



INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL

**ETHICAL AND EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT SYNTHESIS REPORT:**

A collection of Inuit rules, guidelines, protocols, and values for the engagement of Inuit Communities and Indigenous Knowledge from Across Inuit Nunaat



All information and concepts within this synthesis report are a product of work previously done by numerous Inuit communities and organizations. The aggregation of materials, synthesis of information, and facilitation of the work that has led to the authoring of this report has been carried out by Victoria Qutuq Buschman, under contract with the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). The work has been carried out in collaboration with ICC. The final synthesis report was prepared by Victoria Qutuq Buschman in consultation with Carolina Behe, the Indigenous Knowledge/Science Advisor for ICC.

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This report and associated materials can be downloaded for free at the Inuit Circumpolar Council websites: [iccalaska.org](http://iccalaska.org) (Alaska), [inuitcircumpolar.com](http://inuitcircumpolar.com) (Canada), and [inuit.org](http://inuit.org) (Greenland).

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This synthesis report is the combined effort and knowledge of Inuit living in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). Much of the information found here comes from materials previously developed by Inuit communities and organizations, who have pushed for impressive gains in Indigenous rights, sovereignty, cultural continuity, and recognition for the Inuit way of life. Inuit organizations across the north have been critical focal points for the development and discussion of Inuit engagement protocols/guidelines.

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## CIRCUMPOLAR VOICES OF OUR PEOPLE

*“How we are in our region is our strength.”*

*“Within families, we have unwritten commandments, values that are passed on to the young generation. We speak about this with the researchers. We tell them about our traditional life in the settlement, way of hunting, and strict rules we stick to.”*

*“Leadership must have a mindset that works for our people.”*

*“Too many decisions are being made far away.”*

*“Before colonialism, Inuit were rich in natural resources.  
Now we are poor.”*

*“We’d like to have our spiritual values described and recorded within cultural heritage, and recognition for the achievements our people have made for the world.”*

*“We need a paradigm shift.”*

*“There’s a learning curve for community work.”*

*“There’s a clash between the western and the Yup’ik way of life, especially in how we value skilled people (hunting, fishing, parenting), but in western society we are valuing money.”*

*“An Indigenous knowledge holder should be held in at least equal standing regardless of the formal qualifications of the researcher. Many Inuit have PhD’s in living on their lands.”*

*“Try not to take up too much space,  
you’re there to learn.”*

*“We must keep in mind, that we have extraordinary natural heritage thanks to our ancestors. They have created everything we need to live our lives to the fullest, even though conditions now are considered harsh and difficult... [we] didn’t receive another chance from fate, but we have used this one decently. We are one of the peoples whose life is inextricably linked with nature, and whose well being depends on climate conditions. After all, no peoples have as many definitions of ice as Inuit have in our vocabulary. We have developed our own understanding of the world.”*

*“Western thinking is in one or two dimensions, black and white, good or bad, it’s the training that we’ve had. We’re switching to multidimensional thinking so we can think as a whole person.”*

*“We are to protect all that gives us an opportunity to live, create, and raise our children. This is what our ancestors teach us, this is what we must teach our children. This is what true Yupik people do.”*

# ABOUT INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL

Since the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) was founded in 1977 by the late Eben Hopson of Utqiagvik, Alaska, ICC has flourished and grown into a major international Indigenous peoples' organization representing approximately 180,000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia).

ICC holds non-governmental organization Consultative Status II with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. ICC is a Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council. ICC strives to strengthen unity among Inuit of the Circumpolar North; promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level; develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic and social development of the Circumpolar North. ICC receives its mandate from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka delegates gathered in a General Assembly held every four years. The ICC Circumpolar Equitable and Ethical Engagement Project began under the *Utqiagvik Declaration* (2018-2022).

ICC has offices in each country, Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka, and is governed by an international Executive Council. Within each region, ICC is directed by their member organizations.

## ICC Executive Council

The Executive Council is made up of the Chair, 1 Vice-Chair and 1 Member from each country (Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka). The Executive Council includes: Dalee Sambo Dorough (ICC Chair), Jim Stotts (ICC-Alaska Vice Chair), Vera Metcalf (ICC-Alaska Member), Monica Ell-Kanayuk (ICC-Canada Vice Chair), Lisa Koperqualuk (ICC-Canada Member), Hjalmar Dahl (ICC-Greenland Vice Chair), Nuka Kleemann (ICC-Greenland Member), Liubov Taian (ICC-Chukotka Vice Chair), and Elena Kaminskaya (ICC-Chukotka Member).

## Alaska Member Organizations

Member organizations include the North Slope Borough, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, NANA Regional Corporation, Northwest Arctic Borough, Maniilaq Association, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Kawerak, Inc., and Association of Village Council Presidents. Representatives from these membership organizations, along with the President, Vice President and Youth and Elder representatives, compose the ICC-Alaska 13-member Board of Directors.

## Canada Member Organizations

The ICC-Canada Board of Directors is comprised of elected leaders from the four land-claim settlement regions: Inuvialuit, Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut. Member organizations include Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Makivik Corporation, Nunatsiavut Government, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and Permanent Participants to ICC Canada including Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and the National Inuit Youth Council.

## Greenland Member Organizations

The ICC Greenland Board of Trustees and formal delegation are held by elected individuals rather than organizations. Current trustees and delegates belong to the following organizations: ICC-Greenland, The Sports Confederation of Greenland, Greenland Workers Association, the National Advocacy Center Working for Children's Rights, the Joint Council for Children and Youth, the Parliament of Greenland, the School Teachers Association, the Preschool Teachers Association, the Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland, the Elder's Organization, the Women's Association, the Sheep Farmers Association, the Organization of Disabilities of Greenland, and several municipalities of the Greenlandic government.

### Chukotka Member Organizations

The public organization of the Yupik people of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug “Inuit Circumpolar Council of Chukotka” (ICC Chukotka) was established on the basis of territorial principle and comprises 8 branches:

- the city of Anadyr (ICC Chukotka head office),
- Egvekinot urban district, Uelkal community (Iultinsky municipal district)
- Providensky urban district, Novoye Chaplino community, Sireniki community (Providensky municipal district)
- Lavrentia community, Lorino community, Uelen community (Chukotsky municipal district).

ICC Chukotka also oversees the activities of several marine mammal hunting enterprises that are members of the Marine Mammal Hunters Union, a regional non-profit partnership. In addition, members of the ICC Chukotka organization serve as a source of advice and counsel for the Directorate for Indigenous Affairs under the Government of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, the structures of the Government of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug on hunting and fishing affairs, education development, and preservation of native languages. ICC Chukotka is also a member of the Directorate of the District Ombudsman for Human Rights and the Presidium member of the Association of Indigenous Minorities of Chukotka.

## FOREWORD

This synthesis report is an important expression and understanding of the content and contours of our right to “maintain, control, protect and develop” our knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is a characteristic of our cultural identity and legal status as Indigenous peoples. Our world views and knowledge have been clearly recognized in international law as a significant contribution to the “sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment.” Indigenous knowledge has been understood to undergird our cultural identity and cultural integrity, and that it has both historic and ancestral strands as well as a heritage critical for our future generations. Indigenous knowledge encompasses a vast array of elements, from “histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, systems of knowledge, writing, and literature”. Furthermore, Indigenous knowledge goes to the heart of understanding the biodiversity, plants, flora, and fauna, that sustains us. More significantly, Indigenous knowledge creates a space for, and an embrace of, the profound relationship that we have with our Arctic homelands and territory – Inuit Nunaat.

For decades, in the name of science, actions have been taken that ultimately disrespect or exploit Indigenous knowledge or take it out of context for other purposes. Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous knowledge holders must be recognized and respected. This synthesis report illustrates what it means for Inuit to secure the ethical, equitable, fair and just engagement of our knowledge. Indeed, the report highlights our rights of ownership, possession, control, development, and protection of our knowledge and elaborates upon what is needed to genuinely be responsive to the urgent call for recognizing the interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible rights of Inuit.

- Dalee Sambo Dorough, ICC International Chair

*Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous knowledge holders must be secure, and we should recognize that Indigenous knowledge is the intellectual property of Indigenous peoples.*

- Tatiana Achirgina, Former ICC-Chukotka Vice Chair

# INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN CONTROL OF OUR FUTURE?

Inuit are a part of a globalizing world. The Arctic has been our homeland for time immemorial and our people and communities are often asked to contribute Indigenous knowledge, labor, and time to inform research, policy, and decision making in the Arctic and beyond. We have the knowledge and expertise to do so. As hunters, gatherers, fishers, artists, researchers, managers, policy makers, industry professionals, teachers, and students, our Indigenous knowledge and values, formed over millennia, continue to guide our understandings of the environment that we are a part of, our relationships with all living and non-living things within the Arctic, and our adaptive and holistic decision making processes which have guided us through thousands of years of proven survival. Consistent with our distinct Indigenous rights, it is within our interest to assert the future we want to develop for ourselves.

*“By 2010, Inuit Nunaat, our homeland, has become a major force in international and national politics, in climate change research and science, in culture and arts, in [Indigenous] rights and models of Indigenous self-government. Arctic Sovereignty is one of our main concerns and is now also an international concern,”*

– Jim Stotts, Inuit Arctic Policy

There is a growing awareness of the importance of engaging with Inuit communities, the need for Indigenous knowledge and bringing together Indigenous knowledge and science through a co-production of knowledge. A continuation of top-down approach across institutions and governments has created a gap where a lack of understanding of Inuit communities, what Indigenous knowledge is, and existing inequities inhibit the ethical engagement of our people.

## **BOX 1: Many Cultures, One People**

– Inuit celebrate our differences across our regions. Our homelands have been separated into four countries through colonial and geopolitical forces. The guidance found here on the development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines is intended to transcend national borders, politics, and policies and situate us as Inuit in a broader world. These protocols/guidelines bring us together on the international stage, not to eliminate our differences, but to provide a united voice that captures the spirit of our people and our communities.

Many things that impact our daily lives as Inuit occur at the international level. This includes discussions, decisions, agreements, and the development of policy recommendations regarding such matters as: our sovereignty and self-determination; our food security; the health and well-being of all living and non-living things within the Arctic; markets for seal skin products; research approaches; wildlife management and quotas of culturally important species such as whales, seals, and polar bears; the shipment of goods both to, and around, our communities; security and defence of our homelands; and the development and conservation of our lands and waters.

In order to protect and promote our collective rights, we engage at the international level because colonial histories have separated our people into four countries and many rights and issues continue to be asserted and regulated in international fora. Under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), Inuit have the right to engage in the governance of all things related to us. A review of these rights can be found in Annex 1 (pg. 35). These individual and collective rights are part of a broader human rights framework that is ratified at the international level and is intended to be upheld and implemented at the national level. As Inuit seek greater sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance, we must continue to assert, affirm, and uphold these rights even when others do not.



Despite the impacts that international decisions have on our daily lives, Inuit account a long history of insufficient engagement of our communities and our knowledge within these discussions. Inuit are not often provided an effective means of specifying the terms of engagement, leading to processes that are unethical, inequitable, misconstrue our knowledge, and lack meaning for our communities. Inuit must determine the ethical and equitable pathways of engagement – who, what, when, where, why, and how – for our communities and our knowledge.

*“International treaties are often concluded between States on matters that directly affect Inuit interests and rights, especially when concerning issues within Inuit Nunaat. Inuit must be meaningfully engaged in these processes to ensure that the policy formulation and implementation stages support and advance Inuit interests. Engagement should include formal and direct representation in international policy and law-making fora that relate to Indigenous and Inuit interests or Arctic concerns. Inuit should also participate directly in the internal committees of Arctic States which deal with international matters of relevance to Inuit. Arctic States should also provide Inuit representation on delegations to international organizations or conferences dealing with matters affecting Inuit interests.”*

– Inuit Arctic Policy, pg. 14

In a step towards the development of circumpolar engagement protocols/guidelines, Inuit-developed rules, laws, values, guidelines, and protocols have been pulled together into this synthesis report. This report is instrumental in the collective development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines and will be a useful community resource reflecting perspectives across Inuit Nunaat – our homelands.



### **Why is ICC Addressing Engagement?**

In recognition of the important role that engagement plays in economic, cultural, social, and political development of Inuit at the international level, article 27 of the 2018 ICC *Utqiaġvik Declaration* directs ICC to facilitate the development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines on the equitable and ethical engagement of Inuit communities and knowledge to provide guidance to international fora such as the Arctic Council and the United Nations.

Further, the 2018-2022 ICC Strategic Plan identified six priorities, including (5) and (6) which direct ICC to advocate for, and educate about, the ethical and equitable utilization and involvement of Indigenous knowledge, and to ensure that the collective Inuit worldview and voice is represented at international fora.

To fulfil the mandate directed from the ICC *Utqiaġvik Declaration*, ICC created this synthesis report by gathering information and documents on Inuit-produced rules, laws, values, guidelines, protocols, and principles that provide guidance on how others should engage with our communities and our knowledge. We expect the results of this synthesis to contribute to the development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines for the engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge through a direct participation process. The guidance found here has been recorded and voiced by Inuit communities and organizations and is intended to be complementary rather than an effort to replace or oversimplify protocols and guidelines developed at the local, regional, and national levels. ICC encourages Inuit to continue developing protocols/guidelines at the local, regional, and national level.

### **What is the Focus of this Synthesis Report?**

The guidance found here is intended to be useful for all kinds of engagement with Inuit communities and of Indigenous knowledge, including, but not limited to, engagement in decision-making processes, research, sustainable management and conservation, health, adaptation, industry, technology, arts and culture, language, international affairs, policy, law, law enforcement, and any other areas related to the governance of Inuit homelands.

### **Where Does the Information in this Synthesis Report Come From?**

This report compiles and synthesizes information gathered from Inuit-produced materials and voices that address rules, laws, values, guidelines, and protocols for the engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge. The selected materials capture Inuit perspectives, needs, priorities, and values, as well as criticism of, and guidance on, engagement processes. Not all materials used within this synthesis report focused exclusively on engagement. Points of inclusion within this project were often embedded within work related to, but not focusing on, engagement issues. The guidance found within this report was developed through a combined synthesis of these points and aims to address common themes threaded throughout the synthesis documents. This synthesis is not exhaustive and is a living document that can be added to over time. The materials used fall into several categories:

- Community-level research and engagement protocols and guidelines
- Community-level health, land-use, and conservation plans
- Community-level permitting processes
- Organizational position papers
- Organizational research projects
- Organizational project report
- Other organizational documents
- Discussions with individuals and community organizations

### **List of Questions for Organizations**

In addition to the collection of written materials, a list of questions was circulated to local and regional Inuit organizations to give communities the opportunity to further describe their experiences with engagement. This is meant to supplement the collected materials, especially in circumstances and for communities that have not yet had the opportunity to develop concrete materials related to engagement. This list of questions was especially important to reach community members in Chukotka. This list of questions can be found and reviewed at the database listed below.

#### **Inuit Engagement Database**

The materials compiled for use in this report are listed in Annex 2 (pg. 36). These materials can be accessed at [iccalaska.org](http://iccalaska.org).

## WHAT IS ETHICAL, EQUITABLE, FAIR, JUST, AND MEANINGFUL?

Circumpolar engagement protocols/guidelines should reflect a human rights framework and be consistent with internationally recognized norms and standards affirmed by international human rights treaties and instruments such as UNDRIP. Such rights are recognized as the minimum standards that affirm Inuit sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance for our people and our homelands. The circumpolar standards that we set within ICC's protocols/guidelines aim to outline how ethical engagement is practiced. These concepts and their challenges are addressed in Box 2.

### Who is This Report For?

While this document will be useful to Inuit communities, organizations, and to those working within the Arctic and with Inuit, the primary intention of pulling together this wealth of work is to aid in the process of developing circumpolar protocols/guidelines for engagement of Inuit communities. We expect this synthesis report to be useful first and foremost to Inuit, but also to outside audiences. Audiences may include: Indigenous organizations developing their own guidelines for communicating and engaging with outside interests such as industry and environmental groups; researchers and research institutions looking for guidance on how to better their engagement with Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge; managers aiming to understand Inuit needs and requirements for engagement processes; or policy and decision makers hoping to begin new projects, ventures, laws, and policies. Though this synthesis report is intended for guiding Inuit affairs, it is hoped that other Indigenous Peoples may also find it useful.

### How Do These Efforts Complement Community Efforts?

The development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines is intended to complement, and not replace, existing protocols, guidelines, and structures at the community, regional, or national levels. It is hoped that ICC's protocols/guidelines will be useful to communities and regions as they continue to develop their own engagement protocols and guidelines.



#### **Box 2: Ethical, Equitable, Fair, Just, and Meaningful.**

Inuit engagement protocols should reflect a human rights framework, meaning be consistent with internationally recognized rights for which Inuit have advocated.

The terms ethical, equitable, fair, just, and meaningful can be challenging to define, and it is important to define these terms for ourselves as individuals.

As we think of how we can practice engagement in a way that embodies these concepts, it may be good to ask ourselves these questions:

**Is it ethical?** – does it adhere to what we know to be right and wrong?

**Is it equitable?** – does it go beyond equality to help us achieve the same opportunities, responsibilities, and outcomes as others?

**Is it fair?** – does it recognize and respect our cultural differences and values?

**Is it just?** – does it uphold our human rights as Indigenous peoples?

**Is it meaningful?** – does it support our own perspectives and goals? Does it help foster better relationships? Does it elevate our People?



**Figure 1: Inuit Homelands**

*Image reference:* Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska. 2020. Food Sovereignty and Self-Governance: Inuit Role in Managing Arctic Marine Resources. Anchorage, Alaska.

## WHAT IS COVERED IN THIS SYNTHESIS REPORT?

Within this report you will find (a) guidance for the engagement of Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge (b) examples of misuse and misconduct within engagement processes, and (c) considerations for important themes and concepts within the development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines. This report is broken up into five parts, each providing guidance and considerations for the development of ICC's circumpolar protocols/guidelines.

### **Guiding Engagement through Inuit Values – pg. 13**

This section provides insight into our collective values across Inuit Nunaat. Our values should be the foundation on which we develop engagement protocols/guidelines as these values guide how we interact with the world, interact with each other, and identify and solve problems. Respecting and understanding these values is the foundation for the remaining guidance found in this synthesis report.

### **Guiding Engagement with Indigenous Knowledge – pg. 16**

This section explores what Indigenous knowledge is, how it complements science, what the common barriers and misconceptions are, and guidance for engagement in ways that result in ethical use.

### **Guiding Engagement with Inuit Communities – pg. 26**

This section provides a synthesis of guidance on the ethical engagement of Inuit communities in the development of partnerships, projects, and policies. It outlines both common misconduct in engaging communities and guidance for necessary improvements.

### **Guiding Engagement through Inuit Methodologies – pg. 30**

This section explores Inuit methodologies that have been recorded and asserted in Inuit Nunaat. Inuit methodologies may provide further guidance on how our communities collectively identify, discuss, and solve problems. Inuit methodologies are good examples of how values can be concretely built into engagement norms and protocols/guidelines.

### **Guiding Engagement through Permissions – pg. 33**

This section provides a brief review of different mechanisms used to grant permission, such as consent, contracts, and ownership laws. In some circumstances, these mechanisms support Inuit sovereignty and self-determination. The development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines may be an opportunity to discuss how permissions may be used to ensure the ethical engagement of our communities and our knowledge.

## SYNTHESIS: GUIDING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INUIT VALUES

### **Respecting Our Values in Engagement**

Inuit values guide our lives and teach us how to interact within our communities and our environment. These values teach us how to see ourselves and others, interact with each other, and tackle problems. We learn these values from birth, and they are reinforced throughout our lives. Engagement must come with an understanding and respect for these values.

Understanding our values can help to guide us and others in defining and interpreting what ethical engagement of our knowledge and our communities should look and feel like. Many misunderstandings within engagement processes stem from a lack of understanding and respect for what we value. We expect those who engage with our communities and our knowledge to respect and connect with us through the genuine respect for, and recognition of, these fundamental values. Figure 2 includes common values that were highlighted by Inuit organizations and community members, and which were listed within collected materials. These are followed on a daily basis and should be respected by those coming into our communities.



- Acceptance
- Adaptability
- Asking Forgiveness
- Avoiding conflict
- Compassion
- Conservation
- Consensus
- Cooperation
- Domestic skills
- Endurance
- Equality
- Family
- Generosity
- Hard work
- Helping
- Honesty
- Humility
- Humor
- Improvisation
- Interconnectedness
- Knowledge
- Listening
- Love
- Moving forward
- Observation
- Oneness
- Patience
- Perseverance
- Practice
- Resilience
- Resourcefulness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Self-awareness
- Sharing
- Significance
- Skill and mastery
- Spirituality
- Stewardship
- Storytelling
- Strength
- Supportiveness
- Survival
- Taking the long view
- Teaching and learning
- Teamwork
- Trust
- Unity
- Unpretentiousness
- Volunteering
- Welcoming
- Well-being

## How Inuit Values Shape Engagement and Communication

Understanding and respecting our values will aid in relationship building and cultural understanding.

Meetings, communications, and other forms of engagement should be structured in culturally appropriate ways to emphasize these values and cooperation by all involved. This direction should come from Inuit partners as each engagement opportunity may call for different activities and points of action, and may include examples such as:

- It is more important to be good at listening than to be good at speaking.
- We share information through storytelling, and the storyteller should not be interrupted before they are finished.
- Everyone has something to share, so coming to the table with humility, respect, and an unpretentious attitude allows space for mutual learning.
- Key values such as listening influence how discussions occur.
- We value cooperation and conflict avoidance, so we may express opposition with silence, and this should not be interpreted incorrectly as agreement.
- We make decisions based on consensus, which requires extraordinary patience and takes the time to hear the views of all participants while actively moving forward in decision making.
- We expect others to come with honesty and trust and to help and volunteer so that the work we pursue can be completed.
- We may expect or require longer discussion periods, in face-to-face formats that focus on discussion rather than presentations to allow for open dialog.
- Sharing food is an important value and cultural practice and may be considered respectful and appropriate during some engagement activities.
- Inclusion and learning is important, so meetings may require language interpreters, the inclusion of appropriate dialects, and the translation of materials available in multiple formats such as written documents, visuals, and audio.

Our values should be considered as we visit the remaining guidance in this report.

### **Engaging Inuit Knowledge**

– values shape how we learn about and engage with the world

### **Engaging Inuit Communities**

– values shape how we interact with each other

### **Engaging Inuit Methodologies**

– values shape how we conduct ourselves and solve problems

### **Engaging through Permissions**

– values shape how we view trust, consent, and treat contractual agreements



**Figure 2: Inuit Values Across the Arctic**

# SYNTHESIS: GUIDING ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

## WHAT IS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE?

ICC's work is guided by the following agreed upon definition of Indigenous knowledge (IK):

*“Indigenous Knowledge is a systematic way of thinking applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural, and spiritual systems. It includes insights based on evidence and acquired through direct and long-term experiences and extensive and multigenerational observation, lessons, and skills. It has developed over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation.*

*Under this definition, IK goes beyond observations and ecological knowledge, offering a unique “way of knowing.” This knowledge can identify research needs and be applied to them, which will ultimately inform decision-makers. There is a need to utilize both, Indigenous and scientific Knowledge. Both ways of knowing will benefit the people, land, water, air and animals within the Arctic,”* (ICC 2015).

ICC's definition embraces additional definitions of Indigenous knowledge that have been developed and adopted by Inuit communities. Inuit may refer to their knowledge as Indigenous knowledge, Inuit knowledge, Yup'ik Knowledge, Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ), native knowledge, traditional knowledge, hunters' knowledge, or additional other names that specifically identifies their knowledge. These terms may also incorporate a knowledge of tradition, customs, and societal values. The definition provided above is understood by ICC to apply to all these terms. Regardless of the term used, the status, rights, role, and values of our knowledge holders remain constant in the engagement of Indigenous knowledge.

*“Inuit knowledge has been elaborated in Nunavut as Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ), which means “that which has long been known by Inuit.” It is a concept that covers the Inuit ways of doing things, and includes the past, present, and future knowledge, experience and values of Inuit society,”*

- Pikialasorsuaq Commission

*“Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit is a way of knowing. IQ is more than ‘traditional knowledge’ because it incorporates knowledge, customs, and values. It is a way of life. It is as much about how we interact with one another, our attitudes and behaviours as it is about what we know.”*

- ScIQ: Science and Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, 2018

### **Box 3: Using Indigenous Knowledge and Science to Inform Decisions**

“IK and science tend to ask different questions and may use different information to inform decisions. Consider an IK holder obtaining salmon. Multiple relationships between the salmon, the rest of the environment and among the dimensions of food security must be considered to understand changes that are occurring or may occur. It is important to understand the salmon's health, the texture of the salmon meat, color of the meat and scales, interaction between the salmon and its environment, changes in salinity of the water and temperatures in the water and air. It is important to understand changes in riparian vegetation, shifts in growth of plants and seasonality. All of this information is needed to inform decision-making... On the other hand, scientists often base an understanding of salmon health on population dynamics and similar variables. Here we see that science is very good at eliminating variables to address singular questions. IK, on the other hand, is very successful in identifying connections between variables in order to address multi-dimensional questions. Both approaches are often needed to better understand the Arctic environment and rapidly occurring changes.”

- (Food Security Report, 2015, pg. 77).





*Image reference* – Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska. 2015. Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic From an Inuit Perspective. Technical Report. Anchorage, AK.

*Text reference* – Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska. 2015. Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic From an Inuit Perspective. Technical Report. Anchorage, AK; Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska. 2020. Food Sovereignty and Self-Governance: Inuit Role in Managing Arctic Marine Resources. Anchorage, AK

### **Figure 3: Inuit Ecosystem**

*Our IK teaches us to pay close attention to the connections between systems and between components within an ecosystem. For example, a walrus hunter understands the connection between sea ice thickness and walrus, the connection between benthic animals and walrus, the connection between benthic animals and currents, etc. The monitoring of these connections helps inform an understanding of the environment, changes that are occurring through cumulative impacts, and decision-making. (pg. 44)*

*A clear understanding of the Arctic ecosystems, inclusive of our culture, is necessary, as well as understanding the need for information from IK and the involvement of IK holders to inform decisions made across scales (global, national and regional). With the use of both IK and Western science, we will gain a stronger understanding of rapid changes occurring within the Arctic and ways of mitigating negative impacts. (pg. 74)*



## Respecting Our Knowledge in Engagement

Through the process of developing this synthesis report, Inuit stressed the need to address the misunderstandings about, and misuse of, Indigenous knowledge. Despite the increasing recognition of the role Indigenous knowledge has in strengthening decisions and outcomes, this misuse within diverse processes continues to impede the engagement of our knowledge within circumpolar research, assessments, observation, monitoring programs, and management, policy, and governance. In order to move forward, both misunderstandings and misuse of Indigenous knowledge should be addressed within the circumpolar protocols/guidelines. Some of the points of concern Inuit have raised about the engagement of Indigenous knowledge, including specific challenges, barriers, and misconceptions. This includes important points such as equity and extraction that should be addressed within the circumpolar protocols/guidelines.

Guidance for the engagement of Indigenous knowledge is separated from guidance for the engagement of Inuit communities. This is because they are interconnected but somewhat separate processes, each with its own barriers and challenges. Numerous Indigenous organizations and community members have voiced that the engagement of our knowledge within activities has been insufficient, to the point that there are serious concerns about continuing to share our knowledge until the proper guidelines and protocols can be developed and agreed upon. These guidelines must address the misconceptions about, and misconduct in, engagement with our knowledge.

Guidance at the international level can help protect our knowledge. Foremost, recognition must be given to how the security and longevity of our knowledge is integral to our sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance. Sharing our knowledge in decision making processes is important, but others must recognize that this knowledge collectively belongs to us, is ours to demonstrate, apply, assess, and interpret, and that we must be able to determine how our knowledge is compiled, validated, used, understood, and stored.

## Common Concerns Raised by Inuit Regarding the Engagement of Knowledge

While collecting materials and voices for this project and through review of materials, common themes arose regarding barriers to the engagement of our knowledge. These barriers are summarized below:

### Indigenous Knowledge

- Lack of understanding about what is, and is not, Indigenous knowledge, i.e. not the time or labor Inuit contribute to projects.
- Indigenous knowledge is referred to and treated as anecdotal, easily accessible, held only by elders, irrelevant for certain disciplines, or pertinent only to the past.
- Discounting the extraordinary capacity of Inuit and may be dismissive towards the complexity and sophistication of our Indigenous knowledge.

### Indigenous Knowledge and Science

- Commonly those coming to the Arctic demonstrate a lack of trust and respect for what Indigenous knowledge is, and how it is demonstrated, evaluated, validated, and implemented by Indigenous knowledge holders.
- Researchers and decision makers often want access to Indigenous knowledge in formats that are compatible with science, such as the transformation of our knowledge into discrete variables for modelling or other inappropriate uses.
- The attempted translation of Indigenous knowledge into western science or piecemeal use of Indigenous knowledge from reports to support scientific points has left many Inuit at an uneven place relative to other researchers, treats our knowledge as anecdotal, and discards many nuances and crucial information that is shared within what we bring forward.
- Many research and engagement activities focusing on Indigenous knowledge are extractive and do not return collected knowledge to the community.

### Decision Making

- Lack of policies that support equitable involvement of Indigenous knowledge in decision making processes, such that Indigenous knowledge and other forms of knowing are not treated equitably.
- There is often inequitable representation of knowledge holders in boards and other decision making bodies.
- Indigenous knowledge practices and input are not taken seriously until they are adjusted to be more westernized, i.e. lack of trust and respect for IK because it is not written down.
- In consultation processes, often Inuit do not hold the authority to structure the process or define meaningful engagement.
- Decisions are often made based on economics rather than Indigenous knowledge.

### Knowledge Ownership

- Lack of investment in community-managed and accessible information which leads to duplicate efforts and research fatigue.

### Funding

- Lack of equitable funding for Indigenous knowledge, for research concerning Indigenous knowledge, and opportunities for Indigenous knowledge holders to participate in decision making processes.
- Many activities occurring in Inuit homelands do not include funding components that value and support the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge holders in the planning or implementation processes.

*“The importance of understanding the connection that lies between cultural value systems, the development of policies and decision-making cannot be understated. Cultural value systems inform how we view the world and what type of information we require to make decisions in managing human activities,”*

– ICC Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: how to assess the Arctic from an Inuit perspective, technical report, pg. 71-72

## SYNTHESIZED GUIDANCE FOR ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Below are common points gathered while reviewing materials for this synthesis report:

- ***Use of Indigenous knowledge must be ethical, equitable, fair, just, and meaningful*** – as determined by the individuals participating in activities that engage Indigenous knowledge.
- ***Indigenous knowledge cannot be separated from Inuit identity, values, and worldviews*** - and can not be interpreted without direction from Inuit.
- ***Indigenous knowledge must be valued equitably*** – others must recognize Indigenous knowledge as a systematic way of knowing, with multiple methodologies, validation processes, and unique, holistic contributions to understanding Inuit homelands and the Arctic as a whole.
- ***Governments must recognize Indigenous knowledge*** – as a critical component of evidence-based decision making, and must encourage the ethical implementation and application of Indigenous knowledge within Inuit homelands.
- ***Decisions must be informed by Indigenous knowledge*** – in matters regarding research, management, policy, decision making, and other areas related to the governance of and within Inuit homelands.
- ***Inuit must determine the relevance and applicability of Indigenous knowledge*** – including whether the use of Indigenous knowledge during engagement is appropriate, and how Indigenous knowledge should be used within that engagement process.
- ***Inuit and Indigenous knowledge holders must be involved*** – in all aspects and phases of study design and research concerning Indigenous knowledge.
- ***Engagement efforts should develop written plans and agreements*** – for the ethical inclusion of Indigenous knowledge within activities, through all planning, information gathering, and decision making.
- ***Capacity for working with Indigenous knowledge must be provided*** – including as funding for activities such as community meetings for identification and collection of knowledge, trainings for others so that Indigenous knowledge holders may demonstrate the applications of knowledge to ensure that it is properly understood, and long-term storage for gathered knowledge.
- ***Engagement efforts must include adequate funding for Indigenous knowledge holders*** – to engage in projects and decision making bodies concerning Inuit homelands, and must coordinate with Inuit, before, during, and after all activities.
- ***Engagement efforts must include adequate funding for Inuit to direct activities*** – and must account for the time needed to effectively co-produce projects, monitoring, and decision making based on both Indigenous knowledge and science.
- ***Engagement efforts must aim for a genuine co-production of knowledge*** – in bringing together Indigenous knowledge and science it is important to ensure that our knowledge is trusted and respected as a unique knowledge system that comes with its own evaluation and validation processes.
- ***Engagement efforts must elevate processes and procedures that ensure ethical engagement*** – of Indigenous knowledge and processes that genuinely respect and recognize Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous knowledge holders.

- ***Indigenous knowledge must not be translated or integrated “into science”*** – recognition, trust, and respect must be given to the unique contributions of Indigenous knowledge as a way of knowing and that it cannot be ‘translated’ or ‘integrated’ into science, though it can be partnered in research and decision making processes as the result of genuine collaboration and cooperation.
- ***Inuit must be supported to direct research needs and priorities*** – for all research activities occurring in Inuit homelands, including the allocation of funds to projects.
- ***Indigenous knowledge holders must be engaged in the analysis and interpretation of results*** – individuals and communities providing Indigenous knowledge must participate in the analysis of information, the interpretation of research and policy outcomes, and the determination of relevancy and applicability of the results and policy outcomes for the community.
- ***Engagement efforts must support prioritization of Inuit objections*** – to all policies, laws, or regulations that contrast or conflict with Indigenous knowledge.
- ***Engagement efforts must establish or improve procedures for dissent*** – that allow disputes to be resolved with weight given to Indigenous knowledge, and such a body should be effective and readily available at all levels and applicable for all issues raised by Inuit in order to be equitable.
- ***Indigenous knowledge belongs to Inuit*** – Indigenous knowledge is owned both by individuals and communities, and all knowledge, cultural items, art, and other forms of knowledge that are collected and stored must ensure Inuit access, ownership, and control, to be held within the communities or organizations responsible for that knowledge, unless by special permission as determined by the Inuit concerned.
- ***Use of Indigenous knowledge should not harm Inuit*** – the knowledge provided for use in research, management, policy, decision making, or other activities related to governance must not subsequently harm the community or individual who has provided that knowledge.
- ***Equitable credit must be given to all involved*** – individuals and communities must be acknowledged and receive credit for the Indigenous knowledge, expertise, and information provided to others in a way that has been agreed upon and directed by the community or individuals.
- ***Engagement efforts should not be duplicative*** – much Indigenous knowledge has already been collected and it is important to identify and credit this information before entering into duplicate engagement efforts, as this leads to research and engagement fatigue within communities.

## CHUKOTKA

Inuit in Russia mainly live in the Chukotka Autonomous Region in the four municipal districts of Providensky District in the communities of Novoye Chaplino, Sireniki, and Provideniya, Chukotsky District in the communities of Lavrentiya, Lorino, and Uelen, Eultinsky District in the communities of Egvekinot and Uelkal, and in the town of Anadyr. According to the 2010 Population Census there are 1,738 Russian Inuit, 1,539 living in Chukotka. Information is not yet available for the 2020 census.

Despite the small population size, hunters and fishers are actively engaged in work around hunting, fishing, trapping, harvesting, conservation, Indigenous knowledge studies, Indigenous peoples’ rights, local self-governance, education, language preservation, health care, sustainable development, housing, arts, and other general engagement activities with regional authorities.

*“We are successors of our fathers’ and grandfathers’ work. And nobody can prevent that”*

- The Commandments of the Chukchi Sea Hunters, 1998

*“The preservation of the seafaring culture of my peoples is the reason for my life and the work of my generation.”*

- The Commandments of the Chukchi Sea Hunters, 1998

*“The value of my culture is in harmony with nature. The mission of our generation is to pass on this love for nature. We do not own the land or the sea, we belong to the land and the sea. The smallest piece of land is sacred to me. We are as much a part of the earth as it is a part of ourselves. Our children will be taught that the earth is our mother.”*

- The Commandments of the Chukchi Sea Hunters, 1998



FATHER AND SON, NOVOYE CHAPLINO, 2020, PHOTOGRAPHER ALEKSANDR KHIMOOSHIN

## ALASKA

ICC Alaska membership includes regional organizations that represent Iñupiat, Central Yup'ik, Cup'ik, and Saint Lawrence Island Yupik throughout four regions - the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Straits, and Southwest (Yukon-Kuskokwim delta) of Alaska. Across these four regions there are approximately 42,000 Inuit and 83 communities. This number does not account for those living in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and outside of Alaska. Throughout the four regions, and beyond, we have held our own rules and values guided by our Indigenous knowledge. Built upon thousands of years of proven sustainable practices, these values, rules, and knowledge continue to be used today. Inuit from across Alaska are actively engaged in research, monitoring, decision-making, ensuring food security for our families and communities, engage in both domestic and international fora, and are educators, leaders in industry, governance, care takers of our homelands, and much more.

*“There are multiple reasons for and a long history of decreasing decision-making power due to colonialism. Today we face uncertainty in a management system that is fragmented among the Alaska state, U.S. federal government and international agreements. This fragmentation occurs across multiple agencies and, at times, within one governing system. We are left with decisions and policies made outside of our culture and oftentimes outside of Alaska. These decisions are often based solely in Western science ideology and are not place-based. This top-down, fragmented approach to management forces us to use another culture’s standards to live within the Arctic and dismisses our IK and our way of living. These frameworks within which decisions are made are not transparent, and traditional ways of managing are not usually considered. Current policies and decisions often leave us and the entire ecosystem forced into a box that does not belong here.”*

– ICC Inuit Food Security Technical Report, pg. 71

*“There are many positive examples throughout Alaska in which IK holders are engaged in a respectful and positive way; where equitable relationships lie between Inuit and those working with them to better understand the Arctic and address challenges faced today... [we] aim to make them the norm as opposed to the exception.”*

– ICC Inuit Food Security Technical Report, pg. 17.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JAMES HARRIS, ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND, AK

PHOTO PROVIDED BY ICC CANADA



## CANADA – INUIT NUNANGAT

The four Inuit regions are largely defined by modern land claim agreements between the government of Canada and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavik, Nunavut, and Nunatsiavut. Collectively, the four Inuit regions in Canada are known as *Inuit Nunangat*, or Canadian Inuit homelands. Inuit rights to self-governance and self-determination have been strongly asserted within Canada. Inuit rights within Canada are affirmed in *The Constitution Act 1982*, the four Inuit land claim agreements, and various international commitments.

*“While there is a lot of research conducted in the North, Arctic research agendas, questions and methodologies are often determined in the South. Arctic communities are often not meaningfully engaged, consulted, or informed. What counts as meaningful engagement and effective incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into research is often left to individual researchers to interpret.”*

– SciQ: Science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit





PHOTO PROVIDED BY TUKUMMINNGIAQ NYKLAER OLSEN

## GREENLAND – KALAALLIT NUNAAT

Greenland is home to approximately 60,000 Inuit who attained self-government from Denmark in 2009, though they remain within the Danish realm. For Greenland, that means having sovereignty and administration over education, health, fisheries, environment, and climate. There is a future possibility that Greenland will take over the jurisdiction of more areas, that are still under Danish jurisdiction including justice affairs, police, criminal procedures, the courts of law, defence and national security, and foreign affairs. Greenland is a bilingual country in which Greenlandic is the main language and Danish is the other.

ICC Greenland is committed, in part, to elevating the importance of Indigenous rights for Inuit within Greenland and within international fora. In this regard, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has been translated into Greenlandic.

*“Over the last years it has been increasingly difficult to engage in constructive dialogue with the Greenland Government on Indigenous issues. There seems to be a need for educating both politicians and government officials of the importance of enhanced dialogue and involvement.”* – respondent

*“It is needed in the future to strengthen the communication of values to [others] and help them understand that equal cooperation and co-production requires full acceptance for the agreed upon values.”* – respondent

# SYNTHESIS: GUIDING ENGAGEMENT WITH INUIT COMMUNITIES

## Importance of Engaging with Inuit Communities

Inuit already fund, administer, and lead research, management, governance, and decision making through our Inuit institutions, organizations, and Inuit-led governments. Inuit are also researchers, managers, policy makers, industry professionals, hunters and fishers, lawyers, artists, teachers, and students. We are already experts in countless areas and are willing to use that expertise to guide our futures. Engaging our communities directly helps center Inuit priorities in governance, and attention to how this engagement takes place is critical to pursuing sovereignty and self-governance. Circumpolar protocols/guidelines help ensure that all activities occurring within our homelands are in accordance with Inuit rights, values, and perspectives.

Additionally, any work with Indigenous knowledge must necessarily be conducted with Inuit communities so that community members have the means to direct and control the collection and use of data and material informed by that knowledge. New projects and joint ventures are opportunities to redefine relationships between Inuit communities and others, including with organizations, institutions, industries, and governments. Engagement with Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge holders may also provide these entities with unique solutions and strategies to the pressing problems of our current times.

## Respecting Our Communities in Engagement

While direct engagement is integral to working together, many Inuit communities and organizations have reported insufficient processes that fail to proceed in ways that are ethical. Guidance for the engagement of our communities must address common misconduct that inhibits the development of productive relationships, projects, and decision making processes. Continued misconduct with communities has led to some communities rejecting engagement opportunities entirely, or bypassing engagement to pursue projects independently. If organizations, institutions, industries, and governments want to continue engaging with Inuit communities in the future, our values, perspectives, needs, and rights must be upheld.

Inuit values, like those listed in Figure 2 in the values section of this synthesis report, shape our engagement expectations and norms. For instance, community members have voiced and recorded the importance of

communication style in engagement efforts. For example, it is important to develop interpersonal relationships with others, respect cultural calendars and community bonding, speak only when you have finished listening, take long pauses, and accept that meetings will take however long they take. These, and many other cultural differences, are important to learn and understand so that those engaged in the process have the opportunity to develop trust and mutual respect. The guidance here does not address these particular expectations and norms but recognizes the importance of these intercultural skills in co-existing with our communities.

## Community Participation in Engagement Protocols/Guidelines

Circumpolar protocols/guidelines for the engagement of Inuit communities must be in place to allow Inuit to participate fully in engagement opportunities within international fora. Some Inuit communities and organizations have already developed protocols and guidelines for local, regional, and national levels of engagement. ICC recognizes that the values and standards of engagement may differ from one community to the next, as all communities are unique and have different norms and preferences. Inuit know the best way to work with a community is to spend the time, money, and energy getting to know them. The guidance compiled here in no way diminishes the importance of these differences but aims to provide a way forward within international fora that gives communities room to determine what is right for themselves. Again, the development of ICC's circumpolar engagement protocols/guidelines aims to support, and not supersede any other rules, laws, values, guidelines, or protocols operating in Inuit communities.

## Common Concerns Raised by Inuit Regarding Engagement of Communities

The following points were collected for this synthesis report through a review of documents and discussions to highlight common concerns regarding people coming into our communities. Within some Inuit homelands, there are policies and agreements that speak to addressing many of these issues, and while the below concerns do not occur in all situations, they are consistently raised by Inuit. People coming into our communities may:

## **Governance**

- Move forward with proposed activities without understanding Inuit governance structures and fail to engage these structures for proper access to communities, lands, and waters, i.e. ethics reviews and permitting processes.
- Conduct research and activities within Inuit homelands without meaningful engagement of Inuit and/or guidance from Inuit on various components of the work being carried out, i.e. timing, methodologies, etc.
- Implement or reinforce top-down approaches rather than preferred bottom-up approaches.
- Try to conduct their activities despite a lack of engagement and without broad community knowledge and consent.
- Perpetuate illogical or conflicting legal frameworks at multiple scales.
- Enforce laws and interpretations of the law that may not reflect and accommodate our distinct legal status, rights, and roles as Inuit.
- Fail to provide communication and a flow of information that runs from Inuit communities, through governing bodies, and then back to communities.
- Develop policies, laws, and regulations that are consistently externally imposed and are reflective of other cultures' values rather than Inuit values, i.e. single-species management, siloed research questions, etc.
- Fail to understand government agreements, treaties, and other understandings made with Inuit, how to approach these processes, and how to implement them during engagement.
- Utilize practices that perpetuate systemic racism, i.e. are single-knowledge based.

- Use behaviour, language, and approaches that demoralize, belittle, or intimidate Inuit when in a position of authority.

## **Cultural Competency**

- Demonstrate a lack of respect for the importance of seasonality during engagement, both of traditional practices and modern culture, i.e. scheduling meetings during hunting seasons or other community activities.
- In consultation, demonstrate a lack of consideration for time and financial resources, translation needs, location of meetings, and the formation of the meeting, i.e. the way discussions are held.
- Do not work in partnership with communities and Indigenous Knowledge holders to agree upon processes and compensation prior to beginning work, resulting in common practices of people not being compensated for their expertise and time, poorly compensated, or not compensated in a culturally appropriate way.
- Perpetuate and normalize generations of policies, laws, and regulations that challenge and disconnect youth in understanding their cultural identity and connections to the world.

## **Information and Decision Making**

- Pursue consultation, dialogs, or discussions without clearly identified processes.
- Support national and international level policies and decision making processes that tend to be top-down and hierarchical and lack representation from Inuit who are affected by these decisions, which can slow response times and limit adaptations to change, i.e. environmental or economic change.

- Perpetuate definitions of 'meaningful consultation' that may be very different from understandings and definition from an Inuit perspective, i.e. that consultation is a burden on government procedure.
- Attempt to settle disagreements in ways that are not equitable, i.e. Inuit know that objecting can backfire, leading to no substantive changes.
- Come to our community with a mindset to teach rather than the mindset to learn.
- Researchers, decision makers and international bodies often take a position that they know more than Inuit and our communities and focus on teaching and explaining what the problems and solutions are, as oppose to listening, learning, and building relationships to move toward partnerships.
- Fail to share developed materials or information with the communities who contributed their knowledge.
- Lack recognition for information sovereignty and need for accessibility of information generated through agreed upon culturally appropriate platforms and materials, i.e. often materials are not shared with communities and/or are not accessible.

## **Funding**

- Often underfund, or do not fund, Inuit organizations and Indigenous knowledge holders to attend governance discussions and are thus unable to play an equitable role within the context of cooperative agreements where shared Indigenous knowledge has direct relevance and consequences.

## SYNTHESIZED GUIDANCE FOR ENGAGING WITH INUIT COMMUNITIES

Through the work of this synthesis report, the following points were collected through review of documents and discussions to highlight guidance for engaging with our communities.

- **All activities and decisions must be ethical, equitable, fair, just, and meaningful** – and Inuit communities and Inuit organizations engaged in these activities and decisions should determine whether or not this is the case.
- **Inuit must have access to decision making pathways** – at all scales and levels of governance so that Inuit can lead the way in decision making that affects Inuit homelands
- **Engagement must recognize and foster Inuit self-determination and self-governance** – and Inuit must be involved in the development and interpretation of all policies, laws, and enforcement of those policies and laws within our homelands.
- **Inuit must have the right to accept or deny any engagement opportunities** – in accordance with Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, Inuit communities, organizations, and governments must have the ability to accept, accept with conditions, or deny activities and negotiate the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Direction must be taken from Inuit leadership** – as to if and when it is appropriate to engage Inuit communities and Indigenous knowledge holders.
- **Inuit governance structures must be respected** - all engagement activities must respect and recognize, and go through, Inuit governance structures and organizations, even when not required by national or regional laws.
- **Inuit must be involved from the beginning** – as early communication and feedback can support engagement efforts, especially for projects that directly impact conditions in Inuit communities, that concern Indigenous knowledge, or occur within Inuit homelands.
- **Cultural differences must be respected** – and engagement activities must respect and accommodate differences in values, cultural norms, and preferred communication and decision making styles within Inuit communities and organizations.
- **The right individuals must be identified** – and direction must be taken from Inuit organizations and governments in identifying Indigenous knowledge holders, scholars, and youth for their expertise and insights.
- **Adequate capacity must be provided for** – so that Inuit may engage fully within all activities occurring within, or affecting, Inuit homelands, including at the local level within Inuit organizations and at the national and international level within governmental and non-governmental fora, working groups, conferences, trainings, and other initiatives.
- **Funding needs should be determined by Inuit organizations and governments** – as well as the authority to determine the allocation of funds, provision of funding and logistical support to communities, and this funding should be increased annually beyond the rate of inflation and in proportion to need.
- **Funding must be made available to Inuit** – so that Inuit organizations and governments may address our own community-driven research questions and concerns, and these funding opportunities should be stable, long-term, support capacity building, and be available at all scales of governance.
- **Funding should be allocated to support in-house experts** – within Indigenous organization and governments in order to better conduct activities that are directly guided by communities.
- **Direct pathways to engagement must be developed** – so that Inuit communities can actively and effectively participate in decision making processes and determine what is discussed at meetings at all levels, such as through Inuit authorities, Inuit organizations, boards, management bodies, or other advisory or co-production venues.

- ***Inuit must be involved in agenda-setting*** – for research priorities, project priorities, funding priorities, and other decision making processes that require input from Inuit.
- ***Inuit must be allowed to direct procedure*** – including the ability to set the agenda, facilitate dialogue and meetings, and govern proceedings in a fashion that respects and recognizes Inuit cultural contexts, including format and face-to-face meetings, language and dialects, interpretation if needed, provision of food, and the development of written materials and visuals.
- ***Engagement must go beyond consultation*** – as agreed upon and directed by Inuit so that communities may provide more than an advisory role in decision making, may take on more opportunities to lead projects and decision making, and receive veto power for decisions made within Inuit homelands.
- ***Decisions discussed in consultation must prioritize Inuit rights*** – concerns, and voices, and should be substantive exchanges of ideas, knowledge, and views between partners, and equitable weight must be given to Inuit perspectives.
- ***Engagement must foster co-management and Inuit-led decision making bodies*** – including the development and sustained support of these bodies.
- ***Processes should address power dynamics*** – and shift these power dynamics to ensure equitable intellectual and political space for Inuit.
- ***Clear communications must be provided*** – between Inuit communities and decision making bodies, and should support the use of plain language, translation, and interpretation of the appropriate Inuit dialects at the direct of Inuit.
- ***Governments must support policies that allow for objection-and-review processes*** – that respect the right to self-determination, including recognition for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent and the ability to say yes, yes with condition, and no.
- ***Compensation must be provided*** – and agreed upon prior to beginning, as Inuit community members should not be expected to give their knowledge, expertise, time, or labor for free, and this compensation must be on par with compensation given to professional experts regardless of the individual’s educational attainment.
- ***Transparency is critical*** – as participation and engagement in research, management, governance, and decision making must be transparent from conception onwards, including intentions, uses of information such as Indigenous knowledge, and with specifics on how Inuit communities will contribute to, and shape, engagement activities and decision making processes as well as how they may be impacted.
- ***Justification must be provided to all participants*** – for all decisions and in all instances, including providing information on potential impacts of decisions to Inuit.
- ***Direction on safety must be taken from Inuit*** – as many Inuit and Indigenous knowledge holders are experts at navigating their homelands and competing leadership while on the land or water can compromise life and physical safety.
- ***Engagement activities must give back to the community*** – and must seek to provide direct value to communities, by providing goods and services such as free materials and reports in the appropriate languages, aiding in the collection of Indigenous knowledge, support for new educational and employment opportunities, addressing and solving community needs, and finding funding for the collection and storage of Indigenous knowledge, as directed by Inuit.
- ***All materials and products must be reviewed with opportunity for evaluation*** – by the Inuit community or organization engaged in producing those materials and products, and must occur prior to release to the general public in order to identify incorrect or sensitive information, including for materials and products such as reports, policies, laws, books, films, art installations, translations, databases, maps, etc., as directed by Inuit.

# SYNTHESIS: GUIDING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INUIT METHODOLOGIES

## What are Inuit Methodologies?

Inuit have our own methodologies for learning about the world, solving problems, and making decisions. Like our values, our methodologies are pathways for knowing and understanding the world, its interrelated components, and all aspects of our spiritual, cultural, and ecological wellbeing. There is an increasingly awareness for, and interest in, our methodologies and how we implement them. A small number of materials collected for this synthesis report call for recognizing, trusting, and respecting Inuit methodologies.

In this synthesis report we reflect on two aspects of Inuit methodologies. One aspect of Indigenous methodologies is reflective of the gathering of information, evaluation, and validation of Indigenous knowledge. Another aspect focuses on community engagement - how we interact with each other, identify problems, and discuss solutions. Both aspects of methodologies are guided by the Inuit values and ways of viewing the world discussed earlier in this synthesis report.

Inuit methodologies connect values to engagement standards and provide substantial direction for how engagement activities should be structured to meet engagement standards. Methodologies such as those referenced here are practiced daily within communities, and though many of these methodologies are unrecorded, they should be recognized, trusted, and respected as valid ways of addressing questions, problems, and potential solutions.

**What is a methodology?** – a methodology is a specific way of doing something. It is the framework by which we collect, synthesize, apply, and evaluate information. Scientists have methodologies that help them identify and solve problems in the world. There are many methodologies within our Indigenous knowledge that help us identify and solve problems in our communities and in understanding the environment that we are a part of.

## Indigenous Knowledge Methodologies

Indigenous knowledge has developed over millennia and is still developing in a living process. It is through various Indigenous knowledge methodologies that knowledge holders identify new information, trends, challenges, and solutions in a changing environment. Figure 4 illustrates the Arctic ecosystem. This drawing is born directly from Indigenous knowledge through an Inuit led project on food security conducted in Alaska (ICC 2015). The drawing aids in illustrating how Indigenous knowledge methodologies help us understand the relationships between different components of the ecosystems. Indigenous knowledge methodologies may include elements of (ICC AK 2016; ICC AK 2017):

- Assessing new information and identifying impacts to other components and their relationships.
- Know-how in approaching research questions, observing systems, and adaptive decision-making based on Indigenous knowledge.
- Viewing the world holistically and for its robustness of variables and connections, in contrast to science which is often siloed and attempts to limit variables.
- Identifying important indicators of change, sustainability, and every sense of the word 'health'
- Maintaining baseline data about various ecosystem components
- Looking forward to predict future ecosystem dynamics, such as where species may move, may become more abundant, or may decline.
- Approaching the analysis of new information and environmental trends.

## Community Engagement Methodologies

Separate from, though interconnected to, Indigenous knowledge methodologies, communities also have methodologies for addressing issues and problem solving collectively. These methodologies go beyond the western scientific process to also guide how we interact with each other and address questions, problems, and potential solutions at a more interpersonal level. Inuit engagement methodologies may include elements of:

- Relationships building between members of the community, between generations, between knowledge holders and others, and between Inuit and non-Inuit.
- Creating greater meaning by exploring the challenges and opportunities, developing research questions, building a shared evidence base, and finding common ground.
- Developing open and respectful communication through the dismantling of power structures and dynamics.
- Sharing in community activities and cultural practices to pass knowledge and information in culturally-relevant ways.
- Telling stories, exploring narratives, and discussing issues with Indigenous knowledge holders, youth, and other experts.
- Fostering community-driven priorities by raising awareness and engaging in community outreach
- Sharing lived experiences through multiple formats including stories, narratives, audio, video, and voice.
- Coming to consensus and seeking validation by sharing back information, interpreting data, and gathering to make collective decisions.
- Pursuing co-production of knowledge processes between Inuit and those interested in our communities and our homelands.

## Inuit Methodologies in Engagement Protocols/Guidelines

Within the context of this report, both Indigenous knowledge methodologies and methodologies for community engagement are important for directing how Inuit values, world views, and perspectives can be used to guide engagement in structured ways. For example, Inuit use both kinds of methodologies daily within decision making processes. An example of this synthesis is captured as follows:

*It is common practice within our communities for observations and information of any kind to be discussed with Elders and those determined by their peers to be the most knowledgeable. Those people speak with their peers to bring further context to the information based on their wealth of knowledge and experience and to provide analysis of the information. This process is an evaluation and validation process,”* (ICC 2015, pg. 27).

An attention to Indigenous methodologies will help others to understand how Inuit approach Indigenous knowledge and how we engage with knowledge and decision making processes within communities. A final piece towards understanding and achieving ethical engagement is the attention to how Inuit approach permissions.

*“Each community has its own personality and engagement preferences.” – respondent*

*“People pay consultants a lot of money, but when they come to our communities, they expect us to work for free.” – respondent*

*“Communities are burnt out and everyone is taking up too much of their time.” – respondent*

*“You come to our land and our people, you let us be the boss - we don’t care what kind of PhD you have.” – respondent*



*Image reference* – Inuit Circumpolar Council-Alaska. 2015. Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic From an Inuit Perspective. Technical Report. Anchorage, Alaska.

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**Figure 4: Alaska Inuit Arctic Ecosystem as Interlinked Puzzle Pieces**

*This is a healthy Arctic ecosystem. As one Elder explains, the Arctic environment is like a puzzle, with all pieces having a place and all pieces needed to make up the entire puzzle. It has multiple pieces where there are dances, feasts, sharing, learning, observing, collecting water and food. The zooplankton, whales, fish, caribou, berries, and many other pieces fit together to make up this puzzle — they adjust to each other and move but are always connected. A challenge arises when only one piece of the puzzle is viewed on its own. This description of the environment helps explain how the Arctic ecosystem is made up of multiple parts. Scientists may also understand this explanation in terms of system science. Each puzzle piece can be envisioned as a system that together makes up the entire ecosystem. Our culture is a system within this larger ecosystem. Just as the hydrologic system is part of the Arctic ecosystem, our cultural system is interconnected with all aspects of the larger ecosystem.*



# SYNTHESIS: GUIDING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PERMISSIONS

## WHAT IS MEANT BY PERMISSIONS?

During the course of this project, many Inuit referenced the inadequacy of, or misconduct around, ‘permissions.’ In the modern world, there are many mechanisms under western legal concepts that grant permission to do things. The first is permission granted by permitting, such as the use of permits to enter Inuit homelands and or to conduct research in a community. The second is permission granted by consent, such as the audio recording of Indigenous knowledge holders or medical research on community members. The third is permission granted by contracts, such as the rights to develop lands for mining or the duty to keep a community informed of government activities. The fourth is permission granted by property rights, such as ownership of information derived from Indigenous knowledge and access to research materials collected in Inuit homelands. In some circumstances, mechanisms that grant permission may be in place to protect our communities and our knowledge, but in other circumstances, these mechanisms might put our sovereignty and self-determination at risk. Three considerations here are the role of consent, the role of contracts, and the role of ownership laws in ensuring the ethical engagement of our communities and our knowledge. Box 4 explores a positive example of an Inuit-defined contracting protocol.

### Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

The right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is fundamental to the right to self-determination and is affirmed by UNDRIP and other international legal frameworks. FPIC ensures that Inuit exercise their right to give or withhold consent to activities occurring within our homelands or communities, and enables negotiations for project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Though there is a growing body of instructions on how to implement FPIC, the development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines could include language on FPIC in relation to the engagement of Indigenous knowledge and Inuit communities.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ICC CANADA

### Box 4: Supporting Inuit Defined Contracts

Inuit have the right to define, develop, and assert our own concepts of consent, contractual obligations, and ownership laws. We do not necessarily have to follow western legal concepts such as typical consent and contracting protocols for engagement that concerns our community members or our knowledge.

One protocol that may harm engagement efforts is the common ‘holds harmless’ clause. ‘Holds harmless’ prohibits community members from disputing any misuse of information or misconduct, which protects the researcher/industry professional/ decision maker from facing responsibility for any wrongdoing.

In response to harmful clauses that fail to protect our communities, many Inuit organizations have developed their own consent and contracting protocols. One Inuit-owned Alaskan non-profit providing education opportunities to its communities, have considered a ‘quyana contract,’ or a ‘thank you contract.’ Instead of relying on western legal concepts that include a ‘holds harmless’ clause, a quyana contract would instead require the contracting organization to describe its duties to share what they learn with the community rather than require community members to ‘hold harmless’ the organization to which they provide information.

## Knowledge Ownership and Storage

Inuit need access, ownership, and control over information, data, and materials pertaining to our knowledge and our homelands. This includes materials that hold and maintain our knowledge and were collected either under, or against, intellectual and cultural property rights. These materials may include, but are not limited to:

- Databases and repositories of Indigenous knowledge including those holding songs, arts and carvings, dances, tools, and other cultural resources.
- Books, films, and other media regarding Inuit
- Environmental and risk assessments regarding Inuit homelands
- Research publications regarding Inuit

Circumpolar protocols/guidelines should include language on the ethical use and storage of information derived from Indigenous knowledge holders to ensure that intellectual and cultural property rights are maintained. For Indigenous knowledge, western legal concepts of property rights may be insufficient. The development of circumpolar protocols/guidelines may be an opportunity to assert that often communities, rather than individuals, own information, data, and materials related to Indigenous knowledge.

*Indigenous knowledge is fundamental to the cultural survival of Inuit in Inuit Nunaat. Appreciating the knowledge of hunters and fishers is the basis for food security of all kinds.*

**- Hjalmar Dahl, ICC-Greenland Vice Chair**



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JACKIE CLEVELAND, AK

## CONCLUSION

To support Inuit sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance, we must develop circumpolar engagement protocols/guidelines for our communities and our knowledge. It is through these protocols/guidelines that we can continue to assert the future we want for ourselves – a future in which we can fully participate in the activities occurring within our homelands. Through recognition of our values, our knowledge, our communities, our methodologies, and our understandings of agreements and permission, we can change our reality. When the time comes for our communities to develop these protocols/guidelines, this guidance seeks to ensure that Inuit voices from across our homelands are represented in that discussion and that we may reach consensus on what is important to advance within international fora.

# ANNEX 1: UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES<sup>1</sup>

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) contains a number of interrelated articles that hold relevance for Inuit in regard to the information presented in this report. The Pikialasorsuaq Commission pulled together a number of these articles to highlight Inuit rights in a brief review:

In accordance with UNDRIP, Inuit have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international human rights law (Article 1).

In exercising our collective human rights, Inuit have the right to:

- self-determination and to freely determine their political status and to freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development (Article 3)
- autonomy and self-government in matters relating to internal and local affairs, as well as the right to ways and means for financing their autonomous functions (Article 4)
- maintain and strengthen distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining the right to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the State (Article 5)
- participate in decision-making in matters, which would affect these rights, through representatives chosen by the Inuit in accordance with Inuit procedures, as well as to maintain and develop indigenous decision-making institutions (Article 18)
- Inuit have a right to ensure that government consults and cooperates with them, in good faith and through their own representative institutions to implement their right to free, prior and informed consent before the adoption and implementation of legislative or administrative matters that may affect them (Article 19)

- maintain and develop their political, economic, and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all traditional and other economic activities (Article 20)
- control their Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property, including their knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games, and visual and performing arts (Article 31)

Central to the Commission's Recommendations is that Inuit have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas, and other resources and to uphold these responsibilities to future generations in this regard (Article 25). Further Inuit have the right to:

- the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired (Article 26). Inuit have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired (Article 26)
- the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of these lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination (Article 29)
- determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of these lands or territories and other resources (Article 32)
- maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic, and social purposes, with our 'Inuit' as well as other peoples across borders (Article 36).

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: ICC. 2016. "People of the Ice Bridge: the future of the Pikialasorsuaq," (pg. A18-A19). Pikialasorsuaq Commission, Inuit Circumpolar Council.

## ANNEX 2: SYNTHESIS DOCUMENTS

Listed here are the documents reviewed for inclusion in this synthesis report. Additional information presented in this report has come from verbal discussions. Links to these documents can be accessed at [iccalaska.org](http://iccalaska.org).

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