

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	4.0	Community Relations
Sub Program:	4.1	Developing Framework Agreements
Template:	4.1.6	Community Partnership Model
Sponsor(s):	<i>True North Energy</i>	

1. Objective

To provide innovative ways through community partnership agreements to balance the growing Aboriginal community expectations in northeastern Alberta with the business need for economic performance.

2. Description

True North Energy was involved in developing a community partnership agreement for the Fort Hill oil sands project. Community partnership agreements were signed with Aboriginal and other groups to define their participation and role in project planning, communication, training, employment, and other matters of concern. The agreement helped address the rising regulatory expectations, the strain on the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo under extensive development, and the expectation of the local Aboriginal people for more involvement in oil sands projects without forsaking their traditional way of life.

The community partnership agreement focused on:

- a) The need to develop a long-term partnership that supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the Aboriginal community.
- b) Establishing an understanding between the company and the community on the general approach to responding to and resolving key concerns of the community related to the development effects of the project. This requires on-going effort of the parties to identify and address the key concerns related to the cumulative and specific environmental, social, and economic impacts and benefits. The objectives were:
 - **Environmental objectives.** Identify community environmental concerns and seek solutions about how those concerns can be addressed; actively involve the community and other stakeholders in implementing environmental retention, improvement, monitoring, reclamation, and mitigation strategies and activities.
 - **Social objectives.** Identify community social barriers and issues related to education, employment, and workforce advancement and seek solutions to how those issues can be addressed; actively support and promote the traditional practices, culture and language of Fort McKay, and support the community in their efforts to prevent or mitigate impacts on traditional practices, culture and

language; actively work with Fort McKay to meet the objectives identified by the community in their long-term planning process.

- **Economic objectives.** actively involve the community and other stakeholders in implementing activities or strategies that lead to long-term, sustainable, and meaningful economic benefits for Fort McKay.
 - **Issues management objectives.** Follow consultation and communication methods as outlined in the MOU for consultation principles; establish joint advocacy strategies and actions based on mutually agreed objectives.
- c) An annual action plan to be jointly developed and revised; development of the annual action plan to be coordinated with the annual planning and budget cycle for each party; priorities for the annual action plan to be key concern areas as identified by the community and revised from time to time.

Attachments to this agreement included the following appendices:

- a) **Memorandum of Understanding Consultation Principles.** Included the consultation principles, the objectives of the consultation principles and the role of third parties in discussing issues and negotiating.
- b) **Memorandum of Understanding Traditional Environmental Knowledge.** Included definitions, principles of the MOU, the terms, implementation mechanism, review of the MOU, and the duration/termination.
- c) **Environmental Action Plan.** Included commitment/actions, timelines and accountabilities for traditional knowledge, air quality, aquatic resources, groundwater, instream flow needs, sustainability plan, reclamation, wildlife.
- d) **Socio-Economic Action Plan.** All action plans (except childcare) were conditional on True North obtaining all required regulatory, corporate and owner approval to proceed with the project. True North believes that the best way to be a good neighbor is to work right in the community and to assist community residents to achieve things for themselves. The key concern areas included: childcare, education, employment/training, infrastructure, health care, cultural retention, business development and safety/security.
- e) **Business Agreement.** Not developed.

3. Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are:

- Give equal attention to the expectations of all regional stakeholders.
- Assemble the best environmental impact assessment team (progressive and innovative).
- Hire an Aboriginal issues specialist to enhance relationships with the regional Aboriginal community.
- Commit to innovative techniques.

4. Timeframe for Results

Agreements such as this are intended for long-term relationships.

5. Measurable Criteria

These include:

- Creation of a successful MOU model
- Creation of a sustainable and skilled Aboriginal employment base
- Increase in contracts for local contractors
- Creation of sustainable income, economic and other benefits for the Aboriginal community

6. Budget

The True North project has been postponed so there is no identifiable budget.

7. Partners and Sponsors

The partners for this program were True North Energy, the Fort McKay First Nation and the Fort McKay Métis as represented by the Fort McKay Industry Relations Corporation (IRC).

8. Experience with the Program

This program is on hold given the postponement of the project.

9. General Applicability

This program is a model which can be used by resource industries to establish a comprehensive framework for cooperation and building relationships with Aboriginal communities.

10. Additional Information or Support

To view the Community Partnership Agreement, contact:

Information Services, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, Calgary, AB

Telephone: (403) 297-8190

Email: esub.webmaster@gov.ab.ca

Date entered or updated: June 1, 2003