

Natural Resources Canada
Departmental Labour-Management Consultation Committee Minutes
April 23, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Video Conference

Chair and Co-Chair

Julie Jobin, Chair, CAPE
Jean-François Tremblay, Co-Chair, Deputy Minister

NRCan Membership

Shawn Tupper, Associate Deputy Minister
Frank Des Rosiers, ADM-SPIS
Jeff Labonté, ADM-LMS
Drew Leyburne, ADM-ETS
Glenn Hargrove, ADM-TMX
Jeannine Ritchot, ADM-CPS
Vik Pant, Chief Scientist, OCS
Mollie Johnson, ADM-LCES
Michel Gould, CAE, AEB
Shirley Carruthers, ADM-CMSS and CFO
Beth MacNeil, ADM-CFS
Heather Beaton, General Counsel & Executive Director, Legal Services
Anne Casault, CHRO, CMSS
Catherine Désormeaux-Dufour, Director, WMW-HRB-CMSS

Bargaining Agent Membership

Ann Therriault, President, PIPSC NRCan National Consultation Team
Michael Sargent, RVP transitional, PSAC-UCTE
Shimen Fayad, National President, PSAC-UHEW

Special Guest

Trudy Samuel, Director, DMO Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Regrets

Angie Bruce, DG-IARS
Paul Cameron, Business Manager, IBEW
Ming Mei Pan, ACFO Representative
Grant Boland, Labour Relations Advisor, ACFO
Amandeep Garcha, Local President, CAPE

Recording Secretary

Denis Gosselin, Senior Labour Relations Advisor, WMW-HRB-CMSS

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACFO	Association of Canadian Financial Officers
ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
AEB	Audit and Evaluation Branch
CAE	Chief Audit and Evaluation
CAPE	Canadian Association of Professional Employees
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFS	Canadian Forest Service
CHRO	Chief Human Resources Officer
CIOSB	Chief Information Officer and Security Branch
CMSS	Corporate Management and Services Sector
CPS	Communications and Portfolio Sector
DG	Director General
DLMCC	Departmental Labour-Management Consultation Committee
DMA	Associate Deputy Minister
DM	Deputy Minister
ETS	Energy Technology Sector
HRB	Human Resources Branch
IARS	Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation Sector
IBEW	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
LCE	Low Carbon Energy
LMS	Lands and Minerals Sector
LS	Legal Services
MPMO	Major Projects Management Office
NRCan	Natural Resources Canada
OCS	Office of the Chief Scientist
PCO	Privy Council Office
PIPSC	Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada
PPT	PowerPoint
PSAC	Public Service Alliance of Canada
RDG	Regional Director General
SPIS	Strategic Policy and Innovation Sector
SPPIO	Strategic Petroleum Policy and Investment Office
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
TMX	Trans Mountain Expansion
ToRs	Terms of References
UCTE	Union of Canadian Transportation Employees
UHEW	Union of Health and Environment Workers
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WMW	Workplace Management and Well-being

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1.	<p>Introductory Comments and Approval of Agenda and Minutes</p> <p>Julie Jobin, as Chair, welcomed participants to the meeting. She asked members to introduce themselves. She then moved to support the minutes and agenda, which were approved.</p>	
2.	<p>Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Julie Jobin asked Trudy Samuel, DMO Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), to present the topic of Diversity and Inclusion. Trudy Samuel explained that her role was to develop an enabling framework with concrete actions to improve Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) for NRCan, develop programs and policies that are inclusive in design and result in positive social benefits for vulnerable communities and under-represented groups.</p> <p>Trudy Samuel then set out their eight (8) guiding principles, including creating a culture of safety, establishing strong evidence base, embracing “nothing about us, without us” and embedding D&I into NRCan’s DNA. Expected outcomes were threefold: to change the culture (build a culture of inclusiveness), reflect diversity and promote inclusion and update policy and programs (ensure they are inclusive and free of systemic racism and barriers). Five pillars were identified: addressing the data challenge, looking inward (with partners for real actions), looking outward: NR Sector Workforce, Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and applying a complete lens.</p> <p>The Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion reports to the DMA and works with the Senior Management Committee to, among other things, establish and implement a departmental plan and D&I governance. The Office is linked to an advisory team and employee networks. It has a number of key deliverables, including the development of a departmental D&I action plan and provision of logistical and facilitation support to mobilize sectors and employee networks.</p> <p>Anne Casault then reviewed the six (6) NRCan Workforce pillars. The first one was HR data, involving the development and maintenance of EE data collection (self-ID) and reporting standard to support evidence-based decisions on workforce programs and services. A second pillar involves</p>	

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	<p>the continuous enablement of employee networks and communities to fulfill their respective mandates. A Secretariat within Human Resources (HR) is being set up. A third pillar includes the development and delivery of D&I guidance and tools for staffing. A talent acquisition program has been developed and will be ready shortly for input.</p> <p>A fourth pillar involves learning, leadership and development. The focus will be on bringing people in, giving employees experience, ensuring they are thriving with a great deal of focus on leadership and development. A fifth pillar concerns a review and update of the Onboarding Program to incorporate Future of Work and Diversity and Inclusion perspectives. The sixth pillar focuses on looking at removing barriers in the Official Languages Program.</p> <p>Trudy Samuel informed that the next step is to socialize the framework and identify Sector leads. The Department is in the early days yet and it is time to shape meaningful communication.</p> <p>Ann Therriault spoke of her experience with self-identification. There has been difficulty with self-identification of staff and indicated the need to get employees confident to self-identify. With respect to employees' networks, they started in 2001, with most having 'advisory' as titles. There were many committees and many people were involved in several of them. She recommended that these types of activities be captured in the Public Service Performance Management (PSPM). The unions had sat on an Advisory Committee but Ms. Samuel's office is a Centre of Expertise set up to leverage, so how can the unions be engaged in the pillars?</p> <p>Anne Casault agreed with Ms. Therriault that we need an engagement strategy for the Department, on why it is important to know the reasons for self-identification.</p> <p>Trudy Samuel indicated that it is an issue of bringing humanity to the workplace. The focus is needed on middle management to bring humanity to the workplace. Her office is preparing case studies on racism and exclusion affecting people.</p> <p>Jean-François Tremblay thanked Ann Therriault and indicated that we need all levels involved and a change of culture in the Department and the Public Service. For both he and Shawn Tupper, Diversity and Inclusion and Mental Health are at the top of their agenda – the how we behave and work together. We need to start at all levels to move forward.</p>	

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	<p>Jeff Labonté then addressed the Committee about the STEM the Gap Program. A small team of women in the Lands and Minerals Sector (LMS) conceived and successfully piloted STEM the Gap with seed funding from the LMS Innovation Fund. The program expedites the re-entry of women and Indigenous Peoples into STEM careers following an absence of five or more years from the workforce. The pilot launched in February 2019 and received 135 applications from an outreach campaign leveraging informal networks.</p> <p>The STEM the Gap program, ultimately, hired four participants from across Canada, in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador. Participants were given flexibility to remain in their home communities.</p> <p>Each participant completed a one-year term at Level 2 of the Physical Science classification that began with participation in the NRCan Science-Policy Boot Camp. They moved through two six-month placements, one in policy and one in science, in order to build science-policy integration and linkages across branches. In all four cases, the participants were able to extend their term contracts outside the program.</p> <p>Ann Therriault indicated that the team had reached out to her at the beginning of the program. She informed that a professor at the University of Ottawa (Ruby Heap) was looking at the issue of bringing people in mid-career and that it would be worth consulting with her.</p>	
3.	<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Ann Therriault shared with the Committee her personal experience with depression and some of the strategies and tips that she learned to combat depression and on how to take care of ourselves.</p> <p>She indicated that ADMs need to see themselves as role models and to take small breaks to show employees it is important to take time out for one's self. She spoke of a technique she used in order to address the need to take care of yourself: CAARR (Check in (on you); Acknowledge and Allow your feeling and see what unfulfilled need(s) it or they may be associated with; Release that feeling; and see if there is a reasonable Request to self or other(s) to fulfill the need(s).</p> <p>Workspace has changed and behaviours need to change also. We need to be frank on how we feel. Illness starts with "I", but replace the "I" with "We" and it becomes "W"ellness.</p>	

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	<p>Jean-François Tremblay stated that it was a question of not denying, but to share amongst us. We need to find best practices and exercise good judgment to reach better solutions.</p> <p>Beth MacNeil expressed her appreciation for Ann Therriault’s presentation. She spoke of her own recent experience in modelling the type of behaviour addressed by Ms. Therriault, by travelling to her home in Nova Scotia to be with family for her own self-motivation.</p> <p>Frank Des Rosiers agreed that it goes back to talking about things openly. It used to be taboo but we must celebrate the progress that has been made. We must do it for the well-being of the team. He also recognized that employees find it hard to focus at home. Staff have to take a breather and need some space.</p> <p>Mike Sargent recalled a meeting a few years back, at 7:30-8:00 p.m. in the evening with the Deputy Minister and HR; the irony was not lost on him. This week, on three occasions, an ADM told its employees to call their bargaining agent representative. He sees light at the end of the tunnel.</p> <p>Shimen Fayad thanked Ann Therriault for her presentation and for how she speaks at venues. She reiterated what Frank Des Rosiers said about employees finding it hard to focus at home.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Updates</p> <p>a) Bill C-65</p> <p>Anne Casault related that on January 1, 2021, the new Regulation on the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention (HVP) came into force. The policies, directives and recourse mechanisms linked to harassment complaints and violence in the workplace heretofore distinct were combined into a unique recourse. The NRCan policy was made available to employees in January via an e-mail from the Deputy Minister.</p> <p>The Values, Ethics and Workplace Wellness (VEWW) team is the designated recipient for all harassment and violence complaints for the Department as well as maintaining the corresponding policies, directives, training, and processes, while the Occupational Health and Safety team will remain responsible for workplace assessments.</p> <p>Since January, there has been an uptake of questions regarding behaviour, with over 50 calls and a couple of complaints.</p>	

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	<p>Bill C-65's main pillars are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An emphasis on the prevention of violence and harassment, 2. Effective responses to notices of occurrences (complaints of harassment and violence), 3. Supporting Survivors/Victims of harassment and violence. <p>In terms of next steps, the following is being developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line form to enable anonymous filing of notices; • Renewed employee guide with more victim/survivor centred resources; • Additional tools and resources for managers and employees on domestic violence; • On-line tools to help employees identify workplace harassment and violence and be part of the solution. <p>VEWW will continue to work in collaboration with its partners, including bargaining agents, on the development of these tools and resources.</p> <p>Catherine Désormeaux-Dufour indicated that 41 consultations had taken place and that this was a positive sign. Senior management has been engaged to prevent incidents and only 1 has gone to full investigation. NRCan was part of the 50% of departments to have implemented their new Policy within the allotted timeframe.</p>	<p>Follow-up on next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-line form - Renewed Employee guide - Tools & resources on domestic violence - On-line tools (harassment & violence)
	<p>b) Future of Work</p> <p>Shirley Carruthers outlined that a lot of work has been done on a potential return to the workplace – onboarding, recruitment strategy, IT, etc. A Task Force has been set up to look at the transformation of space, science, people and culture and enablement. The group looking at the transformation of space is looking at the readiness of the Department and how far we wish to go. Audit and Evaluation has consulted with 150 people and what we are hearing so far is that employees wish to maintain flexibility to work from home and the office. The Department will look for more collaboration in workspaces. It is expected that the consultations will continue in May and by end of May, a plan will be established.</p> <p>Ann Therriault cautioned the Department about giving employees what they wish for and not what they need. Some women prefer to keep</p>	<p>Consultations on work spaces (May) and establishment of a plan</p>

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	<p>working from home and she asked whether that is good and best for them and their career progression? Would they be viewed as a different class of employees?</p> <p>Shawn Tupper indicated that this was a point of Deputy Ministers, who are engaging and talking longer term. Productivity in a hub is a concern. The Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) has had discussions on how to move forward in the future.</p>	
	<p>c) Parking</p> <p>Shirley Carruthers opened by stating that parking was an area of concern for employees. Booth Street complex now houses 257 spaces (a reduction of 70%). The Department needs more flexibility for employees, and NRCan is moving to a hybrid parking model on June 1st :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly users will be transferred to 555 Booth and CEF • 580 Booth will become a daily parking (max \$12.50/day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using an application to book, reserve and pay. <p>NRCan is investigating the establishment of a shuttle system that would connect the closest LRT station (Pimisi)/OC Transpo/STO hub in the vicinity to the Booth Street Complex. This would be established during the duration of the Trillium Line closure.</p> <p>Ann Therriault raised a question on the availability of motorcycle space and bicycle racks. Shirley Carruthers indicated that there would be space for motorcycle parking at 601 Booth Street (near the loading docks), and a cage for 75 bicycles at 580 Booth, amongst other bicycle racks in the Booth Street complex.</p>	
	<p>d) Pay</p> <p>Anne Casault indicated that she was pleased with the good relations the Department has with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), who administer the pay for NRCan.</p> <p>In February 2018, NRCan had a backlog of 11,000 cases affecting over 4,100 employees and as of February 2021, the backlog is down to 5,700 cases impacting 3,500 employees. The PSPC model is working on service standards and of the 5,700 cases:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% respect the norms of service. • 16 % are 0-45 days outside of the norms of service. • 60% are over 45 days outside of the norms of service and are considered as backlog. In 2019, PSPC presented a new HR-to-Pay Three-Year Forward Plan, outlining how best to deploy resources to resolve pay issues in the next three years. Their plan included several initiatives, such as the Backlog Reduction Strategy: • The work on Natural Resources Canada’s file started back in July 2020 and PSPC’s commitment was to close 95% of 1,987 In-scope cases, between July 2020 - March 9, 2021. • PSPC’s latest report indicates a completion rate of 71% (March 1, 2021). • NRCan expects that an extension of 3 to 4 months will be needed for PSPC to complete all in-scope cases. <p>NRCan has an active role to play in seeing that staffing files are completed on time. The # 1 cases in pay are about actings, and an OCHRO group is looking at actings.</p> <p>NRCan launched the HR to Pay timeliness initiative in the fall of 2020. As per the established OCHRO timelines, the initiative required HR actions to be entered and actioned into the system 1-10 business days prior to the effective date to decrease the likelihood of Phoenix-related issues and to ensure timely and accurate pay. Positive results were immediately obtained as NRCan went from an average of 49% of transactions completed in a timely fashion to 89%. Lots of progress has been made in 3 years, although we are not where we want to be.</p> <p>Ann Therriault spoke of problems she is having with Phoenix about getting no pay and mentioned that this was the type of problem that is affecting people’s sense of control, safety and security. We need to find a way to treat cases in a more humane fashion.</p> <p>Shimen Fayad asked whether managers received a report every Friday on employees with low or no pay, and whether managers talk to employees about this. Anne Casault informed that we do get reports when an employee is without pay for 4 weeks, and we do reach out to employees. Shimen Fayad indicated that if there is a problem at an action point, employees could come to the bargaining agent to attempt to resolve the problem at the next level.</p>	
	<p>e) Mental Health</p> <p>Anne Casault provided an update on mental health activities at NRCan.</p>	

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	<p>On January 18, 2021, the new NRCan Mental Health and Workplace Wellness Strategy 2020-23 was launched. An e-mail to all employees was sent to create awareness of this new strategy.</p> <p>In terms of capacity building, the Wellness Team has also developed, in collaboration with partners, a Manager’s Mental Health Toolkit. The Manager’s Toolkit was created to be a guide for managers when they are dealing with questions or concerns relating to topics like leadership and culture, or employee engagement and motivation, diversity and inclusion, the loss of an employee, domestic violence and so on.</p> <p>With respect to the engagement and awareness pillar, a network of ambassadors of health and well-being was launched. Amongst other things, the network will help to involve employees at the local level and assist in sharing information on well-being and NRCan programs.</p> <p>On March 17, 2021, the VEWW Team formally launched their speaker’s series named Power Up! / Atouts pour tous! with the goal to have experts speak to NRCan employees on various topics on a monthly basis. For example: in June (Men’s Health Week), in July (International Self-Care Day), in August (International Youth Day and International Overdose Awareness Day). Other topics will include grief and bereavement, eating and personality disorders, depression.</p> <p>The topic the next Mental Health Week (May 3 to 9) is <i>Let’s get real on how you feel</i> and will include a presentation from Ann Therriault who will speak to her experience with depression and Caitlin Sigg, who will speak to nutritional and personality problems.</p> <p>In terms of the third pillar, strategic alignment, NRCan is looking to align its Strategy with the Federal Public Service Workplace Mental Health Strategy; the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace; and the priorities of the Clerk of the Privy Council.</p>	<p>Launch of Manager’s Mental Health Toolkit</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Round Table</p> <p>Ann Therriault indicated her surprise that the meeting was only two (2) hours long. She asked that more than 2 hours be scheduled for future DLMCCs. She also outlined how she had been working with Vik Pant on science, including events. At the next DLMCC, they would like to share progress related to career development, knowledge transfer and sharing, and science (other aspects). She thanked Vik Pant for this work.</p>	<p>Review scheduling length for next DLMCC meetings.</p>

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	<p>Frank Des Rosiers reminded members of the budget on Monday. NRCan secured \$711 million and the broad picture for the Department was a positive one. He wished to thank all employees for their work.</p>	<p>Schedule agenda item on science at next DLMCC.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Next Meeting and Closing Remarks</p> <p>Jean-François Tremblay thanked members for the good meeting and for speaking out. He mentioned that NRCan had huge priorities and that management would continue to work hard. He recognized that NRCan staff was doing a fantastic job.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.</p>	