

---

REVIEW  
DIRECTORATE

---

DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE  
DE L'EXAMEN

---

EVALUATION OF STAFF MEETINGS AND  
EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL  
COMMUNICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL  
WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (NWIP)  
PROJECT NUMBER 65193  
FINAL REPORT  
JANUARY 2003



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.1. BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0 SURVEY FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.1 NATIONAL WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (NWIP) .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.2 STAFF MEETINGS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: WEB-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF VERBATIM COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>30</b>

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *National Workplace Improvement Program (NWIP)*

**There is a high level of awareness of NWIP across the department, and many believe these initiatives focus on issues relevant to their own work at DFO. Moreover, close to half of all employees have participated in, or benefited from, some aspect of this program to date, although such involvement is significantly greater for land-based employees than for those serving on ships. The Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance and Health and Wellness initiatives are by far the best known and used, while there is considerably less experience with others, such as Mentoring and the Competency-Based Management Framework. Further communication efforts may be warranted to broaden awareness of specific aspects of the program where there is a lack of involvement by employees and/or are poorly understood.**

*Key highlights from the survey are as follows:*

- More than eight in ten (81%) employees across the department are aware of NWIP generally. Staff are most apt to know about the Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance and Health and Wellness initiatives, while fewer than half recognize those addressing Internal Communications, Recruitment and Retention, and the Competency-Based Management Framework. Shipboard employees are somewhat less aware of the NWIP initiatives than land-based employees (60% versus 83%).
- Among those who are aware of each NWIP initiative, a majority consider it to be somewhat, if not very, relevant to their own work. This is most apt to be the case for the Health and Wellness initiative (86%), while least so for Mentoring (58%) and the Competency-Based Management Framework (53%).
- Close to half (45%) of all employees report to have participated or benefited from some aspect of NWIP to date. Participation rates among land-based staff (47%) are almost double that of those employees on ships (24%). Participation rates are highest for Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance (31%) and Health and Wellness (25%), while lowest for the Competency-Based Management Framework (3%).
- Staff are moderately positive about how NWIP has been communicated within the department, with six in ten saying this has been very (13%) or somewhat (48%) effective in communicating about the purpose and progress of the program (with shipboard staff noticeably less likely to share this view).

### *Staff Meetings*

- Most employees are positive about the functioning of their work unit staff meetings, in terms of being well attended (85%) and well organized (72%) at least most of the time. Similarly, a strong majority consider these meetings to be somewhat, if not very, useful in contributing to the functioning of their unit (85%) and their own job role and responsibilities (78%).

- There is wide variation across the department in the frequency with which land-based work units hold staff meetings. One in four (27%) meet at least once a week, while similar percentage (23%) meet no more than a few times per year. Most (64%) employees believe their unit meets as often as it needs to, and very few (3%) believe they meet too often. Three in ten (30%) say they do not meet often enough, and this is most likely to be indicated by those whose units meet no more than a few times a year.

## **2.0. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1. BACKGROUND**

The National Work Improvement Plan (NWIP) of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) was created in response to results from the 1999 Public Service Employee Survey, with the goal of improving the workplace. At the time of the survey, NWIP consisted of the following initiatives: Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace, Health and Wellness, Workload Reduction, Internal Communications, Career Development and Learning, Recruitment and Retention, Mentoring, and Competency-Based Management Framework.

The Internal Communications initiative was designed to improve internal communications at DFO and to foster an improved understanding of the DFO's role and activities. Based on an internal review completed in October 2000, it was recommended that DFO managers hold regular staff meetings, and that they consult with staff to establish appropriate standards for the conduct of these meetings.

In 2001-02, the Departmental Review Committee mandated the Review Directorate to conduct an evaluation, in collaboration with the Communications Directorate, of Staff Meetings and Effectiveness of Internal Communications of NWIP.

### **2.2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE**

The evaluation had two objectives:

1. To determine if staff meetings have been held and the extent to which staff view these meetings to be of value; and
2. To assess the effectiveness of internal communications of NWIP.

As a key component of this evaluation, DFO retained Decima Research to conduct a department-wide staff survey focusing on awareness of, and participation in, NWIP initiatives, including a focus on staff meetings. The survey also included the Department's Early Conflict Resolution (ECR) services (e.g. awareness sessions, dispute resolution, advisor consultations, workshops). Results of the ECR portion of this survey are not part of the Review Directorate's Evaluation of NWIP and staff meetings. The results have been provided to the Office of ECR for analysis.

The survey was conducted in two parts. A web-based self-administered survey was distributed to all land-based DFO staff in late April 2002, and was completed by 4,024 employees. Because shipboard staff do not have web access on an individual basis, this group received a paper-based questionnaire (excluding the section on staff meetings) that was distributed by Decima in May and June (a longer period of time was required for this group because of the scheduling of ships leaving and returning to port). A total of 508 shipboard staff completed and returned the survey as of July 5th.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Shipboard personnel work in a significantly different environment than land-based employees, and so the office model of "staff meetings" is not appropriate for this group. The Final Report on the Review of Internal Communications acknowledged this difference, and addressed the need for improved communications for sea-going personnel through a separate recommendation to be addressed by the Canadian Coast Guard.

The total combined sample of 4,532 represents 45 percent of all DFO employees, with all Regions and areas of the Department represented. A more detailed description of the survey methodology is presented in Section 4 of the report.

This report presents the survey findings for the sections on NWIP and staff meetings. Copies of the survey questionnaires are provided in Appendices A and B. Also provided are examples of verbatim comments to "open-ended" questions in Appendix C. The survey questions are referenced by number in the report (*e.g. (Q.1)*) for ease of reference.

## **2.3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

### ***Questionnaire Design***

Decima Research designed the questionnaires for this survey, in close consultation with representatives from the DFO. The web-based and paper questionnaires included identical questions, except for the section on staff meetings which was only administered on the web version (to land-based employees).

### ***Sample Design and Selection***

The survey was designed as a census of DFO employees. All employees within the department were contacted and provided with an opportunity to participate in the survey.

### ***Survey Administration***

Employees were notified by the Department in advance about the survey and its purpose through department newsletters and broadcast e-mail messages.

**Web Survey.** Land-based employees received a personal e-mail from Decima that contained a brief invitation to participate in the survey and a hyper-link that connected them to the survey, which was hosted on Decima's secure server. Each e-mail message also contained a unique five digit password, that had to be used to access the survey on the Decima server. This password was employed to ensure that only qualified DFO employees could complete the survey, and that each employee could do so only once. Employees had the choice of completing the survey in either English or French.

The data collection period was between April 25 and May 9, 2002. Decima sent two reminder e-mail messages to employees over this time period. Contact names at DFO and Decima were provided in the event that employees had technical or other questions about the survey. A total of 4,024 surveys were completed during this time period, yielding a response rate of 50 percent.

**Paper Survey.** A paper version of the survey (in the form of a four page booklet in each language) was developed by Decima and distributed by mail to DFO shipboard employees at their home addresses. The survey was accompanied by an introductory letter from DFO management and a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope in which employees were to return the completed survey directly to

Decima for data entry. No follow-up reminders were used with this version of the survey, but contact information was provided to employees who had questions.

The collection period for this survey was May 8 to July 5, 2002. A total of 508 surveys were completed over this time period, yielding a response rate of 24 percent.

### *Sample Distribution*

A sample of 4,532 land and ship based DFO employees completed the survey, out of a total 10,155 employees, yielding an overall response rate of 45 percent. This is a solid response rate for this type of survey, and as important is the fact that all Regions and areas of the Department are well represented in this sample. Because this survey comprises a census of employees rather than a representative sample, measures of sampling precision (e.g. margin of error) are not relevant to this project.

The table below presents the final distribution of the survey sample, by Region and survey type.

**Table 1: Final Sample Distribution**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Land-based Staff</b>	<b>Shipboard Staff</b>	<b>Combined Total</b>
National Capital Region	750	-	750
Newfoundland	399	92	491
Maritimes	744	157	901
Gulf	268	2 <sup>1</sup>	270
Quebec	427	98	525
Central and Arctic	559	49	608
Pacific	877	106	983
Not stated	-	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,024</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>4,532</b>

<sup>1</sup>Included in the Maritimes Region for the analysis

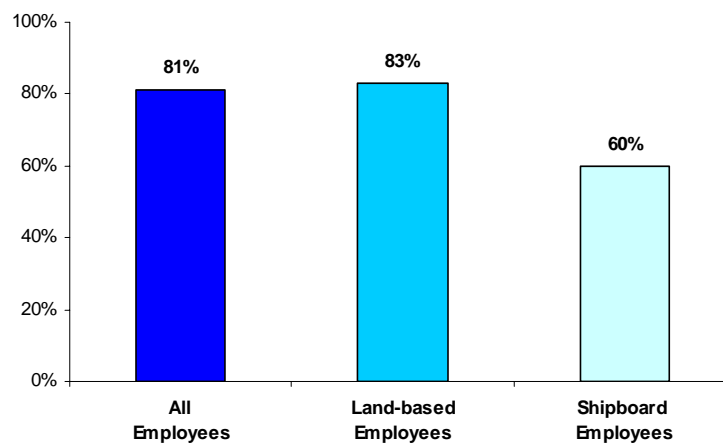
### 3.0 SURVEY FINDINGS

#### 3.1 NATIONAL WORKPLACE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (NWIP)

**Eight in ten employees are aware of the National Work Improvement Plan, with broadest recognition of the Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace, and Health and Wellness initiatives.**

- Employees were initially asked about their awareness of the NWIP, and 81 percent indicated they were aware of this initiative. Awareness is much higher for employees on land (83%) than those serving on ships (60%), a difference that is likely due to the fact that shipboard employees have access to fewer communication vehicles than their land-based counterparts. Across the Department, awareness of NWIP is somewhat lower in the Maritimes (75%) and Pacific (68%) Regions. (Q.1)

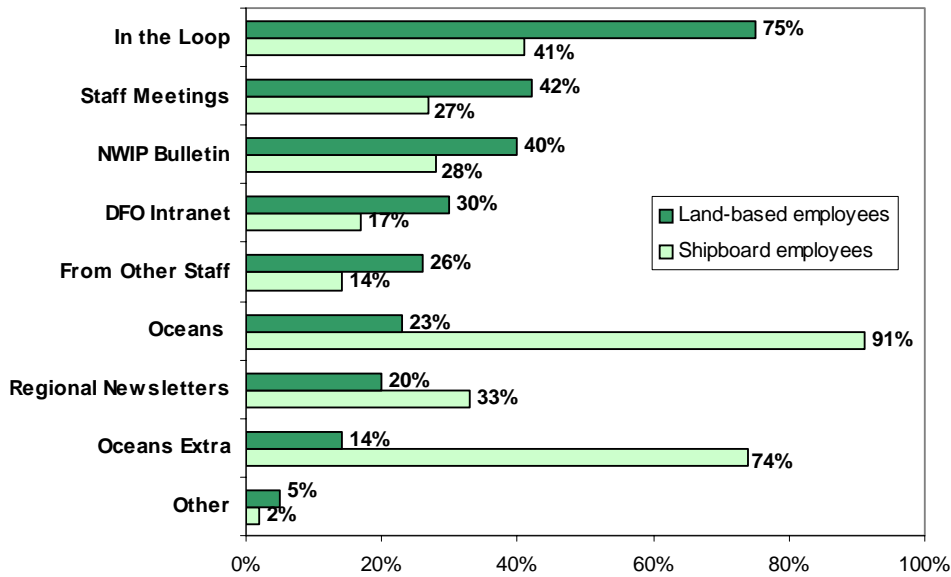
**Awareness of National Work Improvement Plan**



- When employees were asked about where they have heard about NWIP, almost three-quarters (72%) cited *In the Loop*, followed by staff meetings (41%) and the NWIP bulletin (39%). Sources of information greatly differ between land and ship based employees, with those on land more likely to identify *In the Loop*, staff meetings and the NWIP bulletin, while those on ships emphasize *Oceans*, *Oceans Extra* and regional newsletters as sources of information about NWIP initiatives. (Q.2)
- Different sources of information are used to varying degrees depending on Region. Staff in the Quebec Region are more likely to report finding out about NWIP from staff meetings (47%), NWIP bulletins (48%) and regional newsletters (31%). Those in the Newfoundland Region reported higher use of all sources with the exception of *In the Loop* and *Oceans Extra* (which they use about the same as employees overall).

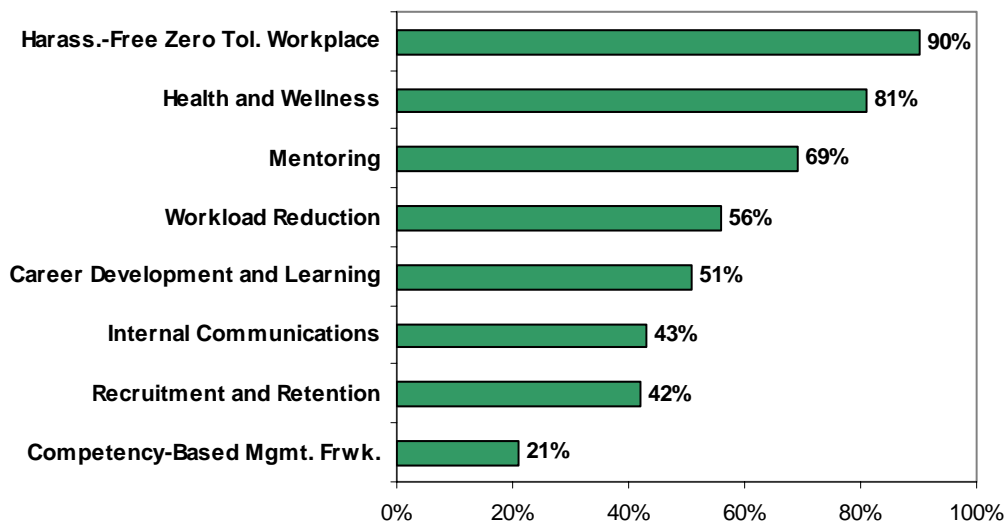


### Sources of Information about NWIP



- Among the eight NWIP initiatives, employees are most likely to be aware of the one focusing on a Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace (90%), followed by those addressing Health and Wellness (81%) and Mentoring (69%). Across the Department, awareness of most of the specific NWIP initiatives is highest in the Newfoundland Region, while lowest among DFO employees with less than three years of service with DFO. (Q.3)

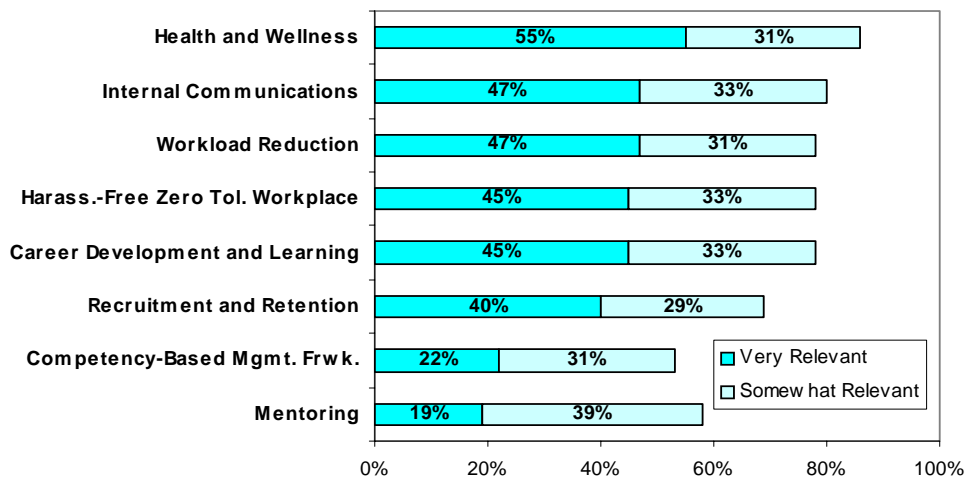
### Awareness of Specific NWIP Initiatives



**Most employees view each NWIP initiative to be at least somewhat relevant to their work. Close to half have participated in or benefited from at least one initiative, especially Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace, and Health and Wellness.**

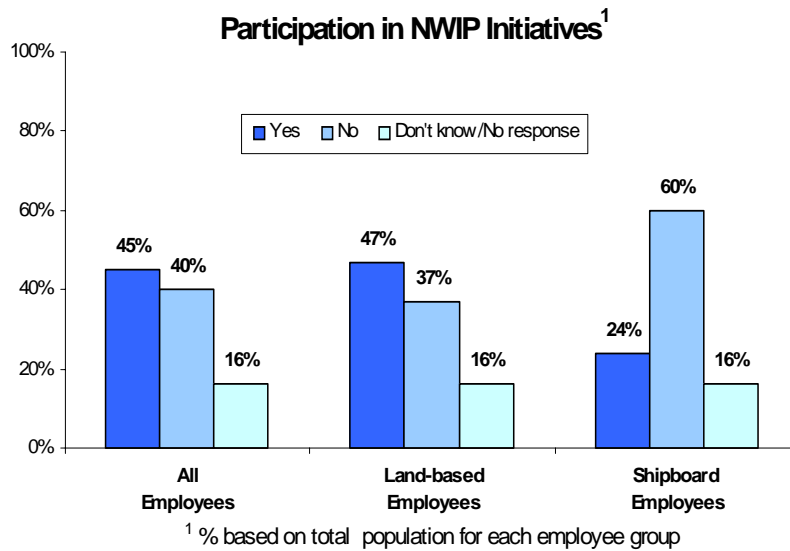
- Employees were also asked about the relevance of each specific NWIP initiative to which they indicated some awareness, in terms of its contribution to their own role at DFO. All eight initiatives were seen to be somewhat if not very relevant by at least six in ten employees, but some are clearly more apt to be viewed as more relevant than others.
- DFO staff are most likely to identify the Health and Wellness initiative as being highly relevant (55%), while just under half give this rating to those addressing Internal Communications (47%), Workload Reduction (47%), Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace (45%) and Career Development and Learning (45%). Mentoring (19%) is least apt to be seen as very relevant. Quebec Region employees were less likely than others to see most of these initiatives to be very relevant to their role at DFO (with the exception of Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace, and Competency-Based Management Framework). (Q.4a-h)

**NWIP Initiatives as Very or Somewhat Relevant**

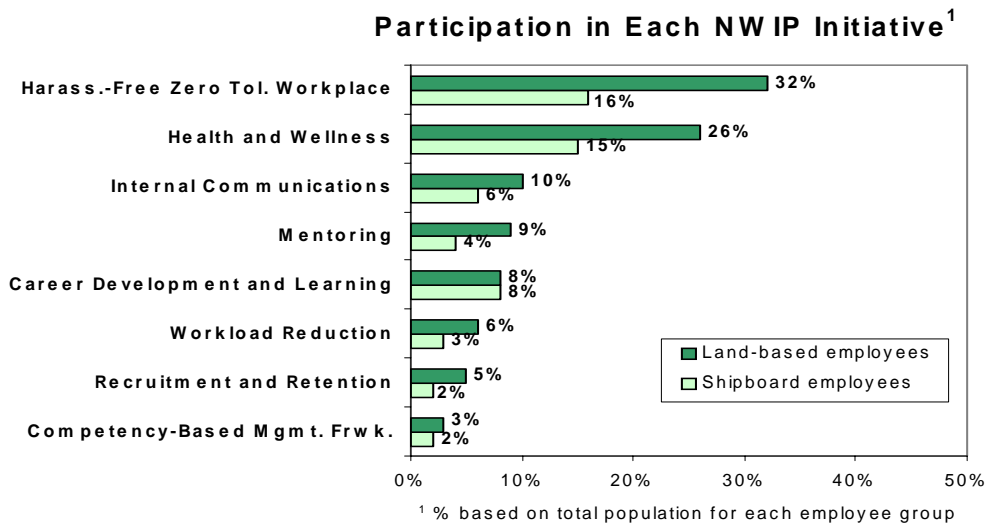


- Employees who have participated in each of the NWIP initiatives are somewhat more likely to see it as being very relevant compared with employees who have not yet participated in that particular initiative. This is most evident with the Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace and the Health and Wellness initiatives.
- The high degree of awareness and perceived relevance of NWIP is due in part to the fact that many staff have already participated in, or benefited from, these initiatives. Close to half (45%) of all employees report to have become involved in at least one of the NWIP initiatives, while 41 percent said they did not and another 13 percent offered no response to the question. Participation rates among land-based staff (47%) are almost double than of those employed on ships (24%), who are likely to have fewer opportunities because of their work schedules. (Q.5)

- Differences in participation in NWIP programs can be observed across regions. Participation rates are highest in the Gulf (57%) and Central/Arctic (54%) Regions, while lowest in the Maritimes (43%) and Pacific Regions (38%).



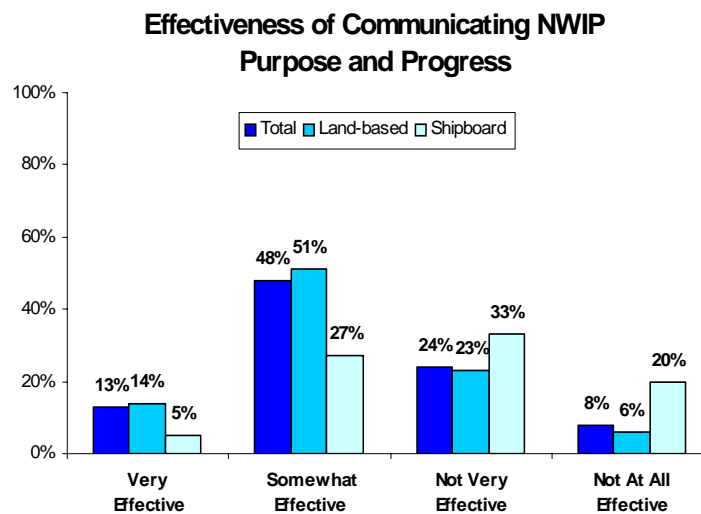
- Much of the NWIP participation to date has been focused on those initiatives addressing a Harassment-Free Workplace (31%) and Health and Wellness (25%). By comparison, no more than one in ten have become involved in NWIP initiatives focusing on Internal Communications (10%), Mentoring (9%), Career Development and Learning (8%), Workload Reduction (5%), Recruitment and Retention (5%) or Competency-Based Management (3%). Participation levels are higher among land-based staff than those serving on ships, with the exception of Career Development and Learning. (Q.6)



- One-quarter (26%) of the Department's employees report to have participated or benefited from more than one NWIP initiative. Involvement in more than one initiative is most widespread among Gulf Region staff, as well as among those having more than 20 years of service in the Department. This is less apt to be the case with employees in the Quebec and Pacific (both 49%), as well as among those with less than three years of service.
- Participation in specific initiatives varies somewhat across Regions:
  - Newfoundland Region staff report higher levels of participation or benefit from Health and Wellness, Internal Communications, Mentoring and Career Development and Learning.
  - Pacific Region employees are less apt to be involved in Health and Wellness, Internal Communications, Mentoring and Workload Reduction, but more active in terms of Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace.
  - Maritimes Region staff are more active in Health and Wellness, Internal Communications, Career Development and Learning, and Workload Reduction, but less so in the case of Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace.

**DFO staff are moderately positive about the effectiveness of communications around NWIP, although few have specific suggestions for improvement.**

- Employees were also asked to rate the effectiveness with which they feel the Department has been to date in communicating to staff about the purpose and progress of NWIP. Overall, staff give a moderately but not strongly positive assessment, with six in ten rating the communications as very (13%) or somewhat (48%) effective, compared with one in three who believe it has been not very (24%) or not at all (8%) effective. (Q.7)



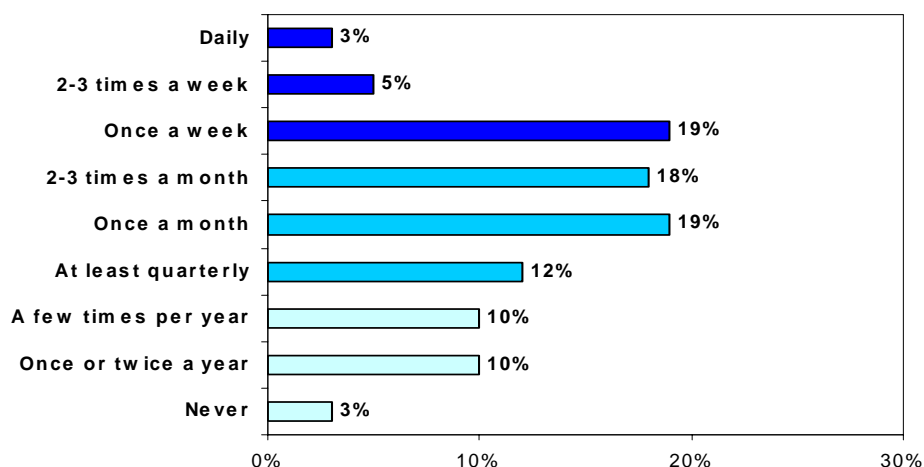
- Assessment of NWIP communications is noticeably lower among shipboard employees, with only one in three rating this activity to be very (5%) or somewhat (27%) effective. Across the Department, very effective ratings are most evident in the Gulf (19%) and Newfoundland (18%) Regions, while least evident in the Pacific Region (7%).
- Employees were asked to suggest any ways in which communications about NWIP could be improved. Only one-third of employees had anything to suggest, and no type of recommendation was mentioned by as many as five percent. The most common suggestions were to hold more meetings/seminars and/or make them more productive (4%), follow through with implementing what is promised (4%), and improve communication between different levels of the organization (4%) (examples of verbatim comments are presented in Appendix C). (*Q.8*)
- Finally, staff were also given an opportunity to make final comments about any aspect of NWIP. Fewer than one in four had anything to offer in response to this question, and no specific issue was raised by more than a handful of employees. The most common themes were the need to address workload issues (3%), the importance of implementation (2%), a generally positive endorsement of NWIP (2%) and the fact that it has not yet had any impact (2%) (verbatim comments are presented in Appendix C). (*Q.9*)

### 3.2 STAFF MEETINGS<sup>2</sup>

**There is considerable variation in how often departmental units hold meetings, but a clear majority of employees are positive about the frequency of meetings, attendance, organization and usefulness to both the unit and their own jobs.**

- Land-based employees were asked about the frequency of staff meetings held in their unit. Work units in the Department fall into three main groups. Just over one quarter (27%) of staff reported they have meetings on a frequent basis (at least once a week), while another quarter (23%) have them very infrequently (no more than a few times a year).
- The third group (comprising the remaining half (49%) of the Department) falls somewhere in between, reporting to have staff meetings at least quarterly but no more than two to three times a month (the total exceeds 100% because of rounding error). Across the Department, frequent meetings are most commonly held in Headquarters and in the Gulf Region, while this is least apt to be the case in the Newfoundland and Maritimes Regions. (*Q.10*)

**Frequency of Staff Meetings in Work Unit**



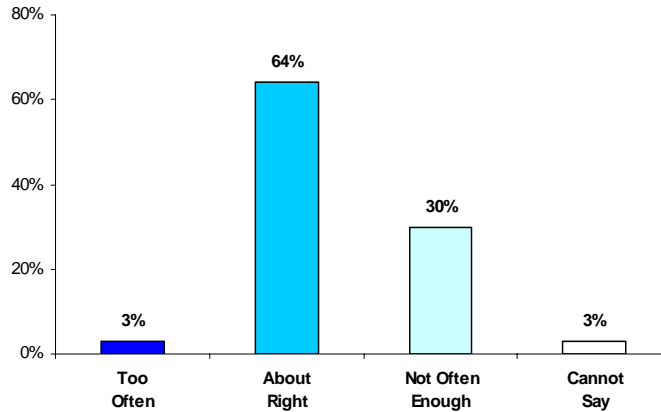
- Regardless of how often staff meetings are held, most (64%) employees express the view that this frequency is about right. Three in ten (30%) believe that meetings in their work unit are not frequent enough, while very few (3%) maintain they are too frequent. (*Q.11*)
- Employees in the Newfoundland (37%) and Quebec (38%) Regions are more likely than others to report staff meetings are not being held often enough, while those at Headquarters (72%) are most apt to believe the frequency of their meetings to be just about right.

Further analysis reveals that a relationship exists between the frequency of staff meetings and the appropriateness of timing.

<sup>2</sup>This section was completed by land-based employees only

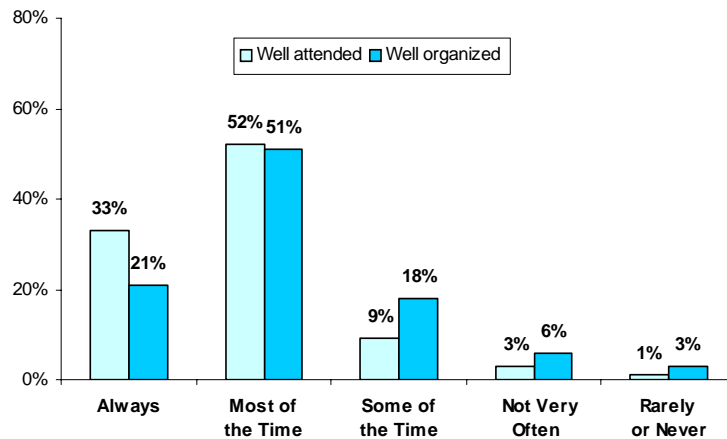
- Meeting too often is not an issue with employees who meet frequently. Almost nine in ten (88%) employees who meet at least once a week report that this is about right.
- Employees who meet infrequently would like to meet more. Seven in ten (71%) employees who meet less than quarterly report that this is not frequent enough.
- Those who meet between 2 to 3 times a month and quarterly are generally happy with this frequency, with seven in ten (70%) reporting that this is about right.

**Frequency of Staff Meetings in Your Unit**

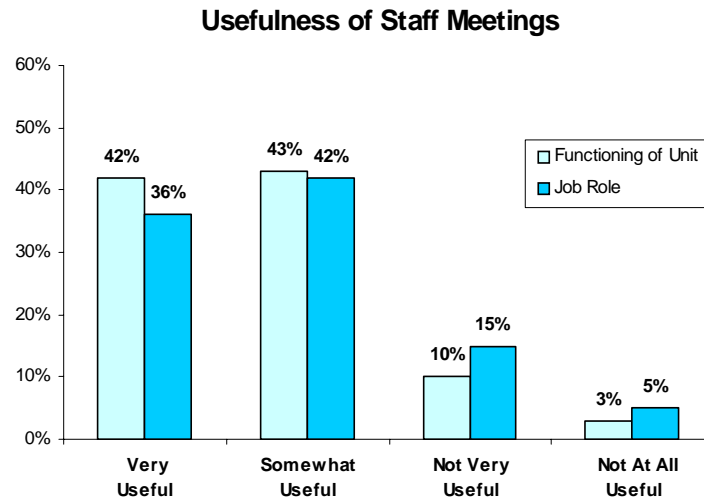


- Employees were asked about the functioning of their staff meetings, in terms of attendance and degree of organization. A strong majority report that meetings are well attended either always (33%) or most of the time (52%), with very few indicating this happens infrequently or never (4%). Good attendance on a consistent basis is most widely reported by those working at Headquarters, compared to all other Regions. (Q.12)

**Overall Functioning of Staff Meetings**



- Employees are somewhat more qualified in their assessment of the regularity with which staff meetings in their work unit are well organized. Only one in five (21%) say this is always the case, while another half (51%) indicate their meetings are well organized most of the time. Once again, relatively few (9%) report that this is not the case at least some of the time. Once again, a positive rating on this measure is most evident among employees at Headquarters, while slightly lower in the Gulf and Pacific Regions. (Q.13)
- Apart from the frequency, attendance and organization of staff meetings in their unit, how useful are they? Employees are generally positive about the value of such meetings, with more than eight in ten rating them to be very (42%) or somewhat (43%) useful to the functioning of their unit, compared with only five percent who rated them as not at all useful. Similarly, close to eight in ten indicate that unit staff meetings are very (36%) or somewhat (42%) useful to them in terms of their own job role and responsibilities. (Q.14a,b)



- Employees in the Newfoundland Region are the most positive about the value of their staff meetings, in terms of both the overall functioning of units and in contributing to their own job, while those in the Quebec Region are least apt to share this view.
- Employees were given the opportunity to offer additional comments about how the value and usefulness of staff meetings in their unit could be improved. Consistent with the generally positive assessment of meetings, only one-third (32%) offered any suggestions, and no particular response or issue emerged as predominant. The most common recommendations were to hold more regular meetings (8%), improve the planning or adherence to meeting agendas (4%), hold more open or consultative type meetings (2%) or place more emphasis on discussing relevant issues (2%) (verbatim comments are presented in Appendix C). (Q.15)



**APPENDIX A**  
**WEB-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE**

Decima Research Inc.  
May 10, 2002

Department of Fisheries and Oceans  
Staff Survey

## Final Questionnaire

---

*To start off . . .*

### Section A: National Workplace Improvement Plan

1. *Have you heard of the National Workplace Improvement Plan, or NWIP?*

- *Yes*
- *No*                    *SKIP TO Q.3*

2. *From which of the following sources have you seen or heard something about NWIP?*

*Select all that apply*

- *In The Loop*
- *Staff meetings*
- *NWIP Bulletin*
- *DFO Intranet*
- *From other staff*
- *Oceans*
- *Regional newsletters*
- *Oceans Extra*
- **Other TO BE CODED**
- *Cannot say*

3. *NWIP consists of the following specific initiatives. Please indicate which of these NWIP initiatives you have heard or seen something about?*

*Select all that apply*

- *Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace*
- *Health and Wellness*
- *Mentoring*
- *Workload Reduction*
- *Career Development and Learning*
- *Recruitment and Retention*
- *Internal Communications*
- *Competency-Based Management Framework*

- None of the above
- Cannot say

4. How relevant do you feel each of these initiatives is to you, in your role at DFO?

**a. Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace** (*Zero tolerance in terms of harassment*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**b Health and Wellness** (*Promoting employees' health and well-being*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**c. Workload Reduction** (*Taking care of workload-related issues*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**d. Internal Communications** (*Improving internal communications and DFO's orientation program*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**e. Career Development and Learning** (*Developing a learning and career development program, available to all*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant

- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**f. Recruitment and Retention** (*Establishing internal and external recruitment strategies*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**g. Mentoring** (*Developing a mentoring program, available to all*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

**h. Competency-Based Management Framework** (*Developing a competency-based management framework*)

- Very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Not very relevant
- Not at all relevant
- Cannot say/Don't know enough about initiative

5. Have you participated in or benefited from any of the NWIP initiatives?

- Yes
- No                                   SKIP TO Q.7
- Don't know/No answer       SKIP TO Q.7

6. (IF YES) In which of these NWIP initiatives did you participate or benefit from?

- Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace
- Health and Wellness
- Internal Communications
- Mentoring
- Career Development and Learning
- Workload Reduction
- Recruitment and Retention

- Competency-Based Management Framework
- Cannot say

7. How effective do you feel the Department has been to date in communicating to staff about the purpose and progress of NWIP initiatives?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not at all effective
- Cannot say

8. In what way, if any, do you think the communications to staff about NWIP could be improved?

*Please specify*

**TO BE CODED**

9. Do you have any other comments to make about any aspect of NWIP?

*Please specify*

**TO BE CODED**

### **Section B: Staff Meetings.**

10. Generally speaking, how often are staff meetings held in your work unit?  
(includes in-person, teleconference and video conference meetings)

- Daily
- 2-3 times per week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times per month
- Once a month
- At least quarterly (once every four months)
- A few times a year
- Once or twice per year
- Never
- Cannot say

SKIP TO Q.15

11. In your view, do you feel that this frequency of staff meetings in your unit is:

- Too often
- About right
- Not often enough
- Cannot say

12. Overall, would you say that staff meetings in your unit are well attended?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Not very often
- Rarely or never
- Cannot say

13. Overall, would you say that staff meetings in your unit are well-organized?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Not very often
- Rarely or never
- Cannot say

14. How useful do you find staff meetings in your unit to be, in terms of:

**a. Being of value to the functioning of your overall unit?**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot say

**b. Being useful to you, in terms of your own job role and responsibilities?**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot say

15. In what way, if any, do you think the value and usefulness of staff meetings in your unit could be improved?

*Please specify*

**TO BE CODED**

**Section C: Early Conflict Resolution Services**

16. Are you familiar with the **Early Conflict Resolution (ECR)** services, a service that was established in 1998 to assist DFO employees address and resolve conflict in the workplace?

- Yes
- No                                      SKIP TO Q.20

17. (IF YES) Have you ever used any of the Early Conflict Resolution (ECR) services?

- Yes
- No                                      SKIP TO Q.20

18. (IF YES) Which of the following ECR services have you used?

*Select all that apply*

- Consultation with an ECR advisor
- Conflict resolution workshop
- Awareness session
- Assisted Dispute Resolution (ADR) services
- Other **TO BE CODED**

19. (ASK FOR EACH SERVICE MENTIONED IN Q.18) How useful did you find this/these ECR service(s)?

**a. Awareness session**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot/Prefer not to say

**b. Conflict resolution workshop**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot/Prefer not to say

**c. Consultation with an ECR Advisor**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot/Prefer not to say

**d. Assisted Dispute Resolution (ADR) services**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot/Prefer not to say

**e. Other service**

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not at all useful
- Cannot/Prefer not to say

**Section D. General Questions.**

*To finish up, a few general questions about yourself for statistical purposes . . .*

20. In which one of the following DFO regions do you currently work?  
*Select one only*

- National Capital Region (NCR)
- Central and Arctic
- Quebec
- Gulf
- Maritimes
- Newfoundland
- Pacific



21. In which part of the DFO organization do you currently work?  
*Select one only*

**TO BE PROVIDED**

22. And how many years of service do you have with DFO?
- Less than 3 years
  - 3 – 10 years
  - 11 to 20 years
  - More than 20 years

This completes the survey.

**APPENDIX B  
MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Department of Fisheries and Oceans  
**Staff Survey**

**Introduction**

***This survey is being conducted by Decima Research Inc., on behalf of DFO, to gain feedback from staff across the Department on the National Workplace Improvement Plan, as well as the services of Early Conflict Resolution.***

Please answer all questions as completely as possible. Be assured that your responses to the survey will remain completely confidential, and will not be linked to your name in any reports or information provided to DFO.

Should you have any questions about this survey, please contact Brian Reid at DFO at (613) 993-1205 or at ReidB@DFO-MPO.gc.ca.

Please complete the survey within two weeks or as soon as possible from the date you received it, and return in the postage-paid envelope provided.

**Section A: National Workplace Improvement Plan**

1. Have you heard of the National Workplace Improvement Plan, or NWIP?

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2      *SKIP TO Q.3*

2. (IF YES) From which of the following sources have you seen or heard something about NWIP?

*Select all that apply*

- Oceans  1
- Oceans Extra .....  2
- NWIP Bulletin .....  3
- In The Loop .....  4
- Regional newsletters .....  5
- DFO Intranet .....  6
- Staff meetings .....  7
- From other staff .....  8
- Other (Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_) .....  77
- Cannot say .....  99

3. NWIP consists of the following specific initiatives. Please indicate which of these NWIP initiatives you have heard or seen something about?

*Select all that apply*

- Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace .....  1
- Health and Wellness .....  2
- Workload Reduction .....  3
- Internal Communications .....  4
- Career Development and Learning .....  5
- Recruitment and Retention .....  6

- Mentoring ..... 7
- Competency-Based Management Framework ..... 8
- None of the above ..... 9
- Cannot say ..... 99

4. How relevant do you feel each of these initiatives is to you, in your role at DFO?

	<b>Very Relevant</b>	<b>Somewhat Relevant</b>	<b>Not Very Relevant</b>	<b>Not at All Relevant</b>	<b>Cannot Say Don't Know</b>
a. Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace <i>(Zero tolerance in terms of harassment)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
b. Health and Wellness <i>(Promoting employees' health and well-being)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
c. Workload Reduction <i>(Taking care of workload-related issues)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
d. Internal Communications <i>(Improving internal communications and DFO's orientation program)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
e. Career Development and Learning <i>(Developing a learning and career development program, available to all)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
f. Recruitment and Retention <i>(Establishing internal and external recruitment strategies)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
g. Mentoring <i>(Developing a mentoring program, available to all)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
h. Competency-Based Management Framework <i>(Developing a competency-based management framework)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

5. Have you participated in or benefited from any of the NWIP initiatives?

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 2      SKIP TO Q.7
- Don't know/No answer ..... 99      SKIP TO Q.7

6. (IF YES) In which of these NWIP initiatives did you participate or benefit from?

- Harassment-Free Zero Tolerance Workplace ..... 1
- Health and Wellness ..... 2
- Workload Reduction ..... 3
- Internal Communications ..... 4
- Career Development and Learning ..... 5
- Recruitment and Retention ..... 6
- Mentoring ..... 7
- Competency-Based Management Framework ..... 8
- Cannot say ..... 99

7. How effective do you feel the Department has been to date in communicating to staff about the purpose and progress of NWIP initiatives?

- Very effective ..... 1
- Somewhat effective ..... 2
- Not very effective ..... 3
- Not at all effective ..... 4
- Cannot say ..... 99

8. In what way, if any, do you think the communications to staff about NWIP could be improved?

*Please specify*

9. Do you have any other comments to make about any aspect of NWIP?

*Please specify*

**Section B: Early Conflict Resolution Services**

10. Are you familiar with the **Early Conflict Resolution** (ECR) services, a service that was established in 1998 to assist DFO employees address and resolve conflict in the workplace?

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 2

SKIP TO SECTION C

11. (IF YES) Have you ever used any of the Early Conflict Resolution (ECR) services?

- Yes ..... 1
  - No ..... 2
- SKIP TO SECTION C

12. (IF YES) Which of the following ECR services have you used?  
*Select all that apply*

- Awareness session ..... 1
- Conflict resolution workshop ..... 2
- Consultation with an ECR advisor ..... 3
- Assisted Dispute Resolution (ADR) services..... 4  
*(e.g. mediation, facilitated discussion)*
- Other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_) ..... 77

13. How useful did you find this/these ECR service(s)?  
*Respond to each service you have used*

	<b>Very Useful</b>	<b>Somewhat Useful</b>	<b>Not Very Useful</b>	<b>Not at All Useful</b>	<b>Cannot Say</b>
a. Awareness session	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
b. Conflict resolution workshop	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
c. Consultation with an ECR Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
d. Assisted Dispute Resolution (ADR) services (e.g. mediation, facilitated discussion)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
e. Other (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

*Section C. General Questions.*

*To finish up, a few general questions about yourself for statistical purposes . . .*

14. In which one of the following DFO regions do you currently work?  
*Select one only*

- Central and Arctic ..... 2
- Quebec ..... 3
- Gulf ..... 4
- Maritimes ..... 5
- Newfoundland..... 6
- Pacific ..... 7

15. And how many years of service do you have with DFO?

- Less than 3 years .....  1
- 3 – 10 years .....  2
- 11 to 20 years .....  3
- More than 20 years .....  4

This completes the survey. Thank you for your participation.

The results will be made available in summary form to DFO staff within the next few weeks.

***Please return the completed survey to Decima Research in the postage-paid envelope provided.***

**APPENDIX C**  
**EXAMPLES OF VERBATIM COMMENTS**



## Verbatim Comments

The NWIP survey gave employees the chance to express their concerns and to provide suggestions for improving communication to staff about NWIP. This section represents some typical examples of both positive and negative responses given for the open-ended questions # 8, 9, and 15. These comments can potentially provide valuable feedback to improve the program.

### ***Question # 8: In what way, if any, do you think the communication to staff about NWIP could be improved?***

The following quotations capture some typical sentiments expressed in response to this question.

*“Incorporate an NWIP segment as a standing item to be discussed in all departmental and sectoral “retreats””.*

*“Reminders from DFO detachments supervisors the importance of those programs from time to time to co-workers.”*

*“Information is distributed via the intranet and CCG vessels do not have access to it. Having to convert or print the information and forward it to them increases my workload. Have a dissemination tool for the vessels.”*

*“The health program was very well promoted, if every program was promoted like that one it would be better.”*

*“Make it clear that employees have a responsibility for improving their own working environment.”*

*“NWIP should be an integral part of our human resource program.”*

*“I find that the remote regions are often at a disadvantage; employees from these regions do not have access to information or training meetings because they are generally held in the major centres.”*

*“Promoting these initiatives is not an easy task, but I would recommend a different approach. Something like a contest, with a prize such as a trip for two for one week on board of cruise liner. Just a suggestion!”*

*“I think that when a new employee arrives in DFO, there should be a package given with the NWIP initiative.”*

*“Have the representative visit the office and present the goals and initiatives of NWIP.”  
“A face-to-face meeting once a year between section staff would be more effective than several e-mails.”*

*“I think many staff may have benefited from NWIP initiatives but do not understand that this is where the benefit came from. I think communications to staff should include benefits that have been put forth because of the NWIP initiatives (eg. harassment training)”.*

*“Establish a set of deliverables and then deliver them eg. workload reduction. I have seen an increase in my workload not a decrease...”*

*“Identify specific activities up front as NWIP eg. career development...”*

*“It would be good to encourage mandatory participation of managers and carry out a follow-up within each section. ”*

*“Have local managers identify the initiatives at staff meetings. Make it important to managers that the staff they supervise are aware of NWIP initiatives.”*

*“All the information is not being filtered down to all staff members. Especially those in isolated areas.”*

*“Make sure that these initiatives are accessible to people in rural.”*

*“There are too many initiatives and the effort is spread too thin. I think it would be better to prioritize and do one or two well.”*

*“Some managers (especially those who have been with the government for a number of years) are cynical about these initiatives and openly express the view “we’ve seen this before ... it’ll go away”. Or openly joke about the issues when brought up.”*

*“Most initiatives are not permanent. They seem to be temporary and are poorly used by senior managers. ”*

*“In the health and wellness initiative, I feel the administration of the funding should be investigated to focus on equal distribution...”*

*“I believe most middle and senior level supervisors/ section heads lack adequate communication skills and the training in these issues. Senior and mid-level staff should be required to take a well thought out ‘test’. These people are the key to the success of these.”*

*“It is important to allow employees to take part in these meetings and sessions. This demonstrates an interest in the program on the part of the managers.”*

*“I think the use of acronyms and jargons over initiatives leaves some people confused as to which initiative is being discussed.”*

***Question #9: Do you have any other comments to make about any aspect of NWIP?***

Examples of the answers given to this question are presented below.

*“Concrete action taken through health and wellness initiative (info/discounts on clubs, health clinics, lectures weight watchers, etc. make a real difference to staff. This initiative is to me the most successful, as it results in actions that benefit staff. In the same way, in the Loop (internal communications initiative) is one concrete action that really helps staff.”*

*“DFO employees are very proud of their program accomplishments and achieve the greatest satisfaction from doing a job well. The biggest cause of employees frustration and lack of feelings of wellness is a result of the current resource shortfall in DFO. If employees were given sufficient resources, in both time (by reducing workload) and dollars they would be happier in their work life. Introducing NWIP programs without addressing the bigger resourcing issues may make it difficult to achieve the concern from a number of perspectives (eg. personal health, cost efficiency). One suggestion might be to set up peer teams that get together and tackle specific workload issues with the goal of developing practical solutions that are cost effective and easy to implement.”*

*“Haven’t seen much information about how the success of the program will be measured (i.e. has workplace improved or not?).”*

*“Excellent program.”*

*“I am glad and fortunate to work for an organization that has such a program.”*

*“I think that the ideas behind the NWIP initiative are great. Promoting in a healthy fun, productive work environment through these kinds of initiatives is great for employees. I believe that it would be nice if there was even more support for certain initiatives. For example all employees should have a career development plan. NWIP is a great beginning, the follow through has to come from every day actions from employees and from managers.”*

*“Consider sending all staff on conflict resolution training courses throughout their career. Encourage fitness such as providing equipment and/or work time to be healthy.”*

*“To improve the workplace, I believe every employee should have not only rights but also obligations. There should be a charter of employee rights and obligations.”*

*“Managers should be more open to recognizing the work of their staff. This will go a long way to improving workplace atmospheres.”*

*“Follow through on workload management. I.E. make decisions on what programs or services to stop. The department has a management problem, not a workload problem.”*

*“The idea of a mentoring program is an important issue but what has been developed is poorly directed (i.e. mentorship with no long term plan for employment and no overall plan). The program should be more directed to identify key positions where mentorship would be beneficial so that our knowledge base and skills aren’t lost when a key staff retires. This may require the restructuring of specific divisions so that this can occur automatically and overtime ensure a mix of age groups. A team of experts could evaluate specific groups.”*

*“Need to tell everyone what is planned for the next 6 months, not just what has been done in the past 6 months.”*

*“If this department really believes it will move forward on recruitment, they have to start making meaningful steps. Saying they want to be the employer of choice then offering 2% pay raises to groups that are well behind their colleagues in private industry does zero to add to the credibility of the “employer of choice” ... ”*

*“Good ideas but with a budget supporting for only a year, what is the point? These initiatives have to be integrated into the DFO culture to have full effect. This will take years and managers will have to have support (ex. Full time career management advisors, learning center mentoring coordinator, competency specialist, etc). If this is pushed for a year then dropped, that cynicism that we saw so well out of the last public service employee survey is only going to be added to. This needs a longer term and more strategic approach.”*

*“It needs to be communicated in the areas by spokespersons as staff are over-run with newsletters, bulletins, memos, e-mails and such. To have a well informed representative attend a few of the major meetings in each of the areas and share successes and ask for ideas. These are times when they are supported by management to participate and they are out of their hectic daily job and appreciate hearing something new, refreshing, and relevant to their jobs.”*

*“I often see memos and e-mails about how NWIP initiatives are being enacted in places like Vancouver, but smaller places like my town don’t seem to get much opportunity to participate (too far, too costly, etc.) NWIP means very little to me because in practice, I see very little of its programs.”*

*“Improvements to communication for ship based employees have not been very effective. Support for ship based communication systems is very poor.”*

*“I have seen no benefits yet with respect to workload reduction initiative. I go to work everyday, work very hard for 8 or 9 hours and go further behind. I’m beginning to feel ‘burned out’. 6 years ago there were 7 of us, 4 years ago there were 5 of us, and today there are two of us and we have not stop doing anything. In fact the scope of work has increased. Regarding harassment free workplace I believe that there is much more awareness and the situation with internal communications has improved. In addition I do see efforts by the department with respect to wellness...”*

*“It should be prioritized. Right now there is an obvious shortage of personnel, which is resulting in a dramatic increase in workload loss of moral, and stress. As far as I’m concerned, this, by far, is the most important aspect of NWIP and should be its #1 priority. It will affect us directly, and when communicated properly should have positive results.”*

***Question #15: In what way if any do you think the value and usefulness of staff meetings in your unit could be improved?***

Some suggestions in response to this question are provided below.

*“Agendas should include more focus on specific operational issues and less on policy and procedural issues.”*

*“They would be more effective if they were held more often – at least once a week.”*

*“Need to have the strategic direction of the organization communicated at least every 6 months and then need to have our daily operations and how they fit into the strategic plan communicated every 2 months. Would be really nice to know how what I do fits into a larger picture and that we are all working to achieve something. Even more important it would be nice to see some objectives set and then see that we have accomplished those objectives. I believe we all want to value our work, at the unit level and in a broader organizational perspective. Many units do have staff meetings, but staff generally don’t understand what the purpose of the meeting should be so they often feel that the meetings are simply a waste of time.”*

*“A briefing at week’s end of events that have occurred over the week. It does not have to be a formal meeting. It could be very informal. The employee would then feel they are a part of the unit and not left in the dark.”*

*“What is lacking are meetings of the staff of several sectors for purposes of coordination.”*

*“Meetings should be held when a minimum of 90% attendance is expected.”*

*“Meetings more often; updates on happenings in different sections.”*

*“Holding short meetings and providing employees with an agenda in advance of the meeting.”*

*“It is useful to know what everyone in the group is working on. This allows the unit to work as a team.”*

*“If you are going to bring your problem to the table, also bring a solution that would work for your unit.”*

*“People to arrive on time; chair to assure that even shy people are encouraged to participate.”*

*“We just had a science symposium for the Pacific Region. This was excellent and the most productive “staff” function. This is the type of thing which should be maintained on annual basis.”*

*“I believe it would give you more information on what is going on in your department, but also to get to know other colleagues in one’s area and to have a voice on these discussions. Your work is important and it’s nice to know it is to others. Thanks.”*

*“Achieve greater management transparency, clear, precise complete uncensored statement.”*

*“We are a very small unit and discuss issues daily as they come up – do not always wait for a staff meeting. Things just work better for us this way.”*

*“I’d like it if my supervisor understood what I’m working on so we could talk about my methods and so she could give me feedback. (I don’t think she was hired for her competency) I’d like to know about events, programs, initiatives going on in the workplace, but because my supervisor isn’t interested in being involved I am not informed until it is too late. It will be good to meet every month, so I know what happens to my work once I’ve submitted it and what everyone else is working on in the office. I feel totally isolated in this place-no one knows what I do, and I don’t have a clue how anything in the coast guard works because there is no group communication.”*

*“The boardrooms are unable to accommodate large group meetings (~25 and over) therefore the majority of staff meetings are usually small (broken down by sections rather than the whole division). Perhaps a representative from each section should attend and relate any information back to co-workers.”*

*“Less meetings – more decisions.”*