

Building Indigenous Economic Readiness in Canada's Pacific Fishery

Strategic Partnerships Initiative: Pacific Commercial Fisheries Diversification

Narrator: In Canada, Indigenous Fisheries play an important role in many communities, serving as the main contributor of own-source revenue and job creation. Indigenous fisheries employ more than 5,000 people, and generate over \$260 million in annual revenues, making them an important driver of indigenous economic development throughout the country.

Narrator: The Strategic Partnerships Initiative, or SPI, helps indigenous communities build their economic readiness by bringing together key partners to increase indigenous participation across various economic sectors. This unique collaborative federal program is administered by Indigenous Services Canada, and shared by over 17 federal departments and agencies aimed at partnering for indigenous prosperity.

Narrator: Out of the partnership, the Pacific Commercial Fisheries Diversification Initiative, or PCFDI, was established to enhance indigenous communities participation in, and benefit economically from, commercial fisheries activities on the west coast of Canada.

Narrator: Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood LP is a prime example of a successful indigenous fisheries enterprise supported under the initiative.

Larry Johnson: Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood's was formed in 2003 in an effort to get the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations involved in shellfish aquaculture. The goal was to produce wealth for our communities, to education and training and marine certificates, and to contribute to a healthier ocean.

Brad Setso: Haida Wild is owned by the Haida Nation through its economic arm of Haico, and the shareholders of Haico is the legal arm of the governance of the Haida Nation.

Brad Setso: The long-term goals of Haida Wild are to be a sustainable company that provides meaningful employment to as many workers as possible, and also to support fishermen in their endeavours and aspirations to be boat owners and business owners.

Dave Moore: The Harrison Salmon Producers Limited Partnership is a modern commercial fishing enterprise. The commercial fishing enterprise is focused on salmon fishing, and the enterprise is operated and owned by the Sts'ailes, Scowlitz and their fishermen. Their focus is on harvesting fish, the local logistics for their fishery, and the value adding and sale of their fish products.

Larry Johnson: The PCFDI SPI funding was very instrumental in terms of helping us purchase St. Jean's back in 2015. It also helped us do the market researching and the development of the Gratitude Seafood brand.

Larry Johnson: St. Jean's is a company that's been around for over 50 years, a family run business that is probably the biggest recreational processor around. It's the last standing cannery as well.

Larry Johnson: We bought St. Jean's because of its expertise and its reputation, and it lines up very well with our principles.

Brad Setso: The project has successfully allowed Haida Wild to build more capacity, internal capacity, including doing our own shipping from Queen Charlotte to Masset. We've also utilized that truck to transport prawns that we were processing at the plant.

Brad Setso: The ice house is going to allow us to give the fishermen ice, rather than the fishermen purchasing it off some of the other local processors. So there'll be a cost savings there, a little bit of benefit, and it also creates the good relations with the fishermen as well.

Dave Moore: The SPI funding provided the capital necessary to become a partner in industry, it opened up access to markets, and the project itself did that by providing logistic space, a base for frozen product, for fresh refrigerated products, for packing, for labeling, and for export of those products.

Dave Moore: For Sts'ailes and Scowlitz, they're a fishing culture. To them, the salmon and the salmon environment around them is part of their culture, it's part of their lifestyle, and they always see themselves as part of that. So becoming an active part in the industry again, has given them a more fulsome role in their fishery, and in the governance of the fishery.

Brad Setso: I believe fishing is important to Haida people because it's always what we've done, it is our sustenance, it is our food, first and foremost. Then it is also because of the bounty around Haida Gwaii. It was a source of commerce to trade with other First Nations in the area. It's just in our blood, it's what we do, it's just as vital as the cedar tree.

Larry Johnson: Fishing is important to the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations because Nuu-chah-nulth means, literally means, people of the mountains facing the sea. We have depended on the lands and the sea resources since the beginning of time.

Narrator: The initiative supported the diversification of 25 indigenous commercial fisheries enterprises, which encompasses 97 First Nations. As a result of the initiative, indigenous commercial fisheries enterprises have received over \$5.5 million in funding, supporting a total of 20 PCFDI projects, for a total project value of \$10.5 million.

Narrator: The SPI investments in PCFDI supported training for 136 personnel, combined in 757 training days, and 806 jobs were created as a result of the PCFDI investments.

Tyler Collie: The impacts to our SPI program have really kind of resulted in additional job creation, additional wealth creation for individuals and for communities, and have really augmented and helped the CFEs kind of expand their business base to the point of helping them achieve sustainability.