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# INTEGRATED HARVEST PLANNING COMMITTEE

EVALUATION – March 2007

Submitted by Pam Cooley



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## SUMMARY

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The Integrated Harvest Planning Committee (IHPC) is a Department of Oceans and Fisheries (DFO) experiment that continues to have merit. One hundred percent of the IHPC members interviewed and surveyed, as well as DFO staff, support the continuation of a maturing IHPC. Participants concluded that after thirty months, a shift is needed from a primarily "information passing" agenda to a more intentional collaboration process. Disputes or issues of mutual concern can be prioritized, addressed and resolved, making the IHPC more relevant and efficient.

All agree there is a tremendous amount of respect, knowledge and experience around the table, despite some disagreements and vested interests. Most agree that the benefit of the IHPC process has been cross-sectoral respect and has served the purpose of improving understanding between the sectors and facilitating the development of common positions on what might otherwise have been divisive issues. It has also increased people's appreciation for the complexities of the issues that are involved with the harvest planning process and evaluation. It is clear that the IHPC is something to build on, invest in, and take advantage of, over the next years.

DFO has said that it is dedicated to supporting the multi-sectoral and interest groups process where stakeholders can address current and potential conflicts in a more intentional manner. Whether there will be enough resources to keep a consistent and relevant dialogue remains a major issue.

Concerns remain about representation: how people are chosen to be on the IHPC from their sectors and interests; consistency in the representation from meeting to meeting; and the decision-making authority of the representative. Representation processes require continued refinement and more consistency for the IHPC but not to gain legitimacy as the mechanism for sectors to solve harvest-planning conflicts. All sectors struggle with the refinement of true representation but that does not stop a constructive process.

All have a great amount of respect for the First Nations own challenges regarding true representation at a table like the IHPC. More legitimate representation from all sectors and interests could lead to a more viable problem solution process, however, waiting for this would be unrealistic.

Data issues are also a main concern: the timeliness of data for analysis, quality of the data, and producing it so that people can use it and make decisions. There is also a question of openness to new methods of obtaining data from other sources and science. The main disputed issue heard through the evaluation is with DFO and how decisions are being made, particularly "in-season."

Approximately 40 members have participated in the IHPC over the last 30 months. The evaluation process has revealed several conditions and practical suggestions that will enhance the committee's relevance and increase the value of the time and resources spent.

While there are numerous processes and structures relating to salmon, most agree that the IHPC is different and can be enhanced in the future with a more consistent and relevant approach to harvest planning. The DFO would not have to defend its positions if there was more stakeholder participation in the IFMP and decision-making processes. There would be more collaborative analysis and ownership if the IHPC were truly being consulted.

If the committee were to create subcommittees to resolve certain priority issues, and if they had clear goals and parameters, each subcommittee could become a “think tank” as opposed to vested interest opponents.

The question of authority and legitimacy of the IHPC was brought up many times. If the committee were to move from being “judge” to a collaborative process to resolve issues, it would be more relevant. Is the IHPC really the place where the disputed issues are going to be resolved? If so, then the resources need to be put in place to make that happen. More effort could be put into consistent and relevant representation, data gathering, information sharing, and a shared understanding of the goal. Staff resources would also be required to support this process.

The approach to the fishery as harvesting vs. conservation and where the emphasis seems to remain a contentious issue and one that is expected around a multi-sectoral table. However, in one person’s words, “the committee may not been very pro-active around issues, but at least we are less reactive and the IHPC provides the space for this.” The question is how can it improve to meet the needs of all stakeholders and of course, the resource?

## **INTERVIEWS AND SURVEY FOR THE EVALUATION**

Telephone and in-person interviews were used in the evaluation process. For those who could not make an interview, an on-line survey was distributed. Twenty-two of 33 people attempted to fill out the survey. 12 managed to make it through.

Four DFO staff were interviewed, two from the regions, and two from head office.

There were people from each sector interviewed or involved with the survey.

Thirteen people were interviewed.

## BACKGROUND

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The Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee (IHPC) was established by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Pacific Region to provide formal advice and make recommendations to the Department on operational decisions related to salmon harvesting in north and south coastal portions of the Pacific Region, and the watersheds that contribute to these fisheries. This was part of a process to establish a more streamlined, representative, and cross-sectoral advisory process for harvest planning, management and post-season review. It reflects commitments outlined in both the Improved Decision-Making discussion paper (2000) and the results of the Fraser River Sockeye Review (2002).

DFO continues to undertake consultation with sector organizations and First Nations to develop fishing plans and provide information related to stock status and the views of other sectors. These relationships will continue. The IHPC is a forum to augment those discussions by permitting representatives of each sector to bring issues to the table.

### Purpose

The IHPC is being established by DFO to promote a more streamlined, representative, and cross-sectoral advisory process related to salmon harvest planning, management and post-season review.

### Mandate

The IHPC is the primary contact for the Department for cross-sectoral communication, advice and recommendations on operational decisions related to salmon harvesting in the Pacific Region. The goal of the IHPC will be to ensure fishing plans are coordinated and integrated, identify potential conflicts, and if there are disputes, make recommendations for solutions if possible.

## OBJECTIVES OF EVALUATION

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The IHPC has been operating for over two years. The purpose of the evaluation is to understand its value to the sectors/interests and DFO, and to bring back recommendations for refinement and improvement. The May 2005 ToR for the IHPC specifically say:

"The IHPC and associated structures/processes will be reviewed and evaluated by the Department and participants no later than 2006."

### The Primary Objectives

- 1. Determine whether the IHPC has begun to reach its goal of ensuring fishing plans are coordinated and integrated, identify potential conflicts, and if there are disputes, make recommendations for solutions if possible.**

Over the last two years, the IHPC has been developing and defining how to fulfill its mandate. The committee, for the most part, has been in a reactive rather than a collaborative proactive position, where the sectors give advice to DFO on issues that affect all.

One hundred percent of the members surveyed and interviewed support the continuation of the IHPC if it evolves to a certain level of maturity. There is concern of

its relevance if there is not a significant shift from sharing information toward resolving issues. Significant resources are required to support the next stage.

The IHPC has the potential to be a body that gives direction to DFO on addressing the causes of the conflicting issues such as allocation, or quality and gaps of data.

**2. Identify the benefits gained and negative impacts of the IHPC process to the sectoral and interest representatives.**

Benefits:

- Cross-sectoral tolerance and respect.
- The process has served the purpose of improving understanding between the sectors and facilitating the development of common positions on what might otherwise have been divisive issues.
- Improved communication - sectors were able to contribute comments, respectfully recognizing the distinct nature and perspectives of other sectors.
- The department is responsible to the public. The IHPC is improving participation by sectors, consisting of people who may have more interest in the resource than the general public. It is an effective vehicle for sector engagement and will minimize potential conflict, or at least provide a method to reduce conflict.

**3. Identify the benefits gained and negative impacts of the IHPC process to DFO and its staff.**

The staff interviewed considers their IHPC experience to be positive. They had, however, hoped for more advice from the IHPC on direction to their work.

- Need to have job description integrated to support the IHPC process, especially for reporting to the IHPC and responding to information requests.
- Capacity of DFO employees to respond to issues raised by IHPC is challenged by ever increasing levels of competing priorities. If it is a priority, then allow staff time for it. Don't piecemeal.
- IHPC requests have resulted in more work for employees, however, employees see it as a net gain. If being present for the IHPC and its processes is a priority, regular time needs to be designated and negotiated with staff.

**The Secondary Objectives**

**Determine whether to continue the process and, if so, suggest improvements for the next two years.**

- 100% said yes, it is to continue, but with a shift from sharing information to resolving issues.

**Identify potential conflicts issues that the IHPC could begin to address in the near future.**

Even though some issues are emotionally charged, they still have to be dealt with. This group has the experience and motivation to dig into issues. Here are some examples of issues that came up in the evaluation process:

- In-season decision making
- In-season decision making, specifically regarding enforcement precautionary management (including selective fisheries and environmental variability)
- Allocation
- LGS Chinook conservation measures
- Active engagement in planning, stock status and assessment
- Southern Coho conservation and harvest issues
- Addressing fishery through transferable quotas
- Management and conservation of salmon diversity (move from aggregate mixed stock management to proactive ecosystem-based management)
- Increased accountability for all participants
- Access to the resource
- Improved capacity
- Monitoring activity and habitats, enforcement participation
- Enhancement and improved market building
- WSP Pacific Fisheries Reform
- Departmental Role of Working groups
- Improved catch monitoring regime

## TERMS OF REFERENCE COMPONENTS

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### Transparent

There should be transparency throughout the process based on open lines of communication and the provision of timely, accurate, accessible, clear and objective information. This information should be available equally to all participants in the process. Organizers should provide access to agendas and information needed as a starting point for informed discussion well in advance of meetings. In addition, this information will be posted to a public website to ensure accountability to all Canadians.

Results:

- Most members were satisfied with transparency.

Improvements:

- More practical and focused manner of communicating information might be achieved by having a designated website to gather and submit information.
- Meeting minutes should be available publicly. Clearer definition of responsibility and accountability of DFO and participants available to public.
- Better integration of science/technical information outside traditional salmon management/modeling realm (e.g., oceans, habitat, etc.)

#### Recommendations:

- Have a designated website for the IHPC
- The minutes from the meetings and agendas are posted sooner to make them more relevant to the sectors and interests.

### Accountable

Participants who are representatives of a constituency are expected to bring to the discussions the general views, knowledge and experience of those they represent, and bring back an awareness and understanding to their constituencies about deliberations and reasons for decisions taken. All participants share accountability for the success of the process. The Department is accountable to participants for explaining how their advice/input was used, and why and how decisions are taken.

Results:

Most members were satisfied with accountability. Accountability of DFO, however, needs considerable improvement.

Improvements:

- Requires more explicit communication from DFO regarding process for decision-making and reasons for decisions.
- Information requested of DFO has still not been addressed.
- If the IHPC is to become the place where the sectors and interests work to resolve issues, representation becomes increasingly important. To date there is no

knowledge of whether the members truly speak on behalf of a sector, and there is no evidence of a formal process to appoint the representatives. If the process is clearer and more accountable, then the Department will refer stakeholders offering unsolicited recommendations and advice on harvest planning outside the established process, to the appropriate advisory IHPC contact.

- It has been clear that the First Nations participants do not feel able to perform as true representatives.
- It appears that some individuals are not working towards the success of the process. They are simply protecting their needs at the expense of others – “one-up-manship” rather than cooperative problem solving.

**Recommendations:**

That sectors and interests submit official communications from the nominating organizations that stipulate the terms of appointment.

Find the time and resources for DFO to be more explicit in the rationale for their decisions.

Continue to find ways for First Nations participation.

**Inclusive Representation**

Representation on advisory bodies should relate to the mandate and function of the committee. Participation in advisory processes should be fairly balanced and reflect a broad range of interests in fisheries and oceans issues in the Pacific Region, so that a diversity of perspectives is involved.

Results: Aside from the issue of how First Nations representatives are to be selected, the current process contains the right balance of interests.

- Good participation by those involved, but little assurance of fair/balanced representation at all times. Lack of interests at the table (First Nations, other scientists, etc.).
- Representation is balanced other than issues needing representation from the First Nations.

**Recommendations:**

To keep the present sectors and interests as is for the best balance of diversity and function.

Continue to invite and find ways for as much FN participation as possible in IHPC and sub groups. It may mean, at times that the DFO approach FN after an IHPC decision.

**Effective**

All participants should be satisfied that the process can achieve the goals of the mandate. This does not mean they will always agree with the final advice, outcome or recommendation. Processes must be cost-effective, with respected realistic timeframes.

Results:

This process is an effective means for cross-sectoral dialogue. Time constraints and a relatively young process are, to some degree, restricting its effectiveness.

- The effectiveness of the process continues to be undermined because different timelines need to be applied to the different sectors to meet their unique interests.
- Size of advisory committee should be determined by the inclusive involvement of affected groups, not by the likelihood of consensus-based discussions. Much better linking with other DFO processes is required. This is a major weakness.
- The process seems to intensify just before meetings with a large volume of information exchanged, often on highly complex subjects. I suspect it is a capacity issue within the department to generate the appropriate data for use in stock analyses and to complete them within a short time frame. It might be more effective to draft and review the documents with user participation. If the users were more integrated with the development of specific plans, then participation time lines naturally expand, and inherently produce more efficiency. It is apparent that funding is a large constraint.
- There is a lack of clarity around conservation objectives and the implementation of the WSP through the IFMP.

**Recommendations:**

Create smaller sub groups to work on issues, with clear terms of reference from the IHPC.

**Efficient**

The size of the advisory committee must be kept to a number that facilitates consensus-based discussion. Wherever possible, links to other departmental consultative processes will be made to increase efficiency.

Results:

Most members were satisfied with some improvements

- The full North/South process is too large to be effectively used for consensus-based discussion. The sub-committee level comes closer, but probably still is large, especially in a climate where FN participants have had little opportunity to reach an internal understanding in advance. Reaching consensus within large and diverse groups requires more time.
- Given the large geographic area and broad range of interests, and to some degree, the type of issues facing the committee, the number of participants is larger than optimal for achieving consensus-based discussion.
- Some consider it too large but can't really see how it could be cut back and still represent people properly.

**Structure**

- One regional IHPC, with two sub-committees – one for the south, one for the north. The regional IHPC will meet at least annually, and will consist of the entire membership of the two sub-committees.

- When the regional IHPC meets, it will be possible to coordinate north/south IHPC sub-committee meetings at the same time.
- Each "sector" nominates representatives according to the membership described below (see Membership section below).
- Each IHPC committee has a Facilitator and a note-taker.
- DFO will provide the services of a note-taker.

Results:

The IHPC members are satisfied with the structure.

- The note-taking can improve.

## Membership

Results:

The members are satisfied with the membership improvements.

- Achieved good membership, but lacking some key representation, particularly First Nations. Process of member selection is non-transparent.
- The key representative question continues to revolve around FN representation. Even if a better process could be worked out between individual FNs, it seems unlikely that four people could address the range of interests in both North and South.
- Lack of scientific awareness, particularly current developments, often limits progress. Need participation by additional scientific experts.

### Recommendations:

Address concerns by implementing a system where sectors and interests sign off on their representatives.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

*Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee:*

#### Pre-season

- Provide recommendations that ensure fishing plans are coordinated and integrated, identify potential conflicts, and recommend a means of resolving disputes.
- Receive from, and provide advice to, DFO on pre-season forecasts and stock assessments.
- Review enforcement plans, identify problems and provide recommendations on the management or enforcement of the fishery
- Provide input on stock assessment programs, as required for management purposes.

- Provide advice on changes to escapement strategies or policies.
- Advise on IFMPs (i.e. decision guidelines, fishing plans).
- Advise on measures and mechanisms for timely and accurate catch/effort information.
- Advise on selective fishing practices.

Results:

The roles and responsibilities need considerable changes to become more effective.

- Reviewing post-season appears to be predictable and fairly consistent. In order to successfully manage resources, there should be an acceptable method to bring forward concerns. (Some items are consistently brought forward without adequate planning and actions; i.e., predator removal) The "anomalies not covered in the fishing plan" tend to surface "in-season" and are executed as "Management Adjustments" causing severe problems. It might be more appropriate to recognize, given the uncertainty, that certain actions may be required within a range pertinent to the particular uncertainty.
- Dealing with more issues than stock assessment that are affecting the outcomes. Integrate more information i.e. effects of climate change and development.
- Improvement can be made through increased dialogue.
- Need proper integration with Wild Salmon Policy, requiring evaluation, reporting and management of conservation units (i.e., stock status info).
- Can't properly forecast numbers of either expected returns or expected spawners on most systems. This makes effective management impossible, resulting in lack of access to many stocks. It is impossible to define if enhancement is required.

**Recommendations:**

Have further discussion with members on how to improve.

**Post-season**

- Review post – season stock status to determine if conservation goals were met.
- Advise on problems encountered regarding management, enforcement and consultation.
- Advise on management, enforcement or other actions that will improve the fishery.
- Review anomalies not covered in the fishing plan.
- Review expected stock status for the coming year.
- Review stock assessment programs

Results:

- Need proper integration with Wild Salmon Policy, requiring evaluation, reporting and management of conservation units (i.e., stock status info). Post-season review is very limited and provides only opportunity for limited advice on key problems, rather than a more comprehensive review by conservation goal.
- Post-season review is very limited and provides only opportunity for limited advice on key problems, rather than a more comprehensive review by conservation goal.
- Sometimes question if meaningful input is really sought

**Recommendation: Seek out solutions from the IHPC members**

*All Fisheries and Oceans Canada employees:*

- The Department will refer stakeholders who offer unsolicited recommendations and advice on harvest planning outside of the established process to the appropriate advisory body contact.

Results:

Capacity of DFO employees to respond to issues raised by IHPC is challenged by ever-increasing levels of competing priorities.

*Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) employees supporting the IHPC process (not exhaustive):*

- Distribute notice of meetings, agendas and materials well in advance of meetings.
- Provide meeting venues.
- Provide services of recorder.
- Provide Facilitator.
- Respond to committee recommendations in a timely manner, explaining how recommendations were incorporated into decision-making process. The reason(s) why recommendations were not adopted, and how that advice might be changed to become acceptable are to be provided.
- Ensure that all Committee approved agendas and records of meetings are provided to the Consultation Secretariat, for posting to the Department's consultation website.
- DFO participation will be limited to those that are directly responsible for the business of the committee. For example: technical and managerial expertise, as needed. This will require the department's representative to communicate committee discussions with all other affected staff, and bring forward any information from the Department that is relevant to the committee's discussions.
- Levels of DFO staff participation:

Results: Satisfactory

*DFO-appointed Facilitator:*

Results: Evaluated as effective

*IHPC Participants:*

- Represent information accurately and appropriately, consult with their sectors/organizations, and keep their sectors/organizations informed of the information and issues discussed at IHPC meetings, securing the support of their sectors/organizations for issues discussed.
- Bring forward issues of concern or interest, as it pertains to the mandate of the group.
- Respect the Committee Charter by developing guidelines for enforcing the charter.
- Review records of meetings for accuracy, and provide feedback within a limited timeframe, before those records are posted on the public website by the Department's Consultation Secretariat.

*Sector Organizations:*

- Select representatives to sit on the Integrated Harvest Planning Committee.
- Transmit information and direct issues, when raised by the IHPC, to sectors/organizations for discussion, action and recommendation, and transmit results to the IHPC.

Results: Satisfactory

*First Nations:*

*Select individuals to participate on the Integrated Harvest Planning Committee (to be further discussed with First Nations)*

## **Procedures**

### **Timeline:**

The IHPC committees will meet three times per year:

- North and South sub-committees will each hold a post-season review.
- North and South sub-committees will each hold a pre-season IFMP meeting well in advance of the season.
- Regional (coast-wide) committee will meet in late fall to discuss regional issues and priorities.
- The recommendations of the IHPC will be based on consensus. Silence will be construed as consensus.
- On issues where there is not consensus, the Facilitator will summarize the differing views at the meeting.

- Meetings will be scheduled well in advance (minimum one month) to allow participants time for adequate preparation. However, under exceptional circumstances, short-notice meetings may be called.
- All meetings will be recorded and summarized in a record of meeting. Prior to the end of the meeting, if there is consensus, the record can be posted; if not, it will be posted following discussion at the subsequent meeting.
- The Facilitator, after consultation with the Committee, may provide time in the agendas for formal presentations requested by the Committee.
- Establish sub-committees as required

Results:

The procedures are acceptable and effective to most members.

- Technical help needed for meetings in the north
- The role of sub-committees has to be further clarified.

**Recommendation:**

Terms of Reference are clearly laid out for each sub committee defined by the IHPC.

**Funding**

DFO will provide funding to cover administration and logistical costs (such as document distribution, conference calling, meetings rooms), as well as travel expenses for participants, on an as-needed basis.

Results:

Most members find this acceptable and effective.

**Final Analysis and Recommendations**

All sectors and interests agree they need to contribute to concentrated thinking and action on major issues facing Salmon harvesting. The question is whether the DFO, sectors and interests are willing to put the time, effort and resources into this, and whether the IHPC is the body to tackle these questions. Most say to stop the IHPC now and create something else would be a loss of established resource, expertise and the established cross-sectoral respect.

There are a number of issues that return year after year. To ignore these issues any longer will exacerbate the situation. All parties will put the time and effort into these processes if the DFO is committed to resolving the issues with the stakeholders. The option is that DFO will continue to make decisions alone. The IHPC will mature through action on these issues. If this approach is taken, DFO staff efforts can be streamlined to attend to the issues and be more prepared to fill in the gaps in the data required for decisions. The issues of representation will be addressed, presenting practical and helpful outcomes. The issues of goals for harvesting and values and concerns of each sector will be further defined, but in a collaborative environment. This approach will diffuse defensiveness allowing the largest issue – the resource – to prevail.

**Recommendations:**

That the IHPC continue. Tweaking of the logistics and above concerns will be addressed to make it more streamline and effective.

Highly recommend the IHPC and its members go through a process to decide on the issues its sub-committees are capable of addressing. The terms of reference for each committee should be formulated and agreed upon by members with the DFO adding required resources.

Highly recommend that the IHPC go though a process of determining future issues of the Salmon fishery, according to each of the sectors and interests, and the DFO. This may be called the "writing on the wall" exercise and could be an opportunity to proactively share everyone's thoughts and realities.