

Oyster Enhancement Fund

GUIDELINES

OYSTER ENHANCEMENT FUND

FUND DESCRIPTION

The Oyster Enhancement Fund is designed to enhance commercially fished oyster beds, develop a new oyster bed, as well as improve spat collection and water quality in strategic areas in PEI. The purchase of oysters under the Fund is in response to the on-going disruptions of key seafood markets caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund is intended to allow for the purchase of choice grade, cocktail-sized (2 – 3 inches) and/or market-sized (> 3 inch) oysters from PEI water-column (i.e. off-bottom) oyster growers. The Fund aims to improve the quality of oysters harvested from the commercial oyster fishery in future years. In addition the Fund will ensure limited disruptions of the production and market cycle by supporting the oyster aquaculture industry in making room for future product.

The onset and spread of COVID-19 continues to create economic challenges particularly for the seafood sector, which heavily relies on the food service industries (e.g., restaurants). The Fund is a one-time emergency measure that will be administered through two third-party industry organizations. The PEI Aquaculture Alliance will administer the funds while the PEI Shellfish Association will spread the purchased oysters as part of the provincially funded Shellfish Enhancement Program.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Must be:
 - An individual or legally incorporated company involved in oyster aquaculture in PEI;
 - Currently active in growing/cultivating water-column (i.e., off-bottom) oysters; and
 - Holding all necessary permits, licenses and leases at the time of application.

- Must also be able to:
 - Guarantee that the oysters to sell to the Fund are:
 - Choice grade;
 - Sourced from a water-column (i.e., off-bottom) lease; and
 - Cocktail-sized (2 – 3 inches) and/or market-sized (> 3 inch) oysters.
 - Provide proof of income from sales of market-sized oysters from water-column (i.e., off-bottom) lease(s) received in 2018 OR 2019; and
 - Confirm staff and resource availability to harvest, clean*, treat**, and grade oysters, as well as transport to a pre-determined site.

*Clean refers to, for example, oysters being relatively free of spat set, barnacles, and/or double oysters.

**Treat refers to a lime/brine dip as per established Fisheries and Oceans Canada protocols for the transfer of oysters under the existing National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms.

FUNDING

- \$0.20 – \$0.30 per oyster, up to a maximum of \$20,000 per applicant*.
- Only one application per applicant/operation is eligible for the Fund.

*The amount of oysters that will be purchased from each water-column (i.e., off-bottom) oyster grower will be based on a percentage of their income from sales of market-sized oysters (above 2 inch in size) from water-column (i.e., off-bottom) leases received in 2018 OR 2019. The percentage and the amount paid per oyster will be calculated based on industry interest and determined following receipt of all the applications to the Fund.

The applicant is responsible for:

- The harvesting, cleaning, grading, and treating of oysters to be sold to the Fund so that the **oysters purchased are of choice grade, cocktail-sized (2 – 3 inches) and/or market-sized (> 3 inch)** oysters for spreading on commercially fished oyster beds, a new bed, and in strategic areas for environmental benefits.
- The delivery of oysters to a pre-determined site, which will be determined by the Fund's Implementation Committee.

The **application period will be open from September 11 to September 25** and only once the application period is closed will the applications be processed by the Management Committee.

The Management Committee consists of representatives from the PEI Aquaculture Alliance and PEI Department of Fisheries and Communities.

The Implementation Committee consists of representatives from the PEI Aquaculture Alliance, PEI Department of Fisheries and Communities, Island Oyster Growers Group, PEI Shellfish Association and PEI Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change.

APPLICATION PROCESS

A completed **application is to be submitted via e-mail to the PEI Aquaculture Alliance prior to the application closing date of September 25**. Once the application period is closed, the Management Committee will meet to assess all applications received based on the Oyster Enhancement Fund objectives and eligibility criteria. **Only fully completed applications with supporting documentation will be reviewed; partially completed applications will not be considered for funding.**

For approved applications, a funding agreement between the PEI Aquaculture Alliance and the successful applicant will be forwarded outlining the terms and conditions. All work by the successful applicant must be carried out before November 30th.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Applicant eligibility (e.g., have product from a water-column aquaculture lease such as off-bottom);
- Logistics and feasibility (e.g., purchased oysters must meet grade and size specifications; purchased oysters must be ready for spreading by no later than November 2020); and
- Clear details on how the applicant will efficiently harvest, clean, grade, treat, and deliver oysters.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CLAIM PROCESS

- Information provided in the completed application will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility under the Fund's requirements, along with any additional information that may be requested by the Management Committee.
- The intent is to ensure funds are directed to separate business entities and that each business entity receives no more than the maximum allowable funding under the Oyster Enhancement Fund.
- Situations such as leases with multiple owners, several leases in one family with different owners, or business entities whose shareholders also hold leases, require further review.
- To determine an applicant's eligibility, as a single business entity, for funding under the Oyster Enhancement Fund, the Management Committee reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant.
- Examples of the type of information which the Management Committee may request from the applicant includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Identification of lease(s) owned, or legal sublet agreement(s), by the applicant where the activity identified in the applicant's application will be conducted;
 - Information as to the nature of the applicant's involvement in the operation and the proposed activities, as described in the application, may be verified by the following:
 - Information demonstrating sales of oysters in the applicant's name that demonstrates activity in the industry;
 - Financial statements related to their oyster aquaculture business and/or income tax returns associated with their oyster aquaculture business that show related income;
 - Information as to whether the applicant has a valid Revenue Tax Exemption Certificate;
 - Information as to whether the applicant has a valid HST registration number.
- Once the assessment of all applications is complete, the applicant will be notified on the approval or denial of their application. If an application is approved by the Management Committee, a funding agreement will be sent from the PEI Aquaculture Alliance, and the funding agreement will specify the level of funding awarded and outline the terms and conditions of all parties.
- **The application period is only open from September 11 to September 25, and all work (e.g., harvesting, cleaning, treating, grading and delivery) by the successful applicant must be carried out before November 30th, 2020 so that purchased oysters can be spread in the fall of 2020.**
 - In the case of extreme disruptive weather (e.g., ice, winds) or any other situations beyond the Funder's control, the Fund will be forced to close early.
- **All work involved in reporting requirements must be carried out before March 31, 2021.**
- The applicant must agree to allow access to the operation by the Management Committee and its representatives for the purpose of monitoring the progress of the Fund.

EVALUATION AND CONTROL

A complete evaluation of this fund is planned to ensure that the objectives and results are achieved. Fund metrics will be collected throughout and at the end of the administration of the Fund.

HOW TO APPLY

Completed applications may be submitted to the attention of the PEI Aquaculture Alliance via email only.

E-Mail Applications:

Applications may be submitted via email to rd@aquaculturepei.com

Please include the applicant name in the subject line.

For information on the Oyster Enhancement Fund or for general assistance to complete the application, please contact Peter Warris, Director of Projects and Industry Liaison at the PEI Aquaculture Alliance, E-Mail: rd@aquaculturepei.com or Cell: (902) 626-9031.