Indigenous Blue Economy Career Navigation Toolkit

A practical guide to careers across Canada's ocean, coastal, environmental and natural-resource sectors.

Welcome

This toolkit helps you explore blue economy careers, recognize the skills you already have and plan your next steps. Experience can come from many places: school, work, community, cultural activities, stewardship, volunteering, and time on the land and water. You decide what you want to include.

How to use this toolkit

On your own	In a group or BEAHR program	With a counsellor or advisor
Read a section, then complete the matching learner tool. Go at your own pace.	Start with a shared example, then write privately. Pair discussion is optional. Choose one next step; use the Facilitator Guide for group sessions.	Bring your completed tools to plan together.

Your journey and the six learner tools

Step	Question	Learner tool
1	Who am I?	Learner Profile & Career Interests
2	What strengths do I bring?	Skills and Experience Inventory; Experience-to-Skills Guide
3	Where could I go?	Blue Economy Career Pathway Planner
4	What steps will I take?	Individual Career Action Plan
5	What am I pursuing?	Training, Employment & Opportunity Tracker

Your privacy

You decide what cultural or community experience to record and share. If you use the website on a shared or public computer, save your progress file or print your Snapshot, then use “Clear My Data” when you finish.
Your completed tools belong to you. Keep them somewhere safe and share them only if you choose to. If you use the website version, your answers are saved only in that browser. Save a progress file or print your Career Snapshot so you don't lose your work when you change devices.

The Blue Economy

The blue economy includes work connected to oceans, coasts, lakes and rivers. It covers protecting these waters, using them sustainably, and building the technology and infrastructure around them. Indigenous communities lead and partner in much of this work, including stewardship, fisheries and marine planning.

Nine career areas

Career area	What the work involves
Indigenous Guardian programs	Caring for lands and waters by monitoring, protecting and restoring them for Indigenous governments and communities.
Environmental monitoring	Collecting and recording field data on water, wildlife, soil and air to protect ecosystems and meet regulations.
Fisheries and aquaculture	Harvesting, farming and managing fish and seafood, including Indigenous commercial fisheries and Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries, guided by Treaty and inherent harvesting rights.
Marine conservation	Protecting and restoring coastal and marine habitats and species, often in partnership with communities.
Ports and shipping	Moving goods and people by water, including vessel operations, port logistics and marine safety.
Ocean technology	Building and running tools such as sensors, underwater vehicles and data systems that help us understand the ocean.
Marine renewable energy	Developing energy from tides, waves and offshore wind, from site studies to operations.
Coastal infrastructure	Building and maintaining wharves, breakwaters, shoreline protection and coastal community facilities.
Environmental consulting	Advising companies, governments and communities on environmental studies, permits and impact assessments.

Example Career Pathways

About these pathways: Stages are illustrative examples of common career moves, not formal credentials. Regulated roles may require specific certificates (for example Transport Canada marine certificates), professional licensing or employer-specific requirements. Confirm current requirements with the training provider, regulator or employer.
These are examples, not fixed routes. People start in different places and move between stages in many ways. Community and land- and water-based experience can be a real starting point.

Indigenous Guardian programs

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Community land and water activities; Volunteer monitoring or cleanups; Seasonal Guardian or field assistant	Guardian / Watchmen; Environmental monitor; Boat operator	Guardian program coordinator; Stewardship technician	Stewardship or Guardian program manager; Lands and resources director

Training that can help: First Aid, small vessel operator training, BEAHR Environmental Monitor, Guardian training programs, GPS and data collection

Governance, policy and co-management roles: Senior Guardian program director · Indigenous-led stewardship and co-management lead · Marine use or spatial planning coordinator for a Nation

Environmental monitoring

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Field assistant; Sampling helper; Community data collection	Environmental monitor; Environmental technician	Environmental technologist; Environmental scientist	Monitoring program lead; Environmental manager

Training that can help: BEAHR Environmental Monitor, college environmental technology diploma, WHMIS, First Aid

Fisheries and aquaculture

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Deckhand; Hatchery or farm worker; Fish plant worker	Aquaculture technician; Fisheries observer; Fishery guardian	Fisheries biologist; Aquaculture site manager	Fisheries manager; Community fisheries director

Training that can help: Marine Emergency Duties, fishing master certificates, aquaculture technician programs

Rights and governance: Indigenous commercial fisheries, Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries, and Treaty and inherent harvesting rights shape how fisheries are governed and who leads them. Many careers support communities in exercising and managing these rights.

Governance, policy and co-management roles: Fisheries rights and negotiations advisor · Community fisheries governance or harvest management coordinator · Indigenous fisheries co-management board member · Indigenous commercial fishing enterprise manager

Certification: see Transport Canada Marine Training and Certification (tc.canada.ca).

Marine conservation

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Restoration crew member; Shoreline cleanup volunteer; Conservation intern	Habitat restoration technician; Marine park or protected area technician	Conservation biologist; Marine planner	Conservation program manager; Marine protected area co-manager

Training that can help: Environmental or biology diploma or degree, boat safety, dive certification where needed

Governance, policy and co-management roles: Marine spatial planner · Indigenous-led conservation and co-management coordinator · Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) lead

Ports and shipping

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Deckhand; Port labourer; Marine response volunteer	Bridge watch or engine room rating; Marine logistics coordinator	Ship's officer; Marine safety specialist	Captain / master; Port or terminal manager

Training that can help: Marine Emergency Duties, Transport Canada seafarer certificates, marine training institutes

Certification: see Transport Canada Marine Training and Certification and Certificates of Competency (tc.canada.ca). Mentorship: Clear Seas IMCAP.

Ocean technology

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Technician assistant; Data entry and field support	Ocean technology technician; Instrument or ROV technician	Ocean data analyst; Ocean engineer	Research or technology program lead

Training that can help: Engineering degree or diploma (for example ocean, mechanical, electrical or computer engineering), ocean or electronics technology diploma, programming and data skills

Marine renewable energy

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Construction or site labourer; Environmental field assistant	Energy systems technician; Marine operations technician	Environmental assessment specialist; Energy engineer	Project or community partnership manager

Training that can help: Electrical or trades programs, marine safety, environmental assessment training

Certification for marine operations: see Transport Canada Marine Training and Certification (tc.canada.ca).

Coastal infrastructure

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
General labourer; Equipment operator trainee	Heavy equipment operator; Construction trades	Engineering technologist; Project coordinator	Site superintendent; Infrastructure project manager

Training that can help: Trades apprenticeship, engineering degree or diploma (for example civil or coastal engineering), equipment tickets, construction safety training

Environmental consulting

Entry & community experience	Technical	Professional	Leadership
Field assistant; Community liaison support	Environmental technician; GIS technician	Environmental consultant; Impact assessment specialist	Senior consultant; Indigenous relations or practice lead

Training that can help: Environmental diploma or degree, BEAHR courses, EP (Environmental Professional) designation from ECO Canada

Governance, policy and co-management roles: Marine spatial planning advisor · Policy advisor on co-management and rights-based approaches

Look up wages, duties and outlook for any role on Job Bank's occupation search, or explore ocean careers with Ocean Alliance Canada's Career Explorer:

jobbank.gc.ca: search occupations

oceanalliancecanada.ca: Career Explorer

Turning Your Experience into Workplace Skills

Employers look for skills they can recognize. Much of what you have done in community, culture and on the land and water builds exactly these skills. The key is to describe it in clear workplace language.

Three steps

- **Name it:** What did you do? Use your own words.
- **Find the skill:** What did it take? Think about planning, safety, teamwork or leadership.
- **Show it:** Write one sentence with an action and a result, e.g. “Organized 20 volunteers for a shoreline cleanup that removed 300 kg of debris.”

Examples

Experience	Workplace competencies	How it could read on a resume
Helping organize a community event or gathering	Planning, coordination, teamwork, time management	Coordinated setup and schedule for an event of 100+ people
Caring for Elders, children or family members	Responsibility, reliability, communication, first aid awareness	Provided regular care and scheduling for family members
Fishing, harvesting or boating with family	Safety awareness, equipment operation, weather and water reading	Operated a small boat and maintained gear safely in changing conditions
Shoreline cleanups or stewardship projects	Environmental awareness, data recording, teamwork	Recorded and sorted collected materials for a community cleanup
Language learning or teaching (if you choose to share)	Communication, patience, teaching and mentoring	Supported younger learners in weekly sessions
Traditional arts, crafts or food preparation (in your own words)	Attention to detail, following procedures, planning	Prepared food for community events following safe handling
Youth or sports leadership	Leadership, conflict resolution, motivating others	Coached a youth team of 15 players for two seasons
Volunteering on a committee or board	Decision-making, meeting skills, accountability	Took minutes and followed up on actions for a local committee
You choose what to share. You never need to describe ceremonies, sacred practices or knowledge that is not yours to share. Cultural experience is self-defined. No one else decides what counts.		

Talking about stewardship

Watching for changes in water, weather, wildlife or plants over time builds observation, data collection and environmental awareness. These are core skills in monitoring, Guardian, conservation and consulting roles.

For employers: the Government of Canada resource Employer Approaches for Indigenous Peoples in the Workplace offers guidance on recognizing community, cultural, stewardship and land- and water-based experience.

Getting Ready for Opportunities

Resumes

- Start with a short summary of the work you want and the strengths you bring.
- Include community, cultural, volunteer and land- and water-based experience alongside paid work.
- Use action words and results: organized, monitored, operated, trained, recorded.
- List certifications with dates (First Aid, WHMIS, boating, BEAHR courses).
- Tailor your resume to each posting, and use its words where they truly describe you.

Interviews

Prepare two or three short stories using Situation – Action – Result: what was happening, what you did, and what changed. Practice out loud with someone you trust. It is fine to pause and think before you answer.

Job search and networking

- Check community, band office and Guardian program postings as well as online job boards.
- Tell people what kind of work you are looking for. Many jobs are found through people you know.
- Attend career fairs, information sessions and community events with employers.

Training, Credentials and Support

Mentorship

A mentor can be an Elder, a family member, a former supervisor or someone working in the field. Ask one question at a time and follow up with thanks. Free mentorship programs include the Indigenous Ocean Careers Mentorship Program (all blue economy sectors) and the Clear Seas Indigenous Marine Career Advancement Program (IMCAP) for marine transportation, ports and shipping.

Training and credentials

Short courses (First Aid, WHMIS, boat operator, BEAHR) are often the fastest way to open entry-level doors. Longer college or university programs lead to technical and professional roles, and many accept BEAHR credits. Transport Canada lists marine certificate and training requirements. Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) organizations can help with training funding, childcare, transportation, wage subsidies and employment services.

Key links

Resource (publisher)	Use for	Sectors
Job Seeker Toolkit (PDF) ECO Canada	Resume & interview	All
BEAHR Indigenous training ECO Canada	Training	Guardians, monitoring
BEAHR articulation (post-secondary credit) ECO Canada	Training	Monitoring, consulting
Employment funding & job board ECO Canada	Job search	All
HR services for individuals (fee-based) ECO Canada	Mentorship & coaching	All
Job Bank Government of Canada	Job search	All
Indigenous Ocean Careers Mentorship Program Indigenous Ocean Careers	Mentorship and networking	All blue economy sectors
Indigenous Marine Career Advancement Program (IMCAP) Clear Seas	Mentorship, training and career development	Marine transportation, ports and shipping
Marine Training and Certification Transport Canada	Marine certifications and training requirements	Fisheries, aquaculture, vessel operations, marine transportation
Certificates of Competency Transport Canada	Marine licensing and competency requirements	Marine transportation and shipping
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program Government of Canada (ESDC)	Training funding, employment supports and skills development	All
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training WorkBC	Examples of ISET services: training funding, childcare, transportation help, wage subsidies,	All (B.C. example)

Resource (publisher)	Use for	Sectors
	employment services	
Employer Approaches for Indigenous Peoples in the Workplace Government of Canada (ESDC)	Employer guidance on recognizing Indigenous experience and building inclusive workplaces	All

Putting It Together

Use the six learner tools alongside this toolkit. A simple way to move through them:

When	Do this	Tool
Week 1	Record your education, experience, cultural activities and interests	Tool 1
Week 1–2	Turn experiences into skills; pick your top six strengths	Tools 2 and 6
Week 2	Compare two career pathways that interest you	Tool 3
Week 3	Set a goal and three next steps with dates	Tool 4
Ongoing	Track applications, training and follow-ups	Tool 5

Check in with yourself

- Do my resume and plan include experience from community, culture and the land and water, if I want them to?
- Do I know one training step that would open doors in my chosen area?
- Have I told at least one person what kind of work I am looking for?
- Is my next step small enough to start this week?

Your career journey can change over time. Come back to these tools whenever your goals or experience change.

Reference and Resource List

Resource (publisher)	Use for	Sectors
Job Seeker Toolkit (PDF) ECO Canada	Resume & interview	All
New Practitioners hub ECO Canada	Career exploration	Environmental
BEAHR Indigenous training ECO Canada	Training	Guardians, monitoring
BEAHR articulation (post-secondary credit) ECO Canada	Training	Monitoring, consulting
Employment funding & job board ECO Canada	Job search	All
Environmental professionals (certification info) ECO Canada	Certifications	Consulting, monitoring
HR services for individuals (fee-based) ECO Canada	Mentorship & coaching	All
Indigenous Ocean Careers Workforce Warriors / Canada's Ocean Supercluster	Career exploration	Ocean sectors
Indigenous Career Pivot Program Workforce Warriors	Career transitions, placements and mentoring	Ocean sectors
Ocean Supercluster Canada's Ocean Supercluster	Sector information	Ocean tech, renewables
Indigenous Marine Career Advancement Program (IMCAP) Clear Seas	Mentorship, training and career development	Marine transportation, ports and shipping
Indigenous Guardians Environment and Climate Change Canada	Indigenous programs	Guardians
Guardian and Watchmen programs Parks Canada	Indigenous programs	Guardians, conservation
Indigenous fisheries programs Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Indigenous programs	Fisheries, aquaculture
Job Bank Government of Canada	Job search	All
Job Bank career planning Government of Canada	Career exploration	All
Job Bank occupation search (wages, outlook) Government of Canada	Career exploration	All
Indigenous Ocean Careers Mentorship Program Indigenous Ocean Careers	Mentorship and networking	All blue economy sectors
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Employer Approaches for Indigenous Peoples in the Workplace Government of Canada (ESDC)	Employer guidance on recognizing Indigenous experience and building inclusive workplaces	All