

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES ON THE ENERGY TRANSITION: LESSONS FROM INDIGENOUS-LED PROJECTS IN SASKATCHEWAN AND ALBERTA

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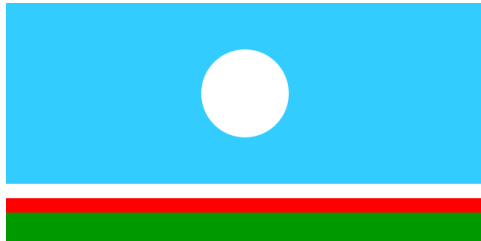
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Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge I live and work on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis. This presentation is built on research which case studies extended to Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territories. I pay respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of the places and reaffirm our relationship with one another.



Autonomous Areas in Russia



Autonomous republic

Autonomous oblast (AO)



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Why does it matter?



Why working with communities on the energy transition is important?

Indigenous people around the world are forced to adapt to transformation (e.g., colonization) and transitions set by non-Indigenous people settled on their land

They share similar history, driven by the policies of “extractivism”: natural resources were drivers for energy development

Rushed by the global actors’ agenda of addressing climate change, e.g., there is no net-zero without nuclear; SMRs can provide clean energy to northern, remote, and Indigenous communities

Energy Transition Problem

Sustainable energy transition is

“sustainable for whom”?

Transitioning and accelerating sustainability and innovative technology with **unclear process for community engagement** and for **community visions of the energy futures**

Need to find a **different approach** in developing a new technology, especially in northern, remote, and Indigenous areas



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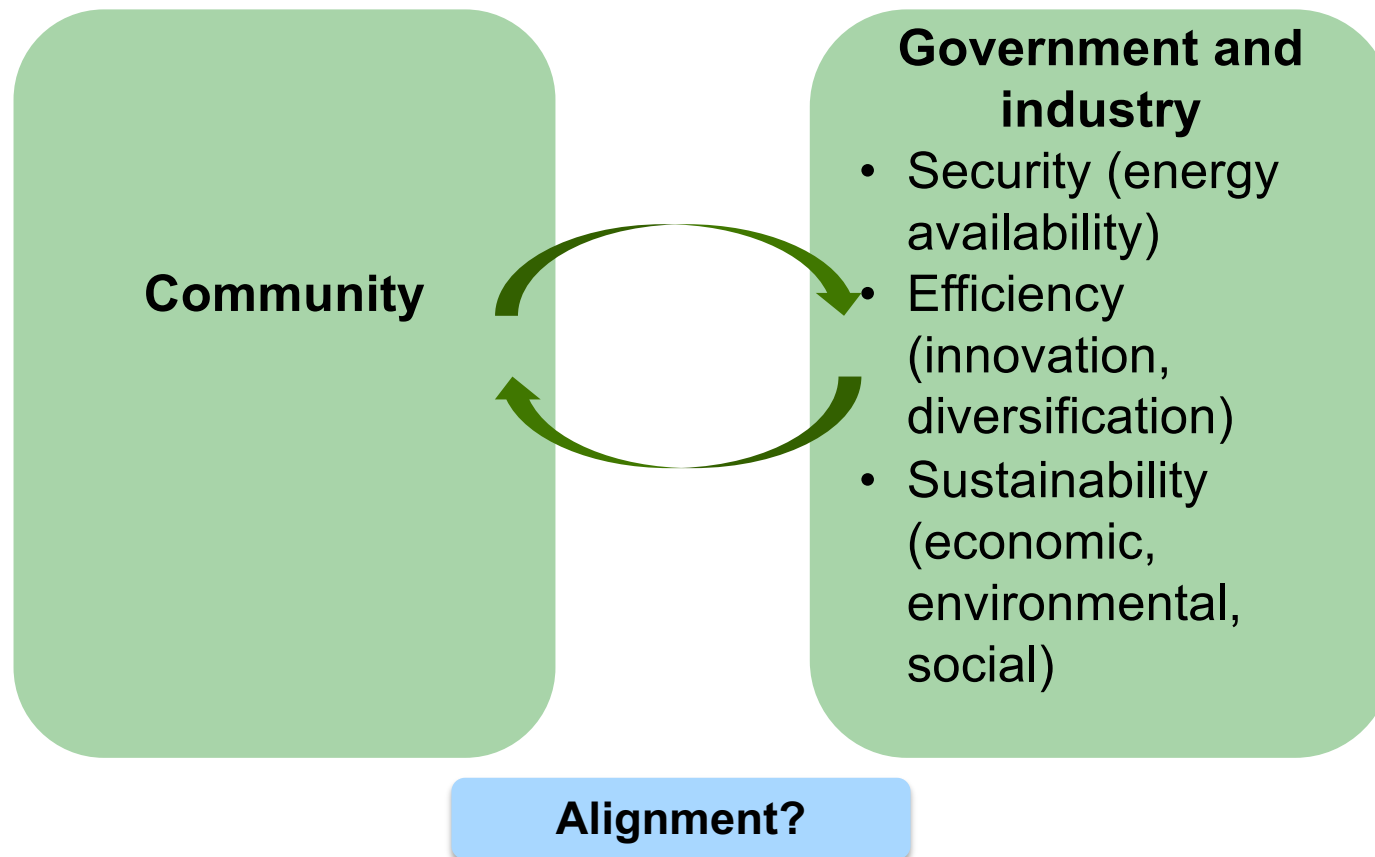
Problem Statement

There is disconnect between Indigenous community and government and industry perspectives on sustainable energy transition

How can we create a space for sustainable energy transition in northern, remote, and Indigenous communities that respects Indigenous experience and worldview?

What are the specific challenges that the leadership of Indigenous-led projects experienced in developing those projects?

Government/Industry and Community Perspectives



What are SMRs?

NEA SMR technology and regulatory readiness levels:

Phase 1 (before 2030): advanced designs with fewer innovative features

- Advanced SMRs (iPWRs)

Phase 2 (later in the 2030s): innovative SMRs

- Innovative SMRs (Gen-IV with a non-water coolant/moderator)



Why SMRs?

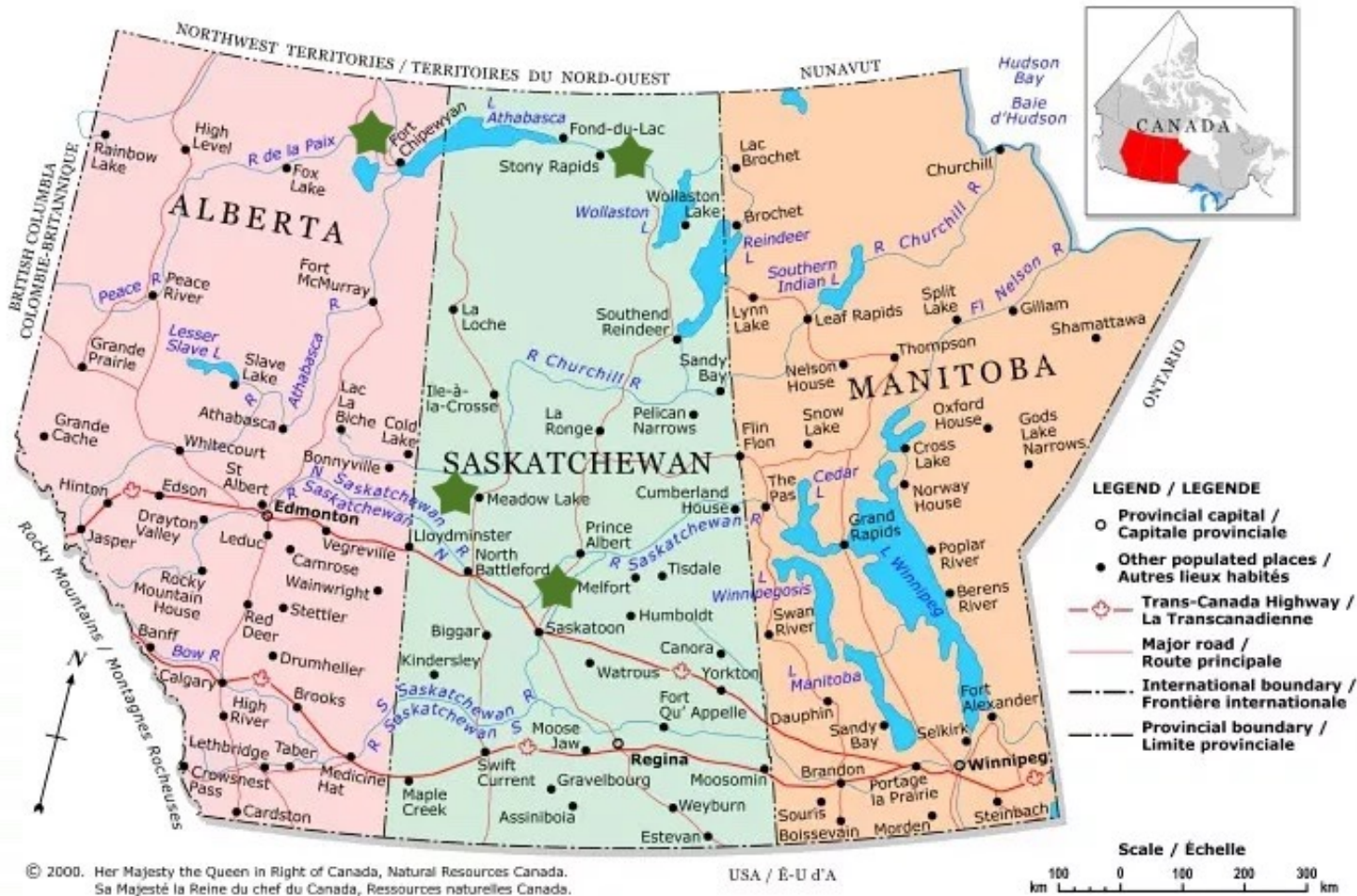
Energy option where large nuclear reactors are not a viable choice, i.e., remote mining sites, northern and Indigenous communities

SMRs haven't been commercially deployed, renewable energy technology closest to SMRs in context

Studied as a clean energy technology innovation in the context of a transition to sustainable energy production, distribution, and consumption



Community Projects Location



Community Projects

Projects	Meadow Lake	Tazi Twé	Fort Chipewyan	Muskoday
Location (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2014)	SK	SK	AB	SK
Indigenous groups number (community interviewee data)	9	1	3	1
Population (community interviewee data/official website or statistics)	Approx. 16 000/ 12 618 ("About Us "Meadow Lake Tribal Council," n.d.)	Approx. 2000 / 2096 ("About – Black Lake First Nation," n.d.)	Approx. 1000-1200 / 798 ("Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Fort Chipewyan, Unincorporated place (UNP) [Designated place], Alberta," n.d.)	Approx. 2000 / 2050 ("Muskoday First Nation, Official Home Page," n.d.)
Projects (community interviewee data)	Biomass 2 sawmills: 1) In Meadow Lake 2) In Glaslyn for a post plant for wood waste recycling	Hydro run-of-the-river	Solar farm	Solar 2 projects
On-/off-grid (community interviewee data)	On-grid	On-grid	Off-grid	On-grid
Capacity (community interviewee data)	6.6 MW	50 MW	2.35 MW (+600 kW owned by ATCO)	514 KW: 1) 190 kW 2) 324 kW
Funding (community interviewee data)	\$52.5 million from NRCan	Project cost reached under \$900 million but was shelved	\$7.76 million: \$4.5 million from NRCan \$3.3 from Government of Alberta	1) \$375,000 from NRCan 2) \$250,000 from NRCan
Ownership (community interviewee data)	100% Indigenous owned	Offer included 49% ownership, 50/50 profit share	100% Indigenous owned	100% Indigenous owned

Four main themes from the interviews:

Self-sufficiency

Recognition

Power

Indigenous values

Self-sufficiency

Main goal: not just to generate power but to get on a path towards independence (mainly independent source of revenue)

Needed: independence from the controlling power of the state (“control through handouts”)

in ways that align with the Indigenous perspective of achieving a good way of living

Recognition

expressed frustrations with the failure of government and industry to recognize Indigenous communities as equal partners

Indigenous communities will almost always sell to a large power company - government and industry are essentially the same entity

Needed: to ensure that the communities have the decision-making space and capacity to make equal partners reality

Power

Inequality disguised by the rhetoric of partnership

Community project leaders mentioned capacity deficits:

- 1) **financial issues:** difficulty in raising the finances to start the project and the time for the investment recuperation
- 2) **human capacity:** overly complex project launch application

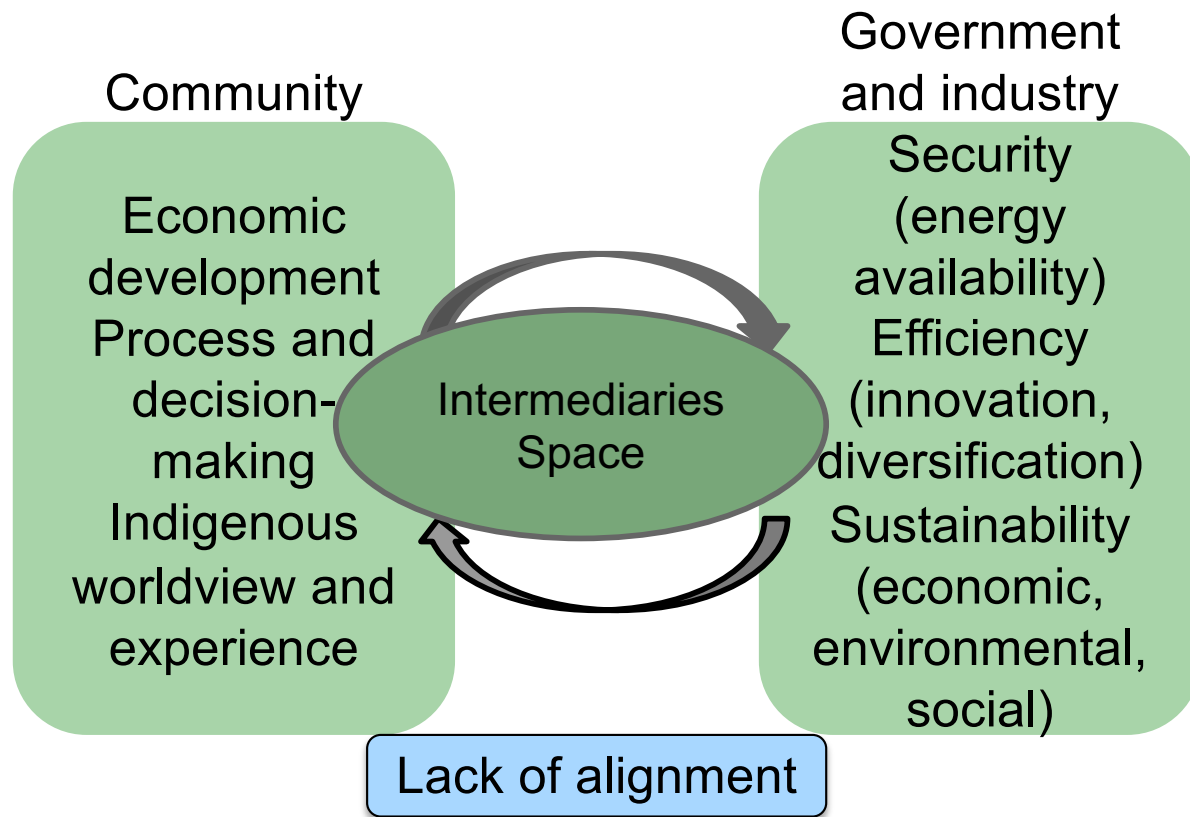
Indigenous communities are not homogenous – traditional forms of governance, the Indian Act, politics

Intergenerational division, driven by political interests, financial interests, environmental concerns, future generation well-being

Indigenous values

Renewable energy fits with Indigenous worldviews to develop natural resources, the concept of 'cycle/circularity' (interconnection)

Cree people concept of 'pimachesowin', Anishinaabe concept of 'bimaadiziwin', the 'Good Life', and 'ayii yorege', 'teachings of good spirits' in Sakha/Yakut peoples' culture – unite the idea of ***the land, good conduct, and self-sufficiency to decolonize***



Findings and Recommendations

A better process of planning (including funding, investment recoupment time) and implementation of energy projects where Indigenous communities are equal partners –a change of attitude and rethinking of what true partnership involves

Other ways of support than clean energy grants/funding (became the only way for Indigenous nations to develop renewable projects)

Energy transition is closely tied to the economic development opportunity which is in most cases financial support for the programs and services of the community not aiming for sustainability goals

Clear and transparent regulations, working process with communities – government prefers dealing with industry partners, not communities

Findings and Recommendations

In the Indigenous context it is about creating space for a 'dialogue', a long-term reciprocal engagement process

The space of formal and informal networks can bridge that gap and amend past relations, space to align the perspectives of government/industry and communities

Provide policy support to the role of intermediaries in the sustainable energy transition, especially in translating the Indigenous vision to government and industry, focusing on the potential of SMRs

Role of intermediaries in creating and managing the space (e.g., FNPA), they are policy brokers that help transform the ideas and transfer knowledge

Indigenous intermediaries can help persuade government/industry to do what communities want to do, which means "selling but not selling out"

What communities think of SMRs?

Communities were not against SMR, they simply haven't put much thought into it

As a technology they say it is smart, but nuclear waste is a problem

If there are ways to sustainably deal with waste, then it could possibly be an option

Communities are not homogenous" "If SMR was proposed located in northern Saskatchewan, there'd be the same split in views."

"The proponents need to show a clear business (case) plan for SMR, all costs in and they haven't done it yet. There's other technologies that make more sense."

Махтал! Thank you!

Questions?

