



Evaluation of the Fisheries Funds



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Final Report

March 2023



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Evaluation Context



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Evaluation Context

Overview

As requested by senior management, and in accordance with the Departmental Evaluation Plan, an Evaluation of the Fisheries Funds was conducted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) Evaluation Division. The evaluation was conducted in compliance with the Treasury Board Policy on Results and meets the obligations of the *Financial Administration Act*.

Evaluation context, scope, and objectives

The evaluation covered the following three Funds: Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF), Quebec Fisheries Fund (QFF), and British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF).

Overall, the evaluation covered the years 2017-18 to 2021-22. However, for BCSRIF, only the fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-21 were evaluated. BCSRIF was realigned to be part of the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) as of April 2021, in addition to the Fisheries Funds (Budget 2021).

The evaluation included DFO regions that manage the Fisheries Funds: Maritimes, Quebec, and Pacific. Provinces were involved as key informants.

The evaluation included an assessment of the relevance, governance, design and delivery, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the Funds.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

1. Are the Fisheries Funds responding to existing and evolving needs?
2. Are the Fisheries Funds well designed?
3. Is the governance of the Fisheries Funds effective and efficient?
4. To what extent are the Fisheries Funds showing early signs of expected results?
5. To what extent is the funding process for the Fisheries Funds effective and efficient?
6. Are the Fisheries Funds accessible and inclusive?

Evaluation methodology and Evaluation questions

The evaluation was designed to respond to the questions listed in Table 1. Information gathered from multiple lines of evidence was triangulated to address the evaluation questions.

The methodology included a document and file review, 51 interviews, a survey to recipients, data analysis, and a literature review. The evaluation methodology, limitations and mitigation strategies are presented in Annex A.



Document and File Review



Interviews



Survey



Administrative data review



Literature Review



Program Context



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Program Context

Overview of the Fisheries Funds


- The Fisheries Funds are jointly funded contribution programs, wherein 70% of the funding is provided by the federal government, and the remaining 30% is provided by the participating provinces and territories.
- The Funds focus on three main pillars: innovation, infrastructure, and science partnerships.
- The Funds are governed by a Management Committee and a Steering Committee, and are each overseen by three Regional Directors General (RDGs) located in the Maritimes, Quebec, and Pacific Regions.

Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF)




AFF began in 2017, with over \$400 million budgeted over seven years, and provides funding to projects in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. It aims to help Canada's fish and seafood sector transition to meet growing demands for products that are high quality, value-added and sustainably sourced. AFF to sunset in 2023-24.

Quebec Fisheries Fund (QFF)



QFF began in 2019 with \$42.8 million budgeted over five years. It aims to stimulate innovation in Quebec's fish and seafood sector and support its development and adaptation. QFF to sunset in 2023-24.

British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF)



BCSRIF began in 2019 with \$142.85 million budgeted over five years. BCSRIF customized objectives with the province of British Columbia at the front end of the program. The Fund aims to support protection and restoration activities for priority wild fish stocks, including wild Pacific salmon, and to ensure the fish and seafood sector in BC is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

In 2022, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and the province of British Columbia, announced the doubling of funding contributions for BCSRIF and extended the Fund to 2026. Budget 2021 committed an additional \$100 million in new federal funding to expand BCSRIF as a key component of the PSSI, bringing Canada's total contribution to \$200 million over seven years.



Program Context (*continued*)

Each Fund focuses on three main pillars: **innovation**, **infrastructure**, and **science partnerships**. AFF administers a fourth pillar, **the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF)**, a national market access and development program.

INNOVATION



Encourages the development of new products, processes, and technologies in harvesting and aquaculture

INFRASTRUCTURE



Encourages the adoption of new technologies or processes to improve productivity and sustainability

SCIENCE PARTNERSHIPS



Forms industry-based collaborations with academic and other research institutions to improve our knowledge and understanding of the marine ecosystem

CANADIAN FISH AND SEAFOOD OPPORTUNITIES FUND



Helps Canada enhance its reputation as a country that provides fish and seafood products that are: legal; sustainable; high quality; and value-added

Objectives

The three Funds share the same Integrated Fish and Seafood Sector Contribution Management Framework Terms and Conditions, whose objectives are aligned with DFO's Core Responsibility of Fisheries, as highlighted in its departmental results framework. The Fisheries Funds contribute to the following departmental results:

- 1.1 Canadian fisheries are sustainably managed; and
- 1.2 Canadian aquaculture is sustainably managed.

The Fisheries Funds aim to keep the fish and seafood sector sustainable and innovative while meeting the growing demands of a worldwide market.

Program Context (continued)

Funding process

All Funds have a similar funding process:

Figure 1: Fisheries Funds activities



* Disbursement of funds can also occur during other phases.

** Repayment for some projects under certain circumstances.

Eligible recipients

Eligible groups under the Fisheries Funds include:

- Indigenous groups
- commercial enterprises
- universities and academics,
- industry associations and other non-profits
- other organizations, such as research institutions

For a complete list of eligible recipients, see Annex B.

Eligible activities funded through the Fisheries Funds

Different activities are eligible for funding under each pillar. Eligible activities cover a wide range of activities, from research and development of innovations; to adopting and/or adapting new technologies, processes, or equipment; to research and science activities.

For a complete list of eligible activities under the Fisheries Funds, see Annex C.



Program Context (*continued*)

Type of recipients

The large majority of AFF projects (86%) and many QFF projects (73%) are from commercial enterprises, while many BCSRIF projects (56%) are either from Indigenous organizations or non-governmental organizations.



86%
of AFF projects are from
commercial enterprises



73%
of QFF projects are from
commercial organizations



56%
of BCSRIF projects are from
Indigenous organizations or
non-governmental
organizations



Photo credit: DFO Facebook page

Program Context (continued)

Figure 2: Number of Fisheries Funds Full Time Equivalent (FTEs), in 2021-22

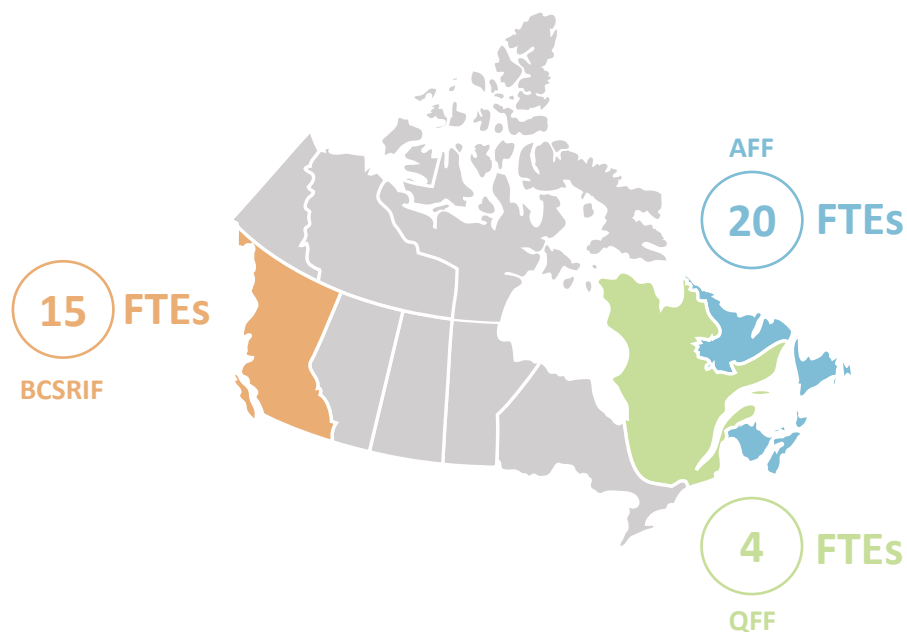


Table 3: BCSRIF financial summary (in millions \$)*

Budget Item	2019-20	2020-21
Salary	\$ 1.03	\$ 1.30
Operations and maintenance	\$ 0.15	\$ 0.06
Contributions	\$ 6.49	\$ 12.55
BCSRIF Total	\$ 7.67	\$ 13.91

Table 2: AFF financial summary (in millions \$)*

Budget Item	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Salary	\$0.80	\$2.20	\$2.40	\$2.90	\$3.00
Operations and maintenance	\$0.10	\$0.20	\$0.20	\$0.20	\$0.30
Capital	\$0.07	\$0.20	\$0.70	\$1.00	\$0.20
AFF Contributions	\$0.20	\$13.80	\$25.80	\$40.10	\$32.54
CFSOF Contributions	\$ -	\$ -	\$0.90	\$0.60	\$1.44
AFF Total	\$1.17	\$16.40	\$30.00	\$44.80	\$37.48

Table 4: QFF financial summary (in millions \$)*

Budget Item	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Salaries	\$0.44	\$0.43	\$0.44
Operations and maintenance	\$0.04	\$0.01	\$0.01
Contributions	\$0.47	\$2.32	\$4.29
QFF Total	\$0.94	\$2.77	\$4.74

* The financial summaries include federal expenditures only.

Evaluation Findings



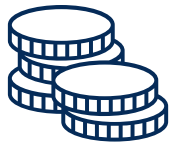
Photo credit: PowerPoint Stock Images



Relevance

Finding: There was widespread agreement that the Fisheries Funds are meeting the needs of the fish and seafood sector. The Funds were adaptable to the fish and seafood sector's evolving needs.

The fish and seafood sector is of great economic, social and cultural importance for Canadians. In 2018, commercial fisheries, including sea and freshwater fisheries, contributed more than \$3.7 billion to Canada's economy and employed 45,907 people. Much of this employment, created by the fish and seafood sector, is from small rural communities that depend on the industry almost exclusively. It is estimated that about 100 communities on the Pacific coast and more than 1,000 in Atlantic Canada depend on commercial fisheries. The fish and seafood sector plays a vital role in these communities.



\$3.7 billion
to Canada's
economy



45,907 people
employed in the fish
and seafood sector

There is a growing demand for fish and seafood globally. Canada is well positioned to support the growing global demand for fish and seafood and to do so sustainably. Indeed, multiple factors contribute to this opportunity, such as the recovery of the American and European economies, changing consumer preferences toward quality seafood products, and the increased value of fish landings and seafood exports since the recession in 2007-2009. But to remain competitive, Canada must keep its fish and seafood sector sustainable and innovative.

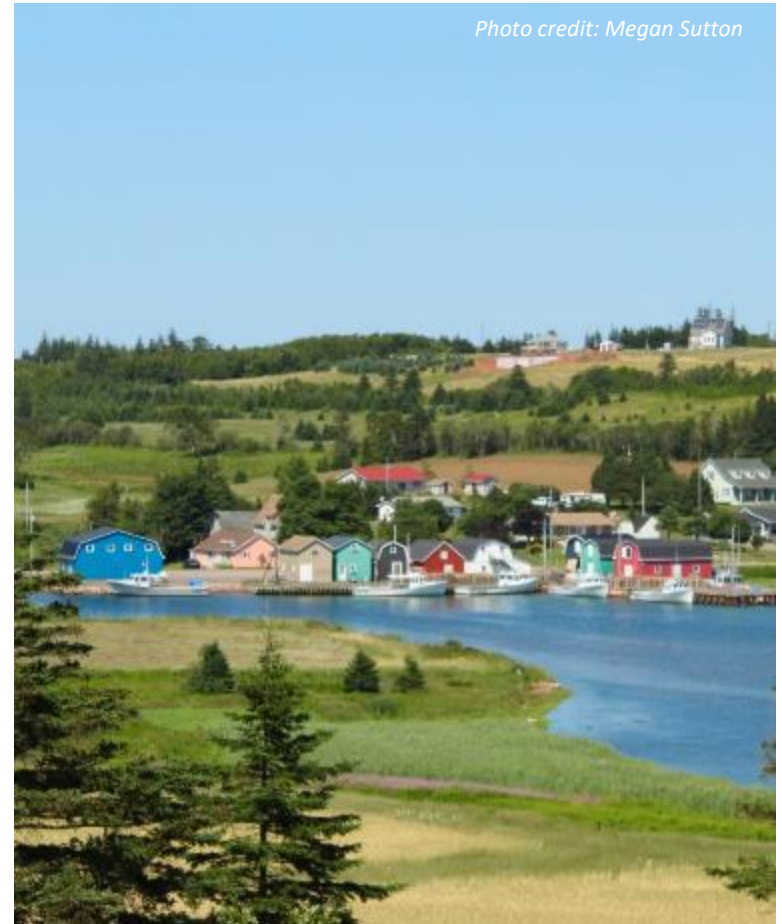


Photo credit: Megan Sutton

Photo description: French River, Prince Edward Island, is home to a fishing village and extensive mussel aquaculture.



Relevance (Continued)

With the goal of increasing sustainability and innovation, as well as competitiveness and quality, the Fisheries Funds support new products, processes, technologies, and research, as well as the protection and restoration of wild Pacific salmon.

- AFF and QFF have helped meet growing market demand for high-quality, sustainable seafood by funding the adoption of equipment. For example, state-of-the-art fish processing equipment, live lobster wells, automated groundfish longline systems, automated oyster graders, and other leading edge technologies for the sector. These types of equipment are largely proven technologies that had not previously been widely adopted by the industry, but this has now changed due to the Fisheries Fund contributions that have reduced the financial risk.
- AFF has also supported the pilot testing of emerging technologies as well such as those aimed at developing more sustainable harvesting techniques to reduce whale entanglements and bycatch in the emerging redfish fishery. The adoption of this new equipment has helped modernize the industry and contributed to improved quality, sustainability, and marketability of the Atlantic seafood sector. In many cases these technologies have also improved worker safety.
- Wild Pacific salmon are ecologically, commercially, culturally, and socially relevant to Canadians. Unfortunately, there have been unprecedented declines in salmon, with many populations declining to historic low levels (e.g., Chinook, Sockeye, Coho). The majority of BCSRIF projects focus on protecting and restoring wild Pacific salmon.



Photo credit: DFO website

Photo description: Northern cod fillets produced at Fogo Island Co-op's advanced processing facility. This facility has received AFF funding to purchase state-of-the-art fish processing equipment.



Need for the Fisheries Funds

There was widespread agreement that the Fisheries Funds are responding to existing needs

Many internal, provincial, and beneficiary interviewees agreed that the Fisheries Funds are responding to the existing and evolving needs of their sector or province. Examples of needs being met included: acquisition of new technology, which helps improve quality and competitiveness in the international market; increased automation; and completion of scientific research that might not otherwise happen without funding from the Fisheries Funds.



64%

of survey respondents said their project would not have taken place without the Fisheries Funds

It is important to note that of the remaining 36%, 18% of projects would have happened at a later time, 14% would have happened on a smaller scale, and only 4% would have gone ahead regardless.



82%

of survey respondents said the Fisheries Funds address the needs of their organization from a moderate to a great extent



80%

of survey respondents said the Fisheries Funds address the needs of the fish and seafood sector from a moderate to a great extent



Receiving BCSRIF funds has been critical to our ability to engage in salmon work.

- Survey respondent



Fisheries Funds have provided us the opportunity to purchase and install automated systems, which will assist in meeting labour needs that have been challenging over the past 5 years.

- Survey respondent



- A few interviewees noted examples of needs not being met, such as: development of skills to help make companies more efficient (e.g., reducing labour costs); and a potential gap created by the focus on salmon in British Columbia.
- Survey and interview respondents also noted that the Funds are adaptable to evolving needs. For example, the Funds became more flexible to the needs of industry over time, with more relevant projects being approved by the Steering committees.



Photo credit: NOAA, Unsplash

Photo Credit: Sustainable Fisheries



Other Similar Programs

Finding: Other similar federal, provincial, and regional programs exist and generally programs complement each other rather than duplicate. While there are not many formal communication mechanisms, good communication within the different groups direct project proponents to funding programs that suit their needs.

The Fisheries Funds cover a large scope of activities and are offered in multiple provinces. Given the nature of the Funds, there is potential complementarity, duplication, and overlap with other programs.

AFF, QFF, and BCSRIF overlap with or are similar to several Federal and Provincial programs. These overlaps or similarities are highly regionally specific. The nature of the relationship with these other programs differs between the regions.

- **ACOA:** In the Atlantic, the funds provided by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) are like AFF, as they both provide funds for innovation and infrastructure. However, ACOA funding does not include science partnerships and does not include fish harvesters as eligible applicants. The program is not seen as duplicative, but rather as complementary.
- **FACTAP:** DFO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program (FACTAP) funds projects to implement market-ready clean technologies, processes, and sustainable practices into the day-to-day operations in the fisheries, aquaculture, and processing sectors. There is an overlap between FACTAP and the Fisheries Funds, in terms of eligible activities (e.g., the adoption of new technologies), but no duplication, as the Fisheries Funds offer support in areas not covered by FACTAP.
- **Other programs:** In Quebec, there is a need for coordination as the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and Economy and Innovation Ministry (MEI) has a few programs similar to QFF, such as Innovamer. There seems to be good communication between these programs to avoid duplication.
- In the Pacific, BCSRIF is said to be similar to multiple salmon-related programs, such as the Salmonoid Enhancement Program, Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program, Species at Risk, and British Columbia's Healthy Watershed Initiative. There is no formal communication mechanisms nor unique database for the different salmon-related programs.

There are similar programs around the world

Globally, there are many programs similar to the Fisheries Funds, including funds located in the United States, Chile, New Zealand, Mexico, Ireland, the UK as a whole and Scotland, Hong-Kong, and the European Union. For example, there is a similar fund in the European Union – the European Maritime, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Fund (2021-2027), which provides funds for developing innovative projects ensuring that aquatic and maritime resources are used sustainably.



Fisheries Funds Contribute to the Fish and Seafood Sector

Finding: As of March 2022, the Fisheries Funds successfully signed more than 1,100 contribution agreements.

Investments are made to support the fish and seafood sector

As of March 2022, the Fisheries Funds successfully signed more than 1,100 contribution agreements and met their targeted number. Specifically, BCSRIF signed 97 contribution agreements, QFF signed 85, and AFF signed 924.

Figure 3: Number of signed contribution agreements and financial federal and provincial contributions (in millions), by Fund, as of March 2022

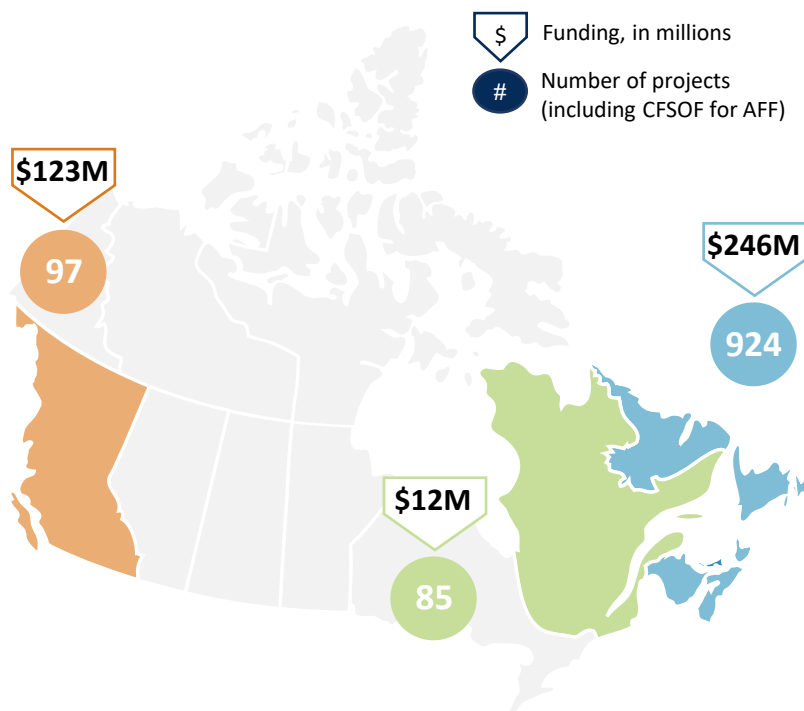


Photo description: A bluefin tuna in Quebec.

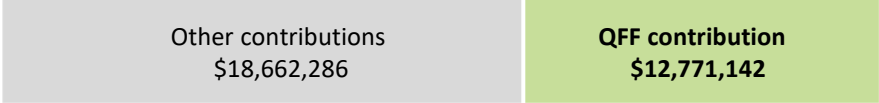
Fisheries Funds Contribute to the Fish and Seafood Sector *(continued)*

AFF has signed 924 contribution agreements (CFSOF included) for a total of \$246,968,730. Projects also leveraged private sector and government funds for a total of \$194,993,917, resulting in \$441,962,647 in project value to support Atlantic Canada’s fish and seafood sector. For every \$1.00 of AFF funding, \$0.79 has been invested through private sector and other government investments.



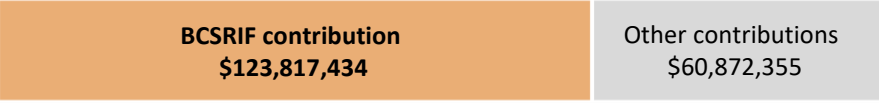
Total value of AFF projects - **\$441,962,647**

QFF has signed 85 contribution agreements for a total of \$12,771,142. Projects also leveraged private sector and government funds for a total of \$18,662,286, resulting in \$31,433,428 in project value to support Quebec’s fish and seafood sector. For every \$1.00 of QFF funding, \$1.46 has been invested through private sector and other government investments.



Total value of QFF projects - **\$31,433,428**

BCSRIF has signed 97 contribution agreements for a total of \$123,817,434. Projects also leveraged private sector and government funds for a total of \$60,872,355, resulting in \$184,689,789 in project value to support British Columbia’s fish and seafood sector. For every \$1.00 of BCSRIF funding, \$0.49 has been invested through private sector and other government investments.



Total value of BCSRIF projects - **\$184,689,789**

“ Our foundation works across the full range of Pacific salmon, these funds complement our other resources and have enabled us to diversify our outreach and support to communities ”

- Survey respondent

Source: Fisheries Funds’ administrative data.



Governance of the Fisheries Funds

Finding: The Secretariats, Steering Committees, and Management Committees support the delivery of the Fisheries Funds; while their roles and responsibilities are clear, and the role of the Secretariats are viewed as key to delivery, some adjustments would improve efficiency.

The Fisheries Funds' governance structure includes Secretariats, Management committees, and Steering committees. Final approval lies with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. Steering Committees, Management Committees, and the Secretariats support the delivery of the Fisheries Funds by processing applications, analyzing and reviewing projects, and recommending projects for consideration. The structures in place to support the governance of the Funds are summarized in Figure 4.

Interviewees noted that DFO's role as the Secretariat for each Fund was key: the Secretariats are considered very responsive and carry out administrative duties effectively. There are limited resources from the provinces to help with the day-to-day core operations of the Secretariats, especially for BCSRIF.

Figure 4: Fisheries Funds' governance structures

	Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard has final approval of all projects.
	Steering Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprised of federal and provincial Deputy Ministers, the Steering Committees' responsibilities include setting investment priorities, determining annual funding levels, and making final project funding recommendations to the Minister.
	Management Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically, the Management Committee consists of Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADM), Directors General (DG), or Regional Directors General (RDG) from each of the parties or their designated alternate. The Management Committee is responsible for the implementation, management and administration of the Fund, and screening applications and discussing funding decisions. The Management Committee provides analysis, support, recommendations and advice to the Deputy Minister-level Steering Committee. It also monitors, reports on and communicates activities undertaken, and program oversight. In all three Funds, the Management committee recommends projects for consideration for funding to the Steering Committee for approval by the Minister.
	Secretariats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Management Committee is supported by a Secretariat that manages administrative matters and solicits and screens projects. The Secretariat is responsible for processing applications and obtaining approvals, organizing Steering and Management committees' meetings, results reporting, providing technical reviews, promoting awareness of the Fund and providing advice on project development, negotiating Contribution Agreements, and managing ongoing projects.



AFF Governance

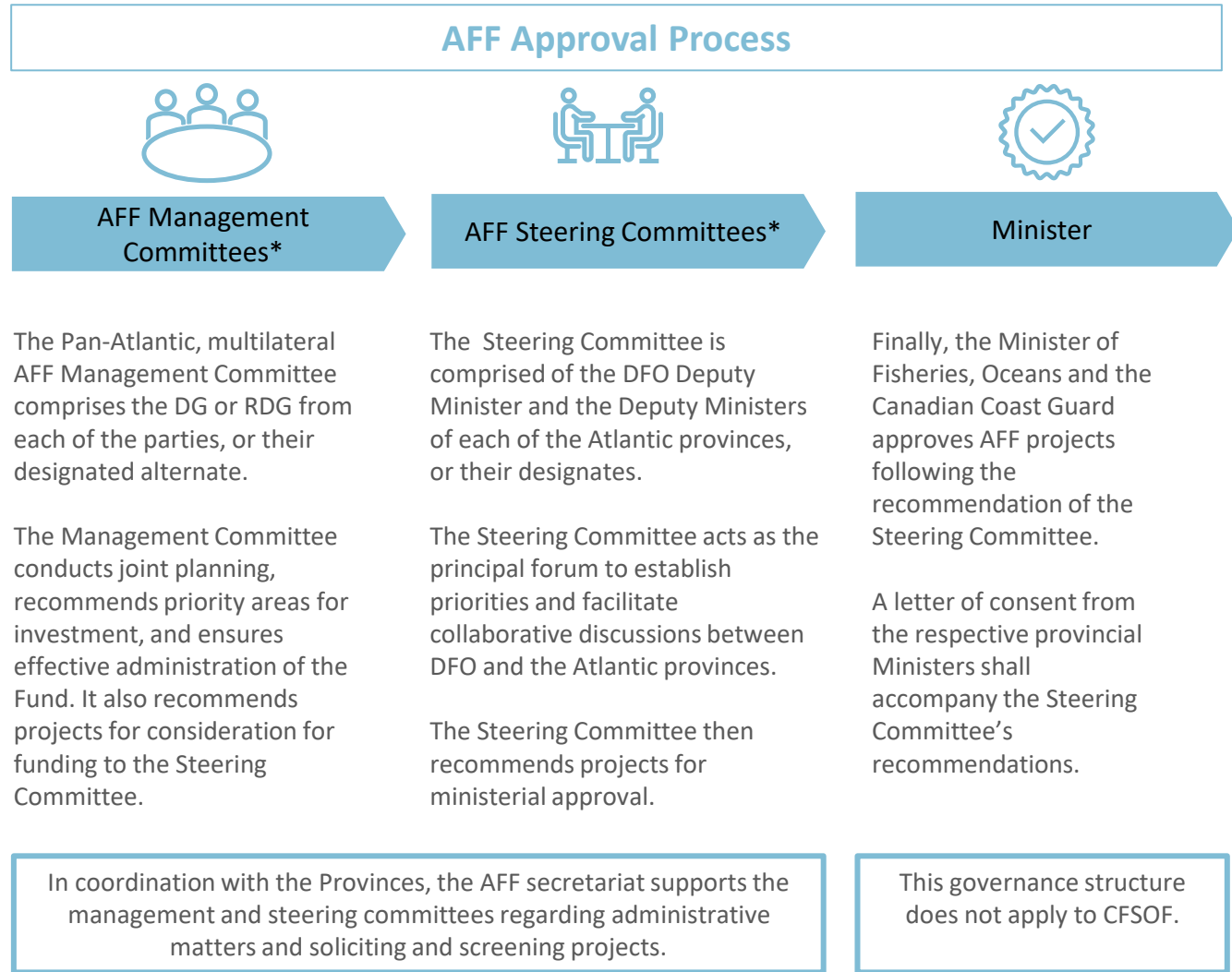
AFF governance structures

AFF roles and responsibilities are clearly established through the Atlantic Framework Agreement for the Atlantic Fisheries Fund.

In a pan-Atlantic context, AFF has multiple governance structures, a Pan-Atlantic management committee, a Pan-Atlantic Steering committee, as well as several bilateral management and steering committees, between DFO and the individual provinces.



Photo credit: PowerPoint stock photo



* Bilateral DFO-Province committees carry out functions for province-specific projects.



QFF Governance

QFF governance structures

QFF federal and provincial responsibilities are clearly established through the bilateral agreement between DFO and the Quebec Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ).



QFF Approval Process



QFF Secretariat*

The QFF Secretariat consists of a representative from DFO and a representative from MAPAQ, who the Steering Committee designates.

The QFF Secretariat plays a similar role to the AFF and BCSRIF Management Committees in that it recommends projects to the steering committee.

The Secretariat also fulfills a similar function to the other secretariats regarding administrative procedures and soliciting and screening projects.



QFF Steering Committee

The QFF bilateral Steering Committee provides strategic direction and reviews progress on its implementation. The Steering Committee recommends projects for ministerial approval.

The QFF Steering Committee acts as the principal forum to establish priorities and facilitate collaborative discussions between DFO and Quebec.

In theory, the DFO DM chairs the QFF Steering Committee; in practice, the Regional Director General (RDG), Quebec Region sits on the QFF Steering Committee.



DFO & MAPAQ Ministers

Finally, DFO and MAPAQ Ministers approve projects following the recommendations of the Steering Committee.

* As per both the QFF bilateral agreement and terms and conditions, the QFF Secretariat plays both roles of Secretariat and Management Committee.



BCSRIF Governance

BCSRIF governance structures

The BCSRIF Framework Agreement between DFO and BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries clearly documents the responsibilities and accountabilities of federal and provincial leads in the joint administration of the Fund.



Photo credit: PowerPoint stock photo

BCSRIF Approval Process



BCSRIF Management Committee

The BCSRIF Management Committee Meeting is chaired by DFO Pacific RDG and the ADM, Agriculture Science and Policy for BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

The Management Committee conducts joint planning and coordination, discusses operational issues, reviews project proposals, and recommends projects for consideration of funding to the Steering Committee.



BCSRIF Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is comprised of the Deputy Minister of British Columbia's Ministry of Agriculture, or their designate; and the DFO Deputy Minister, or his or her designate. In practice, the RDG Pacific Region chairs meetings for both the Management Committee and the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee acts as the principal forum to plan, coordinate, set BCSRIF priorities, reviews proposed projects, and provides recommendations to the Minister for final approval.



Minister

Finally, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard approves BCSRIF projects following the recommendation of the Steering Committee.

In coordination with the Province of BC, the BCSRIF secretariat supports the management and steering committees regarding administrative matters and soliciting and screening projects.



Approval Process

Finding: A major issue with the funding process for all Funds is delays in getting projects approved. The Management Committee and the Steering Committee are perceived as somewhat redundant. The governance structures could support the delivery of the Fisheries Funds in a more efficient way by combining those two levels of approval into one executive committee.

Delays in approval processes

Funding recipients who responded to the survey were less satisfied on average with the approval process compared to other program elements. The evaluation evidence indicated that the biggest issue was the time between submitting a proposal and receiving approval for the project. 32% of survey respondents said the delay was not reasonable, with delays sometimes exceeding six months.

Survey responses are consistent across the three Funds: 30% of AFF respondents disagree that the time between submitting a proposal and receiving approval for the project was reasonable; same with 36% of BCSRIF respondents and 41% of QFF respondents.

Interviewees from industry associations and CFSOF also mentioned that delays in approving projects were a pain point. Such delays create pressure on applicants' costs as their suppliers cannot guarantee a quote for such an extended period, and applicants face the risk of price increases. The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated this situation by disrupting supply chains and creating staff shortages (for instance, at shipyards).



32% of survey respondents disagree that the time between submitting a proposal and receiving approval for the project was reasonable, while 66% agreed that it was reasonable, and 2% were unsure

Good practice



Since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, AFF has introduced an enhanced electronic process for all projects, switching to digital approvals, which are now done secretarially. This practice has greatly improved the efficiency of the approval process.

BCSRIF has also implemented electronic approvals for urgent items.

Approval Process (*continued*)

Opportunity to streamline the approval process

Evaluation evidence indicated that the Fisheries Funds' delivery could be more effective by streamlining the approval process. Many interviewees said that the complexity of the three levels of governance results in delays. In all three Funds, the Management Committees and the Steering Committees are somewhat redundant since they both recommend projects and the same representatives often sit on both committees (e.g., DFO's RDGs). Interviewees questioned the value-added of having two committees in the decision-making process: indeed, by the time projects get to the steering committees, they have been well-vetted.

By combining two levels of approval into one executive committee, the efficiency of the Funds could be improved. It is important to note that any governance changes would need to be made collaboratively with relevant provincial partners.

Moreover, in order to reduce delays in getting projects approved, both federal and provincial representatives mentioned that revising the Delegation of Spending and Financial Authorities could improve efficiency.



Photo credit: Matthew LeJune, Unsplash



Provincial Participation

Finding: Federal and provincial collaboration is mostly working well. However, some challenges exist related to differing priorities and the cost share ratio in QFF.

Federal and provincial participation

The Funds are jointly administered, and there will be a 70/30 cost-share with the provinces over the life of the Funds. There is evidence of good collaboration with the provinces. Views on communication between DFO and the provinces were generally positive, with meetings and discussions occurring regularly.

AFF program management has built strong collaboration with the provinces. At first, limited procedures and processes existed, but as time went on, AFF established collaborative processes to discuss relevant issues. Most interviewees said the partnership is working well. QFF also has built a solid partnership with MAPAQ. Committees' discussions show the capacity of both parties to be flexible and adapt their terms and conditions.

Finally, evaluation evidence indicated that working with a provincial counterpart can bring additional delays due to the provincial approval process. This is particularly true for AFF, where multiple provinces are involved.

Priorities

All applications are reviewed jointly with the provincial counterparts to ensure consistency with federal and provincial priorities. All three Steering Committees are trying to strike a good balance in establishing priorities with the provinces. However, all three Funds face challenges due to differing priorities with and between provincial partners and accepting different levels of risk.

“ Having the provinces involved ensures projects meet with regional goals and objectives for improvement and a better understanding of the broader regional economic challenges and opportunities. ”

- Survey respondent

QFF Challenges

Quebec is the only province that does not transfer money to the Fisheries Funds. Therefore, in Quebec, recipients receive a cheque from MAPAQ and a direct deposit from DFO. The timing of payments to recipients were different, which created confusion to some recipients.

For repayable contributions, MAPAQ did not agree to fund loans, but agreed that DFO could go ahead, with DFO covering 100% of repayable contribution agreements. Consequently, as of March 2022, DFO has contributed \$9,707,802 to QFF. This represents 77% of the funding, while MAPAQ has funded 23% of the total contributions, resulting in a \$1,825,793 difference between DFO and MAPAQ financial inputs. Given these challenges with offsetting the difference, after four loans, DFO did not sign other repayable contributions. Compensating for the 70/30 contribution shortfall is a challenge for QFF.

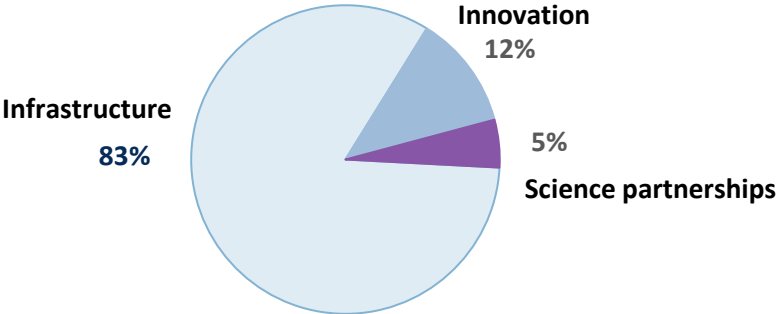


Pillars

Finding: The innovation, infrastructure and science partnership pillars are positively perceived, with only minor challenges being noted. The infrastructure pillar receives the most funding.

The infrastructure pillar consistently receives the most funding of the three pillars, totaling 83% of funding since the beginning of the Funds. Innovation is second, with 12% of funding, and science partnerships has received 5%.

Figure 5: Percentage of projects per pillar, since the beginning of the Funds



BCSRIF has more science partnerships projects than AFF or QFF. Thirty four BCSRIF projects are science projects, while 16 AFF projects and five QFF projects are science projects, respectively.

Figure 6: Number and value of science partnerships projects per Fund

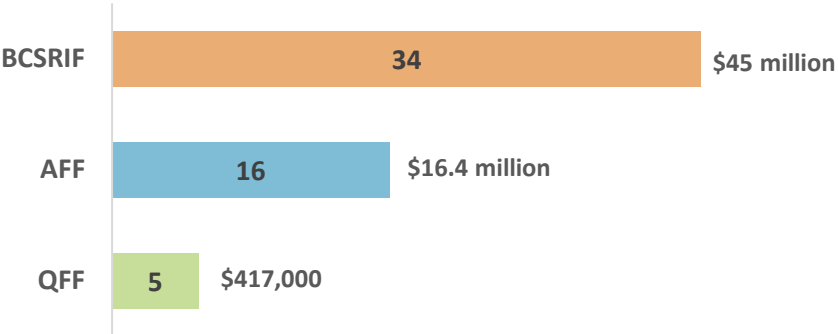


Photo credit: Ruth Troughton, Unsplash



Pillars (continued)

While the pillars were perceived as well designed, some challenges were raised.

79%

of all survey respondents agreed that the pillars are well designed



Photo credit: Frederik Ohlander

INFRASTRUCTURE

For infrastructure, the main issue noted by interview respondents was its name. It was noted that the infrastructure pillar funded projects related to the adoption and adaptation of new processes and equipment rather than actual infrastructure. This pillar does not provide funding for real property investments, such as processing plants or boats. It invests, instead, in equipment and technology. There was widespread agreement that the name of this pillar should be changed to give eligible recipients a better understanding of what DFO aims to achieve through this pillar. Ideas for renaming this pillar included, “Equipment,” “Technology adoption/adaptation” and “Equipment Acquisition.”

INNOVATION

While fewer interview respondents commented on the innovation pillar, it was noted that there can be some uncertainty about what is meant by “innovation.” Further, what is accepted as innovation can differ from province to province. It was suggested that this pillar could also possibly be redefined or better explained to provide a stronger understanding of what is included within this pillar.

SCIENCE PARTNERSHIPS

This pillar received little attention from interview respondents. A few interviewees noted a couple of challenges, including that the pillar is too broad, projects are difficult to assess, and relevant organizations do not always have money to pay their share of the project.



Challenges with CFSOF

Finding: While there is a need for a national marketing program, there is limited awareness of, and issues identified with the design of, the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund.

The objective of CFSOF is to support industry organizations in their efforts to address key market-access issues, as well as branding and promotion opportunities for Canada's world-class fish and seafood sector, through national and regional initiatives. This is a cost-share program of \$42.85 million (70% federal and 30% provincial). Current participating provinces and territories include the Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Signatory provinces are not required to allocate a budget towards CFSOF projects upon signing, but instead have the opportunity to opt-in and contribute on a project-by-project basis.

Eligible projects must focus on one or more of the following areas:

- developing and implementing Canadian fish and seafood branding strategies;
- supporting industry branding, promotion and advertising activities in domestic and/or international markets;
- addressing existing or emerging market access issues and meeting consumer demands for product quality and sustainability;
- undertaking market research and intelligence to facilitate entry or expansion into new and existing markets; and
- supporting industry capacity development activities to increase collaboration and cooperation.

CFSOF has signed only **nine** contribution agreements for a total of \$9,777,900 over the life of the program. Projects also leveraged \$1,259,200 in private sector and other government funds for a total of \$11,037,100 in project value.

75% of the CFSOF budget remains to be committed and expended. DFO has budgeted \$27M for the 70% federal portion of CFSOF. Yet DFO has invested only \$6.8M (or 25% of the budget) as of March 2022, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: DFO contributions for CFSOF, in millions \$
(actual vs budgeted)



Challenges with CFSOF (*continued*)

There is a need for a national fish and seafood marketing program

- While 88% of survey respondents were not aware of CFSOF, the majority of survey respondents (59%) agreed that there is a need for a national marketing program for Canadian fish and seafood products.
- All interviewees who received funding from CFSOF (9/9), agreed that there is a need for a national marketing program. These interviewees noted that the CFSOF is responsive to existing needs, to some degree, for example, by funding education about the seal industry and products.

Duplication with other federal programs

- The only other national program that was found to be similar to CFSOF is the Agri-Marketing program funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). The Agri-Marketing program is a five-year, up to \$121 million federal-only initiative, sunsetting in March 2023. It aims to increase and diversify exports to international markets and seize domestic market opportunities. It will accomplish these goals by supporting industry-led promotional activities that highlight Canadian products and producers and boost Canada's reputation for high-quality and safe food.
- CFSOF interviewees said that the Agri-Marketing program is a program that could duplicate CFSOF, and that funding recipients could get funding from both, though CFSOF was noted to be more generous. Agri-Food was also more likely to fund terrestrial applicants, while the Fisheries Funds focus on the fish and seafood sector.



Photo credit: Megan Sutton

Photo description: Bluefin tuna from Nova Scotia



Challenges with CFSOF (*continued*)

Name of the program

- As with the infrastructure and innovation pillars, it was noted that the name “Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund” is difficult to understand and connect with. A more straightforward name might be something for consideration.

Challenges with provincial partnerships

- The expectation that projects generally have at least two provinces involved was another issue noted by respondents. Though this rule is not a requirement, it is within the spirit of the Fund to have a minimum of two provincial/ territorial (P/T) partners, which is a challenge. This particularly affects organizations in British Columbia as there are limited potential partners compared to the Atlantic provinces, although one CFSOF project has moved forward with only funding from British Columbia.
- Another issue can emerge when there are shared interests from multiple provinces (e.g., Atlantic provinces), but not all interested provinces sign on because they cannot provide funding, which prevents projects from moving forward. As P/Ts do not earmark funds for CFSOF, allocating funding can create challenges and delays.

Governance structure

- Given that CFSOF is a national cost-sharing federal, provincial, and territorial program, both DFO and the P/Ts involved must agree that a project can move forward for it to be funded. Decision-making is carried out through a two-step process that includes both an Expression of Interest and a full proposal.
- As most CFSOF projects involve more than one P/T, the approval process can be complicated and time-consuming in terms of getting agreements between provinces, which can be frustrating for potential funding recipients.
- Interview respondents stated that while CFSOF has funded some “really good” projects, the effort required to approve the projects is hard to justify. Overall, the CFSOF governance structure does not support efficient decision-making.
- It was suggested that CFSOF could have more flexibility around the rule to have more than one P/T, or the federal government could provide 100% of the funding to avoid the layers of federal/provincial/territorial approvals (though P/Ts would continue to be involved). Federal funding would also address challenges related to an individual province not having funding to be part of a multi-provincial project.



Photo credit: Bannon Morrissy, Unsplash



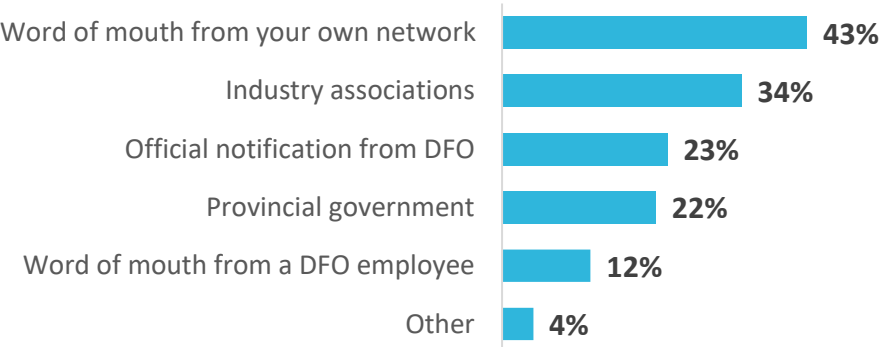
Program Delivery

Finding: The funding process is mostly going well. The Fisheries Funds were considered accessible and inclusive, it was easy to apply, the information provided was clear, the staff were supportive, and reporting requirements were reasonable. Although continuous improvements were made since the launch of the Funds some challenges were identified such as delays with funding decisions and disbursement of funds.

Potential funding recipients were informed about funding opportunities

All three Funds conducted indirect engagement activities through communication tools (such as press releases and publications in relevant media) and direct engagement activities (such as meetings, presentations and promotional tours) with various stakeholders and Indigenous groups to promote the Fisheries Funds. According to survey respondents, recipients mostly learned about the Fisheries Funds from word of mouth through their own network; industry associations; official notification from DFO; and, provincial governments.

Figure 8: Where survey respondents first learned about the Fisheries Funds



Note: Respondents could select more than one response option.

The delivery of the Funds supports accessible and inclusive participation

According to the survey, almost all recipients mentioned no challenges in accessing the Fisheries Funds (such as gender, language, and being from a rural or remote community). However, having access to, and knowing how to use a computer and information technology tools (i.e., Internet and Adobe), as well as being a small organization, were noted as potential barriers to accessing the funding, especially during the application and reporting stage.

“ Older workers are not as "computer savvy" and miss out on a lot of opportunities by not knowing they exist. ”
- Survey respondent

“ [There is an] advantage [for] big aggregate First Nation groups who have lots of funding, staff, and lawyers, compared to a small First Nation [...]. Still a really valuable piece of work, but the proposal won't necessarily be scored as highly [as a larger organization]. ”
- Interviewee



Program Delivery (continued)

The application process is mostly going well

AFF and QFF had a one-step application process and a continuous intake process, whereas BCSRIF had a two-step application process (expression of interest process, then a project proposal) and defined intake periods. Receiving continuous intake was perceived by AFF staff as an effective way to manage the Fund, as was the one-step application process.

BCSRIF's two-step application process was seen as burdensome and without value-added, and the defined intake period limiting. To mitigate this challenge, BCSRIF moved to a one-step application process for the second phase of the BCSRIF program between September and November 2022; however, the Fund continues to use defined intakes. BCSRIF noted that based on the multi-year, and high complexity of projects and subject matter referral requirements, defined intakes are most efficient from an operational perspective.



Almost all funding recipients surveyed agreed they received clear information regarding eligible activities, and that there was enough time between becoming aware of the funding opportunity and the application deadline.



83%

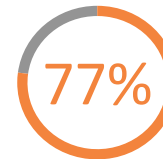
of survey respondents think they received clear information regarding eligible activities



85%

of survey respondents think there was enough time between becoming aware of the funding opportunity and the application deadline

All Funds provided tools and templates to support potential recipients during the application process. Many survey respondents agreed that the application process was easy to follow, and forms provided were easy to use.



of survey respondents think the application process was easy to follow and templates provided were easy to use



Program Delivery (continued)

The relationship between DFO staff and funding recipients is excellent

Support provided by DFO staff to applicants during the application process, and in general, was mentioned as a key success in the delivery of the Funds by funding recipients.



83% of survey respondents think there was adequate support from DFO staff

“**Staff and personnel are excellent and very experienced people who have given great feedback from their own experiences in the fishing industry.**”

- Survey respondent

The Funds included a service standard regarding ‘acknowledgement of the receipt of an application.’ Service standards for DFO grants and contributions (Gs&Cs) programs state the level of service applicants and recipients can reasonably expect under normal circumstances.

In 2020-21, all Funds met their target for this service standard (90%), with AFF meeting the standard 91% of the time, and QFF and BCSRIF meeting it 100% of the time. This demonstrates how staff were responsive to potential funding recipients.

Project assessment

Once applicants have been deemed to have met eligibility criteria (see Annexes B and C for a detailed list of eligible recipients and activities), projects are assessed based on established criteria, such as:

- addresses program objectives;
- is of overall quality and feasibility;
- aligns with federal and provincial priorities; and,
- generates potential economic benefit to the sector.

Fisheries Funds Program Officers gather relevant information during the assessment and undertake due diligence to determine which projects to recommend. No major issues were identified with this process.

Both internal and external interview respondents agreed that, when reviewing applications, the Fisheries Funds have a great working relationship with other DFO groups (e.g., Science, Resource Management, Conservation & Protection), which was helpful during the evaluation of proposals, and sometimes during projects as well. However, there can be capacity issues within other DFO groups that may cause delays.



Photo credit: Frank Mckeena, Unsplash



Program Delivery (continued)

Notifying recipients of a funding decision takes time

As discussed in the governance section, there were delays with the funding approval process.

A relevant service standard measures 'notification of the funding decision' (i.e., informing the recipient whether their activity or project will be funded), for which the departmental target is 90%.

Typically, the standard begins with the receipt of a fully completed application and ends once an applicant is notified of project success or rejection. AFF and QFF follow this typical formula. However, there is variation in how the standard is measured, and BCSRIF includes only the time from when the Minister makes a decision to fund a project (or not), to when BCSRIF notifies the applicant of the funding decision. As a consequence, there is a lack of consistency in reporting on that standard: BCSRIF uses 15 days as their standard, while AFF and QFF use 100 days.

As per table 5, in 2020-21, AFF met the service standard 53% of the time; QFF met the standard 88% of the time, and BCSRIF met the standard 100% of the time. However, it is interesting to note that for their 2022-23 intake, BCSRIF advises potential recipients that it typically takes 6 months or more from the time they submit an application to when a legal contribution agreement is signed.

Table 5: Service standard targets and results for AFF, BCSRIF and QFF (notification of the funding decision)

	Target	AFF		BCSRIF		QFF	
		2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Notification of the funding decision*	90%	38%	53%	100%	100%	74%	88%

* Notification of the funding decision: 100 business days for AFF and QFF; 15 business days for BCSRIF.



Photo credit: Knut Troim, Unsplash



Program Delivery (continued)

There were some delays with disbursement of funds

Timeliness of disbursement of funds is measured by the ‘requisition for payment’ service standard, for which the target is 90%. In 2020-21, as per table 6, AFF met this target 60% of the time, QFF met the target 77% of the time, and BCSRIF met it 100% of the time. It is worth noting that AFF improved from 31% in 2019-20 to 60% in 2020-21, although number of business days for this standard changed from 15 days in 2019-20 to 25 days in 2020-21. AFF’s service standard was increased from 15 to 25 business days because a large component of processing claims payments is dependent on the Chief Financial Officer’s Accounting Operations Hub.

Table 6: Service standard target and results for AFF, BCSRIF and QFF (request for requisition for payment)

	Target	AFF		BCSRIF		QFF	
		2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Request for requisition for payment*	90%	31%	60%	98%	100%	75%	77%

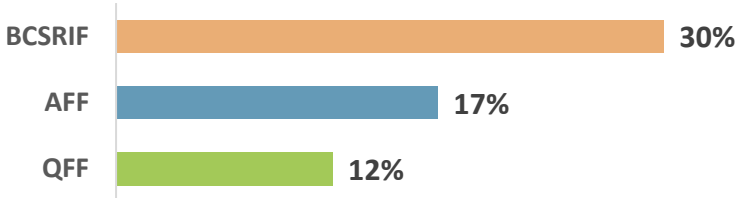
* Request for requisition for payment: 15 business days (2019-20), then 25 business days (2020-21) for AFF; 25 business days for QFF; 30 business days for BCSRIF.
 Source: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/standards/index-eng.htm>

Funding recipients agreed that there were challenges with timely transfer of funds from DFO. Overall, 19% of survey respondents did not think the transfer of funds was timely, with 30% of BCSRIF respondents, 17% of AFF respondents, and 12% of QFF agreeing. This finding for BCSRIF is surprising in light of the 100% success rate meeting the service standard for payment.

19% of survey respondents did not think there was a timely transfer of funds from DFO



Figure 9: Percentage of survey respondents who disagree or strongly disagree that there was a timely transfer of funds from DFO, by Fund



Program Delivery (continued)

Reporting requirements are reasonable

As part of receiving funding from DFO, funding recipients are expected to report back to DFO about both their financials and project progress and results.

Funding recipients who completed the survey almost always agreed that the reporting requirements were reasonable, while many survey respondents agreed that the reporting templates provided were easy to use.



83%

of survey respondents think that the reporting requirements were reasonable



77%

of survey respondents think that the reporting templates provided were easy to use

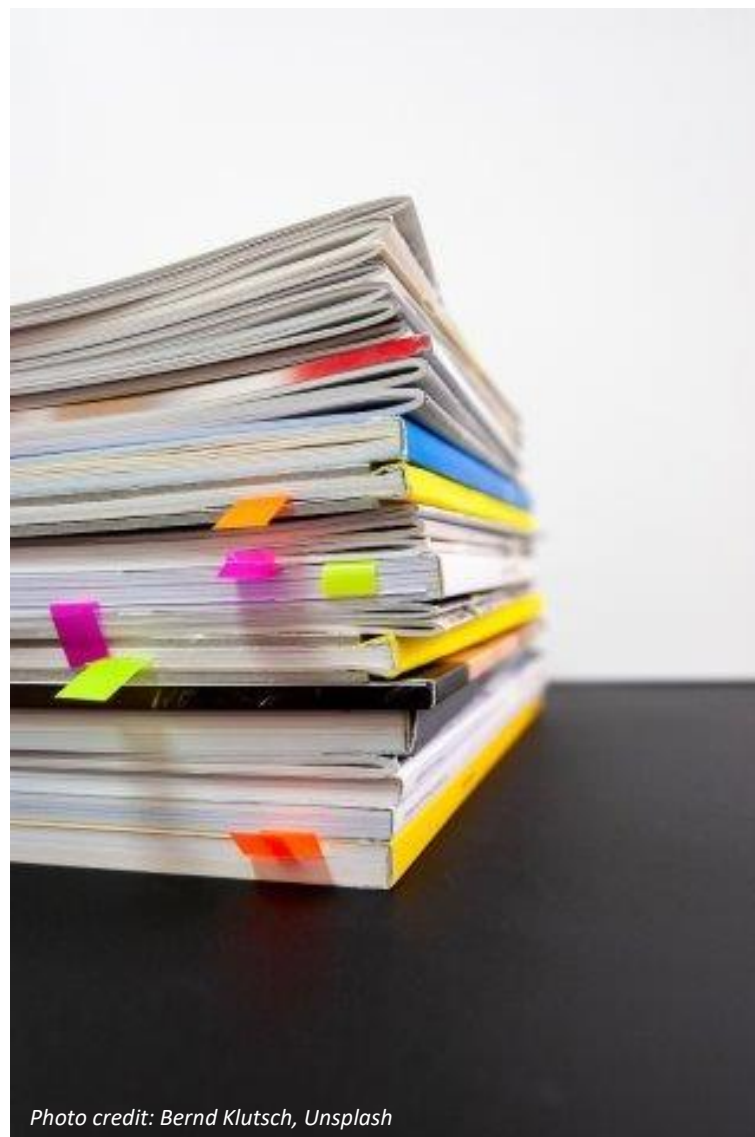


Photo credit: Bernd Klutsch, Unsplash



Program Delivery (continued)

Challenges and continuous improvement

While most funding recipients who responded to the survey agreed that they had a positive experience in most steps of the delivery of the Fisheries Funds, some Fund-specific challenges hindering the delivery of the Funds were cited by internal interviewees.

When AFF was launched in 2017, two years in advance of QFF and BCSRIF, the Department (not only AFF staff) did not have the experience in delivering Gs&Cs of that magnitude. There was no governance structure, standardized tools, processes, procedures, templates, data collection system, or appropriate accounting infrastructure in place to support disbursement of funds. Program leadership adapted and hired staff from other departments, such as ACOA, who had the necessary Gs&Cs knowledge and experience.

As well, AFF continued to make improvements during the Fund's implementation:

- AFF created tools (e.g., Policies and Procedures Manual) to support DFO employees.
- In 2018, AFF contracted IT services to develop an IT infrastructure to support the Fund: the Canadian Fisheries Funds Information Storage Hub.
- AFF shared knowledge and issues in the delivery of the Fund, as well as good practices, policies and procedures, templates, and tools with both QFF and BCSRIF.

While these challenges at first required a lot of effort, AFF responded with continuous improvement, which positively impacted program delivery.

A challenge specific to BCSRIF was labour shortages. With the creation of the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, and the influx of work related to it internally, as well as the current context of lack of labour in the market, staffing shortages were noted as a challenge by BCSRIF staff and management. For the BCSRIF team, 21/23 positions are currently filled. While BCSRIF is almost fully staffed, staffing continues to be challenging. With limited numbers of qualified candidates, significant internal movement of staff, and increased migration of staff out of the department, BCSRIF has experienced challenges in retaining and recruiting. However, they have had success with internal promotion, external hiring, and accessing recent 'inventory' style candidate pools.



Photo credit: Nataliia Kvitovska, Unsplash

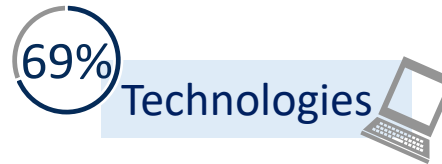
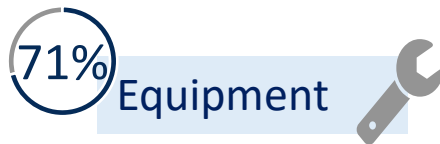


Early Results

Finding: The Fisheries Funds support the adoption and adaptation of new equipment, technologies, processes, and products, as well as the publication of studies and articles. Projects are showing some early signs of results, including improved productivity and product quality, and reduced negative environmental impact.

The Fisheries Funds support the adoption and the adaptation of new equipment, technologies, processes, and products

Fisheries Funds' recipients who completed the survey mentioned they adopted and/or adapted new equipment, technologies, processes and products, as follows:



The Fisheries Funds support the publication of studies and articles

41% of science partnerships recipients who completed the survey stated that they had published studies or articles. More than half of survey respondents who published studies or articles (12 out of 19) are from BCSRIF.



“ I will note that although our scientific partnerships have not yet produced and published articles there will be several in the next few years. ”
- Survey respondent



Early Results (continued)

Projects are showing some early signs of results



50% of survey respondents think their project’s activities were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

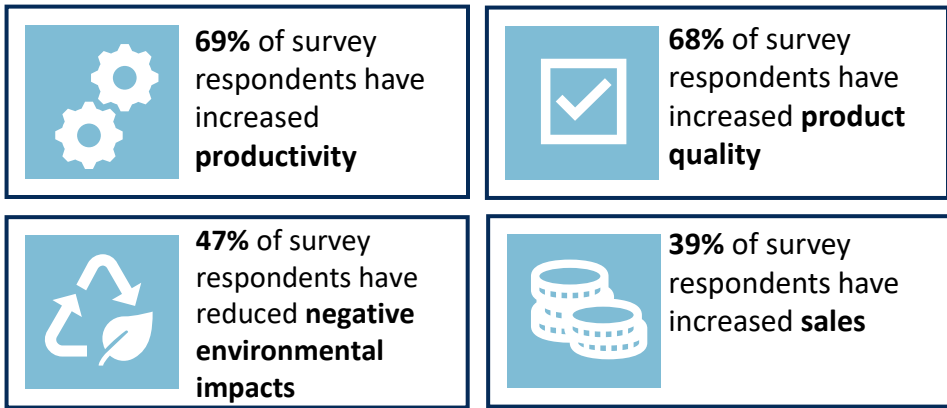
Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all survey respondents think their project achieved its objectives.



88% of survey respondents think their project achieved its objectives.

Many Fisheries Funds recipients reported experiencing some early signs of results, including improved productivity and product quality, whereas many recipients experienced reduced negative environmental impact, and some recipients agreed they increased sales and improved fuel efficiency.

Figure 10: Percentage of survey respondents who experienced the following early signs of results:



74% of BCSRIF survey respondents noticed improvements in the protection and restoration of wild Pacific salmon. This aligns with BCSRIF performance data, which showed that the majority of projects (88%) support the protection and conservation of wild Pacific Salmon.

“ The Fisheries Fund has expanded my capability to fish cod in an efficient and high-quality manner. It has provided much needed extra revenue for my fishing enterprise. ”

- Survey respondent

“ It allows me to maximize my fishing effort to save fuel and have a better quality of my product. ”

- Survey respondent



Data collection on results is limited

Finding: All three Funds have collected limited information on results from recipients, therefore the information collected does not provide a full picture of results achieved to date. Some challenges were noted regarding monitoring, which varied between the Funds.

Monitoring

To manage the Funds and track progress towards expected results, staff from the Funds must carry out monitoring activities, which help staff to:

- identify any operational difficulties;
- maximize the potential for recovery of funds for repayable contributions;
- identify development opportunities for new projects; and,
- capture and report on expected results.

Although the monitoring of projects technically starts once a contribution agreement has been signed, the first claim for payments from a project usually triggers the first monitoring activities. Monitoring of projects ends with the closing of the project file.

Monitoring tools

The tools used to monitor projects vary between the Funds.

AFF uses a combination of the Canadian Fisheries Fund Information Storage Hub (CFFISH) and financial systems data to track its progress. It also uses Central Collab, a protected network, to share information with its provincial partners. Interview respondents noted that CFFISH has led to better organized information. However, CFFISH can be challenging to use, and there is room for improvement. Challenges include: the need to create a new user profile to share information; and hundreds of data entry fields creating inconsistency in how the information is captured and many empty fields, leading to difficulty in sharing and analyzing data collected.

BCSRIF has more comprehensive monitoring than AFF. However, they do not have a central database in which to store information about projects. This means, for example, that it is difficult to share information within the Fund and with other DFO groups (e.g., Science, Fisheries Management).

QFF uses financial tracking tools (for both project applications and funded projects) and shares the information with the MAPAQ via a cloud-based collaboration software. Performance data on completed reports is, however, limited. In the 26 final project reports collected by QFF, the results achieved are wide-ranging, and various metrics are used to report on project results.

Canadian Fisheries Fund Information Storage Hub

CFFISH is a file management information system developed in consultation with the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and AFF. CFFISH was developed because DFO does not have an enterprise-wide solution for managing Gs&Cs information, TBS reporting requirements (e.g., Proactive Disclosure), and performance measurement.

CFFISH development began in 2018. As of August 2022, it has 1,711 active projects, including project assessment in progress, approved, withdrawn, etc. At the time of the evaluation, CFFISH was only used by AFF (including the CFSOF pillar), but QFF has access, and BCSRIF is considering its adoption.



Data collection on results is limited (*continued*)

Data on results

Each Fund designed a template for recipients to report on their projects, mainly on results achieved. BCSRIF has reached out to all recipients to collect information, QFF collected information from 26 out of 28 completed projects (85 total), and AFF on 50 projects out of 611 completed projects (915 total). AFF also completed some other results-related efforts, for example, a technical report about the performance of oyster grader projects, and productivity assessments for New Brunswick. However, overall, data collection has been limited for AFF.

With the information collected by the Funds, it is not possible to tell a clear results story for any of the Funds. Even with BCSRIF's more substantial data collection, the data available does not tell a complete results story, though they do put together a useful and interesting annual report. Issues include, for example, lumping data together, so that it difficult to understand the meaning (e.g., new or innovative products, processes, technologies or equipment are all combined into one question).

As BCSRIF and QFF began in 2019, it is understandable that they have limited information available on early results. However, as AFF began in 2017, it would have been expected that early results would be available by this point in time. While challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic and getting the Fund operational may have contributed to limited data collection, more data should have been collected by now.

Although quantitative data on results was limited, interviewees universally expressed that there is progress towards expected results and that they saw anecdotal evidence that supports progress towards those results. Success Stories for each pillar are highlighted next.

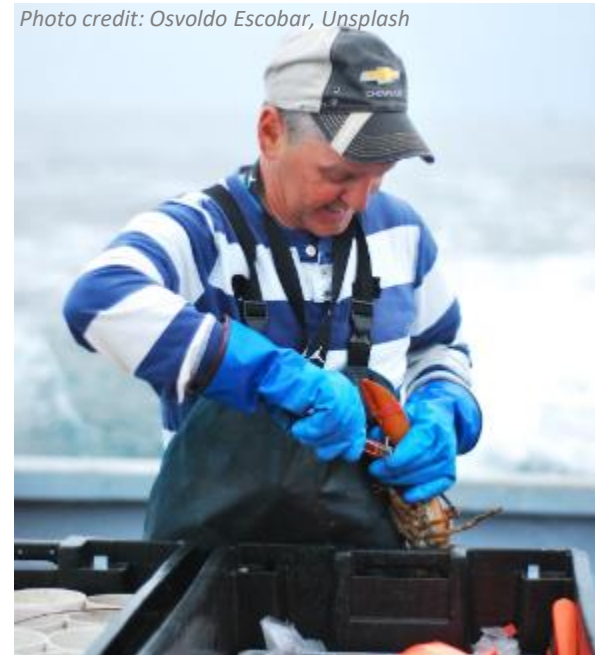
Other challenges with monitoring

Some other challenges were noted regarding project monitoring, which varied between the Funds. A challenge specific to AFF includes a lack of scrutiny of repayable projects, as it is important to identify issues to ensure the Fund will successfully collect repayments. Challenges experienced by all Funds included a stop to in-person monitoring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equitable access and participation

The Funds were not established to target gender and diversity specifically within its eligibility criteria, yet recently some tools have been developed to collect data that supports equitable access and participation.

Photo credit: Osvoldo Escobar, Unsplash



Success Stories

Success Stories

Examples of projects funded by the Fisheries Funds showing early results:

Innovation

Salmon farm

AFF support allowed Cape d'Or to expand its organic salmon farm and, connectedly, its innovative environmental practices. Converting the facility to a recirculating system allowed the company's founders to gain first-hand insight into the role of ultraviolet light in controlling bacteria, and the benefits and risk mitigation that come with the generation of oxygen on-site.



Infrastructure

Monitoring system

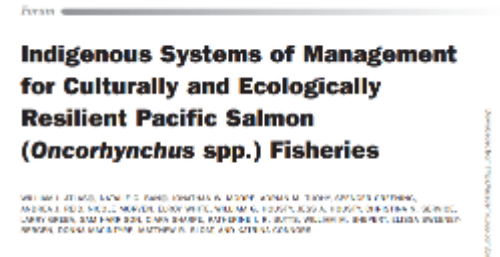
QFF funded several projects to purchase and install a monitoring system on shrimp fishing vessels. This is a new technology used to improve fishing efficiency and environmental sustainability. This system is equipped with an echo sounder, a technology that increases the efficiency of fishing efforts by providing information for enhancing catch operations.



Science Partnership

The Pacific Salmon Foundation

BCSRIF supported the Pacific Salmon Foundation's project, empowering Indigenous community fisheries with deep-learning computer vision for adaptive management of terminal salmon fisheries. This project integrates traditional and modern technologies through the development of new computer vision deep-learning programs to automate salmon counting and species identification from video and sonar data.



CFSOF

Canadian seal products

Through the CFSOF pillar, AFF funded the Seals and Sealing Network to carry out market research, customer surveys, branding, and marketing and communications efforts in order to further expand the Canadian market beyond Ontario and Quebec, and further develop the Chinese and other international markets in a systematic, collaborative and research-based fashion.



Success Stories (continued)

Innovation

Protecting North Atlantic right whales

AFF support allowed the Association de crabiers acadiens and the Association des pêcheurs professionnels - crabiers acadiens to find solutions to help protect right whales from entanglement. The first phase of the project included testing innovative ropes and rope-free traps, geolocation and whale monitoring devices. The second phase retained the three most promising technologies for testing on a larger scale. These technological adaptations protect both the North Atlantic right whale and the snow crab industry, so whales and harvesters can coexist.



Photo credit: PetLife website

Science Partnerships

Changing salmon ecosystems

BCSRIF supported the University of British Columbia's research to improve understanding of the changing ecosystem faced by juvenile salmon in the Strait of Georgia. Research included how Zooplankton are affected by environmental conditions. The resulting model is expected to provide an understanding of salmon survival.

Infrastructure

Freezer-friendly seafood

AFF assisted Labrador Gem in purchasing technology that extends the shelf life of processed seafood, which enhances product quality, adds value for consumers, and increases productivity. Labrador Gem installed a recirculating water system which chills sea water to keep shellfish alive until processing time. After processing, shellfish are cooked in new electric cookers and vacuum-packaged, producing products with a shelf life of 24 months.



An independent BC First Nations genomics laboratory

BCSRIF supported the 'Namgis First Nation in the second phase of a project to establish an independent British Columbia First Nations genomics laboratory, in partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance. The existing laboratory has been upgraded, and been provided with new analysis equipment. This will provide First Nations' with advanced capacity to conduct independent fish health tissue sampling, to detect and monitor pathogens that can affect wild salmon and ecosystems, and to identify if escaped salmon are in the watershed.



Repayable Contributions & Funds' Sunset

Finding: Most Fisheries Funds projects are non-repayable. Although a small percentage of AFF and QFF projects are repayable, these projects total more than \$86 million dollars. As such, it will be necessary to have a plan in place when the Funds sunset, as projects can be repayable for up to ten years.

Non-repayable contributions

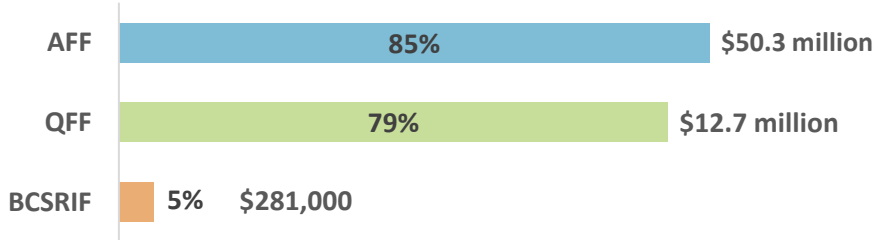
Contributions to not-for-profit organizations are non-repayable. Contributions to for-profit organizations are non-repayable under the following conditions:

- a) the contribution is less than \$100,000, and the administrative burden of repayable contributions is not justified;
- b) the benefits from the contribution accrue broadly rather than to the recipient;
- c) the contribution is made with the primary aim of furthering basic research and development, including a payment made through a granting council or other government entity whose mandate is to promote research and development.

As per figure 11, almost all QFF projects (79%) and AFF projects (85%) fall underneath the \$100,000 non-repayable threshold. By contrast, only 5% of BCSRIF projects are under \$100,000. However, **all BCSRIF projects are non-repayable**, since the remaining BCSRIF projects (95%) fall under the other non-repayable conditions (b and c above).

It was expressed by interview respondents that the \$100,000 non-repayable threshold is too low. It was suggested that the threshold be increased, or that the first \$100,000 of repayable projects be non-repayable, which would encourage potential recipients to propose higher value projects. Higher value projects could have a greater positive impact on the fish and seafood sector.

Figure 11: Percentage and total value of projects under \$100,000 by Fund



The number of projects under \$100,000 varies by Fund. AFF has 784 projects under \$100,000, while QFF has 67, and BCSRIF has 5.



Photo credit: Michael Aleo, Unsplash



Repayable Contributions & Funds' Sunset (continued)

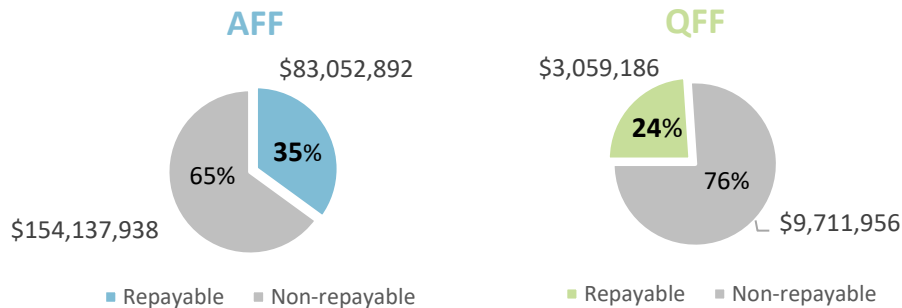
Repayable contributions

There are two types of repayable contributions: conditionally repayable and non-conditionally repayable. They are defined as follows:

Conditionally repayable	Unconditionally repayable
Conditionally repayable contributions may be used to fund projects where shared risk between these programs and the recipient is deemed necessary to stimulate activity, such as where business, technical, and/or market penetration risks are inherently elevated. Success factors which would trigger repayment and determine the amount due (in whole or in part) include the achievement of sales of resulting products or the achievement of productivity gains.	For unconditionally repayable contributions, the intent is to be repaid irrespective of the success or of the benefits resulting from the project. When a contribution is unconditionally repayable, the full amount must be repaid.

Six percent of AFF-funded projects (51 out of 915), and 5% of QFF-funded projects (4 out of 85) are repayable. However, although a small percentage of projects are repayable, figure 12 shows that repayable funding totals 35% of total funding for AFF and 24% of total funding for QFF. These repayable contributions are valued at more than \$86 million dollars.

Figure 12: AFF and QFF repayable vs. non-repayable contributions



Funds' Sunset

As projects can be repayable up to ten years following the completion of the project, long-term planning is necessary for these projects, even after the Fisheries Funds sunset. As such, the sunset will be more complex for projects with repayable contributions, and further planning is needed in this area.

As of March 31, 2022 AFF approved 20 conditionally repayable projects and 31 unconditionally repayable projects. Of these, five began repayment in 2021-22, and seven more began repayment in 2022-23. The remaining projects are not in repayment mode yet since the projects are not fully completed or are not yet scheduled to start repayment.

QFF has put in place steps to address the Fund's sunset, and all four of its repayable contributions have started to repay.

In addition to a plan for repayable contributions, there will be a need for project monitoring for all three Funds in order to assess the impact of the program, as part of sunset planning.



Recommendations



Photo credit: the Bialons, Unsplash



Recommendations

Recommendation 1

It is recommended to identify and implement improvements in order to reduce delays in the approval process.

Rationale: Delays in the approval of projects were raised as a major issue, and greater efficiency is needed for the approval of projects in order to reduce delays. The Fisheries Funds' delivery could be more effective by streamlining the approval process, for example by combining two levels of approval into one executive committee.



Photo credit: Leora Winter, Unsplash

Recommendation 2

It is recommended to improve project monitoring, and performance data collection. A significant increase in the collection of performance data is required to fully demonstrate progress made in increasing productivity, competitiveness, quality, and sustainability in the fish and seafood sector.

Rationale: While all three Funds have collected some data from recipients, collection of performance data has been limited, and existing data do not fully represent the results achieved. The collection of information for all projects needs to be improved, as well as project monitoring. In addition, there will be a need for monitoring projects until each project comes to an end for all three Funds, which may supersede the sunset of the Funds.



Recommendations (*continued*)

Recommendation 3

It is recommended to ensure project repayments continue beyond the sunset of the Funds. It is also recommended that the RDG, Quebec Region find solutions to ensure the 70/30 federal-provincial cost share ratio is met over the life of the Fund.

Rationale: Contributions can be repayable up to ten years following the sunset of the Funds, and repayable contributions from AFF and QFF are valued at more than \$86 million dollars.

Funding is cost-shared, with DFO contributing 70% and the province contributing 30% to each contribution agreement. In the case of QFF, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) does not participate in the funding of repayable contributions. Consequently, as of March 2022, DFO's contribution represents 77% of the funding, while MAPAQ has funded 23% of the total contributions.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended to review the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund in order to address challenges with the governance and delivery of the Fund.

Rationale: Several challenges related to the design of CFSOF emerged from the evaluation, including challenges related to its name, provincial partnerships, and governance structures. For example, the federal government could provide 100% of the funding to avoid the layers of federal/provincial/territorial approvals, although provinces and territories would continue to be involved. Exclusive federal funding would also address challenges related to an individual province not having funding to be part of a multi-provincial project.



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Annexes

Photo credit: Tobias Negele, Unsplash



Annex A – Methodology, Limitations & Mitigation Strategies

The evaluation was conducted using an evaluation framework, which included the evaluation questions as well as indicators. Data was collected through five lines of evidence, which were triangulated to develop the overall findings. Although the evaluation encountered some methodological challenges, methodological limitations were mitigated, where possible. This approach was taken to establish the reliability and validity of the findings, and to ensure that conclusions and recommendations were based on objective and documented evidence.



Interviews

A total of 51 internal and external interviews were conducted with the following groups: Fisheries Funds management and staff, other DFO groups (i.e., Science, Conservation and Protection, Accounting), industry associations, provincial representatives, and CFSOF funding recipients. By conducting these interviews, the goal was to gather information about all evaluation questions. Further, the information gathered was used to triangulate other lines of evidence.



Literature review

The literature review explored three different subjects related to the evaluation. The first was potential duplication of the Funds. The second was the need for the Fund (i.e., the health, sustainability and economic importance of the fisheries in Canada). The third was a scan to see if similar programs are in place internationally. The information generated from the literature review was used primarily to describe the relevance and need for the program.



Survey

A survey of funding recipients provided their perspectives about all evaluation questions.

The survey was made available to 860 funding recipients. Moreover, recipients of the survey were invited to forward the survey link to others involved in their project, that might have valuable input to contribute. As such, it is not possible to calculate response rates. In total, 249 responses were received; 185 from AFF, 47 from BCSRIF, and 17 from QFF, respectively. The survey was administered between July 19 and September 9, 2022, and the responses were used to triangulate findings from other lines of evidence.

Given that there are only nine Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF) projects, it was not possible to collect meaningful data about CFSOF results from the survey. As such, all CFSOF projects were interviewed, in order to get a fulsome story about these projects. Further, two questions were asked in the survey to assess whether respondents were aware of CFSOF, and whether there is a need for a national marketing program in Canada, such as CFSOF.



Annex A – Methodology, Limitations & Mitigation Strategies *(continued)*



Administrative data

Fisheries Funds' statistics (e.g., number of funded projects, total projects value, type of contribution) and financial data were analyzed to better understand the funded projects, and to assess their performance and efficiency. Data associated with 2,122 Fisheries Funds projects were examined.

Each Fund has developed its own tools to manage program information (i.e., financial and project-related data).

BCSRIF 2019-20 projects included all projects for which the funding was approved in 2019-20, even though projects were signed in the summer of 2020.

Each Fund collected some results-related data. BCSRIF has reached out to all recipients to collect information and published annual reports for [2019-20](#) and [2020-21](#). QFF collected information from 26 out of 28 completed projects (85 total), and AFF on 50 projects out of 611 completed projects (915 total). Unfortunately, with the information collected by the Funds, it is not possible to tell a clear results story for any of the Funds, or a shared results story across the Fisheries Funds. As such, the survey and interviews were used to obtain performance related data.



Document & file review

The evaluation team reviewed 167 internal and external documents and files to help respond to all evaluation questions. This included terms and conditions, procedure manuals, contribution agreements, legislation, and external reports. The document review was used to triangulate findings from other lines of evidence.



Annex B – Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients:

Eligible recipients under the **innovation, infrastructure and science partnerships** pillars include:

Commercial enterprises (for-profit organizations) which include:

- sole proprietorships;
- partnerships (non-incorporated business owned by more than one individual);
- co-operatives; or
- an incorporated entity.

Non-commercial organizations (not-for-profit organizations), which include:

- industry associations;
- post-secondary institutions;
- research and innovation institutions;
- academics;
- provincial crown corporations*;
- Indigenous organizations; or
- groups other than commercial enterprises.

The following are eligible recipients under the **Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund** and must reside in a participating province or territory, and be involved in or represent the fish and seafood harvesting, processing, or aquaculture sectors:

- Not-for-profit organizations operating on a national or sector-wide basis in the fish and seafood sectors;
- Not-for-profit industry organizations operating on a regional basis in the fish and seafood sectors that represent the majority of production within that sector and can demonstrate their ability to deliver a project from a national perspective; and
- Marketing alliances and technical marketing organizations.

* Provincial crown corporations are not eligible recipients under QFF.

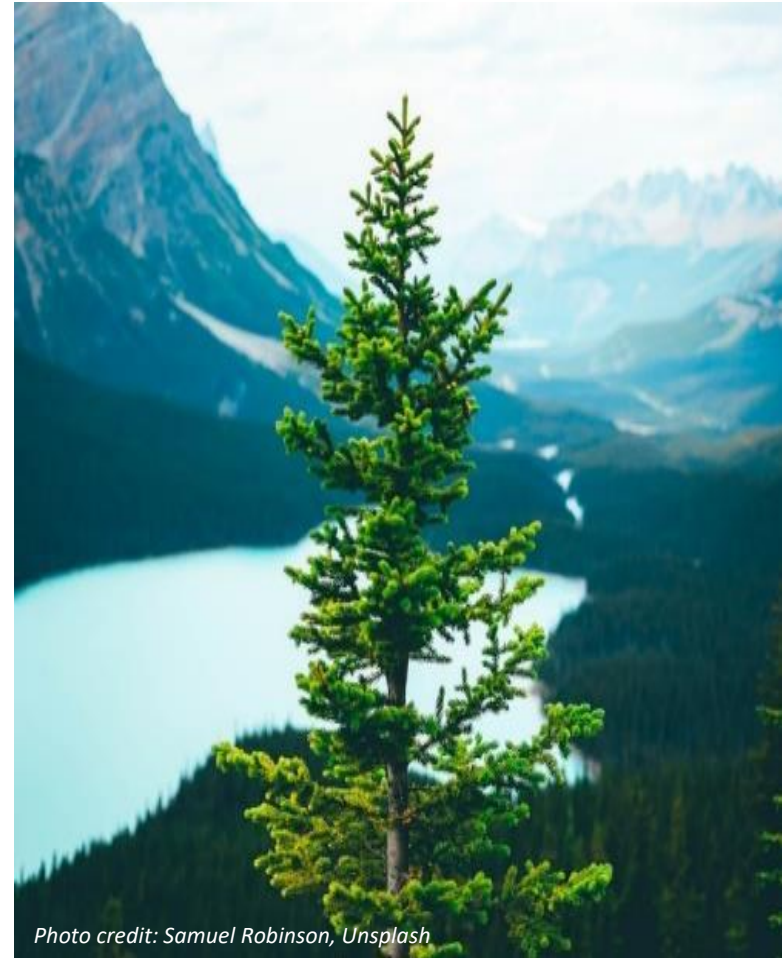


Photo credit: Samuel Robinson, Unsplash



Annex C – Eligible Activities

Eligible activities:

Innovation pillar

- Research and development of new innovations to contribute to sustainability of fish and seafood sector and support the protection and restoration of priority wild fish stocks across Canada, such as wild salmon;
- Undertake pilots and testing of new innovations;
- Undertake activities to introduce innovations to market;
- Initiatives supporting the creation of partnerships or networks that aim to support innovation activities in the sector in accordance with the program objectives.

Infrastructure pillar

- Adopting and/or adapting new technologies, processes, or equipment to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the fish and seafood sector, and support the protection and restoration of priority wild fish stocks across Canada, including wild salmon;
- Providing training associated with adoption and/or adaption of new technologies, processes, and/or equipment.



Photo credit: Megan Sutton

Science partnerships pillar

- Research on the impacts of ecosystem shifts on fish stocks, distributions, and the commercial fishery;
- Science activities in support of the development of sustainable harvesting technologies;
- Initiatives supporting the creation of partnerships or networks that aim to support scientific activities in the sector in accordance with the program objectives;
- Science activities that protect and restore the abundance of priority wild fish stocks across Canada, including wild salmon.

Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund

- Develop and implement initiatives to meet consumer demands for product quality and sustainability, such as eco-certification, catch traceability, eco-labelling, or other initiatives to achieve social license;
- Develop and implement initiatives to address government certification requirements;
- Carry out or disseminate research focused on market access requirements such as regulatory standards;
- Develop and implement Canadian Fish and Seafood branding strategies focused on quality and sustainability; and/or
- Promote industry branding, promotion, and advertising through marketing strategies, promotions or trade seminars to demonstrate quality, sustainability, and other attributes of products;
- Support the industry to re-organize and re-structure to enable it to better access funding and help support developing markets and addressing market access demands.



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

Evaluation of the Fisheries Funds

PMEC Date: January 31, 2023 – Approved March 31, 2023

MAP Completion Target Date: March 2024

Lead ADM/DC: Regional Director General, Maritimes Region

Recommendation 1: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to identify and implement improvements in order to reduce delays in the approval process.

Rationale: Delays in the approval of projects were raised as a major issue, and greater efficiency is needed for the approval of projects in order to reduce delays. The Fisheries Funds' delivery could be more effective by streamlining the approval process, for example by combining two levels of approval into one executive committee.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Maritimes Region accepts the recommendation made in the Evaluation Report and the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) program, on behalf of the region, is committed to working with its provincial and territorial funding partners to try to identify further opportunities to improve its governance structures. This approach aligns very well with the program's commitment to continuous improvement and risk-based approach to program management. Over the course of the program's implementation, several governance improvements have been achieved such as electronic approvals, monthly bilateral meetings with each individual provincial partners, as well as monthly Pan-Atlantic Management Committee meetings. However, the program is limited by what it can change as certain elements are engrained in the framework agreements with provincial and territorial partners which outline the program's governance structures.

AFF has been actively involved in the working group proposing a new Fisheries and Oceans Canada Grants and Contributions Risk Management Strategy, where a component thereof proposes increased delegation in the Delegation of spending and financial authority (DSFA). It aims at modernizing the delegations in order to increase efficiency and improve the timeliness of funding decisions. Should further delegation be achieved at the federal level, this will position the AFF Secretariat well to initiate discussion with Provincial Partners to explore whether further delegation at their level would also be possible.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

- Departmental and Program Service Standards



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of result for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	Director General Responsible
1. The Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) will work to identify and implement efficiencies in governance and delegation of spending and financial authority, in collaboration with provincial and territorial funding partners, wherever possible and within the program's capacity to do so.	1.1 The AFF Secretariat will continue to contribute to the anticipated versions of the <i>Fisheries and Oceans Canada Grants and Contributions Risk Management Strategy</i> as it circulates through the various levels of governance.	February 2024	RDG Maritimes Region
	1.2 If approved, AFF will implement the new DSFA to enable a more timely approach to rendering a decision.	March 2024	RDG Maritimes Region
	1.3 The AFF Secretariat will work collaboratively with provincial partners through the AFF Pan-Atlantic Steering Committee and Management Committee to identify governance efficiency opportunities that could be realized in the program, should it be renewed.	March 2024	RDG Maritimes Region



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

Recommendation 2: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to improve project monitoring, and performance data collection. A significant increase in the collection of performance data is required to fully demonstrate progress made in increasing productivity, competitiveness, quality, and sustainability in the fish and seafood sector.

Rationale: While all three Funds have collected some data from recipients, collection of performance data has been limited, and existing data do not fully represent the results achieved. The collection of information for all projects needs to be improved, as well as project monitoring. In addition, there will be a need for monitoring projects until each project comes to an end for all three Funds, which may supersede the sunset of the Funds.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Maritimes Region accepts the recommendation made in the Evaluation Report understanding that there is important reasons that explain why AFF has not been able to collect as much data on results as was expected. Regardless, the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) program, on behalf of the region, is committed to working with its provincial and territorial funding partners to improve the fund's monitoring practices and data collection on results to better enable the program to demonstrate progress made on increasing productivity, competitiveness, quality, and sustainability in the Canadian Fish and Seafood Sector.

When the program was designed, AFF had an original set of performance indicators that were better suited to a fisheries management program than to a sustainable economic development program. In 2020-2021, AFF worked collaboratively with colleagues in the Quebec Fisheries Fund, British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, and DFO's Results Division to develop a Fish and Seafood Sector Program logic model complete with performance indicators. AFF did not have a set of performance indicators that reflected the objectives of the program until April 2021.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

- Management Accountability Framework
- Departmental Report on Results



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of result for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	Director General Responsible
2. AFF will continue to enhance its monitoring and results data collection processes.	2.1 AFF will complete third party technical assessments of key investment themes to provide more robust data on results.	September 2023	RDG Maritimes Region
	2.2 AFF will refine and enhance its monitoring and results data collection methodologies to enable the collection of more consistent results data, representative of the number of completed projects.	September 2023	RDG Maritimes Region
	2.3 AFF will finalize and implement its data integrity audit plan of its project file and information management system (CFFISH) to try to ensure the data in the system is and continues to be as accurate as possible.	June 2023	RDG Maritimes Region



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

Recommendation 3: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to ensure project repayments continue beyond the sunset of the Funds.

Rationale: Contributions can be repayable up to ten years following the sunset of the Funds, and repayable contributions from AFF and QFF are valued at more than \$86 million dollars.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Maritimes Region accepts the recommendation made in the Evaluation and notes that AFF leadership identified the oversight early in the program’s implementation and mitigation strategies have already been identified and are currently being pursued. While not the primary rationale for its pursuit, AFF’s current request to extend the program’s sunset date by two years to give clients more time implement and receive claim reimbursements, will also give the program two additional years to administer repayable and conditionally repayable projects. In addition, a two-year extension will provide an opportunity for the Department to work with provincial partners to focus on projects that:

- Reduce the impact of commercial fisheries on aquatic species and habitat; and,
- Advance transformative change through community-led innovation in emerging areas of the blue economy that have the potential to offer both environmental and economic gains (for example, blue carbon and carbon capture, algaculture, the circular economy, nature-based climate defenses and seagrass aquaculture).

In parallel to this extension request, the program is also pursuing program renewal to shift the focus to supporting oceans-related initiatives that contribute directly to building a low-carbon, sustainable and diversified blue-economy. AFF has been working very closely with the CFO sector, Strategic Policy, and central agencies regarding extension and possible program renewal to ensure that the ongoing requirements of the funds, to manage the repayable portfolio is incorporated into any renewal proposals that are developed. Should program renewal not be attained by March 31, 2024, the Maritimes Region will seek support from the CFO to risk manage the ongoing operating and salary budgets.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

- Proactive disclosure
- Management Accountability Framework
- Departmental Report on Results



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of result for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	Director General Responsible
<p>3. The Maritimes Region will attain a long-term solution for managing the ongoing operating and salary costs required to manage its repayable portfolio.</p>	<p>3.1 The AFF Secretariat will continue to support the Department's pursuit of a two-year program extension which includes engaging provincial partners to leverage remaining funds to help advance work on a number of key priorities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing the impact of commercial fisheries on aquatic species and habitat; and, - advancing transformative change through community-led innovation in emerging areas of the blue economy. 	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>RDG Maritimes Region</p>
	<p>3.2 The AFF Secretariat will support the Department's pursuit of program renewal as means to make more fundamental shifts in the program, which in its costing model would plan for ongoing minimal operating and salary budgets for 10 years, following the sunset to manage its repayable portfolio.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>RDG Maritimes Region</p>
	<p>3.3 Should AFF not be renewed by March 31, 2024, the AFF Secretariat will seek support from the CFO to risk manage scaled-back operating and salary budgets to support the administration of its outstanding repayable portfolio.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>RDG Maritimes Region</p>



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

Recommendation 4: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to review the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund in order to address challenges with the governance and delivery of the Fund.

Rationale: Several challenges related to the design of CFSOF emerged from the evaluation, including challenges related to its name, provincial partnerships, and governance structures. For example, the federal government could provide 100% of the funding to avoid the layers of federal/provincial/territorial approvals, although provinces and territories would continue to be involved. Exclusive federal funding would also address challenges related to an individual province not having funding to be part of a multi-provincial project.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Maritimes Region accepts the recommendation made in the Evaluation to address CFSOF challenges with governance and approval times.

A component of CFSOF's objective was to create a collaborative space, across provincial and territorial boundaries to help collectively elevate the profile of the Canadian Fish and Seafood Sector domestically and abroad. The design and eligibility criteria of CFSOF targets organizations that operate at a national, regional or sectoral level or on behalf of a particular fishery to encourage inter-provincial/territorial and industry collaboration.

The Maritimes Region, in its pursuit of program renewal, will recommend that CFSOF transition to a federal only funding stream while continuing to encourage collaboration amongst the provincial and territorial partners through collective priority setting. This would allow for more streamlined governance and improved approval times. It would also continue to allow for the advancement of the CFSOF objectives and continue to encourage inter-provincial/territorial collaboration. More broadly, program renewal also provides an opportunity for a more fundamental shift in objectives to incentivize community-led innovation in emerging areas of the blue economy that have the potential to offer both environmental and economic gains (for example, blue carbon and carbon capture, algaculture, nature-based climate defenses and seagrass aquaculture).

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

- Management Accountability Framework
- Departmental Report on Results



Annex D – Management Action Plan

Atlantic Fisheries Fund

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of result for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	Director General Responsible
<p>4. The Maritimes Region, through its pursuit of program renewal, will recommend that CFSOF transition to a federal only funded program with input on investment priorities from provincial and territorial partners.</p>	<p>4.1 The AFF Secretariat will support the Department's pursuit of program renewal as an opportunity for a more fundamental shift in objectives to incentivize community-led innovation in emerging areas of the blue economy, which will include the request to transition CFSOF into a federal only funded pillar of the program.</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>RDG Maritimes Region</p>



Annex E – Management Action Plan

Quebec Fisheries Fund

Evaluation of the Fisheries Funds

PMEC Date: January 31, 2023 – Approved March 31, 2023

MAP Completion Target Date: March 2024

Lead ADM/DC: Regional Director General, Quebec Region

Recommendation 1: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to identify and implement improvements in order to reduce delays in the approval process.

Rationale: Delays in the approval of projects were raised as a major issue, and greater efficiency is needed for the approval of projects in order to reduce delays. The Fisheries Funds' delivery could be more effective by streamlining the approval process, for example by combining two levels of approval into one executive committee.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Quebec Region accepts the recommendation made in the Evaluation Report and the Quebec Fisheries Fund (QFF) is committed to working with the province of Quebec to identify further opportunities to improve its governance structures. This approach aligns very well with the program's commitment to continuous improvement and risk-based approach to program management. The Quebec Fisheries Fund has already revised its governance to avoid redundancies.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of results for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	RDG Responsible
1. The Quebec Fisheries Fund (QFF) will continue to identify and implement efficiencies in governance structures, in order to reduce delays in the approval of projects.	1.1 QFF is working jointly with the province of Quebec to identify and implement additional efficiencies in governance structures and operational processes to reduce delays in the approval of projects.	March 2024	RDG, Quebec Region



Annex E – Management Action Plan

Quebec Fisheries Fund

Recommendation 2: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to improve project monitoring, and performance data collection. A significant increase in the collection of performance data is required to fully demonstrate progress made in increasing productivity, competitiveness, quality, and sustainability in the fish and seafood sector.

Rationale: While all three Funds have collected some data from recipients, collection of performance data has been limited, and existing data do not fully represent the results achieved. The collection of information for all projects needs to be improved, as well as project monitoring. In addition, there will be a need for monitoring projects until each project comes to an end for all three Funds, which may supersede the sunset of the Funds.

Management Response

The Quebec Fisheries Fund will continue to improve the collection of performance data.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of results for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	RDG Responsible
2. Improvement in performance data.	2.1 Results indicators in contribution agreements will be improved.	March 2024	RDG, Quebec Region



Annex E – Management Action Plan

Quebec Fisheries Fund

Recommendation 3: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to ensure project repayments continue beyond the sunset of the Funds. It is also recommended that the RDG, Quebec Region find solutions to ensure the 70/30 federal-provincial cost share ratio is met over the life of the Fund.

Rationale: Contributions can be repayable up to ten years following the sunset of the Funds, and repayable contributions from AFF and QFF are valued at more than \$86 million dollars. Funding is cost-shared, with DFO contributing 70% and the province contributing 30% to each contribution agreement. In the case of QFF, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) does not participate in the funding of repayable contributions. Consequently, as of March 2022, DFO’s contribution represents 77% of the funding, while MAPAQ has funded 23% of the total contributions.

Management Response

DFO-Quebec Region will continue discussions with the Quebec government to balance the 70/30 cost sharing.

DFO-Quebec Region will continue its planning, already underway, to ensure the sustainability of accounting and monitoring activities beyond the sunset of the Quebec Fisheries Fund, especially related to repayable contributions.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of results for PMEC’s approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	RDG Responsible
3. Balancing cost-share and post-QFF planning.	3.1 A formal correspondence will be sent to the Quebec government, mainly addressing the cost-share imbalance	December 2023	RDG, Quebec Region
	3.2 RDG, DFO-Quebec Region will continue discussions with the MAPAQ ADM to solve the cost-share imbalance	March 2024	RDG, Quebec Region
	3.3 Continued internal discussions and implementation of a post-QFF plan	March 2024	RDG, Quebec Region



Annex F – Management Action Plan

British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund

Evaluation of the Fisheries Funds

PMEC Date: January 31, 2023 – Approved March 31, 2023

MAP Completion Target Date: March 2024

Lead ADM/DC: Regional Director General, Pacific Region

Recommendation 1: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to identify and implement improvements in order to reduce delays in the approval process.

Rationale: Delays in the approval of projects were raised as a major issue, and greater efficiency is needed for the approval of projects in order to reduce delays. The Fisheries Funds' delivery could be more effective by streamlining the approval process, for example by combining two levels of approval into one executive committee.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Pacific Region accepts recommendation 1 from the Evaluation on the Fisheries Funds. Since implementation in March 2019, the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) has implemented governance improvements including biweekly DFO-BC operational-level bilateral meetings, secretarial and electronic joint decision functions, and collapsing from an expression of interest plus proposal (2 step), to a proposal only (1 step) application process. The implementation of these governance and operational improvements has increased program efficiency, improved communication between DFO and BC and has resulted in more streamlined review, recommendation and approval processes. The program's framework agreement outlines the required governance structures and thus limits what the program can modify and implement. BCSRIF will continue to work with the Province of BC to identify additional opportunities to improve governance structures with the goal of reducing delays in approval of projects.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

- Departmental and Program Service Standards



Annex F – Management Action Plan

British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of result for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	Director General Responsible
<p>1. The BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) will continue to identify and implement efficiencies in governance structures in order to reduce delays in the approval of projects.</p>	<p>1.1 BCSRIF is working jointly with the Province of BC to identify and implement additional efficiencies in governance structures and operational processes to reduce delays in the approval of projects. Recent efforts have included discussions with BC in consideration of the potential to combine Management and Steering Committee processes.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region</p>
	<p>1.2 BCSRIF implemented the 1-step application process in 2022-23 and will continue to use secretarial and electronic decision functions to streamline approvals, where possible.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region</p>



Annex F – Management Action Plan

British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund

Recommendation 2: MARCH 2024

Recommendation: It is recommended to improve project monitoring, and performance data collection. A significant increase in the collection of performance data is required to fully demonstrate progress made in increasing productivity, competitiveness, quality, and sustainability in the fish and seafood sector.

Rationale: While all three Funds have collected some data from recipients, collection of performance data has been limited, and existing data do not fully represent the results achieved. The collection of information for all projects needs to be improved, as well as project monitoring. In addition, there will be a need for monitoring projects until each project comes to an end for all three Funds, which may supersede the sunset of the Funds.

Management Response

The Regional Director General, Pacific Region accepts recommendation 2 from the Evaluation on the Fisheries Funds. In 2021-22, the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) worked together with colleagues in the Quebec Fisheries Fund (QFF), Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) and Results Division to develop a Fish and Seafood Sector logic model which included program specific performance indicators, outcomes and results. BCSRIF continues to work with the Results Division on annual target setting and results reporting. In 2022-23, BCSRIF started working with IMIT to develop a BCSRIF-specific platform on the Canadian Fisheries Fund Information Storage Hub (CFFISH). BCSRIF is onboarded to CFFISH (tombstone data) in December 2022 and will continue to work with IMIT as enterprise wide solutions are developed for Grants and Contributions programs within the department. Since 2019-20, the program has developed and published the BCSRIF Annual Results Summary Report which focuses on operations and progress towards program objectives of improving the sustainability of fisheries and BC's fish and seafood sector, and contributing to the restoration of wild Pacific salmon through collection of program performance data and results achieved. In addition, the BCSRIF Strategic Monitoring Program launched in 2022 with 44% of field projects monitored by site visits, 29% of all BCSRIF projects monitored by site visits and 100% of projects including desktop monitors. Through 2020 and 2021, site visit monitoring was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events. BCSRIF will continue to build on existing tools and resources, and will work with the Province of BC to improve project monitoring, data collection and reporting on results.

Link to larger program or departmental results (if applicable)

- Departmental Report on Results
- Management Accountability Framework



Annex F – Management Action Plan

British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund

MAP Results Statement <i>Result to be achieved in response to the recommendation</i>	MAP Milestones <i>Critical accomplishments to ensure achievement of result for PMEC's approval</i>	Completion Date <i>Month, Year</i>	Director General Responsible
2. BCSRIF will continue to boost monitoring, data collection and reporting on results to demonstrate progress made in increasing productivity, competitiveness, quality, and sustainability in the fish and seafood sector.	2.1 BCSRIF will continue to develop annual results data collection and reporting of project outcomes through rigorous analysis of recipient reports and survey information.	August 2023	Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region
	2.2 BCSRIF will continue to implement the Canadian Fisheries Fund Information Storage Hub (CFFISH).	February 2023	Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region
	2.3 BCSRIF will continue to augment the field monitoring program with increased site visit monitors and desktop monitors for all BCSRIF projects.	March 2024	Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region
3. The BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) and Pacific region will develop long-term plan to ensure the sustainability of accounting and monitoring activities beyond the sunset of the program.	3.1 BCSRIF will continue to evaluate options to seek program extension and alignment with provincial funding timeframes (to March 31, 2028).	March 2024	Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region
	3.2 BCSRIF will support the long-term plan for ongoing salary and operating budgets.	March 2024	Regional Director Reconciliation and Partnerships Branch, Pacific Region Regional Director Finance, Pacific Region