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MEMORANDUM FOR THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL

**RELEASE OF DISCUSSION PAPER ON
FIRST NATION FSC CATCH MONITORING AND REPORTING**

(For Decision)

SUMMARY

- Improvements in fisheries monitoring and catch reporting are required by all harvest sectors in many fisheries, including aboriginal food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries. Specific actions are being taken by all harvest sectors and a comprehensive catch monitoring strategy is being developed for all sectors. A regional priority is to make substantial, long-term improvements in the monitoring and catch reporting of FSC fisheries.
- A discussion paper on FSC catch monitoring and reporting has been developed jointly by the Enhanced Accountability Manager (Colin Masson) and Mr. David Lightly, who has spent over a decade as a First Nations Fisheries Management Advisor. The paper is intended to serve as a starting point for discussions with First Nations (FNs), at both a bi-lateral and a strategic level. It provides general context, the rationale for improved fisheries monitoring and catch reporting and outlines a framework for improvements and consistency across all fisheries. The paper also highlights the need for strong collaborative relationships between FNs and the Department based on a common appreciation of sustainable use and conservation.
- Releasing this paper now will provide sufficient opportunity for the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) to support this work and for the timely introduction of the topic in pre-season bi-lateral AFS consultations.
- It is recommended that you approve the release of this discussion paper and sign the attached cover letter to send the paper to the FNFC.

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Background

- The Pacific Region has recognized the need to improve fisheries monitoring and catch reporting (FM&CR) for over a decade. Steps have been taken to address fundamental (primarily internal) issues and to develop fishery specific strategies with all harvest sectors. Fundamental internal issues to be addressed include;
 - lack of effective and efficient fisheries information management system;
 - duplicated and unclear accountabilities for FM&CR activities/outputs; and
 - inconsistent fishery monitoring.
- The goal for fisheries monitoring and catch reporting in the Pacific Region is “*To have accessible, accurate, and timely fisheries information, such that there is sufficient information and public confidence for fisheries to be managed sustainably and to meet other reporting obligations and objectives.*”
- Achieving this goal supports DFO’s strategic outcomes (especially Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture), the overall goal of Fisheries and Aquaculture Management sector (FAM), as well as key FAM business goals and operational priorities (2009-2012).
- The Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) Enhanced Accountability element has provided further focus and resources to the FM&CR initiative and associated priorities. As this program expires at the end of fiscal 2011/12, PICFI investments are intended to support transformative change in FM&CR practices, rather than simply extending monitoring operations.
- The Region has previously prioritized the commercial salmon fisheries, FSC fisheries (all species) and recreational fisheries (all species) for FM&CR improvements. While improvements are required in all harvest sectors, each has been quick to note that improvements in other sectors are more critical than in their own. DFO’s response has been to initiate discussions with each sector on strategies and specific actions for improvements. In the commercial salmon sector discussions occur at the regional level (IHPC, CSAB), and more detailed planning is conducted with the APCs. The SFAB/DFO Catch Monitoring Working Group has been actively reviewing current and required monitoring programs for recreational fisheries and is developing a strategy for achieving long-term improvements. FSC improvements similarly require focused efforts at the regional, aggregate and bi-lateral levels.
- Region-wide and Area-based DFO workshops examining the status and associated issues of FSC catch reporting have been conducted over the past two years. In addition to these internally-focused sessions, staff have also been exploring FM&CR issues during FSC consultations.
- In addition to developing and implementing strategies for a robust fisheries information management framework, an accountability framework and generic catch monitoring standards, PICFI has also supported the development of several tools to support and enhance monitoring programs.

- Specific tools for supporting improved FSC monitoring include the completion of an improved creel survey data analysis program (CREST), the development of a FSC catch database (to be rolled out March 2010), a FSC fisheries and data management tool (A-Tlegay Model) and support for First Nation capacity development by establishing First Nation Data Management Advisors within several broader FN organizations.
- In this paragraph, outline the purpose of the paper and how it was developed. If possible, should note importance of Mr. Lightly's contribution (need to convey why THIS paper is important to release.) This paper examines how fisheries monitoring and catch reporting of First Nations FSC catch contributes to the current management system and the critical importance of FN's support and participation in this activity. It is primarily targeted at First Nations technical staff, advisors and project managers, as well as at DFO staff involved in fisheries agreements with First Nations, as these are the participants in the necessary collaboration.
- Part 1 of the attached paper discusses catch monitoring in a generic way, providing an overview of the importance and role that FM&CR plays in modern fisheries management. This overview also introduces a framework for monitoring and reporting standards, which recognizes that different levels of information are required in different fisheries. The appropriate level is determined by consistent criteria which primarily consider the level of conservation risk and other management requirements (such as quota vs. open fishery). This approach is common to all harvesters and core to the Region's evolving catch monitoring strategy and policy framework.
- Part 2 of the attached paper provides an overview of the current situation in First Nation FSC fisheries and highlights the need for effective collaboration between First Nations and DFO. It also focuses on the nature of information requirements associated with typical First Nation FSC fisheries in the Pacific Region. Lastly, a summary of specific benefits of improved FSC monitoring is provided together with several recommendations.

Analysis / DFO Comment

- The paper is primarily targeted at First Nations technical staff, advisors and project managers, as well as at DFO staff involved in fisheries agreements with First Nations. It has been reviewed and supported by key FAM Directors **Solicitor-Client Privilege**
- Sharing the paper with the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) at this time will provide an opportunity to engage them in supporting the initiative. Internal workshops over the past several years have repeatedly identified the need to address significant DFO/FN trust issues together with the need for improved understanding of the rationale for catch monitoring. Wide distribution to DFO and FN fisheries management and technical staff will also support the bi-lateral consultations necessary to develop improved monitoring programs within AFS

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agreements over time.

- To foster engagement of the FNFC, a letter has been drafted for your signature which attaches the paper and seeks advice on how they might best support it. Several suggestions are provided to prompt their response in that regard.

Next Steps

- Approve for distribution the attached discussion paper to support FSC catch monitoring consultations as proposed.
- It is recommended that you sign the attached letter to the FNFC as part of the plan to distribute the discussion paper and seek their advice on supporting improved FSC monitoring and catch reporting.

Attachments (2)

Attachment 1: First Nations FSC Catch Monitoring and Reporting: Preliminary Considerations, Standards and Recommendations

Attachment 2: Letter to the First Nations Fisheries Council

C. Masson / K. Francis / A. Bate/ B. Antcliffe / S. Farlinger