

HANDBOOK OF CIDA PROJECT PLANNING AND INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

APPENDIX 6.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROJECT PLANNING WITH INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Best Practices

Best practices for project planning to include indigenous traditional knowledge have not been well established. By adhering to the practices suggested here, planners and managers can minimize the risk to both project and people. This list, however, is not a step-by-step outline for project planning or implementation. Regional and local variations are extremely important. Being open-minded, sensitive to other cultures, and able to accept another person's completely different way of solving problems is essential. Remember, most project planners have already decided the project should move ahead, and are concerned with **how** that should be done. Whereas, most indigenous communities who are being asked to participate, will be assessing **why** the project should go ahead, not how.

1. Use the simple definition: indigenous peoples are self-identifiable as a people, wholly or partially self-governed, and live within a larger nation.
2. Recognize that indigenous knowledge is a way of life, an experience-based relationship with family, spirits, animals, plants, and the land, an understanding and wisdom gained through generations of observation and teaching that uses indirect signals from nature or culture to predict future events or impacts.
3. Weave indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge systems as full partners in the design of a project when indigenous people are directly or indirectly affected by the project.
4. In acquiring indigenous traditional knowledge:
 - o Cause no harm.
 - o Define the roles and responsibilities of participants carefully and in line with culture and knowledge systems.
 - o Define the information to be collected; specify taboo information as outside the project limits. Establish the use, ownership, and the means to interpret or communicate information at the outset.
5. Recognize that including traditional knowledge systems in projects requires respect, trust, equity, and empowerment of indigenous peoples and of the traditional knowledge system.
6. Protect and transfer to indigenous communities or individuals, any value-added concepts that arise from the indigenous traditional knowledge holders as a direct result of the project.
7. Build in opportunities for indigenous peoples to benefit directly from value-added concepts derived from traditional knowledge so the indigenous community benefits from the commercial use of their traditional knowledge.
8. Enable indigenous peoples to define the aspects of their traditional knowledge that are for public consumption and those aspects that are private and confidential.
9. Respect and protect indigenous traditional rights to natural resources.
10. Ask where the development would best take place, do not ask where development

should not take place.

11. Recognize that indigenous peoples feel that they belong to the land, so they may not easily accept changing it, or their relationship to it, in any radical way.
12. Engage traditional knowledge systems before initial decisions have been taken to help predict the impacts of a project. Be prepared to abandon the project or vastly modify it if there is a risk of harm to indigenous peoples.
13. Leave broad margins for error in predictive models, and include the socio-economic costs of the often invisible economy of 'women's work' and the special vulnerability that indigenous women face.
14. Understand the local customs and etiquette and train staff who will interact with indigenous peoples before contact.
15. Distinguish between local and indigenous communities, and ensure both have roles; local communities as stakeholders in the dominant culture, and indigenous people as a group with special traditional rights.
16. Make the participatory approach fit the cultural sensitivity of the indigenous community. Successful strategies variously include round tables or talking circles, training the trainers, co-management, and participatory action research.
17. Participation by indigenous peoples as autonomous groups is an essential ingredient to developing both mutual understanding and consensus to set strategic objectives, define a chain of expected results, identify underlying assumptions and risks, and select appropriate performance indicators.
18. Include traditional knowledge early and as an honest complement to scientific or western approaches.
19. Developing self-sustainability is an integral part of traditional knowledge systems. It is beneficial to include their knowledge systems in both the interpretation of the knowledge and in its implementation by relying on credible traditional knowledge holders.
20. Assess the credibility of sources of traditional knowledge by using the community as a source of credentials.
21. Using science and traditional knowledge together in co-management or participatory action research can be a powerful tool to improve the effectiveness of projects, but it requires a relationship based on trust and respect for each other's information and for the different methodologies used.
22. Protocols for acquisition of traditional knowledge should be defined by the indigenous community and agreed to by all parties.
23. Instead of using time scales in project planning, it is sometimes better to use indicators based on the traditions indigenous people.
24. Build in mechanisms that provide increasingly important decision-making capacity for indigenous peoples as the risk increases to their communities.
25. Cause no harm to indigenous peoples because of working within another government's priorities.
26. Understand the host jurisdiction's laws and regulations regarding indigenous peoples including constitutional rights, relevant legislation, policy statements, and recent practices.
27. Engage traditional knowledge practitioners the same way western knowledge engages scientists and other professionals, to make full use of traditional knowledge and its multi-generational wisdom.
28. Avoid a strategy of including indigenous peoples too late or in a trivial manner; it places both the indigenous people and the project at risk.
29. Build in safeguards to protect indigenous communities that are extremely vulnerable to unfair exploitation because of lack of experience with, or non-acceptance of,

monetary-based systems of resource sharing.

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