



Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative

FINAL REPORT



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS FISHERIES INSTITUTE
INSTITUT NATIONAL DES PÊCHES AUTOCHTONES
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MARCH 2019
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Message from the Institute

The National Indigenous Fisheries Institute works with communities, regional organizations, and government agencies to maximize the benefits of fisheries, oceans, and aquaculture programs to Indigenous peoples across Canada. This mission is especially important when a new program is being developed.

It is also essential to the co-design, co-development, and co-delivery approach.

Over the past 18 months, the Institute has been meeting Indigenous peoples, groups, and governing bodies across Canada's North to learn about their commercial fishing and aquaculture needs and aspirations. We also received their advice about how to successfully deliver a commercial fisheries program in the North.

In total, we held 17 sessions involving more than 50 different communities, 17 groups, and 143 participants. This includes government leaders and officials, mayors, hunters and trappers, fish harvesters, commercial fishing managers and association leads, aquatic resource and oceans management groups, training coordinators, entrepreneurs, and many community members.

We also benefitted from the results of meetings and engagement sessions held by officials at Fisheries and Oceans Canada with Inuit Nunangat leaders and eight communities in Nunavut during the 2017-18 fiscal year.

What we learned and heard is presented throughout this report.

In particular, we heeded the advice of Indigenous groups and communities to:

- take a cautious approach to program development
- ensure that the program would be successful for all communities
- coordinate and leverage complementary activities
- put an end to federal program 'starts and stops'

For example, we were reminded in Nunavut that while fisheries development promises have been made over more than 25 years, these commitments have yet to be fulfilled. This experience was echoed by Innu communities in Labrador. Meanwhile, Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories have been fighting to regain their rightful place in the commercial fishery of Great Slave Lake – and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon Territory, Nunavik, northern Quebec, and the North Shore of the Saint Lawrence have been left out of the Atlantic and Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiatives.

Clearly, the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative has long been needed.

But the program has been set up with an incredible mandate. It must meet the unique needs of communities with multiple cultures, languages, and governing structures across a vast area with diverse geographic, infrastructure, and species-specific realities. At the same time, it must deliver the requirements of Indigenous communities in Canada's interior regions which are pursuing aquaculture ventures.

Developing such a program required a lot of listening and creative thinking – and we benefitted from the patience and generosity of many leaders and community members. We were also fortunate to have two Board members from the North, one from Nunavut and one from the Sahtu Region of the Northwest Territories, along with Secretariat staff from Manitoba.

As a result of our engagements and discussions, we concluded that the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative must be a multi-type program that accomplishes the following:

- ▶ **First**, it should emulate the successful programs in the Atlantic and Pacific, which support both commercial fishing enterprises and aquaculture operations, while addressing the unique realities of the North and interior regions. This includes community isolation, cost of fuel, and lack of physical infrastructure.
- ▶ **Second**, it should introduce a new model of economic development programming: one that values artisanal and traditional-trade subsistence fishing for food security and local market saturation. This is a redistributive model that revives original commercial fisheries.
- ▶ **Third**, it should include a bridging component to help communities transition from the redistributive model to small-scale commercial fisheries (and beyond) at a pace that is acceptable to its members and appropriate for local, domestic, and global markets.

The elements of these three program components are detailed in this report. We also made several recommendations to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (and other federal departments and agencies) about how to address the unique needs of the North and the funding limitations of this program.

One of our key points bears repeating in this message:

Governments and all Canadians need to understand the importance of this program to the economic success of northern regions. In many areas of the North, commercial fishing is one of the few – if not the only – economic driver for communities. This activity is also key to address high unemployment rates and food insecurity issues.

The Institute has been privileged to be invited into the lands, territories, and communities of so many Northern peoples. We are grateful to our hosts and to each individual who took the time to share their experiences and to offer their advice regarding the development of this program.

Members of the Board of the
National Indigenous Fisheries Institute

**Jeffrey Maurice | The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew
Kenneth Paul | John G. Paul | Jordan Point
Chief Robert Chamberlin | Lina Condo**

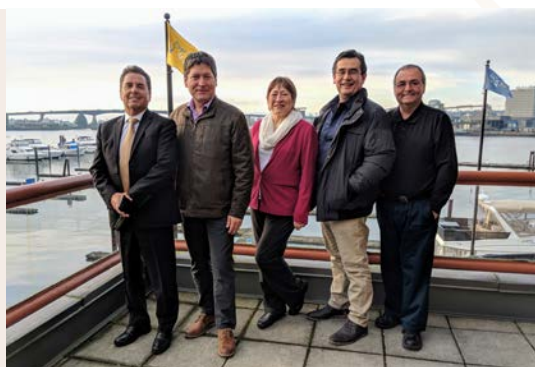
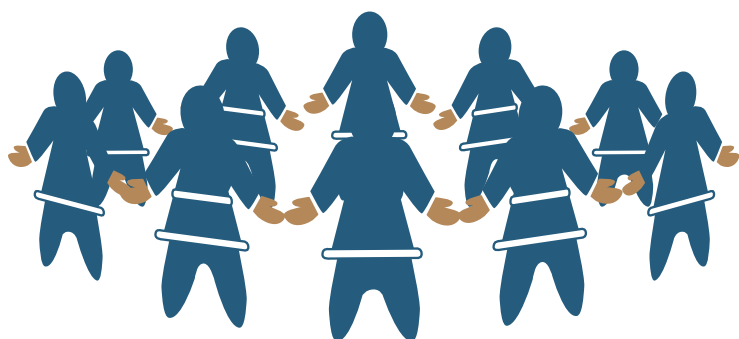


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Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative – Understanding the Program Model

Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s regional Indigenous commercial fisheries initiatives have proven that commercial fisheries and aquaculture can be a driver for socio-economic development and self-sufficiency in Indigenous communities across Canada.

That means these initiatives achieve measurable results beyond the bottom line:

▶ **Creating jobs and meaningful employment.** This includes jobs other than fish harvesting and product handling, and jobs that evolve from seasonal to full-time employment. Meaningful employment leads to low turn-over of crew and management staff, professionalization, and pride in career choices.

▶ **Developing commercial fisheries and aquaculture business managers.** As management staff grow with the business, they develop critical thinking and decision-making skills, and the ability to deal with industry issues and to strategically plan for the future. This includes planning for business efficiencies, innovations, diversification opportunities, and life-cycle management of vessels and other equipment.

▶ **Building the foundation for strong enterprise governance structures.** Because simply having access to commercial fisheries or aquaculture leases does not guarantee long-term success: enterprises must operate with accountability and solid internal controls.

▶ **Benefitting the broader community.** Indigenous commercial fishing and aquaculture enterprises generate dependable revenue streams that can be invested in community priorities. Once again, this develops pride in career choices that help the community.

A major strength of the program’s delivery model is its flexibility to respond to any number of community situations – and its practice of operating at arms’ length from government. This is achieved by offering advisory services to communities through a highly skilled business development team and by making decisions together through a management committee that includes Indigenous community members. It is also realized by adhering to the principles of transparency when allocating program funding.

The business development team is a recognized key program asset, offering a range of services to help Indigenous communities determine the feasibility of new project ideas, prepare business plans, adopt best management practices to improve businesses, prepare proposals to secure funds from other sources, and much more. Teams in the Atlantic and the Pacific are equipped with expertise in the fishing and aquaculture sectors, financial management, and community-development processes. This includes specialists in processing, handling, and marketing.

The management committee reviews and guides the implementation of all program activity, including multi-agency partnerships, to ensure businesses are best positioned to achieve success. This means regularly meeting to monitor progress and the results of funded activities – and to find solutions to any issues. Progress is measured against established success indicators, such as building jobs, skills and revenues in communities.

The integrated commercial fisheries initiative model has benefitted many communities across Atlantic Canada, parts of Quebec, and British Columbia. It is time to bring this model into the North and to other areas served by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.



PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY FOR FUNDING

Funding models fair and equitable

Making funding decisions together

Committed to ongoing program improvements

Independent third-party evaluation of expansion and diversification funding applications

Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative

Recommended Delivery Model: Multi-type Program

1

PROGRAM DESIGN – COMMERCIAL

Honing enterprise governance and business management skills, building capacity in commercial fisheries and aquaculture operations, and ensuring a resource co-management role

Funding Components

- Business Planning and Development
- Business Capacities: Management and Harvesting Training
- Business Necessities: Harvest-related Research and Infrastructure
- Business Opportunities: Harvest-related Marketing and Diversification

Align with other Research-related Funding and Partners

- Aquaculture Collaborative Research and Development Program
- Program for Aquaculture Regulatory Research
- Polar Knowledge Fund
- Science Sector procurement
- Science Partnership Fund

Align with other Infrastructure, Marketing and Diversification Funding and Partners

- Small Craft Harbours
- Clean Technology Adoption Program
- Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund



2

PROGRAM DESIGN – LOCAL REDISTRIBUTIVE

Developing business management skills, building capacity in redistributive fisheries operations, and improving indicators of health and food security

Funding Components

- Local Business Planning and Development
- Local Capacities: Management and Harvesting Training
- Local Necessities: Harvest-related Infrastructure
- Local Opportunities: Harvest-related Marketing and Supply Planning

Align with other Training Funding and Partners

- Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program (Employment and Social Development Canada)
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (Health Canada)

Align with other Infrastructure, Marketing and Distribution Funding and Partners

- Nutrition North Canada and Harvesters' Support Grant (Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and International Trade)
- Indigenous Services Canada
- CanmetENERGY (Natural Resources Canada)



3

PROGRAM DESIGN – COMBINED COMMERCIAL/REDISTRIBUTIVE

Ensuring program design flexibility for redistributive businesses moving into small-scale commercial activities (e.g., being able to access funding from business and local components)

Program Development

On May 22, 2018, the Institute released its Indigenous Program Review phase one final report, which recommended a number of practical and pivotal ways to improve the Atlantic and Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiatives.

In developing the new Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative, the Institute expects that the Department will consistently apply these recommendations, while making any required regional, cultural or language adjustments. For example, when annually updating and making accessible clear and consistent program guidance materials, the Institute recommends, at a minimum, that these materials also be made available in Inuktitut. Additional languages, such as Inuinnaqtun, would also be beneficial, along with visual communication tools.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

To assist in this effort, we have indicated throughout this report where phase one program review recommendations may apply to the northern program using this text graphic.

The Institute also recommends that the Department meet with eligible program participants to inform them about the contents of this report, the program design elements, and clear instructions about how the program will proceed in their region. These information sessions should be preceded by appropriate engagement with Indigenous and other provincial and territorial governments, as well as with regional resource management boards.

VISION OF NORTHERN COMMERCIAL AND REDISTRIBUTIVE FISHING ENTERPRISES

Indigenous Definitions of Success

Benefitting Communities and Resources

Food security

Healthy fish stocks

Co-management

Community employment

Goal

Indigenous communities participate in commercial fishing and aquaculture activities and these activities provide food security, employment, and economic profits to community members.

Understand fish stock abundance

Build knowledge about viable aquaculture ventures

Participate in resource management decision-making

Supply fish to communities and local markets

Increase community employment, health and wellness

Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative – Bringing the Success Model to the North



“I really like how the Institute Board talked about community pride being built from these programs.”

Based on the Institute’s engagement activities, it is clear that the current integrated commercial fisheries initiative program model can be applied to benefit a number of Indigenous communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Northwest Territories. These communities have enterprises that are at various stages of business readiness – from initial planning to fully formed and long-operational.

The program must be flexible to meet the needs of these communities, whether they are involved in offshore, inshore, and inland commercial fisheries and/or different types of aquaculture operations. The existing model in the east and west have achieved this flexibility, and it is recommended that the design of the northern program take advantage of the best practices and lessons learned by these two programs.

Program Design – Commercial Model

The northern program design should start with the existing commercial model, including both the business development team and management committee structures. The Institute recommends extending the business development teams in the Atlantic and Pacific to cover logical geographical regions in the North and expanding these teams to include culturally appropriate expertise. We also recommend that the Department continue using the business development team established for aquaculture development in the interior regions of Canada.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM STRUCTURE

Over the past year, Ulnooweg Development Corporation (the business development team in Atlantic Canada) has been working with Miawpukek First Nation in Newfoundland and Labrador to develop an application to secure business capacity support and proposals to diversify the community’s enterprise further into aquaculture. These are the types of services that a business development team offers to Indigenous commercial fishing and aquaculture enterprises.

Miawpukek has been building its capacity in commercial fisheries since 1999, including by using the Allocation Transfer Program to obtain its initial licences from retiring commercial harvesters and self-funding all subsequent acquisitions. The community was also an early participant in commercial aquaculture as a shareholder in commercial fish farms, owners and operators of industry supply and services businesses, and employees on farms.

During the Institute’s engagement session in Québec, an Ulnooweg advisor recognized the immediate need of several Indigenous commercial fishery managers for the fisheries management system being used by First Nations in Atlantic Canada. A demonstration of the system was in fact incorporated into the session and managers expressed an interest in using such a system in the future.

Based on these successes and geographic proximity, the Institute recommends that the business development team in Atlantic Canada be extended to serve Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore. We also recommend that the team be expanded to include at least one staff member to specifically serve fishing enterprises in Nunavut – and that every effort be made to secure a person with language proficiencies in Inuktitut and an understanding of the changing fisheries regulations in the territory.

Many Indigenous communities in Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore have long been involved in commercial fishing and some have advanced businesses with established local and export markets. These fishery managers are now looking to advance their training plans and the skills of managers and harvesters into the business of aquaculture. Several view Quebec's water quality and cool temperatures as ideal for aquaculture ventures, but they recognize that community infrastructure and knowledge will first need to be developed.

For the Indigenous communities in western regions of the North, the Institute recommends extending the services of the business development team in the Pacific. To start, the team should focus on serving the interests of the Indigenous communities on Great Slave Lake that are ready to develop commercial fishing businesses. This will require dedicating one staff member to serve these communities; ideally, with expertise in freshwater fish marketing and an understanding of the territorial strategy to revitalize the commercial fishery.

Over time, and pending community interest, it is envisioned that the Pacific business development team would also serve Indigenous communities located elsewhere in the Northwest Territories as well as in Yukon Territory.

The Pacific business development team has experience serving both coastal and inland commercial fishing enterprises, which responds to requests of Indigenous communities around Great Slave Lake for the program to reflect the needs of inland fisheries. The team has also recently been involved in the development of an interior region commercial fisheries program.

Great Slave Lake is known as Tu Nedhé or Tucho to local Indigenous communities. Fishing in the lake was fundamental to the historical economy of these communities as it supplied fuel for dogs, which powered the transportation of members to hunt and sell goods. Many Indigenous communities were essentially blocked from participating in commercial fisheries when licences were given to displaced fish harvesters from prairie provinces.

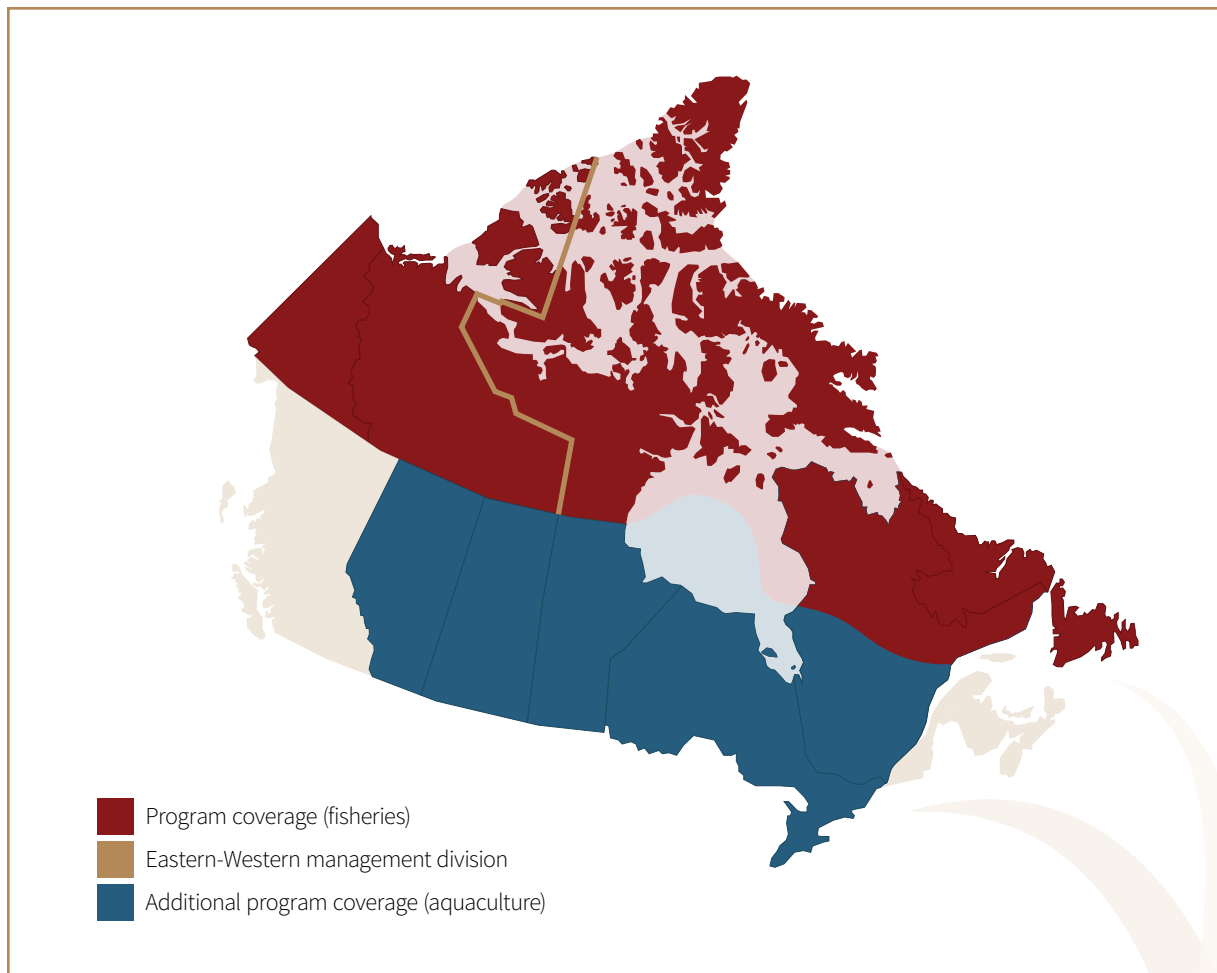
Recent fisheries policy changes have revived opportunities for Indigenous communities around the lake. Indigenous leaders worked hard to effect these changes and they are ready to be more engaged in the management of the fishery and the benefits of any commercial activities. This will require rebuilding the capacity of members to fish and sell commercially.

Specific to the development of aquaculture ventures, the Institute recommends that the business development teams in the east and west regularly meet with Waubetek Business Development Corporation to leverage the industry-specific expertise it offers to interior regions of central Canada. This is particularly important for the Indigenous communities in Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore which have expressed interest in diversifying their commercial fishing enterprises with aquaculture activities.

MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE

The management committee structure of the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative should follow a similar model used for the initiatives in the Atlantic and the Pacific. This includes having geographically representative members of Indigenous communities and regions involved in (or preparing to be involved in) commercial fishing and aquaculture operations. To ensure cost efficiencies, this committee would ideally have two regional northern sub-committees (one for the western regions and one for eastern regions), as well as one sub-committee for interior regions involved in aquaculture. The subcommittees should meet quarterly. To ensure national consistency, transparency, and equity across the country, the co-chairs and two representative members (rotating basis) of each sub-committee should also meet biannually, with officials from Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Ottawa.

The map below shows the division between the western and eastern regions in the North, and the areas covered by aquaculture.



Business Planning Needs

Business planning is the exercise of defining the goals of an enterprise and outlining the activities needed to reach these goals. A business plan is also a useful tool to explain the company's vision and objectives to employees, partners, and others with a stake in the profits.



For Indigenous fishing and aquaculture enterprises, this means involving the entire community so the business achieves the benefits they want and expect. It also means incorporating commercial fishing aspirations into community economic development plans. This is an important step because community development plans must be in place to qualify for funding from Canada's regional development agencies.

During our engagement sessions, the Institute consistently heard that Indigenous participants want to develop long-term, strategic business plans that are supported by their communities. Participants also outlined their training, infrastructure, and marketing needs as part of the business planning process – as well as three important pre-planning variables: understanding fish stock abundance, building knowledge about viable aquaculture ventures, and participating in resource management decision-making.

UNDERSTANDING FISH STOCK ABUNDANCE

"We need to first determine what is sustainable production – and then develop a business strategy based on that knowledge."

A number of regions in the North need to establish a baseline of the biomass of fish stocks in their waterways so they can properly plan their fishing enterprises. In fact, this was one of the most important business planning needs of communities that want to start a commercial fishing enterprise. It was also a key priority of many communities with advanced enterprises – and a need underscored by regional economic development officers. Moreover, some communities want to explore commercial fishing activities on smaller waterways and others want to understand the impact of development on water levels and water quality to protect their fish.

There are three aquatic resource and oceans management groups in the Northwest Territories, representing all but one community around Great Slave Lake. There are also two such groups for communities in Quebec and one in Newfoundland and Labrador for Qalipu and Miawpukek First Nations. While groups have different service models, they generally do technical work together along a watershed or ecosystem to achieve shared priorities.

The Institute recommends that the Department use its Science Partnership Fund and other methods of procurement to enable these aquatic resource and oceans management groups to understand fish stock abundance in waterways being considered for commercial activity. We also recommend that an aquatic resource and oceans management group be created for Indigenous communities in Labrador and, over time, other groups be created in eligible regions, if required.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

Shift to a shared capacity model for services that are best delivered by Indigenous people in their communities by adopting a department-wide Indigenous procurement policy and allocating A-base funding for knowledge and science.

Offer technical capacity-building to core groups and funding security for current service offerings to project groups, and expand the aquatic resource and oceans management network to geographic areas not presently served by a group.

The Science Partnership Fund has \$5 million each year to support collaborative research – including with Indigenous groups – that will increase understanding of oceans and freshwater sources and inform decision-making in these waterways. This includes scientific research projects related to science data collection and integration, ocean and freshwater monitoring, and the management, conservation, protection and promotion of ocean and freshwater resources.

Over the 2017-18 fiscal year, Fisheries and Oceans Canada officials visited eight communities in Nunavut to discuss joint goals for small-scale, community-driven fishery development. During these visits, communities wanted to know more about departmental science and research activities planned for the region. They also wanted improved sharing of research data.

The Institute heard consistent views during its engagement sessions in Nunavut. In particular, we heard that research on local fish stocks and sea mammals is limited in both marine and freshwater sources, and that fishery development research and hydrographic charts are needed in all areas. Some communities also want research to utilize both western science and Indigenous knowledge methods.

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management program is not available to communities that have signed a comprehensive land claims agreement if those agreements address watershed management areas. For these communities, the Institute recommends that other activities and funding partnership options be pursued by the Department, such as working with Polar Knowledge Canada and its pan-northern Science and Technology Program priority to establish baseline information to prepare for northern sustainability. The Department should also deliver agreed-upon data sharing initiatives with the communities they visited in Nunavut.

Over the next five years, Qikiqtaaluk Corporation will operate a research vessel platform in Nunavut that will enable communities to survey the state of Arctic char. A data-sharing agreement with Fisheries and Oceans Canada is included in this project.

Qikiqtaaluk Corporation is a wholly owned, Inuit birthright development corporation created in 1983 to provide employment and financial opportunities to Inuit in the region. The corporation has an excellent track record in Inuit training, capacity-building, and employment successes – and it strives to be a major contributor to the fisheries sectors.



BUILDING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VIABLE AQUACULTURE VENTURES

Over the past decade and longer, Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities have expressed interest in exploring opportunities in the aquaculture sector. This includes in both coastal and inland areas, and across interior regions of Canada.

To respond to this interest, three time-limited Strategic Partnerships initiatives with aquaculture components were made available to Indigenous commercial fishing enterprises and communities: a commercial fisheries diversification initiative in the Atlantic and one in the Pacific, and the Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative. The Atlantic and Pacific programs were linked to their respective integrated commercial fisheries initiative and have since become part of current funding components. It therefore makes sense that the continuation of activities which began under the Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative should be incorporated within the new Northern program.

The Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative was designed to support the development and growth of Indigenous-led commercial aquaculture ventures by offering technical business expertise through Waubetek Business Development Corporation. Business support was guided by economic, environment, and social sustainability and the best interest of communities.

A number of aquaculture ventures resulted from the Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative. For example:

- a feasibility study and business planning to support the development of a pilot-scale demonstration aquaponics facility in Moose Cree to supply approximately 1,000 kilograms of fish per month to community members, along with fresh produce
- a demonstration level, land-based Arctic char rearing recirculation facility in Manitoba expanded to a commercial-scale business operation
- the growing cycle of whitefish while in a submersible net-pen facility was supported to help provide a year-round source of whitefish to domestic markets and full-time employment to otherwise seasonal capture-fishery harvesters

The Institute recommends that the Department continue to work with Waubetek Business Development Corporation to advance the business development work started under the Aboriginal Aquaculture in Canada Initiative through the new Northern program. This includes leveraging other available sources of funding for aquaculture research and development, such as the Program for Aquaculture Regulatory Research and the Aquaculture Collaborative Research and Development Program. We also recommend that the Department and Waubetek further engage communities in the North which have expressed an interest in pursuing aquaculture ventures, such as those in Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore, to explore how their aspirations may be supported in the near future.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

Focus aquaculture efforts on building knowledge about what species and technologies are viable on land or in water.

Indigenous communities are in a unique position to benefit from sustainable aquaculture development due to the aquatic resources in their territories, their section 35.1 constitutional rights to these resources, and the fact that Indigenous communities have special access to aquaculture development sites. However, the business of aquaculture is regulated by more than one level of government in Canada. Licensing for aquaculture sites, for example, largely falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction and, in some areas, Indigenous communities do not recognize this level of jurisdiction.

Issues of policy, regulation, and legislation are outside the scope of the Institute’s mission and activities. However, we are aware that there is a National Aquaculture Working Group within the Fisheries Committee of the Assembly of First Nations and two of the Institute’s Board members are involved in this working group. We therefore urge the national aquaculture working group to help to resolve this issue, including by building on business activities that have received support from provincial authorities without requiring site licences, and by supporting (as appropriate) regulatory activities underway to develop an Indigenous ‘Aquaculture Law.’ We also encourage the Department to find solutions to these and other aquaculture development issues through the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers and its deputy-level fora.

PARTICIPATING IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING

Indigenous communities in the North want to be part of resource management decision-making so they can position their businesses for the future. Communities see their role as co managers of the resource and they want Indigenous knowledge incorporated into resource management plans. There is also clear interest in investing in resource management capacity.

While engaging communities in the North, the Institute learned that resource management plans are not always developed in commercially (or recreationally) fished areas, such as Great Slave Lake. These plans are necessary to guide the conservation and sustainable use of resources, but they first require an understanding of fish stock abundance.

The Institute recommends that the Department support the development of resource management capacity in aquatic resource and oceans management groups and communities receiving Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy program funding. For Great Slave Lake, this means enabling the development of an Indigenous management plan without the involvement of privileged users.

We also recommend that officials engage with their provincial and territorial counterparts, including at meetings of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, in finding a way to standardize the collection of all recreational, sport fishery and angling catch data.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

Support synergies and collaborations between fishing enterprises and aquatic resource and oceans management groups and continue to build Indigenous co-management capacity within the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy and the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management programs.

In areas with land claims, regional boards are the main instruments for resource co management with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. At present, these boards are: Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, Torngat Joint Fisheries Board, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Inuvialuit Fisheries Joint Management Committee, Gwich’in Renewable Resources Board, Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, Wek’èezhii Renewable Resources Board, and the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee.

There are other ways to support Indigenous aspirations to be more involved in the decisions that impact their commercial fishing and aquaculture enterprises. For example, Mittimatalik has proposed that an educational partnership between Arctic College and Algonquin College be developed to create a pool of trained Inuit students that the local Hunters and Trappers Organization could hire to do projects aligned with fisheries management. It is envisioned that departmental information and lectures on sustainability planning would be part of the curricula.

The Institute recommends that the Department resume its discussions with Mittimatalik regarding this proposal. We also recommend that the fisheries management system used in Atlantic Canada be adjusted to apply to different types of fisheries in the North, including inland lakes and rivers, and made available in to communities in multiple languages, including Inuktitut.

Training Needs

Training is fundamental to the future success of the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative. Indigenous communities across the North are interested in building both the business skills and management capacities of their fishery managers and the fishing safety and product handling skills of their harvesters.

Investing in ongoing training and continuous improvement is a best practice of businesses and governments. The Institute also advocates for standardized training and skills development along career progression paths across all Indigenous programs.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Most Indigenous communities in the North need business management training as very few courses have been offered in this region. Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore appear to be the exception as some fishery managers have taken business management, human resource, and finance training courses in the past, including courses offered by their aquatic resource and oceans management group.

During our engagement sessions, participants indicated their support for training in fisheries operational management, financial management, strategic business planning, and informed decision-making. Some communities want additional training in areas such as new technologies, fisheries regulations and policies, marketing, and industry-specific courses. Managers in Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore also want a clear career progression path to be established with a fishery management university certificate that incorporates fisheries biology and aquatic life-cycles, fisheries management planning, fleet management, and statistics.

The Institute recommends that curricula based on the fishing enterprise management training developed in Atlantic Canada, and adapted for British Columbia, should also be adapted to meet the needs of current fishery managers in Nunavut, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore. This exercise should be undertaken in partnership with regional colleges. It should also be adjusted in the future for fishery managers running commercial operations in Great Slave Lake.

HARVESTER TRAINING

“A formal curriculum would help fish harvesters realize the benefits of all these courses.”

Harvesters in several Indigenous communities in the North have already taken basic training courses and some have also completed captaincy training. Other communities are just starting to get new entrants into basic training. Regardless of the region, all communities support having harvesters trained to fish and navigate waterways safely – and most want to see community mentors involved in this training.

Northern Indigenous communities also have specific training interests. For example, communities around Great Slave Lake and in Nunavut, Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore want harvesters to become proficient in using new gear, new technologies, and fisheries regulations through advanced training. Some also want their harvesters to become certified divers and for mechanics in the community to be trained to repair vessels and gear.

Moreover, every community that the Institute engaged is interested in harvesters being trained in fish handling and processing to ensure consistent product quality. This includes basic courses to help harvesters understand why changes are needed and the consequences of not making these changes.

The Institute recommends that a reasonable portion of program funding be used in the first five years of the program to train new entrants or harvesters with very little training; especially, in how to safely harvest fish. At the same time, we recommend that some program funding be allocated for seasoned managers and harvesters to take advanced training in business- and/or diversification-related courses. Funding for training should also be an ongoing feature of the program and the Department should continue to pursue a long-term source of funding to help meet these training needs, including by partnering with Employment and Social Development Canada through its Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program.

**INDIGENOUS
PROGRAM REVIEW
RECOMMENDATION**

A long-term partnership with Employment and Social Development Canada should be secured to augment program funds for training and skills development along career progression paths.

We further recommend that the Department collaborate with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Indigenous communities to develop curricula for fish handling and processing in the North. In addition, the Government of Canada should take steps to employ one or more community inspectors and/or to use lab facilities in larger centers in anticipation of the need for a shellfish sanitation program and other food inspection agency services in the North. At present, Nunavut is served under the agency's western region, which is geographically inappropriate, while other northern regions are only served from southern centers.

To meet the unique needs of northern Indigenous communities, training should be locally coordinated and delivered through regional training partners, such as the *Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium* and *École des pêches et de l'aquaculture du Québec*. This is cost-effective with respect to logistics and travel-related weather constraints and it helps to meet cultural and language needs and preferences. It also makes sense given the diverse waterways in which fishing will be taking place, and the diverse vessels, gear, and other equipment that will be used in these fisheries.

In February 2018, Transport Canada announced \$12.6 million for the *Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium* to deliver a Marine Training Program to underrepresented groups in the marine labour force, including Inuit and other Indigenous peoples in the North. The funding is being used, in part, to set up a marine training center in Hay River and to expand the Consortium's existing training program in Nunavut and Nunavik. Funding will also be used to develop curricula for marine emergency response and coastal and waterway management, and to purchase new specialized marine training equipment.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Indigenous communities want the new program to support recruitment strategies so they can attract young people and other community members to the industry – and better plan for business management succession. Using youth outreach to fill Canada's future labour needs was one conclusion of the Public Policy Forum's December 2018 conference entitled, *Expanding the Circle: What Reconciliation and Inclusive Growth can mean for Inuit in Canada*. Indigenous communities in the North also value mentoring and the involvement of Elders in recruitment activities in addition to sharing traditional knowledge and practices.

**INDIGENOUS
PROGRAM REVIEW
RECOMMENDATION**

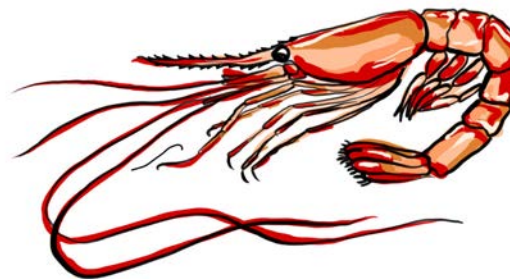
Support succession planning, including the best practice of linking communal fishing activities with commercial enterprise growth and succession, as well as community outreach programs that align training, accreditation, professionalization and career progression paths to employment in the fishery.

Infrastructure Needs

Like most businesses, commercial fishing and aquaculture enterprises rely on basic and industry-specific infrastructure. This includes physical facilities, such as storage facilities and landing sites, physical systems, such as roads and power supplies, and basic equipment, such as vessels and gear.

The most common fishing-related infrastructure need identified by Indigenous communities and commercial fishery managers is for local and/or modernized processing plants. Some are also interested in accessing processing plants located in neighbouring Indigenous communities.

Landing sites for fish, such as harbours, wharves, docks, breakwaters and/or ports are the second most commonly identified infrastructure need by communities. This is of particular interest in Nunavut, with one enterprise operator calling it a barrier to the future growth of the territory's fisheries. Qikiqtarjuaq has also been interested in a deep-water port for many years.



In 2009, a floating wharf was built for the fishing community of Pangnirtung by *Ocean Group*. Four years later, Pangnirtung was the location of the first small craft harbour in Nunavut, including a fixed wharf, breakwater, and sea lift ramp, along with a dredged channel and basin. The total cost of the project was \$40.5 million.

In October 2018, Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced a significant investment in harbour infrastructure in Hay River, including the construction of new floating docks to increasing berthing capacity by March 2019 and an extension of the concrete marginal wharf by March 2020. The Department has also taken steps to assess the feasibility of constructing small craft harbours in Ikpiarjuk, Kangiqtugaapik, Ausuiktuq, and Qausuittuq in Nunavut.

Other infrastructure needs identified by communities are more vessels, new gear, transportation and distribution services, ice-packing plants, community freezers, storage for live fish, and storage for vessels undergoing repair.

Small Craft Harbours at Fisheries and Oceans Canada is mandated to provide the commercial fishing industry with safe, accessible facilities. The Institute thus recommends that the Department continue to advance more landing sites in the North as a priority.

Once business plans are established for new commercial enterprises and targeted fish species are identified, we also recommend that the Department work with economic development agencies and provincial and territorial governments to advance the construction of modernized processing plants, where needed.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

Use the Strategic Partnerships Initiative to advance new processing or retail facilities with appropriate agencies and add more landing sites with Small Craft Harbours.

TRANSPORTATION, ISOLATION AND FUEL COSTS

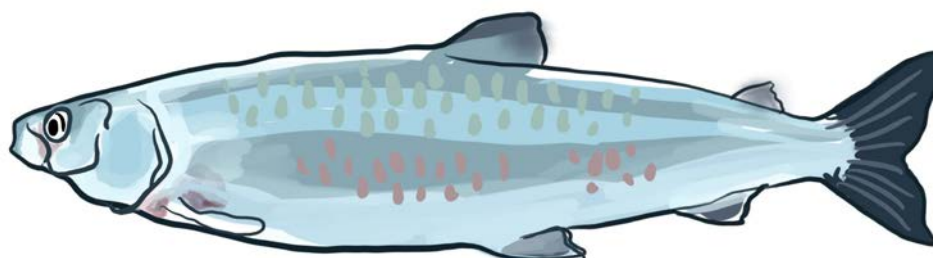
Indigenous communities in the North share unique infrastructure needs which impede economic growth in commercial fisheries and aquaculture. Factors such as isolation between communities, lack of all-weather roads, short fishing season, challenging terrain and waterways, and higher costs to build and maintain infrastructure, all impact the viability of commercial businesses. Fuel and transportation costs, in particular, present enormous challenges as does the dependency on air freight to get products to southern markets. In Iqaluktuuttiaq, for example, we learned that the weather can sometimes prevent air transport to arrive at scheduled times or airlines do not want to go to the camps at all, so fish harvesters do not complete their catch harvest. Air freight delays also significantly reduce and may even eliminate profits.

The Institute recommends that funding for business necessities, such as research on alternative transportation and new technologies, be available through the new Northern program. We also recommend that the Department leverage the Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program for this purpose.

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program is investing \$20 million over four years (from 2017 to 2021) to help Canada's fisheries and aquaculture industries improve their environmental performance.

Moreover, the Institute recommends that officials pursue some of the potential solutions that communities and fishery managers have considered to address transportation, isolation and fuel issues. For example, communities in Kitikmeot want a study to assess the potential of getting larger vessels into the region to carry the product to larger centers as an alternative to air transportation. Others in Nunavut support a commercial fish freight subsidy to be given to local companies that bring fish products to communities and take these products south. Meanwhile, communities in Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore, and around Great Slave Lake, want governments to work together to improve their road systems.

The "first all-weather road to Canada's Arctic Coast" opened on November 15, 2017 to traffic between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. This \$300-million highway has also brought opportunity for Tuktoyaktuk residents to sell products to new tourists, including fish and crafts, and has led to the opening of a new sit-down restaurant.



Market Access and Development Needs

“The whole chain is accountable for the value and price of the fish.”

Some Indigenous commercial fishing managers understand the value of their products and have well-developed local, regional and export markets. They also understand the importance of developing and maintaining local markets to reduce the costs of handling and transportation – and the importance of quality control. This includes working to reduce distribution costs by being the point of sale and delivery point; notably, in Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore, and in Iqaluktuuttiaq.

Kitikmeot Foods Limited produces fine-food products from sustainable harvests of Arctic char and Nunavut muskox. The char is processed and sold whole-dressed and as value-added fillets, candied char and jerky to customers across the territory. The company has also developed important client partnerships with commercial customers in the Northwest Territories, elsewhere in Canada, and into the United States through its long-standing supply partnership with *CleanFish*.

Located in Iqaluktuuttiaq, the Kitikmeot Food plant employs six full-time permanent and 14 full-time seasonal staff. It also employs up to 50 seasonal fish harvesters and hunters to harvest its products.

Other Indigenous communities, businesses and economic development officers are interested in exploring niche markets for their products using certification and quality branding strategies. They also want to better understand and address the realities of the market and commercial fisheries productivity issues, such as the costs of getting product to market.

Local market saturation is one such strategy. It is also the bridge between a local redistributive business model and small-scale commercial enterprises – and both communities and commercial fishery managers support getting locally caught fish into grocery stores and restaurants. Several businesses already supply value-added fish to one or more local restaurants and other communities want to become skilled in marketing their own fish for this purpose.

Two northern regions have specific marketing concerns because their freshwater fish is delivered to Winnipeg for sale through the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. While the future of this corporation is presently under review, the Institute recommends that the Advisory Panel research co-operative models that are based on market-driven production as part of its assessment for new partnership arrangements and ownership models that support collaboration and co-operation amongst fish harvesters – and involve these harvesters in decision-making.

Following initial program development, we also recommend that the Department investigate using the Strategic Partnerships Initiative to work with partners such as federal, provincial and territorial economic development agencies to advance locally desired marketing activities, including sustainability and certification programs. This could build on the results of the *Fish and Seafood Value and Supply Chain Initiative Needs Assessment* that the Institute is presently undertaking.

It should be understood that market access and development are activities for the future, and that commercial fishing enterprises must first be established and have developed business development plans. Where feasible and consistent with currently existing business development plans, the business development teams should also help today's northern enterprises access the new Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund.

On December 5, 2018, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and its provincial and territorial partners announced the \$42.85 million Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund. This cost-shared program is set to advance a national approach to key cross-cutting fish and seafood industry market access issues and branding opportunities in order to maximize product value. It also encourages industry participants to identify priority areas for investment over the life of the fund.

DIVERSIFICATION, VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND VALUE-ADDED ACTIVITIES

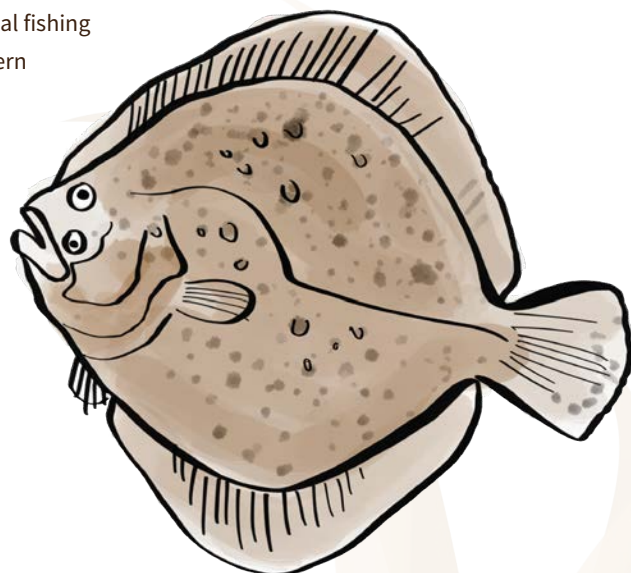
Some companies in the North are ready to develop strategic plans that will guide their business to be ready for diversification, vertical integration, and value-added activities. This includes multi-species processing, retail sales, restaurant operations, vessel maintenance and other marine services, as well as aquaculture. Others have plans to vertically integrate their business with a restaurant and retail sales, such as a shop to sell fishing supplies and equipment.

A number of Indigenous communities are also interested in diversifying production to use all parts of the fish, including by-products as fertilizer and fish scales and skin for artisanal products.

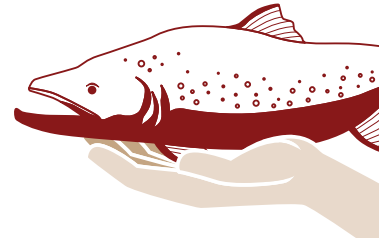
Three Indigenous communities in Quebec began working together in 2006 to vertically integrate their commercial fishing enterprises into processing and distribution. This partnership resulted in the employment of 180 people. Another venture employs an additional 40 people. These communities plan to expand even more in the future by mechanizing the means of production and making distribution more efficient.

The Institute heeds the advice of departmental officials with experience delivering these programs to take the time necessary to build enterprises that are ready for diversification. However, we recommend that a component of program funding be put in place for long-established commercial fishing enterprises, such as those in Nunavut, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavik, northern Quebec and the North Shore.

Following initial program development, we also recommend that the Department investigate using the Strategic Partnerships Initiative to advance the fisheries and aquaculture diversification aspirations of commercial fishing enterprises in the North.



Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative in the North – Valuing Indigenous Food and Trade



“Unless the program is for subsistence fisheries, I don’t see the appetite for this kind of industry.”

To meet the unique needs and issues of the North, the program design must be based on the Inuit’s self-identified needs and priorities – and the needs and priorities of First Nations and Métis communities that are also situated in the North.

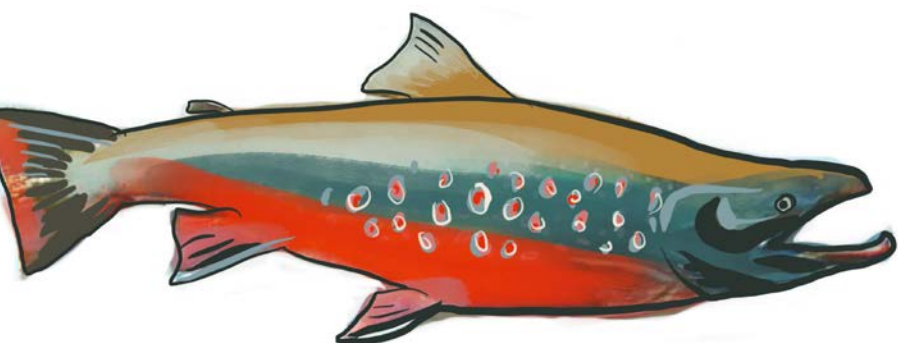
Access to country foods and food security is by far the most important priority identified by these communities. The recently released National Food Policy engagement document also shows that access to food by Indigenous and northern populations is a key priority for all Canadians.

The connection to country foods and traditional methods of trade is deeply rooted in the history of Indigenous communities across Canada. Local fishing, harvesting and hunting were not only activities to secure food, they were at the hub of community commerce.

Traditional trade and local sales are still a viable option for business development in remote areas of the North. With vast distances between communities and challenges to get a steady supply of product to urban centers, local markets may be the dominant ones. Supplying the community and local markets can also be a great source of pride for involved harvesters: providing food to Elders and children, improving the health outcomes of friends and neighbours, and helping to revive artisanal arts and crafts.

For these reasons, the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative program design cannot simply follow the successful model used in the Pacific and Atlantic. It must also lead an economic model that respects and values food security for Indigenous communities and traditional trade methods. This means aligning the program to meet the needs of subsistence and artisanal fishing businesses which redistribute fish and aquatic resources within communities and are based on food security and local trade and sales.

Once a local economy is built and local markets are saturated, communities may then decide to start a collective fishing enterprise and begin planning their business using the commercial model described above. The program’s design anticipates the shift between artisanal and small-scale commercial by including a bridging component in which to transition these participants.



Program Design – Local Redistributive Model

“Having seen so many projects here start big and fail, I suggest starting small and building sustainably from there.”

The local redistributive model supports the business and organization of fishing trips and marine mammal hunts for the benefit of the community by providing food for members and other local residents or visitors. The business is supported by country food knowledge-sharing programs, handling and product distribution training, community freezer programs, country food processing programs, and community-targeted healthy food promotion activities, such as Elder and school food programs.

These activities closely mirror what is identified in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture program model above: business management (planning harvest activity and managing production and distribution), harvesters (safely harvesting, handling, and distributing product), infrastructure (harvesting equipment, transportation systems, processing, and community freezer), and market access and development (community food programs, promotional activities, local sales). These activities also typically involve the entire community so harvests achieve the benefits members want and expect. But rather than profits, the local redistributive model is about access to country foods, which has a higher value because it is linked to food security.

Inuit Nunangat communities have experience using this model. For example, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami’s Nuluaq Project and Inuit Food Security Canada focusses on initiatives that support nutritional needs, teach traditional skills, and strengthen social connections around food through many diverse community-based initiatives. There are also 27 local hunters and trappers’ organizations across Nunavut that oversee harvesting at local and regional levels.

Kangiqtugaapik has used a similar social enterprise model to successfully build a community-run, community-based hotel. All *Naujaaraaluit Hotel* profits are directed to the community’s Ilisaqsvik Society so it can provide a range of programs to members from counselling to free Internet access to school breakfast programs. Having a hotel in the community also enables mobile health teams, which deliver dental and eye care in small Nunavut communities, to visit more often.

Makivik Corporation is another key example. Makivik uses funds that the Nunavimmiut received under the terms of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the offshore Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement to promote the economic and social development of Inuit society in Nunavik. Makivik has donated millions to non-profit and cultural institutions, including funding the construction of recreational facilities in each Nunavik community.

Based on the Institute’s engagement activities, the program’s local redistributive model can be applied to benefit a number of Indigenous communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, Labrador, and Yukon Territory, as well as Inuvialuit and Gwich’in communities in the Northwest Territories. Other Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories or northern Quebec may also be interested. These communities have varying levels of infrastructure and harvesting capacity to support a local redistribution business – and there is support in supplying food to members, including through local sales.

To best administer this side of the program, the Institute recommends partnering with key federal, territorial and provincial partners, as well as the Indigenous resource management authorities in land claim and settlement area

agreements using the Strategic Partnerships Initiative or another suitable partnership arrangement. Federal department and agency partners should include the Department of Indigenous Services Canada, Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade Canada, Health Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. There may also be a role for infrastructure, environment, and resource-focused departments.

ADVISORY GROUPS

The Institute recommends using regional advisory groups to inform the program’s management committee and to guide the activities of this part of the program. Advisory groups make recommendations as opposed to decisions, but they typically comprise ‘on-the-ground’ community members and experts. As such, the recommendations of advisory groups are based on up-to-date and regionally relevant intelligence.

Advisory groups are a way to communicate the needs of many different communities across vast distances, regions and cultures to the Department and the program administration partners noted above. They would still adhere to the principles of transparency: advising on funding decisions, balancing funding recommendations to support fair and equitable decision-making, and remaining committed to ongoing program improvements over time.

Regional advisory groups will require coordination through a national body while the Department establishes its new Arctic Region. The national body would be for coordination purposes only; not decision-making. That authority remains with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other government partners, including Indigenous governments.

The Institute recommends that at least three regional advisory groups be created: one for Nunavut, one for the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and one for Labrador and Nunavik. These groups should regularly meet by teleconference and in person twice a year.

On October 24, 2018, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami announced the establishment of a new, stand-alone Arctic Region for announced by the Department and the Special Operating Agency. The new region covers all four Inuit Nunangat regions, rather than spreading administrative responsibilities across three separate regional offices.

This is a unique approach for Canada, marking the first time that any federal department has structured its administration along a distinct geographical, political and cultural region. The new Arctic Region will be headquartered in Kangiqiniq and a new Coast Guard base will be set up in Yellowknife.

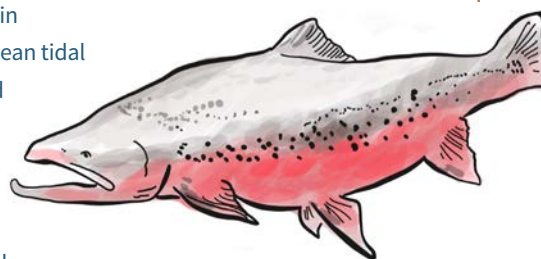
Local Redistributive Model Planning Needs

Indigenous communities across the North have been clear that they want to plan for their involvement in economic development programs by engaging community members and local decision-makers. This will be an important part of the local redistributive program roll-out as there may be new ideas put forward on how communities want to set up their program.

During the engagement sessions held by Fisheries and Oceans Canada officials in Nunavut in 2017-18, Arviat offered to co-lead a region-wide evaluation of fishery potential, including fish sharing, consistent with the Inuit cultural focus on food security. Kinngait also wants to collaborate with the Department to further investigate exploratory, subsistence, and commercial char fisheries. At the same time, Inuvialuit communities want to make sure any commercial-style activities are permissible in areas that were set aside exclusively for subsistence in land-claim agreements.

The Institute recommends that the Department use these opportunities to develop community leadership and empowerment in the co-design of the local redistributive program model. We also recommend that the support of Indigenous leaders in the North in the local redistributive model be confirmed prior to the launch of this program.

Arctic char is an important cultural, subsistence and economic resource in the Arctic. There are a number of commercial fisheries taking place in ocean tidal and river waters, with the majority occurring around Cumberland Sound and Iqaluktuuttiaq. There are also many subsistence fisheries for Inuit communities in Nunavut and some exploratory fisheries that are examining potential for future commercial char fishing areas.



The Arctic char fisheries in the Nunavut Settlement Area are co-managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, Regional Wildlife Organizations and Hunter and Trapper Organizations, in accordance with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the *Fisheries Act* and its Regulations and, in some communities, by local Hunter and Trapper Organization bylaws. This ensures that the best available information guides Arctic char fishery management decisions. Integrated Fisheries Management Plans are also in development for the main Arctic char commercial fisheries and changes in char populations as directly observed through community-based monitoring.

Training Needs

“Not having a food safety program for shellfish is an ‘economic ender.’”

As noted earlier in this report, Indigenous communities in the North are interested in building the business and harvesting skills and capacities of their members. They also support recruitment strategies, including outreach, training and mentorship, to employ more community members and to attract younger people to the industry.

While there are many seasoned and skilled harvesters in the North, Indigenous communities still indicated the need for training to help members manage local fisheries and to ensure harvester safety. There is also keen interest in having members trained to learn how to properly handle and process fish. This is especially important for the many communities in Nunavut that have tried to establish a Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program in the North, including with the support of the Government of Nunavut. At the same time, some Indigenous communities want local processing methods to be recognized by health authorities; especially, in smaller artisanal-level fish processing plants.

In 2016, the Inuvialuit Community Economic Development Organization developed a Country Food Processing Methods course for members across the Beaufort Delta region. The program aimed to give participants the knowledge and skills required to maximize commercial viability of country foods through in-class and hands-on instruction. The course covered the essentials of primary and value-added processing techniques, regulatory requirements, production, and retail economics. It focussed on value-added processing of char, muskox and moose, using flavouring and preservation techniques to create nutritious products with an extended shelf life, making them more affordable and easy to store year-round.

The Institute recommends that the Department build on the success of the Inuvialuit country food processing methods course by supporting the development of similar courses by local training institutes and community economic development organizations. As with all training-related activities recommended in this report, the Department should also continue to pursue a long-term source of funding to help meet the training needs of Indigenous communities in the North, including by partnering with Employment and Social Development Canada through its Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program.

In addition, we recommend that the Department work with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to develop and offer other country food handling and processing training for communities in the North, including those related to shellfish sanitation. It should also incorporate the results of the research procured by the Department early in 2018 to outline a shellfish sanitation program in the North and its assessment of the shellfish industry.

Infrastructure Needs

The most common local redistributive infrastructure need identified by Indigenous communities in the North is for fully functioning, modernized community freezers. Some have community freezers at present but they have trouble maintaining them due to cost of energy. Others may have a freezer, but it is not operational.

In 2016, the community of Sanikiluaq received an energy-efficient freezer designed by CanmetENERGY, a research and development organization working within Natural Resources Canada, which looked for ways to replace the outdated freezer technologies used in Nunavut. The freezer is transportable by plane so it can be flown for repairs if there are no readily available technicians.

Later in 2016, the Amarak Hunter and Trappers Association's announced that a new \$100,000 community freezer would be ready to store country food in Iqaluit.

Local processing facilities are another important infrastructure need identified by communities. In Inuvialuit, for example, communities are interested in examining the potential for small-scale processing units to be set up near their fishing sites. In Nunavut, Qikiqtarjuaq has developed a business plan for a mobile country food seafood processing facility. Partners in a commercial fishery feasibility study in Uqsuqtuuq are also considering whether industrialized snowmobiles could meet mobile processing needs.

Community freezers are essential to the success of the local redistributive business model, as well as the ability for members to safely process country food. Communities must have a way to properly process and store their harvests and this infrastructure must be local or at least reasonably accessible. There is also a need for communities to set up policies and guidelines for how their processing unit and freezer may be used and to determine who will be responsible for managing and maintaining these assets.

The Institute recommends that funding in this part of the program prioritize the purchase, repair, and management of community freezers and mobile processing units, as well as feasibility research to first establish local and regional needs. As an interim measure, funding should prioritize research and community examination of potential co-operatives between neighbouring communities for processing. For example, Arviat has indicated interest in collaborating with Kangiqliniq to be able to access their fish plant.

At the same time, we recommend that the Department collaborate with partners in this program to develop and share general guidelines that would help communities establish their freezer and processing unit management policies.

Local Market and Distribution Needs

During recent Nutrition North program consultations, citizens in the North stressed the importance of having access to traditional foods to support a healthy diet, community well-being and connection to local cultures and traditions. Indigenous communities are also interested in supplying country food to local grocery stores and restaurants – and potentially extending the supply of traditional foods to government institutions and resource development industries – including with the assistance of ‘buy local’ programs.

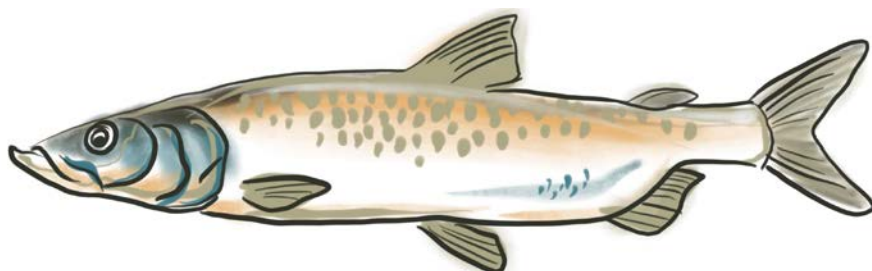
Kivalliq Arctic Foods offers its *Country Food Pak* to Nunavummiut across the territory, which includes country food items such as char, caribou, muskox, and maktaaq. Individual portions of most products are also made available through partner retailers in Nunavut.

In 2016, the Government of Canada expanded the Nutrition North program to include all isolated northern communities. It also committed to update the program, in consultation with northern communities. As a result of this consultation, \$62.6 million will be invested over five years to make several program changes and to introduce a Harvesters’ Support Grant to help lower the high costs associated with traditional hunting and harvesting activities.

Planning for local market saturation is an important success indicator of the local redistributive program model and a locally sustainable fishery. It is also the bridging component to help a local redistributive business transition to the commercial business model.

The Institute therefore recommends that the Department work closely with Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade Canada to align the Harvesters’ Support Grant within the framework of the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative and to examine how it may be aligned within Nutrition North program improvements. For example, the program’s training components could be aligned to increase the number of registered northern retailers in the Nutrition North program.

We also recommend that the Department work closely with Indigenous Services Canada to identify how the supply of country food could serve to achieve their health transformation goals for Indigenous communities in the North. This includes reducing type 2 diabetes.



Overall Program Funding

The Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative is not a multi-million funding program and annual total funding is set between \$7 and \$10 million at present. From the outset, eligible participants in this program have made it clear that this amount of funding is insufficient to cover such a diverse area – and the business of both commercial fisheries across the North and aquaculture across all regions of Canada unserved by other Fisheries and Oceans Canada Indigenous programs. Program administrators at the Department have also said insufficient economic development funding in northern regions has impeded the development of successful fisheries and aquaculture ventures in the past.

The overall level of funding for this program is problematic given the cost of doing business in the North and its immediate and ongoing infrastructure and market development needs.

Throughout this report, the Institute has recommended that the Department leverage every available fund and contribution program to augment the level of funding in this program. We also identified a number of potential partnership opportunities across federal, territorial and provincial departments and agencies that would help the Department stretch public funding to maximize the benefits to Indigenous communities and businesses in the North. This includes by using the successful Strategic Partnerships Initiative.

At the same time, we highlighted examples of other investments that governments have made in the North in recent years which will benefit Indigenous communities and their interests in commercial fishing and aquaculture. It is expected that these types of investments will continue in the future.

Leveraging partnerships and multiple sources of funding is one way to extend the benefits of this program. Enabling Indigenous-related policies may be another. While policies are outside the scope of the Institute's technical mandate, we have listed some suggestions made by Indigenous communities and fishery managers during our engagement sessions in the sub-section below.

OTHER POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Indigenous communities support Nation-to-Nation partnerships to extend employment and other benefits across neighbouring communities and throughout the North. They also want more opportunities to be able to expand and learn from other northern communities – and to take advantage of potential partnerships with non-governmental organizations and others.

Two communities in Nunavut are working on building sustainable commercial fisheries in partnership with World Wildlife Fund Canada. Kinngait is looking at crab and shrimp, and Sanikiluaq will start an Arctic char fishery and may also harvest scallops and mussels. While it may take up to five years of research to determine how these fisheries could be sustainable in the long term, funding for small-scale fisheries is part of WWF's goal to have a sustainable economy in the Arctic. The partnership in Nunavut is set up for businesses to initially sell to neighbouring communities before determining the viability of selling elsewhere in Canada.

During the summer of 2018, the Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative’s business development team organized an Indigenous community exchange between Qikiqtarjuaq in Nunavut and Wagmatcook and Eskasoni in Nova Scotia. The key objective of this exchange was to help Qikiqtarjuaq learn from the development of other Indigenous community fisheries. Fisheries and Oceans Canada staff were also involved in preparing for this activity.

Genome Canada is funding a multi-year study by researchers in partnership with residents of Uqsuqtuuq and Iqaluktuutiaq to understand the genetic differences among populations of Arctic char, Arctic cod and northern shrimp in order to develop a sustainable, science-based fishing plan. The project is intended to strengthen Nunavut fisheries, to increase employment and economic development opportunities in the region, to ensure access to a healthy food source by residents, and to improve food security in the region.

The Institute recommends that the Department continue to support and encourage Indigenous community exchanges and partnerships to benefit the development of fishing and aquaculture businesses in the North – and to improve food security across the region. We also recommend that the Department engage the World Wildlife Fund and researchers in the Genome Canada project to explore how the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative could benefit from complementary food security and sustainable economy priorities.

Moreover, we recommend that additional and ongoing research be undertaken by officials (or through contracted professionals) to remain aware and be able to track the results of all fishery- and aquaculture-related research and economic development activities in the North.

ENABLING POLICIES

Indigenous communities and fishery managers have indicated that the lack of access to fisheries must be addressed to ensure that the Northern program will achieve maximum success. This includes access to adjacent fish stocks, emerging fisheries and existing fisheries, as well as adequate access in transboundary areas. Some also want to see changes to licensing rules and policies. For example, due to the licensing rules in the Northwest Territories, commercial fish harvesters in Inuvialuit communities have to travel to Inuvik twice to get their licences.

The future of the Allocation Transfer Program is another key concern. Indigenous communities in the North have benefitted from this program, including by acquiring licences and quota. Innu Nation also said that this funding has been integral to maintaining their industrial-scale vessel.

Moreover, a number of communities are interested in having Indigenous rights in commercial fisheries clearly defined and outlined in the Department’s legislations and policies. Some are specifically working toward increasing ownership of Indigenous fisheries.

The Institute recommends that the Department consider these issues and address them as part of their reconciliation plans and strategies.

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

Deal with access and licensing issues to increase Indigenous participation in the fishery.

Meeting the Unique Needs and Issues of the North

“Our community is asking for a fishery. It is our number one priority.”

The National Indigenous Fisheries Institute has had the distinct privilege of engaging many Indigenous peoples, community leaders, economic development officers, and business managers across Canada’s northern regions in the development and design of this new program. The aspirations, ideas, and concerns of these people are presented throughout this report.

Our task in engaging on this program was to identify how it could best support Indigenous participation in commercial fisheries and aquaculture operations in the North, while meeting the unique needs and issues of the region.

In addition to the recommendations made above, we want to emphasize the following points:

- Government and all Canadians need to understand the importance of this program to the economic success of northern regions. In many areas of the North, commercial fishing is one of the few – if not the only – economic driver for communities. It is also viewed as key to addressing both high unemployment rates and food insecurity issues.
- Indigenous participation in commercial fisheries in the North has a complex history and communities want the program to reposition their participation in the future. For example, communities in Nunavut have been made a series of promises and commitments over more than 25 years on fisheries development that have yet to be fulfilled. This includes visits made by the Department in 2017-18 to discuss joint goals for small-scale, community-driven fishery development. Activities that have been initiated need to be completed.
- Communities in the Yukon Territory also underscore the importance of the Department not repeating past mistakes in their Indigenous commercial fisheries initiatives. This includes keeping the lines of communication open between officials and communities that may not be ready to participate in this program.
- The need for ongoing engagement, at least for the first few years of the program, is also an important message from Indigenous communities. The Institute heard on multiple occasions how much it was appreciated that engagement took place in their region. Communities also want someone to clearly communicate the roll-out of this program once the report has been issued. Others gave specific instructions regarding future engagement, including talking directly with community members and including decision-makers, such as Chiefs and Councils and/or economic development corporations.
- Communicating this program will require plain-language and language-appropriate guidelines and other information. Indigenous communities also want culturally appropriate information in which to engage and inform their leaders and all community members in planning their involvement in this program.

We are confident that Fisheries and Oceans Canada and all partners in this new program will meet these and other needs of Indigenous communities in the North.

Resources

INTERACTIVE SESSION AND WORKSHOP MATERIALS AND WHAT WE HEARD REPORTS

<http://indigenousfisheries.ca/en/engagement-materials/>

DISCUSSION PAPER

<http://indigenousfisheries.ca/en/discussion-materials/>

LIST OF ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS (COMMUNITIES, GROUPS, BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS)¹

- Akaitcho Dene First Nations / Akaitcho Territorial Government
- Akaitcho Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management
- Arctic Fishery Alliance
- Ajuittuq
- Baffin Fisheries
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- Conseil de la nation innue de Nutashkuan
- Dehcho Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Oceans Management
- Dehcho First Nation
- Dene National Chief and Regional Chief, Assembly of First Nations
- Deninu K'ue First Nations
- Ekuanitshit
- Essipit
- Fort Providence Resource Management Board
- Fort Resolution Métis Council
- Fort Smith Métis Council
- Government of Nunavut
- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Gwichya Gwich'in Council
- Hay River Métis Government Council
- Ikpiarjuk
- Innu Nation
- Innu Takauakan Uashat mak Mani – Utenam
- Inuvialuit Community Economic Development Office
- Inuvialuit Settlement Region Fisheries Joint Management Committee
- Igloodik
- Iqaluit
- Iskut First Nation
- Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation
- Kakivak Association
- Kativik Regional Government
- K'atl'odeeche First Nation
- Kugaaruk
- Kugluktuk

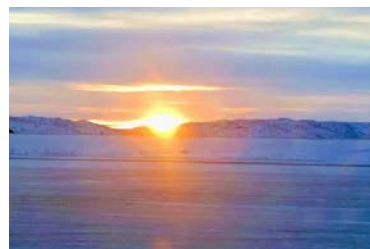


¹This list is not exhaustive. Many citizens and community members in Nunavut attended Institute presentations and participated in related events, some of which were informal and did not require sign in.

- Lutsel K'e First Nation
- Miawpukek First Nation
- Mi'kmaq Alsumk Mowimsikik Koqoey Association
- Nacho Nyah Don First Nation
- Nihtat Council
- North Slave Métis Alliance
- Northwest Territories Métis Nation
- Nunatukavut Community Council
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium
- Nunavut Fisheries Association
(formerly Northern Offshore Allocation Holders Association)
- Nvision Insight
- Options International
- Pakua/shipek
- Pangnirtung
- Pessamit
- Qalipu First Nation
- Qikiqtaaluk Corporation
- Sanikiluaq
- Shared Value Solutions
- Smith Landing First Nation Council
- Kluane First Nation
- Tahltan Fisheries
- Teslin Tlingit Council
- Tikiraqjuaq
- Tłıchǫ Government
- TriNav Fisheries
- Trondek Hwechin First Nation
- Ueushuk Fisheries Limited
- Unamen Shipu
- Wek'èezhii Renewable Resources Board
- West Point First Nation
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah and N'Dilo)

LIST OF OTHER ENGAGED COMMUNITIES, GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS ²

- Arviat
- Ausuiktuq
- Canadian Executive Services Organization
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
- Inuvialuit Fisheries Joint Management Council
- Kangiqtugaapik
- Kinngait
- Makivik Corporation
- Mittimatalik
- Naujaat
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
- Qamani'tuuq
- Qikiqtarjuaq



²This list reflects communities engaged by Fisheries and Oceans Canada officials for the Arctic Leadership Initiative and other government-to-government and/or organization meetings held by officials related to the Northern program.