

A guide to Advancing low-carbon energy innovation in Indigenous communities in Ontario

January 2026



PARTNERS



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the Ontario Energy Board Innovation Sandbox Challenge for the financial support they provided us for this project.

Pollution Probe and QUEST Canada want to acknowledge the contributions of the workshop participants and interviewees for their generosity in sharing their expertise and their views. Of course, the contents and conclusions in this report are the responsibility of the authors alone and may not represent all the views of the participants or their respective organizations.

This framework was produced with the assistance of Cambium Indigenous Professional Services.



QUEST Canada

QUEST Canada is a registered Canadian charity that supports communities on their pathway to net zero. Since 2007, we've been facilitating connections, empowering community champions and advising decision-makers to implement energy use and emissions reduction solutions that best meet community needs and maximize local opportunities. We develop tools and resources, convene stakeholders and rights holders, and advise decision-makers – all with the goal of encouraging, assisting, and enabling communities to contribute to Canada's net-zero goals. Visit us at questcanada.org.



Pollution Probe

Pollution Probe is a national, not-for-profit, charitable organization established in 1969 that exists to improve the health and well-being of Canadians by advancing policy that achieves positive, tangible environmental change. Pollution Probe has a proven track record of working in successful partnership with industry and government to develop practical solutions for shared environmental challenges.

Copyright © QUEST – Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow and Pollution Probe Foundation, 2026

Pollution Probe

130 Queens Quay East,
Ste. 902 West Tower,
Toronto ON M5A 0P6
Tel.: 416 926 1907 x 234
www.pollutionprobe.org

QUEST Canada

350 Albert Street,
Suite 1220,
Ottawa, ON K1R 1A4,
Tel.: (866) 494-2770
www.questcanada.org

For more information, please contact:

Richard Carlson
Director, Energy
rcarlson@pollutionprobe.org

Gemma Pinchin
Senior Lead, Research and Projects
gpinchin@questcanada.org

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
Glossary.....	2
1 Background and context	3
2 Framework modules	5
3 The low-carbon energy community framework	6
1. Early stage: Doing your homework	6
Module 1.1 Learn about the community and its energy needs and challenges	6
Module 1.2 Learn about Indigenous community energy opportunities and challenges.....	7
Module 1.3 Develop a dedicated community engagement plan.....	8
Module 1.4 Identify a trusted facilitator.....	9
Module 1.5 Identify an energy champion	10
2. Indigenous community co-creation innovation stage	10
Module 2.1 Indigenous community engagement	10
Module 2.2 Indigenous community benefits	12
Module 2.3 Community engagements for a collaborative project	13
3. Sustainable implementation stage	13
Module 3.1 Regulatory considerations	13
Module 3.2 Establish the project activities and steps.....	14
Module 3.3 Project monitoring	14
Module 3.4 Future opportunities.....	15

Glossary

Proponent: A private company, a utility, a government, a municipality or any other actor that wants to promote low-carbon energy.

Facilitator: A trusted individual or group, from within or outside the community, that helps build the connection between the community and the proponent. In some communities, the facilitator may also be the energy champion.

Energy champion: An individual or group, generally from within the community, that takes a leading role in articulating and promoting the future energy vision for the community, including clean energy innovation. The champion could be a councillor, band employee, or an engaged community member.

1 Background and context

The low-carbon energy innovation community framework provides guidelines to help communities and their partners, including municipalities, utilities, industries, and governments, to understand how to promote innovative low-carbon energy projects at the community level.

The project process emphasized the need for a tailored framework for Indigenous communities. This framework prioritizes building trust, recognizing cultural and traditional values, respecting different communication paces, and understanding that relationships take time to develop. It also highlights the importance of being physically present in the community, ensuring continuity with the same individuals, and encouraging long-term relationships through the project's steps. This approach aims to create a meaningful partnership between the community and the proponent for a better future while supporting environmental goals.

The framework uses a “choose your own adventure” approach, acknowledging that each community, particularly Indigenous communities, and each potential project has unique conditions and circumstances. It is also designed to adjust to diverse users, including industry partners, utilities, community energy champions, municipalities, and government entities. As a result, some stages of the framework will be relevant to specific partners, while others may not be.

Indigenous communities are a critical part of the low-carbon energy transition across Canada. Apart from being energy consumers, energy projects are developed within their communities. Deploying low-carbon energy often requires innovation in technology, deployment and business models in order to ensure that communities

can benefit. Yet, the frameworks for deploying low-carbon energy have mainly focused on urban areas. Success in Indigenous communities relies on robust social acceptance, and hence, engagement and building trust are essential. Engaging communities early, ensuring they understand, and can participate and benefit from the project while contributing to Canada's net-zero targets, will benefit everyone.

The project has developed a framework that will enable Ontario's Indigenous communities to better understand, participate in, and benefit from the energy transition.

The framework (see **Figure 1**) consists of three stages:

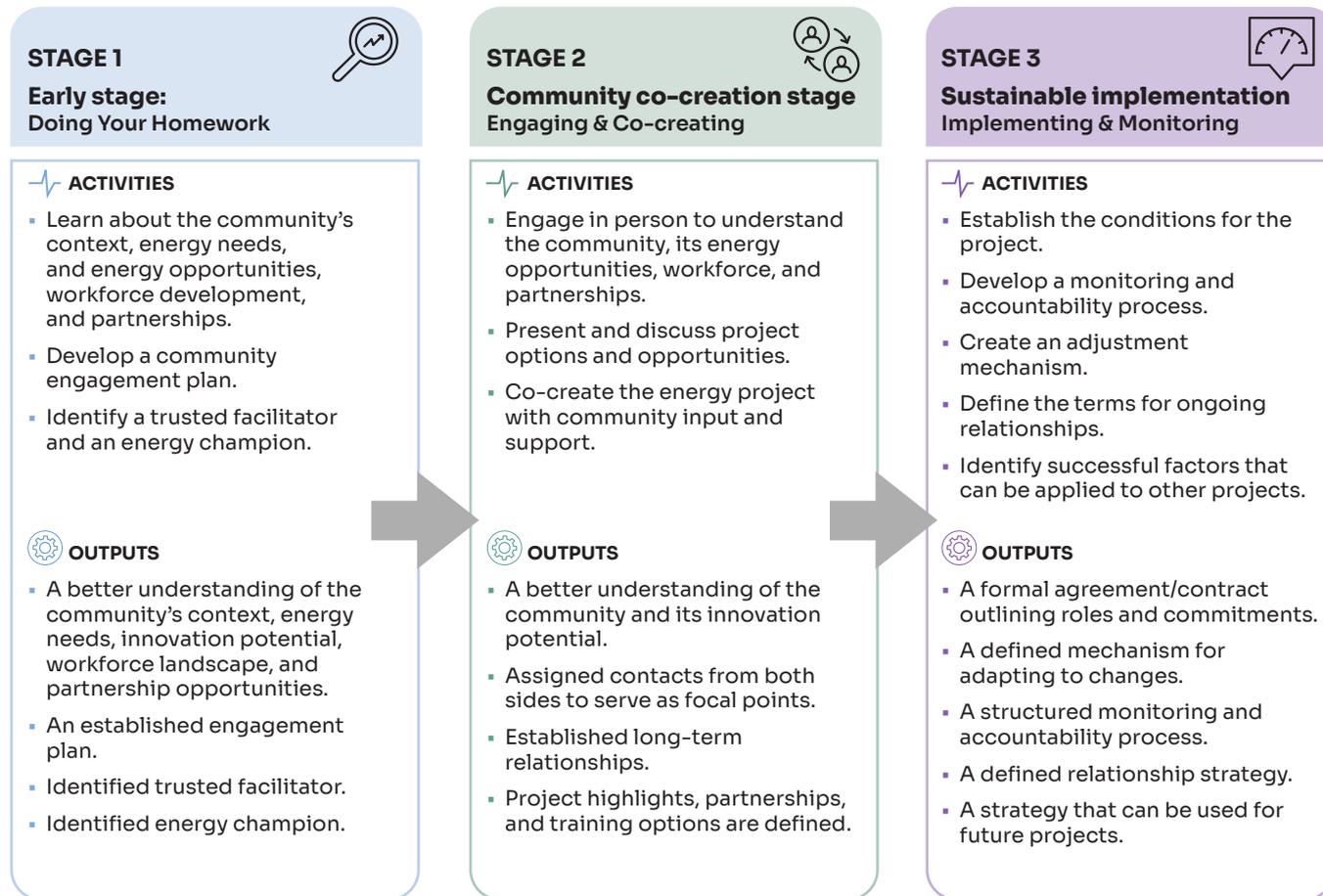
- 1. The early stage** focuses on gathering community information and identifying a facilitator to bridge communication between the community and the proponent.
- 2. The co-creation stage of the project** focuses on engaging with the community, building trust, and developing low-carbon innovation projects collaboratively.
- 3. The implementation stage** ensures successful project implementation and effective ongoing operation and relationships.

In addition to the framework, there are two additional files available on the website. Case studies demonstrating how low-carbon innovation initiatives are successfully deployed within local communities are provided in Annex A. Annex B is a workbook to help interested parties implement the framework.

Figure 1: Framework overview

Community Energy Development Process

A comprehensive three-stage pathway from initial research to sustainable implementation ensuring community alignment and long-term success.



2 Framework modules

The framework consists of an integrated approach that includes a series of modules. Each module outlines its purpose, rationale, suggested methods, key steps for the proponent to follow, and necessary tools, such as worksheets. Partners and

communities can independently evaluate and implement the relevant modules based on their needs and interests. Table 1 below outlines the framework modules along with their intended target audiences.

Table 1: Target audience for framework modules

Module	Community	Private sector/ Utility	Municipality/ Provincial government
Stage 1			
Module 1.1 Learn about the community and its energy needs and challenges	X	✓	✓
Module 1.2 Learn about community energy innovation opportunities and challenges	✓	✓	✓
Module 1.3 Develop a community engagement plan	X	✓	✓
Module 1.4 Identify a trusted facilitator	X	✓	✓
Module 1.5 Identify an energy champion	✓	✓	✓
Stage 2			
Module 2.1 Indigenous community engagement	✓	✓	✓
Module 2.2 Community benefits	✓	✓	✓
Module 2.3 Community engagements for a collaborative project	X	✓	✓
Stage 3			
Module 3.1 Regulatory considerations	✓	✓	X
Module 3.2 Establish the project activities and steps	✓	✓	✓
Module 3.3 Project monitoring	✓	✓	✓
Module 3.4 Future opportunities	✓	✓	✓

X Indicates that the specified module does not apply to the target audience mentioned in the first row.

✓ Indicates that the specified module applies to the target audience mentioned in the first row.

3 The low-carbon energy community framework

1. Early stage: Doing your homework

Stage 1 Overview:

This stage is concerned with learning about the Indigenous community before engaging with them and making project decisions. It focuses on learning about the community's needs, culture and connection to the land, identifying innovation opportunities, and selecting a trusted facilitator and energy champion to ensure effective collaboration between the proponent and the community.

Module 1.1 Learn about the community and its energy needs and challenges

Rationale: Each Indigenous community is unique and affected by various factors, including location, socioeconomic conditions, culture, governance, resources, funding, infrastructure, and policies. Indigenous communities also have distinct rights and cultural ties to the land. Our interviews highlighted challenges related to historical distrust between Indigenous communities and external entities. This highlights the importance of engaging Indigenous communities early, maintaining transparent communication, and providing clear information about the project.¹ Tailored approaches are essential, as applying strategies without considering local contexts could hinder beneficial projects.

Methods: Research public sources, local news and community forums. Attend relevant events and engage with community members and partners familiar with the community.

Points to consider:

- Each community is unique, with its own characteristics and priorities.
- Recognize the strong connection between the community and the land and the environment.
- Recognize and integrate Indigenous traditional knowledge into the planning and decision-making processes of the project.
- Pressing concerns such as health and frequent power outages often come before energy innovation.
- Transportation may be a challenge, including the potential need for developing accessible and reliable year-round transport to support project implementation.
- Each community will have different energy needs or interests depending on their location, resources and local priorities.
- Communities may have limited capacity to develop low-carbon energy projects due to staffing and funding shortages and competing priorities (such as housing, food, etc.).
- There is a need for building long-lasting capacity in the community, including training opportunities for community members for low-carbon projects.
- Uncertainty about funding, high starting and maintenance costs, and the need for affordable energy options.
- The community's energy utilities and other external entities, including other municipal or other levels of government, may not have strong or trusted relationships with the community due to past experiences.
- The need to respect Indigenous rights, cultural values, and historical connections to the land.
- Need for clear and accessible information to support community understanding of energy options and potential actions.

“We focus too much on project timelines and technology. It's people, and if we get that right, we will get other things right.”

—WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, 2025

¹ Canadian Renewable Energy Association. Wind Energy Development. Best Practices for Indigenous & Public Engagement. October 2017. https://renewablesassociation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Wind-energy-development-best-practices_June-2020.pdf

Key steps:**1.1.1 Learn about the community context**

- Gather information about the community's history, culture, society, people, structure, energy landscape, economic conditions, political landscape, demographic trends, sociographic trends, and past efforts.

1.1.2 Learn about the energy needs, net-zero actions and challenges

- Gather information regarding current energy use in the community, economic conditions, community plans or land use plans.
- Identify the community's main challenges and opportunities in energy development and reducing emissions.
- Understand projected energy needs to address short and long-term needs.
- Identify key partners and entities in the energy sector and create connections.

Tools: Module 1.1 Annex B_Workbook

Module 1.2 Learn about Indigenous community energy opportunities and challenges

Rationale: Understanding the community's opportunities, identifying potential partnerships, and workforce potential will help align the projects with community needs while advancing low-carbon energy innovation and development. Our interviews showed that offering training programs tailored to the community's needs and encouraging partnerships between proponents and communities promote community participation in the project.

Methods: Research public policies and funding programs, actively engage with the community and its partners, and participate in relevant community events.

Points to consider:

- Proponents need to understand the specific conditions of the community that will affect potential projects, as these factors can either limit or drive development.
- Indigenous communities face different energy pressures than urban or suburban communities. It is important to recognize that cost, reliability, and lack of grid capacity, or being off-grid, may be critical concerns for the community.
- Energy, while important to the community, may be secondary to other, more pressing issues, such as housing or clean water. There may not be enough capacity in the community to work on energy in addition to more pressing concerns.

Key steps:

1.2.1 Define low-carbon energy innovation using the definition (**Text box 1**) established in a parallel project, the Low Carbon Energy Innovation (LCEI) initiative.²

Text box 1: Low-carbon energy innovation – a definition

Low-carbon energy innovation strategies refer to policies, regulatory frameworks and factors that enable research, development, deployment, new practices, new business models, and new products or services that reduce GHG emissions in the energy sector, aligning with Canada's net-zero targets.

These strategies can be led by the provincial government, utilities, industries, technology providers, third-party organizations, new entrants or well-established players in the energy markets that promote innovation within the community.

1.2.2 Learn about opportunities and challenges

- Evaluate the community's access to the information and resources necessary to understand and implement low-carbon innovations.

“It is important to know the specific conditions of the communities being engaged.”

—WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, 2025

² The LCEI initiative helps to assess low-carbon energy innovation using a National Low Carbon Innovation Assessment that identifies strengths and gaps and highlights successful pathways forward in each jurisdiction across Canada.

- Offer translation services if needed.
- Identify opportunities that could support energy or net-zero goals or improve residents' quality of life.
- Identify energy needs for the community.
- Identify success stories³ and past strategies that highlight the collaboration between communities and proponents in promoting innovation.
- Consider the community's motivation for participating in energy projects.
- Assess innovation challenges & opportunities within the community.
- Evaluate the supportive innovation needs of the community from industries, municipalities, governments, and utilities (e.g., government or utility funding).
- Prioritize the needs of the community.

1.2.3 Learn about funding options for innovation projects

- Evaluate the community's available resources.
- Identify funding options (e.g., federal funding).

1.2.4 Learn about workforce skills opportunities

- Evaluate the workforce skills needed.
- Identify training opportunities that would enable community members to be part of the workforce in developing innovative initiatives.
- Identify the challenges and opportunities for developing and maintaining a skilled workforce.

1.2.5 Learn about potential community and proponent partnership opportunities

- Identify and develop strategies for building effective community and proponent partnerships on projects.
- Identify and develop the benefits to the community that come from partnerships in projects.
- Identify how to co-create low-carbon energy projects.

Tools: Module 1.2 Annex B_Workbook

Module 1.3 Develop a dedicated community engagement plan

Rationale: Strong and tailored community engagement is essential for successful energy projects. It involves working closely with Indigenous groups and community partners and creating positive long-term relationships to ensure the project's success and positive reputation.⁴

Methods: Review best practices for different engagement strategies, research public websites, local news, and community forums, and engage with community partners.

Points to consider:

- Community engagement in Indigenous communities requires more time than in many other communities. Proponents will need to dedicate time to be present in the community, and to engage in meaningful discussions, not just during official "community engagement" periods.
- Community engagement should be clear and understandable for all members of the community.
- Community leadership and community support is critical in advancing energy projects.
- Some communities lack active leadership involvement in energy planning.
- Energy solutions need to be approved and supported by community leadership.
- Proponents need to take the time to connect with community members, elders, and leaders before introducing the project details, and be transparent about their intentions.
- Proponents need to ensure that information is shared in ways that align with community preferences, such as in-person meetings, storytelling, or translation into Indigenous languages.
- Community priorities may change, and engagement should be an ongoing process that adjusts to their needs, concerns and suggestions.

“Relationships are not built between entities but between people. We need someone as a point of contact to remain the same.”

—WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, 2025

³ Success stories are defined as significant collaborations between communities and proponents that result in the successful implementation and operation of an innovative project within its planned initial time frame.

⁴ Canadian Renewable Energy Association. Wind Energy Development. Best Practices for Indigenous & Public Engagement. October 2017. https://renewablesassociation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Wind-energy-development-best-practices_June-2020.pdf

Key steps:**1.3.1 Prepare a community engagement plan**

- Identify strategies to engage the community and to encourage community members to participate.
- Establish platforms for clear, accessible, transparent communication about energy and development projects.
- Support proactive public participation to build trust and maintain ongoing dialogue.
- Engage youth to encourage future leadership in low-carbon energy projects.
- Prepare a community engagement plan.
- Incorporate strategies in the engagement plan to address community challenges.
- Prepare preliminary ideas for discussion to guide initial engagements.

1.3.2 Develop an engagement plan tailored to local community leadership

- Involve community leaders and champions in identifying energy needs and shaping tailored solutions.
- Identify strategies to encourage community leadership to participate.
- Prepare preliminary ideas for discussion to guide initial engagements.

Tools: Module 1.3 Annex B_Workbook

Module 1.4 Identify a trusted facilitator

Rationale: Promoting energy innovation within the community depends on building trust between the proponent and the community. Through our discussions with community members, we've learned that some communities prefer to work with individuals they know and trust. Identifying a trusted facilitator can help initiate communication between the community and the proponent, encouraging open communication, cultural sensitivity, and successful collaboration on innovation.

Methods: Search online, engage with partners, and post requests in local community forums for suitable facilitators.

Points to consider:

- Communities will likely need someone who can be the face of the project and of engagement.
- Communities may prefer to collaborate with individuals they know and trust. This could be someone who has previously worked in the community, or in similar communities, or has a reputation in the community.
- Communities need individuals who respect and understand local governance, decision-making structures, context, and the community's unique pace.
- Seasonal activities, cultural events, or other community priorities may influence communities' timelines.

Key steps:**1.4.1 Identify a trusted facilitator**

- Use the list of individuals and entities from section 1.1.2 to identify the facilitator.
- Establish the relationship between the proponent and the facilitator and formalize it in a contract.

Tools: Module 1.4 Annex B_Workbook

Module 1.5 Identify an energy champion

Rationale: Supporting low-carbon energy development and innovation in the community requires a trusted leader committed to the project's articulation, often called an energy champion. This champion can be a councillor, or a paid role, such as a community facilitator or an engaged community member. The champion's role is to plan, implement, and evaluate energy initiatives while building trust, reducing resistance, improving communication between the community and the proponent, and ensuring cultural sensitivity.

Methods: Engage with partners and community members.

Points to consider:

- An energy champion is anyone who actively pursues the project's feasibility from planning through completion.
- The energy champion needs to be trusted by the community.

Key steps:

1.5.1 Identify an energy champion

- Look for a community energy champion to help plan, implement, and evaluate energy-related priorities.

Tools: Module 1.5 Annex B_Workbook

2. Indigenous community co-creation innovation stage

Stage 2 Overview:

This stage focuses on partnering with the Indigenous community to co-develop low-carbon energy initiatives while identifying opportunities that align with community priorities. It highlights the importance of building trust, respecting cultural values, and enabling strong collaboration that reflects the community's values, needs, and vision for the future.

Module 2.1 Indigenous community engagement

Rationale: This module emphasizes engagement with the Indigenous community to co-develop a project that reflects shared priorities and benefits. The importance of in-person engagement for building trust and understanding the community's vision, energy needs, and challenges for low-carbon energy innovation was stressed in the interviews and the workshop for this project. By respecting cultural values and local decision-making processes, this approach ensures that initiatives align with the community's long-term goals and values, strengthening the relationship between the proponent and the community.

Methods:

- Gather feedback and align everyone's expectations through workshops, meetings, and consultations, preferably in person.
- Attract community members to participate in the engagements.
- Invite partners (e.g., regulators, private companies) to participate.
- Follow the engagement plan that was established in the early stage.
- Appoint a dedicated contact person to address community needs and respond to questions.
- Establish clear communication channels with community contacts.

Points to consider:

- Begin with early-stage community involvement, which is essential to sustained, successful operations.⁵
- Engage the community in person, if possible, to encourage stronger connections.
- Be present where the community already meets, such as at local fairs or events.
- Respect the community's pace, be patient, and acknowledge that communities may operate on their own timelines.
- Be humble, authentic, and honest in your interactions with community members.⁶
- Address all questions and concerns and allow for clear and open dialogue on the project and the process.⁷
- Tailor information to the community.
- Be fully transparent about what impact any project would have on the community.
- Build long-term relationships between the community and the proponent.
- Recognize that the decision is that of the community.

Key steps:**2.1.1 Learn more about the community context, energy needs and opportunities**

- Repeat sections 1.1, 'Learn about the community' and 1.2, 'Learn about community energy innovation opportunities' through engagements to gather new information.

2.1.2 Strengthen community capacity for energy decision-making

- Provide tools for communities to express their energy needs and priorities.
- Develop educational materials tailored to local contexts.

2.1.3 Engage communities from the beginning of the process

- Involve Indigenous communities from the start in energy and climate policy development.
- Promote collaborative, integrated resource planning that aligns with Indigenous governance structures and priorities.

2.1.4 Build long-term partnership

- Build long-term partnerships based on mutual respect, shared decision-making, and accountability.

2.1.5 Provide clear guidance

- Develop simple, consistent policies so communities know what to follow to meet climate goals.

2.1.6 Highlight successful projects

- Share successful stories from similar-sized communities, especially those highlighting funding approaches, local benefits, and resilience outcomes.
- Demonstrate projects that have improved reliability during extreme events (e.g., ice storms) using low-carbon solutions such as batteries, solar PV, and wind.

2.1.7 Raise awareness and knowledge

- Educate the community on new technologies, such as heat pumps.
- Focus on community education on environmental alternatives.
- Develop public education programs on low-carbon energy that can be created and delivered by the community.
- Put effort into community awareness.

2.1.8 Offer tailored energy pathways

- Support models such as "energy-as-a-service" to reduce upfront costs and financial risk.
- Develop "community energy packages" that bundle technologies with service and installation options.
- Support procurement flexibility (e.g., leasing, ownership, service contracts) to meet local preferences and capacities.

5 IRENA. Renewable energy for remote communities: a guidebook for off-grid projects. 2023. https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2023/Nov/IRENA_Remote_Communities_2023.pdf

6 NREL. Community Energy Planning: Best Practices and Lessons Learned in NREL's Work with Communities. 2022. <https://docs.nrel.gov/docs/fy22osti/82937.pdf>

7 Canadian Renewable Energy Association. Wind Energy Development. Best Practices for Indigenous & Public Engagement. October 2017. https://renewablesassociation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Wind-energy-development-best-practices_June-2020.pdf

- Encourage local co-ownership and cooperative models to increase benefit sharing.
- Design solutions that match each community's structure and abilities.
- Support adopting renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency upgrades in community buildings.

2.1.9 Connect energy to other local goals

- Connect energy topics with local priorities, traditional knowledge, and long-term goals.
- Link low-carbon energy efforts to community goals such as economic development, preparing for extreme weather, and creating new income sources.
- Shift the conversation from just decarbonization to energy reliability and resilience.

2.1.10 Make data easy to use

- Develop regional energy data systems and interactive maps to support local decision-making, such as identifying rooftop solar potential.
- Provide communities access to relevant, easy-to-use data and planning tools to support informed decision-making.

2.1.11 Share the project options with the community

- Present innovation project options, including for partnerships (e.g., co-ownership).
- Present training and capacity building opportunities (e.g., PV technician programs).
- Present Indigenous-led low-carbon energy project options that reflect community values and needs.
- Prioritize Indigenous ownership models for low-carbon energy projects.
- Ensure projects support and integrate Indigenous rights, laws, and cultural knowledge.

2.1.12 Integrate clean technologies into planning

- Guide the community on integrating new technologies into their planning processes.

2.1.13 Keep the conversation going

- Encourage informal and accessible communication channels to promote collaboration on low-carbon solutions.

Tools: Module 2.1 Annex B_Workbook

Module 2.2 Indigenous community benefits

Rationale: When community members see how a project aligns with their priorities, such as creating jobs, supporting economic growth, enhancing local services, or protecting the land, they are more likely to engage and offer their support. Communicating these benefits in a way that respects Indigenous values helps build trust, strengthen relationships, and will help ensure the project's long-term success.

Methods: Connect with the community, communicate openly, and work together to highlight the project's benefits.

Points to consider:

- Benefits may vary across Indigenous communities and partners, with different interpretations of their meaning.
- There should be direct and tangible benefits to the community, such as partial to full ownership of the project.
- Ensure long-term, innovative, low-carbon energy projects are supported by planning that prioritizes climate mitigation and community benefits.

Key steps:

2.2.1 Support local capacity

- Provide communities with support for grant writing, partnership development, and regional energy planning.

2.2.2 Make projects more affordable

- Offer financial tools that bundle benefits and spread upfront costs over time to make low-carbon projects, such as net-zero buildings, more accessible to Indigenous communities.

2.2.3 Communicate the project's benefits to the community (e.g., co-ownership, training opportunities).

Tools: Module 2.2 Annex B_Workbook

Module 2.3 Community engagement for a collaborative project

Rationale: Co-creating the energy project with the community ensures that their insights and needs are integrated and aligned with the project. This enables a shared vision, leading to a greater potential for long-term success.

Methods: Engage with the community, share information, and collaborate to define the project.

Key steps:

2.3.1 Co-create the project

- Present and communicate the project.
- Address the community concerns.
- Establish community support.
- Define the project.

Tools: Module 2.3 Annex B_Workbook

“If you can listen and have humility, you will be successful. We just don't want to drive the bus, we want to own the bus.”

—WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, 2025

3. Sustainable implementation stage

Stage 3 Overview:

This stage focuses on implementing the project in a way that respects Indigenous knowledge, values, and decision-making processes. It involves monitoring progress, adapting to community feedback, maintaining relationships through all project steps, and ensuring the project stays aligned with the community's ongoing needs and priorities.

Module 3.1 Regulatory considerations

Rationale: Regulatory considerations, such as environmental impact assessments, infrastructure permits and building permits, are essential components of any energy project within a community. By addressing these factors early, energy projects can ensure compliance, mitigate risks, avoid delays and identify potential challenges early in the process. This approach leads to smoother implementation and long-term success.

Methods: Learn about the community and provincial regulations related to the project. Next, engage with key partners and regulators to deepen your understanding of local regulations.

Points to consider:

- Each community has unique circumstances, with varying regulatory requirements and infrastructure needs that can lead to different regulatory conditions.
- Explain the regulation requirements to the community and be fully transparent about them.

Key steps:**3.1.1 Learn about local and provincial regulations**

- Identify relevant regulatory entities and their contact information.
- Understand the regulations that apply to the project and the infrastructure needed.
- Validate your understanding of the regulations by communicating with partners and regulatory entities.
- Engage with the community to explain the regulatory process.
- Consider inviting a representative from the regulator to visit the community in person.

Tools: Module 3.1 Annex B_Workbook

Module 3.2 Establish the project activities and steps

Rationale: Setting clear project terms and workplan is essential for ensuring all participants understand the project, their responsibilities, commitments, benefits, roles, and funding resources. A clear understanding of these conditions enables trust and builds effective collaboration.

Methods: In-person meetings with the community to establish the final agreement. Points to consider:

- Be fully transparent about the project, cost, environmental impact, visibility changes, and benefits.

Key steps:**3.2.1 Create a final agreement with the community**

- Define the project's terms for short or long-term innovative projects, including funding resources, responsibilities, training, timeline, partnerships, etc.

- Identify the factors that could leverage additional projects or development. This will encourage innovation and establish a strong foundation for future projects aligned with broader goals.
- Incorporate a traditional ceremony to work towards building a positive relationship.
- Sign the contract/ agreement.
- Provide translation if needed.

Tools: Module 3.2 Annex B_Workbook

Module 3.3 Project monitoring

Rationale: Ongoing monitoring to ensure that the project remains on track and adaptable to arising challenges and changes.

Methods: Meet with the community, leaders, elders, or government officials, where applicable, to develop a detailed accountability process and progress indicators.

Points to consider:

- Maintain a long-term relationship with the proponent and the community during all the project phases.
- Support and engage with the community throughout the project, not just at its beginning.

Key steps:**3.3.1 Create a monitoring and accountability process**

- Identify the factors that will provide ongoing support for the project.
- Establish the terms for continuing relationships between the community and the proponent throughout the project process.

8 An adjustment mechanism is a structured approach that enables a project to stay flexible and responsive to unexpected changes, evolving community needs, and technological advancements. For example, an adjustment mechanism can be established that includes:

1. Predefined action plans to address potential risks, such as regulatory changes, shifting energy demands, community needs or the adoption of new technologies.
2. Ongoing engagement with communities to ensure the project remains aligned with their priorities.
3. Regular check-ins with key partners to ensure the project continues as planned.

- Ensure that a constant point of contact for the community is available. The relationship is with the person, not the proponent. If the person changes, there needs to be a transition plan in place to ensure that the community is comfortable with the change.
- Develop an adjustment mechanism to adapt to unexpected changes, evolving community needs, and technological advancements.⁸
- Define the project maintenance and accountability process.
- Regularly report to the community and to community leaders/government officials.

Tools: Module 3.3 Annex B_Workbook

Module 3.4 Future opportunities

Rationale: A successful project benefits the community where it takes place. It also serves as an example for other communities. Building on what works and what communities trust in a proponent can help drive more low-carbon energy development.

Methods: Meet with the community, partners, and other proponents to assess lessons learned and share with other communities.

Points to consider:

- Community members' experiences and success stories can affect perceptions and support for future energy projects, either encouraging or hindering their development.

Key steps:

3.4.1 Identify leveraging factors for future projects

- Identify and apply the factors that will leverage this project to enable additional projects.
- Monitor new energy opportunities and ensure communities are informed and ready to participate.
- Create pathways for continuous learning, innovation, and adaptation as technologies and needs evolve.

3.4.2 Share the lessons learned

- Share the lessons learned from this project to inform and improve future initiatives, ensuring that everyone benefits from previous experiences.

Tools: Module 3.4 Annex B_Workbook

For more information, please contact:

Richard Carlson | DIRECTOR, ENERGY, POLLUTION PROBE
rcarlson@pollutionprobe.org

Gemma Pinchin | SENIOR LEAD, RESEARCH AND PROJECTS
gpinchin@questcanada.org

