

11. *First Nations' Community Values and Perspectives in Development Assessment*
Panel Discussion

How can Yukon First Nation values and perspectives be incorporated into development assessment?

- Involvement that is meaningful to FNs
- Including TK and traditional lifestyles
- Being sensitive to FN timing – hunting seasons etc.
- Develop “standards” to help with compensation, not only monetary, but in kind too
- Having a core of basic information (held potentially by the FN) to be able to gather specific info i.e. data bases
- Knowing the vision and aspirations of the FNs and communities
- Education and communication as to what info is required by assessors, and for FNs to offer ideas as to what mitigations would be appropriate
- TK knows and can describe the invisible aspects of the landscape – spiritual, usage, history
- FNs have a perspective that their own role is as stewards of the land, non-aboriginal “right of ownership” concepts need to learn from that
- FN values work well in SEA as an alternative framework to understand how common social questions can be addressed. The FN communication style incorporates historical knowledge. Scientists and biologists need to learn how to do this
- How can FN groups be compensated for their participation and provision of their intellectual property
- FN communication style (here) often includes a way of directly, concretely relating the micro details with the global perspective. There is much to learn in development projects that often loses sight of this relationship
- Respect
- Social issues/systems/culture/perspective/oral traditions/global views/community views/traditional knowledge
- Education, communication and understanding
- Why FNs conserve and protect their culture and why we are from that specific area having land of plenty surrounding us. Protection of our traditional areas is our priority. We do not infringe on another traditional area because we know through the years of planning and developing, FNs have depended on their resources for survival
- Sharing is the foremost of our traditional ways
- Ask the community
- Be sure the process is inclusive and community specific since each community is different
- Many FNs have their own management plans- ensure the process recognizes and considers these
- Consider historical uses and traditional economies of areas, not just current patterns
- Reclamation is important to include
- Work to the level of capacity in each community
- It takes more than one cursory visit – provide many opportunities for all people to contribute, depending on their comfort level with public speaking
- Ensure community decision makers are at the table (Elders’ councils, Chief and Council etc.)
- FNs must be heard
- FNs must be aware of the process
- Ensure they have a seat on relevant boards and committees
- Make sure all voices of community are heard, not just most vocal. Provide mechanisms for everyone
- Listen
- FNs are a group in healing, learn about cultural sensitivity
- FNs need resources to provide appropriate input in the EA process
- Early participation/partnership in the process
- Less focus on process and timelines – need time to respond and review info
- Importance of ensuring/supporting/developing capacity (over time)
- Avoid consultation overload
- Comfortable meetings will increase quality of information gathered and conversations
- Ensuring regional reps are approachable
- Re-reporting findings for final feedback

- Meet informally on their land
- Patient timelines
- Different sense of time e.g. Gold Rush impacts over generations
- Trust is something that needs to be established respectfully
- Concerns around limits – there is a threshold/quota on how many people can live on the land in certain areas
- “Community” thinking
- Importance dealing with cumulative effects
- Have FNs involved in planning process of boards and projects before they ever go to assessment consultation
- Lacking the tools to understand the ways certain FN knowledge is given e.g. Storytelling. It is not enough to just hear an elder talk if there is no understanding of how to listen. The way the knowledge works or is being given is different. Even a word like “wilderness” – the concepts of the land are different
- There may be a misconception in the FN communities that boards and experts have it all figured out and their input isn’t valued
- Look at TK as first hand knowledge
- The issue of trust needs to be dealt with; we need to become worthy of trust
- FNs don’t provide land claims education to their young people, the understanding of the rationale behind DAP is missing
- Emphasize inter and intra generational values and information transmittal
- Need good documentation of traditional travel networks, get people out on the land again to be monitoring changes and so we are better able to avoid impacts
- Need common vision of Yukon so we have a benchmark
- Have to seek common ground
- Need to have clearly articulated values and perspectives
- Establish commonalities
- May need financial assistance to ensure that TK is gathered and properly used in these assessments
- Involvement, not just consultation
- Ask questions in ways that people can understand them and provide alternate ways for people to offer up their opinions, ideas and values
- Collecting FN oral history (culture) – use alternative methods to obtain the information (go to their homes, record around their schedules and comfort level)
- Holistic approach along with the scientific approach
- The methods to be used to consider FN values and perspective must be included in project planning and land or development planning
- Understand what you are listening for
- Bring people on site and listen to people there
- Continue the dialogue with the same people
- Identify the way the information will be used up front
- Size not always indicative of complexity
- Tie in to Land Use Process
- Must include FNs in the scoping – both geographical and social
- Ask people for input on the process of consultation itself at scoping
- More proactive, personal and direct way of reaching communities, i.e. more than placing an ad for an open house in the local newspaper
- Need to recognize oral history and verbal communication methods
- Avoid consultation overload to certain key members of communities. Reach out to a more diverse set of people
- Recognize the importance of spirituality and culturally appropriate methods
- Put weight on FN recommendations because they have different values
- Incorporate FN values right into the system and not lip service
- Capacity, training, funding, and equitable pay
- Trust FN knowledge
- Equal decision making process
- Don’t take no response as an okay – do some follow up

- Need long term vision from communities, not just individual projects in isolation
- Need common understanding between D.O.s and decision bodies regarding the value of FN knowledge
- Mistrust of “standards” eg. acceptable pollution levels or 25 year flood risks
- Development assessment should be incorporated into FN values rather than the reverse
- It is entrenched in legislation and ensures accountability
- The process must allow for two way communication – they must talk and listen
- Develop common Yukon vision or at least work towards one
- Leadership may have a different view than the whole of the community – ensure comprehensive coverage of views and ID the stakeholders effectively
- Publish values and perspectives so that others outside that community or FN can gain an awareness
- Need government to government dialogue (rights)
- Acknowledge past mistakes and trauma
- Need for enhanced understanding of FNs relationships with the land and with each other
- Trying to recover culture at same time, must cope with all new intrusions
- Respect for one another as governments and decision bodies
- Recognition of previous impacts to FN communities
- Incorporate TK into the social aspects of development assessment
- Having the 3 governments working together in developing the YESAA process
- Do not give up until FNs get what they need and want in the process
- Develop better listening skills
- Where appropriate, socio-economic scoping should be done separately from physical environment scoping in order to accommodate traditional uses of the land
- Need to expand temporal scoping to accommodate past and future traditional use of land
- Document and incorporate local and traditional knowledge
- Backwards question – should be how can development assessment be incorporated into FN values
- Traditional law
- Bonding with the land
- Maintaining the values
- Caring
- Workshop on FN