

2024  
CONGRÈS  
CALL FOR PAPERS

AQÉI

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE  
*and environmental assessments*

UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL  
Québec – November 19 and 20, 2024



## THEME OF THE CONGRESS

First Nations and Inuit are profoundly affected by the field of environmental assessment. Some projects located on Indigenous ancestral territories trigger one or more environmental assessment processes. These environmental assessment processes allow communities to better document the potential impacts of these projects on their rights and interests in order to identify what avoidance, mitigation, or compensation measures are necessary to obtain social acceptability for the project.

For several years, many environmental assessment practitioners have sought to develop expertise to promote the participation of Indigenous peoples in these environmental assessment processes. Environmental assessment processes and the obligation to consult and accommodate Indigenous peoples are closely linked. In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Crown has a constitutional obligation to consult and, if necessary, accommodate Indigenous peoples when a project is likely to have adverse effects on their treaty rights or recognized or potential ancestral rights. Although federal and provincial governments have established consultation processes, these are generally poorly understood by initiators and practitioners of environmental assessment. Furthermore, during consultations, several Indigenous communities cite the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which notably recognizes the inherent right to self-determination, including the right to governmental autonomy in the management of their territories and resources.

Project initiators are also required to consult during the conduct of environmental studies. Although efforts have been made to improve these consultations, much remains to be done to raise awareness among stakeholders about the importance of consulting Indigenous communities to take into account their knowledge, occupation of the territory, rights and interests, and concerns. Furthermore, modern treaties such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (NEQA) provide specific procedures for environmental assessments in Cree, Inuit, and Naskapi territories.

In recent years, Indigenous peoples have requested and sometimes achieved increased participation in environmental assessment processes. Some examples of partnerships are materializing, particularly in studies on land use, archaeological studies and subsequent excavations, as well as in forestry work and during the construction and operation of new projects. Examples of partnership with communities in project governance and benefit sharing are also observed. However, much remains to be done according to some.

In this context, we may wonder how environmental assessment approaches and practices contribute to the integration of Indigenous communities' concerns and thus to reconciliation efforts with Indigenous peoples and their self-determination.

## CONGRESS OVERVIEW

The congress aims to explore, through conferences and workshops, how these consultation and participation practices are conducted by presenting the approaches put forward by Indigenous and Inuit peoples, governments, and project initiators. This congress seeks to create a space for sharing, respectful dialogue, and exchanges among all stakeholders in environmental assessment to enable better understanding and collaborative efforts to improve relationships. The congress will also aim to present experiences from various projects in northern and southern Quebec and will explore major common concerns among diverse communities regarding the effects of projects, including health, social environment, traditional activities, consideration of Indigenous knowledge, archaeology and Indigenous heritage, and cumulative impacts. In

short, the congress aims to exchange best practices, innovations, and improvement strategies to navigate together in the context of the increasing number of energy, mining, and various infrastructure projects.

Members of the AQEI as well as representatives of Indigenous and Inuit communities and the non-Indigenous practitioners who accompany them are therefore invited to participate in large numbers in this congress, which will be held on November 19th and 20th in Quebec City.

**DATES:** November 19 and 20, 2024

**LOCATION:** UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL | Québec





## PROPOSED THEMES

### Theme 1 – Community Consultation Framed by EA Procedures

#### Potential Topics:

- › Framework for Indigenous consultation in the EA process
- › Framework for Indigenous consultation in treaty territory (northern Quebec)
- › Framework for Indigenous consultation in the Quebec procedure for environmental assessment and review
- › Issues related to consultations (quantity, timelines, financial resources, duplication of consultations, etc.)
- › Indigenous consultation experiences in specific projects (assessment)
- › Innovations and potential solutions

### Theme 2 – Treaties and Consultation Agreements

#### Potential Topics:

- › James Bay Agreement and Northeastern Quebec Agreement
- › Consultation agreements with governments
- › Agreements with developers

**Note 1 :** You have two options available, traditional conferences or participatory workshops. Traditional conferences will typically last for 40 minutes, including a minimum exchange period of 15 minutes. Participatory workshops are longer (60 to 90 minutes) and involve participants according to your format. You can contact us to discuss this further! Speakers will also be invited to be part of a panel on the sub-themes addressed.

### Theme 3 – Concerns of Indigenous Communities

#### Potential Topics:

- › Common community issues with projects (health, social acceptance, land access, economic benefits)
- › Cumulative effects on communities and traditional activities
- › Ownership and sharing of collected data

### Theme 4 – Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Contributions to Environmental Assessments

#### Potential Topics:

- › Communication of knowledge
- › How to incorporate Indigenous knowledge
- › Studies conducted by Indigenous peoples
- › Archaeological studies and excavations
- › Forestry studies and work
- › Land use studies
- › Others

**Note 2 :** If a topic of interest to you is not mentioned among the proposed themes, please feel free to propose it. We will be happy to consider it to ensure that the topics addressed reflect your concerns.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BEFORE JULY 15, 2024.

[FORM >](#)