

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) –
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)
Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) - Regulatory Partnership Statement (RPS)**

This Statement describes the partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to implement a deeper collaborative relationship between these agencies.

The RCC's *Joint Forward Plan* launched August 2014 includes a commitment by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US Department of Commerce and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to undertake greater regulatory cooperation in environmental management of the aquaculture sector and identify potential areas for further regulatory coordination.

In meeting the key elements of the RCC *Joint Forward Plan*, NOAA and DFO have:

- **Established a high-level partnership governance framework incorporating both organizations' senior officials, which is supported by a technical working group(s) to review and track progress against medium and long-term regulatory alignment opportunities.**
- **Implemented a bi-national RCC work planning process that includes an annual review of work plans to consider stakeholder input and to update senior officials on progress on regulatory cooperation initiatives.**
- **Identified ongoing opportunities for stakeholder engagement to inform senior officials on new developments and to provide input on potential future regulatory alignment.**

This Statement outlines NOAA and DFO's approach to advancing regulatory cooperation and alignment in areas of mutual interest that currently focus on the organizations' aquaculture sector. Building on the existing bilateral relationship and expertise in both countries, NOAA and DFO explore areas of cooperation that could yield mutual benefits over both the short and long-term in this evolving field. Future consideration may be given to strengthen collaboration on other regulatory sectors between the two organisations.

Governance between NOAA and DFO

Senior officials will meet annually to review progress on annual work plans and cooperative activities. They will review and consider medium and long-term cooperative opportunities based on emerging or changing industry trends that might affect regulatory direction.

DFO's Senior Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic Policy and the NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries will oversee this regulatory partnership. A senior committee will be

co-chaired by these leads or their authorized delegates, and will include appropriate senior officials responsible for the aquaculture technical working group. Stakeholders will be invited to provide input in advance of the annual meeting and to take part in the meeting.

It is anticipated that the first meeting of the senior committee would take place in spring 2016. In most instances, stakeholders should expect notification no later than six (6) weeks prior to any meeting to provide them sufficient time to supply informed input.

Establishing and Maintaining Annual Work Plans

The *Joint Forward Plan* includes a specific commitment for NOAA and DFO to undertake greater regulatory cooperation in environmental management of the aquaculture sector and, where deemed possible by both agencies, to identify potential areas for further regulatory cooperation. To meet this commitment NOAA and DFO have established:

- A technical level working group on aquaculture that is being co-chaired by the Director of the Office of Aquaculture at NOAA and the Director General of the Aquaculture Management Directorate at DFO.
- This working group will explore areas of cooperation that yield mutual benefits in both the short and long-term, such as 1) regulatory environmental management objectives and outcomes, 2) farmed and wild fish interactions, and 3) regulatory development initiatives relating to offshore aquaculture.

Work plans will be informed through a variety of means including: stakeholder input; regulator-to-regulator plans to modernize regulatory systems and associated requirements; internal-to-government issues requiring renewal or common approaches in support of regulatory activities; and new or emerging shared challenges. As such, these work plans will be “evergreen,” and could be revised as needed throughout the year, reflecting common challenges or emerging priorities. In this respect, stakeholders may provide input to regulators throughout the year.

Opportunities and Expectations for Stakeholders

Stakeholders will be provided information in advance of work-planning sessions. They will be invited to provide input to work plan development and to take part in the annual senior committee meeting.

Stakeholders will be asked to provide information pertaining to:

- Industry and market trends with specific reference to where they feel adjustments to regulatory systems and overall direction may be required.

- New technology or innovations in the sector that would serve to initiate early agency discussion on how to approach these in the future.
- Issues that are seen as near-term binational priorities and costs associated with misalignment or the opportunity to assist priority setting.

In identifying issues of binational significance, it is expected, where possible, that stakeholders will work with their binational partners to provide joint positions and informed analysis. To this end, stakeholders are invited to provide basic data in support of their submissions and to respond to requests for clarification or supplemental information in a timely fashion.

Conclusion

NOAA and DFO look forward to this collaborative undertaking and will utilize the new governance framework to implement a more formal department to department arrangement to enable deeper regulatory cooperation.

As indicated in the Joint Forward Plan, this Regulatory Partnerships Statement is not intended to create binding obligations under domestic or international law. In addition, implementation of this Regulatory Partnerships Statement is subject to overall support from the executive branch of government in both countries, as well as the availability of appropriations, personnel and other resources.