

Process for New Aquaculture Lease and Licence Applications

What types of operations can apply?

Proposals for ocean-based shellfish, cultivated marine plants and trout farms are now being accepted. We will also be accepting boundary amendment applications from existing sites for all marine species, including salmon. Applications for bottom-cultivated oyster sites will not be accepted at this time while we develop a policy to make sure we are making the best use of the resource.

Where are the regulations available?

The regulations for leases and licences and aquaculture management are on our website at <http://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#fishcr>.

What is the application process for new ocean-based aquaculture sites?

Details about the process are on our website at <http://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/starting-an-aquaculture-site/>.

THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS FOR OCEAN-BASED AQUACULTURE SITES ARE:

APPLY FOR OPTION An applicant submits a proposal for an option to lease in the area they would like to develop.

DECISION BY MINISTER The minister reviews the proposal and, if it is approved, the applicant pays a fee and proceeds to scoping.

SCOPING The applicant shares information with local stakeholders about what the site would do and how it would be designed and managed, gathers biophysical and other information about the area they propose to lease and receives feedback to shape their plans.

SUBMIT APPLICATION An application form and a farm development plan are then submitted to the department.

INTERNAL REVIEW Department staff review the application to make sure it provides all the information needed, including results of public consultations from the scoping step, and makes sense based on science and technical factors. The department can request additional information from the applicant if they believe it is needed.

NETWORK REVIEW The application would be shared with federal and provincial network partners for their input. Consultations with First Nations may be required depending in the nature of the proposal. The results of all of this would be shared with the aquaculture review board.

INDEPENDENT HEARING The independent aquaculture review board provides notice of a hearing where it would consider the application. It will be provided with the farm development plan, the results of the internal and network reviews, and may consider submissions from intervenors and written and verbal submissions from local stakeholders.

DECISION BY BOARD The board issues a decision document that would be posted on the department's website. It can approve, approve with modifications or reject the application.

How is the local community involved?

There are many ways local stakeholders are involved that are part of the new process. They must be engaged at the very beginning by the applicant as part of the option to lease process. They can make written and verbal submissions to the aquaculture review board hearing. And they can apply to have standing as an intervenor at the board hearing.

Why are salmon sites not being considered right now?

By opening the process for a range of species we are ready to engage companies and Nova Scotians in our new process as part of our careful and deliberate approach to taking aquaculture development to the next level. Eventually that will include opening the process to new salmon farms and we will inform Nova Scotians when we are ready to do that.

Are land-based aquaculture sites able to submit new applications?

We have always accepted applications for land-based sites. That process is also on our website at <http://novascotia.ca/fish/aquaculture/starting-an-aquaculture-site/>.

THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS FOR LAND-BASED SITES ARE:

SUBMIT APPLICATION An application form and a farm development plan are submitted to the department.

INTERNAL REVIEW Department staff review the application to make sure it provides all the information needed and makes sense based on science and technical factors. The department can request additional information from the applicant if they believe it is needed.

NETWORK REVIEW The application would be shared with federal and provincial network partners for their input. Consultations with First Nations may be required depending in the nature of the proposal. The results of all of this would be shared with the department's aquaculture administrator.

REVIEW BY ADMINISTRATOR All of the information submitted by the applicant and the results of the internal and network reviews are considered by the aquaculture administrator. There is a period for public comment on applications and that is posted on our website.

DECISION The department's aquaculture administrator issues a written decision that is posted on the department's website. They can approve, approve with modifications or reject the application.

Do existing aquaculture sites have to comply with the new regulations?

Yes, they have to comply with the aquaculture management regulations that include environmental and fish health monitoring requirements. Staff of the department have been educating industry about the new regulations. Department of Environment is responsible for investigating complaints about sites not complying with the regulations and can be reached at 1-800-565-2224.