



**2008-2010**

**Activity Plan**

*for*

**The Professional Fish Harvesters  
Certification Board**

# Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB), it is my pleasure to present the Board's three-year Activity Plan for 2008-2010. As Chairperson of the PFHCB, my signature is indicative of the full Board of Directors accountability for the preparation of this plan, and for achieving the goals and objectives therein. Full consideration has been given to the Strategic Directions of Government related to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, though it has been determined that the Board has no direct role in the accomplishment of Government's strategic direction.

Since 1997, the Board has been serving the professional fish harvesters of our province, through the establishment and implementation of Canada's first professional certification program for commercial fish harvesters. This Activity Plan provides an operational overview of the PFHCB, including its legislated objectives, lines of business, and values. The Board of Directors and Staff of the PFHCB take great pride in the Board's accomplishments to date, and we commit to supporting the realization of our vision, mission, and objectives, as outlined in this plan.

Supplementary to this Activity Plan, the Board is also required to submit Activity Plans for the Appeal Board of the PFHCB and Disciplinary Board of the PFHCB. As Chairperson of the PFHCB Board of Directors, I accept responsibility for ensuring that these Boards meet their respective planning and reporting obligations under the Transparency and Accountability Act. It is worth noting, however, that the Disciplinary Board has not been enacted to date, and no appointments have been made by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. For that reason, no Activity Plan is being submitted for this planning period. At such time that the Disciplinary Board is enacted the PFHCB will commence the required planning and reporting procedures.

I am confident that the PFHCB is a fundamentally sound organization that is well positioned to make a considerable contribution to the long-term sustainability and viability of the Newfoundland and Labrador commercial inshore fishery, and those men and women who make fish harvesting their profession. To that end, I accept accountability for ensuring that every effort is made to attain the results specified in this plan.

Finally, being a category 3 public entity, the Board will continue to fulfill its obligations under the Transparency and Accountability Act, on an ongoing basis, by preparing 3-year activity plans supplemented by annual progress reports.

Sincerely,



William Broderick  
Chairperson, PFHCB Board of Directors

# **Table of Contents**

**1.0 Overview**

**2.0 Current Board of Directors**

**3.0 Staff and Sub-Committees**

**4.0 Objectives**

**5.0 Primary Lines of Business**

**6.0 Values**

**7.0 Primary Clients**

**8.0 Vision**

**9.0 Mission**

**10.0 Strategic Issues**

**11.0 Contact Information**

## **1.0 Overview**

The Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB) became operational in 1997 following proclamation of the Professional Fish Harvesters Act by the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly. This legislation, the first of its kind in Canada, recognizes fish harvesting as a professional occupation. The PFHCB is mandated to register and certify commercial fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The concept of professionalization originated and was first discussed with fish harvesters in 1990. Subsequently, a federal/provincial working group was formed and a model for the certification of fish harvesters was developed. Spearheaded by the Fish Food and Allied Workers (FFAW) and supported by Fisheries Co-operatives, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DFA), and other government agencies and educational institutions, the concept of professionalism in the commercial inshore fishery was the subject of a number of community consultations.

Consultations with fish harvesters at the community level were held in 1991 and 1994 to further refine the professionalization program and criteria. There was over 90% acceptance of professionalization by fish harvesters at these sessions.

When the PFHCB became functional in 1997 the DFO registration system and its categories of full-time/part-time fisherman was replaced with a new certification system, which included three levels of professional certification: Apprentice Fish Harvester, Professional Fish Harvester Level I, and Professional Fish Harvester Level II.

The certification criteria include a combination of education requirements and experience/dependence on the commercial fishery. Existing fish harvesters were "grandfathered" into the new certification system in 1997/98, with those harvesters having at least 7 years of fishing experience receiving the highest certification level (Level II). New entrants to the commercial fishery enter as Apprentices and are eligible to upgrade to Level I and Level II upon completion of a minimum number of education credits and full-time fishing years.

The PFHCB is a non-profit self-supporting organization created by and operating for the benefit of all Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fish harvesters. The PFHCB currently registers and certifies some 13,000 Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters. The Board reports annually to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the minister responsible for the Professional Fish Harvesters Act.

## **2.0 Current Board of Directors**

The PFHCB operates under the direction of a 15 member Board of Directors, in accordance with the Professional Fish Harvesters Act. Board members are appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture upon recommendation from the respective organizations identified in Section 5 of the Act. The current PFHCB board members are:

George Feltham	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Fr. Desmond McGrath	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Bill Broderick	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Cyril Dalley	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Dwight Spence	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Mildred Skinner	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Mike Noonan	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Roy Freake	Association of NL Fisheries Cooperatives
Craig Taylor	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Ken Carew	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Annette Rumbolt	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Rachelle Cochrane	Department of Youth Services & Post Secondary Education
Glen Blackwood	Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University
Rosemary Norris	Human Resources and Social Development (Canada)
Dr. Sharon Taylor	Independent Appointee by the Minister of DFA

### **3.0 Staff and Sub-Committees**

**Staff** – The PFHCB has a staff of four full-time permanent employees, as follows:

Mark Dolomount – Executive Director  
Elizabeth Smith – Office Manager  
Cheryl Jamieson – Assessor  
Velma Barnes – Executive Secretary

**Executive Committee** – In accordance with the Act and By-Laws, the Executive Committee oversees and implements the policies of the Board, as required, between meetings of the Board.

The current Executive Committee Members are:

Bill Broderick – Chairperson	Cyril Dalley – Vice-Chairperson
George Feltham – Secretary	Ken Carew – Member at Large
Mark Dolomount (Ex-Officio)	

**Education Committee** – This sub-committee convenes, as required, on matters and issues related to education, training, and certification upgrading criteria. The current Education Committee members are:

Mark Dolomount	Jack Greenham (Fish Harvester)
Sharon Taylor	Roy Gibbons (Marine Institute)
Elizabeth Smith	Executive Committee members (as available)

**Public Relations Committee** – This committee convenes, as required, on matters and issues related to public relations, such as the promotion of fish harvesting as a professional occupation.

The current Public Relations Committee members are:

Mark Dolomount	Lana Payne (FFAW/CAW)
Annette Rumbolt	Elizabeth Smith
Don Drew (Fish Harvester)	Executive Committee members (as available)
Sharon Taylor	

## **4.0 PFHCB Objectives**

The objectives of the PFHCB are clearly defined in Section 4 of the Act. All activities of the Board are related, either directly or indirectly, to these objectives. These objectives are:

- (a) to promote the interest of fish harvesters as a professional group;
- (b) to be responsible for defining the standards for professionalization;
- (c) to provide an advisory role to the federal and provincial governments in the formation of fisheries policies consistent with the common good of fish harvesters, namely in the areas of resource conservation, fish quality improvements, a reasonable return to participants, optimizing product value, and the safety of fish harvesters and the public;
- (d) to operate and maintain a fish harvester registration system;
- (e) to develop, evaluate and recommend courses under the professionalization program;
- (f) to issue certificates of accreditation to qualifying fish harvesters;
- (g) to develop, maintain and monitor compliance of a Code of Ethics;

## **5.0 Primary Lines of Business**

### ***1. Registration and Certification of NL Commercial Fish Harvesters***

The PFHCB has been responsible for registering and certifying all commercial fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador since 1997. Fish Harvesters are required to submit a certification renewal application form annually and pay the annual registration fee of \$50.00. New Entrants are required to file a new entrant application form and pay the annual registration fee of \$50.00.

Upon approval of their application for certification, fish harvesters are issued a certification card inscribed with their name, PFH #, and certification level. The entire application/certification process is conducted in accordance with the Professional Fish Harvesters Act, the PFHCB Certification Criteria, and the PFHCB By-Laws.

Collection of annual registration fees is the PFHCB's primary source of operating revenue. Approximately 13,000 fish harvesters were registered with the PFHCB in 2007.

### ***2. Delivery of Basic Safety Training (MED A3)***

Apprentice fish harvesters are required by Board criteria to complete a Basic Safety Training course prior to commencing their second fishing season. In 2002, the Board developed and introduced a Basic Safety Training (MED A3) course for Apprentice Fish Harvesters and new entrants to the fishing industry.

The five-day basic safety MED A3 course includes two days of General Seamanship and Stability, one day of Marine Emergency Duties (MED A3), and two days of Marine Advance First Aid. Harvesters preferring to complete the MED A1 course at the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University (MI) will be exempt, but the course must be completed prior to commencing their second fishing season.

This course also meets the federal Transport Canada mandatory Marine Emergency Duties (MED) requirement for harvesters on vessels fishing inside 25 miles (less than 150 GRT). In anticipation of Transport Canada's April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 MED deadline, many Level I and Level II fish harvesters have also taken the course in (or near) their communities in the past several years in order to fulfill this federal requirement.

### ***3. Assisting Fish Harvesters with Certification Upgrading and Skills Development***

Fish harvesters who wish to upgrade their certification level from Apprentice to Level I, or from Level I to Level II, must complete a minimum number of education credits and full-time fishing years, as per PFHCB criteria. Fish harvesters pursuing certification upgrading and skills development receive a range of information, guidance and advice from PFHCB staff.

While the vast majority of fisheries training is delivered by the Marine Institute, the Board does deliver a Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) program, which enables fish harvesters to acquire credits toward certification upgrading.

PLAR was introduced by the Board, as a pilot project, in 2000. This program provides an opportunity for experienced Apprentice and Level I harvesters to obtain credit from prior learned fishing skills and earn a higher certification level. Harvesters who avail of PLAR must be able to successfully demonstrate their prior learned skills through an assessment by a trained Level II professional fish harvester assessor. Up to 75 education credits can be attained if an individual successfully challenges and passes the ten skill sets available.

### ***4. Public Relations and Advocacy Initiatives***

Through its Public Relations committee, and in partnership with other key industry groups such as the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters (CCPFH), the Board is continually engaged in a variety of activities related to Public Relations and Advocacy on behalf of the professional fish harvesters of Newfoundland & Labrador.

Promoting commercial fish harvesting as a professional occupation, including raising awareness about the skill requirements, technological advancements, and economic value of the industry, is central to the Board's overall activity plan. This is achieved through ongoing initiatives utilizing a variety of media sources.

Additionally, the Board plays an advisory role to the federal and provincial governments in an effort to achieve public policy that is consistent with the overall good of fish harvesters and their industry. Key areas that the Board is currently working in this regard are Safety, Fisheries Licencing, and Skills Development.

## **6.0 Values**

The staff members of the PFHCB work directly for, and on behalf of, certified professional fish harvesters and their industry. Board activities, including the work of board members, staff and sub-committee members, are focused on improving the lot of certified professional fish harvesters - as individuals and as a collective group. For these reasons, the values of the PFHCB are focused on the fish harvesters it represents, as follows:

***Respect*** – Representatives of the PFHCB will endeavor to increase their understanding and appreciation of the commercial fishery, the significant contribution it makes to our local, provincial and national economies, and the high degree of skill and knowledge required to be successful in the fish harvesting profession.

***Confidentiality*** – Representatives of the PFHCB will treat all personal information provided to the Board by certified fish harvesters in strict confidence. Personal information of certified fish harvesters will be used only for the purpose of determining certification status, and shall not be shared without written permission.

***Impartiality*** – Representatives of the PFHCB will remain unbiased in implementing and administering Board criteria, activities and programs. No individual's needs shall compromise, or take precedence over, the collective interests of all professional fish harvesters.

***Service and Quality*** – The long-term success of the PFHCB in meeting its objectives depends on its ability to provide value to certified fish harvesters. This will be achieved by establishing and maintaining an office staff that demonstrates professionalism, courtesy and competence when dealing with clients. The Board and staff will also demonstrate fiscal responsibility, by way of an annual external audit.

## **7.0 Primary Clients**

The primary clients of the PFHCB are the 13,000(+) certified professional fish harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Board's objectives and activities are focused directly on certified commercial fish harvesters and their industry.

Additionally, in carrying out its activities and meeting its objectives, the PFHCB consults and partners with various key industry groups and agencies, including:

- Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
- Association of Newfoundland & Labrador Fisheries Cooperatives
- Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters
- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Fisheries & Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador
- Transport Canada
- Department of Youth Services & Post Secondary Education
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada
- Labour Market Development Secretariat

Canadian Coast Guard  
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency  
Workplace Health Safety & Compensation Commission  
Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador  
Canadian Red Cross

## **8.0 Vision**

The PFHCB vision is a viable Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fishery, sustained by independent professional fish harvesters committed to demonstrating appropriate knowledge, skills and commitment to safely and successfully meet the human resources needs of their industry, from which they can maintain their livelihood with respect and dignity.

The PFHCB also shares the vision of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, as it pertains to the harvesting sector of the industry, through its mandate to enhance professionalism in the commercial fishery.

## **9.0 Mission**

The mission statement of the PFHCB represents the key longer-term results that the PFHCB works toward in fulfilling its objectives, as outlined in the Act. The Board's primary objectives are related to the certification and overall professionalization of NL commercial fish harvesters. The mission statement is accompanied by measures and indicators to assist in monitoring and evaluating success.

By 2010, the PFHCB will have made advancements in the areas of fisheries training and public awareness of professional fish harvesters and their occupation.

***Measure #1*** – Made advancements in the area of fisheries training.

***Indicators:*** Expanded training opportunities for Apprentice and Level I fish harvesters who chose to pursue Level II status.

Improved access to training opportunities for professional fish harvesters required to meet federal Transport Canada (TC) fisheries-related certification requirements.

Worked with Transport Canada and Marine Institute to implement improved fisheries training curriculum that better reflect the current human resources needs of the industry.

Established funding sources to assist professional fish harvesters pursuing fisheries training.

**Measure #2** – Made advancements in the area of public awareness of professional fish harvesters and their industry.

**Indicators:** Engaged in activities aimed at increased public awareness of the skills and knowledge required to be a certified professional fish harvester.

Engaged in activities aimed at increased public awareness of the annual socio-economic value of the inshore commercial fishery.

## **10.0 Strategic Issues**

The issues identified in this Activity Plan are a reflection of the significant human resources challenges facing our commercial fishery as a result of many factors, including: an aging population, out migration, technological advances, public perception of fish harvesters and their industry, and a greater emphasis on fisheries training by the federal and provincial governments.

The Board has identified five primary issues and subsequent objectives by which it intends to address each issue. Each objective is accompanied by measures and indicators to assist in monitoring and evaluating success.

### **Issue #1 – Mandatory Training and Certification**

Under the current Canada Shipping Act (CSA 2001) Regulatory Reform Project, Transport Canada introduced new/amended Marine Personnel Regulations that came into force on July 1, 2007. These new regulations will significantly increase the amount and level of training required by Canadian fishing crews. For example, Fishing Masters training (previously only required on vessels >60GRT) will be mandatory on all vessels >15GRT. Additionally, Transport Canada has set a deadline of April 1, 2008 for all Canadian fish harvesters to have completed the required Marine Emergency Duties (MED) training course.

These added federal training and certification requirements, coupled with an existing shortage of certified fishing masters and mates, will make it increasingly difficult for owner/operators to find and retain certified crewmembers.

**Objective #1:** Through December 31, 2008, the PFHCB will have continued its support of fish harvesters in understanding and fulfilling their Transport Canada mandatory training requirements.

**Measure #1:** Provided support to fish harvesters in understanding mandatory federal training requirements.

**Indicators:** Attended Transport Canada's Canadian Marine Advisory Council meetings in an effort to attain detailed information on federal training requirements.

Disseminated information regarding mandatory federal training and certification requirements.

**Measure #2:** Provided support to fish harvesters in fulfilling their mandatory federal training requirements.

**Indicators:** Delivered MED A3 training courses to fish harvesters.

Assisted the Marine Institute with registration and delivery of MED A1 training, Fishing Master Training, and ROC-MC training.

Assisted fish harvester in securing financial support for tuition fees related to mandatory training requirements.

**Objective #2:** Through December 31, 2009, the PFHCB will have continued its support of fish harvesters in understanding and fulfilling their Transport Canada mandatory training requirements.

**Objective #3:** Through December 31, 2010, the PFHCB will have continued its support of fish harvesters in understanding and fulfilling their Transport Canada mandatory training requirements.

## **Issue #2 – Retention and Recruitment of a Skilled Fisheries Labour Force**

More than 50% of federal Core species licence holders in the Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fishery are over the age of 50, and nearly 40% are over the age of 55.

Comparatively, a mere 12% of Level II fish harvesters (those eligible to receive the transfer of a federal Core licence) are under the age of 40. As suggested by the Rural Secretariat and the Skills Task Force, the fishery is in jeopardy of experiencing a skilled labour shortage over the coming decade.

**Objective #1:** By December 31, 2008, the PFHCB will have implemented initiatives to encourage and support fish harvesters in pursuit of Level II professional certification.

**Measure #1:** Worked to encourage Apprentice and Level I fish harvesters to pursue Level II certification.

**Indicators:** Disseminated information regarding requirements for certification upgrading, DFO federal licencing policy, and training opportunities.

Promoted the occupation of commercial fish harvesting as a viable career opportunity.

**Measure #2:** Worked to support Apprentice and Level I fish harvesters who are pursuing Level II certification.

**Indicators:** Assisted fish harvesters in securing tuition assistance and retaining EI benefits while in training.

Worked toward the development of new training opportunities for fish harvesters pursuing PFHCB certification upgrading.

Advised Apprentice and Level I fish harvester on DFO federal licencing policy, and procedures related to receiving the transfer of Core fishing enterprises.

**Objective #2:** By December 31, 2009, the PFHCB will have continued the implementation of initiatives to encourage and support fish harvesters in pursuit of Level II certification.

**Objective #3:** By December 31, 2010, the PFHCB will have continued the implementation of initiatives to encourage and support fish harvesters in pursuit of Level II certification.

### **Issue #3 – Federal Recognition of Professional Certification/Registration**

In 1997 the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) transferred the registration/certification of fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador to the PFHCB. Since that time, the PFHCB certification criteria have been incorporated into DFO licencing policy in the NL region. For example, in order to receive the transfer of any federal species licence, fish harvesters in NL must be a certified Level II with the PFHCB.

However, despite the strong linkages between DFO licencing policy and PFHCB certification, there remains to be no clear federal regulatory recognition of professional certification/registration by certification boards (such as the PFHCB).

**Objective #1:** By December 31, 2008, the PFHCB will have taken the necessary preliminary steps toward achieving a federal regulatory amendment recognizing provincial PFHCB certification.

**Measure:** Preliminary steps were taken to attain a federal regulatory amendment.

**Indicators:** Gained the support of the Regional DFO, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters in achieving regulatory recognition of PFHCB certification.

Made contact with key federal DFO officials responsible for amendments to federal fisheries regulations.

**Objective #2:** By December 31, 2009, the PFHCB will have begun exploring the avenues and strategy for achieving a federal regulatory amendment recognizing provincial PFHCB certification.

**Objective #3:** By December 31, 2010, the PFHCB will have explored and exhausted all avenues and strategies for achieving a federal regulatory amendment recognizing provincial PFHCB certification.

#### **Issue #4 – Strategic Direction for Communications/Public Relations**

The PFHCB has a mandate around communication and public relations that includes the promotion of fish harvesting as a professional occupation. Since its inception in 1997, the Board has undertaken an array of communications and public relations initiatives aimed at fulfilling this mandate. Since 2002, the Board has had a dedicated Public Relations committee tasked with overseeing public relations initiatives. However, despite a concerted effort to promote fish harvesters, their occupation and their industry, there has been no clear communications plan or direction. The result has been an ad-hoc approach to communication and public relations, with no ability to measure or track success.

**Objective #1:** By December 31, 2008, the PFHCB, through its public relations committee, will have taken steps to prepare a long-term strategic approach to communications and public relations.

**Measure:** Steps taken to prepare a strategic communications plan.

**Indicators:** Received approval from the Public Relations Committee and Board of Directors, including an allocation of funds, to contract the preparation of a strategic communications plan.

Contract awarded for the preparation of a multi-year PFHCB strategic communications plan.

**Objective #2:** By December 31, 2009, the PFHCB will have begun implementing elements of a strategic communications plan.

**Objective #3:** By December 31, 2010, the PFHCB will have continued implementing elements of a strategic communications plan.

## **Issue #5 – New Federal Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (re: Stability)**

Stability of commercial fishing vessels has become a priority of the Transportation Safety Board and Transport Canada in recent years, as stability factors have contributed to a growing number of incidents and fatalities in the fishing industry. Both federal agencies have been advocating for more stable vessels and an improved understanding of vessel stability among commercial fish harvesters.

Under the current Canada Shipping Act (CSA 2001) Regulatory Reform Project, Transport Canada is amending the Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations, including the addition of a new Stability Regulation and Standard. These proposed regulations are due to be enacted in 2009, and will include a substantial increase in the number of fishing vessels required to undergo stability testing and carry stability booklets.

**Objective #1:** By December 31, 2008, the PFHCB will have assisted certified fish harvesters in interpreting the new proposed Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (including stability regulations) and communicated their comments and concerns to Transport Canada.

**Measure:** Assisted fish harvesters in the interpretation of the Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations and communicated their comments and/or concerns to Transport Canada.

**Indicators:** Disseminated information to fish harvesters regarding the new Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations.

Consulted with fish harvesters regarding the impact of the regulations on their operations, and their related concerns.

Made representation to Transport Canada regarding the impact (positive and/or negative) of the proposed regulations.

**Objective #2:** By December 31, 2009, the PFHCB will have continued assisting fish harvesters in interpreting the new proposed Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (including Stability) and communicated their comments and concerns to Transport Canada.

**Objective #3:** By December 31, 2010, the PFHCB will have assisted fish harvesters in interpreting the new Small Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (due to be enacted in 2009), and determining the regulatory impact on their respective fishing enterprises.

## **11.0 Contact Information**

To inquire or comment on the contents of this Activity Plan or for additional information about the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board please contact:

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