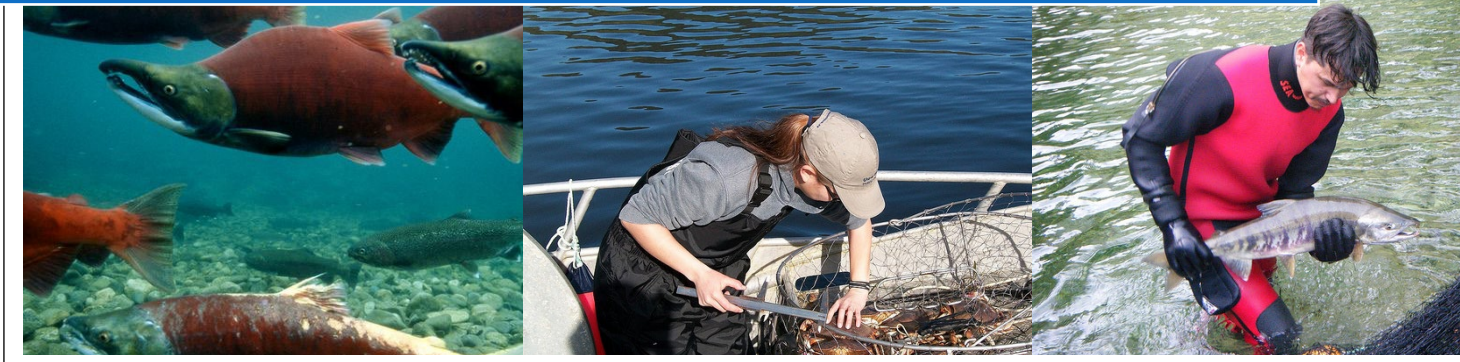


ABORIGINAL AQUATIC RESOURCE AND OCEANS MANAGEMENT (AAROM) PROGRAM



EXPRESSION OF
INTEREST
GUIDELINES

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BACKGROUND

ABORIGINAL AQUATIC RESOURCE AND OCEANS MANAGEMENT (AAROM) PROGRAM

The Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management (AAROM) program supports Indigenous groups as they develop, grow and maintain aquatic resource and oceans management departments that can provide fisheries, habitat, science, and oceans related services along a watershed and/or support participation in advisory and co-management processes and decision-making tied to aquatic resources and oceans management. The current AAROM network includes 35 AAROM departments: 18 in British Columbia, 11 in Atlantic Canada/southern Quebec, 5 in northern parts of Canada (Northwest Territories and northern Quebec) and 1 national organization. Additional information on the AAROM program can be found at: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/aboriginal-autochtones/aarom-pagrao/index-eng.htm.

Budget 2017 allocated \$250 million over five years, and \$62.2 million ongoing, to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to renew and enhance its suite of Indigenous commercial and collaborative management programming. This included additional funds to support the development and launch of a small number of new AAROM departments (i.e., “new entrants”) that can cover significant gaps, at the watershed level, in the existing AAROM network and provide a platform for the delivery of diverse aquatic-related services on behalf of other programs and initiatives.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the AAROM program are to:

- assist Indigenous groups in acquiring the administrative capacity and scientific/technical expertise to facilitate their participation in aquatic resource and oceans management;
- encourage the establishment of collaborative management structures that contribute to integrated ecosystem/watershed management and planning processes;
- enhance existing collaborative management structures, where appropriate;
- facilitate sound decision making in advisory and other processes related to a number of areas of DFO responsibility;
- strengthen relationships through improved information sharing among Indigenous communities, DFO and other stakeholders; and,
- contribute to the federal government's broader objective of improving the quality of life of Indigenous peoples.

NEW ENTRANTS

DFO is launching a multistep and multiyear process to support the planning and development of a small number of new AAROM departments. The main goal is to address significant gaps at the watershed level in the current AAROM network and to realize opportunities for these new AAROM departments to support diverse partnerships and service delivery, including participating in other DFO and Government

of Canada programs and initiatives. This process is not intended to duplicate or displace existing AAROM departments.

Planning and building a new AAROM department is a complex and multi-year undertaking, requiring resourcing and considerable collaboration between communities and with DFO. The new entrants process will rollout gradually through four main steps, with capacity development support provided throughout, and leading to the eventual launch of a full-fledged AAROM department.

The main steps include:

1. **Expression of Interest (EOI):** Interested Indigenous applicants, in dialogue with DFO, will develop and submit an expression of interest demonstrating how they meet the objectives and eligibility criteria of the AAROM program and the new entrants process. A national DFO review committee will review and assess the EOIs, approving a limited number of potential new entrants for advancement to the next step – Capacity Development and Planning.
2. **Capacity Development and Planning:** Potential new entrants will be provided with limited short-term funding to plan and develop a multi-year strategic plan for the creation of a new AAROM department. This will include support for the preparation of a comprehensive strategic plan, including defining and prioritizing the service needs for the communities and watershed involved (including potential links to other programs), developing organizational plans (e.g., staffing, governance, facilities, incorporation, etc.), undertaking community member dialogue and reaching agreement on the AAROM strategic plan, as well as basic overhead costs and some contracting. Project funding and permanent staffing are not eligible activities at this step.

Progression to the next step (i.e., submission of the strategic plan) will be determined through continued dialogue with DFO staff. There is no set time for completion of this step as some strategic plans may take longer than others to be developed and finalized.

3. **Strategic Plan Submission and Review:** Potential new entrants will submit their completed comprehensive strategic plan for review and approval by a review committee consisting of DFO officials as well as independent Indigenous experts.
4. **Become an AAROM Department:** Once approved, potential new entrants will begin implementing their strategic plan as a new AAROM department. This will likely require a ramp up of capacity and funding over time. At the start of this last step, potential new entrants must provide a confirmation of commitment to incorporate and when ready, provide copies of incorporation documents.

DFO staff will work with potential new entrants throughout this process (Steps 1-4). New entrants will be encouraged to take advantage of mentoring opportunities with existing AAROM departments, who can share best practices and guidance.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) PROCESS

HOW TO APPLY

There are three main steps to complete before submitting your Expression of Interest (EOI).

1. Review reference materials

Please ensure you thoroughly review this document and related AAROM background materials provided online at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/aboriginal-autochtones/aarom-pagrao/index-eng.htm before you develop and submit an EOI.

2. Contact DFO Regional Representative

Each EOI must be sponsored by a regional DFO representative having sufficient knowledge of the applicant(s). Dedicated DFO staff have been assigned to provide guidance and assistance to groups for EOI development. Officers will be available to review and discuss the information provided in the EOI package with applicants prior to submission. Please contact the respective official(s) in your region. Contact information can be found in Appendix 1.

3. Complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) Form

After completing Steps 1 and 2 above, please complete the EOI Form, found in *Appendix 1* of these Guidelines. Each part of the EOI Form must be completed:

- Applicant eligibility: provides information to determine if the applicant is eligible to participate under this program;
- Signatory declaration: to be completed by each applicant to confirm the support and validity of the information provided and that all EOI applicants must be mandated as representatives of their communities; and
- Supporting documents: can include additional documents to support your application. More information is provided in the Mandatory Documents section.

All completed EOIs must be submitted to DFO.AAROM-PAGRAO.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca by March 1, 2019 – 23:59 PST

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The main goal of the new entrants process is to support the planning and development of a small number of new AAROM departments to extend the current network of AAROM departments and address major gaps in AAROM coverage. Funding for extending the network, which was provided in Budget 2017, is also limited. Consequently, only a limited number of applicants will be able to advance through this process.

Key factors that potential applicants should consider in assessing this opportunity and developing an EOI are outlined below. Such considerations will be central when DFO assesses and prioritizes EOI applications.

- Will the proposed AAROM department fill a significant gap in the existing AAROM network and AAROM program coverage? Will it avoid duplication or displacement of an existing AAROM department?
- Are there significant opportunities for the proposed AAROM department to serve as a platform that can deliver a variety of services, utilizing different DFO/federal/provincial programs and partnering opportunities (e.g., academia and industry)? If so, what would these be? Does the applicant intend to provide own source funding or in-kind contributions?
- Is there reasonable representation of Indigenous communities within the proposed management area (i.e., potential to deliver services to a meaningful aggregate along a watershed or ecosystem)?

At the next step in the process, as successful EOI applicants develop and eventually submit strategic plans, these questions will be revisited to ensure that these objectives are still being met.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The Expression of Interest (EOI) process is open to Indigenous organizations or aggregates of Indigenous communities that are interested in establishing a new AAROM department. During this process, the interested Indigenous communities or groups will need to be represented by a single Indigenous organization or community, which will be the official applicant and can perform the following functions:

- Being the official signing authority of an agreement until the new entrant is an incorporated independent organization;
- Providing financial, administrative, overhead, infrastructure support; and,
- Adherence and compliance to terms and conditions under the AAROM program and reporting procedures.

Applicants must demonstrate that they meet the eligibility requirements of the AAROM program and the EOI process in the EOI Application Form. Applicants should be aware that any contribution agreements and associated funding will be subject to groups maintaining eligibility status throughout the duration of the agreement.

COMPLETING THE EOI APPLICATION

Refer to the EOI application form at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/aboriginal-autochtones/aarom-pagrao/application-eng.htm> where you will be asked to provide the following information:

1. Applicant Information

This section includes basic information about the Indigenous organization making the application on behalf of a collective of Indigenous communities or groups.

Please provide the organization's name, mandate, primary contact, and experience managing contribution agreements.

2. Member Communities and Affiliated Indigenous Groups

This section includes basic information on the Indigenous communities or groups supporting and represented by the EOI application and that are expected to join the proposed AAROM department.

Please provide details on the following:

- List of the Indigenous communities or groups supporting the EOI and expected to join the proposed AAROM department.
- Indicate if any of the supporting communities or groups are currently involved with an AAROM department.
- Indicate if any of the supporting communities or groups have signed a land claims or treaty agreement and if so, do these agreements support any activities that could be covered by the AAROM program.

At the time of submitting the EOI, it must be demonstrated that a reasonable number of communities or groups located within the proposed AAROM service area (i.e., watershed/management area) have agreed to support this application and participate in the proposed new AAROM department (50% or more).

3. Description of the Proposed AAROM Department

This section includes a basic overview the proposed AAROM department.

Please provide details on the following:

- Basic description of the proposed AAROM department (e.g., mandate and potential services).
- Rationale for creating a new AAROM department (rather than joining an existing AAROM).
- Opportunities for the proposed AAROM department to deliver services funded by other DFO or Government of Canada programs or work with other partners (e.g., academic, non-profit, industry).
- Ability of participating Indigenous communities and organizations to make financial or in-kind contributions to support the development, launch and ongoing operations of the proposed AAROM department.
- Plan to incorporate the proposed AAROM department.

4. Geographic Location

This section includes specific details of the geographic and management areas covered by the proposed AAROM department.

Please provide details on the following:

- The targeted watershed/ecosystem, including the location of Indigenous communities.

- The related management area(s).
- How the proposed AAROM department will provide coverage for the specific watershed and management areas.

5. **Conservation and Sustainable Resource Management**

This section includes past and current activities and commitments to conservation and sustainable development by the applicant and supporting member communities and groups.

Please provide details on the following:

- General experience with conservation and sustainable development.
- Any current conservation statements (draft or approved).
- Specific experience with aquatic management activities.
- Current fisheries, ecosystem, or watershed management plans.
- Any innovative conservation activities undertaken.

MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

For your application to be complete, you must submit the following documents along with your Expression of Interest (EOI) application form:

1. Letters from community leaders indicating the applicant and member communities have approval to participate in the AAROM New Entrant process including the submission of an EOI application (e.g., letter of support or band council resolution).
2. A map that outlines the geographic parameters along a broad watershed/ecosystem that is being proposed for coverage.

FORMAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Expressions of Interests (EOI) will be assessed for quality and completeness (e.g., completed forms, mandatory documents provided, signatory declarations, etc.). The EOI will then be forwarded to the national review committee for formal assessment. If an EOI is deemed incomplete, applicant(s) will be notified and documents may be subject to further amendment following this initial screening phase.

EOI's will be assessed against overall program objectives, criteria, DFO objectives and available funding. DFO is under no obligation to approve any submissions through this process. DFO will formally notify the applicant in writing that the proposal has been *approved-in-principle* if an EOI is selected for possible funding. Applicant(s) must not assume their proposal has been *approved-in-principle* until specifically notified by DFO.

Good luck!

APPENDIX 1: DFO REGIONAL CONTACTS

Before and during the development of an Expression of Interest, please contact your DFO regional representative:

Pacific

Trixia Chisholm

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200-401 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC
V6C 3S4
Telephone: 604-666-662
E-mail: Trixia.Chisholm@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Gulf

Siobhan Curry

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Gulf Fisheries Centre - 343 Université Avenue
PO Box 5030
Moncton, NB
E1C 9B6
Telephone: 506-851-7536
E-mail: Siobhan.Curry@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Central and Arctic

Anna Ryan

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
501 University Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2N6
Telephone: 204-983-8958
E-mail: Anna.Ryan@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Maritimes

Tom Howe

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Bedford Institute of Oceanography
Dartmouth, NS
B2Y 4A2
Telephone: 902-499-6652
E-mail: Tom.Howe@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Quebec

Ricky Richard

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
104 Dalhousie Street
Québec, QC
G1K 7Y7
Telephone: 418-648-7870
E-mail: Ricky.Richard@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Newfoundland & Labrador

Kim Penney

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Centre
80 East White Hills
PO Box 5667
St John's, NL
A1C 5X1
Telephone: 709-772-5020
E-mail: Kim.Penney@dfo-mpo.gc.ca