



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada and Province of Prince Edward Island invest in mussel research and breeding program

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Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

With the longest coastline in the world, Canada's coastal communities rely on the fish and seafood industry as an integral contributor to local and regional economies. This is why the Government of Canada and the Province of Prince Edward Island (PEI) today announced funding to support a project by the PEI Marine Science Organization, through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund.

The funding—a total contribution of more than \$300,000—will see the development of genomic tools with world-class applied research in the aquaculture industry.

The PEI Marine Science Organization is a Crown Corporation with a mandate to provide support and participate in research that will investigate areas of priority to industry and government. Their innovative project will undertake research and development of genomic resources specific to blue mussels for the future implementation of a modern and sustainable mussel breeding program.

Changing ecosystem conditions and potential variability in the successful collection of naturally spawned seed are the more prevalent risks associated with the current method for obtaining seed supply. The research and development of genomic resources will facilitate the development of a mussel broodstock program that is critical for the sustainability and further development of the mussel industry.

The PEI mussel industry accounts for approximately 80% of Canada's production of blue mussels and is an extremely important contributor to PEI's coastal and rural communities with a direct economic value of more than \$60 million and employing over a thousand employees.

Funding this organizations will result in a positive impact on local and regional economies in PEI. The contribution comes from the \$400 million Atlantic Fisheries Fund, jointly funded by the federal and provincial governments, and focuses on increasing opportunities and market value for sustainably sourced, high-quality fish and seafood products from Atlantic Canada.

The Atlantic Fisheries Fund will continue to invest in projects over the seven-year life of the program. The commercial fisheries and aquaculture industry, Indigenous groups, universities and academia and industry associations and organizations, including research institutions, may apply.

Eligible projects must focus on:

- Innovation – to support research and development of new innovations that contribute to sustainability of the fish and seafood sector, and to create partnerships and networks that aim to promote and encourage innovations in the sector;

- Infrastructure – to adopt or adapt new technologies, processes, or equipment to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the fish and seafood sector;
- Science Partnerships – fisheries and aquaculture industry based partnerships with academia and institutions to enhance knowledge and understanding of the impacts of changing oceanographic conditions and sustainable harvesting technology.

Quotes

“The shellfish aquaculture industry is a major generator of economic activity in rural and coastal communities in the Atlantic Region. With the current pandemic, fisheries are faced with unique challenges, but we are proud to fund innovative projects through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to respond to these challenges. Together, we will ensure that Canada’s well-known reputation for quality seafood products remains strong. ”

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

“This project is one that my department is very proud of because it is so important to the future of our aquaculture, and in particular our mussel industry on PEI. Our fisheries and aquatic industries are major contributors to the Island’s economy, and by accessing beneficial funding through the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, these industries will continue to strive for success and sustainability.”

The Honourable Jamie Fox, Prince Edward Island Minister of Fisheries and Communities

“As a proud Islander I know how important the mussel industry is to both our local and national economy. That is why I am so glad to see our Federal and Provincial governments working together to ensure this fishery is directly benefiting from the latest science and technology. By applying genome research to the mussel fishery, I know this sector will find new ways to expand and become even more economically and environmentally sustainable for years to come.”

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Associate Minister of National Defence and Member of Parliament for Cardigan

“Genomics innovations are transforming strategic industries like mussel aquaculture in Prince Edward Island. Significantly, the application of genomic tools is expected to double blue mussel production in the province within the next 10 years. Genome Atlantic is proud to support this industry-leading initiative through Genome Canada’s Regional Priorities Partnership Program, and we thank our provincial, federal and industry partners for their generous support and collaboration,” said Dr. Steve Armstrong, President and CEO of Genome Atlantic.

Dr. Steve Armstrong, President and CEO of Genome Atlantic

Quick Facts

- The Atlantic Fisheries Fund will invest over \$400 million over seven years to support Canada’s fish and seafood sector.
- The federal government will provide 70% of the funding, with 30% coming from the Atlantic provinces.
- The fund aims to help Canada’s seafood sector transition to meet growing market demands for products that are high quality, value-added, and sustainably sourced.
- In addition to support from the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, this specific project is receiving an additional:

- \$200,000 from Genome Atlantic through Genome Canada's Regional Priorities Partnership Program;
- \$200,000 from the Province of PEI outside of the Atlantic Fisheries Fund, and;
- \$200,000 from industry groups including Atlantic Aqua Farms, Prince Edward Aqua and PEI Mussel King.

Associated Links

- [Atlantic Fisheries Fund](#)
- [Atlantic Fisheries Fund application](#)
- [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#)
- [Genome Video](#)
- Toll-free program contact: 1-844-795-9718

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