



BUSINESS PLAN

2024-25

Fisheries and Aquaculture

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Budget 2024-25: Business Plan
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Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

2024-2025 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (the Department) is a key contributor to the long-term economic, environmental, and social development of Nova Scotia. In 2022, Nova Scotia continued to be Canada's number one seafood exporter, contributing \$2.6 billion to the provincial economy, accounting for 39% of the province's export of goods. Nova Scotia's seafood sector employed approximately 19,000 people with higher rates of employment in coastal communities, which rely on the industry for their livelihoods and prosperity.

The Department's vision is to be a global leader in fisheries and aquaculture. The Department's guiding principles support our vision and are the lens we apply to how we operate: environmental stewardship; inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility; and operational excellence. To reflect our vision and guiding principles, we have identified five priority areas in support of the Government's Business Plan for 2024-2025:

Improving the Fisheries and Aquaculture Regulatory Frameworks

- The Minister's mandate letter commits to an aquaculture regulatory framework that supports low-impact sustainable aquaculture. The Department conducted a [review of this framework](#) in 2022-2023, involving public and stakeholder consultation, which informed recommendations from the Nova Scotia Aquaculture Regulatory Advisory Committee (NSARAC).
- Building on work throughout 2023-2024, in 2024-2025, the Department will develop proposals for amendments to enhance the aquaculture regulatory framework guided by the recommendations from the NSARAC.
- Also supporting the recommendations from the NSARAC, the Department is committed to implementing initiatives that support development in the sector and reduce business red tape:
 - Working with the Municipality of Argyle, the Department expects to issue calls for proposals for shellfish and marine plant aquaculture in the proposed Argyle Aquaculture Development Area (ADA).
 - The Department will continue to reallocate inactive aquaculture sites to industry for development through a public call for proposal process.
- The Department is committed to the continuous improvement of the fish buying and fish processing licensing system. In 2024-2025, the Department plans to implement regulatory and policy changes to strengthen the current licensing system.

Delivering a Coastal Classification System for Aquaculture

- The Minister's mandate letter commits to deliver a Coastal Classification System (CCS) for finfish aquaculture in Nova Scotia. In late 2023-2024, the scope of the CCS was expanded to also include spatial suitability assessments for shellfish aquaculture development.
- In 2024-2025, the list of criteria used for the suitability assessments will be finalized, involving public and stakeholder consultation. The developed CCS mapping tool, including the preliminary suitability maps for aquaculture development, will then be made publicly available online.
- The CCS mapping tool will be used by industry, communities and the Department to inform selection of sites for potential development and support informed decisions.

Supporting Government's Climate Change Plan and climate change readiness in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

- The Department is playing a key role in implementing the Province's [Climate Change Plan for Clean Growth](#) and targets.
- In 2024-2025, the Department will continue to utilize funding received under the Climate Change Plan to expand access to the seafood sector Onsite Energy Manager (OEM) program, build a climate change information hub, support industry to conduct climate change vulnerability assessments, and deliver the new Energy Efficiency Innovation Fund and new Climate Change Adaptation Fund.

Developing NS's sportfishing sector and advancing Government's accessibility commitments

- The Department supports advancing economic growth within our province through the continuous growth of the sportfishing sector, which contributes an estimated \$70 million to Nova Scotia's economy. We do this by leveraging innovative partnerships with Tourism Nova Scotia and targeted marketing positioning Nova Scotia as a sportfishing destination.
- The Department contributes to Nova Scotia's goal to be an accessible province by 2030. [Government's 2022-25 Accessibility Plan](#) includes a goal of enhancing the accessibility of government-owned public spaces. To support this goal in 2024-25, the Department will improve existing barrier-free sportfishing sites and develop resources to encourage the development of additional accessible fishing sites to add to the 20 sites currently in place. New developments and redevelopments will align with the Built Environment Accessibility Standard Regulations once enacted.
- The Department will continue to deliver the Learn to Fish Program to schools within Nova Scotia to ensure greater accessibility through a focus on underrepresented angling demographics.

Supporting the innovation and sustainable growth of our fishing and seafood processing sectors

- The Department is committed to supporting the development and long-term sustainability of the industries we support. In 2024-2025, we will:
 - Promote Nova Scotia's premium seafood in domestic and international markets to reinforce its status as Canada's leading seafood exporter.
 - Collaborate with industry stakeholders and government entities to diversify seafood species and sales distribution channels, focusing on strategic markets such as the Indo-Pacific and the European Union.
 - Explore opportunities to enhance the presence of the NS Seafood Brand internationally.
 - Grow local seafood consumption through Department marketing initiatives and ongoing collaborations with the NS Loyal Program and the Department of Agriculture.
 - Continue to explore opportunities for growth within our sectors. We will continue to implement and deliver the [Atlantic Fisheries Fund](#), which supports 300+ projects to grow and innovate Nova Scotia's seafood sector in coastal communities across the province.
 - Continue to support industry development projects related to food safety, product quality, new product development, sector safety, and sector awareness programming such as funding the Team Seafood Student Bursary program and providing marine education classroom materials to teachers for grades primary-6 students.
 - Advocate for and represent Nova Scotia's seafood interests regionally, nationally and internationally.

Financial Summary

(\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>	<u>2023-2024 Forecast</u>	<u>2024-2025 Estimate</u>
Administration	832	826	842
Policy and Strategic Advisory Services	1,392	1,574	1,408
Aquaculture	5,498	5,241	5,454
Inland Fisheries	2,846	3,249	3,138
Marine	5,430	5,373	4,475
Marketing	635	783	634
Total - Departmental Expenses	16,633	17,046	15,951
Ordinary Recoveries	500	500	500
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	84.2	83.1	82.2

Note:

For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2

For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1