

A Space for Indigenous Led Assessments (ILIA)



“There is a failure thus far to break the structural problem that consists in the fact that the entire impact assessment system up until now has been oriented to supporting proponents” (Dr. Taiaiake Alfred – Mohawk Philosopher 2021)

Two Questions

Is there a way of developing a space for ILIAs in the EIA process that does not compromise or minimise Indigenous participation?

How can EIA practitioners/technician, who traditionally work on behalf of proponents, assist Indigenous communities in this process

What is an Indigenous Led Impact Assessment?

Common Factors:

- Significant degree of control of the entire process by Indigenous peoples
- Methodology and content determined by Indigenous peoples
- The process is legitimized by the community

What do we Mean by ‘Space’

Current EIA ‘space’ is:

- Created by government
- Controlled by government regulators
- Focused entirely on supporting proponents achieve project approval

How far have we come?

Projects do not require indigenous approval, just consultation

Challenges in the Current EIA Process

- Opportunities for Indigenous peoples to voice their views is controlled by regulators and proponents
- Even if regulators/proponents listen to Indigenous voices, they may not always take action on what they hear
- Indigenous peoples not involved in developing EIA methodology or project approval

Examples of Successful Partnerships Between Indigenous Nations and Proponents

- **Squamish Nation – Woodfibre LNG**
- **Cheslatta First Nation and Rio Tinto**
- **Stk’emlu’psemc te Secwepemc Nation and Ajax Mine**
- **Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Trans Mountain Pipeline**

Common factors:

- A great deal of effort was put into developing good partnerships long before agreements were signed**
- Equal partnership between Indigenous Nations and proponents**

The Role of Regulators in ILIA

- BC Environmental Assessment Act 2018 – required seeking consensus with participating FNs (more robust than Duty to Consult)
- Nunavut Impact Review Board



How do we grow good
practices

How can EIA practitioners/technician, who traditionally work on behalf of proponents, assist Indigenous communities in this process

- Be open to learning and understand that Indigenous Knowledge is just as (if not more) relevant as western science in EIA process
- Use our knowledge for more than just assisting proponents
- Shift our mindsets