

Indigenous Program Review and its Recommendations Background

In May 2017, Fisheries and Oceans Canada began working with Indigenous executives through the National Indigenous Fisheries Institute to co-design and co-launch a process to review the Department's Indigenous programs. This process was based on the principles of co-development, co-design and co-delivery, which is about government–Indigenous collaboration at the technical and operational levels.

Indigenous Program Review took place over two phases. Phase one reviewed the Atlantic and Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiatives and the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program. Phase two reviewed the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy and its Aboriginal Fishery Guardian Program component. Over both phases, the Institute engaged communities that have not been eligible for the Atlantic and Pacific commercial programs in the co-development of the new Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative.

The Institute produced three recommendation reports as a result of Indigenous Program Review. Some recommendations in these reports are directed to the entire Department and the Canadian Coast Guard, while others are specific to one or more Indigenous programs. There are also some recommendations which include the attention and collaboration of other federal departments and agencies.

The recommendations themselves are grouped under three core messages to DFO and CCG:

1. **Take practical steps** to address issues of a structural or technical nature impeding the efficient administration of programs and practises
2. **Ignite a culture change** by approaching the renewal of programs and day-to-day operations and interactions with Indigenous groups and communities through the lens of truth and reconciliation – and the long-term goal of a balanced relationships
3. **Reconcile resource management** to respect the rights of Indigenous people in programs, practises and policies

The Institute's reports and their recommendations were formally accepted by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard on May 24, 2019 through a joint DFO-CCG-Institute news release. On June 21, 2019, the Minister also announced that DFO-CCG would be taking a whole-of-department, long-term approach to advance meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the areas of fisheries, oceans, aquaculture, aquatic habitat, and marine waterways through the development of a reconciliation strategy. The Department has adopted the *Ignite a Culture Change* message and logo to drive this plan of action and help employees understand why and how their day-to-day work contributes to effective reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The Department and the Canadian Coast Guard have now fully moved into Indigenous Program Review Implementation. On September 6, 2019, the Minister also formally announced the DFO-CCG action plan to track and report on its implementation activities and the broader reconciliation strategy results.