



AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

NORTHERN INTEGRATED COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INITIATIVE



Program Application
Guide

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Introduction

The Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (NICFI) provides funding and support to interested Indigenous groups and communities not eligible for the Atlantic and Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiatives, where Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) manages the fishery¹, to develop and maximize the potential of their community-based communal commercial fishing enterprises (CFEs). This includes redistributive-model enterprises which may sell products only to the community or local area.

The objective of the program is to develop self-sustaining CFEs: Indigenous groups which are fully capable of taking complete ownership of fisheries operations and becoming successful, self-sustaining harvesters. There are four components of the NICFI program:

1. Capacity Building (Business Development).
2. Indigenous Harvester Training.
3. Expansion and Diversification.
4. Aquaculture Development.

This document describes the application process to receive **Aquaculture Development** funding, including support to help CFEs develop and implement their Business Development Plan. It will explain how applications are to be submitted and how they will be assessed.

A copy of the [NICFI – Aquaculture Development - Application Form](#) is attached in Annex A.

Aquaculture Development Overview

Funding is available to help Indigenous communities and groups develop sustainable aquaculture operations. This includes costs to expand or upgrade existing aquaculture facilities, for materials required in new and expanded operations, and those associated with entering into an aquaculture business. The intent of this funding is to support capacity-building, revenue and profit generation, employment generation, and self-sustainability of aquaculture operations.

Each project submitted for NICFI aquaculture development funding must be aligned with the community's or CFE's business development plan. It must also support capacity-building and sustainability in aquaculture and related activities.

¹ Geographic restrictions do not apply to NICFI eligible groups that participate in the Aquaculture Development component.

Eligible activities for aquaculture development funding support may include:

- Expansion or upgrades to existing marine finfish, shellfish, or freshwater/land-based aquaculture facilities where the expansion or upgrades have already been approved under the aquaculture licence (in some cases this may require amendments to an existing licence)
- Equipment, gear and/or infrastructure for new or expanded aquaculture operations, where the equipment, gear and/or infrastructure have already been approved under the aquaculture licence
- Acquisition of an existing aquaculture operation
- Business plan development (includes technical and management advisory costs)
- Other start-up costs funded on a one-time basis (administration, salaries and wages for project management/technical advice, training, etc.)

The following activities are not eligible for aquaculture development funding:

- Working capital projects (subsidizing ongoing operational expenditures)
- Scientific studies

Roles and Responsibilities

The NICFI Aquaculture Development funding has been designed as a collaborative process involving a number of partnerships. The roles and responsibilities of these partners are as follows:

Organization	Role / Responsibility
Fisheries and Oceans Canada – DFO (NICFI Program Authority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimate decision-maker for all funding-related matters. • Verifies applications have all the information needed to be able to evaluate proposed activities. • Reviews applications to ensure alignment with the revenue and profit generation, capacity-building, employment creation, and sustainability goals of NICFI. • Reviews applications to ensure applicant capacity to complete the work within the Fiscal Year.
Business Development Team (BDT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advisory services to prospective applicants and assists with project implementation processes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping to refine and analyze a proposed project - Providing application support by reviewing and providing feedback on draft business cases - Reviewing application packages for quality, completeness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing project implementation support • Does not play a role in the evaluation of business cases and has no decision-making authority
Third Party Evaluator (TPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifies applications for completeness of information needed to carry out evaluation of the proposals. • Evaluates the application and assesses its alignment with revenue and profits generation, employment creation, capacity-building, and sustainability goals of NICFI, and determines applicant capacity to complete the work within the Fiscal Year. • Meets with applicants and associated representatives to discuss proposed projects and learn about applicant operations. • Prepares reports for DFO outlining results from evaluation and provide recommendations. • Presents reports and recommendations to the Application Review Board (ARB) and NICFI Program Authority.
Application Review Board (ARB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews project applications and the TPE's findings in order to make recommendations to the NICFI Program Authority including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whether or not to support a proposal, the funding amount, and any funding conditions - concerning details that may be referred back to the applicant for further work, revisions, and/or resubmission. - identifying other possible sources of complementary project funding for the proposed work or activity. • The ARB is composed of representatives from Indigenous Groups. DFO is an ex-officio participant.

Program Flexibilities

The Aquaculture Development component of the NICFI program is proposal driven. It has flexibilities to enable multi-year contribution agreements for projects to be implemented in stages with secured funding. Multi-year agreements may extend from one to five years.

All decisions on funding flexibility requests are subject to the approval of the NICFI Program Authority.

General Application Requirements

Project Objectives – Activities must be aligned with the CFE’s Business Development Plan and support its development and implementation.

Eligibility – NICFI Aquaculture Development funding can be accessed by Indigenous groups not eligible for AICFI or PICFI, or organizations that provide related support services. There is no geographic restriction for aquaculture projects.

Application Form – All applications must include a completed NICFI Application Form (See Appendix A).

Business Cases - All prospective applicants must work with the Business Development Team to develop a business case, which includes all supporting information, prior to submitting their application to the NICFI Program Authority. Note that there is no cost to the applicant for the services provided by the BDT. Business cases should include the following:

- Project Description/ Purpose.
- Linkage to the Business Development Plan.
- Level of impact (direct and in-direct) to community/CFE (employment, revenue, etc.).
- Quotes.
- Detailed budget that includes immediate and longer-term costs to the project.
- Consideration of alternative sources of funding.
- Technical / scientific /regulatory requirements* and other factors that could affect project success.
- Any other information that could be relevant to the review of the proposal.

**Note: It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure they have met the necessary regulatory requirements before initiating a project. Approval of funding under NICFI does not constitute approval of any requests for permits, licences, assessments, etc.*

Financial Details - All applications must include detailed budget information, outlining the complete costs for each project, and the sources of funding expected. Note that each application must include a minimum 10% cash contribution from the applicant to the total project costs.

Letter of Support - All applications must include a letter of support from the authorized representative of the applicant, e.g. Chief, Executive Director, President, Mayor, or Band Council Resolution (BCR), etc., authorizing the submission of an application under NICFI.

Application Deadline – Applications should be submitted to the NICFI Program Authority by November 30. Once the budget has been fully allocated, projects will be considered for the following Fiscal Year.

Confidentiality

All information provided by an applicant in the application and supporting documentation, and all collaboration with the BDT, will be held in confidence by the NICFI Program Authority even after projects are approved. The evaluation of applications will also be carried out under strict confidentiality by those involved. The Third-party Evaluator's report and

recommendations will be made available to the NICFI Program Authority and the ARB, unless otherwise instructed by the applicant.

Application / Review Process

Step 1 - Interested applicant works with their Aquaculture BDT member to develop work plans and supporting business cases, to submit with their completed NICFI Aquaculture Development Application Form. At this time, prospective recipients should investigate all possible sources of funding for the project.

Step 2 - Once completed, each applicant should submit their application documents to the NICFI Program Authority (see Contact Information), along with a letter of support from their authorized representative such as the Chief, Executive Director, President, Mayor, or Band Council Resolution (BCR), etc.

Step 3 – DFO will refer the application to the Third-party Evaluator (TPE) to review; especially the technical and economic feasibility and practicality of the work proposed. This evaluator will also contact the community representative to schedule a meeting in the community in order to evaluate and draft a project assessment report.

Step 4 – The TPE’s report and the community’s application will be forwarded to the Application review Board, which includes Indigenous representatives, for further evaluations and recommendation. The evaluation will be based on the strength of the project and business case and the recommendation, including recommended levels of support, will be conveyed to DFO.

Step 5 – DFO will review the Application Review Board’s recommendation and make the final determination regarding funding support under NICFI. If a project is approved for support, DFO will send a Letter of Offer to the applicant outlining the level of support available, as well as any conditions associated with the funding.

Note: Each project will be reviewed solely on project merit for funding approval.

Step 6 – If the applicant is in agreement with the Letter of Offer, their authorized representative must indicate in writing to the Program Authority their acceptance of the offer and the associated conditions. This representative may be the Chief, Executive Director, President, Mayor, or a Band Council Resolution (BCR), etc.

Step 7 - Once the work and level of funding are agreed upon, DFO will develop a contribution agreement for ratification by the authorized representative and DFO.* Proceeding with a project before a contribution agreement is issued, without pre-approval from the NICFI Authority, will be done at the risk of the CFE.

**Note: Project expenses incurred prior to the ratification of a contribution agreement are done at the applicant’s risk, and are not guaranteed for reimbursement.*

Program Policy

While it is recognized that very large projects may involve several phases or steps, acceptance of a project by NICFI does not imply a commitment to provide support for follow-on work or projects submitted for consideration in subsequent years.

While it may be helpful to describe the entire undertaking when applying for NICFI Aquaculture Development funding, approval will be limited to the work outlined in the Letter of Offer.

Permit and Licence Requirements

Applications for NICFI Aquaculture Development funding will not be approved until all necessary permits and licences have been obtained, and copies have been forwarded to the NICFI Program Authority.

Applicants are responsible for obtaining the appropriate permits and licences and these permits and licences must remain valid for the duration of the project. Depending on the nature of the project and type of activities, there may also be requirements such as land/marine/foreshore tenure, Navigable Waters Protection Licence, Introduction and Transfers Licence, discharge permits, etc. Permits and licences may take time to arrange, therefore, applicants should address this need several months before the project start date.

Note that a successful NICFI aquaculture project funding proposal does not guarantee permits or licences will be issued by DFO or by any other government departments or agencies.

Contact Information

To begin working with the program, please contact the NICFI Program Authority at the address below. The NICFI Program Authority will direct you to the BDT member for your community.

Applications should be submitted to:

NICFI Program Authority
Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation Directorate
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
300 Laurier Avenue. West
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0R5
DFO.NICFI-IPCIN.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

ANNEX A - NICFI Aquaculture Development Application Form

Section 1: Applicant Information			
Organization:			
Federal aquaculture licence holder name:			
Mailing Address:		Date:	
		Application Contact:	
	Business Address: (if different from Mailing Address)	Phone:	
		Email:	
Aquaculture Facility Number and Location Address or Landfile Tenure Number:			

Section 2: Confirmation of Application Attachment and Pre-Requisites	
Financial statements from the most recent three (3) years.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Résumé(s) for the individual(s) involved in implementation of the project activities.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Regulatory approval documents (e.g., permits, licences, etc.).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Minimum 10% cash contribution requirement met.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3: Applicant and Partners	
Identify the principal applicant, as well as the name(s) of Indigenous Groups (s) in the aggregate group and any affiliated business entities who are partners in this project.	
Organization	Nature of the Relationship

Section 4: Goals and Objectives	
Note: Use a separate document if more space is needed.	
Complete the following table to identify the goals and objectives of the project on how they relate to the NICFI Aquaculture Development funding objectives – support revenue and profits generation, capacity building, employment creation, and economic sustainability of Indigenous aquaculture operations and facilities.	
1. Employment: How many new jobs will be created from this project?	

2. Indigenous employment: Of the new jobs that are created from this project, how many of those would be Indigenous staff?	
3. Capacity Building: How many personnel will be trained from this project? For how many days?	
4. Capacity Building: How many Indigenous personnel will be trained from this project? For how many days?	
5. What level of revenue will be generated from this project?	
6. What level of profit is expected from this project?	
7. Self-sustainability: How will the project sustain itself beyond NICFI funding?	

Section 5: Summary of Project

ACTIVITY DETAILS: PLEASE INDICATE THE CATEGORY THIS APPLICATION APPLIES TO.

PROJECT CATEGORY:	1. EXPANSIONS OR UPGRADES ON EXISTING AQUACULTURE FACILITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. EQUIPMENT, GEAR AND INFRASTRUCTURE ACQUISITION FOR NEW AQUACULTURE OPERATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>

PROVIDE A BRIEF PROJECT OVERVIEW

Provide, in a non-technical manner, a description of the proposed project activities, including:

- Work completed to date (if applicable).
- Describe the aquaculture-related activities and type of expenditures that you are requesting for funding, and whether these activities are already licensed under your federal aquaculture licence. Note: New aquaculture activities as well as aquaculture infrastructure changes or expansions may require a licence amendment or a new licence.
- Project planning process.
- Measures that will be implemented to ensure the long-term economic sustainability of the project beyond the NICFI aquaculture project lifecycle.

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Section 6: Work Plan

Using the table below, identify and describe the project’s major milestones in chronological order, the indicators of success, and the targeted completion dates.

- Project milestones are defined as the achievement of specific activities necessary for the completion of the project (i.e. critical path to project success) and may span several of the project’s activities.
- These milestones can be related to any aspect of the project (e.g. technical, financial, management, etc.).

Major Milestones Description	Indicator of Milestone Success	Anticipated Completion Date

Section 7: Schedule and Breakdown of Estimated Costs and Financing

Costing Details (By Activity)

#	ACTIVITY TITLE	BUDGET
1.		\$
2.		\$
3.		\$
4.		\$
5.		\$
6.		\$
7.		\$
8.		\$
TOTAL COST OF ACTIVITIES:		\$
SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING SOURCES (E.G., MINIMUM 10% OWN-SOURCE CASH CONTRIBUTION, FINANCING, OTHER SOURCES)		
Funding Source		\$
Funding Source		\$
Funding Source		\$

TOTAL SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING:	\$
TOTAL NICFI AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING REQUESTED:	\$

Section 8: Regulatory and/ or Other Approvals:	
PERMITS AND LICENCES	
Where applicable, applicants are responsible for obtaining the appropriate permits and licences prior to the receipt of any NICFI Aquaculture Development funding support and these permits and licences must remain valid for the duration of the project.	
Regulatory Approvals	Completion Date

Section 9: Declaration and Signature(s)	
The information provided is an accurate description and accounting of the request for Aquaculture Development funding support.	
Authorized Representative	Position
Signature	Date

Please Note: This application form and supporting documentation may be shared, in confidence, by the NICFI Project Authority, with the Third Party Evaluator, Business Development Team and Application Review Board as appropriate.