



FOREST PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (FPAC)



Indigenous Engagement Best Practices Compendium

Special thanks

This report was developed with contributions from the following organizations.



In 2015, FPAC collaborated in the creation of the *teaching leadership chair in Indigenous forestry* at Université Laval (**Chaire de leadership en enseignement (CLE) en foresterie autochtone**). The chair team conducted a literature synthesis and produced the first version of the compendium.



Acosys Consulting Services is an Indigenous consulting firm based in Montréal, QC. Their team played a central role in providing flow and structure to the compendium, which led to the version 1.1.



Mokwateh is Leadership Studio where founder JP Gladu helps clients build bridges toward sustainable partnerships and shared economic prosperity. Mokwateh partnered with Dr. Ryan Bullock from the University of Winnipeg to edit the compendium for tone, flow, clarity, to remove content that was redundant and to add content to better support arguments. Versions 1.2 and then 1.3 were completed in 2023.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Business case for Indigenous engagement

The forest industry has numerous motivations to engage in relationships with Indigenous communities, community economic development corporations, and private Indigenous businesses. Forest companies may want to 1) obtain new business opportunities, 2) broaden supply chains for stronger competitiveness, 3) obtain better access to forest resources, 4) become more socially responsible and improve the image of companies, as well as 5) attract and train Indigenous workers.

Creating *business opportunities* is an important motivation for the forest industry. Indigenous communities offer a new market in many business sectors. In addition, businesses can find financial advantages by working with Indigenous business. Furthermore, new partnerships can fill the gaps in current businesses (leadership, administration, management, markets, workforce, technology, environmental stewardship) and diversify sectors.

Broadening supply chains for improved competitiveness can be achieved through improving relationships with local Indigenous businesses and national Indigenous business organizations. Increasing spend on Indigenous businesses is an effective and proven way to support the Indigenous economy and act on economic reconciliation. Especially as Canada competes on international markets, the more robust, diverse, and fair our supply chains are, the more competitive we become.

Partnerships with Indigenous communities can *secure access to resources*. The lack of clarity by industry and governments about Indigenous rights can have widespread impacts including the perception of investment risk, which in turn can impact capital raising and returns to shareholders. Resources are always located on Indigenous lands and are often close to Indigenous communities. Partnering can help members of forest industry better understand Indigenous rights and implications for business.

Partnerships can help *fulfill a company's social responsibilities and improve its image*. Shareholders and the public are increasingly interested in corporate social and environmental programs. In fact, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks are increasingly being adopted by investors and companies across industries to attempt to mitigate risk to a company's long-term financial performance. Many companies are embracing ESG reporting because they understand the benefits it provides to the company and the rightsholders and stakeholder they engage with.

Having strong ESG standards and corporate social responsibility can also help build the reputation of the company. Improved social mindedness is therefore a wise practice that can help forest-based businesses align with and keep pace with changing social values that directly impact the sector.

Partnerships can help *attract and train Indigenous workers* at all levels of the organisation, including its' executive and board of directors. Indeed, Indigenous people play an important role in meeting the labour needs of Canadian industry, and forestry partnerships can beneficially expand this workforce.

According to the Forest Products Sector Council, *"There is a common understanding Indigenous peoples may be a key human resource in helping the Canadian forest products sector address future labour force requirements"*.¹ The Council believes that Indigenous people can continue to be a good source of future workers as their population is expected to grow. In addition, Indigenous workers can bring different skills, values, perceptions and create a more dynamic workplace as diverse organizations have proven over time to outperform organisations that are not diverse.

Given the above examples, there are many reasons for partnerships between Indigenous Peoples and Canadian natural resource companies, with a variety of ways in which to achieve meaningful outcomes. There is, however, no single universal solution to achieving successful partnerships. The underlying fundamentals are built on trusting relationships and sustained effort with the ability of all actors involved to remain flexible and committed to a commonly developed vision.

Thus, the approaches described in this compendium are a collection of evolving best practices rather than a script to follow. It is important to adapt each individual strategy according to the context of the environment. The role of the actors involved, their aspirations, the history of their relationships, the size and type of partnerships, as well as their capacities (i.e., human, financial, physical, social, natural), affect the steps and practices to pursue. In the end, each company will need to adopt its own unique approach, which will be influenced by their Indigenous partners.

It is paramount to learn about partner Indigenous communities, as well as their histories within the context in which communities have operated within the sector. Each Indigenous community has its own history, traditions and aspirations. Working with

¹ Forest Products Sector Council (FPSC), 2011. *Conversation and Collaboration Building the future Canadian forest products sector with Aboriginal talent*. 20 pages. <http://www.fpac.ca/publications/FPSC-CSPF-Final-English-Report-Conversation-and-Collaboration.pdf>

them requires sensitivity to and recognition of the fact that they are not homogenous. Contextual knowledge requires an understanding of the history of the community, their rights and their territories. The approach developed by the company must include a meaningful commitment to adapting corporate culture in a manner that addresses existing gaps, and aligns with the individual characteristics of each Indigenous community.

1.2. Current operating climate and culture

In the past, forest managers did not factor in the Indigenous relationship to the land, or the traditional and cultural significance of the forests to Indigenous Peoples. However, the dynamics between the Indigenous communities and the forestry industry have changed significantly, due to recent court rulings around the recognition of Indigenous land titles, and the constitutional duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous communities. There are further changes on the horizon as Canada begins to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into policy, and the translation to practice will be both an opportunity and a challenge. These changes are motivating the forest products industry to adjust their corporate culture and attitudes in terms of their business development and operational practices as they pertain to Indigenous relationships. As corporate culture and practice shifts from adversarial practices to that of progressive engagement and economic partnerships with Indigenous communities and businesses, positive outcomes and attributes have strong potential to surface:

- **License to operate:** Positive relationships with Indigenous communities mean that companies can earn the privilege to operate in the communities' ancestral land. Without the cooperation, progressive policies, practices and economic opportunities along with goodwill of Indigenous rightsholders, businesses are at significant risk of conflicts. Positive relationships between the company and the Indigenous rightsholders bring certainty to business operations, something that is valued by shareholders.
- **Meeting workforce training and labour needs:** Securing a skilled workforce that has a low turnover rate is a continual challenge for all players within the forestry sector. Tapping into the Indigenous labour market can help meet these challenges. Ensuring well paying jobs and skills training for members of nearby Indigenous communities is a good way to build positive relationships and obtain the license to operate.

- **Assistance with permits and certifications:** Companies that can show they have the support of the Indigenous rightsholders face an easier road to gaining government approval of their development plans. As well, forest management certification programs require effective Indigenous relations for gaining certification.
- **Shared understanding:** Indigenous communities possess unique perspectives and knowledges about environmental conditions and can offer perspectives that have been built through generations of learning in-situ. Incorporating these perspectives and knowledges are critically important for managing and mitigating the environmental impacts on Indigenous lands.

1.3. Motivations for Indigenous communities and businesses

There are two broad reasons for an Indigenous community to partner with a forest product company – to gain economic benefits and to exercise their right to self-determination.

Indigenous communities typically gain revenue, employment, and business development opportunities when they partner with the forestry industry. This is especially important for many rural or remote communities that have limited economic opportunities outside of natural resources. Economic development opportunities through the forestry industry can increase the socio-economic standard and well-being of community members. Indigenous communities are looking to create long-term, generational wealth and build internal capacity through these types of projects. Through different types of partnerships and governance opportunities, the Indigenous partner can develop new skills and expertise on contemporary forest and business management that can be used for future business opportunities. Certainly, economic development is a driving force for Indigenous communities to engage in this industry.

Equally as important, Indigenous communities are motivated by exercising their right to self-determination. This is especially important because of the history of ignoring the rights of Indigenous Peoples in developing natural resource projects. Today, it is understood that projects will always need consent and engagement by impacted Indigenous communities in order to move ahead. Beyond the mandatory consultation process, Indigenous communities are increasingly seeking to reclaim control over their own affairs, including their traditional lands. They want to control and manage how their lands are used and ensure that they still have access to it for cultural and traditional

activities. They want their traditional knowledge to be incorporated in forestland management and planning. This is a driving motivator for Indigenous involvement and partnership in forestry projects.

1.4. Indigenous rights

Indigenous rights are an important topic for most communities both in a communal and individual sense (take into account trappers and individual trap lines). There are many sources of rights for Indigenous Peoples: inherent, treaty, constitutional, and internationally recognized rights. Rights issues are primarily the federal government's responsibility and their fiduciary responsibility to Indigenous communities and people; however, the actual implementation of rights is passed to industry to figure out. Recognizing Indigenous rights in many respects is the foundation for the relationship with Indigenous people. It is therefore important to understand that these rights are often the basis for negotiating agreements. This concept becomes especially important when considering free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) recognized by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Indigenous people have won hard fought legal battles against both provincial and federal governments of Canada. Some notable cases that have certainly been encouraging companies to reflect on their corporate culture and operations:

- **R. v. Sparrow - Supreme Court of Canada (1990):** The 1990 Supreme Court Decision in R. v. Sparrow was the first Supreme Court of Canada decision which applied s. 35, of the Constitution Act, 1982 which states, "The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed." In the foundational Sparrow ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that First Nations have an Aboriginal right, as defined in the Constitution, to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes and that right takes priority over all others, after conservation.
- **Delgamuukw v. British Columbia (1997):** which confirmed that aboriginal title constituted an ancestral right protected by Section 35(1) of the Constitution Act, 1982. Aboriginal title is a right relating to land, held communally and distinct from other ancestral rights. Aboriginal title is, therefore, in substance, a right to territory and encompasses exclusive use and occupation. Delgamuukw also confirmed oral tradition is as valid as written documents in substantiating these claims.

- **Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)– Supreme Court of Canada (2004)**: ruled that government has the Constitutional duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal communities regarding potential infringement(s) on an Aboriginal right or title, and that this must be done in a manner that is meaningful, timely and reflective of the “honour of the Crown”. It also found that this duty rests with the Crown, meaning that it cannot be delegated to and does not otherwise extend to third parties (e.g. private industry).
- **Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia (2014)**: where the Supreme Court of Canada granted a declaration of Aboriginal title to more than 1,700 square kilometres of land in British Columbia to the Tsilhqot'in First Nation. Where Aboriginal Title has been declared by the courts, the standard to be followed is that of Indigenous consent. However, the Supreme Court made it clear that Aboriginal Title is not absolute. If an Indigenous Nation does not give consent to the use of their Title lands, the Federal or Provincial governments can still try to move ahead with their plans on that Title land. To try to do that, the government must meet a very high standard:
 - demonstrate that what they are trying to do is in the broad public interest and that it actually furthers the goal of reconciliation with the Indigenous Nation.
 - show that they have fully consulted, accommodated and compensated the Nation, and that they are acting consistent with the honour of the Crown and their duty to act in the best interests of the Nation including impairing Aboriginal Title as little as possible, and showing that Indigenous interests were taken into account and given priority.
- **R. v. Sappier; R. v. Gray (2006)**: where the Supreme Court upheld the rights of Indigenous peoples to log Crown land for personal use, issuing a unanimous judgment on two New Brunswick cases. A key feature of this decision was the confirmation that **rights** to resources uses cannot be “frozen in time”, but rather must be understood as evolving in a modern context.
- **Yahey v. British Columbia (2021)**: where the Supreme Court of BC “*found that the Province had breached its treaty commitment to Blueberry River First Nations and infringed the Nations’ rights to carry out their traditional ways of life. The court determined that decades of provincial development authorizations had left Blueberry River with no meaningful ability to exercise their Treaty 8 rights to hunt, fish and trap on their traditional territory. The court ruled that the Province could no longer authorize further activities that unjustifiably infringe Blueberry River’s*

treaty rights, or breach the Province's honourable and fiduciary obligations".² This is a significant court case because it is the first time that a court in Canada has found treaty infringement based on the cumulative effects within a First Nation's territory.

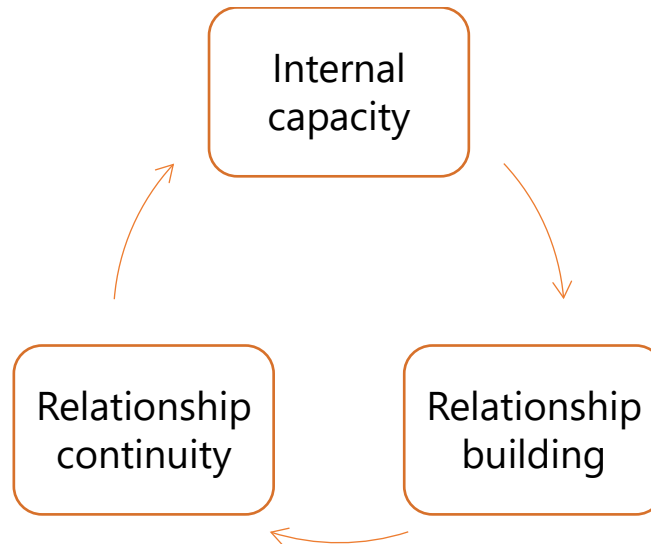
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Adkins, 2018. [Recent Developments in Aboriginal Law](#): Forest Products Association of Canada. Presentation by Sam Adkins, Blakes, December 5, 2018.
- FPAC, 2018. [Aboriginal 101 – Chapter 5; It's the Law](#).
 - To get access to the FPAC Aboriginal 101 training, you can contact the designated "Manager" for each FPAC Member company.
 - For support, contact Etienne Bélanger (ebelanger@fpac.ca).
- Millen, 2013. [Legal Principles and Recent Cases – Outline of Presentation](#). Presentation by Roy Millen, Blakes, October 7, 2013.

² BC Gov News (January 18, 2023). *Province, Blueberry River First Nations reach agreement*. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023WLRS0004-000043#:~:text=On%20June%2029%2C%202021%2C%20the,their%20traditional%20ways%20of%20life>.

2. BEST PRACTICES

Below is a summary of activities that a forestry company should consider when engaging and partnering with Indigenous communities.



- a) **Building internal capacity** ensures that you set the baseline for Indigenous community engagement. The phase focuses on internal training about Indigenous culture, history, and issues, restructuring and expanding the company's organizational chart, and developing policy and strategies to facilitate relationship building. At times companies can face a challenge of change management as they build the internal capacity to manage the engagement process.
- b) **Developing relationships** is a shared responsibility across the company. Often the relationship building starts before the projects are even conceived. This phase of partnership development includes outreach which sets the tone for the relationship between the company and the community. Companies must focus on building trust with community leadership and other community or business representatives. Fostering meaningful relationships with these representatives is essential, as they can also help develop the project to best meet the community needs of well-being and economic development, and influence adoption of a company partnership with the community.
- c) **Relationship continuity** ensures a continued partnership with communities throughout the life of the project and thereafter. It also opens new opportunities for the business since a positive relationship can influence future projects with

other communities but also becomes a touchstone for the industry. Maintaining positive relationships also upholds company image and entrenches relationship building in corporate culture going forward.

2.1. Internal capacity development

2.1.1. Education and awareness about Indigenous culture, lived experiences, and best practices

Knowledge strategy

Before engaging with Indigenous rightsholders, it is essential to devote time and resources into a knowledge strategy, to develop improved understanding of the people and communities as well as their history. The knowledge strategy should be developed by the Indigenous Relations Lead, approved by the Board of Directors, and executed by identified senior leaders.

Education is one of the most important activities a company can address early in the planning stages of any Indigenous related policy or strategy. This will enable a company to grow its organizational competencies to build comprehensive Indigenous strategies and practices that empower future relationships.

In your company's knowledge strategy, it's important to

- **Set baseline education and awareness training:** To ensure teams are well-prepared for the development of any Indigenous related policy or strategy, it is important to host internal education and awareness training events. Such events will provide and help management and employees develop basic knowledge about Indigenous peoples and specific notions about the potential partner communities. Such examples would be the Blanket exercise or Indigenous history 101 programs that are delivered by professional Indigenous practitioners. The Board of Directors should also be included in these trainings and exercises.
- **Have ongoing Indigenous training and relationship building:** Indigenous engagement and cultural training cannot be treated as a one-time event. It is important that the company looks to recurring training especially at the leadership and operations levels. Often the corporate memory will get lost as people come and go or change roles in the company. It is important that companies hand off relationships from one person to the next, review metrics

and lessons learned. Training should be customized depending on the roles. Some roles require more in-depth training while others may not.

- **Participate in developmental workshops:** Develop corporate expertise within the operations of human resources, procurement, leadership, and employment by participating in relevant and informative workshops and conferences.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [FPAC, 2018. Aboriginal 101.](#)
 - To get access to the FPAC Aboriginal 101 training, you can contact the designated “Manager” for each FPAC Member company.
 - For support, contact Etienne Bélanger (ebelanger@fpac.ca).
- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business’ [Progressive Aboriginal Relations Program](#)
- Conference Board of Canada’s [Corporate-Indigenous Relations Council](#)
- [Sheridan Library and Learning Services: Indigenous Studies: Organizations & Websites](#)

Recognize and act upon Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action

For companies that engage with Indigenous communities, they should strongly consider recognizing the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In 2015, the TRC released its report with 94 calls to action. The TRC engaged Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.

The TRC has included a specific call to action for private industry:

“Business and Reconciliation.

92. We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.*

- ii. *Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.*
- iii. *Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism”.*³

Initiatives that can be part of call to action #92 include:

- Employment and inclusion (i.e., board of directors, advisory group) opportunities.
- Workplace education about Indigenous experience and intercultural safety.
- Procurement from and joint ventures with Indigenous businesses.
- Sponsorship, volunteer and philanthropic activities.
- Conducting meaningful engagement, consultation accommodation and/or mitigation processes.

Many businesses acknowledge that adopting these measures is not only the right thing to do but that adoption is also an investment in their mutual success. Benefits to businesses include: a new and growing talent pool and customer base; long-term reliable business partners; local employees, suppliers and contractors; development of new and innovative services and products; greater operational stability and environmental oversight via Indigenous knowledge systems.

When you recognize and act on the TRC call to action #92, it’s important to

- **Obtain leadership buy-in and visibility:** It is important the senior leadership buys into the TRC and UNDRIP and that they visibly and meaningfully support the process. Leadership is important to align the strategic direction and policies and drive cultural change of the organization along its journey towards reconciliation.
- **Commit to reconciliation:** When making public announcements or commitments to reconciliation, it’s important to back that up with a plan, such as

³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), 2015. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. 10 pages. http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

a Reconciliation Action Plan which are becoming common practice across the natural resource sector.

- **Join and support of Indigenous Economic and Community Development Associations:** By becoming an active member of organizations specializing in Indigenous employment and economic development such as the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO), National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Associations (NACCA), First Nation Major Project Coalition (FNMPC), Indigenous Resource Network (IRN) and Downey Wenjack Foundation, you will broaden your network, strengthen your knowledge, and build more relationships with Indigenous leaders.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [Reconciliation and Corporate Canada: Advancing Progress on Call to Action #92](#)
- [Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, Business Reconciliation in Canada Guidebook](#)

Seek experts

When preparing an engagement process with Indigenous communities and people, it is worth engaging an external expert (or experts) and Elders who can provide contextual information about the community you want to engage with and potential relationship bridging via their personal and professional networks. The expert(s) can also play a key role in preparing your team for the initial contacts, including the provision of training and conducting the pre-engagement research.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), [list of Certified Aboriginal Business \(CAB\)](#)
- [NVision Insight Group Inc.](#)
- [Acosys Consulting Services](#)
- [Mokwateh](#)
- [Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.](#)

- [Indigenous Bar Association](#)

Indigenous relations certifications

The value of Indigenous relations certifications is to demonstrate a company's commitment to a respectful, trustworthy partnership with Indigenous communities whose territories companies may be operating within. Professionally recognized and respected certifications are normally validated by third parties who have limited vested interest in the company other than validating and ensuring that their business practices are positive and create mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Some Indigenous relations certifications are highly regarded by Indigenous communities and can indicate a company's Indigenous relations experience level. The leading Indigenous relations certificate is the CCAB's Progressive Aboriginal Relations™ (PAR) Program. The PAR Program helps companies become good, trusted business partners for Indigenous communities.

Indigenous relations are also one element of sustainable forest management considered by forest management certification programs.

- FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of Canada (FSC-STD-CAN-01-2018): Principle 3.
- CSA Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CAN/CSA-Z809-16): Criterion 7.
- SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard: Objective 8.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), [Progressive Aboriginal Relations \(PAR\)](#)
- Smith and Perrault, 2017. [Are All Forest Certification Systems Equal? An Opinion on Indigenous Engagement in the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#)
- FPAC, [Forest Certification in Canada: The Programs, Similarities & Achievements](#)
- [Certification Canada](#)

2.1.2. Staffing up and restructuring your organizational chart

Board of Directors, advisors and senior leadership

Improving Indigenous engagement and internal work culture begins with the board and senior leadership. It is important that they not only see the business rationale for good Indigenous relations but also that they understand the role of their industry within Canada as a whole. To quote the Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair: *“Reconciliation is not just an Aboriginal problem. It is a Canadian Problem. It involves all of us.”* The board and senior leadership need to believe in the same vision and apply it to their business realities. They must be the driving force to support the relationship between the company and the community. Moreover, in some cases, they must be the change agent for the company, especially if they have a history of strained community relations.

There are different roles, committees, and experts you can include in your organization, such as an

- **Indigenous Advisory Committee** that guides the company in their over-arching approach to engagement with Indigenous communities and general business activities. The committee would consist of company employees as well as external Indigenous community members or professionals. This Committee should have a direct line of communication with the Board of Directors and senior leadership or else it can become an act of tokenism.
- **Indigenous Director:** More and more companies are targeting Indigenous directors within their corporate governance structures. Indigenous directors are adding tremendous value to corporations through their strategies and managing corporate risk. It is also a strong signal to Indigenous communities that the corporation takes these relations seriously by ensuring Indigenous perspective and leadership is accounted for at the highest level of the company. It can be challenging to pick one local community representative, so some companies choose Indigenous professionals from outside their operating area, which can also have a significant and positive impact.
- **Integrate a local Elder into the corporation:** Incorporate an Elder in an advisory role to consult and advise leadership and provide strategic relationship direction. This is a bold step for any corporation. Furthermore, Elders can bring an Indigenous perspective to provide meaningful suggestions to leadership and operations as they work towards a better relationship, building a cooperative environment for human resources, procurement and operations with respect to

the community. This role can be an honorary position and can be made part of the Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Operations team

It is important to review your current organizational chart, roles, and responsibilities, and understand where there might be a need for new or expanded roles that demonstrate your commitment to working with Indigenous Peoples. Typically, the operations areas that would require specialized roles are in business development, community engagement and relations, and human resources.

When building out your team, consider if the following roles are suitable for your company.

- **Indigenous business development manager** who focuses on identifying and procuring from local Indigenous businesses and is responsible for executing the Indigenous Procurement Strategy (see Section 2.1.3)
- **Indigenous relations lead** who specializes in starting and maintaining relationships between the company and Indigenous communities and is responsible for executing the Indigenous Relations Policy and Communications Protocols (see Section 2.1.3).
- **Indigenous human resources specialist** who focuses on recruiting and retaining Indigenous talent and is responsible for the Indigenous Employment Strategy (see Section 2.1.3).

To support these Indigenous-specific operations role, there needs to be an Indigenous Engagement Champion in the senior/executive leadership team. They will be responsible for considering Indigenous engagement and relationships in company-wide decision making and have direct communications with the expanded Operations team. The CEO should always have a line of site on these relationships and be clear and transparent with her or his board of directors.

2.1.3. Developing Indigenous-related policies to facilitate relationship building and project development

Indigenous Relations Policy

Companies use a variety of strategies to engage Indigenous communities. Often these strategies are rooted in an Indigenous Relations Policy. A public Indigenous Relations

Policy clearly states for everyone the organization's commitment to developing positive relationships with the communities and businesses who may be impacted by their activities.

The policy can cover aspects like:

- Recognizing that Canada's forests are uniquely important to Indigenous Peoples.
- Recognizing that Indigenous Peoples have constitutionally protected rights.
- Committing to build respectful relationships through early, inclusive dialogue and collaborative processes.
- Committing to work with Indigenous Peoples to achieve mutual benefits.
- Committing to support learning opportunities for Indigenous Peoples as well as company employees.
- Committing to foster understanding of the history and culture of Indigenous Peoples among employees and contractors.

Other elements used by companies to support their Indigenous Relations Policies are:

- Setting up an Indigenous relations teams
- Adopting a co-designed engagement process with each community partner
- Engaging external advisors and Elders to develop and implement the above processes and resources.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- FPAC, 2018. [Indigenous Relations Policies](#)

Indigenous Employment Strategy

FPAC members have the ability to provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to Indigenous people. In fact, the forestry sector is one of the leading employers of Indigenous people, where Indigenous people make up 6% of the entire forestry workforce.⁴ But the details of the quality or types of jobs held by Indigenous people are

⁴ Canadian Council of Forest Miners. *Forests : An integral part of our communities*.
<https://www.ccfm.org/canadians-and-communities/forests-an-integral-part-of-our-communities/>

unknown. In addition, Indigenous people continue to face larger rates of unemployment (8%) compared to non-Indigenous Canadians (5.2%).⁵

Even though in the last 10 years there have been strides and improvements in many areas in improving Indigenous relationships, there is more work to be done on increasing Indigenous employment and supporting their career development. Ongoing strained relationships, reduced competitiveness, and high uncertainty remain, which pose threats to industry and communities, but also present opportunities for partnerships. It is clear that growing or even simply maintaining current business will be difficult to achieve without considerable efforts in this regard. FPAC and FPAC members must take into consideration their roles in increasing Indigenous participation in the forest sector.

An Indigenous Employment Strategy should be robust and comprehensive. In developing the strategy, it is important to engage with the current Indigenous employees as well as the larger Indigenous labour pool from near by communities to understand their current levels of education, skills, and certification, and their long-term aspirations in their forestry career. This is crucial for job retention and supporting Indigenous career development.

When developing an Indigenous Employment Strategy, it's important to

- **Set targets and collect data:** Measuring the outcomes of the Indigenous Employment Strategy against the target is a credible way to measure success. If the targets have not been met, assess why, and adjust practices.
- **Be forward looking:** Develop pre-employment practices such as preparing primary and secondary students for the work force through presentations at career days, mentorship programs, providing information about hiring processes and education requirements, providing scholarships for post-secondary education, and organizing internships and co-op programs such as the Outland Youth Employment Program. FPAC and its members can also work with educators and education institutions to ensure and develop programming that adequately prepares youth and adult learners for employment in parts of the sector that demonstrate current or forecasted needs (for example, Indigenous relations, business, human resources, management, and research and development).

⁵ Statistics Canada (January 6, 2023). *Labour for characteristics by region and detailed Indigenous group*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410036501>

- **Understand the Indigenous hiring environment:** Develop hiring practices such as utilizing Indigenous platforms to advertise job openings, maintaining job lists of potential employees, proactively seeking potential hires, and having two person hiring teams with at least one person being Indigenous.
- **Focus on retention and career advancement:** Survey Indigenous employees to understand how you can retain them in your workplace. This could look like increased pay, benefits, training, safety, cultural appreciation and other innovative ideas. Identify ways to advance careers of Indigenous people within their areas of interest.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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- [Hiring and Retaining Aboriginal Peoples in the Workforce; An Internal Guide with Facts and Ideas to Support FPAC Members with HR Planning.](#)
 - [The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. Hiring and Retaining Aboriginal Apprentices — An Action Plan for Employers](#)
 - [Indigenous Works, Guide for Developing Indigenous Inclusion Policies](#)
 - [Carlton University, Indigenous recruitment and retention: Ideas and best practices from a literature review of academic and organizational sources](#)
 - [Outland Youth Employment Program](#)

Indigenous Procurement Strategy

Developing Indigenous supplier opportunities is a direct way for a company to positively impact the wellbeing of community, communicate goodwill and establish progressive partnerships. In addition, using local businesses have the potential to lower costs for the company through:

- Assessments of existing capacity.
- Development of a registry of Indigenous businesses.
- Identification of contract opportunities and alignment with current and future community capacity.
- Development of service contracts that match the capacity of the communities.

The CCAB developed an Aboriginal Procurement Strategy which aims to create an unprecedented, national approach to Aboriginal procurement by developing the largest

membership of corporations committed to increasing Indigenous participation in corporate supply chains. The Aboriginal Procurement Champions, part of the [Supply Change](#) initiative, have access to CCAB's Aboriginal Procurement Marketplace online platform to connect with Indigenous suppliers.

When developing an Indigenous Procurement Strategy, it's important to

- **Review your internal procurement procedures, policies and templates:** Consider any changes required and update their departmental procurement procedures, policies and templates.
- **Set targets** that are measured and accounted for annually.
- **Consider developing business mentoring or incubator programs:** Business Mentoring or Incubator programs are effective means to identify and prepare potential suppliers for the local operations. In addition, having Business Mentoring or Incubator Programs are a visible commitment of companies willing to work with the Indigenous community.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business \(CCAB\), Supply Change Program](#)
- [University of Victoria, Bronwen Grieve, MADR candidate, School of Public Administration, Understanding the Target Process of the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business](#)
- [University of Manitoba, Erinn Mah, Graduate Student Master of Public Administration Program Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Arts, An Evaluation of Canada's Procurement Policies for Aboriginal Business](#)
- [Tsawwassen First Nation, Procurement Policy](#)
- [First Nations Fiscal Management, Procurement Tools](#)
- [NACCA, Indigenous Procurement](#)

Communications Protocol

Prior to community engagement, organizations should have a common understanding or best practice for engaging with community partner. This foundational Communications Protocol should provide guidance on communications with Indigenous partners but be nimble and flexible to adapt to community-specific request and needs. Once you have begun working with an Indigenous community, you should ask how they

want to be communicated with and agree to a specific Communications Protocol for the duration of that partnership.

2.2. Relationship building

2.2.1. Start early and come prepared

Prepare for the first meeting

Now that you have done the internal education and training, hired dedicated team members to support Indigenous engagement, and have developed policies and protocols, you are well equipped to begin the community engagement process. It's important to prepare for the first meeting by learning as much as you can about the community before the first meeting. This shows that you have put effort into getting to know them.

As you prepare to first meet with the community representatives, remember to

- **Learn how to pronounce Indigenous words** such as the community's traditional name, first and last names. This demonstrates a willingness to learn and decolonize your vocabulary.
- **Do pre-engagement research:** Before engaging with an Indigenous community, it is essential to do background desk research and ensure that everyone on the team who will be in contact with the community has some context on their political, economic, cultural, and societal history and contemporary situations. This can be as simple as Googling the community's name, looking through past news articles, public databases on community demographics, and connecting with people that have ties to the community.
- **Learn from the past:** Communities, band councils, and territorial or regional governments have had a variety of negative and positive experiences with corporate Canada and governments. To foster a constructive working relationship, the Indigenous relations lead must possess a good understanding of that history and meaningfully act upon lessons learned through past interactions of development and community relations. This will help all parties feel respected and confident.

Engage early

Engaging all partners early in the process also builds trust. When you are looking to start a new project on a new site, it is important to start the engagement process with the impacted community as soon as possible. The worst thing you can do is start the relationship with the Indigenous community after key decisions have been made. This makes the Indigenous community feel like an after thought or a burden and shows the lack of understanding that Indigenous Peoples are rightsholders. Even if you do not have fully developed plans yet, it is always better to start earlier than later. That way you can incorporate the local Indigenous knowledge and perspectives from the on set of the project.

Engaging Indigenous communities at the very beginning of a project also increases the chances of a successful outcome. If, for any project, community members feel that all the decisions have already been made before they have been contacted, community members may protest actions rather than invest their own time and energy in the relationship with the company.

Begin the engagement process by writing a letter to the Chief and Council. This letter should be written by the CEO of the company who outlines the project in a plainly worded letter that avoids using a lot of technical details and industry jargon. The letter should also request the opportunity to meet initially with the Chief and Council in person at their earliest convenience. Companies should start the engagement process by contacting the leadership of the community to seek their advice and direction on engagement activities and whom to contact for further efforts. This may include, for example, a community liaison, such as a Land Manager, Band administrator or Consultation coordinator.

2.2.2. Listen

Get to know the needs of the community

Although you have done some desk research to learn about the community, nothing beats asking them directly what they are looking for. Making efforts to know the communities you hope to work with provides an opportunity to have a partnership approach that meets the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities and businesses. Does your approach encourage engagement from both the community and business representatives? It is by getting to deeply know the communities that it is possible to create a common vision and understanding of the relationship. Common objectives are needed to move forward, as well as motivated and qualified people on

both sides of the partnership who form the relationship and set the working conditions at the onset.

Being open is an important part of building trust. The community will provide the company with suggestions and needs they expect to be met. Showing “reservation” or saying “no” right away can often generate mistrust and, subsequently, lead to denied access to traditional territory. Be prepared to take community ideas and suggestions back to your company leadership in order to support an open dialogue about what may be possible/necessary to support the partnership.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.:
 - [Why Pre-engagement Research of Indigenous Communities is Important](#)
 - [Indigenous Peoples Worldviews vs Western Worldviews](#)
 - [Respecting First Nations Cultural Diversity](#)
- [Native Land](#)
- [Indigenous peoples and communities, Government of Canada](#)
- [Assembly of First Nations](#)
- [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#)
- [Métis National Council](#)

Active listening

Practicing active listening is important for relationship building and problem solving. This means that the company’s leadership and Indigenous relations lead fully hear, understand, respond to and then remember what is being said. Active listening requires repeating back what has just been heard to confirm understanding of issues and challenges for the community. It will also require having an empathetic ear while listening in order to provide people with an outlet for their emotions. Active listening creates a climate of openness that can enable the community and other groups to share experiences. This practice can also create opportunities to invite new perspectives on difficult subjects and recognize emotional suffering that most Indigenous peoples have faced as result of natural resources development projects. Below is a summary of the Active Listening Process:



Often the community will have a list of grievances with past leadership or even the previous governments. It is important that company leadership listens without passing judgment or ignoring the message. Position the community at the centre for your interactions and acknowledge that the community wants to be heard and understood.

It is important to prepare for potential opposition to the development of a project. Indigenous peoples are environmental stewards and are very tied to their land, which can result in a very protective positioning regarding land usage, environmental protection, and land reclamation. The negative history of resource extraction on Indigenous lands also raises mistrust and skepticism. Depending on the community history with an industry or company(ies) it may also affect the tone and dialogue between company and the community. Companies should plan for conflict and prepare mechanisms or strategies to work through the opposition internally and with the community partner.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Active Listening Definition, Skills, and Examples by Alison Doyle in The Balance.](#)

2.2.3. Respect

Understand cultural differences

Acknowledging cultural differences is important to building positive relationships and will have an impact on all communications, decisions and activities. Indigenous Peoples' traditional cultures are distinct from other cultures within Canada. Because Indigenous cultures were attacked throughout Canada's history, it is important to understand and celebrate the diversity of Indigenous cultures as part of reconciliation and building positive relationships with Indigenous partners.

Culture is the whole of our everyday life. Specifically, it encompasses collective behaviours, norms, values, beliefs, customs, traditions, institutions, social orders, ways of life, intellectual outputs and capacities of a group of people or society. Value differences are one of the biggest obstacles encountered when non-Indigenous people try to work with Indigenous Peoples. Behaviours are visible, but values and beliefs, for example, can be more difficult to recognize, which can make it difficult to interact with confidence and in a positive, natural, and constructive manner.

It is important to put relationships before business. To do so, develop relationships through effective communication, meaningful time spent in community or boardroom, and seek to learn about, understand and celebrate Indigenous cultures, without imposing deadlines and demands.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., Respective the Cultural Diversity of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [UBC, Indigenous Foundations: Aboriginal Identity](#)
- [Canada Guide, The Aboriginal People in Canada](#)

Recognize and respect Indigenous protocols

Protocol subsumes notions such as manners, ceremony, and "know how". Protocols can be elaborate and vary nation by nation. The following protocols are typically observed in First Nation communities, but don't assume and always ask the community what their

specific protocols are. An easy way to acknowledge a protocol and locally diverse practices is to request a cultural ambassador from the community. This person can be an Elder, member of the band council or Economic Development Council.

- **Consideration to the Chief:** If you will be meeting with Chief and Council your organization should send someone of equal stature – the CEO or other Senior Executive. It can be seen as disrespectful to send anyone further down the organization. When building a relationship, you must respect that the Chief is the elected political leader of the community. If the Chief instructs you to not engage with other community members on business issues, that direction should be taken very seriously. Be transparent with your community engagement to avoid inadvertently overstepping and disrespecting the Chief.
- **Prayer:** Start the event/activity with a prayer and end the event with a prayer by an Elder of the community or the host Nation.
- **Offering tobacco:** For First Nations or Métis Elders, one must offer tobacco. Tobacco is one of the four sacred medicines, and it is offered when making a request. The offering can be in the form of a tobacco pouch or tobacco tie (loose tobacco wrapped in a small red or yellow cloth). The tobacco pouch or tie should be prepared by the person making the request. As the pouch or tie is being made it is good to think about what you are asking for, and to put good thoughts and prayers into the offering. When making a request, offer the tobacco by holding it in your left hand (in front of you), state your request (be specific), and if the Elder accepts your request place the tobacco in their left hand.
- **Alcohol:** Recognizing that many Indigenous communities have problematic relations with alcohol, some having banned alcohol from the community, it might be considered offensive to introduce alcohol in a ceremony. Follow direction from local leadership and Elders.
- **Traditional welcome:** Traditional welcoming ceremonies range from speeches of welcome, traditional dance, drumming, singing, and smoking ceremonies, and are performed at the beginning of a forum by an Elder or appropriate member of the community to welcome people who are visiting and/or meeting on their traditional land. Traditional welcomes should be incorporated into the opening of major internal or public events, meetings, forums and functions.

- **Smudging:** In most First Nations ceremonies, certain herbs are traditionally used to purify or bless people and places. Herbs are lit with a match in a shell or another suitable container to produce smoke that can be pulled towards oneself with the hands or pushed by someone else with a feather or fan. This is called “smudging”. Remove hand jewelry and eyeglasses before smudging. Where smudging accommodation needs are known to exist, the Indigenous relations lead and operations team should take proactive steps to facilitate the practice in a dignified and timely way.
- **Land acknowledgments:** The land that you gather, live, or operate on should be acknowledged by the first speaker at any significant organisational forums. Subsequent speakers may also choose to acknowledge the land. Do your research to properly acknowledge the traditional stewards of the land and remember to practice your pronunciation.
- **Acknowledging Elders:** Following the land acknowledgement, the first speaker at a forum should also separately acknowledge any Elders who are in attendance. If the Elder agrees to become involved and accepts the tobacco, it is customary to provide a gift of appreciation afterwards to show your thanks. This gift can be monetary and can also be known as an honorarium.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Centre for Indigenous Initiatives, [Guidelines for Working with Elders](#)
- Queens University, [Elder Protocol Handbook](#)
- [Seven Generations Education Institute](#)

2.3. Relationship continuity

2.3.1. Establish collaboration and governance agreements

Formal agreements, such as memorandums of understanding, consultation agreements, and impact and benefit agreements (IBAs) can play a meaningful role in the reconciliation of the interests and ambitions of both the Indigenous communities and the company. Different agreements vary in their formality and commitments, making some more appropriate to different objectives, contexts and levels of scale. The benefits to the proponents are largely derived from establishing “good neighbour” and business relationships, and from the withdrawal of objections against the approvals for projects.

There are many different forms of institutional arrangements used in Canada between Indigenous communities and forestry proponents. The five main approaches to collaboration are:

- Treaties, agreements, and memoranda of understanding (MOU), which provide the frameworks within which collaborative arrangements are carried out.
- Involvement in forestland planning and management.
- Influence on decision-making through consultations.
- Forest tenures.
- Economic activities such as businesses and partnerships.⁶

In practice, many of these approaches can be used at the same time since they are often linked to one another. Underpinning the success of all these collaboration approaches is adequate capacity from both parties to meaningfully participate in the process. When working with an Indigenous partner, it's important to identify what the intended outcome of the collaboration is and then work to identify which arrangement suits that outcome the best. Even within these five broad approaches there are many unique forms of arrangements to be explored.

Treaties, agreements, MOUs	Management and planning	Influence on decision-making	Forest tenures	Economic roles
Treaties Agreements Sector MOUs Case MOUs	Aboriginal Comprehensive Planning Activities Land use maps Trad. knowl. studies	Autonomy Delegated authority Co-management Advisory tables Exchange info. Provide info.	Aboriginal lands Aboriginal tenure Trusts NAFA class 1 NAFA class 2 NAFA class 3 NAFA class 4 Emerging	Primary transform'n Secondary transf. Forest planning Harvesting Silviculture Employment Revenue-sharing Access costs Indirect Non-timber for. prod.
← Capacity-building →				

Figure 1 . What forms of collaboration are you using?

⁶ Stephen Wyatt et al., 'Collaboration between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Forestry Industry: A Dynamic Relationship' (Sustainable Forest Management Network, 2010).

Source: Stephen Wyatt et al., 'Collaboration between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian Forestry Industry: A Dynamic Relationship' (Sustainable Forest Management Network, 2010).

2.3.2. Support the Indigenous partner as needed

Be flexible with time

Being flexible means being respectful of Indigenous cultures. To do business with an Indigenous community is to take into consideration that the leadership has a duty to the entire community. To ensure the success of the relationship you must be flexible. Often, deadlines are too rigid or do not reflect local timelines and priorities, and the consultation process is not developed with the participation of Indigenous Peoples. They may feel rushed to review proposals, give their consent and/or enter into agreements. In communities, decisions are often made on a consensual basis, or at least by giving an opportunity for everyone to contribute.

Indigenous Peoples can function with a sense of timelessness where a sense of place is within the context of hundreds of generations. The term "Indian Time" is used in a derogatory manner. This term is racist and must not be used. Time is sometimes measured differently in Indigenous communities than in other communities and understanding the local and cultural contexts that give rise to such differences is crucial to maintaining positive working relationships.

In practicing your flexibility, remember

- **Timelessness:** Be flexible and allow for projects and engagement activities to take more time than conventional business may expect. Set out flexible meeting agendas and ensure that you can have flexible timelines.
- **Fine-tuning the consultation protocol for the community:** Although you have developed a consultation protocol, it is important to keep it updated. Under the Indian Act, band elections happen every two years. Many conditions and opinions can change when a new band council takes over the management of the community. Companies should try to be on top of the changing political and administrative environment of the community.

Language translation

Providing time and funding to support the Indigenous engagement is essential to building a positive relationship. Such supports could include the resources needed to do

internal consultations, to develop effective tools for communication, hire internal representation, or to contract independent experts. It could also include fees to assure translation, knowing that in some communities' language is a barrier to sharing and receiving the information.

If language presents a barrier to the exchange of communications, arrangements may need to be made for the translation of materials or interpretation during meetings. Community representatives can help identify a local translator.

Community Investment Strategy

Community investment goes beyond public relations efforts. Community investment refers to company actions that help to build-up communities, where companies are operating in Indigenous territories. Community investment can be directly related to or be in addition to core project work. For example, a building or road that is built for the project but is accessible to the community for other uses can be considered as an in-kind community investment. Also, smaller initiatives like supporting the local pow wow or community cultural events are also opportunities to do direct investment for the community well-being.

Having strong community partners strengthens the company's business capacity to operate locally. Strong relationships and progressive partnerships with Indigenous communities will:

- Support initiatives that bolster the health, environmental and educational capacity.
- Empower an engaged community to assist in the business operational success and solidify access to natural resources. Peripheral benefits will include the creation of civic-minded employees and friends who have a focus on Indigenous relations locally and nationally.
- Build critical infrastructure for communities to reach their potential.

When developing a Community Investment Strategy, it's important to

- **Align to business and community objectives:** A balanced approach to include both the community's economic and social development goals and the overall corporate social responsibility principles and goals should be considered in when developing the Community Investment Strategy. Ensure ESG principles are clearly identified and accounted for.

- **Ensure that the strategy can be implemented through the life cycle of a project**, which is inclusive of community. Global strategy must incorporate infrastructure, policy and processes to empower community participation and collaboration with interested stakeholders, target communities, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and governmental authorities (if necessary).
- **Focus on what is important to communities:** Ensure that the strategy is relevant to locally impacted Indigenous people and communities. Focusing on cultural enhancement, language, sustainable development, environmental and socio-economic outcomes are hot buttons for Indigenous Peoples.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Strategic Community Investment: A Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing Business in Emerging Markets.](#)
- [Cass Business School, Social Investment; Tools for Success: doing the right thing and going them right.](#)

2.3.3. Continue relationship development

Building on and maintaining the relationship is just as critical as the initial engagement. A wise practice of meaningful engagement is “early, often and ongoing.” Ensure that community issues raised in the initial phases are being addressed and communicate how you are addressing them and follow through on commitments made during the engagement process.

Respectful engagement with a community means doing more than “getting them on side” for permit approval. Achieving support for your project is not a means to an end - it’s a step together in a long respectful and reciprocal relationship.

Rather than only gaining short-term economic benefits from royalties and employment, Indigenous communities are increasingly ensuring that their relationships with the forest industry help them build long-term capacity as part of broader economic development initiatives. Communities need assurances that they will continually and increasingly gain benefits through forest sector involvement. Commitments by industry and government are crucial to building the rapport and capacities needed to pursue short-term and long-term initiatives.

Monitor your engagement

The implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system is a success factor of a positive relationship. This process is often overlooked due to a lack of time and resources. It can be misunderstood or not valued. The evaluation of the partnership measures the achievement of objectives. It is important to evaluate the partnership on a regular basis, to know if it is still beneficial for both partners and if the expected benefits are present. Evaluations create a sense of responsibility in the implementation of the partnership and enable continuous improvement of the partnership.

To monitor and evaluate a partnership, you need to know what to measure to assess success. Then, you have to think about how to collect and analyze this information. It is likely that during the implementation of the partnership, adjustments will have to be made. The monitoring and evaluation system will make it easier to identify changes to the partnership.

In order to accurately monitor your engagement, consider the following steps.

- **Develop metrics:** Developing metrics provides an opportunity for the company to measure the success of the engagement strategy being implemented. These metrics should be specified for what is important to the community i.e. youth employment, supplier inclusion, community involvement, for example. To help meaningfully link the executive and community partner, produce common metrics that are SMART: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, and time bound.
- **Tools to manage the relationship:** Consider using a case management tool to document the engagement. Case management tools can provide the framework for recording issues, resolutions, and timelines. In addition, case management helps with corporate memory of the interactions, decisions and community protocol process. It can also provide a record to third parties.
- **Communicate results:** The case management tool should produce reports that measure the outcomes of engagement. The reports should be shared with community leadership to demonstrate transparency and improve what is not working in a relationship and celebrate what is working between the community and the company.
- **Adjust strategies:** Depending on the results companies should be prepared to adjust their strategy to accommodate the potentially fluid environment of the community, the company, and the sector.

- **Communicate success:** Use the information distribution channels defined in the communication protocol and plan to celebrate success stories at every opportunity. These success stories can be from new business engaged in the supply chain, announcements of new community hires, awarded student scholarships, new funding or company participation initiatives.

Participate in community events

Participation in community events is still considered a responsible and respectful act. Gatherings such as pow-wows, hockey tournaments, celebrations, and so on, deepen relationships and are considered a responsibility for business partners, which builds a good reputation and respect. The Indigenous relations lead should be informed about upcoming community events.

Aligning strategic planning with partnership needs

When undertaking project planning, ask Indigenous partners to participate in the process in order to ensure shared ownership and responsibility for the success of the plans and appropriate implementation. In doing so, it is important to recognize the elected leadership (Chief and Council) in the community. It is usually the Council who is responsible for determining the acceptability of any activities undertaken within their territory. Do not take anything for granted. It is important to work 'with' and not 'for' people. Send a letter to Chief and Council asking how they would like to engage in the strategic planning process.

3. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If you follow this compendium, you will minimize the chances of conflict with community members, however sometimes it still happens. You may experience conflict with the community's political leadership, your liaison or point of contact, or other community members. This section provides some context and best practices on how to understand and respond to those situations in a productive way. This is a summary of best practices that can be applied to a variety of different conflicts and issues, but it is not an exhaustive list. Other actions may be better suited for more severe or complex challenges.

3.1. Context

Depending on the nature of the conflict or dispute you may be experiencing with the community, the source of the conflict might have many layers to it. There is the surface layer issue in addition to the hidden layers of colonial legacy that are likely showing itself through this conflict. When dealing with any type of conflict with the community, it's important to understand this context.

3.1.1. Colonialism and Forestry in Canada

Indigenous communities are still dealing with the inter-generational trauma caused by colonialism, and this can impact the way they work and communicate with industry proponents. Indigenous people have experienced, and may continue to experience, collective trauma stemming from colonization, the effects of which are passed on from one generation to the next; this is referred to as intergenerational trauma.⁷ Settler colonialism in Canada led to the forced settlement of Indigenous nations, residential schools where Indigenous children were taken from their homes to be forcibly assimilated into Western society, many of them to never return to their families, the loss of Indigenous languages, among many other irreversible, negative impacts. Although the main actors of colonialism were the state and church, the forestry sector also had a role to play.

In the National Aboriginal Forestry Association's intervention submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1993, they state that "the economic history of

⁷ Dr. Connors, (20 June 2021), "Indigenous people, trauma, and suicide prevention". Centre for Suicide Prevention. https://www.suicideinfo.ca/local_resource/trauma-and-suicide-in-indigenous-people/

Canada has been the story of natural resource exploitation”⁸. Historically there has been a chronic lack of consultation between governments and Indigenous Peoples who hold rights to land and resources. This has further marginalized Indigenous communities that could have benefited from the economic development generated from forestry activities on their traditional territories. Not only was their ability to participate in Canada’s growing natural resource economy diminished, but their traditional lifestyles and food sources were shattered due to poor forestry management methods that did not include the concept of sustainable development which is inherent in Indigenous decision-making.⁹ In their submission, the National Aboriginal Forestry Association expressed that their lack of access to land and resources created further dependency on governmental welfare programs and inhibited their ability to exercise their right to self-government. This unjust past lingers in contemporary forestry-Indigenous relations today.

As you can see, over the last 150+ years there has been a lot of mistrust developed between Indigenous communities, the government, and industry due to broken promises of shared wealth and environmental protection, and the experiences of racism and discrimination. It is crucial to acknowledge that, whether you are a new individual representing a company, or if it’s a new company becoming active in a region, you must be cognizant of the historical context of forestry and colonialism. Your actions and plans cannot exist in a vacuum, disregarding this history. Even if you personally haven’t contributed to these issues, recognizing and understanding this context is essential. Industry proponents must work hard to gain the trust of the entire community, not just their point of contact or political leadership that signs off on partnership agreements. Ask your point of contact in the community how you can build trust with all the adults, children, and Elders who live in the community and will be impacted by the project you are proposing.

3.1.2. Understanding Community Dynamics

When working with just one or many different Indigenous communities, it is important to remember that Indigenous people are not a monolith. This applies to Indigenous people of the same community who may disagree on certain issues. There are cases

⁸ National Aboriginal Forestry Association, (August 1993), “Forest Lands and Resources for Aboriginal People: An Intervention submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples”.
<https://www.nafaforestry.org/pdf/2019/Intervention%20Submitted%20to%20the%20Royal%20Commission%20on%20Aboriginal%20Peoples-August%201993.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

where community members, Elders, and the elected political leadership disagree on important issues, projects, and actions. This is to be expected of any diverse population. With that in mind, it's important to talk to your community liaison to understand what meaningful engagement and obtaining consent looks like for their community. If you have followed their guidance and there are still disagreements about the project's acceptance or actions, talk to your community liaison about how to resolve those issues.

Lateral violence is a systemic issue that affects the progress and cohesion of many Indigenous communities which may be another contributing factor to the conflict you are experiencing. Indigenous lateral violence is when Indigenous people abuse or oppress other Indigenous people, caused from the cycles of abuse and oppression they have experienced from colonization.¹⁰ Because of inter-generational trauma, the suppressed feelings of anger and shame manifest in toxic behaviours of jealousy, gossiping, and arguing. Instead of directing their anger to their oppressor, they direct it at their own peers or community members. It may be hard to identify, but sometimes inter-personal conflicts within a community are caused by lateral violence. As an outsider, it's important for you to be aware that this happens but avoid getting involved in it.

There will be situations where you are at fault and there will be situations where you aren't. Both types of situations should be handled with care and compassion. Even if there are hidden layers to the conflict you are dealing with, it is important to take responsibility for your actions and attempt to resolve the problem in a respectful manner.

3.2. Best Practices

As highlighted in the preceding section (2.1 - Internal Capacity Development), the significance of engaging with Indigenous communities with cultural awareness and sensitivity cannot be overstated. To ensure effective engagement, dedicating time and resources to cultural competency training for staff actively involved in community engagement is essential.

In the event of an altercation or conflict between yourself and an Indigenous community member, consider implementing the following best practices with guidance from your community liaison.

¹⁰ Native Women's Association of Canada, (2011), "Aboriginal Lateral Violence".
<https://www.nwac.ca/assets-knowledge-centre/2011-Aboriginal-Lateral-Violence.pdf>

1. **Active Listening and Validation:** Keep calm and don't escalate the situation – sometimes people want to vent and get things off their chest, even if what they're upset about isn't directly related to you. When this happens, try not to escalate the situation by arguing or disputing specific facts. It is better to listen to what the person has to say and tell them you will take this information into consideration and relay it back to your organization or leadership.
2. **Identify the Root Cause:** Work closely with your community liaison to identify the underlying causes of the conflict. This step helps uncover deeper issues beyond the surface conflict.
3. **Consider Cultural Mediation:** Suggest involving a culturally respected mediator, which might include an Elder, to facilitate discussions and promote understanding. Using their wisdom, knowledge, and worldview, they can help make sense of the problem and identify a path forward.
4. **Indigenous-Led Approaches:** Similar to inviting an Elder to mediate the problem, some communities and institutions are initiating sharing circles as an Indigenous-led way to resolve conflicts instead of going through the criminal justice system. If the community decides to pursue this, you should attend the circle and be authentic and vulnerable when sharing your thoughts and feelings.
5. **Legal Resolution:** Avoid pursuing the legal route unless absolutely necessary – it's always better to try to resolve conflicts inter-personally instead of relying on lawyers.
6. **Accountability and Learning:** When conflicts arise within Indigenous communities, industry proponents must uphold accountability as a core value. Accountability entails taking ownership of any actions, decisions, or oversights that may have contributed to the conflict. Even if the conflict's origins lie beyond your immediate control, taking responsibility for your role is essential. This includes both individual and organizational accountability. Even if the fault lies elsewhere, demonstrating a willingness to learn from the experience and improve is paramount. This involves conducting post-conflict assessments and soliciting feedback from the community to identify areas for improvement. Transparency in this process helps rebuild trust and demonstrates a commitment to continuous learning and growth.
7. **Developing Conflict Resolution Policy:** Develop a policy to help guide your staff in the event of a future conflict – based on your experience resolving

conflicts with community, consider developing a policy or “lessons learned” document that includes basic steps and procedures you can use to diffuse and resolve the conflict. A conflict resolution policy should not be a static document; it should evolve over time based on ongoing experiences and feedback from the community.

4. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TO TAKE TO BUILD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP

The current compendium outlines the three main phases of effective Indigenous engagement – internal capacity development, relationship building, and relationship continuity – and then describes the specific steps needed to be taken. The following list summarizes those steps.

Phase 1. Internal capacity development

1. Develop a knowledge strategy that includes education and awareness training with all staff about Indigenous culture, lived experienced, and best practices.
2. Recognize and act on the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action.
3. Seek experts to help build your internal capacity and guide decision making.
4. Pursue an Indigenous relations certification to prepare you for future community engagement.
5. Restructure your organization and staff-up with Indigenous-specific roles and committees.
6. Develop Indigenous-related policies such as an Indigenous Relations Policy, Indigenous Employment Policy, Indigenous Procurement Strategy, and Communications Protocol.

Phase 2. Relationship building

1. Prepare before your first meeting with the Indigenous partner by doing desk research on the community's history, businesses, publications, etc.
2. Engage early – not after critical decisions have been made.
3. Understand the needs and requests of the community.
4. Practice active listening.
5. Show respect to different cultural beliefs, practices, and worldviews.
6. Recognize and practice Indigenous protocols.

Phase 3. Relationship continuity

1. Establish collaboration and governance agreements with the Indigenous partner that matches their objectives and intended outcomes of the partnership.
2. Be flexible with time. This is part of respecting different cultures and the competing priorities that elected political leadership deal with.
3. Offer to pay and provide Indigenous language translation.
4. Co-develop a Community Investment Strategy with the Indigenous partner.
5. After the project had ended, continue to maintain the relationship with your Indigenous partner.
6. Monitor and track your engagement throughout the entire process.
7. Participate in community events, as appropriate.
8. Invite your Indigenous partners to help inform your company's broader strategic planning.

5. TERMINOLOGY

Aboriginal or Indigenous group: A community of people that hold or may hold Aboriginal and treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982.

Aboriginal or Indigenous peoples: As provided for in section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982, the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada include the “Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.”

Aboriginal or Indigenous rights: “Aboriginal rights” are collective, constitutionally protected rights which flow from Indigenous peoples’ continued use and occupation of certain lands prior and subsequent to European contact, which may include rights to land, resource use, self-government and other cultural and traditional activities.

Community of Interest: An Indigenous community in proximity to the project or who engages in right-bearing activities in the area that will be impacted by the proponent’s activity.

Duty to Consult: The Crown’s Constitutional duty to consult in a meaningful way with Indigenous peoples before making decisions that might adversely affect the exercise of Indigenous or treaty rights and, where appropriate, to develop meaningful ways to accommodate the concerns of Indigenous communities about any potential adverse impacts on the exercise of their rights.

Engagement: Communication between a project proponent and a community to share information relevant to the project planning and/or planning for the community to share in business and employment opportunities generated by the project.

First Nation: A term that has come into common usage to replace “Indian” in some circumstances, either because “Indian” is felt by some to be offensive or by preference; sometimes adopted into the name of a Treaty community in replacement of the word “band”.

Indigenous: Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them.

Inuit: An Indigenous nation in Northern Canada, who live primarily in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. Some Inuit live in Manitoba. Inuit means “people” in the Inuit language —Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

Métis: A distinct nation that was born post-contact from the unions of First Nations women and European fur traders in the 18th century. The Métis have a unique customs and culture that draw on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree.

Traditional Territory: Land defined as being traditionally used or occupied by Indigenous peoples.

Treaty rights: Rights arising from the signature of a land claim agreement between an Indigenous group and the Crown.

6. RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

FPAC Resources

- FPAC Aboriginal Engagement Framework: <http://members.fpac.ca/wp-content/uploads/FPAC-Aboriginal-Engagement-Framework-February-18-2016.pdf>
- Indigenous Cultural Awareness Face-to-Face Training.
 - Materials: <http://members.fpac.ca/fpac-indigenous-cultural-awareness/>
 - Training providers: <http://members.fpac.ca/aboriginal-cultural-awareness-training/>
- Hiring and Retaining Aboriginal Peoples in the Workforce; An Internal Guide with Facts and Ideas to Support FPAC Members with HR Planning: [https://members.fpac.ca/wp-content/uploads/FPAC%E2%80%93Aboriginal Handbook v3-1.pdf](https://members.fpac.ca/wp-content/uploads/FPAC%E2%80%93Aboriginal%20Handbook%20v3-1.pdf)
- FPAC maintains a number of “Living Documents” for its Indigenous Committee. Most can be found on FPAC members-only website: <https://members.fpac.ca/category/fpac-committees/aboriginal/aboriginal-resources/> You can also contact Etienne Bélanger (ebelanger@fpac.ca) to get latest version. These Living Documents include:
 - List of Indigenous Organizations
 - List of Federal Funding Programs for Indigenous Engagement
 - Aboriginal Law and Recent Cases
- Rights, Title, Interests and Aspirations of Aboriginal People and their Government; Challenges and Opportunities for the Forest Sector. A National Landscape Review, February 2015.
[https://members.fpac.ca/library/publications/FPAC Aboriginal National Review v150210.pdf](https://members.fpac.ca/library/publications/FPAC%20Aboriginal%20National%20Review%20v150210.pdf)

Governmental resources

- Department of Justice, 2018. Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>
- Natural Resources Canada, 2016. Indigenous Peoples and Forestry in Canada. <http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/36704.pdf>
- Natural Resources Canada, 2016. Good practices in community engagement and readiness : compendium of case studies from Canada's minerals and metals sector.

https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/www.nrcan.gc.ca/files/mineralsmetals/files/pdf/rmd-rrm/GoodPractices2ed_En.pdf

Others

- Assembly of First Nations, It's Our Time: The AFN Education Toolkit: <https://education.afn.ca/afntoolkit/>
- Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia. 2014. Aboriginal Engagement Guidebook; A Practical and Principled Approach for Mineral Explorers. <https://www.cab-bc.org/file-download/aboriginal-engagement-guidebook>
- Canadian Geographic. 2018. Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: <https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/>
- Canadian Wind Energy Association. 2017. Wind Energy Development; Best Practices for Indigenous and Public Engagement. <https://canwea.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/canwea-bestpractices-engagement-web.pdf>
- Forest Products Sector Council, 2011. Conversation and Collaboration: Building the future Canadian forest products sector with Aboriginal talent. <https://www.fpac.ca/wp-content/uploads/FPSC-CSPF-Final-English-Report-Conversation-and-Collaboration.pdf>
- The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. Hiring and Retaining Aboriginal Apprentices — An Action Plan for Employers https://caf-fca.org/caf_research/hiring-and-retaining-aboriginal-apprentices-an-action-plan-for-employers/
- The Conference Board of Canada, 2012. Understanding the Value, Challenges, and Opportunities of Engaging Métis, Inuit, and First Nations Workers. <http://www.otec.org/Files/pdf/Understanding-The-Value-of-Hiring-Aboriginal-Worke.aspx>
- Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples: <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog>



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