



Indigenous Research Protocol: Ensure the Proper Use and Protection of Your Knowledge

What is an IRP and why is it important?

Indigenous Research Protocols (IRPs) are agreements between Tribes/First Nations and third parties. These agreements are to be established prior to permitting research projects that focus on indigenous communities—particularly projects that directly or indirectly relate to intellectual property or an aspect of traditional lands (i.e. wildlife, water quality, etc). IRPs present an opportunity for Tribes/First Nations to develop information management systems and safeguards to better protect their local and traditional knowledge. Ultimately, IRPs aim to ensure that knowledge is used in an appropriate and respectful way, and that research is conducted in a manner that benefits the Tribe/First Nation.

Make sure you check out these very comprehensive frameworks for developing your own Indigenous Research Protocol!

www.northerncontaminants.ca/done/guidelines/tkGuidelines/tk%20Guidelines.pdf
http://www.trondek.ca/downloads/TK_Research_Protocol_Master.pdf

You can make your protocol as comprehensive as you like. Some Tribes/First Nations write whole guides, some create a questionnaire for researchers to fill out, and others just have a checklist style consent form. We've made a checklist to help your Tribe/First Nation get started developing its own IRP!

- Informed consent: The purpose and nature of the research must be clearly and fully communicated before permission to enter community and/or use of traditional knowledge is permitted. Data ownership must also be discussed and determined.
- The researcher is required to continue informing and updating us, the tribe(s), on project progress even after consent has been granted. Any changes in the direction and execution of the project (at any point before or after implementation) must be immediately made known to all relevant parties and the tribe(s).
- “The researcher must respect local cultural traditions, languages, and values. The researcher should, where practicable, incorporate the following elements into the research design: use of local and traditional knowledge and experience; use of languages of the local people; translation of research results, particularly those of local concern, into languages of the people affected by the research” (National Science Foundation 2014).
- Traditional knowledge and local knowledge should never be used out of its cultural context. TK and LK “isn’t just factual information”--it’s tightly associated with people and place (Carcross/Tangish First Nation 2008).

- Prior to every use of traditional knowledge and local knowledge, the tribe(s) must be contacted and permission must be granted.
- We, the tribe(s), have the right to halt/deny further research at any point in time.
- Before research begins it must be established whether or not research subjects (both people and place) are to remain anonymous or honored by name.
- The research conducted must benefit the community and the expected benefits should be clearly stated before research begins.
- Additionally, all potential harms/hazards related to the project must also be clearly stated before research begins.
- Community input on the direction and results of the project should be received before execution of the research as well as throughout the research process. Community members should be given reasonable opportunities to participate in the research.
- “Sacred sites, cultural materials, and cultural property cannot be disturbed or removed without tribal and/or individual consent and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.” (National Science Foundation 2014).
- Should we, the tribe(s), deem it relevant, we may request that, in addition to adhering to signing off on the above requirements, the researcher present a short written work plan addressing the ways in which the above will be executed/adhered to.

I, the principal investigator of the _____ project, have read and understand the above information, will adhere to these rules, and am submitting a written work plan that addresses the way in which the above will be executed.

Signature

Date

Bibliography

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