



DISCOVER



Essential Skills For Atlantic Fisheries

Setting the stage

Fishing, seafood and aquaculture are essential components of our regional economy, employing about **35,000 people** and generating more than **\$2.5 billion** in annual exports – but it is now an industry facing a significant shortage in skilled labour.



Designed for the Atlantic fisheries industry,
the program's **primary objectives** were:

Objective

Increase the pool of skilled labour available

Connect unemployed workers in rural communities to available jobs

Strengthen attachment of job seekers to employers with job-related training and better skills match to available jobs

Improve individual literacy and essential skills

Increase essential skills of supervisors and middle managers to become essential skills mentors/coaches

Develop and test an innovative and highly contextualized blended learning approach with customized content and a community approach

Anticipated results & benefits

A better workforce and competitive advantage

Lower unemployment rate and hire locally

Create a stronger long-term pool of workers with skills adapted to the specific employer

Increase self-esteem/dignity and provide everyday life essential skill

Support employee onboarding and improve performance and retention

Create a strong link between workforce and workplace with better support and more relevant training

This initiative targeted the following skills:

Essential skills



Reading



Writing



Document Use



Numeracy



Computer Use/
Digital Skills



Thinking



Oral
Communication



Working with
Others



Continuous
Learning

Employability skills



Motivation



Attitude



Accountability



Time
Management



Stress
Management



Presentation



Teamwork



Adaptability



Confidence

How we went about it

The project targeted rural coastal communities facing labour shortages and unemployed or underemployed individuals. These factors are hindering the Atlantic seafood industry's ability to meet client demand and stay competitive in a global world.

The project took a pan-Atlantic Canadian approach in both official languages where the lessons learned will provide important knowledge for future expansion into other industries.

The holistic approach to training focused not only on participants, but on supervisors and middle managers, as well. This two-pronged approach sought to develop skills which would maximize the chances of long-term success for the unemployed and under-employed individuals taking part in the program while also providing valuable supervisory tools and strategies to assist in this success.

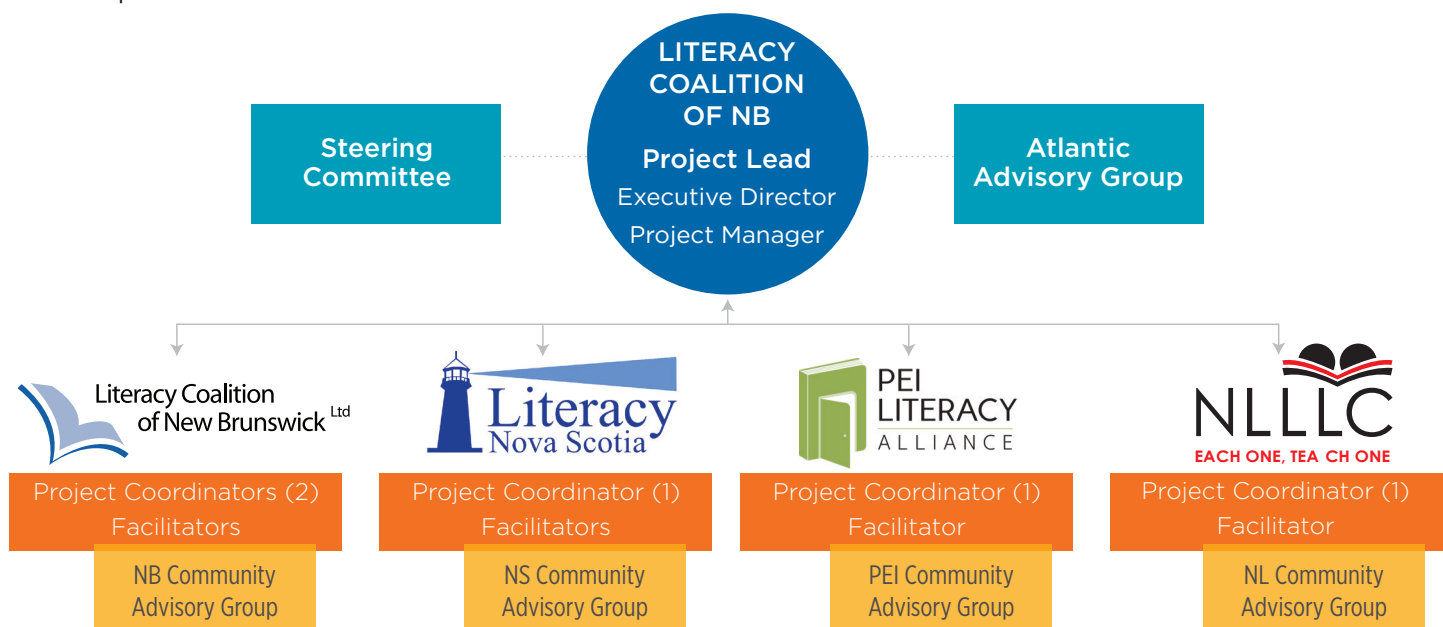
Delivering the program through a customized combination of classroom, online and on-the-job training, which we called blended learning, proved be very effective to better prepare the participants for the workplace.

Who was involved

The Essential Skills for Atlantic Fisheries Project was funded by the Government of Canada's National Essential Skills Initiatives. It is a joint project led by the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick in partnership with Literacy Nova Scotia, PEI Literacy Alliance and Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council.

The project was executed through an expansive network of committees, managers, coordinators and organizations. The condensed narrative is as follows: The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick was the project lead. Oversight was provided by the Executive Director of the Literacy Coalition. The Steering Committee met monthly to provide input and facilitate communication, problem solving and information sharing among the provincial project partners. An Atlantic Advisory Group, composed of multiple stakeholders also provided ideas, advice and information about the project on a pan-Atlantic level.

The Project Manager led the concerted efforts with all four partners located in each of the four Atlantic provinces.



Each of these pilot sites was managed by existing literacy organizations which hired their own project coordinators and facilitators to implement the project and deliver the training directly with the participating employers. Each province was also supported by local Community Advisory Groups (CAG). The CAG was very instrumental in the success of the project by bringing together local government agencies and community organizations to identify appropriate pilot participants and identify available community resources to support job seekers in overcoming barriers to employment.

Finally, the employers who took part in the ESAF project were responsible for identifying entry-level job vacancies and participating in the workplace needs assessment. They were also required to provide access to train their supervisors/managers and offer 6-to-12-week paid work placements.

When did this all happen?



Program numbers

	NB	NL	NS	PEI	TOTAL
Employers (pilot sites)	7	3	4	3	17
Mentors trained	17	8	4	11	40
Participants enrolled in training	30	24	23	26	103
Complete classroom training	21	20	12	20	73
Complete OTJ/WP	12	15	9	12	48
Employed	12	15	9	12	48

During Cohort 2, it should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, leading to switching to online training only. This made it challenging for some participants and also interrupted some work placements.

High level outcomes

- A replicable life essential skills (LES) training model including a communication strategy, information kits and training materials.
- Increased number of individuals accessing essential skills supports.
- Improved essential skills for individuals participating in the pilots.
- Improved essential skills for managers/supervisors (e.g. working with others, oral communication, thinking skills, etc.) contributing to their ability to be effective in their roles as managers/supervisors, capacity to retain employment, as this training is part of wrap-around supports for vulnerable workers.
- Improved integration of essential skills into workplaces practices (e.g. recruitment, onboarding and people management) among participating organizations.
- Improved wellness and wellbeing (e.g. health, psycho-social capital, self-efficacy, self-confidence, resilience) among pilot participants.
- Improved business outcomes (e.g. satisfaction, ROI, reduced error rates, reduced accidents, increased retention, and improved productivity and customer service) among participating organizations.
- Increased number of organizations with capacity to offer essential skills supports.
- A pool of skilled labour available to the fisheries sector.
- A standalone online learning portal in both official languages with self-paced and virtual classroom options.

www.essentialskillsatlantic.ca

