

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS (2022-23): AAROM INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION FUND

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## OVERVIEW

- The objective of the AAROM Innovation and Collaborative Fund is to support AAROM departments, through individual and joint projects to:
  - build and maintain organizational and technical capacity
  - develop innovative tools and solutions that can help unlock opportunities for growth, including serving as a “steppingstone” to new partnerships and funders.
- Eligibility is limited to current participants in the AAROM program (see Annex A for a full list).
- This document provides AAROM departments with the guidance and application materials required to complete and submit a 2022-23 application. This includes the application form which is provided in Annex B for reference and as a fillable MSWord file, which has been included with this document.
- The annual AAROM Fund budget is \$2.5M and applications can be for 1 to 3 year projects. Each participating AAROM department can receive up to \$75,000 per year for individual projects. There is no set limit for collaborative projects that involve more than one AAROM department. Funding is for short-term project activities (e.g. addressing immediate challenges or opportunities) and not for ongoing core operations or activities.
- The priorities for 2022-23 are:
  - Human Resources;
  - Operational Infrastructure;
  - Communications and Governance;
  - Regional Research, Planning & Coordination;
  - Development of New Services & Partnerships;
  - Indigenous Knowledge;
  - Engaging Youth.
- Applications for 2022-23 will be accepted and approved on an ongoing basis until November 30, 2022.

### *Where this started ...*

*The concept for the AAROM Innovation and Collaboration Fund emerged from the findings and recommendations of the Indigenous Program Review. The objectives, design and priorities of the Fund have continued to evolve through ongoing collaboration with AAROM departments over the last two years. See Annex C for further information on this continuing journey.*

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## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS & PROJECT STREAMS

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Applications may be submitted by existing AAROM departments (please consult Annex A for a complete list) through either the individual or collaborative project streams.

### Individual Projects:

- Projects developed and undertaken by an individual AAROM department
- May be funded up to a maximum of \$75,000 per annum for each AAROM department

### Collaborative Projects:

- Projects developed and undertaken by a group of AAROM departments
- The potential budget amount is flexible (based on project requirements and availability of budget)

All applications (individual or collaborative) must align with one or more of the 2022-23 eligible priorities and must meet the evaluation criteria as outlined in the sections below.

## ELIGIBLE PRIORITIES

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Through Indigenous Program Review, successive Annual National AAROM meetings, and other AAROM networking activities, a number of key priorities for ongoing capacity development and collaboration have emerged. These have been shaped into priority areas for individual and joint collaborative projects, as follows:

- Human Resources (HR) – Projects in both the individual and collaborative streams aimed at supporting a variety of HR related activities required to sustain and grow HR capacity including:
  - Succession planning;
  - Mentorships;
  - Training;
  - Leadership development;
  - Interchanges;
  - Proposal Writing;
  - HR Tool-kit; etc.
- Operational Infrastructure – Projects in the individual stream to support investments to help maintain or grow assets and equipment essential to core operations.
- Communications, Community Engagement & Governance – Projects in both the individual and collaborative streams to support the development of strategies and tools to support community outreach and engagement, and effective governance practices.
- Regional Research, Planning & Coordination – Projects in the collaborative stream to support collaborative activities aimed at the development of new tools and solutions that can help address regional issues or access opportunities.
- Developing New Services & Partnerships – Projects in both the individual and collaborative streams to support the initial planning and development of new service areas, and to establish new partnerships and pave the way to accessing new sources of funds.
- Indigenous Knowledge (IK) – A continuation of the eligible priority from 2020-22, projects in both the individual and collaborative streams to support IK capacity development and collaboration. Please note that under this eligible priority, the intent is to support development of the capacity of AAROM departments to use and handle IK – however, the gathering of IK is not an eligible activity.
- Engaging Youth – Projects in both the individual and collaborative streams to support the development of strategies and tools for outreach, training, employment, land/fish camps, Youth-Elder interactions, etc.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

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General criteria to be considered during the development and the final review and approval of individual or collaborative applications include:

- Proposed activities align with one or more of the annual eligible priorities for the Fund;
- For a one-time project, with set deliverables and no ongoing funding obligation;
- Activities will help support and/or build organizational and technical capacity within the participating AAROM department(s);
- Supports AAROM program objectives (e.g., not a general source of funds used to make up for deficiencies in other program funding or as a flow-through to fund individual member communities);
- The proposal is feasible (e.g., reasonable budget, relevant activities, clear timelines, capacity to deliver, etc.) and deliverables and benefits are clearly identified;

- Potential to access funds in the future based on project outputs/outcomes;
- Supports innovation and/or partnership;
- Leverage other funding or partnerships. (bonus criteria).

Additional criteria considered for collaborative projects include:

- Involves collaboration between AAROM departments and/or benefits more than one proponent;
- Project benefits the overall network and/or at a regional/area level (bonus criteria);
- Deliverables are scalable or transferable into other contexts (bonus criteria).

In applying this criteria, consideration will be given to the fact that individual AAROM departments may be at different points in developing capacity and may require different types of support. The intent is to increase the capacity of all program participants and not just high capacity departments.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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Program participants are encouraged to work with their regional AAROM program contact in developing their project concept and application. When submitting your project application, please also copy your [regional AAROM program lead](#).

In the case of collaborative projects, all implicated AAROM departments should have some role in the development of the application, at least in terms of providing endorsement for the joint application.

The application form can be found in Annex B and has been sent separately as a fillable MS Word document. Applications for 2022-23 should be submitted through your regional AAROM program contact at any time up until midnight (Pacific Time) on November 30, 2022. While funding will be protected for individual projects, AAROM departments are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Upon submission of your application, DFO will confirm receipt within 5 business days and, as needed, follow up with you on any extra information or further development needed prior to final review.

## REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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All applications will be reviewed and approved on a continuous basis until the November 30, 2022 deadline so as to support timely implementation before fiscal year-end.

Each application will first undergo a review process conducted from within the respective region. Once that review has been completed, and the application is deemed to be ready for the final review and approval, the region will send the results of their regional review and recommendation to NHQ where the final review and approval process will begin. If any questions arise during the final review and approval process, these will be communicated back to the applicant through the respective regional contact(s). The intent of these multiple steps in the review process is to offer and provide adequate support so that all applications are fully developed for funding. Upon final approval, an approval letter will be composed and sent to the applicant via e-mail.

## PREPARATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

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The information provided in the application will form the basis for each activity description and the overall budget that is to be included in your contribution agreement (CA). Your regional AAROM program contact will work closely with you to get the CA completed and ratified as soon as possible.

## TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

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- If you are planning to develop an application, you are encouraged to contact your regional AAROM program contact early to discuss your project concept. They can provide feedback, confirm edibility of proposed activities, and answer any questions you might have throughout the application process.
- Please use the fillable MS Word version of the Application Form that has been sent along with this document. The fillable version has features such as check boxes and drop down menus to make the process of completing the application easier.
- Please use the check boxes provided to indicate the project stream and eligible priorities.
- The application allows you to provide as much information as necessary to describe your project and its related activities, products, outcomes and budget. In the case of more complex applications, additional information or supplemental documents may be required to support the application.
- For collaborative projects, please provide a full list of all AAROM departments that have agreed to participate in the project and include letters or emails of support.
- For multi-year projects, please specify the requested contribution for each year of the project. In addition, for each year please copy and paste an additional version of the Budget Table that provides the breakdown of the budget by eligible expense category.
- If you have any other questions, your regional AAROM program contact is available to assist you.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the operations of AAROM departments (e.g., ability to travel, conduct fieldwork, and hold meetings). DFO will continue to provide COVID-related flexibilities to assist AAROM departments in managing the effects of the pandemic. Each AAROM department is encouraged to continue to evaluate their ongoing core activities and budgets, along with any new proposed activities under the AAROM Fund, to identify areas where adjustments may be needed to address COVID-related impacts. This could also include, where appropriate, reallocating funding that may go unspent on core operations to supplement AAROM Fund project funding.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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*Q: Can I submit more than one application to the AAROM Fund?*

A: Yes. You may submit multiple individual applications up to a total of \$75,000. For instance, you might apply for some support for managing succession planning (under the HR priority), but may later submit an unrelated application tied to community outreach (under Communications, Community Engagement and Governance). In most cases, however, it is expected that AAROM departments will only make one application per year under the individual project stream. Any AAROM department may also participate in a collaborative project, either as a proponent or participant along with other AAROM departments. Participation in one stream (individual or collaborative) does not limit participation in the other.

*Q: Are there items or projects that are not eligible for funding through the AAROM Fund?*

A: Yes. The main objective of the Fund is to support ongoing capacity development of individual AAROM departments and the network as a whole. Moreover, the AAROM program itself has a specific mandate to support the ongoing core operations (e.g., governance, management, administration, community outreach, etc.), along with technical and scientific capacity of AAROM departments. It is not intended to, nor can it, fund all areas related to collaborative management or scientific activities. Nor is the program funding intend to directly support areas like treaty negotiations, policy development, reconciliation writ large, or the establishment of commercial fishery or aquaculture enterprises. There are other programs and sources of funding available for such important activities. However, where appropriate and where AAROM departments are involved, the AAROM fund may play a role in helping unlock that funding.

*Q: What happens if an approved project cannot be completed and must be cancelled?*

A: If for any reason an approved project is cancelled, the AAROM department may develop and submit a new application for approval. When an AAROM department is not able to develop and submit a new application, an amendment to the CA will be completed, removing the activity and funding, and the funds will be re-directed by the AAROM program to other approved projects or activities. In such cases, where an AAROM department is not able to participate in the Fund for a year, the AAROM program will seek to make up for this in future years, when and where additional funding is available.

## AAROM INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION FUND – ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The following AAROM departments may apply under either the individual project stream or the collaborative project stream (as part of a joint application):

- Akaitcho Territory Government (ATG)
- A-Tlegay Fisheries Society
- Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance (CCIRA)
- Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM)
- Dehcho First Nation (DFN)
- Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC)
- Gespe'gewaq Mi'gmaq Resource Council (GMRC)
- Island Marine Aquatic Working Group Society (IMAWG)
- Ktunaxa Nation Council Society - Formerly CCIRFC
- L'Agence Mamu Innu Kaikusseht (AMIK)
- L'Association de gestion Halieutique autochtone Mi'kmaq et Malecite (AGHAMM)
- Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance Society (LFFA)
- Maliseet Nation Conservation Council (MNCC)
- Maritimes Aboriginal Peoples Council (MAPC)
- Mi'kmaq Alsumk Mowimsikik Koqey Association (MAMKA)
- Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI)
- North Coast Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society (NCSFNSS)
- North Shore MicMac District Council (NSMDC)
- Northwest Territories Metis Nation (NWTMN)
- Nuu-Chah-Nulth TC (NTC)
- Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
- Q'u'l'hanumutsun Aquatic Resources Society (QARS)
- Secretariat of the Haida Nation
- Shushwap Nation TC
- Skeena Fisheries Commission (SkFC)
- Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)
- Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance (UFFCA)

The following AAROM departments may apply through the collaborative stream as part of a joint application with the AAROM departments listed above:

- Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APCFNC)
- First Nations Fisheries Council of BC (FNFC).

ANNEX B

**APPLICATION FORM (2022-23) – AAROM INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION FUND**

Please complete and submit the following application form to your [regional AAROM program contact](#). A separate fillable version of this application form has been sent to you, along with this guidance document, for your use. Please use the separate fillable version to prepare and submit your application.

<b>Applicant Information</b>	
AAROM Department Name:	
Main Project Contact – Name: Phone: E-mail:	
Mailing Address:	

<b>Proposal Description 2022-23</b>	
Project Title:	
Project Stream:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative <i>For Collaborative Projects:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List all partnering AAROM departments below; and</li> <li>- For each partner, provide a brief indication of support when submitting your application by attaching a letter or e-mail.</li> </ul>
Eligible Priorities:	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources (HR) <input type="checkbox"/> Operational Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Communications & Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Research, Planning & Coordination <input type="checkbox"/> Developing New Services & Partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Knowledge (IK) <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging Youth <i>Indicate all eligible priorities related to your project.</i>
Requested Contribution Amount:  <i>For multi-year projects, specify the requested contribution for each year</i>	
Contributions from other sources:  <i>Please identify other sources of funding that support the planned project (if any)</i>	
Potentially unused funds allocated from core AAROM budget:	

ANNEX B

<i>Please identify funds re-allocated from the core AAROM budget to support the planned project (if any)</i>	
Project Description (brief):	

Activities, Products and Outcomes		
Activity/Task Descriptions	Outputs/Products/Deliverables	Expected Outcomes/Benefits

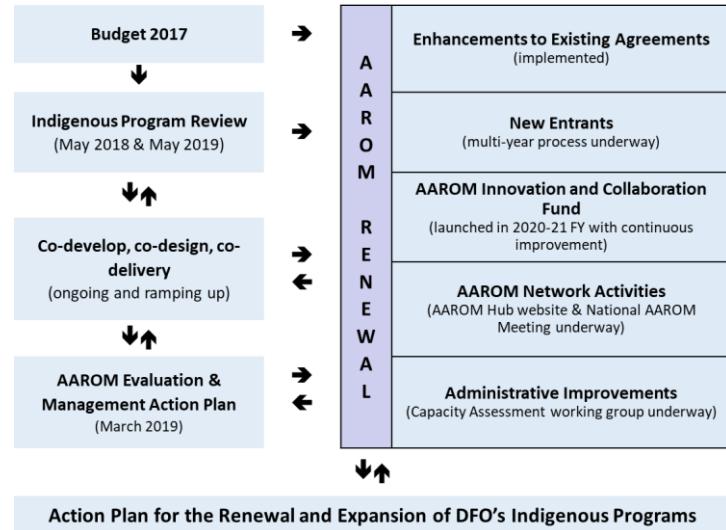
Budget Table 2022-23		
Eligible Expense Category	Funds Requested (\$)	Description/Details
Choose an expense category.	\$Enter amount.	Provide a brief description of the expenses in this category.
Choose an expense category.	\$Enter amount.	Provide a brief description of the expenses in this category.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$Enter Total Request</b>	

\*For multi-year projects, please copy the above Budget Table and provide the breakdown of the budget by eligible expense category for each year.

## THE AAROM INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION FUND – THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The renewal of AAROM program has been informed by:

- Budget 2017;
- The [Indigenous Program Review \(IPR\)](#);
- An internal [DFO AAROM Program Evaluation](#) and resulting [Management Action Plan](#); and
- Ongoing co-development, co-design and co-delivery activities including two National AAROM Meetings, regional workshops, webinars/virtual meetings and Ad Hoc Working Groups.

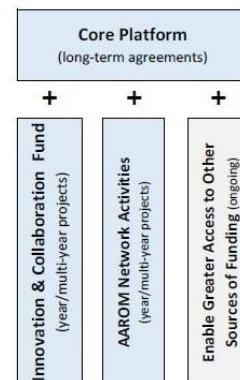


The activities related to the renewal process are included in the [Action Plan for the Renewal and Expansion of DFO's Indigenous Programs](#) which includes as part of its broader context the [DFO-Coast Guard Reconciliation Strategy](#). All these elements are presented visually above.

The AAROM Innovation and Collaboration Fund is one element of a more strategic approach being implemented, as part of a renewed AAROM program, to support long-term and ongoing capacity development across the network of AAROM departments.

The four main strategic objectives are:

- Develop and maintain robust AAROM departments (core platform/capacity)
- Fund innovative and collaborative projects (funded by the AAROM Innovation and Collaboration Fund)
- Support a strong network of AAROM departments (including sharing and developing capacity as well as growing co-development, co-design and co-delivery capacity)
- Promote access to other funding



The AAROM Innovation and Collaboration Fund was officially launched on April 27, 2020 with an interim one-year process for 2020-21. This allowed projects to proceed while co-development of the Fund continued. The initial priority, which was drawn from Indigenous Program Review and the outcomes from the two previous Annual Nation AAROM Meetings, was Indigenous Knowledge Collaboration and Capacity Development. An interim and simplified application process was implemented.

During the inaugural year, 14 projects were approved which equaled a 52% participation rate. This result was in-part due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Later in the year, funding was also made available to support one-time investments in operational infrastructure, following a similar application process. This increased participation overall to 75% or 33 projects overall for a total of \$2.5M.

Moving forward, the objective is to reach 100% participation so that all AAROM departments are able to

## ANNEX C

benefit from the Fund. This will be accomplished, in part, through the expansion of eligible priorities (including the addition of Operational Infrastructure as a priority) as well as the co-development and co-delivery of a Capacity Development Team that can offer support to AAROM departments in development of successful projects and applications.

In the inaugural year, no collaborative project applications were developed. This was in-part due to the absence of an established process for developing and implementing collaborative projects. Plans to address this challenge include: organizing co-development discussions and Regional AAROM Workshops aimed at identifying collaborative priorities and establishing effective collaborative processes.

The final design of the Fund, along with a more extensive list of priorities, came from a series of webinars held with AAROM departments in October and November 2020 and was further confirmed and refined at the Annual National AAROM Meeting, Virtual Meeting Series (both through a specific session on the Fund, held on February 10, 2021, as well as through sessions on specific areas of capacity development and collaboration). The Fund priorities and overall delivery will continue to be reviewed at each Annual National AAROM Meeting going forward.

In conclusion, the figure below which was presented and discussed multiple times at the Annual National AAROM Meeting, Virtual Meeting Series (January and February 2021), identifies continuous improvement and capacity development as central themes and objectives for the ongoing AAROM Fund Process. This visual describes the process for the annual cycle and identifies some of the additional support for AAROM departments that are or will be co-developed and co-delivered, including the Capacity Assessment Tool (underway), Capacity Development Team, and a National Training Coordinator.

