

# GROUP 5:

# CLEAN ENERGY AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



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Indigenous-Led Solutions for  
the Future Generations

# INTRODUCTION

Clean energy is a viable and attractive economic development choice for Indigenous Communities in both Canada and New Zealand. Aotearoa, NZ is already active in the clean energy space and progress is being made, aiming to have 100% renewable electricity by 2035 (currently 80%) and to be carbon neutral by 2050. In Canada, headway is being made and there are Indigenous success stories, but there is room to increase Indigenous leadership at government tables, within the energy sector and economic development sectors.

An Indigenous-led forum to exchange ideas around various governance structures, funding models, regulations, and strategic partners should be supported to help Indigenous Peoples find ways to be successful, should they want to develop clean energy solutions at the individual or community level.

Being energy self-sufficient, and an active partner in the energy sector, will progress indigenous development and re-affirm sovereignty by reducing the need for Indigenous communities to rely on others for their energy needs.



# BACKGROUND

Clean energy is of interest to many Indigenous communities, as it aligns with the spiritual ways of knowing, being, relating and connecting. Further, many Indigenous communities are remote or rural and energy sovereignty is critical to Indigenous community sustainability and economic development.

## Canada

- Canada has 619 First Nations, 8 Métis Settlements, many Métis Nations and many Inuit Nations, all with different beliefs, cultures, and economic interests.<sup>1</sup>
- Canada's relationship with Indigenous communities is built upon the *Indian Act*,<sup>2</sup> rather than through the Treaties,<sup>3</sup> and as such has a complicated financial, consultation, and governance relationship, that does not necessarily favour, nor encourage, independent Nations with strong and vibrant economies and communities.<sup>4</sup>
- Through Canada's Truth and Reconciliation efforts, there are attempts to improve this complicated relationship.
- In Canada, frameworks are set to create Indigenous dependency on both government as well as certain industry sectors.
- For example, in Alberta there is a dependency on the oil and gas sector, making it difficult to diversify economic development to areas such as clean energy.

## FACT:

In 2017, 67% of Canada's electricity was generated from renewable sources. Hydro accounted for 67.6% of Canada's total renewable energy use, followed by solid biomass (23.3%), wind (5.0%), ethanol (1.7%), renewable municipal waste and landfill gas (1.0%) and solar (0.6%).<sup>5</sup>

## New Zealand

- The Indigenous Peoples of New Zealand are the Māori and there exists a number of tribes throughout the country. Māori, with the New Zealand government, have been working to address the issue of tribal land loss, environmental concerns, cultural revitalization, and financial and commercial redress.
- Aotearoa, NZ, via the Treaty of Waitangi, has settlement mechanisms in place to ensure Indigenous active partnership and participation, but that is yet to be fully realised in the energy sector.
- As an example, Te Arawa River Iwi Trust has a Ministerial Accord with the Petroleum and Minerals department of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment signed in 2012. However, no potential energy sovereignty outcomes have yet been achieved. There are however some examples of private sector partnerships, that are working well for both parties.
- The New Zealand government has committed to 100% renewable energy by 2035 by transitioning away from fossil fuels to hydro/wind/solar/geothermal energy generation on a macro and micro level.

### FACT:

In 2017, 82% of New Zealand's electricity was generated from renewable sources. These include hydro, geothermal, wind, and bioenergy. ~40% is produced in conjunction with Maori, either via joint ventures, or as geothermal field owners.<sup>6</sup>

# DISCUSSION

In Canada, there are examples of Indigenous community involvement ranging from Impact Benefit Agreements to direct ownership of projects.

The Value Proposition in the government supporting Clean Energy projects:

- It generates jobs and training opportunities.
- It aligns with Indigenous spiritual connections with the land, water, air, animals, and other elements.
- It helps Indigenous communities move towards economic independence and control.
- It is a possible revenue generator for Indigenous communities.
- It is a tangible action that supports Truth and Reconciliation efforts.
- It also allows for ways to address the impact of existing operations on community relationships, irreversible impacts on Indigenous land, water quality and more.

Indigenous voices need to be first in the conversation.

# WHAT DOES GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT LOOK LIKE?

It cannot be delivered in the form of grant projects, the way they have been typically funded through Indigenous Services Canada to the Nations in a bidding competition. Similar to how the Government of Alberta delivers grant programs for Métis Settlements, where the Settlements have to compete for a small amount of infrastructure dollars. There are gaps in these existing grant programs where the communities then have to absorb costs, such as initial grant proposal/cost estimates/feasibility studies, understanding the grant program requirements, ineligible costs, costs generated from poor quality work or deficiencies, and etc.

There is opportunity to re-invest capital gains from large projects, such as the TransMountain Pipeline, into different sectors like clean energy. Perhaps considering a clean energy fund with specific policy supporting Indigenous leadership and inclusion.

Perhaps piloting a different governance model is worthwhile. Instead of the *Indian Act* and modelling Nations after municipalities with funding through Indigenous Services Canada, consider the cooperative model, as used by certain Mennonite and Hutterite communities or even farming cooperatives. These should consider Water rights and the like, recognising and respecting the spiritual connection to water along with the social, basic human right relationship too.

# TO ADVANCE, WE MUST LEARN FROM EACH OTHER...

A relationship with New Zealand will encourage an exchange of information as to what different treaty and governance structures could look like, as well as ownership models to help stimulate clean energy economy in Canada.

For example: The Treaty based co-governance models (eg. Waikato River Iwi Trust Legislation, Te Arawa Lakes Trust Legislation, Te Urewera National Park Legislation alongside Tuhoe) may be options to explore and work through, however these are all in the environmental space. The opportunity to work through co-governance in the energy space potentially can reap rewards for all parties. A particular opportunity exists in the Taranaki region (re: offshore wind generation), given the transition from fossil fuel generation as a climate change response. It should be noted that Maori engagement and involvement was not as in-depth as it could have been in the recent white paper published on this topic. There is much room for improvement.

There is potential for alignment between New Zealand and Canadian clean energy projects, especially in the areas where New Zealand has had great success, such as geothermal, hydro, wind, and solar power generation. The NZ Budget in March 2020, outlined funds available for state enterprises and schools to assist them to move to renewable energy.

Māori are major players in the Geothermal space in Aotearoa NZ, with a number of geothermal power stations either joint venture or on Maori owned land. Indeed as recently as 31 August 2020 additional government funding for the establishment of a geothermal power station in Rotorua New Zealand, a JV with iwi, was announced.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Prioritize** the development of a bilateral, Indigenous-led Energy Sector Exchange forum to explore governance structures, energy legislation and regulations

**Expedite** the formation of a program to facilitate Indigenous Equity in Clean Energy and Transmission Infrastructure in both Canada and New Zealand

There is much that Canada can learn from New Zealand in how Indigenous communities can work with government in different ways and through different governance structures. As well, how to start the economic stimulus needed to increase the amount of Indigenous owned renewable energy operations in Canada. In addition, Canada has a wide range of energy interests and options and work has been done to commence active involvement of Canadian indigenous peoples.

We recommend that an Indigenous-led Clean Energy Summit is held in 2021, in which Canadian and New Zealand Indigenous community leaders, Indigenous clean energy business owners, socially-minded Clean Energy consultants, and government representatives can gather in order to exchange ideas to help move forward both countries Indigenous clean energy industries in a good way. The Indigenous Clean Energy Summit could also be open to others outside of Canada and New Zealand.

The intent of this Exchange forum will to be focus on governance and business models that work with traditional Indigenous decision-making models; how new governance and business models can satisfy regulations, legislation, and financial institution requirements or how can we work with these entities to create new policies that will allow successful Clean Energy and Transmission Infrastructure.



Consideration should be given to alignment of the Indigenous-led Clean Energy Summit within the Expo Dubai Global Indigenous Symposium in 2021. APEC in Aotearoa NZ 2021 is another opportunity.

For a large, high production event that runs multi-day with a variety of keynotes, workshops, panels, and networking events, this can cost in the range of \$250,000 plus salary of event managers and staff. This cost can be off-set by sponsorship and grant programs. It is important that this is Indigenous led. Already, there is interest amongst clean energy producers, such as Contact and Mercury Energy, with coordinating organizations such as TARIT to help with cultural exchange and connection to relevant government bodies and officials.

Sources:

- 1: <https://fnppn.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/index.aspx?lang=eng>
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- 3: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>
- 4: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1529354437231>
- 5: <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/science-data/data-analysis/energy-data-analysis/energy-facts/electricity-facts/20068>, <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/science-data/data-analysis/energy-data-analysis/renewable-energy-facts/20069>
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