Commercial fishing infrastructure supporting Canada’s economic prosperity
The vision

• Provision of an essential, affordable, national network of safe and accessible harbours, in good operating condition, that meets the principal and evolving needs of the commercial fishing industry, while supporting the broader interests of coastal communities and Canada’s national interests.

• Operation, management and maintenance of harbours by viable, professional and self-sufficient Harbour Authorities (HAs) representing the interests of users and communities.
Program overview

• The Small Craft Harbours (SCH) Program was created in 1977 when the *Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act* was passed. The Act is enabling in nature and allows the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to acquire, contribute to, maintain, operate and repair fishing and recreational harbours across Canada.

• In 1995, following a government-wide review of federal programs, the SCH mandate was narrowed to focus solely on core fishing harbours critical to Canada’s commercial fishing industry and the SCH Program was directed to divest all recreational and non-core fishing harbours. These divestitures have been ongoing since then.
Program overview (cont’d)

• The SCH Program maintains a national network of approximately 743 core fishing harbours.

• As of December 10, 2013, there were 1039 harbour sites across Canada – 743 core fishing harbours and 296 harbours remaining to be divested (137 recreational, 130 non-core fishing, and an additional 29 fishing harbours with undecided status).

• Individual assets number over 7,200 structural facilities with an estimated replacement cost of $3.7B.

• Sites vary in terms of size and services provided – most are small and are located in small, sometimes isolated communities.
Program objective

To meet the Program’s objective of keeping harbours that are critical to the commercial fishing industry open and in good repair three key strategies are used:

- Maintaining a network of core fishing harbours (currently 743);
- Promoting the creation of Harbour Authorities (HAs) and supporting HAs in the local management and operation of core fishing harbours; and
- Divesting recreational and non-core fishing harbours by:
  - Transferring all recreational harbours and low-activity fishing harbours to local communities
  - Eliminating derelict harbours
Program governance

SCH is a decentralized program. National Headquarters in Ottawa provides national policy and program coordination and five regional offices manage program operations.

Regions

- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Maritimes / Gulf (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island)
- Quebec
- Central & Arctic (Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northwest Territories)
- Pacific (British Columbia)
Locations of Harbours

Commercial Core Fishing: 743
Non-Core Fishing and Recreational: 296
Total: 1039

Map showing the distribution of harbours across different regions of Canada, with specific numbers for each region.
Service delivery model

The SCH Program has three streams:

• **Client Services**
  • Builds strategic contacts with HAs and fishing industry associations to support SCH planning; manages research and development of policy / program proposals to enhance economic development of fisheries, of coastal and inland regions where commercial fishing takes place, and of coastal communities.

• **Engineering**
  • Manages safety, integrity, and functionality of a multi-million dollar portfolio of harbour infrastructure over its lifecycle and ensures the development and construction of new, upgraded, or enhanced harbour infrastructure.
  • Has in-house engineering capacity in all regions. May use the services of Public Works and Government Services Canada and / or private consultants.
Service delivery model (cont’d)

• Integrated Program Planning & Analysis
  • Responsible for business planning, program reporting, financial management, investment planning, performance measurement, risk management, contract management, human resources, information and systems administration.
SCH Real Property Portfolio

- Wharves (concrete, steel sheet pile, steel pile, timber crib)
- Launching ramps
- Breakwaters
- Floating wharves
- Offloading equipment
- Environmental equipment
- Upland and water lots
False Creek (British Columbia)
Pangnirtung (Nunavut)
Ste-Thérèse-de-Gaspé (Quebec)
Malpeque (Prince Edward Island)
Port de Grave (Newfoundland and Labrador)
Lifecycle management (LCM)

• SCH uses LCM principles, which are defined as “a practical management approach with the goal of achieving an optimum cost solution ... of both new and existing harbour structures over their lifetime. The approach takes into account economic and functional considerations, as well as environmental and safety requirements.”

• SCH strives to implement LCM as early as possible in the service life of its facilities in order to obtain the maximum benefit.

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Lifecycle management (LCM) (cont’d)

• The four lifecycle stages:
  1. Planning and Design
  2. Construction
  3. Operation and Maintenance
  4. Reuse or Removal

• With these four lifecycle stages in mind, SCH focuses on the following performance parameters: serviceability, availability, durability, sustainability, environmental compatibility, safety, and the ease with which structures may be constructed, inspected, maintained, upgraded, reused, replaced, or removed.
Priorization strategy

Before the start of each fiscal year, an annual Operational Plan for SCH is prepared and communicated to the Minister.

As funds are limited, priority is given to:

1. Safety-related repairs (or dredging) at core fishing harbours;
2. Investments or upgrades required for harbour safety or operations at core fishing harbours;
3. Minor, urgent, safety-related repairs or mitigation measures, such as installing barricades, at non-core harbours pending their divestiture.
Priorization strategy (cont’d)

Eight criteria are used to establish funding priorities:

1. Safety / Risk Management (20%)
2. Functional Need (20%)
3. Economic Participation by HAs (15%)
4. General Economic Benefits and Potential (15%)
5. Harbour Activity (10%)
6. Harbour Management (10%)
7. Consolidation of Harbours / Facilities / Services (5%)
8. Harbour Isolation (5%)
Harbour Authorities (partners)

- The Harbour Authority (HA) Program was implemented in 1987 to involve local users in decisions about management and maintenance of harbours, take local needs into consideration, and increase users’ commitment and contribution to the upkeep of harbours.
- HAs are client-run, not-for-profit, volunteer organizations that manage and operate the harbours at arm’s length from DFO.
- Currently 694 of the 743 SCH core commercial fishing harbours are managed by HAs.
HA (partners) (cont’d)

HAs are responsible for all day-to-day operations at the harbours they manage, including:

- overseeing harbour operations such as berthing and offloading of catches
- providing services such as utilities, security, recycling, and vessel launching
- ensuring proper maintenance and clean-up of the harbour
- collecting fees
- managing the business of the HA via the Board of Directors

SCH, in collaboration with HAs, remains responsible for funding and overseeing all major repairs, maintenance and dredging; SCH provides advice to HAs and ensures that:

- harbours that are leased at a nominal cost are used for the public good
- facilities meet health, safety and environmental regulations
Since its inception, the HA Program has become the cornerstone of service delivery at SCH harbours by:

- increasing community/user involvement in decisions affecting their harbour
- Increasing service levels compared to those provided by SCH prior to the establishment of the HA Program
- tailoring services to the culture / needs of individual communities
- revenues collected by the HAs are reinvested locally into harbour operations and maintenance
Divestiture

• In 1995, the SCH mandate was narrowed to focus on core fishing harbours critical to Canada’s commercial fishing industry (currently 743).
• All recreational and non-core fishing harbours were to be divested.
• Since then, 1,041 harbours have been divested as funding and circumstances have permitted. This number includes:
  • 332 non-core fishing harbours;
  • 709 recreational harbours.

• Nominal sum ($1) transfers of harbours to governments and non-profit organizations were authorized by the Treasury Board, subject to a five-year minimum guarantee of continued public access.
Divestiture (cont’d)

• Reasonable repairs to the facilities (generally not to exceed the cost of demolition, where feasible) are also offered as part of transfer agreements.

• Under the disposal process, facilities are offered in the following order of priority: to other federal departments, the province, municipality, local non-profit organizations and First Nations before they are offered at market value through public tendering.

• Demolition of non-core harbours is carried out only as a last resort.
Challenges

• Increased maintenance and dredging requirements
• Increased rust-out at core fishing harbours as a result of deferral of repairs and deferral of facility replacement
• Evolving needs of the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries
• Overcrowding at some harbours due to:
  • Changes in traditional fishing patterns and increases in the size of vessels;
  • Increased demands for basic services from the aquaculture industry, particularly in Atlantic Canada.
Challenges (cont’d)

• Increases in transient fishing vessels may exacerbate congestion at some fishing harbours;
• Requests for support from DFO by non-DFO community fishing harbours as these facilities deteriorate;
• Greater use of harbours by the tourism and small, marine-related industries are putting additional pressure on existing infrastructure;
• Increasingly powerful and more frequent storms due to climate change are causing significant damage to harbours.