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HARBOUR
AUTHORITIES
*our harbour,
our community*

Small Craft Harbours Advisory Committees

Orientation package for new members



Last update: August 2026

Canada 

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Introduction to Small Craft Harbours Advisory Committees

Welcome to a Small Craft Harbours (SCH) Advisory Committee. Your participation is greatly appreciated and we hope that it will be an interesting and rewarding experience.

This document was developed for new members of SCH Advisory Committees to provide general information about the SCH Program and the Advisory Committees.

The Small Craft Harbours Program

The SCH Program was created in 1977 when the *Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act* was passed. The Act allows the Minister of Fisheries to acquire, contribute to, maintain, operate and repair fishing and recreational harbour facilities across Canada.

Following a Government-wide Program Review in 1995, the SCH refocused its mandate on core commercial fishing harbours and has since been continuously divesting recreational and non-core fishing harbours.

There are approximately 935 small craft harbours across the country, as of Spring 2026. Roughly 655 are classified as core harbours and 280 as non-core harbours (including recreational harbours). Together, they represent over 10,000 structures today valued at approximately \$7.1 billion. Sites vary in size and services, most are small, and located in small or isolated communities.

Since 2018, SCH is a decentralized program. The national headquarters (NHQ) is located in Moncton, New Brunswick. While the headquarters office provides national policy and program coordination, five (5) regional offices manage the program operations (see [appendix E](#)).

For more information on the SCH program and its regions, please visit:
<https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch-ppb/index-eng.html>

SCH OBJECTIVES

The SCH Program's goal is to **develop and maintain a sustainable national network of safe and accessible harbours**, that are fully operated, in good working condition, that meets the principle and evolving needs of the commercial fishing industry, while supporting the interests of coastal communities.

These harbours are operated, managed and maintained by viable, professional and self-sufficient harbour authorities (HA) representing the interests of users and communities.



The SCH National Management Committee

SCH's **National Management Committee (NMC)** promotes a coordinated and consistent approach to program management and delivery across the country through a strong functional relationship between NHQ and the SCH regions. The NMC supports collaboration, operational alignment, and effective decision-making. The NMC meets virtually on a biweekly basis and in person, as required. The NMC is composed of: the SCH Director General, five (5) SCH Regional Directors and three (3) National Directors.

National Management Committee Members

CHAIR	SCH Director General	
REGIONAL DIRECTORS (5)	• Pacific • Ontario and Prairie (including Arctic)	• Quebec • Maritimes and Gulf • Newfoundland and Labrador
NATIONAL DIRECTORS (3)	• Harbour Development, Policy and Planning • Engineering and Technical Services • Integrated Program Planning and Analysis	

The Harbour Authority Program

The Harbour Authority program was created in 1988 and has since continued to grow. HAs are not-for-profit, volunteer organizations that manage and operate the harbours through a lease agreement with SCH.

The goal of the program was to involve local users in decisions on management and maintenance of harbours, and take local needs into consideration, as well as increase users' commitment and contribution to the upkeep of their harbours.

About 5,000 volunteers, such as yourselves, dedicate their time to these HAs, and your efforts average about 200,000 hours of work per year, which exceeds 100 full-time positions. Each year, HAs generate approximately \$50 million in revenue, which is reinvested in the harbours or the communities.

As of 2026, HAs operate and manage approximately 700 small craft harbours across Canada.





The Advisory Committees

Regional Harbour Authority Advisory Committees

At the end of the 1990s, the SCH Program created **Regional Harbour Authority Advisory Committees** (RHAACs) as a means to assist SCH in the management of its Program, further support its decision-making process and enhance relationships with HAs. Each SCH region has its own RHAAC. There are five (5) RHAACs, one (1) committee for each SCH region.

The RHAAC's Terms of References vary from one region to the other. Please reach out to your regional SCH contact for a copy of yours.

National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee

Established in 2001, the **National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee** (NHAAC) provides advice to the SCH Program on matters of national interest, supports decision-making, and strengthens relationships between SCH and HAs. The committee also serves as a forum for members to share information and best practices, fostering a strong national network.

The NHAAC comprises three (3) HA representatives from each of the five (5) SCH Regions. Members are appointed by their respective RHAAC.

The committee meets at least once a year in-person and is co-chaired by the committee chairperson and the Director General of the SCH Program. Records of discussion of these meetings are shared with committee members.

The NHAAC's Terms of Reference can be found in [appendix A](#).

Selection and appointment or election of advisory committee members

- Advisory committee members are selected through a regional appointment or election process that ensures diverse and effective representation.
- Members should be interested in the SCH program and willing to provide advice on HA-related matters.
- Selection should reflect a range of:
 - Geographic locations
 - Harbour types and sizes
 - Experience and expertise
 - Stakeholder interests
- Members may include fish harvesters, industry representatives, and community members.
- Candidates may be nominated and selected based on their knowledge, ability to contribute, and commitment to collaborative decision-making.
- Terms are generally a **minimum of two (2) years**, with staggered appointments or elections to support continuity.



Purpose of advisory committees

To provide advice to and share information with SCH on matters of national and regional interest regarding the HA Program and SCH Program overall in order to assist SCH in the development of policies and best practices.

Members are expected to present their views based on their knowledge and own experience and not as representatives of their own HAs. As such, HA advisory committees will:

1. Provide SCH with first-level contact with HAs on matters of national and regional interest.
2. Provide SCH with a forum for consultations as well as effective and timely communications.
3. Present and raise important issues for HAs, thus strengthening relations between national SCH and regional HA councils/organizations, and between regional SCH and HAs.

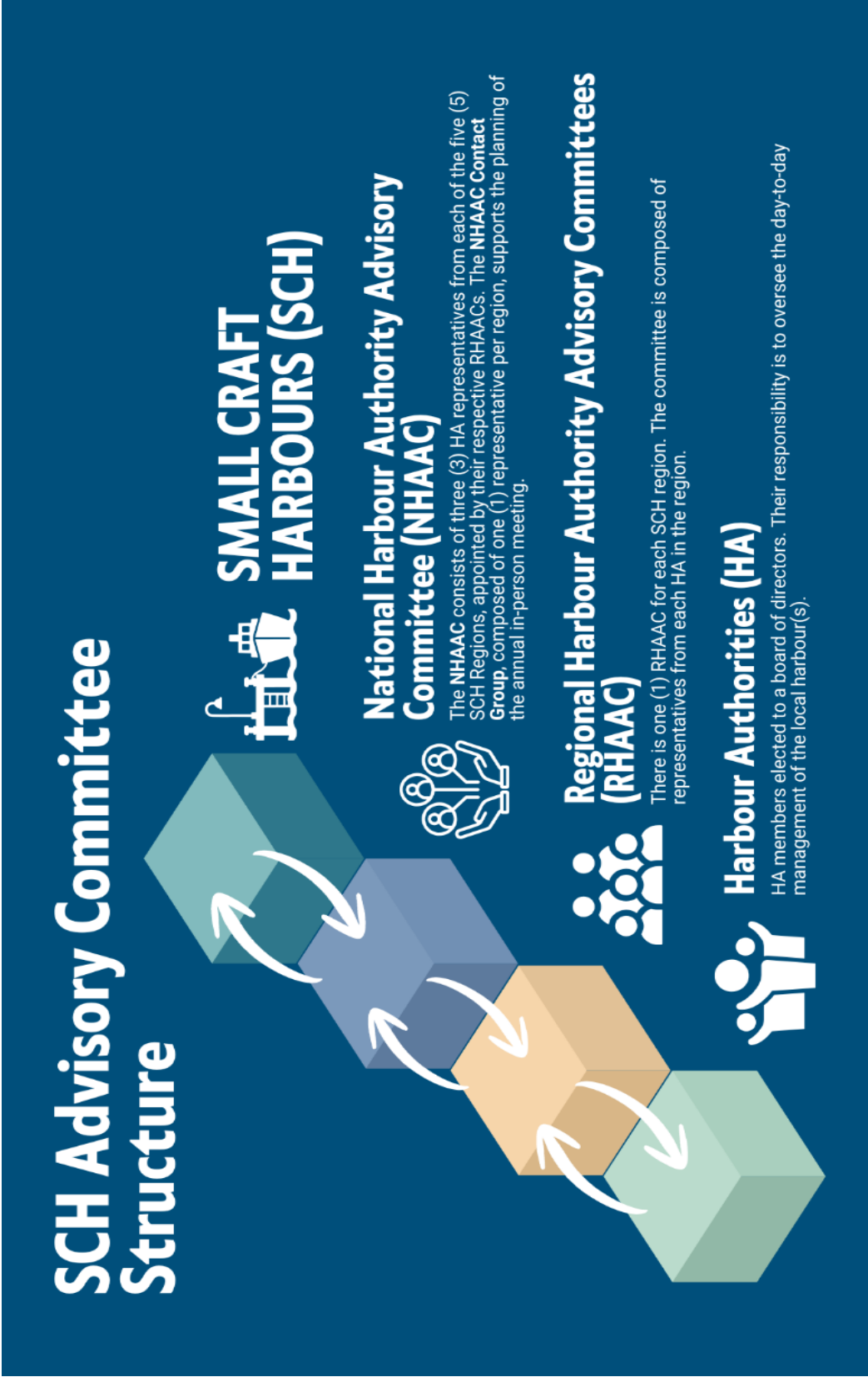
Other committees:

There is also the NHAAC Contact Group that is comprised of one (1) representative per region and meets virtually to contribute to the preparation of the annual in-person meeting and to ensure follow-ups between meetings.

NHAAC working groups may also be established, as determined by SCH, in which members assist SCH in furthering specific initiatives.



SCH Advisory Committees' Structure:





Appendices



Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee (NHAAC)

Purpose of the NHAAC:

To provide advice to and share information with Small Craft Harbours (SCH) on matters of national interest regarding the Harbour Authority (HA) Program and SCH Program overall in order to assist SCH in the development of national policies and best practices.

➔ **Members are encouraged to express their views based on their personal knowledge and experience and not as representatives of their individual HA.**

As such, NHAAC will:

- Provide SCH with first-level contact with HAs on matters of national interest.
- Provide SCH with a forum for consultations as well as effective and timely communications.
- Present issues of national scope discussed at RHAAC, thus strengthening relations between national SCH and regional HA councils/organizations.

Structure and participation

The NHAAC will involve a balanced range of individuals that can make a meaningful contribution to the consultation process.

The NHAAC will be comprised of three (3) RHAAC members from each region, for a national total of fifteen (15) members. A Contact Group of five (5) members, made up of one (1) representative per region, shall be responsible for the follow-up with SCH between NHAAC meetings. Each regional Contact Group member will be selected by the 3 regional members on NHAAC, on an annual basis.

RHAAC members participating at NHAAC meetings (including alternates, as required) will be selected through a region-specific process (appointment or election). If the mode is elective, the results of the regional selections will have to be endorsed by SCH since the regional representatives sent to NHAAC must reflect the specificities of these regions and demonstrate diverse experiences and expertise.

NHAAC members should be selected for a renewable two (2)-year period.

NHAAC meetings will be attended by SCH's National Management Committee members (i.e., national and regional directors).



Roles and responsibilities of participants

Small Craft Harbours:

- ✓ Determine topics for discussion and set the agenda for the NHAAC meetings with input from the Contact Group members.
- ✓ Provide secretariat service including the:
 - Provision of logistical arrangements for NHAAC meetings
 - Distribution of agendas one month prior to each NHAAC meeting
 - Distribution of other relevant information to the members as early as possible before the meetings
 - Preparation of records of discussion of meetings including distribution to NHAAC members as soon as possible
 - Follow-up on action items stemming from NHAAC meetings
 - Provision of an Orientation package to all new NHAAC members
- ✓ Approve and fund NHAAC meeting expenses (meeting rooms, interpretation services, travel and accommodation), in accordance with Treasury Board policies, rules and regulations
- ✓ Communicate relevant information to the NHAAC on SCH issues

NHAAC members:

- ✓ Advise SCH, on matters of national interest regarding the HA Program and SCH Program overall
- ✓ Inform SCH of HA issues and/or concerns of national interest
- ✓ Consult the RHAAC and other HAs in their areas on matters of national interest (facilitated by SCH)
- ✓ Communicate information received at NHAAC to the RHAAC (facilitated by SCH)
- ✓ Communicate information received at RHAAC meetings to NHAAC members
- ✓ Provide input to SCH on potential agenda items for NHAAC meetings

Contact Group members:

- ✓ Provide input, as required, into the development of the agenda of NHAAC meetings
- ✓ Contact points for follow-ups with SCH between NHAAC meetings
- ✓ Keep other NHAAC members apprised of their discussions with SCH and consult them, as necessary

Meeting frequency and operational rules

There will be one in-person meeting per year; the location of this meeting will alternate throughout the five SCH regions.

A Pre-NHAAC meeting will be scheduled for the five (5) NHAAC Contact group members prior to the NHAAC in-person meeting. Its duration will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the chair in consultation with the Contact Group.

SCH staff and other guests may attend the meetings with prior authorization of the Chair of the Committee.

All meetings, in-person or virtually, will have interpretation services available for members.

Code of conduct

All committee members shall adhere to the Code of Conduct attached as [appendix B](#).

Evaluation and monitoring

SCH will evaluate the effectiveness of consultative processes on a periodic basis in consultation with the NHAAC.



Appendix B: Advisory Committees Code of Conduct

General principles

Individual and stakeholder participation in advisory committees are accompanied by responsibilities. Parties that participate in these committees should do so in good faith and with the public interest in mind. Committee members also have a responsibility to engage in effective, balanced and respectful communication. All participants have a responsibility to actively participate and provide non-partisan advice so that the government gets the information it needs to make well-informed and balanced decisions, and so that consultation processes operate as efficiently as possible.

Communications

In order to maximize the exchange of information among parties and minimize misunderstandings, SCH employees and Advisory Committee members should:

- ✓ Speak clearly, listen carefully and ask for clarification if a point is not understood
- ✓ Share information related to the issues at hand
- ✓ Clearly explain what is important to them, what their interests are and why

The Committee Chair shall ensure that all Committee members have the opportunity to speak and all perspectives and interests are heard, by:

- ✓ Seeking the active participation of all members
- ✓ Providing opportunities for all members to be heard

Confidentiality

SCH employees and Advisory Committee members shall engage in appropriate communications activities by:

- ✓ Respecting the confidentiality of individual views expressed during meetings
- ✓ Not divulging information identified as privileged or time sensitive obtained from the work of the Committee until the information has been released for public distribution

Mutual respect

SCH employees and Advisory Committee members shall maintain a respectful atmosphere, by:

- ✓ Respecting each other's values and interests
- ✓ Separating issues from people
- ✓ Avoiding accusatory or critical language, rude behaviour, and stereotyping
- ✓ Listening to what others have to say without interrupting

- ✓ Beginning meetings on time
- ✓ Seeking a better understanding of other perspectives with an open mind
- ✓ Allowing members the freedom to be creative, brainstorm, and test ideas without prejudice to future discussions

Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest is defined as any situation in which a member is in a real or perceived position to take advantage of privileged information for their personal benefit. As such:

- ✓ Members should avoid situations in which their participation in advisory committees results in real or perceived conflict of interest (i.e. personal benefit)
- ✓ Members should declare any potential conflict of interest to the Chair for awareness and consideration

Transparency and legitimacy

SCH employees and Advisory Committee members shall:

- ✓ Avoid participation in activities that might undermine the process
- ✓ Not use the consultative committees as lobbying¹ mechanisms

¹ **Lobbying:** To conduct activities aimed at influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body on legislation (Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Appendix C: Travel and Hospitality Directives

Members of advisory committees (RHAAC and NHAAC) are sometimes required to travel to attend meetings, for which expenses are covered by SCH. All travel claims are subject to the [Treasury Board directive](#). The provisions in this directive provide for the reimbursement of reasonable expenses necessarily incurred while travelling on government business.

Participants should contact their SCH regional office as they will be coordinating the travel arrangements.

Participants must submit and certify a travel claim for expenses incurred while travelling, including required receipts, in coordination with their regional office.

What is covered?

- ✓ Transportation (e.g., plane, train, ferries, bridge tolls, etc.)
- ✓ Taxi and ride-sharing services
- ✓ Kilometres and parking
- ✓ Hotel
- ✓ Meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)



Transportation

Travel is arranged using the most cost-effective and practical transportation option, with costs calculated from the traveller's residence to the event location.

Commercial travel is typically prepaid and coordinated by regional offices, while local transportation and authorized personal vehicle use are reimbursed in accordance with the government travel rates and policies.

Additional expenses may be considered for travellers from remote locations, and accommodation reimbursement is subject to regional limits.

Accommodations

When DFO is organizing meetings and selecting accommodations, the decision is based on the following factors: safe environment, cost, conveniently located and comfortably equipped. All participants will be provided with a single standard room. Any other extra room costs are the responsibility of the individual.

Meals

Meal allowances are to be reimbursed in accordance with the rates specified in Appendix C of the [National Joint Council's Travel Directive](#).

Example

This is a **fictional scenario** to demonstrate the expenses that would be covered for someone attending a NHAAC meeting. The expenses could vary for someone attending a RHAAC meeting. However, the nature of the reimbursements would remain the same.

- Henry is a member of an HA in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and is on the RHAAC.
- He has been elected to attend the upcoming NHAAC meeting.
- The meeting takes place in Victoria, British Columbia, from Tuesday, November 13 at 9 a.m. until Wednesday November 14. It also includes a harbour tour on Thursday, November 15.
- Coffee breaks will be provided by SCH for the two days of meetings.
- Henry's flight and hotel have been booked by the NL Region and he will leave home on Monday, November 12 at 12 p.m.
- Henry will be returning home on Friday November 16 and arriving in NL at 7 p.m.
- His travel, hotel room and meals will be covered from Monday to Friday.

Here is what Henry would be entitled to claim for his trip to the NHAAC meeting:

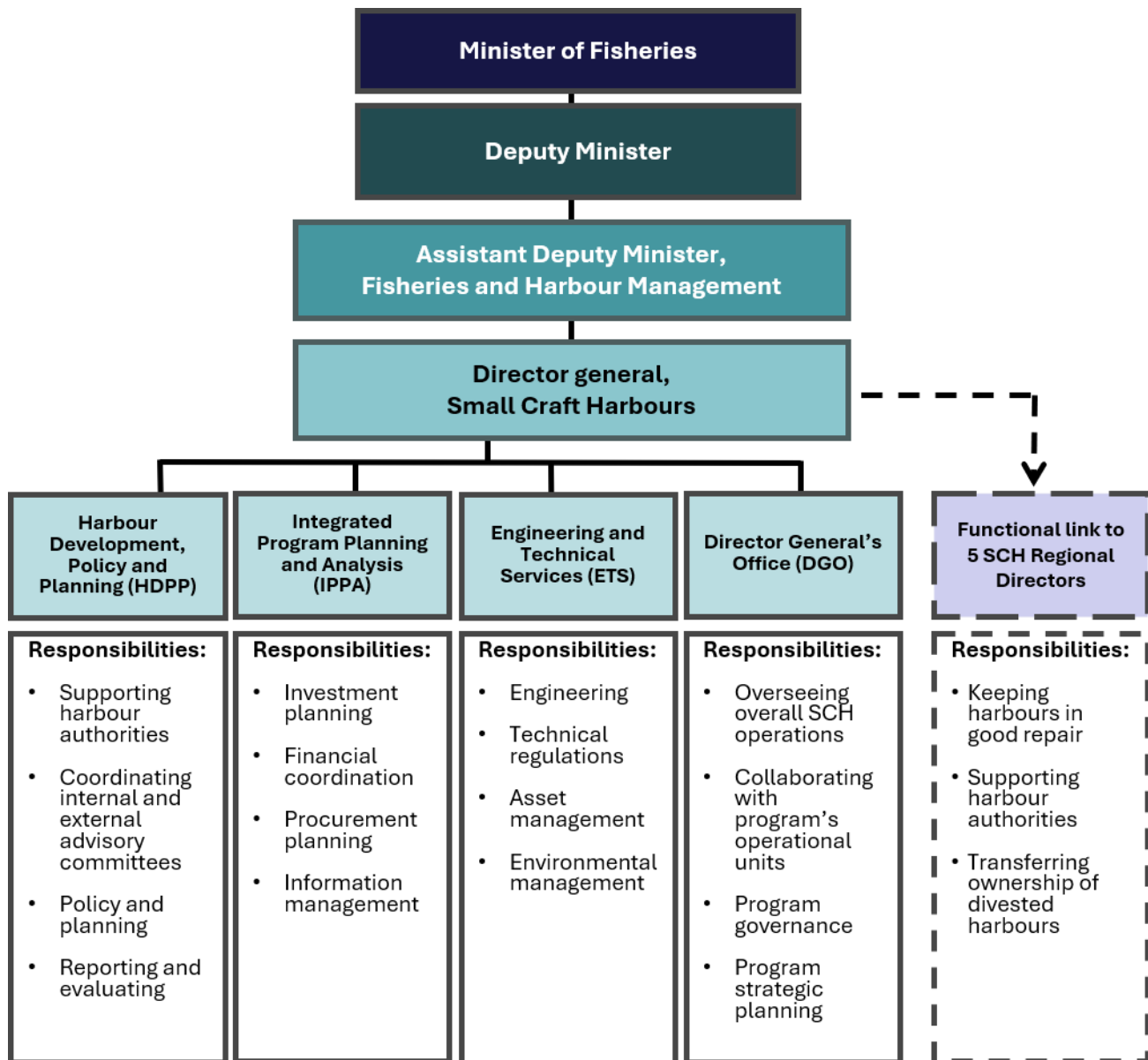
Monday, November 12	Tuesday, November 13	Wednesday, November 14	Thursday, November 15	Friday, November 16
✓ Drive to St. John's airport from his home (approx. 12 km)	✓ Breakfast, lunch, dinner	✓ Breakfast, lunch, dinner	✓ Breakfast, lunch, dinner	✓ Breakfast, lunch, dinner
✓ Taxi from Victoria airport to hotel	✓ Hotel	✓ Hotel	✓ Hotel	✓ Taxi from hotel to Victoria airport
✓ Lunch, dinner				✓ Parking at the St. John's airport for 5 days
✓ Hotel				✓ Drive from St. John's airport to his home (12 km)

Links: Please note that these rates change annually. Be sure to check the current rates.

- National Joint Council Travel Directive — Appendix B — Kilometric Rates (2026):
<https://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/d10/v326/s999/sv2/en>
- National Joint Council Travel Directive — Appendix C — Allowances (2026):
<https://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/d10/v326/s978/sv2/en>



Appendix D: Fisheries and Oceans Canada Organizational Structure

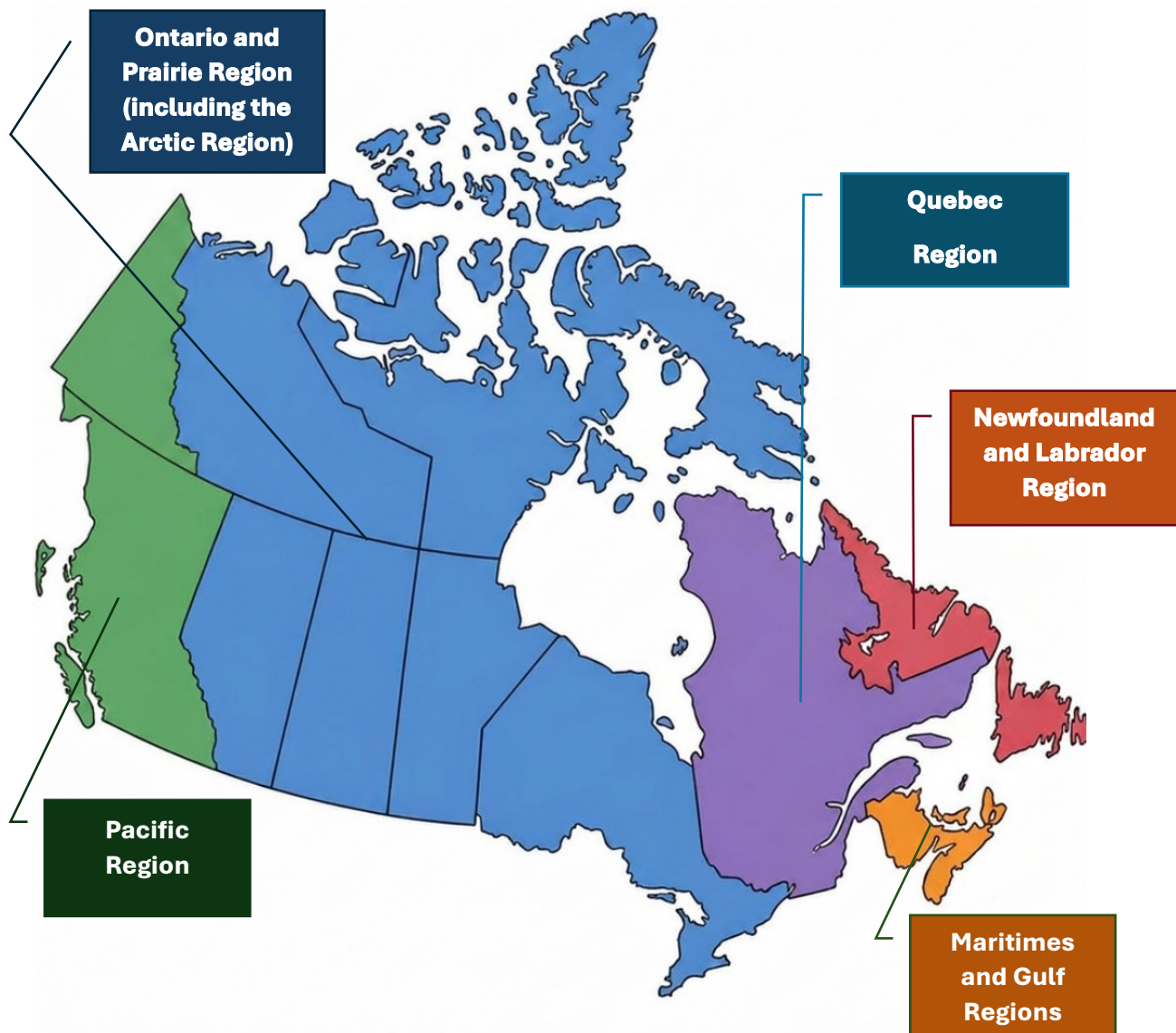


Appendix E: Small Craft Harbours Region

As a department, Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is organized into seven (7) regions: Arctic, Pacific, Ontario and Prairie, Quebec, Gulf, Maritimes, and Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the Small Craft Harbours (SCH) Program delivers its services through five (5) administrative regions, with some SCH regional teams providing support and oversight across multiple DFO regions.

Here are the five (5) SCH regions:

- Pacific Region
- Ontario and Prairie Region (including the Arctic Region)
- Quebec Region
- Maritimes and Gulf Regions
- Newfoundland and Labrador Region





Appendix F: Common Acronyms

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
DG	Director General
ETS	Engineering and Technical Services (Unit within SCH-NHQ)
FRHA	<i>Fisheries and Recreational Harbours Act</i>
HA	Harbour Authority
HDPP	Harbour Development, Policy and Planning (Unit within SCH-NHQ)
IPPA	Integrated Program Planning and Analysis (Unit within SCH-NHQ)
M&G	Maritimes and Gulf Regions
NHAAC	National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee
NHQ	SCH National Headquarters
NL	Newfoundland and Labrador Region
NMC	National Management Committee
O&P	Ontario and Prairie (including the Arctic Region)
PAC	Pacific Region
QC	Quebec Region
RDG	Regional Director General
RHAAC	Regional Harbour Authority Advisory Committee
SCH	Small Craft Harbours

Appendix G: Small Craft Harbours Contact Information

Pacific Region (British Columbia, Yukon)	200–401 Burrard St Vancouver, BC, V6C 3S4 Telephone: 604-666-2231
Ontario and Prairie (including the Arctic Region) (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Northwest Territories and Nunavut)	501 University Crescent Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N6 Telephone: 204-983-5721
Quebec Region (Quebec)	104 Dalhousie Street, 2nd floor Québec, QC, G1K 7Y7 Telephone: 418-649-6569 Email: DFO.QUESCH-PPBQUE.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Maritimes and Gulf Regions (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island)	343 Université Avenue P.O. Box 5030 Moncton, NB, E1C 9B6 Telephone: 1-800-983-6161
Newfoundland and Labrador Region (Newfoundland and Labrador)	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Centre 80 East White Hills Road P.O. Box 5667 St. John's, NL, A1C 5X1 Telephone: 709-772-4486
National headquarters (Moncton, NB)	343 Université Avenue P.O. Box 5030 Moncton, NB, E1C 9B6 Telephone: 1-833-900-4944 Email: sch-ppb@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

