

Natural Resources Canada
Departmental Labour-Management Consultation Committee Minutes
December 6, 2021, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Video Conference

Chair and Co-Chair

Jean-François Tremblay, Chair, Deputy Minister (*1st half of meeting*)
Amandeep Garcha, CAPE, Chair (*2nd half of meeting*)

NRCan Membership

Frank Des Rosiers, ADM-SPIS
Jeff Labonté, ADM-LMS
Drew Leyburne, ADM-ETS
Jeannine Ritchot, ADM-CPS
Mollie Johnson, ADM-LCES
Michel Gould, CAE, AEB
Shirley Carruthers, ADM-CMSS and CFO
Beth MacNeil, ADM-CFS
Anne Casault, CHRO, CMSS
Catherine Désormeaux-Dufour, Director, WMW-HRB-CMSS

Bargaining Agent Membership

Ann Therriault, President, PIPSC NRCan National Consultation Team
Sadik Ahmad, Regional Vice-president, PSAC-UCTE
Benoît Thibault, National Vice-president, PSAC-UHEW

Special Guests

Trudy Samuel, Director, DMO Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Jérémy Emond, Director General, Real Property Workplace Services

Regrets

Glenn Hargrove, ADM-SPPIO - replaced by Nada Vraný – Director General, Petroleum Resources Branch, SPPIO
Vik Pant, Chief Scientist, OCS – replaced by Brenda Dogbey, A/Director, Strategic Policy, Governance and Communications
Heather Beaton, General Counsel and Executive Director, Legal Services
Shimen Fayad, National President, PSAC-UHEW, replaced by Benoît Thibault, National Vice-president PSAC-UHEW
Paul Cameron, Business Manager, IBEW
Ming Mei Pan, ACFO Representative
Grant Boland, Labour Relations Advisor, ACFO
Julie Jobin, Labour Relations Officer, 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
CIO SB	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

Natural Resources Canada
Departmental Labour-Management Consultation Committee Minutes
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Item	Subject	Decision / Action
1.	<p>Introductory Comments and Approval of Agenda and Minutes</p> <p>Jean-François Tremblay (DM), as Chair, welcomed participants to the meeting. He mentioned that Amandeep Garcha would chair the 2nd half of the meeting, while he chaired the first half. The DM indicated that he was impressed with the work of NRCan employees during the last six (6) months and with their resilience.</p> <p>He welcomed Sadik Ahmad as a new member of the Committee. The DM moved to support the minutes and agenda, which were approved. He then asked Shirley Carruthers to address the Future of Work agenda item.</p>	
2.	<p>Future of Work (FoW)</p> <p>Shirley Carruthers outlined the three (3) principles that have guided planning and decision-making during the pandemic: health and safety of employees; accommodating the needs of employees and families; and transparency: preparing and informing managers and employees. New guiding principles have been identified as NRCan prepares for the future and a hybrid workforce, including: serving Canadians as a first priority; equity, diversity and inclusivity; consistency and equality; and enabling science and innovation.</p> <p>Ms. Carruthers outlined that a FoW secretariat was established in June 2021, with a mandate to develop NRCan’s FoW conceptual Framework. Bi-weekly meetings have been held to provide updates on NRCan’s 4 pillars (Digital Enablement, People and Culture, Space Transformation and Science Transformation).</p> <p>A FoW survey was conducted with a return rate of 76%, well above expectations. The data will be made available on the FoW website. A series of virtual drop-in sessions were held in November, with participation at 1,600 employees. Concerns were expressed regarding telework, parking and employees in the office during the pandemic. The department is working on the questions posed by employees and a Q&A document should be posted during the next week or so.</p>	

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	<p>At 580 Booth, a space reduction exercise of 30% will account for the hybrid model and new FTE pressures. There will be a depersonalization of space and unassigned seating by design. A clean-up exercise has been launched, with a target date of end of March 2022.</p> <p>The renovation of the 3rd and 18th floor is underway and will be similar to the 15th floor but with more collaboration spaces. The demolition is planned for January 2022 with the renovations completed at the start of fall 2022.</p> <p>Parking issues have been raised. There has been a reduction of 70% during the pandemic. A parking reservation and payment application has been launched and is now required (December 1, 2021).</p> <p>In terms of re-entry, NRCan will not be in phase V until the restrictions are lifted. Phase IV should be unveiled after the holiday period, with a gradual re-entry.</p> <p>The 599 Tremblay road project is at the early stage as NRCan is working on a budget proposal to establish a project management office. Construction on the building will take place between 2023 - 2026.</p> <p>Amandeep Garcha asked for information on parking and mentioned employees have said other departments are at Phase IV. On the issue of parking, Shirley Carruthers mentioned that parking shields are being made available to NRCan employees for easy identification in their vehicles. Spaces have been identified at 555 Booth for people who have held onto parking permits. With respect to the NRCan approach to move to Phase IV, NRCan has viewed this in the context of 'flow' (e.g., 1 person in an elevator at a time). In response to a query from Benoît Thibault, Ms. Carruthers pointed out that Phase IV has not been announced to employees yet. Sadik Ahmad asked about the impact of the 30% workspace reduction on employees and Ms. Carruthers indicated that there would be accommodation of employees with special needs.</p>	
3.	<p>Updates on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</p> <p>The DM asked Trudy Samuel and Anne Casault to address this issue.</p> <p>Trudy Samuel indicated that the goal for NRCan is to imbed EDI in the ways employees work, internally, outward and supporting industry. NRCan is conducting reviews of programs and policies to make them more inclusive, updating its audit and evaluation methodology, and strengthening Gender Based Analysis+ practises. Other major deliverables include the launch of the talent acquisition strategy in</p>	

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	<p>November 2021 and the launch of an NRCan Data Repository, which has a key EDI component.</p> <p>One challenge is how NRCan can support its middle management cadre (e.g., competencies). Another challenge is some reluctance in NRCan to adopt EDI practises, specifically surrounding the work on talent acquisition. There is an unfounded fear that EDI is detrimental to employees who are not part of an underrepresented group. She asked, “How do we get employees to get involved?”</p> <p>The DM mentioned that EDI is his first priority and that changing culture is the difficult part. He stated that any comments from members on EDI would be appreciated.</p> <p>Anne Casault indicated that NRCan supports EDI and is proud of it. A talent acquisition strategy was approved by SMC in April 2021 with the goal of reducing our EE representation gaps by 50% in 2 years and completely eliminate them in 4 years. NRCan is also the first department in the federal public service to pilot a new Self-ID form developed by Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and equity seeking groups in June 2021. NRCan has renamed this exercise, the NRCan Census. This online form is much more comprehensive than previous versions and allows equity seeking subgroups to self identify based on gender identity, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The NRCan response rate is currently 42%. The Department is looking for suggestions on how it can continue to encourage employees to complete the self-identification form.</p> <p>The NRCan Sponsorship program is expected to be launched in January 2022. As part of this program, a senior leader will advocate actively on behalf of their protégé, being an active participant in their career development. Two names of employees from equity seeking groups at the EX minus one level were also provided to TBS for the recently introduced MOSAIC leadership development program. TBS will confirm by the end of December whether any of the NRCan candidates will be among the 25 chosen for this initial launch of the program.</p>	
4.	<p>Human Resources Updates</p> <p>Telework – Anne Casault outlined that NRCan is reviewing its draft telework guidelines and documents in line with recent TBS guidance. NRCan has not received any TBS guidance on when it can proceed from remote work to telework. With telework, management must be as flexible as possible. The recent employee survey will help NRCan identify the types of positions in a telework environment (part-time telework,</p>	

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	<p>full-time telework or on-site work only). International telework agreements will be approved on an exceptional basis only.</p> <p><u>Conversion</u> – NRCan is moving to the PA conversion (1600 positions) and updated generic work descriptions that more accurately reflect the type of work employees are doing and promotes pay equity. Modernizing its broadband work description with standardized work description, as a first step, will allow for more consistency across the department.</p> <p><u>Revitalizing the Manager’s community</u> – NRCan has provided a series of learning events and networking opportunities that offer support and tools for creating a safe respectful, diverse and inclusive workplace and workforce. This year, “Must Do” learning has been added to develop Indigenous cultural competencies.</p> <p><u>Talent mapping</u> - In October 2021, the Human Resources Branch introduced a proposal for talent mapping of non EX employees at all levels. This is designed to encourage conversation and dialogue about employee potential, beyond the PMA cycle. This exercise supports the identification of potential and readiness of employees, and ensures there is a repository of individuals ready to assume other responsibilities within the organization. NRCan will consult with the unions on this initiative.</p> <p><u>Recruitment opportunities from outside the NCR</u> - Broadening recruitment efforts outside of more traditional channels will also allow for the creation of a more diverse workforce while also supporting efforts to create a balance with work and life and urban and rural communities.</p> <p><u>Onboarding & retention</u> - The review of the onboarding of employees including the arrival process is at the beginning stages. A working group of various internal services employees (HR, IT, Security, Facilities, etc.) has been put together and had its first meeting on Friday November 26, 2021. The Goal / Mandate is to develop a streamlined, efficient process map for onboarding and supporting tools for hiring managers and new hires. The intent is to consult with various stakeholders: managers, employees, bargaining agents, employee networks. In addition, NRCan also wants to understand why employees are leaving. The Department will be developing an exit survey to gather in a consistent fashion key information from employees.</p> <p><u>Vaccination</u> – 98% of NRCan employees are double vaccinated. Only 18 employees are on leave without pay due to mandatory vaccination. NRCan is finalizing the review of accommodation requests through a</p>	

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	<p>Human Resources (HR) committee that has looked at requests and made recommendations to management.</p> <p>During the discussion period, Benoît Thibault suggested that the aspect of flexibility will be very important for a telework policy. With respect to onboarding, he asked that bargaining agent participation be ensured. Sadik Ahmad asked if in re-opening the work descriptions, there would be mention of telework. Anne Casault mentioned the launch of the virtual union board as a communications platform, for employees. On the issue of broadband work descriptions, they are to be less broad than before, and NRCan has not been told that telework can be included in the work descriptions.</p>	
5.	<p>Values and Ethics and Mental Health and Awareness</p> <p>After the health break, Amandeep Garcha asked Anne Casault to address this issue. She opened by outlining that in a recent exercise, senior management had nominated four Mental Health and Values and Ethics Champions. The team had met with the Champions on October 8 and 12, 2021 to discuss the roles and responsibilities. The Champions are as follows :</p> <p>Values and Ethics Co-Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mike Norton, DG, CFS ○ Sonia Talwar, Director, LMS <p>Mental Health Co-Champions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daniel Lebel, DG, LMS ○ Jean Gagnon, DG, LMS ○ Ann Therriault, PIPSC <p>The Mental Health Strategy has three (3) key pillars. In terms of the first pillar (Capacity Building), a Manager’s Mental Health Toolkit was made accessible on The Source on September 17th. Interactive information sessions on the toolkit will be held in January/February 2022. In terms of the 2nd pillar (Engagement and Awareness), NRCan has over 60 ambassadors across all sectors. One issue is that nobody wishes to take the lead in the sectors. Some sectors have working groups, others not. It would be helpful if ADMs appointed a lead ambassador for their sector, who would regularly brief the ADM and work with the co-chair.</p> <p>Since October 1st, NRCan has signed a partnership agreement with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, to offer a platform which offers a variety of expert speakers on various subjects related to mental health. Five difference sessions were held during Mental Health Week with only 54 attendees from NRCan. Anne Casault</p>	

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	<p>asked, “How do we help promote these sessions more in NRCan?”</p> <p>On the issue of ambassadors, Ann Therriault mentioned that she met with Daniel Lebel and Jean Gagnon and that they would have recommendations for the ADMs on lead ambassadors. Ambassadors will meet every three (3) months, with the core group every month. She recognized the poor participation of NRCan employees on mental health sessions and believes it is the culture of the department that must be changed to better promote wellness initiatives.</p> <p>Amandeep Garcha remarked that we may need to task wellness (mandatory training) as a prerequisite to changing culture. Benoît Thibault spoke of the Joint Learning Program, which by next spring, should be doing face-to-face sessions in the workplace. Mollie Johnson suggested that we have a focus on issues during the next 12 months, for example, how to tackle ‘uncertainties.’ Ann Therriault indicated that taking regular short breaks (e.g., 10-minute buffers between meetings; 2-3 minutes of deep breathing or silence) would help to improve mental health.</p> <p>The DM expressed his concern about the problem in NRCan regarding participation, and asked what else can we do to improve it? Perhaps targeted issues maybe a solution. He would be more than pleased to help and to look at other solutions to unlock discussion in NRCan.</p> <p>Jeannine Ritchot indicated that her team had leverage on platforms to get things out. For example, a powerful message would be the Minister needs time in the morning for a workout; also talk about the cycling of the DM. Amandeep supported the notion of leading by example – as a narrative. Ann Therriault suggested that we have to realize the bad habits we have created in working at home, and need to carve out a routine that makes us healthy, even if short Mental Health breaks each day.</p>	<p>Next Steps: Recommendations to ADMs on lead ambassadors and decisions.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Update on Pay</p> <p>Amandeep Garcha asked Anne Casault to provide an update on pay.</p> <p>Anne Casault outlined that throughout the last 6 months, the average backlog in the queue was 66%. While it appears that the backlog is not reducing, some backlog cases are being closed, while at the same time, new cases that are not closed within service standard do end up falling in the backlog category. The Pay Centre works primarily on the intake to achieve their goal that « new does not become old.» Every pay period, backlog continues.</p>	

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	<p>In terms of the Backlog Reduction Progress, Public Service and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) latest progress report indicates 97% completion rate as of September 7, 2021 (1,750 completed out of 1,809). In terms of transactions in the queue, NRCan needs managers' involvement on some of them to inform pay in a timely manner (e.g., terminations; return from leave; actings).</p> <p>NRCan receives reports from PSPC on outstanding transactions as well as exceptions in the time and labour module that need to be addressed by S.34 managers. NRCan can therefore go to managers on outstanding items to have them addressed. An escalation process has been put in place whereby any transaction that has been in the queue for more than one pay period, will be sent to s.34 to address. If transactions continue to stay in the queue for a period of more than 42 days, this will be escalated to senior management.</p> <p>On the Moratorium on Leave Cash-Out, Anne Casault pointed out that some employees have one year of cash-out coming to them. Employees are being encouraged to take their leave during the year it is earned. The Overpayment Recovery Project deals with recoveries dating back to 2016. No timeline has been set for the NextGen of Human Resources.</p> <p>Ann Therriault spoke of a case one year ago of non-payment of salary and asked if NRCan is still enabling emergency pay. Anne Casault responded that salary advances can be done within 48 hours.</p>	
7.	<p>Round Table</p> <p>Amandeep Garcha asked if there were any items to flag. Ann Therriault informed committee members that PIPSC was looking to all sectors regarding the provision of selection criteria; she is getting to the Office of the Chief Scientist. She outlined that NRCan needs a Departmental Career Development Consultation Committee, as called for in certain PIPSC collective agreements. Also, that we need to have a better idea of the skills inventory to manage talent. Anne Casault agreed with her on the talent management point. With respect to the Departmental Career Development Consultation Committee, she confirmed NRCan is on-board and will be working with management and the unions on this initiative, and bring this topic forward for discussion at the next DLMCC meeting.</p>	<p>Action Item: Develop Terms of Reference for a Departmental Career Development Consultation Committee for review at the next DLMCC.</p>

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8.	<p data-bbox="228 306 659 338">Next Meeting and Closing Remarks</p> <p data-bbox="228 373 1097 506">Amandeep Garcha thanked all members for the discussions. He looked forward to the next meeting. The DM wished a good week and happy holidays for the members and mentioned the next DLMCC would be held in May 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="228 541 711 573">The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.</p>	