

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	1.0	Corporate Policy
Sub Program:	1.2	Benchmarking Performance in Aboriginal Relations
Template:	1.2.2	Criteria and Indicators Approach to Community Development
Sponsor(s):	<i>Sustainable Forest Management Network</i>	

1. Objective

To set out a template for resource development that preserves an Aboriginal community's traditional lifestyle without significantly compromising the economic integrity of the industrial activity.

2. Description

The development of this model was sponsored by the Sustainable Forest Management Network (Drs. Cliff Hickey and David Natcher) based on the experience of the Little Red River Cree Nation in northern Alberta. It proposes a way for industry and the Aboriginal community to meet and negotiate, within a mutually agreed framework, the trade-offs that are required from time to time on access and management issues relating to traditional lands. The approach sets up a number of ground rules that industry and Aboriginal communities can accept as the basis for a constructive relationship.

For each of these ground rules, the approach is to identify goals, indicators and actions that both industry and the Aboriginal community can agree on. These provide the basis for identifying and managing the issues important to the local community while providing industry with greater certainty on access and resource management. The ground rules include:

- The need for industry to modify or reduce activities that have a negative impact on wildlife species important to the community
- The need to ensure community access to land and resources. Industry must protect community access trails (to waterways, firewood stands, berry/medicinal plant picking sites, fishing sites and hunting areas), and minimize its impact on access trails.
- The need to provide protection to areas identified by community members as having biological, cultural or historical importance. This might include cabins, burial sites, places in which rare and endangered medicinal plants are found, hunting grounds, fishing sites, and traplines.
- The need to recognize and respect Aboriginal and treaty rights to hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering activities
- The need to increase meaningful economic opportunities for community members. This

includes efforts to expand and diversify economic opportunities, and provide education and training opportunities.

- The need to increase the involvement of community members in land-use planning and decision-making processes

3. Implementation

As Aboriginal communities achieve a greater role in the development of natural resources, industry will require a means by which to address community values and interests so that they can be effectively monitored and evaluated. This is important in avoiding “top-down” approaches where implementing an effective and inclusive approach to community-based development becomes virtually impossible.

This model describes one such process and uses a case study of the Little Red River Cree Nation to illustrate the challenges and opportunities involved. It shows how a community-based management program can be developed to:

- Facilitate an assessment of existing and future resource development practices based upon prevailing cultural, social, ecological and economic criteria
- Implement a monitoring and evaluation framework that provides a basis for continuous improvement of management objectives
- Serve as a means of managing conflict by articulating the diversity of values found in Aboriginal communities

4. Timeframe for Results

The model was developed in 2002 and is intended to provide a framework for building and sustaining long-term relationships between industry and Aboriginal communities.

5. Measurable Criteria

The model contains a set of local criteria and indicators of forest and community sustainability specific to the Little Red River Cree Nation. These were designed to facilitate a system of adaptive community-based management that is responsive to the values and changing needs of community members.

6. Budget

The main cost would be staff time required to develop criteria and indicators in partnership with the Aboriginal community.

7. Partners and Sponsors

Sustainable Forest Management Network (a Network of Centres of Excellence) at the University of Alberta and the Little Red River Cree Nation (case study)

8. Experience with the Program

National criteria and indicators on forest sustainability were adopted in 1995 by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. This included a set of six national criteria and 83 indicators for evaluating forest sustainability. Specific to Aboriginal peoples, Criterion Six addresses the need

to recognize the rights of Aboriginal peoples in the planning process (Criterion 6.1), as well as to involve Aboriginal peoples in forest management directly (Criterion 6.2).

While these criteria and associated indicators have addressed sustainability at the national level, few examples have addressed local level information needs. In light of these needs, this model builds upon the experiences of the Little Red River Cree Nation in implementing new and locally-defined approaches to resource development. The model eliminates largely non-relevant criteria and indicators developed at the national level, and extends beyond provisions of sustained timber yield. It sets out a criteria and indicators approach that incorporates environmental, social, cultural and economic factors associated with local resource management.

9. General Applicability

While the model was developed specifically in the context of forest management, it is generally applicable to other resource industries operating on traditional lands.

10. Additional Information or Support

Dr. Marc G. Stevenson, Sustainable Forest Management Network, G-208, Biological Sciences Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E9

Telephone: (780) 492-2476

Email: marc.Stevenson@ualberta.ca

Dr. David Natcher, Department of Anthropology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL A1C 5S7.

Telephone: (709) 737-6116

Email: dnatcher@mun.ca

The working paper (#2002-02) can be obtained from the SFM Network Website at <http://www.ualberta.ca/sfm>.

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