**Final Report for the Visiting Scholar Programme with the MCG**

**Title: Supporting Mainland Mi'kmaw leadership in the development of Indigenous Certification for the American lobster commercial fishery of Nova Scotia**

**Background:**

The visiting scholar programme started officially on 1st April 2019; however, I arrived at Dalhousie University on 28th March 2019. Base on the scope of the project, we (I and my host) worked in partnership with the Mi'kmaw Conservation Group (MCG) on policy research focused on supporting the Mainland Mi'kmaw leadership in the development of Indigenous Certification for the American lobster commercial fishery of Nova Scotia. After my stay, I departed from Halifax on 29th July.

 This visiting research project connects to my current doctoral PhD research at the Brandenburg University of Technology, Germany. It considers investigating the impact of voluntary certifications and their policies on shrimp fisheries with focus on the fish stock and the trawlers fishing community. My host is Asst Prof Melanie Zurbah from the School for Resource and Environmental Studies and the College of Sustainability, Dalhousie University, Halifax.

**Objectives of the projects:**

1. Evaluate the potentials and benefits of the Indigenous lobster certification in improving the socio-economic aspect and livelihood of the Indigenous communities;

2. Identify uncertainties, gaps and challenges in harnessing benefits for the community group.

**Methods adopted:**

The project underwent various transformations and modifications through brainstorming and participatory activities with our partner. Hence, we considered participatory and secondary research approach, by exploring textual literature of about 8981 documents with multiple meetings and discussions with the MCG. We used MAXQDA software to scope information into frameworks with a subset of codes into themes and subthemes. The codes emerged from the discussions through our boundary work stage and pieces of literature prepared from preliminary data gathering and random searches. On top of that, they are segmented into a broad theme to sub-theme through a top to down logical analysis

**Research collaboration and cooperation:**

We (I and my host) engaged in various meetings with the Ms Sana Kavanagh, the MCG partner representative through two physical meetings in Truro and other meetings via Skype and telephone call. We have been able to enhance the relationship through working on feedbacks and the need of the Indigenous community to support governance of the lobster fisheries through the certification process.

To learn and foster relationships with the Mi’kmaw peoples. We were able to attend a workshop organised with the Indigenous communities with the agenda, *flowing together: protecting waters and communities from mining impacts*. This event took place at the Millbrook First Nation on Saturday, 30th March 2019. With the support of Dr Melanie, I was able to interact with some of the Mi'kmaw peoples. Also, the interaction understands some of the issues affecting the Mi’kmaw communities in the area. At the event, I was further given the platform to introduce myself and briefly discuss my expectations for the visiting research project. Also, partners and supporters were acknowledged.

I am glad to have excellent partners and mentor, i.e. my host. Mainly, I was able to learn a lot of mentorship experience from my hosts such as ethics and engagement with Mi’kmaw, communication and writing skills, networking and collaborative skills, and following qualitative research skills and protocols. These skills would be significantly essential in my next phase of career endeavours.

**Deliverables:**

As part of the outcome for the project, the deliverables are below.

1. Policy document (white paper or yellow)
2. A one-page summary paper to be presented to the board of the MCG
3. Brief communication paper in a peer-reviewed journal
4. A Peer-reviewed article
5. Infographic boundary object

The peer- reviewed article would address the *Identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities towards harnessing benefits of Indigenous, based certifications for the American lobster commercial fishery of Nova Scotia*. Our targeted journal is the Marine Policy. We are still perfecting the manuscript to be sent to the journal soon.

The policy document helps to scope concept ideas on the projects. This document outlines the regulations and policies that affect Indigenous certifications, the lobster fisheries, understanding the need of the Indigenous certifications from the Indigenous peoples. Also, the policy document would be submitted to the MCG.

The brief communication paper has been outlined to discuss on unveiling the Indigenous Certification in the fisheries industry, and we have targeted the "Nature sustainability" journal. We are working on the draft as well and it would be submitted as soon as it is finished.

The Infographic boundary object is a graphical map that would be send to the Mi’kmaw leadership as an outcome of the research.

Preliminary results from this research were presented as a poster (Appendix 1) at the MEOPAR Annual Training & Scientific Meeting, at the Delta Hotels Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort, Victoria between the 10th to 15th June 2019. The programme includes Indigenous and community development themes, e.g. topic on Indigenous community engagement for early career researchers, project management, the community of practices and others.

Other programmes considered towards having knowledge and information with the indigenous peoples and fisheries include the following.

* Guest lecturer at the School for Resource and Environmental Studies/ College of Sustainability, Dalhousie University, Canada Module (ENVI 5039 / SUST 3955; ENVI 5500);
* Volunteering at the North American Association of Fisheries Economists (NAAFE) conference May 22-24, 2019, Halifax Nova Scotia;
* Participant at the Marine Planning Process Training – Schedule, April 30-May 1, 2019. Dalhousie University;
* Participant at the workshop on ethics in research with Indigenous Peoples, 6th June 2019, at Dalhousie University;
* Volunteering to deliver a lecture at the IOI class on Certification of fisheries: using Indigenous case study for simulation.

**Challenges and constraints:**

This research project faced many challenges; however, managed. Some of the issues include adjusting and modifying the scope and strategies of the work according to the interest of Indigenous people's attention. However, management of the challenges helped us to consider the capacities available for the research within the limited time available. Also, this dynamism made it possible to focus on critical items for the project. We further had issues on getting data for the second paper, however through contacts and assistance of Dr Wendy, we were able to contact some authorities to get some of the data.

**Timing:**

The timing of the project was not sufficient because of the magnitude of our expected outcomes. Although, we were able to achieve a lot during the period, as shown in our deliverables. The period was appropriate as well due to the weather, which made it easy to network and interact with our partners and other people.

**Replication:**

This project is an innovative one, and we would be interested in furthering the project as a subsequent postdoc project. Our initial intentions and objectives for the project were high. So we were able to split the plan into stages with the approval of the MCG. The first stage fulfils the outcome of this project. The next phase of the project would include actively going to the field, following protocols and approvals on primary data collection with the fishers and stakeholders.

**Linkages:**

My academic background and experience in sustainability certifications and fisheries made me to appreciate my journey to the Atlantic region of Canada. I believe my experience here will create a balance and platform to explore other coastal areas in the future, including the peoples involved and the environment.

**Sustainability:**

The project was highly innovative in terms of using a sustainability market-driven certification approach to support the Mi’kmaw leadership; in terms of actualising their rights and empowering them to realise their resource potentials and utilisation. One of the key focus of the project was to support and make awareness at the local and international level. Particularly on the need and opportunities to support and possibly implement an Indigenous based certification programme that will not only benefit the Indigenous peoples but also benefit non-indigenous communities. We are almost finishing our manuscript to be published in an international peer-review journal. Thus, we will be able to show to the public on the value attached to having a sustainability-based certification with Indigenous attributes.

**Budget:**

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| Budget Fieldwork Isa Elegbede at Dalhousie University, Halifax Acct 38044 |
| Item | Description | Price (C$) | Funding RRT (C$) | Funding OFI (C$) | Actual RRT 38044 |
| Feeding and accommodation | for 120 days | 16,000 |  | 16,000 |  |
| Transportation |  |  |  |  |  |
| Flight | A return ticket from Berlin (TXL) to Halifax (YHZ), including taxi from the airport to Dalhousie | 1,604 |  | 1,604 |  |
| Insurance | C$ 1.65 per day for a 5-month plan | 252 | 252 |  | 252 |
| Other expenses |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conference, meetings and knowledge mobilisation | *Attendance at MEOPAR meeting in Victoria*  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Flight to MEOPAR meeting in Victoria | 1,087.67 | 1,087.67 |  | 1,087.67 |
|  | A hotel booking for the event, MEOPAR paid C$ 857.61 | 2,001.09 | 1,143.48 |  | 1,143.48 |
|  | Knowledge mobilisation object  | 2000 | 2000 |  | 2000 |
| Student fees with Dal student accounts |  | 393 | 393 |  | 393 |
| Total  | 23,337.76 | 5,000 | 17,604 | 4876.15 |

**Explanatory of the expenses:**

In addition to funding provided by the RRT. I also received funding from the Ocean Frontier Institute (OFI), which does cover my flight from Germany to Halifax and my living allowance during my stay in Halifax. The RRT support would be used to arrange for insurance of C$ 1.65 per day for five months at C$ 252 and student fees with Dal student accounts at C$ 393. An invoice of C$ 2000 was raised for the knowledge boundary infographics object. An amount of C$1,143.48 was approved for the hotel booking for the MEOPAR conference, and a sum of C$ 1,087.67 was paid for the flight to the MEOPAR event in Victoria. MEOPAR paid C$ 857.61 for the MEOPAR Annual Training & Scientific Meeting in Victoria. It also worth to acknowledge that MEOPAR also gave a partial travel grant support to attend the programme.

**Appendix 1**

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