



2020-2022

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 2020-2022. 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, Forestry and Agriculture (the department formerly known as 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**.

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 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** (the 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 (NL).

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, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA), 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 fish harvester 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 granted exemptions under 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 Act** 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 9,000+ Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters. The Board reports annually to the Minister of FFA, the Minister responsible for the **Professional Fish Harvesters Act**. For further information about the PFHCB's lines of business, values and primary clients, please see www.pfhcb.com.

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 FFA upon recommendation from the respective organizations identified in Section 5 of the Act.

The current board members of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board 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)
David Jarvis	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
Nicole Rowsell	Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Frank Corbett	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Patricia Williams	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Jennifer Meadus	Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour
Ed Durnford	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 FFA

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
- Frank Corbett – 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 9,000-9,400 fish harvesters were registered with the PFHCB annually during our last reporting period of 2017-2019.

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

Apprentice fish harvesters are required by PFHCB criteria to complete a Basic Safety Training course prior to commencing their second fishing season. Since 2002, the Board has been delivering a five-day Basic Safety Training (MED A3) course to Apprentice Fish Harvesters and new entrants to the fishing industry.

The PFHCB's five-day basic safety course includes two days of General Seamanship and Stability, one day of Transport Canada Marine Emergency Duties (MED A3), and two days of Canadian Red Cross Marine Basic First Aid. Harvesters preferring to complete an equivalent Transport Canada recognized MED 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 85 education credits can be attained if an individual successfully challenges and passes the 11 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, Fish Harvester Recruitment, Regulatory Recognition of Professional Certification, 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 9,000+ Newfoundland and Labrador professional fish harvesters that are certified annually. 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:

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

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 strategic issues identified in this Activity Plan reflect the ongoing, and interconnected, skills development and labour supply challenges that continue to face the harvesting sector of NL's commercial fishery. In addressing these two issues, the focus of the PFHCB will be placed primarily on meeting the long-term skilled labour supply needs of the industry, and dealing with amendments being made by Transport Canada to the existing Marine Personnel Regulations (MPR) of the **Canada Shipping Act** (CSA). For this 2020-2022 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 indicators to assist in monitoring and evaluating success.

As the focus of the PFHCB 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 – Transport Canada Amendments to the Marine Personnel Regulations

The Marine Personnel Regulations of the **Canada Shipping Act** were last amended by Transport Canada in 2007, with new mandatory training and certification requirements for fishing crews phased in over an eight year period (2007-2015). While these new requirements initially created challenges for fish harvesters in understanding their regulatory requirements and achieving compliance, the end result was a positive and significant increase in the level of training and certification held by NL fishing crews.

Thirteen years later, following several years of regulatory consultation and drafting by Transport Canada, amendments to the MPR are scheduled to enter the 30-day public consultation of Canada Gazette Part I (the federal regulatory approval process) in fall 2020. The proposed amendments include significant changes to the mandatory training and certification requirements of Canadian fishing crews, including:

- Renaming of all Marine Emergency Duties courses, Fishing Master, and other master and watchkeeping certificates of competency;
- Introducing several new master and watchkeeping certificates valid on fishing vessels;
- Changing/updating the curriculum content of the new master and watchkeeping certificates of competency, and the newly named Marine Emergency Duties courses;
- Changing the validity of the various master and watchkeeping certificates of competency for fishing vessels;
- Changing the process for renewing Transport Canada certificates of competency; and
- Introducing an exchange process for current certificate holders to exchange/transition to the new corresponding certificates of competency.

While deemed to be very positive changes, these proposed amendments to the MPR will require significant work by industry organizations, such as the PFHCB, during the consultation, drafting and implementation phases. During the consultation and drafting stages, the issue is gaining a comprehensive understanding of the proposed amendments and ensuring that the newly amended regulations have the maximum positive impact on fish harvester certification and training, and the least negative impact. This requires constant engagement with Transport Canada, other industry organizations, and fish harvesters throughout the consultation and drafting processes prior to the implementation phase. This activity is key to meeting one of the PFHCB's stated objectives – "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".

During the implementation phase, the issue is ensuring that fish harvesters are aware of the regulatory amendments, including any new requirements, and are able to maintain and/or achieve compliance in a timely and efficient way. Overall, the new amended MPR will impact all NL fishing vessels in some way; with some parts of the new regulations impacting all vessels, and other elements impacting vessels based on their size and area of operation. Therefore, it is important that NL fish harvesters stay up-to-date on changes to the MPR, any impact on their own certification and/or vessels, and how to ensure regulatory compliance is met.

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 necessary 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, 2020, the PFHCB will have contributed to the amendment of new federal Marine Personnel Regulations with a goal of maximizing the positive impact on fish harvester certification and training, and prepared for the successful implementation of these new amended regulations in the Newfoundland and Labrador fishing industry.

Indicators: Attained detailed information and a general understanding of the proposed amendments to federal MPR requirements.

Made representation to Transport Canada on the amended federal MPR during the regulatory consultation, approval and implementation phases.

Disseminated information regarding the federal MPR requirements amongst Newfoundland and Labrador fish harvesters.

Assisted individual fish harvesters with maintaining/achieving compliance with the federal MPR 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 remains a priority for the PFHCB through the 2020-2022 planning period. The most recent updated **Provincial Labour Market Outlook** prepared by the Department of Finance continues to identify “Fishing vessel masters and fishermen/women” as an occupation with one of the highest job demands/prospects. Overall, in the 2019-2028 labour market projections, it ranks second highest out of 180 occupational categories, and has an occupational rating of 4 (scale of 1-4) in 2024, 2025 and 2027, defined as:

“Projected labour supply is expected to lag projected job openings; competition for qualified labour will be strong.”

While progress has been made over the past several years, and aging trends appear to be levelling, the aging fish harvester population remains a key issue of the PFHCB and the industry generally. More than 50 per cent of all federal Core species licence holders in the Newfoundland and Labrador commercial fishery are over the age of 55. Comparatively, less than 20 per cent of Level II fish harvesters (those eligible to receive the transfer of a federal Core licence) are 45 years of age or younger. Clearly, these demographics are driving the labour market projections noted above. If the issues of recruitment and retention of skilled labour do not remain a priority of the fishing industry, including the PFHCB, a skilled labour shortage will likely develop over the coming decade.

In an effort to continue certifying and retaining an adequate skilled labour force to meet the future industry demands (including adequate numbers of Level II fish harvesters to receive the intergenerational transfer of licences from retiring enterprise owners), the PFHCB has set the following objective for this planning cycle. Success on this strategic issue remains critical to the PFHCB’s vision and long-term objectives and, 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, 2020, the PFHCB will have recruited and supported fish harvesters to attain PFHCB certification and pursue Level I and Level II professional certification upgrading.

Indicators: Promoted fish harvesting a viable career option and/or employment opportunity.

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

Maintained 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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