 

**Environmental Information: Use and Influence Report to BoFEP Annual Meeting**

The Environmental Information: Use and Influence (EIUI) interdisciplinary research program evolved from the nascent BoFEP Informatics Working Group (2007-09). It is based in the Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University and continues an active research agenda exploring the pathways and roles of information in marine science-policy interfaces. This research is currently supported by an Insight Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), which will conclude on 30 March 2024.

**Funding and Leadership Transition**

The EIUI team contributed to the development of multi-institutional grant application to the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF) in August 2022. Confirmation was received earlier this year (2023) that the application for $154 million was successful. This large research venture, titled Transforming Climate Action (TCA), involves researchers at four universities (Dalhousie as lead, Memorial, Laval, Université de Québec à Rimouski). Research that will continue along the EIUI theme and focus is included in Cluster 3.2 (Co-Constructing Knowledge to Engage and Empower Diverse Actors in Decisions and Solutions). Drs. Sandra Toze, Isabelle Caron, and Philippe Mongeon in the Dalhousie Faculty of Management are co-leading the policy and bibliometrics components of Cluster 3.2; the research will begin in 2024. The new TCA funding will facilitate both a funding and leadership transition for the EIUI program.

**Current Projects and Publications**

Several projects supported by our third SSHRC grant are coming to a conclusion with research reports being prepared for publication. Two papers were published earlier this year, others are in review with journals, and drafting of other manuscripts is continuing (see Appendix). All of these initiatives highlight the importance of understanding how credible, relevant, and legitimate information finds its way (or not) into decision processes for marine environmental sustainability.

**Public Lectures, Twitter, and Website**

On 29 November 2023, EIUI co-sponsored an Information Science Public Lecture, entitled “Open Science: A Shifting Paradigm, a New Reality,” by Dr. Maria Pawlowska, a noted expert on this subject. EIUI maintains an active Twitter account (twitter.com/EIUI\_Dal) averaging about 200 views / post. Further details about the research team’s work are available at the EIUI website (www.eiui.ca). Notably, numerous blog entries are posted on the website.

**Conferences**

The research team participated in the Coastal Zone Canada Conference in Victoria, British Columbia in June 2023 with a poster that provided an overview of EIUI’s case studies (see Appendix). Two researchers presented a paper at the Twenty-Fifth International Conference on Grey Literature in Amsterdam, 13-14 November 2023; twenty years earlier, Ruth Cordes, Peter Wells, and Bertrum MacDonald won the International Grey Net Award for a paper presented at the 2003 conference in this series in Amsterdam.

**Graduate Course**

Another iteration of the graduate course, Information in Public Policy and Decision Making, was offered during the Winter 2023 term to Masters students from four graduate programs at Dalhousie University. The participation of several prominent guest speakers based in Canada and the UK continues to be a strength of this important course about evidence-informed decision-making. Several blog entries prepared by the students are posted on the EIUI website. In the winter term 2024, Dr. Rachael Cadman, a member of the EIUI research team, will teach the next iteration of this course.

To summarize, the research of the EIUI team continues in support of the overall mandate of BoFEP – to utilize scientific and social information more effectively at the science-policy interface in support of a more sustainable ocean.

Bertrum MacDonald,

For the EIUI Research Team

30 November 2023

**Appendix**

**Papers Published**

Castillo, D. J., Vicary, T., Kalensits, M., Soomai, S. S., & MacDonald, B. H. (2022). Ensuring equitable access to ocean and coastal information to advance knowledge and inform decision-making: The global Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts. *Ocean and Coastal Management,* 231, 106399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2022.106399 [Open Access].

Toupin, R., Melnick, K., Moharana, T., Curry, B., Gracey, C., Richards, N., MacDonald, B. H., & Mongeon, P. (2023). Measuring engagement with shark research in science, news and social media, and policy: A bibliometric analysis. *Marine Policy*, *157*, 105829. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2023.105829 Get rights and content

**Papers Submitted**

Eck, K., Soomai, S. S., & MacDonald, B. H. (2023). Evaluating the effectiveness of technical working groups for marine conservation and fisheries management in Belize. (In review).

Watson-Wright, W. M., Wells, P. G., Duce, R. A., Gilardi, K. V., Girvan, A. S. T., Huber, M. E., Kershaw, P. J., Linders, J., Luit, R. J., Vivian, C. M. G., &. Vousden, D. V. (2023). The UN Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) - An ocean science-policy interface standing the test of time. (Submitted to the Mar. Pollut. Bull., currently in review).

**Conferences**

MacDonald, B. H., Soomai, S. S., De Santo, E. M., & Wells, P. G. (2023). Understanding information pathways for evidence-based policy and decision making in coastal and ocean management. Poster presented at the Coastal Zone Canada conference, Victoria, British Columbia, 11-14 June 2023.

MacDonald, B. H., & Manuel, P. (2023). Information, public decision-making, and climate change: The many roles of grey literature. Paper presented to the 25th International Conference on Grey Literature, Amsterdam, 13-14 November 2023.