

# The Contributions of Indigenous Knowledge and Inuit-Driven Research to Defining Community Priorities, Policymaking, and Land-Use Governance in North Slope, Alaska

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DARTMOUTH



Everyone knows the Arctic is rapidly changing, and communities are facing challenges

## **Good intentions, but pitfalls?**

Unusable  
Research

Duplicate  
Research

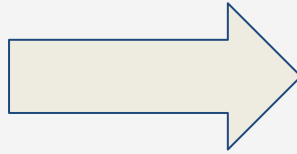
Unethical  
Practices

Bias and  
Preconception

Causing Research  
Fatigue

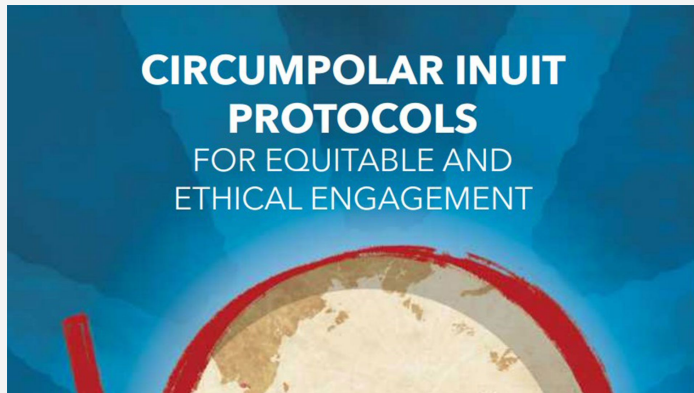
# A Research Paradigm Shift

Here are my  
questions, what are  
your answers?



**What are you  
interested in? What  
do you want me to  
focus on?**

# A Research Paradigm Shift



Geosciences (GEO)

## Principles for Conducting Research in the Arctic

Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC)<sup>1</sup>

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*Insight*

## A framework for co-production of knowledge in the context of Arctic research

Negeqlikacaarni kangingnaulriani ayuqenrilnguut piyaraitgun kangingnauryararkat

Ellam Yua, [Julie Raymond-Yakoubian](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Raychelle Aluaq Daniel](#)<sup>2</sup> and [Carolina Behe](#)<sup>3</sup>



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY  
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



November 30, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM:

Arati Prabhakar, Ph.D.

Assistant to the President and Director  
Office of Science and Technology Policy

Brenda Mallory

Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

SUBJECT:

Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge





# Findings and Learnings: key aspects to successful governance

Equitable and ethical research **serving community needs**

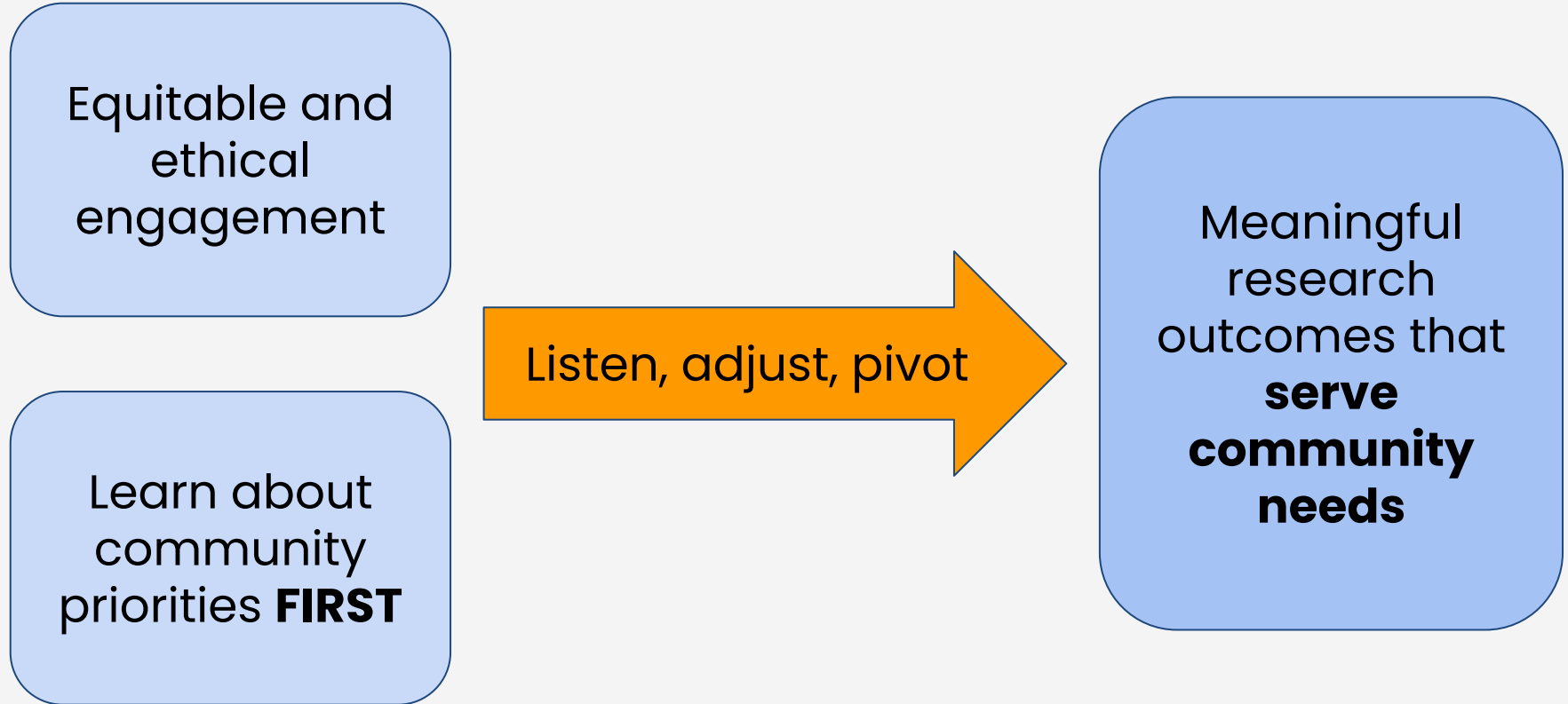
Indigenous-led **research and ecological monitoring**

**Balance** and Iñupiat values

Stipulations developed through **community meetings** and multilateral conversations

*Utqiaġvik, AK, 2022.12*

# 1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs





## **1:** Equitable and ethical research serving community needs

Community interests & Advice for researchers, coming from the Iñupiat Peoples:

**Always come with an open mind.**

– Iñupiat leader 04

**Iñupiat are interested in knowledge-sharing:**

“Also think about other places in the Arctic or other places in the world – maybe how they can help us or we can help them.”

– Iñupiat leader 03

**Be open to adjust research directions:**

“Be flexible with what you're working with and where your project may lead.”

– Iñupiat leader 03

## **1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs**

### **Do not duplicate research. Instead, empower capacity-building:**

“... versus what a dozen researchers coming to the same conclusion ...”

– Iñupiat leader 05

“We're done studying our land ... How can we implement to to get more resources or funding for our communities?”

– Iñupiat leader 02

### **Support Indigenous Peoples to lead research and train outside researchers:**

“At the end of the day, it's gonna be the local person on the ground that knows much more... our local hunters trained the helicopter pilot and the researchers on staff.”

– Iñupiat leader 04

## **1: Equitable and ethical research serving community needs**

### **Build trust, learn, and serve community needs:**

“The [non-Indigenous] staff that we have here right now, they've learned to build a mutual, trusting relationship with our people.”

– Iñupiat leader 04

“Take a year or two to learn the Iñupiat way... lean it towards what can you do that's actually helpful to the communities.”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 03

### **Climate change related research is a priority:**

“When the ice is not coming in with the animals, that means it's not bringing in food for the Iñupiat... So that's something you should look into.”

– Iñupiat leader 01

## 2: Balance and Iñupiat values

**Iñupiat Peoples** in the North Slope have seen great successes in **achieving a balance**



*Utqiagvik, AK, 2022.12*

## **2: Balance and Iñupiat values**

### **Maintaining subsistence skills and practices:**

“Even though there's a cash economy up here, there's no way we could live up here without our subsistence food.”

– Iñupiat leader 06

### **Iñupiat values:**

“We have to protect the land and the resources, it's so deeply rooted in us.”

– Iñupiat leader 04

### **“Research during development is never ending.”**

– Iñupiat leader 01

### **Continuous reporting:**

“Continuous reporting between the government and the residents ... to have that harmony”

– Iñupiat leader 01



## 2: Balance and Iñupiat values

### **Living both worlds:**

“Find a balance of living in the western culture and what we've known for thousands of years, traditional living.”

– Iñupiat leader 01

### **Industrial development and income helping subsistence:**

“I think quality of life for basically everybody has improved, because of jobs and income ... fuel, snow machines, bullets, guns, arctic gear, all that stuff, it costs a lot of money”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 01

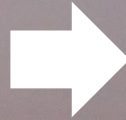
### **Improved relationships with industry:**

“It's like a good neighbor policy ... [the oil company] actually loaded up a cargo plane and flown a plane full of whale back to Nuiqsut.”

– Biologist 01

### 3 : Indigenous-led research and ecological monitoring

**Inuit-centered  
scientific research  
and ecological  
monitoring**



**Effective  
policymaking and  
land governance**

### **3 : Inuit-led research and ecological monitoring**

#### **Inuit-driven research:**

“Our mission is to work FOR and work WITH the communities, and produce good scientific research that helps answer the questions our communities are asking”

– Iñupiat Leader 03, Department of Wildlife Management

#### **Indigenous advising:**

“The advisor will tell [the oil companies], whaling's coming up, caribou are migrating right now, and keep them absolutely informed”

– Iñupiat Leader 01

### **3 : Inuit-led research and ecological monitoring**

#### **Co-production of knowledge:**

“Because we're working together with our local hunters, knowledge holders, plus very well respected scientists, that it really is the best of both worlds.”

– Iñupiat Leader 04

#### **Ethical engagement practices:**

“Local whaling captains and crews knew a lot more about whales than western scientists too ... our scientists live here and assimilate and learn from the culture that they live with.”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 01

“What am I most proud of? Professionally, I guess it's been helping promote scientific collaboration with the community.”

– (Non-Indigenous) Biologist 02

## 4 : Stipulations developed through community meetings

**Community  
meetings  
&  
Multilateral  
conversations**

**Inuit priorities put  
first &  
Sustainability for  
community and  
ecosystems**

Stipulations  
Regulations  
Permits

*Utqiagvik, AK, 2022.12*



#### **4 : Stipulations developed through community meetings**

### **Defining priorities:**

“Trilaterals ... with every one of our villages, to see what they feel like is needed most.”

– Iñupiat Leader 02

### **Developing stipulations:**

“We have permits and stipulations to ensure that they're not hindering any animals specifically like caribou or fish.”

– Iñupiat Leader 02

“Each village has their own meeting ... and that's when they decide whether they can build [the project] or not.”

– Local 01

# Key Takeaways

- Practice **research paradigm shift**
- Ask about **community priorities** **BEFORE** developing a project
- Empower Indigenous **self-determination** and **self-governance**
- Build capacity for **Inuit-led research** and **knowledge-sharing**
- Follow **ethical and equitable engagement protocols** and true **co-production of knowledge** in all stages of scientific research and decision-making

# Acknowledgements

## Land Acknowledgement:

The content and learnings included in this presentation are based on the interviews conducted with leaders, experts, scientists, and Indigenous community members in Utqiaġvik, Alaska, part of the unceded territories of the Iñupiat Peoples. I acknowledge that Iñupiat Peoples have been stewards of the land since time immemorial and have given the land incredible care. I am grateful for the profound perspectives, stories, experience, and knowledge that the Iñupiat Peoples have shared with me during my visit. The interviewees possess all rights to the perspectives they shared that are included in this presentation, and the right to revise any points presented in case any information or view is not accurate.

*Utqiaġvik, AK, 2022.12*

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- City of Utqiaġvik, Alaska
- Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat
- Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University of Alaska Fairbanks

among others.

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# Thank You! Quyanaq!

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