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Canada's natural assets

RESOURCES AND INNOVATION
CREATE A WAVE OF INTEREST IN
OCEAN INDUSTRIES



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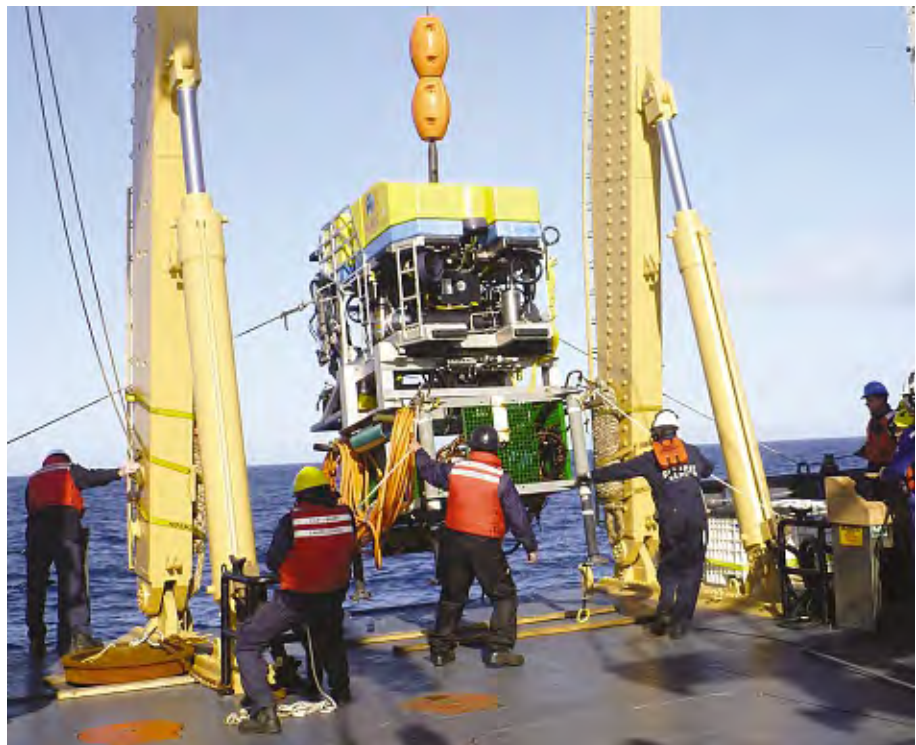
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CANADA'S OCEAN BLUEPRINT

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High tide: Canada is taking advantage of its lengthy coastline to embrace the blue economy

Canada's ocean blueprint

SURROUNDED BY OCEANS, CANADA IS TAKING A GLOBAL LEAD IN DEVELOPING ITS 'BLUE ECONOMY' IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INITIATIVES INCLUDE INNOVATIONS IN AQUACULTURE, EARTHQUAKE WARNING TECHNOLOGY AND A MAJOR SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME. JACOPO DETTONI REPORTS

Canada's oceans bring to mind the epic adventures of the fishing industry recounted in dozens of novels, films and TV shows. Bordered by three oceans (Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic), the country has the world's longest coastline and the fourth largest ocean territory.

Besides this, it boasts some 563 lakes and dozens of major rivers across the country, which together make up about one-fifth of the world's surface freshwater. This endowment of natural aquatic resources has been the backbone of communities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts for centuries.

A global leader

"Canada is an ocean nation whose economy, environment and social fabric are inextricably linked to the oceans and their resources,"

according to the government's Oceans Strategy, which was approved in 2002 as a direct result of the country's 1997 Ocean Act, the first comprehensive oceans management legislation in the world.

But Canada's interests go well beyond aquaculture and fisheries, and the country has taken a global lead in developing ocean technologies and innovation. The government has established an ocean supercluster on the east coast to "become a leader in the knowledge-based ocean economy" and support a more sustainable use of ocean resources. Prime minister Justin Trudeau has also vowed to give protected status to 25% of the country's oceans by 2025. Besides this, its multibillion-dollar National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS) is breathing new life into several shipyards and their suppliers.

Smart ecosystems

The OECD estimates that the value of the world's ocean economy, or blue economy,

will reach \$3000bn by 2030.

“Anchored by investment in maritime and coastal tourism, resource exploration, ship-building and port activities, this blue economy will also be built through innovative ocean data analytics, ecosystem-based fisheries management, aquaculture and ocean renewable-energy systems,” Dr Kate Moran, CEO of Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), wrote in 2016.

“Building a smarter ocean creates sustainable ecosystems, and Canada is already exhibiting leadership in ocean observation, bringing government, industry, conservation and recreational interests together for informed policy decisions about our coastal resources. But in order to advance a truly innovative national agenda, we must continue to invest,” she added.

The ONC is an initiative by the University of Victoria in British Columbia that has spearheaded the development of ‘smart oceans’ technologies such as the underwater observation networks Neptune and Venus, earthquake early-warning systems and, more recently, carbon-negative solutions in marine environment (see article on British Columbia, page 50).

A coordinated approach

Meanwhile over in Atlantic Canada, the government established the Ocean Supercluster (OSC) as one of the five new superclusters it launched in 2018. According to its website, the OSC aims to become “the first cross-sectorial initiative of its kind, which includes the shared vision of leaders in fisheries, aquaculture, offshore resources, shipping, defence, marine renewables and ocean tech. By facilitating the growth of these industries through an interconnected cluster, we’re positioning Canada to be the leader in sustainable ocean innovation.” (See article on Atlantic Ocean, page 52.)

Other initiatives, such as the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, nurture and grow start-ups and SMEs that focus on ocean technologies. At the same time, the Ocean Technology Alliance Canada is launching a database that brings together all the stakeholders of the industry to foster collaboration at home and showcase the sector abroad.

“I’ve been in this industry for 20 years, and one thing that strikes me is that there is a lot of effort to organise the industry,” says Chris Sundstrom, co-founder of Seamor Marine, a producer of remotely operated vehicles for underwater use. “For many years, the industry has been very much an individual effort; there was no coordination. Over the past four or five years, companies really started thinking of working together. It is both a bottom-up and a top-down effort, and that combination is proving very effective.”

NSS developments

Canada is also developing its ambitious, 30-year NSS to renew the fleet of defence ships,

the coast guard and those used in other federal departments. Launched in 2010, the NSS is designed to provide long-term, stable business opportunities to Canadian shipyards.

The shipyard of Irving, Halifax, won the contract for the supply of combat vessels worth estimated C\$60bn (\$45.2bn), while Seaspan in Vancouver, British Columbia, won the supply for non-combat vessels worth another C\$8bn.

As part of the NSS, the building of smaller vessels will be contracted to other shipyards, while the commissioning of six ice-breakers has yet to be decided, although industry sources and media widely expect the contract to go to the Davie shipyard in Quebec (see article on Quebec, page 54).

The programme puts much emphasis also on the development of a shipbuilding cluster across the country by linking up major contractors such as Irving and Seaspan with local suppliers, communities and research institutions.

Showcasing Canada

Canada’s push into the ocean industry as a whole is also stirring the interest of services providers, including in the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions sphere, which are working to showcase the country’s excellence in the oceans industry to possible foreign partners and investors.

“We want to show them what’s going on in the industry in Canada in the hope they will bring their event, as well as consider trade and investment opportunities,” says Virginie De Visscher, senior director for business development of Business Events Canada.

These new developments are building momentum for industry events to take place across the country as a way to bring together local stakeholders and connect them with international peers, clients and investors. “Today we’re steering the conversation toward hosting business events in destinations that align with an organisation’s mission,” says Ms De Visscher.

“In the case of ocean sciences, it makes sense to host in locations such as St John’s, Halifax, Quebec City and Victoria, among others. Not only is there a robust ocean tech and ocean sciences ecosystem in each, but when organisations meet here, they can access our industry and thought leaders to enrich their programme content, augment their speaker’s series, grow their membership and more. We refer to this as ‘meeting with purpose’ in Canada.”

Business Events Canada will host Innovate Canada 2020 in St John’s, Newfoundland, between August 31 and September 3. The event, one of many happening throughout the year which will bring foreign ocean industry experts and decision makers to Canada, will focus on the country’s ocean science sectors and will be held in conjunction with the World Aquaculture Society Conference. ■



Out of the blue: Ocean Networks Canada is an initiative of the University of Victoria that has pioneered "smart oceans" technologies

Why British Columbia is making waves

THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ON CANADA'S WEST COAST IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF OCEAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, AS WELL AS VITAL CONTAINER PORT ACTIVITY. JACOPO DETTONI REPORTS

British Columbia is building momentum as a major ocean industry hub on Canada's west coast thanks to the province's world-class R&D expertise, as well as its major government and private investment programmes.

Nearly 1000 companies are active in the ocean technology sector across the region, 90% of them concentrated in Victoria and Vancouver, according to figures from the British Columbia Trade and Investment.

The cluster includes associations, universities, research insti-

tutes and a large naval presence and features some of the main actors of the national ocean industry. These include: Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), an initiative by the University of Victoria that has pioneered 'smart ocean' technologies; Seaspan Shipyards, the centre of a shipbuilding cluster that has been rejuvenated by the government's National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSS); and the port of Vancouver, the largest in the country and on the west Pacific coast of North America. The hub is also becoming a catalyst for events focusing on ocean technologies and industries.

An ocean tech leader

"Our interest is to develop technologies that can reduce the environmental impact on the oceans and keep them cleaner," says Dr Kate Moran, CEO of Ocean Networks Canada (ONC).

ONC developed the Neptune and Venus projects, the first regional underwater ocean observatories to connect directly to the internet and whose data is available for analysis and to inform policymakers about anything concerning coastal communities and the health of their ecosystems. ONC has also pioneered an earthquake early-warning system, and recently received funding for the testing of a carbon-negative technology designed to pull carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and inject it into deep-sea basalt.

As well as supporting scientific research, local communities and national policy-making, the technologies developed by ONC generate business opportunities for the company and its partners. Jasco Applied Sciences, with offices on Vancouver Island and Halifax, collaborated with ONC on a product development for its advanced sound-monitoring systems, which records and assesses

the sound generated by shipping lines and its impact on ocean ecosystems in order to achieve more sustainable shipping management.

Clean energy company Carbon Engineering, based in Squamish, British Columbia, is one of the technical partners for ONC's carbon-negative project, which if successful could be very lucrative. "The scientific community has accepted by now that sooner or later we will have to pull carbon dioxide from the atmosphere," says Ms Moran.

The private sector in British Columbia is also working on an initiative that follows in the footsteps of the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship (Cove), located across the country in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. "We are trying to put together an innovation cluster on the west coast," says Alex Rueben, executive director at the Association of British Columbia Marine Industries. "We are speaking to different levels of government to create a marine innovation hub much like Cove on the east coast."

Seaspan growth

Meanwhile, in the more traditional shipbuilding industry, the Canadian government's multibillion-dollar, 30-year NSS is generating major activity throughout the cluster, first and foremost for Vancouver-based Seaspan Shipyards, which won the contract for the supply of non-combat vessels, initially valued at about C\$8bn (\$6bn).

"It has been night and day from where we were eight years ago [before Seaspan won the NSS contract]," says Amy MacLeod, Seaspan's vice-president for corporate affairs and external communications. "Back then, we had about a couple of hundred employees – today we have 2700 spread across our three shipyards [two in Vancouver and one in Victoria]."

The company invested C\$200m to upgrade its facilities for the NSS programme. It delivered the first of three offshore fisheries science vessels it is building for the Canadian Coast Guard in June 2019, while the remaining two are at an advanced stage of construction.

The activity generated by the NSS programme goes far beyond Seaspan, as it encourages the main contractors (Seaspan and Irving on the east coast) to work with domestic suppliers. So far, Seaspan has signed C\$936m in contracts with 625 supply companies across the country – 63% of them in British Columbia – and contributed C\$880m to the provincial economy, according to figures from the company.

In addition, says Ms MacLeod: "Because of the federal government's long-term commitment with the NSS, there is a whole new generation of Canadians looking at the shipbuilding industry for their careers."

As part of the NSS agreement, Seaspan is developing specific skills vital for a comprehensive shipbuilding sector. The company supports the University of British Columbia in establishing naval architecture and marine engineering academic programmes, as well as the marine trades and manufacturing programme at Camosun College, Victoria.

A vintage port

British Columbia is also expanding its port infrastructure to strengthen its position as Canada's main commercial shipping centre. Authorities at the port of Prince Rupert in the northernmost part of British Columbia, on the border with Alaska, are expanding the existing Fairview Container Terminal in conjunction with Dubai-based port operator DP World. The project will increase the terminal's capacity to 1.8 million twenty-foot equivalent

units (TEUs) from the current 1.3 million TEUs and is scheduled to wrap up in 2022. At the same time, the port authority is considering building a new container terminal with a 2.5 million TEU capacity.

At the port of Vancouver (Canada's largest), DP World and Global Container Terminals are enlarging their local operations, and there is major growth planned at the port's terminals for bulk commodities. Local authorities are also considering proposals to add container capacity at the Roberts Bank port, 32 kilometres south of Vancouver.

Shipping them in

This activity is driving an interest among event organisers that has made Vancouver in particular a major venue for global ocean industry-related events, such as the 2019 World Maritime Rescue Congress, the 2020 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference, and the 2021 International Marine Protected Area Congress hosted by national charity the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). CPAWS ocean conservation manager Alexandra Barron says: "We look forward to hosting this meeting and showcasing the best of Canada and British Columbia on an international stage."

All of this underscores the importance of the ocean industries to the province, and to Canada's economy. A spokesperson from the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations says: "More than three-quarters of British Columbia's population lives in the coastal zone, and many make their living from the province's vibrant tourism industry, marine shipping and transportation sector, diverse fishing economy and other coastal activities. Given this, we recognise the importance of the health of our marine environment and the role that it plays in supporting our way of life." ■

OUR INTEREST IS TO DEVELOP TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN REDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON THE OCEANS AND KEEP THEM CLEANER





Mysteries of the deep: Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has invested heavily in ocean science research programmes

An Atlantic view

CANADA'S ATLANTIC OCEAN-BORDERING PROVINCES ARE MAKING THE MOST OF THEIR COASTAL RESOURCES, USING DECADES OF KNOWHOW TO BALANCE ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH SUSTAINABILITY.
JASON MITCHELL REPORTS

Eastern Canada's picturesque Atlantic region, comprising the four provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, are leaders when it comes to innovation in ocean and 'blue' technology.

Atlantic Canada enjoys some of the world's richest fishing grounds, and commercial aquaculture – the breeding, raising and harvesting of fish and shellfish – is a big contributor to the local economy. The region

is home to many innovative companies in the fishing and aquaculture industry. It also has a flourishing ocean and marine tech ecosystem, including marine engineering, ship building, oil and gas exploration, hydrodynamics, underwater technology and engineering, coastal and deep-sea shipping, protection of the marine environment and leisure and safety.

Virginie De Visscher, senior director of business development, economic sectors, at Destination Canada's Business Events team, says: "The wealth of intellectual capital found in Canada's ocean science community is as vast as our coastline."

Maritime lab

St John's in Newfoundland and Labrador hosts the Ocean Sciences Centre at Memorial University (MUN), one of Canada's biggest marine laboratories and a global

leader in cold ocean bioscience. Kendra MacDonald, chief executive officer at Canada's Ocean Supercluster (OSC), says: "In the Atlantic region, ocean innovation is part of the fabric of who we are, because of our geography, harsh ocean environment, and our history of making a living from ocean industries."

OSC is an initiative that brings together industry, government and academia, and is co-investing up to C\$300m (\$227m) in new tech platforms used across ocean sciences. "Our start-up ecosystem offers incredible support for entrepreneurs in the form of incubators and accelerators, as well as complementary programmes including ocean-focused initiatives and mentorship," adds Ms MacDonald.

"The Atlantic region has significant support for companies from ideation to commercialisation to

SALMON FARMING HAS TRANSFORMED COASTAL, RURAL COMMUNITIES FROM AREAS OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT TO RELATIVE PROSPERITY

growing reach across global markets. This is an attractive place for ocean start-ups and investment in them, given the number of companies focused on innovative ocean solutions [that are] in turn garnering global attention.”

More than 300 companies are doing oceans sector business in Nova Scotia and there are more than 60 innovators in hi-tech ocean services and products. The ocean sector accounts for one-fifth of all R&D carried out by companies in the province. Including spin-offs, ocean-related industries generate about C\$4.5bn, or 12.2%, of the province’s GDP.

Techs and start-ups

Halifax, Nova Scotia, is home to the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship, one of several eastern Canadian institutes dedicated to innovation in the ocean sciences and a hub for a number of successful new ocean start-ups.

The city’s Dalhousie University is host to Ocean Tracking Network (OTN); IBM’s DeepSense platform, which uses data-driven insights to leverage new ocean technologies; and Aquatron Laboratory, the largest aquatic research facility in eastern Canada. The Ocean Frontier Institute – which brings together international researchers and teams from MUN, the University of Prince Edward Island and Dalhousie University – is also located there.

“Dalhousie University and MUN both have extremely strong ocean science research programmes,” says Frederick Whoriskey, executive director of OTN.

Halifax has hosted ocean-related conferences such as the World Ocean Council’s Sustainable Oceans Summit, and the International Conference on Underwater

Networks & Systems. The city has also been chosen as the location for the IEEE Oceanic Society’s Oceans’ 24 Conference and it annually hosts the H2O (Home to Overseas Conference, Industry Showcase and Exhibition) Conference, which is emerging as Canada’s leading event for the ocean technology sector.

The city of Saint John, New Brunswick, is also an important centre for the ocean sector. The University of New Brunswick, Saint John Campus, offers Canada’s only bachelor of science in marine biology courses. It is also home to the Centre for Environmental and Molecular Algal Research.

The global headquarters of the world’s largest independent seafood company, Cooke, is also located in Saint John. The company has C\$2bn in annual revenues, and is investing in research and innovation along the aquaculture supply chain. Cooke and a number of other companies based in the greater Saint John area – including T4G Limited, NB Power and Atlantic Towing – are taking part in Canada’s Ocean Supercluster initiative.

A leap in salmon farming

Today, Atlantic Canada’s salmon farming industry is one of the region’s biggest economic drivers and is also seeing extensive R&D. Susan Farquharson, executive director at the Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association, says: “Salmon farming has transformed coastal, rural communities from areas of high unemployment to relative prosperity, and the potential exists to create more jobs and economic growth.

“Atlantic fish farmers are pioneers in the global salmon farming industry and are recognised international leaders. With world population growing along with the demand

for healthy protein, the salmon farming industry has significant potential for sustainable growth,” she adds. For example, Sustainable Blue, a company based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, has developed a land-based, saltwater grow-out facility, enabling the production of farmed Atlantic salmon throughout the year.

The region is also home to a significant and increasingly innovative lobster industry. “Processing plants are investing in automation and robotics, new packaging, water quality management, lobster quality testing and shipping methods,” says Geoff Irvine, executive director of the Lobster Council of Canada. “Harvesters are testing pop-up buoys to avoid lines in the water that entangle whales. They are testing new mechanisms that allow lost traps to be found.”

A place to meet

As eastern Canada enjoys a growing international reputation for ocean industries and innovation, experts in the field are flocking to its shores to attend top industry events. Halifax’s other ocean-related conferences also include: the American Fisheries Society; the Society for Marine Mammalogy’s Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals; Godae Oceanview’s Ocean Forecasting Symposium; the International Institute of Fisheries & Trade; Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation; and IEEE/MTS Oceans 2024.

Meanwhile, the World Aquaculture Society Conference will take place in St John’s in 2020 and is expected to draw 2000 guests from more than 100 countries. The city also hosts Innovate Canada, an event organised by Business Events Canada which showcases the country’s strengths in ocean sciences to C-suite members. ■



Industrial heart: the Port of Quebec is spending millions on its cargo-handling facility

Quebec's deep ambition

QUEBEC HOPES A MAJOR MARITIME STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES CONSTRUCTING A CONTAINER PORT AND BUILDING NAVAL VESSELS WILL BOOST ITS ECONOMY BY CREATING JOBS AND ATTRACTING INVESTMENT. JASON MITCHELL REPORTS

The government of Quebec is implementing a maritime strategy that aims to create more than 30,000 direct jobs and encourage public and private investment of about C\$9bn (\$6.8bn) by 2030.

During the first five years of the strategy, the government plans to invest up to C\$500m to improve infrastructure in the maritime sector, which is expected to generate 1500 jobs during the construction phase. The government also plans to strengthen Quebec's economy – in particular the manufacturing sector – through the development of industrial port zones.

Cargo-handling and cruisers

The Port of Quebec is spending C\$775m to create the most environmentally and technologically advanced cargo-handling facility in North America in a project called Laurentia. The Quebec Port Authority (QPA) has signed a long-term deal with global port operator Hutchison Ports and Canadian National Railway to develop the container terminal on Port of Quebec land on the north shore of the St

Lawrence River. It will be the only inland terminal on the North American continent capable of handling the next generation of large cargo vessels.

"We couldn't have hoped for a better scenario," says Mario Girard, chief executive officer of the QPA. "The world's largest terminal operator, in alliance with North America's largest rail carrier, both choose Quebec City. This will make it one of the largest private non-residential projects ever built in Quebec City."

Eric Ip, group managing director of Hutchison Ports, says: "With its fully intermodal deep-water port, its strategic location to reach the US Midwest market, and the strong support of local authorities, the Quebec City project has all the assets to succeed in this highly promising market."

The Port of Quebec is also the first cruise ship destination on the St Lawrence River and Quebec City welcomed about 230,000 visitors from more than 30 cruise ships during 2018. Meanwhile, in July 2019, Davie shipyard – located on the St Lawrence River at Lauzon, close to

Quebec City – won a C\$500m, five-year contract from the federal government for maintenance work on the country's fleet of 12 Halifax-class frigates (Seaspan Victoria Shipyards in British Columbia was awarded a similar contract). This is the biggest contract in Davie's history.

On the research and innovation side, Quebec City is showing its credentials in the bio-marine and ocean tech space. Researchers at Laval University are using active ingredients in bio-marine products or by-products to maximise the nutritional value of foods and food products.

Applied research centres

Quebec's university is also the administrative home to Canadian research icebreaker CCGS Amundsen. The ship has been a major catalyst in revitalising Canadian Arctic science by giving Canadian researchers and their international collaborators unprecedented access to the Arctic Ocean. Its facilities and sophisticated pool of equipment make it a versatile research platform for scientists in the natural, health and social sciences along with their partners from government, industry and northern communities.

Furthermore, Merinov is Canada's largest integrated centre for applied research in fishing, aquaculture and the processing and development of aquatic products. It has four centres spread throughout the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and the North Shore, in the province of Quebec, and works closely with Laval University's institute for nutrition and functional foods.

"The development of innovative fields and strong industries not only benefits Quebec's economy, but it is also a great catalyst for the event industry," says Ann Cantin, director of communication and marketing for Quebec City Business Destination, the official meeting and convention bureau for the Québec region.

"When our economy strives, the event industry follows. It is essential for all stakeholders from politics, businesses and R&D to work closely together to create the strongest ecosystem possible for meetings and conventions to flourish. This industry then generates economic impact that can lead to an even greater economic development. It truly is a virtuous circle," she adds. ■