

## **Small Working Group on the Future of BC Commercial Fisheries Draft Terms of Reference**

### **Background and Purpose**

The Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has initiated a Small Working Group to discuss the future of BC Commercial Salmon Fisheries and provide advice to the department.

### **Purpose Statement**

The commercial salmon fishery industry in British Columbia is being significantly impacted by ongoing and persistent environmental and socio-economic challenges, now further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Immediate solutions are needed to support both the immediate and long term viability of the industry. A small group of federal, provincial, Indigenous government and industry representatives are invited to explore ideas and develop options to address the sustainability and future of the west coast commercial salmon industry. The outcome of this process will inform government policy direction and be used as part of seeking broader feedback and input from external partners and stakeholders in the future.

### **Objectives**

The current overarching objective of the Small Working Group (SWG) is to provide advice as to the current state of the BC Commercial Salmon Fishery and provide advice and recommendations to Fisheries and Oceans Canada on how to address the sustainability and achieve a stable and economically viable future state of the fishery.

### **Timeline and Deliverables**

These timeframes are tentative and are for discussion purposes only.

### **Overview**

The SWG held its initial meeting in September 2020, with bi-weekly meetings to follow.

The SWG will provide advice and views throughout the process, with the goal of a series of interim recommendations by the end of March 2021.

### **Key Deliverables to Oversee**

- Create a Work Plan to generate the interim recommendations
- Identify areas of further research required.
- Interim Recommendations submitted to DFO
- Review of purpose and scope of WG.
- DFO to provide a response to the recommendations

## **Year One**

September to January: Creation of SWG, develop Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) circulated to members; Discussion of issues and current situation

January 2021: Begin development of draft interim recommendations.

March 2021: Finalize Interim Recommendations and review purpose and scope of the SWG.

## **Governance and Membership**

The SWG will have members encompassing a wide array of knowledge and perspectives on all aspects of the BC Commercial Salmon fishery. They are selected not to be necessarily representative of any particular organization, but to provide their knowledge and perspective to the process.

The Initial Members include:

Christina Burridge  
Larry Johnson  
Mark Lewis  
Jim McIsaac  
Brad Mirau  
Murray Ned  
Andy Olsen  
Jordan Point  
Mark Recalma  
Joy Thorkelson

The SWG will be co-chaired by three DFO officials: The Regional Director – Fisheries Management, Director General Fisheries Resource Management and Director General Indigenous and Sectoral Policy., with ex-officio participation of federal officials for support as needed.

The province of BC has been invited to attend as well on an ex-officio basis.

The Secretariat, provided by DFO Pacific Region, will prepare a report on the discussions that were held and the recommendations made, noting the degree of support or divergence among members for advice on different issues.

The SWG is not intended to replace the Crown's Duty to Consult, and DFO will consult Indigenous groups when decisions may potentially affect Aboriginal fisheries and/or other interests. Given the focused membership, additional consultations and engagement of Indigenous and stakeholder groups may be required and other processes may, therefore, be used to ensure the appropriate engagement and consultation.

In addition to Indigenous groups, DFO has enduring relationships with a number of organizations which include regular meetings that happen on a bilateral level, to address many operational issues.

## **Responsibilities of Participants**

Secretariat support provided by DFO Pacific Region: provide timely reporting of the deliberations of the SWG to members of the committee.

All: review circulated information and actively participate in meetings.

All: participate in meetings or assign an alternate to attend. Alternates will need to be approved by the Chair in advance of the meeting.

All: engage in open and respectful dialogue, seeking to understand and be understood, and working toward productive solutions.

All: Members should declare an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest prior to discussion about an issue at the SWG.

## **Consensus-based Advice**

The SWG will strive to develop consensus-based advice or recommendations. Consensus is a process for making decisions, in this case, decisions on what advice to put forward, without the requirement that formal votes be taken. Its main feature is that no common position is claimed unless all members of the group can support the action, or agree not to obstruct it. Consensus does not require that everyone be in complete agreement, but only that all will be willing to accept – consent to – a decision. In reaching a decision no one should feel that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it was not given a proper hearing.

When consensus is not possible, the advice or recommendations will reflect the points of views expressed in the SWG.

## **Linkages to other ongoing processes**

DFO acknowledges that there are a number of ongoing policy review and consultative processes that may overlap and/or have significant influence on the BC commercial salmon fishery. These include the on-going Salmon Allocation Policy review, the response to the FOPO report on West Coast Licensing Policy and others.

Further clarity and delineation of the role of this committee will be developed pending a review of all ongoing processes.

## **Communication Protocols**

The deliberations and work of the SWG are not confidential however member should be respectful and avoid public disclosure of attributable statements.

The SWG will create a plan on how the recommendations will be communicated to their respective organizations and to the public.

### **Meeting Process**

The SWG is anticipated to meet on a bi-weekly basis until the end of the fiscal year, at which point a review of the process will be conducted to determine if the group / process should be continued or reconfigured in some way.

Teleconferencing and video conferencing will be used to minimize travel demands, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. DFO will provide Secretariat services to support meeting delivery and the preparation of summary meeting notes. SWG participants will be invited to propose topics for meetings. Agendas will be approved by the Chairs.

### **Reporting**

The Chair will disseminate meeting summary note to the SWG.

Individual participants of the SWG will report back to their respective organizations, as appropriate.

The Chair/Secretariat will provide draft meeting summary notes that include a record of recommendations and follow-up actions to all participants within two weeks of the meeting. The SWG members will have two weeks to review summary notes prior to their finalization.

### **Budget and Financial Matters Placeholder**

Direct meeting costs (meeting rooms and videoconference/teleconference technical-related fees) etc.), as applicable, will be covered by DFO.

Each participant will be responsible for their relevant costs associated with participation in the SWG meetings, including travel and accommodations (as required).