



What We Heard

“I’m excited by what the Institute and Fisheries and Oceans Canada is doing. It’s nice to have [you] come to us and ask us what we may want to do.”

- Participants are interested in Indigenous commercial fishing opportunities, but they are concerned about the future of marketing for freshwater fish. Some are also concerned about renewal activities related to commercial fishing in Great Slave Lake starting before the new Northern initiative is in place. For example:
 - One questioned the rationale of sustaining the existing fishery model (production-driven marketing) even though it has not worked well in the past. A few also saw value in more collaboration between governments and government initiatives to ensure economic success. *“A lot of problems can be addressed by this program.”*
- Participants stress the need to design the program to reflect the needs of inland fisheries, which differ from coastal ones, and to respect traditional trade routes. They also want to see all Indigenous communities benefit from the program. *“We want to deal with this in a reasonable way, so we all benefit as was originally intended.”*
- Some participants are concerned about the lack of attention and production in lakes other than Great Slave Lake. *“There’s no turn-over of product. Fish should only be allowed to grow to a certain size or else there’s too much mercury in them to eat.”*
 - Several support commercial fishing in other waterways if studies show that this activity can take place sustainably. *“The fishery can be a lot bigger. We want a study of all fishing in the Territories: all lakes and rivers.”*
 - One pointed to the number of available territorial programs to support those interested in commercial fishing. *“It’s not a matter of having programs, it’s more a matter of will.”*
- A few participants are eager for the Northern initiative to be formalized and underway quickly. *“This is all great stuff, but the time part is not fast enough. I hope you can speed this up.”* However, they also acknowledge that a plan is needed to support industry with sales and marketing if the marketing corporation does not continue.
- There are mixed views about the marketing potential of fish in the area. Some have already been approached by fish buyers for their products, while others see more opportunities in local markets. *“I’m fascinated by the potential for commercial sales of freshwater fish in grocery stores here.”*
- One participant would like more plain-language information on the Northern program so they can explain it more easily to community members. *“If we could design this so everyone can understand it. I have to keep things simple.”*