



Toward a more effective, predictable and timely Habitat Management program

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is modernizing its Habitat Management (HM) program to make decision-making more effective, predictable and timely.

Through the Environmental Process Modernization Plan (EPMP), DFO is focusing resources on reviewing projects and activities that pose a high risk to fish habitat and is managing lower-risk activities with guidelines and best management practices for developers and the public. DFO is also increasing stewardship, education, partnerships and monitoring to improve compliance with, and effectiveness of, habitat provisions of the *Fisheries Act*.



The changes respond to public demands for greater habitat protection as well as for improved clarity, transparency and timeliness in DFO's review of projects.

The six elements of EPMP

Risk Management: A science-based Risk Management Framework has been developed to categorize the risk to fish and fish habitat from development proposals. The framework will allow DFO to focus on reviewing those activities with the greatest potential impact to fish habitat.

Streamlining Referrals: Guidelines, operational statements and best management practices for developers and the public are being created to identify conditions and measures needed to avoid harm to fish habitat for routine, low-risk activities in or near water. These tools provide upfront guidance and allow the Department to direct its resources to higher-risk activities.

Partnering: Collaborating with provinces, industry, First Nations, environmental groups and municipalities acknowledges the need for shared stewardship and will identify common issues and priorities. DFO has established partnerships with other governments, industry and others to develop mechanisms to achieve common interests, clarify responsibilities and result in more effective protection of fish habitat.

Coherence and Predictability: Developing policy manuals for all DFO field staff and a mandatory training program to be delivered across the country will improve the fairness, predictability and credibility of decision-making. The goal is to ensure all regulatory decisions are based on the same knowledge and procedures.





Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Environmental Assessment and Major Projects: Measures are being implemented to increase consistency in decision-making, harmonization with other levels of government and timeliness of regulatory decisions under the *Fisheries Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and other federal environmental legislation for major development projects.

Habitat Compliance Modernization: An increased emphasis on monitoring development activities and regulatory decisions is aimed at improving compliance with the *Fisheries Act* and effectiveness of habitat management. The goal is to support a spectrum of compliance activities from education, to monitoring, to enforcement.

For further information, please visit http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/canwaters-eauxcan/epmp-pmpe/index_e.asp

