

Union-Management Consultation Committee (UMCC) Meeting
Ecosystems and Oceans Science Sector (EOSS)
Room 13 W 131, 200 Kent, Ottawa
Record of Decision
Friday November 13, 2015, 10:00 pm to 3:00 pm (EST)

Participants:

Science Sector

Carmel Lowe, Regional Director Science (Pacific)
Michel C. Goguen, Director, Canadian Hydrographic Service */for* Michelle Wheatley
Regional Director, Science (Central and Arctic)
Denis Hains, Director General, Canadian Hydrographic Service and Ocean Science
(NCR)
Wayne Moore, Director General, Strategic & Regulatory Science (NCR)
Arran McPherson, Director General, Ecosystems Science
Glen Condran, Director, Strategic Business Management (NCR)
Janice Anderson, Senior Advisor, Strategic Business Management (NCR)
Yves de Lafontaine, Regional Director, Science (Québec)
Sherry Niven, Manager, Ocean and Ecosystem Sciences Division */for* Alain Vézina
Regional Director, Science (Maritimes)
Doug Bliss, Regional Director, Science (Gulf)
Barry McCallum, Regional Director, Science (Newfoundland and Labrador)

DFO Labour Relations

Marie-Claude Asselin, Senior Labour Relations Advisor (NCR)

Bargaining Agents

Thomas Landry, Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada (PIPSC)
Alain Rowlinson, Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada (PIPSC)
Daryl Hoelke, Union of Environment Workers (UEW)

Regrets:

Trevor Swerdfager, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ecosystems and Oceans Science Sector
Michelle Wheatley, Regional Director, Science (Central and Arctic)
Alain Vezina, Regional Director, Science (Maritimes)
Isabelle Petrin, Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)

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1. Welcome/Opening Remarks

Wayne Moore, Director General, Strategic and Regulatory Science advised the UMCC members that he would chair the meeting and extended regrets on behalf of the standing Chair, Trevor Swerdfager ADM, EOSS.

The Chair noted in his opening remarks that the ADM, EOSS was participating in a series of meetings and briefings in support of the new government transition. UMCC members were advised that the Prime Minister released the Ministerial Mandate Letters on the internet; copies were distributed during the meeting.

The Chair then solicited opening remarks from the bargaining agents.

PIPSC representative Thomas Landry expressed optimism that the change in government could signal positive and exciting times for science. UEW representative Daryl Hoelke hoped that the change would lead to more exposure for science and more activities for the public.

1a. Agenda Review and Approval

Prior to the approval of the agenda, PIPSC requested some discussion regarding the federal science program under the new government.

The agenda was accepted without further amendments.

1b. May 12, 2015 Record of Decision (RoD) Approval

The UEW requested easier access to final RoDs; PIPSC suggested setting up a link to the RoDs via *In the Loop*. The Chair agreed to examine the issue and committed to sharing the results.

The RoD was approved without further amendments.

ACTION ITEM(S):

- **Examine the possibility of posting the finalized RoD on *In the Loop* and share the results with bargaining agents.**

1c. Action Items

i. Performance Management Statistics

The Chair opened the discussion by advising that Performance Management results will be raised at the upcoming December 16, 2015 NUMCC meeting and that more in-depth Sector data results may be made available at that time.

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The Chair noted that overall, the Science Sector had a year-end (2014-15) Performance Management national completion rate of approximately 84%, compared to DFO at 77%. At mid-year 2015-16, EOS currently shows completion rate of approximately 61% compared to DFO at approximately 78%. The Chair noted that the field season could be a factor in the mid-year results for the Sector. He also advised that reports have been distributed to Sectors and regions and that mid-year review panel discussions are occurring within each Sector. Further, resources and support are available to managers and employees to help them have discussions around career development, talent management, giving and receiving feedback, having difficult conversations, and other elements related to the Performance Management.

PIPSC requested more information related to learning plans, specifically, a quantitative report on the percentage of completion and an identification of reasons why there is variance.

UEW requested information on the distribution of ratings and expressed an interest in the identification of any best practices in the Sector. PIPSC reminded the committee that the Deputy Minister identified 2013-2014 as a pilot year for performance management but there has not been an assessment of the pilot to date.

The Chair concluded that some of the data available on this issue may be more qualitative than quantitative in nature, and that the Sector continues to reflect on the issues raised. The Senior Labour Relations Advisor noted the concerns raised by the bargaining agents and advised that a more in-depth briefing would take place at the upcoming NUMCC.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **The Sector will review to see if more Performance Management and Learning Plan data is available and report back.**
- **Labour relations will brief management that PIPSC noted the need for assessment of the pilot year for Performance Management**
- **Sector will review to see if data is available on the distribution of ratings and report back.**

ii. IT Support

PIPSC opened the discussion by indicating that they are receiving several complaints from their members concerning the impacts and level of service associated with the centralization of IT support at Shared Services Canada (SSC).

The Chair invited Carmel Lowe, Regional Director, Science (Pacific) and Science 2016 Stream 5 lead, to provide an overview of Stream 5 (*Information Technology*) activities to date. She acknowledged that there were some challenges with the transition to SSC, however the issues related to Shared Services Canada would be best addressed at a

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national level. Specific to the Science Sector, the committee was advised that Stream 5 of the Science 2016 Initiative was making headway by identifying ways to articulate priorities to help focus IMIT efforts and by reviewing organizational changes in the regions to address IT changes in a more manageable way. UMCC members were also advised that another proposal under consideration would be to pilot new IT initiatives in sub-units within the Sector before being rolled-out more broadly in order to minimize changes and disruptions. The RDS Pacific committed to providing more information as the process unfolds.

PIPSC expressed concern that employees are required to use equipment and technology that is slow or unresponsive to large amounts of data requirements. In order for employees to conduct the work required of them, they need to have access to more efficient equipment and technology. PIPSC highlighted that the concerns being raised are not only about plug-in software, rather there is a need for more equipment and HR support. PIPSC suggested that CS personnel are challenged when receiving service calls requests and do not feel valued in their jobs. PIPSC closed the discussion by noting that the IT transition is a much larger issue than the Science Sector scope as a number of employees are being negatively affected.

The Chair acknowledged the concerns and recommended that with respect to the issue that CS personnel are feeling under-valued, the Chair suggested that the bargaining agents could raise that discussion at the NUMCC level.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **Continue to provide updates to the bargaining agents regarding Stream 5 Information Technology progress.**
- **Bargaining agents to raise IT transition at NUMCC.**

iii. HR Processes

The Chair presented an overview of the Sector's HR data:

As of April 1, 2015, there were 1,773 employees in 7 regions across Canada. 72% of employees are indeterminate (1,276 employees). This rate is lower than the DFO average of 81% and a decrease of 1.5% compared to April 2014. 28% of EOS population is of "temporary" tenure compared to 20% DFO's workforce. This may be reflective of the project-based nature of the Sector's work. The EOS Contingent Workforce Summary National Data (as at August 2015) showed: casual employment was 187 hires; student employment was 32 hires and employment tenures less than 3 months was 14 hires while employment tenures more than 3 months was 171 hires for a total of 404 hires. Further to the unions' request on the rate of consultants use by the Sector, the Chair advised that there was a 26% decline in consultants over 5 years.

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In response to the overview, PIPSC advised that first, it is committed to driving a strong science agenda and that second, contracting out should not be a way of doing business, rather good business requires a stable workforce. Both PIPSC and UEW raised concerns about contracting out arguing that while contracting out may be cheaper in the front end, it may cost much more in the final analysis. PIPSC suggested that a cost benefit analysis may be worthwhile. The bargaining agents also wondered how many term employees were part of the sunset programs and UEW asked if terms were being considered for indeterminate positions.

The Chair noted the concerns and highlighted that approximately 50% of staff paid from B-Base programs are indeterminate employees and this statistic indicates the Sector is currently adopting a risk-based approach to staffing and is committed to building a strong and stable science organization. The Chair also added that determinate staff was needed to support the project nature of the Sector's programs. The Chair concluded the discussion by noting that the department is under pressure to reduce reliance on temporary help.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **The Sector will review data to determine if it is possible to identify how much of the 28% determinate staff is funded from B-Base sources.**
- **The Sector will provide information about consulting and Temporary Help Expenditures.**

iv. 2014 PSES Results

The Chair opened the discussion by reminding members that at the last UMCC meeting, the 2014 PSES results were shared for discussion. Members were advised that management made the decision to incorporate proposed PSES activities or recommendations into a number of the Science 2016 initiatives to ensure a national theme-focused and coordinated Sector response to workplace concerns.

PIPSC responded to the overview by noting the importance of including the bargaining agents in the PSES review process as a positive strategy to improve participation. PIPSC expressed concerns that the survey results are not accurate as many Sector employees chose to not participate and that employees needed assurances they would be supported and protected. PIPSC referenced DFO's higher rates of harassment compared to public service wide data and recommended the notion of a liberated steward fully available to employees as a best practice to support responses to the 2014 PSES results. PIPSC representative Alan Rowlinson raised concerns about the absence of a concrete PSES action plan and that there appeared to be little employee engagement and no apparent change in the issues that were raised. UEW advised that a targeted action plan was required to address employee concerns. The unions requested a status report regarding of the departmental PSES action plan.

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Denis Hains, Director General, Canadian Hydrographic and Oceanographic Services advised bargaining agents that CHS had developed specific action plans in response to the PSES survey, for example, CHS held several meetings to discuss the PSES first, between employees without managers present and, second, managers met with a facilitator. It was acknowledged that in the past the action plans were too high level and diluted and therefore did not help to address issues raised by the survey.

The Chair noted the concerns and advised that a more detailed discussion should also be held at the upcoming NUMCC meeting. UMCC members were also told that the ADM, EOS and Jeffery Hutchinson, Canadian Coast Guard Deputy Commissioner are the Co-Champions of the *Wellness and Respectful Workplace Initiative* and there would be opportunities to provide leadership in addressing the issues related to stress, mental health, and harassment in the workplace.

The Chair agreed with the bargaining agents that it would be beneficial to hold a meeting to focus solely on PSES issues.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **The Chair will discuss with bargaining agents opportunities for more focused meetings related to the 2014 PSES results and actions.**

v. Progress on B17

The Chair opened the meeting by advising members that the OCCOE has completed 11 of the 17 of the required re-classifications. With respect to the 6 outstanding positions, the Sector is waiting for one of the four new Data Management Models to be finalized. The Chair also shared that a meeting would be held with the OCCOE to discuss progress with B17. He concluded the update by acknowledging that while the process was long, it was coming to a conclusion as several letters were being issued to the incumbents.

The bargaining agents did not have any further comments or questions regarding this issue.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **None.**

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vi. Wellness and Respectful Workplace Initiative¹

The Chair provided a brief overview regarding the *Wellness and Respectful Workplace Initiative* noting that at the upcoming December 16, 2015 NUMCC, bargaining agents would be briefed fully on the proposed action plan and the top three proposed priorities:

- a) Mental Health
- b) Respectful Workplace
- c) Governance and Leadership

The Chair again noted that Jeffery Hutchinson, Canadian Coast Guard Deputy Commissioner was nominated to be the new Co-Champion of the *Wellness and Respectful Workplace Initiative* replacing Michel Vermette, Canadian Coast Guard Deputy Commissioner. The Chair then proposed that this agenda item be tabled until the ADM, EOSS was in attendance at which point a more thorough briefing could be offered. All bargaining agents were in agreement.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **The ADM-EOS will facilitate a discussion at the next UMCC.**

New Business

2a. Vehicle Use When in the Field

The Chair invited invited UEW to open the discussion with their concerns or questions about the policy.

The UEW indicated that this issue was raised at the CFO UMCC and that they understood the policy was being revised. The UEW clarified that the issue was being raised in this forum because of questions from a member working in EOS about a proposed form associated with field work. UEW asked if a notice had gone out to Science Sector employees.

¹ The *Wellness and Respectful Workplace Initiative* proposal was revised based on feedback from a November 26, 2015 Departmental Management Committee (DMC) two-day retreat in Ottawa. The revised proposal was presented and approved as the *Respectful Workplace Initiative* at both the December 15, 2015 DMC meeting and the December 16, 2015 National Union Management Consultation Committee (NUMCC) on December 16, 2015. A Respectful Workplace Steering Committee will be initiated in early 2016; committee members will determine the priorities and actions required to address issues related to respect in the workplace and harassment, among other issues, based on a closer review of the 2014 PSES results and further consultation with employees, as appropriate.

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The Chair and Director, Strategic Business Management, advised members that a notice had not yet gone out to Science Sector employees. The CFO is updating and revising the policy on vehicle usage, and will keep the bargaining agents engaged throughout the policy revision process.

The Chair offered to revisit the issue once more, if needed.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **None.**

2b. Lab Space Usage

The bargaining agents were invited to open the discussion on this issue. UEW asked for more information about the lab consolidation progress, particularly as it pertained to Winnipeg.

The Chair responded that DFO is currently seeking a co-location agreement with Environment Canada in Winnipeg. Broadly speaking, he noted the value of sharing lab space as it provided an opportunity for better collaboration and improved science culture. He confirmed that going forward; Science will support more collaboration in buildings and more lab consolidation.

The Chair then shared that the objective of Science 2016 Stream 4 (*Utilization of Assets*) is to improve the ability of the Sector to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its portfolio of tangible assets. As part of the lab inventory, the associated utilization rates and surplus capacity at the regional science institutes was identified (frequency and number of work stations used). Current work is focused on determining opportunities to increase utilization on laboratories with a utilization rate under 30%, and the Sector will conduct a regional challenge process to develop options for space with low utilization. The focus is on laboratory space optimization and there was an acknowledgement that lab use varies by the nature of the seasonal work involved. The Chair concluded his overview by soliciting more ideas regarding better lab space usage.

The UEW and PIPSC advised that a strong communications plan would help members to understand why the project is unfolding in a particular direction.

The Chair agreed that there is an opportunity to improve communication with both bargaining agents and employees.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **Review a communication approach to share information about the lab space usage.**

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2c. B-Base Program

PIPSC began the discussion by noting that if new funding is coming to the Sector, it should come as permanent funding and not B-Base (temporary) funding and highlighted the need for long term funding to improve long-term monitoring capacity. PIPSC further noted that experience with B-Base funding models should be reviewed; and that the preparation process to access B-base funds does not guarantee success and therefore is not a productive use of scientists' time.

The Chair noted that the Sector would welcome input to help argue for long term permanent funding. The Chair also reflected that it is anticipated that there will be more stability in the science budgets in the future; it appears the period of on-going reductions and freezes, which could alter risk management approaches, may be ending.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **None.**

3a. Science 2016 Initiative

The Chair provided a brief overview of Science 2016 progress, noting that several initiatives are well underway; however some progress is taking place faster than others. He noted on-going work on the IT and Labs Space project and more work will continue over the fall and winter months. It was noted that there was a commitment to conclude Science 2016. He agreed that there is an opportunity to improve communication on all the initiatives, but employees are being engaged throughout the process, specifically, several surveys have been initiated subsequent to the launch of Science 2016.

PIPSC requested a meeting with management prior to the close of Science 2016 being communicated to employees.

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **The Chair will seek an opportunity to meet with PIPSC prior to the close of Science 2016 being communicated to employees.**

Roundtable and Adjournment

4. Summary, Next UMCC Meeting

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The Chair made 2 announcements:

- 1) The National SE RES Career Progression Committee Meeting will be held March 16 & 17, 2016.
- 2) The 2014 DFO Outstanding Scientific Paper of the Year Award was launched and a decision would be announced shortly.

The Chair noted the 2016 NUMCC is set for May 12, 2016 and the Sector UMCC will be held 4 weeks prior to the NUMCC; a tentative date of Wednesday April 13, 2016 is proposed.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking members for their attendance and participation and committed to reviewing the possibility of coordinating a separate meeting schedule with the bargaining agents to discuss key issues which require more time.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

ACTION ITEMS(s):

- **UMCC spring date: Wednesday April 13, 2016.**