshop