

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

NEWS

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The Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch
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2

The lobster of the Gaspésie: from the sea to your dinner plate since 2012
A team dedicated to promoting your products abroad
A partnership between MAPAQ and Inno-centre for a business support service in the bio-food industry

3

The Quebec Fisheries Fund (Fonds des pêches du Québec): two years already
MAPAQ's Regional Branch Is at Your Service!

4

Find out more about commercial freshwater fishing
Carbon Footprint: Fishery and Aquaculture Products Looking Good

A REASSURING EXCITEMENT

The start of the fishing season coincides with the arrival of the warm weather. For the past few weeks, the economic activity has resumed on the docks. Ships and crews are busy and the operations have restarted in the seafood processing plants in the maritime regions of Quebec. That familiar enthusiasm is reassuring: it demonstrates that the sector is solid and that it is adapting despite the hard setbacks of the past year. Although the pandemic has disrupted our lives and our habits, we are getting back on track.

It is important to note that consumer interest in our products has increased in recent months. The calls for local consumption from the Premier have been heard and, now more than ever, Quebecers want to eat locally.

Our fishermen and our aquaculturists are offering a great diversity of seafood products, for the greatest enjoyment of our consumers. The snow crab has filled the feast of March and the shrimp and lobster will be the guests of honour at the upcoming dinners. Without forgetting our farmed products, such as the rainbow trout, the mussel and the oyster, which are among the local fish and seafood offered at our market.

I encourage Québec consumers once again to take the opportunity to meet the 12\$ Challenge that I have launched: choosing local fish and seafood means passing the challenge with flying colours, tasting unique flavours and supporting the local economy. The identification «Aliments du Québec» may help them identify these products and consumers should not hesitate to ask for them in the fish and grocery stores.

All is in place for a successful fishing season this year. While there are encouraging signs and immunization is well underway, I urge you to be extra cautious. The pandemic is still ongoing and the industry must continue to follow health protection measures in order to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, both on ships and in plants and in aquaculture enterprises.



Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries, and Food

ANDRÉ LAMONTAGNE

Please know that I am following the commercial fisheries and aquaculture activities very closely. I wish you a fruitful season, with plenty of abundance.

By Danielle Bouchard

from the Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

One of the biggest challenges for processors in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector is labour scarcity. In order to meet their requirements, these companies are turning more and more to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). The purpose of the TFWP is to enable employers to use temporary foreign workers (TFWs) when they cannot recruit Canadians or permanent residents, while also ensuring that these foreign workers are protected.

It is important to remember that these workers can make up to more than a third of a plant's staff. They are therefore an essential source of labour for the sector. In addition to providing paid work for a guaranteed period of time, companies must also provide foreign workers with appropriate living conditions, including housing. The testimony of many processing companies suggests that the use of the TFWP, while expensive, is a win-win for plant owners, seasonal workers and TFWs. The progressive increase in the number of foreign workers demonstrates the benefits of their contribution to the sector. In order to encourage the return of these workers, processing companies are increasingly putting in place measures to offer them an attractive living environment and to promote their integration into their host region.

Through the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Mandatory Isolation Assistance Program for Temporary Foreign Workers (Programme d'aide pour l'isolement obligatoire des travailleurs étrangers temporaires du ministère de l'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada), employers have access to financial support to reimburse expenses incurred for the 14-day mandatory isolation period imposed on temporary foreign workers upon their entry into Canada in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This allows them to be reimbursed up to \$1,500 per TFW for expenses incurred for this specific purpose after March 25, 2020.

INCREASING NUMBERS OF TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS TO ASSIST THE SECTOR

In 2020, the Quebec government implemented a protocol for the arrival of temporary foreign workers in line with the public health rules imposed on the overall Quebec population due to the pandemic. A work group of the Réseau de santé publique en santé au travail, coordinated by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec, has adopted new health recommendations for the bio-food industry for 2021. The majority of these recommendations are applicable to the living conditions of temporary foreign workers and their accommodations.

For instance, in processing plants, two categories of occupations are mainly concerned by this issue: workers and labourers. In 2020, despite a need for nearly 400 workers, Quebec's aquatic product processing plants recruited only about sixty TFWs. A number of international hiring efforts were cancelled due to the pandemic. For the upcoming fishing season, several plants have already hired TFWs. If the arrivals are as expected, there will be more than 480 foreign workers employed in a dozen processing companies in the maritime regions. We must also remember that, for 2021, the mobility of foreign workers between factories has been permitted, in the same way as for the agricultural sector, which will allow for greater productivity.

Given its importance to the sector, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ) intends to continue its efforts to facilitate the process of welcoming these workers into the aquatic products processing sector.

THE LOBSTER OF THE GASPÉSIE: FROM THE SEA TO YOUR DINNER PLATE SINCE 2012

By **Gabrielle Lafond Chenail**, from the Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

For the ninth consecutive year, the Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie (RPPSG) is pursuing its campaign to identify and promote the Gaspesian lobster. The purpose is to promote the quality of the lobster from the Gaspé Peninsula, the traceability system that has been put in place, the work of the fishermen as well as numerous measures adopted to ensure a sustainable fishery.

The traceability is made possible thanks to the medallions that are placed on the freshly caught lobsters. Each lobster has a unique code that identifies the Gaspesian fisherman who caught it, which enables the consumer to know its origin. The medallions also feature the logo «Aliments du Québec», which is intended to facilitate the identification of Quebec food products in grocery stores.



La Nomade Photographie

This traceability system has been promoted over the past eight years through a public relations campaign and has been instrumental in identifying Quebec seafood products. The program also provided consumers with an understanding of the importance of looking for and requesting lobsters that have a clear indication of their origin. Since its implementation, this initiative has received financial support from the MAPAQ.

The next time you taste Gaspesian lobster, we invite you to visit monhomard.ca in order to discover the origin of your shellfish and to learn more about the fisherman who caught it!

A TEAM DEDICATED TO PROMOTING YOUR PRODUCTS ABROAD

By **Michel Bélanger**,

from the Direction des analyses et des politiques
des pêches et de l'aquaculture

The pandemic has prompted the seafood industry to adapt. The traditional ways and means of doing business have been disrupted. The opportunities to meet face-to-face with international buyers have almost disappeared. In fact, all the major international seafood trade fairs have been cancelled since the beginning of the pandemic.

In this context, the commercial attachés working in Quebec's foreign representations are very valuable resources. In the United States, for instance, there are six offices dedicated to helping you market your products to potential buyers.

The services offered include business development, organization of business meetings with potential buyers and the representation of Quebec companies at foreign trade events, just to name a few. Should you have any questions about international business development, please do not hesitate to contact the various attachés.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE BUSINESSES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DEVELOP MARKETS

The Québec Foreign Representations Network

[https://www.international.gouv.qc.ca/en/
general/representation-etranger](https://www.international.gouv.qc.ca/en/general/representation-etranger)

Market access office

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A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MAPAQ AND INNO-CENTRE FOR A BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE IN THE BIO-FOOD INDUSTRY

By **Maëva Louis**, from the Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

On September 14th 2020, Inno-centre announced, in partnership with the MAPAQ, the deployment of business consulting services to SMEs in the bio-food processing industry at a very competitive rate. The program will be implemented with an investment of \$5.5 million over a three-year period.

WHICH BUSINESSES ARE ELIGIBLE?

Any business whose revenues are between 2 million and 100 million dollars.

WHAT ARE THE SERVICES OFFERED?

A total of 200 hours of consulting services are offered at a discounted rate of \$6000, or \$30 per hour.

Additional consulting services are also offered at a rate of

\$110/hour for up to 600 hours.

HOW TO REGISTER?

In order to benefit from the program, the company must be referred to Inno-centre by MAPAQ, the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation, Investissement Québec or La Financière agricole du Québec, to name just a few.

It is important to note that, in order to benefit from the services offered by Inno-Centre, the entrepreneurs must be committed to finding solutions. In fact, this is a support service, not an outsourcing service.

You can consult the article announcing this program on the Inno-Centre website: <https://www.inno-centre.com/en/news/press-releases/high-level-business-support-services-to-ensure-the-growth-of-smes-in-the-agri-food-processing-sector>.

Inno-centre is a non-profit organization that has been assisting innovative SMEs in various sectors of activity for some thirty years. With its experts of various backgrounds, the organization offers services in a variety of fields including financial management, human resources, marketing and even governance. Inno-centre also has several volunteer experts with specialized skills in telemetry, e-commerce or innovative food processes.

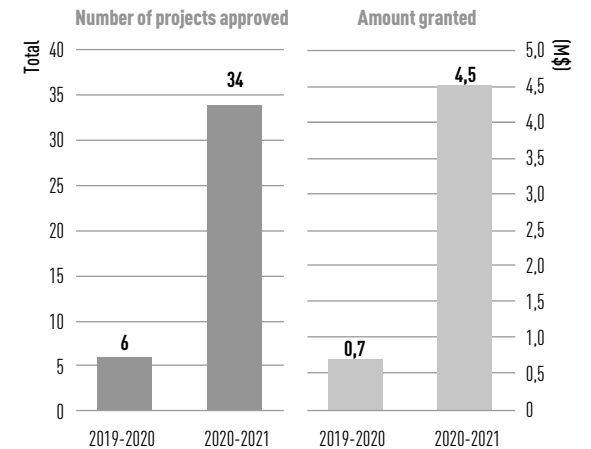
THE QUEBEC FISHERIES FUND (FONDS DES PÊCHES DU QUÉBEC): TWO YEARS ALREADY

By Moez Khefifi, from the Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêches et de l'aquaculture



As of March 30, 2021, 87 applications for project funding have been officially presented to the Québec Fisheries Fund (FPQ). In the second year (2020-2021), the number of projects filed is approximately the same as in the first year (2019-2020), with 42 and 45 applications, respectively.

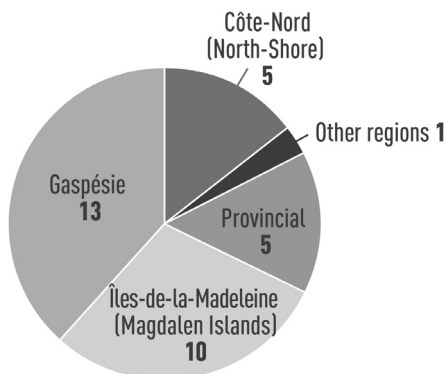
In 2020-2021, the number of projects approved increased more than fivefold over 2019-2020, jumping from 6 to 34. The total amount awarded by the QFF increased from \$0.7 million in 2019-2020 to almost \$4.5 million in 2020-2021, representing a more than six-fold increase. One of the reasons for these differences between the two fiscal years is the late submission of projects. This is due to the fact that more than two-thirds of the applications, or 31 files, were received by the QFF over the last six months of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.



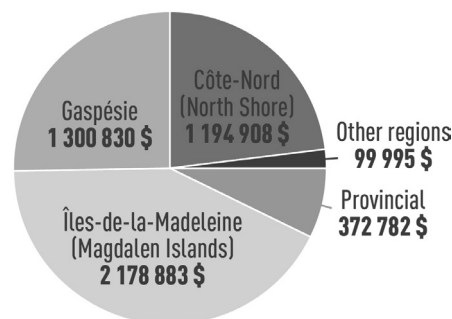
The following graphs demonstrate that the QFF has been instrumental in the realization of projects in the three maritime regions of Québec.

The majority of the projects that were approved were submitted under the infrastructure pillar. The amount allocated to this pillar is also greater than the amount awarded to the other two pillars together, i.e. Innovation and scientific partnership.

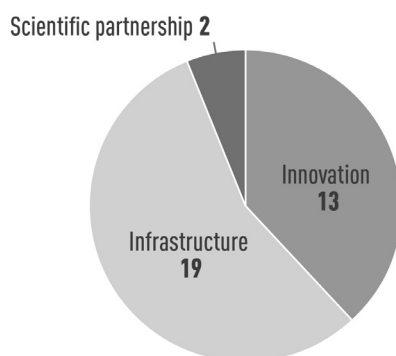
NUMBER OF PROJECTS APPROVED BY REGION



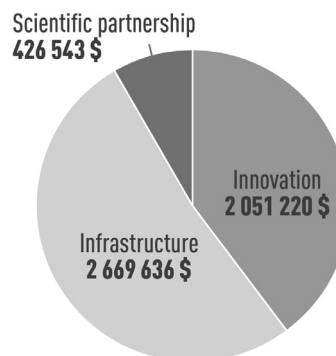
AMOUNTS ALLOCATED BY REGION



NUMBER OF PROJECTS APPROVED BY PILLAR



AMOUNTS ALLOCATED BY PILLAR



The QFF has three pillars (innovation, infrastructure and scientific partnerships) under which many activities are eligible for financial support.

The activities that are eligible for support under the innovation pillar are:

- Research and development that lead to innovations which contribute to the sustainability of the seafood industry;
- Undertake pilot projects and testing of new innovations;
- Undertake activities to commercialize innovations;
- Projects that support the creation of partnerships or networks for innovation activities in the industry, in compliance with the program's objectives.

The activities that are eligible for funding under the infrastructure pillar are:

- The adoption or the adaptation of new technologies, processes or equipment in order to increase the efficiency and sustainability of the seafood industry;
- Provide training associated with the adoption or adaptation of new technologies, processes or equipment.

The activities that are eligible for funding under the scientific partnerships pillar are:

- Research on the impact of the changes in the ecosystem on fish stocks, the distribution and the commercial fishery;
- Scientific activities that support the development of sustainable harvesting technologies;
- Projects that support the creation of partnerships or networks for innovation activities in the industry, in compliance with the program's objectives.

MAPAQ'S REGIONAL BRANCH IS AT YOUR SERVICE!

Are you in need of financial assistance to undertake a project or would you like to know if you are eligible for a program? Would you like to fill out a form or do you have questions? Your regional branch is at your service!

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DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DE LA GASPÉSIE

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DIRECTION RÉGIONALE DES ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE

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FIND OUT MORE ABOUT COMMERCIAL FRESHWATER FISHING

By **Nathalie Moisan**,
from the Direction de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

Did you know that the MAPAQ is mandated to promote the development of commercial fisheries in Quebec's fresh waters?

The MAPAQ issues commercial fishing permits in accordance with the terms and conditions of the fisheries management plan (FMP)* established by the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs under a delegation of federal authority. As such, the FMP does not apply to fishing for marine species such as ground fish.

The allocation of the quotas is granted based on the following order: conservation of the spawning stock, fishery for alimentary purposes, recreational fishery and commercial fishery. In this respect, if the resources cannot accommodate all the forms of fishing listed above, the allocation will have to be carried out according to the order of priority up to the availability of the stocks, while restricting the forms of fishing that have a lesser priority and for which there are not enough resources. In 2012, for instance, the Québec government issued a complete ban on commercial and recreational yellow perch fishing in Lake Saint-Pierre (Lac Saint-Pierre) for a period of five years (which was subsequently extended until 2022). This was a necessary measure in order to ensure the protection of the breeding stock.

The FMP sets out the terms and conditions of

the commercial fishery: the water bodies where it may be conducted, the types of fishing gear authorized, the maximum catch (quotas) along with minimum sizes for each species and the seasons during which it is open.

According to the species fished, the equipment used for this type of fishing can be different types of gill nets, seines, trap nets, fyke nets or even crayfish traps.

* **Anadromous** : This refers to a fish that swims up the rivers to reproduce.

** **Catadromous** : This refers to a fish that lives in fresh water but is born and breeds at sea.

The chart below shows the details of the landed volumes for the 2019 season. Commercial fishing in freshwater as well as for the anadromous and catadromous species is done on approximately thirty species of fish. Below are the landed volumes (in kilos) for the 2019 season, with a total dollar value of 1.2 million dollars:

NAME OF THE SPECIES	KG
Brown bullhead	86 293
Lake sturgeon	78 429
Channel catfish	52 502
Acipenser oxyrinchus	45 499
Carp	45 467
American eel	39 942
Silver redhorse	14 458
Walleye	5 201
Other freshwater fish	38 652
TOTAL	406 444



MAPAQ | Eel fishing with a trap net called fish corral

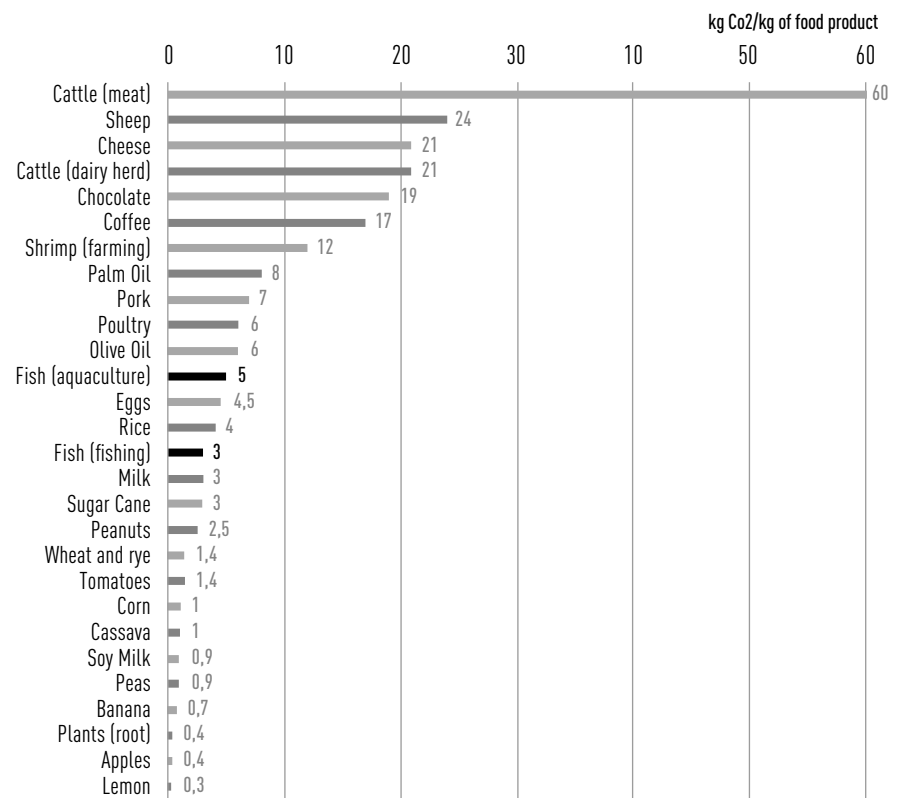
*The fishery management plan is available in the Gazette officielle du Québec, Laws and Regulations, Volume 151, Part 2, 8 May 2019, No. 19: <http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=13&file=1919-F.PDF>

CARBON FOOTPRINT: FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS LOOKING GOOD

By **Jérémie Persant**, from the Direction de l'innovation

For several years, environmental issues have been coming to the forefront. This can be seen in an energy shift that is reflected in the increasing adoption of hybrid and electric vehicles. This change has now reached our plates, as various studies on the carbon footprint of food have confirmed, including those conducted by Oxford University in the United Kingdom or, closer to home, by the International Reference Centre for the Life Cycle of Products, Processes and Services, based in Québec. This research shows that food accounts for a quarter of our greenhouse gas emissions and that fishery and aquaculture products emit little compared to other sources of animal protein.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS PER FOOD PRODUCT (CO2 EQUIVALENT [KG] PER KG OF PRODUCT)



International Standard Set Up

In order to establish a universal method for the entire industry, a new standard appeared in 2020, called *ISO 22948: 2020 Carbon footprint for seafood – Product category rules (CFP-PCR) for finfish*. The rules resulting from this standard will allow evaluation of the life cycle from sea to plate. With this tool, the industry will be able to establish its footprint in an objective manner.

Unmissable Opportunity

Knowing that fishery and aquaculture products are among the animal proteins with the lowest carbon footprint and considering the growing consumer interest in this subject, there may be a card to play. Indeed, publicizing information on the carbon footprint would likely improve the image of these products to attract a more mindful clientele ready to invest in sustainable consumption choices. Combining this with local distribution of products, there is little doubt about the potential for growth in the domestic market.

For more information:

- <https://ourworldindata.org/> - You want to reduce the carbon footprint of your food? Focus on what you eat, not whether your food is local
- <https://www.iso.org/standard/74228.html>