

Background

The Minister of Natural Resources has committed to an externally driven process for the development of Natural Resources Strategy 2010. The outputs of Phases 1 and 2 are to be incorporated into the third and final phase of the Strategy. Phase 2 of DNR Strategy 2010 will be led by a Steering Panel appointed by the Minister of Natural Resources. Under the auspices of the Phase 2 Steering Panel, four Panels of Expertise (forests, minerals, parks and biodiversity) will be recruited to tap into the province's diverse technical expertise in these four areas. The Panels of Expertise will prepare and submit draft reports and recommendations to the Steering Panel that will inform Phase 3 - when the DNR Strategy 2010 will be written. Phase 2 technical expertise will be sought within the parameters of citizen values that were developed in Phase 1.

Purpose

The Minister's Panels of Expertise will be tasked with the following:

- Engage technical stakeholder expertise directly to inform Phase 3 – writing of the report
- Ensure alignment with the Strategy's Guiding Principles and government-approved strategy process guidelines (provided during panelist briefing)
- Ensure Phase 1 direction remains faithful to Phase 1 citizen values as articulated in Phase I report
- Ensure alignment with NS Corporate Plan and success of Phase 2 stakeholder engagement through Panels of Expertise to strengthen Phase 3 Strategy writing

Accountability

The Minister's Panels of Expertise are accountable to the following in their activities:

- Minister of Department of Natural Resources
- Minister's Steering Panel
- Citizens of Nova Scotia

Panels of Expertise will work with DNR Strategy Project Management Team and DNR Staff Liaisons throughout the process.

Scope & Authority

The Panels of Expertise will operate within the following scope, with the following authority:

- Stakeholder consultation is to be conducted according to approved methods and format in alignment with guiding principles
- Final report and recommendations to Steering Panel is to include high-level strategic directions – i.e., recommendations for policy and programs that include an assessment of priorities
- Panels' strategic direction is to be in alignment with Phase I values

Panels have the authority to:

- Seek and acquire DNR's expertise/perspective via DNR Liaison

- Liaise with DNR Project Management Team re: Strategy process and administration
- Report (via the Panel Lead) to Steering Panel, and seek feedback
- Share information across panels

Functions & Deliverables

The Panels of Expertise have the following functions and deliverables:

Preparation:

- Have working knowledge of key documents (Voluntary Planning report – Phase 1 citizen values/themes, DNR Strategy 2010 guiding principles, government guidelines and approved Strategy 2010 process, NS Corporate Plan, Social Framework, Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA))
- Compile a list of target stakeholder groups with recommendations from the Steering Panel
- Identify gaps in research

Process Management:

- Convene stakeholder groups for input, collect information
- Liaise with Steering Panel – Periodic updates on process and objectives to ensure alignment; request support and direction where appropriate and necessary
- Ensure
 - Panels' consultations, analysis, report and recommendations are aligned with Phase 2 purpose, including: Strategy 2010 principles, Phase 1 citizen value themes, government guidelines for 2010 strategy initiative, approved strategy process, Nova Scotia Corporate Plan, Social Framework, EGSPA

Confidentiality:

- In their conduct and activity panelists will maintain the highest degree of confidentiality to the process, to fellow panelists and to those who make submissions to the panel, and will limit their discussion of panel matters to panel meetings prior to the release of their report, and limit their comments to the content of the report after its release.

Report:

- Develop report and recommendations to Steering Panel on area of expertise, ensuring it is aligned with Phase 1 citizen values and themes

Inputs

The Panels of Expertise are to have a working knowledge of the following:

- Phase 1 report
- Stakeholder submissions
- Nova Scotia Government Corporate Path
- Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act
- Social Framework

Operating Standards

The Panels of Expertise will operate according to the following standards:

Appointment

- Members shall be appointed by the Minister of the Department of Natural Resources with recommendation by the Steering Panel
- Breach of confidentiality or other behaviour that is demonstrated to be detrimental to the success of the Phase 2 process will constitute grounds for removal by Minister

Composition, Duties & Terms of Appointment

- Members of the Panels of Expertise will serve a one-year term, and there will be no alternates.
- Panels will deliver their reports to the Minister of the Department of Natural Resources and the public through the Steering Panel by October 31, 2009.

Meeting Frequency

- The Panels of Expertise will meet on a regular basis, approximately 1 to 3 days per month; panel leads meet as a group periodically to share resources and align reports.
- Special and or frequent meetings may be required to deal effectively with issues as they arise.

Decision Making

- Decisions of the Panels of Expertise will be made through collaboration and may be diverse and/or opposing. Recommendations are not required to be based on consensus and panels may submit more than one recommendation on a given issue. It is incumbent upon each panel member to participate in the generation of best thinking, and in so doing not offend basic individual principles or values that can be supported both in and outside the panel.

Communication, Liaison with Panels of Expertise

- Periodic updates with Steering Panel as to progress.

Quorum

- Each Panel of Expertise will require a quorum of all three members for decision making.

Remuneration

- Panel members shall receive \$150 per diem when performing approved Panel activities.
- Panel members shall be reimbursed for the expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred by them in attending meetings and in the performance of other approved activities of their Panel of Expertise.
- Reimbursement and remuneration for extraordinary circumstances to be determined.

Membership & Structure

The Panels of Expertise will be populated and organized as follows:

- Under the auspices of the Phase 2 Steering Panel, four Panels of Expertise (forests, minerals, parks and biodiversity) will be recruited to tap into the province's diverse technical expertise in these four areas.

- The Panels of Expertise are structured to facilitate the unfettered exchange of ideas, expertise and opinions in a forum conducive to open discussion.
- The Steering Panel shall recommend three qualified candidates for membership on each Panel, including one lead for each Panel to Minister of Natural Resources
- One DNR Liaison will be appointed to each Panel.
- The Minister recognizes the importance of having a broad range of interests represented among Panel members and will seek to achieve and maintain diversity.
- Panel Lead: Will provide periodic updates to Steering Panel
 - Panel Leads will meet as a group periodically to share resources and align reports
 - Report writing, editing, maintain timelines, chair panel meetings and stakeholder meetings
 - DNR Liaison is not eligible for Panel Lead
- Panel Members: Participate in report writing, update information, stakeholder consultation design and implementation, synthesizing information.
- Panels will liaise with the DNR Strategy 2010 Project Management Team through the Strategy 2010 Project Coordinator
- Criteria for Panels of Expertise selection:
 - Practical and technical knowledge and expertise in specified area
 - Established credibility and respect in field – peer recognition
 - Consensus builder, proven collaborator, can reconcile conflicting values for balanced solution
 - Strategic thinker
 - Communicates in the language of the key strategy area
 - Commitment to public engagement in public policy development, using inclusive and transparent engagement approaches
 - Willingness to commit time and energy over a 12-month period

Asset: Demonstrated experience in written communication and leadership will be an asset.
- DNR Liaison for Panels of Expertise: DNR executive directors responsible for Strategy 2010 focus areas will recommend staff members and receive expressions of interest from staff and forward all names to the Deputy Minister. These DNR Liaisons will act as lead resource contacts to their corresponding Panels of Expertise.
 - Provide DNR subject-matter content in area of expertise
 - Provide DNR stakeholder context and contacts
 - Provide/coordinate available research (local, national and global) on file and further “light” research
 - Provide Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources perspective on focus area

Sub Committees

Recommended by Steering Panel and appointed by the Minister of the Department of Natural Resources

Evaluation

Evaluation criteria to be determined by the Steering Panel and the DNR Strategy 2010 project management team.