

# Resources for Engaging First Nations & Aboriginal Communities



Increasingly, applied biology professionals are working for or with First Nations or other indigenous groups in Canada, collectively referred to as Aboriginal peoples. Doing so effectively requires a deep appreciation of cultural differences, sensitivities, and different ways of doing things. The BC division of the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies (ACEC-BC) recently compiled a list and summary of guidance resources to support effective engagement with Aboriginal peoples and communities. ACEC-BC has kindly granted permission to the College to re-print this resource in *College Matters*.

## What is Aboriginal Engagement?

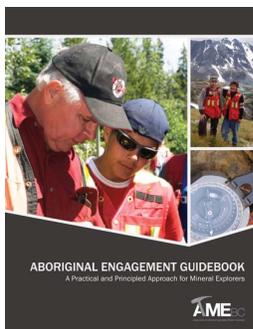
Experience has shown that engagement with Aboriginal groups early in the planning and design phases of a proposed project can benefit all concerned. Conversely, there have been instances where failure to participate in a process of early engagement with Aboriginal people has led to avoidable project delays and increased costs to proponents.

So what is early engagement? Essentially it is about starting conversations early – well before the project requires First Nations' support for permitting or engagement is necessary. In the very early days it means two-way conversation which is honest, open and forthright. It is important to understand it takes time to build assurances, bridge cultural differences and gain trust. This doesn't happen with one conversation, it happens over many conversations.

## Resources Available

There are several excellent resource documents and sites that can assist members of ACEC-BC on this matter. We would encourage you to become familiar with these resources if your firm will be dealing with projects that may impact aboriginal communities.

### 1) **Aboriginal Engagement Guidebook** *Association of Mineral Exploration*

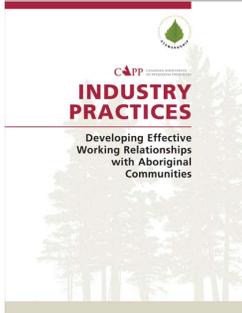


This Aboriginal Engagement Guidebook is to be used as a practical tool for mineral explorers working in British Columbia (BC). The intent of the Guidebook is to offer a realistic portrayal of how mineral explorers in BC find that their interests intersect with those of Aboriginal peoples, both in the field and during the regulatory process, and provide guidance on how to create a pathway for the shared prosperity associated with mineral exploration and development.

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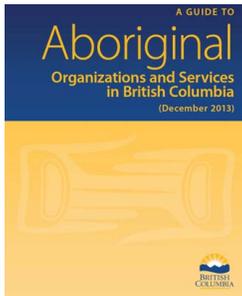
*Aboriginal Engagement – Resources to Assist Consultants*

## 2) **Developing Effective Working Relationships with Aboriginal Communities** *Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers*



This guide addresses the key issues and supporting rationale for oil and gas proponents operating in areas of identified interest to aboriginal communities.

## 3) **Consulting with First Nations** *Province of BC*

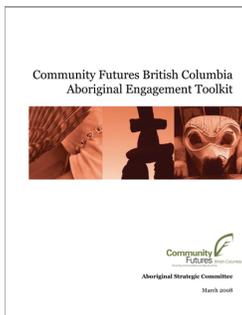


This website has a number of guidelines and procedure manuals that are designed to assist government officials and proponents with meeting consultation obligations with First Nations.

This website has a very useful document, [A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations and Services in British Columbia](#), which is a provincial listing of First Nation, Métis and Aboriginal organizations, communities and community services.

A recent resource offered by the Province of BC is the [First Nations Economic Development Database](#) – a collection of First Nations economic development initiatives in BC, accessible through a user-friendly and searchable interface. It provides a single source of factual information about economic activity initiated by First Nations. It is a snapshot in time that can be extended to capture other information about the growth of BC First Nations economic development activity.

## 4) **Community Futures British Columbia Aboriginal Engagement Toolkit** *Community Futures*



This toolkit provides information requested by Community Futures Managers, to assist them in better understanding the history and current environment impacting BC's Aboriginal peoples and to provide guidelines, proven effective by their peers, for relationship building. The toolkit also includes community economic development project best practices, which have been undertaken by Community Futures in partnership with Aboriginal peoples.

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*Aboriginal Engagement – Resources to Assist Consultants*

5) **Early Aboriginal Engagement: A Guide for Proponents of Major Resource Projects**  
*Government of Canada*

This guide to Early Aboriginal Engagement provides the proponents of major resource projects with information about the importance of early and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal peoples and groups (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit).

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### **Aboriginally-authored Resources Available**

Not all of these sites provide specific guidance on how to engage with aboriginal peoples, but they are all good sources of information for anyone genuinely interested in learning about aboriginal perspectives about a broad range of issues that form the foundation of aboriginal engagement.

1. [www.ictinc.ca/](http://www.ictinc.ca/)  
*Bob Joseph provides corporate training on Indigenous Relations*
2. [www.purichpublishing.com/](http://www.purichpublishing.com/)  
*Books written about Aboriginal consultation and related topics*
3. [www.culturalcompetency.ca/](http://www.culturalcompetency.ca/)  
*Online cultural competency training*
4. [www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/main.html](http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/main.html)  
*Video provides info about indigenous knowledge and philosophy from five diverse First Nations*
5. [www.bcafn.ca/index.php](http://www.bcafn.ca/index.php)  
*Excellent source of information on BC First Nations*
6. [www.afn.ca/index.php/en](http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en)  
*Excellent source of information on Canadian First Nations*
7. [www.cbc.ca/news/politics/never-too-late-to-engage-aboriginal-groups-says-doug-eyford-1.2451972](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/never-too-late-to-engage-aboriginal-groups-says-doug-eyford-1.2451972)  
*A paper by Doug Eyford*
8. [www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/downloads/consultation-and-accomodation-report.pdf](http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/downloads/consultation-and-accomodation-report.pdf)  
*Best Practices for Consultation and Accommodation, 2009*

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### **ACEC British Columbia Position Papers**

The ACEC British Columbia Position Papers are a series of articles published by the Business Practice Committee of the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – British Columbia. They are intended to provide general information about issues and best practices in the consulting engineering industry, and should not be construed as legal advice. Permission is granted to copy articles when credit is given to ACEC British Columbia.

President and CEO: Keith Sashaw  
Edition Editors: Keith Sashaw  
Edition Reviewer: ACEC-BC Board of Directors  
Design/Layout: Brian McAskill  
ISSN: 1193-9990

**February 2015**

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