

BEYOND COUNTING VISIBLE MINORITIES: PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

Visible minorities (VM) face several barriers to full participation in the Federal Public Service. To reduce these barriers, employers subject to the Employment Equity Act are expected to gauge progress of VM representation by using self-identification surveys. Based on self-reported statistics, VM employees remain under-represented in Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)'s Pacific Region. While perceptions that self-reported statistics may distort actual VM representation exist, a gap remains. The goal of this study is twofold: first, to capture perceptions of VM employees and managers on what barriers and facilitating factors exist; second, to illustrate the impact these have upon self-identification. Two focus groups identify main factors contributing to the under-representation of VM employees, while individual interviews provide in-depth experiential information. Key themes include challenges with: self-identification, promotion of diversity, and hiring and appointment practices. Final recommendations identify how DFO can further benefit from the ethnic diversity of Canada's population.

Keywords: visible minorities; employment equity; diversity; self-identification; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Vancouver.

Executive Summary

Visible minorities (VM) continue to be under-represented and face several barriers to their full participation in the Federal Public Service. VMs experience high unemployment rates, lower than average salaries and a high concentration in low-status and seasonal work. Literature suggests that discrimination and stereotyping, immigrant status, differing standards, language, and difficulties in recognition of foreign credentials, among other similar barriers influence these disadvantages. Recent population projections suggest that the shifting demographics and increase of VMs will significantly influence the makeup of the Canadian workforce. Correcting for the under-representation of VMs within the workforce will need to stay on the agenda if Canadians wish to see a Federal Public Service which reflects wider society. The statistical representation of VMs and the culture within organizations will need to change before the public service can effectively reflect Canada's diversity.

The visible minority population is not a homogenous population; the Employment Equity Act requires federally regulated employers to apply the principle that employment equity means more than treating VMs the same. It also means employers must enact special measures to correct for the disadvantages facing VMs in employment. Employers subject to the Employment Equity Act, such as Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), are required to gauge the progress of VM representation by using self-identification surveys as well as, removing barriers that exist to recruitment and retention. Despite this legislation, this study examines why VM employees remain under-represented in DFO's Pacific Region. While self-reported statistics may distort actual VM under-representation, a gap still remains between targets and actual representation. The goal of this study is twofold: first, to capture perceptions of VM employees and managers on what barriers and facilitating factors exist; second, to illustrate the impact these have upon self-identification.

One focus group with VM employees and one focus group with management personnel serve to identify main factors contributing to the under-representation of VM employees. An additional eight individual interviews with DFO employees and management provide in-depth experiential information. A thematic analysis of data identified several themes: facilitators to work-related well-being of VM employees at DFO; challenges with self-identification of VM

status; a need for leadership and developmental opportunities; challenges with the promotion of diversity; lack of awareness; arduous hiring and appointment processes; as well as no comprehensive recruitment strategy to facilitate the employment of VMs.

These themes help to inform the development of policy options. Option (1) indicates the possibility of DFO remaining with the status quo. Otherwise, DFO can opt to enhance the status quo through five additional proposed policy options. Drawn from the data, the policy options introduced are: (2) improve the workplace culture; (3) mandate training; (4) communicate diversity more effectively; (5) streamline hiring and appointment processes; and (6) develop a staffing strategy with a VM lens.

These policy alternatives are evaluated by using criteria and measures including: effectiveness, cost, administrative feasibility, stakeholder acceptability and horizontal equity. The policy evaluation is built upon a literature review, key findings, as well as three key informant interviews with employment equity experts. In summary, three options (on top of the status quo) perform the best against the evaluation criteria. Option (2) improve the workplace culture has moderate costs as compared to the status quo and other alternatives. However, this option ranks effectively for significantly increasing representation through creating more community, as well as by placing EE on the agenda. It is also relatively easy to implement, and based largely on the voluntary component, agreeable to most stakeholders. Option (4) communicate that DFO is diverse more effectively and option (6) develop a staffing strategy with a VM lens, rank moderately against the administrative feasibility and stakeholder acceptability criterion. Of the two options, the communication option is the most cost effective, but ranked as less effective at increasing representation when compared to the staffing strategy with a VM lens.

Finally, it is recommended that DFO can further benefit from the ethnic diversity of Canada's population by pursuing three of the proposed policy alternatives. DFO should, through consultation with more stakeholders: (2) improve the workplace culture; (4) communicate diversity more effectively; and (6) develop a staffing strategy with a VM lens. These recommendations are discussed in conjunction with implementation considerations and implications for future research, as provided by key informants and the literature.

Dedication

To Mark Kolapak, whose constant support and love continues to encourage and uplift me in all my adventures. You are my compass when I am lost, my rest when I am tired, and my strength when I am weak. I am sorry for losing my mind sometimes and I thank you for always finding it.

To my family and dear friends, I would like to dedicate this degree to you. Without your guidance, support, and unconditional love this journey would not have been possible. Thank you for encouraging me to pursue my degree and above all to dream big! I am proud to be the first in our family to graduate with such an honour.

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This research was possible thanks to the dedicated work and participation of many people. I wish to thank all of the participants in the focus groups and personal interviews, who gave of their time to share their own experiences and insights regarding how DFO as a workplace is diverse. As well, I appreciate those participants who contributed their ideas on how DFO can become more welcoming and fair for everyone.

I gratefully acknowledge the work of my supervisor. Your knowledge and mentorship made this process both enlightening and enjoyable. Thank you for your continued support, encouragement and many insightful conversations. Your humour always reminded me to look on the bright side of life and helped to keep me on track.

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1: Introduction

The real meaning of multiculturalism from my perspective is when you go into a place, a neighbourhood place, a school, a hospital, a neighbourhood house, a community centre, a government office that you see the reflection of diversity to the extent that society is diverse. You see that reflection of diversity not at the clerical level only but at the top management level as well. That you see that diversity in its fullest variety at every level of society (Ujjal Dosanjh, former Premier of BC. Audio Record, Feb 3, 2004).

This meaning of multiculturalism is shared within the context of Canada's Employment Equity Act (EEA), which was legislated to ensure that no person is denied employment opportunities and benefits for reasons unrelated to ability (Employment Equity Act 1995, c. 44). As part of its promise, employment equity policies attempt to address systemic discrimination in employment by targeting disadvantages that affect visible minorities¹ (alongside three other groups: women, aboriginals and persons with disabilities). Some of these disadvantages include the experience of high unemployment rates, lower than average salaries and high concentrations in low-status jobs. The EEA requires federally regulated employers to apply the principle that employment equity means more than treating people in the same way; it also requires special measures to correct for those conditions that disadvantage visible minorities in employment and accommodate differences to promote fairness in the workplace (Ibid).

However, governments have been struggling to fully-implement employment equity policies since the inception of Canada's EEA passed in 1986 and later amended in 1995. Today, one of the greatest challenges to the federal public sector continues to be the under-representation of members of visible minorities in the workforce (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2008, p. 6). While the representation of members of visible minorities in the workplace

¹ Please see Section 1.2 for definitions

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has risen noticeably in the private sector, the public sector has not been as quick to follow suit. As of 2007, visible minority representation of all employees in the federally regulated public sector (inclusive of 72 employers with approximately 733,517 employees) was 9.2 percent (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2008, p. 6). This can be compared to the federally regulated private sector (inclusive of 546 employers with approximately 388 253 employees) where representation of visible minorities was 15.9 percent; the public sector is lagging behind (Ibid). Many institutions experience a gap wherein visible minority representation is not reflective of levels of diversity with society. It is surprising to see gaps in urban centres where there is a greater concentration of visible minorities. One would conceivably expect that organizations would be more able to fulfil if not surpass availability rates.

1.1 Policy Problem

The policy problem I addressed in this capstone is that *employees who self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group remain underrepresented in Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Pacific Region according to internal representation statistics*. More specifically, there remains a significant gap in the overall representation of visible minorities compared to the workforce availability estimate in the Pacific Region. As of 2009, internal statistics showed 9 percent of DFO employees within the Pacific Region self-identified as visible minorities (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2009c). This is compared to labour market availability rates of 12.8 percent, based on the 2006 census (Ibid). The percentage of visible minority (VM) DFO employees can be contested as there may be more VM employees working for Fisheries and Oceans Canada that chose not to self-identify for a variety of reasons. Internal statistics, based on self-identification, are the best available figures, as they are the only data source to determine VM employee representation at DFO Pacific Region. The purpose of this study is to understand why self-identified visible minorities remain underrepresented in DFO Pacific Region's headquarters, located in Vancouver. The ultimate goal of the project is to develop and analyze policy

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alternatives and make recommendations to increase VM representation and promote diversity at DFO's workplace by placing employment equity on the agenda.

Promoting equitable representation for visible minorities who work in federally regulated workplaces is a key area that DFO recognizes as requiring attention. According to the most recent *DFO Follow-up Audit of Employment Systems Review 2008*, progress is slow in achieving equitable representation of certain areas including: visible minorities and women. In terms of achieving equitable representation of self-identified VM employees, DFO falls consistently below the achievement of other government departments or agencies (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2008c). A key suggestion in the report specifies that DFO concentrate its efforts on reaching equitable representation for visible minorities and women, by among other things, expanding outreach activities (i.e. career fairs), especially in large urban centres where the concentration of visible minorities is greater (Ibid). The report lists Vancouver as one of four main Canadian urban cities where targeted EE efforts should be concentrated.

Vancouver has emerged as a focal point for Canada's demographic and ethnocultural diversity (Bélanger & Malenfant, 2005). In fact, the majority of Vancouver's population are visible minority persons. Population projections estimate that 1.1 to 1.5 million visible minority persons in 2017 will account for 47% to 53% of the city's population (Bélanger & Malenfant, 2005). Malenfant, Lebel and Martel (2010) referenced that as of 2006, there were an estimated 910,000 visible minorities, accounting for 41.7% of Vancouver's Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). In comparing these statistics, researchers attribute large increases in visible minorities in Vancouver to both increased immigration and the relatively higher birth rates of recent immigrants (Bélanger & Malenfant, 2005; Banerjee, 2006).

Concerns about racial inequality in employment have heightened in light of the change in Canada's racial composition (Banerjee, 2006). Accordingly, the focus of this study is directed at

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employment equity efforts at DFO's Pacific Regional headquarters (RHQ) located in the urban centre of Vancouver.

1.2 Definitions

This study defines a “visible minority,” as a person who is non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour, as understood within the Canadian context and as it is now entrenched in Canadian legislation through the *Employment Equity Act* (EEA). The EEA defines visible minorities as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.” Under the EEA, Aboriginal persons are not members of visible minority groups as they are identified in a separate designated group for the purposes of equity programming.

Approved as a departmental standard on July 15, 1998, Statistics Canada states that the category ‘visible minority’ comprises of the following groups: Black (e.g., African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali), South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan), Chinese, Korean, Japanese, South East Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese), Filipino, Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan), Latin American and Other (Statistics Canada, 2010, Classification for visible minority section, para 1). Those who fit into the category of “Other” are asked to specify with the caveat that “Other” does not include those ethnic groups who are considered white or Caucasian in origin. Furthermore, the definition of “visible minorities” is not based on place of birth, citizenship or religious affiliations. While some members of visible minority groups are born in Canada, others are foreign born (University of British Columbia, 2009, Employment Equity and Census FAQs section).

For the purposes of this study, the concept of “diversity” within the context of the workplace does not refer to all aspects of diversity. Rather, the expression ‘diversity’ relates to the concept of ethnocultural diversity, consistent with the recent population projections published

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by Statistics Canada (Malenfant et al., 2010). In this study, the term diversity is used with respect to visible minority groups as it applies to employment equity of visible minorities. This is an operational definition as it does not cover all forms of diversity which can be defined using other characteristics.

The term workforce availability in this study refers to the “distribution of people in the designated groups as a percentage of the total Canadian workforce” as utilized by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2009c, p. 2).

According to the EEA, as well as its current manifestation within DFO’s Employee Self-Identification process, this study defines self-identification voluntary public statement of their VM status in the DFO workforce context. At DFO, questionnaires are distributed to employees who are asked whether they are aboriginal, disabled, or belong to a visible minority group. Self-identification occurs when an employee categories themselves as belonging to a visible minority group. The data collected are based on voluntary self-identification, except for gender (Mentzer 2002; Bakan & Kobayashi, 2000). DFO’s self- identification form still asks the question “what is your gender – male or female?” HR staff does not typically record the answers to the gender question into statistical software because employee records indicate gender statistics.²

1.3 Study Objectives

As a current part time employee with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the underlying goal of my project is to understand the barriers and facilitating factors to visible minority employment with Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the Pacific Region’s headquarters. The second goal is to understand the impact these factors have on self-identification at DFO. By understanding those factors which affect visible minority employment with DFO, I will identify and evaluate solutions

² I interpret gender differently than stated on Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s self-identification form. Personally, I believe that people perform their gender. I also believe that one’s sex is prescribed at birth, which may or may not be the same as someone’s gender. Literature suggests that part of people’s identity refers to their internal and psychological sense of themselves as female, male, both or neither.

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that can help create better access to employment opportunities and build stable, equitable working environments for VM employees whether they self-identify or not. To do so, I examine both VM employees' and management personnel experiences, perceptions and working practices concerning diversity in the workplace with a focus on understanding why self-identification rates among visible minority groups remain underrepresented. In order to attract and retain employees through the promotion of workplace diversity, it is important to understand organizational culture. Understanding visible minority employee and management personnel experiences and exploring possible avenues forward to promote diversity in our workplace, will contribute towards the development and analysis of policy alternatives. Recommendations shared with DFO have the potential to help to shape strategies for a more inclusive workplace that celebrates the diversity of its current and future employees and hence creates a climate where self-identification is encouraged. The information that is collected and analyzed could help to enhance Human Resources planning and develop initiatives that involve employment equity strategies aimed at recruiting and integrating culturally diverse groups.

This study uniquely contributes to the literature on employment equity serving as an example to other federally regulated employers to take actions in promoting diversity in workplaces specific to their situated context. Again, DFO's RHQ provides a clear example of a federally regulated public service workplace where evidence demonstrates the under-representation of visible minorities. Although DFO's RHQ is situated in a diverse and urban centre, specifically the city of Vancouver, visible minority workforce representation is still recognized as a problem within the Pacific Region. This research also provides an opportunity to collectively-increase awareness of the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce. Ron Hayter, an Edmonton City Councillor once said "we could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colours. But they all have to learn to live in the same box" (Quoted in Dyette's Address, March 2009, 4). This report will

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try to uncover how Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees learn to live in the same box and develop strategies to recruit increasing numbers of diverse employees who can offer a rainbow of skills.

1.4 Permissions

At the time of data collection, I was a part-time determinate employee for Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as a graduate student at Simon Fraser University (SFU). As such, I had access and authorization from the Acting Director of Human Resources, to conduct primary research and report on existing data as a student on this project at Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific RHQ, 401 Burrard Street. This authorization provided me with the necessary permissions to conduct two focus groups as well as seven interviews with DFO RHQ staff and management personnel. Permissions from DFO were granted on October 14, 2009. Ethical Approval for this research was obtained through the Office of Research Ethics at SFU, categorizing the research project as “minimal risk” on November 10th, 2009.

2: Employment Equity Background

Equity in employment is important because it leads to a representative workforce that includes fairness in hiring, promotion, training and retention for all employees. Essentially, having equity in employment in Canada would mean that Canadians have a right to enjoy fair access to work, as well as fair treatment and employment opportunities at work. As part of the employment equity goal, Employment Equity (EE) policies in Canada were legislated to address systemic discrimination in employment by targeting disadvantages affecting women, racialized minorities termed “visible minorities”, Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities (Agocs & Osborne 2009, p. 237). Sufficient evidence suggests that members of these four designated groups often experience significant discrimination in employment. A review of literature in this area documents that visible minorities may experience higher unemployment, higher poverty rates, a concentration in low status and low paying jobs and limited opportunities for career advancement (Reitz & Banerjee, 2006). For example, studies that investigate the perceptions of racial discrimination in Canada have concluded that visible minorities perceive far more instances of discrimination compared to their White colleagues (Reitz & Banerjee, 2006; Banerjee, 2006). Discrimination in the workplace includes but is not limited to occupation and earnings gaps between similarly qualified visible minority and White persons (Banerjee, 2006). While VMs face greater employment disadvantage as well as higher perceptions of workplace discrimination, it is important that employers remove the barriers inhibiting their full participation, so that the organization and Canadians in general can benefit.

This research project focuses on visible minority representation as covered by employment equity policies, legislation and affirmative action programming, and is based within the context of

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understanding the barriers and facilitating factors to employment equity for visible minorities. Furthermore, understanding these facilitating factors and barriers in relation to self-identification is examined. Under the Employment Equity Act, visible minorities are an important group to analyze within the policy context of Fisheries and Oceans Canada because of their under-representation based on self-reported identification statistics. In this background section, the policy context to date uncovers the relevant history and important dates related to employment equity in Canada. Conducting a literature review has enabled the exploration of the central and contested concepts - visible minority and self-identification - in relation to the EEA. The final section captures what works and what does not work with reference to the implementation and enforcement of the EEA, as appraised through recent academic literature.

2.1 The Employment Equity Policy Story

The Canadian Human Rights Act passed in 1977 established the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) to promote human rights and equality in Canada. The Act forbids systemic discrimination by federally regulated employers on the basis of race, gender and other stipulated grounds (Mentzer, 2002). The Canadian Human Rights Act and the Employment Equity Act ensure equality, respect for human rights and protection from discrimination. Saha, O'Donnell, Patel and Heneghan (2008) found that both allow for the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and permit special programs to remedy past or present discriminatory practices. Today, discrimination can take on various forms. For example, racialized economic exclusion takes the form of labour market segregation, unequal access to employment, employment discrimination, disproportionate vulnerability to unemployment and underemployment, income inequality and precarious employment which can act both as characteristics and causes of exclusion (National Anti-Racism Council of Canada, 2007). Initially, it was hoped that this act would be sufficient to break down barriers that prevent the economic progress of women and other minorities. However,

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it became apparent that simply forbidding discrimination was not enough and that affirmative action is required alongside practical policies that incite a more reflective workplace.

2.1.1 A Rationale for Employment Equity in Canada

The influx of immigrants from developing countries changed the demographic and cultural landscape in Canada. In the 1980s, academics revealed that immigrants faced barriers to finding work within their chosen fields. In 1984, two reports would come to shape the future of employment equity initiatives in Canada. First, a commissioned parliamentary committee on VMs produced a report entitled *Equality Now!* This report included findings that some ethnic groups were much less economically and socially privileged than others and produced eighty recommendations, mostly aimed at employment and the improvement of race relations in Canada.

Directed by Judge Rosalie Abella the second report, a Royal Commission report entitled *Equality in Employment* resulted in the Employment Equity Act of 1986. The report reviewed findings of an investigation of employment practices including eleven federally regulated employers. The report confirmed that despite the Canadian Human Rights Act and other affirmative action measures, systemic discrimination was an experienced reality for the four designated EE groups. Evidence indicated that equal access to employment was denied to certain groups of people because of their sex, race or ethnic characteristics. At the time there was reason to believe that the labour pool would face an increase of new people from the designated groups via immigration. This meant that legislation would be necessary to counteract discrimination, as well as ensure equity in workplaces.

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The term Employment Equity played a key role in the Abella commission. More specifically, in 1984 Employment Equity was defined as a strategy to:

...obliterate the present and residual effects of discrimination and to open equitably the competition for employment opportunities to those arbitrarily excluded. It requires a special blend of what is necessary, what is fair and what is workable (Abella, 1984, p. 254).

However, “what is fair and what is workable” can mean different things to different people.

Indeed, what is fair and workable would mean something different for Canadians than it would elsewhere, e.g. United States (Ibid). In Canada, policy makers working on Employment Equity examined the policy trend in the United States. For example, Abella raised the notion that “affirmative action” policies and the use of quotas in the United States had been divisive for its citizens. She argued that “affirmative action” policies pitted men against women and whites against minorities that often sparked a negative emotional reaction, as it can be equated with reverse discrimination. Canadian employers are protected from the charge of reverse discrimination under section 16 (1) of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which clearly permits the implementation of special programs that diminish disadvantages to minority groups or remedy the effects of past discrimination against such groups (Saha et al., 2008). Furthermore, Section 53(2) of the Act permits a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to carry out special programming where action is deemed necessary to prevent future discriminatory practices to occur (Ibid). Nevertheless, employment equity legislation was instituted to refer to measures to eliminate discriminatory employment barriers and procedures.

2.2 The Evolution of Employment Equity

Eventually, the evolution of the EEA was based on critics who complained that the 1986 Act included “ambiguous wording” such as employers “shall” attain certain numerical targets (Mentzer, 2002, p. 38). This was problematic because rather than ensuring that all employers hire based on assigned numerical targets, the EEA left employers to make up their own goals.

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Furthermore, targets to increase VM representation should reflect the fact that the VM population is growing (Jain & Lawler, 2004). Though, as Agoecs and Osborne (2009) point out, typically such targets are conservative since they are set with data that are often outdated and reflect an existing trend of under-representation of employment equity groups in the labour market. A quota system would require that a fixed number of people be placed in certain jobs, regardless of their skills and qualifications. Instead, each organization sets their own goals and timetables, based their own internal factors including: staff turnover, workforce growth rate, corporate culture, and business plan (Agoecs & Osborne, 2009).

Advocates of employment equity highlighted the problem that the act had no teeth and was more symbolic in nature. The principle problem being that the act could not, in itself, impose penalties for all employers, rather than just those who failed to submit a mandated report. This meant that compliance would be erratic at best (Ibid). On the basis of these ambiguities and lack of sanctions, the latest version of the law that came into effect is the Employment Equity Act of 1995. It received royal assent in 1995 and officially came into force on October 24, 1996. Built upon the earlier framework, the new EEA act of 1995 focused on employer obligations and enforcement. The Act covers private sector employers under federal jurisdiction as well as almost all employees of the federal government. An overview of major changes under the Act is available in Table 1.

Table 1: Changes to the EEA in 1995

Changes in EEA of 1995
Canadian Human Rights Commission was given the authority to audit all federally regulated employers' employment equity processes.
All federal departments fall under the Employment Equity Act (not reported to HRDC).
Federal Contractors Program responsibilities stated in the legislation [Section 42 (2)]
Section 44(1) called for a review of the Employment Equity act in five years.

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In 1995, this Act was significantly amended to put into place financial mechanisms that would enable modest fines of up to \$50 000 for those employers not meeting targets (Mentzer, 2002). Unlike the 1986 legislation, the 1995 Act necessitates that employers covered by the act create an employment equity plan that could increase representation rates of designated groups, where there is under-representation of a protected group (Ibid). This includes timelines with short term numerical targets for the hiring and promotion of persons in designated groups designed to increase their representation (Ibid).

The Act currently applies to federal Crown Corporations and federally regulated private sector employers with 100 or more employees and the federal public service. As aforementioned, rather than imposing a quota system, the 1996 EEA requires that each organization's EE plan contain "an effective enforcement mechanism" the design of which is left to the employer (Saha et al., 2008). Employers are expected to set goals and targets to improve their representation. In addition, employers should adopt "special measures" and positive actions to remove barriers and achieve fair representation of designated groups within the workplace. In the context of visible minorities, employers must commit to a review of their employment systems, policies and practices as well as identify and eliminate barriers, which negatively impact upon visible minorities. Regular reviews of employment policies and practices are required of larger employers.³ Employers are also recommended to have consultations with unions about best EE practices.

The Act, besides designating groups for employment equity purposes and defining proportional representation, also specifies how the obligations of the Act are to be met. In summary, under the current EEA employers must commit to a review of their employment systems, policies and practices as well as identify and eliminate barriers which negatively impact upon visible minorities. Essentially, employers are required to conduct a workforce census to

³ Large employers are considered companies that employ 100 or more persons

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identify representation of designated groups and compare this with labour market availability data to ensure proper representation. Organizations may collect this data intended for analysis through the process of 'self-identification' by means of a survey. While survey information may help to inform evidence based policy or decision-making, knowledge does not necessarily translate into changing a situation for the better, especially when questions are based solely upon self-identified demographics. The survey data is then reported to a relevant authority, which is then reported publically. Reporting publically is a means by which to indicate the status of Employment Equity obligations while at the same time, persuading those who are not producing optimal EE outcomes to step up their role in achieving EE gains.

2.2.1 Critiquing the Workability of the Employment Equity Act

People working within its mandate, as well as those who oppose the act all together have scrutinized the EEA. Critics such as Jain and Lawler (2004), Agocs and Osborne (2009) and Lum (1995) raise the issue of effectiveness in terms of the working nature of the EEA. Agocs and Osborne (2009) explain that:

...there is no sanction for failure to improve the representation of the designated groups if the required reports are submitted and the employer cites a plausible reason for slow or non-existent progress. Furthermore, there are no sanctions under the Act for failing to remove job barriers identified in the employment systems review (p. 246).

Without sanctions, accountability becomes difficult to ensure. Loopholes allow employers to pay lip service to their role in making guarantees to their workforce and to the public (Agocs & Osborne 2009).

The employment systems review that employers are required to perform are also critiqued. Employment system reviews are supposed to encompass a review of employer's human resources policies and practices, identifying discriminatory barriers to entry or career development (Ibid). According to annual CHRC reports, most employers are poorly informed

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about EEA obligations despite the efforts of CHRC and Human Resources and Skills

Development Canada (HRSDC) to inform and educate (Ibid). Agocs and Osborne (2009) argue that in practice:

“...implementation of Canada’s employment equity policy is left largely to the discretion of employers, who face insufficient government and public scrutiny and few consequences for their failures to comply with the legislated requirements. As a result, equality seekers remain disappointed that the promise of Canada’s Employment Equity Act is unfulfilled, and a large gap remains between the intent of employment equity policy and practice at the workplace level” (246).

In addition to the problems of leaving the goal of employment equity to employers to ensure that EE goals are achieved, Agocs and Osborne (2009) explain that as of 2006/2007 the CHRC simplified and expedited the compliance review process. This suggests the process will if anything become less rigorous and less effective.

Saha et al. (2008) argue that the Canadian federal EEA has undergone minimal public scrutiny. The literature indicates that this is perhaps due to limited expectations for organizations to fill quotas (Ibid). The Act’s intention of allowing each organization to develop their own system based on its own needs provokes less concern from employers. A more significant critique would suggest that minimal backlash exists to Canadian EE plans based upon their minimal effects (Ibid). Bakan and Kobayashi (2007) explain that backlash surrounding employment equity policy in Canada occurs from those ideologically opposed as well as policy makers who advocate on its behalf. For example, “[s]ome equity advocates have argued that the federal employment equity program has not been successful because it has been ‘top down’ and not geared to ‘statistical improvement’” (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2007, p. 153). Literature suggests that without buy-in from employees, employment equity strategies will not be as affective. Similarly, without statistical improvement, the commitment to EE can fade off political agendas. These kinds of critiques are important to set the stage and context of an organization’s challenges with

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employment equity within the context of visible minorities. Equally important are prevalent attitudes and scholar's concerns about challenged concepts that lie within the Act itself.

2.2.2 Contested Concepts in the EEA

According to Samuel and Basavarajappa (2006) social scientists and researchers do not accept the term "visible minority" universally, even though it is enshrined in the current legislation. In fact, the VM employment equity group is the most interesting and controversial protected group under Canadian law (Mentzer, 2002; Pendakur 2000). Mentzer (2002) and Pendakur (2005) outline that part of the controversy lies within the idea that visible and ethnic groups are identified as a heterogeneous group under employment equity policies. Treating visible minorities as a heterogeneous group is problematic because there are many differences between the groups that make up "visible minorities" as an employment equity category. For example, there is no distinction between Canadian born and foreign-born visible minority persons (immigrants). Literature suggests that visible minorities have a "catch-all label," and it is important to recognize that researchers can study VMs by looking at the large groups within them since they are heterogeneous (Hum & Simpson, 2000, p. 6). Nevertheless, the 1995 legislation did not change the designated groups named in the original Act despite critics concerns over the make-up of the 'visible minorities' category and the desire of other minority groups (including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members, or francophones in English-speaking areas) to be included in the revised law (Mentzer, 2002).

Two more problems that Pendakur (2005) raises include: definitions of visible minority based on "difference in skin tone" and the idea of minority assumed as "numerical smallness or weakness." This is a problem because the term indicates that white skin is normal and any other colour skin is different. Furthermore, it is problematic to name a group minority, especially since it is losing relevance especially as minority population increases in numbers (i.e. it has been projected that Vancouver's CMA will comprise a majority population that consists of VMs as

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soon as 2017). Again, this term is context specific referring to a certain time and place, when it was true in Canada that people of colour were a minority compared to the majority of the population. Although remaining in some legislation such as the EEA and used by Statistics Canada, the term visible minority is losing its relevance, as demographics in Canada change.

This is evident because, as Statistic Canada's population projections of visible minorities suggest, visible minorities are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population and will significantly alter the make-up of the Canadian labour force (Cardozo & Pendakur 2008). A large number of visible minorities will have a higher level of education than their counterparts in Canadian society (Pendakur, 2005; Tran, 2004). The medium to long term planning horizons used in human resource strategic planning should account for the shifting demographics and shifting attitudes and use of the term 'visible minority.' In March 2007, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racism criticized the term "visible minorities" and Canada's use of it as racist, suggesting the phrase itself is discriminatory ("Term 'Visible Minorities'", 2007, para. 1). A spokesperson for the Committee explained that term indicates white or Caucasian as the standards with all others deviating from that standard making them "visible." No one has suggested an alternative term for visible minority.

Another contested subject in the EEA that relates to the term visible minority is self-identification. Some employers argue that there is a serious flaw with self-identification surveys asking questions about race, ability and sex (Mentzer, 2002; Agocs, 2002). This is because self-identification means that all data collected for the purposes of understanding numerical representation of EEA groups includes employees volunteering their own information. While self-identification is in principle intended to promote equity, a problem remains in the number of employees who fail to self-identify (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2000 and 2007). Reasons for refusal of self-identification include: self-identification will lead to stigma, increased risk of discrimination, or because they feel pressure not to self-identify as part of a general backlash against employment

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equity policies (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2000). Other possible reasons to self-exclude are; lack of pride in obtaining employment or advancement, claims that they are Canadian first, claims that there could be backlash against EE targeted policies, as well as, suspicions that by self-identifying records are inextricably linked to their employment and promote-ability.

Lum (1995) contends that there are also weaknesses in gathering information through self-identification because there could be an increase in rates of self-identification rather than an attribution that employers are upholding requirements in the EEA. Assessment of the representation of individual racial groups within the category of “visible minority” rarely occurs (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2000). Hagey, Turritin and Lee (2005) found that respondents can also self-report multiple ethnic origins on a survey which can make interpreting contrasts in ethnic origin and visible minority status difficult. In addition to these contested concepts, the EEA remains challenged by some academic scholars.

2.2.3 The Inefficiencies of the EEA

Implementation problems with the current Employment Equity Act have been identified. The implementation of the EE policy in practice is predominantly the responsibility of employers (Agocs & Osborne, 2009). This is particularly problematic as employers often face “insufficient government and public scrutiny and few consequences for their failures to comply with the legislated requirements” (Agocs & Osborne, 2009, p. 246). The result is a gap between the intent of the legislation and the practice of employment equity at the individual workplace level. Mentzer (2002) also argues that the EEA has become primarily symbolic. This is because EE relies heavily upon the persuasion and embarrassment of employers through the CHRC, the body designated to monitor action plans according to criteria that put into action the goals of the legislation. Unfortunately, the CHRC faces its task of reviewing employers’ compliance with EEA requirements with “little leverage” and “grossly inadequate resources” (Agocs & Osborne, 2009, p. 245).

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For employers to be serious about creating workplaces that value diversity, enforcement needs to be incorporated in the practical application of the EEA. According to Agocs and Osborne (2009) enforcement is a problem, since the aforementioned fines are rarely imposed. Formal legislation does exist for approximately 370 federally regulated employers and Crown Corporations with over 100 or more employees. In practice the responsibilities of employers are unclear and consequences for employers' failure to implement the legislation are rarely stringent (Agocs & Osborne 2009, p. 239). Partly, this is because the CHRC is under-funded and ultimately has little investigatory power (ibid). The absence of incentives for employers to actually reach EE targets has damaged the power of the Act to make a real difference. We

...need to analyze employment equity's relative lack of advancement, therefore, in light of the effects of new forms of racism and sexism that wield tremendous discursive power. This may not entail explicit racist and sexist ideas or actions but, alternatively, the claim that racism and sexism no longer exist. In British Columbia, for example, the Liberal government has maintained that the provincial government no longer needs measures to advance employment equity because previous measures were so successful. In fact, previous employment equity practices were uneven and were applied more effectively for women and persons with a disability than for visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples (Bakan & Kobayashi 2007, p. 18).

From a policy perspective, it is ironic that serious equity issues persist among the groups that the Act is intended to protect. More than a decade after the implementation of EE programming, inequity is on the rise, even with an influx of Canadian-born minorities entering into the labour market (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2004). As Pendakur & Pendakur (2004, p. 32) state, "[i]t appears that the labour market may be neither colour blind nor moving toward that goal." As Agocs (2002) argues, some critics assert the EEA's requirements have set the bar too low for employers, while others argue it is "essentially sound," but lacks proper mechanisms required to ensure employers are held accountable. Accordingly, it is important to investigate how an individual workplace like DFO RHQ is fairing with EE targets, hiring and recruitment, especially in regards to promoting a diverse workplace.

3: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

This study addresses EE programming at DFO to examine what barriers and facilitating factors exist for VM employees who work in a region where the under-representation of VM employees is a reality. This section outlines how DFO functions under the obligations of the EEA and outlines its main responsibilities. First, I outline what work the agency performs. Next, I discuss DFO's commitment to EE as well as some background information. Finally, I discuss DFO's current policies and strategies as well as, demographic information where this study is located to help frame the context.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is the main federal government department responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs in support of Canada's economic, ecological and scientific interests in oceans and inland waters. Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) stated mandate is:

On behalf of the Government of Canada, DFO is responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs in support of Canada's scientific, ecological, social and economic interests in oceans and fresh waters (Fisheries and Oceans Canada [DFO], 2008, Our Mandate section, para. 4)

This mandate includes responsibility for the conservation and sustainable use of Canada's fisheries resources while continuing to provide safe, effective and environmentally sound marine services that are responsive to the needs of Canadians in a global economy. Overall, DFO Pacific Region fluctuates between approximately 2400 to 2800 employees depending on seasonal and

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operational requirements.⁴ On average, the region employs approximately 2500 people including indeterminate, term, casuals, and students. To carry out DFO's mandate in the Pacific Region,

...over 2200 employees are engaged in diverse and challenging tasks and activities throughout the region. Working from offices, field camps, ships and helicopters, their roles are numerous and range from patrol and research vessel officers and crew to Aboriginal and community liaison officers, enforcement officers, scientists of all disciplines, and policy analysts and advisors (Fisheries and Oceans Canada website, 2009a, About Pacific Region, para. 3).

The DFO's Pacific RHQ is made up of 377 employees (including students, and managers).⁵ With this variety of responsibilities, diversification of the workplace can help bring rich perspectives, diversity of thought and help garner the best talent possible. The following section provides a brief overview of DFO's safeguarding of an employment equity program under the provisions of the EEA.

3.1 DFO's Commitment to EE

Fisheries and Oceans Canada recognizes that addressing employment equity gaps helps to create the conditions for a 'fair' workplace. DFO understands that "having a representative workforce is a legal obligation, as well as a way to ensure DFO provides the best possible service to Canadians" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2005, Strategic Plan 2005–2010, Strategic Objective 2 section, para. 4). As such, consistent with obligations under the EEA, DFO Pacific Region collects target group statuses through a regional employment equity coordinator. This EE

⁴ This statistic does include the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), while my own study does not. There are approximately 1000 CCG employees in the Pacific Region who do not fall within the scope of this study. While the CCG is an operating agency within Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the CCG has a distinct culture and as such I believe further consultation would need to be done with CCG staff before generalizing to their agency.

⁵ This figure is based on my own estimates, as existing data is only able to provide estimated ranges of employees, which vary from 300 to 450 employees at any given time. This inability to accurately report the number of employees at DFO RHQ is primarily because DFO employs many part time, term and seasonal employees whom may share their time between multiple offices. Currently there is no standardized recording method to account for their fractional participation between offices. Therefore, based on a statistical analysis from a PeopleSoft report ran on December 9th, 2009 using the parameters of including term employees over 6 months, but excluding Canadian Coast Guard affiliated employees, I ascertained the estimation of 377 employees at DFO RHQ.

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information is stored in the Fisheries and Oceans Human Resource Database and in the Employment Equity Data Bank of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada. Information is confidential and protected under the Privacy Act. Employees have the right to review and correct any information about themselves at any time. Consistent with the Human Resources Modernization priority initiated in 2003, EE continually remains on DFO's radar. Human resource staff is expected to continue to inform managers and executives of the profile of DFO's workforce (including expected retirements, succession plans for vulnerable groups, language needs, and employment equity targets) and encourage the factoring of this information into management decisions, business plans and parliamentary reports (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2005).

3.2 Background on EE

In 2003, the CHRC undertook an EE Compliance Audit on DFO to determine whether the Department was compliant with the EEA. The audit stated that DFO was found to be compliant in 5 of the statutory requirements, but only partially compliant in 3 and not compliant in 4 requirements. After completing an Employment Systems Review (ESR) in 2000, the CHRC requested Fisheries and Oceans Canada to complete another ESR in 2004 requesting more current workforce data with a focus on specific identified occupational categories. The key findings of the 2004 ESR, addressing the over-arching issues and gaps identified by the CHRC included the themes presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Gaps at DFO Identified by CHRC in 2004



In addition to conducting an ESR, the CHRC interim Audit report required DFO to develop a Management Action Plan (MAP) to address the above findings of the ESR and implement the actions identified in the DFO EE MAP. DFO developed the 2004 – 2007 EE MAP and the Departmental Management Committee (DMC) approved it in October 2004 and then submitted it to the CHRC in December 2004. Then again, in July 2005, the CHRC requested that DFO conduct a supplemental ESR in specific areas and adjust the EE MAP if necessary and DFO complied. As of June 1, 2006, departmental efforts were recognized by the CHRC which found DFO to be compliant with all statutory requirements of the EEA, provided that all elements of the

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EE MAP are implemented and reasonable progress made” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2008d, EE MAP, p. 5). Some of the notable efforts the department has made include:

“Communicating and encouraging the use of the Accommodation Policy and Guide, analyzing data on the workforce and providing managers with numerical EE recruitment goals, at the regional and national level, and maintaining a database of self-identified employees and promoting self-identification to all new employees (with the completion of a form to be returned to their Regional Coordinator)” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2008c, Observations section, Para. 1).

Nevertheless, the Follow-up Audit of Employment Systems Review (2008) found that:

“...the EE MAP is difficult to manage; progress is slow to achieve representation in certain areas (i.e., visible minorities and women); monitoring is weak; and there is a lack of accountability and engagement on the part of senior management” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2008c, Executive Summary, Para. 3).

Monitoring is described as weak, as reports are published semi annually. Suggestions have included reporting to DMC quarterly. As well, DFO calls for an increase of input from relevant stakeholders which is thought to help reflect more accountability according to HR staff discussions (Ibid). In fact, senior managers are considered important stakeholders who should be held accountable to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to deliver on EE commitments. Furthermore, the Follow-up Audit of Employment Systems Review (2008) identifies that these factors indicate the following significant risks: increased probability that representation for visible minorities and women may not be reached; CHRC and other parties’ expectations with regards to full representation of the designated group may not be met; and DFO’s reputation could be damaged (Ibid).

As of 2009, Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s internal statistics on the Pacific Region provide evidence that special measures are still required to address the gap in representation of visible minorities, which has widened since 2006. For example, reported as of September 30, 2006, DFO had representation of 8.1 percent with an availability rate at 11.2 percent. In other words the gap in 2006 employees with visible minority status was reported as minus 42 employees. In 2009, this gap slightly increased to minus 45 VM employees. Reported as of

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September 30, 2009 and based on the 2006 census, DFO had representation of 9.0 percent with an availability rate at 12.3 percent (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2009c). Please see Table 2 for a detailed data comparison. Further, out of 21 executive level positions, none are classified as representing visible minorities; only eight positions are held by women. Overall, in 2009 42.2 percent of the DFO workplace is made up of women. As well, five percent of DFO self-identified as persons with a disability (Ibid).

Table 2 Representation and Availability Rates of Visible Minorities at DFO Pacific Region⁶

PR Self-Identification Survey	DFO		Availability		Gap
Sept. 30, 2006 (Census 2001) Employee Count – 1367	111	8.1 %	153	11.2 %	-42
Sept. 30, 2009 (Census 2006) Employee count – 1371	124	9.0 %	169	12.3 %	-45

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (2009c and 2006)

Promoting equitable representation for visible minorities who work in federally regulated workplaces is a key area that DFO identifies as requiring attention. In the short term, the key challenge for DFO is to create stability in its workforce while preparing for significant projected departures due to retirement. Stability is important for all employees as it helps to create a climate where employee secure and safe at work. When employees feel safe and secure at work this can translate into a lower turnover rate, therefore assisting in maintaining the representation that it has already worked hard to achieve. According to a recent Diversity Conference held in 2009, 30 percent of DFO's workforce is eligible to retire in the next few years. Attrition forecasts suggest 50 percent of Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees are eligible to retire in five to eight years.

⁶ These internal statistics are based upon Pacific Region employees, excluding Canadian Coast Guard employees.

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The department has developed initiatives to promote public service renewal to recruit for new talent with the knowledge and experience necessary to work for DFO.

3.3 Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Employment Equity Policy and Strategies

DFO's 2008-2011 Employment Equity Management Action Plan was introduced as a roadmap for making progress and closing representation gaps. Rather than taking a Human Resources-driven approach, the roadmap asks managers to be "agents of change" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2009b). Managers are asked help make DFO a more inviting organization, in which every employee is valued for his or her competencies and contributions. This is because the perspectives on EE as simply involving targets is shifting to reflect human capacity and capability (Ibid). The EE MAP outlines the priorities and timelines over the next year aimed at attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining valuable employees who self-identify as belonging to employment equity groups (Ibid). The department has an Employment Equity Program in place aimed at enabling managers to effectively integrate and respect diversity within their management practices and when applying department policies. These approaches should encompass the understanding that visible minorities will make up a large portion of the employment pool, particularly in urban centres like Vancouver. The next section will discuss the demographic attributes of the city where DFO's RHQ is situated.

3.4 The City of Vancouver: Demographic Information

The pool of employees within DFO RHQ is primarily drawn from the Greater Vancouver Regional District. People from diverse cultures and backgrounds make up Vancouver's population, constituting approximately two-fifths of the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).⁷ In 2001, the VM population in the Vancouver CMA was about 36 percent (Bélanger & Malenfant, 2005, p. 26). By 2006, a little over half (51 percent) of the city's total population was of visible minority background, where 45.6 percent of the total population were immigrants⁸ (Statistics Canada, 2007). Table 2 illustrates the 2006 visible minority population in the Vancouver CMA based on the 2006 Census. The most numerous groups of recent immigrants⁹ in Vancouver are of Chinese (26.1%), Hong Kong (11.2%), Filipino (8.7%), UK (5.3%) and Indian (4.9%) origin.

Table 3 Visible Minority Population in Vancouver

Total population	2,097,965		Visible minority population	875,295	(41.7%)
Visible minority (not included elsewhere)	2,920	0.33%	Multiple visible minority	22,115	2.53%
South Asian	207,160	23.67%	Arab	7,430	0.85%
Chinese	381,535	43.59%	Southeast Asian	33,470	3.82%
Black	20,670	2.36%	West Asian	28,160	3.22%
Filipino	78,890	9.01%	Korean	44,825	5.12%
Latin American	22,695	2.59%	Japanese	25,425	2.90%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

⁷ Urban Census metropolitan area (CMA) is an area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a major urban core.

⁸ According to Statistics Canada, immigrants are defined as persons who are, or have ever been, landed immigrants in Canada.

⁹ The classification of "recent immigrants" refers to those who immigrated in the last five years.

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With the multitude of various ethnicities in Vancouver, the people of Vancouver also speak many different languages. Based on the 2006 Census figures, only half of the city's population identified English as their mother tongue.

Malenfant, et al. (2010) found that by 2031, three in ten Canadians could belong to a visible minority group, representing between 29 percent and 32 percent of Canada's population. This would nearly double the proportion reported in the 2006 Census (Ibid). According to this scenario, more than 71% of all visible minority persons would live in Canada's three largest CMAs: Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal (Ibid). Out of the visible minority groups in 2031, one in four could be foreign-born, which would surpass the highest proportion of immigrants seen between 1911 and 1931 (Ibid). According to Statistics Canada's reference scenario, visible minority groups would comprise 59% in Vancouver by 2031. The visible minority population is relatively youthful when compared to the non visible minority population throughout Canada (Samuel, 2006; Malenfant et al., 2010). This is an especially relevant context for the current research; given these will be the people who make up the employee candidate pools from which DFO will draw its recruits. While there is this large pool of visible minority candidates in Vancouver, a workforce availability rate of 12.8 percent demonstrates a gap or shortfall against the 9 percent of Pacific Region employees who self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group. Under-representation occurs where internal representation is less than external representation in a particular occupational group. Again, DFO's internal statistics report lower visible minority representation statistics, as compared to the workforce availability, with the proviso that these statistics are collected through self-identification.

4: Barriers to Employment of Visible Minorities at DFO

Literature suggests that VMs are less likely to be employed all-year and more likely to be employed in precarious jobs relative to other workers (Samuel and Basavarajappa, 2006). With fewer weeks of work, the implications are that VM employees are more likely to receive less income and have a higher likelihood of living in poverty (Ibid). This section presents a literature review that focuses on the factors affecting employment of visible-minorities generally and to DFO. By providing some background information on barriers that exist for visible minorities, the context for the research is set. Both statistical data and the experience of visible minority members in the Federal Public Service provide overwhelming evidence that, for the most part, expected improvement is not proceeding (Natufe, 2008).

In particular, organizations like DFO are not meeting their own targets to respond to the under-representation of visible minorities. Visible minorities continue to face the effects of lower representation including limited access to acting appointments and promotion prospects, notwithstanding their high levels of qualifications and work experience (Ibid). Principal factors affecting employment of visible minorities include challenges of self-reporting VM status, discrimination and racism based on stereotypes, immigrant status, lack of fit and differing standards for performance are all found in the literature to be barriers that could influence VM employment with DFO.

4.1 Challenges of Self-Reporting VM Status

Organizations that are required to comply with the EEA collect employee data for reporting purposes annually. However, many organizations find that visible minorities are reluctant to identify themselves as belonging to the EE category on workforce surveys (The

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Conference Board of Canada, 2004b). In a study conducted by The Conference Board of Canada in 2003-2004, seven focus groups with visible minorities who had achieved some success in their chosen fields revealed their perspectives on factors attributable to their success. Researchers reported that the focus group members who understood the reasons for collecting self-reported visible minority status had no real objections to self-identification. Nevertheless, many participants noted that they often hesitate before checking off the “visible minority” box on the employee survey forms based on their distrust of management. Participants also raised the question ‘will self-identification help me or the manager who hires me?’ Those who believed that it would only benefit their manager said they would not identify themselves as visible minorities. As well, perceptions that self-identification can serve to create different groups among employees is cited as a negative influence on self-reporting VM status. Focus group participants said that ensuring equality is more difficult through the creation of differences (The Conference Board of Canada, 2004b); “for these focus group participants, equality and inclusiveness will exist only when visible minorities do not feel that they are different and our society is colour-blind” (The Conference Board of Canada, 2004b, p. 8).

At the Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s National Diversity Conference, a Director General stated:

“...self-identification was a challenge for members of Employment Equity groups: people do not like the perception of being a ‘target’. Members of Employment Equity groups wish to be promoted because of their competencies and capability, not because of their ‘apparent’ difference. Therefore, managers have a role to play in promoting the idea that Employment Equity is not reverse discrimination but a positive endeavour for the organization” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2009b, p. 15).

This sentiment illustrates the stigma associated with self-identification where VM candidates want their professional credentials recognized rather than their physical appearance (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2009b, p. 16). Managers discussed other possible issues in relation to why some employees chose not to self-identify as belonging to an EE group. Some managers discussed the

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possibility of new Public Service members not understanding what some of the terms on the self-identification form mean. Others mentioned that it was important to reflect what it means to be a VM in an urban centre compared to a more rural area. Managers discussed that some employees may not self-identify because they do not associate themselves as a minority. In addition, employees may not wish to be identified as different from their colleagues. Self-identification can indeed be a sensitive subject, especially with confidentiality issues.

4.2 Facing Discrimination and Racism Based on Stereotypes

Unfortunately, society is not colour-blind and issues of discrimination and racism are present in Canadian workplaces. “The differences in labour force outcomes between Canadian-born VMs and their non-visible minority counterparts who have similar human capital characteristics such as, education and language skills, seem to point to the existence of discrimination” (Samuel and Basavarajappa, 2006, p. 260). Generally, discrimination and racism can be based upon the use of stereotypes. Stereotypes are “unconscious habits of thought that link personal attributes to group membership” (Quoted in Banerjee, 2006, p. 5). They can come in the form of generalizations intended to differentiate “other” categories of groups of people (Giscombe, 2008). Often under-represented groups may experience negative stereotyping that undermines the credibility of the group and those within it (Ibid). Examples of stereotypes faced by visible minority professionals employed in Canadian Business Organizations included a feeling that they were seen as “hard working but not sociable,” “outsiders,” “lacking skills or motivation to work,” and treated as foreigners even though many were born in Canada (Giscombe, 2008, p. 4). Assumptions that VMs qualifications are less important than their race and ethnicity or background can arise at all stages of pursuing gainful employment, where VMs experience the effects of racism and discrimination (Banerjee, 2006). It is interesting to note that “VMs generally have higher education levels than non-VMs, yet VMs with university education are less likely to hold managerial/ professional jobs than non-VMs with similar levels of

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education” (Jain & Lawler, 2004, p. 586). Evidence demonstrates that racial discrimination is responsible for at least part of the disparity in achievements between various racial minorities and non-VMs in the Canadian labour market (Jain & Lawler, 2004).

4.3 Visible Minority Immigrants

In addition, foreign-born visible minorities face greater challenges in workplace integration than Canadian-born visible minorities and non-visible minorities do (Tran, 2004). Barriers such as, lack of fluency in an official language (or other language barriers such as accent), lack of recognition of educational credentials, discounting of previous work experience, unfamiliarity with Canadian norms, are obstacles to favourable labour market outcomes (Samuel & Basavarajappa, 2006; Tran, 2004; The Conference Board of Canada, 2004b). Jain and Lawler (2004) point out that foreign-born VMs experience additional education-occupation discrepancies compared to other groups. In fact, less than half of foreign-born VMs with a university education have high skill level jobs (Ibid). Although immigrants may face these barriers regardless of their visible minority status, trends suggest that the foreign-born visible minority groups experience more labour market difficulties than non-visible minorities because of discrimination, problems of attaining education equivalency, accent, among others. Foreign-born VMs are over-represented in the lowest income quintile and under-represented in the highest income quintile (Jain & Lawler, 2004; Pendakur et al., 2008). All of these factors may contribute to foreign-born VMs having trouble in perusing gainful employment in the labour market.

4.4 Lack of Fit

The “fit” with a position or an organization can be an influential predictor of job performance (The Conference Board of Canada, 2004b). However, many visible minorities believe that systemic discrimination can occur when managers determine whether candidates are the right “fit” for the position; this can occur at all levels within an organization (Ibid). Whether a

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candidate's personality meshes with the overall organizational culture, can often be reflected in the candidate's rapport and chemistry with hiring managers. Unfortunately, VM candidates who had been unable to create a rapport with hiring managers due to different backgrounds and ethnicity left the interviews feeling that prejudice may have been to blame (Ibid). In recent studies, the phrase "lack of fit" signalled a propensity for sameness, preservation of the status quo and underlying racism. It is also interesting to note that few people with hiring authority are visible minority and that can signal a bias in the selection process and a major barrier to their being hired or promoted (Ibid).

4.5 Different Standards for VMs

While workers in Canadian organizations feel they have to work hard to succeed; visible minorities, in the focus groups facilitated by the Conference Board of Canada, felt that they experienced added pressures as compared to their non-visible minority colleagues. One reason cited was that managers felt a need to justify the hiring of a visible minority to the rest of the organization and managers pointed to reasons such as a VM employee's results or long hours. Another reason cited was a pressure stemming from a perception that their co-workers suspect that their promotion came out of their VM status rather than based upon their competencies to do the job (The Conference Board of Canada, 2004b). This idea of VM feeling they need to "be exceptional to be qualified" has been documented.

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For example, The Conference Board of Canada states:

“You need to be one step ahead of everyone else to succeed,” according to one focus group participant. In work environments where there were few visible minorities, many placed significant pressure on themselves to succeed “because, if you don’t, you may be responsible for curbing the career opportunities of the visible minorities who enter the organization after you.”

Some VM employees point to feelings of others pushing more expectations upon them as compared to others.

4.6 Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s Employment Processes

Fisheries and Oceans Canada offers a variety of employment and career opportunities, from clerical, scientific and administrative positions in the various regional offices and laboratories (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2008b, Frequently Asked Questions section 2, para. 2). All job opportunities within the department are announced on the Public Services Commission of Canada’s career website. To know about and benefit from these, computer literacy skills and internet access must be in place on the part of the candidate. Difficulty accessing and utilizing a computer, fax machine, photocopier and/or other job search tools may be barriers for new Canadians. Other barriers for visible minority candidates include: credentials, testing requirements, government language and acronyms, language barriers, among others.

In a pointed speech about striving for a barrier-free, inclusive and representative Federal Public Service where Visible Minorities can realize their professional aspirations and are individually and collectively respected and valued, Devoe J. Dyette presented a speech in March or 2009 on behalf of the President and the National Council of Visible Minorities (NCVM) Board of Directors. Dyette stated that “managers will continue to hire those that look like them, like minded and visually similar; rather than render provisions that may establish a well represented work force” (Dyette, 2009, p. 4). The perception still exists that managers look for their mirror images in hiring because it is familiar and less of a hassle (Ibid; The Conference Board of

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Canada, 2004b). In a further instance, an employee who happened to be of colour did not excel in the working arrangement for various reasons. VMs felt that managers used the fact that the VM candidate did not do well as a justification not to hire VM candidates in the future and regardless of the context involved. In fact, according to the aforementioned study conducted by The Conference Board of Canada, visible minority federal government managers felt:

Managers will think twice about hiring another person of colour, because “the last time I hired a visible minority, it really didn’t work out.” This is a heavy burden for anyone, but it is especially heavy for visible minorities, who may not have a mentor, a network or other forms of support to access for advice (The Conference Board of Canada 2004b, p. 5).

Whether intentional or not, visible minorities may not be chosen as optimal candidates for various personal biases on the side of Caucasian management. In this way, candidates may experience the effects of institutionalized racism, which is essentially any form of racism that occurs specifically within institutions, such as public government bodies.

One government initiative called the “Objective Eye” developed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada recognizing this same problem and seeks to reduce bias in staffing processes through a two-pronged approach. The first, an online course delivered through Canada School of Public Service to help managers become more aware of the bias that exist in staffing processes. The second, an accessible list of trained/available board members, which departments and managers can draw upon to invite members to sit on competition, boards to ensure diversity representation. Nevertheless, the rate at which DFO managers are utilizing the Objective Eye, or similar employment equity targeted initiatives is unknown.

4.7 Recruitment Tools

Recruitment is an important part of managing employment equity strategies. Recruiting employees with the intention of building an inclusive pipeline of talent, is one suggestion provided to corporations in Canada (Giscombe and Jenner, 2009, p. 9). For example, the Royal

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Bank of Canada (RBC), a Canadian financial services and banking company, outlines the way it builds diversity and inclusion through its pipeline is including visible minorities at both entry level and middle ranks. At DFO, recruitment of visible minorities is discussed as a national priority and filtered down to regions to take up initiatives. These are largely dependent upon financial budgets and capacity to develop and implement recruitment projects.

Saha et al. (2008) argue that legislation alone is insufficient noting that mindsets of the key HR/business people often matter the most. In this context, the decision to hire a female or a visible minority will be influenced by the group stereotype that is held about these groups (Ibid). Accordingly, a gap exists in understanding the role that values and beliefs play in determining hiring decisions of both majority and minority candidates (Ibid). This study is not limited to examining how values and beliefs play a role in hiring decisions. Rather this study aims to identify some key themes in Fisheries and Oceans Canada by exploring DFO employee values and beliefs held about visible minority employment. This includes ideas about: hiring practices, recruitment and retention strategies, employment processes, workplace experiences, experiences of diversity, and organizational culture.

In Canada, policy makers recognized employment discrimination as a problem and accordingly they enacted legislation to attempt to address the problem (Saha et al., 2008). This investigates the situation of an individual employer at a local level to understand how the legislation is practiced and what tensions exist for employees and management with ensuring employment equity. Again, while some gains have been made in Canada, certain minority groups including visible minorities continue to find it difficult to obtain justice in the labour market (Ibid). The following section outlines the methodological approach and method undertaken to address the research questions and policy problem.

5: Methodology

This research aims to outline the factors that underpin why visible minorities remain underrepresented at DFO Pacific Region. This study identifies barriers and facilitators to employment with DFO in order to develop and analyze policy recommendations that can promote Visible Minority diversity in the workplace. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. *What are the barriers and facilitating factors to the employment of visible minorities at the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's, Pacific Regional Headquarters*
2. *How do the barriers and facilitating factors impact on self-identification?*

These questions will target data collection and analysis on the under-representation of visible minorities that lead to ideas for policy options in the areas of promotion and awareness of diversity of visible minority employees.

In order to address the research question, I seek to understand and interpret how the various participants in regional headquarters construct the world around them (Glesne, 2006). I adopt a qualitative approach since the primary aim of the research is not to quantify how many visible minorities DFO employs. Rather, this study aims to understand and elicit data (not available through current survey instruments) needed to understand why a representation gap of visible minorities exists and how this influences self-identification. I attempt to collaborate with current members of DFO staff and management to analyze and interpret the different perspectives on the issue of diversity in the context of race and ethnic relations (Ibid). My final goal is to make effective use of the time available for data-collection (Ibid). In turn, I adopt the constructivist paradigm in this research project to shape the methodology.

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This section outlines the methodological approach used in this study, which involves the study design. Qualitative methods engaged managers and employees to share their experiences of the workplace in terms of visible minority diversity at RHQ. By gathering data from both employees who self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group¹⁰ and management personnel it will be possible to understand the barriers and facilitators¹¹ to employment of visible minorities in the context of DFO. To reveal the factors that underpin the reasons why visible minorities remain under-represented in DFO's workforce, the research process will include four key components: secondary analysis of internal data, focus groups, interviews, and key informant interviews.

To address the policy problem, I designed the research study to unfold in six distinct stages. In the first stage, I conduct secondary analysis on primary data to interpret the proportion of VM employees that exist in Pacific Regional Headquarters as compared to Pacific Regional statistics. The second stage of the methodology and first encounter with DFO employees and management personnel involved a recruitment and information presentation about the project in order to raise awareness of the project and to recruit for focus groups and interviews. The third stage of the methodology involved conducting two focus groups: one with DFO employees; and one with management personnel. The fourth stage of data collection and third encounter with Fisheries and Oceans Canada staff included gathering information through individual interviews with DFO employees and management personnel. The fifth stage of the methodology includes a qualitative analytical tool called 'thematic analysis' in which data can be coded and themed. The

¹⁰ Visible minority participants "self-identified" in this study to the extent that they considered themselves as a visible minority and explicitly signed up for the "VM Focus Group" or "VM Individual Interviews." I did not exclude VM participants from participating in this study as VMs; even if they chose not to self-identify on DFO's Self-identification Form they were free to participate.

¹¹ Some visible minority participants have surmounted the barriers discussed within the literature review, which is helpful to understand the facilitators to their employment. Some visible minority employees indicate barriers that still exist for them while others see few if any barriers to their employment with DFO.

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final stage of data collection included interviews with key informants who discussed Employment Equity best practices and constructively evaluated policy alternatives.

5.1 Stage 1: Secondary Analysis of Primary Data

A quantitative document entitled *Representation and Availability of the Designated Groups Fisheries and Oceans Canada – September 30, 2009* helped to reveal the current situation of diversity in the workplace within the Pacific Region at DFO.¹² This data reported on existing statistics to illuminate the scope of the problem and outline where categorical gaps in representation exist. In addition, I ran an internal data report on DFO's Pacific Regional Headquarters using PeopleSoft, an internal software system. This helped me to examine statistics at a local level rather than at the regional level, how the above report summarizes data. The statistical report helped reveal an estimate of the percentage of employees that self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group within the confines of the Pacific Regional Headquarters in Vancouver. This also allowed me to do an approximate comparison of how VM representation at RHQ in Vancouver fair in comparison to the Pacific Regional self-identification statistics.

5.2 Stage 2: Recruitment Strategies

To begin, I organized an information and recruitment presentation about my research in order to engage DFO employees and let them know about how they could contribute their opinions and experiential information to my study. Furthermore, the presentation was a forum to address any questions from DFO employees. To invite people to come to the non-compulsory presentation, I sent an e-mail to a list of DFO RHQ management personnel from my work email address. These employee e-mail addresses are also available to the public through the Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS). I asked Managers to disseminate to DFO

¹² The Acting Director of Human Resources made this data available to me to analyze and interpret all data in the report are anonymous and people are not identifiable in the data.

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RHQ employees. At the presentation, employees in attendance had the opportunity to volunteer their time and sign up for participation in a focus group and/or interview. Unfortunately, only a few DFO staff came to hear the presentation. Nevertheless, the email I asked managers to circulate did spark some interest and I was able to recruit for two separate focus groups as well as interviews.

5.3 Stage 3: Focus Groups Rationale

For the purposes of this study, I adopted the focus group method with both visible minority staff members and management in order to seek answers to questions regarding the barriers and facilitators to visible minority employment at DFO's regional headquarters. Krueger and Casey (2008) describe a focus group as,

“...a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perception on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. Each group is conducted with 5 to 10 people¹³ led by a skilled interviewer. The discussions are relaxed and often participants enjoy sharing their ideas and perceptions” (Krueger & Casey, 2008, p. 2).

Focus group interviewing has gained in popularity in the research context in recent years (Glesne, 2006). Focus groups can help with decision-making, guide in program development and delivery, and provide insight into organizational concerns or issues, among many other end goals (Krueger & Casey 2008; Robson 2007). In other words, focus groups allow researchers to explore how ideas, plans or projects develop and operate in a given social and organisational context.

For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to facilitate two focus groups. In general, research projects conduct three to five focus groups dependent on the research question. Krueger & Casey (2008) discuss that more than one focus group is typically necessary and suggests that

¹³ The number of participants in a focus group can fluctuate depending on the intent, framework and context of the researcher. For example, Creswell (2003) described a sample size of six to eight participants as being sufficient for this type of research (p. 188).

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researchers continue running focus groups until a clear pattern emerges and repetitious information is produced. I facilitated two focus groups because I also engaged in eight interview sessions. Both focus groups demonstrate consensus and patterns within each group, while interviews provided some contrast and variance in opinions.

The researcher's role in focus groups is multifaceted. First, the researcher endeavours to create a permissive environment in which participants are encouraged to share their own ideas in the group setting (Krueger & Casey, 2008, p. 2). Participants tend to enjoy themselves within focus groups and focus groups work best when participants feel comfortable, respected and free to give their opinion without fear of judgement (Krueger & Casey, 2008). Secondly, the researcher invites participation based on group commonalities or shared characteristics that relate to the topic of a focus group (Ibid). While researchers chose similarity as a basis for recruitment (and participants are typically informed of these common factors before the discussion), homogeneity can be broadly or narrowly defined (Krueger & Casey, 2008, p. 7).

In the case of the current study, homogeneity is broadly defined on the basis that "visible minority" refers to groups who share physically visible characteristics such as skin colour. Previously established in the literature review, academic scholars caution treating visible minorities as a homogenous group (Cardozo & Pendakur, 2008; Pendakur, Pendakur and Woodcock, 2008). Studying VM subgroups unto themselves is valuable. Nevertheless, "visible minorities" is a term used in federal legislation, including the EEA, and by Statistics Canada. As such, some commonalities of experience can be usefully explored in relation to the broad categorization of visible minorities and the pooling of information across different sub-groups can usefully inform the shaping of organizational policy. Constructing a group based on potentially influential background variables is a good way to organize and it does not mean attitudes toward the topic will be the same (Glesne, 2006). By grouping VM employees together and managers together I did not intend to discount the value of understanding the specific issues of particular

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sub-groups. Rather, it simply emphasises a broader category in the interests of providing usable information at an organisational level. The idea that visible minority employees could show guarded responses in discussing issues of race or ethnicity in front of management fully shaped the design and planning stage of the focus group session.

Accordingly, management personnel have been chosen as a similar group based on their position as managers; managers could be visible minorities. Similarly, employees who self-identify as visible minorities for the purposes of this study are grouped together in a focus group. These groups were purposely set to pragmatically acquire those commonalities or shared characteristics that underpin participants' experiences at the workplace. Again, the object is not to reach consensus, rather focus groups can reveal shared knowledge, similarities and differences in perspectives, attitudes and experiences between participants. They also show how shared norms concerning EE are discussed within the organisational setting, exposing barriers and facilitators to EE which are tacitly held yet reproduced in conversation. As such, focus groups were useful in identifying the barriers and facilitators to the recruitment and employment experiences of visible minorities, as well as understanding perceptions of diversity at RHQ. The goal of the focus groups was to understand participants thinking and assessment of their work situations. By having participants talk to each other, the context of the workplace became clearer.

5.3.1 Focus Group Logistics

Focus group participants received a Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics approved information and consent form. Participants consented to contribute to one, approximately 60-minute semi-structured focus group. Furthermore, focus group participants were aware that they could request a follow-up individual interview if they wished. This allowed focus group participants who wanted to contribute any additional information that they were either unwilling to provide in the focus group setting or upon later reflection. Both focus groups were audio taped and transcribed. The focus group process involved my co-worker who took

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notes and was present in each focus group to capture the main themes of the discussions. Focus groups often take place in a public community office space or a university seminar room. I facilitated both the focus groups in the same boardroom at DFO's headquarters with the participants who consented to participation. This allowed for participants to engage in conversation with one another within a familiar space from which they could draw on workplace experiences. Purposefully, I chose to keep the environment in both focus groups similar as well as accessible in order to minimize the impact of environmental factors such as noise or visual distractions and latecomers, which may have been more difficult had both focus groups been in different settings (Glesne, 2006).

In order to cover the topics that could incite policy alternatives as part of our discussion, as a constructivist researcher I purposely-designed themes to engage focus group participants to create their own meanings and understandings through a self-reflective and collaborative processes. The focus group schedules with pre-themed and open-ended questions helped to guide discussions.¹⁴ While participants did not see the focus group schedules in advance, I briefed participants about the nature of the discussions in both the recruitment presentation, telephone conversations, email correspondence and as well as before the focus group sessions began.

5.3.2 Focus Group with Visible Minority Employees

The focus group with employees who self-identify as visible minorities helped provide a forum for communication to discuss diversity in the workplace. I facilitated one focus group which included seven employees who voluntarily self-identified as visible minorities. The focus group was 54 minutes in length. A review of the consent form, ensured that confidentiality was established ensuring that whatever was said within the group setting stayed in the group. Participants were welcome to share their own experiences with others, but asked not to discuss other peoples without permission. Together we established ground rules at the onset to permit

¹⁴Focus Group Schedules are available for review in Appendix A and B.

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everyone an opportunity to contribute ideas regarding how the session would run. While the focus group session was audio taped, I assured anonymity of participants and outlined the SFU ethics process. Once everyone was in accordance with the content, the focus group discussions began.

The focus group schedule for VM employees is available to review in Appendix A. The schedule includes a multitude of possible factors leading to the under-representation of VM employees at DFO based upon a review of the literature. Based on the schedule, I asked VM employees how DFO, management and staff provide a welcoming atmosphere for diversity. I asked about the barriers to having more people from visible minority groups applying to positions in DFO and ways DFO could address these barriers and gap. We also discussed facilitators to visible minority participation at work. Together we outlined how these could help improve DFO management and staff embracing values of diversity. The discussions of VM work experiences, perceptions of diversity, as well as the barriers and facilitators to work for DFO helped me to identify potential solutions from focus group participants regarding the established policy problem.

5.3.3 Focus Group with Management Personnel

In the second focus group, five management personnel gathered together to reveal perceived barriers and facilitators to the employment of visible minorities. During the focus group with management personnel, participants could share their general experiences and impressions about diversity in the workplace. Based upon the interview schedule (see Appendix B), I asked managers similar questions to the questions asked in the VM employee focus group. I asked managers to discuss the presence (or lack there) of a welcoming atmosphere for visible minority employees, perceived reasons for VM candidates applying or self excluding from applying to DFO, the focus on internal statistics, among other themes outlined in Chapter 8. Management personnel collectively discussed their perceptions about the barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities within DFO.

5.4 Stage 4: Interview Rationale

An interview is a technique to seek information about people's lives and reveal how they describe their world and views. Interviews can help researchers discover the interviewee's own meanings instead of imposing researcher assumptions about what they think is important to discuss. By treating the interviewee as an expert on their own lives, important issues can be revealed which were unanticipated by the researcher. However interviewers can also introduce the topics researchers feel are necessary to discuss in order to clarify meanings that may be relevant to the research project (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). I used the semi-structured interview format, which entails the researcher preparing a list of questions or specific topics and subtopics to be covered, often referred to as an interview schedule. A semi-structured interview provides both the interviewer leeway in regards to what they ask and flexibility to participants in how to reply. Questions may not follow exactly the way they were outlined in the schedule, and interviewers may not ask all of the questions. An interview schedule was prepared in advance of the interview and was used to guide the conversations. In addition, interviewers may ask additional questions that are not included in the schedule, as interviewers become aware of important issues raised by interviewees.

Within the constructivist framework, I created key themes in the interview schedule so that the interviewees could identify his or her categories of meanings. To gather more in-depth personal experiences of diversity within the workplace context I engaged in two different sets of individual semi-structured interviews with management as well as visible minority employees. This was to allow for both employees, who self-identified as belonging to a visible minority group, and management personnel to describe their experience in their own terms (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

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5.4.1 Interviews with Visible Minority Employees

I engaged in four in depth semi-structured interviews with four employees who voluntarily self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group. This small sample is sufficient in the context of the research because the interviews provided support for the thematic template analysis used in the focus groups. Interview schedules were developed keeping consistent with the focus group with minor adjustments to allow for more personal questions to probe deeper into personal experiences of the organization as a visible minority employee.

Interviews provided a way for VM employees to elaborate on their personal opinions to come forward by contextualizing their own experiences. In addition it was a forum for employees to have a private interview free from possible judgement from other employees. No focus group participants agreed to be interviewed formally, however one visible minority employee voluntarily sent his perspective in the format of summary notes via email, which were used as additional contextual information in the thematic analysis portion of the research study.

5.4.2 Interviews with Management Personnel

I also engaged in three semi-structured interviews with management of personnel. One manager voluntarily self-identified as belonging to a visible minority group. While focus group material revealed social and group norms, individual interviews allowed for personal reflections. Interviewing managers and directors from DFO allowed for reflections from management about the subject matter.

5.4.3 Interview Logistics

Interview participants received an approved consent form and returned their consent. Participants had the opportunity to select the location of interviews. Again, instead of restricting myself to ask a certain set of questions, I chose to include a mix of topic headings and sub headings the interview schedules which encompassed: reasons to apply to DFO, employment

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processes at DFO, recruitment of VM candidates, personal and organizational experiences of diversity.¹⁵ Participants did not see the interview schedules in advance, but the nature of the discussion was described to participants before the interviews began. Interviews varied in length from 45 minutes to 90 minutes in length. The average interview was 61 minutes in length. I recorded, transcribed and analyzed all interviews.

5.5 Stage 5: Thematic Analysis

To analyze all of the qualitative data collected in both focus groups, and the seven interview sessions, I engaged in the process of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves “...searching across a data set to identify repeated patterns of constructed meanings” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 78). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is an analytical method ‘that works both to reflect reality and to disentangle and reveal the surface of reality’ (p.81) through the analysis of verbal or textual data. “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (Brawn & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). To shift away from one of the main critiques of qualitative research that ‘anything goes,’ yet allow for multiple realities to be constructed by those I spoke with, thematic analysis provides a clear systematic and rigorous way to analyze data (Ibid). As such, I chose to engage in the six phases of thematic analysis that Braun and Clarke (2006) provide as a framework for analyzing focus group and interview data. Please see Table 4 for an overview of the process in conducting a thematic analysis.

¹⁵ Please see Appendix D for interview schedule.

Table 4: Thematic Analysis Process

Phase	Description of process
1 Familiarize myself within data	Transcribe, read and re-read noting initial ideas
2 Generate initial codes	Code interesting features systematically
3 Search for themes	Collate codes into themes
4 Review themes	Check that themes work in relation to coded extracts
5 Define and name themes	Analysis and refining the specifics of each theme
6 Produce the final report	Final opportunity to analyze, providing vivid examples

(Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

Following this six step approach, I discovered themes and concepts to captures important features about the data in relation to my research question, and representing patterned responses and meanings within the data (Brawn & Clarke, 2006). I coded patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data. This fluid process began during data collection and continued to the final stages of data analysis (Ibid).

5.6 Stage 6: Key Informant Interviews Rationale

After completing the primary data collection and analysis in stages three and four of the research with staff and management working in Fisheries and Oceans Canada, I engaged in three key informant interviews also referred to in literature as elite interviews (Odendahl & Shaw, 2001). Personal interviews with key informants are an effective method of data collection for research on elite subjects and culture (Ibid). In addition to providing expert opinions on related subject matter, key informants (or elites) can also provide rankings or numerical indexes in addition to tacit information. Odendahl and Shaw (2001) describe that "...it is important that researchers view these indicators as maps to a reality that can unfold only though broader knowledge of evolving patterns of wealth and power in social context under consideration" (p. 303). I met with knowledgeable professionals known in the employment equity field and external to DFO. I identified key informants through an academic literature review and I chose to contact

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key informants based on their experience and knowledge in the employment equity field. I asked key informants to provide expert opinion to help develop, frame and evaluate policy alternatives.

5.6.1 Key Informant Interview Logistics

I contacted key informants by phone or email and everyone contacted had the choice of whether or not to participate in an interview. Their contact information was available to the public online. Key informants who decided to participate were given the option to either disclose or keep their identity confidential. All key informants signed a SFU approved consent form. I expected the interviews to last about 60 minutes to allow sufficient time to discuss potential policy options and tradeoffs between options. Key informants were also encouraged to share best practices and relevant case information that could provide DFO with examples of successful parallel models to emulate. A mix of topic headings and sub headings with open-ended questions were included in an interview schedule (see Appendix E) to guide the interviews. These included topics relating to the policy alternatives I developed based upon the data collected as well as evaluative criteria developed to help analyze the options. Key Informants did not see the interview schedules in advance, but I briefed them about the policy alternatives before the interviews began. Three key informants helped to analyze policy alternatives:

- An equity officer from University of British Columbia (UBC) with expertise in employment equity and government relations,
- A professor from University of Western Ontario (UWO) with expertise in discrimination in employment
- An economics professor from Simon Fraser University with background in visible minority well-being and working experiences.

I asked key informants to inform and help evaluate the policy alternatives, which I provided. Key informants commented on the barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities in DFO as well as, suggested supplemental information on policy options that could improve access and employment among this targeted demographic. In addition to their work, each expert had

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relevant experience working within their own organizations, which included the various policies and procedures under which their organizations operate.

To cover the topics that could rank policy alternatives and help decide on recommendations I decided to use an adapted version of a qualitative technique called the ‘Multiple Sorting Task’ or MST. Multiple Sorting is a technique that encourages participants to construct, assess and use their own meanings in relation to a topic area (Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 1987, p. 313). The MST is essentially a card-sorting task in which a large amount of information can be sorted and discussed in relatively little amount of time (ibid). In this case, I wrote policy options on cards, while providing categories for key informants to sort by. The policy alternatives and criterion are available for review in Chapters 7 and 9.

In addition, experts could also elect to sort the options in ways in which they themselves designated. The advantage of this technique within the context of policy analysis is that rankings are easy to compare across participants. For the purposes of this study, participants prioritize pre-established policy options that have derived from a thorough analysis of the data collected and then describe their thoughts and evaluations of each policy alternative. This allows for a systematic comparison of different policy options providing a preferable methodological choice given the focussed policy alternatives that require ranking and the narrow timeline of this project. Additionally, key informants are free to interpret the policy options in their own terms and constructed meanings. The key informants’ interviews were also thematically analyzed via audio record rather than transcriptions. Where MST was not facilitated (as a consequence of environmental constraints), semi-structured interviews were conducted.

5.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are necessary to think about when undertaking any research project. For this project, I considered anonymity, confidentiality and transparency for the sake of

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the participants. I informed participants about the purpose of this research project and its potential benefits to the participants of the study who work at Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as to the organization. Participants received and read the information about this study and consented to participate. I assured participants that the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University reviewed and received ethics clearance. They had the opportunity to ask questions, to receive satisfactory answers and any additional details requested. Where focus groups or interviews were audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of responses participants, I asked for their permission. To assure confidentiality, I assigned audio records and transcripts a number in one electronic data file, and I attached the same number to an anonymous name in a separate password protected electronic file. Accordingly, participants' names are not in this capstone or report resulting from this study; however, with permission, I included anonymous quotations. I kept all the information gathered for this study confidential. I informed participants that they could withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time without penalty. I made participants aware that the results will be available to DFO employees including study participants, management personnel and other decision-makers in Fisheries and Oceans Canada. DFO may implement recommendations within this study in the future.

6: Study Findings

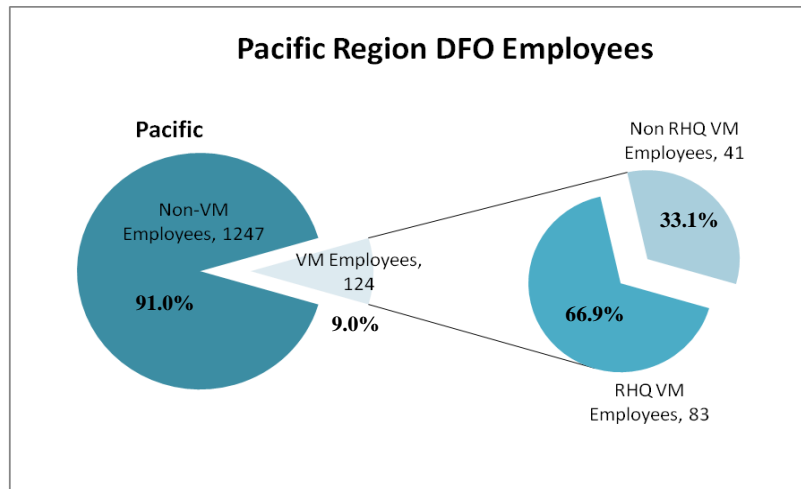
This chapter discusses participants' narratives, perceptions and opinions expressed at the two focus group sessions held separately with VM employees and management personnel. As described in the methodology chapter, first descriptive statistics provide context for the focus groups. Second, themes are presented based upon the focus group sessions and evidence from in-depth interviews with VM employees and management are embedded within the themes.

6.1 Analysis of Internal Data

By conducting an analysis of a statistical report run on RHQ to the Representation and Available Rates for Pacific Region (September 30, 2009), I was able to identify the proportion of VM at RHQ as compared to the Region. Out of 377 employees,¹⁶ there are an estimated 83 employees who self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group working at Pacific RHQ in Vancouver. Drilling further down into the data, I compare this statistic against the 124 employees who self-identify as being visible minority throughout the entire Pacific Region. Please see Figure 2: Proportion of Pacific Region VM representation at DFO's RHQ.

¹⁶ Please see footnote 5 for the rationale to how this figure was calculated. The limitation to this estimate include time period differential and dependent upon the scope of encompassing different occupational classifications included.

Figure 2: Proportion of Pacific Region VM representation at DFO's RHQ



This chart indicates that 9.0 percent of the Pacific Region’s employees are visible minorities. According to my analysis, approximately 67 percent of the Pacific Region’s employees who self-identify as belonging to a visible minority group are located in regional headquarters, Vancouver. The reason why this statistic is important is because my focus has been established at RHQ based upon previous Employment System Review’s suggestions that employee equity efforts are focused in urban centres. Due to a fact that a majority of DFO’s PR VMs are located at RHQ, having the existing VM employees buy-in is critical for DFO to attain successful outcomes and equitable representation rates. The RHQ employee population holds approximately 27 percent of DFO Pacific Region’s population. As such, the remainder of the region needs more in-depth research regarding where pockets of VM groups may exist.

6.2 Study Participants

This section is about participant demographic information which show that five men and seven women participated in two focus group sessions. Table 5 reveals the characteristics of both focus groups. Focus group participants held a range of positions within the organization.

Table 5: Characteristics of DFO Focus Group Participants

CODE	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Positions
Visible Minority DFO Employees (FG)	Male (2) Female (5)	All visible minority* *only visible minority employees invited, no management	Administrative Officer, HR Advisor, HR Assistant, Audit clerk, Program Recruitment Officer, Data Technology
DFO Management (FG)	Male (3) Female (2)	All Caucasian* *All management invited	Manager, Regional Director, Senior Advisor, Team lead
TOTAL FG participants 12			

The characteristics of face to face interview participants and cultures are further explained in Table 6.

Table 6 Characteristics of DFO Interview Participants

CODE	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Positions
Visible Minority DFO Employees (INT.)	Male (2) Female (3)	Visible minority (4) Aboriginal (1)	System Analyst - Administrator, Program Administrator, Biologist, project Engineer,
DFO Management (INT.)	Male (2) Female (1)	Visible minority (1) Caucasian (2)	Acting Manager, Acting Director, Director,
TOTAL FG participants 8			

The characteristics were similar between both focus groups and individual interviews.

Nevertheless, participants shared a broad range of ideas about diversity and inclusion based upon their own experiences. As expected, and based upon their heterogeneous composition, VM employees did not always share the same opinion on issues.

6.3 Identified Themes

Major themes identified from focus group discussions include challenges with establishing good internal statistical data on self-reporting visible minority status, promoting diversity, and hiring and appointment practices. These themes are not mutually exclusive and rather intersectional with other identified themes and sub-themes. Each identified theme represents the predominant content of the focus group and interview discussions. I selected the

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key issues that were commonly discussed in both focus groups and interviews, while I reported upon divergent opinions.

6.3.1 Facilitators to Work-Related Well-Being of VMs at DFO

To most participants, multiculturalism at work is positive organizational characteristic “so people can get more understanding of difference.” (VM Interview A). In fact, some visible minorities at DFO discussed how, in their working teams, they feel there are multiple cultures. Some participants did mention that there were “pockets of multiculturalism” and that “if you just look around some floors you can see that” (VM Interview A). VM employees felt more connected to their workplace where diversity existed. One VM manager discussed how it was strange to deliver a presentation to a room full of executives, while being the only visible minority present. Where work is reflective of the broader context of outside life, VM employees felt a positive connection to their workplace. The workplace culture is pivotal in determining employee’s attitudes toward work-life balance. If diversity is a lived work-reality, employees are more likely to see their employer as promoting a supportive of work-life balance.

VM participants found that a “warm and friendly” atmosphere generated by management within interview and performance review settings helped to ease nervous feelings and make employees feel accepted for who they are. My findings reveal that VM employees want to feel valued and accepted for who they are today, not tomorrow (VM Focus Group). Encouragement from managers was seen as a positive attribute as compared to “pushy attitudes” which was seen as a hindrance to working efficiently. One participant said: “I am so happy to work here. The whole team is so friendly and they support me to finish the project and give me more opportunities to upgrade my skills” (VM Interview A). Certainly the experiences of some VM employees at DFO were very positive. Throughout their interviews, VM employees demonstrated various differences in a variety of opinions, to their interests at work, to their skill sets. For example, two VM participants who engaged in face to face interviews thought there were no

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employment equity issues and that the workplace supported their work and valued their contributions. Many other VM employees, who named problems with EE programming at DFO, still mentioned other positive facilitating factors. Concrete examples include: strong managerial support, peer support, fair pay, good benefits, all of which helped VM employees to find the meaning in their work. Participants also mentioned that their differences should be celebrated and they brought my attention to the fact that VMs are made up of many visible minority groups and should be recognized as such.

6.3.2 Challenges with Self-Identification of Visible Minority Status

Both VM employees and Management talked to the challenges with establishing good internal statistical data and the limitations of self-reporting of visible minority status. One issue that managers revealed was a struggle to meet VM representation. Some managers attributed the inability to meet VM representation as a problem because DFO is unable to adequately represent employment equity groups' interests. A primary example was listed as DFO being unable to represent First Nations interests, another employment equity group that faces under-representation in DFO. Presumably, Aboriginal interests would be a high priority seeing as there is a strong relationship with first nations and fishing practices and they are a key stakeholder. Nevertheless, managers cited this as a problem.

Managers and VM employees questioned whether the department had high-quality information, upon which EE targets are established by managers to increase VM representation. How management develops employment equity targets in relation to their existing data also posed a challenge. Managers also asked "are people self-identifying?" This question has been raised in terms of whether voluntary self-identification produces the best-available data and again reifies how managers do concentrate on the problem of people not self-identifying.

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Managers discussed how some internal sectors do at least meet if not surpass EE targets; the reality being different depending on where you work within DFO. For example some units are viewed by management as well-represented, where gaps in representation are seen in other units. Here, the idea that VM representation was in actuality better than was reflected within internal DFO statistics highlighted in this report. Some managers argued that statistical under-representative data does not necessarily reflect a lack of commitment to employment equity; nevertheless some mentioned it could be an indication. One manager stated, perhaps self-identification rates only matter if they are a substantial departure from reality for succession purposes.

Management do not typically release statistical information to employees. Instead they discuss statistics at a high level within the organization. In individual interviews, some participants indicated that some managers still count VM employees regardless of self-identification reports because they feel that this will increase their performance pay.¹⁷ Management also discussed how managers count VM employees in their work unit:

I think people try to count the people within their unit. But it's usually been in a negative effect where somebody will tell them they don't have good representation in their unit or we need to work on this, and they'll say, "Well I know that I have 3 visible minority employees in my unit because I can tell by looking at them." But, we can't really do that because you know it's up to them to self-identify and whether they might want to or not. So, it might be that your whole unit is made up of visible minorities but if they have chosen not to self-identify for whatever reason then your stats just look really off (Interview, Manager A, lines 410-419).

This is interesting to note, as VM employee interviews also raised the issue of managers performing a physical count of VMs, despite the stipulation that information should be collected voluntarily. This may be in part where distrust of management occurs and why some VM employees chose not to self-identify (VM Interview B & VM Interview C). Manager A went on to

¹⁷ Performance pay refers to a bonus received by management by, in part, meeting or exceeding EE obligations set out in their job expectations.

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say, the best thing to do in that case is to work on retention and explaining the reasons why self-identification is important as well as the advantages of the process. Nevertheless, this tension was highlighted by a VM employee who indicated that whether data is collected based on self-identification or is based on managers' knowledge; the data would be wrong regardless (VM Interview B & VM Interview C). Again, two participants reiterated that both methods to collect VM data made such statistical data irrelevant, and this explained another motivation to refuse to self-identify with DFO.

VM employees in the focus group also agreed that knowing the statistics about how many VM employees are employed with DFO should not be the top concern for managers. Instead, the concern should be in terms of diversity and promoting that within the organization. Participants explained: "...it should be creating that diverse environment where we come to work and we feel that we're in that environment" (VM Focus group participant, lines 252-253). At the Fisheries and Oceans National Diversity Conference held in 2009, managers discussed that some people might not self-identify as a tactic to get managers to focus on creating a welcoming and diverse workplace. Hence, managers discussed VM's strategic use to refuse to self-identify within DFO. If people refuse to self-identify as VM based on the idea that it will influence managers' priority to create a more welcoming and inclusive workplace, this may have implications for policy at DFO to shift toward creating a welcoming and diverse workplace. As such, VM focus group participants stated that numbers were less important than actually reflecting the existing diversity in order to expand possibilities for even more diversity. Participants were apprehensive about and could see the limitations of DFO relying on representational statistics to tell the whole story.

Furthermore, there exists an idea among some VM employees that once managers complete their discussions on gaps and targets in terms of VM representation, the duty to create a welcoming and diverse workplace fades. VM focus group participants stressed that DFO employees should be concerned about creating an environment that reflects the area that it serves

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and the area that we live in. This included support for different cultures and embracing diversity of thought rather than one way of viewing the world. VM employees do not want to feel that they have been hired, retained, or promoted to increase internal representation statistics.

Additional reasons given for VM's failing to self-identify were as follows: they want to be acknowledged as Canadians, they do not want to be seen or treated as different to the mainstream, to avoid the experience of discrimination such as the possibility that it could hurt them or their job opportunities. Other VM employees feared the problem of "reverse racism." This is where racism against the racial majority, by managers, could incite the hiring of VM candidates over white Candidates. The problem VM employees see, is that managers may feel that EE policies are overly affirmative action oriented and alienate their dominant culture resulting in reversing the trend again (i.e. reverse, reverse racism) and hire white candidates.

The need to stress to others that a VM's new job acquisition or promotions was merit-based rather than because of their VM status, was a large barrier to self-identifying.

One visible minority focus group participant said:

... I think in general the situation that has prevented identifying as visible minorities and not is when you specify that you want a visible minority you can get into the area of reverse racism, where you purposely hire someone that's not a visible minority. I think there needs to be a balance. I agree that there should be merit based hiring always. Some people may be afraid to say I am a minority because maybe in that case that may be what helps them not get the job. You never know where is it going to help where is it going to hurt. So I think people think it's easier just not to say anything and just have an equal playing field and have HR do blind resume to resume comparisons (VM focus group participant, lines 221-233).

The problem of uncertainty linked to self-identification was also mentioned in individual interviews with managers. Visible minorities discussed this problem when managers strategize about the recruitment of VM candidates. Participants felt that managers need to consider a more positive framing of VM's in the hiring's and appointments procedure. Consistent with the literature, managers ought not to overly justify the hiring of VM candidates to the dominant

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group, as it could serve to negate the merit based qualities in the first place. At the same time, managers may alienate both the dominant group employees who do not receive the same amount of praise and the VM candidate who is put up on an unreasonable pedestal. VM employees may not want to be singled out, hired or promoted based on their VM status but, rather because they can do the job. Interviews with managers also indicated that the trend not to self- identify as visible minorities was a youthful characteristic citing reasons like they did not buy into employment equity or they want to be valued on their credentials. Managers discussed the need to raise more awareness with all staff about the idea that EE policies do not undermine the merit principle.

In addition self-identification survey instruments were discussed as problematic due to the way in which they are provided staff in current work packages. The forms for some VM employees are confusing and do not stipulate who should be filling them out (e.g. term or season employees below a set period of time with DFO, as stipulated in their contract). Participants thought the role of managers should include providing self-identification forms and relevant information to their employees.

6.3.3 A Need for Leadership and Developmental Opportunities

Lack of visible minority representation is an issue at senior management and middle management levels. In fact, both focus groups discussed the lack of VM employees within a management or leadership role. Despite recent positive shifts towards increased presence of certain EE groups within management like women, VM presence is lacking. Literature suggests that VM women can experience a double jeopardy of sorts in trying to access high- level positions. Managers need to encourage and mentor the management potential of visible minority employees, with a specialized focus on VM women.

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VM employees discussed that leadership activities happen most for them outside of work or in other venues. They warned that a forceful management or leadership approach would fail, hence formal and informal opportunities to advance leadership prospects would be appropriate. Participants discussed providing a forum for visible minorities to network and a space to discuss leadership opportunities aimed at improving the representation of visible minorities in the executive cadre of government. In one interview, a VM immigrant participant mentioned a leadership opportunity provided to her through her manager's informal invitation to attend *Toastmasters International*. Through *Toastmasters International*, a non-profit organization, participants can engage in effective programming to help improve their communication and leadership skills (Burrard Toastmasters, 2009). Usually over her lunch break, she attends once a week to develop her skills and gain more confidence in giving speeches, which she says, has helped with her work at DFO.

Currently Employment Equity Champions mandated to be visible on employment equity related issues. Some participants suggested that due to busy schedules, heavy workload, and few incentives to be visible in DFO's community, meant that EE Champions are losing momentum in their role. Participants noted that their profile should be heightened. One VM Manager mentioned a potential name change to EE Ambassador. Similarly the Regional Diversity Advisory Committee (RDAC) made up of DFO volunteer staff has many commitments and work timelines do not permit their active participation in the committee. This results in many having to "work of the sides of their desks." Incentives were raised by one manager, who thought this might assist in alleviating work-life balance conflicts, increase their profiles, and effectiveness of the EE Champions and RDAC respectively.

6.3.4 Challenges with the Promotion of Diversity

Both visible minority employees and managers reflected upon their experience of diversity in terms of race and ethnicity at DFO. An overarching theme that recurred throughout

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both focus group sessions was that little promotion of diversity occurs at RHQ. Visible minority employees reached consensus that DFO takes little action to be inclusive of the diversity present at RHQ. One participant noted that in their lengthy experience working at DFO, no diversity events occur during lunch breaks and “definitely not on staff time.” A VM immigrant discussed in her interview how her work unit engages in coffee breaks to get to know each other to discuss current events and hobbies. She thought these social gatherings were important for her because she had a need to understand the local culture (VM Interview A).

Other VM focus group participants mentioned an Aboriginal awareness event held at DFO, which ran over the summer for a week. Participants felt this activity was positive because it created understandings between different cultures and consequently participants suggested that more events encompassing other EE groups would be a good start in promoting inclusivity and inter-cultural exchange. Suggestions included diversity events, potlucks, fundraisers and generally “reaching out to people within the community.” One interview participant said she would like to attend events, as it would be a way to get to know more DFO employees, to support her own work and to understand the different areas of work at DFO. Here the social and work-oriented factors of such events were recognized. Focus group participants also regarded Environment Canada, a federal government department that shares 401 Burrard building with DFO, positively for their action in running an event for Chinese New Year. One VM Manager identified that a unifying characteristic in all cultures is food. Focus groups confirmed that food could help DFO in celebrating cultures, which exist in the workplace, through potluck lunches. These shared perspectives highlight that there should be recognition of the variety of ethnic groups that exist in the building. This demonstrates how DFO fails to recognize diversity events as integral, or an important part of work-life balance.

Managers echoed this sentiment by stating that, as an organization, DFO is not particularly welcoming. Managers stated that there are weaknesses in DFO’s approach to

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orienting new employees to their new job responsibilities, staff, and organizational framework. Managers and VM staff claimed initial orientation was weak because the aim of DFO's orientation program is not clear, there is little awareness of the content and it is poorly advertised. Of interest, here is the designation of this problem as one affecting all employees and not just those of visible minorities. This is significant because if employees feel valued and that they are able to fit into their new job easily and quickly, both the employer and employee can benefit with regard to reduced turnover, higher rates of retention and increased productivity. VM employees mentioned that "fitting in" rather than "standing out" was an important factor in their employment. This of course would have implications for an on-boarding tool.¹⁸ Careful consideration of crafting a targeted approach would be necessary. Managers did also mention that a targeted component for visible minority employees should be a part of the orientation package.

Interview participants held a variety of perspectives of promoting more diversity at work. While managers in interview sessions tended to agree there was little promotion of diversity through activities such as events and orientation, some visible minority employees indicated that the promotion of diversity at work was a non-issue for them. Two visible minorities went on to say that, increasing diversity activities could serve to encroach on the rights of other groups within the category "visible minority." For example, by celebrating one group's culture another's would inevitably be excluded. Multicultural events would need to be balanced, inclusive and voluntary in order to achieve desirable participation rates and objectives.

6.3.5 Lack of Awareness

The lack of awareness and understanding of the benefits and importance of having a diversified and welcoming workplace (inclusive of equitable leadership) amongst DFO staff, management and the public in general arose as an important theme throughout the data collection

¹⁸ The current on boarding tool is an employee handbook, available to DFO employees online through the intranet site, to help orient and guide new employees through their initial period as a new employee.

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and analysis. Visible minority focus group participants stated that some people do not understand what self-identification is in the context of employment equity and why it is necessary, specifically within DFO. Managers felt this was a problem because employees lacked an understanding of the value-added benefit to an individual employee to self-identify as belonging to an employment equity group. One manager said:

...I think awareness is a big part of it. Like I know , knowing that probably most of the senior managers here are mostly intelligent and progressive thinking people and I think it's just you know important to have a session at RMC (Regional Management Committee) or have ... somebody from HR come in and just give a presentation ... Just to put that reminder out there. I think it's kind of in the back of everyone's mind but especially if you have someone like [name] or a real regional champion just to kind of take that and re-emphasize that I think you might be able to get some more buy in at the managerial or director level when we're staffing processes and then they could then feed that through the lower level staff that are running the processes (Manager focus group participant, lines 583-598).

Managers and VM focus group participants discussed that managerial buy-in to fostering diversity and employment equity positive policies are pivotal to creating a fair workplace. Managers have the power to ensure that DFO becomes a fair workplace.

In addition, data from individual interviews with management revealed the need for myth busting. Myth-busting, was conceptualized by predominantly managers who saw a problem with VM employees not self-identifying for DFO's internal statistics or for employment equity processes based on the idea that candidates want to be hired based on merit. As aforementioned, managers want to ensure DFO staff understands that EE does not over-ride the merit principle, rather, everyone who ends up in a pool to be hired is qualified to do the job regardless of their skin colour. This sub theme of - merit based hires versus employment equity process hires - was a consistent theme discussed throughout focus group sessions and interviews. One individual VM employee revealed that while s/he engaged in the internal self-identification survey s/he did not engage in an employment equity process because s/he thought that would be unfair. S/he felt that

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s/he would have an unfair advantage based on her employment equity status as a visible minority during a promotion employment process.

Managers mentioned a general lack of awareness in terms of what other departments are doing in the context of employment equity. Managers queried amongst themselves about other departments who had best practices to share with them. They felt that the organization as a whole does not engage in identification of and learning from best practice within itself or in other organizations. Commitment to employment equity fades overtime without renewal from those organizations where employment equity is favourable and where resources can provide rich education and lessons learned.

6.3.6 Arduous Hiring and Appointment Practices

Many challenges linger within hiring and appointment practices. While both VM employees and managers attributed government process in general as a hindrance to achieving employment equity, there were specific ideas about what was occurring internally at DFO. Participants mentioned that process can take up an exorbitant amount of time in both hiring and applying. Management set the context by stating that union used to raise concerns when job postings would be processed externally (meaning outside of DFO) before internally (meaning inside of DFO). Unions were concerned that employees were not afforded employment opportunities prior to hiring externally. Managers expressed that the unions' discontent about external hires over internal hires was relevant of past culture. Nevertheless, there were questions regarding how long it would take the federal government to move in the direction of externalising all job processes. One manager articulated the problem of hiring internally stating: "...we have this idea that we should be advertising internally then you're dealing with the same pool of people and we're under-represented already" (Manager focus group participant, lines 241 – 244). Again, the idea of trying to attract new blood into the organization was expressed as important by managers who engaged in interviews.

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Visible minority participants also discussed the Employment Equity (EE) targeted processes. This process involves DFO management who have flexibilities, based on occupational requirements, to hire or appoint those members of specific employment equity groups where candidates have agreed that the information used. Where managers saw EE targeted processes as problematic in their application, visible minority employees saw few managers use EE processes at all. Visible minority focus group participants felt that managers understand they can target certain groups, but never actually use the opportunity.

None of the management focus group participants had run an EE targeted hiring process exclusively. One participant knew of someone in the organization that ran one but did not know the outcomes. In addition, two managers argued that there are problems with the EE processes. For example, too few candidates of VM status apply leaving managers with small candidate pools. Subsequently, when the EE targeted process is unproductive, managers have to start again and run an entirely new process, this “left a bad taste” in managers’ mouths. One manager also experienced some visible minorities in senior positions who in no way wanted to be associated with any type of targeted process. Tensions run high when VM employees have differing perspectives on EE positive policies, especially when positive discrimination is applied to one person or group, other groups can feel disenfranchised, alienated or discriminated against. These reasons illustrate why managers are hesitant in using the EE targeted process. Managers can also now justify appointments of VM employees through an EE process as a means to address any serious under-representation problems in DFO. A few managers saw this as positive because of its convenient nature. Nevertheless, having VM employees identify as “visible minority” status for this purpose still poses a serious problem in terms of its useful power.

One subtheme identified within this research concerned negative media coverage of DFO and departmental related business. Both management and visible minority employees mentioned negative media although from different perspectives. For example, negative media coverage

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related to a targeted EE competition meant that the completion was cancelled indefinitely.

According to one visible minority focus group participant:

...they posted something for visible minorities for a high level position in our office and there was some flack about it and then it got pulled. So, even in the efforts to try and do that it got pulled at some point because of a fall out from somewhere (Lines 162-169).

This same issue was explained in the Employment Systems Review of DFO published in 2004

where:

In 2003, the Pacific Region undertook to fill the Director of Communications position with a visible minority candidate using this special authority. There was significant negative media coverage related to this competition. Ultimately, the competition was cancelled, the official position of the Department is that the competition was cancelled as part of a departmental initiative to reduce the number of [executive] positions by 10%. Several managers interviewed, however, saw this cancellation as an indication that the Department was not willing to utilize special EE recruitment authorities to staff positions where there is an EE representation gap. This perception may have resulted in reluctance within the Department to use all existing tools available to promote the recruitment of visible minorities into the Executive category as well as other categories (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2004, p. 39).

Six years later, a VM employee still felt the negative aftershock from this event. She highlighted the lacklustre motivation, on the management side, to conduct similar EE processes in light of this negative coverage. Managers mentioned negative media attention more generally without articulating the specifics of a targeted group like visible minorities and felt this influenced negatively on DFO's image. They felt that such negative publicity was a big challenge as people ask themselves why they would work in a department where negative media is a regular occurrence. Discussion in the visible minority focus group session also revolved around today's media-driven world and the impact on issues of diversity. For example, how newspaper and TV accounts their thoughts of the lived experience of being a member of a visible minority, portraying them in stereotypical ways (violent, lazy, unsociable).

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6.3.6.1 Information Overload

Another subtheme of the arduous hiring and appointment process concerns the problem of information overload facing VMs who apply for a position with DFO. For example, some VM participants revealed that the Public Service Commission website was so full of information it made it difficult at times to navigate.

Standard issued employment equity statements apply to all internal or external DFO job advertisements. The employment equity clauses state:

The Public Service of Canada recognizes that the diversity of its employees' population contributes to its strength and integrity. We are committed to achieving employment equity and developing a highly capable workforce that is representative of Canadian Society. We therefore encourage women (especially in non-traditional occupations), Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minority groups to apply and declare themselves as part of one or more of the above mentioned Employment Equity Designated Groups.

The Public Service of Canada is committed to building a skilled, diverse workforce reflective of Canadian society. As a result, it promotes employment equity and encourages candidates to indicate voluntarily on their application if they are a woman, an Aboriginal person, a person with a disability or a member of a visible minority group.

VM employees without government background knowledge, particularly immigrant VM, may not completely understand this government jargon. Where managers were hopeful that the statement would work to benefit representation of visible minorities within DFO, visible minority participants were in agreement that this does nothing to benefit representation. This is because VM participants believed that candidates are already inundated with information regarding the job they are applying to that the statement is missed altogether. Managers also questioned the evidence DFO has in terms of its value for 'on-boarding' more VM candidates. In addition the EE statements, on job advertisements also provide accommodation information. This was discussed within the visible minority focus group.

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An example of accommodation statement is:

The Public Service of Canada is also committed to developing inclusive, barrier-free selection processes and work environments. If contacted in relation to a job opportunity or testing, you should advise the Public Service Commission or the departmental official in a timely fashion of the accommodation measures which must be taken to enable you to be assessed in a fair and equitable manner. Information received relating to accommodation measures will be addressed confidentially.

However, the duty to provide accommodation to job applicants may not be explicitly clear to DFO staff or candidates applying on job processes. For example, one focus group participant shared a story of a candidate asking if an HR advisor could book a hotel for them. Hotel accommodation is not offered under the *Accommodation Policy* at DFO, rather the policy is intended to promote:

...the recognition of management's commitment and active support to ensuring that all employees, including the designated groups covered under the *Employment Equity Act*, and individuals and groups protected under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* are able to effectively contribute to the Department without discrimination (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2004, p. 1).

VM participants were in agreement that DFO should have an explicit statement about how they accommodate and what the *Accommodation Policy* involves so that applicants understand what the statement on the job advertisement means. Management interviews confirmed this suggestion.

6.3.6.2 Additional External Barriers to Applying to DFO

Both visible minority employees and management mentioned many barriers to VM candidates applying for jobs. External barriers were identified which participants felt DFO could do little to change. Table 7 summarizes the external barriers.

Table 7: External Barriers to Visible Minority Candidates Applying to DFO

Managers	Visible Minority Employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal government not seen as an employer of choice • Broader systemic issues within government • Demographics within education systems also not at representative levels (particularly in the specialties that DFO engages in) • Educational requirements as essential – hiring people with little education to increase their skills and climb the ladder internally not a reality anymore • Post secondary recruitment process arduous • Hiring system present barriers, knowing where to look • Immigrants would have to actively seek out employment with DFO • Educational background/ skill sets/credentials • Lack of awareness about DFO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job application process complicated within the federal government • Salaries less competitive than in private sector • Credentials not being equated with Canadian standard • Education as a barrier - especially where seen as not needed for lower level or entry level positions • Inability to speak French as barrier to reach mid to high level positions

DFO participants thought that there was little that could be done regarding these barriers.

However, participants thought that, where able to, managers should strive to address them.

6.3.7 No Comprehensive Recruitment Strategy to Facilitate the Employment of Visible Minorities

One sub theme identified as part of the arduous hiring and appointment processes, was the challenge of developing an equitable and workable recruitment strategy. Managers discussed that a recruitment strategy was just starting to be developed; therefore, a targeted VM recruitment strategy was not currently at the top of the DFO agenda. This reported as due to capacity issues and shifting priorities. Nevertheless, managers mentioned that VMs have not participated in the framing DFO’s budding recruitment strategy. The concern voiced from managers was that any strategy designed might be ineffective at recruiting and targeting VM talent without the valuable input of current VM employees. In terms of a general recruitment strategy, managers felt that

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management should really think about where and how DFO recruits new talent; particularly in light of the potential retirements of many public servants. Managers thought that it was important that DFO staff attended university career fairs but wondered what other venues were available. The idea that universities may not really be connected with what work is actually done was brought up, with managers voicing that the academic focus can mean a weaker connection to the working world. Managers mentioned that they see students as excited and interested about working for the federal government, but unclear about what the job responsibilities are and what is expected of them in those roles.

VM participants discussed that the DFO staff who operate the booths at the career fair should reflect and promote the diversity of the organization.

...if you are going to do a career fair, then I think maybe the people that attend the career fair should be of a diverse background. [This way] students or anybody coming to find out information can see right away well there's a man there's a woman, and maybe someone with a disability or a visible minority you know you could see that right away (VM focus group participant, lines 502-507).

Some participants questioned how managers would recruit VM volunteers to attend a career fair or recruitment drive, others thought it might raise the same problem with self-identification where some VM employees do not want to be provided with such opportunities on the basis of their VM status. Nevertheless, VM participants agreed it would be beneficial to give VM employees a chance, so that those who do feel comfortable self-identifying could attend and represent more diversity for the department.

VM participants also discussed how hiring panels and boards typically lack people of diverse backgrounds, which they felt was another issue affecting the recruitment and retention of VM candidates. Participants said they thought that managers were becoming more aware that boards should be diverse. HR advisors thought it was progressive to have managers ask questions regarding how their boards should be more reflective of diversity and how many EE groups should be represented. Nevertheless, VM employees did mention that when it comes to having

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representative boards, managers' concerns are typically about ensuring that there is a woman on the board over a visible minority employee.

6.3.7.1 Barriers to Fully Engaging in Co-op and Internship Programming

A further subtheme of the arduous hiring process acknowledged in the management focus group concerned organizational barriers to engaging in co-op and internship programming. Co-op and internship programs help to bridge the gap between the academic and working worlds for students, providing practical experiences and pay. Co-op placements and internships were viewed as a positive route to hiring students and candidates as a part of designated employment equity groups. VM interviews revealed that co-op and internship programming was usefully, particularly for immigrants. Unfortunately, many barriers to engaging in co-op and internship opportunities were identified, including human resourcing, lack of funding, cultural constraints and time challenges. For example, one manager talked about his attempt to secure work for a First Nations person in the Lower Fraser Area. This:

... didn't work out very well. I think a lot of it because, well two reasons for me, one is cultural, the other is I didn't have time, or I didn't dedicate the time to make that work. I think it will take quite a bit of time to make it work. And I think [participant] said it earlier, you know you have so much time and then you say how much am I going to dedicate to one particular case to make that work. I felt I didn't have the time to do it. It did not turn out well. And convenient that that person did not stick around. I think it would take a significant effort too. And there is a significant difference to the culture as well and maybe expectations.”
(Manager focus group participant, lines 351-363).

A significant barrier here relates to cultural difference, which focus group participants discussed broadly. When management has access to few resources to help manage various groups with cultural differences, the meaning of messages between managers and employees, or colleagues can be distorted, whereby misinterpretations can lead to problems. This can lead to tensions in the workplace.

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A reason cited from management for not engaging in co-op or internship programming concerns the specialized work that DFO does. At DFO, managers explained, it is not always easy to break up work into reasonable packages that students or interns can then work on with little supervision. Unfortunately, if DFO does not fully engage in co-op and internship programming, visible minorities who are involved in these kinds of programs feel the consequences. Participants felt that not taking advantage of co-op and internship programming, which enables VMs to gain valuable experience, was negative. However, a part of management experiences at DFO include budget constraints among other factors contribute to the reality. Nevertheless, management felt that more DFO staff is beginning to make use of school initiatives, which is recognized as positive by visible minority employees and management. This is positive because the current demographics and projections confirm that Canada's VM population is predominantly youthful; by bringing in younger VM employees, DFO is effectively starting to accomplish its strategic renewal objective.

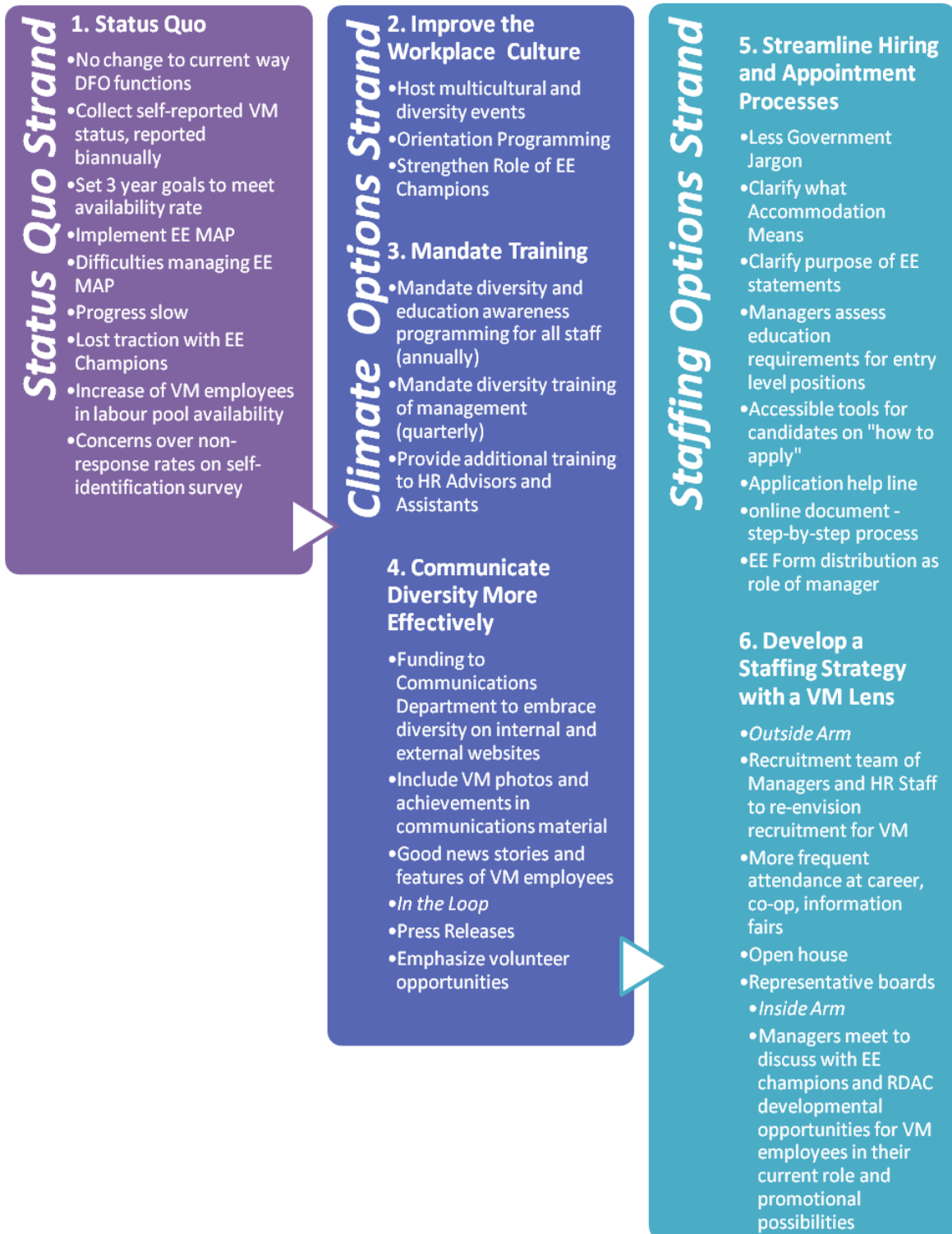
Both visible minority staff and management named barriers that impact employment equity at Fisheries and Oceans Canada including capacity issues, lack of resources invested and time constraints. Management also referred to DFO as engaging in "complex business" and having "specialized jobs" requiring particular skills which were offered as reasons underpinning the problems DFO faces in reaching VM employment targets. This was discussed in reference to a lack in connection with education systems that managers felt were not as connected with the work that gets done at DFO.

These study findings suggest several implications for DFO's future policy initiatives. The next section outlines a variety of different climate and staffing options to help increase representation of VM employees as well as ensure that EE is on DFO's agenda.

7: Policy Alternatives Specific to DFO

Organizations have specific obligations to fulfill under the EEA. To ensure that VM representation in DFO's workforce reflects their representation in either the Canadian workforce or the qualified and available labour pool, it is encouraged that DFO institute positive policies and practices, which accommodate and account for the differences within and between visible minority groups. As such, this chapter identifies and establishes policy alternatives to further employment equity in Fisheries and Oceans Canada. After diagnosing how DFO's Pacific RHQ manages and accommodates differences through its employment of visible minority employees, policy alternatives stem from the literature, focus group sessions and interviews with DFO employees. I target policies aimed at both creating an equitable workplace in order to encourage VM employees to self-identify. Decision makers at DFO can adopt and implement these options individually or together in combinations as resources allow. The policy alternatives are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Policy Alternatives



7.1 Status Quo Strand

7.1.1 Status Quo

Maintaining the status quo requires no change to the current way that Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pacific Region functions in terms of its employment equity programming. This means DFO will continue to operate as described in chapter 3. To reiterate, the status quo includes the collecting and reporting of self-identification data on VM employees among other employment equity groups as mandated by the Employment Equity Act. Regional and recruitment goals for all four designated EE groups including VM employees, are provided through the implementation of the Employment Equity Management Action Plan (EE MAP). Fisheries and Oceans Canada sets short-range recruitment goals for VM employees over a three-year period. Typically, management sets targets above the availability rates in order to achieve progress in attaining a representative workforce. Attrition forecasts, impact of recruitment goals and anticipated changes in the workforce size are also considered. Over the long-term, the EE MAP provides goals for VM representation across the country to meet the availability rate. Employment equity reports are produced semi-annually to show promotion and attrition for VM groups. These data reports are available on the internal intranet web site for employees to scan. Through the DFO Employment Equity Program effective in October 2007, managers also have at their disposal flexibilities to engage in positive policies, practices, elements of the DFO EE MAP in order to hire and retain underrepresented visible minorities. For example based on occupational requirements, managers can hire and appoint EE groups.

Maintaining the status quo will likely have little to no significant impact on increasing representation, including the retention and recruitment of people self-identifying as belonging to a visible minority group. This is because recent data and reports demonstrate that progress is slow,

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or non-existent, in achieving targets for VM representation in the Pacific Region. DFO Pacific Region is consistently chasing visible minority availability rates, which are continually on the rise. If Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues its course, the gap between the availability rate and the representation rate of visible minorities is likely to continue to widen. The labour pool must expand to reflect the influx of immigrants to Canada as well as, the increase of Canadian-born visible minorities. The status quo also tends to treat all VM employees as the same. For example, DFO employees are asked to self-identify if they are a visible minority and if so, what ethnic group they belong to. While the VM status is collected, the group to which they belong to is not reported on at a regional or national level. This means that the organization is missing out on information that could potentially help management to properly address ethnicity and VM issues. The data and policy options in this study suggest that “visible minorities” encompass many differences between those who make up the groups.

7.2 Climate Strand

“Workplace well-being is having challenging work and the tools to do it. It is feeling that our work is adequately classified and compensated. It is working effectively in a safe and respectful environment” (Quoted in Natufe, 2008, p.8).

Work and the workplace influences quality of life. As such, the complex relationship between the various visible minority groups and their work-related well-being ought to influence how organizational policies and practices function. Giscombe and Jenner (2009) suggest that encouraging managers to support inclusion improves the “fit” between visible minority employees and their workplaces. Less-than-inclusive workplaces can make VM employees feel as though they need to acculturate or “Canadianize” themselves (Ibid). In order to meet the diverse needs of DFO employees and create an environment that encourages employees to stay with the organization, DFO could aim to improve work-related well-being of VM employees by improving the climate. While DFO's recruitment efforts are important, their efforts will not be effective if DFO does not provide an attractive workplace for all employees to stay.

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DFO could concentrate on fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment that extends beyond simply counting VM employees. As the Conference Board of Canada (2004a) suggests,

The Canadian workforce, along with the Canadian mosaic, will look quite a bit different in little more than a decade. These numbers strongly suggest that we in Canada—in our communities and in our organizations— will need to ensure that we are creating an environment that welcomes visible minorities and that builds on the skills and talents of an ever-increasingly diverse workforce (p.3).

Unfortunately, a key issue identified by VM employees was that management overly concentrates on how many VMs work at Fisheries and Oceans Canada rather than celebrating and benefiting from their diversity. Further, VM employees perceive that the employment equity duties performed by management are complete once managers discuss numbers, set the targets or asked VM employees to self- identify. While managers understand that the success of employment equity relies on their engaged leadership and moving beyond a numbers game, visible minority employees perceive that managers are nevertheless concentrating solely on numbers. If this perception dominates the workplace, the willingness of visible minorities to self-identify will not increase, especially with decreased levels of satisfaction of their work environments. This is because without a sense of belonging to the organization the willingness to and reasoning behind self-identifying as a VM is diminished.

7.2.1 Improve the Workplace Culture

The term organizational culture, assumes an anthropological perspective to “access an outsider’s view of the deep seated, taken for granted and unconscious assumptions which guide norms, values and behaviours” (McKee et al., 2010, p. 33). Fisheries and Oceans Canada could strive to change their current workplace culture to ensure visible minority employees feel welcomed and valued based on their contributions rather than simply fulfilling statistical gaps. The goal of this option is two-fold: first to provide an incentive for VM employees to self-identify based on the idea that they feel safe and part of an inclusive and supportive environment, second,

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to recruit more VM employees for their valuable contributions, talents and skills, such as innovative and diverse strategies to problem solve.

This option requires implementation of a multi-component strategy that encourages sharing the diversity that already exists in the working environments within Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Pacific Region. Components include:

- Host Multicultural and Diverse Events
- Expand Orientation Programming
- Strengthen Role of Employment Equity Champions

Below is a detailed list of the key components entailed in the strategy for consideration.

7.2.1.1 Host Multicultural and Diversity Events

DFO should consider hosting multicultural and diversity events that are entertaining. Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees who come from various ethnic backgrounds could come together to learn about, enjoy and benefit from the diversity that exists within their working environment. This component would be offered to DFO RHQ employees to begin with, and where applicable could be expanded to other parts of the region. DFO could facilitate promotional learning activities referencing the various cultures that exist within the building. Through six optional leisure activities scheduled at work throughout the fiscal year, DFO could provide employees with an opportunity to learn about the various cultures of fellow employees. Rather than celebrating cultures solely at the Christmas party, Fisheries and Oceans Canada could engage all employees by celebrating relevant cultural events as they occur throughout the year, such as Chinese New Year. In addition, participants mentioned that in order to keep costs low, Fisheries and Oceans Canada could invite employees to a regular and optional potluck lunch of their favourite foods over the lunch break. Through the interviews and focus group sessions, participants felt food was a symbolic vessel to highlight how DFO can celebrate the diversity of its workers. Participants also mentioned the link between people being afraid of diversity before

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they experience it through the example of people being afraid of food before they try it. For example, “I don’t like this Chinese restaurant. Well how do you know if you didn’t try it?” (VM Manager B, lines 783-784). In this case food could be a “common denominator” for employees to come together to find out about cultural roots (Ibid).

Fisheries and Oceans Canada could create a social committee inviting the participation of Environment Canada (EC) employees, who share the building where DFO's regional headquarters is located. According to interviews, EC often engages with their employees in creative and fun ways throughout the year. DFO could liaise with EC to envision a calendar of events while sharing resources and minimizing costs. The onus will be on Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s social committee to ensure that activities remain fresh and fun, especially in light of the long tenure of so many employees at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. By taking on an “I want to learn” attitude, department employees can learn about the diversity of its existing employee base.

7.2.1.2 Expand Orientation Programming

As a component to increasing the work-related well-being of VM employees, Fisheries and Oceans Canada could expand upon its orientation programming in the region, which according to participants is not welcoming. Orientation programming has been a relatively new component to DFO. Currently, DFO has an on-boarding handbook tool, which is essentially a manual available to new employees through the intranet to help orient them to DFO. To improve inclusivity, DFO could revise the content of this tool so that the handbook reflects all employees, including VM employees and feature articles on their contributions. Currently, the orientation handbook does include a diversity page and a page dedicated to discuss self-identification as well as the associated benefits; however, visible minority groups are not visible throughout the document.

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As with the communication strategy discussed in Option 4, it is imperative that displaying the diversity existing at DFO is not an afterthought. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could engage in a consistent yet fluid process of displaying diversity to recognize the various groups that make up the VM category. For example, DFO could include photographs and feature articles of DFO VM employees engaging in their work responsibilities to make them feel included, recognized and key players within the organization. Consultation with VM employees would help to ensuring that the updates reflect the different VM groups at DFO. The orientation program could also be a required and routine part of on-boarding new employees to the department. VM employees reported feeling lost when they began work and left alone to figure out their new roles and responsibilities. More advertising that is visible would help to engage managers in sharing this online tool to DFO staff. HR staff could liaise with the Communications Department who would have expertise in maintaining the Fisheries and Oceans Canada look and feel as well as expertise in communicating messages to staff.

Additionally, management, Human Resources, as well as Employment Equity Champions and the RDAC, should consult together semi-annually to discuss options to further the orientation programming. By looking to other government departments, an orientation example could include informal mentorship programming aimed at introducing employees to departmental goals, policies, procedures and protocols, as well as providing reciprocal expectations. An additional component of the orientation could include a special employment equity focus to familiarize VM employees with existing avenues, while identifying the prospects available to them. For example, volunteering opportunities to join various committees and registering for programs targeted towards VM participation.

7.2.1.3 Strengthen Role of EE Champions

“Like other groups, visible minority employees need networks, mentors, and champions to advance” (Giscombe and Jenner, 2009, p. 5). Currently Fisheries and Oceans Canada has

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employment equity (EE) Champions intended to demonstrate their ongoing commitment as senior managers through their personal and visible support for employment equity. These EE Champions exchange information on employment equity challenges, successful practices, and innovations that have achieved concrete results. They also provide feedback on current or proposed employment equity initiatives, priorities and programs and are in a position to influence employment equity issues within their respective departments. Interviews suggest that EE Champions have lost some traction in Fisheries and Oceans Canada. For example, interviews suggest that EE Champions have lost momentum due to their busy schedules and increasing operational pressures. Others offer that they are out of touch with Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees.

An initial suggestion by one manager was to reverse this trend by raising the profile of EE champions to ambassadors. Nevertheless, a name change could serve as a Band-Aid solution (Key Informant B). Thinking critically about what is working well and what needs to be improved, FG participants mentioned that building more partnerships with other existing groups and employment agencies concerned with social justice and diversity, including the Regional Diversity Advisory Committee would be helpful to employees. Furthermore, I suggest that EE champions engage with more employees at all levels rather than just management. While it is important not to shift the weight of the responsibility to those in lower level positions, inviting more participation at all levels would help managers to understand what is occurring from the ground level-upwards. By engaging employees from all levels, managers can harness the energy and innovative creativity that exists throughout the organization. Visible minority focus group members and interviewees expressed this creativity through many of the suggestions presented in my study. For EE Champions to remain effective in their role, DFO could offer EE Champions incentives such as extra pay and/or time to do this role, rather than the current situation “off the side of their desks,” as indicated in interviews. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could also provide

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training and support to EE Champions. The more prominent that EE Champions are in the daily work environment and the more equality work that they can engage in, the more likely VMs will have an inclusive workplace culture in which they can identify with.

7.2.2 Mandate Diversity and EE Training

A diversity awareness campaign would provide educational programs, training sessions, and experiential activities on issues of diversity and EE, relevant to DFO's working community. By engaging in regular diversity awareness initiatives, positive change to attitudes, values, and behaviour may be established. In addition, employees will be made aware of the differences that are encompassed by those who are VMs. Learning about self-identification and the voluntary survey that Fisheries and Oceans Canada administers, as it falls under the EEA legislation, would be a part of the EE training. As employees become more knowledgeable about what is involved in the self-identification process and why this voluntary information is asked, a culture of understanding to participate in these surveys will be established. Training could be conducted by people of VM status reinforcing the valuable contributions, skills and assets that VMs bring to the workplace.

7.2.2.1 Mandate Diversity Education and EE Training to All Staff (Annually)

Providing free and mandated diversity education and awareness programming on issues of race and ethnicity in the workplace for all DFO staff would help to foster more understanding about the ethno-cultural composition of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's workforce. For example, Fisheries and Oceans Canada could fund co-delivered workshops to staff about relevant and up-to-date diversity issues annually. This is important because with increased understanding among DFO staff regarding the obligations that fall under the EEA, more VM employees will feel safe to self-identify and recognize that their co-workers respect differences. Relevant organizations and employment agencies with expertise in the lived experiences of racialized groups in attaining

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government employment could help to co-facilitate, such as the National Visible Minority Council or SUCCESS, a multi-service agency mandated to promote the well-being of Canadians and immigrants. When a significant event like the DFO National Diversity Conference arises, those who attend on behalf of the Region could share what they learn; this way DFO effectively disseminates this information back to the Pacific Region's employees. Workshops might include discussion about the framing of the EEA and tensions with how some employees do not like to use, do not resonate with, or do not understand the term "visible minorities," as discussed within the literature section of this report.

Other ideas might include educating staff on the challenge of racism and discrimination, building employment equity competencies and providing information on the rights and responsibilities as DFO employees. These could complement current educational workshops offered through the Joint Learning Program (JLP), or indeed the mandated training could be the JLP. The JLP is a partnership between the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. The objectives are improving labour relations and understanding of the roles of both the union and management in the workplace. Unfortunately, according to interviews, the challenge with the JLP programming is getting enough interest at DFO to run the workshops. By mandating educational and awareness-raising programming engaging with issues of race and ethnicity, all employees will have opportunities to spark dialogue on diversity issues, again making all employees feel an important part of the organization.

7.2.2.2 Mandate Diversity Training for Managers (Quarterly)

Managers could receive mandated diversity training (quarterly) to build employment equity competencies. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could fund the training and education of management on relevant topics such as, understanding difference among visible minorities, what accommodation means in a work context and what "cultural" considerations should be taken into account in workplace dynamics. Managers should strive to be 'open to differences, treat

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employees equitably, be sensitive to and accommodate employees' different needs, treat employees with dignity and respect, contribute to change efforts that support diversity, demonstrate knowledge of best practices, and enthusiastically endorse and participate in diversity-related programs'(Quoted in Conference Board of Canada, 2004b, p. 7). To shift away from the distrust of management that was discussed in both the findings and previous Employment System Reviews, training of managers would help ensure that management are accountable to employment equity initiatives and that they work towards stabling better trust relationships between themselves and their VM employees. Training managers to develop these competencies and qualities is important to help diversify Fisheries and Oceans Canada's workforce as well as establish stronger confidence in management on EE issues.

7.2.2.3 Provide Training to HR Advisors and Assistants about Diversity Tools

In addition and dependent upon budget as well as Human Resources capacity constraints, HR Advisors and HR Assistants who work closely with management in formulating staffing decisions could also be trained about the available tools on subjects related to diversification in the Public Service. For example, the training could provide an overview of tools for management and hiring processes including information on the Objective Eye, the free Campus-direct training on employment equity, and other new applicable tools. HR Advisors and Assistants who are well versed on the existing and accessible diversity tools could then pass this information on to the managers whom they routinely work with.

7.2.3 Communicate Diversity More Effectively

DFO could also enhance their communications strategy to display and reflect the diversity of the jobs and people who fill them within the Pacific Region. Investing money in the Communications department with the funds earmarked to present a diverse workplace could help enhance the feeling of inclusivity for the DFO. This approach is two-fold. First, internal and

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external websites and publications at DFO could embrace diversity. Websites could inform the public and staff about Fisheries and Oceans Canada in a professional and inclusive way. This would include real photographs and articles about visible minority employees engaging in their work. Second, DFO could holistically recognize and reward employees through their valuable contributions by publically and internally distributing exemplary work (i.e. through website content and press releases). So as not to let the work contributions of VM employees go unnoticed, DFO could improve upon the current communications strategy to ensure that it is more inclusive. Providing the public and DFO employees with tangible examples of how they value their employee base through the sharing of “good news stories” and displaying inclusive pictures through internal communication strategies and publications, all employees could feel more a part of the organization, particularly VM employees who are not often showcased. Internally, achievements and accomplishments of visible minorities within the organization could be shared with fellow staff. DFO could strive to be inclusive within the workplace by: presenting a welcoming display in the reception area depicting VM employees, creating an accessible and diverse website (internally and externally), and communicating through regional *In the Loop* messages on the various accomplishments of VM employees, distributed to staff weekly.

In addition, DFO could provide topical and localized interest stories to be published and distributed as a press release to various media outlets. Managers highlighted the negative press that often influences the public’s perception of DFO. This strategy would serve to engage the public in a positive way. DFO's diversity campaign would show the public how they are continually striving for better employment equity outcomes by displaying the diversity that already exists in the organization. This serves a dual purpose: first to portray a better image of DFO in the media; second, to demonstrate the underpinnings of diversity that already exist. Focus group participants argued that the onus should be on DFO rather than other agencies to attract people to the organization by letting them know how DFO is a diverse place today, rather than

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stating how diversity will happen in the future. This would help to raise DFO's profile in the communities DFO serves and inform its constituents who they are and what they do.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada could emphasize the volunteering opportunities available to VM employees at DFO through a dedicated advertising campaign. Volunteering is a great way to gain more experience, learn more skills and network with others (Sixsmith & Boneham, 2003). Advertising volunteer opportunities (such as, sitting on various boards and hiring panels) could help provide avenues for leadership roles among VM employees as well as provide more evidence that Fisheries and Oceans Canada cares about being inclusive and welcoming for its employee base. For example, the Objective Eye seeks public servants to volunteer to participate on representative hiring boards. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could offer VM employees the opportunity to plan, attend, and help promote the diversity of the department through career fairs and other recruitment events. By bringing diverse people to the forefront of the organization, more VMs will be apt to join in by volunteering, applying to DFO, or simply feel a sense of belonging to the organization on a regular and valued basis.

By concentrating on these kinds of strategies for embracing diversity, management could help to shift perceptions that VM employees are just employed at DFO to increase the numbers of VM employees in the department. Encouraging VMs to share what they know and be part of both formal and informal networks of diversity efforts would help to improve the well-being of VM employees at work and demonstrate how their cultural values play an important part of who they are within their work. The overall message from VM employees is that playing a numbers based game alone is not making life easier.

7.3 Staffing Options Strand

The staffing options strand houses two key policy alternatives intended to improve upon the status quo. I propose the policy alternatives as avenues to lead to increased understanding

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regarding how the public perceives staffing processes and how Fisheries and Oceans Canada should focus its recruitment efforts to ensure workplace representation that is more equitable. Self-identification can increase when the public understands what and why EE policies exist before they apply to a job. As well, if leadership and promotional opportunities are more readily available to VM employees, a more evenly distributed workplace is a possible outcome.

7.3.1 Streamline Hiring and Appointment Processes

Streamlining cumbersome hiring and appointment processes was a suggestion brought up by both VM employees and managers. While it was noted that many of the ways in which DFO engages in employment processes is set by the Federal Government, using less “government jargon” and at the very least sharing what the terms means would reduce confusion among VM candidates. Using common terms that are unambiguous and relatable would lead to more VM candidates applying to DFO.

Providing additional support to VMs applying on processes could occur both internally and externally. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could let candidates know that DFO staff will help show candidates how to apply most effectively. VM employees suggested that DFO could provide accessible tools to candidates on “how to apply to DFO.” For example, VM employees may be better equipped to understand what it is they need to put on their resume to fulfil the requirements if those requirements are made explicit. An applications help-line or access to a staffing expert could help to alleviate the volume of applications that simply fail to pass the initial screening process purely because candidates did not provide the required information.

Alternatively, many VMs may not apply for DFO positions because they see a self-identification request and are confused at best or suspicious at worst as to how DFO will use the information. A simple inquiry to a help-line or staff person might help to clarify to candidates the role of EE statements and processes. Participants stressed that if DFO provides the public with any online

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tools on “how to apply”, it is essential that Fisheries and Oceans Canada write them in plain language and terms that people who do not work for the government understand.

Setting clear expectations is a key part of Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s responsibility to ensure that the recruitment and retention of VM employees is successful. The example cited in the focus group was “accommodation” and the fact that candidates are unclear what this term means in relation to applying for a DFO job position. VM employees expressed a concern raised among candidates who want to be hired based on merit and are afraid that self-identifying as a VM or needing accommodation (such as more time on a test) would hinder chances of moving forward in the selection process. Conversely, VM employees stressed that they do not want to be hired based solely on their VM status rather than merit. DFO needs to be more explicit in what ‘accommodation’ is available to candidates and how this does not hinder chances of gainful employment or indeed contribute unfairly progress up the career ladder. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could explicitly state what accommodation is, the role that it plays, and to what level they will accommodate employees. Provisions of concrete examples would be useful in this respect. Participants raised the notion that DFO needs to take a more active role in asking if people need accommodation rather than assuming that very few need accommodation.

VM focus group participants said that DFO provides the public with information-overload on job advertisements. Because of the loaded terms used and the abundance of information on job postings, the EE statements used to highlight Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s commitment to employment equity is simply not effective according to VM employees. Additionally, management called into question the effectiveness of these EE statements on job postings to recruit VM candidates, as they themselves are unsure as to their impact. EE statements are a standard part of job advertisements, so rather than suggesting their removal, perhaps streamlining the processes and simplifying the way in which such statements are presented to candidates will enhance their effectiveness. By streamlining the hiring process and

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reducing the required elements to apply to meet industry norms, VM candidates will be able to apply to more positions and managers will be able to get external employees into the organization quicker. VM focus group participants discussed the difference in applying to a Fisheries and Oceans Canada position versus private sector position in which resumes expectations tend to be up to 3-4 times longer in government agencies than elsewhere. This can be a barrier to VM candidates, especially as immigrants may be unfamiliar with the variation of standards.

VM and management focus group participants also mentioned that post-secondary education requirements are necessary for many positions at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. In some instances employees born prior to a certain year may substitute experience for education; however, today education is overwhelmingly necessary to fulfil job requirements. Focus group participants listed that education is necessary for certain positions but at other times poses as a systemic barrier to participation of certain groups, for example VMs, specifically immigrants. Immigrants face an added challenge whereby DFO (among other agencies) do not equate foreign degrees to an international standard. This means that often foreign degrees are worth less in Canada. Continuing to outline a streamlined approach, managers could re-examine education requirements for low- mid level positions to allow for a greater accommodation of VM candidates where life experiences can adequately act as a substitute for education. And engage in establishing parity for degrees gained abroad, as appropriate.

As a part of the recruitment strategy, participants envisioned that managers play a larger role in the self-identification process for new and existing employees. A suggestion from interview participants revealed a preference for a familiar manager to discuss the merits of self-identification on an individual level, while distributing the form to the employee. Rather than employees being provided a self-identification form as part of an information paper package without clear instructions, a personal touch in distribution would be useful in reducing perceived threats associated with self-identification. Participants described the EE forms as confusing and

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cumbersome on numerous occasions. Some employees who are not supposed to fill them out based on their seasonal or term¹⁹ status do fill them out, while other employees are inadvertently neglected. HR staff also suggested that employees often complete forms incorrectly. Furthermore, participants thought that managers should provide clear instructions on how the information is used and why it is important to self-report visible minority status if they chose to volunteer this information for internal use. Fisheries and Oceans Canada should train managers so they can adopt the best approach to discuss the option with employees in an open and honest manner. As well, management training could help to answer the often-raised questions about the self-identification forms in a consistently correct and thoughtful way, without making VM employees feel uncomfortable or threatened.

7.3.2 Create a Staffing Strategy with a VM Lens

This policy alternative includes the implementation of a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy that targets VMs throughout the region. As it stands, the recruitment and retention strategy in the Pacific Region does not specifically target employment equity groups. This targeted approach would include both an outside and inside arm, explained in more detail below.

Outside arm

Currently the approach in the Pacific Region is that based upon availability, whereby managers can opt to attend a career fair. Due to organizational capacity constraints, few events get organized and when they do occur only a small number of managers attend. One solution would be to initiate a permanent recruitment team made up of diverse management and HR personnel (that specialize in staffing processes) across the region and representative of the Areas.

¹⁹A seasonal employee performs the duties of a position for a period of less than 12 months in successive years of employment. A term worker of less than three months is an employee who is working for less than three months.

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This recruitment team would be in charge of re-organizing the way in which DFO recruits, by setting a target number of career-fairs and information presentations at various institutions across the region over the fiscal year. Teams would decide who would attend, whether training employees who attend could be facilitated and invite where possible VM employees to attend and represent DFO. Teams would also decide which institutions and organizations they should target (e.g. schools and colleges where the concentration of VMs is higher within the work areas that DFO engages in). Teams would, in this strategy, benchmark DFO's recruitment strategy with other best practice models of recruitment within similar organizations. Teams would also actively search out new and innovative opportunities and advertise to the various regions and targeted public institutions. Each regional recruitment team member would attend the various events within their respective region in conjunction with one or two rotating local DFO VM employee(s). These local DFO employee representatives will be able to contribute their personal experiences while attending the events and the recruitment team member will be an expert on the hiring process. DFO could also allocate funding to the recruitment team for liaising with appropriate organizational representatives at targeted institutions regularly.

The strategy would encompass activities above and beyond traditional recruitment methods. Activities could include attending career and co-op fairs and providing information presentations at high schools, colleges, universities, as well as at other organizations specializing in visible minority issues, including but not limited to employment agencies. Or have 'open days' throughout the year, inviting the public to see what activities DFO engages in on a daily basis would also to help raise the profile of the organization and allow a different way in which diverse groups could come through DFO's facilities.

Again, managers discussed that attending career fairs at universities as a recruitment strategy could be re-examined in terms of whether diversity is encouraged through DFO's outreach materials, and what the result come from DFO's attendance. VM focus group

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participants stated that the people that attend the career fair could reflect diverse people. This way, students, or anyone coming to find out information about the department, can immediately see the diversity that exists at DFO. The underlying message from participants proposes that DFO could take an active role in how representatives distribute information about the Department and be knowledgeable about existing job postings and potential opportunities within regular employee intakes (i.e. the annual hiring of Canadian Coast Guard employees, Fish Officers, etc.). To increase knowledge about staffing and hiring processes, training could also be offered to those who attend recruitment events. These suggestions will help raise DFO's public profile, connect with talented visible minorities seeking career and volunteer opportunities, as well as provide an opportunity to network with other relevant organizations.

Another part of the outside arm of a recruitment and retention strategy could include a commitment from management to encourage the use of representative boards and hiring panels. While the communicate diversity strategy will increase the advertising of an opportunity to be a part of a hiring board, this option encompasses more management to encourage ensuring that boards are in fact representative. Visible minorities have mentioned that some managers have been concerned over how representative their boards/ hiring panels have been. This was seen by VM employees as a positive shift and they thought representative boards were important. Nevertheless, VM employees did raise the idea that the overall concern at Fisheries and Oceans Canada when it comes to having boards that are more representative seems to be ensuring that there is a female on board over a visible minority employee. DFO could strongly encourage that at the very least a visible minority candidate be a part of hiring panels and boards.

Inside arm

Internally, VM employees struggle with breaking through the glass ceiling or obtaining promotions. When positions arise, managers may utilize employment equity status as a rationalization to hire or appoint visible minority candidates. Nevertheless, many visible

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minorities raised the issue that they may not want to be singled-out as a visible minority for employment purposes. Strategies could encompass this idea by developing VM employees informally and formally through workshops, targeted leadership programming and networking opportunities. In the internal arm of a recruitment strategy, management could:

- Meet with EE Champions and the RDAC annually, to discuss how VM employees within their current role could be provided with additional opportunities and supports to engage in their work as leaders and reach their full potential
- Meet with EE Champions and the RDAC annually, what leadership and development opportunities for VM employees for promotion purposes, especially where gaps exist

In Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pacific Region out of 25 executive class employees, no employees self-identified as belonging to a visible minority group as of September 2009 (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2009c, Visible Minority Section). Nevertheless, this may or may not be representative of the reality because, as mentioned earlier, the response rate is unknown and self-identification statistics are voluntary. DFO needs to conduct research to understand fully the barriers to achieving leadership roles in existing and potential positions. It can be inspiring to see executives taking an active interest in the careers and well-being of visible minority employees and alternatively demoralizing to see few VM employees in leadership roles and progressing in their career. For instance, literature suggests that VM employees will gain confidence when they have increased access to leaders. “The increased access to leaders gave visible minorities a feeling of being a part of the “in group” and a confidence that the glass ceiling could be shattered” (The Conference Board, 2004b, 8). As suggested in the literature, visible minority women can experience an especially difficult time in shattering the glass ceiling, as they are part of two disenfranchised groups and sometimes even three if they are VM immigrant women (Ibid, Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007).

Investing in developing leadership opportunities for VM employees can operate through both formal and informal channels. For example, the formal program at DFO Pacific Region called the Executive Development Component program (EXDC), which prepares employees for

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executive level positions, has not captured equitable representation of VM employees. It is imperative that these formal programs also target VM candidates to allow for equal opportunity and ensure employment equity responsibilities. Informal strategies are equally important. Some VM employees who participated in this study suggested that managers consider how some visible minorities would prefer to approach managers about leadership opportunities. Rather than managers asking them on the spot, some thought it would be best to have informal ways to seek development opportunities. Some VM participants mentioned that they mostly engage in leadership roles outside of work because of lack of opportunities and persistent barriers at work. In this way, it would be beneficial to have an informal network that would act as a forum to recruit and mentor VM as leaders. Different visible minority groups did indicate an interest in pursuing leadership opportunities; however, participants suggested that managers could re-evaluate how they provide and advertise these opportunities. Managers have incentives to engage in an appropriate balance of both formal and informal strategies to develop leaders amongst VM employees, as representation will increase throughout the organization, including executive levels where a large gap remains.

As can be expected with any policy problem, there are an array of options available to tackling the VM disparity that exists at DFO. From one side of the policy continuum, the status quo option incites no new efforts be put forth by DFO to increase VMs representation rate. On the other, more comprehensive strategies envision options for DFO to retain and recruit increased visible minority employees. For example, a more active contribution from managers and EE group members could help DFO to create a more inclusive and welcoming workplace. Furthermore, in developing these options, tokenism of VM employees as well as, alienating dominant groups were well considered. The following chapter will evaluate these policy alternatives based upon established criteria.

8: Additional Considerations

There are significant implications behind the framing of the Employment Equity Act. As literature suggests, DFO can only shoulder some of the responsibility to enforcing the EEA. The broader picture accounts for many of the problems that DFO encounters in attempting to increase representation of visible minorities, depicted in the background section. This includes but is not limited to the problems encountered in the operational nature of the EEA. DFO expects that Human Resources engage in employment equity and diversity programming among many additional duties, which the sector is scarcely resourced to do. If any recommendations that task Human Resources to drive forward the employment equity objectives, policies and practices for DFO, resources are required. Otherwise, capacity challenges will mean little success in the implementation of them.

In addition, where a body or person exists to oversee EE, then the rest of the organization's employees may not need to concern themselves with employment equity as their business. The general training for managers is important to help ensure that segregation of duties in this respect does not occur. This can be explained through the "free rider problem" mirrored in the Tragedy of Commons whereby free riders shoulder less than their fair share of the collective responsibility to ensure an equitable workplace.

9: Policy Criteria and Measures

Rather than undertaking a full cost-benefit analysis, this multiple criteria analysis provides an avenue to evaluate alternative policies based upon a set of established criteria. In considering what might be the best policy to address the under-representation of visible minority employees in DFO, I identify five key criteria by which to judge each policy: effectiveness, administration ease, stakeholder acceptability, cost and equity. This next section provides an overview of each criterion, while Table 7 succinctly summarizes the criteria and measures by which I evaluate each policy alternative.

9.1 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is measured based on two components. Firstly, I evaluate the degree to which a policy is predicted to significantly increase representation of visible minorities in Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Secondly, I evaluate the degree to which a policy alternative will effectively increase employee perceptions that EE is important. These are based upon my own study's findings as well as, key informant interviews.

9.2 Cost

Cost refers to the anticipated expenses involved in implementing the policy alternative. Based on my own estimates from proposed parameters, the estimates of the costs include: the opportunity cost of staff and managers time²⁰, space, training, as well as an operating budget

²⁰ I used loaded costs to formulate calculations, where staff received \$80 and managers \$100. Commonly, the loaded cost of an employee is at least twice the salary of employees to account for wage, benefits and overhead. Please see Appendix G for breakdown of wage.

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(where applicable) for the production of materials. Key informants provide a comparison to my cost analysis, which verify the overall rankings.

9.3 Administrative Feasibility

Administrative feasibility is designed to measure the ease in implementing the policy alternative, based on the anticipated burden of administration, reporting, monitoring and enforcement. The burden of administration evaluates whether the policy increases the administration work that DFO must perform for the policy to be implemented. The burden of reporting evaluates whether a policy increases the reporting that managers must complete for the policy to be put into practice. The burden of monitoring refers to whether managers will have to carry out additional monitoring duties of their staff for the policy to function. The burden of enforcement refers to whether there needs to be an enforcement body in place for an option to be operationalized. To establish a metric, each criterion is scored on a binary scale; each option is then ranked based on the sum of all four components. A score of less than 1 indicates a high ranking, a score of 2 a medium ranking, and finally, a score of 3 to 4 a low ranking.

9.4 Stakeholder Acceptability

Stakeholder acceptability evaluates the degree to which a policy is supported by visible minority employees, all other employees, managers, as well as their associated union. A score of 3 represents a high acceptability rate, a score of 2 medium and a score of 1 a low rating. Aggregated together, the scores reflect the overall stakeholder acceptability for each option with a score of less than 6 indicating a low ranking, 7-8 points indicating a medium ranking and 9-12 indicating a high ranking.

9.5 Horizontal Equity

Horizontal Equity is a criterion that evaluates whether each policy creates an equitable workplace among all departmental employees. Where it is estimated that a policy will result in an equitable workplace, the policy alternative is rewarded with a high ranking. Otherwise a policy alternative could score inadequately or moderately.

Table 8: Criteria and Measures

Criteria	Definition	Measure	Value
Effectiveness	Degree to which policy option leads to an increase in: 1) Significant representation of VM employees at DFO 2) Perceptions that EE is important	Predicted effectiveness of policy increasing: 1) Significant representation of VM employees at DFO 2) Perceptions that EE is important	Low (1) Policy is not effective Moderate (2) Policy is somewhat effective High (3) Policy is effective
Cost	The predicted cost of implementing the proposed policy option	Predicted cost (in \$CDN) of implementation of policy option	Expensive (1) Moderate (2) Inexpensive (3)
Administrative Feasibility	Ease of implementing policy option	The anticipated burden of: 1. Administration 2. Reporting 3. Monitoring 4. Enforcement	Low (1) Burden of administration, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement is vast Moderate (2) Burden of administration, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement is average High (3) Burden of administration, reporting, monitoring, and enforcement is kept to a minimum
Stakeholder Acceptability	Degree to which a policy option will be accepted by key stakeholders	The estimated acceptance of policy option by: 1. VM employee 2. All other employees 3. Managers 4. The union	Low (1) Policy seen as inappropriate or unacceptable by majority of stakeholders Moderate (2) Some significant opposition, but policy acceptable to most stakeholders High (3) Policy seen as acceptable and appropriate by a majority of community, opposition minimal
Horizontal Equity	Degree to which the policy option creates an equitable workplace	Policy option provides an equitable workplace amongst Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees.	Low (1) Policy does not create equitable workplace Moderate (2) Policy creates somewhat equitable workplace High (3) Policy creates equitable workplace

10: Evaluation of Policy Alternatives

Through this study's findings, key informant interviews and supporting literature, the evaluation of policy alternatives is explained in this chapter. The six policy options are evaluated according to five established criteria: effectiveness, cost, stakeholder acceptability, ease of implementation and equity. To evaluate the trade-offs among the proposed policy options, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three representatives of stakeholder groups. I asked interviewees to identify some of the key considerations necessary to implement the policy alternatives and for key informants to discuss the significant differences and/or similarities among policy options. My policy evaluation of the alternatives is informed by this study's results as well as the key informant interviews.

I evaluate the policy alternatives using the policy matrix illustrated in Table 9, which provides a summary of my analysis as an overall matrix of evaluation of the policy alternatives. As aforementioned in the criteria explanations, some criterions have multiple measures. For a detailed breakdown of how each policy was rated, please turn to Appendix F. Each policy option is provided with a low, medium, or high score, illustrating the important considerations among the different alternatives. This evaluation approach does aggregate results to illustrate the trade-offs among policy options because. As each consideration is important, the criterion has not been weighted as this could inadvertently skew results or misdirect attention away from policy alternatives. In the following matrix, similar to a traffic light, green indicates the best option, yellow indicates proceed with vigilance, and red indicates problem areas with the policy option.

Table 9: Overall Matrix Evaluation of Policy Alternatives

Option Criterion	1 Status Quo	2 Improve the Workplace Culture	3 Mandate Diversity and EE Training	4 Communicate Diversity More Effectively	5 Streamline Hiring and Appointment Processes	6 Develop a Staffing Strategy with a VM Lens
Effective	1	3	2	2	2	3
Cost	3	2	2	3	1	2
Admin.	3	3	1	2	1	2
Stakeholder	1	3	1	2	2	2
Equity	2	3	3	2	3	3
TOTAL	10	14	9	11	9	12

10.1 Status quo

While options are intended to be implemented in addition to the status quo, I evaluate the status quo option amongst all proposed options. Aggregated, the status quo provides a benchmark for which all options are measured against. This will allow for recommendations that improve upon the status quo.

Effectiveness: The status quo is currently ineffective at significantly increasing VM representation based on internal statistics, where the gap between the representation rate and the availability rate is widening. Availability rates will continue to rise, especially with the shift in demographics and increase in visible minorities available to work in Canada’s labour force. In addition, currently according to my focus groups and interview data and analysis, a strong majority of employees see EE fading on organizational agendas²¹. As stated earlier, there was a concern from managers that the response-rate to self-identifying could be low.

²¹ 17 of 19 focus group participants said that DFO should engage in more EE initiatives.

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Cost: The status quo ranks well on cost²² because there is no additional implementation cost associated with this option.

Administrative Feasibility: The status quo ranks well on administrative feasibility because there is no additional implementation concern associated with this option. In terms of administrative feasibility, this option requires no additional burden of administration, reporting, monitoring or enforcement.

Stakeholder Acceptability: The status quo ranks low on stakeholder acceptability. Even though the status quo is the current framework, it does not improve the situation for VM employees beyond simple collection of numerical data. All other employees may be more accepting of the status quo because they are not the affected group facing the under-representation gap; they may agree that there is an issue but are not overly concerned, as it is not detrimental to the organizational culture. While some managers do not see a concern with visible minority representation, a majority of the managers I spoke to indicated that VM representation should be more equitable and managers appreciate the positive contributions that EE brings to the organization as well as the positive reputation that it brings about. In addition, based on key informant interviews, union representatives would likely not be satisfied with the current gap in VM representation, as well as the dissatisfaction expressed by employees in the focus groups and interviews.

Horizontal Equity: In terms of equity, the status quo ranks medium on equity. The status quo creates somewhat of an equitable workplace, but does not receive a high rating because while the EE programming does cover all employment equity groups, the status quo does not account for the differences within VM groups. In this way the status quo treats everyone the same in that it does not account for the many groups that make up “visible minority.” It is positive that there is

²² Please see Appendix G for a summary of estimated costs of all options.

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an EE MAP and EE Champions within the region; however, there is also room for improvement upon who EE is placed upon the agenda.

10.2 Improve the Workplace Culture

Effectiveness: Cultural change is recognised as a focus of policy makers in their quest to improve the effectiveness and quality of service delivery (McKee et al., 2010). Depending upon how inclusive events are and the budget provided for the social committee, orientation programming and EE champion incentives, this option is effective at both significantly increasing the representation of VM employees and increasing perceptions that EE matters to DFO. Firstly, while the policy is not aimed at recruiting more VM employees, the policy alternative does provide existing VM employees with a sense of an inclusive climate. My findings show that an inclusive climate may lead to an increased association of employees with the organization, in turn providing an additional reason for employees to self-identify. Regardless of the number of participants, the voluntary nature would create a sense of community in breaking down barriers, which could then translate into a higher sense of belonging and create another reason to self-identify with the organization. Secondly, if VM employees perceive that EE is more prevalent on a daily basis, through multicultural events, orientation programming and supports for EE champions, VM employees may be more inclined to celebrate their VM affiliation with their co-workers and as a result may be more inclined to self-identify as a VM employee for DFO. Evidence suggests that diversity and inclusion programs are linked to more positive workplace experiences and career satisfaction (Giscombe & Jenner, 2009). In addition where organizations have climates that support work-life integration, positive organizational outcomes are experienced. For example, increased employee loyalty, more productivity, and fewer absentees (Roehling et al., 2001; Casper & Harris, 2008).

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Cost: The cost estimate for this option is \$331,000.²³ The cost is rated as moderate based on the proposed budget for the volunteer social committee to spend on the events, as well as the expenditures involved in the orientation program and the incentives provided to EE Champions in their staff time.

Administrative Feasibility: I rate this option as high on the burden of administration, reporting, monitoring and enforcement because with a voluntary social committee with a budget this does not largely impact upon the core duties DFO engages in. Expanding the orientation program would involve minimal paper work as compared to the status quo. For example, content for the orientation manual may need to be updated periodically throughout the year and depending on how it is accessible to employees; the administration efforts and monitoring by managers may increase. For now, the program is available online while strategies to expand to those employees with remote access to computers are being explored. Nevertheless this is occurring in the status-quo, so there would be no additional pressures. There may be additional duties to report in terms of extra incentives provided to EE champions, but this would be absorbed by compensations and EE Champions who would work together on how best to report to the key directors in DFO. While other administrative burdens are not increased, periodic monitoring would most likely occur with management, who would need to commit to this option.

Stakeholder Acceptability: Stakeholders would I believe, support this option in addition to the status quo based on its ability to create equality across the different EE groups (Key Informant A). Visible minorities were, for the most part, in favour of this option in my study. All other employees accept this at the same rate as status quo, because of the voluntary component. Managers favoured this option through their suggestion that more initiatives could and should be done to create a welcoming climate; however, managers also discussed that some may be concerned with resource allocations and capacity constraints. The unions would support its

²³ The detailed cost breakdown for this calculation, and all other cost estimations, can be found in Appendix G.

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constituents (Key Informant B) and, so long as the events were inclusive and voluntary, I think most would be accepting of this option. There may be some employees worried about alienation of the dominant group as well as losing momentum with these kinds of on-going activities.

Horizontal Equity: This option attempts to include all staff members who are interested in learning more about Fisheries and Oceans Canada's diversity. Additionally, by expanding the orientation programming to new staff coming into the organization, as well as supporting those engaging in employment equity work, everyone will benefit. This option is aimed at creating a more equitable workplace, consequently this alternative ranks high.

While this option is moderately more expensive than the status quo, this option, based on my analysis is more effective, ranks high on administrative feasibility, has more perceived stakeholder acceptance as well as provides a more equitable workplace.

10.3 Mandate Diversity and EE Training

Effectiveness: While mandating diversity and EE Training would mean EE was on the organizational agenda, it scores moderately in terms of effectiveness. This is because the policy may not result in significantly increasing VM representation, since mandated training does not necessarily make an inclusive community. Due to the compulsory nature of the program, mandated training would not create the same buy-in, as could be seen in the previous option. While the multi-cultural event component may not translate into a large inclusive community, there was interest shown through focus group sessions and interviews for the events. Mandating programs can be effective; however, can also result in backlash and further alienation of vulnerable groups.

Cost: The cost estimate for this option is \$182,100. This option involves the moderate cost to deliver and have employees participate in the training. Currently the cost of this alternative receives a moderate and more positive ranking while the stakeholder acceptability is negatively

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affected. An added burden would be placed on employees who receive the training; employees would continue to carry out their same duties in a reduced time frame. For employees to support this alternative, the estimated cost would need to increase. The additional costs would need to include the extra time required for employees to do their work that the training requires them to miss, or new staff would need to be hired to shift the workload and accommodate higher stakeholder acceptability.

Administrative Feasibility: The anticipated burden of administration to implement this option is high and thus receives a low score. This option ranks low on administrative burden, as this alternative would involve the organization of over 1300 employees to obtain mandated training on a yearly basis. This would also include monitoring and tracking which employees completed training. As well, managers would need to identify measurable outcomes for the overall EE objective and most likely report upon their findings. There would also need to be an enforcement body or official to enforce that those who did not receive training do.

Stakeholder Acceptability: Again, because this option mandates training, it is not as favourable to key stakeholders. For example, while most VMs will likely be accepting of the mandated training to increase awareness on diversity and employment equity, other VM may believe it will simply create further alienation by the dominant groups. Other employees will see that the funds going to this training should be spent in other ways, and that the situation is manageable as is. Managers will be concerned about the same duties which need to be accomplished in the same amount of time. In addition, managers may worry that mandated training may not create an inclusive work environment, based on the mandated component. The union will support employees who articulate that they now need to do their same duties in less time, if these considerations are not accounted for and many employees protest (Key Informant B).

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Horizontal Equity: The option is designed to create a more equitable workplace by building employment equity competencies among managers and employees alike. Competencies include employees learning about how to respect and accommodate differences as well as policies and practices in Fisheries and Oceans Canada that support an equitable workplace. Due to these considerations, the policy alternative ranks high.

10.4 Communicate Diversity More Effectively

Effectiveness: Communicating diversity more effectively through communications materials internally and externally would be effective at letting VM employees know that they are an integral part of the organization. While effective at bringing part of an EE objective to the agenda, this option is rated moderately effective because of its more passive nature at increasing VM employees and putting EE on the agenda.

Cost: The cost estimate for this option is \$60,000. Communicating diversity more effectively is the most inexpensive option besides the status quo to implement, so it ranks high on the cost criterion.

Administrative Feasibility: This option ranks moderately on the administrative feasibility because it will take more administration efforts to co-ordinate and regularly update the content on websites and publications, review the copy write laws to review, as well as to collect the consent forms that DFO will need to collect for any photos taken or written work released. In addition monitoring may need to occur in term of approving content for websites and publications. Nevertheless, reporting and monitoring would be kept to the same as the current status. I rank this option as moderate, because there is a marginal increase in reporting and workload, as the communications department already deals with many of the protocols.

Stakeholder Acceptability: In terms of stakeholder acceptability this option ranks moderately because DFO reflects diversity, but as one key informant noted, some VMs may not

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want to be on website for strategic reasons. For example, perhaps they want to be “missing” for a reason and the fact that the public cannot see VM is a signal that DFO is not as inclusive as they could be as a workplace (Key Informant B). Other employees may like this idea; however, most would probably feel it was not a necessary change for the organization. Managers would be afraid that this option would serve to alienate the dominant group or provide a tokenistic view of VMs within the organization. The union might be a little reserved and echo the same sentiment as VM employees, whereby DFO would be running before it was walking with a fully functioning EE program (Key Informant B).

Horizontal Equity: Finally, I rank this option as moderately equitable because on a website DFO may not be able to capture all diversity for various reasons (i.e. not all VM groups work at DFO, VM employees may not consent to have their pictures taken, among other reasons). It does not rank low however, because a communications strategy, which encompasses diversity, does signal to all VM employees that they are valued. With these considerations in mind, this option does score above the status quo option.

10.5 Streamline Hiring and Appointment Processes

Effectiveness: This policy alternative is ranked moderately effective because while it would help to increase the number of new employees coming in as VMs, it is most likely less effective for internal employees who are familiar with job processes. It would not create a far-reaching signal that EE is on the agenda, unless it is explained to employees and framed by senior manager as such.

Cost: The cost estimate for this option is \$662,000. This has been ranked as the most expensive option of all the alternatives. It encompasses consultation time with relevant government bodies, as well as the estimated time it would take staff to help streamline the processes, create the online tools and take calls through the proposed help-line.

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Administrative Feasibility: This option also incurs a low ranking on the administrative feasibility criterion, because it is a large under-taking to modify entrenched and intricate employment processes involved within the federal government. Administration duties would increase as would report to Managers on the effectiveness of the streamlining efforts. Managers would also need to be involved in a consultation process. Accordingly, there are burdens which exist in all aspects of administrative feasibility except for enforcement. Fisheries and Oceans Canada could regulate where needed through management.

Stakeholder Acceptability: In terms of stakeholder feasibility, this option ranks moderately as some VM employees really encourage a streamlining approach as evident through focus groups and interviews; however, other VM will be concerned with the idea this affects mostly external applicants. Other employees may see this again, as sharing more of the resources than preferred. Managers would like this option as it is targeted to increase representation; although they may not enjoy the added pressure of taking on more training from HR staff to provide the self-identification forms to new staff. Some employees will be uncomfortable with managers providing the EE form. For example, the union would rather see HR provide the EE form for purposes of privacy and confidentiality (Key Informant B).

Horizontal Equity: Finally, this option ranks high in creating an equitable workplace. Currently there are barriers to entry at DFO, thus by working on the arduous hiring process and making explicit the employment equity policies and practices to external candidates, VM employees may do better in applying (VM Focus Group). While Canadian born VMs would be likely to benefit less from this policy alternative when compared to foreign-born VMs who typically face more barriers in applying for jobs, this option aims to increase the ability for all candidates to apply to DFO. The benefit here is that this option would help to create a more equitable workplace by aiming to increase the numbers of VMs who can apply.

10.6 Create a Staffing Strategy with a VM Lens

Effectiveness: I rank this option as highly effective at both improving the VM representation as well as putting EE on the agenda. This option opens up more dialogue by talking about VM inside of the organization, as well as about holding the potential to bring more VM employees in from outside of the organization. This may affect the critical mass of VM employees which would reduce feeling of tokenism amongst VM employees, as well as could lead to increased representation in areas where VM – under-representation occurs most.

Cost: The cost estimate for this option is \$271,400. The cost of this option is ranked as moderate because it involves costs such as time for managers, HR, and members from RDAC or EE champions to come together to strategically plan how to bring about developmental and leadership opportunities for VM employees within their current jobs as well as for promotional purposes as required. As well, bringing a recruitment team together from across the region to discuss and share their activities and increasing the number of career fairs and information sessions that DFO attends will translate to elevated costs.

Administrative Feasibility: This strategy will encompass more administrative duties and thus there will be a burden to report and coordinate between the different areas in the region. Nevertheless, this option does score moderately because the work on recruitment will be self-managed but the ideas behind the work will still be shared.

Stakeholder Acceptability: In terms of stakeholder acceptability, some employees would agree to this option to help diversify the workplace. However, others might feel that a more encompassing lens is important and may not wish to spend resources or funding toward one employment equity group rather than the others.

Horizontal Equity: This option ranks high on the equity criterion, because it is expected to create an equitable workplace. As interviewees pointed out, career fairs may still not completely be inclusive of all VM groups, especially where few visible minority managers are

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available. Nevertheless, focus group participants suggest that this option could help promote more diversity in the workplace while making the diversity that already exists more evident. The multi-component alternative provides more benefits to visible minorities as well as employees who would benefit from a more inclusive and diverse environment. This option scores well above the status quo and will be recommended to DFO based on all the criteria listed.

10.7 Evaluation Summary

Appendix F displays my full evaluation. Again, each criterion is shaded in a traffic light representation, with green - indicating as best, yellow - proceed with caution, and red - as areas with the least beneficial payoffs. Although the status quo ranks high under the cost and administrative feasibility criteria, the option ranks low under the effectiveness and stakeholder criteria, where all but one of the proposed alternatives dominate the status quo. Among the five proposed policy alternatives, none of the alternatives emerge as completely non-dominated.

The mandating diversity training option and the streamline hiring and appointment processes are both ranked lower than the status quo and are not recommended for DFO at this time. The mandating diversity training option, while moderately expensive, has a low stakeholder acceptability ranking. Both options have high administration burdens associated with them. In addition the streamlining of the hiring processes would be expensive as compared to the status quo.

The closest option to being the best alternative under all criteria is the improve the workplace culture option. While it has moderate costs compared to the status quo and other alternatives, this option is ranked as quite effective at significantly increasing representation through creating more community, as well as by placing EE on the agenda. It is also relatively easy to implement, and based largely on the voluntary component, agreeable to most stakeholders.

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The next two best options on top of the status quo and presented in numerical order include: option (6) develop a staffing strategy with a VM lens and option (4) communicate diversity more effectively. Both share the same moderate ranking on overall administrative feasibility and stakeholder acceptability. Option (6) is considered as more likely to create an equitable workplace based upon its more dynamic components. Of the two options, the communication option is the most cost effective, but ranked as less effective at significantly increasing representation compared to the staffing strategy with a VM lens.

11: Recommendations

While voluntary self-identification is the current way in which representation of VM employees is measured and recruitment targets are set, this study indicates that such a limited approach is fraught with problems. Some VM employees see self-identification campaigns as merely asking employees to voluntarily report their VM status without engaging in dialogue about the broad and systemic issues that cut across issues of race and ethnicity. As such, these policy options are not intended to under-cut the importance of the employment equity work and obligations DFO adheres to under the EEA and Public Service Act. Rather, these recommendations serve to enhance VM employees' current work well-being as a designated employment equity group and, through mechanisms underscoring an important sense of belonging. This study is one lens to address employment equity at DFO.

Based on my policy evaluation, the status quo does aim to protect the rights of its workers who belong to designated EE groups through the delivery of its employment equity program. Nevertheless, as suggested by my findings, there are gaps in DFO's approach to delivering equity to VM employees. Both cultural and structural changes need to work jointly to improve performance outcomes (McKee et al., 2010). As such, I recommend the complementary implementation of the following three policy options: (2) improve the workplace culture, (4) communicate diversity more effectively; and (6) develop a staffing strategy with a VM lens. These options seek to address some of the barriers and concerns raised by some VM employees; mainly that VM employees would like to be addressed as people rather than statistical gaps. Even the framing of this policy problem which was developed out of HR consultations is problematic indicating that numbers is the main fixation rather than the other obligations listed under employment equity. This is not a problem that is peculiar to DFO; however, and the way in which

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the legislation has been adopted has proved challenging as highlighted throughout my paper.

These options serve to move past a conversation on numbers and work on what is going on at a local and regional level.

Findings from the literature and the research interviews advocate that a single option or strategy will not serve to cure the barriers and discrimination VMs face. Adopting a range of employment equity options will most likely achieve long-term success to equity in the workforce for VMs as a designated group. While the improve the workplace option is a preferable option in the evaluation of the policies, investment in communicating diversity and the staffing strategy with a VM lens could provide more results in increased representation of VM employees and illustrating to employees and the general public that EE is on the map. My policy analysis recommends that DFO pursue three compatible courses of action to address the under-representation of VM employees. DFO should, through consultation with more stakeholders: (2) improve the workplace culture; (4) communicate diversity more effectively; and (6) develop a staffing strategy with a VM lens. Nevertheless, key informants discuss that employment equity policies cannot be created in a vacuum. Careful considerations would need to be addressed before any implementations were to occur. Additional implementation considerations advised by policy experts and practitioners are listed below.

11.1 Future Research

Key informant interviews revealed a preference for an advisory body or EE committee that could oversee policy initiatives, such as the ones I propose. Currently there is no EE committee with EE representatives, union support, HR representatives, and management, as suggested through interview sessions. Key informants discussed that this would be a signal to them that DFO's EE programming falls short of providing the full obligations under the EEA. This is because EE committee or advisory body can help to alleviate the overwhelming

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responsibilities by playing a key ad hoc role to watch over the key activities like those presented in DFO's EE MAP.

In addition, key informants suggested that more research is important in order to develop and implement an all encompassing strategy. The Employment System Review (2008) suggests that monitoring is weak and perhaps more research should be conducted as to why and to the appropriate frequency of conducting self-identification reports. Interviews suggest that it would be helpful to fully understand the patterns as seen in: DFO's Employment System Reviews, response rates on self-identification surveys, promotional opportunities made to and accepted by VMs, as well as where employees fall out in DFO's employment processes.

Accountability was also discussed as an important feature to the practices of equity in employment. Managers mentioned that meaningful ways in which to measure the impacts of targeted EE initiatives are required. As literature suggests, systemic barriers will only be removed through a change in organizational culture that is built on accountability (Langtry, 2008). Senior management must demonstrate their commitment to DFO employees on any employment equity initiatives that they pursue.

11.2 Study Limitations

The major limitation of this research study is that, due to time and scope constraints, recruitment for the focus groups and interviews were not representative of the entire population of DFO employees in Pacific Region's headquarters, located in Vancouver. I did not contact Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees on a random basis and so every employee may not have had an equal chance to participate in the study. I may have inadvertently excluded many potential participants since they were not a part of the network contacts or were not aware of the solicitation from the emails that went through the internal management email list. Therefore, the study results represent only the views of those who participated. Qualitative studies do not require

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that the study be representative of the population and rather the important issue is to reveal understandings of participant's own meaning and issues that arise in the workplace. A future survey could be conducted to reveal how my findings are substantive for the region. Nevertheless, the real aim of the research was to collect rich data, allowing diverse perspectives to emerge on the policy problem so that these viewpoints could shape the final recommendations and this was achieved in this study. Another limitation to my study was that those who did not wish to reveal their VM status may have abstained from participating altogether. These people may have provided important contextual information on facilitators and barriers to employment and their impact upon self-identification within the organization.

12: Conclusions

“We are so fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful and diverse city’s in Canada. This is the time and year we really need to look at ourselves not only as one but as a nation that can truly welcome change with open arms. Diversity is all around us. All you have to do is open your eyes” (VM FG participant, participant’s own summary, p. 2).

Decision makers in DFO Pacific Region are confronted with the under-representation of visible minorities in the context of unprecedented growth of visible minority groups within their urban communities, like Vancouver. Literature suggests that visible minorities are a heterogeneous group with a variety of different skill sets, opinions and needs. Some federal governmental departments have begun to account for the diversity among its employee base into account through developing positive employment equity policies geared at increasing workplace well-being and building inclusive environments thereby increasing numbers. Nevertheless, VM groups, especially those most marginalized and vulnerable at DFO continue to face barriers and challenges, as demonstrated through my study.

My findings suggest that some visible minorities fail to see management taking stock in their immediate and long-term work-life interests. Rather various VM groups see managers worrying about self-identification numbers rather than embracing the diversity that exists. To explain, “...equity is like an onion, consisting of many layers and no core; without numerical representation, the other layers—including redistribution, removal of systemic barriers and changing workplace culture—cannot be supported” (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2000, 17) Conversely, I argue that without a supportive work environment where employees feel safe to self-identify, the surveys will remain a problem in DFO. Based on focus groups, interviews case studies, and my policy analysis, I recommend that DFO commence to improve their workplace culture, communicate diversity and ensure that their staffing strategy includes a VM lens.

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The growing numbers of Canadian-born and immigrant VMs, who are both generally well education and skilled, ought to be reflected in the Federal Public Service. Research demonstrates that their under-representation prevails. While values are extraordinarily difficult to change (Saha et al., 2008), research suggests that anti-racism organizational development plays a key role in addressing the intentional and unintentional barriers faced by visible minorities (Agocs & Jain, 2001; Yee et al., 2006). My research indicates that more research, more work and more consultation with VM employees at DFO is needed to ensure a fair working environment for the well-being of visible minorities. Nurturing belonging, cultivating diversity and inspiring change are important collective actions that DFO can embrace in order to move beyond counting visible minorities and help promote diversity in the workplace.

Appendices

Appendix A: Focus Group Schedule (VM Employees)

Barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities in Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

Applying to DFO: reasons

- How did you come to be an employee of DFO?
- Why did you apply?
- DFO as employer choice
- Knowledge about Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- What jobs are available?
- Wages
- Work conditions

DFO employment processes

- How did you find the DFO employment process?
- Did you experience any barriers/facilitators in applying?
- Did you find any complexity in the process?
- Did you find the interview accessible?
- What has changed with the employment processes since you first applied?

Recruitment

- Were you recruited? How?
- Do you feel that DFO has incentives or disincentives to employ visible minorities?
- Are there pros/cons of recruiting internally versus externally?
- Does visible minority recruitment policy exist? Is it practiced? Difficulties?
- Transparency in application process

Personal Experiences

- Workplace experiences
- What barriers or facilitators do you experience in working at DFO?

Organizational

- Explain how DFO is or is not diverse
- Prevalent attitudes towards visible minorities
- How is culture accommodated? How should culture be accommodated?
- Is positive discrimination practiced? In what ways?

Appendix B: Focus Group Schedule (Management)

Barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities in Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

Self exclusion from applying to DFO: reasons

- DFO as employer choice
- Knowledge about Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- What jobs are available?
- Wages
- Work conditions

DFO employment processes

- Complexity of employment process
- Language problems with job postings/advertisements
- Complexity of forms
- Accessibility to interview

Recruitment

- Incentives or disincentives to employ visible minorities
- Recruiting internally versus externally
- Does visible minority recruitment policy exist? Is it practiced? Difficulties?
- Transparency in application process

Organizational

- Explain how DFO is or is not diverse
- Prevalent attitudes towards visible minorities
- How is culture accommodated? How should culture be accommodated?
- Is positive discrimination practiced? In what ways?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule (VM Employees)

Barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities in Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

What works and what does not in DFO? / What would you like to see change?

- Is DFO seen as employer choice internally and externally
- What jobs are available?
- Wages
- Work conditions

DFO employment processes

- Complexity of employment process
- Language problems with job postings/advertisements
- Complexity of forms
- Accessibility to interview

Recruitment

- Incentives or disincentives to employ visible minorities
- Recruiting internally versus externally
- Does visible minority recruitment policy exist? Is it practiced? Difficulties?
- Transparency in application process

Organizational

- Explain how DFO is or is not diverse
- Prevalent attitudes towards visible minorities
- How is culture accommodated? How should culture be accommodated?
- Is positive discrimination practiced? In what ways?

Appendix D: Interview Schedule (Management)

Barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities in Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

- **What works and what does not in DFO?**
- **What would you like to see change?**
- Is DFO seen as employer choice internally and externally
 - What jobs are available?
 - Wages
 - Work conditions
- **DFO employment processes**
 - Complexity of employment process
 - Language problems with job postings/advertisements
 - Complexity of forms
 - Accessibility to interview

Recruitment

- Incentives or disincentives to employ visible minorities
- Recruiting internally versus externally
- Does visible minority recruitment policy exist? Is it practiced? Difficulties?
- Transparency in application process

Organizational

- Explain how DFO is or is not diverse
- Prevalent attitudes towards visible minorities
- How is culture accommodated? How should culture be accommodated?
- Is positive discrimination practiced? In what ways?

Appendix E: Interview Schedule (Key Informants)

Barriers and facilitators to employment of visible minorities in Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

After summarizing themes from focus groups and individual interviews, ask experts if they could comment on findings and recommendations

- Are findings typical or different in each workplace?
- Similarities/ differences across organizations
- Provide list of the policy options

Strategy located in affiliated organization

- What works well / what does not in your affiliated organization?

Foreseeable Strategy for Department of Fisheries and Oceans

- Organizational
- Based on Location in Vancouver
- In conjunction with other organizations

Opinion on Measurable Criteria for each recommendation identified

- Effectiveness
- Administrative Ease
- Cost (predicted)
- Stakeholder Acceptability
- Equity

Policy Alternative Discussion

- Do any stand out as best policy option based on criteria? Explain.
- Are any policy options missing?
- What recommendations would you make given the scenario?

Appendix F: Overall Matrix Evaluation



Best



Caution



Problematic

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
Criterion	Status Quo	Improve the Workplace Culture	Mandate Diversity and EE Training	Communicate Diversity More Effectively	Streamline Hiring and Appointment Processes	Develop a Staffing Strategy with a VM Lens
Effectiveness						
Effectiveness 1	1	3	2	2	2	3
Effectiveness 2	1	3	2	2	1	3
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS (2 = LOW, 3-4 = MED, 5-6 = HIGH)	LOW = 1	HIGH = 3	MED = 2	MED = 2	MED = 2	HIGH = 3
COSTS						
Costs	0	\$331,000	\$182,100	\$60,000	\$662,000	\$271,400
OVERALL COSTS	LOW = 3	MED = 2	MED = 2	LOW = 3	HIGH = 1	MED = 2
Administrative Feasibility						
Burden of Administration	0	0	1	1	1	1
Burden of Reporting	0	0	1	0	1	1
Burden of Monitoring	0	1	1	1	1	0
Burden of Enforcement	0	0	1	0	0	0
OVERALL ADMINISTRATION FEASIBILITIES (Binary scale – no burden = 0 = HIGH, burden= 1= LOW)	HIGH = 3	HIGH = 3	LOW = 1	MED = 2	LOW = 1	MED = 2
Stakeholder Acceptability						
Visible minority employees	1	3	2	2	2	3
all other employees	2	2	1	2	2	1
Management	1	2	1	2	2	2
Union	1	2	1	2	2	2
OVERALL STAKEHOLDER ACCEPTABILITY (< 6 = LOW, 7-8 MED, 9-12 =HIGH)	LOW = 1	HIGH = 3	LOW = 1	MED = 2	MED = 2	MED = 2
Equity						
Horizontal Equity	2	3	3	2	3	3
TOTAL RANK						
TOTAL	10	14	9	11	9	12

Appendix G: Cost Estimates Summary*

	Option	Opportunity Cost of Time	Training and Other Costs	TOTAL
1	Status Quo	\$0	\$0	\$0
2	Improve Workplace Culture	\$318,000	\$13,000	\$331,000
3	Mandate Training	\$0	\$182,100	\$182,100
4	Communicate Diversity More Effectively	\$54,000	\$6,000	\$60,000
5	Streamline Hiring Processes	\$662,000	\$0	\$662,000
6	Develop a Staffing Strategy with VM Lens	\$266,400	\$5,000	\$271,400

Key Assumptions:

1371 Total employees in PR DFO
 377 Employees at RHQ
 150 Managers DFO PR
 50 Managers RHQ

Based from Stats Canada average Federal Government Employee in BC Salary

Source: <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/cst01/govt62f-eng.htm>

Number of employees: 40177

Total BC Federal Government wages: \$ 2,945,551,000

Wage: Approximately \$37.60 per hour

Hours per week: 37.5 x 52 weeks in a year

Used loaded costs (approximately double wage): Managers \$100/hour, Non-managers \$80/hour

*Please note: The next chart shows a more detailed breakdown of costs.

Full Cost Estimates

Option	Component	Method	Freq. (ann.)	Recurring Cost?	# of Managers	Duration (hours)	# of Staff	Duration (hours)	Training	Other	Sub Total	Total	
					Loaded Costs \$100 per hour		Loaded Costs \$80 per hour						
Status Quo												\$0	
Improve the Workplace Culture	Multicultural events	Events organized by a volunteer social committee	6	yes	13 25% of managers @ RHQ	On their own time (lunch)	82 25% of managers @ RHQ	On their own time (lunch)	None	\$5,000 Entertainment (i.e. key note speaker fee(s))	\$30,000	\$331,000	
	Orientation	Initial Strategy Session	1	No			1	300 8 weeks		\$6,000 Strategy Session	\$30,000		
		Advertising	Ongoing	N/A	(Existing resources)								\$0
		Talks with Managers, EE Champions, and RDAC	3	Yes	45 30 managers, 15 EE Champ./RDAC	2				\$27,000			
	Supports to Champions	Training		52	Yes	20	2				\$208,000		
				2	Yes	20	8		\$2,000		\$36,000		
Mandate Diversity and EE Training	Training for all Staff	Training	1	Yes			Time for workshop not included, will need to perform on regular time, Stakeholder Acceptability will increase if worker's time accounted for		\$119,100 1221 employees max 20 per session @ \$2,000 per session		\$119,100	\$182,100	
	Training for all Managers	Training	4	Yes		Time for workshop not included, will need to perform on regular time, Stakeholder Acceptability will increase if worker's time accounted for		\$15,000 150 managers max 20 per session @ \$2,000 per session		\$60,000			
	HR Advisors	Training	1	Yes			Time for workshop not included, will need to perform on regular time, Stakeholder Acceptability will increase if worker's time accounted for		\$3,000 20-30 HR Advisors @ \$2,000 per session		\$3,000		

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Option	Component	Method	Freq. (ann.)	Recurring Cost?	# of Managers	Duration (hours)	# of Staff	Duration (hours)	Training	Other	Sub Total	Total	
					Loaded Costs \$100 per hour		Loaded Costs \$80 per hour						
Communicate Diversity More Effectively	Develop Initial Strategy to Enhance Plan	Meetings	1	No	5	20 Approx. 1 month working on project 25% of time					\$10,000	\$60,000	
	Develop Intranet and Internet websites	Initial collaboration and sketch + work	1	No			5	100 Approximately 6 weeks working on project 50% of the time			\$40,000		
	Professional Photographer	Use photographer to take pictures of real DFO employees	1	No						\$6,000 10 days @ \$500 per day plus \$1,000 to purchase rights to photos	\$6,000		
	VM Press Release/Recognition Stories	Utilize existing networks (i.e. newsletters)	ongoing	Yes			2	25			\$4,000		
Streamline Hiring and Appointment Processes	HR Meeting		2	Yes	10	4					\$8,000	\$662,000	
	Staff Time to Streamline		26	Yes			5	37.5			\$390,000		
	Help Line		52	Yes			1	37.5			\$156,000		
	Staff Time for Online Tools		1	No			1	600 (4 months of work)			\$48,000		
	Manager to provide information on EE forms					Duty Change							\$0
	Training of Management on EE forms from HR		1	Yes	150	4					\$60,000		
Create a Staffing Strategy with a VM Lens	Inside Arm	Meetings with managers, EE Reps.	2	Yes	45 employees = 30 managers, 15 EE champ. / RDAC	3					\$27,000	\$271,400	
	Outside Arm	Meetings, updates, work	6	Yes	25 employees = 15 Managers across the region, 5 HR advisors, 5 EE champ. / RDAC	15 = 3 hour meetings, 12 hours to work on projects between meetings					\$225,000		
		Recruitment spending budget	10	Yes	1	8	1	8		\$500 per career fair per region, 5 regions in PR	\$19,400		

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