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RAMP

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RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Traditional Knowledge in the Environmental Assessment Act

Section 16.1 in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*, states:

" The act gives responsible authorities conducting an Environmental Assessment the discretion to consider Aboriginal traditional knowledge in any EA: Community knowledge and **Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK)** may be considered in conducting an environmental assessment (Assessment Agency 2004)."

Link to Canadian Environment Assessment Act:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/c-15.2/text.html>

http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/013/001/0002/0004/0001/opp1_e.htm

General Principals

Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge can assist in the Environmental Assessment process in many ways. For example:

- provide historical information about the area
- help recognize possible environmental effects;
- help improve project design;
- strengthen the mitigation measures;
- contribute to the building along-term relationships between proponents, Aboriginal groups, and/or responsible authorities;
- lead to better decisions;
- help increase the EA and ATK capacity within Aboriginal communities
- design and implementation of any follow-up programs
- build an awareness of, and appreciation for, ATK in non-Aboriginal communities.

(Assessment Agency 2004)

Working with the community

- Before an EA is done the community members are contacted
- The communities can decide if they want to provide ATK to the EA;
- community members are provided with project information, the EA, the EA process, the kinds of ATK sought, and how the ATK provided will be incorporated into the EA process;
- extensive communications with communities;
- establish a relationship of trust with the community, its leaders, and ATK holders is crucial; and
- where language may be an issue, translation may be necessary.

(Assessment Agency 2004)

Collect Aboriginal traditional knowledge in collaboration with the community

Some communities may request an ATK access agreement. This agreement sets out how the ATK will be accessed and used in a given EA process. The agreement includes:

- how the information will be collected;
- if the community members will be paid for the provision of ATK-related services;
- the ownership of the ATK
- how the community will be acknowledged and credited
- how and when the community will be provided with any reports
- how the ATK will be respected

(Assessment Agency 2004)

Bring Aboriginal traditional knowledge and western knowledge together

How you combine ATK and Western knowledge depends almost entirely on the type of knowledge that is collected. For example, the environmental information gathered by ATK explains how the aboriginals deal with wildlife and the land. For

instance, ATK can deal with wildlife migration patterns and this information can be integrated into the scientific knowledge of the western world. Thus all aspects of a situation can be explored.

(Assessment Agency 2004)

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