

**Involving Aboriginal Populations in the Assessment of the
Environmental and Social Impacts of Development in
Northern Canada**

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement

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Abstract

The resident aboriginal population of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) in Canada's western arctic is involved in a meaningful way in assessing the potential impact of development. Three levels of government cooperate with the indigenous people through several co-management organizations set up under federal legislation that is firmly entrenched in the Canadian constitution. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) established a unique structure to deal with resource management and environmental issues that incorporates both government and Inuvialuit views.

The Inuvialuit Game Council expresses the collective Inuvialuit interest in wildlife, renewable resources and the environment. Its counterpart is the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation that deals with the business aspects of the claim settlement; finance and investment, economic and social development. Both facets of the Inuvialuit side of the IFA are democratic entities, drawing on elected representation from each of the six communities in the ISR.

To provide the Inuvialuit with a tangible way to participate in the government decision-making process, five cooperative management agencies were formed. The co-management agencies deal with terrestrial and marine wildlife and habitat issues, including traditional harvesting activities, as well as environmental impact review and assessment. The co-management organizations provide advice directly to the appropriate government minister. The constitutional status of the implementing legislation, which established the duties and responsibilities of the co-management agencies, ensures that the advice, though it may not be enthusiastically embraced in all cases, simply cannot be ignored.

There are three governments implementing the IFA; the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of the Northwest Territories. The laws of general application still apply, but since the IFA takes precedence over other legislation in case of conflict, all of the traditional government functions must comply with the IFA, and pay attention to the advice of the Inuvialuit and co-management organizations.

Most of these co-management agencies have been operating successfully since 1986. Both sides of the agreement, government and Inuvialuit, are intimately involved in making decisions that affect them both. For the most part, decisions are reached by consensus after information and opinion is gathered through lively and healthy debate. It may not be a perfect system, but all indications are that it is a much better system than the confrontational, paternalistic and often dictatorial one it replaced.

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THE FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS IN CANADA

Canada is a relatively young country, with only 125 years of official existence as a sovereign nation. Since the 15th Century, the vast majority of Canadians have come from somewhere else to make Canada their home. Aboriginal Canadians are the exception to this rule. Aboriginal Canadians have been living, indeed thriving, in numerous distinct sub-groups scattered across the country for tens of thousands of years.

During their early histories, aboriginal peoples in North America developed sophisticated forms of government well suited to the conditions under which they operate. One such example is the remarkable Iroquois Confederacy, which some say was the inspiration for the federation that eventually became known as the United States of America.¹ In fact, aboriginal peoples were living throughout the North American continent from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico – proof of their adaptability and ingenuity. Many scholars now admit that these aboriginal societies were economically and socially far ahead of the European cultures that eventually “discovered” them.²

It is not possible to “discover” an inhabited land. Indigenous people living in this “New World” did not practice private land ownership – the Earth belonged to all, and everyone shared a responsibility to respect the Earth’s resources.³ Territorial boundaries were well known, and occasionally changed due to political conflict between peoples, each of which enjoyed a king of natural sovereignty.⁴

The newcomers from Europe, where land was a precious commodity, held a different view. Wave after wave of European settlers invaded North America and simply took the land they wanted. Indigenous inhabitants were pushed aside, often peacefully, sometimes violently. The colonists brought to North America their own languages and religions, procedures and institutions, diseases and vices, that with time overwhelmed the indigenous population. In some cases, when attrition did not work fast enough, military force was used.

MODERN CANADA

This attitude changed very little in the next four hundred years. The modern day government of Canada is a parliamentary democracy based on the British model. It is a means of government that was brought to North America from Europe and imposed on the indigenous population. Even in the 1990’s, when Native people upset the Canadian system, the army is still called in.⁵

European settlers did not recognize the natural sovereignty of Native people – they expected aboriginal Canadians to assimilate into the European way of life or be overrun. Some Native groups were overwhelmed, but despite the efforts of generations of colonists and their descendants, a surprising number of aboriginal societies have survived more or less intact.⁶ These Native Canadians are demanding, and apparently now getting, recognition of their inherent rights as First Nations within the framework of Canada's constitution that is being revised as I write this. The future for Native Canadians is full of promise, but there is much left to be done.

A NEW ORDER

Today, the federal government is responsible for the welfare of aboriginal peoples in Canada. Native Canadians, as citizens of Canada, are subject to the same laws as any other Canadian citizen. There are even a few laws that apply only to Native Canadians. Unfortunately, aboriginal Canadians have had very little input into the drafting or enforcement of those laws.

Many Native Canadians believe that the natural sovereignty that belonged to them before the coming of the white man was never extinguished.⁷ This is especially true in Northern Canada, much of which was never the subject of a treaty between indigenous people and the imported government. Northern Canada, for the most part, was spared many of the pressures of colonization and settlement experienced in the south. The northern landscape was viewed as inhospitable by the newcomers, and more or less left for the aboriginal people who had lived there for generations. Except, of course, for any accessible resources like whales or furs, which were systematically exploited by hardy adventurers and carried off to the south.

Law, Order and Religion all caused tremendous incremental change in the north. Government policies set in the south directly affected the way aboriginal citizens of Northern Canada were allowed to live, yet those citizens had no role to play in the creation of those policies. Until very recently, assimilation of Native peoples was still the official policy of the Government of Canada.

The contemporary reality of indigenous peoples is dire and can be understood in terms of the consequences of a process that has involved dispossession from, and physical colonization of, indigenous lands and exploitation of their natural resources. Indigenous social and political institutions have been suppressed and supplanted in varying degrees by legal and administrative systems imposed by the dominant state. Although these practices began in the age of European colonialism, they have been continued through the actions of successor states structurally indistinguishable from those of the colonial era.⁸

In the 1960s, things slowly began to change. A new emphasis in North America on fundamental human rights and revolutionary challenges to conventional wisdom allowed penetrating questions about the assimilation of aboriginal peoples to be asked. In the United States, a renaissance occurred among American Indians.⁹ In Canada, the first seeds of a “native rights” movement were planted. Aboriginal people all over the world

began to demand equality, and fair treatment of Native peoples' claims to their homelands.

In the 1970s, the Government of Canada instituted a "Comprehensive Claims Policy".¹⁰ This policy statement was intended to resolve uncertainty over aboriginal land claims, and contribute to the solution of the economic, social and cultural problems experienced by aboriginal peoples in Canada. In 1977, the Inuvialuit (Inuit of the Western Arctic Region) submitted a claim under this policy shortly after a broader-based claim for all Inuit in northern Canada was withdrawn.¹¹

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement¹² was signed in 1984. It is one of three major comprehensive land claim settlements in Canada to have any implementation history. In April of this year, another comprehensive claims was signed – also in the Western Arctic – by the Tetlit Gwich'in Indians. In the next year, it is expected that the largest comprehensive claim to date – that of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut – will be settled on behalf of the Inuit in the rest of the Canadian Arctic.

THE INUVIALUIT FINAL AGREEMENT

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement was negotiated in the midst of the evolution of aboriginal land claim policy. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement was the first comprehensive aboriginal land claim of its kind in Canada to be settled after this new policy first came into effect. In many ways, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement is a landmark agreement.

The claim settlement affects a large portion of the Western Arctic and Northern Yukon: as much as one million square kilometers (over 386,000 square miles) of land, ocean, and polar ice. Within that vast expanse, the Inuvialuit were granted legal ownership to 56,000 square kilometers (35,000 square miles) of land, known as the Inuvialuit Private Lands. These were the lands that the Inuvialuit could prove, to the satisfaction of the federal government, their historical land use and occupancy.

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement is a formal agreement between the Government of Canada and the Inuvialuit that sets out in law the relationship between an indigenous Native group and the ruling colonial government. The provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement have the weight of a statute, and are recognized as an existing treaty under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the highest law in the land.¹³

Section One of the IFA expresses the goals of the land claim settlement:

The basic goals expressed by the Inuvialuit and recognized by Canada in concluding this Agreement are:

- a) to preserve Inuvialuit cultural identity and values within a changing northern society;*
- b) to enable Inuvialuit to be equal and meaningful participants in the northern and national economy and society; and*

c) to protest and preserve the Arctic Wildlife, environment and biological productivity.¹⁴

LAND AS THE BASIS OF LIFE

The Inuvialuit entered into a land claim agreement because, at the time, it was the only option that they had available to them that would secure a land base. A land base is essential to any indigenous people. Without it, any attempt by a given indigenous population to control their own destiny is doomed to fail.

The ownership of real property is given great importance by European-style governments, and lends and air of legitimacy to the owners that is recognized by those governments. This particular land claim was given impetus because it was believed at the time that large-scale industrial development was about to take place in the Western Arctic Region. The Inuvialuit, quite rightly, wanted a piece of the action.¹⁵

The land is the foundation of Inuvialuit culture, so free access to the tundra and sea is essential to their survival as an independent people. The concept of private “ownership” of the real world is as foreign to the Inuvialuit as it is to most aboriginal people – how can an individual own something so basic to survival, that is shared with so many other living things? The land and water provide so much more than food and clothing – they define and sculpt a way of life.

COOPERATIVE RENEWABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement is a typically Canadian compromise between two distinctly different points of view. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement is structured so that conventional government functions must recognize and incorporate, wherever possible, the views of the Inuvialuit. This was considered to be a more prudent approach than to try to invent totally new government agencies, and was a less revolutionary idea in 1984 than true self-government would have been. In short, a cooperative management regime was not an idea so radical that it would be rejected by Parliament.

To this end, the agreement created solely Inuvialuit organizations to put forward the opinions of the Inuvialuit population, which is as close to self-government as federal negotiators would go. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement also created cooperative management organizations to enable the Inuvialuit to participate on an equal footing with government in resource management decision-making. This equality is manifested in the membership structures of the co-management agencies, and is a cornerstone of the agreement.

The Inuvialuit Game Council represents the collective Inuvialuit interest in renewable resources and the environment, especially wildlife and its habitat. Each of the Hunters and Trappers Committees in the six Inuvialuit communities sends two representatives to the Inuvialuit Game Council, and a Chairman is elected to a full-time paid position. The

Inuvialuit Game Council appoints all Inuvialuit members of the co-management agencies described in this paper, advises government on the Inuvialuit perspective in renewable resource management, research, decision-making, legislation and enforcement, and allocates harvesting quotas among the communities. The Inuvialuit Game Council also represents the Inuvialuit interest in international matters that may affect wildlife harvesting by the Inuvialuit.

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement created five cooperative management agencies that form a cooperative management regime in which an equal number of government and Inuvialuit delegates work together to manage the renewable resources of the region:

- a) *Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC)*
- b) *Wildlife Management Advisory Council for the Northwest Territories [WMAC(NWT)].*
- c) *Wildlife Management Advisory Council for the Yukon North Slope [WMAC(NS)].*
- d) *Environmental Impact Steering Committee (EISC).*
- e) *Environmental Impact Review Board (EIRB).*

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT SCREENING AND REVIEW PROCESS

One of the most significant elements of this cooperative management regime is the Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process, which consists of two components: the Environmental Impact Screening Committee and the Environmental Impact Review Board.

The Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process is a two stage impact assessment process that screens all development proposals to determine whether there is the potential for significant negative environmental impact, and if there is, subjects that specific proposal to further detailed public assessment and review.

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement defines development in very broad terms:

“development” means:

- a) *any commercial or industrial undertaking or venture, including support and transportation facilities related to the extraction of non-renewable resources from the Beaufort Sea, other than commercial wildlife harvesting; or*
- b) *any government project, undertaking or construction whether federal, territorial, provincial, municipal, local or by any Crown agency or corporation, except government projects within the limits of Inuvialuit communities not directly affecting wildlife resources outside those limits and except government wildlife enhancement projects¹⁶*

Two provisions of this impact assessment process, firmly entrenched by federal statute in the Canadian Constitution, make it unique in Canada and perhaps the world. Firstly, the enabling legislation¹⁷ must prevail over any other federal, territorial, provincial, or municipal law if there is a conflict. Therefore, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, and the Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process, cannot be by-passed, ignored or denied.

*The Settlement Legislation approving, giving effect to and declaring valid this Agreement shall provide that, where there is inconsistency or conflict between either the Settlement Legislation or this Agreement and the provisions of any other federal, territorial, provincial or municipal law, or any by-law or regulation, the Settlement Legislation or this Agreement shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency or conflict.*¹⁸

Secondly, no licence or approval can be issued by any government regulatory or approval authority unless the provisions of the Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process have been complied with. Therefore, permission to proceed with any aspect of a proposed development must wait until the Inuvialuit have exercised their right to equal and meaningful participation in development impact assessment.

*No licence or approval shall be issued that would have the effect of permitting any proposed development to proceed unless the provisions of this section (Environmental Impact Screening and Review) have been complied with.*¹⁹

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement requires the Environmental Impact Screening Committee and the Environmental Impact Review Board to maintain a numerical balance between Inuvialuit and government members. Both of these agencies are composed of seven individuals. Each Chairman is appointed by Order in Council of the Government of Canada, but must be acceptable to the Inuvialuit. The Inuvialuit Game Council appoints three Permanent Members to each body, while the Government of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of Yukon each appoint one Permanent Member to each organization, for a total of three government delegates.

Once appointed, these Permanent Members do not function as representatives of the respective parties, but are required to bring their own judgements to bear on the issues before them, and to make decisions in an impartial and reasoned manner. ***The IESC and the EIRB are neither Inuvialuit nor Government entities.*** They are meant to be autonomous organizations, and to fill the gap between the government and Inuvialuit approaches to problem solving.

The first stage of the Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process is dealt with by the Environmental Impact Screening Committee. The Environmental Impact Screening Committee screens all development activities within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and any occurring outside the Inuvialuit Settlement Region that may have an impact within it. The job of the Environmental Impact Screening Committee is to look at the development proposal and determine whether or not there may be significant negative environmental impact as a result of that activity going ahead as planned. The

Environmental Impact Screening Committee pays particular attention to possible impacts on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and wildlife harvesting, and relies on the members of the community Hunters and Trappers Committees, the people closest to the land, to bring forward local concerns.

If the Environmental Impact Screening Committee Members believe there may be significant negative environmental impact if the proposed project goes ahead, they must refer the development proposal for further impact review and assessment. One of the places that the Environmental Impact Screening Committee can refer the proposal is to the Environmental Impact Review Board. The Environmental Impact Screening Committee also has the option to refer the more detailed assessment to an existing government process that, in the opinion of the Environmental Impact Screening Committee, adequately encompasses the assessment and review provisions of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. In other words, duplicative reviews may be avoided, but only if the alternative involves the Inuvialuit, and is at least as stringent and open as the Environmental Impact Review Board process.²⁰

The Environmental Impact Review Board does its environmental impact assessment in public, through a public review designed to accommodate the specific circumstances of the development proposal brought before it. The Environmental Impact Review Board reports directly to the appropriate government authority responsible for approving the proposed development. The Environmental Impact Review Board has an independent statutory foundation – emphasized throughout the Inuvialuit Final Agreement – which requires it to observe all of the procedural and substantive elements of a quasi-judicial tribunal. Over the years, the Environmental Impact Review Board has developed a wide range of procedures from which to choose, and can tailor the public review to handle expeditiously a large and complex proposal, or a smaller-scaled, perhaps more intensive development.²¹

Under Section 13 of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, provisions are included that impose absolute liability on developers with respect to present and future wildlife harvesting and habitat losses, and provide to individual Inuvialuit and Inuvialuit communities the right to enforce this absolute liability. The Inuvialuit can call on the government to “back stop” this liability should the developer have insufficient resources to meet all claims. The EIRB must take these issues into account during the public review.

After completing its public review, the Environmental Impact Review Board is required to report to the “competent governmental authority” with its decision as to whether or not the project should be approved. If approval is advocated, the Environmental Impact Review Board is required to make recommendations as to the terms and conditions which should be imposed on the developer to mitigate and/or avoid negative environmental, wildlife harvesting, or social impacts. Another exception feature of this process is that the competent government authority must provide reasons in writing within 30 days if it decides not to follow the recommendations of the Environmental Impact Review Board.

CASES IN POINT

In October, 1989, the Environmental Impact Review Board conducted its first public review on the **Esso Chevron et al. Isserk I-15 Program**.²² This developmental proposal was brought forward by a partnership of oil companies who wanted to drill one exploration well from the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit *Molikpaq* in the land-fast ice zone of the Beaufort Sea. The issues examined ranged from the technical capabilities of the drilling operation to the effect of those operations on traditional harvesting activities.

The entire public review process took 63 days from the date of referral to the date of decision – an interval that redefined the term “expeditious” for environmental assessment procedures in Canada. The final report was written in 72 hours by a team of ten people working in Inuvik. Within a short time, the Government of Canada accepted all of the Environmental Impact Review Board recommendations, and the exploration well was drilled as planned.

The second public review held by the Environmental Impact Review Board proved to be much more controversial. In March, 1990, the Environmental Impact Screening Committee referred to the Environmental Impact Review Board a proposal from Gulf Canada Resources Limited to drill a number of exploration wells over a three year period. The locations proposed were in comparatively deep water in the Beaufort Sea in the transition zone between the permanent pack ice and the land-fast ice, so plans called for the floating drilling vessel *Kulluk* to be used. The **Gulf Canada Resources Limited Kulluk Drilling Program 1990-1992** presented the Environmental Impact Review Board with very different issues to deal with, and the technical complexity of the material reviewed increased substantially.

After 7 days of public hearings in June, 1990, the Environmental Impact Review Board retired to consider its decision. On June 29, 1990, the Environmental Impact Review Board issued a detailed decision report which recommended that the project not be allowed to proceed.²³ The sheer volume of work required to address those issues illustrated that the government was not as well prepared as it had first believed. In fact, many of the issues identified by the Environmental Impact Review Board public review in 1990 are not yet resolved today.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT UNDER LAND CLAIM LEGISLATION

Any aboriginal land claim negotiation in Canada is a protracted process. The Government of Canada establishes the rules for acceptance of a claim, sets the timetable for its consideration, provides the finances vital to the complex legal negotiation of the claim, and later is responsible for implementing the finished claim. It is clear who is in control. It is also clear that there is a conflict between the federal government’s responsibility to look out for the interests of aboriginal citizens, and its desire to look out for its own political interests. If the two clash, there is only one loser – native people – because if a land claim fails, the government has lost nothing. Even if a land claim is settled, the government attempts to carry on as it has always done.

Often one branch of government will be busily promoting industrial activity in order to stimulate economic growth, while another arm of the same government is expected to regulate that activity. In Northern Canada until very recently, these two conflicting duties were placed with the same federal organization, the Canada Oil and Gas Lands Administration, for frontier oil and gas exploration activities. That organization was disbanded shortly after the Environmental Impact Review Board issued its critical report about the **Gulf Canada Resources Limited Kulluk Drilling Program 1990-1992**.

In the past, it was easier to let environmental concerns take a back seat to economic growth. Operating in an environmentally responsible way was viewed by many businessmen to be far too costly, and they were often right. Most environmental safeguards or remedial measures, and the associated costs, were not built in to the project from the beginning, but were grudgingly added on afterwards, under duress, when the public protested and government was forced to react.

There is a better way. If development is planned from the start with a sincere intention to minimize and mitigate negative environmental impacts, and the costs become an integral part of the project economics, then the chance of eventually completing the project while truly minimizing environmental impacts will be substantially improved. Unfortunately, once the development plan is approved by corporate management and the money to do it is set aside, it becomes virtually impossible to add on environmental terms and conditions without increasing the final cost.

Government regulatory agencies in Canada have a very poor record of demanding this logical kind of environmental protection through sensible planning. Until very recently, Canadian law did not require proponents of development to conduct impact assessment in every case, as this requirement was only expressed in a government guideline²⁵ not taken very seriously if there were compelling reasons to avoid doing so.

This approach was abruptly changed by a Federal Court of Canada decision on the Rafferty – Alameda Dam project in the Province of Saskatchewan in 1989²⁶, which stated that the guideline order had the legal status of a law, and could not be circumvented even by the Minister. Overnight, every government department discovered an environmental ethic, and a lot of good work has been done since. Most federal departments are paying more attention to environmental issues as a result of that court decision. In fact, a new *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* is expected to come into effect early in 1993.

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement establishes a special kind of environmental impact assessment process that is cooperative and pragmatic, and which cannot easily be circumvented for political or economic reasons. Since aboriginal people are so dependent on a healthy environment, it is unlikely that the Inuvialuit would allow the environmental assessment provisions of their claim settlement to be corrupted, bartered, or ignored.

The agencies implementing the Inuvialuit Final Agreement are firmly entrenched in legislation and given precedence by the Canadian Constitution. In many ways, a cooperative management regime established under land claim legislation enjoys a legal legitimacy that overshadows that of conventional government departments, and the co-

management agencies often end up doing the jobs that government should have been doing in the first place.

Some government officials react to this by trying to force the co-management agencies into a mould they can understand. If that fails, the work of the joint management agencies may be ignored, or dismissed as insignificant. The only way for co-management agencies to avoid being treated this way is to move the results of the cooperative management process into the political arena, where they may only be ignored by bureaucrats at the peril of embarrassing the politicians in power at that particular time. In order to have any credibility in the national political arena, however, all work done by the cooperative management agency must be of the highest professional standard.

The single most important characteristic of the cooperative management agencies of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement is the balanced structure – the number of Inuvialuit places at the table is equal to the number of government places at the table. On the surface, this may not seem to be as vital as all that, but one must consider the atmosphere in which these unconventional organizations must function. If government delegates participate in the joint management effort, and are present as decisions are made, it becomes much more difficult for other government officials to ignore or criticize those decisions. With time, the mutual suspicious subsides and it becomes easier to nurture an atmosphere in which true consensus management can take place.

The unorthodox nature of co-management agencies gives them several advantages, and they can often succeed where conventional bureaucracy has failed. New ways of addressing issues and solving problems must be found that take the best attributes of parliamentary processes and combine them with the wisdom and common-sense of most aboriginal societies. Both parties to land claim agreements have much to offer to the implementation phase, but it is essential that neither approach dominates the other.

If one side of the agreement exerts undue influence over the process, the other side will naturally feel at a temporary disadvantage or worse, will lose faith in the fairness of the entire process. If the balance deliberately created by the cooperative management regime is lost, the value of its consultations and decisions will be suspect. The inevitable result would then be a degeneration into confrontational or adversarial proceedings, which is exactly the situation land claim settlements and cooperative management agencies were set up to avoid.

The Environmental Impact Screening Committee and the Environmental Impact Review Board take pride in their independence from both government and Inuvialuit organizations. They draw expertise and opinion from both sides of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, and strive to attain a consensus view of any issue they deal with. Only in the rare instance when consensus has proven to be elusive has a vote been held which was not unanimous, or a minority view expressed in the official record. By and large, the Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process has remained objective and unbiased, despite pressures exerted by both sides to do otherwise.

The optimistic message is that cooperative management under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement is working despite the obstacles it faces. In most cases, the Members and staff of the co-management agencies are creative and well-intentioned, so they are able to find ways to make the new system achieve its goals. One clear indication of the modest success of the cooperative management approach is that Inuvialuit participants have been directly involved in all of the successes and failure experienced to date – and that is how it should have been all along.

The sensible course in future is to work toward a truly equal partnership between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians in renewable resource management, which must include a balance and progressive approach to environmental and social impact assessment that appreciates the points of view brought to the table by all of the players. The challenge is to do this in the midst of sweeping changes to public environmental awareness, and increasing pressures on global ecosystems.

The Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement may not be perfect, but all indications are that it is a much better approach than the confrontational, paternalistic and often dictatorial government-dominated process it replaced.

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