

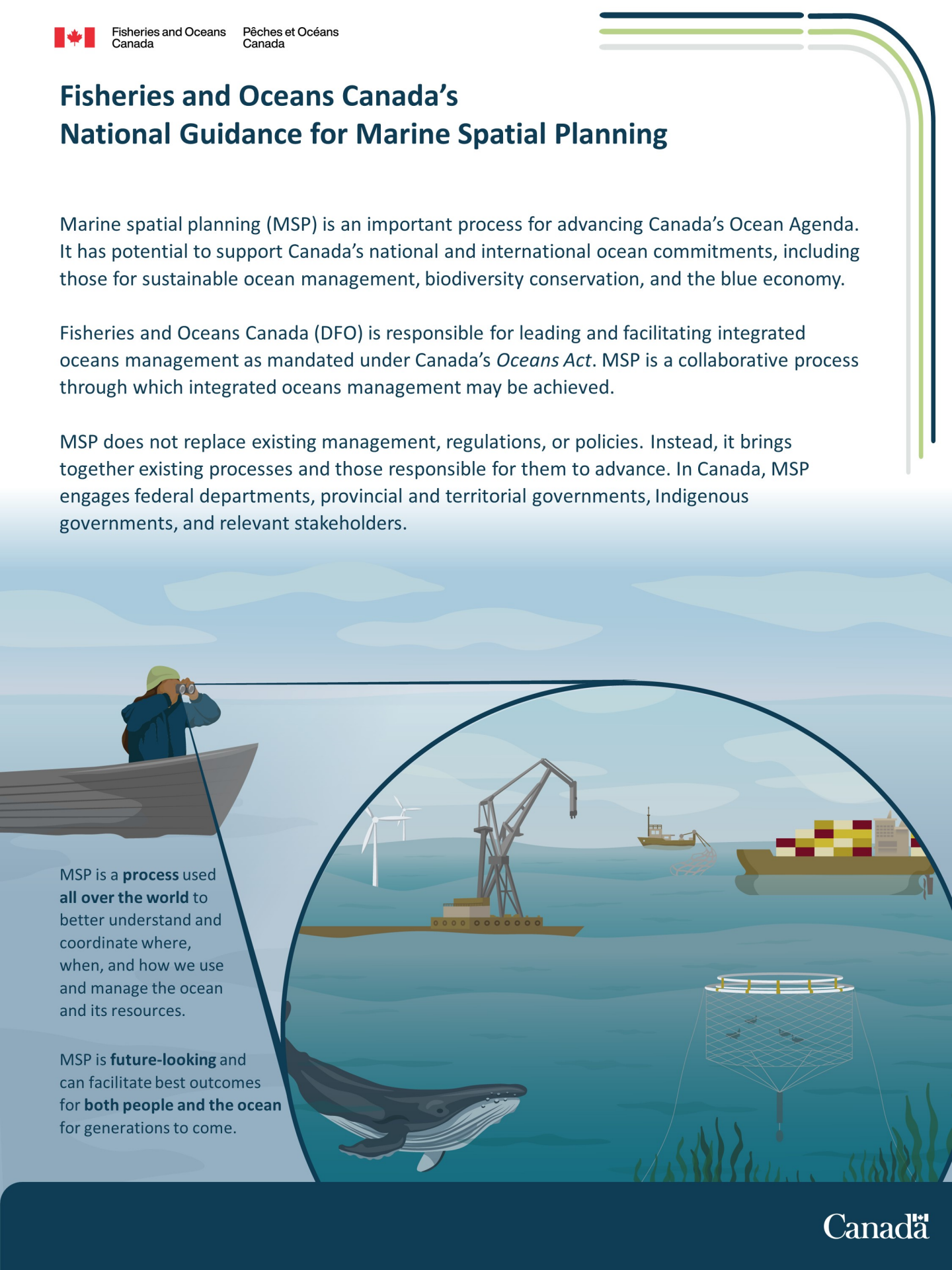


# Fisheries and Oceans Canada's National Guidance for Marine Spatial Planning

Marine spatial planning (MSP) is an important process for advancing Canada's Ocean Agenda. It has potential to support Canada's national and international ocean commitments, including those for sustainable ocean management, biodiversity conservation, and the blue economy.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for leading and facilitating integrated oceans management as mandated under Canada's *Oceans Act*. MSP is a collaborative process through which integrated oceans management may be achieved.

MSP does not replace existing management, regulations, or policies. Instead, it brings together existing processes and those responsible for them to advance. In Canada, MSP engages federal departments, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous governments, and relevant stakeholders.

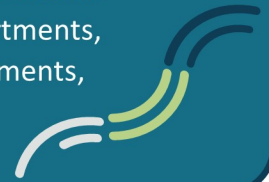


MSP is a **process** used **all over the world** to better understand and coordinate where, when, and how we use and manage the ocean and its resources.

MSP is **future-looking** and can facilitate best outcomes for **both people and the ocean** for generations to come.

DFO has developed this national guidance for MSP, which provides high-level MSP goals and principles, and a series of MSP phases and activities. This guidance can help to inform how DFO envisions MSP processes moving forward in our ecologically, economically, socially, and culturally unique planning areas.

Canada has committed to delivering first-generation marine spatial plans, or frameworks for MSP, in 2024. These documents provide information about planning areas and describe intentions for ongoing MSP processes in collaboration with federal departments, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous governments, and relevant stakeholders.



This national guidance is based on international guidance for MSP provided by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and broadly reflects the vision of *Canada's Oceans Strategy*. It outlines DFO's vision for the MSP process in Canada and is intended to support ongoing, collaborative work towards building a shared process and objectives for how we use and manage the ocean. With this guidance, the overall approach to MSP is united from coast to coast to coast, while still being flexible enough for each planning area to build an MSP process that reflects their unique environments.

DFO welcomes the knowledge, perspectives, and interests of those involved in MSP in tailoring the use of this guidance in unique planning areas.

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DFO's high-level goals for MSP in Canada are to:

### **Enable integrated management of our ocean**

Aims to collaborate to coordinate ocean uses, integrate information and knowledge, and advance environmental, economic, social, and cultural objectives.

### **Respect regional diversity**

Aims to reflect diverse ecological, economic, social, and cultural contexts across planning areas, while also being united under a shared set of national principles, processes, and deliverables.



DFO's approach to MSP is guided by principles that can support how **MSP processes, goals, and objectives are collaboratively established**. Additional principles may be identified in planning areas that complement and supplement these to reflect unique contexts. These principles provide a way for all involved in MSP to engage constructively, assess progress, and ensure accountability against a nationally consistent backdrop. DFO's national MSP principles include:



### Sustainable development

Environmental, economic, social, and cultural values are taken into account, with the aim of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.



### Participatory

Processes are conducted in a manner that is inclusive and that actively engages all involved in MSP.



### Respect for rights and existing activities

Processes progress within the current constitutional, legislative, regulatory, and policy context of Canada, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### Evidence-based

Processes are informed by the best information from diverse scientific disciplines and knowledge bases, including Indigenous Knowledge.

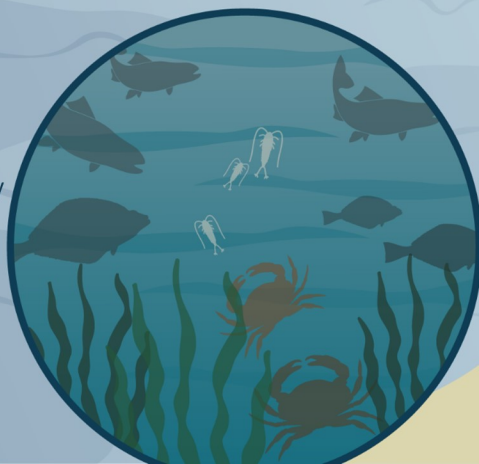


### Transparency

Processes can be easily understood by all, openly sharing how work is completed, how decisions are made, how government resources are allocated, and how decisions may affect the public.

### Ecosystem-based

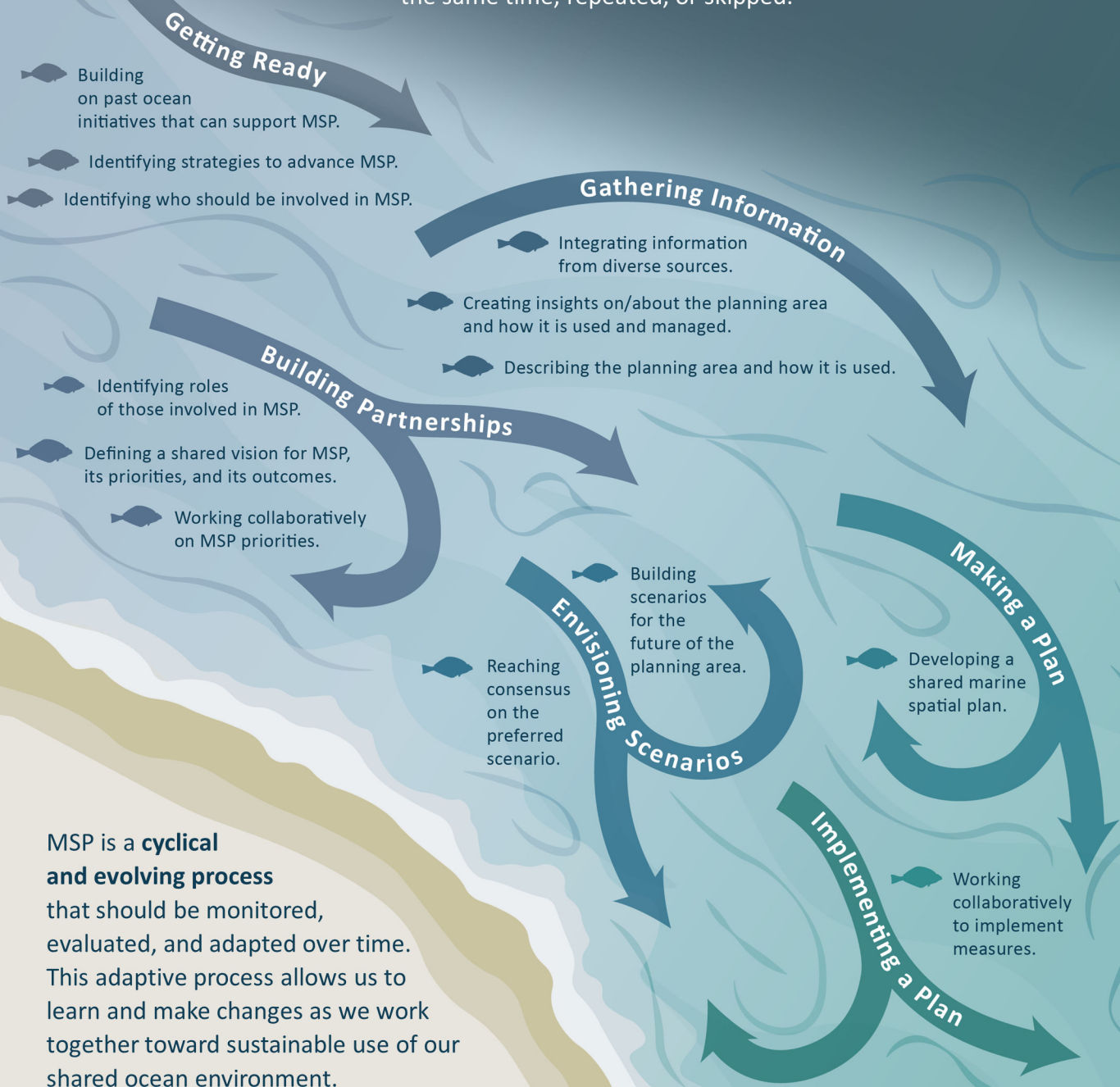
Ecosystem sustainability and function are of primary importance in MSP processes.



DFO's approach to MSP is broadly made up of **6 phases**, each with between **1 to 3 activities**. Together, these phases reflect the MSP process toward developing a marine spatial plan.

The phases are not necessarily linear. Depending on the circumstances of each planning area, the order of activities can change.

As the MSP process evolves, activities can be worked on at the same time, repeated, or skipped.



MSP is a **cyclical and evolving process** that should be monitored, evaluated, and adapted over time. This adaptive process allows us to learn and make changes as we work together toward sustainable use of our shared ocean environment.





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