

Indigenous consultation and engagement

The Guideline on Indigenous Consultation and Engagement offers comprehensive guidance for consulting engineers engaging with Indigenous communities. This quick guide outlines the guideline's focus on building respectful, reciprocal relationships that go beyond legal obligations, aligning with professional ethics and reconciliation efforts.

Key considerations for Indigenous consultation and engagement

The distinction between consultation and engagement

Definition

- **Consultation:** A legal obligation of the Crown to consult Indigenous communities when decisions may impact their rights.
- **Engagement:** A broader, relationship-based process aimed at building trust and mutual understanding, extending beyond legal requirements.



Prioritize Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Definition

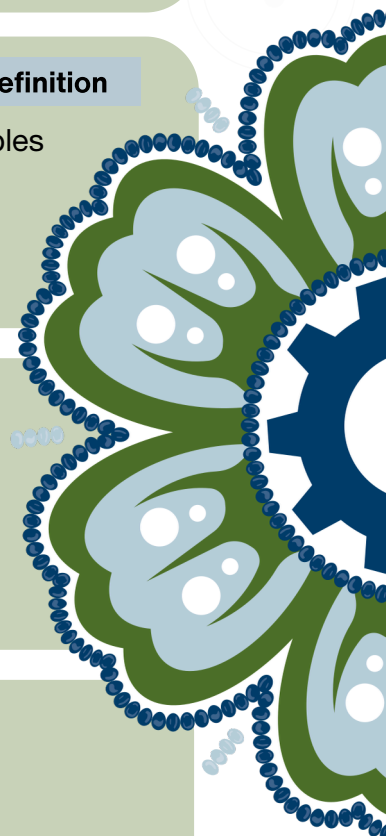
- **FPIC:** a principle from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which Canada has endorsed.
- FPIC requires obtaining consent from Indigenous communities before initiating projects that affect them.

Commit to individual and organizational preparation

- Develop a foundational understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and the impacts of colonialism.
- Reflect on personal positionality and undertake intercultural training to engage authentically.

Conduct thorough pre-engagement learning

- Research the community's history, aspirations, protocols, and seasonal activities.
- Prepare land acknowledgments that are specific and meaningful, avoiding performative gestures.



Build trust through respectful engagement

- Engage early and invest time in relationship-building activities, such as attending community events and observing local protocols.
- Maintain continuity in project staffing to foster consistent relationships.



Develop a comprehensive engagement plan

- Collaborate with the community to create an engagement plan that outlines objectives, timelines, participant roles, and methods for incorporating feedback.
- Ensure the plan is adaptable to the community's capacity and preferences.



Facilitate effective communication

- Establish consistent communication channels with designated community contacts.
- Tailor communication materials to be culturally appropriate and accessible, respecting community protocols and preferences.



Observe and respect community protocols

- Learn and adhere to specific cultural practices, such as ceremonies, gifting, and interactions with Elders.
- Acknowledge and learn from mistakes in protocol adherence as part of the engagement journey.



Evaluate and adapt engagement practices

- Regularly assess the effectiveness of engagement strategies and be open to feedback.
- Document lessons learned to inform future projects and strengthen ongoing relationships.



By integrating these principles, consulting engineers can foster meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities, ensuring projects are developed collaboratively and respectfully.