

Keepers of the Circle



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ORGANIZING TOOLKIT

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Who should read this guide?

This toolkit is for First Nations bands including lands and resource coordinators, staff and representatives, and Indigenous organizations that want to learn more about Culturally Relevant Gender Based Analysis Plus in Impact Assessments, and to access resources to support participation and leadership in the Federal Impact Assessment process.

Acronyms

ACRONYM	FULL TERM
CCAB	Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business
CRGBA+	Culturally Relevant Gender Based Analysis Plus
GBA+	Gender Based Analysis Plus
IA	Impact Assessment
IAAC	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
IAIA	International Association for Impact Assessments
IBA	Impact Benefit Agreement
IPD	Initial Project Description
MMIWG	Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
NGO	Non-governmental Organization/ Non-profit Organization
NIEDB	National Indigenous Economic Development Board
NWAC	Native Women's Association of Canada
SEIA	Social Economic Impact Assessment
TISG	Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
TK	Traditional knowledge
UNDIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WEKH	Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub

Definitions

Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+):

An assessment tool used to help create policies, programs, and initiatives that are responsive and inclusive.

Governor in council:

The Governor General of Canada acting by and with the advice and consent of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada (i.e., Cabinet).

Impact Assessment:

An assessment of the effects of a project that is conducted in accordance with the Impact Assessment Act.

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC):

Is a federal body accountable to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. The Agency provides high-quality impact assessments that contribute to informed decision-making, in support of sustainable development. The Agency is the responsible authority for all federal impact assessments.

Life cycle regulators:

Agencies, such as the Canada Energy Regulator (CER), Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), and Offshore Petroleum Boards, that collaborate with the Agency during the assessment of projects to ensure compliance with the Impact Assessment Act (IAA) and relevant regulatory requirements. They provide expertise on safety, licensing, and other factors, contributing to a unified, integrated evaluation process for projects governed by various laws.

Proponent:

A person or group that proposes or carries out a designated project.

Valued Components:

Identified by Indigenous communities, the public, federal authorities or proponents. They may have scientific, biological, social, cultural, economic, historical, archaeological or aesthetic importance, and may be intricately related to community health and well-being.

What is an Impact Assessment?

This toolkit is for First Nations bands including lands and resource coordinators, staff and representatives, and Indigenous organizations that want to learn more about Culturally Relevant Gender Based Analysis Plus in Impact Assessments, and to access resources to support participation and leadership in the Federal Impact Assessment process. An impact assessment is a planning and decision-making tool that assesses the potential positive and negative effects of proposed projects. It considers a range of factors and suggests measures to reduce adverse effects. The purpose of impact assessments is to maintain sustainability, to protect environmental, health, social and economic conditions from negative effects. It is used to respect rights, promote communication and cooperation, and to incorporate science, and knowledge with indigenous communities.

Impact assessments identify ways to avoid or minimize a project's negative impacts while also recognizing opportunities to enhance its positive aspects. Their primary goal is to inform decision-makers about the implications of a project, ensuring the protection of people and the environment. Impact assessments provide Indigenous people the opportunity to actively participate in the project approval process.

LEARN MORE IMPACT ASSESSMENT HERE:

[What is an Impact Assessment \(LINK\)](#)

[Impact Assessment: Overview and History \(LINK\)](#)

[Section 22: Factors to be considered in an Impact Assessment descriptions \(LINK\)](#)



What is Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis Plus (CRGBA+)?

As part of the government's commitment to integrating gender and diversity considerations in policy and resource development, Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a mandated tool designed to assess how policies and developments affect diverse community groups. While GBA+ incorporates factors such as age, ability, and socioeconomic status, it often falls short of addressing the deep and lasting impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples. Culturally Relevant GBA+ builds on GBA+ by incorporating Indigenous perspectives, recognizing the historical and cultural contexts that shape the experiences of Indigenous women and gender-diverse people. Indigenous-led organizations have been instrumental in supporting and developing CRGBA+ into their resources, it's an excellent way to analyze the specific challenges faced by Indigenous communities in resource development (NWAC, 2020).

Integrating CRGBA+ into resource development processes is an opportunity to build trust and stronger relationships that have better outcomes for marginalized peoples in Impact Assessments. It ensures that planning and decision-making are informed by the lived experiences of all community members, fostering outcomes that respect Indigenous knowledge systems and benefit everyone involved.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS (GBA+) HERE:

Shared Responsibilities: Indigenous Lens Gender Based Analysis+ in Impact Assessments ([LINK](#))

CRGBA+ Starter Kit ([LINK](#))

CRGBA+: A Roadmap for Policy Development ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis ([LINK](#))

Inuit-Specific GBA+ Framework ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) Toolkit ([LINK](#))

Inspiring Change: A community and activist guide to intersectional gender-based analysis and Impact Assessments in Canada ([LINK](#))

Gender and SBCC Implementation Kit ([LINK](#))

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls ([LINK](#))

Our Sacred Responsibilities: MMIWG Calls for Justice in Impact Assessments and the Reclamation of Power and Place ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Women's Participation in Impact Assessments: An Examination of Barriers in Impact Assessments and the Navigation of Violence to Land and Body ([LINK](#))

Women, Communities and Mining: The Gender Impacts of Mining and the Role of Gender Impact Assessment ([LINK](#))

A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment for the Extractive Industries ([LINK](#))

Gender equality and empowerment measurement tool Part 1: Training Guide ([LINK](#))

A Guide to Gender and Mining ([LINK](#))

Gender-Transformative Programming ([LINK](#))

Gender Based Indigenous Intersectional Impact Assessment Network ([LINK](#))

Intersectionality and GBA+: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women ([LINK](#))

The Impact Assessment Process

The Impact Assessment Act (IAA) was passed in 2019 and replaced the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act of 2012. This change meant that federal impact assessments could address more than environmental impacts from major projects and now they can address social and economic and health impacts in addition to environmental impacts. This change introduced new opportunities to examine various and interrelated aspects of resource development planning, including opportunities to further community priorities in the regulatory context.

Phases of an IA



There are 5 phases of the Impact Assessment Process. Overall, it can take up to four years for the process to be complete. In this document we will be including another phase called the pre-planning phase.

Pre-Planning

At the pre-planning stage of impact assessments proponents usually make the agency aware of a project. The agency makes aware that the proponent knows of potentially effected Indigenous communities. Then communities will then engage with proponents to help shape project descriptions and potential impacts on their rights and interests. They receive early notification and can apply for funding to support their participation. Identifying key concerns, negotiating agreements (IBA's), and suggesting alternatives are essential steps in their involvement. NGOs may provide guidance, capacity-building resources, or advocacy support to ensure that communities are equipped to engage effectively.

Planning

The Planning Phase starts when the Agency posts the Initial Project Description (IPD) on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry. This document must meet regulatory standards, and once accepted, a public comment period begins. The planning period lasts for 180 days. The reason the planning phase happens is to identify community concerns, determine the need for an IA, and to promote meaningful consultation. It also determines if an IA is necessary for the project or not. The Initial Project Description (IPD) is an early submission by the proponent detailing key aspects like location, purpose, potential impacts, and possible mitigation measures. It allows Indigenous groups and the public, to provide feedback before the formal assessment starts, helping to identify and address issues early.

Some things that are included in the planning phase are the summary of issues, which is made by the agency to summarize concerns raised from the IPD, then the proponent will write a response to the summary of issues and adjusting the project design if need be, after that there is a detailed project description submitted by the proponent which is updated details on the project. Grassroots advocacy initiatives focus on engaging individuals directly impacted by an issue central to an organization's mission. NGOs can play a key role in facilitating these efforts by mobilizing communities and providing resources. Advocates who are deeply invested in the cause "plant seeds" of concern, cultivating awareness and inspiring action naturally, much like grass grows. This organic approach gives the movement its name (Vaughn, 2016). Then the agency decides a decision if an IA is necessary and if so, the draft tailored impact statement guidelines are formed. Then there is a notice of commencement which sets the stage for the Impact Statement phase, including the final TISG and other related plans. The Minister may refer the assessment to a Review Panel if deemed in the public interest.

Impact Assessment

The Impact Assessment phase begins once IAAC posts the Notice of Determination on the Registry. In this post IAAC must state that the proponent has provided all of the required information and studies outlined in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines.

The time limit for this phase (Phase 3) is up to 300 days. During this time IAAC must:

- Develop the draft Impact Assessment Report, prepare a draft of potential conditions;
- Develop a Consultation Report and consult with Indigenous groups on the document;
- Seek views on the draft Impact Assessment Report and draft potential conditions;
- Consider the comments received, and provide the final Impact Assessment Report, Consultation Report, and recommended potential conditions to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

In Phase 3 IAAC continues its analysis by taking into consideration the information gathered during Phase 2 (the Impact Statement phase). The Agency might engage the proponent to seek clarifications, resolve issues or to ask questions on the Impact Statement. When a project requires an impact assessment by a jurisdiction other than IAAC (i.e. provincial, territorial, or Indigenous jurisdictions), IAAC offers to consult and cooperate with the other jurisdiction(s) for the conduct of the IA and implements the Impact Assessment Cooperation Plan developed in the planning phase.

Additionally, during the Impact Assessment phase IAAC may co-develop or collaborate on some sections of the Impact Assessment Report, draft potential conditions, and Consultation Report with Indigenous groups.



Decision Making

Phase 4 is the decision-making phase, during which the Minister and Cabinet are actively involved in reaching a final decision. This process can take up to 30 days. The Agency provides the Minister with the Impact Assessment Report, Consultation Report, and potential conditions. Based on this information, the Minister determines whether the project's adverse effects are in the public interest or refers the decision to the Governor in Council.

Before making a decision, the decision-maker (either the Minister or Governor in Council) must ensure that Indigenous peoples have been properly consulted and accommodated. If the decision is referred to the Governor in Council, a Notice of Referral and the reasons for referral are posted on the Agency's website. After the decision, the Minister issues a Decision Statement to the Proponent, including the reasons and conditions. This must be done within 30 days if the Minister decides, or within 90 days if the Governor in Council decides. The Decision Statement is then posted on the Agency's website.

Public interest determinations must consider the Impact Assessment Report and the following five public interest factors:

- The extent to which the designated project contributes to sustainability;
- The significance of the adverse effects within federal jurisdiction and the adverse direct or incidental effects indicated in the Impact Assessment Report;
- The implementation of mitigation measures that the Minister or Governor in Council considers appropriate;
- The impact the designated project may have on any Indigenous group and any adverse effect it may have on the rights of Indigenous peoples, as recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982;
- The extent to which the effects of the designated project hinder or contribute to the Government of Canada's ability to meet its environmental obligations and climate change commitments.

Post Decision Making

Phase 5 involves ongoing activities, including the issuance of a Decision Statement by the Minister outlining project conditions and mitigation measures. The proponent develops and implements monitoring programs. The Agency tracks project progress, verifies compliance, and posts updates, documents, and enforcement actions on the Registry. Amendments to the decision statement can be made by the Minister, with opportunities for public comment. Once finalized, the amended Decision Statement and reasons are shared on the Registry.

FOR MORE RESOURCES ON THE FEDERAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT:

Welcome to the 'Overview of the Impact Assessment Act' online training course ([LINK](#))

Impact Assessment 101 ([LINK](#))

Community Champion Training Series ([LINK](#))

IAIA Training ([LINK](#))

FNMP 8 Part Video Series on Impact Assessments ([LINK](#))

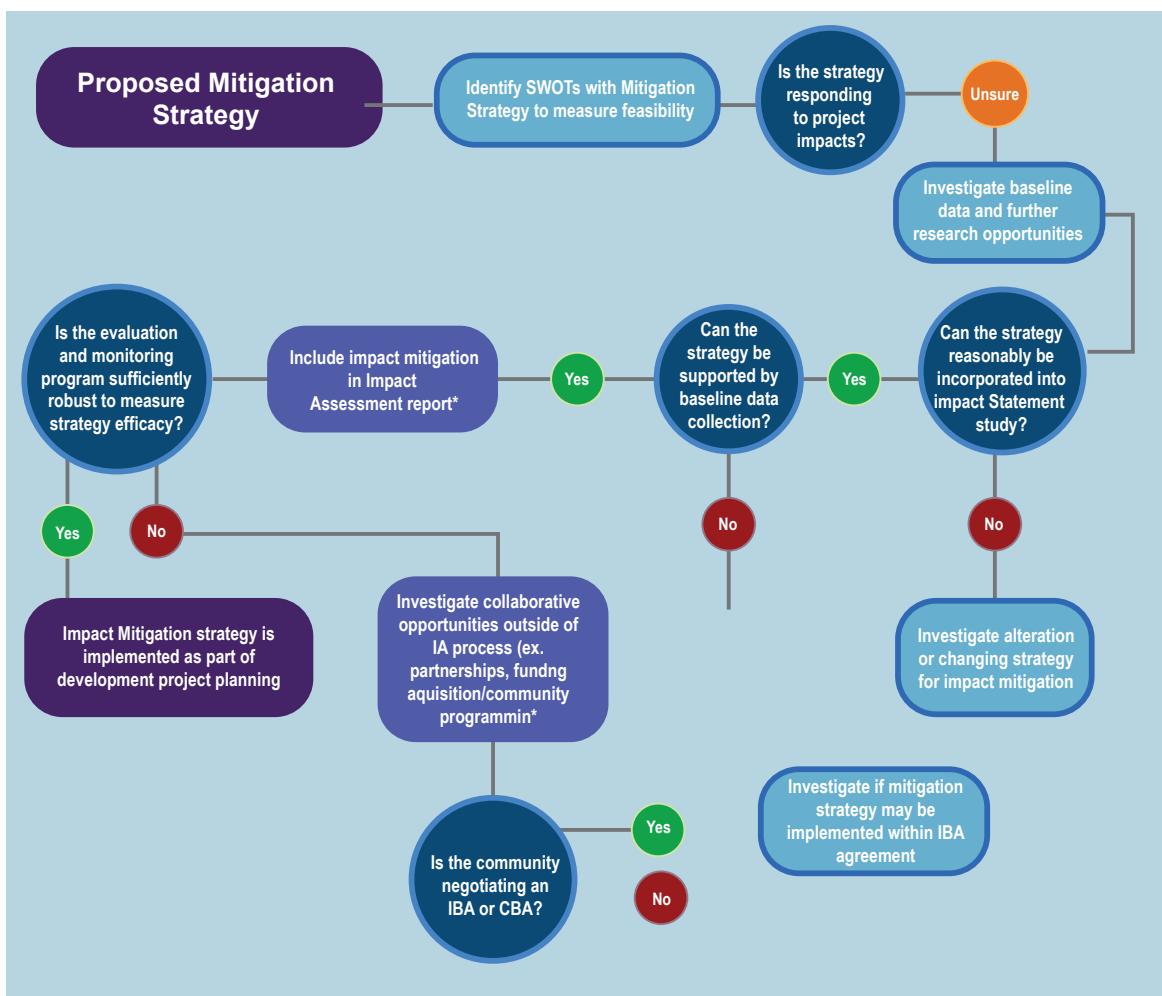
Guide to Effective Indigenous Involvement in Federal Impact Assessment ([LINK](#))

Impact Assessment and Responsible Business Conduct Tools in the Extractive Sector:
An Environmental Human Rights Toolbox for Government, Business, Civil Society and Indigenous Groups ([LINK](#))

Resource Extraction and Gender: CRIAW ([LINK](#))

Impact Benefit Agreements and Impact Assessment

Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs) are agreements that proponent companies often set with the Indigenous communities who they are required to consult with. They are often private documents that outline monitoring programs, economic opportunities, and social mitigation measures. However, because IBAs are private contracts between proponents and the community they are more challenging to enforce than if conditions were included in the IA process. The IA process is public and monitored by the Impact Assessment Agency. There is a difference between benefits included in IBAs and mitigation measures that can be included in IAs.



Use this flowchart as a starting point to determine if a mitigation measure should be included in the IA process or designated to an IBA.

OTHER RESOURCES ABOUT IMPACT AND BENEFIT AGREEMENTS:

Gender Impact Analysis of Impact Benefit Agreements: Representation Clauses and UNDRIP ([LINK](#))

Impact Benefit Agreements: Key Insights from First Nations; Government and Industry Leaders ([LINK](#))

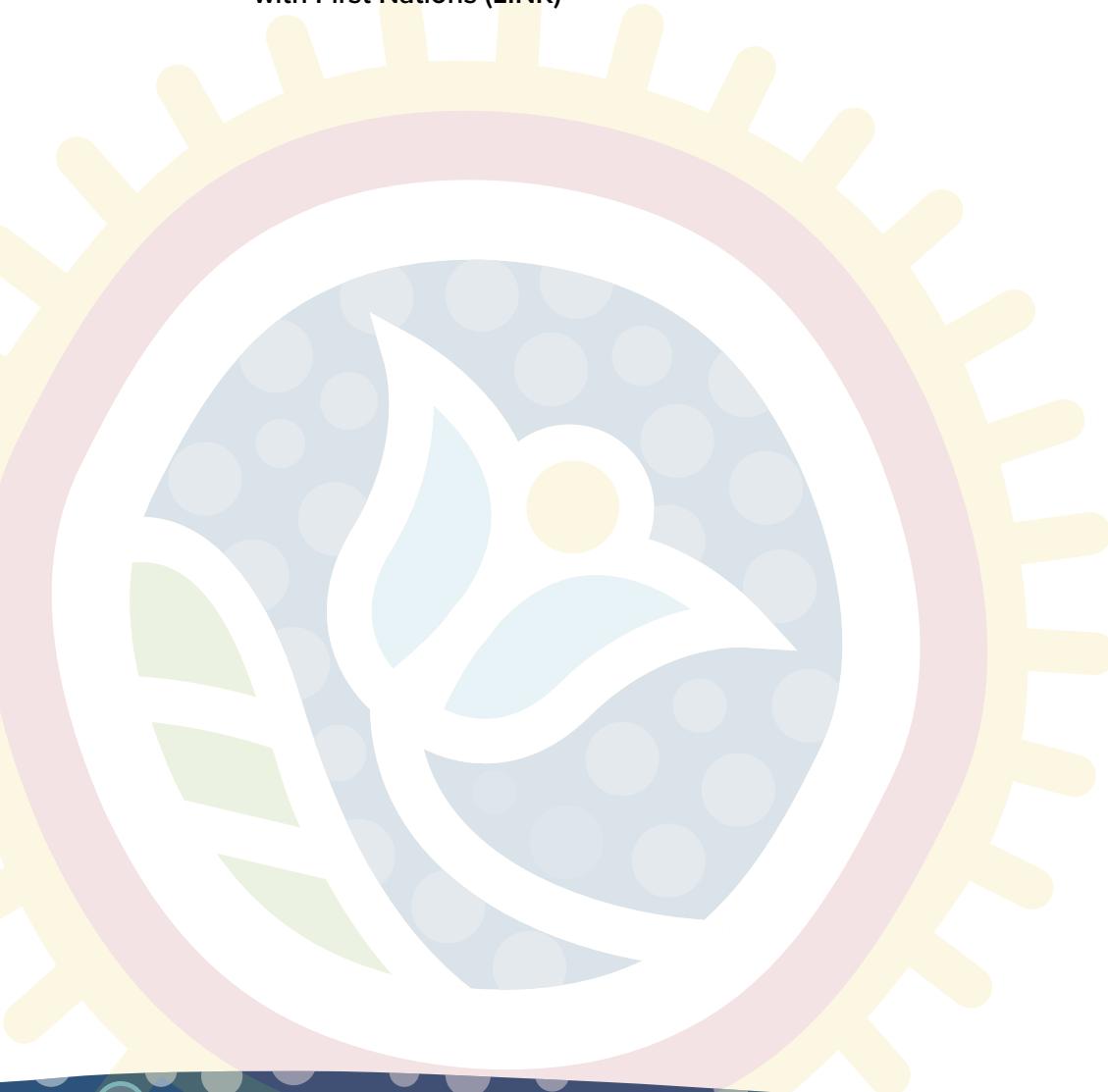
IBA (Impact and Benefit Agreements) Community Toolkit: Canadian CED Network ([LINK](#))

Impact Benefit Agreement Guidebook ([LINK](#))

Centre of Expertise on Impact and Benefit Agreements: An Important Ally ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Leadership Development Institute Inc. Seminar Presentation ([LINK](#))

The Role of Impact and Benefits Agreements in the Resolution of Project Issues with First Nations ([LINK](#))



Getting Involved

There are several ways to get involved with the IA process, either as an organization, a community, or as an individual. Below are several avenues and tools you can use to engage with the IA process.

Access to Information

- To access information around what IAs are currently happening in your area or are upcoming look at the **Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (LINK)**
- To learn how to use the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry watch the following **tutorial video (LINK)**

Information Sessions

- Stay up to date on IAAC information by **signing up for email lists** and following IAAC on social media (**LINK**)
- Using the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry find project specific information sessions

Additional Supports

- If you are interested in accessing training on Impact Assessments the Impact Assessment Agency delivers training opportunities adapted to various audiences. **Learn more here.**
- Apply for financial assistance to build your community's capacity to participate in assessments. **Learn more here.**

GETTING INVOLVED

Commenting Process

Indigenous communities have multiple places to voice their concerns and provide feedback on resource extraction activities. Some of the following is what is available:

1. **Local First Nation Band Offices:** Members should be able to find documents and make comments on Impact Assessments in their area at local band offices. You may also find notices posted on their boards.
2. **Regional Governments:** Depending on your area, in Inuit regions local government offices should have documents available and a place for you to be able to submit your comments.
3. **Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) Website:** The IAAC website is another resource where Indigenous people can submit their comments on ongoing and proposed projects. If you subscribe to notifications on the IAAC website, you will receive alerts when new comment periods are open. This ensures that you remain informed and can participate at the appropriate times. You can also email your comments into the specific resource development you are interested in and attend public meetings where you can leave comments.

OTHER RESOURCES ABOUT IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

How to Comment on Impact Assessments: Step-by-step guide ([LINK](#))

Submission Policy of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada ([LINK](#))

More Effective Impact Assessment: Tools for Stronger Argument and Clearer Writing ([LINK](#))

ASET Technical Report Writing: Training Guide ([LINK](#))

GETTING INVOLVED

Indigenous Collaboration in Impact Assessments and Studies

Communities may engage in Indigenous-led impact assessment (ILIA's) in certain capacities under the IAA 2019 legislation. Indigenous-led studies and assessments provide unique considerations of project impacts and can be very important in implementing mitigation measures early on in the project development. These ILIAs should include gender considerations including CRGBA+ processes.

RESOURCES ON INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT IN THE FEDERAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

[Operationalizing Indigenous-Led Impact Assessment \(LINK\)](#)

[Let's talk Indigenous Impact Assessment Co-Administration Agreements \(LINK\)](#)

[Indigenous-Led Impact Assessment, An Introduction \(LINK\)](#)

[Policy Context: Indigenous Participation in Impact Assessment \(LINK\)](#)

OTHER RESEARCH AND RESOURCES ON EFFECTS ASSESSMENT, STUDIES AND REPORTS:

[Cumulative Effects Knowledge Centre: Indigenous Centre for Cumulative Effects \(LINK\)](#)

[Knowledge Studies, Policy, Indigenous Communities, Land Use Planning: Firelight Group \(LINK\)](#)

GETTING INVOLVED

Social and Economic Impact Assessment

Social and economic impacts are focused on in this toolkit because of the new parameters of an Impact Assessment, health, social and economic impacts are considered as part of a federal assessment, and this increases the opportunity to broaden studies to include a wider range of impacts than traditional elements of environmental assessment. Social Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) is a systematic analysis conducted as part of an impact assessment to identify and evaluate the potential socio-economic and cultural impacts of a proposed development on people, their families, and communities. If these impacts are found to be significant and negative, SEIA can help the developer and other stakeholders in the process identify ways to mitigate, eliminate, or prevent these impacts (Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, 2007).

The International Association for Impact Assessments (IAIA) states there are core values when conducting SEIA they are:

- Fundamental human rights are universal, equally shared across cultures and by all genders.
- Everyone has the right to have these fundamental human rights protected by the rule of law, with justice applied fairly and equally to all.
- People have the right to live and work in environments that promote good health, a high quality of life, and foster human and social development.
- Social aspects of the environment like peace, quality social relationships, freedom from fear, and a sense of belonging are important to people's health and well-being.
- People have the right to participate in decisions about planned interventions that will impact their lives.
- Local knowledge and experience are valuable and can greatly improve the effectiveness of planned interventions.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Canadian Government and SEIA ([LINK](#))

Mackenzie Valley SEIA guidelines ([LINK](#))

Example of SEIA from Grassy Mountain ([LINK](#))

Video on SEIA ([LINK](#))

Government of NL SEIA ([LINK](#))

GETTING INVOLVED

Conducting Community Engagements

STAKEHOLDERS, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For time immemorial, Indigenous people have shared a deep, respectful, spiritually and physically interconnected relationship with the land. This bond is not one of ownership but of stewardship. Indigenous people believe they have been entrusted with the responsibility to care for the land, sea, and all the creatures that share it with them. This responsibility goes beyond an emotional connection—it is deeply rooted in the spirits of all elements of the earth (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc, 2012). As an Indigenous organization conducting community engagements with your people, it's important to keep this in mind, especially when conversations become heated.

At times, thinking about the future of the land and how it is changing can be painful for Indigenous peoples, as they feel the weight of this responsibility. Studies have examined the impact of four major resource industries—mining, hydroelectric, petroleum, and agriculture—on the mental health of Indigenous Peoples in settler colonial states. These studies focused on Indigenous communities affected by land dispossession due to industrial developments. The evidence highlights that land is crucial to the mental health of Indigenous Peoples, and that the loss of land due to these industries has led to significant negative mental health outcomes in these communities (Ninomiya et al., 2023). As Indigenous people they feel they carry the duty to protect the land for future generations.

ACTIONIZING RESEARCH FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

The impact assessment (IA) process is not just about identifying potential challenges, it's a tool for advocating for meaningful, sustainable change in our communities. By taking an active role in research, Indigenous communities can shape the outcomes of development projects, ensuring that they align with community priorities and values. This section highlights practical ways to use research to strengthen advocacy efforts and safeguard rights, lands, and traditions. Through the effective use of data and thoughtful mitigation strategies, we can ensure that community voices are at the forefront, balancing economic opportunities with the protection of cultural and environmental integrity (Simpson, 2014; Starblanket, 2018).

RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS FROM INDIGENOUS AUTHORS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

Publications: Indigenous Climate Action ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Climate Hub ([LINK](#))

Blog: Indigenous Environmental Network ([LINK](#))

Blog: The Red Nation (decolonization, liberation, landback) ([LINK](#))

GETTING INVOLVED

Collecting and Using Information

An important consideration for Indigenous communities and organizations throughout the Impact Assessment process is the collection, storage, and use of information and data. Data collection, use and storage must respect the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP). OCAP asserts that Indigenous communities alone have control over data collection processes in their communities, and that they own and control how this information can be stored, interpreted, used, or shared.

The First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) has an abundance of information and resources to learn more about data collection, storage and use.

TO LEARN MORE:

[FNIGC website \(LINK\)](#)

[Ownership, Control, Access, Possession - FNIGC \(LINK\)](#)

GETTING INVOLVED

Community Engaged Research

ETHICAL AND EMPOWERING RESEARCH

Due to past racist and ethnocentric research on Indigenous peoples, much of the existing research needs to be reassessed and reevaluated (McGregor, 2018). We need to shift from studying Indigenous peoples to building equitable relationships with them. IA practitioners and consultants must recognize the structural and systemic impacts on Indigenous women and gender-diverse peoples. Non-Indigenous researchers must recognize their role in the history of dispossession and colonial violence. Indigenous peoples have the right and responsibility to address issues affecting their lands and bodies (Latulippe & Klenk, 2020). The MMIWG Vol 1b outlines ethical and empowering approaches to research on page 87 and 88, we highlight the following two recommendations: Validate diverse forms of knowledge and adopt a strength-based approach to research (MMIWG, 2019).

Validating diverse forms of knowledge includes lived experience, traditional knowledge (TK), and academic research (MMIWG, 2019). Indigenous women base their theories on their lived experiences and collective concerns about the issues affecting their lives (Archuleta, 2006). Strengths-based research approaches focus on ethical, epistemological, and methodological aspects. This means using respectful, culturally appropriate methods and including Indigenous values and worldviews (FNIGC, 2020). Researchers must always check if they have accurately captured relevant contextual issues (FNIGC, 2020).

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

Participatory Research Methods: Choice Points in the Research Process ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Communities and Community-Engaged Research: Opportunities and Challenges ([LINK](#))

Community Engaged Research ([LINK](#))

GETTING INVOLVED

Baseline Data Collection

There are opportunities for baseline data collection to inform the way projects plan mitigation strategies that would decrease impacts to communities while increasing potential benefits. The information below covers what could be considered during early engagements, what information is focused on may be guided and defined by community experts and diverse knowledge sources through consultation and engagements. Discussed below are instruments that could be used, types of studies that can be commissioned and what types of information could be collected to support baseline conditions and support community interests during resource development project planning.

It's important to have baseline data to support:

1. Scoping and evaluation of current conditions (environmental, health, social, economic and their respective subcategories)
2. Retrospective analysis of cumulative effects of a development on specific areas of importance and value to the community
3. Any potential analysis of cumulative effects on the valued component because of the proposed development
4. Management measures for effects mitigation to lessen predicted impacts on a particular component

The VC's or 'Valued Components' that are identified by community members will provide the basis for the projects areas of focus and study during the impact assessment, so having good data to pull from is important in shaping studies and ensuring community priorities are addressed throughout the project planning process. The Impact Assessment Agency will collect information on the particular areas of focus for communities and direct studies in the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines which is informed through community input. The data collection tools should be designed to address the research questions. These tools may include surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, observations, or a combination of these methods. They should be structured to gather both quantitative and qualitative data (Eval Community, n.d.). Also, before doing research, it is important that you connect with officials from your community about any protocols you must follow. For more information on this check out our data collection section.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONDUCTING STUDIES

Strengths-Based Approaches to Indigenous Research and the Development of Well-Being Indicators: First Nations Information Governance Centre ([LINK](#))

Medicine Wheel Evaluation Framework: Atlantic Council for International Cooperation ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Perspectives in Systems Theory: The Medicine Wheel as a Framework for Decolonization ([LINK](#))

GETTING INVOLVED

LAND PROTECTION, CITIZEN SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

When participating in impact assessments, it's crucial to consider all the land and water areas that will affect your community members. This includes not just the physical space, but also the paths of roads and the flow of water. Engage with community members by using tools like maps and diaries and encourage them to share their stories and mark on the map the areas of land that hold cultural significance to them. For Indigenous peoples, land is deeply connected to culture and identity, making it essential to understand and respect its importance in the assessment process. According to the Assembly of First Nations land is a crucial asset for the sustainable economic development of First Nations, and land rights are essential for their self-determination. Indigenous Peoples regard the land and its resources as integral to both individual and collective identities; land serves as the foundation for social connections, livelihoods, and overall wellbeing (Ninomiya et al., 2023). Using the land is a big part of Indigenous culture, for many Indigenous cultures, land represents more than just property; it encompasses culture, relationships, ecosystems, social structures, spirituality, and law. For many, land includes the earth, water, air, and all living beings within these interconnected ecosystems (Indigenous Foundations Art, 2009).

Citizen science is the practice of involving the public, or in this case wider community membership in scientific research to enhance scientific knowledge and collect information on occurrences and patterns on the land. Individuals can contribute to data monitoring and collection programs, fostering collaboration and engagement in the scientific process (Ullrich, 2024). Becoming involved in environmental monitoring and land protection efforts means that people may be involved in designing experiments, collecting data, analyzing results, and solving problems. To be effective, monitoring in land-based projects should be consistent, carried out over a specific timeframe (such as months or years), and recorded with accuracy to ensure reliable outcomes. There are four key features of citizen science: (a) anyone can participate, (b) participants follow standardized protocols to ensure data quality and consistency, (c) the data collected helps real scientists draw meaningful conclusions, and (d) a broad community of scientists and volunteers collaborate, sharing data that is accessible to both the public and the scientific community (SciStarter, N.D).

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GETTING INVOLVED

LAND PROTECTION, CITIZEN SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING (CON'T)

Engaging in Impact Assessment processes can be funded to provide the training and tools that are needed to increase the skills and capacity of wider membership to do scientific data collection. Depending on what you are studying you will need different tools. There is information in our stories, our songs, place names, values, and languages, and is passed down from Elders to younger generations. Indigenous Knowledge is rooted in millennia of observations, temporal and place-based, living and evolving, grounded in kinship relationships, and holistic. It is also based on Indigenous ways of knowing concepts of nature, human existence, and being, and values, ethical frameworks, and value judgments (Gordon, n.d.). Indigenous knowledge and environmental monitoring is necessary for evaluating the health of our natural surroundings. It provides key data that informs decision-making and policy development to protect ecosystems, reduce pollution, and promote sustainable resource management. It also allows people to recognize the impacts that resource development has on the earth. This process identifies environmental risks, evaluates the success of conservation efforts, and supports proactive action to safeguard both the environment and human well-being. The four types of environmental monitoring are air quality monitoring, water quality monitoring, soil quality monitoring, and biodiversity monitoring. They involve assessing pollutant levels in the air, evaluating the health of water bodies, examining soil properties, and tracking species diversity and ecosystem health, respectively (Perfect Pollucon Services, n.a).

FOR MORE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING:

Indigenous Guardians Toolkit ([LINK](#))

The Indigenous Knowledge App ([LINK](#))

Land Needs Guardians Program ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Climate Action ([LINK](#))

Government of Canada Citizen Science Portal ([LINK](#))

Citizen Science Theory and Practice ([LINK](#))

GETTING INVOLVED

Gendered Development Opportunities

Creating policies that support economic participation of community members, particularly during the planning stages of economic development, is a critical starting point for community involvement. Making sure that your community members have the information they need and an avenue that works for them to be able to design programs, co-create strategic initiatives, or to start/scale-up businesses or get jobs in the upcoming developments is important in responding effectively. This allows Indigenous people the opportunity to share their own stories and cultural traditions (Waaseya Consulting, 2024).

These policies should prioritize the inclusion of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit individuals, ensuring they have equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Supporting Indigenous women and gender-diverse people through policies that address the social and health implications of resource development projects is crucial. These groups often face unique and disproportionate impacts, such as increased exposure to gender-based violence, environmental harm, and socioeconomic marginalization (Manning et al., 2018). Indigenous organizations can get training in GBA+ and make sure Indigenous women and gender diverse people sit on committees and have their thoughts and opinions heard.

Becoming involved is important because not being involved as Indigenous people in environmental decisions can be costly and can cause delays Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs stated, “Indigenous peoples are being compelled to endure lengthy and expensive court battles to protect their traditions and ways of life because Canadian governments continue to resist working with peoples on critical decisions regarding environmental protection and resource development.” (Union of BC Indian Chiefs, n.d.)

Indigenous organizations can take proactive steps by establishing their own training programs or schools designed specifically to empower Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people with the skills and knowledge needed navigate the impacts of industry. Such programs could encompass a wide range of initiatives aimed at holistic personal and professional growth. This might include training in relevant trades, leadership development, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. These initiatives could focus on equipping participants with both technical skills, such as certifications in industries like construction, technology, or renewable energy, and soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. Indigenous employees also contribute to greater cultural understanding within the workplace and inspire others in their community to pursue broader career pathways. In remote areas, local Indigenous workers are more likely to stay in the community, reducing turnover (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc, 2012).

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GETTING INVOLVED

Gendered Development Opportunities (con't)

Another important strategy is fostering entrepreneurship through robust procurement planning, communities have the opportunity to invest into joint-partnerships, create new businesses that provide technical services to industry operations and more. This can be achieved by providing accessible resources, including financial support, mentorship programs, and business development workshops. For example, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) provides mentorship, training, and networking opportunities that help Indigenous entrepreneurs, particularly women, connect with industry leaders in resource extraction. The National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB) also advocates for policies that support mentorship and access to capital for Indigenous women, with a particular focus on the natural resource sector and the Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) highlights the importance of culturally relevant and inclusive business training programs for Indigenous women, addressing specific barriers in resource extraction industries (WEKH, 2024).

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS RESOURCES:

Tools for Indigenous Business: CCIB ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Business and Federal Procurement ([LINK](#))

Detailed Company Search: Indigenous Business Directory ([LINK](#))

The First Peoples Innovation Centre: Products, Arts, Apparel ([LINK](#))

Additional Resources

The resources compiled here bring together a variety of knowledge, tools and resources that can assist in further exploring topics of interest, and can serve as a jumping point for community engagement, professional development and knowledge synthesis on the various fields related to Impact Assessment studies and policies.

LEGAL PUBLICATIONS AND POLICY INSIGHTS:

Publications: Canadian Environmental Law Association ([LINK](#))

CONSULTATION AND RIGHTS:

Centre for First Nations Governance: Governance and Rights ([LINK](#))

FPIC: Indigenous Rights and Resource Governance Research Group ([LINK](#))

Assembly of First Nations: Resolutions regarding Impact Assessment ([LINK](#))

WORKSHOPS:

Trauma Awareness Training: Narratives Inc. ([LINK](#))

MINING AND CRITICAL MINERALS:

Mining Watch ([LINK](#))

Mining Industry Human Resources Council ([LINK](#))

Online Learning Centre: Women in Mining Canada ([LINK](#))

International Women in Mining Alliance ([LINK](#))

GRASSROOTS PUBLICATIONS AND INITIATIVES:

Legacies Project: 7-Generation GTB ([LINK](#))

Native Women's Association of Canada: Publications and Resources ([LINK](#))

Keepers of the Circle: Programs, Services, Publications (Ontario) ([LINK](#))

NDN Collective: Activism and Capacity Building ([LINK](#))

Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper ([LINK](#))

Resources (Gender Issues/ Environment): KAIROS ([LINK](#))

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

| SPECIAL TOPICS:

Native Land Digital: Visual Mapping Collective ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Blogs: Cambium Indigenous Professional Services ([LINK](#))

| BOOKS AND MERCHANDISE (FOR DOOR PRIZES!):

AK Press: Collective Bookstore ([LINK](#))

Cheekbone Beauty: Cosmetics ([LINK](#))

Kokum Scrunchies: Textiles ([LINK](#))

| MEDIA, AUDIOVISUAL:

Bioneers ([LINK](#))

Climate Atlas of Canada ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Climate Action ([LINK](#))

Indigenous Environmental Network ([LINK](#))

UINR: Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources ([LINK](#))

APTN News ([LINK](#))

First Nations Major Projects Coalition ([LINK](#))

Environment and Climate Change Canada ([LINK](#))

Land Needs Guardians ([LINK](#))

North American Association for Environmental Education(NAAEE) ([LINK](#))

Pew ([LINK](#))

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