



At a Glance

Evaluation of Environment and Climate Change Canada's components of the Oceans Protection Plan, Environment and Climate Change Canada

About the program

The Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) is a five-year \$1.5 billion investment aimed at building a world-leading marine safety system to protect Canada's marine ecosystems. Launched in fiscal year (FY) 2017 to 2018, the OPP is a comprehensive and transformative whole-of-government strategy. It is composed of 58 sub-initiatives grouped under four pillars, each targeting a different expected outcome. Transport Canada (TC) is leading the implementation of the OPP in collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

ECCC received \$69.5 million over five years (FY 2017 to 2018 to FY 2021 to 2022) to conduct activities related to the five sub-initiatives of the State-of-the-Art Marine Safety Pillar:

- Marine Weather Information Services Demonstration Project
- Baseline Environmental Data on the Northern British Columbia Coast
- Regional Response Planning
- 24/7 Emergency Response Capacity
- Alternative Response Measures

Seven ECCC branches are involved in the OPP: Environmental Protection Branch, Meteorological Service of Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, Science and Technology Branch, Enforcement Branch, Corporate Services and Finance Branch and Public and Indigenous Affairs and Ministerial Services Branch (PIAMSB).



What the evaluation found

Overall, ECCC has made substantial progress in implementing the OPP during the first half of the funding period.

- ECCC has completed about half of its outputs.
- ECCC established governance mechanisms to support the implementation of the OPP, which enabled the reporting of OPP sub-initiatives within the Department. However, the ECCC OPP Secretariat could play a stronger role in its oversight function and further challenge the information provided by program areas involved in the OPP within ECCC.
- ECCC has collected performance measurement information at the output level for the five sub-initiatives and has measured progress at the outcome level.
- There is a need to better articulate how Gender-base Analysis Plus (GBA+) can be considered in the context of the OPP and to collect data on activities undertaken to address these considerations.

Recommendations and management response

Two recommendations are directed to ECCC's Associate Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of Environmental Protection Branch, as the senior departmental official responsible for the OPP Secretariat. The branch has accepted the recommendations and has developed a management action plans in response.

Recommendation 1: The ECCC Oceans Protection Plan Secretariat and Environmental Protection Branch senior managers should provide more strategic oversight, be more proactive in their coordination efforts and provide a challenge function on information provided by program areas.

Management response: The Environmental Emergencies Division oversees the OPP Secretariat. The OPP Secretariat has over the past year instituted a new governance structure and is putting in place measures to strengthen oversight, program coordination and integration. The Secretariat will also provide a challenge function within the Department. It will ensure effective monitoring, tracking and reporting as well as use governance mechanisms to discuss and resolve issues.

Recommendation 2: The ECCC Oceans Protection Plan Secretariat and Environmental Protection Branch senior managers should collect and analyze data on Gender-based Analysis Plus to ensure that vulnerable populations participate equally in the OPP.

Management response: GBA+ was applied in the planning phase of OPP through an assessment of the general impacts of the program on women and other groups benefiting from or participating in OPP. It was determined that Indigenous people had a desire to be much more involved in the marine oil spill regime, especially in British Columbia, and that all OPP departments needed to find ways to allow greater Indigenous participation.

Work will continue in FY 2021 to 2022 to support the renewal of the OPP. Women and men may participate in the proposed initiatives and activities differently. The Environmental Emergencies Division will design measures to monitor and track impacts or differences in engagement until the end of OPP in March 2023 and use this information to develop engagement and implementation strategies to ensure that both women and men will be able to participate equally in the next phase of OPP. ECCC will also design future OPP initiatives to allow Indigenous people to participate, and where appropriate, help design future OPP objectives and work plans.

About the evaluation

The evaluation was conducted to address a need specified by the senior management to assess the OPP implementation status within ECCC at its mid-term. It covered the period from April 2017 to September 2019. The evaluation examined the extent to which ECCC's OPP components were implemented as planned, the effectiveness of the OPP governance structure and mechanisms within ECCC and other relevant aspects, such as performance information, implementation challenges and missed opportunities. Information was gathered using different methods including a document review, financial and administrative data review and key informant interviews with staff from all seven ECCC branches.