

# Indigenous Data and Indigenous Knowledge Sovereignty Collaboration

## Kick-off Workshop Summary

Date: June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Location: Tigh-Na-Mara and Zoom

**Facilitated by: Beth Keats and Peter Evans, Trailmark**

**Hosted by: Nick Chowdhury & Sonora Morin, Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG) & Jordan Bromley, Q'ul-lhanumutsun Aquatic Resources Society (QARS)**

**Attended and co-presented with: Lee Croft and David Collister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Jordan Bromley, Q'ul-lhanumutsun Aquatic Resources Society (QARS), Sonora Morin, and Nick Chowdhury, IMAWG**

### **Workshop Goal:**

- » Present and review project background and motivations.
- » Outline and get feedback on the planned collaborative approach.
- » Hear from attendees about their experiences with Indigenous data and knowledge(s).
- » Identify key concerns regarding Indigenous data sovereignty and data management.
- » Use these insights to refine focus for subsequent workshops.

### **Background and Project Goal**

To co-develop guidance materials for understanding and operationalizing Indigenous data sovereignty and the respectful use of Indigenous Knowledge (IK). These materials aim to inform and contribute to the DFO Data Ethics and Responsible Artificial Intelligence Framework, ensuring respect and support for Indigenous data sovereignty.

## Workshop Overview

### ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Introduction and Presentations:

- » Peter Evans of Trailmark kicked off the workshop with a presentation on the historical context of issues related to knowledge inclusion and data sovereignty.
  - Many participants provided perspectives and opinions during pauses for discussion throughout the presentation.
- » Lee Croft from DFO presented on past harms by DFO and Canada related to information and data of Indigenous peoples, and outlined the intended outcomes of this workshop series, focusing on creating guidance materials for DFO and the Office of the Chief Data Steward. He also discussed the alignment with the UNDA Action Plan Measure 30 and possibly Measure 40.
- » Sonora Morin from IMAWG shared the background of their work and emphasized the importance of hearing from workshop participants to inform the process.
- » Facilitators presented the planned approach to the collaboration, explaining how it will be shaped by the feedback and information shared during the workshop.

#### 2. Participant Feedback and Discussion

Workshop participants were invited to provide comments and feedback on the topics presented. Their insights and experiences were crucial in understanding the challenges and issues related to Indigenous data sovereignty and knowledge management. These are summarized in section 'Workshop Summary' below.

#### 3. Polling on Involvement of Other Federal Agencies:

Using Slido, a polling software tool, participants were asked, "How would you like to involve interested individuals from other Federal Government Agencies? (NRCAN, ISC, UNDA working groups)"

Out of 13 participants:

- » The greatest number (just under half) voted for allowing individuals from other departments to attend as observers.
- » 31% voted that the results of this work could be shared with other agencies after a review.
- » 30% had no preference.

- » One participant voted for allowing them to participate.
- » No participants voted for excluding other departments entirely.

#### 4. Breakout Group Discussions:

Participants were divided into breakout groups to discuss their own experiences specific to issues related to the control, access, and sharing of data. They shared their experiences and identified key challenges, which were later summarized and presented to the larger group for polling.

#### 5. Identification of Key Concerns

The group collectively identified the topics and issues of highest concern regarding the respect and upholding of Indigenous data sovereignty. These insights are intended to refine the focus of subsequent workshops. These are summarized in section ‘Workshop Results Summary’ below.

The workshop provided a platform for learning about the subject of data sovereignty from a historical perspective, which set a shared understanding for open dialogue, sharing experiences, and collaboratively identifying the key issues related to Indigenous data sovereignty and knowledge management. The insights gained will guide future workshops and the development of guidance materials to support Indigenous data sovereignty.

### **Workshop Results Summary:**

The issue most widely mentioned and discussed by workshop participants was lack of trust involved in sharing data with DFO and lack of transparency in the Department’s storage, handling, and use of Indigenous data. Participants highlighted several aspects of this issue, including:

- » Misuse and misrepresentation of data, leading to fear and distrust.
- » Historical lack of informed consent and access to data by communities.
- » Lack of clear protocols for data sharing leading to tension and uncertainty.
- » Selective and non-transparent data sharing by DFO.
- » DFO’s assumptions about Indigenous capacity and selective control over data.
- » Mistrust due to inconsistent application of data and science by DFO management.

## Key Themes and Issues Identified

1. Historical and Ongoing Misuse of Data:
  - » Data has been misused, misrepresented, lost, or changed over time.
  - » Communities were historically not informed about research projects they participated in and couldn't access the data they contributed.
  - » Fear, animosity, and distrust of sharing data/IK with outsiders due to historical misuse.
2. Lack of Protocols and Transparency:
  - » Absence of clear data sharing protocols leads to tension and uncertainty.
  - » Data collection often reflects Western methods, not Indigenous approaches.
  - » Information gathered from Nations is not returned to them.
  - » There are gaps that need to be filled in process of data collection to application across parties to restore faith in the process
3. Pressure from Open Data Movement:
  - » Pressure to make data open often overlooks Indigenous data sovereignty.
  - » Some journals require data sharing for publication, putting First Nations in a difficult position.
4. Challenges with Crown Agencies and Government Reporting:
  - » Inability to access data held by Crown agencies.
  - » Burdensome and seemingly pointless government reporting requirements.
  - » Lack of transparency and accountability in data submission and use by DFO.
5. Cultural and Methodological Disconnects:
  - » Data collection methods do not align with Indigenous ways of knowing and cultural protocols. Data is not just digital, need to think more broadly about it as being about people, and carrying integral qualitative information.
  - » Large differences in data types: Indigenous data includes stories that tie time and place and people together, and these points create a network to reference and

enable better recall. The holistic nature of this type of data should be viewed as an entwined understanding of place, people, time.

- » Managers and researchers often seek to verify Indigenous knowledge with other non-compatible data sources, wasting resources. This information serves a valuable place in fisheries management on its own.
- » Data sovereignty is linked to who has the right to make decisions, and who has power over interpretation.

**6. Trust and Capacity Issues:**

- » Mistrust due to DFO's control and selective data sharing.
- » Assumptions about Indigenous capacity and discrimination in data management.
- » Lack of tools, applications, and modernization within DFO to support Indigenous needs.
- » Elders are hesitant to share knowledge due to past abuses or not feeling that they will be heard.

**7. Management and Policy Concerns:**

- » Discrepancies between DFO's scientific advice and management actions.
- » Participants feel that decisions are often politically driven rather than data-informed.
- » Poor relationships and lack of cultural understanding from some DFO staff.

**8. Data Access and Quality:**

- » Data requests are often denied or selectively provided.
- » Data is outdated or insufficient for decision-making.
- » Disjointed license allowances and unfair monitoring between commercial and Indigenous harvesters.

**9. Community and Regional Collaboration:**

- » Nations are hesitant to share data with each other, limiting regional awareness, collaboration, learning, and expanded capacity.
- » Lack of standard data collection approaches hinders connected management efforts.

**10. Broader Implications and Needs:**

- » Need for respect and understanding of IK to achieve data sovereignty.
- » Recognition of the impacts of historical restrictions on fishing and IK.
- » Calls for Indigenous cultural alignment in fisheries management to assert rights.

These insights and issues will guide the refinement of focus topics for subsequent workshops aimed at developing practical and respectful approaches to Indigenous data sovereignty and management.

## **Recommendations for Future Workshop Modules**

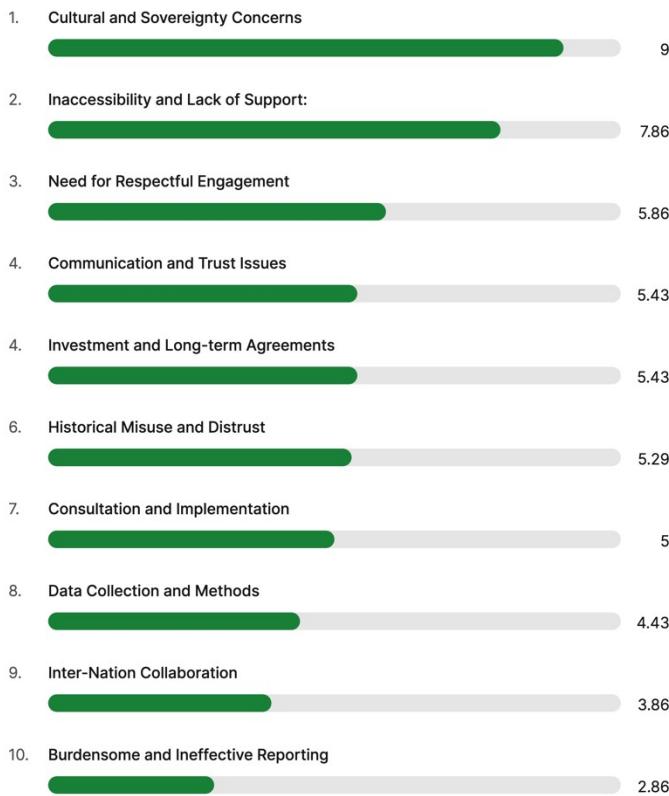
The objectives for future workshop modules are to identify:

- » Parameters of Indigenous data, Indigenous data sovereignty and IK sovereignty (e.g., variability of definitions) grounded in the contexts of different communities.
- » Ways to operationalize Indigenous data sovereignty and safeguarding and respectful use of IK.

Initial workshop participants were provided with a poll to vote on potential upcoming priorities for the next workshop, based on the emerging themes from workshop activities. The results of the poll are shown in Figure 1 below.

 What should we prioritize as a topic in our next workshops?

Ranking Poll  7 votes  7 participants



slido

Based on these results, analysis of the issues and concerns documented during the workshop, and the objectives for future workshop modules, we recommend future workshop modules focus on the following themes:

**1. Operationalizing/Implementing OCAP and CARE**

- » What do OCAP and CARE mean to communities and individuals?
- » How are those reflected in what we've discussed so far to govern data sovereignty, access, and use. *What is missing?*
- » How can ideas to govern data sovereignty, access, and use be operationalized to implement OCAP and CARE? Practical, specific, ideal scenarios.

**2. Data Access and Use**

- » What kinds of data do communities most need in fisheries (co-)management contexts? Why?
- » How do communities want and need to use data gathered and/or held by DFO?
- » What kind of data requests do communities get from DFO?
- » What barriers to accessing and using data gathered and held by DFO do communities experience? How could these be overcome?
- » Examples of what didn't work and why.
- » What additional supports and capacity do communities need to overcome barriers to data access and use?

### 3. Data Sharing Protocols and Processes:

- » How has data sovereignty been violated or disrespected in the past?
- » How can/should data be gathered, stored, used respectfully and appropriately? This includes understanding methods that protect the holistic and qualitative nature of oral history and Indigenous knowledge.
- » What kind of initial and ongoing permissions/agreements, reporting back, follow-up, etc. are required to ensure and respect data sovereignty?
- » Possible accountability mechanisms.

Engagement on each workshop module theme will begin by clearly identifying the connections to input gathered at the kick-off workshop to ensure that participant input is driving the process of developing appropriate, actionable plans as well as those plans themselves.