First Nations Research Co-design Guidelines

The First Nations Co-Design Guidelines offers advice for collaboratively designing One Basin CRC projects that are culturally respectful, community-driven, and mutually beneficial. Equity in partnerships involve First Nations communities in all phases of a project lifecycle to ensure community perspectives and priorities contribute to mutual and sustainable outcomes across The Basin. These Guidelines promotes the need for fair, balanced, genuine collaborative partnerships where researchers, industry partners and First Nations communities share decision-making, responsibilities, and benefits. Codesign in First Nations research is a collaborative approach where communities and researchers jointly plan and conduct activities, ensuring research is culturally respectful and aligned with community priorities. Co-design involves honouring First Nations knowledge, cultural protocols, and community values, ensuring research benefits and acknowledges community contributions.

The key considerations for co-design include:

1. Support the development of skills and knowledge within First Nations communities to enable their active participation in the research process. Provide training, resources, and opportunities for community members to contribute meaningfully (see *First Nations Capacity Building Guidelines*).

2. Engage First Nations communities early and often (i.e., pre-planning visioning, research design, & application write-up).

3. Focus on building and maintaining long-term relationships with First Nations communities. Approach research with a commitment to ongoing collaboration and support.

4. Prioritise trust and open communication, building relationships based on clear and shared understandings of community needs, aspirations, and concerns.

5. Consider the long-term legacy of the research and its impact on First Nations communities. Plan for the continuation of partnerships and the application of research findings to support enduring community benefits.

6. Ensure First Nations communities have a prominent voice in decision-making processes, sharing responsibilities and benefits.

7. Obtain explicit consent from First Nations communities before commencing research. Ensure that consent is informed, culturally appropriate, and obtained through a transparent and respectful process.

8. Establish structures that allow First Nations communities to oversee and guide the research [relevant to their lands, waters and people] process.

9. Ensure that community representatives have a role in decision-making and oversight.

10. Work collaboratively with First Nations communities to co-create research objectives, methodologies, and outcomes.

11. Incorporate community feedback and perspectives into the design of the research project.

12. Integrate cultural understanding into all stages of the research process. This includes respecting traditional practices, sites and relationships, languages, and perspectives, and avoiding practices that could be culturally inappropriate or harmful.

13. Ensure that research outcomes provide tangible benefits to First Nations communities. Focus on achieving outcomes that address community priorities and contribute to well-being and empowerment.

14. Maintain transparency throughout the research process. Provide regular updates and reports to First Nations communities regarding progress, harm, findings, and future opportunities.

15. Implement participatory research methods that actively involve First Nations community members in data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

16. Foster collaborative analysis and interpretation of findings to ensure they reflect community perspectives.

17. Protect the confidentiality and privacy of First Nations participants. Manage data in ways that align with community expectations and cultural values and ensure that data usage is ethically sound (see *First Nations Data Sovereignty Guidelines*).

18. Respect First Nations intellectual property rights and traditional knowledge. Ensure that the ownership, use, and dissemination of research findings are managed in accordance with community agreements and protocols (see *First Nations Intellectual Property Guidelines*).

19. Include project-specific mechanisms to ensure ongoing evaluation and feedback from First Nations communities. Use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and ensure that the research remains relevant and beneficial.

20. Share research findings with First Nations communities in accessible and meaningful ways. Facilitate the dissemination of results through community-centric research translation events, capacity building workshops, reports, and other culturally appropriate, community-directed formats.