



Business Plan

2023-24

Fisheries and Aquaculture

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Budget 2023-24: Business Plan
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Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

2023-24 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

The Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (the Department) supports Nova Scotia's economic, environmental, and social development for the benefit and long-term well-being of all Nova Scotians. In 2021, as Canada's number one seafood exporter, Nova Scotia's seafood industry contributed \$2.5 billion to the provincial economy. Approximately 17,000 people are employed in Nova Scotia's seafood sector. Rates of employment are higher within 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 for the benefit of Nova Scotians. The Department's guiding principles support our vision and are the lens we apply to how we operate: environmental stewardship; diversity, equity and inclusion; 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 2023-24:

Sustainable, low-impact aquaculture regulatory framework

- 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 2022-23, involving public and stakeholder consultation, which informed recommendations from the Nova Scotia Aquaculture Regulatory Advisory Committee.
- In 2023-24, the Department will bring forward recommendations for changes to legislation and regulations.

Coastal Classification System for finfish aquaculture

- The Minister's mandate letter commits to deliver a Coastal Classification System for finfish aquaculture in Nova Scotia. This project was initiated in 2022-23 by contracting the expertise of the Centre for Marine Applied Science.
- In 2023-24, biological and physical criteria to classify the suitability of the waters and collect relevant data, developed in the project's first year, will be applied to design coastal classification maps, which will aid in implementing the system in 2024-25.
- Once developed, this system will be a tool that industry and community can use to proactively identify potentially suitable sites for finfish aquaculture, and it will be referenced by decision-makers in the aquaculture licensing application process.

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

- Building on the Department's successful Climate Change Readiness Framework, which guides our work to build resilience in the fisheries, seafood processing, aquaculture and sportfishing sectors, the Department will play a key role in implementing the [Government's Climate Change Plan](#) and targets.
- In 2023-24, the Department will begin to implement the goals related to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors within the Climate Change Plan, including designing and building the climate change information hub, supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in conducting

climate change vulnerability assessments, and creating a new energy efficiency innovation fund to support operators to reduce their energy use.

Developing Nova Scotia's sportfishing sector and advancing Government's accessibility commitments

- The Department will continue to advance its work to develop the sportfishing sector in Nova Scotia; which contributes more than \$66 million annually to the province's economy.
- The Department actively supports and contributes to Nova Scotia's goal to be an accessible province by 2030 under the [Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan](#). Making sportfishing more accessible is part of this commitment.
- In 2023-24, the Department will continue to identify barrier-free sportfishing sites to add to the 20 sites currently developed, identify means to improve current barrier-free sportfishing sites, and support the innovative delivery of 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

- Promoting and supporting Nova Scotia's seafood industry to thrive both locally and internationally is a key goal of the Department. In 2023-24, the Department will:
 - Promote Nova Scotia's world-class seafood to local and international markets to remain Canada's global seafood leader.
 - Work closely with industry and government partners to promote market diversification efforts in new seafood export priority markets and market distribution channels.
 - Explore opportunities to market and expand the [Nova Scotia Seafood Brand](#) globally.
 - Grow local seafood consumption through the [Nova Scotia Loyal Program](#) and partnering in the development of the Nova Scotia Food and Beverage Strategy.
 - 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.
 - Implement improvements to the licensing process for fish buying and fish processing.
 - Deliver industry development, outreach and extension services that encourage sustainable resource access and sector growth, including advocating for Nova Scotia's interests in federal fisheries management decisions, transferring knowledge to facilitate industry innovation, delivering the Fisheries and Aquaculture Student Bursary Program, and implementing the Marine and Coastal Education Strategy.

Financial Summary

(\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2022-2023 Estimate</u>	<u>2022-2023 Forecast</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>
Administration	1,216	1,222	832
Policy and Corporate Services	965	959	1,392
Aquaculture	5,391	5,113	5,498
Inland Fisheries	2,548	2,732	2,846
Marine	6,936	6,872	5,430
Marketing	642	642	635
Total - Departmental Expenses	<u>17,698</u>	<u>17,540</u>	<u>16,633</u>
Ordinary Recoveries	500	500	500
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	83.2	77.6	84.2

Note:
 For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1

