

Oceans and Coasts Network - Canada (OCN-Canada) VISION STATEMENT

Purpose

Oceans and coasts are of significance to all regions of Canada and fulfill important economic, social, and environment roles. Canada has the world's longest ocean coastline with extensive coasts on the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic oceans (243,792 km.). In addition, it has the world's longest fresh water coastline. This includes twelve lakes with over 5,000 square kilometres, including the five Great Lakes, Great Bear Lake, Great Slave Lake, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Athabaska, Reindeer Lake, Lake Nettilling and Lake Winnipegosis. Over 90 percent of the population of Canada lives in a coastline community.

Given the significance of oceans and coastlines to all aspects of Canadian life and well-being, it is important to have a concentrated research and policy focus that reflects both the role that oceans and coasts play in Canada, and also monitors those social, economic, policy and environmental processes that affect the well-being of our oceans and coasts.

Several organizations exist at present in Canada with overlapping mandates related to research and the monitoring of policy initiatives related to Canada's oceans and coasts (see Appendix A). However, their efforts remain fragmented and largely uncoordinated. Oceans and Coasts Network Canada (OCN-Canada) is envisioned to provide a forum directed toward: (i) establishing greater communication among and across our Network memberships; and, (ii) achieving enhanced unity of purpose and direction within the context of our respective and overlapping mandates.

Common ground

On March 18-19, 2010 representatives of several oceans and coast focused organizations met in Ottawa in a 'Oceans and Coasts Networks Summit' (see Appendix A for list of participants) to discuss the issues currently confronting them, including overlapping mandates, the current funding climate, government relationships and dependence on Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the niche recognition of each Network, and the changing future we see for ocean and coasts networks in Canada in the context of recent developments in government policy, budgets, and governance restructuring both federally and provincially.

These various Networks in Canada and their memberships are characterized by:

- A concern for Canada's ocean and coastal environments as identified above.
- A mandate for networking among disparate interests, fields, and expertise.

- Interdisciplinary approaches combining natural sciences, social sciences, engineering and technology development that is designed, in considerable part, to address gaps in government capacity and in response to existing enabling legislation
- A concern with engaging and building oceans expertise and capacity among: youth, students, aboriginal peoples, communities, industry, and multiple levels of governments, including federal, provincial, and municipal government.
- Providing for a for policy relevant discussion and deliberation relevant to oceans and coastal issue.
- An interest in showcasing Canadian expertise and leadership in oceans and coastal science across a wide range of social scientific, scientific and technical disciplines and expertise.
- Providing a focal point for the integration of local, regional, national, and international initiatives.

The primary conclusion stemming from this meeting was the agreed upon need for coastal and oceans related groups to work more closely together as a ‘network of networks’. OCN–Canada is seen as fulfilling this role.

Our Environment and Our Reality

Ocean and coastal networks in Canada already have numerous informal ties with often overlapping membership. Each network tends to have specific geographic and disciplinary focus, but all have a common desire to have a more active consultative and/or research role in the formulation of policy and decision-making with regard to the pursuit of ocean and coastal issues and activities. All existing networks have a strong interest in the perseverance of environmental integrity and the maintenance of communities that derive a significant part of their economic activity from ocean and coastal pursuits. These organizations also have strong expertise and interest in a range of other issues, including aboriginal rights, and governance and legal mandates around access to oceans and coastal resources. Most of these organizations exercise their mandates in different ways and means, and generally around niche and relevant topics, e.g., the human dimension, local coastal communities, oceans industries, oceans science and technology, oceans information systems, training and development.

Five realities underlie all existing coastal and ocean organizations:

- (1) They do not ‘speak for the oceans and coasts’ with a single, strong, and consensual national “voice”.
- (2) They are finding it increasingly difficult to survive, especially in times of fiscal restraint, due to the limited opportunities for targeted funding by government.
- (3) The opportunities to achieve the potential benefits from active collaboration with the various oceans and coasts networks is not being well utilized by those departments and agencies with primary mandates related to ocean and coastal issues. This is complicated by the ongoing and shifting political landscape, by the difficulties in interpreting governmental priorities, and by the relatively low-priority position of ocean and coastal

- issues in some of these federal departments which themselves have overlapping mandates related to ocean and coastal management (notably Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Environment Canada; Parks Canada; Natural Resources Canada).
- (4) There is a reluctance by some regulatory agencies to recognize the contribution possible from adopting an interdisciplinary perspective that embraces all branches of social science in a balanced approach to formulating research and policy. This, despite the fact that Canada's Ocean Act and several other relevant policy documents frame ocean and coastal issues in terms of a panarchy of ecological, institutional, and social priorities.
 - (5) The fragmentation of ocean and coastal networks has generally hampered their potential and deliver a joint and regular 'product' that is recognizable evidence of their united capacity, and the combined strength of their expertise and insights> This lack of a "product" effectively reduces the visibility and influence of all coastal and ocean networks, singularly or in combination.

The OCN-Canada Policy Briefs

In response to the realities of overlapping and competing mandates and the other issues just previously outlined, representatives of the organizations attending the March 18-20, 2010 'Oceans and Coasts Networks Summit' unanimously endorsed the development and regular dissemination of an *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* program.

This is envisaged as a position paper, policy brief, or policy editorial of from 5 to 10 pages, to be disseminated regularly (e.g., six times per year). These documents will be written by an individual or team, recognized as expert to comment on ocean and coastal relevant issues. As much as possible, these documents will be written by members of one or more of the supporting networks, though they are not required to support any position taken by any of the supporting networks. The procedures for identifying and selecting such persons are outlined below. However, fundamental to the process is a 'management committee' of representatives from the partner networks.

These policy briefs will reflect the knowledge and views of their author or authors and not any one network. However, they will be subject to review and comment by members of the various networks before they are disseminated. It is emphasized that this review will not require the author(s) of any policy brief to alter their fundamental position. However, issues raised through the review process may lead to the author(s) to sharpen their analysis. Also, in the interests of open debate on policy issues related to oceans and coasts, these documents may also include both supporting and questioning commentary by the members of the supporting networks.

The *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* are intended to address fundamental policy issues. While they may be polemical in format, all arguments must be grounded in and consistent with current empirical evidence, unless they wish to directly challenge the validity of that evidence.

Structure of a Policy Brief

While the format of the *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* is still open to discussion and adjustment and will undoubtedly develop and change over time, the following is intended as a statement that encapsulates the general format being envisaged:

The policy brief is a document of approximately 5-10 pages written by an expert or co-authored by a team of experts from within the broad membership of each Coasts and Ocean Network that presents a position piece on a defined topic of relevance to oceans and coasts. The policy brief document includes:

- (1) *The Problem Statement (1 page maximum)*: presentation of the relevant issue in ocean and coastal policy
- (2) *The Opinion (4 pages maximum)*: logically supported statement of innovative and critical thinking on policy alternatives with respect to (1)
- (3) *The Resources (1 pages maximum)*: references, web page sources, working papers, other information as supporting documentation for the Opinion
- (4) *The Recommendations and Follow-up (1 page maximum)*: a concise statement of the related, feasible research initiatives, including meetings among governments, communities, and industries, as well as information and training workshops designed to support the extension and application of the expressed Opinion.

A list of initial policy briefs topics were produced in the *OMRN 2009 National Conference Post-Conference Synthesis Summary Report* (see Appendix B for list of topics).

The Policy Deliverable Process

The policy deliverable process proceeds once topics and authors have been identified. The following steps are described for the preparation of the *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* deliverable document as part of a regular and continuing series:

- (1) *Initial assignment and preparation (1 month)*: It is anticipated that 1 month is sufficient for authors, once a topic has been identified, to produce the draft deliverable for review within OCN-Canada.
- (2) *Review and Editing (2 weeks)*: Selected reviewers (which may include the entire OCN-Canada membership) within the OCN-Canada collective are requested to provide feedback to the author(s) on the initial draft document submitted for review. The selected reviewers (chosen in part from names suggested at submission by the authors of the Opinion) reserve the right to return the Opinion to the authors for clarification and re-writing as deemed required.
- (3) *Endorsement (2 weeks)*: Representatives from individual Ocean and Coast Networks are asked to edit and acknowledge the work of the author(s); an endorsement means that the policy brief will be posted to the endorsing OCN-Canada organization's website and that the endorsing organization's icon appears on the document.

- (4) *Delivery and Dissemination (2 weeks)*: In addition to posting the endorsed document to their website, each endorsing OCN-Canada organization is asked prepare limited print copies, as resources permit (using in a unified style to be established), for dissemination to ranking clients in government, industry, communities, and institutions designated as the targeted audience for the *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* series. It is anticipated that funding for printing, translation, and distribution (mail outs) can be readily obtained through the generous contribution of institutional support for research. Note: the *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* series is authored by the contributing individuals or groups of individuals who retain “ownership” of their Opinions. OCN-Canada endorsement does not imply that the entire memberships of the OCN-Canada organizations support the Opinion expressed, and in fact, it is anticipated – and healthy – that alternative Opinions are expressed and endorsed as evidence of the richness and variety within the membership of the OCN-Canada collective. Rather, endorsing logical alternative views is evidence of the “honest broker” position staked out by the collective OCN-Canada as characteristic of all oceans and coasts networks.

Appendix A

OCN-Canada Members

List of OCN-Canada member organizations that form the collective responsible for the management and dissemination of the *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs*:



www.oneocean.ca



www.czca-azcc.org



www.marinebiodiversity.ca/CHONE



www.ostp-psto.ca



www.aczisc.dal.ca



www.omrn-rrgo.ca



www.internationaloceaninstitute.dal.ca

Canadian Coastal Science And Engineering Association (CCSEA)

Appendix B

Policy Briefs – Initial Series

The table below is taken from the *OMRN 2009 National Conference Post-Conference Synthesis Summary Report* and represents the initial series of policy topics for which *OCN-Canada Policy Briefs* draft documents are being solicited. For additional topics, see the *Workshop Backgrounders Online Collection*¹ generated at the OMRN 2003 National Conference² (thanks to Mr. Rod Dobell for reminding us of this collection). These topics do not preclude the contribution of other submissions by interested parties.

Topic	Title	Description	Source Information
1	<i>Political Will</i>	Evidence of low priority of oceans and coasts on the political agenda; the high level political commitment to carry out declared policy often inevitably displaced by other concerns; planning processes too long, need to be more efficient in order to capture momentum, e.g. BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, summer of 2010.	2009 OMRN Conference; BP Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill
2	<i>Coastal and Oceans Governance</i>	Canada's governance systems for oceans and coasts are inadequate; stakeholder involvement, a key element of integrated management, has not progressed beyond a consultative contribution; oceans and coastal governance cannot be effectively managed under centralized government regulatory control.	FAO, OECD, 2003 through 2009 OMRN Conferences
3	<i>The Land-Sea Interface</i>	Renewed focus on the land-sea interface required; LOMAs need to be brought "on shore", and coastal vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies need to be made an integral part of integrated management planning; call for new spatial management units with local jurisdiction and responsibility and directed at coastal communities, and all stakeholders.	LOMAs, Coastal COE, 2009 OMRN Conference; 2010 CZCA Conference
4	<i>Marine Spatial Planning and Oceans Zoning</i>	Management plans defining relevant marine and coastal "space" required; communities and stakeholders need to be directly linked to the design and delivery of spatial management plans with an active, responsible and authoritative voice toward incorporating the local context and reflecting local management.	Special Issue publication pending; DFO Workshops; 2009 OMRN Conference
5	<i>Role of Governments in Coastal & Marine Mgmt</i>	Global evidence abounds -governments have been unable to ensure the commons are sustainable; Ostrom's Nobel Prize in 2009 has shown us that command and control is not necessarily effective, that diverse local initiatives are better.	OECD, New Zealand NIWA and SeaFIC, IOI-Canada, Ostrom's Nobel Prize

¹ Link to *Workshop Backgrounders Online Collection*: www.maritimeawards.ca/OMRN/

² Link to OMRN 2003 National Conference webpage: www.omrn-rrgo.ca/index.php?action=conferences_2003.index