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*Your file* *Votre référence*

OCT 18 2011

*Our file* *Notre référence*  
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Dear IOAC members,

Thank you for your letter of September 23, 2011 requesting further information about a revised plan for the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA). Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) recognizes the value of the Integrated Oceans Advisory Committee's (IOAC) contribution to date. This includes your input to the development of a framework for an ecosystem-based approach to management, which will continue to provide guidance as we develop further elements of a draft plan. We have also appreciated the perspectives you have shared in a constructive way on what an effective planning process means to you. It has been our experience that when IOAC members have worked together to develop advice that accommodates the diversity of stakeholder interests around the table, the outputs have played a central role in shaping draft components of the plan.

As DFO described in the recent September 14-15, 2011 IOAC meeting, we intend to maintain our collaborative governance arrangements with First Nations, the Province of British Columbia, and other federal agencies. Accordingly, DFO is currently completing a revised work plan for the PNCIMA planning process for discussion with its collaborative governance partners. This work plan will address many of the points in your letter, as well as feedback that many of you have provided at other points, including: revised meeting schedules and budgets for engagement mechanisms; provisions for drawing on the best available science, conducting technical analyses, and integrating marine protected area network planning. You can find a draft summary of this work plan attached as Appendix 1. We also acknowledge the utility of describing the relationship of the revised work plan to our previous work plan, and will provide a description of this for the IOAC following discussion with our collaborative governance partners.

Moving forward, DFO envisions a planning process that continues to provide meaningful opportunities for stakeholder input to the development of the plan. We envision achieving this objective through the ongoing application of the PNCIMA engagement strategy (see Appendix 2). This will include continued work with the IOAC and the use of Sub-Regional Advisory Forums to solicit broader public input at key stages of the process, workshops to address key issues or questions, and participation in related sectoral advisory processes. We will draw on these engagement mechanisms to provide information and advice to support the development of a more focused plan using government resources, focused at the PNCIMA large ocean management area level.

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Further to your letter's points about the need for credible science, we will draw on the significant science work done to date for PNCIMA which has synthesized contributions from a broad range of experts. Examples of this work include the comprehensive PNCIMA Ecosystem Overview Report and the identification of ecologically and biologically significant areas – products both informed by contributions from a diversity of scientific experts. We also recognize the opportunity to draw on the work and knowledge of others to complement these products. As we move ahead, we would like to continue inviting expert input to inform the planning products we develop through workshops on key scientific and technical elements of the plan. Experts identified by the IOAC and Selection Panel for the Marine Technical Advisory Team will be invited to participate in these workshops. This approach to ensuring an integrated management plan informed by credible science and the best available information is guided by several key considerations: respect for a variety of types and sources of information, transparency, efficiency, feasibility, and providing integrated opportunities for both third-party expert advice and advice from experienced stakeholders.

Honouring our commitment to the current timeline of completing a draft plan for December 2012 is important for several reasons. It will ensure that our work in the PNCIMA planning process is well-positioned to align with related marine planning initiatives such as Canada-BC marine protected area network planning. It will also provide the clarity and predictability that are important for all parties in planning their participation in the process, and allow us to move efficiently into the work of implementing the plan. A strategy for sustaining implementation efforts over the long term and adapting to what we learn will be a key part of the work we do to develop the plan over the next year.

The Department is proposing to hold an IOAC meeting in Vancouver on Nov 30 - Dec 1, 2011. We will be polling you to find the dates that work for the greatest number of people. In this meeting, we anticipate outlining our workplan for a revised integrated management plan and undertaking a joint assessment of proceeding with a cooperative problem solving approach.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and contribution to PNCIMA planning process.

Yours sincerely,



Bonnie Antcliffe  
Regional Director Ecosystem Management Branch  
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