



OTTAWA INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE PRINCIPLES

Developed and agreed upon by the Arctic Council Permanent Participants for use in the Arctic Council in 2014, updated in October 2018.

WORKING DEFINITION – INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE: ¹

Indigenous Knowledge is a systematic way of thinking and knowing that is elaborated and applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and linguistic systems. Indigenous Knowledge is owned by the holders of that knowledge, often collectively, and is uniquely expressed and transmitted through indigenous languages. It is a body of knowledge generated through cultural practices, lived experiences including extensive and multi-generational observations, lessons and skills. It has been developed and verified over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation.

PREAMBLE

These fundamental principles on Indigenous Knowledge will strengthen the Arctic Council and advance its objectives by supporting the active participation of Permanent Participants. Indigenous Knowledge has been formally recognized by the Arctic Council as important to understanding the Arctic in numerous Ministerial Declarations, including the 1996 Ottawa Declaration on the establishment of the Arctic Council. The “...role of Arctic indigenous peoples and their Indigenous Knowledge in the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biological resources” was also emphasized in the Tromsø Declaration (2009). Furthermore, in 2013 the Kiruna Declaration called for the Arctic Council to “**recognize** that the use of Indigenous and local knowledge is essential to a sustainable future in the Arctic, and **decide** to develop recommendations to integrate Indigenous and local knowledge in the work of Arctic Council.” Permanent Participants represent Indigenous Knowledge holders and are integral to the inclusion and use of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council. These fundamental principles represent the foundation for the long term vision and framework for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge in Arctic Council activities.

The inclusion, promotion and use of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council is a collective expression of Arctic Council States in supporting the domestic and international rights, roles, and place of indigenous peoples in the circumpolar Arctic; and will address a collective need to produce information that are of use to Arctic indigenous peoples, decision makers and scientists of all cultures from a community level to international governments.

¹ The following working definition has been adapted from the ICC and GCI TK definitions and forwarded for use by the Arctic Council. This definition is not intended to replace other definitions endorsed and used by individual indigenous organizations.

Fundamental Principles for the Use of Indigenous Knowledge in Strengthening the Work of the Arctic Council

1. The use of Indigenous Knowledge is an overarching mandate of the Arctic Council and is a central commitment for implementation by the Senior Arctic Officials, Permanent Participants, and all Arctic Council Working Groups.
2. Indigenous Knowledge enhances and illuminates the holistic and shared understanding of the Arctic environment, which promotes and provides a more complete knowledge base for the work of the Arctic Council.
3. Recognition, respect, trust, and increased understanding between Indigenous Knowledge holders, scientists, and representatives of the Arctic States are essential elements in the meaningful and effective inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council.
4. The inclusion, use, review, and verification of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council will occur at all stages of every agreed-to initiative and will be led and facilitated by the Permanent Participants. Recognizing that Permanent Participants will determine the appropriate use of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council.
5. Indigenous Knowledge is the intellectual property of the indigenous knowledge holders, therefore policies and procedures for accessing data and information gathered from Indigenous Knowledge holders should be developed at the appropriate ownership level, recognizing and adhering to each Permanent Participants' protocols.
6. In order to maintain the integrity of specialized information and avoid misinterpretation of Indigenous Knowledge, it is crucial that evaluation, verification and communication of analyzed information be conducted by Indigenous Knowledge holders with appropriate expertise, to be identified by Permanent Participants.
7. Each of the Permanent Participants represent their respective cultures, communities, peoples and Indigenous Knowledge systems and holders; processes of including Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council will respect and reflect this diversity.
8. The inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council requires adequate capacity and resources to address the unique needs and circumstances of the cultures, languages, communities, governance processes, and knowledge systems of Arctic indigenous peoples represented by the Permanent Participants.
9. Indigenous Knowledge and science are different yet complementary systems and sources of knowledge, and when appropriately used together may generate new knowledge and may inform decision making, policy development and the work of the Arctic Council.
10. The use of Indigenous Knowledge within the Arctic Council must benefit the knowledge providers and appropriately credit indigenous contributions.
11. The co-production of knowledge requires creative and culturally appropriate methodologies and technologies that use both Indigenous Knowledge and science applied across all processes of knowledge creation.
12. Communication, transmission and mutual exchange of knowledge using appropriate language conveying common understanding, including strategies to communicate through indigenous languages, is critical to work of Arctic Council.
13. Recognize the need to bridge knowledge systems, including leveraging existing indigenous knowledge networks, institutions and organizations, as well as developing education strategies to broaden mutual understanding.

THE PRINCIPLES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AND ADOPTED BY THE ARCTIC COUNCIL PERMANENT PARTICIPANTS FOR USE IN THE ARCTIC COUNCIL.