



2017-2019

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), I am pleased to present the Board's three-year Activity Plan for 2017-2019. My signature below is indicative of our accountability for the preparation of this plan, and for achieving our stated objectives. The Strategic Directions of Government related to the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources have been considered.

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. The Board of Directors and Staff of the PFHCB takes great pride in the Board's accomplishments to date, and we commit our continued support for realizing our vision 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. The PFHCB's Board of Directors accepts 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 Land Resources. 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.

The PFHCB remains committed to its objectives as outlined in the *Professional Fish Harvesters Act*, and will contribute, in every way possible, to improving the professional status of commercial fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador. To that end, I accept accountability for ensuring that all efforts are made to attain the results specified in this plan.

Finally, this Activity Plan meets the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* for a Category 3 entity, and 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

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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 Land Resources (DFLR), 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 per cent 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 seven 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 the authority granted under the *Professional Fish Harvesters Act*, and operating for the benefit of all Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fish harvesters. The core operating revenue of the PFHCB is generated from annual certification fees paid by harvesters, with additional revenue generated from training and other service fees. Board revenue is utilized to carry out its annual activities, as outlined in this plan, and covers such expenses as staff wages, office and administration costs, training and skills development initiatives, communications and awareness campaigns, and an appeal process. Details of the PFHCB's revenue and expenditures can be found in the Board's audited financial statements that are submitted annually to the Minister in support of its *Transparency and Accountability* reporting obligations.

In accordance with the *Professional Fish Harvesters Act*, the PFHCB operates under the direction of a 15-member board of directors, which meets a minimum of two times per year. The PFHCB currently registers and certifies some 9,500 Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters. The Board reports annually to the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, 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, Forestry and Agrifoods upon recommendation from the respective organizations identified in Section 5 of the Act.

The current Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, board members are:

Bill Broderick	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
George Feltham	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Carl Hedderson	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)
Robert Keenan	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Reg Best	NL Fisheries Cooperatives
Vacant Position	Department of Fisheries and Land Resources
Brooks Pilgrim	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Kimberly Penney	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Paul Dinn	Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
Carey Bonnell	Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University
Vacant Position	A representative appointed to represent aboriginal fish harvesters
Dr. Ratana Chuenpagdee	Independent Appointee by the Minister of DFLR

3.0 Staff and Executive Committee

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

- Mark Dolomount – Executive Director
- Cheryl Jamieson – Coordinator, Registration and Certification
- Velma Pike – Coordinator, Finance and Administration
- Juanita Cutler – Project Coordinator

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
- George Feltham – Vice-Chairperson
- Mildred Skinner – Secretary
- Kimberly Penney – Member at Large
- Mark Dolomount – Ex-Officio

4.0 Legislative 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; and
- (g) to develop, maintain and monitor compliance of a Code of Ethics for fish harvesters;

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. Professional Fish Harvesters are required to submit a certification renewal application form annually and pay the annual registration fee of \$75.00. New entrants are required to file a new entrant application form and pay the annual registration fee of \$75.00.

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 9,500 fish harvesters were registered with the PFHCB annually during our last reporting period of 2014-2016.

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). As a result of Transport Canada's mandatory MED requirement under the *Marine Personnel Regulations*, Level I and Level II fish harvesters also take advantage of this course 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 courses are delivered by the Marine Institute of Memorial University, the Board does deliver a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program, which enables fish harvesters to acquire credits toward their certification upgrading.

The PLAR program provides an opportunity, on an annual basis, 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 a standardized 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 10 skill sets available.

4. *Public Relations and Advocacy Initiatives*

Under the direction of the Executive 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 and 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 an annual public relations budget allowance to support ongoing public relations 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, Certification and Training, 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 professional development 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 approximately 9,500 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:

- Newfoundland and Labrador Fisheries Cooperatives
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canadian Coast Guard
- Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters
- Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Federation
- Canadian Red Cross
- Canadian Sealers Association
- Department of Fisheries and Land Resources
- Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour
- Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/Unifor)
- Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Transport Canada
- Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA)

8.0 Vision

The PFHCB's 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.

9.0 Objectives

The issues identified in this Activity Plan are a reflection of the challenges that continue to face our commercial fishery as a result of many factors, with the focus placed mainly on new federal regulatory requirements and meeting the long-term human resource needs of the industry. For this planning period, the Board has identified two 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.

As the focus of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board will remain the same for all three years, the Board will report on the same objectives and indicators in all three years of this planning cycle.

Issue #1 – New Federal Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations

The new federal Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations (of the *Canada Shipping Act*) are scheduled to come into force in July of 2017. As outlined below, these new regulations will have a significant impact on NL fishing crews – particularly vessel owners/operators. These new regulations include changes to current regulatory requirements, as well as significant new requirements for fishing vessels. For example:

- Changes to the lifesaving equipment requirements for fishing vessels.
- New stability requirements that will require all new fishing vessels, and some existing vessels, to be formally tested for adequate stability.
- Requirements for fishing vessels to have written safe operating procedures.

Overall, the new regulations will impact all vessels less than 24 meters (m). Some parts of the new regulations will impact all vessels, while other elements of the regulations will impact vessels based on their size, sea area, and fishing activity.

The Newfoundland and Labrador fishing industry currently has approximately 3,600 fishing enterprises in the less than 24 meter category, and many enterprises have more than one registered fishing vessel. As a result, the impact of these new regulations will be significant, both in terms of the number of vessels impacted, as well as the potential cost, time and resources necessary to become compliant with the new regulatory requirements.

Regulatory compliance is considered a key part of being a professional fish harvester, and can contribute significantly to improved safety onboard fishing vessels. The PFHCB has always played a key role in assisting fish harvesters understand their regulatory requirements, and supported them in achieving and maintaining compliance. Over the next three years, the PFHCB will make every effort possible to meet our objectives on this strategic issue.

Objective #1: By December 31, 2017, the PFHCB will have assisted small vessel (<24m) owners/operators in understanding the new regulatory requirements of Transport Canada's federal Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations, and supported them in achieving compliance with their federal certification requirements.

Indicators: Attained detailed information and a general understanding of the new federal regulatory requirements.

Raised awareness of the new federal regulations amongst Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters.

Advised individual owners/operators on how to achieve compliance with new federal regulatory requirements.

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

Recruitment and retention of skilled labour in the harvesting sector of the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery is a priority for the PFHCB. The *Provincial Labour Market Outlook* prepared by the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour identifies ‘Fishing Vessel Masters and Skippers’ as an occupation with one of the highest job prospects from 2016-2025. It ranks third out of 120 occupational categories, and has an occupational rating of 4 (scale of 1-4), defined as:

“Projected labour supply is expected to lag projected job openings. Significant labour supply responses will be required to meet demand. Competition for qualified labour will be strong.”

Furthermore, approximately 65 per cent of federal Core species licence holders in the Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fishery are over the age of 50. Comparatively, less than 10 per cent of Level II fish harvesters (those eligible to receive the transfer of a federal Core licence) are under the age of 40. If the issues of recruitment and retention of skilled labour are not addressed, a labour shortage will likely develop over the coming decade.

In an effort to recruit and retain an adequate skilled labour force to meet the future industry demands (including adequate numbers of Level II fish harvesters to receive the transfer of licences from retiring enterprise owners), the PFHCB has set the following objectives for this planning cycle. Success on this strategic issue is critical to the PFHCB’s vision and long-term objectives.

Objective #1: By December 31, 2017, the PFHCB will have recruited and supported fish harvesters to pursue Level II professional certification.

Indicators: Identified Apprentice and Level I fish harvesters in the PFHCB’s registry/database who would be candidates for certification upgrading.

Established support mechanisms to assist Apprentice and Level I fish harvesters interested in pursuing certification upgrading.

10.0 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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