

Indigenous Partnerships: Learnings, Opportunities & Conditions for Success

In May 2024, BMAC along with the Energy Futures Lab (EFL) hosted a full-day workshop with Indigenous leaders and battery metal value chain innovators to explore how to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action (#92) for corporate Canada. Below are examples of opportunities that taking action presents, and conditions for partnership that BMAC invites you to reflect on and consider.

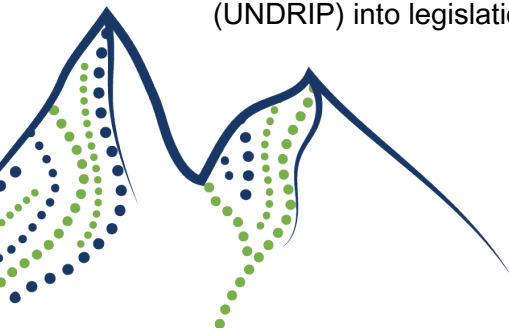
Our hope is that the Canadian battery metals industry is an example for creating meaningful partnerships to advance projects. This includes Truth and Reconciliation; Indigenous ancestral, inherent, constitutional rights; and approaches that look beyond a project lifecycle toward sustainability to address impacts that today's decisions have on future generations.

Seven Opportunities of Partnerships

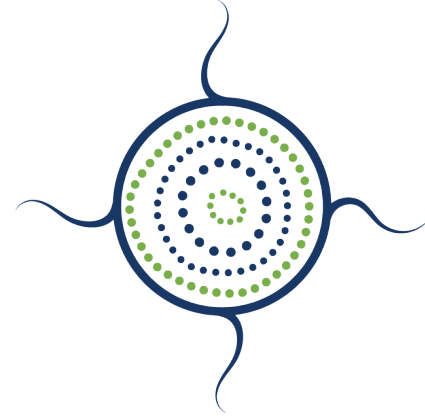
1. **Co-create a pathway for the industry to advance reconciliation.** Take meaningful action to inspire and demonstrate what is possible and reinforcing our industry reputation and brand.
2. **Reciprocal knowledge sharing.** Work in ways that center Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and teachings, including localized land and environmental considerations to inform infrastructure, site decisions and industry technical processes.
3. **Community Support and Relations.** Respond to the expectations of investors who are increasingly curious about community support and relations to understand project risk, impact and performance.
4. **Access Indigenous financing and capital.** Through equity sharing agreements with indigenous communities and organizations such as the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC).
5. **Uphold Responsibilities, Accountabilities.** Uphold obligations to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as an inherent right of Indigenous Peoples, and processes that provide opportunities to strengthen relations, lower project risks, and align the objectives of Indigenous communities and corporations.
6. **Draw on localized knowledge and skills.** Foster an environment where Indigenous knowledge is honoured throughout the project cycle and beyond by hiring local people for leadership, operations, expertise, contracting and business.
7. **Align with regulatory and legislative expectations and evolving landscape.** The Government of Canada adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into legislation in 2021.



What opportunities
are relevant to you?



At the May workshop, participants were asked to share what is important for us to keep in mind as we start or continue to build successful partnerships with communities. You are invited to consider how these conditions could be relevant in your work and the future battery metal sector in Canada.



Seven Conditions for Successful Partnerships

1. **Acknowledge and lean into (not ignore or dismiss) discomfort that may arise as a result of learning about Indigenous people's realities and experiences, including Canada's historical and ongoing settler-colonialism.** Discomfort is normal and a sign that we are exploring something new to us. If we approach this with curiosity and openness it may result in new solutions and ideas.
2. **Adopt a curious and 'open' stance when initiating and nurturing partnership with Indigenous communities.** Walking with humility acknowledges there is much to be learned and that building trust and relationship takes time.
3. **Take action to educate yourself and others on truthful narratives.** Deepen understanding of where we are and how we got here, consent, continued intergenerational impacts, historical and ongoing connections to land.
4. **Develop awareness of conscious and unconscious biases and stereotypes held about Indigenous people, cultures, ways of doing and being.** Explicit attention to worldview, most often a dominant, Western perspective (offered as an observation, rather than criticism) in decision-making is necessary to uproot assumptions and understand the realities and lived experiences of Indigenous communities.
5. **Facilitate projects and development in ways that respect and recognize the diversity of Indigenous cultures, Nations and communities.** Each Nation best understands their realities and needs. Decision-making about development options and project leadership should be based on this understanding. A framework for decision-making that is shared by many Indigenous communities is Seven Generations Thinking which considers the impact of decisions made today on future generations.
6. **Commit to shared governance and decision-making with Indigenous Nations and communities.** Be informed about ancestral, inherent and constitutionally protected rights, responsibilities to FPIC and other key reports, recommendations during and beyond lifecycle of projects and what it means to work in relationship.
7. **Establish FPIC, 'benefit-sharing' and 'data sovereignty' (e.g. OCAP*) as a minimum standard for partnership with Nations.** This looks different for each Nation and Community (self-determination) and is best determined by the voices of partners and communities involved.

**First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession – more commonly known as OCAP®*

What barriers do you face to fulfil these conditions? How can BMAC help?

