



What We Heard

“We are happy to see this process taking place. We need help to achieve our goals and we want to have people help us.”

- Participants welcome the announcement on the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative. They reminded us, however, that communities in Nunavut have been made a series of promises and commitments over the past 25 years or more on community fisheries development that have yet to be fulfilled.
 - Infrastructure requirements are mainly lacking, research on local stocks is limited, and development lags far behind what is needed.
 - Western Nunavut communities also need an opportunity to engage on the Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative’s program priorities.
- Participants underscore that careful consideration needs to be given to priorities under the new Northern program. Program activities also need to be co-ordinated with that of other federal agencies and the Government of Nunavut.
 - Participants are interested in learning more about the scope, timing and structure of the program, including the value of projects and implementation cycles. They are also interested in building business plans that will address marketing and transportation issues.
 - The overall level of funding for the program was seen as problematic given the cost of doing business in the North and ongoing infrastructure needs.

“We are a hard-working community. There are certified processors here and people have training from the Arctic College. We are building roads and getting youth involved. We are getting ready; we just need the facility.”

- Several communities are developing community plans for their fishery, including plans to build processing plants and/or deep water ports.
 - Harvesters are adjusting their ways and tools to new fisheries locations and resources. For example, some would like to pursue clam diving and other potential or emerging fisheries. *“Start-up costs are enormous. We have to find inventive ways to pull up our lines.”*
- Some participants report that they are working closely with Fisheries and Oceans Canada scientists. Others have received limited funding from small business support programs or the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

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

- Participants in all of the communities visited raised several common challenges being experienced across the Territory:

- Fishery development research and hydrographic charts are needed in all areas. *“We have been asking for a research station to undertake science work here.”*
- Investments are needed in vessels, gear, and other equipment, as well as facilities to fully exploit current onshore opportunities. *“The equipment will be expensive and if we don’t have it, we can’t go ahead.”*
- Local infrastructure needs include new or improved wharves, docks and harbour facilities, as well as water treatment, freezing and processing capacity. *“We’re losing millions of dollars every year in income because they have to land fish in Greenland.”*
- There is a need for harvester and onshore training to expand local fisheries from the current levels, but this should be coordinated with training undertaken by the Nunavut Marine Fisheries Training Consortium. Business planning and managerial training is also required, as well as gaining knowledge of fisheries regulations and policies. *“We have learned a lot from our elders on how to fish safely, but we notice the effects of climate change and things are changing. The young fishermen need to know the changes.”* Some interest was expressed in training people to be in higher-level roles.
- Transportation costs are prohibitive and a main impediment to future inshore fisheries development. *“Freight is phenomenally expensive and all our fish has to be shipped out.”* Any development of the inshore fishery will need to be reconciled with the objectives of the Offshore Allocation Holders Association.
- Local markets do exist, but future development will require investments to ensure Canadian Food Inspection Agency standards can be met. The level of Agency services is also seen as a limiting factor. Some participants suggested that a local community inspector and/or lab facilities could be introduced to resolve this issue. *“We need to have a workshop with government and other bodies to make them aware and explain how buying and selling works with respect to food inspection certification and our land claims agreement.”*
- Communities are focused on providing young people and elders food security to traditional foods. They are also looking to provide employment opportunities to young people in the fishery for the long-term benefit of communities. The collapse of the sealing industry in recent years has severely affected several communities.