



## **OTEL Supplemental Document for *Back to the Sea Society's* RFP**

*This document is intended to provide additional context to the Back to the Sea RFP applicants about how Ocean to Eye Level Consulting will provide input and support in collaboration with the selected proponent.*

### **Introduction to Ocean to Eye Level**

Ocean to Eye Level Consulting (OTEL) helps communities start marine education centres which bring the ocean up to eye level for local children and families to see and explore.

Public aquariums provide a unique opportunity to experience marine life hands-on without the need for a wet (or dry) suit. We know coastal communities benefit from the environmental, economic, tourism and social benefits that aquariums provide.

Together, our team has supported the launch of six non-profit public aquariums across Canada. Our goal is to support individuals, groups or municipalities to launch sustainable marine education centers to create measurable value for the locals and visitors of your community and promote conservation of our oceans.

We are guided by three key pillars:

- 1. Pilot.** Like any good scientist, we believe in running experiments to test the feasibility of an aquarium in the community before settling on a permanent location, size or scope.
- 2. Self-sustainability.** We specialize in projects that are scaled to fit the surrounding community. Small, well-loved, profitable aquariums that have lineups out the door are better than big, empty aquariums that are struggling financially.
- 3. Collect-hold-release philosophy.** Animal care is paramount. In order to reduce the environmental impacts and address the issue of captive animals, we only work with clients that commit to a collect-hold-release philosophy. This means careful collection of local animals no larger than an octopus with a valid Fisheries and Oceans Canada permit, providing the best care possible to the

animals while on display, and releasing all of the animals at the end of the season or portions of the collection throughout the year.

Our projects are often called “mini” because they are smaller than a larger institution that might you may envision. Our clients know that big is not best.

Ocean to Eye Level's CEO and co-founder, Melanie Knight has supported the development of seven coastal aquarium projects across Canada. She is the founder of the Petty Harbour Mini Aquarium in Newfoundland. Melanie is also a full-time project management consultant for the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority and based in Vancouver, BC.

Melanie is joined by several expert consultants which can be engaged as needed, including:

- Philip Bruecker, founder of the Ucluelet Aquarium, CEO of Living Elements Ltd. and co-founder of Ocean to Eye Level Consulting
- Kevin Kaufman, CEO of Coast Aquariums
- Ruby Banwait, senior biologist at the Vancouver Aquarium and founding curator of the Petty Harbour Mini Aquarium

### **Ocean to Eye Level Consulting and Back to the Sea Society**

OTEL has been working with the Back to the Sea Society since 2017 to support the development of an initial feasibility study. The project has progressed to stage where additional local expertise and site-specific input is required.

OTEL is available for up to 20 hours to support the selected proponent to provide aquarium specific advice. Advice could include, but is not limited to:

- Exhibit and layout design
- Life support system design
- Plumbing and aquarium planning
- Operational and capital budget support
- Animal collection and care advice
- Visitor experience & interpretive planning

To find out more, please see Ocean to Eye Level's website - [oceanotoeyelevel.com](http://oceanotoeyelevel.com). OTEL looks forward to working with the successful proponent.