**Expression of Interest - PARTNERING WITH THE FUTURE SKILLS CENTRE ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN CANADA - Inshore Fishery Development in the Qikiqtani Region of Nunavut**

**Project Lead:** *Qikiqtaaluk Corporation (QC) – Fisheries Division*

QC is the Inuit birthright corporation for the Qikiqtani region, 100% owned by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA), with responsibility for identifying employment and economic development opportunities for the region’s Inuit population.

As the Inuit birthright development corporation for the Qikiqtani Region, QC has a responsibility to strengthen the social and economic well-being of Nunavut and the 15,500 Inuit it represents. The QIA created QC in 1983 as their for-profit development arm.

QC strives to make a positive difference for Inuit, communities and the Nunavut economy through dedication and determination to create meaningful employment and business opportunities. Upholding Inuit principles and values, QC is committed to working collaboratively to serve and provide for our communities.

QC is always evolving to respond to emerging markets and to be a major contributor to all sectors of the Nunavut economy. Since 1983, QC has grown from a one-person company to a group of companies with over 600 employees. Through these companies, QC has strategically established business in fisheries, transportation, telecommunication, hospitality, energy, environment, construction, retail, and real estate.

QC invests in and create business opportunities that have grown our company to be the economic driver in the Region transforming Nunavut’s economic landscape. The growth strategy includes investments in sound financial business endeavours that maximize local participation to have a lasting effect.

QC is committed to creating meaningful economic, employment and career development opportunities for its communities, partnering with these communities to help expand economic infrastructure, to create employment opportunities for residents and to explore innovative projects.

The QC Board of Directors establishes policies, set corporate direction and monitors investments and performance of QC’s subsidiaries and joint venture companies. Board members are registered under the Nunavut Agreement and appointed by QIA for a three-year term. They are selected based on their experience in business and governance. The current Chair of QC is Mr. Levi Barnabas and the President and CEO is Mr. Harry Flaherty. For additional information on QC and its activities visit www.qcorp.ca.

Proposed partners on this project, in addition to the Future Skills Centre, are two entities with which QC has partnership experience:

* *SmartICE:* SmartICE is an award-winning Work Integrated Social Enterprise (WISE) working in Canada’s north. SmartICE is a community-oriented organization offering climate change adaptation tools designed to incorporate ice monitoring data with local Inuit knowledge of sea ice conditions, which can contribute to more informed decisions regarding safe land, water, and ice use. SmartICE’s remote environmental monitoring systems provide climate-impacted communities across the Arctic invaluable, data-driven insights into local ice conditions in near real-time. SmartICE is currently engaged 25+ northern communities.

SmartICE has been expanding its training and operational services to meet community needs and address the challenges of a changing climate. Its *Pilimmaksaqniq Sikulirijimik* program, meaning “training to be a worker who deals with ice”, is a holistic, culturally contextualized training program that encompasses a broad range of soft and hard skills, is grounded in Inuit Societal Values, and reflects Inuit ways of knowing and learning. It was co-designed with Inuit educational experts and community ice users (i.e., CMCs) to provide the technical knowledge and skills that a Community Operator (Sikuliriji) requires to successfully operate and maintain SmartICE monitoring systems, and to interpret and share the ice information they collect with their community. Two key components of the program are its delivery by Inuit trainers and the incorporation of *Inuit Qauijimajatuqangit* , both as critical content and learning approach. The *Pilimmaksaqniq Sikulirijimik* program offers a wide variety of training that is immediately transferable to other community economic sectors.

QC has partnered with SmartICE over the past several years, providing funding in support of their critical ice monitoring activities in member communities, as well as partnering through its membership in the Nunavut Fisheries Association (NFA) in SmartICE’s Ocean Supercluster training project titled: *Inclusive Workforce in Arctic Ocean Technology*.

* *Training Works:* Training Works is a knowledge and skills development company focusing on technology-based learning solutions. By strategically designing modern learning solutions, enhanced with technology, Training Works helps individual learners feel valued and part of the process. Training Works works closely with clients to ensure the operational and cultural realities of their organizations are incorporated into the learning solutions.

Training Works’ most advanced learning solution, Skill-tin-u-ous TM is AI-powered and driven by cognitive science. It autonomously identifies each individual’s unique learning patterns as well as audits their skills gaps. With the organization’s needs in mind, Skill-tin-u-ous™ will let the learner know where the gaps are and map a remediation path through targeted microlearning.

Training Works has worked on multi-jurisdictional projects across Canada including five in Nunavut. During this work, Training Works has engaged with local communities and organizations to ensure the learning solutions presented are relevant and engaging. By working closely with the community, Training Works has been able to include traditional knowledge to ensure the learning is culturally contextualized, allowing for higher participation amongst the target audiences.

QC has worked with Training Works both directly and through the Nunavut Fisheries and Marine Training Consortium (NFMTC), inclusive of partnering on a project looking at solutions to fatigue in the marine sector and an upcoming initiative on mentoring/coaching to increase Inuit participation in Nunavut’s offshore fishery.

Combined these organizations bring the expertise and experience to assist QC in its goal of identifying and developing the small businesses and entrepreneurs required to develop the inshore fishery in Nunavut’s Qikiqtani region.

**Interest and Approach**

*Overall Corporate Objective***:** Over the next five years, QC is seeking to address the human resource needs for successful inshore fisheries development in the Qikiqtani region. This will cover all aspects from: attracting young Inuit to the opportunities in the sector; to training for opportunities in research, vessel operations and winter and summer fishing, and onshore fish handling and processing; to identifying and supporting the development of the entrepreneurs/small business owners, and managers required for success. Within Nunavut, it is anticipated that many communities will have opportunities to prosecute both a summer vessel fishery and a winter ice-based fishery (similar to the turbot fishery in Pangnirtung), utilizing the local ice cover (when in place) as a stable platform for fishing.

A group of people posing for a photo next to a boat

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceQC’s Fisheries Division has developed an Inshore Fisheries Development Plan to guide its involvement in supporting the development of inshore fisheries potential in its members communities throughout the Qikiqtani region. Significant investments have already been made towards the implementation of this Plan, including the construction of the new inshore fisheries research vessel, the Ludy Pudluk, and the first year of operation and research in two member communities.

The Division’s business plan and annual budget includes a commitment to continuing and expanding on this work. For 2022/23, this includes a commitment by QC in excess of $750,000, including:

* A new project manager and community liaisons;
* Operating the Ludy Pudluk and undertaking research in two communities;
* Support for research chair position at the Marine Institute; and
* Support for high-school mentorship development.

These existing commitments under the Division’s budget further illustrate QC’s commitment to inshore fisheries development.

In order to be able to take advantage of any opportunities that may exist within member communities for inshore fisheries development, it will be important to develop the required human resource capacity in parallel with the scientific research. Otherwise, communities will be ill prepared to move forward once resource potential has been confirmed.

Elements of the proposed QC HR development plan include the following:

* HR Pipeline Development – Working with local community schools to develop and implement a Career Exploration Series for high-school students focused on careers in the fishery. Work with teachers for in-class curriculum and with local research/commercial vessels to avail of hands-on teaching/exposure opportunities;
* Technical Training – Training for technical positions as research assistants, vessel/fishery operators and winter ice harvesters, and on-land fish handling and processing personnel, with in community training provided to meet required government standards. Includes identification of candidates interested in pursuing additional training opportunities for research and operating positions that may require out-of-community training;
* Entrepreneurship/Small Business and Management Training/Mentorship – Successful inshore fishery development in member communities will require local entrepreneurs and small business managers to be identified and developed. Work will be required to identify potential entrepreneurs/small business owners and fishery managers for training and mentorship.

Initial plans are to start with pilot projects in each area for a couple of communities in Year 1 and to expand the program over the next five years to reach all 13 Qikiqtani communities.

*Partnering with FSC:* QC is very excited to have the opportunity to work with FSC and avail of its expertise in the areas of entrepreneurship and SME development. Utilizing the community-based training approach and expertise of SmartIcE (developed through its Ocean Supercluster project for which QC was a partner through the Nunavut Fisheries Association) and the innovative micro-learning approach developed by Training Works, QC is proposing to initiate the entrepreneurship and small business identification and training pilot in two to four communities from September 2022 through September 2023. Initial communities under consideration include Sanirajak, Igloolik, Pangnirtung and Iqaluit. Working in partnership, it is anticipated that this project will lead to an innovative approach to indigenous community-based entrepreneurship and small business development that can be extended in subsequent years to QC’s other communities and more broadly to other regions and to other sectors of the economy.

**Knowledge and Project Management**

Since its creation in 1983, QC has matured from a one-person entity to a multi-disciplinary group of companies with 32 subsidiaries, joint ventures, partnerships and affiliations. In total QC employs well over 600 people, with close to 70% Inuit employment.

QC has over time developed a multi-disciplined approach to economic development in Nunavut with interests virtually in every sector. It is further enhanced by tactical innovation, sound business decisions, excellent leadership, and applied risk management. QC’s credibility lies within its successful framework of strategically aligned companies that are designed to consolidate the various elements to successfully undertake projects.

The ongoing success of QC and its Fisheries Division can be largely attributed to the expertise and experience of its Senior Management. Over the past few years, QC has been able to attract and maintain an experienced senior management team, inclusive of the following individuals:

* President and CEO - Harry Flaherty
* Vice President – Peter Keenainak
* Chief Financial Officer – Gregory Cayen
* Director of Business Development - Sheldon Nimchuk
* Director of Fisheries – Jerry Ward
* Director of Corporate Services – Katie Choquette

This senior management team has extensive business experience across a variety of industry sectors, with senior management having an average of almost 28 years/person in management roles in their careers.

QC’s Fishery Division works directly and in collaboration with the Qikiqtaaluk Business Development Corporation (QBDC) in its member communities. QBDC was created to work with Qikiqtani communities to create local economic development opportunities in the Qikiqtani region, supporting communities by enabling innovative approaches to project delivery and leveraging investments. QBDC partners with communities to support economic development through planning and delivery of community projects, working with communities to secure funding, develop sustainable solutions and deliver projects. Developing capacity through Inuit training and career development is critical to project success. QC works with communities to maximize Inuit participation to realize local economic benefits.

**Resources**

As outlined above, entrepreneurship and small business development is one component of QC’s overall plans and approach to inshore fishery development in its member communities. However, this is a very critical component, as without the required community-based entrepreneurs and small businesses, the potential for successful inshore fishery development will be limited to non-existent.

Over the next five years, the total budget for the full project will be in the order of $30-40 Million, in order to reach all 13 communities in the Qikiqtani region. For the period of this project with FSC to the end of September 2023, it is estimated that the total budget will be in the order of $4-5 Million for the project initiation in two to four communities. The community-based training component will be in the order of $3 Million for this first year (inclusive of SmartICE, Training Works, and Marine Institute/ Nunavut Arctic College technical training) and QC is seeking support from FSC of $1 Million towards these costs in support of entrepreneurship and small business training.

Additional funding sources, in addition to the significant commitments from QC, include a group of existing and new partners, as follows:

* Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (Cannor): Existing partner providing support for vessel capital and operations and supportive of this larger training initiative;
* Government of Nunavut – Economic Development and Transportation (ED&T): Existing partner providing support for vessel capital and operations and supportive of this larger training initiative;
* Northern Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (NICFI) – DFO program developed to support inshore fishery development in the north, existing partner providing support for vessel capital and operations and supportive of this larger training initiative;
* Kakivak – QIA owned provider of training and small business development supports, also the ESDC designated service delivery organization for its ISET (Indigenous Skills and Employment Training) program for Nunavut. Existing partner providing support towards Inuit training on QC’s research vessel, the Ludy Pudluk, and interested in the broader training potential for inshore fisheries development; and
* Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) – QC is applying under ESDC’s Skills and Partnership Fund for funding support for 5-year program initiative.

QC is seeking to partner with FSC on the entrepreneurship and small business development training components of its initiative and would request FSC’s participation in the larger project’s Management Committee. It is envisaged that FSC would be an important partner for the full term of this initiative, bringing its expertise to help ensure that our communities are ready with the entrepreneurs, small businesses and trained personnel needed for successful inshore fishery development.