

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas – Supporting Conditions for Success:

Lessons and Experiences from Jurisdictions Across Canada



Table of Contents

Foreword	2
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Methodology	5
What We Heard	10
• Deliverable 1: Initiating and fostering conservation partnerships	10
• Deliverable 2: A compilation of IPCAs and similar initiatives across Canada	17
• Deliverable 3: Guidance on capacity building	19
Suggestions for Moving Forward in a Good Way	23
Examples of IPCAs and Other Conservation Initiatives Involving Indigenous Leadership	24
Conclusion	30
Additional Resources	31
Appendix I: Sondage axé sur la collecte de connaissances des aires protégées et de conservation autochtones (APCA)	32
Appendix II: Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area Knowledge Gathering Survey	35

Foreword

By Curtis Scurr and Wesley Johnston, IPCA Working Group Co-Chairs

As we reflected for this report, the process of getting here and our role as Co-chairs of the Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) Working Group, we found ourselves coming back to the teachings of the Grass Dance shared with us at Wanuskewin and, in particular, the role of the Grass Benders. In the tradition of the Great Plains, the Grass Dance prepares the grass, as a protocol, for upcoming gatherings and ceremonies. The bending of the grass is grounded on the principle of respect and intended to create space for future gathering, dialogue or ceremony. That is what we saw as our primary role in this process, as we do in the Working Group as a whole. We have endeavoured to “bend the grass,” so to speak, by holding a safe and mutually respectful shared space where we could talk with partners as collaborative peers: an Ethical Space. While our path was not entirely clear at the beginning, we have found our way here together through the application of Ethical Space and respectful dialogue. This report, however, does not mark the end of this effort. Instead, it is a point in time, a pause for reflection in an ongoing collective journey. This work is a contribution toward the domestic implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, both as the Aichi Targets come to a close and as this work continues beyond 2020 and, to the extent possible, it informs Canada’s efforts to better integrate nature and conservation efforts in the negotiation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

This report is both a resource and a story. As you engage in it, you take on a responsibility as a curious reader. While the suggestions we include are broad, your responsibility as a reader is to determine what kind of partner or ally you are and how these recommendations might inform your own efforts to support Indigenous-led conservation and the establishment of IPCAs. Carry respect with you, and your process and learning will reflect that value. Ultimately, all we have learned during the course of this journey to date has showed us that this is much more about relationships and conversations than it is about defining an Indigenous Protected or Conserved Area. Perhaps this journey, then, is more about “how” than it is “what.” Sometimes this can be uncomfortable, but that is okay. In fact, that is the point, for progress and growth are only possible when we challenge ourselves.

From a Eurocentric standpoint, this report is considered a success as it has fulfilled a specific set of agreed-upon deliverables. But if we reframe our idea of success and expand it, we find that we are successful because we have learned and broadened our understanding of the processes of collaboration. This idea, this process, must be a long-term commitment. This is about seven generations and more. It is about demystifying terms and sharing stories, supporting Indigenous-led conservation and acknowledging that this journey looks different for every participant, partner and Indigenous Nation. So although this report might represent an outcome in the conventional sense, it is really an inquiry: where are we going next, and how? What ceremonies, gatherings and important conversations will follow now that the grass is bent?

We leave these questions with you, as we are all part of the answers.



2 / Pat Kane photo in Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta IPCA

Executive Summary

The primary purpose of the Knowledge Gathering Process (KGP) and this report is to help create and support the conditions for success and resilience of IPCAs and other forms of Indigenous leadership in conservation. It also fulfils the IPCA Working Group deliverables agreed to by the Pathway to Canada Target 1 National Steering Committee. These deliverables include:

1. Guidance on important conversations needed to initiate and foster conservation partnerships
2. A compilation of IPCAs and similar initiatives across Canada
3. Guidance on capacity building

The methodology used to inform this report emphasizes the importance of process over outcomes and was intended to be flexible, inclusive and adaptive to changing circumstances. The KGP outcomes included a scan and summary of existing resources and the compilation of survey responses from a number of Pathway members.

What we read and heard during this process can be summarized into key themes related to each of the identified deliverables.

Initiating and fostering conservation partnerships. How to approach conversations about conservation partnerships should be informed by the “Four Moose” narrative outlined in *We Rise Together*, as well as the principles of Ethical Space. Respondents emphasized the importance of focusing on building strong relationships, approaching conversations with empathy and honesty, creating safe spaces, being prepared, and being committed to and supportive of co-developing approaches and outcomes. Respondents also shared examples of important conversations to have when developing conservation partnerships, including exploring common interests, defining the scope, exploring funding options and navigating questions about jurisdiction.

Examples of IPCAs and other similar initiatives. Throughout the KGP, many examples of existing and emerging IPCAs and other conserved and protected area initiatives involving Indigenous leadership were identified. These examples offer insight into what is possible and what these types of initiatives can look like in different contexts. The diversity of examples demonstrates that all forms of Indigenous-led conservation can offer benefits and useful lessons, regardless of whether all the partners involved would use the term “IPCA” to describe them. These examples also demonstrate a variety of creative ways to navigate the jurisdictional landscape of Canada.

Guidance on capacity building. Respondents and resources identified a need for continued work to build capacity, and in particular internal government capacity, to be able to support IPCAs and other forms of Indigenous-led conservation. They also identified multi-year funding and time as key elements of capacity development and spoke about building relationships as an important part of building capacity. Policy development on reconciliation and ethical space would support government capacity building.

This report is not intended to be the conclusion of this work, but rather a snapshot of an ongoing reciprocal learning and sharing process. Next steps include engagement with wider Pathway partners and ongoing collection and mobilization of useful resources.

Introduction

The purpose of this report, and the process that it represents, is to help create and support the conditions for success and sustainability of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and other forms of Indigenous-led conservation. For the purpose of this report, Indigenous-led conservation can include a spectrum of governance models (including sole Indigenous governance and co-management), so long as the Indigenous governments, organizations and communities themselves get to choose the path and governance model they want to pursue.

The process reflected in this report was undertaken by the Pathway to Canada Target 1 NSC Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas Working Group (IPCA Working Group). The IPCA Working Group conducts its work through a distinctions-based, nation-to-nation approach that respects the diversity of First Nations, Inuit, Métis Nation and other Métis Peoples.

At the outset of this process in early 2020, the Knowledge Gathering Process (KGP) was to be held in two phases: first, through engagement with National Steering Committee (NSC) members, and second, through engagement with a broader group of partners in the Pathway process, including Indigenous leaders in conservation. In parallel, there was a significant effort made to seek out, collect and annotate supporting resources for the conditions of success and resilience.

This report, compiled from the available resources in December 2020, represents a point in a journey that is ongoing. Due to the unprecedented events of 2020 and shifting levels of capacity and time, this report represents knowledge gathered from NSC members; the second phase of broader engagement has yet to occur. Still, the efforts made by all those who were able to remain involved should not go unrecognized.

The knowledge shared by participants in this process to date is meaningful and important to the field of Indigenous leadership in conservation. It is not complete. By its very nature, it will never be complete, but rather a representation of a particular point in a learning journey that should carry on in perpetuity.

We advise readers to engage fully with the knowledge within, to follow the links and resources, and to reflect on the process of *how* this report came to fruition. As you read, consider the gaps, the places where we need to dig deeper to learn more. This report is not just about what we have learned; it is about where we are going, together, and perhaps more importantly *how*. We also encourage you to find yourself within it, and to reach out if you want to get more involved, since this work and its mobilization will certainly need to continue.

Methodology

The knowledge gathered for and mobilized in this report is informed by the IPCA Working Group Knowledge Gathering Process (KGP). The primary purpose of this process is to help create and support the conditions for success and resilience of IPCAs and other forms of Indigenous leadership in conservation. It also fulfils the IPCA Working Group deliverables agreed to by the National Steering Committee (i.e. guidance on important conversations and capacity building, and a compilation of IPCA-like areas in Canada). This report assembles the information gathered in order to mobilize needed knowledge and to help lift up and showcase ongoing and future Indigenous conservation initiatives across Canada.

An emphasis on process

This process was centred on the “*how*” being just as important, if not more important than, the “*what*.” The emphasis was on process over outcome. In other words, the KGP was not just about delivering the knowledge that was compiled, but also lessons about the process of doing so in a good way. For this reason, the methodology employed is as important as the suggestions on what to do moving forward. The methodology is itself a reflexive learning experience that forms part of the knowledge gathered.

The process was co-designed with Pathway members. The IPCA Working Group discussed potential audiences, purpose, methodologies, questions and participants for the KGP. One goal was to make sure the outcome was useful not only for federal, provincial, territorial and municipal officials, but also for other audiences as allies, to inform the creation and mobilization of their own processes and products. With the NSC’s endorsement, the IPCA Working Group settled on an approach that involved engaging a wide range of Pathway partners in two phases. The results in this report focus only on the first phase of participants, NSC members.

The process itself was carried out in a collaborative way. Each jurisdiction was encouraged to approach the KGP in a way that worked best for them. Co-chairs held preparatory meetings with participants to frame the process, catalyze planning, uncover limitations and discuss what approach worked best for each individual jurisdiction. Through this process, some survey questions were nuanced based on feedback, and all participants were encouraged to take a flexible approach to answering the proposed questions.



I / Thaidene Nënë

Note that this work was largely undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, a recognition of the realities of working within these challenging circumstances was especially important, and efforts were made to adapt original timelines and processes for receiving responses and submissions. Shifting away from normal practices posed some technological and other challenges, but also allowed for increased flexibility. Some jurisdictions, however, were not able to contribute due to sustained capacity limitations. It is hoped that as they return to a place of possible, they will engage in the journey again.

Key components of the KGP

The knowledge summarized in this report was collected through two key components:

1. **Annotated Bibliography:** a scan of existing resources that support the establishment and implementation of IPCAs and Indigenous leadership in conservation. These resources have been compiled into an Annotated Bibliography, which, due to its usefulness, has already been distributed for partners’ use.

2. **Survey Questions:** a survey (see Appendixes I and II for the survey in French and English). Participants responded to the surveys and submitted their responses to the IPCA Working Group Secretariat.

Partners in this process were informed that the raw data from the survey would not be shared in the final report so as to remain anonymous. Instead, the feedback was coded generally and qualitatively by theme. Efforts were made to ensure that feedback is non-attributable wherever possible, unless express permission was obtained to share a specific attributable example. The purpose of this was to foster a spirit of respect and encourage transparency, to ensure that partners felt safe responding to the questions asked and to ensure that the information shared was as accurate as possible.

1. Annotated Bibliography

The [Annotated Bibliography](#) is a spreadsheet of annotated resources that includes documentation on lessons learned, best practices and impediments related to operationalizing Indigenous leadership in conservation and IPCAs. The spreadsheet is sortable by various themes and keywords, and includes summaries of and links to each resource. Summaries and other key information were added to each resource to make it easier to scan through this vast amount of information and find resources that may be useful for a particular situation, question or audience. This document is intended to be evergreen and all users are encouraged to provide feedback or additional resources to be added.

The Annotated Bibliography is a key IPCA Working Group contribution to the development of the Solutions Bundle as part of the broader partnership. The Solutions Bundle is an online space being coordinated by Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership, which is intended to make these types of resources more broadly available. The Solutions Bundle website is currently under development, though a preliminary search engine is now available [here](#).

The IPCA Working Group has been engaged in the design process for what the Solutions Bundle will look like and will continue to stay involved in this process going forward. It also continues to collect resources to be added to the Annotated Bibliography and Solutions Bundle on an ongoing basis.

2. KGP Survey

The survey (see Appendixes I & II) was a list of thematic questions grouped according to the three NSC deliverables, as follows:

1. Guidance on important conversations to initiate and foster conservation partnerships
 - What conversations are useful to have when building new partnerships (such as identifying what each party needs from the conversation/relationship), and guidance on how to have these important conversations in an ethical space
2. A compilation of IPCAs and similar initiatives identified by the KGP partners
 - An analysis of existing protected and conserved areas that demonstrate the spectrum of Indigenous leadership in Canada and the conditions that have led to these areas being successful
3. Guidance on capacity building
 - Recommendation and options on how FPT governments can work with Indigenous partners to help build their own capacity and the capacity of Indigenous partners to meaningfully collaborate in conservation partnerships

The survey was the foundational document of the KGP. Six members of the IPCA Working Group provided responses to the survey: Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Parks Canada Agency, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Environment and Climate Change Canada's response also incorporated some initial input from other members of the Federal Community of Practice on IPCAs in order to reflect broader federal perspectives. Respondents were not instructed to adhere strictly to the questions, although many of them did respond to each. They were encouraged to be flexible in their written responses. For example, if a respondent did not conduct capacity-building work, they were free to omit that section of the survey. Additionally, respondents were encouraged to provide information that they thought was important even if it did not fit explicitly within any of the deliverables or questions.

Prior to engaging in the KGP, the IPCA Working Group Co-Chairs also offered one-on-one preparatory meetings with those interested in participating to answer questions, brainstorm potential approaches for conducting the work and gauge the support that might be required. These meetings were valuable for providing context and generating ideas for how each jurisdiction could best complete the process. All members who participated took different approaches to gathering the knowledge needed to complete the survey. For example, some conducted brainstorming sessions with knowledgeable individuals within their jurisdictions and others provided an opportunity for their Indigenous partners to review the responses. Some of the participants expressed that they would have liked to gather knowledge in a more collaborative way with their Indigenous partners, but that it was not possible to do this properly given the time and COVID constraints. For example, one jurisdiction suggested that organizing a workshop with Indigenous partners could be a great way to gather richer stories to inform this report. These types of events may be possible in the future as a follow-up or next step to this knowledge gathering process and could be valuable opportunities to strengthen existing relationships and demonstrate positive ways of how to work with partners.

Example of how Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) gathered knowledge to respond to the survey

Because of the challenges that 2020 brought, ECCC used brainstorming sessions to inform its response to the survey. They were held from August to October 2020. Officials from the Canadian Wildlife Service at ECCC were invited to participate, as well as a few officials from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, to catalyze the then-emerging Federal IPCA Community of Practice. The sessions began by following the deliverables within the survey and discussing possible answers to the questions with participant groups, which usually consisted of two to four individuals. In keeping with the spirit of flexibility, brainstorming session participants were not instructed to strictly adhere to the deliverables or answer the questions specifically. They were also encouraged to offer important knowledge even if they did not feel that it fit explicitly within the deliverables.

The survey responses were compiled into a feedback document and sorted into four categories: Deliverables 1–3 and miscellaneous. The feedback document was then processed by the IPCA Working Group Secretariat and coded according to the following questions:

- What was the general response?
- What were the trends?
- Were there any notable outliers?
- What did we learn?
- What do we recommend? For F/P/T/Ms?
- What is our biggest takeaway?

The purpose of asking these questions was to identify common themes and suggestions for best practices and next steps for moving forward. The information was then summarized, and what we learned can be found in the *What We Heard* section of this report.

This information is useful, but not without limitations. Although efforts were made to ensure broad engagement, we did not engage with Indigenous partner organizations and nations for input into the survey during this phase. The responses are reflective of the composition of the IPCA Working Group, which includes primarily federal, provincial and territorial representatives, along with representatives of the Métis National Council (MNC) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Although MNC and AFN did not respond to the survey at this stage, they were involved in guiding the process through their involvement in the IPCA Working Group. It is important to recognize this when engaging with the work of the KGP: it is useful, but it is not wholly representative of perspectives across Turtle Island. However, the summarization of relevant resources did include many resources from Indigenous thought-leaders and nations. Throughout this process and as we move forward, we aim to hold all knowledge systems as equal, and are continuing to engage through ongoing research on the operationalization of Ethical Space.

Proposed next steps

At the time of writing this report, Pathway to Canada Target 1 and the IPCA Working Group were approaching a transition and changes were expected. The Pathway to Canada Target 1 was created to support Canada's goal of conserving at least 17% of Canada's land and freshwater by the end of 2020. While this important work will continue in some form beyond 2020, exactly what that will look like remains uncertain. We see this report as a snapshot that is intended to be revisited and used to inform future initiatives. Since the results in this report focus only on input from NSC members, the goal is for the next steps to involve a wider group of Pathway partners, including Indigenous leaders in conservation and their allies. The vision is for this process to involve the creation of a plan for the ethical collection, ownership and storage of knowledge collected from Indigenous leaders. This plan would need to incorporate the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) and be developed in partnership with academic and Indigenous partners of the Pathway.

What We Heard and Read

Deliverable 1: Initiating and fostering conservation partnerships

[We Rise Together](#), the report of the Indigenous Circle of Experts, identifies Four Moose (a “made-in-Canada” version of the “elephant in the room” expression) that consistently come up in Indigenous-led conservation: jurisdiction, financial solutions, capacity development, and cultural keystone species and places. These Moose are frequently the subjects of important conversations needed to foster conservation partnerships. *We Rise Together* also discusses [Ethical Space](#) as a framework for collaboration. Ethical Space is a concept shared by Indigenous Elders that was adopted in the [One with Nature](#) report. It is focused on creating a place for knowledge systems to interact *with mutual respect*. It holds that all knowledge systems are equal, and no single system has more legitimacy than any other. It also holds that relationships should be nurtured on multiple levels, not just politically.

This framework informed the approach and the questions that the Knowledge Gathering Process hoped to address through Deliverable 1. By sharing knowledge, we hope this report helps support the process of building respectful, meaningful and ongoing conservation partnerships. Much of this advice was framed in order to be shared with federal, provincial and territorial (F/P/T) government actors, but it can be adapted according to context. Here is what we heard:

Relationships

We heard that the emphasis should be on building respectful and reciprocal relationships. These relationships should begin before a project is initiated and they should be ongoing, even if a project has been abandoned, launched or wrapped up. Difficult conversations will happen, but if you have first invested in your relationship, these conversations will be learning opportunities and shared challenges rather than barriers. Make sure that this emphasis is clear to all levels of F/P/T/M and Indigenous governments, and in this vein, ensure that the same people are present for conversations and meetings. It is hard to build a relationship with a community if you have a different representative every time (i.e. relationships are non-transferable; they are personal). It was recognized that this presents challenges in the public service, where career mobilization structures rarely make this possible. Ideally, relationships need to exist at the technical, senior management and political level.

Examples of ways to build personal relationships

- Meet in person when possible
- Take time to travel and work together in the field and on the land (e.g. wilderness canoe expeditions)
- Participate in ceremonies and/or community events when invited
- Take part in hands-on activities (e.g. workshops to build turtle boxes)
- Connect and remain connected even without purpose

Relationships can be strengthened by co-developing terms of reference, signing agreements or establishing collaborative institutions such as advisory committees. These can help initiate and maintain collaboration and communication. Relationship building takes time and effort and governments should budget adequate time and resources for this to take place. Finally, each relationship will be different. You cannot assume that the ways in which you developed a good relationship with one Indigenous government, organization or community will be appropriate in a different context. Every community is distinct and it is important to avoid taking a pan-Indigenous approach.

Institutions and processes that support relationships – Examples from Nova Scotia

In 2011, the province of Nova Scotia and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs formed the **Mi'kmaq–Nova Scotia Protected Areas Selection and Management Technical Advisory Group**. This group was instrumental in discussing areas of shared interest and providing timely advice to the Assembly and provincial Minister(s) on developing and implementing the province's protected areas strategy. Working outside of formal consultation protocols, this group supports relationship building, information sharing and collaboration, and provides a space to discuss sticky issues in an open manner without prejudice.

The province and the Assembly have a similar working relationship in the **Moose Working Group**, which has been active for more than 15 years. The group's guiding principle is that moose have intrinsic value as part of the ecosystem and will be collaboratively managed. It is guided by the Mi'kmaw principles of *Netukulimk* and *Two-eyed seeing*, where western science and traditional knowledge are equal partners. The working group's work has led to moose hunting guidelines for Mi'kmaq harvesters and a collaborative moose management strategy.

These types of collaborations would not be possible if other foundational processes did not also exist. This includes a formally agreed-to negotiation process regarding treaty and Aboriginal rights, including title, and agreed-to formal consultation protocols. In addition, Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq have developed **a strong government-to-government framework** at the political leadership level. The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs and provincial cabinet ministers meet annually to discuss issues of common concern. The Assembly also has designated lead chiefs for various portfolios who meet regularly with corresponding provincial ministers, including for IPCAs.

Building on these past relationships, the province of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq are now working together on a **collaborative Challenge Fund project** to support the establishment of IPCAs. The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs has approved terms of reference for an IPCA Project Advisory Committee. Additional joint committees and processes for identifying and discussing IPCA candidates are being developed as part of the Challenge Fund project in Nova Scotia.

Respect

Approach your relationships, and your conversations, with respect, curiosity and reciprocity. Be flexible and aware of the needs of others; have empathy. For example, meet where it is most convenient or meaningful for Indigenous communities, which is most often in the community. If you are meeting in an isolated community, go out of your way to inquire and bring items that they might need. Build interpersonal relationships by attending and supporting community events without an agenda. Be cognizant and aware of the customs, history and traditions of the people you are partnering with (e.g., protocols, ceremonies, language). When you take time to understand your partners, you engage in a process of building and showing respect.

Applying these lessons to the Four Moose

Jurisdiction

- Conversations about jurisdiction are a great place to lean on the lesson of preparedness. Do your research about the historical and modern relationship between Indigenous communities and colonial governments. Know about the treaties, the discussions and the junctures leading up to your conversation.

Financial Solutions

- When discussing finances, remember the lesson of honesty. Be upfront about your limitations and sincere about wanting to help. Listen to the community's needs and advocate on their behalf if the funding or funding mechanisms are presenting challenges.

Capacity Development

- For conversations about capacity development, relationships are key. Relationships represent a capacity unto themselves, and strong relationships foster knowledge sharing. Mentorship, networking opportunities, and sharing expertise and resources can be useful ways to build relationships and capacity simultaneously.

Cultural Keystone Species and Places

- It's all about Ethical Space. Indigenous knowledge is valuable. Instead of coming from a place of needing to verify the knowledge Indigenous communities are sharing, recognize it is equally valuable to scientific ways of knowing. It is important to put species and places of cultural significance on an equal footing with significant ecological regions and species at risk. Bio-cultural keystone places research may be able to be part of supporting this process.

Intent

If you are about to initiate a conversation, ideally you would already have this firm relationship to build upon. Do not approach conversations with a plan already pre-formed. That is antithetical to building a

From the Annotated Bibliography

[This keynote presentation](#) by Elder Reg Crowshoe and Elder Willie Ermine discusses Ethical Space.

This hour-long presentation is a visual and auditory way to learn more about the meaning and significance of Ethical Space as taught by Indigenous leaders.

relationship in Ethical Space and holding all knowledge systems equally. Start from a place of co-design, co-development and co-delivery. The agenda should be set jointly and led through a shared approach. For example, arriving to a meeting with a pre-made slide deck can feel like there is already a pre-set agenda. Instead, co-developing a scoping document together can be a better place to start. The process itself has value, not just the outcomes. When you come to the table, come with an open mind: be curious and flexible. It is better to show up wanting to talk about how to approach the conservation broadly than to want to talk about what IPCAs are specifically. Be receptive to the broader goals and vision of all the partners at the table even

if they do not fit with your organization's specific goals. If your organization is the public service and your goals do not match the goals of Indigenous partners, reflect on why this discrepancy exists and what can be done to remedy it. Finally, allow space for Indigenous partners to bring in people from the community who are most knowledgeable on the topic (Elders, knowledge keepers, councillors, etc.).

Preparedness

Make sure you have done your research before initiating a conversation. Are there existing relationships or negotiations with other F/P/T departments or NGOs? Are there additional factors that might influence or affect your relationships and related efforts (community emergency or ongoing technical or political challenges)? This is both an individual and collective responsibility. Be aware of the context within which you are holding space. Conversations should be approached with an acknowledgement of Treaty and Section 35 rights, an awareness of the importance of reconciliation, an understanding of what government has committed to and, ideally, clear policy and guidelines. Make sure you understand and share information about the legislation, regulations, policies and processes your organization is responsible for, as well as any opportunities you can offer.

For example:

- What funding opportunities exist?
- What legal or policy mechanisms does your organization have that could be used to protect land? How do these mechanisms work?
- How do they allow (or not allow) for Indigenous leadership?
- What are some successful examples of how your organization has partnered with Indigenous Peoples in the past?

Operationalizing Ethical Space

- Provide public servants with training on reconciliation
- Provide experiential learning opportunities / role-play training on implementing Ethical Space
- Hold meetings in Indigenous languages
- Hold events and meetings on the land

Legislation, policy and procedural documentation used to guide conversations around conservation – Examples from the Northwest Territories

- **Protected Areas Act**: The new Act, which was created in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations, regulatory boards, stakeholders and the public, provides the legislative framework for protecting, conserving and maintaining the biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural continuity of the NWT through the creation of a network of permanent protected areas that are representative of the ecosystems and cultural landscapes found in the territory. This Act allows for collaborative and cooperative establishment and governance, allows the GNWT to enter into Establishment Agreements with Indigenous Governments, and considers Indigenous culture and ecosystems equally important.
- **Healthy Land, Healthy People – Government of the Northwest Territories Priorities for the Advancement of Conservation Network Planning 2016–2021**: A five-year work plan that outlines how the GNWT is moving forward collaboratively with conservation network planning in the NWT. The GNWT developed this document to implement conservation network planning with input from IGOs and Indigenous communities to build upon the former NWT Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) 1999.
- **GNWT Traditional Knowledge Policy**: A policy that commits the GNWT to incorporate traditional knowledge into government decisions and actions.
- **Respect, Recognition, Responsibility: The Government of the Northwest Territories' Approach to Engaging with Aboriginal Governments**: The GNWT-wide approach to engaging with Indigenous governments. The approach was developed based on discussions with Indigenous governments and community leaders. It was produced in all NWT official languages.
- **GNWT Culture & Heritage Strategic Framework**: The purpose of this Framework is to identify the GNWT's culture and heritage vision, goals and priorities until 2025. Among its several goals and priorities are the goals to respect the foundational role of Indigenous cultures and the cultures of all people living in the NWT, protect culturally significant places and provide opportunities for a diversified economy.

Honesty

The best time to establish and make sure that everybody is using the same definitions and has a shared understanding of key terms is during your early design-phase conversations. Having clearly articulated approaches in place for engagement, consultation, shared-decision-making and formalizing protected area establishment agreements ensures all parties are accountable and aware of the processes involved. Be transparent about your organization's goals and the level of support that superiors are willing to offer, even if it is not ideal. Be clear about your timelines, but also as flexible as possible. Your Indigenous partners might have a different timeline, especially if there are other influential factors (such as capacity limitations or overlapping crises). It is important to discuss the fact that government may decide not to implement recommendations or products that result from collaborative conservation initiatives, which again speaks to the significance of transparency. Here it can be helpful to co-create your goals and objectives for working together. Strong personal relationships are important for creating

a space where people can share their honest feelings as well as the official positions of those they represent. Above all, if you should apologize, then do so. Be accountable for your actions and for the (in)actions of your organization.

Safety

Emphasize that these conversations are intended to be held in “safe spaces” where everyone’s input is of equal value and without prejudice. This is particularly important in the early stages of planning, for safe creativity can yield new ways of doing things and appreciation for diversity. Build on the trust that you have established through your ongoing relationship, and again – if you need to apologize, apologize. Aspire to operationalize Ethical Space.

Challenges

In addition to this wealth of advice, respondents to the KGP identified some ongoing challenges that impede their ability to foster strong relationships and collaborative conversations. First, jurisdictional differences provide uneven footing to build these relationships on. Different jurisdictions, for instance, might differ in terms of their approach to Indigenous leadership in conservation. This discrepancy can make it hard to build and maintain relationships, especially as approaches can change over time. There is no easy solution to this problem, but fully committing to the relationship aspect during times of political priority and higher-level support is critical, and by extension being an advocate for and vocalizing the importance of Indigenous conservation when there may be an absence or lack of higher-level support, can help.

The second key challenge that emerged was a lack of understanding of how to operationalize Ethical Space. Respondents shared that although they want to action Ethical Space and see its value as a concept, they do not know how to do it. Even in circumstances where there is a deeper understanding of Ethical Space, they are unsure of how to integrate it with government practices as they move forward. Here, increased awareness and how-to advice could prove useful tools.

Sources on fostering conservation partnerships from the Annotated Bibliography

[Best Practices and Lessons Learned in Indigenous Engagement](#)

This document provides an overview and history of the Parks Canada Agency and outlines the best practices for Indigenous Engagement.

[Ally Bill of Responsibilities](#)

This document sets out critical responsibilities that allies of Indigenous Peoples must uphold.

[Bridging Parallel Rows: Epistemic Difference and Relational Accountability in Cross-Cultural Research](#)

This article provides important information on Indigenous knowledge, Ethical Space and how non-Indigenous people should best engage with the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.

Examples of important conversations and potential ways to approach them

Shared interests

- Give all partners a chance to communicate their interests at the beginning, with the goal of identifying shared interests. These conversations provide everyone with a mutual understanding of interests and expectations from the start.
- Focus on shared interests can help move things forward in a collaborative and productive way.

Scope and boundaries partners can work within

- Be transparent from the start about limitations, while remaining open and creative.
- Understand the scope to help keep the work focused on what is achievable now.
- If government may decide not to implement recommendations or products that result from collaborative conservation initiatives, this needs to be discussed upfront.
- Set reasonable expectations to help build and maintain trust at the working level.

Overlapping claims and interests

- Crown governments may need to make time and space within the broader process for Indigenous Peoples with overlapping interests to have conversations and develop plans and protocols between themselves without the Crown present.
- Make sure you are speaking to the right people and be open to expanding the group of people involved in the conversation as you discover that more groups may have an interest in the same area.

Differing official positions on jurisdiction

- You can “agree to disagree” on jurisdictional issues and move forward together in doing the work needed to achieve shared goals.
- One way to do this is through “dual designation,” where an area is protected both under Indigenous law and Crown government law. One example of areas where dual designation has been used is Thaidene Nëné.

Differing official legal positions on Aboriginal and treaty rights

- These will remain a “moose in the room” unless acknowledged.
- Have a separate formal and agreed-to process to address longstanding Aboriginal and treaty rights (including title) disputes.

Distrust of government

- Be open and receptive to having this conversation.
- Make the Indigenous worldview the foundation of the discussions.

Availability of funding

- Be completely transparent about what you can and cannot offer in terms of funding, but also make sure to make an effort to connect the community with other partners or resources that may exist.

Supporting rights-based uses by Indigenous Peoples while imposing greater restrictions on non-Indigenous individuals

- Have a grounded knowledge in Indigenous knowledge systems, natural law, and Aboriginal and treaty rights.
- Work to understand the nuances between accommodations for impacted rights versus allowance of rights-based uses, versus reconciliation and recognition of Indigenous land uses as a means of continuing or increasing ecological integrity of an area.

Deliverable 2: A compilation of IPCAs and similar initiatives across Canada

The [One With Nature](#) report and the [We Rise Together](#) report describe IPCAs as lands and waters where Indigenous Peoples have the primary role in protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. This definition is purposefully broad and can encompass areas that look very different in terms of ecology, jurisdiction, management and more. Despite these differences, IPCAs generally share the following three elements: They are Indigenous-led, they represent a long-term commitment to conservation, and they elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities. The Knowledge Gathering Process asked respondents for examples of case studies of areas and initiatives that have elements of IPCAs, and these are described in the [Examples of IPCAs and other conservation initiatives involving Indigenous leadership](#) section (page 24). They also provided insights into the challenges and opportunities of various Indigenous conservation initiatives.

Here is what we heard:

Flexibility

Due in part to the breadth of the definition, the respondents expressed uncertainty about whether or not projects “count” as case studies of IPCAs. Each example can vary vastly in terms of legal designation, management type and more. Despite these differences, all examples of Indigenous-led conservation can offer benefits and useful lessons, regardless of whether or not all partners involved would use the term “IPCA” to describe them.

Some of the examples respondents talked about are on uncertain ground due to uncertainty regarding ongoing funding. Several respondents also asked what happens if an IPCA is declared without F/P/T/M support.

From the Annotated Bibliography

Here is a source that presents a review of the Conservancy designation in BC within a legal and political ecology context, and assesses some of the related opportunities and challenges presented by this designation.

[Conservancies in British Columbia, Canada: Bringing Together Protected Areas and First Nations' Interests](#)

From the Annotated Bibliography: Case Studies

Here are some case studies on IPCAs in Canada

[Edézhíe Protected Area Establishment Agreement](#)

[Cree Regional Conservation Strategy](#)

[Let Us Teach You: Exploring Empowerment for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in B.C.](#)

Each IPCA emerges and develops differently through various legal mechanisms and different relationships. That diversity underlies the uncertainty participants reflected, but this can be useful if we are flexible and view this as a strength rather than a challenge. For instance, if there is concern that an IPCA might be declared without all the partners involved, this could be an indication that more resources should be allocated towards building strength in partner relationships. Through a strong relationship and open communication, partners can navigate the complex Moose in the room and create something that suits their unique context.

Awareness

Partners were clear in their calls for more case studies, for a clearer roadmap about the “what” and “how” of IPCAs. We can respond to this by emphasizing the importance of awareness, and investing in bringing these together for mobilization. An IPCA does not have to be fully established for knowledge to be valuable and shared. The unique challenges and processes of each IPCA initiative are important and helpful, and can be shared even if they do not seem complete.

Creativity

By reporting on the actions that they and their partners took to support IPCAs and other Indigenous conservation initiatives, respondents demonstrated a variety of ways to navigate the jurisdictional landscape of Canada. Some respondents used dual-designation systems to provide support and validation for conservation projects. The principle of dual designation allows partners to agree to disagree on jurisdiction while moving forward together to do the work of achieving shared goals. In dual-designation systems, both Indigenous and Crown Government laws establish the protected area in parallel. This speaks to the importance of Ethical Space and helps to address the “Moose” of jurisdiction. Others navigated their unique legislative systems to find ways to establish conservation areas without their partners needing to give up Indigenous title, or in a manner that allows traditional hunting and harvesting activities to continue and for collaborative management to take place. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but rather than presenting a challenge, this allowed creativity and flexibility that is essential for Indigenous conservation initiatives. In some cases, an incremental approach can provide the time and space for partners to learn and grow together.

More details are provided in the [Examples of IPCAs and other conservation initiatives involving Indigenous leadership](#) section, but these are the key lessons that resonated regardless of the type of conservation measures and partnerships that exist.

Examples of existing tools and processes that can be used to support IPCAs and Indigenous Leadership in conservation

- Securing and protecting private lands or private interests in land (e.g. conservation easements)
- Protective notation – indicates that land-use restrictions exist in order to manage lands in consideration of specific circumstances
- Conservation notation – used to indicate that a particular group wishes to be notified prior to any commitment or disposition regarding the land; note that conservation notations do not impose land-use restrictions
- Land-Use Planning (e.g. establishing Public Land Use Zones to manage specific land bases according to the unique conditions that exist)
- Cooperative management initiatives within existing legislation (advancing co-management of existing or new FPT protected areas)
- Protection for species at risk
- Strategic agreements (e.g. memoranda of understanding and protocol agreements)

Deliverable 3: Guidance on capacity building

From the Annotated Bibliography

This page on the Government of the Northwest Territories website lists the ongoing legislative initiatives on conservation. It provides a high-level example of how the partnership process between a provincial/territorial government and Indigenous nations can occur to inform an action on conservation.

[Environment and Natural Resources – Legislation Initiatives Partnership Process](#)

As one of the Four Moose, capacity development is a critical aspect of conversations regarding Indigenous conservation initiatives. It is also a broad term that refers to the capacity of all actors, which is reflected in the feedback provided.

IPCA: What and how

In terms of F/P/T capacity, respondents said that they need clarity about the “what” and “how” of IPCAs, including a roadmap or guidance on how to support the establishment of an IPCA.

This demonstrates the discrepancy between the intentionally broad definition

of IPCA and the propensity of F/P/T actors to seek clear categorizations first. In some cases, respondents were not sure who to contact for support, which further exacerbated respondents’ lack of clarity. These respondents did not feel as equipped as they wanted to be to support IPCA establishment, because of outstanding questions around land management, rights and shared jurisdiction, and seeking and prioritizing the “what” instead of the “how.”

Internal work

Many respondents highlighted the need for F/P/T actors to do their own internal work. This includes employee training (although many respondents identified formal training programs that had been helpful for capacity building within their jurisdictions to date), hiring more Indigenous employees and actively promoting important skills. Other challenges include staff turnover and changing priorities, which were also previously mentioned as challenges to relationship building. There were, however, possible solutions offered. Collaborative programs were highlighted as a possible path forward. For example, through formal and informal mentoring and internship programs between F/P/T staff and Indigenous organizations, some respondents found success building capacity and fostering strong relationships. This offers a way to collaboratively broaden understanding of what is possible and encourages creativity in furthering conservation projects.

From the Annotated Bibliography

Here are some sources for understanding the “what” and “how” of IPCAs.

[Key Terms for IPCAs](#)

This document lists and defines key terms that arise in IPCAs with links to documents and websites for further learning.

[Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas \(IPCAs\), Aichi Target 11 and Canada’s Pathway to Target 1: Focusing Conservation on Reconciliation](#)

This source provides an analysis of the “wicked problems” that Indigenous communities, governments and other stakeholders navigate to implement IPCAs.

Here is a source for those who would like to learn more about Indigenous Guardians.

[Indigenous Guardians Toolkit](#)

[Land Needs Guardians](#)

In addition, respondents spoke about how their internal staff had benefitted and learned about partnership building and Indigenous Leadership in conservation through engagement in Pathway to Canada Target 1 Initiatives, including the National Steering Committee and Indigenous Circle of Experts.

Healthy Country Planning – an Example from the Northwest Territories

The Northwest Territories is using an adaptive management method called Healthy Country Planning (HCP) to help ensure that the management and monitoring of IPCAs is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives. It is already proving very useful in the development of management and monitoring plans for conservation initiatives.

The main benefits of Healthy Country Planning include:

- Ensuring Indigenous knowledge and community values drive conservation planning.
- Allowing everyone's ideas to be shared, understood and prioritized.
- Accommodation of diverse participants: all ages, different types of expertise, other stakeholders, etc.
- Building relationships during the planning process helps with plan implementation.

There are currently few trained HCP facilitators in Canada and the HCP process is meant to be Indigenous community-led. To help build capacity across the NWT, HCP training is targeting existing professional facilitators, territorial and federal staff, and Indigenous governments that are interested in leading HCP projects themselves.

Funding and time

Funding represents another key capacity challenge, one where the impacts are disproportionately felt by Indigenous organizations with fewer resources than F/P/T actors. Respondents identified that providing multi-year capacity funding for Indigenous partners can help them participate in collaborative conservation initiatives in a variety of ways, including participating in meetings, translating of material into Indigenous languages, obtaining legal advice, reviewing or developing materials, hosting their own meetings or workshops, conducting research and developing proposals. Respondents also acknowledged the need to support the emergence and application of Guardians programs in order to support capacity for IPCAs. Some respondents said that the project-based funding model needs to be revisited. This model makes it difficult to build long-term capacity as organizations and communities cannot make long-term plans and have to dedicate their time to retaining resources. Secure, sustainable funding is needed. Timelines are closely linked to this; some respondents said that some Indigenous governments, organizations and communities need time more than they need money. Establishing new protected and conserved areas takes a significant amount of time. One respondent estimated that it takes about 20 years of work. Perhaps temporal and incremental approaches to conservation may help resolve this issue. Sometimes F/P/T governments and Indigenous communities set timelines that do not match. For example, when a government branch funds research, it might expect that deliverables will be presented within a set period. The Indigenous recipients, on the other hand, may require time to collect information and consider knowledge evergreen.

Relationships

Strong relationships and the ability to intentionally build and maintain them are themselves types of capacities. Common success factors highlighted by respondents emphasized the importance of building strong and trusting relationships with all different types of partners. This necessitates the provision of regular and consistent advice to higher levels of management and political bodies, as well as sufficient time and funding to work through difficult conversations and ensure thorough community engagement. The context is different everywhere; but rather than a challenge, this can also represent an opportunity for creativity and collaboration. Some respondents highlighted that the collaborative work through Pathway and the ICE process has helped create a common understanding and frames of reference for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Others mentioned gatherings and workshops as good ways to build knowledge and valuable partnerships among protected area managers, Guardians programs, academia, government and funders.



2 / Edézhíe Protected Area, NWT



3 / Pat Kane photo in Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta IPCA

Suggestions for Moving Forward in a Good Way

A series of suggestions for moving forward were identified based on what was heard and read throughout this process. These suggestions for getting to a good place in a good way reflect a continued emphasis on our collective intentions to prioritize process over outcomes.

Deliverable 1 (Initiating and fostering conservation partnerships)

- 1) Relationships
 - a. Prioritize ongoing relationships rather than project-specific conversations
 - b. Have consistent equitable representation inclusive of all relevant Indigenous governments
 - c. Align relationships at the technical, senior management and political levels
 - d. Be flexible
 - e. Build interpersonal relationships without an agenda
 - f. Be aware of customs and traditions
 - g. Foster employment structures and environments that allow employees to stay in positions long enough to build and maintain meaningful relationships with partners
- 2) Initiating conversations (intent and preparedness)
 - a. Do not come to the table with a plan already pre-cooked
 - b. Co-create (or co-design) your goals and objectives for working together
 - c. Make sure you have done your research before initiating this conversation
 - d. Be flexible with respect to the meeting location and who participates
 - e. Clarify definitions
 - f. Show up to talk about conservation broadly rather than to talk about IPCAs specifically
- 3) Honesty and accountability
 - a. Be transparent about what you can offer
 - b. Timelines might be different; be flexible
 - c. Hold conversations in safe spaces to build trust (these are both physical and intangible spaces)
 - d. Be up front about your organization's limitations
 - e. If you should apologize, apologize
- 4) Challenges
 - a. Jurisdictional differences: during times of support, lean into relationship building. During times without support, advocate for those relationships
 - b. Ethical Space: more awareness and a how-to toolkit

Deliverable 2 (A compilation of IPCAs and similar initiatives across Canada)

- 1) Flexibility
 - a. Do not get hung up on the term IPCA and whether or not it applies to a particular conservation initiative. The term is meant to be flexible, inclusive and allow for Indigenous governments, organizations and communities to decide what they call their conservation initiatives
 - b. Focus on relationships
- 2) Creativity
 - a. Think outside the box: there is no one-size-fits-all approach

Deliverable 3 (Guidance on capacity building)

- 1) Internal work for F/P/T actors
 - a. Support internal training on Ethical Space, IPCAs and relationship building
 - b. Hire more Indigenous people
 - c. Support collaborative learning initiatives with Indigenous communities, such as knowledge exchanges and internships in which we *learn from one another*
- 2) Funding
 - a. Funding models need to be re-evaluated for long-term sustainability. This may involve expanding funding practices from traditional government timelines
 - b. Be receptive to community needs. These are different everywhere, so do not make assumptions
 - c. Fund ongoing initiatives promoting Indigenous protocols, ceremony and language

Examples of IPCAs and Other Conservation Initiatives Involving Indigenous Leadership

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to include descriptions of existing and emerging IPCAs and other conservation and protected area initiatives involving Indigenous leadership that they were familiar with. These examples are important to demonstrate what is possible and what is already taking place in many places across Canada. They also offer valuable examples of what these types of initiatives can look like and offer lessons that can be learned from their successes. This compilation of examples is by no means comprehensive and only covers a portion of examples that can be found across Canada.

[Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve](#) (Northwest Territories)

Thaidene Nënë, which means Land of the Ancestors in Dënesųłíné, is an Indigenous protected area that spans 6.5 million acres (26,376 square kilometres). Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation has designated all of Thaidene Nënë as an IPCA under Dene law, and has worked with the federal and territorial governments to provide protection under legislation. Parks Canada has designated 14,305 km² of Thaidene Nënë as a National Park Reserve under the *Canada National Parks Act*, and the Government of the Northwest Territories has designated 9,105 km² as a Territorial Protected Area under the territorial *Protected Areas Act* and a further 3,120 km² as a Wildlife Conservation Area under the *Wildlife Act*.

The [Thaidene Nënë Fund](#) was created to ensure long-term funding. It functions as a partnership between Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation and Nature United.

Lessons learned:

- **Relationships.** Send the right people at the right time. Identifying leaders, technicians and practitioners is essential for success. Negotiators or facilitators are sometimes required.
- **Preparedness.** Honour local protocols and traditions and, when possible, host meetings on the land.
- **Ethical Space.** Involve Elders and aim for gender equality at meetings.

- **Creativity.** All areas have unique circumstances and will require flexibility in how they are designed.
- **Capacity.** Do not rush the process, because negotiations take time. Provide capacity support throughout the process.

Little Limestone Lake Provincial Park (Manitoba)

Little Limestone Lake was established as a park reserve in 2007 by the Park Reserves Designation Regulation 66/99, which provides for interim protection of areas under consideration. In 2011, Manitoba entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Mosakahiken Cree Nation to work towards designation and co-management of Little Limestone Lake Provincial Park, marking the first such agreement between the province and an Indigenous community. Little Limestone Lake Provincial Park was then designated under the *Provincial Parks Act* in June 2011. These provincial regulations in Manitoba have been instrumental in the establishment of Little Limestone Lake and several other areas that have some of the attributes of IPCAs. As a non-operational park, there is no dedicated budget for park operations or park management, and the provincial minister is responsible for administering the *Provincial Parks Act*. A management plan was developed with Mosakahiken Cree Nation in 2013, but has not yet been implemented.

Lessons learned:

- **Relationships.** Partnership was the key factor that led to the development of this park. Regular in-person visits to the community were especially valuable, but changes in staff and/or community leadership can slow progress.

Chitek Lake Anishinaabe Provincial Park (Manitoba)

Chitek Lake Anishinaabe Provincial Park was established under Manitoba's *Provincial Parks Act* in 2014. This marked a milestone for park management, as Chitek Lake Anishinaabe is the first park classified under the Indigenous traditional use park classification. Legislated management mechanisms were established to include the Indigenous traditional use park classification and Indigenous heritage land use category, which were added to the *Provincial Parks Act* in 2014. A provincial park may be classified as Indigenous traditional use if the main purpose of the designation is to preserve land that has been traditionally used by Indigenous Peoples and that is significant to Indigenous Peoples because of its natural features or cultural importance. The Indigenous heritage land-use category is used to protect unique or representative sites containing a resource of cultural, spiritual or heritage significance to Indigenous Peoples.

In 2016, the province signed an MOU with Skowman First Nation to work cooperatively towards the development of a management plan, explore models for cooperative management of the park and explore options for boundary expansions to reflect other lands Skowman First Nation considers important for conservation. As a non-operational park, there is no dedicated budget for park operations or park management.

Lessons learned:

- **Time.** Building relationships and conducting good processes takes time.

- **Flexibility.** There is a spectrum of management opportunities and priorities can change over time.

[SGaan Kinghlas-Bowie Marine Protected Area \(SK-B\) Seamount](#) (British Columbia)

SGaan Kinghlas-Bowie (SK-B) Seamount is located 180 km offshore of Xaayda Gwaay (Haida Gwaii). It is an underwater volcano and the entire protected area is 6,103 km². In 2007, the federal government and Haida Nation signed an MOU that established a Management Board to facilitate cooperative management and planning of the protected area. It was designated a Haida marine protected area by the Haida Nation in 1997, and a Marine Protected Area under the federal *Oceans Act* in 2008. The Haida Nation and DFO agreed to a [management plan](#) published in 2019, which includes a framework for cooperative governance and education and outreach.

Lessons learned:

- **Creativity.** This area has been designated as both a Haida marine protected area by the Haida Nation and as a Marine Protected Area under federal legislation. The MOU demonstrates the shared responsibility of the Haida Nation and Canada to protect and conserve the area for the benefit of present and future generations.
- **Relationships.** The emphasis on collaborative governance would not be possible without devoting time and years to developing the relationship between the Haida Nation and the Canadian government.

[Tsá Tué Biosphere Reserve](#) (Northwest Territories)

The Tsá Tué Biosphere Reserve is the homeland of the Sahtuto'ine, the “Bear Lake People.” It encompasses Great Bear Lake, the last large pristine Arctic lake, and part of its watershed. The [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) designated it as a biosphere reserve. This designation is a tool for increasing collaboration and advancing environmental protection, but it has no legal basis. The Tsá Tué Biosphere Reserve was established in 2016, becoming the first biosphere reserve in the world to be completely managed by Indigenous Peoples.

The Sahtu Dene Council is a participant in the federal Indigenous Guardians Pilot, which granted it funding in 2019. This program provides support for environmental monitoring and protection. The biosphere reserve [was also featured](#) in a documentary series in 2020.

Lessons learned:

- **Creativity.** The biosphere reserve designation may lack legal teeth, but it provided the framework necessary for land-use planning, which can contribute to the establishment of protected areas even if they are not formally designated as IPCAs.
- **Funding.** The funding provided through the Indigenous Guardians Pilot has supported environmental monitoring and protection.

Edézhíe Protected Area (Northwest Territories)

Edézhíe Protected Area covers 14,218 km² and is the result of a collaborative relationship between the Dehcho First Nations and the Government of Canada. It was [established in 2018](#) as the first IPCA since the launch of the Pathway to Canada Target 1 and the Nature Fund. The 2018 Edézhíe Establishment Agreement sets out the process to manage the Edézhíe Protected Area, which includes the creation of the Edézhíe Management Board and the Edézhíe Management Plan. The Edézhíe Protected Area will encompass both the Edézhíe Dehcho Protected Area and the proposed Edézhíe National Wildlife Area (NWA) under the *Canada Wildlife Act*. The Edézhíe Dehcho Protected Area was established in 2018 when Dehcho First Nations passed an Assembly resolution. A [Land Withdrawal Order](#) exists granting an indeterminate land withdrawal of subsurface rights. It is intended to be designated as a National Wildlife Area in 2021.

Lessons learned:

- **IPCA: “what” and “how.”** It was not immediately clear that Edézhíe would be an IPCA; that was not the intention behind it, but rather something that was realized along the way.
- **Ethical Space.** To facilitate productive and positive collaboration, government management had to be open and receptive. The Dene world view became the foundation of Edézhíe, and that helped to move the discussions forward.

Ts’udé Niljné Tuyeta Territorial Protected Area (Northwest Territories)

The area was identified by the K’asho Got’ine of Fort Good Hope and proposed for protection following the steps outlined in the NWT Protected Areas Strategy. To date, an [establishment agreement](#) has been signed and formal establishment under the NWT *Protected Areas Act* is pending development of regulations. Once formally established, Ts’udé Niljné Tuyeta will be protected by the GNWT as a Territorial Protected Area, and by the K’asho Got’ine as an IPCA. The management board members will be appointed by the K’asho Got’ine and the GNWT. All management board recommendations will be made by consensus and the management board will determine its own operating procedures, including reaching consensus and how to resolve any impasse.

Lessons learned:

- **Capacity.** The GNWT, the federal government and ENGOs (World Wildlife Fund Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, US Nature Conservancy) provided funding, mapping support, logistical support, etc.

Dinàgà Wek’èhodì candidate Territorial Protected Area (Northwest Territories)

The area was identified in 2008 by the Tłı̄chǫ government and proposed for protection following the steps outlined in the NWT Protected Areas Strategy with multiple Indigenous governments and stakeholders. Establishment discussions are currently under way as the Tłı̄chǫ government is seeking formal establishment under the NWT *Protected Areas Act*. A conceptual governance and management approach is being discussed with the Tłı̄chǫ government and all

relevant Indigenous governments and organizations. Other partners involved in previous planning and assessments have included ECCC, the GNWT, ENGOs, industry and local business stakeholders.

Lessons learned:

- **Partnerships.** The advancement of the area involves multiple partners, each with unique historical relationships with the land and water. An Indigenous-led planning process is being piloted to develop a shared management and monitoring approach in an area with multiple interests. Indigenous governments involved include the Tłı̨chǫ government, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the North Slave Métis Alliance and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation.

[Ezodziti](#) (Northwest Territories)

[Ezodziti](#) is a Tłı̨chǫ Heritage Resource Area that is protected under Section 17.6 of the Tłı̨chǫ Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement (2003). It does not have a management board.

[Kelly Lake Protected Area](#) (Northwest Territories)

Kelly Lake Protected Area is protected under the Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1993). It is also zoned as a conservation zone in the Sahtu land-use plan. It does not have a management board.

[Wehexlaxodiale](#) (Northwest Territories)

Wehexlaxodiale is established on Indigenous-owned lands and has sole Indigenous governance. It is a land-use exclusion zone in the Tłı̨chǫ land-use plan for Tłı̨chǫ Lands. The land-use plan states that the area is to be protected for all time.

[Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Site](#) (Manitoba and Ontario)

Pimachiowin Aki is the largest protected area in the North American boreal shield. It [comprises](#) the traditional lands of four Anishinaabe communities – Poplar River, Bloodvein River, Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids First Nations – as well as adjacent protected areas, including Atikaki and South Atikaki Provincial Parks in Manitoba, and Woodland Caribou Provincial Park and Eagle-Snowshoe Conservation Reserve in Ontario. In 2018, it became a recognized [UNESCO](#) world heritage site. It is managed by the Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, which organizes community programming in addition to maintaining natural and cultural values.

Lessons learned:

- **Funding.** Pimachiowin Aki accepts donations towards the Pimachiowin Aki Endowment Fund held at the Winnipeg Foundation.
- **Flexibility.** There is a spectrum of management opportunities, and priorities can change over time.

Northeast Wildland Provincial Parks (Alberta)

The Northeast Wildland Provincial Parks actually include [five distinct parks](#) that were established and/or expanded in 2018. Prior to 2018, three of these parks were already designated under Alberta's Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) of 2012 and under management as wildland parks. Establishment of the Birch River Wildland Provincial Park in 2018 was catalyzed by a partnership including an Indigenous community, the Alberta provincial government and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, with funding support from the Government of Canada's Natural Areas Conservation Program. As wildland provincial parks, they are designated according to provincial legislation, and the provincial government has also bought back oil sands and metallic mineral leases in these areas. Four of these areas [border on Wood Buffalo National Park](#). Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is currently working with 23 First Nations and Métis organizations to create a cooperative management approach for these five wildland provincial parks. Comprehensive Terms of Reference have been co-created, and a Northeast Cooperative Management Board is being established. The intent of the cooperative management board is to provide advice to the Minister, through the creation of site-specific park management plans, provide operational oversight and recommendations during the implementation of the plans, and focus primarily on issues that affect traditional use and cultural practices moving forward.

Lessons learned:

- **Relationships.** The northeast wildland provincial park cooperative management initiative would not have been possible without the collaboration of many different partners.
- **Intent.** Focusing on shared interests can help move things forward in a collaborative and productive way. Understanding scope helps keep the work focused on what is achievable now.

[Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks](#) (British Columbia)

In 1984, in response to widespread clear-cut logging, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation declared a Tribal Park on Wah-Nah-Jus Hilth-hoo-is (Meares Island). Since then, it has expanded the Tribal Park model to include all of Tla-o-qui-aht territories, and has established [Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks Allies](#) to help provide community and economic support for the conservation economy. Tla-o-qui-aht also has [Indigenous Guardians](#), and in 2019 launched the [#Meares35 campaign](#) (in recognition of the 35th anniversary of the declaration of the Tribal Park), with the aim of rebuilding the ancient Tla-o-qui-aht Village of Opitsaht.

Lessons learned:

- **Challenges.** Jurisdictional differences, such as the lack of historical treaties in BC and other regions, can actually be a useful tool in establishing IPCAs.
- **Relationships.** Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation has built strong relationships with other Nations and community partners (such as local businesses and non-profits) that have helped to support their work.

Conclusion

As Canada enters a critical phase in its conservation journey, the importance of and ongoing support for Indigenous-led conservation has never been greater. This recognition comes at a pivotal moment, against a backdrop of increasing global urgency and ambition to address biodiversity loss. Much hangs in the balance as Canada negotiates its next set of conservation commitments under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, commitments that will guide global and domestic conservation efforts for the next decade and beyond. In conclusion, there should be no conclusion. Not only will we hopefully have opportunities to continue the specific work of the Knowledge Gathering Process through future phases of engagement, but the learning will be ongoing as part of an evolving learning process.

So far, we have heard about how to initiate and foster conservation partnerships; examples of existing IPCAs and similar initiatives; and how we need to do the work building capacity, both internally and with partners. The overwhelming thread through all of this is that relationships are key. If we are going to support Indigenous leadership in conservation and help to protect the ecological and cultural values of this land, we need to work together. Lean into your relationships. Be honest and prepared to do the hard work. Listen to what your partners are saying and hold all knowledge systems equal.

We are grateful to all who have participated in this work. Thank you. We know it has been a challenging year, and taking time to contribute to the Knowledge Gathering Process has been meaningful and important. This document is a reflection of your effort and collaboration.

As this work continues, we are hopeful that this contribution will provide support and insight. We are eager to see where we go next – together.

Additional Resources

Indigenous Circle of Experts Report: We Rise Together

The Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) was formed to provide advice and recommendations on achieving Canada Target 1. ICE hosted four regional gatherings across Canada to help inform the report and recommendations. The ICE process and report established and articulated many important concepts and started collaborative work that continues today. For example, the term IPCA was chosen by ICE to describe a variety of Indigenous-led land protection initiatives in the Canadian context.

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Ethical Space

This foundational document defines Ethical Space in an accessible, user-friendly way. It discusses the framework and principles of Ethical Space and its implications for establishing IPCAs. The document includes a helpful diagram and an overview of the broader context in which Ethical Space exists.

One With Nature

This report contains the latest guidance from officials on how to support progress toward conserving at least 17% of Canada's land and freshwater by the end of 2020. The four collective priorities outlined in the report are 1) expand the systems of federal, provincial and territorial protected and conserved areas, 2) promote greater recognition and support for existing Indigenous rights, responsibilities and priorities in conservation, 3) maximize conservation outcomes, and 4) build support and participation for conservation with a broader community.

Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership: Resources Search Engine

This is the first iteration of the online Solutions Bundle: A bundle of resources for supporting Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and Indigenous conservation leadership. It is an evergreen search engine, and participants are encouraged to add resources of their own.

Pathway to Canada Target 1 website: <https://www.conservation2020canada.ca/the-pathway>

For more information on this report or the IPCA Working Group, please reach out to ec.apcaipca.ec@canada.ca.

Appendix I: Sondage axé sur la collecte de connaissances des aires protégées et de conservation autochtones (APCA)

Le présent sondage constitue la première étape du processus de collecte de connaissances du groupe de travail sur les aires protégées et de conservation autochtones (APCA) d'En route vers l'Objectif 1 du Canada. L'objectif principal de l'exercice de collecte de connaissances est d'éclairer l'élaboration des produits livrables du groupe de travail sur les APCA convenus par le comité directeur national (c'est-à-dire des conseils sur les conversations importantes et le renforcement des capacités, et une compilation des aires semblables aux APCA au Canada). Les connaissances recueillies seront également résumées dans un rapport définitif qui sera diffusé par le biais de l'ensemble de solutions, du site Web Conservation 2020 et d'autres sources appropriées. L'objectif est de donner la possibilité de créer d'autres produits potentiellement utiles sur la base des connaissances recueillies.

Les données brutes tirées de ce sondage et des entretiens ne seront pas publiées et les renseignements fournis dans le rapport définitif et les produits livrables, dans la mesure du possible, seront anonymes. Comme indiqué dans le sondage, tous les renseignements recueillis sur le produit livrable n° 2 seront non anonymes, tandis que les renseignements recueillis sur les autres produits seront communiqués de manière à ce qu'ils soient anonymes, à moins qu'une autorisation expresse soit obtenue pour diffuser un exemple particulier non anonyme.

Si vous avez des questions, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec le Secrétariat du groupe de travail sur les APCA à ec.apcaipca.ec@canada.ca.

Produit livrable n° 1 : Conseils sur les conversations importantes

- La teneur des conversations qu'il est utile d'avoir lors de l'établissement de nouveaux partenariats (par exemple, déterminer ce dont chaque partie a besoin à partir de la conversation/relation)
- Des conseils sur la manière d'avoir ces conversations importantes dans un environnement éthique.

1. Quelles approches ou stratégies avez-vous trouvées efficaces pour amorcer des conversations en vue d'établir des partenariats relatifs à la conservation?
 - a. Comment cela a-t-il été fait de manière à favoriser un espace positif et respectueux pour que ces conversations puissent avoir lieu?
 - b. Quelles ressources utilisez-vous actuellement pour être plus efficace?
2. Comment les travaux antérieurs et récents ont-ils aidé à situer le contexte dont vous avez besoin maintenant pour établir des relations positives et avoir des conversations importantes?
3. Quelles sont les conversations que vous avez trouvées utiles pour établir de nouveaux partenariats relatifs à la conservation?
 - a. Pour chacun de ces sujets de conversation, veuillez fournir des exemples de ce qui suit :
 - i. Un résumé du contexte des conversations particulières;
 - ii. Les avantages qui découlent de ces conversations;
 - iii. Les conseils qui vous semblent avoir bien fonctionné (y compris les conseils sur la manière d'avoir ces conversations dans un environnement éthique);
 - iv. Les approches qui ont échoué;
 - v. Les aspects les plus difficiles de ces conversations;
 - vi. Les questions qui sont toujours sans réponse sur la manière d'aborder ces types de conversations.

4. Pourriez-vous donner des exemples de conversations que vous auriez aimé avoir, ou dont vous prévoyez qu'il sera important d'avoir, avec des partenaires au moment d'entamer une collaboration en matière de conservation pour aller de l'avant?
 - a. Pour chacun de ces sujets de conversation, veuillez fournir des exemples de ce qui suit :
 - i. La mesure dans laquelle vous pensez que ces conversations seront utiles;
 - ii. Ce qui, selon vous, constituera les aspects les plus difficiles de ces conversations;
 - iii. Les questions clés que vous vous posez sur la manière d'aborder ces types de conversations.
5. Qu'avez-vous fait à l'interne, au sein de votre administration, pour préparer, mettre en évidence et rendre accessibles des enregistrements et des conseils sur les conversations importantes?
6. Quels sont certains des obstacles ou des défis auxquels vous faites actuellement face, ou auxquels vous prévoyez faire face, lors de la mise en place et du soutien des APCA? Quelles sont les conversations ou autres actions qui, à votre avis, sont nécessaires pour surmonter ces obstacles ou défis?

Produit livrable n° 2 : Une compilation d'initiatives en matière de conservation et d'aires protégées mobilisant des dirigeants autochtones

- Une analyse des aires protégées et de conservation existantes qui démontre l'éventail du leadership autochtone au Canada et les conditions qui ont favorisé la réussite de ces aires protégées.

Remarque : Toutes les questions de cette section concernent des aires ou des processus particuliers qui sont propres à votre administration. Bien que votre identité ne soit pas explicitement liée aux réponses, les renseignements que vous fournissez seront clairement attribuables à votre administration particulière.

- I. Quels sont les lieux dans lesquels vous avez été impliqué ou dont vous avez connaissance et qui présentent les éléments d'une APCA ? (Pour plus de précision sur les éléments clés des APCA, voir la page 45 du [rapport Unis avec la nature et les pages 36 à 42 de Nous nous levons ensemble.](#))
 - a. Pour chacune de ces aires, veuillez fournir une description de ce qui suit :
 - i. La gouvernance de l'aire (notamment qui est impliqué, quel mécanisme a été utilisé pour l'établir, comment les intérêts juridiques préexistants dans la terre ont été résolus, comment elle est financée et comment la collaboration et la prise de décision se font);
 - ii. Les conditions qui ont permis sa création (par exemple, les partenariats, le contexte historique, les travaux antérieurs);
 - iii. Les principales leçons apprises;
 - iv. Ceux avec qui vous avez établi un partenariat au cours de ce processus;
 - v. La question de savoir si ce lieu est reconnu ou non comme une APCA par le(s) groupe(s) autochtone(s) concerné(s);
 - vi. La question de savoir si le site est actuellement reconnu ou si on entend éventuellement le reconnaître comme une aire protégée ou le soumettre à une

autre mesure de conservation efficace par zone (AMCEZ), et tout obstacle potentiel à cette reconnaissance (si tel est l'objectif de la communauté).

2. Quels sont les mécanismes, tels que les lois, les politiques ou les processus, qui existent déjà et qui pourraient être utilisés pour reconnaître et/ou habiliter les APCA? Quelles sont les prochaines étapes liées à la reconnaissance d'une APCA au sein de votre administration?
3. Quelles sont les aires qui, à votre connaissance, présentent le potentiel de devenir des APCA?
4. Quels APCA candidates ont été proposées au sein de votre administration, et quelle est l'évaluation de votre gouvernement sur les possibilités et les obstacles? (Remarque : cette question s'adresse aux gouvernements FPT.)

Produit livrable n° 3 : Conseils sur le renforcement des capacités

- Un document contenant des recommandations ou des options sur la manière dont les gouvernements FPT peuvent travailler avec des partenaires autochtones afin de les aider à renforcer leurs propres capacités et la capacité de ces partenaires autochtones à collaborer de manière significative dans des partenariats relatifs à la conservation. Cette section du questionnaire est destinée aux gouvernements FPT .

1. Avez-vous l'intention de renforcer les capacités des partenaires autochtones et gouvernementaux à l'appui des APCA au sein de votre administration?
2. De quelle manière votre administration aide-t-elle actuellement les partenaires autochtones à renforcer leurs capacités de participation et de direction dans les partenariats relatifs à la conservation?
 - a. Pour chacune de ces approches, veuillez fournir des exemples de ce qui suit :
 - i. Ce qui fonctionne bien;
 - ii. Ce qui ne fonctionne pas bien ou pourrait être amélioré.
3. De quelle manière votre gouvernement travaille-t-il actuellement avec des partenaires autochtones pour aider à renforcer vos propres capacités à participer à de nouveaux partenariats relatifs à la conservation?
 - a. Pour chacune de ces approches, veuillez fournir des exemples de ce qui suit :
 - i. Ce qui fonctionne bien;
 - ii. Ce qui ne fonctionne pas bien ou pourrait être amélioré.
4. Quelles sont vos idées sur la manière dont le renforcement des capacités pourrait être davantage soutenu?
5. Quelles sont les options de renforcement des capacités dont vous avez entendu parler et sur lesquelles vous aimeriez en savoir plus?
6. Qu'avez-vous fait à l'interne, au sein de votre administration, pour préparer, mettre en évidence et rendre accessibles des conseils sur le leadership autochtone dans le domaine de la conservation?

Appendix II: Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area Knowledge Gathering Survey

This survey is the first step of the Pathway to Canada Target 1 Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) Working Group knowledge gathering process. The primary purpose of the knowledge gathering exercise is to inform the development of the IPCA Working Group deliverables agreed to by the National Steering Committee (i.e. guidance on important conversation and capacity building, and a compilation of IPCA-like areas in Canada). The knowledge gathered will also be summarized in a final report that will be shared through the solutions bundle, Conservation 2020 website and other appropriate sources. The intention is to provide opportunities for other potentially useful products to be created based on the knowledge collected.

The raw data from the survey and interviews will not be shared and information provided in the final report and deliverables will be non-attributable wherever possible. As described in the survey, all information gathered on deliverable 2 will be attributable, while the information gathered on the other deliverables will be shared in a way that is non-attributable, unless express permission is obtained to share a specific attributable example.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to the IPCA Working Group Secretariat at ec.apcaipca.ec@canada.ca.

Deliverable #1 – Guidance on important conversations

- What are the conversations that are useful to have when building new partnerships (such as identifying what each party needs from the conversation/relationship)?
- Guidance on how to have these important conversations in an ethical space.

7. What approaches or strategies have you found work well for initiating partnership conversations about conservation?
 - a. How has this been done in a way that fosters a positive and respectful space for these conversations to take place?
 - b. What resources are you currently using to be more effective?
8. How has historical and recent work helped to situate the context that you need now to build positive relationships and have important conversations?
9. What are the conversations that you have found useful to have when building new conservation partnerships?
 - a. For each of these conversations topics, please provide examples of:
 - i. A context summary of the specific conversations;
 - ii. The benefits that came from having these conversations;
 - iii. Tips that you think worked well (including any tips about how to have these conversations in an ethical space);
 - iv. Approaches that were not successful;
 - v. The most difficult aspects of these conversations; and
 - vi. Outstanding questions you have about how to approach these types of conversations.
10. What are some examples of conversations you wish you had, or predict will be important to have, with partners when initiating collaboration on conservation moving forward?

- a. For each of these conversation topics, please provide examples of:
 - i. How you think these conversations will be useful;
 - ii. What you predict will be the most difficult aspects of these conversations; and
 - iii. Key questions you have about how to approach these types of conversations.
11. What have you done internally within your jurisdictions to prepare, capture and make available records and guidance on important conversations?
12. What are some of the obstacles or challenges you currently face, or anticipate facing, when establishing and supporting IPCAs? What conversations or other actions do you think are needed to address these obstacles or challenges?

Deliverable #2 – A compilation of conservation and protected area initiatives involving Indigenous leadership

- An analysis of existing protected and conserved areas that demonstrate the spectrum of Indigenous leadership in Canada and the conditions that have led to these areas being successful.

Note: All questions in this section pertain to particular areas or processes that are unique to your jurisdiction. While your identity will not be explicitly linked to the answers, the information you provide will be clearly attributable to your particular jurisdiction.

5. What sites have you been involved in or are aware of that have the elements of an IPCA? (For information on the key elements of IPCAs, see page 45 of the [One with Nature Report and pages 35–42 of We Rise Together](#))
 - a. For each of these areas, please provide a description of:
 - i. The governance of the area (including who is involved, what mechanism was used to establish it, how pre-existing legal interests in the land were resolved, how it is funded, and how collaboration and decision making take place);
 - ii. Conditions that allowed for it to be created (e.g., partnerships, historical context, past work);
 - iii. Key lessons learned;
 - iv. Who you partnered with during this process;
 - v. Whether or not this site is recognized as an IPCA by the Indigenous group(s) involved; and
 - vi. Whether the site is currently, or eventually intends to be, recognized as a Protected Area or OECM and any potential barriers to achieving this recognition (if that is the community’s goal).
6. What mechanisms, such as legislation, policies or processes, already exist that could be used for recognizing and/or enabling IPCAs? What are your next steps related to IPCA recognition in your jurisdiction?
7. What areas are you aware of that present potential to become IPCAs?
8. What IPCA candidates have been brought forward in your jurisdiction, and what is your government’s assessment of the opportunity and hurdles? (Note: this question is aimed at FPT governments).

Deliverable #3 – Guidance on capacity building

- A recommendation/option document on how FPT governments can work with Indigenous partners to help build their own capacity and the capacity of Indigenous partners to meaningfully collaborate in conservation partnerships. This section of the questionnaire is aimed at FPT governments.
7. Do you intend to build jurisdictional/Indigenous partner capacity in support of IPCAs in your jurisdiction?
 8. In what ways does your jurisdiction currently help Indigenous partners build capacity for participating and leading in conservation partnerships?
 - a. For each of these approaches, please provide examples of:
 - i. What works well; and
 - ii. What does not work well or could be improved.
 9. In what ways does your government currently work with Indigenous partners to help build your own capacity to participate in new conservation partnerships?
 - a. For each of these approaches, please provide examples of:
 - i. What works well; and
 - ii. What does not work well or could be improved.
 10. What ideas do you have for how capacity building could be further supported?
 11. What capacity-building options have you heard about that you would like to know more about?
 12. What have you done internally within your jurisdictions to prepare, capture and make available guidance on Indigenous leadership in conservation?