

Summary of the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting

April 26-27, 2021

Virtual Meeting (day 1)

Meeting Objectives

For IAC to endorse final advice on the Sub-Committees work on “Principles to be considered in Collaboration Agreements” and discuss approach for priority areas for the year ahead.

Agenda item: Introduction & opening remarks

The meeting began with a cultural welcome and an opening prayer from an Indigenous Elder. IAC co-chairs provided a welcome to members and opening remarks noting the new meeting structure for the meeting. The Ex-Officio member provided opening remarks recognizing progress on key priority areas and work from the sub-committees.

Agenda item: Presentation on draft academic work “Challenges and Opportunities in Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples in Impact Assessment”

An independent consultant, Dr. Taiaiake Alfred provided an overview of a draft report examining past collaboration agreements with the intent of providing information and perspective to the Committee to inform the discussions at the big-picture level, and to provide a basis for the Committees advice to the Agency. The report was the result of an environmental scan of 34 past and present Indigenous collaboration agreements that contain provisions related to impact assessment (IA) and interviews with 16 practitioners in the field of IA. Dr. Alfred presented the following five recommendations outlined in the report:

1. Implement a principles approach to reforming IA;
2. Promote Indigenous-led impact assessment as the preferred option;
3. Build proven successful elements into future collaboration agreements;
4. Increase Indigenous capacities to engage in IA; and,
5. Support community-based spaces and pathways for collaboration.

Members provided the following feedback on the report:

- Need for a distinctions-based approach to ensure the unique rights, interests and circumstances of Métis and Inuit are also reflected in the report.
- Challenges of locating collaboration documents and getting Inuit representatives to fully participate were noted by Collaboration sub-committee members.
- As a potential next step for this research, one member recommended having Dr. Alfred assist in drafting a collaboration agreement template, integrating these recommendations and the Principles developed by the collaboration agreement sub-committee.

Agenda item: Update from the Collaboration Agreement Sub-Committee

The Champion for the Collaboration Agreement Sub-Committee provided an update on the Final Draft of the document “Principles to Inform Collaboration Agreements between Indigenous Peoples and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada”. Members endorsed the final draft and also recommended adding additional language around the need to “promote in advance Indigenous laws and policies”.

Agenda item: Update from the Joint sub-committee on IK & Science

A member of the joint sub-Committee on IK & Science provided an update on the sub-committees work including format and focus on integrating knowledge issues while the IAC will look at the subject of IK as a whole. An overview was also provided of the upcoming presentation for the Conference for the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) in May. The presentation will provide an overview of work done by the sub-committee and the policy of the Agency regarding the use of IK in the context of the new Act. The joint sub-committee is also working of a recommendations document for the Agency outlining advice to proponents at the early planning phase regarding IK.

Agenda item: Re-cap of day one and plan for day 2.

The Co-Chairs provided a re-cap of the meeting and outlined the objectives for day 2, including confirming Committee interests and determining priority areas of focus for the year.

Summary of the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting

April 27, 2021

Virtual Meeting (day 2)

Agenda item: Plan for day 2

A Co-Chair provided an overview of the objectives for the meeting including determining the approach to move forward on priority areas for the year ahead.

Agenda item: Assessing Impacts to Rights – Next Steps

A Co-Chair led a discussion on next steps to finalize the advice to the Agency on this topic. IAC members decided a sub-committee would be struck. Members highlighted potential areas of focus for the sub-committees deliverable including:

1. Guidance/standards for proponents; and,
2. Developing a toolkit for communities on how to do baseline thresholds (i.e. cultural mitigation)

Agenda item: Priority setting

The Co-Chair provided an overview on interests expressed by the Committee over the past two years and outlined how these may align with the Agency's work.

The Agency spent some time providing an overview of the objectives for the following areas of interest:

- **Reconciliation Framework:** advice to the Agency on an overarching reconciliation framework for the Agency; and
- **IK tools in IA:** frequently asked questions, tips for reviewing IK in proponent submissions, templates for confidentiality agreements);

Members noted additional areas of focus within the topic areas including:

- Reconciliation: Desire to start with a discussion to form common understanding of the meaning of Reconciliation, need for a discussion on scalability of potential Framework.
- IK: differences between federal and provincial processes, further work on how IK will be used in balance with Western Science.

This was followed by a using Slido, an online engagement tool, assisted in allowing members to rank preferences for priority areas and to ensure that the right topics in each area were captured. Poll results indicated in order the following preferences of focus:

1. Assessing Impacts to Rights;
2. Further work on Collaboration and Cooperation;
3. IK Tools in IA;
4. Committee evaluation/reporting;
5. UNDRIP/Reconciliation Framework;
6. Operational implementation

It was noted that the Assessing Impact to Rights, further work on Collaboration and Cooperation could be considered as focus topics for the members and other topics would be part of a reoccurring Open Dialogue Forum as subsequent meetings.

Agenda item: Wrap-up

The Secretariat noted that placeholders for the remaining three meetings for the year have been sent out. The next meeting will occur June 15-16. The travel landscape will determine the venue going forward. The meeting ended with a closing prayer from a member who is an Indigenous Elder.

Indigenous Advisory Committee

Action Items from April 26-27

Secretariat Action Items:

- Prepare meeting summary for Members to review and finalize;
- Circulate Dr. Alfred's contact information to members who wish to provide additional feedback or have further discussions;
- Update work plan to integrate priority areas into agenda topics.
- Circulate email to members to confirm sub-committee representatives.

Members' Action-items:

- Review meeting summary;
- Provide additional comments on Dr. Alfred's report "Challenges and opportunities in Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples in Impact Assessment" (May 11, 2021);
- Integrate additional input to the deliverable "Principles to Inform Collaboration Agreements Between Indigenous Peoples and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (Collaboration Sub-Committee).
- Confirm interest on current and new Sub-Committees.

Attendees

IAC Co-Chairs

Sue Chiblow
Kyle Vermette

IAC Committee Members

Deana Sappier
Paul Jones
Jocelyn Gosselin
Rachel Olson
Angel Ransom
Melody Lepine
Suzie O'Bomsawin
Stanley Oliver
Elmer Ghostkeeper

Impact Assessment Agency

Brent Parker
Janice Zeitz
Emily Fairbairn
Alana Green
Christina Mulvena