



**2014-2016**

**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 2014-2016. My signature below is indicative of our accountability for the preparation of this plan, and for achieving our stated objectives. Full consideration has been given to those Strategic Directions of Government related to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and it has been determined that the Board has no direct role in the accomplishment of those strategic directions.

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 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 Appeal Board of the PFHCB and Disciplinary Board of the PFHCB have their own planning and reporting obligations under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The Disciplinary Board has not been enacted to date; therefore no activity plan has been submitted for this planning period.

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, we accept accountability for ensuring that all efforts are 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

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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 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 10,000 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:

Bill Broderick	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
George Feltham	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Keith Sullivan	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)
Kevin Normore	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)
Perry Collins	Association of NL Fisheries Cooperatives
Craig Taylor	Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
Brooks Pilgrim	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Kimberly Penney	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
Paul Dinn	Department of Education
Carey Bonnell	Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University
Vacant Position	Human Resources and Social Development (Canada)
Dr. Scott MacKinnon	Independent Appointee by the Minister of DFA

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

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

Mark Dolomount – Executive Director  
Cheryl Jamieson – Coordinator, Registration and Certification  
Velma Barnes – Coordinator, Finance and Administration

**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	Keith Sullivan – Vice-Chairperson
George Feltham – Secretary	Kimberly Penney – Member at Large
Mark Dolomount (Ex-Officio)	

**Education Committee** – In accordance with the *Act* and By-Laws, this committee convenes, as required, on matters related to education, training, and certification upgrading criteria. The current Education Committee members are:

Mark Dolomount (PFHCB)	Jack Greenham (Fish Harvester)
Craig Parsons (Marine Institute)	Executive Committee members (as available)

**Public Relations Committee** – In accordance with the *Act* and By-Laws, this committee convenes, as required, on matters related to public relations, such as the promotion of fish harvesting as a professional occupation. The current Public Relations Committee members are:

Mark Dolomount (PFHCB)    Sharon Walsh (NL Fish Harvesting Safety Association)  
Kimberly Penney (DFO)    Executive Committee members (as available)

#### **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 \$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 10,000 fish harvesters were registered with the PFHCB in 2013.

## **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 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, and many continue to take this training for that purpose.

## **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.

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 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, Certification & 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 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 approximately 10,000 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:

- Association of Newfoundland & Labrador Fisheries Cooperatives
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canadian Coast Guard



Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters  
Canadian Red Cross  
Canadian Sealers Association  
Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Department of Advanced Education and Skills  
Fish Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW/CAW)  
Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Service Canada  
Transport Canada  
Workplace Health Safety & Compensation Commission  
Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesting Safety Association (NL-FHSA)

## **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.

## **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 2016, the PFHCB will have continued to make advancements in the areas of fisheries training and public awareness of professional fish harvesters and their occupation.

***Measure #1*** – Continued to make 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, Marine Institute, and other industry organizations to increase fish harvester awareness of their professional certification and training requirements.

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

**Measure #2** – Continued to make 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 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/changing regulatory training and certification requirements.

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.

### **Issue #1 – Mandatory Training and Certification for Small Vessel Operators**

The new revised Marine Personnel Regulations (MPR) of the *Canada Shipping Act* came into force on July 1, 2007, with a significant impact on NL fishing crews. For example, certified Masters, previously only required on vessels >60 Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT), will now be mandatory on all vessels, regardless of length or tonnage. Since 2007, the PFHCB has been actively engaged in educating NL fish harvesters on the regulatory requirements, and assisting them with achieving regulatory compliance. The focus over the Board's past 2 planning cycles has been on large vessel compliance (>15GRT), as the phase-in period for this fleet of vessels ended on November 7, 2012.

However the largest regulatory impact, in terms of number of vessels and harvesters, will be on vessels <15GRT, as there are approximately 3,000 such vessels operating in the NL inshore fishery. The regulatory phase-in period for this fleet of vessels will end on November 7, 2015 (for vessels >6 meters in length) and November 7, 2016 (for vessels 6 meters or less in overall length).

These added federal training and certification requirements, coupled with an existing shortage of certified fishing masters, will make it difficult for NL owner/operators to acquire the required certification, and achieve compliance with the new federal regulations.

**Objective #1:** By December 31, 2014, the PFHCB will have begun assisting small vessel owner/operators in understanding the regulatory requirements of the federal Transport Canada Marine Personnel Regulations, and supported them in achieving compliance with their federal certification requirements.

**Measure #1:** Began assisting small vessel owner/operators in understanding the regulatory requirements of the federal Transport Canada Marine Personnel Regulations.

**Indicators:** Attended Transport Canada’s Canadian Marine Advisory Council meetings, and other meetings and sessions as required, in order to attain detailed information on federal training and certification requirements.

Disseminated information to small vessel owner/operators regarding mandatory federal training and certification requirements in a clear and understandable manner.

**Measure #2:** Supported small vessel owner/operators in achieving compliance with the regulatory requirements of the federal Transport Canada Marine Personnel Regulations.

**Indicators:** Supported small vessel owner/operators in determining the exact training/certification they require, assisting them with registration for Fishing Master training, Officer of the Watch training, and Small Vessel Operator Proficiency training.

Supported fish harvesters in securing financial support for tuition fees related to mandatory training requirements.

Disseminated information to small vessel owner/operators regarding possible “exemptions” or “dispensations” (to federal certification/training requirements) available under the Marine Personal Regulations, and supported fish harvesters in acquiring and completing the necessary associated paperwork.

**Objective #2:** By December 31, 2015, the PFHCB will have continued assisting small vessel owner/operators in understanding the regulatory requirements of the federal Transport Canada Marine Personnel Regulations, and supported them in achieving compliance with their federal certification requirements.

**Objective #3:** By December 31, 2016, the PFHCB will have continued assisting small vessel owner/operators in understanding the regulatory requirements of the federal Transport Canada Marine Personnel Regulations, and supported them in achieving compliance with their federal certification requirements.

## **Issue #2 – Training Requirements for Commercial Sealers**

It has become widely accepted among sealing industry stakeholders that effective training is key to achieving the most humane, viable and professional industry possible. Such training will form the foundation on which the industry continues to rebuild its international reputation and markets. Since 2010, acting on a mandate received from sealing industry stakeholders, the PFHCB has been directly involved in the development and delivery of training workshops for commercial sealers. Since that time, the PFHCB has delivered Humane Harvesting of Seals workshops to nearly 4,000 commercial sealers (2010-2013), and has assisted DFA in the coordination and delivery of Quality/Handling/Health workshops to more than 2,000 commercial sealers (2011-2012).

However, as the result of new federal government requirements, these training workshops will become mandatory for all licenced sealers who wish to continue participating in the annual seal harvest. As a result, thousands of sealers will require training over the coming years. The PFHCB has made a commitment to assist sealers attain any required training, and the Board will work toward fulfilling this commitment throughout the 2014-2016 planning period.

**Objective #1:** By December 31, 2014, the PFHCB will have begun assisting commercial sealers to attain mandatory Humane Harvesting of Seals training workshops and mandatory Quality/Handling/Health training workshops.

**Measure #1:** Began assisting commercial sealers to attain mandatory Humane Harvesting of Seals training workshops.

**Indicators:** Acquired a formal training curriculum on the Humane Harvesting of Seals, approved by DFO to meet their new mandatory federal licencing requirements.

Maintained a team of qualified and trained instructors capable of meeting the delivery needs of the Humane Harvesting of Seals training workshop.

In cooperation with industry partners (DFA, DFO, CSA and FFAW), conducted the successful delivery of Humane Harvesting of Seals training workshops in all regions of the province, maintained a database on all participants, and issued Certificates of Attendance to all participants.

**Measure #2:** Began assisting commercial sealers to attain mandatory Quality/Handling/Health training workshops.

**Indicators:** Worked with DFA and other sealing industry partners to develop a training curriculum on Quality/Handling/Health that meets the requirements of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

In cooperation with industry partners (DFA, CFIA, CSA and FFAW), coordinated the successful delivery of Quality/Handling/Health training workshops in all regions of the province, maintained a database on all participants, and issued Certificates of Attendance to all participants.

**Objective #2:** By December 31, 2015, the PFHCB will have continued assisting commercial sealers to attain mandatory Humane Harvesting of Seals training workshops and Quality/Handling/Health training workshops.

**Objective #3:** By December 31, 2016, the PFHCB will have continued assisting commercial sealers to attain mandatory Humane Harvesting of Seals training workshops and Quality/Handling/Health training workshops.

## **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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