

Introduction	2
Background on the Fraser Forum and its historical significance	2
The Need for Renewal considering the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) ..	4
Current State of the Fraser Forum: Summary of perspectives from the interviews & feedback from interview participants on Forum and renewal	5
Strengths of the Fraser Forum:	6
Areas Poised for Renewal:	6
Divergent Lenses of Focus:	7
JTWG: Opportunities for Refinement:	8
Review of the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) and implications for the Forum process.....	8
Insights from the Interviews Regarding Fraser Forum Renewal and the FSCMA	9
Connecting conversations: Forum and new structures under the FSMCA.....	10
IFMP	11
Conclusions	12
Key findings and Recommendations regarding Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) and implications for the Forum process	13
Recommendations - The need for interconnectedness of the Fraser Forum with the broader collaborative structures established by the FSCMA	13
Additional Recommendations for Adapting the Fraser Forum Process:	14
Recommendations for renewing the Joint Technical Working Group.....	15
Engagement and Participation.....	16
Motivations, Concerns, and Aspirations: Insights from Forum Participants	17
Strengthening Inclusivity and Representation: Participants stressed the importance of ensuring diverse participation and meaningful inclusion of all relevant parties in the Forum process.	18
Revising the Forum's Mandate and Objectives	20
Recommendations to consider for aligning with the goals of the FSCMA	20
Operationalizing Recommendations: A Practical Approach to Implementation.....	23
Conclusion.....	26

Introduction

The Fraser River has been a focal point for communities for thousands of years. Central to its narrative is the Salmon, a species that has not only sustained ecosystems but also been integral to the livelihoods and traditions of the people of the Pacific Northwest.

To navigate the complexities of salmon management, the Fraser Forum was established as a collaborative platform, uniting Fraser and approach First Nations with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Over the years, the Forum has adapted and evolved, reflecting the changing needs and dynamics of the region.

In 2019, a significant milestone was achieved with the signing of the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA). This agreement underscored the commitment to uphold the rights of First Nations in the region and a more integrated and inclusive approach to salmon management, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between Indigenous communities and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

This report examines the impact of the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement on the Fraser Forum and its efforts to address the evolving needs of the region's communities and the challenges posed by declining salmon populations.

Drawing from a comprehensive review process, which included extensive interviews with a diverse range of participants including First Nations, representatives of First Nations-led organizations, and DFO staff, the report offers insights into the Forum's current state, its strengths, and areas that are poised for renewal.

As you explore this report, you'll uncover the collective aspirations, challenges, and recommendations that emerged from the review process. The goal is to provide a clear path forward, ensuring that the Fraser Forum remains a robust and effective platform for collaborative salmon management in the Fraser River Basin.

This report serves as both a reflection on the past and a reflection of participants' recommendations for the future of collaborative governance in the region.

Background on the Fraser Forum and its historical significance

The Fraser River, with its vast and intricate network of tributaries, has long been a lifeblood for the communities that call its bank's home. Its significance transcends mere geography; it is a cultural, ecological, and economic touchstone for the entire Pacific Northwest. Central to this

river's story are Salmon, a keystone species that has, for millennia, connected ecosystems and peoples.

The Fraser Forum emerged from a recognition of the intricate interdependencies between human communities, salmon populations, and the broader ecosystems of the Fraser River Basin. Initiated in 2007, the Forum was a response to discontent with other processes and the pressing need for a collaborative platform where Fraser and approach First Nations and Fisheries and Oceans Canada could come together to address the challenges facing salmon management in the Fraser River and its marine approach areas.

Historically, the management of salmon resources in the Fraser River was characterized by fragmented approaches, often leading to conflicts, misunderstandings, and suboptimal outcomes for both the salmon and the communities dependent on them. The early attempts by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to engage with Fraser First Nations in in-season conference calls in 2007 underscored the need for a more structured, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach.

The Forum's inception in 2008 marked a significant shift towards collaborative governance. It provided a space for First Nations to meet among themselves and with DFO, fostering dialogues that went beyond mere resource allocation to encompass broader issues of rights, conservation, and sustainable management. Over the years, the Forum has evolved, reflecting the changing dynamics of the region, the lessons learned from its engagements, and the broader shifts in the understanding of collaborative resource management globally.

The Forum's significance is not just in its role as a platform for dialogue but also as a testament to the power of collaboration. It stands as a unique effort in Canada, and indeed globally, to integrate diverse perspectives – from Indigenous knowledge systems to scientific research, from local community insights to broader policy frameworks.

In doing so, the Fraser Forum has not only attempted to address immediate challenges but has also laid the groundwork for a more resilient, adaptive, and inclusive approach to resource management.

In understanding the historical significance of the Fraser Forum, one must see it as more than just a governance mechanism. It is representative of a collective aspiration – to ensure that the Fraser River, with its rich tapestry of life and history, continues to thrive for generations to come.

The Need for Renewal considering the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA)

The Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) represents a significant milestone in the journey towards a more inclusive and sustainable approach to salmon management in the Fraser River Basin; one that reflects the Rights of First Nations' Communities.

Signed in 2019 between the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the FSCMA embodies a shared commitment to collaborative governance, recognizing the rights, knowledge, and aspirations of the Indigenous communities of the Fraser River.

However, with this new agreement comes the imperative to re-examine existing structures and mechanisms, including the Fraser Forum, to ensure alignment with the principles and objectives of the FSCMA. Several factors underscore the need for this renewal:

- **Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Knowledge:** The FSCMA, in alignment with Canada's broader commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, emphasizes the importance of recognizing and integrating Indigenous rights and traditional ecological knowledge in salmon management. The Fraser Forum, as a key platform for dialogue leading towards collaborative decision-making at the FSMC and Fraser Salmon Management Board (FSMB), must be attuned to this shift, ensuring that its processes and outcomes honour these principles.
- **State of Salmon Stocks:** Documents such as the "Wild Salmon Policy Implementation Plan" and assessments on salmon returns highlight the precarious state of many salmon stocks in the Fraser River. The urgency of these ecological challenges necessitates a Forum that is adaptive, responsive, and capable of fostering collaborative solutions.
- **Changing Dynamics of Collaboration:** The principles outlined in the "Justice and Reconciliation Principles" emphasize the importance of collaboration, co-management, and shared decision-making in Canada's relationship with Indigenous communities. The Fraser Forum must evolve to reflect these principles, ensuring that it remains a space where all voices are heard, respected, and integrated.
- **Broader Regional and Global Context:** As highlighted in various documents, including the "BC Coastal Marine Strategy" and the "Pacific Offshore Marine Protected Area" discussions, the challenges facing the Fraser River's salmon are interconnected with broader regional and global issues. Climate change, marine ecosystems' health, and

socio-economic shifts all impact salmon management. The Forum's renewal must consider this broader context, fostering holistic and forward-looking discussions and strategies.

The Fraser River, with its intricate web of ecosystems and communities, stands at a pivotal moment. The challenges facing its salmon populations are not merely ecological but also emblematic of broader issues of governance, rights recognition, and collaborative management.

The Fraser Forum, having played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and collaboration, now faces the imperative of renewal to align with the evolving landscape of salmon management, especially considering the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA).

This report aims to examine the implications of the FSCMA for the Fraser Forum and understand how the principles and objectives of this landmark agreement can be integrated into the Forum's processes and outcomes.

By utilizing the insights and feedback from various participants, as documented in the interviews, the report will shed light on the strengths and areas of improvement for the Forum.

The goal is to propose recommendations for the Forum's renewal, ensuring it remains a vibrant, inclusive, and effective platform for collaborative salmon management in the Fraser River region.

Current State of the Fraser Forum: Summary of perspectives from the interviews & feedback from interview participants on Forum and renewal

The Fraser Forum is a key platform for collaboration in the Fraser River region. Feedback from both formal interviews and Forum meetings has provided insights into its strengths and areas needing improvement.

What's Working: Positive Perspectives on the Fraser Forum

Collaboration is universally recognized as essential. All participants agree that working together is crucial to address the Fraser River's challenges. The Forum is valued not just for discussions but also for the relationships it helps build. Participants appreciate the chance to interact and understand different viewpoints. The Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) plays a significant role in the Forum, especially in making technical information accessible to a wider audience.

Areas for Improvement: Feedback on the Renewal Process

There are concerns about the clarity of the Forum's objectives and its relationship with the broader FSMCA structures. This uncertainty can hinder participation. Transparency is another major concern. Participants want clear communication and easy access to information. Some feel the Forum can become too presentation-heavy, limiting interactive discussions.

There is a clear need for better follow-up after Forum meetings. Participants want insights and decisions from the Forum to be communicated effectively to the broader FSCMA structures. While the Forum is inclusive, there is a push for more integration of traditional practices and knowledge.

Operational challenges, particularly concerning the JTWG, have been highlighted. Delays in data delivery, especially around forecasts and stock assessments, can disrupt the Forum's effectiveness. The JTWG could be more integrated with the Forum planning committee to ensure their insights directly influence the Forum's agenda. There is also a call for more transparency in the JTWG's operations.

Differences in Focus

DFO participants often focus on operational details, while non-DFO participants, especially from Indigenous communities, look at the broader cultural and ecological implications.

Strengths of the Fraser Forum:

- **Collaborative Core:** Across the board, forum participants from DFO and First Nations champion the essence of collaboration. The intricate challenges of the Fraser River necessitate a united, collaborative approach.
- **Engagement and Relationship Building:** Beyond its primary function as a discussion platform, the Forum excels in fostering relationships. It offers participants a unique space to engage, interact, and deepen their understanding of diverse perspectives.
- **Technical Translation by JTWG:** The Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) emerges as an invaluable asset, adeptly translating complex technical data into digestible insights for a broader audience.

Areas Poised for Renewal:

- **Objective Clarity:** A recurring theme is the need for crystallized clarity on the Forum's objectives and its symbiotic alignment with the overarching FSMCA structures. This ambiguity occasionally impedes deeper participation.
- **Transparency Imperative:** A transparent flow of communication and information accessibility stands out as a primary expectation among participants. This includes everything from technical information to pre-planned meeting agendas and feedback loops for conversations held at forum and the structures created by the FSMCA.
- **Balancing Information Sharing:** Participants have voiced concerns about the Forum's tendency to lean towards presentation-heavy sessions, which can eclipse interactive dialogue and paradoxically requested a more focused approach when it comes to data transparency. This request may in fact be more about sharing the information that matters most.
- **Post-Forum Continuity:** A pronounced gap is the absence of a structured mechanism to carry forward the momentum after Forum meetings. Forum participants are keen on a system that ensures the Forum's insights and decisions resonate with the broader FSCMA structures.
- **Deepening Cultural Inclusivity:** While the Forum's inclusivity is commendable, there's an echoing call to further weave in traditional practices and Indigenous knowledge.
- **Operational Fluidity with JTWG:** The JTWG, while invaluable, faces operational challenges. Notably, the timely delivery of crucial data, especially forecasts and stock assessments, is a concern. A more integrated approach with the Forum's planning committee could ensure that JTWG's insights are seamlessly woven into the Forum's agenda. Additionally, a clarion call for enhanced transparency in the JTWG's operations has been noted.

Divergent Lenses of Focus:

Worth noting, the Fraser Forum's structure, with its delineation into Tier 1 and Tier 2 sessions, inadvertently amplifies a dichotomy in perspectives between DFO and non-DFO participants. Tier 1, reserved exclusively for First Nations participants, often delves into broader cultural, social, and ecological narratives, reflecting the deep-rooted connections Indigenous communities have with the land and waters. On the other hand, when the discussions transition into Tier 2, which includes both First Nations and DFO representatives, there's a noticeable shift towards the operational intricacies of fisheries management. This distinction in focus can be attributed to the inherent differences in the roles and responsibilities of the

participants. DFO representatives, with their mandate, naturally lean towards the technical and operational aspects. In contrast, Indigenous communities, with their rich history and connection to the Fraser River, bring forward a holistic perspective that encompasses not just the fish but the entire ecosystem. While the separation into tiers allows for focused discussions, it also inadvertently perpetuates this dichotomy, underscoring the challenge of integrating these two distinct viewpoints into a cohesive strategy for the Fraser River's salmon management.

JTWG: Opportunities for Refinement:

- **Data Delivery:** A pressing challenge is the timely dissemination of technical insights, notably pre-season forecasts, in-season stock assessments, and post-season data. Such delays can stymie the Forum's discussions and decision-making efficacy.
- **Data Transparency:** compounded by issues surrounding time, a call has been made to improve access to the data behind assessments, decisions and fisheries management measures related to Fraser Salmon. It was noted that often the JTWG has been evaluating outcomes without the benefit of all participants being aware of what information informed them. First Nations members made the request to be able to “look under the hood” and have discussions about how conclusions are drawn affecting management of Fraser Stocks.
- **Integrating with Forum Planning:** The JTWG stands to gain from a tighter integration with the Forum planning committee, ensuring that their technical insights shape the Forum's agendas, fostering richer, more informed discussions.
- **Operational Transparency:** A clear delineation of the JTWG's role, coupled with an outward transparency in its operations, especially in data review and processing, is essential. This clarity can bolster trust and fortify collaboration among participants.

Review of the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) and implications for the Forum process

Overview of the FSCMA and its key terms.

The Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) stands as a unique example along the path to Canada expressing its commitment by fostering a nation-to-nation,

government-to-government relationship with the member Nations. Central to this agreement is the emphasis on reconciliation and the collaborative governance of Fraser Salmon.

The Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) emphasizes the deep-rooted significance of the Fraser River and its salmon populations. It recognizes the intricate blend of histories, rights, and aspirations that Indigenous communities share with the broader governance structures in Canada. Central to the FSCMA is the principle of collaborative governance, which seeks to establish nation-to-nation arrangements that foster a collective approach to recommendations, decision-making, planning, and implementation processes.

A cornerstone of this agreement is the Fraser Salmon Management Board, a Tier 2 decision-making body dedicated to the collaborative governance and management of Fraser Salmon.

Alongside this, the Joint Technical Committee, another Tier 2 committee under the FSCMA, provides invaluable technical expertise, ensuring that governance structures benefit from rigorous scientific knowledge.

The FSCMA is further anchored by guiding principles that prioritize collaboration, respect for Indigenous rights and knowledge, and the sustainable management of Fraser Salmon.

Additionally, the agreement underscores the importance of the Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMP) related to Fraser Salmon. These plans serve as foundational blueprints for the sustainable management of salmon populations, aligning with broader ecological and community aspirations.

Insights from the Interviews Regarding Fraser Forum Renewal and the FSCMA

The Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) represents a significant shift in the approach to salmon management in the Fraser River Basin. The interviews conducted provided valuable insights into the relationship between the FSCMA and the Fraser Forum, shedding light on the evolving dynamics of collaborative governance in the region.

A recurring theme from the interviews was the **new context in the Fraser**. As many interviewees acknowledged, Fraser River Salmon management now encompasses a suite of relationships and structures, including the Fraser Salmon Management Council, the collaborative agreement, and the Fraser Salmon Management Board that must lead adjacent process like the Fraser Forum and integrate activities under an umbrella that serves to coordinate activities and information for its members and participants.

This evolving landscape underscores the importance of ensuring that the renewed Fraser Forum aligns with and complements these broader collaborative structures.

"... essentially Forum needs to fit the new context that exists in the Fraser. So, the Fraser Salmon Management Council, the collaborative agreement, the Fraser Salmon Management Board...the new forum needs to fit."

The principles of **co-management and collaboration** are another focal point. Interviewees highlighted the momentum towards a more collaborative approach, emphasizing the challenges and opportunities that come with it.

Different regions, such as the upper, mid, and lower Fraser bring diverse perspectives to the table, making platforms like the Fraser Forum crucial for fostering dialogue and building consensus action where there are considerations impacting multiple areas.

"Even If we kind of exclude forum, and within the context of collaborative management or co-management that, you know, there's this agreement (FSMCA), ... there seems to be momentum in that direction..."

Connecting conversations: Forum and new structures under the FSMCA

A consistent theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of effective communication and feedback loops within the Fraser Forum process. Interviewees emphasized that the success of the renewed Fraser Forum hinges not just on the discussions that take place during the meetings, but critically on what happens afterward.

They highlighted the necessity of a structured and transparent follow-up mechanism after Forum meetings. This mechanism should ensure that insights, recommendations, and action points generated during the Forum are not only documented but are also effectively communicated to the broader structures of the FSCMA, including the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC) and the Fraser Salmon Management Board (FSMB).

Moreover, interviewees expressed a desire for clarity on how their input is considered and integrated into subsequent decision-making processes. They voiced concerns about potential gaps in communication, which could lead to feelings of disenfranchisement among Forum participants related to the outcomes of the FSMC or FSMB process.

To address this, it's imperative that the renewed Fraser Forum incorporates a system where feedback from the FSMC and FSMB is relayed back to the Forum participants ahead of subsequent meetings. This two-way communication ensures that all are informed about the

outcomes of their discussions and how they influence broader salmon management strategies in the Fraser River Basin.

The interviews shed light on the need for a renewed **technical review and feedback loop** that would improve an integral element of the process. The role of the **Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG)** in supporting the Fraser Forum's discussions was highlighted, emphasizing the importance of translating technical information for a broader audience.

"Joint technical working group feeding into a tier one process. Like, hey, these are your concerns and here is the information you need to have. And does that happen at forum, the tier one? Yes, but it needs improvement...."

".. all joint technical working group members should be able to look under the hood, to see what the data looks like behind decisions and forecasts, then we can be informing the tier 1 group on what they need to know for the discussions we need to have."

As conversations evolved over the interviews and the 2023 Forum process, participants from within and outside the JTWG called for a renewed approach that could involve re-thinking the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the JTWG. While this document does not make recommendations for the contents of a new TOR, we do address core elements of what participants said they would like to see from a renewed JTWG process as well as incorporate recommendations for an update to participation, feedback loops and how the JTWG could fit into the structures of Fraser salmon management under the FSCMA and a renewed forum.

IFMP

The FSCMA has brought the IFMP for Fraser Salmon into focus for the Fraser Salmon Management Council and the Fraser Salmon Management Board.

However, it's crucial to recognize that among Fraser First Nations, there exists a palpable dissatisfaction with both the IFMP document and the process through which it has been developed. This discontent stems from a history of perceived inadequacies and concerns about the inclusivity, recognition of Rights, and transparency of the process.

While the FSCMA emphasizes the importance of the IFMP, the reality is that a comprehensive review and action plan for a revitalized IFMP process and document have not yet been incorporated into the work plans of the FSCMC or FSCMB. This gap creates tension, especially given the Fraser Forum's historical and ongoing connections to the development of the IFMP as it pertains to Fraser Salmon.

The challenge lies in reconciling the acknowledged dissatisfaction with the IFMP and the current lack of capacity or a concrete plan to address this at the FSMC or FSMB levels.

This situation underscores the need for appropriate funding and continued dialogue, understanding, and collaborative efforts to ensure that all voices are heard and that the governance structures evolve to address these critical concerns.

Conclusions

In its renewed form, the Fraser Forum could stand aligned to the principles and objectives set forth in the Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA).

The FSCMA's strong emphasis on collaborative governance repositions the Forum as a central platform for enriched dialogue, with the potential to weave together Indigenous knowledge and scientific research.

Communicating insights, particularly from entities like the FSMC, FSMB and the Joint Technical Committee would ensure that the Forum's discussions are not only deeply rooted in technical expertise but also resonate with the overarching governance vision set by the FSCMA. Central to that goal is the role of the JTWG in looking beyond the sometimes-narrower scope of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC), connecting the work of the two technical bodies while ensuring that the full scope of the Forum participants' interests are at least noted, and the particulars addressed with insight where possible.

As the Fraser Forum embarks on its renewed journey, it should position itself as a cornerstone of a larger process that becomes a model collaborative dialogue and decision-making. By aligning its operations and ethos with the principles, structures, and objectives of the FSCMA, the Forum is poised to play a pivotal role in shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and respectful future for salmon management in the Fraser River Basin.

Key findings and Recommendations regarding Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) and implications for the Forum process

Recommendations - The need for interconnectedness of the Fraser Forum with the broader collaborative structures established by the FSCMA

1. Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities: There is a consensus that both the **FSMC and FSMB should have clearly defined relationship, roles and responsibilities to the Forum** process to avoid confusion and ensure input from the forum process is incorporated into its decision-making.
2. The FSCMA has established a new context in the Fraser, introducing structures like the Fraser Salmon Management Council and the Fraser Salmon Management Board. **The Fraser Forum must ensure its activities and discussions are in harmony with these broader collaborative structures and their work.**
3. While the Fraser Forum is also a place for dialogue and learning conversations held at both the tier 1 and 2 levels, the **need to see traction for ideas and outcomes that bear fruit from the Fraser Forum** meetings is desired by participants. A clearer **connection to the structures created by the FSMCA is required.**
4. There's a need for a robust feedback mechanism after Forum meetings to ensure effective communication with broader FSCMA structures.
5. The FSCMA's focus on collaborative governance underscores the importance of the Fraser Forum as a platform for dialogue. **The Forum is positioned to prioritize discussions that enable the inclusion and parallel consideration of both Indigenous knowledge and scientific research**, ensuring a holistic approach to salmon management.
6. **Strengthen the process and outcomes from the regional FSMC process** and involve delegates from each of the regional processes in the forum planning committee.
7. The desire for a **collaborative approach to the IFMP** document and process: The dissatisfaction among Fraser First Nations with the IFMP process and document poses a challenge. The Fraser Forum, with its connections to the IFMP's development, should play a proactive role in facilitating discussions around this discontent, seeking ways to

address concerns and bridge gaps. The success of this effort would depend on a new clear pathway of connections to the FSMC and FSMB process.

Additional Recommendations for Adapting the Fraser Forum Process:

- 1. Refine the role of the JTWG:** The interviews highlighted the role of the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) in supporting the Forum's discussions. In its new form, **the JTWG should realign itself and understand its role and purpose in the Fraser Forum cycle.** This includes a new understanding of what information is reviewed by whom and when, as well as contributing to the development of the Forum workshops to align the agendas with available information as well as topic relevancy to the broader Forum participants. The Fraser Forum should continue to leverage this technical expertise, translating complex information for a broader audience. The Forum may want to consider a review of the JTWG Terms of Reference led by its co-chairs to reestablish guidelines for the activities of the JTWG and how it conducts reviews of technical information. The goal would be to establish clarity and predictability in the process and enhance outcomes and support for the Fraser Forum.
- 2. Guiding Principles as Cornerstones:** The Fraser Forum has been an example of collaborative aspirations towards working together, setting the stage for the principles now enshrined in the FSCMA. These principles, which emphasize collaboration, respect for Indigenous Rights, and sustainable management, are not new to the Forum but are a continuation of its longstanding ethos. While at various times the degree to which there has been satisfaction from participants that these principles are being practiced, they have endured as a guide for how the Forum conducts its activities. Recognizing the Forum's leading role, it's essential to acknowledge both its achievements and the challenges faced in actualizing these principles. Moving forward, the focus should be on deepening the 'how' of trust-building. This means not just celebrating past successes but also learning from challenges, ensuring transparent communication, active listening, and consistent follow-through on commitments. In doing so, the Forum can continue to be a living embodiment of its foundational principles, fostering an environment of mutual respect and trust.
- 3. Strengthen Collaborative Mechanisms:** The Fraser Forum should introduce mechanisms that foster deeper collaboration, ensuring that discussions are enriched by diverse perspectives, from Indigenous knowledge systems to scientific research.
- 4. Enhance Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement a structured feedback loop to ensure that insights from Forum discussions are effectively communicated to the broader FSCMA structures and that feedback is integrated into subsequent discussions.

5. **Facilitate IFMP Discussions:** Given the concerns around the IFMP, the Fraser Forum should prioritize discussions around this topic, seeking ways to address the concerns of Fraser First Nations and exploring avenues for a more inclusive and transparent IFMP process.
6. **Continuous Alignment Checks:** Regularly review the alignment of the Fraser Forum's activities with the FSCMA's guiding principles and structures, ensuring that the Forum remains attuned to the evolving landscape of salmon management.
7. **Capacity Building:** Recognizing the challenges posed by the lack of capacity or a concrete plan to address the IFMP's concerns at the FSMC or FSMB levels, the Fraser Forum should consider initiatives that build capacity, fostering a deeper understanding of the issues at hand and facilitating informed decision-making.

Recommendations for renewing the Joint Technical Working Group

The Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) plays a crucial role in enhancing the Forum's discussions. As the Forum continues to evolve, it's imperative for the JTWG to reassess and refine its role to meet the changing needs and expectations.

To facilitate this, the Fraser Forum should spearhead a comprehensive review of the JTWG's Terms of Reference, led by its co-chairs. This review aims to establish clear guidelines for the JTWG's activities, with a particular focus on its approach to reviewing technical information. The review's main objective is to ensure clarity, consistency, and efficiency in the JTWG's operations, thereby bolstering the support and outcomes for the Fraser Forum.

While this review is underway, the following operational enhancements can be implemented to optimize the JTWG's in-season function:

1. **Operational Rules:** The JTWG needs clear operational rules to ensure timely data presentation to JTWG process and effective integration with the Forum's planning processes. This will additionally provide stability, predictability and encourage trust to be developed.
2. **Transparency in Operations:** Clear communication about the JTWG's activities and review processes is essential to foster trust among all participants. In fostering a culture that strives to adhere to the guiding principles of the FSCMA, the JTWG should be able to present itself as a trusted collaborative body that operates in ways that uphold these principles.

3. **Timely Data Provision:** Recognizing the inherent challenges posed by the salmon life cycle and the complexities in gathering and interpreting stock assessment data in alignment with the Forum's schedule, the JTWG should still prioritize the timely delivery of technical information wherever feasible. While capacity issues in data gathering and interpretation are acknowledged, even incremental improvements in data provision timelines can significantly enhance the Forum's effectiveness. It's understood that achieving a 100% solution may not be immediately feasible; however, making consistent efforts towards this goal can offer substantial benefits. Thus, timely data provision should remain a cornerstone of the JTWG's operations, with a focus on continuous improvement and adaptability.
4. **Integration with Forum Planning:** The JTWG should be tightly integrated with the Forum Planning Committee. This ensures that its technical insights directly shape the Forum's agenda, leading to more informed discussions, and set the stage for better communications and transparency for all Forum participants.

As the Fraser Forum looks to its future, it should position itself as a central platform for collaborative dialogue and recommendations to decision-making bodies, while ensuring its operations and ethos are in harmony with the principles, structures, and objectives of the FSCMA. This alignment will empower the Forum to play a transformative role in fostering a sustainable, inclusive, and respectful approach to salmon management in the Fraser River Basin.

It's evident that while the Fraser Forum serves multiple purposes, from technical discussions to social interactions, there's a need for clarity on its mandate and objectives.

Engagement and Participation

The Fraser Forum, as a collaborative platform, thrives on the diverse voices and perspectives of its participants. This section delves into the motivations, concerns, and aspirations of these participants, shedding light on the intricate dynamics that shape the Forum's discussions and decisions related to its function. By understanding these dynamics, we can identify areas of strength and those that require attention to ensure the Forum remains a model of collaborative governance.

From the nuances of productivity measures to the challenges of consensus-building, this analysis provides an overview of many participants' experiences. It also offers actionable recommendations to address the identified challenges, ensuring the Forum continues to evolve in a manner that respects and integrates all voices.

For policymakers, facilitators, and participants involved in the Forum, this section serves as a valuable resource. It offers insights that can guide future engagements, ensuring discussions are inclusive, productive, and aligned with the Forum's overarching objectives.

We recommend that those involved in the Forum's planning and decision-making processes (as they relate to the form and function of Forum), especially members of the Forum Planning Committee, utilize this analysis to inform their strategies and actions, fostering an environment of trust, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.

Motivations, Concerns, and Aspirations: Insights from Forum Participants

The Fraser River, with its dynamic interplay of ecology and culture, has always been a focal point for the communities along its banks. At the heart of many participants' involvement in the Fraser Forum is a profound sense of shared responsibility. Recognizing the river's immense significance, they are united by a collective drive to ensure its sustainable management, safeguarding both its salmon populations and the intricate ecosystems they support.

The Forum's inception reflected the desire of many to establish a new era of collaborative governance. This model, which emphasizes partnership and mutual respect, resonates deeply with many participants. They are committed to developing the platform the Forum provides, with aspirations to bridge the often-diverse worlds of Indigenous knowledge systems, scientific research, and policy frameworks in increasingly meaningful ways. Through dialogues, they navigate the complexities of salmon management, seeking solutions that honor all perspectives, respect the inherent rights of the First Nation communities, and uphold the current responsibilities and requirements of DFO and Canada.

For many participants, the Forum is more than just a discussion platform; it represents an opportunity to leave a legacy. They envision a future where the Fraser River continues to flourish, sustaining life and culture for generations to come. This vision is not just aspirational but is deeply rooted in their sense of duty. Whether from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, First Nations, or AAROM (Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management), many participants are professionally intertwined with Fraser Salmon management. Their participation in the Forum is a testament to their commitment, transcending policy to reflect a genuine dedication to their professional mandates.

The motivations of First Nations participants are deeply personal and span both time and space. They often recount a spiritual bond with the Fraser River, a connection nurtured over countless generations. This bond is not just about the past but is a living relationship that informs their present actions and future aspirations. Their involvement in the Forum is seen as both a

continuation of their ancestors' legacy and a commitment to the generations yet unborn. This spiritual connection is complemented by tangible concerns. The Fraser River, for them, is a lifeline that could provide sustenance once again, underpinning cultural practices that have been passed down through generations. The health of the river has direct implications for their food security, health, wellbeing, and the preservation of traditions that define their identity.

The motivations of the Fraser Forum participants are as diverse as they are profound, reflecting a tapestry of professional, cultural, and personal commitments, all converging towards a shared goal: the sustainable future of the Fraser River.

Strengthening Inclusivity and Representation: Participants stressed the importance of ensuring diverse participation and meaningful inclusion of all relevant parties in the Forum process.

Diverse Productivity Measures:

Participants, particularly from Indigenous backgrounds, have highlighted the diverse ways in which productivity is measured. A recurring sentiment is the dominance of discussions by a few key individuals, leading to feelings of marginalization, among others. To address this, it's recommended to encourage a rotation of speakers or representatives from various groups. This ensures that fresh perspectives, especially from younger participants, are consistently introduced. Structured sessions where different measures of productivity, especially those from Indigenous perspectives, are discussed can also be integrated into the Forum's decision-making processes.

Consensus Building in the Fraser Forum Context:

Navigating the intricacies of consensus within the Fraser Forum presents unique challenges. Particularly, participants such as consultants and technical advisors often grapple with the feeling of not having adequate authority to shape or define consensus. It's essential to clarify that within the Forum's framework, consensus isn't about decision-making; the Forum remains a non-decision-making entity. Instead, its role is to inform the decision-making structures established by the FSMCA.

The essence of consensus in the Forum revolves around shared perspectives and understanding. It's about ensuring that all participants are "on the same page" and viewing challenges and opportunities through a similar lens. As aptly captured by a participant, "How far out do we need to stand before we all recognize we are looking at the same thing? This is where we might find the kind of consensus we need."

To streamline this process, it's crucial to establish a clear, mutually agreed-upon definition of consensus that resonates with all participants. Furthermore, introducing training sessions or workshops focused on consensus-building can empower participants with the tools and insights needed to foster a shared understanding and collaborative spirit.

Representation Gaps:

There have been concerns about certain nations or groups not being adequately represented or participating in the Forum. To bridge these gaps, a periodic review of the Forum's participant list is essential. Actively reaching out to underrepresented groups or nations and fostering an environment where concerns about representation are addressed promptly can also be beneficial.

Forum Planning Committee:

The Forum Planning Committee's effectiveness has been a topic of discussion. The influence of its structure, membership, and dominant personalities has been noted. To address this, revisiting the Terms of Reference for clarity in roles and responsibilities is crucial. Rotating membership or introducing term limits can also ensure diverse perspectives are consistently represented.

Achievement Objectives:

There is a clear desire among participants to witness measurable outcomes from the Forum's decisions. To meet this, clear and measurable objectives encompassing both ecological and social achievements should be developed. Regular reviews based on participant feedback can ensure these objectives remain relevant and achievable.

Location and Accessibility: The importance of meeting locations that allow participants to connect with different areas and learn from local communities has been emphasized. The Forum Planning Committee has tried to host the meetings in many locations. However, travel logistics, weather, and other unpredictable variables often create havoc with plans. It has been noted that there is a desire to hold meetings in more culturally relevant locations for First Nations participants. This request along with the realities of travel may present difficult challenges that could require compromise in either direction. It is equally vital to ensure all meeting locations are accessible to all.

Strengthen Inclusivity and Representation: Interviewees emphasized the importance of diverse representation and meaningful inclusion. To strengthen this, fostering an environment where all voices are heard and respected is essential. Participants in the interviews noted that workshops or training sessions on inclusivity and representation can further ensure all participants value and understand the importance of diverse perspectives in the Forum's processes. Determining what workshops and training, to whom they would be offered to have the most impact, and how they would fit into the annual schedule are all considerations that would need to be addressed.

Revising the Forum's Mandate and Objectives

Recommendations to consider for aligning with the goals of the FSCMA

The following section presents recommendations drawn from participant interviews. While they might not represent the views of every participant, they provide a comprehensive summary of the suggestions made during the interviews. These recommendations are offered for the committee's consideration, with the aim of aligning the Forum more closely with the goals of the FSCMA and ensuring its ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

Regional Engagement and Collaboration:

- The FSCMA envisions regional bodies feeding up into a larger process. However, the implementation has faced challenges, especially in areas without pre-existing AAROM bodies.
- **Recommendation:** Utilize functional pre-existing AAROM bodies to support areas where they are lacking if desired. Engage with Nations in those areas to develop a collaborative process that aligns with the FSCMA's goals. These could be built off or augmenting the regional FSMC process and connecting into Forum via Forum Planning Committee, bringing regional conversations into one place. Regional needs and interests are discussed, and those migratory topics can be scaled and included in the Forum.

Forum's Role in Co-Management:

- The Forum could serve as a venue for regional conversations, tying into the FSCMA process (FSMC, FSMC, JTC). This could drive more attendance and participation, especially in discussions related to salmon management.
- **Recommendation:** Reframe the Forum as a platform dedicated to regional discussions that extend to the migratory level. Ensure that both the topics addressed and the overall process align seamlessly with the FSCMA's objectives. This alignment should prioritize engagement with essential groups and knowledge holders. Subsequently, these discussions should be channeled to the relevant FSMCA structure, culminating in a structured feedback mechanism.

Feedback Mechanism:

- The FSCMA process could benefit from a feedback mechanism where questions from the FSMB are addressed and integrated into the Forum's discussions.
- **Recommendation:** Establish a structured feedback loop between the FSMB and the Forum to ensure alignment with the FSCMA's goals and enhance collaborative decision-making.

Focus on Shared Objectives:

- The Forum could play a pivotal role in addressing specific fisheries-related challenges, such as developing sharing formulas and rebuilding strategies for Chinook.
- **Recommendation:** Use the Forum as a platform to discuss and develop strategies that align with the FSCMA's vision for the future, ensuring a collaborative approach to salmon management.

Topic Requests at the Forum:

- There is a suggestion to have a call for topic requests at the Forum, allowing participants to propose subjects of interest.
- **Recommendation:** Introduce a system where participants can suggest topics for discussion at the Forum. If adopted, the recommendation to scale regional conversations through representation at the Forum Planning Committee could be the mechanism. The Forum Planning Committee can then review these requests and determine the most appropriate platform for each topic, ensuring alignment with the FSCMA structures objectives.

Formalize a Clearer Connection between Tier One Forum Technical Information and FSMC Process:

- The importance of a robust technical process that seamlessly integrates the contributions of tier one organizations into the discussions at the FSMC and the decisions made at the FSMB has been underscored by participants. Such integration is vital for ensuring a cohesive approach that truly reflects the collective insights and expertise of all involved.
- **Recommendation:** To enhance this integration, participants from the JTWG representing First Nations organizations should consistently share a report with the FSMC after each JTWG session. This report would encapsulate the JTWG's work from their perspective. While it might align with the general outcomes of the JTWG, it could also offer additional context or insights that provide a more comprehensive understanding of the discussions. This practice would ensure that the unique perspectives and insights of First Nations representatives are effectively communicated and considered in the broader FSMC process.

Consider Expanding the Scope of the Forum to Incorporate Diverse Sectors

- Participants have indicated a need for the Forum to be more encompassing. While the primary focus has been on co-managing Salmon in a bilateral conversation, there is a recognition that the challenges facing the Fraser River's salmon are interconnected with broader regional and global issues. This includes the impact of recreational and commercial fishing activities on Salmon and those that Civic and Provincial regulations along with the associated activity have on their habitat. To ensure an integrated approach to salmon management, it is crucial to incorporate perspectives from other

sectors. These sectors play a significant role in the Fraser River ecosystem and have a direct impact on salmon populations. Their inclusion in the Forum process would provide a more comprehensive view of the challenges and potential solutions.

- **Recommendations:**

- **Engage with Recreational and Commercial Provincial and Civic Representatives:** Actively seek out representatives from these sectors and governments to participate in Forum discussions. This could be achieved through targeted outreach and invitations to specific meetings or workshops.
- **Incorporate Topics Relevant to These Sectors and Governments:** Ensure that the Forum's agenda includes topics that are relevant to the recreational and commercial sectors as well as those habitat considerations that fall under the authorities of the Provincial or Civic Governments.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Establish a clear feedback mechanism where insights and recommendations from the recreational and commercial sectors as well as Provincial and Civic governments can be channeled into the FSMC and FSMB processes. This ensures that their perspectives and objectives are considered in decision-making processes.
- **Regular Updates:** Provide regular updates to the recreational and commercial sectors about the Forum's discussions and decisions. This fosters transparency and ensures that these sectors are informed about developments that might impact on them.

In the context of this report, the "Revising the Forum's Mandate and Objectives" section attempts to bridge the Forum's historical significance with actionable steps for its future evolution. The recommendations presented, drawn from the voices of those intimately involved in the Forum's processes, offer a roadmap for enhancing its alignment with the FSCMA's goals. While these recommendations reflect a range of perspectives, they are not exhaustive and should be viewed as a starting point for further deliberation. The committee is encouraged to consider these suggestions in tandem with the broader objectives of the report, ensuring that the Forum remains a dynamic, inclusive, and effective platform for collaborative salmon management in the Fraser River region. As the Forum continues to evolve, it is essential to remain receptive to diverse insights, ensuring that its mandate and objectives are both responsive to current challenges and anticipatory of future needs.

Operationalizing Recommendations: A Practical Approach to Implementation

Various recommendations have been presented throughout this report. While these suggestions provide a roadmap for renewing the Fraser Forum in the new context brought on by the FSCMA, the next logical step is to consider how these recommendations might be operationalized.

This section offers a starting point for discussions on how to implement some of the key recommendations. It is not an exhaustive list but represents pivotal suggestions that are ready for action.

For readers, this section serves as a practical guide, detailing potential timelines, activities, and the groups involved in each recommendation's implementation. It provides a structured approach to transitioning from recommendation to action. By understanding the 'how' of each recommendation, interest can better visualize the path forward and the collaborative efforts required. This section can be particularly useful for those directly involved in the Forum's operations, offering them a clear blueprint for integrating these recommendations into their workflows.

1. Enhanced Pre-Forum Technical Review:

- **Group Involved:** Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG).
- **Timing:** September.
- **Activity:**
 - Review technical information related to pre-season forecasts, in-season stock assessments, and post-season data (where available) from the previous year.
 - Address any challenges related to the timeliness of data delivery, meeting outcomes, and other pertinent issues. This could include the development of agendas for the JTWG along expected timelines for the appropriate information to become available.
 - Highlight technical areas that may influence or drive the Forum agendas and activities. These insights are crucial for shaping the direction and focus of the Forum's discussions and should feed into the work of the Forum Planning Committee.

2. Incorporate JTWG into Forum Planning:

- **Group Involved:** JTWG and Forum Planning Committee.

- **Timing:** Ongoing throughout the year.
- **Activity:**
 - A First Nations representative and a DFO representative from the JTWG could join the Forum Planning Committee to ensure that the technical insights from the pre forum technical review are integrated into the planning and agenda-setting process for the Fraser Forum Main Meetings.

3. **Adding Structure in the preseason to the Forum Process:**

- **Group Involved:** Forum Planning Committee and Participants.
- **Timing:** Three times a year between January and May.
- **Activity:**
 - Meetings continue to be split between Tier 1 (First Nations only) in the mornings and Tier 2 (First Nations and DFO) in the afternoons.
 - Recommend that Tier 1 time has more structure. The Forum Planning Committee should reserve time in the Tier 1 agenda for consideration of topics brought forward by the First Nations delegates on the JTWG. Ensure time to return to debrief.
 - Consider the use of breakout / working groups to focus on particulars, parallel scope or related topics.
 - Consider a conference style day with opportunities to attend talks by different speakers, particularly where there is the desire for information sharing between Nations.
 - All considerations and structures are ideally proposed and developed in the preseason meetings, and an annual agenda is circulated subject to change for in season developments.

4. **Feedback Loop to FSMC and FSMB:**

- **Groups Involved:** Fraser Forum, FSMC Secretariat.
- **Timing:** After each Fraser Forum Main Meeting.
- **Activity:**
 - Outcomes from Fraser Forum meetings to be reviewed by the FSMC. Summaries distributed to FSMC delegates and the FSMB for discussion and preparation for the next Forum Main Meeting.

5. **FSMC and FSMB Communication to Forum:**

- **Group Involved:** FSMC and FSMB.
- **Timing:** Before the subsequent Fraser Forum Main Meeting.
- **Activity:**
 - Provide feedback and comments on the outcomes of the previous Fraser Forum Main Meeting, ensuring a two-way communication channel. What

from the previous forum has been incorporated into the work of the FSMC/FSMB? Are there other processes where some conversations from forum should be continued?

6. Streamlined Decision-Making:

- **Group Involved:** FSMC, FSMB.
- **Timing:** Ongoing.
- **Activity:**
 - Work towards a more efficient decision-making process, ensuring timely decisions that are effectively communicated back to the Fraser Forum.

7. Enhanced Community Involvement:

- **Group Involved:** Fraser Forum, local communities, knowledge holders.
- **Timing:** Throughout the year.
- **Activity:**
 - Incorporate traditional practices and engage with local communities and knowledge holders to foster a more inclusive and culturally relevant process.

8. Funding and Staffing:

- **Group Involved:** FSMC.
- **Timing:** As soon as possible.
- **Activity:**
 - Secure funding to appropriately staff the FSMC, including a secretariat and technical staff, ensuring the needs of member nations are met.

It is essential to emphasize that the examples provided here represent only a fraction of the recommendations put forth in this report. They serve as illustrative starting points, shedding light on the potential pathways to implementation. However, the comprehensive work of thoroughly examining, refining, and adapting these recommendations, coupled with devising detailed plans for their operationalization, remains ahead. The journey of transforming these recommendations into actionable strategies requires collective reflection, collaboration, and commitment from everyone involved in the Fraser Forum. The path forward is one of continuous evolution, ensuring that the Forum remains adaptive, responsive, and effective in its mission.

Conclusion

The Fraser Salmon Collaborative Management Agreement (FSCMA) stands as a testament to Canada's dedication to fostering a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship with the member Nations, with reconciliation and collaborative governance of Fraser Salmon at its heart. The Fraser River, with its salmon populations, represents the intricate weave of histories, rights, and aspirations of Indigenous communities within the broader Canadian governance framework.

The FSCMA's core principle is collaborative governance, aiming for collective decision-making, planning, and implementation. The Fraser Salmon Management Board and the Joint Technical Committee, both pivotal Tier 2 entities under the FSCMA, are instrumental in this collaborative structure, ensuring governance and technical expertise are harmoniously integrated. Interview insights have shed light on the evolving dynamics of salmon management in the Fraser River Basin. With the new context in the Fraser, it is evident that the Fraser Forum must align seamlessly with these broader collaborative entities. The diverse perspectives from different Fraser regions emphasize the Forum's essential role in fostering dialogue and achieving consensus.

Effective communication has been identified as a cornerstone of the Fraser Forum process. The success of the renewed Forum is not just about the discussions held but also about the actionable insights derived post-meeting. It is crucial that these insights are communicated effectively to the broader FSCMA structures, especially the Fraser Salmon Management Council (FSMC) and the Fraser Salmon Management Board (FSMB). A transparent feedback mechanism is paramount, ensuring Forum participants are well-informed about how their contributions shape the broader salmon management strategies in the Fraser River Basin.

However, as we conclude, it is clear that the journey is far from over. The recommendations presented in this report are a starting point. The task of reviewing, sorting, and implementing these recommendations in meaningful ways lies ahead. There is a pressing need to integrate multiple knowledge systems into decision-making, further capacity building, and ensure that the aspirations of all involved parties are met. Moreover, for these recommendations to be effectively implemented, it is imperative that structures created by the FSCMA, especially the FSMC, receive appropriate funding. Without adequate resources, the potential of these structures and the broader goals of the FSCMA might remain unrealized. The path forward is one of collaboration, understanding, and commitment to ensuring the sustainable and inclusive management of the Fraser River's salmon populations.