



**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS
FISHERIES INSTITUTE**

Indigenous Program Review

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**Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fishery Initiative
Workshop in Moncton November 6, 2017**

What We Heard

Intros of Participants, List one challenge and one success

- Participants were asked to introduce their commercial fishing enterprise, what species they fished and a challenge and success each of their programs have encountered. Species fished by the enterprises consisted of: Lobster, snow crab, rock crab, herring, salmon, tuna, scallops, sea urchin, shrimp, turbot, halibut, haddock, squid arctic char, clams, mussels.

Challenges

- Expense of vessel upgrades, finding money for capital projects, discriminatory DFO policies to develop fisheries, proper training for fishers, reconstructing commercial fishery over the last two years, extreme distances ie: Hard to get to Digby or Grand Manan, fish access, professionalism, decline in shrimp population, having voice heard, short fishing season, break downs in the middle of the season, unionized deckhands, dealing with DFO, Started one month late because of negotiations of price with plant, access to capital, access to quota, administrative guidelines. Hard to use whole licence as rules wouldn't allow them to choose who would, decline of shrimp.

Successes

“Out of 90 there are 2 non-natives. We have 4 guys training under a non-native captain so they will eventually replace them. We have 40 people at our processing plant. Administration is all native except one chartered accountant. One mechanic is non-native and training someone to replace him. “

- Expansion project, successful reconstruction of commercial fishery, upgrading of vessels, didn't restrict to one territory, fish farm expansion, implementation of drug testing policy, First Nations participation in our fishery, caught 100 metric tonnes of Snow Crab this year, prosperous communities, temp increase to snow crab quota employed 20% of community members. Building new crab boat, bought stocks in a transformation plant, season was good stable teams of young fishermen, lobster transformation plant wholesale retail store, Sea Cucumber picked by hand.

Comments about nature of review

- At one point participants asked for a change in the nature of the workshop to more directly address fundamental aspects of the integrated commercial fisheries initiative business they are involved in. They wanted to focus on components of AICFI: business development team, fishery management system, technical advisory committee, and training. The facilitators adjusted the afternoon schedule to address their concerns and continued on with the present task.

Identifying needs and success factors of Commercial Fishing Enterprises

- Participants commonly listed **access** as the driving need of their commercial fishing enterprises. This meant access to capital and access to quota. Participants do strategic planning along with business planning. However they say the **growth aspect** is not there and they need to have funding dollars to make part of plan come into effect. One participant mentioned how they need to be able to purchase specific gear to expand or improve their fishery. In terms of access to a larger fishing quota, many enterprises would like to access a more diverse array of species to further ensure the sustainability of their businesses. Participants listed shrimp, scallops, snow crab and sea cucumbers as species they would like to access. On a related note one need listed was needed the **scientific background** to move into fisheries they are not involved in yet.
- Participants would also like their enterprises to be able to provide more **sustainable employment** for their members. Many stated they would like to be able to offer for regular employment in order to be able to hang on to their employees and make the investment in them more worthwhile. Much of the employment is short term and seasonal which makes it hard to compete for the best employees. Related to more sustainable employment is the desire to establish more of a **career track** for employees who would like to make more of a career out of their employment. This means further access to training for those interested in long term career planning.
- One participant felt the **Fisheries Management System** could use more tweaking to make it more user friendly and increase the amount of data available. *“If there is some info I would like to put into reports for chief and council like a graph or diagram, I should be able to bring up trip and diagram. I can’t just go in and get info of safety for example on particular vessel.”*

Open comments

“I have office of three people. The dollars provided under 2.3 does not suffice. The time it takes to run the program is more than the dollar amounts we get. We used to take components and combine them to pay for office staff. When reports come due they don’t know they also come

due for chief and council. It takes lots of time without money to do it and is taking away from jobs people were actually hired to do.”

- A section of open comments revealed a number of other concerns and issue many participants. **Funding issues** were a big source of frustration. Enterprises were concerned with being **“graduated”** from the program. One participant mentioned they lost funding because they were considered a “successful” program. They stated they would have stayed an “emerging” program if it meant they would be able to keep their funding. On a related note, participants discussed how **reporting requirements** were hampering their programs. Many stated how these requirements were so onerous they took up valuable human resources away from the jobs they were supposed to be doing. They also felt the **funding was not adequate** to properly allow them to cover the reporting requirements. One enterprise also had to deal with a **3rd party evaluator** which further delayed funding, resulting in them getting funding on March 15th with only two weeks to spend it.
- Communications was also mentioned as a concern. Participants say there needs to be better communications between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and communities.

What can AICFI do to improve or help the following components?

- Business development Team
- Business Planning
- Wage Subsidy
- Training
- harvest and enterprise management
- CFLC Coordinators
- Access to capital
- Fisheries management systems
- Expansion and Diversification

Business Development Team

- Participant’s views were mixed on the value of the Business Development Team. One felt the engaging in this process was more of a delay than anything else. They questioned whether the Team taking over Fisheries Management Systems was an improvement. One group did not feel the Team did not know enough about the community to be of help to their needs. However they did see a potential place for the Team to aid their nation. *“There is some value in what they do. They could go out and identify potential partners for us. Clear some of the obstacles.”* Others felt the Team was effective over the years by assisting with business plan development and applications.

One participant felt the team could do more. For instance, they could take on more of a liaison role, because, as one enterprise mentioned, they do not have a commercial development officer. Another suggestion was for the members of the Business Development Team to have a science background.

Training

- Training was identified as an incredibly important aspect of their program, and one worth focusing on improving. One participant says training needs to be continuous because of the rotation of personnel. They want to see more accredited training rather than just three day workshop. Though one participant cautioned against those looking to cash in on providing training to nations. *“Community colleges milk this like crazy. They created deckhand training course and charged \$2300 per person. What you actually need is actually \$650 course.”* It was also suggested Service Canada take up some of the leadership on providing and funding training. Participants want flexibility in training dollars. For instance one participant wanted to allocate training money towards purchasing a training vessel.

Commercial Fisheries Liaison Coordinators

- Participants were again, mixed on the value of the Coordinator. One comment was their community had outgrown the need for the person and suggested each community be asked whether they feel they need this position. Another participant says he uses the CFLC to attend meetings he cannot. Another participant says the CFLC should be looked at as a function rather than a position. One suggestion was for the scope of the position to be expanded to include more of a science focus. *“We are probably the only group to have CFLC doing this, looking at it being a commercial fishing science coordinator like improving knowledge of stock assessments. There is a lack of science on the commercial side. So you are expanding the mandate to include commercial aspects of group. Another nation is looking at that for CFLC position. The position is very strict, in reality they are exposed to science. It makes sense to report it and become involved.”* One participant cautioned though, one coordinator could easily be overwhelmed by the various species they would need to have expertise in, though another pointed out they could be supported by existing technicians in-house or related Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Ocean management groups.

Access to Capital

- Participants are looking for more flexibility in use of funding received through the program. Two participants suggested moving component 2.3 and 2.4 funding back under component 4.0 so they have more of a choice in what to do with the funds, including increasing access. It was also mentioned 2.3 and 2.4 seem to be population based. They felt 4.0 should not be population based. One suggestion was to be allowed

to use multiple years of funding in one year to make major purchases, for instance, to buy a vessel.

Fisheries Management Systems

- Participants had a mostly poor view of using the Fishery Management System. They feel the system in use is inferior to commercial products widely available. They did not appreciate being told they had to use the program and revealed they do not in fact use it. They do however see the value in using some sort of system as they have use of the information being compiled. *“They should have been made it into a software program like QuickBooks that an auditor could come and get information out of. I like using a program to get info from for chief and council. I would like to see expansion.”* One participant says his group absolutely refused to use the program because they did not want to violate the privacy of their members. They essentially privatized their fishery practices. *“With our lobster industry, we issued all 38 licences. In return we had them employ band members. We tried to address dependency issue and give a sense of self-confidence. All revenue generated was theirs and we didn’t need to know. Once revenues go to them, expenses went to them, not the band. FMS doesn’t allow this to be incorporated into the system.”*

Expansion and Diversification

- One participant mentioned how diversification of their program was essential they did not get the backing they needed under the current Commercial Fisheries Initiative. They stated the first year of the program they tried to get a vessel, was delayed and delayed, then finally told “next year.” The Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Diversification Initiative was mentioned as not being offered for the last 10 years.

What is your definition of sustainable/successful CFE?

- There is a checklist. Something being used by DFO to consider what is considered sustainable. What is that checklist and let us shape it?
- Hard to define sustainable enterprise if the community is still in need.
- Sustainability: Every resource that you fish, make sure there is all kinds for generations to come.