



DFO Toxics Program and National Lab Operation

December 2005



Canada



Toxics – National View

- Toxic chemicals program to be focused on (restricted to?) to the DFO mandate of biological impacts of toxic chemicals on fisheries resources
- Concentration of scientific expertise and laboratories in fewer locations to allow efficiencies for personnel, equipment and overhead (two main labs from nine or 4 from 9, depending on how you count)
- Strengthened collaboration with Environment Canada to reduce overlap with EC's Section 36 Fisheries Act responsibilities



Fisheries Act – Section 36

- Prohibits the deposit of deleterious substances into waters frequented by fish unless authorized under regulations made by the Governor in Council.
- Provides for the Governor in Council to make regulations regarding the deposit of deleterious substances.
- The Minister may direct a person authorized to deposit a deleterious substance to conduct sampling, analyses, tests, measurements or monitoring that are required to determine if the deposits are being undertaken in the manner authorized.



Section 36 and EC

- *36(3)* Subject to subsection (4), no person shall deposit or permit the deposit of a deleterious substance of any type in water frequented by fish or in any place under any conditions where the deleterious substance or any other deleterious substance that results from the deposit of the deleterious substance may enter any such water. * The Prime Minister of Canada assigned responsibility for enforcing subsection 36(3) of the Fisheries Act to the Minister of the Environment*



Toxics – Regional View

- As part of regional reorganization OHEB (primary client for the Dioxin lab) has dismantled its Water Quality Unit. Some uncertainty over who is the primary contact.
- Suggestion that responsibility really rests with “some other agency” – EC, CFIA, Health Canada
- CFIA reminds us “it is not our responsibility to manage YOUR contaminated fisheries”
- RDG has authority to close fisheries due to human health concerns (Management of Contaminated Fisheries Regulation)



Toxics Program and Labs – changes

- REDUCE in NFLD
- REDUCE at BEDFORD; Retain COOGER
- ADD (lots) at IML
- REDUCE at FWI; Retain some Pesticides work
- ADD (some) at IOS



National Labs

- IML – metals, inorganics and some organic analyses
- IOS – low level organics
- FWI – Pesticides
- BIO – hydrocarbons (COOGER)



National Labs - principles

- Will provide analytical services to support the DFO toxics research program
- Demand will be managed by a national board of science managers
- Labs will be funded and staffed (A-BASE) to support this function
- Labs will be managed as a national, not regional asset
- Labs will be equipped to do the work (instruments). We are seeing this investment now.



National Labs – more principles

- Labs will be managed by a Lab Manager (CH-04), not a Research Scientist (reduce Conflict of Interest)
- Transparency will be paramount (whose samples are getting analysed when)
- Additional samples /demand in excess of that funded by DFO can be accommodated.
- Some sort of sample tracking/management system will likely be required (LIMS?)



How will it work here? - 1

- Hire a lab manager – national, interdepartmental competition as far as I know
- Existing CH-02 positions report to lab manager
- Sample analysis requirements (from research scientists) will be managed nationally (DFO funded envelope)
- Additional demand (SPA and OGD-funded) managed locally, but cannot interfere with DFO-funded work.



How will it work here? - 2

- Students, Term and Casuals – can they be accommodated?
 - YES, but their activities managed by the Lab Manager



New Resources

- 4 FTEs plus O&M promised
 - Includes Lab Manager
- National “envelope” for analytical costs will be established, lowering the costs of research
- Should start (some) next FY
- Believe it when you see it.
- No interest expressed by staff from other DFO labs to move to positions here (or at IML)
- We will have some significant flexibility in how these new resources are deployed (except Lab Manager)
- We will hold off hiring until we understand the demand better



Lab Manager job and evaluation

- LEADS lab health, safety and environmental management program
- MAINTAINS and DEVELOPS QC/QA procedures and processes (with research scientists)
- IMPLEMENTS new analyses (research scientists leads)
- MANAGES Staff (assign work, training and development etc.)
- REPORTS results, sample flow, finances
- REPORTS TO Division Manager

- Not a “competitor” for research scientists



Timing – when will changes take place?

- Slower than you think!
- CH-04 job description “in the works”
- Lab manager on site – EARLIEST – summer 2006.
- Additional staff - 6 months to 2 years



Promotion Opportunities

- CH-04 competition – should be open
- No CH-03 positions
- Division of duties/responsibilities and subsequent hiring by the Lab Manager, with Section Head and Division Manager input.



Unknowns

- Size and nature of National Toxic Chemical Program in DFO
- Relationships amongst DFO, EC, CFIA and Health Canada
- Expectations for Marine Environmental Quality under the Oceans Action Plan – how much? Who does it?