



# ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL FISHERIES STRATEGY

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES,  
AQUATIC AND OCEAN RESOURCES

## Terms of Reference

### Assembly of First Nations - National Fisheries Committee

May 6, 2015

#### *Mission Statement:*

*“Using consensus-based and collective strategies, the National Fisheries Committee will work to support the self-determination and jurisdiction of First Nations over all fisheries resources. It will support, promote, and protect efforts aimed at the advancement of First Nations’ Rights and Title, including Treaty Rights, relating to all fisheries – which includes all aquatic and ocean resources, and all related habitats contained within indigenous lands, waters and territories”.*

#### **1. OBJECTIVE**

- 1.1. The National Fisheries Committee (NFC) seeks to advise and support the collective interests of First Nations in Canada with respect to fisheries issues. This includes sharing information and advancing advocacy strategies that promote sustainable First Nations fisheries that recognize and respect the sovereign rights, self-determination and jurisdiction of all First Nations.
- 1.2. The NFC will function to support the leadership of the AFN in its efforts to advance First Nations fisheries interests at the national level.
- 1.3. NFC representatives will support general information sharing relating to fisheries issues at the national and regional levels in an effort to enhance the collective interests of First Nations relating to fisheries.

#### **2. MANDATE**

- 2.1. As directed by Resolutions passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, the NFC will support and facilitate the exchange of information regarding First Nations fisheries and all other aquatic resources and sustainable aquaculture activities relating to indigenous lands, waters and territories.

- 2.2. The NFC provides a national venue to share and coordinate various regional perspectives on federal legislation, policies, and programs, and supports the protection and implementation of Aboriginal and Treaty rights aimed at establishing self-governing fisheries.
- 2.3. The NFC provides guidance to the AFN Secretariat in the development and implementation of a National Fisheries Strategy that includes First Nation perspectives from across Canada, including all coastal and inland regions.
- 2.4. The NFC seeks to affirm First Nations' rightful role in the management of fish and fish habitat and the governance of ocean and freshwater resources.
- 2.5. The NFC will support the development of relationships with international indigenous organizations to collaborate on efforts that are consistent with AFN Resolutions and the principles contained within the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and other international instruments.

### **3. ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 3.1. The NFC is accountable to the Chiefs-in-Assembly through the AFN National Executive.
- 3.2. Reporting from the NFC will take place in coordination with the AFN National Executive at General Assemblies and through the AFN's Annual Report.

### **4. COMPOSITION**

- 4.1. The NFC will consist of one Chief and one technician from each of the 10 AFN regions, appointed by the respective AFN Executive member from each region.
- 4.2. Each AFN Executive member can also appoint one alternate for each position on the NFC in the event that a regular representative is not available.
- 4.3. The National Chief and AFN Executive Committee are ex-officio members of the NFC and can participate in all activities of the NFC.
- 4.4. A representative from the AFN Youth Council, AFN Elders Council, and AFN Women's Council are welcome to attend and participate in all NFC meetings.
- 4.5. The NFC may establish technical sub-committees from time to time, subject to financial considerations. All sub-committees will be subject to the NFC Terms of Reference.

- 4.6. The National Chief will appoint one member of the National Executive to act as Chair of the NFC and one member of the National Executive to act as an alternate Chair.

## **5. DURATION OF TERM**

- 5.1. The duration of term for regional representatives to the NFC will be determined by the AFN Executive from each region.

## **6. DECISION MAKING**

- 6.1. Every effort will be made to make decisions by consensus. NFC members may abstain from a decision as a part of this consensus.
- 6.2. Where a decision cannot be made by consensus, it will be brought to the AFN Executive Committee and/or the Chiefs-in-Assembly, at the discretion of the Executive.
- 6.3. Any decisions made by the NFC are without prejudice to the interest or position of an individual First Nation.

## **7. MEETINGS**

- 7.1. NFC meetings will take place at least once per year, and as necessary, subject to financial considerations.
- 7.2. The AFN Secretariat will host regular “information” teleconferences (as necessary) for NFC members and other interested First Nations, between regular meetings of the NFC, to exchange fisheries related information.
- 7.3. Pre-approved travel and meeting expenses for NFC members will be reimbursed as per AFN travel policies. Every effort will be made to book travel well in advance to ensure cost efficiency and to ensure that advances for expenses can be prepared prior to meetings.
- 7.4. All NFC meetings are open to all First Nations representatives on an observer basis and at their own cost.
- 7.5. Preferred notice of meeting (minimum two week notice accompanied by draft agenda).
- 7.6. The AFN Secretariat will organize preliminary calls to develop meeting materials including agenda.

- 7.7. Preferred meeting dates/locations will be discussed as early as possible to enable maximum participation by NFC membership, and every effort will be made by the Secretariat to provide agendas and other information at least one week ahead of all regular meetings.

## **8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 8.1. Political representatives of the NFC shall be responsible for advancing political perspectives, approaches and recommendations to the AFN National Executive, with support from technical representatives.
- 8.2. In order to carry out the mandate and objectives of the NFC as outlined, NFC members will endeavor to:
  - 8.2.1. Ensure that any regional issues that have national implications and concerns are brought to the NFC table for collective consideration;
  - 8.2.2. Ensure that decisions and recommendations reflect a national perspective and respect and take into consideration regional variations and processes;
  - 8.2.3. Identify and co-ordinate the components of a strategic plan for the National Fisheries Strategy;
  - 8.2.4. Provide briefings and materials to their respective Regional Chief and to inform, share and promote the recommendations of the NFC regionally.
- 8.3. In addition, the Chair of the NFC will:
  - 8.3.1. Preside over all meetings (or appoint an alternate as necessary);
  - 8.3.2. Ensure that reports are provided to the AFN National Executive;
  - 8.3.3. Ensure that reports, verbal or written, are provided at AFN Annual General Assemblies or Special Chiefs Assemblies as necessary;
  - 8.3.4. Encourage active discussion, constructive input, advice and information sharing at all meetings of the NFC;
  - 8.3.5. Endeavour to reach a consensus on recommendations coming from the NFC;
  - 8.3.6. Seek to identify any conflicts of interest that may affect decisions of the NFC;
  - 8.3.7. Support the development of NFC meeting agendas and ensure that minutes are recorded and distributed in a timely manner by the AFN Secretariat;
  - 8.3.8. Meet with Ministers and other Government departments, as required;
  - 8.3.9. Provide guidance, support and political direction as required.
- 8.4. NFC representatives or their alternates must endeavor to attend NFC meetings and participate in discussions on a regular basis. A lack of attendance/participation may be brought to the attention of a respective Regional Chief.

## 9. SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

9.1. The AFN Secretariat will support the NFC consistent with its mandates and the AFN Charter. This will include:

- 9.1.1. To monitor and report on progress made on with respect to NFC recommendations and mandates;
- 9.1.2. To support and facilitate advocacy efforts as directed by the NFC;
- 9.1.3. To maintain up to date information on First Nations fishery issues and provide information regularly and upon request;
- 9.1.4. To support and assist NFC members in the development and maintenance of effective fisheries strategies and other forms of advocacy;
- 9.1.5. To host regular calls and other forms of communication with the NFC and broader fisheries community;
- 9.1.6. To maintain regular contact/networks with First Nations technical personnel and regional organizations;
- 9.1.7. To provide updates and information obtained from federal departments as required;
- 9.1.8. To attend regional, national and international First Nation forums and provide reports as circumstances permit;
- 9.1.9. To develop the means of continuing to enhance and improve the capacity of the AFN to collect and disseminate information as it pertains to First Nation fisheries issues.