



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS
FISHERIES INSTITUTE



DFO-CCG Indigenous Training and Skills Development in the Fisheries and Oceans Sector

SUMMARY REPORT - NOVEMBER 2021

Message from the Institute



Training helps us build the skills and know-how to do our jobs. It also prepares us for new opportunities to advance and transition our careers over time.

The Indigenous programs at Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) are capacity-building programs. They have helped our communities create employment opportunities for fish harvesters, field technicians, managers, guardians, monitors, and many other professions over the years. The training component of these programs has supported skills development and education opportunities; helping workers to better perform their duties and assisting communities in better managing their resources and economic interests. Although investing in training and skills development is a best practice of governments and businesses, it does require ongoing investments and supports.

During Indigenous Program Review (IPR), we realized that to offer and sustain meaningful employment and career progression, communities would need more training tools and support. We recommended that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (the Department) secure a long-term source of funding to augment the training and skills development activities that its programs cannot fully support. This includes training related to commercial, scientific, technical, and management careers in fisheries, oceans, aquaculture, fish habitat, and aquatic resources.

Over the past 18 months, we completed the Indigenous Training and Skills Development (ITSD) Project in collaboration with the Department, to explore how this recommendation could be achieved. The project applied a multi-faceted engagement approach to understand the current training investment by DFO-CCG and others, training paths for career progression, existing training tools, and gaps in training resources.

This project was in its infancy when the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact Canada and our ability to travel and gather. Like the rest of the world, we adapted to the new way of working; our research, mentoring, and engagement activities were all done virtually. Creating interactive tools such as videos helped us engage Indigenous groups, business development teams, training experts, and federal officials in our findings and ensure their input was reflected in the recommendations.

Training and skills development are important components of capacity building in our communities – which is essential to economic reconciliation.

Thank You

for your continued interest and participation in our activities.

Institute Board of Directors

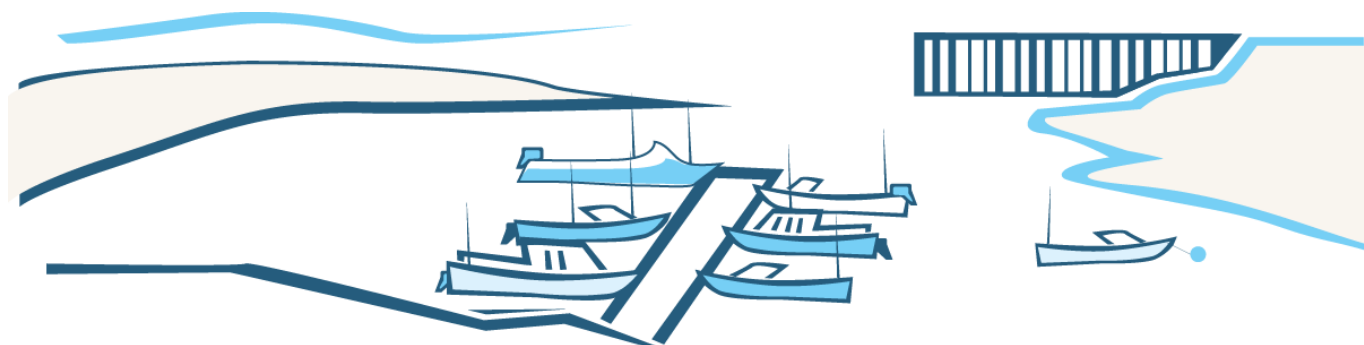
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The Summary Report is divided into three parts:

1. An introduction to discuss the purpose of the ITSD project and provide an overview of recommendations and linkages between other national initiatives.
2. A summary of the training and skills development impacts and gaps identified across core DFO commercial and collaborative Indigenous programs.
3. A detailed account of the ITSD recommendations and a brief discussion of how these could be implemented.



1.0 Introduction

Training helps people build the skills and knowledge to do their jobs. It also prepares individuals for new opportunities to advance or transition their careers over time. Investing in training and skills development is a best practice of governments and businesses. It is also a key component for communities to build capacity to better manage their resources and economic interests. Investments in training and skills development will be critical as people and businesses strive to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indigenous training and skills development initiatives administered by governmental agencies require consistent tools, standardized practices, and federal collaborations to be successful. Training coordination, resource development and performance monitoring should be implemented across DFO-CCG programs to achieve efficiencies and help Indigenous communities and organizations offer meaningful employment in the fisheries and oceans sector.

The Indigenous Training and Skills Development (ITSD) project was developed following DFO's acceptance of the Indigenous Program Review (IPR) recommendation to secure long-term funding for training and skills development along career progression paths. The ITSD project was launched in 2020 to understand how this and other training-related IPR recommendations could be achieved.

The ITSD Summary Report ("Summary Report") was developed to present key findings from the project, highlight best practices from within the Department, and present recommendations to achieve consistencies and maximize resources. The Summary Report provides DFO-CCG programs, Indigenous communities, and other governmental agencies with a valuable resource that can guide the development and implementation of effective approaches, tools and practices for Indigenous training and skills development.

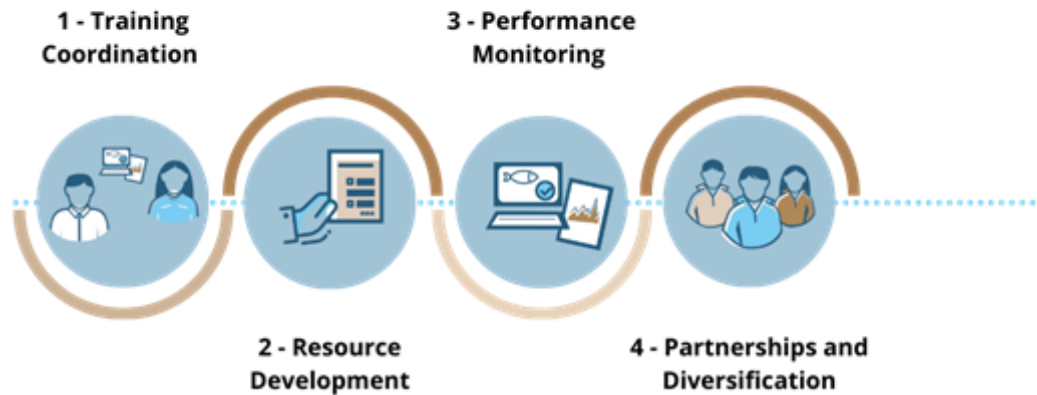
1.1 Summary of ITSD Recommendations

The ITSD project utilized a variety of research and engagement tools to understand and summarize the following:

- The current investment in training and skills by DFO-CCG and others, highlighting gaps and opportunities for efficiencies.
- The unique and intersecting training paths for various ocean-based careers, along with courses offered by education institutions.
- Tools for communities to plan, track and manage training activities.

Project results were used to create recommendations, which have been summarized in **Section 3.0: ITSD Recommendations and Implementation**. The recommendations were developed for the Department, program participants, Indigenous communities, and federal partners to support the development of consistent tools and practices, and strategies to leverage complementary initiatives; all in an effort to maximize resources and advance opportunities. With the above objectives in mind, the ITSD recommendations were organized into four themes: (1) training coordination, (2) resource development, (3) performance monitoring and (4) partnerships and diversification.

ITSD Recommendation Themes



1. Training Coordination

- a. Establish AAROM, AFS and AFG training coordinators.
- b. Dedicate an external Indigenous body to coordinate training nationally.

2. Resource Development

- a. Establish AAROM department and AFS management training modules.
- b. Continue to work with aquaculture training institutes to develop standardized curricula.
- c. Continue to work with Conservation and Protection to develop standardized AFG training and curriculum.
- d. Maintain up-to-date and accessible career training path backgrounders.
- e. Provide a stand-alone training database to AAROM, AFS and AFG program participants.
- f. Produce an Indigenous training passport for program participants.

3. Performance Monitoring

- a. Regularly review the training needs of commercial enterprises (under AICFI, PICFI and NICFI) and Indigenous organizations supported by AAROM, AFS, and AFG.
- b. Continue to track and coordinate DFO-CCG training and skills offerings.

4. Partnerships and Diversification

- a. Identify federal strategies, programs, and partners to advance training and skills development initiatives.
- b. Create opportunities for mentorships, internships, on-boarding and other knowledge-transfer activities.
- c. Create opportunities for Indigenous training and skills development within DFO-CCG procurement contracts.

See [Section 3.0](#) for further details.

1.2 Link to other National Initiatives

As mentioned above, an ongoing effort needs to be made to identify collaborations within the Department and across governmental agencies to maximize resources and advance Indigenous training and skills development opportunities.

Opportunities exist to share best practices and resources through national collaborations. The following initiatives are well-aligned with the Indigenous training and skills development investments made by DFO's core programs; however, further collaborations can and should be identified.

Blue Economy Strategy

"A Blue Economy Strategy could...[f]acilitate the development of new ocean-based business opportunities, including the conservation economy, to diversify the economies and employment opportunities of Indigenous communities along the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific oceans." ([Blue Economy Strategy Engagement Paper](#))

In the 2020 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada articulated its plan for economic transformation post-COVID-19: addressing socio-economic gaps, building a stronger workforce, fighting climate change, and remaining committed to sustainable economic growth. These broad objectives form a resiliency agenda to "build back better." The Department is developing the Blue Economy Strategy to serve as a key component of this plan as it will aim to steer Canada's ocean-based economy towards a more sustainable future and to "build back bluer."

Growing a sustainable blue economy requires the creation of jobs in coastal communities while ensuring our oceans remain healthy. Investment in Indigenous training and skills development will be critical to equip Indigenous people with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in a robust and resilient ocean-based economy.

DFO-CCG Procurement Policy Dialogue Project

The Government of Canada is one of the largest public buyers of goods and services across the country, purchasing approximately \$22 billion worth every year for its departments and agencies. DFO-CCG's annual average procurement spending is close to \$900 million.

In 2020, the National Indigenous Fisheries Institute (NIFI) and the Department launched the DFO-CCG Procurement Policy Dialogue project to understand:

- The current state of DFO-CCG procurement from Indigenous vendors.
- Current and future Indigenous procurement opportunities at DFO-CCG.
- Indigenous capacity, expertise, and gaps with regards to the procurement process and successful delivery of contracts.
- Administrative and policy constraints and opportunities

DFO-CCG procurement could help address Indigenous communities' training and skills development needs. Discussions are underway to develop a DFO-CCG Indigenous Procurement Policy, which could include weighted contract value percentages to build capacity through training and employment to Indigenous people. See the [DFO-CCG Procurement Policy Dialogue Final Report](#) for more details on the project.

Strategic Partnerships Initiative

The Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI) was set up in 2010 to increase Indigenous participation in the economy by enabling multiple federal departments and agencies to work together, as well as with provincial and territorial governments, industry, and Indigenous communities to fill the gaps that could not be addressed by existing programs.

SPI is focused on complex, market-driven opportunities in key sectors of the economy, including resource sectors. The Atlantic Commercial Fisheries Diversification Initiative was the first SPI-funded program. DFO has also used this program to further the training offerings of PICFI and aquaculture programming.

Oceans Protection Plan

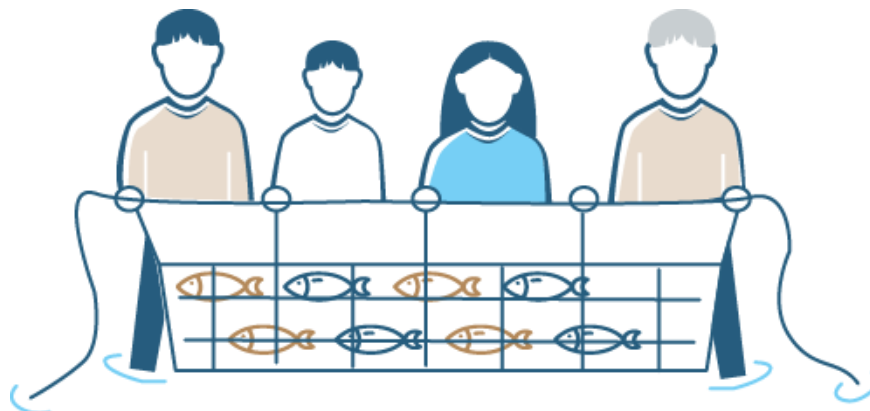
The five-year \$1.5 billion Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) began in November 2016. It has the following components:

- ecosystem conservation
- Arctic marine protection
- marine research and science
- emergency preparedness and response
- engaged Canadians and partnerships with Indigenous peoples
- CCG capacity for prevention and response
- safer navigation and vessel tracking
- modernized marine safety regulations and operations

Indigenous communities and groups are involved in most of these activities, which include training and skills development for habitat, environmental monitoring, and marine response.

Canada Nature Legacy Fund

The Canada Nature Legacy Fund aims to slow the decline of aquatic species at risk and advance species recovery in priority places and threats. The program promotes strategic and lasting collaboration with Indigenous peoples and leverages capacity, expertise and resources through collaboration and engagement. The program earmarks a portion of the fund for Indigenous capacity-building, engagement, and Indigenous-led projects each year.



2.0 DFO Core Programs: Training Impacts

DFO has a proven track record of creating long-term employment at the community level through their permanent Indigenous commercial and collaborative technical program offerings.

The commercial programs include the Atlantic, Pacific, and Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiatives. The collaborative technical programs include the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management program and the Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy, which contains the Aboriginal Fishery Guardian program.

The Business Development Team (BDT) provides confidential business planning assistance and helps to identify training needs and opportunities for Commercial Fishing Enterprises (CFEs) in the commercial programs. The Capacity Development Team offers similar services to the collaborative program participants.

2.1 Commercial Programs

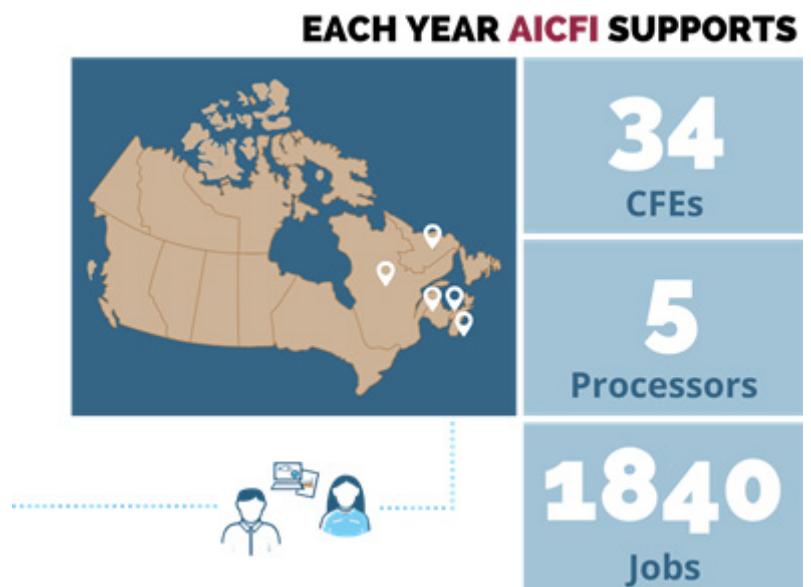
2.1.1 Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative

The Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (AICFI) began in 2007 to help Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations develop and operate successful commercial fishing enterprises and establish a more effective voice in fisheries co-management.

Over time, this program has been very successful. Annually, AICFI supports 34 commercial fishing enterprises, five processors and 1,840 jobs (350 of which are in fish and seafood processing).

One component of this program is specifically set aside for harvester training. Eligible training costs include in-class sessions and practical skills development training, along with workshops to address specific skills needs using dockside (or aquaculture site) hands-on delivery. At-sea mentoring is prioritized for new fishing vessel operators and crew who require practical training for fish harvesting, and/or the introduction of a new fishing method.

AICFI has a Training Advisory Coordinator to help enterprises develop or update their training plans and apply for harvester training funding. The coordinator also reviews all training proposals and training providers to ensure training methodologies are consistent with industry standards, provide the best value, and are aligned to an enterprise's training plan. In addition, mentors proposed for at-sea mentoring are vetted to ensure safety standards are met, and the mentorships match other program objectives and outcomes.

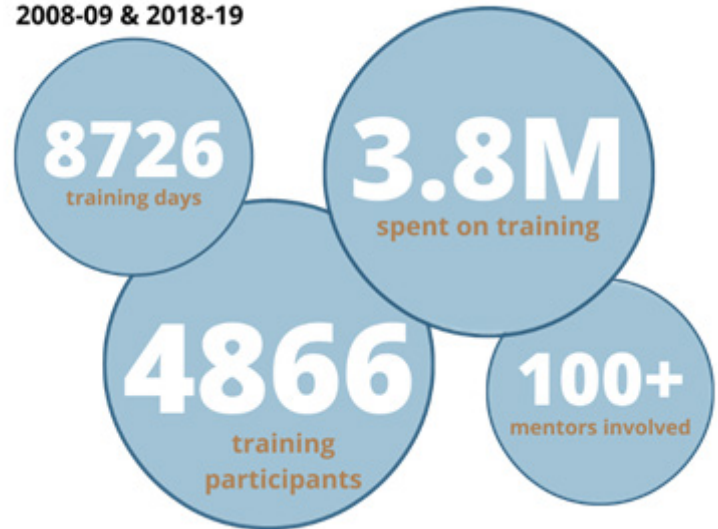


Between 2008-09 and 2018-19, the AICFI program had 4,866 trainees, of which 4,558 successfully completed the training. The total cost of the training was \$3.8 million, of which 82% came from the program and 18% from the enterprises. Training days totalled 8,726: 5,238 in classroom and 3,488 mentored at sea. More than 100 mentors were involved.

In 2010, AICFI’s Business Development Team and the Nova Scotia Community College collaborated to develop management training curricula for commercial fishing enterprise managers. Training courses cover:

- Informed decision-making using the fisheries management system
- Introduction to financial management for fisheries managers
- Fisheries operational management
- Strategic business planning
- Project management for fisheries managers
- Human resource management

AICFI PROGRAM OUTCOMES 2008-09 & 2018-19



2.1.2 Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative

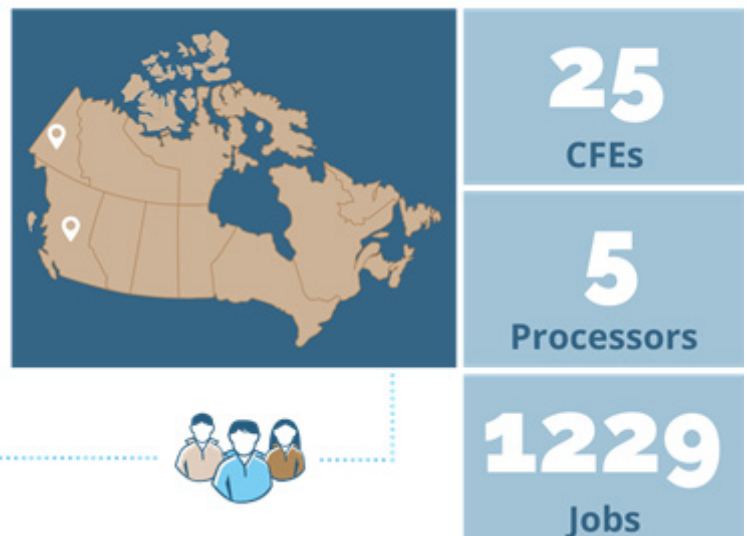
The Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) began in 2007, with the goal to reinvigorate and diversify the involvement of First Nations in British Columbia in commercial fisheries by helping communities develop sustainable fishing enterprises and participate in fisheries management decision-making processes. The program built on the fisheries reform work which was undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in 2004 to respond to recommendations made by the Joint Task Group on Post-Treaty Fisheries and the First Nations Panel on Fisheries. It also leveraged other investments made by the Department toward economic programs in the 1990’s.

Annually, PICFI supports 25 commercial fishing enterprises, five processors, and 1,229 jobs (of which 974 are Indigenous workers and 147 are in processing).

While similar to the Atlantic program, PICFI has had different training models since it began. Funding for harvester training is available to the unemployed or underemployed as part of capacity-building support, but there is no specific harvester training application component.

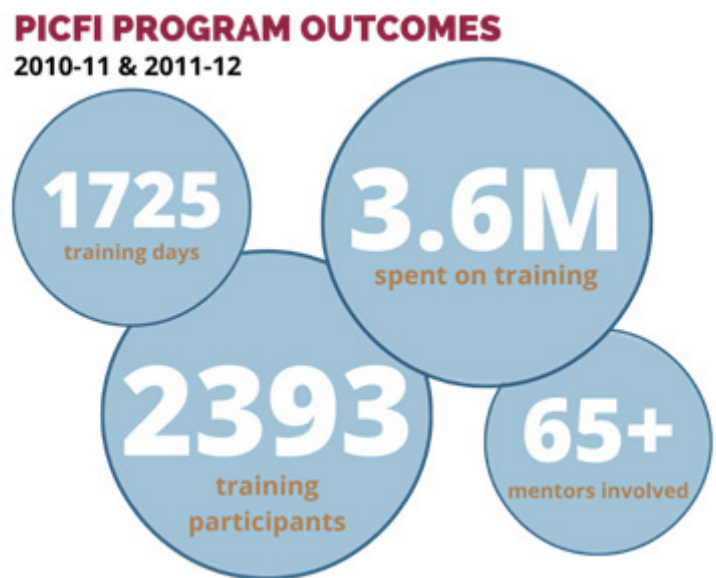
The program also collaborates with FishSafe BC to offer basic safety training courses that are recognized by Transport Canada and WorkSafeBC, such as Safest Catch, the Stability Education Program and one-on-one training aboard a vessel with the master and crew.

EACH YEAR PICFI SUPPORTS



Between 2010-11 and 2011-12, the PICFI program had 2,393 trainees with 2,224 successful completions, for a total cost of \$3.6 million. Training days totalled 1,725: 1,048 in classroom and 677 mentored at sea. More than 65 mentors were involved.

The addition of fishing enterprise management training, based on the model developed in the Atlantic program, became available in the Pacific in 2017. Between that year and 2018-19, 80 people took one or more of the five courses in this package at a total cost of \$254,000. Forty-seven of these individuals were Indigenous.



2.1.3 Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative

The Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (NICFI) only began in 2019-20. The program was built upon the success of the AICFI and PICFI programs to support development of Indigenous-owned commercial fishing enterprises and aquaculture operations. It serves communities across the North, as well as Indigenous groups located elsewhere that are not eligible for AICFI or PICFI.

As a newly established program, NICFI is focused on community development and capacity building. Food security is a special focus within participating communities north of 60°. The program is currently in discussions to establish partnerships that will support training and skills development. The program also has an aquaculture component for all Indigenous communities situated in inland provinces which are not eligible participants in AICFI or PICFI. Training is an eligible funding expense in this program.

In 2019-20, 1.1% of total program funding (\$12,832) was used for harvester-related training. This cost is expected to grow as the program supports more participants.

2.2 Collaborative Technical Programs

2.2.1 Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program (AAROM) program helps Indigenous groups develop, grow, and maintain departments that can provide technical fisheries, habitat, science, and oceans-related services along a watershed. It also helps groups support their member communities so they can participate in resource advisory and co-management processes, and other decision-making forums related to aquatic resources and the ocean environment.

AAROM is unique among federal Indigenous programs, as it provides core and relatively secure funding for non-treaty-based science and technical activities. It is also focussed on building Indigenous scientific, technical, and advisory capacity required for resource management.

There are presently 31 AAROM departments: 15 in British Columbia, 11 in Atlantic Canada and southern Quebec, three in the Northwest Territories, and two national groups. Departments employ both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with jobs totalling about 215.

During 2015-16 and 2019-20, an average of 1.4% of total program funding was spent on training and skills development at a total cost of \$1.1 million. However, this amount is open to interpretation, as training-related activities are not captured uniformly throughout the related contribution agreements, annual reporting, or in the Department’s Aboriginal Programs and Governance Information System (APGIS). For example, capacity building activities include, “attending meetings to increase capacity to make informed decisions” and some training line items may be copied year over year alongside other activities.

CURRENTLY, THERE ARE 31 AAROM DEPARTMENTS



 **215 Jobs**

There is no training coordinator for the AAROM program, and its departments are not required to have a training plan to participate in the program. Several departments do have training plans, and all have offered training to their personnel using program funds. Our analysis of available APGIS information found the training, mentorship, and skills development opportunities funded through the AAROM program to be quite diverse: from geographic information system (GIS) and electrofishing training to supervisory skills and workplace literacy. In addition, the Innovation and Collaboration Fund recently launched to further support long-term and ongoing capacity development across the AAROM network.

2.2.2 Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy Program

The Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) helps participating Indigenous communities build capacity so they can meaningfully take part in fisheries management. This includes the technical capacity to undertake scientific stock assessments and habitat management activities in the field, monitor catch and fishing activities, and enforce the rules established for fishing.

The AFS program supports about 75 full-time jobs and approximately 1,325 seasonal jobs each year. Full-time jobs are primarily managers of community fisheries, while seasonal jobs are typically geared towards positions such as technicians, catch monitors and fishery guardians.

In the 2020-21 fiscal year, 133 AFS agreements were signed with communities across the country: 85 in the Pacific region, 3 in the Arctic, 10 in the Quebec region, 31 in the Atlantic region, and 4 in Newfoundland.

During 2015-16 and 2019-20, approximately 1.3% of total AFS program funding was spent on training – equating to more than \$960,000. This total includes training for designated fishery guardians, described in the next section; however, this amount is open to interpretation as training-related activities are not specifically or uniformly captured in contribution agreements, annual reporting, or APGIS.

Often, just the name of the community’s fisheries or guardian program is listed with the training funding amount. There are also some references to non-Indigenous persons receiving training.

There is no training coordinator for the AFS program, and a training plan is not required of communities participating in the program. Nevertheless, many First Nations do have a comprehensive community plan, which includes human resource and training plans. Similar to the AAROM program, our analysis of available APGIS information found diverse training, mentorship and skills development opportunities being funded through AFS, from wilderness first aid and swift-water rescue to fish stock sampling and surveying.

IN 2020-21, 133 AFS AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED



2.2.3 Aboriginal Fishery Guardian Program

The Aboriginal Fishery Guardian (AFG) program helps Indigenous communities develop the technical capacity to manage their fisheries by hiring one or more fishery guardians to perform some/all of the following AFS program duties:

- Monitor community catch and fishing activities
- Enforce the rules for fishing as set out in the communal licence and the Fisheries Act
- Collect data related to fisheries, habitat and/or aquatic resources
- Undertake activities in the field, such as stock assessments and habitat management
- Carry out community engagement and education activities

Based on the Policy for the Management of Aboriginal Fishing (1993), DFO is responsible for providing regular and consistent training for fishery guardians; including on how their duties relate to fisheries and habitat legislation, how to gather and give evidence related to a violation, and how to employ tactics/ techniques – including defence – when faced with difficult situations or conflict. However, DFO has not consistently provided this training.

During Indigenous Program Review, we further noted that training processes for fishery guardians on how to monitor the catch or to do technical ‘field’ activities are unclear. We

therefore recommended that DFO adopt a nationally consistent curriculum and training program for fishery guardians and establish a joint Indigenous–departmental working group to oversee its development. Curriculum development has been underway since September 2019.

AS OF 2021, THERE ARE 130 FISHERY GUARDIANS



3.0 ITSD Recommendations and Implementation

The ITSD project engaged the Department, Business Development Team advisors, AAROM department directors, and Indigenous groups and communities in conversations and facilitated sessions to discuss training and skills development investments and best practices.

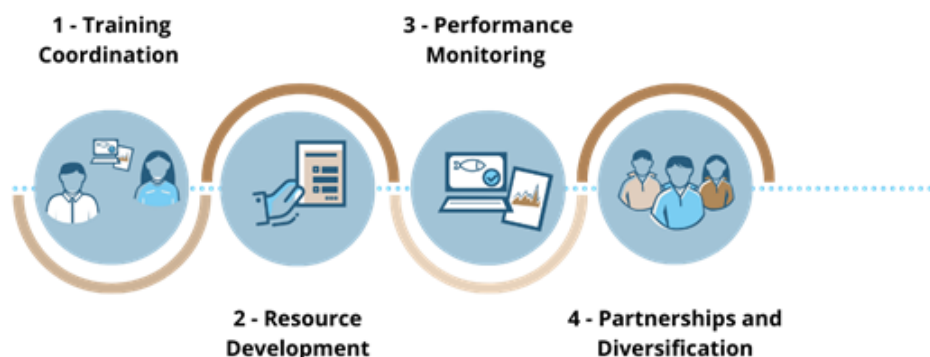
Engagement and research findings were analyzed, and the following gaps were identified across DFO’s core programs:

1. Training coordination needs to be available across the core programs.
2. Training plans should be required from communities and organizations participating in the collaborative technical programs (AAROM, AFS, and AFG).
3. Aquaculture-specific training needs to be developed above technician and operator positions.
4. Organized mentorship and knowledge transfer programs should be offered within the collaborative technical programs.
5. Standardized curriculum for management training and fishery guardian training is required in the collaborative technical programs.
6. Innovative bridging strategies are required to move technicians into advanced training and education.
7. Strategies are required to engage youth in fisheries and oceans sector careers.
8. Strategies and resources are required to align education and progression paths for science, technical “field” activities, and management careers.

Some of these gaps have been filled by Indigenous communities and groups using their own sources of revenue, as well as partnerships with academia, industry, and others. However, further investment in training and skills development is critical to the continued success of DFO’s core programs and ongoing capacity development across Indigenous communities and organizations.

The ITSD recommendations were made for the Department, program participants, Indigenous communities, and federal partners to support the development of consistent tools and practices and leverage complementary initiatives to maximize resources and advance opportunities. With the above objectives in mind, the ITSD recommendations were organized into four themes: (1) training coordination, (2) resource development, (3) performance monitoring, and (4) partnerships and diversification.

ITSD Recommendation Themes



1 - Training Coordination

Training coordination and planning is required to increase efficiencies and develop nationally consistent resources and practices across DFO's core Indigenous programs. The subsequent recommendations were developed to build out a training coordination and advisory team to identify ongoing training needs, support career progression, and collaborate with partners to advance Indigenous training and skills development initiatives.

1a. Establish AAROM, AFS and AFG training coordinators

DFO's Indigenous commercial programs have Training Coordinators to help fishing enterprises and aquaculture operations plan their training needs, find local and cost-efficient trainers and training programs, and track training expenditures and other key statistics. The Department's collaborative technical programs should have similar experts to help AAROM groups and communities that participate in the AFS program, including the Aboriginal Fishery Guardian program component.

1b. Dedicate an external Indigenous body to coordinate training nationally

A national, external Indigenous body should be assigned to track, coordinate, and organize training to link Indigenous communities and groups to other federal, provincial, territorial, non-governmental and industry training and skills development activities.

This body would be required to share information with:

- Business Development Team training coordinators so they can more easily organize training for commercial fishing enterprise and aquaculture operations (and end the inefficiencies that result from individual advisors trying to make these links on their own).
- The newly created AAROM, AFS and AFG training coordinator(s), responsible for providing various training related advisory services to AAROM departments, resource departments of communities participating in the AFS program, and designated guardians.

2 - Resource Development

Resources are required to increase capacity and support career progression across DFO's core Indigenous programs. The subsequent recommendations were developed to establish standardized training and resources for commercial and collaborative program participants.

2a. Establish AAROM department and AFS management training modules

Standardized training for AAROM Executive Directors and AFS fisheries managers will be established using the Fisheries Enterprise Management Training modules as a guide and based on the engagement findings of this project. Training modules should include administration and project management, financial management, human resource management, life-cycle management, safety, communications, proposal writing, and legislation.

The training should be offered to Indigenous Executive Directors and AFS fisheries managers, which would help the Department implement another Indigenous Program Review recommendation. Indigenous communities or organizations that hire non-Indigenous Executive Directors should be encouraged to apply the same training requirements.

2b. Continue to work with aquaculture training institutes to develop standardized curricula

The majority of aquaculture training has been completed through mentorship. Formalized aquaculture training needs to be developed to support farmers who are interested in career progression.

This task will build on the Aquaculture Foundations curricula being developed by Fleming College, in collaboration with the NICFI Business Development Team, which will have an online ‘in class’ module, a hatchery or lab setting module, and an on-site experiential learning ‘co-op’ module. The curriculum should be offered to AICFI and PICFI participants.

2c. Continue to work with Conservation and Protection to develop standardized AFG training and curriculum

During Indigenous Program Review, we noticed that it was less clear how guardians are trained to monitor the catch or to do technical ‘field’ activities. We therefore recommended that DFO continue their work with the Conservation and Protection department to develop a nationally consistent curriculum and field training program for fishery guardians. A joint Indigenous–departmental working group should be established to oversee the development.

2d. Maintain up-to-date and accessible career training path backgrounders

The ITSD project produced 16 career training path backgrounders and identified another 10 careers of potential interest to Indigenous communities and groups. Each backgrounder highlighted training requirements, from first aid and workplace safety to knowledge and skills at the expertise levels. Any knowledge transfer activities were also noted, and courses offered by Canadian training and educational institutes were then itemized, along with any certificates, diploma programs or advanced education options. The information collected on the career training path backgrounders will be released as a separate resource on the NIFI website.

Career training path backgrounders need to be maintained and accessible. These backgrounders will have multiple uses for Indigenous employers during recruitment processes, for training institutions when developing curricula, and for the national Indigenous entity established to coordinate training for DFO’s Indigenous programs. The backgrounders will need to be kept up to date to incorporate new courses and training programs, such as the Impact Assessment Act online training modules and to address the input of Business/Capacity Development Team advisors, AAROM staff and DFO–CCG officials. The additional 10 career backgrounders identified should also be filled in over time by the recommended external Indigenous body dedicated to organizing training.

2e. Provide a stand-alone training database to AAROM, AFS and AFG program participants

Putting in place a stand-alone training database option for AAROM, AFS and AFG participants would be a helpful management, tracking, and reporting resource. This recommendation is consistent with the fisheries management system approach taken by DFO for its commercial Indigenous programs.

A training database would help coordinators and managers organize the implementation of their training plans, including the names of training courses, institutions, costs, renewals, and certification information for each employee, along with mentorships, internships, and other knowledge-transfer activities.

A database can also generate tailored reports for groups and communities to provide information about the training courses staff have taken each year, including the costs, to its leaders and funders. Reports do not need to contain personal information about employees; rather, they can produce a generic, high-level account of training statistics.

DFO should test up to three of the 10 database options researched in the ITSD project to ensure that the best tool for communities and the Department is chosen. Criteria should include overall and/or ongoing costs, ease of use and quality of reports generated. The database could be piloted by the training coordination and advisory team.

2f. Produce an Indigenous training passport for program participants

In the fisheries, oceans, and marine safety sectors, completed training, sea time, number of hours performing certain tasks, and other skills development experiences must be tracked in a log. An Indigenous training passport should be developed to support accreditation tracking and career progression for program participants. The passport should be easily integrated into the commercial and collaborative stand-alone database systems.

3 - Performance Monitoring

With new monitoring tools and resources, the Department, Indigenous groups, and communities can more easily identify and pursue training and skills development opportunities that will continue to build Indigenous capacity and careers. It is critical for the Department to properly track and monitor the progress made in relation to Indigenous training and skills capacity development within the Programs, and to ensure a system is established to review and respond to emerging community needs.

3a. Regularly review the training needs of commercial enterprises (under AICFI, PICFI and NICFI) and Indigenous organizations supported by AAROM, AFS, and AFG

Based on our engagement activities, DFO noted the importance of having a regular meeting with Business Development Team advisors to ensure that anticipated training needs are known. A similar exercise should take place to identify training needs for AAROM, AFS and AFG program participants. The frequency of training meetings and method of presenting identified needs should be consistent and led by the Training Coordinators.

3b. Continue to track and coordinate DFO-CCG training and skills offerings

DFO and CCG need to coordinate their training offerings – which will require collaboration across the Department. This project spent several months tracking down the different training and skills development offerings for Indigenous communities and groups. This activity must be maintained to ensure:

- DFO-CCG can properly track the number of persons trained by their programs and initiatives and measure progress, as required in its Reconciliation Strategy
- Indigenous groups and communities can be linked to training and skills development opportunities to continue to build their capacity and career progression opportunities to members and citizens

An accessible online platform should be developed to host information on DFO-CCG programs, highlight the training career backgrounders and other federal training and skills opportunities.

4 – Partnerships and Diversification

An ongoing effort must be made to identify collaborations and opportunities for diversification within the Department, and across governmental agencies, to maximize resources and advance Indigenous training and skills development opportunities. The following recommendations highlight best practices, resources, mentorships, knowledge transfer opportunities, and diversification through procurement activities that should be leveraged to advance Indigenous training and skills development.

4a. Identify federal strategies, programs, and partners to advance training and skills development initiatives

A deliberate and continuous effort needs to be made to identify, track, and promote federal strategies, programs and partners that can support Indigenous training and skills development within the fisheries and aquatic ecosystems sector.

Currently, training and skills development opportunities can be found in the Oceans Protection Plan's Marine Training Program, the emerging Blue Economy Strategy, and the Strategic Partnership Initiative. Partnerships should be further investigated with ISET organizations, ESDC, the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, Indigenous Centre for Cumulative Effects, Students on Ice and SmartICE. Relationships should also be developed with ISETs located along the coasts and in inland areas where relevant labor market employment opportunities exist.

4b. Create opportunities for mentorships, internships, on-boarding and other knowledge-transfer activities

Mentorship, internship, and other knowledge-transfer opportunities relevant to each coast and community must be explored to train the next generation of fisheries and oceans leaders and prepare for succession. Potential programs for investigation include the Canada Summer Jobs program and the First Nations and Inuit Skills Link Program.

NIFI, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chief Secretariat, First Nations Fisheries Council, and all other AAROMs departments, commercial fishing enterprises, and aquaculture operations should work together to develop a pool of internships and work experiences for Indigenous youth. DFO should also identify mid-management internships within procurement, program development and strategic policy.

4c. Establish Indigenous training and skills development percentages in high-value procurement contracts

As we learned during our recent DFO-CCG Indigenous Procurement Policy Dialogue project, the Department and Agency can include an Indigenous Partnership Component in high-value and complex contracts to set a percentage (e.g., 1-3% of contract value) to help support related Indigenous training and skills development. We made the same recommendation in the [DFO-CCG Procurement Policy Dialogue Final Report](#).