
ACTION PLAN

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF

A FISHERIES RENEWAL FRAMEWORK

FOLLOW-UP TO THE NB FISHERIES SUMMIT

March 28, 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITEM	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	2
SUMMARY ACTION PLAN	3
1. FISHERIES ROUNDTABLE	3
2. STAKEHOLDER ACTION GROUPS	3
3. FISHERIES RENEWAL FRAMEWORK	5
4. FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE	5
5. COMMUNICATIONS	6
CRITICAL PATH	6
CONCLUSION	7

INTRODUCTION

Several developments during the 2006 fishing season marked a turning point for the fisheries industry in New Brunswick. Escalating operating costs, an increase in the Canadian dollar relative to the currencies of our major seafood trading partners, significant drops in the market value of the important snow crab and shrimp species, volume and value reductions in herring and a continued drop in the volume of lobster landings in some regions all contributed to creating major challenges for all stakeholders in the industry.

In November of 2006, the Minister of Fisheries initiated a series of industry consultations. These consultations included several stakeholder meetings with processors and harvesters in the three fishing regions of the province. Industry representatives presented their perceptions of the issues and opportunities facing the sector. The major conclusions from these consultations included:

- the need for a greater market-focus,
- the need for a review of over-capacity in both processing and harvesting,
- the need for human resource planning in processing and harvesting and
- the need for greater stability of access to the fisheries resource.

Industry was almost unanimous in seeking a greater leadership role on the part of the New Brunswick Department of Fisheries. Participants recognized the fragmented nature of the fisheries and seafood sector in the province and called upon the Department to take the lead in bringing industry together around a collective plan for improving the viability of the fishery.

Following the consultations with industry, Minister of Fisheries Rick Doucet, in cooperation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada Minister Loyola Hearn, convened the first-ever New Brunswick Fisheries Summit in Moncton on February 23-24, 2007. The theme of the Summit was “Common Vision-Common Future”. It brought together over 100 industry representatives, including harvesters, processors, plant workers, marketers and representatives from research and training institutions, as well as officials from various government agencies. The Summit resulted in the identification of a clear list of industry issues under the general themes of Markets, Processing and Harvesting.

The Summit endorsed proposals made by the Minister to develop an Action Plan as a follow-up process to the Summit. It was also suggested to include in this Action Plan the creation of Stakeholder Action Groups on Marketing, Processing, Harvesting and Governance in the industry. Other features of the Action Plan would include the formation of a Fisheries Roundtable, and the development of a *Fisheries Renewal Framework*.

This document constitutes the Department’s suggested Action Plan and represents the first phase of the Summit follow up.

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN

The proposed Action Plan is presented under five distinct initiatives, as follows:

1. Fisheries Roundtable
2. Stakeholder Action Groups
3. Fisheries Renewal Framework
4. Federal/Provincial Coordinating Committee
5. Communications

1. FISHERIES ROUNDTABLE

It has become crucial to establish a permanent ongoing forum of industry representatives to ensure that the Minister of Fisheries has the opportunity to receive advice from the industry on a regular and ongoing basis. This will be achieved through the creation of a permanent Fisheries Roundtable. Chaired by the Minister of Fisheries, this Roundtable will be mandated:

- to provide advice to the Minister of Fisheries on issues related to improving the fisheries industry in New Brunswick;
- to provide advice to the Minister on formulation of a *Fisheries Renewal Framework*; and
- to appoint Task Groups, as required, to consider options and make recommendations in relation to specific issues of importance that arise from time to time.

The Minister of Fisheries will appoint members of the Roundtable in May 2007. In addition to the Minister, the Roundtable will include 16 to 18 members, including seven persons from the harvesting sector, seven persons from the processing sector and up to four other fisheries stakeholders, as well as ex-officio representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Fisheries NB (DOF). The Roundtable will meet, at least, on a quarterly basis.

2. STAKEHOLDER ACTION GROUPS

Participants and observers at the New Brunswick Fisheries Summit were almost unanimous in seeking continued dialogue among all industry stakeholders. In order to continue the work initiated at the Summit, four Stakeholder Action Groups will be created, with representation from industry and both levels of government. The Groups are

- a Marketing Stakeholder Action Group;
- a Processing Stakeholder Action Group;
- a Harvesting Stakeholder Action Group; and
- a Stakeholder Action Group on Governance.

These groups will be expected to reach consensus in defining various options and bringing forward recommendations in relation to actions that may be pursued to address issues raised during the New Brunswick Fisheries Summit.

The activities to be carried out by the Action Groups are summarized as follows:

- 1) To confirm the priority challenges and issues identified during the Summit.
- 2) To identify options available to industry and governments in order to respond in a positive manner to the priority challenges identified at the Fisheries Summit.
- 3) To submit, for discussion at a workshop of the four Action Groups, options available to industry and governments to respond in a positive manner to priority challenges.
- 4) To develop recommendations for consideration by industry and governments.
- 5) To submit recommendations for discussion at a second workshop of the four Action Groups.
- 6) To submit recommendations to industry and governments.
- 7) Members of each Action Group will be encouraged to consult other stakeholders and associations during their mandate as required.
- 8) Each Action Group will submit monthly progress reports to DOF and DFO.
- 9) Action Groups may also submit interim reports and recommendations dealing with more pressing issues.

Unless otherwise determined, the work of the Stakeholder Action Groups will begin in April 2007 and extend to November 2007. Meetings of each Action Group will be facilitated by staff members of DOF, who will also prepare agendas and minutes of meetings.

The Minister of Fisheries, in consultation with DFO, will appoint members of the Action Groups in April 2007. Each Action Group will have approximately 10 members from industry and will include representatives from harvesting, processing and other stakeholders. Each Action Group will also include representatives from DOF, DFO and other pertinent agencies as required. Where possible, membership will include permanent staff of associations.

MARKETING STAKEHOLDER ACTION GROUP

The Marketing Stakeholder Action Group will address market-related issues with the goal of improving the province's position on the international market.

This committee will be composed of six representatives from the processing industry, two persons involved in marketing and two representatives from the harvesting sector.

PROCESSING STAKEHOLDER ACTION GROUP

The Processing Stakeholder Action Group will address processing issues with the goal of improving the viability of the processing sector.

This committee will be composed of six representatives from the processing industry, two representatives from the harvesting sector and at least one person from each of the areas of training and research and development.

HARVESTING STAKEHOLDER ACTION GROUP

The Harvesting Stakeholder Action Group will address harvesting issues with the goal of improving the viability of the harvesting sector.

This group will subdivide into two working groups, one for the Southwest region and one for the Northeast and Southeast regions.

Each working group will be composed of five representatives from the harvesting sector, and at least one person from each of the areas of processing, training and research and development.

STAKEHOLDER ACTION GROUP ON GOVERNANCE

The Stakeholder Action Group will address governance issues with the goal of creating an efficient structure to ensure meaningful and constructive participation by industry in making it more viable and sustainable for all of its participants.

This committee will be composed of four representatives from the processing industry, four representatives from the harvesting sector and at least one person from each of the areas of marketing, training and research and development.

3. FISHERIES RENEWAL FRAMEWORK

The *Fisheries Renewal Framework* will provide a long-term vision for the viability of the commercial fisheries industry in New Brunswick. It will present goals for the advancement of a sustainable industry and a plan where, through the efforts of both the industry and the governments, the goals may be achieved. It will represent a commitment from all stakeholders to take action to improve the industry for the good of coastal communities and all New Brunswickers.

The formulation of this Framework should be completed by December 2007, following the presentation of the final reports of the Stakeholder Action Groups.

4. FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

A Federal/Provincial Coordinating Committee will ensure inter-governmental coordination where required during the work of the Stakeholder Action Groups. The Deputy Minister of Fisheries will chair the Committee, which will also include senior officials of both DOF and DFO.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

The Department of Fisheries is committed to keeping industry informed throughout the process of the progress being made by the Stakeholder Action Groups and in the formulation of the *Fisheries Renewal Framework*. The momentum for renewal developed through the consultation process and the Fisheries Summit will be maintained through a structured Communications Plan. Periodic communications with industry will be planned, as well as provision of information on the DOF website. The Communication Plan will include the following:

1. March 28 This Action Plan will be distributed to all Summit participants and other industry stakeholders, with a request for comments or feedback by April 10.
2. April 17 Composition of members of the Stakeholder Action Groups will be announced.
3. May 17 Composition of members of the Fisheries Roundtable will be announced.
4. End of June A general status report will be provided to all Summit participants and other stakeholders.
5. End of July A second general status report will be issued to all Summit participants and other stakeholders.
6. End of September Stakeholder Action Group reports submitted to DOF will be made publicly available welcoming written comments by October 22.

CRITICAL PATH

The sequence and timing of the principal activities of the process leading to the development of a *Fisheries Renewal Framework* may be summarized as follows:

- Appointment of members of the Stakeholder Action Groups (April)
- Each Stakeholder Action Group will meet on at least a monthly basis in April, May and June
- Appointment of members of the Fisheries Roundtable (May)
- General status report to industry (end of June)
- Workshop of the four Action Groups to discuss preliminary findings (July), after which a second general status report will be issued to the industry
- Stakeholders Action Group meetings (August)
- Workshop of the four Action Groups (early September)

- Preparation and submission to DOF of final Stakeholder Action Group reports and recommendations (end of September), which will be made publicly available to industry for feedback by October 22
- Preparation of the final draft of the *Fisheries Renewal Framework* (end of November), which will then be presented to government for consideration

CONCLUSION

Presentation of a draft of the *Fisheries Renewal Framework* is targeted to be delivered to government by November 30, 2007 for consideration. The process and critical path for achieving this goal are designed to maximize opportunities for inclusion of all stakeholder groups in the discussions and deliberations of the Stakeholder Action Groups and also to gain feedback from industry individuals and associations not directly involved in the Groups. The final product is intended to represent a collaborative and cooperative approach to the renewal of the New Brunswick fisheries industry.