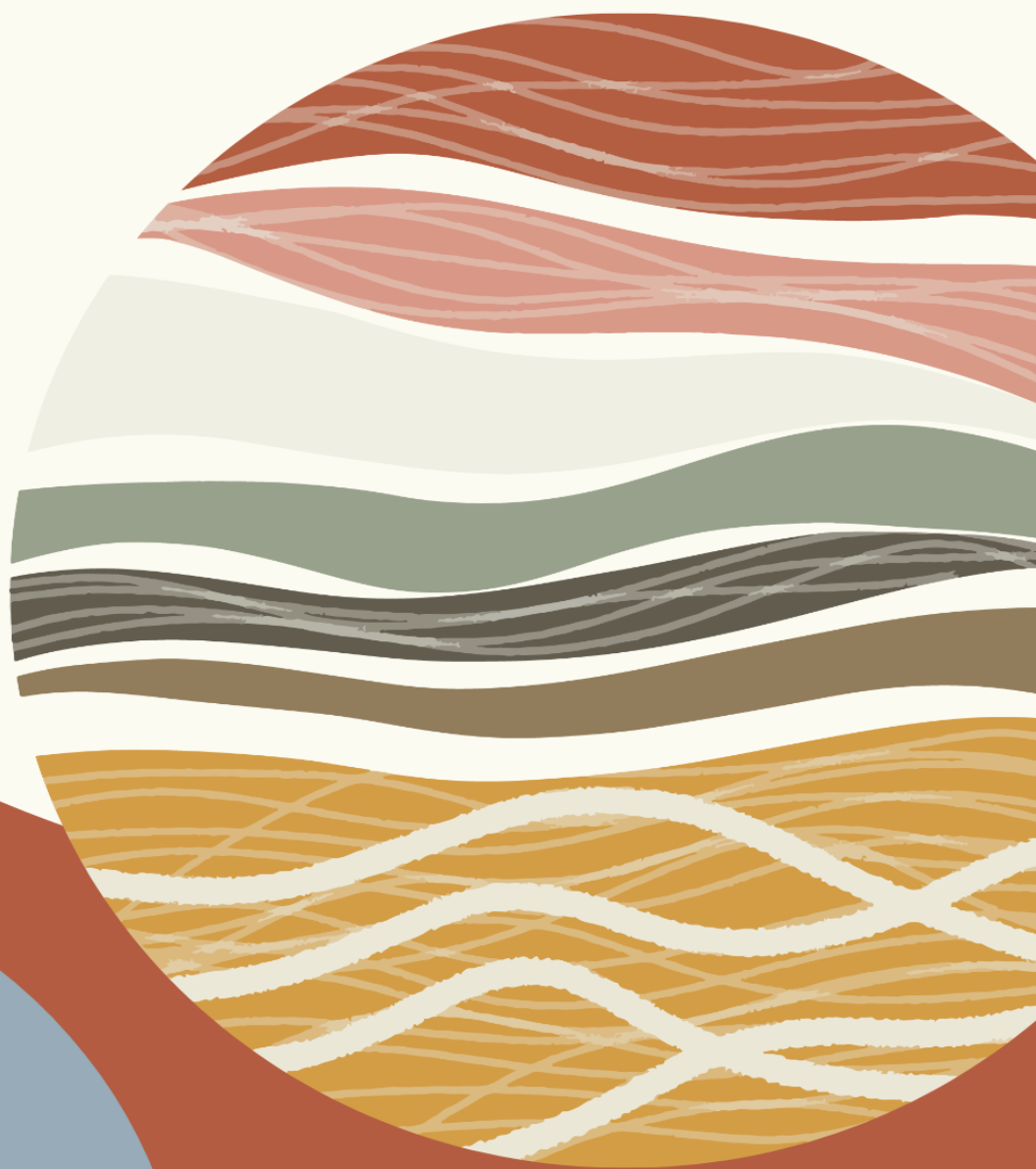


Indigenous Co-Development and Engagement: Wise Practices



Presented to:
Canadian Radio-
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Commission (CRTC)

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Let us acknowledge the traditional territories of the original peoples who occupy the land upon which we read this report. As the original stewards, Indigenous peoples continue to have a sacred and spiritual connection to the land, the earth, Mother Nature, and all the creatures and things that give us life.

Indigenous peoples' sacrifice and contributions allow us all to live, work, play, and grow. Let us keep in mind that honouring the land and Indigenous peoples and processes must underpin this work.

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is co-developing a new Indigenous Broadcasting Policy with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis broadcasters, content creators, and audiences across Canada. The policy, introduced in 1990, “set out definitions, licensing processes and regulatory requirements for Indigenous broadcasters in Canada.”¹ While changes to the policy have occurred over the years, the CRTC has launched a three-phase process “to better understand what these broadcasting needs are, now and in the future, for both traditional and digital services.”²

The first phase consisted of early engagement sessions with Indigenous broadcasters, content creators and artists and resulted in a “[What You Said](#)” report informing the second phase of the process. This second phase, currently under development, includes a public consultation process to hear from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. These findings will inform the third and final phase, in which the Commission will present preliminary views to Indigenous participants from the public consultation process to provide further comments on the proposed policy.

Purpose

Before launching phase two of the engagement process, the CRTC has requested a focused literature review of best and promising practices for engaging and consulting with Indigenous peoples.³ Appendix A highlights the methodology for this effort.

The findings indicate the necessity of emphasizing “wise practices,” defined as “locally-appropriate actions, tools, principles or decisions that contribute significantly to the development of sustainable and equitable social conditions.”⁵ This definition moves away from the concept of “best practices,”⁶ which has become a prescriptive standard often with a list of actions applied to similar settings rather than a guideline as initially intended. Also, wise practices acknowledge that culture matters and that no one size fits all exists. The implication is that wise practices evolve through relationships over time.

*[W]ise practices require people involved in a collaboration, partnership or engagement to be fully engaged in a holistic way, drawing on experience, knowledge, and deep understanding of a given situation to make decisions based on wisdom. Wise practices, in other words, are about the people, their insights, intuition, lived experience, nuance, time, ethics, knowledge of their values and priorities.*⁴

Muir et al., 2023

Co-development frames this report and highlights the literature within that framework for the CRTC to effectively engage First Nations, Inuit and Métis in the co-development of a new broadcasting policy. Before proceeding with a definition and framework for co-development, a word about the context is helpful.

CONTEXT

The [Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples \(RCAP, 1996\)](#), a landmark document, dealt with virtually all aspects of life for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and its purpose was to renew relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadians. This renewed relationship was premised on four ethical principles: mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility, and was to address First Nations, Inuit and Métis people's aspirations for and rights concerning self-determination and self-governance. The recommendations continue to be reflected in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC, 2015\) Calls to Action](#) and the [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls \(MMIWG, 2019\) Calls to Justice](#).

They are grounded in the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP, 2007\)](#) and form the basis of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

Self-determination is the fundamental right of human beings, both as individuals and as groups, to have control of their lives and destinies.⁸ This includes the freedom to make decisions and choices that affect their well-being and pursue their goals without external coercion or influence. The MMIWG also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing our relationships with each other.⁹ The heart of self-determination lies in the idea that we are all interconnected and interdependent and must work together to create a just and equitable society for everyone.

Self-determination involves the active participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in developing legislation, policies, programs, and other initiatives that affect their lives. Central to this process is the concept of co-development, which requires equal, transparent participation in designing, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating any initiative. Co-development bridges different worldviews, perspectives, and priorities throughout decision-making, ensuring that initiatives are relevant, effective, and successful.

DEFINING CO-DEVELOPMENT

Co-development is a collaborative (all parties are equal), transparent and distinctions-based approach for working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Co-development has been guided by principles collaboratively defined among the parties involved. For example, Canada, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), and the Métis Nation Council (MNC) agreed to a Statement of Co-development Principles for developing the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages legislation.¹⁰ Recently, ITK, the four Inuit treaty organizations¹¹ and the federal government specified a set of principles for co-development.¹²

The right to self-determination is a prerequisite to the exercise and enjoyment of all other individual and collective human rights of Indigenous nations, peoples and communities...

It is one whole right.

It is inherent, pre-existing.⁷

Dalee Sambo Dorrough, 2019

In co-developing distinctions-based health legislation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis, Indigenous Services Canada, indicated it meant “A collaborative and participatory approach that supports the concept of ‘nothing about us without us’, acknowledging the distinct nature and lived experience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.”¹³

A distinctions-based approach “ensures that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of First Nations, Inuit and Métis are acknowledged, affirmed and implemented.”¹⁴ The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) goes further with a distinctions-based approach to consider several identity factors and their intersectionalities (e.g., self-identification, gender, family, culture, geography, residency).¹⁵

Common to developing these principles is the establishment of a Co-development Working Group. The composition of the Working Group is determined based on who is impacted by the initiative, with representation jointly determined. All parties are represented when an initiative impacts First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Suppose an initiative solely affects the Inuit, as with developing their co-development principles with the federal government. In that case, the composition of the Working Group is different yet jointly determined.

The process also requires careful consideration of various dimensions and associated requirements (see Table 1). Working through these dimensions and requirements with all involved parties and adhering to them throughout the initiatives’ design, implementation, and evaluation ensures an effective co-development process.

Table 1. Co-development dimensions and requirements

Dimension	Co-development requirements
1. What is the basis for participation?	Determined by who is impacted by the initiative, with representation jointly agreed upon.
2. What is a distinctions-based approach?	<p>Acknowledges the diverse histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples, nations and communities, avoiding a one size fits all.</p> <p>Elders, women, youth, children, two-spirit, and persons with disabilities are included in the design, implementation and evaluation.</p>
3. How are process rules established?	Jointly developed by the parties and detailed in a Terms of Reference, a Memorandum of Understanding or a Data Sharing Agreement.
4. What degree of shared decision-making authority is required?	Total shared decision-making.
5. What is the scope for decision making?	Shared decision-making occurs throughout the process (design, implementation, evaluation).

Dimension	Co-development requirements
6. What is the power relationship?	Equal partners with all members working to dismantle oppression throughout the co-development process.
7. What degree of trust is required of the parties?	Trust requires respect and builds over time based on behaviour.
8. Who is accountable for outcomes?	All parties are jointly accountable.
9. What is the dominant style of interaction?	Collaborative and consensual interaction with written procedures for decision-making, including managing conflict.
10. Is there a dispute resolution process where parties disagree about the outcome?	Rules developed at the beginning of discussions.
11. What is the outcome of the process?	Stronger relationships lead to relevant and effective initiatives.

Source: Adapted from Public Service Advisory Council, 2003.¹⁶

The following sections describe the co-development process and illustrate the steps for developing a new policy.

CO-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The co-development process is built on relationships, relational reciprocity and accountability. It includes seven key areas for designing, implementing and evaluating a policy, which are:

- Preparing for co-development
- Early engagement
- Co-planning and development
- Co-implement engagements and validate
- Co-design the policy
- Co-implement policy
- Co-monitoring and evaluation

The literature brings to life a wholistic process that begins with preparing and initiating engagement as early¹⁷ as possible in the proposed initiative and carrying it out as equal partners in co-planning, developing, adjusting, monitoring and evaluation.

The literature also highlights evolving Indigenous protocols and proponent guidelines. Underpinning these protocols and guidelines are relationships based on mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility. Throughout this process, the literature's findings speak to how proponents (e.g., governments, health organizations, education

institutions, natural resource companies) engage in knowledge development and research with Indigenous Nations, communities and peoples.

Relationships and relational reciprocity

Relationships and relational reciprocity underpin Indigenous life and community existence. Their values/guiding principles permeate life and living with all relations and are articulated through their languages and teachings, emphasizing all things' interconnectedness and interdependence. It is about relationships. See panels below for examples of Indigenous values/guiding principles.

Understanding these values/guiding principles reminds non-Indigenous peoples to approach Indigenous peoples with a good mind, letting go of preconceived notions to embrace the possible. It is a reminder that the process and how you work through it are much more important than the task. The result builds relationships, and through co-development new opportunities and solutions emerge.

Indigenous guiding principles

Inuit Societal Values/Principles¹⁹

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq: Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.

Tunnganarniq: Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive.

Pijitsirniq: Serving and providing for family and/or community.

Aajiiqatigiinni: Decision making through discussion and consensus.

Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq: Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort.

Piliriqatigiinni/Ikajuqtiinni: Working together for a common cause.

Qanuqtuurniq: Being innovative and resourceful.

Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq: Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment.

Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address (Ohen:ton Karihwatehkwen)¹⁸

The Thanksgiving Address symbolically reaches back to the origins of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story and the Original Instructions. Spoken at the opening and closing of Haudenosaunee ceremonies and gatherings and as a personal greeting for opening and closing each day, the Address gives gratitude reminding us of our connection to others and to all aspects of the natural world.

Métis²⁰

Strength, kindness, courage, tolerance, honesty, respect, love, sharing, caring, balance, patience, and most of all, the important connection with the creator and Mother Earth

The Seven Grandfather Teachings (Eddie Benton-Banai)²¹

Love (Zaagi'idiwin) - To know love is to know peace. Love is based on affection, respect and kindness. Love cannot be demanded...it must be earned and given freely from the goodness of your heart.

Bravery (Aakwa'ode'ewin) - To face life with courage is to know bravery. It is the personal strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges. It is the courage to make positive choices. Never give-in and never give-up!

Humility (Dibaadendiziwin) - Humility is to accept yourself as a sacred part of creation. Recognize the human need for balance in life. Know that you are equal to everyone else. Take pride in what you do and share your accomplishments with others.

Honesty (Gwekwaadiziwin) - To walk through life with integrity is to know honesty. Do not be deceitful or use self deception.

Respect (Minaadendamowin) - Respect is to honor our traditional roots and teachings. Honor our families, other and ourselves. Don't hurt anything or anyone, on the outside or the inside.

Wisdom (Nbwaakaawin) - To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom. Listen and use the wisdom of the elders.

Truth (Debwewin) - To know the teachings of the 7 Grandfathers is to know the truth. Faithfully apply these teachings and trust in the Creator. Be true in everything you do. Be true to yourself and true to your fellow man/fellow woman. Understand it, speak it, live it!

Understanding the complexities associated with developing non-Indigenous relationships with Indigenous peoples also supports initiating relationships and eliminate the systemic racism and discrimination against them. Several factors influence the approach to Indigenous relations activities, which include:

- Legal actions and court decisions
- Treaty rights and modern treaties
- Indigenous expectation of co-development
- Building respect and trust
- Ministerial mandate letters
- UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP)
- 2021 Bill C-15, an act respecting UNDRIP
- Reconciliation: TRC and MMIWG calls to action and justice

Source: Adapted from Transport Canada Indigenous Engagement Review, n.d.²²

Learning to listen with your whole being, eliminating power differences, and putting learnings into practice build relationships. Richard Wagamese expresses listening as “When you listen you become aware, that's for your head. When you hear you will awaken, and that's for your heart. When you feel it becomes a part of you and that's for your spirit.”²³ Eliminating power differences focuses on ensuring equality of parties and co-development of mutually beneficial projects. Different understandings about approaches to life and living emerge, which require reflective thinking and practice.

*Collaborative and equitable work is the ongoing understanding that relationship building is a process; check expectations, pan-Indigenous ideologies, and self-serving goals at the door- as each project, conversation, and partnership requires unique and thoughtful attention.*²⁴

Mussett, et al., 2022, p. 8

Preparing for co-development

Preparing for the co-development process supports all other areas. This preparation includes understanding co-development, including what it means and reflecting on how it differs from day-to-day decision-making processes. Included is thinking through who is impacted by the initiative and learning about the histories, cultures and languages of those Indigenous peoples. Most of the literature²⁵ emphasizes this later point as a prerequisite to engagement. The reports of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\)](#) and the [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls \(MMIWG\)](#) and their respective Calls to Action and Justice serve as a foundation.

Learning brings awareness that everyone has a worldview – the beliefs (values and assumptions), behaviours, and actions — that influence our daily lives. We reveal our worldview in the

assumptions and values behind our attitudes and behaviours from culture, language, history, upbringing, and experiences. Learning that multiple worldviews exist initiates awareness of different ways of thinking and approaches to co-development.

Engagement protocols

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis have long held established protocols for knowledge development. The RCAP represented one of Canada's initial documented approaches to this process. Indigenous organizations, nations, and communities have crafted and implemented distinct protocols, with a few illustrated below.

These protocols foster relationship building by respecting self-determination, protecting individual and collective rights, co-developing the project, ensuring culturally relevant processes and methods, transparency and reciprocal accountability, and information governance (ownership, control, access, and possession/stewardship).

Recent literature²⁷ highlights the review and evolution of protocols. These are living protocols and have evolved, as do relationships. Learning about the history and meaning of the protocol(s) enables a better understanding for developing protocols as part of early engagement.

The implementation of protocols may include a data sharing agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, or another type of agreement (Terms of Reference) which is jointly determined.

Protocols are passed down through culture and language and allow First Nation, Inuit and Metis Peoples to make decisions and behave in ways that align to their ways of knowing and being.²⁶

Indigenous Innovation
Initiative, 2021

Indigenous protocols

Inuit Circumpolar Council 2022²⁹

1. ‘Nothing About Us Without Us’
2. Recognize Indigenous Knowledge in its own right
3. Practice good governance
4. Communication with Intent
5. Exercising accountability – building trust
6. Building meaningful partnerships
7. Information, data sharing, ownership and permissions
8. Equitably fund representation and knowledge

First Nations OCAP²⁸

Ownership - First Nations have ownership over their own information and cultural knowledge.

Control - First Nations have control over all aspects of research and information management processes that impact them.

Access - First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities regardless of where it is held.

Possession - First Nations have stewardship of their own information and data and responsibility for its security.

Métis National Council OCAS³⁰

Ownership

Control

Access

Stewardship

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres USAI³¹

Utility - Research needs are based on community priorities.

Self-voicing - Research, knowledge, and practice are authored by communities that are fully recognized as knowledge Creators and Knowledge Keepers.

Access - Research fully recognizes all local knowledge, practice, and experience in all their cultural manifestations as accessible by all research authors and Knowledge Keepers.

Inter-relationality - Research is historically-situated, geo-politically positioned, relational, and explicit about the perspective from which knowledge is generated.

National Association of Friendship Centres, Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN)³²

Community Driven Research - The project is community driven and promotes relational accountability.

Protection - The project process ensures the protection of all individuals, communities and/or organizations.

Ongoing Consent - Ongoing consent must occur throughout the project and processes.

Ownership and Intellectual Property Rights - Indigenous peoples are the experts, and ownership and intellectual property rights lie with the Nations/communities and/or individuals.

Fairness - There is fair and equal treatment for all individuals and communities.

Respect - The project respects the Indigenous approach to Creation and how work occurs.

Honesty - The process and results are honest and free of false claims.

Community Relevance and Practicality - The project outcomes ensure progress and practicality for Indigenous peoples and communities.

Cultural safety and humility

Emphasized in the literature is learning about and practicing cultural safety and humility.³³ Cultural safety is a framework that integrates awareness, sensitivity, competency and humility (see tables below). It shifts the way we work in relationships. It is a wise practice that is a journey (not a destination) of learning and practicing respectful relationships.

Initial learning provides an awareness of cultural differences and considers how social and historical contexts and structural and interpersonal power imbalances shape a person's experiences. Acknowledging these differences through self-reflection helps us see our biases in practice (e.g., the exercise of power, decision-making) and how they interfere with relationships. Through awareness and self-reflection, understanding emerges, and more effective approaches for working together occur. Humility can happen when we realize that we can never understand another's experience, only our own, and that finding bridges through relationships is the way forward.



Early engagement

Co-development means meaningful participation at the outset of the initiative³⁴ and is essential to successful relationship building and engagement. While the non-Indigenous organization offers initial goals and outcomes for the initiative, the Working Group determines the final purpose, scope, process, outcomes, and timelines jointly. This approach allows all parties to influence and shape the initiative, building collective ownership.

A written agreement (i.e., Terms of Reference) is developed by the Working Group that includes the purpose, scope, goals, outcomes and timelines, specifies the principles and protocols (see Engagement protocols) by which the group works, and how the group makes decisions, including dispute resolution. The agreement also includes performance measures for addressing mutual obligations and duties and the skills needed for fostering a positive relationship and meaningful engagement.

Table 2 can be used to identify essential features for convening and making decisions. This tool helps ensure that all parties have the same expectations and shared goals while providing a clear roadmap for addressing issues that arise during the process.

Table 2. Co-development features for working together

Commitment to co-development and the protocols and principles	
Principle 1: True and equal partners	
Principle 2: Distinctions-based meaningful engagement	
Principle 3: Transparency	
Principle 4: Reciprocal accountability	
Structure	
Assessment	Organization
What is the policy, issue, problem or improvement being addressed?	How is the co-development group structured and process designed?
Who needs to be involved, and how are they represented (i.e., decision-maker or information gatherer)?	How is the design distinctions-based, including reflecting the diversity and inclusion of voices?
How is the process structured, and how does it address equity and power imbalances?	How is consensus defined and conflicts addressed as they arise? How is power shared and imbalances addressed as they appear?
The work	
Education	Negotiation, Consensus and Resolutions
Does everyone have a common understanding of discussion and negotiation?	What criteria will the co-development group use, and how will it be applied to achieve agreed-upon goals while ensuring equitable and active participation in the solution?
What areas of education are necessary? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and treaty rights • Inuit rights • Métis rights • Colonization and racism • Cultural safety and humility • Legislation, regulations and policies • Relevant data 	What is required? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making process with responsibilities, including how consensus is defined and determined • Generating options for solutions • Methods for reconciling conflicting interests • Dispute resolution

Implementation and performance measurement	
Implementation	Performance measurement
How does the co-development group implement the agreed-upon solutions?	How does the co-development group monitor implementation and performance?
What is required? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined responsibilities and timeframes • Communication plan • Risk management plan and strategies • Change management strategies 	What is required? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early monitoring as plans always require adjustments • Identifying the performance measurements • How are results communicated? • How are results linked to continuous improvements?

Source: Adapted from the National Policy Consensus Center, 2012.³⁵

Risks

The significant risk is inauthenticity and not adhering to the co-development process. The behaviour negates the importance of relationships. It continues the legacy of broken promises and agreements.

Co-developing a risk management plan can mitigate many risks that are likely to occur, such as:

- What is needed when members of the Working Group change?
 - One strategy: Members notify the Working Group before the change, and the new member receives an orientation before their first meeting.
- How can we manage tight timelines?
 - One strategy: The Working Group work plan identifies timelines and reviews at each meeting. Adjustments are made, if needed, based on discussions.
- How do we manage communications, including media relations?
 - One strategy: The Working Group determines who speaks (i.e., co-development leads) for their work and details the process for doing so. The process could entail how all working group members are informed and when time allows obtaining approval for the communication.

Collaboratively addressing risks as they arise can strengthen relationships.

Building and maintaining relationships is a continual process that demands time and attention from all involved individuals, making it a crucial and intricate process. The significance lies in the journey.

Co-planning and development

Co-planning and development involve designing the policy framework, including questions and developing a distinctions-based engagement strategy.

Policy framework

The purpose, scope, objectives, and timelines shape the policy framework. This framework establishes a clear set of questions to address for the engagements. These questions inform the development of data collection instruments within the initiative. Data collection instruments often include individual and group discussions, surveys, and narrative or voice submissions. The data instruments require testing before implementation, as minor adjustments are often necessary.

Engagement strategy: A distinctions-based approach

The literature speaks to a fulsome co-developed engagement approach that forms the engagement strategy. Prno et al. (2021) specify three plan components: transactional, transitional and transformational.³⁶ Transactional focuses on the methods to reach and maintain communication with participants and community members (e.g., community meetings, local radio, podcasts, newsletters, posters). The transitional component identifies the methods and frequency for engaging participants, including engaging Elders and Traditionalists, using language(s), ensuring the participation of women, youth and 2SLGBTQIA+, and engagement methods. The transformational delineates the partnership relationship, including meeting frequency and decision processes.

Critical is communicating with participants about the initiative, validating findings from engagements, and providing updates and actions as a result. The strategy should identify key messages for the initiative, who (i.e., Working Group) sends the communication, the communication method(s), and the occurrence frequency.

Languages

The importance of including relevant languages, including training for the proponents, when undertaking projects, particularly in the Canadian North.³⁷ “[A]ll communicative systems ... hold both individual and cultural identities, histories and memory, and encode knowledge in specific ways.”³⁸ When proponents have some training in a particular Indigenous language, a sense of understanding emerges about the particular worldview and how easy it is to lose the meaning in translation to English. The wise approach is engaging language speakers from the area throughout the initiative.

Elders

Engaging and forming intentional, humble, and respectful relationships with and valuing the input of Elders/Traditionalists is a cultural tradition. Elders/Traditionalists bring their unique wisdom and particular sacred gifts to the process. Engaging them in the co-development process, including the engagement strategy, fosters an atmosphere of humility, safety and mutual respect. They often offer a story to help navigate challenges, which with deep listening, provides wisdom for moving forward.

There are protocols for engaging and working with Elders/Traditionalists. The organization with an Indigenous department and Indigenous Elders/Traditionalists Council can determine the best approach for the co-development process and offer guidance about the protocols.³⁹

Reaching youth

The literature emphasizes meaningfully engaging Indigenous youth when undertaking a distinctions-based co-development project. A wise practice is forming relationships with Indigenous organizations that connect with interested youth who may wish to become youth project specialists. Engaged early in the process, these youth specialists offer wisdom about engaging youth and ensuring their safety during engagements. With training, guidance and support, they may also become facilitators for these engagements and participate throughout the effort, part of relational reciprocity. Peer-to-peer “hanging out” or hosting events are valuable approaches.

Experience has shown that empowering youth project specialists with relational reciprocity enables reaching youth participants and builds their capacity for future work.⁴⁰

Engagement methods

The literature identifies wise ways for developing criteria and selecting Indigenous organizations, nations, and communities (e.g., national and regional organizations; urban, rural, and remote nations/communities; Nation/community size; interest).⁴¹ Various approaches can facilitate participation, including contracting with community animators,⁴² using social media, radio, blogging and posters. Consideration is also given to the spaces and places where engagement occurs (e.g., land-based, hanging out, tea time) and providing food, gifts, and honoraria. Approaches to engage prospective participants include working with Elders and traditionalists and can use creative art and writing dialogue,⁴³ photovoice, story-telling or dialogue methods, talking circles, and community meetings and surveys.

Participant safety

Collaboratively ensure that privacy and data collection requirements are explicitly defined and met for Indigenous organizations, Nations, communities, and non-Indigenous organizations.

Recognizing that everyone has unique needs for feeling secure, it is crucial to establish safe spaces that foster participation and contribution in engagements. Although complete safety cannot be guaranteed, implementing wise practices, such as Indigenous-led engagements and addressing safe or braver space parameters at the outset of interviews or discussion sessions, can significantly contribute to a sense of safety. An example of braver space parameters includes the following:

- Be open to learning and taking risks
- Break it down. Ask for clarification if needed
- Use moments of discomfort to inquire deeper
- What’s said here, stays here. What’s learned here, leaves here
- Make Space, Take Space
- Acknowledge impact as distinct from intent

- Honour our multiple identities
- Expect and accept a lack of closure

Funding

The literature⁴⁴ speaks to the importance of providing the resources to engage First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Doing so respects the role of Elders and traditionalists, acknowledges the challenges in attending engagements for all participants, and honours the amount of time Indigenous peoples contribute. The jointly agreed upon form of funding for Elders/traditionalists can include honouraria, physical gifts for sharing knowledge, and traditional tobacco for use during prayers. For Indigenous participants, funding can consist of transportation, serving food, and door prizes.

Co-implement engagements and validate

A wise practice for implementing engagements involves closely monitoring the reach and response of each chosen engagement instrument. It is common for initial plans to require adjustments based on observations and feedback.

Validating findings with participants is crucial and necessitates careful deliberation by the Working Group to determine the most suitable approach, considering its potential impact on timelines and costs. This ensures the accuracy and credibility of the findings and builds respect and trust with participants. Two examples include the following:

- At the beginning of the engagement, inform participants that a “What We Heard” report will be available for review and comment after completing the engagements. It is helpful to provide an approximate timeline of when to expect the report, how long they will have to respond, and how they will receive notification.
- Working Group members work with their members to validate findings.

Co-policy design

The Working Group determines the policy structure and assigns responsibility for drafting it for review. Depending on the findings and recommendations, the structure may involve modifying the existing policy or exploring a different approach altogether. When drafting the policy, the Working Group members can take on this responsibility, or the sponsoring organization may volunteer to prepare the draft. However, it is preferred to prioritize Indigenous participation in the drafting process, ensuring their perspectives and expertise are thoroughly incorporated. The draft should then be reviewed and refined by the Working Group as a whole.

Before implementing the policy, establish an approach for testing it. This test allows for the identification of any necessary adjustments or refinements.

Co-implement policy

The Working Group prepares an implementation plan with defined responsibilities, timeframes, and performance measures. The implementation plan includes a launch strategy to ensure all

relevant parties are informed. The plan also includes monitoring implementation and addressing and adjusting initial plans as necessary.

Co-monitoring and evaluation

The Working Group actively reviews the policy, including monitoring the implementation of previous recommendations to assess progress and reasons for non-implementation.

CO-DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

Co-developing a new policy that impacts First Nations, Inuit, and Métis across Canada is a relational process. At the heart of policy development is reaching Indigenous peoples, and doing so begins with reaching out to the leadership of the National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs). The NIOs are an essential structure to access, engagement, and decision-making. How the process unfolds highlights establishing a Co-development Policy Working Group with representation from all parties implicated in the initiative. Initial discussions should occur with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council to discuss the purpose of the Working Group and how other organizations are involved.

An essential aspect of this discussion revolves around the need to develop a new Indigenous broadcasting policy that reaches all Indigenous peoples while simultaneously amplifying the voices of those engaged in Indigenous broadcasting. Consider the value of identifying co-leads for the Working Group, reinforcing that this is a co-development approach.

Consider up to a 12-member Working Group with representation, in addition to the three NIOs and CRTC, from:

- Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council
- National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC)
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
- Native Women's Association of Canada
- Pauktuutit
- Representatives from the media sector (e.g., Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, Uvagut TV, Windspeaker, Wawatay News, National Indigenous Radio Service)
- Elder or Traditionalist

The Working Group is the mechanism for reaching Indigenous peoples through its relationships with regional organizations, which reach their respective members (Nations and communities). Regular, transparent communication with all parties is critical, as are multiple methods to submit input (e.g., dedicated email for the initiative, art, voice and written submissions).

Implementing each key area or step in the co-development process enables the success and effectiveness of the new policy.

Co-development steps

Step 1. Prepare for developing a new broadcasting policy

- Preferred is an Indigenous-led team
- Team members are knowledgeable about Indigenous histories, cultures, traditions, protocols, and have completed cultural safety and anti-bias training

Step 2. Early engagement

- Identify who the policy impacts and develop a working group to guide the process
- Define purpose, scope, process, outcomes and proposed timelines
- Develop a reciprocal commitment to principles and protocols
- Delineate how decisions are made
- Use a Terms of Reference or MOU to codify agreement

Step 3. Co-planning and development

- Develop the policy framework, including the questions the review is seeking to answer
- Develop a distinctions-based engagement strategy, including how participants will validate findings
- Identify how Indigenous language(s) are included in engagements
- Identify a budget for the Working Group and engagement strategy

Step 4. Co-implement engagements and validate

- Monitor the engagement process and adjust plans as needed to reach participants
- Provide participants with a report of “What was heard” and validate findings

Step 5. Co-design policy

- Design policy based on findings (includes who and how the draft is written and reviewed)
- Test policy with a key representatives
- Adjust policy as needed

Step 6. Co-implement policy

- Develop an implementation plan with defined responsibilities, timeframes and performance measures
- Develop a launch strategy that participants know about in advance and are acknowledged in the launch
- Monitor implementation for needed adjustments

Step 7. Co-monitor and evaluate policy

- Regularly review the policy and its outcomes
- Track implementation of recommendations

APPENDIX : METHODOLOGY

A focused literature review was conducted between May 2 through May 19, 2023 to identify best and promising practices for engaging or consulting with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Search parameters

The search parameters for the focused review follow.

General requirements include:

- a. Time frame = 2015 to present (assess older articles only if needed to address gaps)
- b. Location = Canada
- c. Article content = best or promising practice review
- d. Article type = journal article, formal report (grey literature)
- e. Excluded = news articles, general websites, blogs
- f. Search engines = Google, Google Scholar

Main search:

- a. Best Practices OR Promising Practices AND Indigenous AND “engagement” OR “consultation”

Subtopics:

- a. Best Practices OR Promising Practices AND “First Nations” AND “engagement” OR “consultation”
- b. Best Practices OR Promising Practices AND “Inuit” AND “engagement” OR “consultation”
- c. Best Practices OR Promising Practices AND “Métis” AND “engagement” OR “consultation”

A manual search of grey literature:

- Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
- Métis Nation of Canada (MNOC)
- National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC)

Selection criteria

- **Must** include engagement or consultation as the focus of the article
- **Must** include focus on Indigenous persons
- **Must** include a main focus on the identification of best or promising practices
- Include the most recent article if there are updates or newer versions of that specific article
- Include at least one article on each subtopic (women, youth, Elders)

- Note: If more than 50 articles total (and one per each subtopic), pre-screen to focus on 25 most relevant articles (newer, includes Canada, includes a broader range of approaches, etc.)

Results

Twenty-five articles were selected with an additional three articles to better reflect engagement with Elders and youth. The findings from the literature highlighted a consistency of themes across sectors (health, education, natural resources) about engaging First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Table 3. Literature search results

Articles/reports	Google	Google scholar
# retrieved	30	63
# discarded	14	51
# duplicates	2	1
# reference documents	2	0
# included	16	12
Total	28	

Limitations

Knowledge and experience are not static; thus, these best, promising and wise practices are not fixed and continuously evolve.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). (2021). *Indigenous broadcasting policy (TV and radio)*. Accessed on May 3, 2023. The current *Native Broadcasting Policy* is available in the [Public Notice CRTC 1990-89](#).

² CRTC. (2021). *Co-development of the Indigenous broadcasting policy*. For more information, please consult the [CRTC's website](#). Accessed on May 3, 2023.

³ The term “Indigenous” is used throughout this report to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis unless there is a particular reference to a specific population or group.

⁴ Muir, A.M., Duncan, A.T., Almack, K., Boucher, N., Dunlop, E.S., Febria, C., Ives, J.T., Lauzon, R., Lickers, H., Mattes, W.P., McGregor, D., McGregor, H., & Reid, A.J. (2023). Sharing across the space: Introduction to a special issue on bridging Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems. *Journal of Great Lakes Research* on [ScienceDirect's website](#). Accessed on May 16, 2023.

⁵ Wesley-Esquimaux, C., & Calliou, B. (2010). *Best practices in Aboriginal community development: A literature review and wise practices approach*. See the [Communities4families' website](#). Accessed on May 21, 2023.

⁶ According to Merriam Webster (2023), best practice is “a procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption. See Merriam-Webster, [Incorporated's website](#). (2023). Best practice. Accessed on May 3, 2023.

⁷ Dorough, D.S. (2019). *The right to self-determination and the continuing quest for equality* [PowerPoint slides], slide 19. See the [Inuit Circumpolar Council's website](#). Accessed on May 21, 2023.

⁸ J. Anaya, The right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination in the post-declaration era, in C. Chatres and R. Stavenhagen (Eds.). *Making the declaration work: The United nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Copenhagen: International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs. (2009), p. 187.

⁹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming power and place*, p. 124.

¹⁰ See for example, Assembly of First Nations. (2017). *Co-developing a First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages act: Preparatory sessions presentation* [PowerPoint Slide]. See the [First Peoples' Cultural Council's website](#). Retrieved on May 4, 2023.

¹¹ The four Inuit Treaty Organizations (ITOs) are: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Makivik Corporation, and Nunatsiavut Government.

¹² Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. (2022). *Inuit-Crown co-development principles*. See the presentation on the [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's \(ITK\) website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023.

¹³ Indigenous Services Canada. (2021). *Engagement guide: Co-developing federal distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation*. See the [Indigenous Services Canada's website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ National Association of Friendship Centres. (n.d.). *The Friendship Centre movement & Canada's distinctions based approach to Indigenous self-determination*. See the guide on the [National Association of Friendships Centres' website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023.

¹⁶ Public Service Advisory Council. (2003). *Co-development in the public service of Canada*. See the [National Joint Council of the Public Service of Canada's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023.

¹⁷ The majority of the literature reviewed identifies early engagement as a key principle. See for example, Liebenberg, L., Sylliboy, A., Davis-Ward, D., & Vincent, A. (2017). Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Youth in PAR: The Role of Community Partnerships. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). Read the article on [SageJournals' website](#). Accessed on May 12, 2023; Ontario. Population and Public Health Division, [Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care](#). (2018). *Relationship with Indigenous communities guideline, 2018*. Accessed on May 1, 2023; Brock, T. (2019). *Characterizing good-practice engagement between resource developers and Indigenous communities in Northern Saskatchewan* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan). See the [University of Saskatchewan's website](#). Accessed on May 11, 2023; Gamble, S. & McQueen, J. (2019); *Best practices for Indigenous engagement*. Prepared for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. For more information, please

download the document on [UNESCO's website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023; Prno, J., Pickard, M., & Kaiyogana, J. (2021). Effective community engagement during the environmental assessment of a mining project in the Canadian arctic. *Environmental Management*, 67(5), 1000-1015. See the [Springer Link website](#). Accessed on May 11, 2023.

¹⁸ For the Thanksgiving Address see *Giving thanks: A Native American good morning message* by Jake Swamp (1995). Also see *We plant a tree of peace: Mohawk Chief Jake Swamp's narratives, dynamics of relationships and principles of peace* by Jeff Lambe (2004, Chapter Six).

¹⁹ Government of Nunavut. (n.d.). *Inuit societal values*. For more information, consult the [Government on Nunavut's website](#). Accessed on June 19, 2023.

²⁰ Dorion, L.M. & Fleury, N. (2009). *The giving tree: A retelling of a traditional Metis story*. Gabriel Dumont Institute.

²¹ Benton-Banai, E. (2010). *The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway* (2nd ed). Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

²² Transport Canada, (n.d.). *TC Indigenous engagement review*. See [Transport Canada's website](#). Accessed on May 24, 2023.

²³ Wagamese, Embers, 2016, as cited in Mussett, K.J., Bell Chiblow, S., McGregor, D., Whitlow, R., Lauzon, R., Almack, K., Boucher, N., Duncan, A.T., & Reid, A.J. (2022). Wise practices: Indigenous-settler relations in Laurentian Great Lakes fishery governance and water protection. *Journal of Great Lakes Research*, p. 6. See [ScienceDirect's website](#). Accessed on May 6, 2023.

²⁴ Mussett, K.J., Bell Chiblow, S., McGregor, D., Whitlow, R., Lauzon, R., Almack, K., Boucher, N., Duncan, A.T., & Reid, A.J. (2022). Wise practices: Indigenous-settler relations in Laurentian Great Lakes fishery governance and water protection. *Journal of Great Lakes Research*, p. 6.

²⁵ See for example, Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. (2015). *Evidence insight: Engaging First Nation, Inuit and Métis families*. See the [Preparing Our Home : Enabling Indigenous Youth to Reach their Potential in Becoming Emergency Preparedness Leaders in their Communities' website](#). Accessed on May 8, 2013; Canada, House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. (2019). *International best practices for Indigenous engagement in major energy projects: Building partnerships on the path to reconciliation*. 42nd Parl, 1st sess. See the [House of Commons' website](#). Accessed on May 1, 2023; Gamble, S. & McQueen, J. (2019). *Best practices for Indigenous engagement*. Prepared for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. See [UNESCO's website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023; Maar M.A., Beaudin V., Yeates K., Boesch L., Liu P., Madjedi K., Perkins N., Hua-Stewart D., Beaudin F., Wabano M.J., & Tobe S.W. (2019). Wise Practices for cultural safety in electronic health research and clinical trials with Indigenous people: Secondary analysis of a randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 21(11): e14203. <http://doi:10.2196/14203>. PMID: 31682574; PMCID: PMC6862000. See [ResearchGate's website](#). Accessed on May 8, 2023; Gaudet, J. C., Dorion, L. M., & Corrigan Flaminio, A. (2020). Exploring the effectiveness of Métis women's research methodology and methods: Promising wellness research practices. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 15(1), 12-26. See on the [First Peoples Child & Family Review's website](#). Accessed on May 6, 2023; and Futures Cities Canada, (2022). *Guiding protocols for civic-Indigenous engagement*. See [Futures Cities Canada's website](#). Accessed on May 6, 2023.

²⁶ Indigenous Innovation Initiative. (2021). *Indigenous knowledges and data governance protocol*. Toronto: Indigenous Innovation Initiative. See the [Indigenous Innovative Initiative's website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023.

²⁷ See for example, Hayward A, Sjoblom E, Sinclair S, Cidro J. (2021). A new era of Indigenous research: Community-based Indigenous research ethics protocols in Canada. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 16(4), 403-417. See on [ResearchGate's website](#); and Stewart, S., Fournier, K., & Indigenous Research Circle. (2021). *Indigenous research ethics consultation report*. See the [University of Toronto's Indigenous Research Network website](#). Accessed on May 5, 2023.

²⁸ OCAP® or the principles of ownership, control, access and possession assert information governance and are essential to working with First Nations. For more information see the [First Nations Information Governance Centre website](#).

²⁹ Inuit Circumpolar Council. (2022). *Circumpolar Inuit protocols for equitable and ethical engagement*. See the [Inuit Circumpolar Council's website](#). Accessed on May 3, 2023.

³⁰ OCAS is followed by some Métis communities.

³¹ USAI stands for Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, and Inter-Relationality which was developed and updated in 2016 by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. These protocols guide all research projects involving

the Friendship Centre and urban Indigenous communities. For more information, see the [Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre's website](#).

³² Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN). (2026). *Guiding ethical principles*. See the [Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network's website](#). Accessed on May 4, 2023.

³³ See for example Canada, House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. (2019). *International best practices for indigenous engagement in major energy projects: Building partnerships on the path to reconciliation*. 42nd Parl, 1st sess. See the [House of Commons' website](#). Accessed on May 1, 2023; Gaudet, J. C., Dorion, L. M., & Corrigan Flaminio, A. (2020). Exploring the effectiveness of Métis women's research methodology and methods: Promising wellness research practices. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 15(1), 12-26. See on the [First Peoples Child & Family Review's website](#). Accessed on May 6, 2023; and Mussett, K. J., Chiblow, S. B., McGregor, D., Whitlow, R., Lauzon, R., Almack, K., Boucher, N., Duncan, A. T., & Reid, A. J. (2022). Wise practices: Indigenous-settler relations in Laurentian Great Lakes fishery governance and water protection. *Journal of Great Lakes Research*, 49, Suppl. 1, S12-S21. See [ScienceDirect's website](#). Accessed on May 6, 2023.

³⁴ See for example, Energy and Mines Ministers' Conference. (2017). *Common principles for engagement and participation in energy and mineral development*. St. Andrews by-the-Sea, New-Brunswick, August 2017. See [Natural Resources Canada's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023; Canada, House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. (2019). *International best practices for indigenous engagement in major energy projects: Building partnerships on the path to reconciliation*. 42nd Parl, 1st sess. See the [House of Commons' website](#). Accessed on May 1, 2023; and Dovetail Consulting Group. (2020). "What we heard": *Indigenous engagement process on modernized land use planning in BC*. See the [Government of British Columbia's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023.

³⁵ National Policy Consensus Center. (2012). *5-2 Summary of Collaborative Decision-Making Elements*. See the [National Policy Consensus Center's website](#). Accessed on May 5, 2023.

³⁶ Prno, J., Pickard, M. & Kaiyogana, J. (2021). Effective Community engagement during the environmental assessment of a mining project in the Canadian Arctic. *Environmental Management*, 67, 1000–1015, p. 1003. See [Springer Link's website](#).

³⁷ Ferguson, J. K. & Sidorova, E. (2023). *The usage of Indigenous languages as a tool for meaningful engagement with northern Indigenous governments and communities*. See [ResearchGate's website](#). Accessed on May 9, 2023.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3.

³⁹ For more information see Calgary Board of Education. (n.d.). *Engaging with Elders: A co-created story*. See the [Calgary Board of Education's website](#). Accessed on May 17, 2023.

⁴⁰ Crooks, C.V., Chiodo, D., Thomas, D., Burns, S., & Camillo, C. (2010). *Engaging and empowering Aboriginal youth: A toolkit for service providers, 2nd edition*. See [Western University's Centre for School Mental Health's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023; Bird-Naytowhow, K., Hatala, A. R., Pearl, T., Judge, A., & Sjoblom, E. (2017). Ceremonies of relationship: engaging urban Indigenous youth in community-based research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). See [SageJournal's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023; Liebenberg, L., Sylliboy, A., Davis-Ward, D., & Vincent, A. (2017). Meaningful engagement of Indigenous youth in PAR: The role of community partnerships. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). See [SageJournal's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023; and Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health & The Students Commission. (2018). *Youth engagement toolkit*. See the [Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's website](#). Accessed on May 15, 2023.

⁴¹ See for example, Canada, House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. (2019). *International best practices for indigenous engagement in major energy projects: Building partnerships on the path to reconciliation*. 42nd Parl, 1st sess. See the [House of Commons' website](#). Accessed on May 1, 2023.

⁴² When engaging (contracting) with community animators or youth facilitators, offering initial training and consistent support and guidance is crucial throughout the process. This approach fosters trust, enhances capacity, and ultimately expands reach (e.g., participation, validation of what was heard, and participation in recommendations).

⁴³ Gaudet, J. C., Dorion, L. M. & Corrigan Flaminio, A. (2020). Exploring the effectiveness of Métis women's research methodology and methods: Promising wellness research practices. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 15(1), 12–26. See [Erudit's website](#). Accessed on March 5, 2023.

⁴⁴ See for example Ontario Public Health. (2017). *Relationship building with First Nations and public health: Exploring principles and practices for engagement to improve community health: Review of the literature*. See [Public Health Sudbury & districts' website](#). Accessed on May 8, 2023; Canada, House of Commons, Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. (2019). *International best practices for indigenous engagement in major energy projects: Building partnerships on the path to reconciliation*. 42nd Parl, 1st sess. See the [House of Commons' website](#). Accessed on May 1, 2023; and Futures Cities Canada, (2022). *Guiding protocols for civic-Indigenous engagement*. See [Futures Cities Canada's website](#). Accessed on May 6, 2023.