

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

# Inclusion and Diversity in the Blue Economy



*Prepared for:* Canadian Women in  
Ocean Industries Leadership (CWOIL)

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## Introduction

Canada's ocean industries significantly lack diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and remain predominantly male dominated. Based on available data, the level of participation of people who identify as women within Canada's ocean sectors is as low as 2% and not much higher than 15% - depending on the sector. As there is no data related to specific under-represented groups, such as Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, and disabled communities; it is safe to assume the level of participation for these groups is much lower.

The Canadian Women in Ocean Industries Leadership (CWOIL) initiative is focused on the development of a long term, strategic action plan to operationalize a vision to increase participation in Canada's oceans sectors by women, as well as people who identify as Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, racialized, and persons with disabilities, and those who otherwise lack fair access to opportunities.

The goal of the Action Plan is to help policymakers, ocean industry associations, and enterprises develop concrete programs and provide supports and resources for employers and organizations to support the advancement of females, and the participation of those who are historically excluded in Canada's ocean industries. The Action Plan is designed to be an urgent call to activate and fund initiatives as soon as possible. Indirectly, but ultimately, the goal is to help individuals who are within the under-represented groups, and their enabling organizational leaders, who are looking for opportunity in ocean industries.

The Action Plan is focused on cultivating a culture and practice of fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion for Canada's ocean industries that will, ultimately, support and grow Canada's ocean economy. This requires the establishment of an ecosystem that will intersect and connect businesses, communities, industry associations and DEI expertise, creating the invisible and visible infrastructure so Canada's ocean economy can achieve its full potential.

Ultimately, there is a need for urgency and focused commitment to acting on these recommendations. Key people need to own and lead deliverables and be responsible and accountable for results.

Numerous studies have definitively proven that diversity contributes to greater prosperity and economic success. For instance, every 1% increase in gender diversity generates a 3% increase in company revenue. Higher levels of ethnic diversity increase revenue by an outstanding 15%. Nevertheless, there is prevalent low awareness of the reasons for, and the benefits of, a DEI-positive workplace in most ocean sectors.

Despite some leading companies taking steps to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), there are significant equity, diversity, and inclusion challenges in all of Canada's ocean industries. There is unconscious bias in hiring and in workplaces, along with systemic inequalities within corporate culture, intolerant behaviors, a 'mini me' phenomenon, as well as a lack of policies and practices that are fully inclusive towards DEI. Progress in most of Canada's ocean sectors has been slow, and for many reasons, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on workforces, the gains that were once achieved are being lost.

The report, *Developing Workforce Capability among Under-Represented Workers* (Scully, S.) best summarizes the complexity of the issues: Women, immigrants, Indigenous people, visible minorities, and people with disabilities have largely been marginalized because of low turnover, low relative visibility of similar people in the industry, perceptions of unwelcoming work environments and workplace cultures, low awareness of how to hire an underrepresented worker, and lack of awareness of how innovations have made many roles more accessible to a broader range of workers. There are few relatable role models. There are perceptions of restricted accessibility and 'fit' challenges. The lack of continuity in Government-funded initiatives aimed at supporting under-represented workers continues to marginalize those who identify as women and others in historically excluded groups.

Specific actions and accountabilities are urgently needed to achieve the vision to make Canada a world leader for women and under-represented people to pursue and establish a thriving, successful, well-paying career in ocean industries; so, they can fulfil their personal and professional potential, including becoming leaders and owners; and maximize and broaden their impact on Canada's ocean sector and economy.

## Approach

The development of this Action Plan was a collaborative effort that included extensive national and international consultation with diverse communities of stakeholders. It included over 120 engagements, including interviews and workshops with individuals from academia, under-represented groups, entrepreneurs, industry associations, national ocean-oriented organizations, and Indigenous organizations as well as industrial, government and private sector leaders. The supporting quantitative research was drawn from multiple sources, reports, studies and articles relating to numerous sectors and jurisdictions that had studied gender diversity. While this plan may not tell the full story, as it is complex, it does serve as a benchmark as it confirms the overall low participation rates and issues for people excluded from Canada's ocean industries.

The plan generally targets the following sectors within Canada's ocean industries:

- Ocean technology
- Energy
- Shipbuilding and maintenance
- Transportation
- Fisheries and aquaculture

### **In Scope**

The following deliverables are included in the project's scope of work:

- Identify trends and best practices in gender diversity in ocean industry sectors.
- Identify current and predicted capability gaps.
- Provide guidance and recommend specific actions to create real change in the recruitment, retention, and development of under-represented workers.
- Demonstrate best practices and programs in workforce development in similar or related industries.
- Be action-orientated with defined deliverables and clear paths for activation and implementation.
- Avoid duplication and promote collaboration by acknowledging successful initiatives and organizations that are active now.
- Learn from others – adapt when applicable.

### **Out of Scope**

The following are not deliverables in the project's scope of work:

- Frameworks to support on-the-ground diversity, equity, and inclusion programs within each sector of Canada's ocean industries.
- Frameworks to support the on-the-ground diversity, equity, and inclusion programs to address specific intersectional issues and communities.
- Public education curriculum for k-12 system, colleges, or universities.

## Executive Summary

From CEOs to leaders in industry organizations, we were frequently told during the consultations that while workforce diversity is a priority and of growing importance, it is primarily “managed off the side of desks.” The frequency of this theme was a motivating force to determine what can be done so workforce diversity within Canada’s ocean industries shifts to front and center on the desks and in the minds of leaders in Canada’s blue economy and ocean industries’ associations.

Unfortunately, this is not only a Canadian problem. Recognizing this as a global issue, the UN Ocean Decade has prioritized the need to actively improve gender parity as it relates to the ocean economy. It claims the Ocean Decade, “will systematically identify and dismantle barriers to achieving gender, geographic and generational balance so that no one is left behind.”

This Action Plan is intended to identify solutions, shared responsibilities, and collaborations, and make recommendations to support DEI across Canada’s ocean industries. It is focused on cultivating a culture and practice of fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion for Canada’s ocean industries that will, ultimately, support and grow Canada’s ocean economy. This requires the establishment of an ecosystem that will intersect and connect businesses, communities, industry associations and DEI expertise, from a 10,000-foot perspective, creating the invisible and visible infrastructure so Canada’s ocean economy can achieve its full potential.

When designing this ecosystem, it is important to ask the following questions:

- What is the problem that you want to solve? Where are the gaps?
- Who needs to be part of this ecosystem?
- What should be the initial governance model of the ecosystem?
- What does success look like?
- How can you ensure the growth and long-term viability of the ecosystem?
- Who needs to have a voice at the table?

There is no homogenous solution that will adequately or credibly address the complex challenges of diversity within each ocean industry sector. The challenges within each sector are nuanced and culturally specific. Whether this is because of the vast distance between each coast, rural versus urban communities, or the unique conditions of each sector, there is little programming in place or common threads that truly connect and communicate activities, programs or funding for organizations or businesses that wish to engage or lead DEI initiatives to support Canada’s ocean industries. Therefore, frameworks to support on-the-ground diversity, equity, and inclusion programs within each sector of Canada’s ocean industries are not included in this plan. As a follow up, this plan highly recommends that consultations and diversity, equity and inclusion plans be developed and implemented to address the specific sectors within Canada’s ocean industries.

Intersectionality is how various identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability status, intersect to influence experiences of discrimination. The complex interplay of intersectionality must continue to be closely examined to fully understand and address gender inequality. Intersectionality must also be considered in the implementation of all this plan’s recommended actions.

When considering the complexity of Canada’s ocean industries industry and the issues relating to diversity, the stewards/leaders of this Action Plan (who are not yet in place) must start from the beginning and build the necessary DEI ecosystem components that can be strengthened over time to support diversity within Canada’s ocean industries. The ecosystem would support the following activities: Manage long-term operational activities that will support the action plan recommendations; Form and manage a DEI Taskforce, including industry leaders and DEI experts, who will drive performance and accountability; Develop and coordinate DEI programs for ocean enterprises, to support business leaders, human resource practices, and employees; Advance ocean-related careers, including influencing early childhood education and career advancement programs; and, Create necessary momentum by celebrating and profiling DEI best practices and industry leadership.

Government agencies, like ACOA, can provide central federal government leadership to support and drive this Action Plan, with options that include an Atlantic Canadian pilot, customized programs and funding, policy-leadership, and conditions to outline how support is to be provided to business and non-profit sectors, eventually driving to national programs and leadership.

## Summary: Priorities and Actions

The following chart summarizes the recommend priorities and actions to establish the ecosystem required to foster DEI across Canada’s ocean industries.

<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire dedicated professional staff to support Task Force work and action plan implementation.</li> <li>• Establish a national integrated funding program to support DEI in Canada’s ocean industries and support industry specific DEI strategies.</li> <li>• Fund national industry associations to develop comprehensive, long-term strategies to support inclusivity of all genders and under-represented people to guide their respective industries and member companies.</li> <li>• Collect and report on data that focuses on gender in Canada’s ocean industries, including a breakdown of people’s intersectionality.</li> </ul>
<b>Champions of Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce with inclusive representation of sector leaders, and diversity experts to support the implementation of the Action Plan.</li> <li>• Host an annual conference or forum, focused on DEI in Canada’s ocean industries.</li> <li>• Engage in industry advocacy relating to diversity in Canada’s Blue Economy.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver motivational presentations and content targeting ocean sector conferences, forums, and events tied to diversity of the blue economy.</li> </ul>
<b>Empowering Ocean Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit financial resources and grants to support DEI initiatives in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).</li> <li>• Raise awareness about existing diversity resources through an online web portal, that also includes labour market information.</li> <li>• Offer workplace DEI assessments to ocean enterprises.</li> <li>• Develop and offer online ocean sector toolboxes, training &amp; resources.</li> <li>• Establish a Women in Ocean Export program: Fund trade delegates or trade cohorts to attend international trade conferences and tradeshows, including female-owned enterprises, start-ups, and ocean technology students from under-represented groups.</li> <li>• Establish scholarships for CEO executive level education.</li> </ul>
<b>Inspiring Careers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an online ocean industries career portal for students and potential employees to research career opportunities, that also profiles sectors and connects users to career databases and career fairs.</li> <li>• Curate, refine and circulate ocean literacy and awareness resources that promote oceans careers, and raise awareness of the importance of Canada’s blue economy and our oceans.</li> <li>• Form a national, cross-ocean sector, intersectionality-driven advisory group to provide direction for ocean literacy programs across all ocean sectors.</li> <li>• Introduce an annual National Blue Economy Day Career Day – hosted by industry associations, with career fairs and high-profile guest speakers.</li> <li>• Develop a series of scholarships to support accelerated executive and leader development for women and others in underrepresented groups.</li> <li>• Develop a series of scholarships to support entrepreneurial/ business skill professional support program for advancing mid-managers.</li> </ul>
<b>Celebrating best practices and leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and celebrate best practices, progress, and leadership in DEI through the development of an annual national awards program.</li> <li>• Develop a Blue Economy Speaker Series: Celebrate the diverse talent and companies that are leading in diversity, equity, and inclusion.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a communications platform focused on storytelling: featuring best practices of organizations driving a diversity culture; role model profiles; and ocean industries careers.</li> </ul>



## What we Learned

### Previous Studies Revealed Common Challenges and Recommendations

Through our research, we identified many studies and strategies that focus on increasing participation of under-represented groups within a variety of sectors, including ocean-related sectors. Most identified similar challenges and recommendations. The following summarizes findings and recommendations related to increasing participation of those who identify as female, Indigenous, and other under-represented groups:

- **Labour market challenges:** emerging realization that employees must come from non-traditional populations, combined with lack of expertise in how to approach and integrate them
- **Leadership:** necessity to identify champions, create allyship, demonstrate career pathways, change management, drive business growth, requirement for top management vision and accountability
- **Communications:** poor knowledge and awareness of ocean industries, and related opportunities, and career pathways, is common across all organizations, platforms, and sectors
- **Data:** no tracking, centralized curation, benchmarks, accountability, opportunities, monitoring, reporting,
- **Connectivity:** need for more interaction among sectors, networks, supports, mentorship, conversations
- **Barriers:** unacceptable behaviours and lack of civility, no pathways, no representation at higher levels, safety, few customized facilities and equipment, weak innovation, lack of supportive work culture
- **Lack of education:** limited early access and education, awareness of opportunities, careers, pathways
- **Best practices:** some success with DEI lens in Human Resources policies and practices, leadership, regulations, training, mentoring and development
- **Equity:** inconsistent wages, opportunities, access, and wrap around supports to advance
- **Unfavourable perceptions:** unknown or unrealistic ocean sector career paths, unsafe, isolated, work-life balance, remote, outdated established norms and practices (e.g., perpetuating gender stereotypes), cold, dirty
- **Voices:** conversation, solutions and actions must be driven by and owned by all decision makers and influencers, including predominant male-led organizations and decision makers.

### Blue Economy Strategy Fosters DEI

Canada's Blue Economy Strategy, "What We Heard" document identified the need to foster more inclusion and diversity in Canada's ocean sectors. When the strategy is implemented, it will likely assist in filling labour shortage gaps by promoting ocean careers and role models, targeting recruitment, increasing ocean literacy, raising awareness around ocean sector opportunities, and connecting women, Indigenous and historically excluded groups. This includes respecting and recognizing Indigenous rights and their unique role in the blue economy. The Blue Economy Strategy is considered an opportunity to advance reconciliation by recognizing and integrating the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples.

Using a DEI lens to support and improve inclusion, diversity, and equity overall in Canada's blue economy, it was recommended:

- Promote ocean-related careers and the ocean environment
- Encourage ocean-related curricula in education and training, in collaboration with provincial and territorial partners
- Support more accessible and affordable education and training options
- Invest in infrastructure that enables ocean users to participate in blue economy activities
- Use innovation and technology solutions to address safety concerns
- Incentivize increased diversity in training, education, and sectors
- Improve data on labour demographics and measuring inclusion
- Support non-governmental initiatives helping under-represented groups become more involved in blue economy activities



To increase the proportion of under-represented groups in managerial and decision-making roles in the blue economy, it was recommended:

- Promote role models in ocean sectors
- Support targeted recruitment and hiring initiatives
- Incentivize increased student and training supports
- Involve under-represented groups in ocean governance and decision making

Of particular importance is that “many Indigenous coastal communities are dependent on a limited range of economic activities taking place in, around and on our oceans.” Fostering partnership with Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast is vital for exploring how we can build upon and create sustainability for Indigenous people, women, and diverse communities. As each ocean sector examines specific diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, there are no “one-size-fits-all” solutions.

Canada’s ocean economy requires more inclusionary methods to build and drive development that will address barriers to inclusive growth in which women, Indigenous and historically excluded populations are invited to the table with their voices and unique life experiences.

The Blue Economy document identified many challenges. For instance, it is difficult to access government funding programs and procurement processes, there is a lack of funding for small-and medium-sized enterprises, and it is difficult to access local and affordable education and training. Ultimately, there is no clear career pathway to access ocean-sector jobs.

## Opportunities Within Canada’s Ocean Industries Start with Leadership and Ownership

The following summarizes many opportunities identified during the consultation that exist within Canada’s ocean industries relating to diversity:

- Leaders and CEOs are highly motivated now because of significant labour capacity issues.
- The Government of Canada has stated its supports for diversity within Canada’s Blue Economy. As the nation’s largest procurer and regulator in the ocean industries, it has tremendous power to influence policy and activities associated with ocean sector hiring practices, procurement and priorities.
- Canada’s Ocean Supercluster is advancing awareness of the importance of Canada’s ocean industries and diversity.
- The development of Canada’s blue economy strategy is exposing and driving interest in ocean industry matters.
- There is incredible interest, and a sense of urgency, to engage and contribute to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in workplaces.
- Post Covid-19, there is strong support for this initiative and participants were highly engaged.
- There is a high level of agreement that change is needed at many different levels regarding DEI. This is expected to influence increased recognition within organizations who have yet to realize the opportunity and benefits of increased participation of individuals in under-represented groups.
- Where there are leaders and individuals actively driving DEI, there is change.
- People who live near oceans and are familiar with ocean employment and enterprise are more aware of industry conditions and may be easier to inform and attract to the sector.
- People move in and out of ocean employment, and more flexible work conditions, to accommodate family and personal circumstance – acknowledging and accommodating fluid career tracks can increase participation.
- Some rigid perceptions of negative work conditions in ocean sectors can be addressed.
- Women and under-represented individuals who are employed in ocean sectors provide visibility and open a gateway for movement throughout more types of employment and leadership in the industry.
- Paradigm shifts in behaviour and attitudes are happening in other economies e.g., carbon reduction and greening technologies, and Indigenous leadership and relationships with industry, that offer foundational and simultaneous best practises for radical and urgent change.



## DEI Challenges Must Be Addressed

During the consultation, we heard of many factors that challenge how ocean industries manage diversity, equity and inclusion, including:

- Absence of case studies/best practices to help leaders learn how drive diversity and inclusion within their organizations.
- Good intentions but low awareness of how to hire under-represented workers.
- In nation-building programs, such as the National Shipbuilding Strategy, the Government of Canada requires DEI programs and policies in its procurement processes. Federal offshore oil and gas regulators collect data relating to gender. Yet, there appears to be little accountability for actually tracking and monitoring the progress of these DEI requirements.
- Male-dominant employment conditions, e.g., equipment and PPE are constructed for male specifications/physiques and thus not inclusive for everyone.
- Low awareness of how innovation and digital solutions have improved accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Opportunities in ocean industries are somewhat unknown, and for under-represented workers, are even less familiar and harder to navigate.
- Societal barriers such as childcare, language, family support issues, transportation barriers, access to education, and settlement issues can make it difficult for many under-represented workers to participate in training and employment programs.
- Good intentions but low awareness of how to hire, recruit, and retain under-represented workers.
- Organizational cultures have not all been set up as safe spaces to welcome and include those who identify as women or are historically excluded.
- In ocean industries there is an absence of analytics and benchmarking around DEI, and poor data collection and tracking.
- Lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of internal mentoring and sponsoring people who identify as women and who are historically excluded blocks their advancement.

## DEI Communications Must Improve

The need for improved communications to support diversity across Canada's ocean industries was repeatedly mentioned. Many ideas were offered to make these improvements. Information gaps and/or opportunities where improved communications would support DEI within Canada's ocean industries include:

- There is a sense of urgency to act now. Many noted this is the time to act, and it requires a paradigm shift in thinking. This is necessary and will be good for communities and ocean industries.
- There are many diversity programs already in place, but more awareness around these initiatives is needed as there is little connectivity throughout ocean industries.
- Enhance promotion of DEI within all Canada's ocean industries, including programs focused on ocean-based entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Create opportunities to learn and improve how to communicate with under-represented communities, taking into consideration Indigenous and other languages, literacy levels, regional and cultural dynamics, and how communities access information.
- Raise awareness around role models and their success. Introduce young people to relatable role models who may challenge already-embedded stereotypes. This can improve recruitment efforts, encourage students to select oceans as their career, and ensure pathway selection is more likely to be a good 'fit'.
- CEOs are asking for insight and knowledge about organizations that are having success when it comes to increasing diversity in the workplaces. Who are the corporate / industry role models?
- There is a need to foster partnerships and raise awareness of Canada's ocean industries and its incredible contribution to the Canadian economy. Celebrate Canada's Blue Economy.
- Educate and inform to address possible perception issues that these sectors may not offer safe or supportive environments for women and under-represented groups.

## STEM Programs Open DEI Opportunities

Ocean enterprises, including traditional ocean sectors like the fishery, are tending to be more technology-oriented and often require new and emerging technologies in every aspect of operations. The increasing demand for both traditional and advanced STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) competencies is critical across Canada's ocean industries. According to a recent ECO Canada study, scientists, data analysts and engineers are top occupations in demand across the ocean sectors. However, according to Statistics Canada in 2022, of the 34% of Canadians with a STEM degree who are women, they comprise only 23% of Canadians working in science and technology. Therefore, the pipeline of women with the technical skills and experience to lead ocean industries enterprises is small. To retain these women in this sector, ocean industries will need to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating flexible, safe and welcoming workplaces.

## Canada's Aging Population is Reducing All Workforces

Canada's aging population is creating disruptions as its large baby boom generation continues to enter retirement age. This has significantly lowered the share of the population actively working or looking for work. By 2030, labour force participation is expected to fall to levels not seen since the 1970s, creating severe economic and fiscal strains.

Canada's marine transportation sector has a rapidly aging workforce. For instance, Transport Canada estimates 43% of the marine transportation workforce — on board commercial vessels and ferries — is expected to retire over the next decade. Employers need to find ways to enable faster, flexible, viable and more affordable career advancement of deckhands to mates, and mates to captains.

All Commercial fisheries' operations are struggling with a declining and aging workforce. Although women add high value to fishing communities and the seafood industry, their participation is often unseen, underpaid or undervalued. Fisheries work needs to be valued differently, and, in recognizing the roles women play, not only encourage inclusivity, but also count them in the statistics for their paid and unpaid roles and provide true visibility. Listening to women's voices is imperative. Hampering change is women's lack of access to work experience on fishing vessels, as is the weak intergenerational transfer of licences and quota to youth and/or women, combined with limited access to capital, and the high cost of entry to purchase a vessel. With its aging workforce, limited access to a skilled workforce in rural areas, and rapid technological advances, aquaculture is also challenged to find ways to significantly increase its training capacity to meet the training demands at all levels of organizations.

## A DEI Focus Can Relieve Labour Market Challenges

According to a recent RBC *Thought Leadership* article: "In nearly every Canadian industry and across every sector, a historic labour shortage is hitting companies hard. As of June 2022, businesses posted almost 70% more job openings in Canada than pre-pandemic. But these firms were competing for 13% fewer unemployed workers than were available in February 2020. The impact is severe: more than half of Canadian businesses say labour shortages are limiting their ability to increase production—up from 40% before the pandemic and 30% a decade ago."

Sectors within Canada's ocean industries are experiencing common labour market challenges, particularly shortages in skilled labour in all operational areas. In some sectors the demand for workers is extreme. Fostering more inclusion and diversity in Canada's ocean sectors will help fill current labour shortages and set the foundation for a sustainable labour force over the long term. Focused DEI programs can create workplace cultures that foster all realms of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Meaningful Indigenous Engagement is Vital

The Indigenous population in Canada's north is younger and growing faster than other non-Indigenous populations, yet the unemployment rate is higher, over 17%. The unemployment rate among all Indigenous Canadians is higher yet, at 19%. There is no gender-based analysis of Indigenous workforce population as it is often addressed as one homogenous group rather than by identity as men, women or two spirited.

The unique life experiences and perspectives of Indigenous women must play an important role in all policy development and decision-making processes, regardless of the policy issue being addressed, or whether it targets Indigenous women directly, or it indirectly impacts them.

It is becoming better known that more Indigenous people may be available employees. Multiple strategies urge business leaders to hire more Indigenous workers, to appreciate the business case for doing so, and to adopt new and appropriate policies and strategies.

To improve Indigenous DEI, it is necessary to first understand the multi-generational, often maternal-led, home-based and community living conditions of Indigenous families and childcare; as well as cultural, educational and language contexts. It is important to appreciate the dynamic challenges, and opportunities, for Indigenous workers to work remotely, and far from home for extended periods in ocean industries.

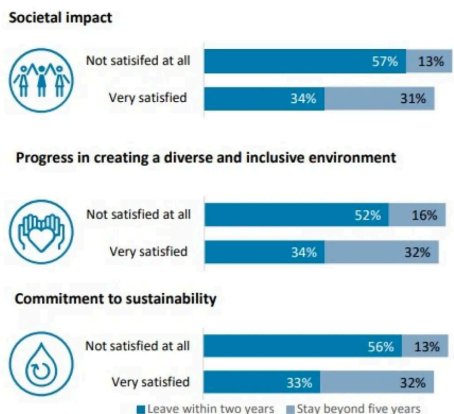
## Youth Are Driving Change

Involving youth in the blue economy workforce would ensure intergenerational equity and help position industries for tomorrow's workforce. When it comes to hiring younger generations, a report released by the Canadian Marine Industry Foundation points to a common issue found across all of Canada's ocean industries. It highlighted that the biggest barrier to recruiting candidates is a lack of knowledge of the diversity of jobs available in the marine sector. It reported that 67% of youth in the millennial and Gen Z generations believe the industry is hard to get into and 60% said they could think only of a few types of industry jobs. Awareness was identified as one of the biggest challenges.

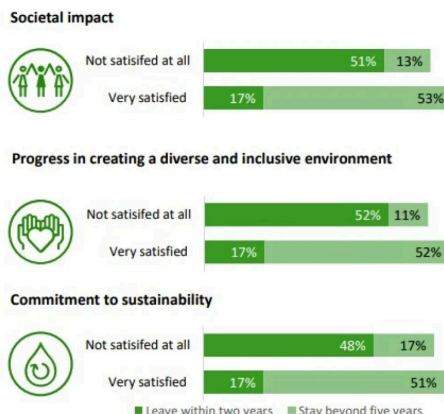
Young people are also expressing dissatisfaction with organizations that are not committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. According to Glassdoor, 67% of active and passive job seekers say that when evaluating companies and job offers, it is important to them that the company has a diverse workforce. This is likely creating similar significant barriers for Canada's ocean industry sectors, which are also predominately male.

Deloitte noted Millennials are 52% more likely to stay beyond 5 years when there are corporate efforts to create a diverse and inclusive culture.

**Gen Zs' satisfaction on the following efforts of their organization and its impact on their loyalty**



**Millennials' satisfaction on the following efforts of their organization and its impact on their loyalty**



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## Recommended Priorities

This Action Plan includes five recommended Priority Actions.

### Priority Action 1 – Provide Operational Resources to Implement the Action Plan

This Action Plan must be adequately resourced if it is to be implemented and succeed. If fact, without an organization or entity accountable for the implementation of this Action Plan, it is highly likely that the recommendations included in this Action Plan will not be implemented.

Dedicated professional resources are needed to support the recommended Task Force (Priority Action 2), for them to coordinate cross sector initiatives, apply for funding, manage projects and provide the required leadership to support a national action plan. Duties could include: stewardship of the action plan, budget management, advocacy, cross sector coordination, communications, DEI advisory services, program development, resource library, intersectionality strategy development and conference coordination.

To address labour supply challenges, comprehensive, long-term diversity initiatives are needed in each sector of Canada’s ocean industries, ideally driven by the strong leadership and insights offered through industry associations. However, industry associations that support ocean industries are not interconnected, and diversity programming is often not prioritized, funded, or resourced.

We heard, repeatedly, that diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are “managed off the side of a desk” despite the need. A one-size homogenous approach will not work for all sectors in Canada’s ocean industries. And funding programs to support diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are often strapped by low funding levels, are fragmented and disconnected, and are regionally focused, which impede efforts, support and results from being impactful.

A commonly accepted norm in business is, “What is monitored, is managed.” There is very limited measurable information about gender, Indigenous women, and other under-represented groups. When under-represented people are missing from research, and policy spaces and decision-making tables, biases occur causing faulty research and potentially harmful policies and strategies and cultures that are not safe and inviting to everyone. Improving data on gender diversity across all ocean sectors is critical. If we do not know how many men and women work in the Canada’s ocean industries, we have no way of knowing how well we are doing.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Coordinator /Partners</b>
Hire dedicated professional staff to support Task Force work and Action Plan implementation	Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada members
Establish a national integrated funding program to support DEI in Canada’s ocean industries	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)  Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)  Canada’s Ocean Supercluster
Fund national industry associations to develop comprehensive, long-term strategies to support inclusivity of all genders and under-represented people for their respective industries and member companies	Industry associations
Collect and report on data that focuses on gender in Canada’s ocean industries, including a breakdown of people’s intersectionality	Canada’s Ocean Supercluster  Ocean Allies  ECO Canada

## Priority Action 2 – Identify Champions of Diversity

With female participation rates in Canada’s ocean sectors being as low as 2% and no higher than 15%, it will likely take decades to significantly increase diversity across Canada’s ocean industries. This will require a renewed focus by determined champions and industry leaders, from all genders, to lead and drive action to support the diversity and inclusion within Canada’s ocean economy. Coordination and direction of these leaders is needed to help shape, steward, and drive accountability of this proposed diversity initiative.

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Taskforce with inclusive representation of sector leaders, and diversity experts is needed to support the implementation of the Action Plan. The Taskforce would serve as the lead convening body with representation from across Canada’s mix of ocean industries to drive accountability, provide oversight and help direct the Action Plan’s activities and priorities, while setting a firm vision and mission.

This group of industry influencers is crucial to ensuring industry and government officials - provincially, territorially, and nationally - are aware and remain committed to the advancement of Canada’s blue economy through diversity. Ongoing advocacy and profiling are required to ensure the voices of those who are under-represented are heard and included, that the programming remains funded, and diversity remains as a top-of-mind issue within Canada’s ocean industries.

Networking, professional development and DEI celebrations are strongly recommended. For instance, an annual symposium or forum focusing on DEI in Canada’s ocean industries will build on the momentum generated by this planning process. This forum, which could be moved annually to different Canadian coastal regions, could be hosted by Canada’s ocean technology organizations or Canada’s Ocean Supercluster. This would send a strong message about the importance of diversity and inclusion in Canada’s ocean sectors.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Coordinator/Partners</b>
Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce with inclusive representation of sector leaders, and diversity experts to support the implementation of the Action Plan.	Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada members
Host an annual symposium or forum, focused on DEI in Canada’s ocean industries, which could lead to a stand-alone conference in year three	Circulate annually across Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada members
Develop core content, presentations, and data for subsequent delivery as panelist and presenters in conferences and gatherings where ocean sectors gather	Taskforce
Engage in industry advocacy relating to diversity in Canada’s Blue Economy	Taskforce
Develop and deliver motivational presentations and content targeting ocean sector conferences, forums, and events relating to diversity of the blue economy	Taskforce



### Priority Action 3 – Empower Ocean Enterprises

Diversity is no longer a matter of regulatory compliance or ‘the right thing to do’. It’s now a growing business-performance issue. Research tells us that organizations that do not prioritize diversity will find it harder to succeed as it will be more difficult to attract top talent, expand into new markets, establish a good reputation externally and internally, as well as to innovate. There is overwhelming evidence that diverse companies are more productive, innovative and perform better financially.

According to a recent McKinsey report, women continue to have worse day-to-day experiences at work. “Women are more likely than men to have their competence questioned and their authority undermined, and women of color and other women with traditionally marginalized identities are especially likely to face disrespectful and “othering” behavior.” Women continue to be under-represented in all levels of management. Workplace bias continues to impede the hiring, development, and promotion of under-represented groups.

CEOs told us that they want to better understand why some organizations are performing better than others when it comes to diversity. Some admitted that they are having limited success and have limited knowledge to support the significant culture change and leadership required to support organizational diversity. They want to learn from companies who are experiencing positive results from their diversity efforts.

Organizations need to first understand the current work environment as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through a workplace assessment, they can better understand issues related to their policies, interviewing practices, orientation processes or worksite facilities that may act as a deterrent for hiring and/or retaining women.

Developing fully inclusive policies is a necessary step in creating an intersectional workplace. Conducting regular internal policy audits may ensure that these policies stay up-to-date and properly address the needs of all employees.

Offering workplace diversity and culture initiatives is a critical component of this ecosystem building process, including multiple levels of training for CEOs, managers and supervisors, employees and women working in these sectors. For instance, there is a need for consistent education and awareness that prioritizes intersectionality. While one-time training sessions on microaggressions, implicit bias, privilege, and similar topics are important and necessary, they will not be effective without more consistent “organic education” whereby everyone feels safe reporting workplace harassment and having the tough conversations about oppression, bias, and discrimination.

There are significant hurdles to create and grow female-led ocean enterprises. Most ocean enterprises are based in science and engineering and the pipeline of women with the technical skills and experience is small. In commercial fishing enterprises, the transfer of licences and quotas to any under-represented individual or enterprise is often hampered by the high cost of entry coupled with limited, and at times biased, access to capital. We heard that some female founders require education relating to finance, business culture and business development. Conversely, we also learned of female founders who excelled when they were provided with additional entrepreneurial education, guidance and supports.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Toolboxes supporting diversity, with training models and online resources have been developed by a variety of organizations and sectors. Some industries have human resources councils that support DEI. These resources can be modified and customized to meet the needs of Canada’s ocean sectors and potentially managed by sector industry associations to guide companies, CEOs and educate employees on matters relating to diversity.

Organizations that focus on women in STEM, such as Winsett, offer a library of diversity resources and training. The Women in Resource Development Corporation, based in Newfoundland and Labrador, provides a variety of employer services including workplace assessments, diversity policy development, recruitment assistance and workshops and training. The Mining HR Council offers Indigenous Awareness Training to introduce Indigenous peoples, values, histories, and experiences. Through guided questions, learners reflect on course content, awareness of Indigenous cultures and the vital roles we all play to advance reconciliation in Canada.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Coordinator/Partners</b>
Commit financial resources and grants to support DEI initiatives in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	Industry Associations
Raise awareness about existing diversity resources through an online web portal, including labour market information.	Taskforce
Offer workplace assessments to ocean enterprises	Women in Resource Development Committee
Develop and offer ocean sectors online toolbox, training & resources (see suggestions below)	Winsett ECO Canada Industry Associations Women in Resource Development Corporation (WRDC) Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE) YWCA
Establish a Women in Ocean Export program: Fund trade delegates or trade cohorts to attend international trade conferences and tradeshow, including both female-owned enterprises, start-ups and ocean technology students from under-represented groups.	Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada members Industry Associations

Note: The toolbox could include the following:

- An E-Book on how to increase diversity through improved hiring and recruitment processes, to identifying safe and respectful work policies and gender safe supports. It could include a step-by-step guide to identify barriers and create inclusive workplaces by removing barriers within policies, processes and procedures.
- A gender champion workshop for CEOs and senior executives to train and drive organizational change towards a more inclusive workplace, including best practices in human resources, pathway development, leadership, regulations, training, mentoring and development, wages, opportunity access, etc.
- Education and guidance on inclusive communications.
- Research and insights on what motivate new young workers to guide recruitment and retention strategies.
- Specialized awareness training that focuses on under-represented groups by category, such as people with disabilities, Indigenous, racialized and those who are under-represented in ocean industries.
- Cultural sensitivity and unconscious bias training.

## Priority Action 4 – Inspire Careers through Awareness and Education

This Action Plan recommends oceans industry-wide centralized and laser-like focus on awareness and education to:

- (1) Inspire individuals within underrepresented groups to recognize and seek opportunities for careers in all ocean sectors, and,
- (2) Inspire employers, educators, and other stakeholders to commit deliberate attention and disciplined action to offer multi-layered and flexible programs to hire and advance more individuals from underrepresented groups.

Employers, exasperated by labour force pressures to find new employees, consistently asked how to ensure Canada's young students and under-represented groups know enough about our oceans and the possible careers in Canada's oceans industries. Influencers of career choices, public sector administrators, and industry organization leaders recommended connecting with future employees in schools, as early as elementary and primary grades. This is in addition to inspiring new entrants to work in ocean industries, included retaining, and convincing former ocean industry employees to return to the sectors.

Multiple researchers revealed that many people in under-represented groups, particularly youth, women and Indigenous, have negatives perceptions of ocean careers. Misinformation is often perpetuated by workplace biases, and biases towards traditional academic pathways.

Most consultations highlighted the need for visibility and encouragement. Women, youth, and people who are under-represented need to see themselves in the workplace, in the photos, language, policies used in workplaces and recruitment. There must be genuine opportunity without discrimination or bias.

Many organizations are driving innovative ocean career awareness, such as Students on Ice Foundation that funds Blue Futures Pathways, the Youth Maritime Collaborative of the Port of Seattle in Washington, and Oceans Advance Immersion Program. Programs like these can be adapted to increase awareness among all underrepresented people using multiple tactics - digital platforms with job boards, learning resources, salary stipends, career pathways, experiential events, internships, career fairs, and more. There are opportunities to connect employers with potential ocean-minded employees of the future to empower youth, engage ocean-centric sponsors and partners and to provide accessible online platforms for employers, students, and career counsellors, with relevant content, and experiential context. These and other practises including bringing youth and other underrepresented people to industry conferences, tradeshows, and events, and continuously circling back throughout all stages learning and career planning.

Intentional programs can offer opportunities for complementary resources to increase reach in parallel sectors and regions, especially if they tie back to a centralized one-stop online platform. This can extend awareness and educational resources to learn about Canada's ocean economy, and to integrate data relevant to career selection. It would offer regional and national data to cater to the mobility interests of our workforce, as well as connect Canada's ocean career opportunities, networks, and platforms to link with already developed regional online tools and resources.

Having such resources available to youth influencers like career counsellors, extracurricular guides, and activities, and even within children's educational entertainment, can extend reach even further. Ocean literacy education in earlier grades will provide opportunities to reach a broader group of young people. Especially as research shows that young people begin to form awareness of social stigmas and group stereotypes between the ages 6-10, suggesting that programs on ocean literacy are needed long before social biases about career intentions are too firmly embedded. If a young person who identifies as female is deterred from science and math by Grade 4, she simply thinks she can't do it and often gives up forever. A concerted effort and DEI lens is needed to create science and math programs that are interesting and accessible to gender diverse and young females.

Other recommendations heard throughout the consultations included oceans-focused post-secondary programs and paid student work placements in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and business in Canada’s ocean industries. This would include wage subsidies for employers who create new placements, including co-ops, internships, applied projects, field placements and non-traditional opportunities. This could facilitate stronger partnerships between Canada’s ocean industries and partnering polytechnics, universities, and colleges. It would also encourage the participation of students from under-represented groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, and new immigrants.

For women advancing throughout their oceans industry career ladders, and beyond to positions of executive leadership, they need more than reinforced education and awareness. Deliberate and targeted leadership accelerator and executive development programs will equip women with management skills to enable them to rise to leadership positions. This will also boost their active participation within a familiar and trusted network of female executives who support and inspire each other along their leadership journey.

These programs can leverage existing programs designed and curated for women in the ocean industries, as well as be modeled from other sectors, and developed in collaboration with existing education organizations. For instance, in 2022, WISTA, IMO and the Maritime Sheeo are delivering the 2nd Leadership Accelerator Program (LEAP) to members of Women in Maritime Associations and National WISTA Associations. The Fisheries Council of Canada also offers the Future Leaders Canada program.

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Coordinator/Partners</b>
Develop an online ocean industries career portal for students and potential employees to research career opportunities, profile sectors and connect users to career databases and career fairs	Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE)  Canadian Network for Ocean Education (CaNOE)
Curate, refine and circulate ocean literacy and awareness resources that promote oceans careers, raise awareness about the importance of Canada’s blue economy and our oceans	Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (COVE)  Canadian Network for Ocean Education (CaNOE)
Form a national, cross-ocean sector, intersectionality-driven advisory group to provide direction for ocean literacy programs across all ocean sectors	Taskforce
Host a National Blue Economy Day Career Day – hosted by industry associations, including career fairs and high-profile special guest speakers	Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada members
Develop a series of scholarships to support accelerated executive and leader development for women and others in underrepresented groups	Taskforce
Develop a series of scholarships to support entrepreneurial / business skill professional support program for advancing mid-managers	Taskforce

## Priority Action 5 – Celebrate DEI Best Practices and Leadership

Consistently, we heard that industry leaders are challenged by labour workforce shortage and want to learn about best practices from organizations that are making progress relating to DEI. We also heard that women and youth need to have role models and better understand the opportunities offered by ocean industries.

Storytelling can have a profound impact on culture, shaping beliefs and ideas and creating a shared understanding of the world. It is important that positive DEI stories from Canada's ocean industries are told, to inform, to educate, to motivate and to celebrate.

By establishing a national speakers' series that profiles the many faces of Canada's Blue Economy, personal stories can be told profiling the diverse talent and companies that are leading in DEI. Establishing a national awards program, like the 'Best Place to Work for LGBT Equality,' would also serve as a platform to tell success stories, celebrating leadership, commitment and contributions to DEI in the blue economy. Both these profiling opportunities would incentivize corporate and industry leaders to rise to the challenge, to tell their stories, receive recognition, and celebrate best practices and progress.

Below are highlights of the best practices identified and discussed during the consultation that could be highlighted through storytelling and celebrated as best practices.

**Accountability Works:** The report "What Works: Evidence-Based Ideas to Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace" identifies practices that are working to improve diversity and inclusion in organizations. Among its recommendations, it says that organizations should set goals, collect data, and hold people accountable for improving diversity within an organization. It also suggests that organizations get managers and other leaders involved in diversity programs from the start. This will increase buy-in and lead to smoother implementation. Successful companies often hold management accountable for progress on DEI efforts and formalize this accountability. Ambitious leaders must possess DEI achievements as a differentiating competency as executive performance reviews connect progress on diversity goals. Inclusive leaders know their metrics on DEI and can provide guidance and feedback progressing their organizations and creating safe spaces.

**CEO Ownership:** Successful DEI leadership within an organization is moving from a human resources function to ownership by CEOs and top management, who are increasingly supported by expert DEI leads. Organizations that are seeing a difference, prioritize diversity and inclusion and integrate it into their value proposition and business model. Some of the world's highest ranked corporations in DEI link diversity and inclusion to the organization's mission, business strategy and performance goals. They view it as central to the company culture and a significant driver of financial value.

**Case Study:** Canadian engineering and project management company, Hatch, believes that a diverse and a fully inclusive work environment fosters perspectives to solve challenging problems and creates value for their clients, for their communities, and for the world at large. With 9,000 employees, Hatch has an aspiration to achieve 40% women in their company by 2023. It currently requires all interview slates be 30% women for experienced positions and 50% women for student and new graduate positions, which have been already surpassed. Hatch is committed to hiring 50% women into new graduate and student positions. In Newfoundland, 37% of its St. John's office is women, which is among the highest rate of women of any of Hatch's 80 offices globally.

**Case Study:** Irving Shipbuilding, as a partner in Canada's Shipbuilding Strategy since 2011, has an intensive DEI focus on building a workforce that drives the Halifax Shipyard's success and celebrates the advancement of women, Indigenous, immigrant and diverse employees. 25% of its engineers are women, and 10% of its skilled trades are women. The company applies a dedicated suite of programs with precision, identifying individual and mentoring candidates, before and after, they are hired: DEI Channel and Completion Certificates, Transgender in the Workplace, and Leadership Fundamentals for all leaders. The company established a Centre of Excellence in partnership with colleges, government, industry and community to advance diversity and engagement, offering Pathways to Shipbuilding that covers tuition and fees with partners like Women Unlimited Nova Scotia, and annual bursary awards. They share the 'See it. Be it.' outreach program with youth in classrooms. They seek speaking opportunities for female employees to share their stories. The company actively supports women entrepreneurs throughout their supply chain. Often the success most celebrated are



the employees who receive wraparound support from the company helping with necessities of life, or supports like the costs of sport equipment and registrations for single parents, , as well as training and coaching of cohorts of people with similar culture and background who are often the minority on work sites. The company's approach to dedicated support for one person at a time, has delivered results to show they are on the right path as they strive to increase the proportion of diverse employees.

**Sponsors:** According to McKinsey's *Women in the Workplace 2021 Report*, women in technical roles are less likely than men to win promotions early in their careers (only 52 women in technical roles are promoted to manager for every 100 men) and many are exiting the field. During the consultation, women with long-term technical careers in an ocean sector often referred to key male leaders who made a significant difference early in their careers, providing guidance, offering career opportunities, and advancing their careers. Research confirms that men who play an active role sponsoring the early advancement of women in technical roles can have a profound impact on the long-term careers of women they sponsor.

**Allies:** Allyship in the workplace is a powerful tool for diminishing and eliminating biases against marginalized groups and creating a culture of diversity and inclusion. Being an ally means that when you encounter bias or microaggressions, you not only speak up and out against it at that moment but take follow-up actions to drive systemic improvements in workplace policies and practices. According to a Deloitte study, "people working in organizations with cultures of inclusion and allyship are 50% less likely to leave, 56% more likely to work on improving performance, and 167% more likely to recommend their organization to others.

**Role models:** Research shows that role models have an amplified benefit for women due to the gender biases, institutional barriers and negative stereotypes women have long had to contend with. Research proves that female role models inspire girls to think bigger. Seeing is believing.

**Mentors:** Mentors are a vital when trying to retain diverse talent. A mentoring and networking model would provide significant benefits to female professionals in Canada's ocean industries. According to *Women: An Unmined Resource – A Report on Female Participation within BC's Mineral Exploration and Mining Industry*, "Mentoring ... is a personal enhancement strategy whereby one individual facilitates the development of another by sharing known resources, expertise, values, skills, perspectives, attitudes and proficiencies." It also provides benefits for the mentor (experienced women who mentor feel a "profound sense of wanting to give back to the community, to educate others about their work and help out in some tangible way") and quantifiable benefits to employers, including "improving employee retention, managing organizational change, bridging competency gaps, rejuvenating mid- career employees, developing managers, helping employees obtain formal certification and increasing the representation of minority interests."

## International Examples

When we look to worldwide blue economy jurisdictions for guidance, two examples of success stand out. They hail from the United Kingdom and the Indian Ocean Blue Economy.

Women in the Fisheries UK connects women across the fisheries sector to strengthen relationships and benefit the whole industry. It is an example of how women have created ecosystems of sustainability in the fishing industry. They have accomplished getting women's role in the fisheries recognized and their voices heard, so that the whole sector can be improved through networking, research, and building their presence.

### Strategy Recommendations:

- Promote fisheries as a viable career option.
- Promote recruitment, providing women with access to work experience on boats.
- Mentor women by more experienced women.
- Include women in meetings, processes, and policymaking and in particular maritime strategies that seek to promote women and diversity.
- Change traditional working conditions to improve work life balance of fisheries' employment.
- Value fisheries' work differently - recognize the roles women play in the fishery and count them in statistics for their paid and unpaid roles, thereby making them more visible.

Indian Ocean Blue Economy stakeholders are making strides towards sustainable development goals and acknowledge that women are lagging in all sectors of the blue economy development. To align women, they proposed key policy interventions for gender inclusion and development in the Indian Ocean Blue Economy to address gendered marginalization of women and equity seeking groups.

Strategy Recommendations:

- Generating evidence-based knowledge on women.
- Women need to be active and participate in policy-making processes.
- Creating gender-sensitive institutions and transnational gender networks.
- Women need to be both agents and actors for social change.
- Solid investments in women’s education and facilitating gendered scholarship and analysis to highlight intersectionality and different lived experience.

Recognize and celebrate DEI best practices, progress, and leadership an annual national award	Canada’s Ocean Supercluster Industry associations  Ocean Technology Alliance of Canada members
Develop a Faces of Canada’s Blue Economy Speaker Series	Taskforce
Develop and implement a communications platform focused on storytelling: best practices of organizations driving a diversity culture; profile role models; ocean industries careers	Canada’s Ocean Supercluster  Taskforce

## Summary: Business Case for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Ocean Industries

Throughout our research and consultation, we learned, if Canada’s ocean industries and corporation want to be globally competitive, they need an employee body that reflects the astounding diversity of our communities.

However, building a diversity and inclusion action plan for Canada’s ocean industries has many complexities and intersectionality. For instance, all those who identify as women cannot be treated as one big homogenous group. There are so many factors and considerations when we look at DEI for those who identify as women and those who are historically excluded from ocean sectors. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Oceans industry leaders and decision makers need to know the numbers, the facts, and then act.

It starts by creating opportunities so that women and those historically excluded feel like they belong. As people, we all need to feel like our voice matters and having this connectedness builds confidence, skills, knowledge, support networks, and an engaged work force. Establish workplace cultures that are safe and inclusive and where diverse representation is present at management and board levels. If we do not make these fundamental changes, it is suggested that it might take “90 years” before we have the right places for those who have been historically, and continue to be, excluded.

Leaders in Canada’s ocean industries have choices to make. The current labour force is challenged with many vacancies in ocean industries and retention and recruitment efforts have become stagnant. DEI has far out-reaching benefits for employee engagement, financial impact, customer satisfaction, productivity, and corporate reputation. Canada’s ocean industries have an immense opportunity to lead by example and create partnerships and trust, which in turn will create the end goal of DEI for women and historically excluded groups in Canada.

During the consultations, we heard loud and clear that there is need for stronger, connected networks, profiling of role models, increased collaboration, and the need for empowerment, across the ocean industries to give voice to those who identify as women and are from historically excluded communities. There is heightened awareness and intention among groups and leaders who recognize the need for action. We experienced an openness and willingness of ocean industry organizations and leaders to collaborate. The body of knowledge

and network of engaged organizations that informed this Action Plan provides the momentum and a starting foundation for action.

## Implementation Timeline

<b>Operations</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>
Hire dedicated professional staff	X	X	X
Establish a national integrated funding program	X	X	X
Fund national industry associations to support DEI		X	X
Collect and report on data that focuses on gender in Canada's ocean industries	X		
<b>Diversity Champions</b>			
Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce	X	X	X
Host an annual conference or forum, focused on DEI	X	X	X
Engage in industry advocacy relating to diversity in Canada's Blue Economy			X
Presentations and content targeting ocean sector conferences, forums, and events			
<b>Empowering Ocean Enterprise</b>			
Commit financial resources for DEI among small and medium-sized enterprises	X	X	X
Raise awareness about existing diversity resources through an online web portal		X	X
Offer workplace assessments to organizations	X	X	X
Develop and offer ocean sectors online toolbox, training & resources		X	X
Establish a Women in Ocean Export program	X	X	X
Establish scholarships for CEO executive level education		X	X
<b>Inspiring Careers</b>			
Develop an ocean's focused career portal		X	X
Curate and offer ocean literacy and awareness resources		X	X
Form a national, cross-ocean sector, intersectionality-driven advisory group		X	
Host a National Blue Economy Day Career Day		X	X
Develop a series of scholarships to support accelerated executive and leader development for women	X	X	X
Develop a series of scholarships to support entrepreneurial / business skill professional support program for advancing mid-managers		X	X
<b>Celebrating DEI Best Practices and Leadership</b>			
Recognize and celebrate DEI best practices, progress, and leadership an annual national award		X	X
Develop a Diverse Faces of Canada's Blue Economy Speaker Series		X	X
Develop and implement a DEI communications platform			X

## Funding Sources for CWOIL

Through extensive consultations and desktop research, it became clear that there are many barriers and obstacles that face those who identify as women and are historically excluded persons in the Ocean Industries in Canada. These barriers include but are not limited to a lack of funding and role models, gender bias, social and cultural barriers, hiring practices, exclusionary language, toxic organizational cultures, lack of support and acceptance, microaggressions as well as overcoming unconscious bias.

We know that funding is needed to move the needle ahead so those who identify as women can have the financial resources and opportunities to be able to fulfil their personal and professional potential and to maximize their impact on the Canadian Ocean Industries.

Funding opportunities for Canadian Women Oceans Industries Leadership are very limited, and often project based. There are no programs focused on the combination of ocean, women, under-represented workforces. The following chart outlines potential funding sources with the majority being Federal funding initiatives.

Sources of Funding	Website	DETAILS
Federal Government	The WES Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative  <a href="https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/women-entrepreneurship-strategy/en/wes-inclusive-women-venture-capital-initiative">https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/women-entrepreneurship-strategy/en/wes-inclusive-women-venture-capital-initiative</a>	The fund projects to strengthen and build a more inclusive venture capital environment for Canadian women. The WES Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative is a 3-year non-repayable contribution program totaling \$15 million that seeks to strengthen and build a more inclusive venture capital environment for Canadian women.
Federal Government	Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund  <a href="https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/women-entrepreneurship-strategy/en/women-entrepreneurship-loan-fund">https://ised-isde-canada.ca/site/women-entrepreneurship-strategy/en/women-entrepreneurship-loan-fund</a>	The Loan Fund provides loans of up to \$50,000 to women business owners and entrepreneurs so they can start up, scale up and access new markets.
Federal Government	Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada (WEOC) National Loan Program  <a href="https://weoc.ca/loan-program/">https://weoc.ca/loan-program/</a>	The WEOC National Loan Program supports women and non-binary entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial journey as they start, scale, grow and maintain their business.  Established through the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund seeks to provide smaller amounts of affordable financing to women entrepreneurs, particularly for start-ups, under-represented groups or sole proprietorships which may experience more difficulty in accessing financing.
Federal Government	Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)  <a href="http://www.cannor.gc.ca">www.cannor.gc.ca</a>	CanNor administers the Northern Aboriginal Economic Opportunities Program (NAEOP) available to Indigenous applicants only. This program supports greater participation by northern Inuit, First Nations and Métis communities and businesses and enables them to

		<p>pursue opportunities for employment, income, and wealth creation.</p> <p>EBD assists Indigenous entrepreneurs and Indigenous businesses through project-based support for activities that help facilitate the establishment or growth of Indigenous businesses.</p>
Bank of Montreal (BMO)	<p>BlackNorth Initiative (<a href="https://blacknorth.ca/bmo-etfs-announces-support-for-the-blacknorth-initiatives-education-within-reach-program/">https://blacknorth.ca/bmo-etfs-announces-support-for-the-blacknorth-initiatives-education-within-reach-program/</a>)</p>	<p>BlackNorth Initiative's Education Within Reach Program with a \$100,000 investment to help provide career discovery opportunities and support tuition for students in the Black community.</p>
Federal Government ACOA	<p>The Atlantic Canadian Women in Growth Partnership (ACWGP)</p> <p><a href="https://www.centreforwomeninbusiness.ca/about/atlantic-partnership-project/">https://www.centreforwomeninbusiness.ca/about/atlantic-partnership-project/</a></p>	<p>ACWGP's has two main goals. One goal is to increase each organization's capacity to support women in start-up and growth phases. The other goal is to increase participation of under-represented women such as, newcomer women, women with disabilities, indigenous women, rural women, as well as women in non-traditional trades and in STEM related fields in the women's entrepreneurial ecosystem in Atlantic Canada.</p>
Ulnooweg	<p>Ulnooweg</p> <p><a href="https://www.ulnooweg.ca/">https://www.ulnooweg.ca/</a></p>	<p>To take a leadership role in closing the gap between the philanthropic sector and Indigenous Communities. As chiefs and leaders, the goal to create new funds, pursue investment opportunities, and increase public understanding of the opportunities for Indigenous Communities and philanthropy.</p>
	<p>Women and Gender Equality Canada</p> <p><a href="https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/funding/funding-programs.html#opportunities">https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/funding/funding-programs.html#opportunities</a></p>	<p>The objective of the Women's Program is to achieve the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada. Funding is provided to eligible organizations in support of projects at the local, regional and national levels that address the following three priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ending violence against women and girls</li> <li>• Improving women's and girls' economic security and prosperity</li> <li>• Encouraging women and girls in leadership and decision-making roles</li> </ul>



## Canadian Ocean Ecosystem and Industry Partners

This is a partial list of organizations that are potential partners and contributors to establishing a Canadian Ecosystem of diversity, Equity and inclusion for women and underrepresented people in Canada's oceans sectors:

### **Ocean Technology**

[Ocean Technology Alliance Canada \(OTAC\)](#)  
[Canada's Ocean Supercluster \(OSC\)](#)  
[Oceans Advance](#)  
[Association of British Columbia Marine Industries \(ABCMI\)](#)  
[Ocean Networks Canada](#)  
[Ocean Technology Council of Nova Scotia \(OTCNS\)](#)  
[Technopole du Maritime](#)  
[Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship \(COVE\)](#)  
[Canadian Network for Ocean Education \(CaNOE\)](#)

### **Energy**

[EnergyNL](#)  
[Net-Zero Atlantic](#)

### **Shipbuilding / Military / Coast Guard**

[Atlantic Canada Aerospace and Defence Association \(ACADA\)](#)  
[Canadian Marine Industries and Shipbuilding Association](#)

### **Transportation: ferries, shipping, offshore support**

[Canadian Ferry Association](#)  
[Women's International Shipping & Trading Association \(WISTA Canada\)](#)  
[COMPASS Council of Marine Professional Associates](#)

### **Fisheries and Aquaculture**

[Fisheries Council of Canada](#)  
[The Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation \(CCFI\)](#)  
[Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association \(NAIA\)](#)  
[Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association \(ACFFA\)](#)

### **Industry Diversity**

[Diversity Development Network of Canada](#)  
[Women in Resource Development Corporation](#)  
[Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology](#)  
[Women Building Futures](#)  
[Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science & Technology \(WISEST\)](#)  
[Women in Science & Engineering Newfoundland & Labrador \(WISE NL\)](#)  
[Women Unlimited Association](#)  
[Women in Defence & Security \(WiDS\)](#)  
[ECO Canada](#)

### **International Diversity**

[Wista International](#)  
[Women in Aerospace Canada: Présentation | LinkedIn](#)  
[Women in Aerospace Europe \(WIA-E\): Présentation | LinkedIn](#)  
[Maritime SHEeo](#)  
[IMO - Women in Maritime](#)  
[Women Offshore](#)

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