



**OXFAM**  
Canada



# INSPIRING CHANGE

A community and activist guide to  
intersectional gender-based analysis  
and impact assessments in Canada

# Inspiring Change

## A community and activist guide to intersectional gender-based analysis and impact assessments in Canada

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This guide was written by Jackie Hansen with support from Ian Thomson, Nirvana Mujtaba, Rachel LaFortune and Diana Sarosi. The guide was edited by Kimberly Francoeur and designed by Jenny Walker.

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Impact Assessment  
Agency of Canada

Agence d'évaluation  
d'impact du Canada

Oxfam is a global movement of people working to end injustice and poverty. Our mission is to build lasting solutions to poverty and injustice while improving the lives and promoting the rights of women and girls.

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### Land acknowledgement

Oxfam Canada acknowledges the historical and ongoing oppression and colonization of all Indigenous Peoples, cultures and lands in what we now know as Canada. We commit to acting in solidarity with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in their struggles for self-determination and decolonization and in support of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Oxfam Canada's offices are located on the unceded, unsundered traditional territories of the Anishinabe Algonquin peoples. We recognize the privilege of operating on lands that these peoples have nurtured since time immemorial. As settlers on these lands, we commit to walking in solidarity with our host nation and according to Oxfam's values of equality, empowerment, solidarity, inclusiveness, accountability and courage.

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# Foreword

Resource development and infrastructure projects are seen as major economic drivers that benefit communities in Canada. These projects are primarily promoted by the federal, provincial and territorial governments, as well as private companies in the extractive industry and industry associations. While these projects do generate wealth for some, they can also increase inequality. They generally offer unequal and limited opportunities to access high-paid jobs, can exacerbate housing shortages and food insecurity and can lead to increased rates of crime, including gender-based violence, which puts added pressure on over-stretched social services. The negative impacts of resource development and infrastructure projects disproportionately affect women, girls and gender diverse people and notably, Indigenous women and girls.

And yet, in the face of the rising inequalities caused by some projects, communities and activists are pushing back. They are often in rural and remote communities and often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination with no formal organizational support or funding. Their courageous activism has raised awareness of the gendered impacts of resource development and led to laws seeking to address the harmful impacts and distribute benefits more equitably. Oxfam stands in solidarity with their efforts to build a more equal future.

This guide seeks to de-mystify the long, complicated and colonial federal approval process for resource development and infrastructure projects. It provides an overview of when and how activists and community members, especially those most marginalized from the assessment process, can get involved. It suggests tools to carry out community-led intersectional gender impact assessments, to help ensure the gendered impacts of resource development projects are fully analyzed and documented by the government so that the unequal and harmful impacts can be addressed and the benefits of resource development are shared more equitably. We hope this guide is a useful addition to your activist toolkit and enhances your community organizing.

In solidarity,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Ravon'.

**Lauren Ravon**  
Executive Director, Oxfam Canada

# About Oxfam

Oxfam Canada is one of 21 members of the global Oxfam confederation working in 87 countries to end poverty and injustice. Oxfam Canada directly supports programs in over a dozen of these countries across Latin America, Asia and Africa. Together, we are a movement for social justice.

Oxfam Canada has taken deliberate action to put women's rights at the heart of everything we do. We continue to deepen this commitment, guided by feminist principles and a belief that supporting women, their movements and their organizations is the most effective and powerful way to drive change.

## Oxfam, gender and resource development

Oxfam recognizes that resource development and infrastructure projects tend to benefit some people and marginalize others. We know that women and girls – and particularly Indigenous women and girls and all gender diverse people – disproportionately experience the human rights violations associated with resource development and infrastructure projects. For almost 20 years, Oxfam has worked with communities around the world to address the rights abuses caused by resource development and ensure the benefits are shared equitably.<sup>1,2,3</sup> For more than 10 years, Oxfam has supported communities in conducting human rights impact assessments, including gender impact assessments.<sup>4,6</sup>

At the end of our current five-year strategy, [Oxfam Canada Strategic Framework 2021-2025](#),<sup>6</sup> we hope that women and their organizations will have more power to defend their rights. The strategy commits Oxfam Canada to strengthening support for social justice movements in Canada by providing specific resources to support women's organizations, movements and campaigns across Canada; facilitating the connection between Oxfam partners in Canada and around the world; and building a larger, louder and more active base of people in Canada who can mobilize quickly to drive change at home and around the world.

This guide aligns with our commitment to strengthen support for social justice movements in Canada. We believe in the power of people to drive change. It was also peer reviewed and informed by a range of Indigenous organizations and communities and academics who work closely with First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and Two-Spirit people in all their diversity. We hope this guide supports you – a driver of change – in navigating the federal impact assessment process for resource development and infrastructure projects and in conducting community-led intersectional gender impact assessments.

### OUR VISION

A just and sustainable world

### OUR MISSION

We fight inequality and patriarchy to end poverty and injustice

### OUR VALUES

Equality, empowerment, solidarity, inclusiveness, accountability and courage

# Who this guide is for

This guide is a road map to support activists and community members of all genders and identities in navigating the federal impact assessment process. It goes beyond outlining the process: it provides an overview of advocacy ideas and approaches to help ensure the voices of activists and community members, especially those most marginalized because of systemic oppression, are heard and considered in the impact assessment process. This guide is for land defenders, whistleblowers, concerned citizens, frontline service providers – it is for anyone who wants but isn't quite sure how to get involved in the federal impact assessment process. It provides insight on how to ensure gender and other identity factors, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability and age, are centred in impact assessments so that everyone can benefit equitably from resource extraction and infrastructure projects, while harms are eliminated, reduced and addressed, instead of being borne by the most marginalized.

Women and girls, First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and girls, and gender diverse and disabled people disproportionately experience human rights violations related to resource development projects and are too often marginalized in the assessment process itself. Nevertheless, they are often at the forefront of efforts to address the harmful impacts of resource development. We hope this guide will encourage broader efforts to be made to recognize their leadership and actively ensure their inclusion in efforts to assess and meaningfully address project impacts.

There are other resources that provide information tailored to particular groups, such as Indigenous communities, looking to engage with the federal impact assessment process. Many are referenced throughout this guide to provide further guidance.

**SOCIOECONOMIC**  
**BOYS**  
**MEN**  
**HERITAGE**  
**INDIGENOUS BOYS**  
**2SLGBTQIA+**  
**INDIGENOUS WOMEN**  
**INDIGENOUS GIRLS**  
**WOMEN**  
**GIRLS**  
**GENDER**  
**INDIGENOUS MEN**  
**INTERSECTIONALITY**  
**ENVIRONMENT**  
**CULTURE**  
**DISABLED**

# Introduction

Many large resource development and infrastructure projects in Canada must seek approval from various regulatory bodies such as the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC), the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) and others. These regulatory bodies can be federal or provincial and territorial bodies that review and approve major resource development and infrastructure projects. The federal impact assessment legislation requires that, as part of the federal impact assessment approval process, the positive and negative impacts of the project on people of different genders in all their diversity be considered. The project proponent submits information about the project, including project plans, studies and evaluations of the predicted impacts and mitigation measures. This information is prepared either directly by the company proposing the project or by an external organization hired on contract. The IAAC completes a federal impact assessment and manages the whole process.

At various points in the assessment process, Indigenous groups and the public can provide input and share questions and concerns about the proposed project, including about how people of different genders and other identities may be impacted. Figuring out when and how community members and activists can get involved can be challenging. The barriers to participating in the assessment process are particularly profound for marginalized groups. Oxfam partners identified that barriers to participation are among the major reasons the gendered impacts of resource development remain little understood and addressed in the assessment process.

Community-led intersectional gender impact assessments are one of the tools that activists and community members can use before, during or after regulatory impact assessments to shape recommendations to the company and government. This guide outlines what community-led assessments are and when and why they can be useful. It provides an array of research, community engagement and advocacy options that can be adapted to the available resources and time, alongside guidance and links to other resources on how to conduct assessments.

Few company-led, intersectional gender impact assessments have been conducted on resource development projects in Canada. Community-based intersectional gender impact assessments are even rarer. Robust intersectional gender impact assessments won't become commonplace until the impact assessment process becomes more accessible to activists and community members. Practical tools are needed to support this access. This guide will hopefully be one such tool.

Read this guide in its entirety or just use the portions that are most relevant to you. However you use it, we hope this guide will strengthen your activism, leading, in turn, to better project outcomes that minimize harms and share benefits equitably.

# In this guide



## Getting involved with an assessment



**GETTING STARTED**



**ENGAGING IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**



**DETERMINE YOUR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT**



**ACTION IDEAS**

## How to conduct community-led intersectional gender impact assessments



**PLAN DEVELOPMENT**



**BACKGROUND RESEARCH**



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



**ASSESSMENT DRAFTING**



**USE ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE**



**ONGOING MONITORING**





# Gendered impacts of resource development

Resource development is big business in Canada. According to the federal government, in the next 10 years, over 470 major resource development projects worth \$520bn will be planned or constructed across the country.<sup>7</sup> Resource and energy development projects include mines, oil and gas, hydroelectric development and forestry projects and associated infrastructure projects like the construction of pipelines, highways and ports. Resource development projects are often located in remote areas and employ mostly male workers coming from other parts of Canada.

Resource development and infrastructure projects can provide economic benefits, such as increased wealth for those who can access the high-paying industry jobs. Where governments have eliminated outdated and inefficient industry subsidies, projects can also yield significant royalty and tax revenues. However, these projects can also have negative impacts on the environment and human rights and tend to impact people in differing and often unequal ways depending on their identities, including their gender, age, race or ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status. While each project has its own footprint, a consistent pattern of impacts has been documented for projects in Canada and around the world.

Major resource development projects can have a huge impact on the natural environment. Trees and other vegetation may be wiped out. Animals may be displaced. Waterways may be polluted. These impacts on the natural environment may in turn impact the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of people living in the area. Indigenous peoples in particular often bear the brunt of such environmental impacts. Resource development often takes place on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples, negatively impacting their rights and the communities' ability to maintain their cultures. Projects, for example, may reduce the size of territories for hunting, fishing and gathering the plants and medicines necessary for food security and cultural ceremonies or negatively impact species critical to cultural identity.<sup>8</sup>

While resource development and infrastructure projects bring economic opportunities, these opportunities are not equally available. Cis-gender, non-Indigenous men, often from outside of host communities, tend to have more access to high-paying industry jobs for example. Discrepancies in household income can result in uneven power dynamics between predominantly male breadwinners and other family members, often women. As other family members become increasingly dependent on the breadwinner, their decision-making power is diminished, increasing the gender power imbalance.<sup>9</sup>

Women are often less likely to access high-paying resource sector jobs because of gender-based discrimination, care responsibilities or lack of skills and training. A lack of affordable, accessible childcare is a real barrier to women working in resource development.<sup>10</sup> Jobs are often fly-in/fly-out, shift-work positions that are inaccessible to women who are disproportionately responsible for care work. Even programs that aim to boost the employment of local women in the sector often only offer temporary, low-skilled, low-paying opportunities in traditionally female-dominated sectors, like cooking and cleaning, that do little to mitigate the disparity of power within households.<sup>11</sup> If a family member does access a high-paying resource development job, the demands of the job may pull them away from home and their family, shifting more responsibility to other family members.

To fill the employment needs of projects, men, and often young men, migrate to resource development host communities. This influx of highly paid young men strains the often-inadequate social services of the community, decreasing access to essential health and frontline services for those most in need. This strain derives not only from the sudden increase in the population base relying on local services, but also from the increased rates of drug and alcohol use that often accompany the presence of resource sector workers. When returning home from long, difficult shifts, some workers release work-related stress through a pattern of destructive and anti-social behaviours, which can include excessive partying accompanied by drug and alcohol use. Many companies have zero tolerance policies for drug and alcohol in industry work camps, which forces employees into nearby host communities in their off hours.<sup>12</sup> With an influx of young men, there is also an increase in the sex trade.<sup>13</sup>



Young men are statistically more likely to commit violent crimes, putting community members, especially women, at risk of violence.<sup>14</sup> Indigenous women are more likely to be the targets of violence putting them at even greater risk. As mentioned throughout the [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (MMIWG Inquiry), the deep rooted process of colonialization and mistrust has created conditions for an ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Most cases of violence and abuse are unreported.<sup>15</sup> Under-resourced police forces are often unable to respond to increased demand.

The influx of people into resource host communities further creates pressure on the housing market, making the most vulnerable people – including those who have experienced intergenerational trauma, addiction and mental health crises and who may have low levels of education – difficult to house or homeless. The high incomes of industry workers can also push up the prices of goods to the point that community members are unable to afford them, leading to increased risk of food insecurity for the local population.

People of different genders and identities experience the positive and negative impacts of resource development projects in different ways. Indigenous peoples – and Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people in particular – experience some of the most harmful and profound impacts of resource development and infrastructure projects in Canada.<sup>16</sup> While the impacts are becoming better understood, more must be done to mitigate and eliminate the harms.

The impacts of resource development and infrastructure projects on groups other than women, for example Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual plus other (2SLGBTQIA+) people; people with disabilities; and youth, are much lesser known and need further attention in intersectional gender impact assessments.<sup>17</sup>

Just as diverse people experience project impacts differently, they can also bring different expertise and insights to bear. As this guide will explore, it is essential to include diverse representation in your assessment process to address potential project impacts more fully and ensure project benefits are experienced equitably across the community.





# POWER AT WHAT COST?

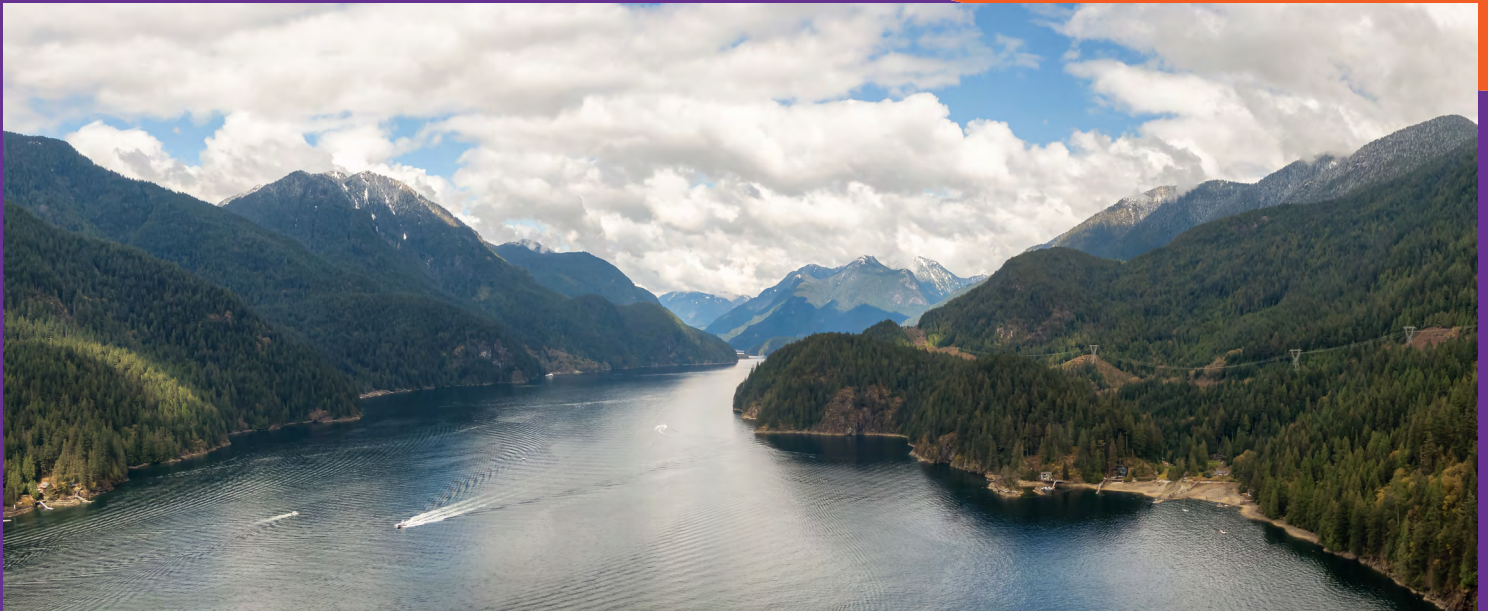
## The devastating impacts of hydroelectric projects on Manitoba First Nations

In Northern Manitoba, the First Nations, particularly the Ininiw, Ithine and Anishinaabe groups in the South, have long experienced profound adverse impacts from hydro power construction and operations. The commercial fisheries at O-Pipon-Na-Piwin (South Indian Lake), Misipawistik (Grand Rapids), and Tataskweyak (Split Lake) were virtually destroyed by dams and water level manipulations; in other communities, commercial fisheries were severely damaged. The jobs lost were largely men's jobs, but women shared the burden of finding ways to feed and care for the families deprived of a steady, independent source of income. Forests were submerged or clear cut, trap lines were drowned, wetlands and rapids were flooded and erased. Many once-pristine lakes and rivers became silted and contaminated, creating a drinking water crisis. The life on the land and the water that has always been the foundation of Indigenous lifeways has become nearly impossible. The combined effects of hydro power development and the climate crisis intersect with the other issues that Indigenous communities face due to colonization, including loss of culture, gendered violence, substance abuse and the long-term and intergenerational effects of residential schools. In many ways this further displaces Indigenous communities from their land and disconnects them from their culture.

Members of several Manitoba First Nations have begun to disclose the prevalence of violence they have experienced due to the presence of the largely male workforces and transient workers at construction site "man camps" and hydro installations. Some of the workers at these sites victimized members of northern First Nations through acts of rape, sexual assault, physical assault, sexual harassment, racism and other forms of discrimination and abuse, confirming historical and ongoing correlation between increased crime and Manitoba Hydro projects.

Despite its severe consequences, this issue is often not widely discussed. Instances of physical and sexual violence against women and girls, Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirit people, and other gender identities are frequently silenced and overlooked, perpetuating a cycle of trauma and mistrust. Lack of accountability has persisted for a long time, which may have led community members who have experienced trauma to feel unsupported and hesitant to revisit their wounds. This highlights the more extensive problems of a mistrust towards the system and the use of non-trauma-informed approaches to address and reduce the impact of violence against women, girls and other gender diverse people.

Source: This information was adapted from discussions with Wa Ni Ska Tan and the [Parliamentary submission: R. Neckoway and J. Brownlie. \(n.d.\). \*Wa Ni Ska Tan: An Alliance of Hydro Impacted Communities\*](#). Wa Ni Ska Tan is a research partnership between academics and First Nations' members who have been documenting the impacts of hydroelectric projects on Manitoba's First Nations for the last nine years.



# MYTH-BUSTING

There are lots of misconceptions and misunderstandings about what “gender and impact assessment” is and isn’t. Here are some common myths de-bunked.

## **MYTH 1:**

**Promoting economic development is in the national interest. All this talk about the harmful impacts of industry is an assault on economic progress and is anti-industry.**

Resource development and infrastructure projects can have both positive and negative impacts. The negative impacts are often downplayed, while the positive impacts are often exaggerated or even fictitious. Working to ensure the harmful impacts are eliminated isn’t anti-industry – it results in stronger projects that benefit more people.

Canada has legal obligations to protect human rights and make sure the companies operating in Canada respect human rights. Protecting human rights and promoting economic development are both in Canada’s national interest; economic progress must not come at the expense of human rights.

A person who raises concerns about the negative impacts of resource development is not necessarily opposing a particular project or all resource development projects. If someone is against a project, ask why. They may have very legitimate concerns about the negative impacts of a particular project that aren’t being addressed.

## **MYTH 2:**

**“Gender or GBA+ and resource development” is all about getting more women to work in the resource development sector.**

“Gender and resource development” is a broad term used to talk about the different ways people of different genders and identities are impacted both positively and negatively by resource development. This includes the impacts women face working in the sector as well as the impacts that women and other gender identities face in the community.

Gender-based analysis plus (also known as GBA+ or intersectional gender-based analysis) is an analytical tool that can be used to better understand the different ways groups of people are impacted by resource development because of their multiple and intersecting identities, including gender identities. For example, a young Indigenous woman living in a small town near a resource development project may be impacted very differently than a middle-aged non-Indigenous man coming to the same town to work on a resource development project.

Very few women are employed in the resource development sector, and those who are overwhelmingly work in lower paid jobs as cleaners and cooks. According to Statistics Canada, 27.5% of natural resource sector jobs in 2019 were held by women, however, women made up only 21.8% of the labour force in minerals and mining.<sup>18</sup>

Women and gender diverse people working in resource development report experiencing violence and harassment on job sites. These issues are very real and must be addressed, and workplace issues are sometimes covered in impact assessments. However, when we use the terms “gender and resource development” or “gender-based analysis in the impact assessment process” we are not solely or primarily referring to issues related to women working in resource development. Rather, we are talking about a broad set of impacts, both positive and negative, experienced by people of different genders and other identities as a result of resource development and infrastructure projects regardless of whether or not they are employed by the project.

## **MYTH 3:**

**Why do you only care about women?**

Oxfam cares about how everyone is impacted positively and negatively by resource development projects, and we recognize that people of different genders are impacted in different ways. We also recognize that cis-gender men tend to experience more of the benefits of resource development, while women, girls and gender diverse people tend to experience more of the harmful impacts of resource development.

We recognize that not all men, not all women and not all gender diverse people experience resource development in the same way. A person’s age, Indigenous identity or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and other factors shape how a person experiences the positive and negative impacts of resource development.



Gender impact assessments are an important tool to help understand how different groups of men may benefit from resource development (e.g., greater access to high-paying industry jobs) and be harmed by resource development (e.g., unhealthy working environment including pressure to work through injuries, Indigenous men may have less access to high-paying jobs and experience racism in the workplace).

The goal of intersectional gender impact assessments is to identify ways to ensure everyone affected by resource development, whether they are a worker or a member of a nearby community, is safe and healthy and also benefits from the resource development project. It recognizes that people of different genders and different sub-groups of people of the same gender are impacted by projects in different ways and identifies ways to minimize the harms and maximize the benefits for everyone.

## **MYTH 4:** **But not all men do the terrible things you're talking about...**

Young people are more likely to be involved in traffic accidents compared to older people. That doesn't mean that every young person is going to be involved in a traffic accident or is even at a significantly elevated risk of being in an accident. But it's something for all young people to be aware and mindful of.

The same principle applies to the gendered impacts of resource development. Overall, women, girls and Two-Spirit people and disabled people disproportionately experience the negative impacts of resource development, including the elevated levels of gender-based violence in communities hosting resource development projects. Prejudiced attitudes and assumptions make discrimination and violence more acceptable and probable, which is why men need to be aware and mindful of how their actions may affect others. That doesn't mean that every man working in resource development is a perpetrator, but all men must actively work to not become perpetrators or bystanders.



## **MYTH 5:**

**Sure, we support women's rights, but this project is about energy and has nothing to do with women's rights.**

Resource development and infrastructure projects are situated in or near communities and impact the plants, animals, land, water, host communities and people. Different groups of people are impacted in different ways. Women and gender diverse people tend to disproportionately experience more of the harmful unintended consequences of resource development. Resource development projects tend to make existing gender inequalities worse unless deliberate efforts are made to promote gender equality.

Companies are obligated to respect human rights. When their projects, even inadvertently, violate human rights, they must take steps to remedy the situation. Energy projects generate energy, but how the projects are carried out has a very real impact on human rights including the rights of women, girls and gender diverse people.

## **MYTH 6:**

**These gender impact assessments are complicated and are going to drive companies to do their business elsewhere.**

In the past, the federal environmental assessment process involved studying the bio-physical effects of a project on the environment and recommending steps to mitigate negative effects. Environmental assessments at the federal level have been replaced by impact assessments, which take a more holistic approach and examine how a project will likely impact the environment and the people living in that environment and what steps must be taken to mitigate harms and enhance benefits. Impact assessments aren't necessarily more complicated than environmental assessments, they're just different, and it takes time to adjust to doing assessments in new ways.



# Navigating impact assessments in Canada

## What is an impact assessment?

An impact assessment is a tool for assessing the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposed project.

Impact assessments may be conducted during the project planning and decision-making process. Many types of impact assessments exist, such as gender impact assessments, health impact assessments, socio-economic impact assessments, cumulative impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. Under the *Impact Assessment Act, 2019* proponents must assess a wide range of factors during a federal impact assessment.

Impact assessments are usually managed with a federal, provincial and/or territorial government and conducted by the company responsible for the project (the proponent). They may also be conducted by people from the communities that will likely be impacted by the project or by anyone wanting to assess the project's impacts.<sup>19</sup>

## How does the federal impact assessment process work?

In 1995, the government of Canada committed to using GBA+ on all legislation, policies and programs as a tool to advance gender equality.<sup>20</sup> Despite this commitment, use of GBA+ has been uneven. The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* did not specifically mention gender or the need for a GBA+ approach in assessments,<sup>21</sup> and despite the broad government commitment to GBA+, gender was not considered systematically in the assessment process.

The *Impact Assessment Act, 2019* shifted the focus from environmental assessment to impact assessment, expanding the focus beyond environmental impacts to directly consider social, economic and health impacts as well. Under the new legislation, intersectional gender-based analysis must be applied to projects requiring federal government approval. Specifically, the legislation calls for assessment of factors including "the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors."<sup>22</sup>

The Act also advanced rights protections for Indigenous peoples through a range of measures, including consultation with Indigenous groups early in the assessment process; consideration of the specific impacts of a project on Indigenous peoples; inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in determining a project's impacts; and the creation of substantive opportunities for Indigenous governments to carry out portions of impact assessments.<sup>23,24</sup>

All projects currently undergoing the federal assessment process can be found in the online [Canadian Impact Assessment Registry](#).<sup>25</sup> The types of projects the federal government reviews are listed in the [Physical Activities Regulations](#) of the *Impact Assessment Act*.<sup>26</sup>

## What is a provincial and territorial impact assessment processes?

Some resource development and infrastructure projects must seek approval from provincial or territorial governments. While the *Impact Assessment Act, 2019* sets out requirements for the impact assessment of projects under the federal jurisdiction, provincial and territorial governments have their own regulatory frameworks for assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts of projects within their jurisdictions.

The only province or territory to include intersectional gender-based analysis explicitly in its assessment process is British Columbia. As of 2018, under the BC legislation, projects must consider the “positive and negative direct and indirect effects of the reviewable project, including environmental, economic, social, cultural and health effects and adverse cumulative effects,” including the “disproportionate effects on distinct human populations, including populations identified by gender.”<sup>27</sup>

Some provinces and territories have specific requirements for their assessment process. In the Northwest Territories, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board has incorporated the wellbeing and way of life of Indigenous Peoples into its environmental impact assessment process. The federal government has also committed to working with provinces and territories to promote the integration of GBA+ into their environmental assessment process.

Through public participation, GBA+ considerations can be woven into processes that do not explicitly require intersectional gender-based analysis in impact assessment. Search the webpages of provincial and territorial assessment agencies to find lists of the projects they are currently reviewing or have previously reviewed. For example, in British Columbia, search the [project list on the provincial government’s website](#).<sup>28</sup> Most provincial and territorial processes have online commenting options available for individuals or groups. For example, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board offers the option to [submit a comment](#)<sup>29</sup> through their Online Registry by fax, mail or email, or by meeting with an assessor.

## What do impact assessments have to do with human rights?

Everyone has the right to live free from discrimination and violence, to feel safe, to be able to access justice and due process and to be able to participate in the cultural life of the community. Everyone has the right to food, water, health, housing, education and a livelihood. Indigenous peoples have treaty rights that must be respected and upheld. These include the right to land, the right to practise and maintain their culture, the right to participate in decision making, the right to provide or deny free and informed consent and the right to self-determination.

Canada has signed international treaties protecting human rights. By law, all levels of government in Canada are required to protect human rights. They must do everything possible to prevent human rights violations, including those committed by companies. When human rights violations occur, governments must acknowledge the harm, support the recovery of victims and prevent harms from

happening again. Governments must also think ahead and ensure their decisions don't increase the likelihood of human rights violations.<sup>30,31</sup>

The negative impacts of resource development, including gender-based violence and housing and food insecurity, are human rights violations that governments have a legal responsibility to address. Companies also have the responsibility to respect human rights as per the [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment](#). Impact assessments help identify the positive and negative human rights impacts of a project. They also identify actions companies should take to ensure their projects don't violate human rights. Impact assessments are critical for governments to fulfill their legal obligation to avoid approving projects that increase the likelihood that human rights will be violated.

## What is GBA+?

Gender-based analysis plus, or GBA+, uses an intersectional approach to understand how people of different genders (women, men and gender diverse people) and identities may experience policies, programs and initiatives in different ways. It recognizes that not all people of the same gender experience the world in the same way. A person's unique combination of identity factors (race, ethnicity, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation and gender identity) all shape a person's experiences. GBA+ helps to understand how a person's many intersecting identities shape their experiences of equality and inequality.<sup>32</sup>

## What is GBA+ in impact assessment?

GBA+ in impact assessment, also known as intersectional gender impact assessment, is a tool for assessing a proposed project's potential positive and negative impacts on people of different genders, identities and abilities.

These assessments can help to very specifically identify how a project may benefit or violate the human rights of different groups of people within a community based on gender and other identity factors. This information can be used to develop targeted strategies to mitigate or eliminate the potential negative impacts of the project, while identifying ways to broaden the benefits to more sub-populations within a community.

Impact assessments must examine how projects impact the environment, people and culture. Intersectional gender impact assessments can be conducted on their own or as part of a broader impact assessment.<sup>33</sup>

## What is a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment?

Under the *Impact Assessment Act, 2019*, impact assessments are carried out by either the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada or a Joint Review Panel or can be delegated to another government.

Community-led assessments, on the other hand, are conducted by impacted communities themselves (for example, a First Nation) or by civil society groups from impacted communities (for example, a women's group). Community-led assessments, particularly those conducted by Indigenous groups, can be formally included in the assessment process.<sup>34</sup> Community-led assessments can also be conducted independently from the government assessment process and the findings can be used to guide a community or group's participation in the government assessment. For example, a women's group might conduct an assessment to better understand the different ways sub-groups of women with different identities may be impacted by a project and use that information in their written submissions during the assessment process.

Community-led intersectional gender impact assessments are led by impacted communities or groups within communities and focus on identifying the different ways groups of people, with a range of identity factors, within a community might be positively or negatively impacted by a project.

## What happens when intersectional gender impact assessments aren't conducted?

Intersectional gender impact assessments generate specific data about who within a community the project will likely impact and how. This data can empower governments and companies to take targeted measures, both to prevent harm from occurring in the first place, and to ensure necessary resources are available to address project-related impacts when they occur. Without this data, the potential harms of a project may be overlooked entirely, or limited resources may be allocated inefficiently or ineffectively, compounding existing marginalization and increasing risks for particular groups. Harms continue to be overlooked because few intersectional gender impact assessments have been conducted.<sup>35</sup>

The Site C hydroelectric dam in British Columbia provides one example of how failure to undertake an intersectional gender impact assessment means missing out on critical information needed to prevent harm. The federal and provincial impact assessments noted that jobs created by the project would draw more workers to the region and make accommodation even harder to find and more expensive.<sup>36</sup> A community-led gender impact assessment undertaken by the [Peace Project](#), meanwhile, identified "insecure housing as a critical risk factor for violence against women, with local service providers identifying affordable housing as the top need for those women and girls most at risk of violence." Indigenous women were identified as being particularly at risk due to racism and isolation.<sup>37</sup> In this case, the general assessment identified that affordable housing was needed in the community<sup>38</sup> while the gender assessment identified who needed access to affordable housing and how access to affordable housing would help prevent gender-based violence.

This is just one example of an overlooked impact within one project. With the number of projects slated to occur across Canada and their significant impact on host communities, it is essential that intersectional gender assessments be undertaken to prevent real harm and ensure equitable, sustainable development.

## What is the connection between intersectional gender impact assessments and responding to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls?

Intersectional gender impact assessments are critical to effectively address the role that the resource sector has played for decades in exacerbating violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people.

Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people disproportionately experience harms associated with resource development. The connection between resource development and levels of violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people is so clear and so profound that, in its 2019 final report, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) dedicated five Calls for Justice to addressing these concerns (see text box). These Calls for Justice included a specific call for gender-based assessments of resource projects, recognizing this approach as key to preventing harm. The National Inquiry specifically called on “all governments and bodies mandated to evaluate, approve and/or monitor development projects to complete gender-based socio-economic impact assessments on all proposed projects as part of their decision making and ongoing monitoring of projects.” The Inquiry also emphasized the need to consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people through all stages of a project, as well as their equitable benefit from such projects.

In follow-up to the National Inquiry’s report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women undertook an eight-month study into links between resource extraction and violence against Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people. The Committee’s report, released in December 2022, detailed how the influx of temporary workers—largely non-Indigenous men—to staff resource projects exacerbates the risk of violence for Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people in communities located near the resource development projects. Indigenous women who work in the resource development industry can also experience violence and abuse in the workplace, the Committee noted. The Committee also drew particular attention to the role of industry “man camps” in fostering a misogynist and hypermasculine culture and attitudes that dehumanize Indigenous women.

Citing these findings, the Status of Women committee recommended:

That the Government of Canada ensure that a culturally relevant Gender-based Analysis Plus is undertaken by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada in each natural resource development project review with the goal of informing decision making and identifying mitigation measures that could be implemented to prevent violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals for approved projects.<sup>39</sup>

The Committee underscored that the benefit of Gender-based Analysis Plus is not only in identifying possible negative impacts, but further, the ability to require and, under the *Impact Assessment Act*, monitor and enforce specific mitigation measures. Examples of possible mitigation measures that could help prevent or address project-related violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people include: “physical site and security measures, employee support programs, employment policies and conditions related to harassment or anti-harassment, education awareness programs and support for community social infrastructure.”

### **Calls for Extractive and Development Industries from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:**

*13.1 We call upon all resource-extraction and development industries to consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people, as well as their equitable benefit from development, at all stages of project planning, assessment, implementation, management and monitoring.*

*13.2 We call upon all governments and bodies mandated to evaluate, approve and/or monitor development projects to complete gender-based socio-economic impact assessments on all proposed projects as part of their decision making and ongoing monitoring of projects. Project proposals must include provisions and plans to mitigate risks and impacts identified in the impact assessments prior to being approved.*

*13.3 We call upon all parties involved in the negotiations of impact-benefit agreements related to resource-extraction and development projects to include provisions that address the impacts of projects on the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Provisions must also be included to ensure that Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA people equitably benefit from the projects.*

*13.4 We call upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to fund further inquiries and studies in order to better understand the relationship between resource extraction and other development projects and violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. At a minimum, we support the call of Indigenous women and leaders for a public inquiry into the sexual violence and racism at hydroelectric projects in northern Manitoba.*

*13.5 We call upon resource-extraction and development industries and all governments and service providers to anticipate and recognize increased demand on social infrastructure because of development projects and resource extraction, and for mitigation measures to be identified as part of the planning and approval process. Social infrastructure must be expanded and service capacity built to meet the anticipated needs of the host communities in advance of the start of projects. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that policing, social services and health services are adequately staffed and resourced.<sup>40</sup>*



# Getting involved with a federal assessment

The best time to get involved in an impact assessment is before it has even started! Community leaders, activists and Indigenous community members can use the following step-by-step process to get involved with a federal impact assessment process.

## Getting started



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### FIND OUT ABOUT A PROJECT

How do you find out if a company has proposed a project in your area? Your community may be notified directly by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada if the project is subject to the *Impact Assessment Act* and share this information with community members. You could hear about the project in the media, such as in a local newspaper or on the radio, via social media, such as the Agency's [twitter](#) feed, or through word of mouth. Additionally, you can use the Agency's [interactive assessment map](#) to find information about upcoming projects. If the company proposing the project (the proponent) does not think your community will be directly impacted by the project, your local government might not be aware of the project, and you may not learn about the project early in the assessment process.

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## GET INVOLVED EARLY

Anyone can get involved with the impact assessment process. The proponent will have a list of communities they think could be impacted by their project, and there will be proactive outreach to these communities. If you feel your community will be impacted by the project, even if it isn't on the proponent's list of impacted communities, you can still get involved.

It's possible to get involved at any point in the impact assessment process, but it's better to get involved early. Early involvement allows you to have more influence on whether and how the impact assessment will be carried out.

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## DO BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Researching the company responsible for the project, the type of project and its likely impacts will help you decide if you have concerns to raise in the assessment process. Research the details of the project on the internet:

- The name of the project
- The company responsible for the project
- Some of the positive and negative impacts of the company's other projects
- Some of the positive and negative impacts of similar types of projects on people of different genders and other identities (e.g., use search terms like "gold mine + gender impacts")
- The level of government (federal, provincial, territorial) responsible for approving the project
  - Check the [Canadian Impact Assessment Registry](#) for federally regulated projects.
  - Check the webpages of provincial and territorial assessment agencies for lists of the projects they are regulating.

If you need help with online research, ask a friend, family member or colleague or consult a librarian at your local public library.



# Provincial and Territorial Impact Assessment Agencies:

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## **ALBERTA**

Alberta Environment  
Alberta Energy Regulator  
Environment Assessment  
Natural Resources Conservation Board

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## **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy  
Environmental Assessment Office  
Environmental Protection & Sustainability

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## **MANITOBA**

Manitoba Conservation and Climate  
Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch

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## **NEW BRUNSWICK**

Environment and Local Government

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## **NEWFOUNDLAND**

Environment and Wildlife  
Municipal Affairs and Environment

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## **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

Environment and Natural Resources  
Mackenzie Valley Review Board

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## **NOVA SCOTIA**

Nova Scotia Environment  
Environmental Assessment Branch

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## **NUNAVUT**

Department of Environment  
Nunavut Impact Review Board

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## **ONTARIO**

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks  
Environmental Assessment Branch

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## **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

Environment, Water and Climate Change  
Environmental Assessment Branch

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## **QUEBEC**

Environnement et Lutte contre les changements climatiques  
Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement

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## **SASKATCHEWAN**

Ministry of Environment  
Environment Assessment Branch

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## **YUKON**

Department of Environment  
Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board

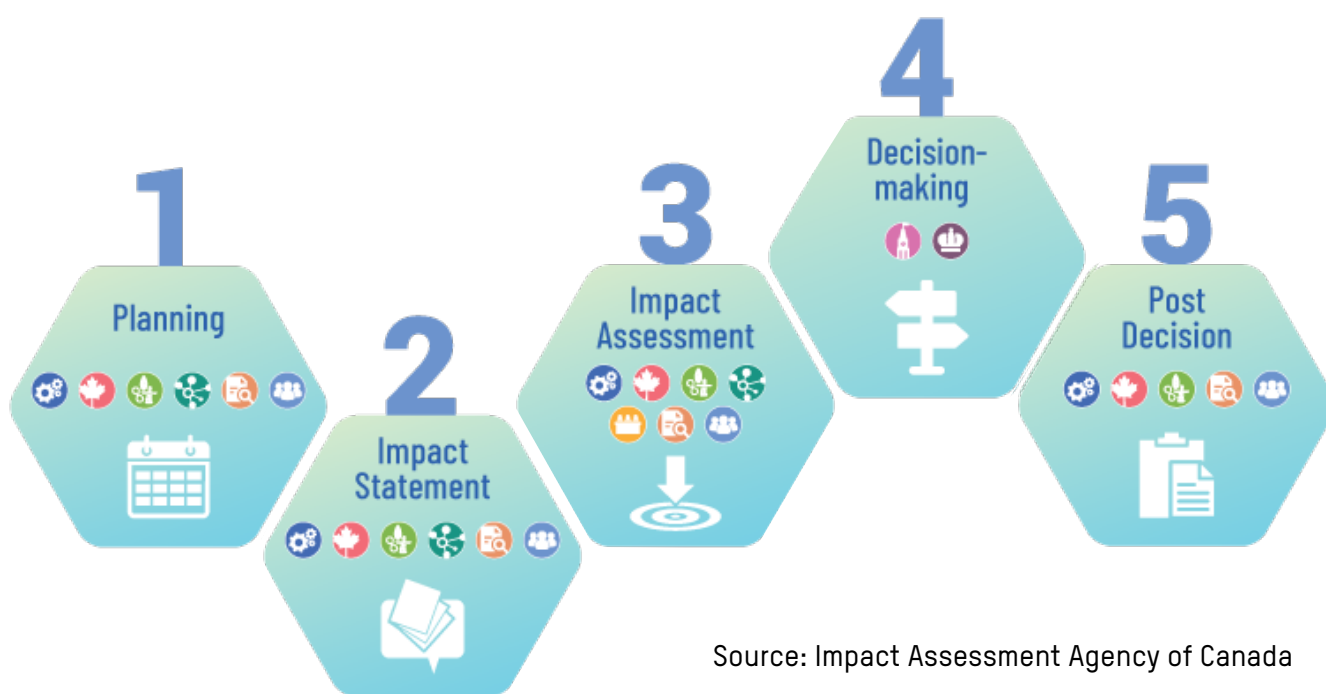
## LEARN MORE ABOUT FEDERAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

You don't need to be an impact assessment expert to get involved in the assessment process, but it is helpful to have some knowledge of impact assessments and the impact assessment system.

You may wish to review the resources created by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada:

- [Basics of Impact Assessments](#)
- [Overview of the \*Impact Assessment Act\* e-learning course](#)

The federal impact assessment process has **five phases**: planning, impact statement, impact assessment, decision-making and post decision.<sup>41</sup>



Source: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has two guides for getting involved in the impact assessment process: one for Indigenous groups and one for the general public. The guidance for Indigenous groups includes Indigenous governments, individual community members or community groups (for example, a women's council).

[Guidance: Public Participation under the \*Impact Assessment Act\*](#)

[Guidance: Indigenous participation in Impact Assessment](#)

# Engaging in the assessment process



## PHASE 1: PLANNING

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) seeks feedback from Indigenous groups and the public on the proponent's draft project description. The Agency decides if an impact assessment needs to be conducted and the minister determines if the assessment will be conducted by the Agency or sent to a Joint Review Panel. This process can take up to 180 days. [Learn more.](#)

Before the Agency determines if an impact assessment needs to be conducted, they prepare a summary of issues based on the feedback received during the initial engagement, including feedback from Indigenous groups and the public. Project proponents must respond by identifying how they will address the issues raised. These responses are published by the Agency. Even if the Agency later determines that an impact assessment is not needed, engagement at this stage allows interested parties to identify concerns and receive a direct response from companies as to how they will address potential impacts. If an impact assessment proceeds, this stage will focus the scope of the assessment.

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- Whether or not an assessment is required
- The issues covered by the assessment
- Who conducts the assessment

### ACTION IDEAS:

- Build a network of like-minded people to take action together. Look for allies that represent different perspectives from your own and represent the diversity of experiences related to the project.
- Regularly track the project's progress in the online [Registry](#).
- Participate in engagement sessions organized by the proponent or the Agency.
- Organize your own community engagement sessions. Be aware of how you can ensure a diversity of representation at your sessions. Is your venue accessible to people with disabilities? Are you hosting at a time and place that is considerate of people with child care responsibilities? What barriers to participation exist for other people in your community and how can you overcome them?
- Write a submission commenting on the Draft Project Description, participation plans, the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and other plans. The key documents that can be reviewed before writing a submission are the initial project description, detailed project description, summary of issues, response to summary of issues, public participation plan and tailored impact statement guidelines.

- Raise awareness of the project and opportunities to get involved using media and social media. Determine what languages you should use to reach others in your community.
- Advocate publicly to raise concerns that aren't being addressed, for example, if a proponent's suggested response to an issue raised is inadequate or if an impact assessment is not deemed to be necessary.
- Explore whether a community-led intersectional gender assessment might be needed. Are there members of your community whose experiences or concerns are not being reflected in the Agency's Summary of Issues, the proponent's Response to Summary of Issues, or the Public Participation Plan and Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines? A community-led intersectional gender assessment may provide a way to ensure their concerns are documented and provide a basis to push for government or company response.
- If needed, [seek funding](#) to support participation in engagement sessions and/or to complete a community-led assessment or other activities related to the assessment process. Funding can be used to address specific participation obstacles, including allowing access to childcare or transport. For Indigenous communities, the [Indigenous Capacity Support Program](#) provides funding to support local and regional capacity development so that Indigenous communities or organizations can participate in, direct and/or undertake assessments.

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## PHASE 2: IMPACT STATEMENT

The proponent develops an Impact Statement evaluating the potential impacts of a project. The proponent can take up to three years to complete this process. [Learn more.](#)

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- The scope of impacts covered by the assessment

### ACTION IDEAS:

- Build a network of like-minded people to take action together. Build connections with other groups engaging with the assessment process or raising awareness about potential project impacts to explore how your aims might overlap or build upon each other's.
- Regularly track the project's progress in the online [Registry](#).
- Participate in proponent-led and Agency-led engagement opportunities on the project's potential impacts, how negative impacts can be eliminated or addressed and how positive impacts can be enhanced.
- Write a submission commenting on the proponent's Impact Statement.
- Conduct a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment and submit findings to the proponent and the Agency. This can be done directly by advocacy groups or in partnership with other organizations such as academics.

- Raise awareness of the project and opportunities to get involved using media and social media. Determine what languages you could use to reach others in your community.
- Engage in public advocacy to raise concerns that aren't being addressed in the development of the Impact Statement. Can you reference and elevate other groups' work or submissions documenting other impacts you might have missed? Can you collaborate on advocacy with elected officials or news media outreach?
- If needed, [seek funding](#) to support participation in engagement sessions and/or to fund a community-led assessment or other activities related to the assessment process. For Indigenous communities, the [Indigenous Capacity Support Program](#) provides funding to support local and regional capacity development so that Indigenous communities or organizations can participate in, direct and/or undertake assessments.

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## PHASE 3: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The [Impact Assessment Agency](#) or Joint Review Panel conducts the impact assessment. The assessment may also be conducted by a provincial, territorial or Indigenous government. In some cases, an Impact Assessment may be delegated to a provincial, territorial, or Indigenous jurisdiction in the planning phase, in which case the assessment would be conducted by that jurisdiction. This process can take up to 300 days if the assessment is conducted by the Agency, or 600 days if conducted by a Joint Review Panel. [Learn more.](#)

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- The impacts covered by the assessment and how deeply each impact is studied
- How GBA+ is meaningfully incorporated into the assessment
- The extent to which those most impacted by resource development and those most marginalized will be engaged in the assessment process

### ACTION IDEAS:

- Activate networks of like-minded people to take action together. For example, networking with women's rights organizations with knowledge and expertise on assessing gendered impacts.
- Regularly track the project's progress in the online [Registry](#).
- Participate in engagement opportunities organized by the Agency or the jurisdiction conducting the assessment including public meetings and open houses.
- Write a submission commenting on the draft Impact Assessment Report and draft potential conditions. What conditions are placed on the proponent to minimize or eliminate potential negative impacts?

- Conduct a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment and submit findings to the proponent and the Agency. If your concerns still aren't being addressed, conduct targeted advocacy (e.g., advocacy meetings, letter-writing, social media campaigns, online petitions and public stunts) focused on the minister of environment and climate change, who will receive the final Impact Assessment Report and/or the proponent, who is conducting the assessment.
- Raise awareness of the project and opportunities to get involved using media and social media. Determine what languages you could use to reach others in your community.
- If needed, [seek funding](#) to support participation in engagement sessions and/or to fund a community-led assessment or other activities related to the assessment process.

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## PHASE 4: DECISION MAKING

The minister of environment and climate change or Governor in Council (Cabinet) issues a decision statement and conditions. If the minister makes the decision, it can take up to 30 days. If a decision is referred to Cabinet, it can take up to 90 days. [Learn more.](#)

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- Whether or not the project is approved
- What conditions are placed on the proponent to minimize or eliminate potential negative impacts
- What conditions are placed on the proponent to maximize potential positive impacts

### ACTION IDEAS:

- Activate networks of like-minded people to take action together.
- Regularly track the project's progress in the online [Registry](#).
- If your concerns still aren't being addressed, conduct targeted advocacy focused on the minister of environment and climate change, minister of women and gender equality and other federal cabinet ministers and provincial ministers during the decision-making process (e.g., advocacy meetings, letter-writing, social media campaigns, online petitions, public stunts). Can you collaborate with other groups in shared advocacy?
- Address concerns about issues under the jurisdiction of provinces and territories (i.e., health care, policing) with provincial and territorial authorities.
- Raise concerns using media and social media. Determine what languages you could use to reach others in your community.

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## PHASE 5: POST-DECISION

If approved, the proponent carries out the project according to the terms in the Decision Statement and is responsible for follow-up and monitoring programs. [Learn more.](#)

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- Whether the proponent abides by the terms in the Decision Statement
- How impacts are monitored

### ACTION IDEAS:

- Activate networks of like-minded people to take action together.
- Participate in proponent-led follow-up and monitoring initiatives. Is there diverse representation within monitoring initiatives? Are women and other gender identities involved within the monitoring initiatives? If not raise this as an issue with the proponent and the Agency.
- Conduct a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment as a tool to monitor the actual impacts of the project and compliance with the decision statement. Submit findings to the proponent and the Agency. Findings can be accompanied by clear calls to action such as petitions, who to call for action, which groups/communities/community organizations to support, etc.
- For updates, sign up on the Agency's distribution list by emailing the project inbox and ask to be notified of project milestones and updates. The project inbox can be found on the project's registry site. You could also follow the Agency's twitter feed.
- If needed, advocate publicly for the minister to amend the Decision Statement.
- If the minister agrees to amend the Decision Statement, submit written comments during the public comment period.
- Raise concerns using media and social media. Determine what languages you could use to reach others in your community.
- Engage in public advocacy to raise concerns about the negative impacts of the project that aren't being addressed.
- If needed, [seek funding](#) for ongoing monitoring including a community-led intersectional gender assessment. You could also raise funds for grassroots organizations working to offset the negative impacts of a project or working to help marginalized groups or groups affected by projects.

## Determine level of involvement



Once you have learned about the project, the assessment process, and ways to get involved, it's time to decide how you want to get involved in the assessment process. Consider the following using an intersectional gender lens and feminist approaches:

- How concerned are you about the potential impacts of the proposed project on people of different genders and identities?
- Who is already involved and what work has already been completed?
- Am I the right person/group to represent the interests of the community? Who else should be involved, or championing this work?
- Do you have suggestions for how the project could be strengthened to minimize or eliminate harms and ensure benefits are enjoyed more equitably?
- Do you have lived experience or other knowledge that you are willing to share during the assessment process?
- How much time do you have to dedicate to the assessment process?
- Are there particular phases of the assessment process where you would like to focus your attention?
- What relationships are needed to strengthen involvement in the process?
- Do you require financial or other resources or supports to participate in the assessment process?
- Would you be involved in the assessment as part of a community, organization or coalition or would you participate alone?

## Action ideas



Check out [Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing](#) before you get started!

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## BUILD A NETWORK

### What?

Join or build a network of like-minded people, groups, and organizations to collaborate with during the assessment process.



## Why?

- Assessment processes can be long and technical. It can be helpful to have a large group of people with different skills and knowledge to share the work.
- There is strength in numbers. Decision makers may pay more attention to concerns and recommendations coming from a large group as opposed to an individual or small group.
- Collaborating with groups and associations can help build credibility, elevate visibility, streamline actions, get funding and build on decades of experience.

## When?

- Join or build a network as early as possible.

## How?

- Ask people in your area if there are any networks, coalitions or organizations getting involved in the assessment process. You may be able to join an existing network.
- Consider reaching out to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working at the local, provincial, territorial, federal or international level on impact assessments. They may be keen to partner with you and may be part of existing networks you might want to join. If you start a network, they might want to join. A list of some of the organizations involved with intersectional gender impact assessments is included in the contacts section at the end of this guide.
- If no network exists, reach out to different groups in your community and see if they want to get involved in the assessment process and collaborate. Consider reaching out to a broad spectrum of individuals and organizations representing the identities of people who may be impacted by the project. For example, Indigenous organizations, 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, women's shelters, women's groups, sex workers' groups, affordable housing groups, food banks, community service providers, seniors' organizations, day cares, youth groups and environmental organizations.
- Networks and coalitions can be as formal or informal as you want them to be. At their simplest, they can be an informal group of people who come together around a common cause to share information and take action. You don't have to agree on everything, but you do need to have enough common ground to be able to express shared concerns and make recommendations to government and proponents.

## Resources

[Coalition Building and Maintenance](#), Community Catalyste

[Coalition Building Guide](#), Campaign for Youth Justice

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## TRACK PROGRESS IN THE ONLINE REGISTRY

### What?

Review the project's webpage in the Agency's online [Registry](#).

### Why?

The Registry tracks the project's progress through the assessment process. It contains updates from the Agency, draft documents that are open for comment, comments people have submitted on draft documents, training opportunities and information about upcoming information sessions and funding.

### When?

Often, ideally weekly

### How?

- Identify a person who has good Internet access and time to look at the Registry regularly. It can be helpful to add a weekly calendar reminder to check the Registry.
- Sometimes project teams have distribution lists through which they share project updates via email. You can request to be added to the distribution list by emailing the project inbox. The project email contact information should be listed on the project's registry page.
- Share updates with people you're collaborating with, either directly or by setting up a regular newsletter to circulate updates among advocacy allies.

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## PARTICIPATE IN AGENCY OR PROPONENT ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### What?

Attend in-person or virtual open houses, information sessions and other types of events organized by the proponent or the Agency who will set the agenda. At information sessions, you will be receiving information about the project and assessment process. There is always a question-and-answer session at the end which may not be listed in the agenda of the session. You may be able to speak at open houses or engagement sessions held as part of an assessment.

### Why?

These sessions are opportunities to learn more about the project, get to know Agency and proponent staff and share your concerns and recommendations. If no one attends these sessions, organizers may presume the public doesn't have concerns about the project. The participation of women and gender diverse people and Indigenous people is of extreme importance to share concerns through an intersectional lens.

## When?

Opportunities will be posted in the Registry. Some communities and organizations may receive invitations to participate. You do not need an invitation to attend. Sessions are open to the public.

## How?

- Regularly check the Registry for opportunities.
- Sign up for the Agency's distribution list by emailing the project inbox and asking to be notified of project milestones and updates. The project inbox can be found on the project's registry site.
- Follow the Agency's twitter feed.
- Phone or email the contact to indicate that you would like to be invited to participate in engagement opportunities. Contacts are identified at the bottom of each project webpage in the Registry.
- Connect with your network such as women's rights organizations, Indigenous rights organizations for opportunities of engagement.
- Ask in advance if you will be able to speak at the event, how to get on the list of speakers and how long you will have to speak. Before speaking, identify who you are trying to influence and what you want to achieve in these sessions. Prepare a list of key messages. Spread the word in your community to encourage other people to participate in engagement opportunities.
- Follow up afterwards by submitting written comments.

## Resources

[Sample information session agenda](#)

[Sample virtual engagement session agenda](#)

### *Remember!*

The type of forum for discussion (virtual, in-person or hybrid) can limit and/or enable the participation of certain groups. For example, women who are primary caregivers may not be able to attend an in-person session. The language of the session, the gender and age of the moderator(s), the timing of the session, the age distribution of participants (the presence of elders can influence dynamics) etc. can all be barriers to participation. When organizing engagement opportunities, consider the barriers to participation and make the session accessible for women and other identities, Indigenous women and other identities, persons with disabilities, etc.

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## ORGANIZE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### What?

Organize in-person or virtual events that bring together community members to learn about the project, discuss potential impacts and share recommendations.

### Why?

Not all proponent- or Agency-organized events will be accessible to all community members. By organizing engagement sessions, you can set the agenda, determine the focus (for example, an event focused specifically on the intersectional gender impacts of the project), invite the participants and ensure the event is accessible to the people you would like to have attend. For example, a large, public, male-dominated forum may not be a safe space for sex workers to talk about how a project may impact them. A closed session held at a location trusted by sex workers (e.g., a drop-in centre frequented by sex workers) and organized jointly with sex workers may make engagement more accessible to sex workers.

### When?

As early as possible in the assessment process.

### How?

- Set the goal (for example, to get the perspectives of marginalized people who aren't comfortable attending a public open house organized by the proponent or Agency).
- Decide how many sessions you want to organize. You may need to organize different sessions for people of different identities to create environments where people are comfortable engaging (e.g., a session for Indigenous women, a session for youth).
- Find organizations and individuals to collaborate with because organizing sessions can be labour intensive and because your event will be more successful if it is organized with and led by the communities you hope will participate.
- Make sure the event centres around themes such as respect, accessibility and inclusion. Find out what barriers may prevent people from participating in the event and eliminate as many barriers as possible.
- Decide if the session will be held in person or virtually.
- Determine if the activity will be open to the public or by invitation only. Invite participants and, for public sessions, publicize the event broadly via word of mouth, social and traditional media and through your network.
- Decide whether to invite proponents or the Agency, and if not, decide how to share feedback with them afterwards.

- Be sure to set the tone for your session(s) to achieve your goal of identifying project impacts through a feminist lens with gender intersectionality.
- Share information on the project and the information session with participants. This should include information about the project, the timeline and the goal of the session. Also explain how their feedback will be shared with the proponent and the Agency and whether their feedback will be anonymous.
- Keep participants engaged and updated. Let participants know how they will be updated and whether they will have other opportunities to share their insights. Share ways that participants can further get involved outside of the consultation.
- Community groups can also request engagement sessions by emailing the contact through the project page on the registry.

## Resources

[Diversity through Inclusive Practice – An Evolving Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Processes, Spaces & Events](#), The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (FemNorthNet) & DisAbleD Women’s Network of Canada (DAWN-RAFH)

[Inclusive Event Planning](#), Women and Gender Equality Canada

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## WRITE A SUBMISSION

### What?

Provide feedback in writing on the Registry and on draft documents created by the Agency or the proponent.

### Why?

If you attend a proponent- or Agency-organized open house, verbal feedback may be captured by the note taker but perhaps not in the detail it was shared or in your own words. Written submissions to the Registry are critical to ensuring the Agency receives your detailed feedback and recommendations about a project, in your own words.

### When?

- The Agency will post documents to the online Registry and provide a deadline for providing comments. Various documents will be posted for comment throughout the assessment process.

# How?

- Regularly search the project in the online [Registry](#).

## Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

We are a federal body accountable to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We serve Canadians by delivering high-quality impact assessments that look at both positive and negative environmental, economic, social, and health impacts of potential projects. We contribute to informed decision making on major projects in support of sustainable development in Canada.

[Search the Registry](#)

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- Where possible, try to collaborate with other organizations to submit one comprehensive comment to the Agency.
- You can participate in an engagement session, submit written feedback or both. Submitting written feedback is an excellent way to make sure your perspectives are written in your own words, not as part of a summary document written by the Agency or proponent after an engagement session.
- **SUBMITTING WRITTEN FEEDBACK OR COMMENTS ON THE REGISTRY MEANS THAT YOUR COMMENT WILL BE ONLINE, AND OTHERS WILL BE ABLE TO SEE IT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE PROVISIONS FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.**

Before sharing Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous communities and knowledge holders must discuss with the Agency or review panel whether any of the Indigenous knowledge is confidential. If an Indigenous community wishes to provide confidential Indigenous knowledge to the Agency, committee or review panel, discussions need to happen prior to submission of the Indigenous Knowledge to make sure that it can be appropriately managed. Read [Protecting Confidential Indigenous Knowledge under the Impact Assessment Act](#).<sup>42</sup>

## Resources

[Written submission on Cedar LNG](#), Women and Gender Equality Canada

[Review of the Alamos Gold Inc. Lynn Lake Project Environmental Impact Statement](#), Sayisi Dene First Nation

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## USE SOCIAL MEDIA

### What?

Share your concerns, recommendations, lived experiences, calls for participation and links to actions on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok.

### Why?

Social media is a great vehicle for sharing stories of lived experiences that aren't often heard in the media, for sharing information about how to get involved in the assessment process and for building support for your concerns and calls for action.

### When?

Anytime in the assessment process, but particularly around key moments like public events (e.g., open houses) and when important decisions are made.

## How?

- Find someone in your group who is social media savvy and wants to lead your social media work.
- Decide why and how you want to use social media. Determine if you can use personal social media accounts or if you need to create a group page or account.
- Map similar advocacy accounts on different social media platforms. You can consider collaborating with them for cross visibility.
- Figure out what hashtags are being used already that you can also use and if you should create a unique hashtag for what you're doing.
- Create content such as photos, infographics, videos and text.
- Have someone regularly post content to social media and respond to comments.
- Beware of trolls! Discussing intersectional gender impact assessments on social media may lead to online harassment. Women, girls, non-binary people, 2SLGBTQIA+ people and people with other identities are at greater risk of trolling and may want to avoid using their personal accounts.

### *Remember!*

All social media posts and media communications can be subpoenaed and used in a court of law. It is important to understand how social media posts can be used for or against you or your group if litigation ever arises from an impact assessment.

## Resources

[Social Media Best Practices](#), All Rise for Civil Justice

[Guidelines of Social Media Activism](#), The Outrage

[Speak Up & Stay Safe\(r\): A guide to protecting yourself from online harassment](#), Feminist Frequency



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## ENGAGE THE MEDIA

### What?

Build relationships with journalists who can share your concerns with a large audience.

### Why?

Keeping your concerns in the news is a way to build public awareness and support and pressure decision makers.

### When?

Throughout the assessment process, but preferably early in the process before big decisions are made.

### How?

- Try to engage organizations with media experience and contact lists in your network or coalition.
- Build direct relationships with individual journalists. Be brief and courteous and pitch newsworthy stories they can easily cover. Promptly respond to their communications.
- Circulate press releases around key moments and media advisories in advance of events.
- Submit opinion pieces (op eds) to media. Here's a great [op ed by community activist Connie Greyeyes on gender and resource development](#).
- Keep in mind that everything you say to a journalist is on the record and can be quoted in a media story unless you specify it is off the record.
- Doing media interviews, particularly live TV and radio interviews, can be nerve wracking. If possible, do practice interviews to prepare.

### Resources

[Media Tips for Activist Groups](#), Electronic Frontier Alliance

[Get Media Attention: Learn how to get covered by news media](#), Activist Handbook

[How to Write Press Releases](#), Amnesty International

[Media Resources for Women and Gender Diverse People](#), Informed Opinions

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## WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT

### What?

Engage directly with cabinet ministers and other members of parliament to raise your concerns and calls for action.

### Why?

The minister of environment and climate change is responsible for approving projects and their decisions may be shaped by concerns and recommendations from fellow cabinet ministers, including the minister of women and gender equality and youth, and other members of parliament.

### When?

At key moments before major decisions are made.

### How?

- Have a clear goal for engaging with government and a focused message.
- Decide who is most strategic for you to target. Is it the minister of environment and climate change, as the person responsible for making decisions on the assessment? Your local member of parliament, who can raise their concerns with the minister of environment and climate change? Members of parliament from opposition political parties, who can raise concerns in the House of Commons? Cabinet members before a decision on a project is taken by the federal cabinet? Members of parliament who sit on the [House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development](#) who can call for a study to be conducted on the intersectional gender impacts of a project?
- Email the target(s) requesting a virtual or in-person meeting. Phone their office(s) to follow-up. Developing good relationships with political staffers is very important for securing meetings with politicians.
- Attend town halls, public events and meetings with constituents to raise concerns.
- Build relations with provincial representatives, mayors or members of the official opposition to raise awareness and elevate concerns related to the environment, gender, Indigenous people, people with other identities and marginalized groups.
- If you secure an in-person or virtual meeting, prepare a one-page document to share with the person after the meeting that includes your key messages and the request you are making of the person, as well as your contact information.
- If you can't get a meeting, email your concerns and your request, copying their staff. The [contact information of all members of parliament is available online](#).

### Resources

[Meeting with your MP](#), Citizens for Public Justice

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## ADVOCATE PUBLICLY

### What?

Organize public stunts, protests, marches, online petitions, letter-writing campaigns, shareholder advocacy and other public actions to raise awareness of and build support for your calls for action.

### Why?

When government won't meet with you or consider your calls for action, you may want to consider raising the profile of the issue and creating public support through public advocacy.

### When?

At key moments in the assessment process when you want to raise awareness and put pressure on decision makers (for example, before the minister decides about a project approval).

### How?

- Determine the purpose of the action, your message, who you are targeting, when to take strategic action and for how long the action will run.
- Decide what type of action to take. To help make this decision, determine how the action will take place (online or in person), the available time to organize the activity, the financial and human resources available to organize the advocacy and how to make the action inclusive and accessible.
- Make sure to have a strong media and social media strategy.
- Evaluate risks. For example, if you organize an in-person event addressing a project's potential harms and hold the event in a resource sector host community, how will you deal with people who may be angry with your message?

## Resources

[Youth Activist Toolkit](#), Advocates for Youth

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## FUNDRAISE

### What?

Raise funds to support your advocacy or to carry out an intersectional gender impact assessment.

### Why?

Advocacy work can be time intensive and can't always be done for free.

## When?

Whenever funds are needed to support the work. Plan as far in advance as you can.

## How?

- Make a budget. If you aren't an incorporated organization, see if an organization in your network or coalition is able to receive and manage funds.
- [Apply for funding from the Agency](#). Explore ways to apply for funding from other government departments and agencies.
- See if coalition partners have funds they can contribute.
- Launch a crowd funding campaign.

## Resources

[Grants 101: A how-to guide for nonprofits](#), Imagine Canada

[How to Write an Effective Grant Proposal: A nonprofit's guide](#), Donorbox

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# COMPLETE A COMMUNITY-LED INTERSECTIONAL GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## What?

Assess the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposed project on people of different genders and identities by completing an intersectional gender impact assessment, also known as GBA+ in impact assessment.

## Why?

Understand the potential positive and negative impacts of a project on people of different genders, and other intersections of identity providing data to help eliminate negative impacts.

## When?

At any point in the assessment process, but often at the beginning or to conduct ongoing monitoring of an existing project.

## How?

Keep reading for more information!



# Community-led intersectional gender impact assessments

Community-led intersectional gender impact assessments are one of the tools that communities and activists can use to better understand the potential impacts of a project and shape their advocacy. This section of the guide is not exhaustive, but it provides information to help you decide whether a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment is something you want to pursue, details to help you get started and links to other resources.

Community-led assessments are conducted by impacted communities themselves (for example, a First Nation) or by civil society groups from impacted communities (for example, a women's group). Community-led assessments, particularly those conducted by Indigenous groups, can be formally part of the assessment process.<sup>43</sup> Community-led assessments can also be conducted independent of a government assessment process and the findings can be used to guide a community or group's participation in a government assessment. For example, a women's group might conduct an assessment to better understand how different sub-groups of women with different identities may be impacted by a project in different ways and use that information in written submissions to the Agency.

## Why should you consider conducting a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment?

- 1. TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE IMPACTS OF PREVIOUS PROJECTS** – Conducting an assessment can help you better understand how community members of different genders and other identities have been impacted by other resource development and infrastructure projects. This can help you shape recommendations to strengthen benefits and minimize or eliminate harms associated with the proposed project.
- 2. TO TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH** – Most assessments are limited to the impacts of the very narrow footprint of a particular project, and few assessments cover the cumulative impacts of projects in an area. Your assessment can be broad in scope, helping to better understand the cumulative impacts of projects in the area and the further impacts of the proposed project.
- 3. TO BE MORE ACCESSIBLE** – Proponent-led assessments may be conducted in ways that don't work for everyone. For example, Indigenous elders may not feel comfortable speaking in a public forum facilitated by a non-Indigenous person, and women with caregiving responsibilities may not be able to attend an open house in the evening. Assessments designed and led by community members can be made accessible to people of different genders and other identities within a community and can make special efforts to ensure the people who are likely to be most impacted by a project are engaged in the assessment process.
- 4. TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF THOSE MOST MARGINALIZED FROM THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS** – Community-led assessments can create the conditions necessary to break down barriers to engagement and include and amplify the voices of the people most marginalized from the assessment process, who are usually women and other people facing discrimination because of their multiple and intersecting identities.
- 5. TO COLLECT THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** – Community-led assessments can gather information about the potential impacts of a project. Communities can use non-traditional ways to collect data, such as storytelling, drawing or other feminist and Indigenous approaches. This knowledge helps communities decide if they should support a project and informs their recommendations for increasing the positive benefits and minimizing or eliminating the negative impacts of a project. The Government of Canada passed legislation in 2019 which requires Indigenous knowledge be considered, when provided, alongside other factors in project reviews and regulatory decisions. You can read more about the [Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework for Project Reviews and Regulatory Decisions](#).<sup>44</sup>
- 6. TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY** – Throughout a project's life cycle, ongoing community-led monitoring can identify the actual positive and negative impacts of a project. This information can be used to hold the proponent accountable for following through on obligations to minimize or eliminate negative impacts. It can also encourage proponents to integrate gender & intersectional aspects in their own impact assessment and include mitigation measures in their plans. Gender roles, relationships and power dynamics are not static and ongoing monitoring can increase understanding of how a project changes gender and other social dynamics.<sup>45</sup>

## When in the assessment process should this sort of assessment be done?

A community-led intersectional gender impact assessment can be conducted at any point in the assessment process. However, if this assessment is to support the formal impact assessment process and submitted to the Agency, it is important to get involved early in the decision-making process. When you choose to undertake an assessment will depend on why you are conducting the assessment, when you learn about the project, when you secure the funds to conduct the assessment and other factors.

In general, conducting a community-led assessment as early in the process as possible is helpful because it will allow you to gather information to better understand the likely positive and negative impacts of a project and decide what recommendations to make to maximize the project's benefits and minimize or eliminate potential harms. It also allows you to collect baseline information about your community before the project has started, making it easier to measure the impacts of project implementation.

## Who should carry out a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment?

Who carries out an assessment will depend on who is interested, who has the capacity, who has knowledge of the impacts of projects on the community and who has the trust of community members of different genders and identities.

Community-led assessments can be carried out by a community, for example a municipal government or First Nation. They can also be carried out by groups within a community, for example, a local women's organization.

In undertaking a community-led assessment, you may want to consider partnering or collaborating with a group that has experience navigating the process. A broad range of groups may wish to collaborate on an assessment, from academics and non-governmental organizations to project proponents and governments. Such partnerships carry potential in terms of access to expanded resources and expertise but should also be weighed carefully. Be sure that you reach a shared understanding about how to undertake the collaboration and how to resolve any disagreements.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development states that "multistakeholder partnerships (i.e., between local/regional/central governments, civil society and/or companies) in the design and implementation of gender-responsive impact assessments can achieve better results. Such partnerships should be encouraged by governments and adopted by the industry to achieve not only better results but also trust, confidence and collaboration that can last throughout the project

life cycle.”<sup>46</sup> Such an approach will not work in every situation but may be a good option for some communities.

Consultants who conduct assessments for proponents and communities are readily available in Canada, but not all have experience conducting intersectional gender impact assessments. Working with consultants may be a good choice for your community, but don't discount your own knowledge. Community members know their communities, understand the impacts of resource development on their lives, may have the trust of other community members and might be the best people to conduct a community-led assessment.

“Nothing about us without us” is a powerful motto coined by the disability rights movement. As you think about who is involved in your assessment, let this phrase guide you. Who is your community-led assessment seeking to represent? Are their voices and expertise represented and meaningfully included?

## How to conduct community-led intersectional gender impact assessments

The *Impact Assessment Act, 2019* lays out the expectations for proponent-led assessments. Proponents must follow the standards laid out by the Agency for conducting assessments.

Community-led assessments do not replace proponent-led assessments within the broader Agency-led assessment process. They are a welcome addition to proponent-led assessments and do not have to follow the same process or protocols. They are more flexible and can be adapted to suit community needs and available resourcing.

Make your community-led intersectional gender impact assessment what you need it to be depending on the available time, capacity and funding. Community-led assessments can be multi-year, multi-million-dollar projects, but they can also be quick and inexpensive and still have immense impact. Civil society organizations often must do what they can and be resourceful with limited means.



## STEP 1: PLAN DEVELOPMENT



Once you have decided to carry out a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment, start by developing a project plan. Creating a plan will help you think through every aspect of the assessment, ensuring it centres the voices of those most impacted, is disaggregated by gender and other identity factors and is designed to maximize its effectiveness while working within available resources.

The plan should detail the following:

- Goals
- Scope
- Partners who will collaborate to organize and carry out the assessment
- Steps that will ensure the assessment is intersectional, focused on the most marginalized, rights-based, participatory and transparent<sup>47</sup>
- Methodology for background research, community engagement, assessment production, publication and ongoing monitoring and analysis
- Protocols around free and informed consent, privacy and data ownership
- Security and safeguarding concerns related to the assessment
- Budget and fundraising plans

In developing your plan, think through how timing will impact your work. If you are undertaking an assessment in response to a proposed project, start as early as possible in the assessment process, ideally either before the federal impact assessment process has begun or during the planning or impact statement phases of the federal impact assessment process.

Another option is to develop a baseline assessment. These are undertaken proactively at any time, and ideally before more projects are proposed in an area. Depending on your available resources, you may be interested in undertaking a long-term assessment, where work can run through the entire assessment process and life cycle of projects. Available time and resources will inform which option is best for you.

## Approach to Developing a Plan:

Topic	Considerations	Leading questions
<p><b>GOALS:</b></p> <p>What does the assessment aim to do?</p>	<p>In this section, provide an overview of the assessment, its audience and its purpose.</p> <p>Determine whose voices the assessment will capture. Focus on capturing the voices of those most impacted by projects and most marginalized from the traditional assessment process.</p> <p>Decide if this is a quick assessment in response to a single proposed project or a long-term assessment covering a longer period or the cumulative impacts of several projects.</p> <p>Outline what type of information will be gathered and how the information will be used.</p>	<p>Whose voices will be captured in the assessment?</p> <p>Whose voices will be centred and amplified?</p> <p>What kind of data will be collected through the assessment?</p> <p>What background information will be captured?</p> <p>Will the assessment capture baseline data?</p> <p>How will the assessment explore the impacts of previous projects and the likely impacts of future proposed projects?</p> <p>How will the data be used?</p> <p>Will the assessment inform recommendations for a specific project?</p> <p>Will the assessment proactively determine community positions?</p>

Topic	Considerations	Leading questions
<p><b>SCOPE:</b></p> <p>What will the assessment include?</p>	<p>This section provides the parameters for the assessment. It's important to set boundaries to keep the results relevant and the assessment manageable.</p> <p>Consider which geographic area will be covered by the assessment. Also consider which project impacts will be included in the assessment.</p>	<p>What geographic area will be covered by the assessment?</p> <p>Will the assessment cover the same area as the proponent assessment (if the assessment is in response to a project)?</p> <p>Are there other areas (communities downstream, nearby urban centres) that might also be impacted by the project that should be included?</p> <p>Which project impacts will be reflected in the assessment?</p> <p>Can the assessment review the cumulative impacts of all resource development and infrastructure projects in the area? For example, look at the <a href="#">Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Guidelines</a> prepared by the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.<sup>48</sup></p>
<p><b>PARTNERSHIPS:</b></p> <p>Who will organize and carry out the assessment and what are their roles and responsibilities? Why are they being included?</p>	<p>In this section, outline the team that will be conducting the impact assessment. Identify the groups that will participate and what their roles will be.</p>	<p>What levels of government will be involved? Local governments and First Nations, Provincial or Territorial governments, or federal government?</p> <p>Which organizations or groups will participate? Will this include any non-governmental organizations or community groups?</p> <p>Are there any networks or coalitions that should be engaged?</p> <p>Who else can help with the assessment? Academic institutions? Independent consultants with experience conducting community-led intersectional gender impact assessments?</p> <p>Will the proponent be involved in this independent assessment?</p>

Topic	Considerations	Leading questions
<p><b>METHODOLOGY:</b></p> <p>What methodology will be used for every aspect of the assessment?</p>	<p>In this section describe what steps you will take to complete the different phases of the assessment.</p> <p>The methodology used for the assessment should ensure that it is participatory and transparent. Every aspect of the assessment should be clear, transparent and participatory.</p> <p>A community-led assessment should be human-rights based and intersectional. The assessment must centre those most marginalized in traditional assessments.</p> <p>Consider all aspects of the assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• background research</li> <li>• community engagement</li> <li>• analysis, writing and report production</li> <li>• publication and dissemination</li> <li>• ongoing monitoring and analysis</li> </ul>	<p>What would be the best approach to acquire relevant information?</p> <p>How can the assessment be most effective considering the time and resource constraints?</p> <p>How will the ways of working promote rights such as non-discrimination?</p> <p>Who will be involved in the assessment and how will they be involved?</p> <p>How will those most impacted by resource development be identified, included, and have their voices and experiences centred?</p> <p>How will those most marginalized from the assessment process be identified and meaningfully included?</p> <p>How will barriers to participation be identified and addressed?</p> <p>How will ways of working respect community and cultural protocols?</p> <p>How will historic and ongoing human rights violations be understood and shape how the assessment is carried out?</p> <p>How will findings and knowledge gathered throughout the assessment process be shared with and made accessible to community members?</p> <p>How will information be shared publicly?</p>

Topic	Considerations	Leading questions
<p><b>CONSENT, PRIVACY AND DATA OWNERSHIP:</b></p> <p>How will the assessment use best practices around free and informed consent, privacy and ethical data collection and ownership?</p>	<p>In this section, outline what measures will be taken to collect, store and use the data from the assessment responsibly and ethically.</p> <p>Protecting participants' data is integral to building trust and confidence in the process. Following best practices will ensure participants are comfortable.</p>	<p>How will free, prior and informed consent be obtained from everyone who participates in the assessment? How will ongoing consent be obtained?</p> <p>How will guidelines on <a href="#">Indigenous data collection</a> and ownership be followed?</p> <p>How will privacy considerations be addressed, particularly in small communities?</p> <p>How will best practices in ethical data collection and ownership be used?</p> <p>Who will own the data?</p>
<p><b>SAFETY AND SECURITY:</b></p> <p>What measures will be put in place to ensure no one is harmed during the assessment process?</p>	<p>In this section, outline the security measures that will be put in place to protect those conducting the assessment and its participants.</p> <p>Consider the physical and emotional risks associated with the assessment and outline mitigating strategies that will be adopted to combat them.</p>	<p>What steps will be taken to protect the on- and offline safety of community members who participate in the assessment?</p> <p>What steps will be taken to protect the on- and offline safety of people carrying out the assessment?</p> <p>What safeguarding measures will be in place to minimize harm to participants and ensure any harms are quickly and adequately addressed? For example, how will researchers apply trauma-informed and culturally safe research practices?</p>
<p><b>BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING:</b></p> <p>What resources are needed to fund the assessment and where will they come from?</p>	<p>Conducting the assessment will require financial resources. In this section, outline the anticipated expenses and sources of financing.</p> <p>Outline, as well, how the finances will be managed, including who is responsible and what strategies they will use.</p>	<p>How much money is needed to carry out the assessment?</p> <p>Who is responsible for the financial management of the project and who are they responsible to?</p> <p>What financial and in-kind contributions can assessment partners make?</p> <p>Where might funding be sourced from? Foundations? Individual donors? Crowd funding? Governments? Proponents?</p>

## STEP 2: BACKGROUND RESEARCH



Conduct as much background research as you can before getting started, working within the time you have available! Much of the background research will involve sitting in front of a computer searching for information on the Internet, but it can also involve emails, phone conversations and in-person meetings with experts (including those with lived expertise) and specialists, or visits to libraries and/or archives to access records that may not be available online. It can also include community engagement, especially to gather baseline information about the community that you can use later when monitoring the actual impacts of a project on the community.

Background research should cover a variety of topics that provide context for your assessment:

- Details on the impacts of similar projects on other communities
- Information about the impact of previous projects on the community and barriers to participation in previous impact assessment processes
- Baseline data about the community before a project begins, to help monitor the project's impacts throughout its life cycle
- Information about the intersectional gender rights history and current situation in the community (e.g., is there already a history of targeted, gender-based violence or marginalization of certain groups due to historical and ongoing dynamics)
- Details about the division of labour and the control and access to resources based on gender and other identity factors in the community (e.g., who is represented in your community workforce, who has access to housing, what income disparities exist, who is able to access health care, education, and other social services, etc.)



Information about	Where to find information	Possible research questions
<b>PROPONENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company website</li> <li>• News websites</li> <li>• Meeting with proponent</li> </ul>	<p>Is the project in the planning phase?</p> <p>Where is the project located or where will it be?</p> <p>What type of project is it (i.e., mine, pipeline construction)?</p> <p>How has the company engaged with the community around this or other projects?</p> <p>Is the company Canadian or foreign-owned and where is its headquarters? Is the company public, private or state-owned?</p> <p>Is it listed on the stock exchange and if so, who are the major shareholders?</p> <p>What other projects does the company operate in Canada or around the world? Are any of the projects similar to the one proposed for your community?</p> <p>Does the company have gender; diversity, equity and inclusion; and/or human rights, anti-racism and anti-oppression policies? What about corporate codes of conduct that specifically mention discrimination and gender-based violence and cover the off-hours of employees?</p> <p>Is there a history of discrimination, harassment and violence by workers in the workplace or community? How are reported incidents of discrimination, harassment and violence in the workplace and community addressed?</p> <p>What are the company's policies on substance use by employees?</p>

Information about	Where to find information	Possible research questions
<b>PROJECT ASSESSMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Online project registry</a></li> <li>• Meeting with the Agency</li> </ul>	<p>What information is available about the project?</p> <p>What information is available about other projects operated by the same proponent in other communities?</p> <p>What previous impact assessments have been conducted in the area?</p>
<b>PREDICTED PROJECT IMPACTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet research</li> <li>• Review of academic studies, NGO reports, and other independent assessments</li> <li>• Emails and meetings with communities, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions</li> </ul>	<p>What are the impacts of similar projects in other parts of Canada and around the world?</p> <p>What are the impacts of projects by the same proponent in other communities in Canada and around the world?</p> <p>What has been the relationship between the proponent and community for other projects in Canada and around the world?</p>
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Census</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Statistics Canada Crime and Justice Statistics</a></li> <li>• Provincial statistics, for example, <a href="#">BC Statistics</a></li> </ul>	<p>What are the demographics of the community?</p> <p>What is the level of crime in the community?</p> <p>What is the rate of gender-based violence? Violence against Indigenous women, girls and, gender diverse people? Differently abled people?</p> <p>What other baseline information is needed to address community concerns? (e.g., food security, homelessness)</p>



Information about	Where to find information	Possible research questions
<b>HUMAN RIGHTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</a></li> <li>• Indigenous organizations</li> <li>• Human rights organizations</li> <li>• Provincial and territorial human rights commissions</li> <li>• Local organizations working with marginalized groups including frontline service providers</li> <li>• Internet research</li> </ul>	<p>What is the past human rights and intersectional gender rights situation in the community?</p> <p>What is the current human rights and intersectional gender rights situation in the community?</p> <p>What are the historic and ongoing impacts of colonialism in the community?</p>



**Information about**

**COMMUNITY**

**Where to find information**

- Oral histories and stories that have been written down by community members
- Libraries, archives and museums
- Conversations with community members

**Possible research questions**

- What can be shared about the history and culture of the community?
- What is the past and present situation in the community as it relates to human rights including intersectional gender rights?
- What are the historic and ongoing impacts of colonization?
- What are the impacts of previous resource development projects in the community?
- What are the anticipated impacts of future development projects in the community?
- What have been the barriers to participation in previous impact assessments?
- What do people know about the upcoming project?
- What do people think the project will change in the community?
- What is the division of labour and control and access to resources based on gender and other identity factors in the community?



## STEP 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Once you have a plan and have done your background research, engage with community members of different genders and other identities. When engaging with a community it is important to ensure that they have the freedom to choose whether to participate, and that they are given enough information to make an informed decision. It is also important to follow ethics guidelines to ensure that the community's rights, interests, values and knowledge are respected and protected. Community engagement is important to achieve the following outcomes:

- To identify a project's potential positive and negative impacts
- To recommend ways to maximize a project's potential benefits and reduce or eliminate predicted harmful impacts
- To understand the needs and interests of people of different genders and identities and how the project might support or undermine them
- To understand and eliminate barriers to participation in the assessment for people of different genders and other identities
- To understand the structural and institutional causes of gender inequality and marginalization in the community

### Who to talk to and why

When choosing who to engage in the assessment process, rely on multiple sources:

- **USE YOUR BACKGROUND RESEARCH** – Your background research should increase your understanding of who is likely to be most impacted by the project and least likely to engage in the assessment process. Use that information to determine which groups you should make special efforts to engage.
- **IDENTIFY WHO ISN'T CURRENTLY ENGAGED** – Attend proponent- and Agency-led engagement activities to see who does and does not attend. Seek out people who are likely to be impacted by the project but aren't participating in these activities as well as people who have been engaging in these processes.
- **REFLECT THE COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY** – Communities are not homogeneous. People of the same gender aren't homogenous. Speak with people representing the diversity of the community. Make a particular effort to reach out to people of different identities based on:
  - Gender identity and expression
  - Disability
  - Sexual orientation
  - Socio-economic status
  - Ethnicity and Indigeneity
  - Location (rural/urban)
  - Age

- **DETERMINE WHO IS MISSING** – Always ask yourself who is missing from discussions, whose voice isn't being heard and whose perspective isn't being shared. Ask people you meet with who is missing from the conversation.

Specifically, ensure these voices are represented in your assessment:

- **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES** – Resource development projects can further marginalize people who are already living on the margins. To avoid this, engage with these communities in a way that empowers them and recognizes their unique perspectives, experiences and strengths. One way to do this is by reaching out to frontline service providers including women's shelters, homeless shelters, youth shelters, drop-in centres, food banks, friendship centres, Indigenous service providers, seniors' groups, 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations and groups providing services to people working in the sex trade. Meet with staff and clients.
- **WORKERS** – Meet with people working on resource development and infrastructure projects; try to meet with people working in a range of positions in the industry. Provide the option of a confidential meeting and ask workers whether they wish to meet outside their workplace.
- **DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE PROJECT** – Within and between communities, people may have very different views about a resource development or infrastructure project. Some may support it and others may oppose it. Make sure to meet with people representing the broad diversity of perspectives about the project.

## ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE

Resource development and infrastructure projects are often located near Indigenous communities and always impact the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people are often most negatively impacted by resource development projects, most marginalized from the impact assessment process and at the forefront of grassroots activism to address the harms associated with resource development projects. If the assessment is being led by non-Indigenous people, consider whether it should be co-led with Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people.

To ensure your work is carried out properly, deepen your understanding of how to work in a reciprocal, respectful way with Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people. This includes developing knowledge of trauma-informed and culturally acceptable work practices.

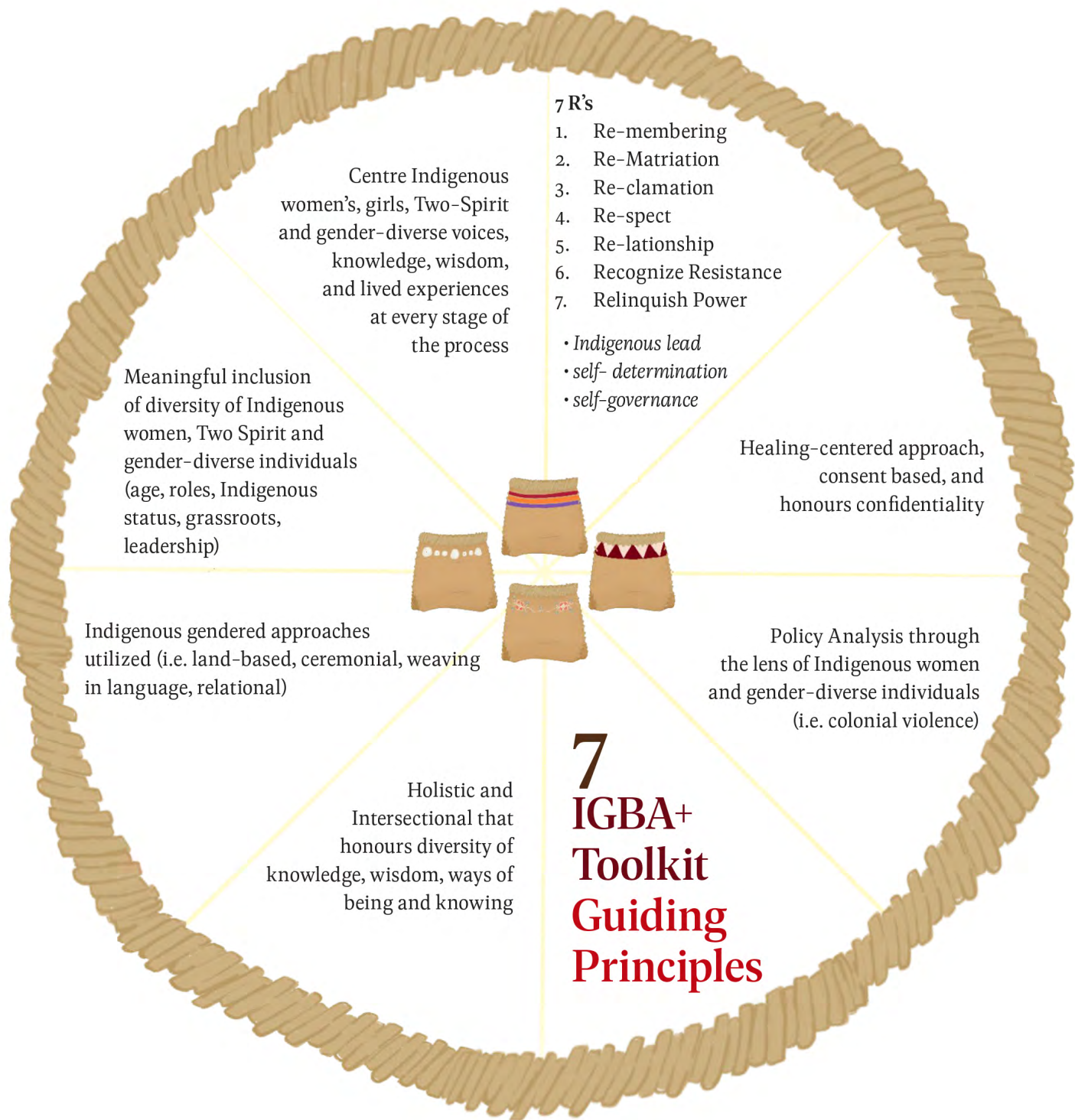
## The Native Women's Association of Canada lists eight principles to shape your engagement with Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people:

1. Recognizing Indigenous peoples as knowledge holders
2. Establishing mutual trust and respect
3. Involving Indigenous knowledge in all assessment phases, from conception through to outputs
4. Recognizing resource owners/users and knowledge holders
5. Involving appropriate local intermediaries and leaders
6. Ethical approaches
7. Free, prior and informed consent
8. Benefit sharing<sup>49</sup>

Read [Indigenous Women and Impact Assessment Final Report](#) by the Native Women's Association of Canada to learn more.<sup>50</sup>

## The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women in British Columbia (MACIW) developed seven guiding principles for engaging with Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people:

1. Meaningful inclusion of diversity of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and Gender-Diverse Individuals
2. Centre Indigenous women's, girls', Two-Spirit and gender-diverse voices, knowledge, wisdom, and lived experiences at every stage of the process
3. 7 R's: Re-membering, Re-Matriation, Re-clamation, Re-spect and Reverence, Re-relationship, Recognize and Respect Resistance, Relinquish Power
4. Healing-centred and consent-based
5. Policy analysis through the lens of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and Gender-diverse individuals
6. Indigenous gendered approaches utilized
7. Holistic and intersectional that honours diversity of knowledge, wisdom, ways of being and knowing<sup>51</sup>



Source: Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Plus (IGBA+) Toolkit, MACIW

## The “Seven Rs” of Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis Plus developed by MACIW are:

- 1. RE-MEMBERING:** This principle is about remembering and reconstructing tradition and memory including re-membering Indigenous women’s power and knowledge and the truth of the harms created and maintained by colonialism.
- 2. RE-MATRIATION:** This principle is an approach that centres Matriarchal knowledge, ceremonies, leadership and connections to the land.
- 3. RE-CLAMATION:** This principle is about the reclaiming of Indigenous women’s ceremonies and practices across the lifespan.
- 4. RE-SPECT AND REVERENCE:** This principle requires that respect and reverence are accorded to the laws and ceremonies and knowledge and practices of Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse individuals across the lifespan.
- 5. RE-LATIONSHIP:** This principle centres the important role of forming relationships with Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse individuals and their communities. Respectful relationships require time and presence in the community.
- 6. RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT RESISTANCE:** Indigenous women’s resistance in its many forms across the lifespan is a source of survival and must be honoured and centred in any principled approach. Indigenous women are often on the front lines of protection of land and water and these acts of resistance must be honoured.
- 7. RELINQUISH POWER:** This principle is about Indigenous sovereignty. Power must be relinquished from colonial systems and processes and instead centred within Indigenous Nations, communities and within Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse individuals.<sup>52</sup>



## Who will be conducting community engagement?

Strive to have a few people who can meet with community members. As a community-led assessment, most, if not all, of the assessment team should be from the community and represent diverse genders. To ensure a wider range of community perspectives and gender intersectionality are represented, the team should include influential community leaders from diverse gender identities, including community elders. Consider various factors when deciding who is best placed to meet with each individual or group:

- **COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP** – Consider whether it is better to have someone from the community or someone from outside the community meet with community members. Having someone from the community conduct community engagement can often be helpful, but sometimes, given the dynamics of small communities, having someone from outside the community undertake the community engagement on their own or together with community members can be helpful.
- **IDENTITIES** – Consider the many identities of people in the community and which sub-groups you most want to meet with. Consider sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, Indigeneity and ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status. With whom will people of different identities be most comfortable meeting?
- **POWER** – Consider the power balance between the people conducting community engagement and community members. If a member of the assessment team is in a position of power in the community, it could create a power imbalance that would impede their ability to bring community members together and encourage open communication, particularly amongst women, girls, and gender diverse people. Be mindful of these dynamics and take steps to mitigate any potential negative impacts. That could include actively seeking out and amplifying the voices of marginalized community members, creating safe spaces for open dialogue and implementing measures to ensure equal participation and representation. By prioritizing inclusivity and equity in community engagement, you can ensure that all voices are heard and all community perspectives are considered.
- **TRUST** – Make sure that whoever is meeting with community members has their trust. People will only feel comfortable speaking, particularly during confidential meetings, if they believe the information they share will remain confidential.
- **GENDER** – Have a gender balanced assessment team. Consider whether community members would feel more comfortable meeting with someone of the gender they identify with or with someone of a different gender.
- **LANGUAGE** – What language(s) do community members speak? Can the assessment team speak with community members in their first language? Is interpretation needed? Interpretation can create distance from community members and meaning can be “lost in translation.” Interpreters should build community trust by building relationships. Confidentiality agreements can also be developed to gain the trust of community members.



## What techniques will you use to engage with people?

Make sure that every engagement technique you use during the assessment is:

- **INTERSECTIONAL** – Recognize that a person’s multiple and intersecting identities, including their gender identity, shape how they are impacted by resource development projects. Centre the voices and experiences of those most impacted by resource development projects and those most marginalized from the assessment process. Be flexible and tailor engagement techniques to meet people’s needs.
- **RIGHTS-BASED AND TRAUMA INFORMED** – Know the historic and ongoing human rights, gender-based violence and gender equality situations in the community and have it shape how you engage with people. For example, resource development and residential schools are both inextricably connected with colonization. Discussions about resource development with Indigenous peoples may lead to people sharing their lived experiences with residential schools, which can be very triggering for survivors. Therefore, the presence of healing supports at all meetings is critical. Ensure that every aspect of the assessment process promotes human rights, including non-discrimination, inclusion, participation and empowerment.
- **PARTICIPATORY** – Provide a range of opportunities for people to get involved with the assessment. Respect community and cultural protocols and meet people where they are at with the engagement techniques you use. Identify and work through barriers to participation with community members.
- **TRANSPARENT** – Make sure every aspect of the engagement process is clear, transparent and accessible. Regularly share updates with community members.

Various engagement techniques can be used. Conduct a variety of community engagement activities both online and in person, specifically designed for people of different genders and identities and focused on the most marginalized. Depending on the time and resources available, think about which options work best for you, and ask community members what works best for them:

- **COMMUNITY GATHERINGS** – Community-led intersectional gender impact assessments are conducted by the community, for the community. They often explore collective, as well as individual, human rights and how they are impacted positively and negatively by resource development and infrastructure projects. It can be helpful to organize community gatherings at the beginning of an assessment to provide information about the assessment, to explain how people can get involved and how the information shared will be used. These early community gatherings also offer an opportunity to gather information and to listen to questions, concerns and suggestions.

They can be a critical trust-building activity. Gatherings should follow community and cultural protocols, and efforts should be made to make them accessible to a broad spectrum of people. Take note of who is and is not in the room, and who speaks and does not speak. Use this information to create opportunities to engage with people who don’t participate in community gatherings.

Knowledge shared during gatherings can be used in the assessment as long as you have secured consent from gathering participants. Gatherings can help identify issues to explore and people to meet with during the assessment. At gatherings, create opportunities for people to identify how they would like to be involved in the assessment (i.e., sign up for a small group or individual meeting). Community gatherings are also an excellent opportunity to present draft assessment findings back to the community for feedback.

- **SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSIONS** – Organize meetings of small groups of people. This technique is best used with people who don't require confidentiality and may be more comfortable speaking with their peers. Small-group discussions can be helpful for meeting with people from particular communities who may not be comfortable speaking in a larger community gathering and for engaging people in greater depth than would be possible at a community gathering. Small-group discussions are great because participants build on each other's comments, often leading to a richer discussion.

If power dynamics between meeting participants and facilitators are a concern, small-group discussions can be helpful because there is power in numbers for the meeting participants, though carefully consider who will moderate the small-group discussion and how their identity will impact the conversation dynamics.

Examples of small-group discussions could include sessions co-organized with a frontline organization working with sex workers, held at their location, with staff and clients present, or a chat with a group of women in someone's home or at a community centre at a time that works around caregiving responsibilities. These group meetings can be as simple as a coffee chat with elders at a popular gathering place.

- **INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS** – Individual meetings are the best way to meet with people confidentially and have an in-depth discussion. Meetings can be held when and where the person you are meeting with is most comfortable. Meetings are ideally conducted in person. There may be situations where a trust relationship has already been built and a meeting could be conducted by phone or video chat. Virtual meetings may be possible for community members living far from their home community, for example, Indigenous peoples from the North living in the South.
- **SURVEYS** – Surveys can be helpful to gather quantitative and some qualitative information from a broad cross-section of people. They may be helpful for getting the perspectives of people living far from their home community or people who are unable to participate in the assessment in other ways. Feminist approaches should be explored while conducting surveys. Online surveys, however, are not accessible to people without regular high-speed Internet, strong computer skills and adequate literacy and should not be used as the primary or only engagement technique.

## How can you identify and address barriers to participation?

One of the greatest challenges in carrying out a community-led intersectional gender impact assessment is identifying and removing barriers to participation. Barriers will differ between communities and within each community. For example, the barriers to participation for an Indigenous woman elder living in a rural community are different from the barriers to an urban mother with disabilities and caregiving responsibilities. Work closely with a broad spectrum of community members early in the assessment process and take an intersectional approach to making the assessment accessible to as many people as possible.

Here are a few common barriers to engagement and possible ways to handle them. Many of the examples are drawn from a 2022 report written by Indigenous women in northern Ontario and Labrador.<sup>53</sup>

Barrier to participation	Possible solutions
<i>People with childcare responsibilities, usually women, are often unable to attend evening meetings or meetings scheduled during school drop-off and pick-up times.</i>	<p>For people with older children, offer child minding at meetings or make the activity child friendly.</p> <p>For people with younger children, offer to pay for babysitting, conduct meetings in the person's home after children have gone to bed or arrange meetings at times that participants have identified as being convenient. Consider offering virtual options as well.</p>
<i>Indigenous elders may not speak at public events with a non-Indigenous facilitator.</i>	<p>Have an Indigenous person facilitate the gathering. Consider organizing public activities open to everyone in addition to specific activities for Indigenous peoples. Ask if it would be appropriate to invite an elder to open and close your gathering with a prayer or ceremony and provide honoraria for this service.</p>
<i>2SLGBTQIA+ people may not speak at events held in their community because of homophobia and transphobia.</i>	<p>Organize a small group meeting facilitated by a 2SLGBTQIA+ group. Consider holding the meeting outside the community. Offer confidential individual meetings in a private location or virtually or by phone.</p>
<i>Women, gender diverse people and survivors of gender-based violence may not speak during mixed-gender activities.</i>	<p>Offer women and gender diverse people opportunities to meet without cis-gender men present. Organize confidential individual meetings or closed, small group meetings. Always have healing supports present or available.</p>

## Barrier to participation

*People from rural areas may not attend meetings in nearby urban centres.*

*Lower-income individuals may not be able to travel to engagement sessions or take time off work.*

*Indigenous peoples may not feel comfortable sharing when non-Indigenous people take notes at meetings.*

*Indigenous peoples may feel uncomfortable engaging in forums that centre non-Indigenous worldviews.*

*Crowds, ambient noise and having to share feedback verbally in front of an audience can make public events inaccessible for some people with disabilities.*

*In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, people at high risk for COVID-19, including some people with disabilities and chronic health issues, may not feel safe participating in person.*

## Possible solutions

Organize meetings in each rural community so people don't have to travel to urban centres. If travel to urban centres is needed, cover the cost of safe transportation, lost wages, accommodation and food, and schedule meetings at times that people are available, and transportation is safe. You can also offer virtual or individual phone meetings as an option.

Allocate funds to cover travel expenses, lost wages, accommodation and food and schedule meetings in locations that are easy to access and near lower-income residents. Consider offering virtual or individual phone meetings as well.

If you are working with a limited budget, seek donations of refreshments, gas gift cards and bus tickets to compensate in-person participants.

Have Indigenous facilitators and note takers and organize Indigenous-specific activities or small group discussions in addition to public activities.

Co-design activities with Indigenous peoples to make sure cultural protocols are followed and that Indigenous knowledge is centred, recognized and valued. Consider also holding Indigenous-specific small-group discussions.

When advertising events, outline what steps are being taken to make the event accessible. Make events as accessible as possible but be aware that no event will be accessible to everyone. Ask people to contact the assessment team if they want to get involved but the event isn't accessible to them. Ask people to identify how they would like to engage.

Offer virtual gathering options and individual phone interviews as well as the option for people to submit written or recorded responses to questions.

## Barrier to participation

*Men may tend to take over the conversation at public events.*

*People may be unwilling to participate and share because it triggers trauma.*

*Events advertised on social media aren't accessible to older people.*

*Events advertised in the community may not be accessible to community members residing elsewhere.*

*Indigenous women and gender diverse people may fear they won't be believed or that their feedback will be ignored.*

## Possible solutions

Hold separate events for women and gender diverse people or designate times during public events where only women and gender diverse people can speak. Ask women and gender diverse people what steps can be taken to make the event accessible to them (i.e., provide a meal and support caregiving responsibilities).

Acknowledge how difficult it is to speak about trauma. Be willing to meet people in a setting that works for them (i.e., a small group of people with similar experiences or an individual discussion). Have culturally appropriate healing supports present or available. Recognize that everyone is in a different place in their healing journey and the healthy choice for some people may be to not participate in the assessment.

Advertise events through word of mouth, radio, people who work with seniors, posters at locations frequented by older people and mailed letters.

Organize events outside the community in places where many community members reside. For example, community members from northeast BC with knowledge to share may be in Fort St. John, Prince George or Vancouver. Consider whether online activities would be appropriate and accessible. Promote events on social media. Explore other ways to directly communicate with community members living outside the community, including those who don't use social media.

Use best practices in healing-centred, trauma-informed ways of working.

Let Indigenous women and gender diverse people know how their feedback will be acknowledged and shared with them to ensure accuracy. Outline how and when information shared will be used. Keep people updated throughout the assessment.

## Barrier to participation

*Community members may not hear about events until after they are held.*

*There may not be enough time to participate in the assessment.*

*Sex workers may fear stigmatization if they attend and speak up at a public gathering.*

## Possible solutions

Have outreach plans for people of different genders and other identities within a community, using a range of communications techniques identified by community members.

Proponent-led assessments often leave communities with little time to engage. Community-led assessments sometimes face these same pressures (i.e., if data is needed quickly to respond to a proponent), but where possible, lengthen timelines and take the time needed to carry out the assessment properly. If you can avoid it, don't rush the process.

Meet with sex workers and organizations working with sex workers to determine how to create safe spaces for sex workers who want to participate in the assessment.

## 10 things you need to know about data collection and storage

How questions are asked and information is recorded are as important as what questions are asked during the assessment. Take time to consider critical questions around consent and data collection and storage before beginning community engagement.<sup>54</sup>

- 1. FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT** – Ensure you have free, prior and informed consent from every person who participates in the assessment. Free means deciding to participate in the assessment without coercion. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. Prior means that consent was obtained before involvement in the assessment. Informed means the person knows about the assessment and how the knowledge and experiences they share will be used.<sup>55</sup> To obtain free, prior and informed consent, have a discussion with each person. Make sure they understand what they are consenting to. Ask each person to sign a consent form.<sup>56</sup> Offer to provide a copy of the signed form. Photocopy the signed form or take a photo and email it to the person. If the person is below the age of 18, parent/guardian consent is a must.
- 2. CONFIDENTIALITY** – Always allow people to decide whether they want their name used in the assessment. People may speak more freely if their name will not be used. People may want their name to remain confidential if they have concerns about their job security, their safety or the wellbeing of themselves or their family. See if people are comfortable being directly quoted even if their name isn't used. In small, tight-knit communities, people may be able to easily identify the speaker in anonymous quotes. If a person is at risk because of their participation, take steps to protect them including altering how and where you communicate with the person and keeping their identity anonymous and their participation in the assessment confidential.<sup>57</sup>

- 3. DATA DISAGGREGATION** – Gather information in as much detail as possible. At a minimum, disaggregate data based on gender identity and expression, age and Indigenous identity. If possible, gather data on other identities including ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, location (i.e., urban/rural) and whether the person works in resource development. Gather the same level of detail for each person you meet with. Ditch the gender binary and don't disaggregate information only by woman and man. Statistics Canada allows people to identify as man, woman or non-binary,<sup>58</sup> and then indicate whether they are cis-gender, transgender or non-binary.<sup>59</sup>
- 4. RECORDING** – Where possible, take a video or audio recording of the meeting. Audio or video recorded on a cell phone can be transcribed later, allowing you to focus on connecting with the person without taking detailed notes (always take some notes in case the recording device fails). Many people are more comfortable with audio rather than video recordings. Make sure your device is fully charged and carry a back-up power bank and a charger. Always make sure to have free, prior and informed consent before recording a conversation.<sup>60</sup>
- 5. NOTES** – Take notes during every meeting. Notes can be taken by hand, on a laptop, tablet or phone. Always have a notebook and pen in case of a technology failure. Consider what data collection method the person you are meeting with is most comfortable with.
- 6. PHOTOS AND VIDEO** – Consider taking photos and video. Make sure to have consent. One easy way to get consent is to laminate a consent form with large print and write a person's information on it with a dry-erase marker. Take a photo of the person holding the form. This ensures you have consent, have a way to contact the person in future and can match the photo or video to the person and their consent form. If the person is a child or below the age of 18, consent of a parent or guardian is mandatory.
- 7. LOCATION** – Ask people where they feel safe and comfortable meeting. Location is especially critical for confidential meetings. Meetings can be conducted in a person's home, office or a public space. Meetings can be done out on the land, in a coffee shop or in a person's car. Consider public health risks and ask whether a face mask should be worn to make the person more comfortable.
- 8. LANGUAGE** – Where possible, conduct meetings in a person's preferred language. If interpretation must be used, use an interpreter the person trusts and make sure the interpreter knows that their role is to facilitate communication and not to be part of the discussion.
- 9. INFORMATION STORAGE AND OWNERSHIP** – Store electronic information in one secure location. Back up all data. Avoid storing information on personal devices like cell phones. Store hard copy files in a secure location. Make sure not to store identifiable personal data. Develop a data storage and ownership plan before data collection begins. Share the plan with community members. Follow best practices around Indigenous peoples and data ownership.<sup>61</sup>
- 10. ETHICAL DATA COLLECTION** – Do no harm. Make sure not to re-traumatize people during meetings and if needed, seek specialized training on conducting meetings with survivors of gender-based violence.<sup>62</sup> Always offer to stop a meeting if the person is in distress. Use scenario-based approaches, especially for questions related to gender-based violence or other difficult questions. Don't duplicate the collection of data that has already been collected from a community. Always prioritize security, safety and wellbeing.

## DATA COLLECTION AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous peoples have the right to exercise control over data about Indigenous peoples. Read Article 31 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If the assessment isn't Indigenous led, consider whether it should be. At a minimum, connect with Indigenous peoples impacted by the project and explore opportunities to collaborate on all aspects of the assessment. Talk about how to conduct the assessment properly so it reflects best practices in Indigenous data collection and ownership.<sup>63,64,65,66</sup>

*Article 31, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

- 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.*
- 2. In conjunction with Indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.<sup>67</sup>*

## Security, safeguarding, supports and self-care

Do no harm to anyone during the assessment—that means doing no harm to yourself or others. Strive to go beyond doing no harm and actively promote healing and wellbeing. Community engagement can be exciting and stimulating but it can also be triggering and difficult. Make sure to take care of yourself and safeguard the wellbeing of everyone you interact with during the assessment.

- 1. SELF-CARE AND COMMUNITY CARE** – Feminist Audre Lorde said, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”<sup>68</sup> Make sure to create space throughout the assessment process to practise self-care and community-care.<sup>69</sup>
- 2. HEALING AND TRAUMA SUPPORTS** – Ask each person you meet with if they would like a support person to be present during your meeting. The support person could be a family member, friend, elder, social worker or another trusted person. Arrange culturally appropriate trauma and healing supports. Offer that a support person be present during and after meetings. Where possible, map out service providers, community support groups and non-government organizations and refer people to other resources if they need ongoing support.



3. **SECURITY** – Have a physical and digital security plan for everyone involved with the assessment. Security means making sure no one involved in the assessment is subject to discrimination, harassment or violence, but it also means making sure that people travel safely to and from meetings and aren't subject to online harassment because of their participation in the assessment. Make a security plan that clearly outlines potential risks and includes mitigation strategies.
4. **SAFEGUARDING** – Oxfam does not tolerate sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse and we do everything we can to prevent abuse from happening and address abuse when it happens.<sup>70</sup> Where possible, avoid meeting with children (under age 18). If you must meet with children, obtain consent from and conduct the meeting in the presence of the child's parent or legal guardian. Make sure to have a strong and transparent rationale for meeting with every subgroup, especially children. Use best practices for the safeguarding of children. Seek guidance and training on meeting with gender-based violence survivors and pay particular attention to not re-traumatize survivors through their participation in the assessment.<sup>71</sup>

## What questions should community members be asked during the assessment?

Determining which questions to ask and why is one of the most critical and challenging parts of the assessment process. Every community-led intersectional gender impact assessment is unique and the list of questions should be based on the assessment's goals, its scope and the people participating in the assessment. Always:

Co-create the list of questions with people of different genders and other identities to ensure it is truly intersectional.

- Be clear on what quantitative and what qualitative data you need to gather.
- Make questions simple and clear. Ask one question at a time and phrase it well.
- Ensure questions are respectful and appropriate.
- Recognize the impact of questions about difficult issues.
- Only ask for the information needed—don't over ask and don't duplicate the work of others.

## Suggestions for Questions:

Topic	Possible Questions
<b>SOCIAL IMPACTS</b>	<p>What are the potential social, environmental, economic and health impacts of the project on women; girls; men; boys; Indigenous women, girls, men, boys, Two-spirited people; and people with other gender identities? How can the negative impacts be addressed and mitigated and the positive impacts more equitably distributed?</p> <p>How may the project affect the safety and well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and what measures are being taken to ensure their safety and protection?</p> <p>If you have to move away from your community, due to the project, what steps should be taken to minimize the negative impacts of displacement?</p> <p>What are the potential impacts on the culture, language and social practices of Indigenous peoples in the project area? What would you suggest to mitigate the impact?</p> <p>How may the project impact the physical and mental health of nearby communities and what measures need to be implemented to mitigate potential health impacts?</p> <p>What are the economic impacts of the project on the communities and how can the negative impacts be minimized while maximizing benefits?</p> <p>What are potential impacts of the project on Indigenous rights, including right to self-determination, the right to free, prior and informed consent, and the right to practice traditional cultural activities?</p> <p>How will the project affect the social infrastructure, such as housing, health care, education etc.? What measures should be taken to ensure that the community needs are met?</p>

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**Topic**

**Possible Questions**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACTS**

What are the potential impacts of the project on the biodiversity of the area? What animals, fish, birds will be affected?

How will the change of biodiversity affect your hunting requirements?  
How can the negative impacts be minimized?

How will the project affect the quality of local water sources, and what steps can be taken to prevent contamination? What steps need to be taken to make sure you and your community has safe drinking water?

What are the potential environmental impacts of the project on the air quality and what measures should be taken to mitigate these impacts?

How might the construction and operation of the project affect the soil quality in the area? How might it affect the food that you grow? What steps should be taken to minimize soil degradation?

What are the potential impacts on forests and what measures can be implemented to minimize deforestation?

How might noise generated by the project impact the wildlife in the area and community members? What steps can be taken to minimize noise pollution?

**ECONOMIC  
IMPACTS**

What are the potential employment opportunities associated with the resource development project? Who in the local population will most likely be able to access these employment opportunities?

What government revenues (e.g., royalties, taxes, other payments) could be generated by the project? How will these be managed to benefit the communities and local infrastructure and services?

What are the potential impacts on cost of living? How will affordability for local people be addressed?

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**Topic****Possible Questions****HEALTH  
IMPACTS**

- What are the potential health impacts on the local population (i.e., respiratory, water contamination, exposure to toxic chemicals etc.)?
- How can these impacts be mitigated? What measure should be taken to minimize the health impacts?
- How may the project impact the reproductive health of the community members? What measures are should take place to mitigate these impacts?
- What are the potential mental health impacts associated with the social, economic and environmental disruption due to the project? What support systems should be put in place to help communities cope with these impacts?
- What measures are being taken to prevent possible spread of infectious diseases?

## Conducting an assessment? There's an app for that!

That's right! Oxfam Canada developed a mobile application that can help you collect gender disaggregated data considering all gender intersectionality. This mobile application can be used by communities and proponents to undertake the baseline in intersectional gender-based analysis on impact assessment.

The gender impact assessment tool in the extractive industries is a mobile application developed by Oxfam Australia and designed to facilitate the collection and analysis of baseline data from communities affected by extractive industry projects. Oxfam Canada contextualized the tool for Canada, so it could be used to measure the impacts of mining, energy and infrastructure projects in Canada.

This survey tool is an easy-to-use, step-by-step app that can be used on any smartphone or tablet. It has questions to collect baseline information from a respondent about their household, the type of work they do, their decision-making power and what sort of impacts, either positive or negative, they think the community may face due to the projects. It includes questions about the community's perception of the project, if they are aware of the project plans, what they hope that the project will bring in terms of benefits and what concerns they may have about potential socioeconomic or environmental impacts.

Collecting information through this app ensures all safeguarding and data protection principles apply, especially in terms of Indigenous peoples, gender and other gender diverse identities, ensuring intersectionality is addressed throughout the data collection process. The analysis function on the app draws together all this data and presents it in a number of ways in an interactive report. This tool can be tailored to each context and community as needed.

Responses are uploaded in real time through the app. In communities where there is no internet or internet coverage is slow, the data is stored offline and uploaded as soon as internet connection is restored.

The app is built on a digital platform called Magpi. Magpi designs software for cloud-based mobile data collection and data visualization tools so that organizations and communities can conduct mobile surveys at low cost, with limited external assistance, around the world. It can also facilitate surveys through text messages.

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## STEP 4: ASSESSMENT DRAFTING



### What happens after community engagement and information gathering is finished?

Transcribe, review, identify gaps, fill them, analyze and reflect! A significant amount of time will be spent in front of a computer processing and analyzing all the information you have collected. Don't underestimate how long this part of the process can take.

- 1. TRANSCRIBE MEETINGS** – Transcribe audio and video recordings. This is time consuming, tedious work but is very worthwhile. Reviewing meetings is a great way to start identifying data gaps and trends.
- 2. REVIEW DATA** – Review all the information you have collected from your background research and community engagement. Write down summaries, trends, observations, gaps and other information in a separate document. Discard information that is not relevant. Maintain data confidentiality.
- 3. VALIDATE INFORMATION** – The assessment won't have credibility if the information is not accurate. Validate research. Identify conflicting versions of facts and do further investigation. Find at least two sources of information for validation.
- 4. IDENTIFY MISSING INFORMATION** – Determine if the data collected is representative of the community and complete. Who did you want to meet with? Who did you actually meet with? Did you meet with enough people of different genders and other identities? Whose voices are missing? How does the information collected reflect the diversity of the community?
- 5. FILL ANY GAPS** – Conduct additional background research and community engagement activities as needed to fill gaps. Find the documents that people in meetings suggested you review. Conduct another round of meetings with any new people identified during community engagement activities. Meet with sub-groups of people whose voices were missing from earlier activities, prioritizing those most impacted by resource development and most marginalized from the assessment process.
- 6. COLLATE INFORMATION** – Compile quantitative data into a spreadsheet or database. Make sure to disaggregate data by as many identity factors as possible.

7. **DATA ANALYSIS** – Analyze quantitative and qualitative data. What does the data show you about how people of different genders and other identities may be impacted positively and negatively by the resource development and infrastructure project? Is inequality likely to increase or decrease, how and for whom?<sup>72</sup> What practical recommendations have people made to strengthen projects and reduce inequality?
8. **REFLECT** – Read personal notes with your reflections on the process. Bring the assessment team together to de-brief, talk through challenges and identify next steps.

## Discuss assessment findings with community members

Prepare a preliminary summary of the assessment findings and conclusions. Consider creating a one-page text summary, infographic or some other brief, simple and accessible way of presenting information.

Set up meetings with community members of different genders and identities. This can be a combination of community gatherings and small-group and individual meetings.

Remind community members of the goals of the assessment and progress made to date. Share draft assessment findings and conclusions. Be very clear about the feedback being sought. Do you want to know if the findings resonate with people's lived experiences? Do you want to know if you got it right or if something seems off or missing from the analysis and conclusions? Do you want to know if the assessment reflects the diversity of the community?

Determine the best way to disseminate the final report to community members. How do community members want to receive the final assessment? What medium(s) would be most accessible to community members? Online or offline? Videos or podcasts? A printed report? A one-page summary or infographic? Something else?

Record all feedback. Let community members know what you will do with the feedback.

Decide whether and how to share the preliminary findings and conclusions with the proponent, governments and/or the Agency. Consider the strategic implications of your decision.

Address all feedback received and share the updated summary and conclusions with community members. Address any feedback received in response to the revised summary and conclusions.

## Prepare the final assessment

Not all assessments will have a written report, but many will. This section is geared towards assessments with a written final report.

1. **MAKE AN OUTLINE** – Create a detailed outline for the report. It can take a surprising amount of time to create an outline that presents the information in the best possible way. The outline will shape what information is presented and how it is presented. Take your time and seek feedback on the draft outline.

2. **DETERMINE THE FORMAT** – Determine what products you are producing. Will you write a 30-page report? Create a video outlining key findings? What types of resources will make the assessment accessible to those most impacted by resource development? Who else are you trying to reach? Determine all the mediums that will be used to present the assessment to the public, and any specific audiences.
3. **MAKE A PRODUCTION PLAN** – What is the final deadline for releasing the assessment? Make a timeline working backwards from publishing the assessment. Include steps like editing, proofreading, seeking comments, translation, formatting, shipping, creating videos and other resources and releasing the assessment.
4. **DRAFT THE ASSESSMENT** – Draft the assessment report. Remember to pace yourself and practise self-care.
5. **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS** – Draft the assessment’s recommendations to decision makers.
6. **PREPARE FOR COMMENTING PHASE** – Decide who you want to comment on the draft assessment report and why. Community members, the proponent, governments and the Agency? Make a list, create a timeline for sharing the draft and receiving comments and the terms and conditions for reviewing the draft. For example, specify that the draft is being shared under embargo and contents are not to be released publicly. Contact people in advance so they are aware of what feedback is being sought, the timeline and how feedback will be handled by the assessment team.
7. **REVISE, EDIT AND PROOFREAD** – Have members of the assessment team edit the report. Have someone who hasn’t been involved in writing the report, ideally someone with editing experience, edit the report. If possible, have two people not involved with writing the report proofread the report.
8. **COMMENTING** – Send the report to the list of people who confirmed their willingness to provide feedback. Add a watermark to the document that says “draft – do not circulate” and consider sending a locked PDF document requiring password access instead of a Word document that can more easily be shared with people not involved in the commenting process. Revise the report as needed based on the feedback received. If working with Indigenous communities, ensure there is time for them to review the draft report and provide approval according to cultural protocols, and time for you to make the required changes.
9. **PRODUCTION** – Translate the report if needed. Then send it for layout and formatting, ideally to a graphic designer and possibly to a print shop. Report production can also include the creation of other resources such as videos, podcasts and infographics.
10. **PUBLISH** – Decide how to release the assessment. Will a public event be held in the community? Will a press conference be organized? Will copies of the report be sent in hard copy or by email to governments, the Agency, proponents and people who participated in the assessment? Will it be sent to key project stakeholders to use in their advocacy? Create a plan to release the assessment. Get it into the hands of the people you are seeking to influence.
11. **EVALUATE** – Take time to evaluate the assessment process and final products. Implement best practices in feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning.<sup>73</sup>

## Crafting impactful recommendations

After preparing the assessment findings spend time reviewing them and identify:

- The project's likely or actual positive and negative impacts
- The parties responsible for addressing these impacts
- The actions that must be taken to ensure positive benefits are experienced broadly and equitably and that negative impacts are reduced or eliminated

Create one recommendation for each project impact. Be very specific about the change that needs to happen. Make sure that the target of the recommendation has the power to create the change you are seeking.

One example of a strong recommendation was in a 2016 report, Amnesty International recommended that the governments of BC and Canada, "Require that reviews and approvals of resource development projects, and other decision-making and programming processes, be informed by a comprehensive gender-based analysis, conducted in consultation with women's rights and Indigenous organizations, including an intersectional analysis of the specific impacts on Indigenous women and girls."<sup>74</sup>

Consider:

What is the impact?	Name the impact and be as specific as possible
Is the impact positive or negative?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• List whether the impact is positive or negative</li><li>• It's possible for an impact to be positive and negative (for example, increased household income could be a positive impact for some, but it could be a negative impact for others if it increases power inequality within the household)</li></ul>
Who is impacted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• List who is impacted</li><li>• Specify who is most impacted</li><li>• Outline how people of different genders and other identities are impacted in different ways</li></ul>
Why are people impacted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where possible, outline why people of different genders and other identities are impacted in different ways</li><li>• Pay attention to the role of historic and ongoing patterns of human rights abuses (i.e., impacts of colonialism)</li></ul>



## What is the impact?

How is the project status affecting the impact?

## Name the impact and be as specific as possible

- Is the impact a result of project implementation?
- Is the impact a result of the implementation of other projects (i.e., cumulative impacts of projects in a region)?
- Is the impact likely when project implementation begins?

## Who has the power to create change?

- Local government?
- Indigenous government?
- Provincial/territorial government?
- Federal government?
- International organization (i.e., United Nations, Organization of American States)?
- Police?
- Proponent?
- Sub-contractor?
- Union?
- Who else?
- More than one entity can be responsible for creating change (i.e., provincial and federal governments)

## What is the involvement of those responsible?

- Are they aware of the impact?
- Did they benefit from the impact?
- Were they complicit in the impact?
- Did they fail to protect people from the impact?
- Are they aware of what they can do to address impacts?
- Have they addressed the same/similar impacts in the past?

## What is the change you want to see?

- Be very specific about the change you want to see
- Make sure the change you want to see is realistic and achievable
- Outline how the actions you want to see taken will result in the change you want to see

## STEP 5: USE THE ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE



Sitting on a bookshelf collecting dust (or its digital equivalent) is an assessment's worst fate. If you submit an impact assessment to the Agency, legislation requires them to consider it!

After investing significant time and resources conducting the assessment and despite how tired (and fatigued of the assessment process) you may be, do not neglect to share and use the assessment.

- 1. SHARE THE ASSESSMENT** – Share the assessment with everyone targeted in the recommendations. Use the assessment's publication as an opportunity to set up an in-person or virtual meeting. Send the assessment to the [Agency](#), governments and the proponent. Make it available to frontline service providers and all community members.
- 2. MAKE THE ASSESSMENT AVAILABLE ONLINE** – At a minimum, ask organizations involved in the assessment to post it on their websites. Ask non-governmental organizations to post articles and blogs about the assessment on their websites with a link to the assessment.
- 3. SPREAD THE WORD ON SOCIAL MEDIA** – Social media promotion of the assessment doesn't stop the day after the assessment is publicly released. Create a plan for ongoing promotion of the assessment. Think about key dates in the assessment process and key dates on the activist calendar (for example, International Women's Day) to post content linked to the assessment.
- 4. STRIVE FOR SUSTAINED MEDIA COVERAGE** – Cultivate relationships with journalists. When something "newsworthy" happens related to the project, tip off journalists about the issue and provide relevant content from the assessment. Write an op-ed about the project's impacts, connecting it to recent "newsworthy" events and including information drawn from the assessment.
- 5. FUEL YOUR ADVOCACY** – Knowledge is power! Use the information in the assessment, particularly the recommendations, to fuel your advocacy (see the first part of this guide for advocacy ideas).

## ONGOING MONITORING



Community-led intersectional gender impact assessments conducted before a project has started help you understand how previous projects have impacted and how future projects may impact a community.

Ongoing monitoring can help you understand a project's actual impacts on a community and are a critical tool for holding governments and proponents accountable for preventing and addressing human rights harms associated with a project.

Consider these things before undertaking ongoing monitoring of a project's impacts on people of different genders and other identities:

- 1. SCOPE** – Will you monitor the impacts of all the projects in an area, or can you isolate the impacts of a specific project? Will you monitor all the impacts of a project on all people (examining how people of different genders and other identities are impacted in different ways, of course), or will you monitor a few critical impacts on the sub-groups of people you anticipate will be most impacted?
- 2. FREQUENCY** – What is the life cycle of the project? How long will it take for impacts on the community to be measurable? How regularly do you need updated information about impacts to hold those responsible accountable? How often do you have the capacity to undertake monitoring? How often do community members want impacts to be monitored?
- 3. PARTNERSHIPS** – Who will you partner with to undertake monitoring? An academic institution with experience in ongoing monitoring? A non-governmental organization that has trained community members in conducting this sort of monitoring? Whomever you partnered with to carry out the initial assessment? Diversity and community representation in the monitoring stage is as important as in the initial assessment.
- 4. RESOURCES** – How will you fund ongoing monitoring? How will you secure multi-year funding?
- 5. PRESENTATION** – How will findings be presented? How will recommendations made in the initial assessment be updated to reflect progress made, issues that remain unaddressed and emerging issues? Will the information be presented as a report card? An evaluation of progress made against recommendations in the initial assessment? A report? Podcasts and videos? Infographics? How will the information be shared with decision makers and the public and used in ongoing advocacy?



## Limitations of the Guide

Undertaking an impact assessment may be complex and use a multifaceted process that involves engaging various stakeholders, assessing potential impacts and mitigating adverse effects. A well-crafted impact assessment can be a valuable tool to help ensure that the community impacts are identified early in the process and the proponent is aware of the risk mitigation measures it should consider.

The action ideas proposed in the guide are dependent on who is participating in the impact assessment process. Different groups may have different levels of interest and willingness to engage, which may affect the outcomes of the assessment. The guide proposes various action ideas for advocacy groups, activists and community leaders and may need to be contextualized based on the community where the impact assessment is being conducted and its needs. What works for one community may not work for another.

Conducting a community-led impact assessment will require resources. Funding may be a significant barrier for this type of assessment. While the Agency offers [funding programs](#),<sup>75</sup> communities and activists can also benefit from engaging and collaborating with partners and like-minded organizations to minimize the effect of resource constraint. Collaboration can also help bring in people with experience working in intersectional gender-based analysis.

This guide has not focused on linguistic diversity, and therefore, it may not adequately address the needs of communities with different languages and cultures. This may restrict their ability to participate fully in the impact assessment process. However, the guide recognizes the use of interpreters while having discussions with community members. Building trust is crucial when interpreters are used during discussions with the community.

The methodologies proposed in the guide may need to be tailored to each community to ensure that they are accessible and effective. This may require additional resources and expertise, which may not be readily available.

# Conclusion

This guide has been a journey re-imagining how communities and activists can get involved with federal impact assessments in Canada. We hope it has inspired people interested in undertaking community-led intersectional gender impact assessments.

We regret we couldn't include more examples of community-led intersectional gender impacts assessments, but this is a developing area of work and there aren't yet many examples to draw from. We hope you will take everything from this guide and apply it to assessments in your community and make them as feminist, intersectional and community driven as they can possibly be. The actions you take will become the examples others will look to in the future.

We always knew this guide would not be exhaustive. It easily could have become a 200-page technical manual. Entire books have been written about issues we covered in a single sentence. However, we have included links to additional resources where possible and we hope the guide has motivated you to deepen your knowledge of an important topic.

Most importantly, we hope this guide leads to positive change in the lives of people who are most impacted by resource development and infrastructure projects. For too long, the harmful impacts of resource development and infrastructure projects have been little known or understood and rarely addressed. Federal legislation mandating GBA+ in the federal assessment process is a positive step forward, but it is not enough.

Urgent steps must be taken to meaningfully incorporate intersectional gender-based analysis into the assessment process, centred on the voices of those most impacted by resource development and recognizing the different impacts that resource development projects have on people of different genders and other identities. We hope this guide supports communities and activists in their advocacy and in conducting their own community-led assessments, and we hope it inspires proponents to do better.

# Resources

## Oxfam resources

Oxfam International, [Getting it Right: Community-based Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool](#)

Oxfam Australia, [A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment for the Extractive Industries](#)

Oxfam Canada, [Richer Analysis, Better Outcomes Report](#)

Oxfam International, [Gender and the Extractive Industries: Putting gender on the corporate agenda](#)

Oxfam International, [Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing](#)

Oxfam International, [Position Paper on Gender Justice and the Extractive Industries](#)

## Gender and impact assessment in Canada

[Indigenous Gender Based Analysis Plus \(IGBA+\) Toolkit](#), Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW), Government of British Columbia<sup>76</sup>

Amnesty International, [Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Gender, Indigenous rights, and energy development in Northeast British Columbia](#)

C. Eckford and J. Wagg, [The Peace Project: Gender Based Analysis of Violence against Women and Girls in Fort St. John – revised](#), Fort St. John Women's Resource Society

International Institute for Sustainable Development, [Global Review: Integrating Gender Into Mining Impact Assessments](#)

S. Manning, P. Nash, L. Levac, et al., [Strengthening Impact Assessments for Indigenous Women](#)

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Nak'azdli Whut-en First Nation, Tl'azt'en First Nations, and municipality of Fort St. James, [Ten Steps Ahead: Community Health and Safety in the Nak'al Bun/ Stuart Lake Region During the Construction Phase of the Mount Milligan Mine](#)

Native Women's Association of Canada, [Indigenous Women and Impact Assessment Final Report](#)

D. Steinstra, S. Manning, L. Levac, [More Promise than Practice: GBA+, Intersectionality and Impact Assessment](#)

Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group (Keepers of the Circle) and AnânuKatiget Tuningit Regional Inuit Women's Association, [Indigenous Women's Participation in Impact Assessments: An Examination of Barriers in Impact Assessments and the Navigation of Violence to Land and Body](#)

The Firelight Group for Lake Babine First Nation and Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation, [Indigenous Communities and Industrial Camps: Promoting Healthy Communities in Settings of Industrial Change](#)

## Data collection and storage resources:

A Human Rights-Based Approach to Data: Leaving no one behind in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, OHCHR<sup>77</sup>

Engaging Communities in your Data Collection Initiative, Health Commons<sup>78</sup>

The First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP)<sup>79</sup>

Handbook on Civil Society Documentation of Serious Human Rights Violations: Principles & Best Practices, PILPG<sup>80</sup>

Count me in!: Collecting human rights-based data, Ontario Human Rights Commission<sup>81</sup>

The Indigenous Guardians Toolkit<sup>82</sup>

Indigenous Knowledges & Data Governance Protocol, Indigenous Innovation Initiative<sup>83</sup>

## Contacts

### Organization

Amnesty International

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

International Institute for Sustainable Development

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak

MiningWatch Canada

National Family and Survivors Circle

Native Women's Association of Canada

Oxfam Canada

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

The Firelight Group

West Coast Environmental Law

### Website

<https://www.amnesty.ca/>

<https://www.criaw-icref.ca/>

<https://www.iisd.org/>

<https://metiswomen.org/>

<https://miningwatch.ca/>

<https://familysurvivorscircle.ca/>

[www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca)

[www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca)

<https://pauktuutit.ca/>

<https://firelight.ca/>

[www.wcel.org/](http://www.wcel.org/)

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# Glossary

## **ACTIVIST**

An activist is a person who is actively engaged in advocating for social and economic justice, particularly in relation to issues affecting women and marginalized communities in the context of this guide.

## **2SLGBTQIA+**

An acronym that indicates the spectrum of Two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual + other people whose identities are not heterosexual and cisgender

## **CISGENDER**

A person whose sense of gender identity correlates with the sex that they were assigned at birth

## **COLONIALISM**

Colonialism is the domination of one nation by another through violence – to gain political control, occupy the land with settlers and exploit it economically. Many people may feel this no longer exists. But the domination over different nations' cultures, languages, religions and economies still remains.

## **COMMUNITY**

A group of individuals who share a common geography, culture, or identity and who are connected by social, economic or political relationships. Communities may be defined by factors such as language, ethnicity, religion, or shared experiences of oppression or marginalization.

## **FIRST NATIONS, INUIT, MÉTIS**

These terms refer to the three main groups of Indigenous peoples in what is now known as Canada. These groups are highly diverse and come from hundreds of distinctive and sovereign nations with different languages, cultural norms and practices.

## **GENDER**

Gender can be understood as the social and cultural construction of norms and behaviours attributed to people differently on the basis of their sex assigned at birth. Gender can also be understood as an identity. A person's innate sense of their own gender may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth, for example, trans men and women and non-binary people, and people of other genders as differently expressed in the different contexts and cultures in which we work.

**GENDER BASED ANALYSIS PLUS**

An analytical framework that, in the context of impact assessment, guides the assessment of how designated projects may have different positive and negative impacts on diverse groups of people or communities. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges the multiple identity factors that intersect with sex and gender to affect how people may experience projects differently and be differently impacted by projects.

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

Human rights refer to the basic rights and freedoms that are inherently entitled to every person, simply by virtue of their humanity. These rights are protected by international law and aim to ensure that every person is treated with dignity, equality and respect, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, religion or any other status.

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In the context of the federal impact assessment process, an assessment of the effects of a designated project that is conducted in accordance with the *Impact Assessment Act*

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT AGENCY OF CANADA (THE AGENCY)**

The federal body accountable to the minister of environment and climate change. The Agency is used synonymously within the guide to represent the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

The term is used when referring to a variety of Indigenous peoples. The term “Indigenous peoples” in this guide has the same meaning as “Aboriginal peoples of Canada” which include First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as defined in section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

**INTERSECTIONAL GENDER BASED ANALYSIS**

Intersectional gender-based analysis in impact assessments is the process of analyzing how gender (and other identities) power relations intersect with other social variables to affect people’s lives, create differences in needs and experiences, and how policies, services and programs can help to address these differences. Intersectional gender-based analysis and GBA+ are used synonymously throughout the guide. Refer to Gender Based Analysis Plus

**INTERSECTIONALITY**

Intersectionality recognizes how various parts of our identity – like race, sex, gender, sexuality, class and ability – overlap to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. The term was created to reflect how Black women face both racism and sexism. Nowadays, it’s applied more widely to other aspects of identity, and it’s vital that we start but do not stop with race.

**LAND DEFENDERS**

Land defenders are individuals or groups who are actively engaged in protecting their land, water, and natural resources from threats such as resource extraction, development or environmental degradation. Land defenders may include Indigenous peoples, rural communities and other groups who are directly impacted by these threats and who are fighting to defend their rights and their environment.

**NON-BINARY**

Non-binary refers to a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or exclusively feminine, i.e., identities that are outside the gender binary.

**PROPONENT**

In the context of a federal impact assessment process, a person or entity – federal authority, government or body – that proposes the carrying out of, or carries out, a designated project.

**RACE**

A social construct produced by the dominant group in society to exert power over different groups.

**RACISM**

Racism is a power construct and a form of discrimination that is particularly complex and difficult to prove due to the evolving nature of prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior in global minority countries. It manifests itself overtly and covertly, with structural racism occurring through subtle and subversive forms of differential treatment.

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

The process of extracting or using natural resources for economic and/or commercial purposes. This can include activities such as mining, energy and infrastructure projects.

**SEX**

Sex is typically assigned based on a person's reproductive system and other physical characteristics.

**TRANSGENDER FEMALE**

A transgender person who identifies as a woman (or whose gender identity is of a woman) and was assigned male at birth.

**TRANSGENDER MEN**

A transgender person who identifies as a man (or whose gender identity is of a man) and was assigned female at birth.

**WHISTLEBLOWERS**

A person who discloses information about unethical or illegal activities within an organization or institution, with the goal of bringing attention to the issue and promoting accountability and transparency.

# Endnotes

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