



Sto:lo Tribal Council
PO Box 440
Agassiz, BC
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Dear: Grand Chief Clarence Pennier

Re: Fisheries and Oceans Aboriginal Contribution Programs

I am writing to provide you with additional information on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO's) Aboriginal Contribution Programs; as well as the renewal of the Terms and Conditions (Ts & Cs) for April 1, 2009. As well, I would like to address the negotiation and processing of Aboriginal Fisheries Strategy (AFS) and Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program (AAROM) Agreements for the upcoming season.

The Ts & Cs govern all DFO Aboriginal programs, including the AFS; AAROM; the Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (AICFI), the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), and the Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk (AFSAR). On March 12, 2009, Treasury Board Ministers approved the renewal of the Ts&Cs. The objective is to integrate all DFO Aboriginal contribution programs under one set of Ts&Cs, which will maintain the programs distinctiveness while offering, where possible, streamlined administrative processes. DFO will not be making any "program" changes to its Aboriginal programs at the present time, but these administrative changes will affect the implementation of these programs to some degree and will harmonize many of the elements across the programs. This should be particularly helpful for recipients receiving funding from several programs.

Although we originally expected no change to the 09-10 agreement templates, some minor adjustments will need to be made to be in compliance with the new Ts & Cs. Your local DFO representative will be able to work with you to adjust agreements as needed. DFO has developed some guidance materials to assist in making these changes. We apologize for any inconvenience this causes.

Despite the new common Ts &Cs, it remains important for recipients to track and report on expenditures and activities for each program individually, as DFO is responsible for reporting on the performance of each program.

Fiscal year, 2009 will be a transition year for the agreements. Later in the year, DFO will be developing a new National Integrated Contribution Agreement Template and developing criteria and assessment processes for funding instruments, agreements and reports. By September, 2009 we hope to begin discussions regarding future single and multi-year agreements. We will, of course, work with your community concerning the development of this integrated program process.

DFO and Aboriginal communities are beginning discussions regarding AFS and AAROM agreements for the 2009 season. In recent years, some agreements were concluded in a timely



fashion, but many agreements were signed late in the year, well into the fishing season or after the season was closed. These delays in signing have resulted in hindrances in processing reports and payments, which in turn leads to financial pressure on many Aboriginal communities. These problems also create difficulties in fisheries management overall.

DFO in all Regions is emphasizing the importance of conducting negotiations and reaching agreement as early as possible to ensure that Agreements can be signed by June 1, 2009. This will maintain the national integrity of the program and meet the demands for greater accountability and transparency in government funding arrangements.

We look forward to continuing the good working relationship with your community in 2009 and beyond. Thank you for your cooperation.

Kaarina McGivney
Regional Director,
Treaty and Aboriginal Policy