



Tool 01:

Guiding principles for remote engagement

01

Guiding principles for remote engagement summary sheet

The guiding principles are an important aspect of working within remote and very remote communities as they set the framework for all that will follow, providing guidance for project workers and staff in the minimum tenets required.

Principle	Definition
Culturally safe engagement	→ Conscious awareness of behaviour, whether it is overt or covert or intended or unintended, which disadvantages people who are identified based on their real or assumed membership of a racial or cultural group.
Communication	→ Foster co-ownership of the communication process with clearly defined lines of communication. → Clearly define lines and methods of communication to ensure relevance. → Maximise community and stakeholder opportunities. → Ensure community and stakeholder access to project representatives. → Demonstrate active listening and sensitivity to concerns. → Ensure the right people are engaged, and contacts are representative. → Build and maintain honest relationships through timely and accurate information. → Understand individual and group capacities and incorporate into planning. → Identify and assess social, environmental, and economic impacts of project.
Transparency	→ Clearly identify objectives and preferred outcomes of the project. → Clearly explain or negotiate the decision-making and feedback processes. → Clearly outline and negotiate the boundaries and level of influence. → Provide information immediately on any changes to the expected outcomes. → Report openly regarding input and feedback received from all. → Document decisions and outcomes of meetings and ongoing performance.
Collaboration	→ Ensure cognisance of stakeholders and community capability and resources. → Work in cooperation and share expertise. → Establish joint ownership of outcomes. → Comprehensively deal with the issues consistently seek input. → Consider independent mediation for any disagreements and disputes.
Inclusiveness	→ Identify the relevant communities and stakeholders and their issues, interests, and aspirations, noting they may change over time. → Facilitate community and stakeholder engagement. → Acknowledge and respect diversity and differing agendas. → Respect the cultural and heritage of local communities. → Systems to engage with minorities and marginalised groups appropriately. → Acknowledge it is rarely feasible to involve the entire community.
Integrity	→ Be open about the nature of the engagement process and make it clear from the beginning what decisions are outside the scope of the process. → Clearly articulate what is negotiable and what is not negotiable in the engagement process. → Ensure realistic expectations. → Report often on progress – accurately and promptly. → Ensure that opinions, objections, or support are respected. → Treat people fairly and without discrimination. → Respect legal, ethical, and human rights. → Be honest, even when the news is not good.

Guiding principles for remote engagement

This Section of the Toolkit sets out the guiding principles that were established by the Remote Accord, as well as how they have been expanded on and applied in practice as part of the Project.

The Remote Accord guiding principles for engagement with communities and stakeholders ('guiding principles') were originally developed in June 2023 and were reviewed by the Remote Accord Leadership Group and approved by the National Reference Group in August 2023. The Project Team employed the guiding principles for the site-specific projects in Project Communities. The site-specific project work conducted by the Project Team informed further explanation and expansion of the principle's elements, i.e., what the principles looked like in the reality of consultation and engagement with remote communities.

The guiding principles are an important aspect of work within remote and very remote communities as they set the framework for all future work. They provide guidance for project workers and staff in the minimum tenets required for successful collaborations and outcomes. The principles and their original definitions are noted in Table 1.

Table 1. The original Remote Accord guiding principles for engagement with communities and stakeholders

Principle	Definition
Culturally safe engagement	→ Conscious awareness of behaviour, whether it is overt or covert or intended or unintended, which disadvantages people who are identified based on their real or assumed membership of a racial or cultural group.
Communication	→ Open and effective engagement involving both listening and talking. → Two-way communication. → Clear, accurate and relevant information. → Timeliness.
Transparency	→ Clear and agreed information and feedback processes. → Transparency. → Reporting.
Collaboration	→ Working cooperatively to see mutually beneficial outcomes.
Inclusiveness	→ Recognise, understand, and involve communities and stakeholders early and throughout the process.
Integrity	→ Conduct engagement in a manner that fosters mutual respect and trust.

Using the learnings from the Project and the day-to-day work involved in the Project's evolution, these principles also evolved and expanded, with elements gleaned from the Project Team's real-life experience. These elements better describe all the different aspects of each of the principles. Tables 2 to 7 set out each of the revised guiding principles and the elements that need to be considered to successfully meet them. Each of these are supported by a small example of the experiences of the Project Team.

Table 2. The guiding principle of culturally safe engagement

Principle	Definition
Culturally safe engagement	Conscious awareness of behaviour, whether it is overt or covert or intended or unintended, which disadvantages people who are identified based on their real or assumed membership of a racial or cultural group.
Elements	No additional elements for this principle

Case Study

The Project Team engaged with members of the local communities in the Project areas extensively. The main message was to "keep this principle simple" and just provide a clear and simple definition, rather than trying to complicate an important self-explanatory principle.

Table 3. The guiding principle of communication

Principle	Definition
Communication	Open and effective engagement involving both listening and talking. 1. Two-way communication. 2. Clear, accurate and relevant information. 3. Timeliness.
Elements	→ Foster co-ownership of the communication process. → Clearly define lines of communication. → Maximise community and stakeholder opportunities to say what they want and to provide information and feedback. → Ensure project representatives take part in consultation and are accessible to communities and stakeholders. → Demonstrate active listening by responding to the issues of each community and stakeholder group and being sensitive to their concerns. → Determine and use the right channels of communication to ensure the method of communication is appropriate to the relevant communities and stakeholders. → Identify appropriate individuals and contacts to ensure the right people are engaged, ensuring the contacts are representative of their group. → Build and maintain honest working relationships through the provision of accurate and timely information. → Understand individual and group capacities to participate and incorporate this into planning. → Identify and assess relevant social environmental and economic effects of activities. → Provide information in a form that is understandable by the target audience and in a way that genuinely assists people to understand and make informed decisions. → Allow enough time for community and stakeholder issues to be raised and addressed and for the stakeholders to review and respond to information. → Maintain engagement throughout the life of the project, from the planning stage through to construction, implementation, operation, review and finally through to closure. → Respect timeframes that will allow community and stakeholder representatives to consult appropriately with their constituencies. → Provide information within appropriate timeframes and contexts and identify the reporting period.

Case Study

Ideally, the Project Team members aligned themselves with industry groups in the first instance. Where possible, they met with stakeholders face-to-face in their own communities in the beginning. This was through an informal process of 'immersion': talking to people in local cafes and shops, patiently building, and maintaining relationships and lines of communication. Then following up with their preferred method of communication and frequency – "...people are happy to tell you what suits them best."

Table 4. The guiding principle of transparency

Principle	Definition
Transparency	Clear and agreed information and feedback processes. 1. Transparency. 2. Reporting.
Elements	→ Clearly identify objectives of the project. → Identify the objectives of the community and stakeholders. → Clearly explain or negotiate the decision-making processes and ensure that communities and stakeholders understand the project objectives. → Clearly outline and negotiate the boundaries of the engagement process, commitment of resources and level of influence of the various parties involved in the process. → Clearly articulate the preferred outcomes of the project. → Clearly set out the process and provisions for two-way feedback. → Reinforce the expected outcomes throughout the process – provide information immediately on any changes to the expected outcomes. → Report openly the input from all communities and stakeholders and include feedback on their input. → Document decisions and outcomes of meetings with communities and stakeholders. → Report appropriate performance information on the consultation through an agreed process.

Case Study

An organisation in one community thought a particular strategy would work based on some pre-existing infrastructure they had. "It just wasn't feasible..." and outlining that clearly and honestly worked well for the long-term relationship between the stakeholders and the Project Team.

Table 5. The guiding principle of collaboration

Principle	Definition
Collaboration	Working cooperatively to see mutually beneficial outcomes.
Elements	→ Ensure cognisance of how capable stakeholders and community groups are in participating in the process of collaboration. → Recognise that communities need adequate time and resources to effectively engage. → Share expertise. → Work in cooperation. → Establish joint ownership of outcomes, seeking mutually beneficial outcomes where feasible. → Comprehensively deal with the issues and seek community and stakeholder input into responses. → Consider independent mediation processes to deal with any disagreements and disputes.

Case Study

Developing key stakeholders and champions within the communities was a key element to the success of the Project Team. Collaboration with those on the ground helped set the framework for creating sustainability of the initiatives.

Table 6. The guiding principle of inclusiveness

Principle	Definition
Inclusiveness	Recognise, understand, and involve communities and stakeholders early and throughout the process.
Elements	→ Identify the relevant communities and stakeholders, recognising they may change over time. → Identify and, where possible, understand community issues, interests, aspirations, and concerns to better define what matters most to the community. → Facilitate (where appropriate) community and stakeholder engagement. → Acknowledge and respect the diversity of communities and stakeholders. → Accept the different agendas of different communities and stakeholders and ensure that dominant groups are not the only voices heard. → Acknowledge that in few circumstances is it feasible to involve the entire community. → Respect the cultural and heritage requirements of local communities, including the traditional owners of the area. → Ensure there are appropriate systems, with minorities and other marginalised groups having equitable and culturally appropriate ways to engage, so groups that may be under-represented or hard to reach, take part.

Case Study

Focus groups and regular feedback using tools such as infographics, ensured continued engagement with a variety of stakeholders for the life of the Project. Providing these in a range of formats, depending on the audience, ensured all stakeholders felt they were heard and seen.

Table 7. The guiding principle of integrity

Principle	Definition
Integrity	Conduct engagement in a manner that fosters mutual respect and trust.
Elements	→ Be open about the nature of the engagement process and make it clear from the beginning what decisions are outside the scope of the process. → Clearly articulate what is negotiable and what is not negotiable in the engagement process. → Ensure realistic expectations are set and agreed early in the process. → Report often on progress – accurately and promptly. → Ensure that all community opinions and rights to object or support a project or policy are respected. → Treat people fairly and without discrimination. → Respect legal, ethical, and human rights. → Be honest, even when the news is not good.

Case Study

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