

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the draft Canada-BC Marine Protected Area Network Strategy

Q1 Why do we need a Canada-British Columbia Marine Protected Area Network Strategy?

A1 The draft Strategy is an initiative to coordinate all existing federal and provincial marine protected area programs under a single umbrella. It is an explicit recognition that more efficient and effective conservation of our important natural and socio-cultural resources can be achieved by working together. The draft Strategy commits government agencies to employ an inclusive, collaborative process with First Nations, regional/ local governments, marine stakeholders, coastal communities, and the public for marine protected area planning in areas inside and outside of current coastal planning processes.

Q2 How will BC’s MPA network fit within the bigger picture?

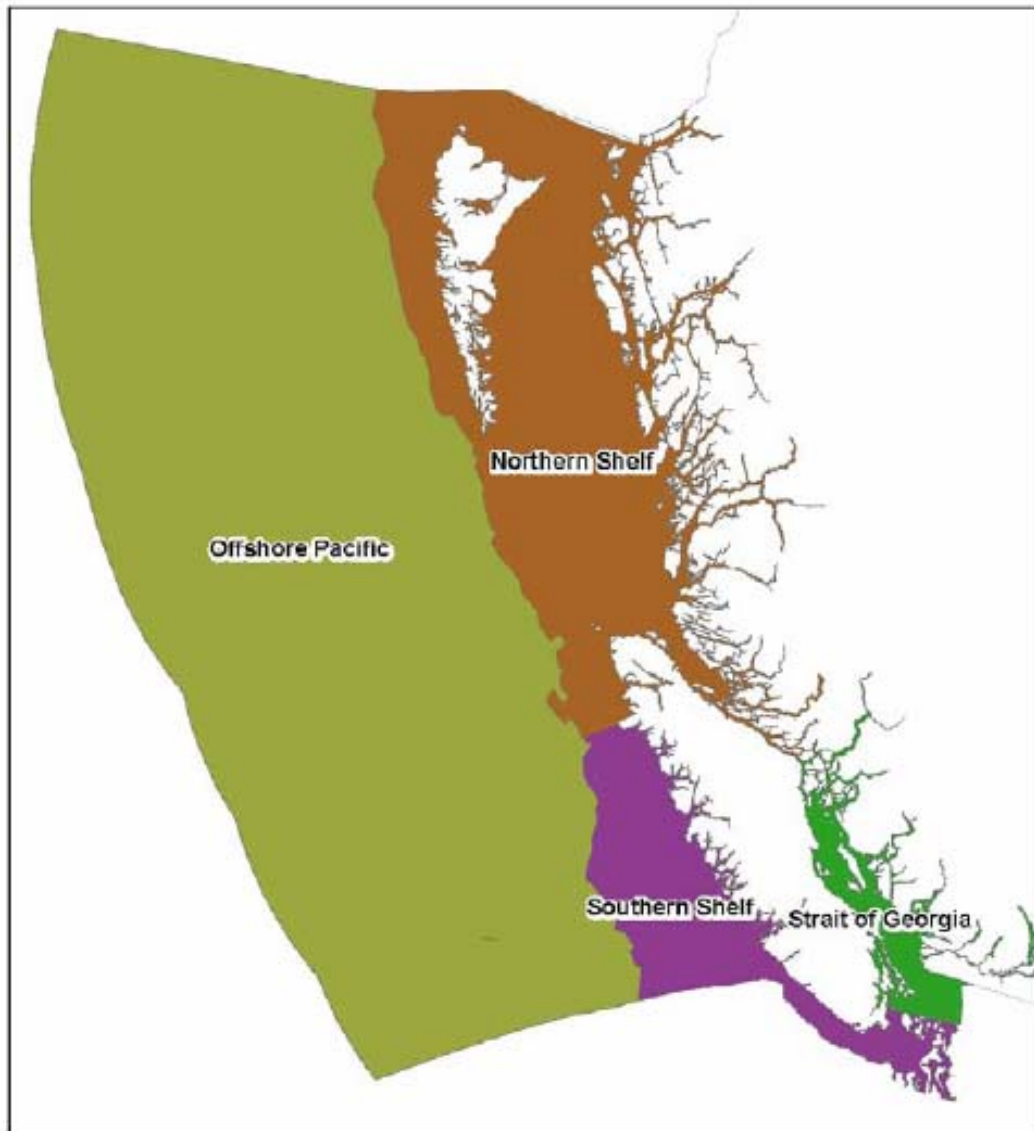
A2 The Government of Canada, in collaboration with provinces and territories, is currently developing a *Framework for Canada’s National Network of Marine Protected Areas*. The vision is for Canada’s marine protected area (MPA) network to be made up of several regional networks. That is where this draft Strategy fits in – it will help to guide the creation of that regional network and support Canada’s efforts to create a national network.

While regional network planning should be consistent with the direction provided by the *National Framework*, flexibility is needed to adapt the guidelines to the ecological and socio-cultural characteristics that make the Pacific Region unique. The draft Canada-BC Strategy strives to achieve the right balance between national coherence and regional effectiveness. That’s why there are several important elements of the Strategy that are consistent with the draft National Framework and that some are unique to the Canada-BC Strategy. The table below summarizes the scale at which guidance for developing a regional network is, or will be, provided.

Guidance	National	Regional (coast-wide)	Bioregional (smaller spatial units)
Vision	✓		
Goals	✓		
Definitions (MPA, Network)	✓		
Eligibility criteria (for assessing contribution of existing MPAs to network) ¹	✓		
Objectives		✓	
Design properties/ criteria	✓	✓	✓
Planning process (implementation)	✓	✓	✓

Q3 Will one network cover all of Pacific Region?

A3 Pacific Region's network of MPAs will be composed of a number of smaller networks based on four high-level spatial units or bioregions:



All of these bioregional networks will share a common foundation, including vision, goals, objectives, principles, and design properties, as outlined in the draft Canada-BC MPA Network Strategy. However, each bioregional network will be designed to suit its own unique geography, management tools, and ecological and socio-economic characteristics.

Q4 How long will it take to establish BC's MPA network?

A4 Implementation of bioregional networks will progress over time and as resources allow. Ultimately, bioregional networks will include as many protected areas and other kinds of management tools as are needed to achieve network goals and objectives. The design phase may take several years since it is an inclusive process that involves consultation with many

groups.

Fortunately, we aren't starting from scratch. In the Pacific Region, there are already 187 federal and provincially designated MPAs that may already contribute to network goals and objectives. Of these, 182 are provincial, and five are federal MPAs established by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Parks Canada, and Environment Canada. An estimated 2.8 % of the marine area in the Pacific Region out to the 200 nautical mile limit is under some level of protection. In addition, some local governments have identified and protected marine areas. Most notable is West Vancouver's Whytecliff Park, one of the first fully protected MPAs in Canada.

Q5 How will new network MPAs be identified?

A5 The governments of Canada and British Columbia will work with diverse partners to determine an effective process for fully achieving network goals and objectives. However, building effective bioregional networks of MPAs will require two major activities:

1. analysis of existing MPAs against network goals and objectives, and
2. identification of gaps in protection of marine areas that meet network goals and objectives.

Existing MPAs that meet network goals and objectives will contribute significantly to the building of a comprehensive and representative network. However, there may be conservation gaps that will need to be addressed by strengthening protection levels of existing MPAs, adjusting boundaries, or identifying new sites. Gap identification efforts and recommendations for new or enhanced MPAs will be focused at the bioregional scale, and will be collaborative, involving First Nations, local governments, stakeholders and the public.

Q6 What percentage of the oceans will be targeted for protection within the network?

A6 The 2010 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which Canada is a signatory, set a 2020 global target of "at least... 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services..." However, the *National Framework* does not commit to a specific national target for Canada's network of MPAs. Similarly, the Canada-BC strategy does not identify targets for protection, but instead proposes an objectives-based approach to network planning, in which specific ecological, socio-economic, and cultural objectives will be pursued instead. Should numerical targets for network goals and objectives be required, they will be set at the bioregional level with advice from First Nations, regional/local governments, stakeholders, and the public.

Q7 How will the Canada-BC MPA Network Strategy be implemented?

A7 The Strategy will be implemented incrementally, starting with the Northern Shelf bioregion, where an integrated oceans management process – the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA), is already underway. The draft Canada-BC Strategy will help guide efforts related to conservation planning. The bioregional network for this area of the coast will build on existing MPAs, with new MPA proposals to fill gaps in the network. The marine use plans that fall out of the PNCIMA process will make recommendations for amending existing, and establishing new, MPAs to fill network gaps.

It will take longer to fully implement the Canada-BC Strategy in other areas of the coast, where large integrated ocean management processes are not underway (e.g, Strait of Georgia and Offshore Pacific Zone bioregions). However, some work can be done now that will help lay the ground work for network planning in the other bioregions (e.g., information gathering, MPA inventory, assessment of existing sites against network objectives, gap analysis, and public education and awareness).

Q8 How can the citizens of BC become involved in MPA network planning?

A8 Any individual with an interest in marine protected area planning can become involved. Copies of the draft Canada-BC MPA Network Strategy have been sent to individual coastal First Nations groups for review. Once First Nations have had an opportunity to provide comments, copies of the draft will be made available to regional/local governments, industry groups, environmental non-governmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders. Interested individuals will also be invited to provide comments via a website.

¹ The draft *National Framework for Canada's Network of Marine Protected Areas* has identified eligibility criteria for assessing how existing marine protected areas will contribute to a national network of MPAs. To be considered for the national network, it must be demonstrated that a given MPA:

1. Meets Canada's network definition of a marine protected area, including each of the key terms as described by the IUCN (see Section 4 and Annex 2.2); and
2. Contributes to at least one national MPA network goal; and
3. Has a management plan, or protection guidance explicitly specified in supporting legislation or regulations, and is being actively managed for achievement of the specified MPA network goal(s).

For consistency, eligibility criteria set nationally will be adopted in British Columbia. The criteria will be included in the final *Canada-British Columbia Strategy for a Network of Marine Protected Areas*.