

Summary of the Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting

March 7-8, 2023

Virtual Meeting

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) had a virtual meeting March 7-8, 2023. The meeting opened with a prayer from an Indigenous Elder followed by welcoming remarks and updates from the IAC Co-Chairs, including an update on the work of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Ministers Advisory Council on Impact Assessment. An update was also provided on a call for nominations for renewal of IAC Committee members.

The Champion of the Sub-Committee on Assessing Impacts on Rights provided updates about recent revisions to the operational guidance for proponents for the Pre-Planning, Planning and Impact Statement phases, which IAC members will endorse by the end of March 2023¹.

An Agency official provided an update on an upcoming Breadth of Consultation Assessment Guidance document for proponents of designated projects to support their understanding of the Agency's preliminary consultation assessment and the expectations for proponents for early and meaningful consultation and engagement. Members highlighted terminology considerations recognizing the inherent nature of Indigenous rights.

The Co-Chairs provided an update on IAC's Progress and Impacts Report with the objective of finalizing the text. As a next step, the Agency will be working with an Indigenous Graphic designer on the look and feel of the document which will be sent to members for a second review.

An Agency official provided members with an update on a draft Reconciliation Framework and engaged members on structure, vision and principles. The aim is for the Agency to develop goals and actions, which are achievable in the short and long term, and to push the limits of what is possible with respect to reconciliation at the Agency. Members provided input on terminology and would like to strengthen the language in certain sections. Members also recognized the importance of highlighting Indigenous languages.

The Champion of the joint Sub-Committee on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Science provided an update on a draft tool, in the form of a table, for the consideration of IK and Science in decision-making. The objective of this tool is to provide generic criteria that will help decision-makers understand if science and IK were appropriately considered in impact assessments. Members provided advice on the structure of the table.

On the second day, the Ex-Officio provided an overview of the Agency's upcoming priorities and how these may inform IAC's discussion on work planning. Areas of focus included maximizing Indigenous leadership, ensuring the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, as well as minimizing the environmental impacts of projects on communities.

The Co-Chairs lead a working session on potential priorities for the coming year. Members provided input on potential priority areas including: continued work on guidance to proponents on assessing Impacts on Rights; continued joint work with the Agency's Technical Advisory Committee on

¹ IAC endorsed final product March 21, 2023

Indigenous Knowledge and Science in decision-making phase; and flex space for the Agency to discuss issues brought forward by members or Agency. The session ended with a discussion on Committee business including upcoming meeting locations and dates. The next meeting will be scheduled for June 20-21 in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The meeting ended with a closing prayer from an Indigenous Elder.

Attendees

IAC Co-Chairs

Kyle Vermette

Sue Chiblow

IAC Committee Members

Paul Jones

Angel Ransom

Jocelyn Gosselin

Suzie O'Bomsawin

Julia Kennedy-Francis

Derrick Pottle

Stanley Oliver

Rachel Olson

Impact Assessment Agency

Ian Ketcheson

Janice Zeitz

Emily Fairbairn

Erin Gilmer

Tara Fulton

Regrets

Melody Lepine

Elmer Ghostkeeper