

Fisheries and aquaculture

news

Minister's message



It gives me great pleasure to once again take up my activities at the helm of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. I kept a very interested eye on what was happening in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture industry and I'm delighted to be able to accompany you as you face the challenges that lie ahead.

The 2010 fishing season is already well underway and although the situation is disquieting for some of Québec's fleets, there are indications that give us reason for optimism. In addition, the global economic situation is showing encouraging signs of recovery. Buoyed by these developments, members of Québec's commercial fisheries and aquaculture industry must work together, as they did during last year's fishing season, to channel their efforts and thus, make the most of the sector's opportunities for growth.

It is important for the industry to step up initiatives in the area of marketing to improve its presence not only on the domestic market in Québec but also on markets elsewhere in

the world. During the coming months and years, eco-certification and traceability will become major market issues, so Québec's fisheries sector needs to prepare itself accordingly.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will continue to take action to develop this activity sector, so crucial to the economies of coastal communities. In this regard, I invite you to consult the report on the Ministry's financial interventions in 2009-2010, published in this issue. It provides an overview of the concrete actions we've taken to ensure the sector's viability and prosperity.

I remind you once again of the Ministry's commitment to contribute to the growth of your industry and assure you of my collaboration.

MNA for Kamouraska-Témiscouata, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Minister responsible for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs and the Reform of Democratic Institutions, Deputy Leader of the Government and Minister responsible for the Bas-Saint-Laurent administrative region

Claude Béchard

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Agreement on the creation of an innovation centre to serve the fisheries and aquaculture industry

By **Julie Boyer**,

Innovation and Technologies Directorate

Last April 15, Marc Dion, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Roland Auger, Director General of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, Michel Ringuet and Alain Caron, respectively President and Secretary General of the Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR), as well as Pierre Michaud, Interim Director General of the future centre, signed a framework agreement to create an innovation centre that will be dealing with fisheries, aquaculture, processing and aquatic biomass valorisation.

These individuals thus expressed their willingness to commit their organisations to a collective effort designed to meet innovation-related challenges. They agreed to pool within a single not-for-profit organisation their respective research and development resources and the support they each provide for enterprises in the fisheries and aquacul-

ture sector. The future centre—which will bring together a critical mass of experts—will be able to offer innovative services for the benefit of the fisheries and aquaculture sector throughout Québec.

The innovation centre, slated to begin its activities in late June, will strengthen the sector's capacity to occupy leading niches on markets. Research and development work and technology transfer activities will be conducted there. The centre will also provide such services as technical assistance, monitoring, outreach and information.

The centre—in preparation for nearly a year—unites five groups employing nearly 90 individuals, already recognised for their multidisciplinary competencies, the quality of their actions and their know-how in developing novel solutions. Three of these groups are associated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—the Grande-Rivière Marine Aquaculture Centre, the Magdalen Islands Mariculture Centre and the Aquatic Products Technology Centre. They are joined by Halieutec, attached to



Michel Ringuet, President of the Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) Marc Dion, Deputy Minister (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food - MAPAQ), Roland Auger, Director General of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, and Pierre Michaud, Interim Director General of the new centre

the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles and located in Grande-Rivière, and the UQAR research teams based at MAPAQ research centres. Finally, the Centre plans to ensure a

permanent presence on the North Shore, notably by establishing professional and technical services in the heart of that region's main production areas.

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Québec

Overview of MAPAQ interventions in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector in 2009-2010

GASPÉ PENINSULA

Fishing fleet

- Loan guarantees for 21 fishing enterprises
- Total amount of MAPAQ-guaranteed loans: \$9,656,217
- Total number of young fishers who received funding via the *new Financial support program for young aspiring fishers*: 4
- Other measures: \$1,332,900

Aquaculture, processing and biomass valorisation

- Support provided for 32 projects
- Grants approved: \$4,548,080
- Total cost of projects: \$16,679,559

Research and development

- Support provided for 12 projects
- Grants approved: \$661,622
- Total cost of projects: \$2,141,084

Employment benefits:

- Jobs created: 266
- Jobs consolidated: 1,371

TYPICAL INTERVENTIONS IN 2009-2010:

- **E. Gagnon & Fils Itée:** Improve productivity and diversify processing activities.
- **Arrivage de Gaspé inc.:** Establish a regional collective marketing structure for marine products.
- **Pêcheries Jean-Yan II inc.:** Develop a new fishery to valorise Gaspé Peninsula Atlantic mackerel.
- **Les Algues Gaspésiennes (9065-5119 Québec inc.):** Establish an algae farming site.
- **Crevette du Nord Atlantique inc. and Crustacés de Malbaie inc.:** Introduce technological upgrades for equipment used to process shrimp and lobster.
- **Fermes marines de Gaspé inc.:** Establish a suspension rearing site for sea scallops in Gaspé Bay.

MAGDALEN ISLANDS

Fishing fleet

- Loan guarantees for 23 fishing enterprises
- Total amount of MAPAQ-guaranteed loans: \$4,573,597
- Total number of young fishers who received funding via the *new Financial support program for young aspiring fishers*: 15
- Other measures: \$2,127,100

Aquaculture, processing and biomass valorisation

- Support provided for 19 projects
- Grants approved: \$1,832,387
- Total cost of projects: \$6,063,258

Research and development

- Support provided for 2 projects
- Grants approved: \$103,468
- Total cost of projects: \$294,918

Employment benefits:

- Jobs created: 1
- Jobs consolidated: 1,102

TYPICAL INTERVENTIONS IN 2009-2010:

- **Fruits de mer Madeleine inc.:** Improve productivity by upgrading snow crab processing processes.
- **Cap sur Mer inc.:** Improve competitiveness and optimise facilities by upgrading and specialising marine product processing plants.
- **Élevage de myes PGS Noël inc.:** Perfect softshell clam rearing techniques.
- **Cultimer inc.:** Establish a pilot project for marketing scallops frozen on the half-shell.

NORTH SHORE

Fishing fleet

- Loan guarantees for 10 fishing enterprises
- Total amount of MAPAQ-guaranteed loans: \$1,341,069
- Total number of young fishers who received funding via the *new Financial support program for young aspiring fishers*: 3
- Other measures: \$283,700

Aquaculture, processing and biomass valorisation

- Support provided for 14 projects
- Grants approved: \$658,181
- Total cost of projects: \$1,537,141

Research and development

- Support provided for 1 project
- Grant approved: \$23,665
- Total cost of project: \$23,665

Employment benefits:

- Jobs created: 8
- Jobs consolidated: 415

TYPICAL INTERVENTIONS IN 2009-2010:

- **Table bioalimentaire de la Côte-Nord:** Support for structuring projects linking the agriculture and fisheries sectors.
- **Université Laval:** Conduct perspective studies concerning the establishment of a reserved designation for North Shore marine products.
- **Pec Nord inc.:** Upgrade the nursery built in 1995 in Shekatika Bay on the Lower North Shore.
- **Poissonnerie Fortier et Frères:** Optimise the marine product cooking system to improve the company's competitiveness.
- **Crabiers du Nord inc.:** Promote Stimpson's surfclam chowder and other canned products on the Québec market.

OTHER REGIONS

Aquaculture, processing and biomass valorisation

- Support provided for 15 projects
- Grants approved: \$1,189,279
- Total cost of projects: \$1,782,629

Research and development

- Support provided for 7 projects
- Grants approved: \$953,142
- Total cost of projects: \$7,734,884

Employment benefits:

- Job created: 1
- Jobs consolidated: 23

TYPICAL INTERVENTIONS IN 2009-2010:

- **Pisciculture Val-des-Bois (Québec) inc., Pisciculture Tardif & Fils inc., Pisciculture McKenzie inc. and Domaine chez Albert:** Redesign fish farming facilities to reach the environmental target in terms of phosphorus emissions, a project stemming from the implementation of the *Sustainable development strategy for freshwater fish farming in Québec*.
- **Société Makivik and Pêcheries Unaaq inc.:** Evaluate the off-shore shrimp fishery with an eye to obtaining Marine Stewardship Council certification (eco-labelling).
- **Fédération des pourvoires du Québec inc.,** in partnership with the **Table filière de l'aquaculture en eau douce du Québec:** Organise a training and knowledge transfer workshop on brook trout restocking in structured wildlife areas.
- **Association québécoise de l'industrie de la pêche:** Conduct a study on market prospects for northern shrimp.
- **Association des pêcheurs commerciaux du lac Saint-Pierre:** Organise a networking project on an experimental spring catfish fishery.

Diversification, a promising avenue: Portrait of a young fish harvester/mariculturer

By **Karine Villemaire,**

Magdalen Islands Regional
Directorate

To succeed, you definitely have to believe in your project, be ready to make a personal commitment and work hard to get where you want to go. This is what Christian Vigneau advises young fish harvesters who, as he did, want to explore different areas to diversify their commercial fishing activities. Here's a quick look at the road he's taken.

Fishing has always been present in the life of this young Magdalen Islander. When he was still in his teens, Christian Vigneau got his first job as a deckhand in the groundfish fishery. Five years later, he was hired as an assistant fish harvester for the scallop and lobster fisheries. His passion for this activity grew year after year. Despite the arduous work, he obtained two professional diplomas, one dealing with fishing. In 2000, he acquired his first fishing enterprise and was able to use licences to harvest lobster, herring, mackerel and groundfish. Young, dynamic, ambitious and possessed of an enquiring mind, Christian has always kept up to date on what's happening in the world of the fisheries and takes upgrading courses in fishing-related fields.

His first years as a skipper-owner were stimulating. The idea of diversifying his activities came up when the groundfish moratorium was imposed and the pelagic

fish stocks around the Islands fell drastically. In fact, experimental mariculture work conducted in open water around the Islands by the Magdalen Islands Mariculture Centre (CEMIM) aroused his curiosity. In 2005, he decided to meet the specialists at CEMIM who encouraged him to become involved in open water mariculture, a novel approach in the region since mariculture had until then been confined primarily to the Islands' lagoons.

Convinced of the potential for mariculture in the waters surrounding the Magdalen Islands, Christian founded La moule du large inc. by joining forces with a shareholder whose knowledge of biology and management complemented his own expertise as a fish harvester. The company's activities, begun in 2007, first focussed on blue mussel farming.

The first harvests—in 2009—were most promising in terms of meat quality and yield. The first commercial harvests are expected in 2010 and in the near future, the company plans to become involved in further processing its own mussels so it can market its products distinctively.

According to the young fish harvester, diversifying your activities calls for a lot of time and investment, but it pays off in a number of ways. In particular, jobs can be maintained year round; it improves the company's profitability and above all, it gives you the chance to earn your living doing something you're passionate about!

Photo: MAPAQ.



The *Marie Gabriel*, owned by Christian Vigneau

Photo: MAPAQ.



Christian Vigneau, a young Magdalen Islands fisher

Les Gaspésiennes Algues de Gaspésie honoured at SIAL Canada 2010

By **Michelle Parent,**

Gaspé Peninsula Regional
Directorate

Les Gaspésiennes Algues de Gaspésie, a company owned by Raymond Ferembach, has just launched a line of Gaspé Peninsula algae-based food products whose qualities were recognised at SIAL Canada 2010 held in Montréal on April 21, 22 and 23. In fact, *Les algues kombu royal Les Gaspésiennes* ranked amongst the ten finalists in SIAL Canada's *Trends and Innovations Competition*.

This international show is for specialists and professionals active in North America's food industry and market. The event brings together over 530 exhibitors and more than 12,000 visitors every year.

The competition jury was impressed by the brined kelp chips that can be cooked like vegetables, the kelp sheets used to prepare *aumonière*-style fish and by the kelp flakes. These ready-to-eat products are distinctive because of their particular nature and innovative attributes, and offer consumers the double benefit of being both natural and functional. They are made of sweet kelp (known as *kombu royal* in French), a brown alga harvested at sea or gathered on the beaches along Chaleur Bay on the Gaspé Peninsula.

Les Gaspésiennes Algues de Gaspésie is the first company to specialise in harvesting and processing Gaspé Peninsula kelp. Its activities began in 2005 when it established an

Photo: Marc Lajoie, MAPAQ.



The algae-based food products prepared by Raymond Ferembach, owner of Les Gaspésiennes Algues de Gaspésie, earned distinction at the International SIAL Canada 2010 show.

organic algae farm. In 2009, its horticultural product range—which includes seaweed meal, liquid extracts and enriched potting

soil for residential horticulture—earned kudos from the Montréal Botanical Garden which presented the company with an award of horticultural merit saluting the value of its high-end ecological products.

Just recently, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food provided financial support to the company, which intends to establish an algae farming facility in Chaleur Bay. The company hopes to grow algae in open water as a way to ensure a continuous supply of algae it can use to optimise production of its horticultural and food products.

National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan Initiative: Strengthening sustainable aquaculture development in Canada

By Pierre Dubé,

Aquaculture and Sustainable Development Directorate

MANDATE OF WORKING GROUP

The *National Aquaculture Strategic Action Plan Initiative* (NASAPI), under the stewardship of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM), aims to develop targeted action plans to facilitate sustainable growth in five sectors of Canada's aquaculture industry—East Coast marine finfish and molluscs, West Coast marine finfish and molluscs and the freshwater sector. Defined in keeping with a five-year time-frame, the measures that will be implemented under NASAPI will seek to advance the aquaculture sector in the mid and long term.

WORKING TOGETHER INSTEAD OF DUPLICATING EFFORTS

There are already a number of federal, regional and provincial plans in place or in the works to support development of this industry. NASAPI endeavours to pool rather than duplicate efforts. For instance, in the area of governance, NASAPI serves to enrich actions undertaken in the aquaculture sector, particularly those involving environmental management, the introduction and transfer of aquatic organisms, the use of waterways and the monitoring of mollusc safety. As for productivity and competitiveness, priority will be given to interventions concerning finfish health, invasive aquatic species, new technologies and alternate species.

ACTIONS UNDERWAY

For over nine months, Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been holding consultations to seek contribution from public and private partners. To this end, over 30 meetings have taken place throughout the country, including meetings with First Nations groups. Two consultations followed by a national workshop in May 2010 produced draft action plans that are now nearly definitive.

QUÉBEC REPRESENTATION

Recently, steering committees were established in Québec; they bring together sector representatives from the Table filière de l'aquaculture en eau douce, Association des aquaculteurs du Québec, Société de recherche et de développement en aquaculture continentale, Table maricole, Regroupement des mariculteurs du Québec and Société de développement de l'industrie maricole.

During the course of their discussions, these representatives were able to assert the paramount authority of Québec with respect to development of its aquaculture industry, composed of nearly 140 enterprises generating sales of about \$13 million.

It is anticipated that in fall 2010, the action plans that will have been prepared by Fisheries and Oceans Canada will be submitted, via CCFAM, to the provincial fisheries and aquaculture ministers for their approval.

ISSUES

Action plans supported by CCFAM in the past have led to accomplishments that helped consolidate the aquaculture sector. The new *National Aquatic Animal Health Program* (NAAHP) and the *National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms* are convincing examples of this.

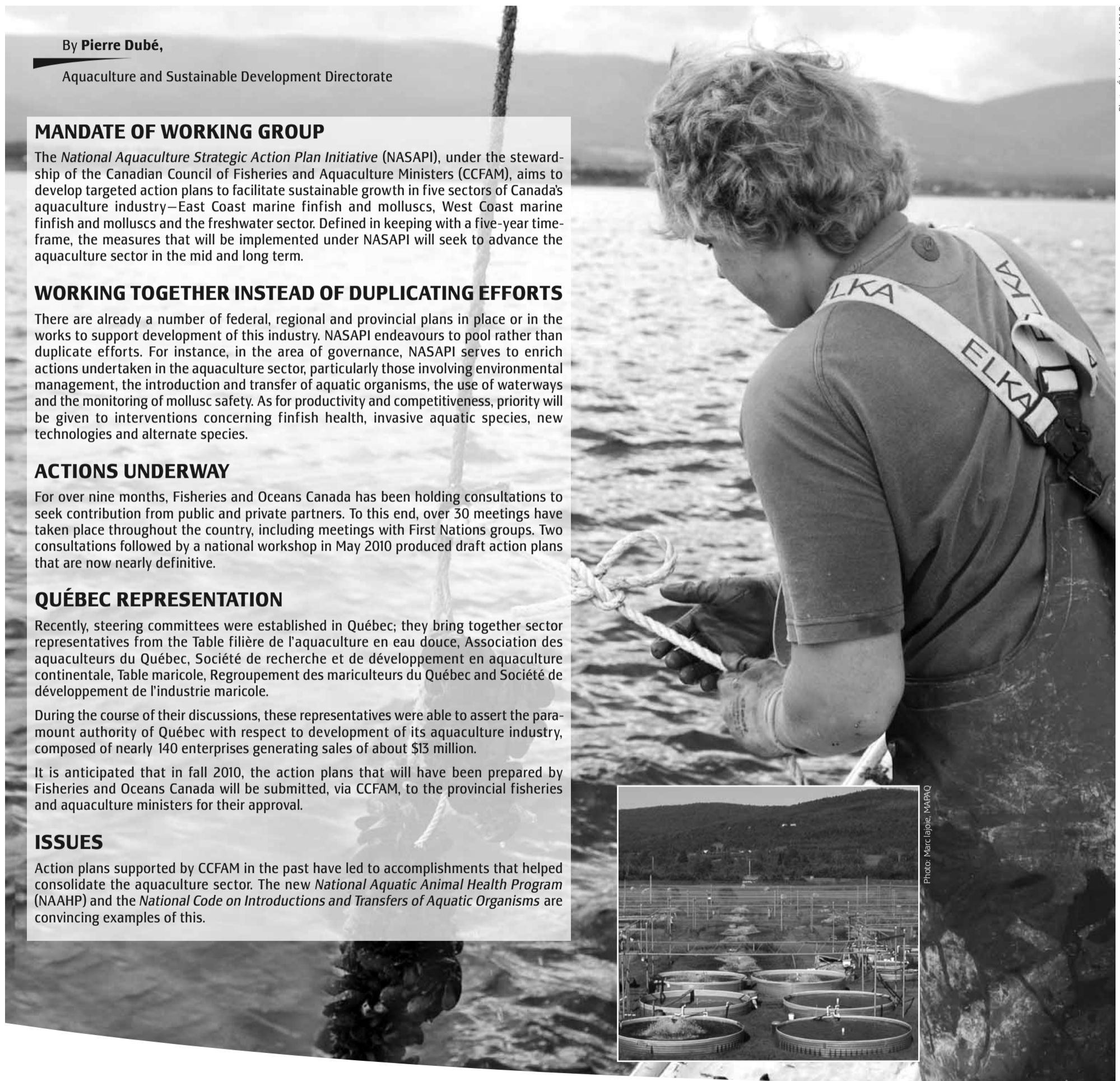


Photo: Eric Labonté, MAPAQ

Photo: Marc Lajoie, MAPAQ

