



WHAT WE HEARD:

Bridging knowledges for climate action

Foundations for collaboration workshop



**Pacific Institute
for Climate Solutions**

Fall 2025



**Pacific Institute
for Climate Solutions**



This report was prepared by Brenda Lisset Jiménez González, PICS Community Research Initiatives Assistant, with contributions from PICS and the First Nations Leadership Council's climate staff. We acknowledge that PICS and our associates work on the unceded əʷŋən (Songhees and Xsʷepsəm/Esquimalt), ƵSÁNEĆ, the x̱mʷəθkəʷy ʔəm Peoples (Musqueam), the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. We thank those Nations for their care and stewardship over their territories. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our partner, the First Nations Leadership Council — this work would not have been possible without your leadership and collaboration.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From late May to early June 2025, the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) hosted a series of workshops with the support of the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) technical staff to strengthen our connections and relationships with a diverse cross-section of university researchers at our four partner institutions. In keeping with PICS' commitments to the recently established *Relationship Protocol* with FNLC, British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS) and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), researchers, students and other academic professionals were invited to come together to reflect on and map the connections and alignments between their research projects and the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

These discussions took place at in-person workshops held in Victoria (UVic), Vancouver (UBC, SFU), and Prince George (UNBC). The workshops created space for dialogue—both practical and visionary—about how we can strengthen collaboration across institutions, and support research that is community-driven, values-based, and grounded in respect. In addition, PICS requested feedback through an online questionnaire and/or by written submission at the end of each event.

More than 100 people participated in the workshops, providing valuable insights around connections, opportunities, and gaps related to pathways and themes identified in the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan. **This “What We Heard” report summarizes the key inputs that emerged through the engagement sessions**, including:

- The need to map and strengthen alignment between university research and the FNLC Climate Strategy pathways
- Reflections on current research highlights, best practices, structural gaps, and institutional barriers in Indigenous-engaged research
- Identification of tools, supports, and roles needed to sustain ethical, long-term, and co-designed partnerships
- Recommendations for shifting institutional systems to better support Indigenous leadership and self-determined research priorities



Throughout the workshops, participants emphasized that Indigenous climate leadership is inherently interdisciplinary and systems oriented. Advancing this work will require cross-campus collaboration, institutional flexibility, and shared learning over time. In the near-term, PICS is moving forward with several next steps, some of which provide supports directly connected to feedback received at the workshops, including:

- Uplifting Reciprocal Research Scholarship Pilot Program to support graduate students engaged in community and co-designed work.
- A Baseline Report to gather, map, and share, existing initiatives aligned to First Nations priorities.
- Convening a Community of Practice (CoP) to build shared tools, mentorship and cross institutional support.

INTRODUCTION

Across British Columbia and beyond, communities are confronting the escalating impacts of climate change—from intensifying wildfires and heatwaves to water insecurity, biodiversity loss, and infrastructure vulnerabilities. Indigenous Peoples, whose cultural identities and ways of life are intrinsically connected to their traditional territories, are disproportionately affected by climate change. While the science is clear on the urgency, what’s equally evident is that technical solutions alone are not enough.

Climate action needs relationships and partnerships that guide our responsibilities to future generations.

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) was established in 2008 to catalyze research, partnership, and policy innovation across British Columbia’s academic institutions. PICS operates from the belief that transdisciplinary, collaborative, and community-informed research is essential to addressing the climate crisis. In the recent [Strategic Plan](#), PICS made a bold and explicit commitment to support effective, equitable and long-lasting solutions through several engagement activities related to *Supporting Climate Impact, Fostering Collaboration and Sharing Knowledge* at the intersection of diverse ways of knowing, collective values and community wellbeing.

PICS has also made a renewed commitment to Indigenous climate leadership and the recognition of First Nations title, rights, and responsibilities. In 2025, this commitment took formal shape in [Relationship Protocol with the First Nations Leadership Council \(FNLC\)](#), designed to uphold First Nations title, rights, and treaty rights while advancing climate action across British Columbia (*Figure 1*), and supporting the implementation of



the B.C. First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan, as well as the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in B.C.

In that spirit, PICS, in close collaboration with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), hosted a series of four workshops in May and June 2025 to begin building a foundation for collaboration with academic researchers, First Nations partners, and institutional allies. These gatherings—*Bridging Knowledge for Climate Action: Foundations for Collaboration*—brought together the research community, creating space for dialogue around shared priorities, institutional barriers, and the conditions needed to support First Nations-led research partnerships and co-created research.



Figure 1. Diagram of the Relationship Protocol (Art: Hetxw'ns Gyetxw, Gitxsan Nation)



This report shares the insights, reflections, and recommendations that emerged through those conversations. It is organized around five central topics :

- **Institutional highlights:** an overview of research strengths and highlights across the four universities
- **Overarching structural challenges:** systemic barriers that limit Indigenous-engaged research
- **Best practices:** insights from participants on how to do research in a good way
- **Needs and supports:** tangible tools, roles, and changes needed to sustain this work
- **The role of PICS:** feedback on how PICS can support coordination, continuity, and capacity across partners and disciplines

The input received offers a high-level perspective of where we are now—and what's needed to move forward. The feedback confirmed the value of the next steps already underway, and encompasses a broader invitation for researchers and institutions to align their work not only with the urgency of the climate crisis, but also with the principles of responsibility, reciprocity, and Indigenous leadership.

By documenting these conversations and shared priorities, this report is intended as a step toward more connected, ethical, and community-centered climate action in British Columbia.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

*The Bridging for Knowledge for Climate Action: Foundations for Collaboration workshop series was inspired by the Relationship Protocol between **PICS** and the **First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC)**. From late May to early June 2025, PICS hosted four workshops with the support and collaboration of FNLC technical staff. The workshop objectives were centered on themes and actions outlined in the FNLC's First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan (BCFNCS) and the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (APDRR).*

The workshop objectives were to:

- Deepen relationships between FNLC technical staff, PICS, and university researchers through dialogue and collaboration
- Explore how research can support priorities in the BCFNCS and APDRR
- Explore how to foster better collaboration, trust and capacity within the PICS research community



- Connect with researchers across the university and identify opportunities for future partnership

The Foundations for Collaboration workshops were designed as in-person gatherings to foster relationship-building and strengthening connections across organizations and within universities. Due to the complexity of academic schedules, the outreach strategy was designed to allow invitees to register for the event or opt-in for future outreach.

The workshops were held in late May 2025 at the University of Victoria (UVIC), the University of British Columbia (UBC) and at Simon Fraser University (SFU), Vancouver campus. A condensed version of the workshop was brought to the SFU research community in partnership with a broader event being hosted by the *SFU Climate Innovation team*. The last workshop was held in early June 2025 at the University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George campus. Across the four workshops a total of 106 participants joined the events along with staff from the First Nations Leadership Council and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions.



Workshop participants at the University of British Columbia, May 27, 2025.

In addition, over 45 researchers who could not attend the workshops indicated their interest in being involved in future activities. Further relationship-building and engagement opportunities will take place over the coming year to activate and grow this network. Each workshop followed the same format, with the exception of the condensed version at the Simon Fraser session. The proceedings of the events were as follows (see also Appendix A):

- Welcome and Territory Acknowledgment
- Introductions and framing presentations from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and the First Nations Leadership Council.
- Participants Introductions Circle.
- Activities and Small Group Discussions.
- Closing Circle and Feedback



SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Bridging for Knowledge for Climate Action: Foundations for Collaboration workshops began with an introduction to the FNLC-PICS Relationship Protocol. The presentation emphasized the importance of respectful partnerships and the need for transformative climate research.

The opening presentation was followed by an introduction round that allowed every participant to share a piece of their own story with the group.

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Building from the introductions, staff from First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) presented the priorities outlined in the [BCFNCS](#) and introduced the [Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction \(APDRR\)](#).

The presentation included a summary of the BCFNCS Pathways (*Figure 2*):

- Inherent Title and Rights;
- Climate Response and Preparedness;
- Capacity and Leadership; and
- Land and Water Protection.

The presentation also highlighted recent and ongoing climate related activities led by FNLC. This included sharing recent work to expand and enrich the BCFNCS with the [BC First Nations Spiritual Knowledge Keepers Gathering on Climate Change](#) and the upcoming report, [From Vision to Action: Advancing BC First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda](#).

At each workshop, the FNLC presentation provided valuable insights into ongoing efforts to address climate challenges from Indigenous perspectives and leadership. It also helped lay the foundations and framework for participants to better understand and make connections to their work and the four BCFNCS Pathways.



WORKSHOP: ACTIVITY 1. MAPPING RESEARCH AND REFLECTIONS

For the first workshop activity, participants were divided into small groups and invited to share their existing research or knowledge mobilization efforts and explain how it aligned with BCFNCS priority pathways and themes.

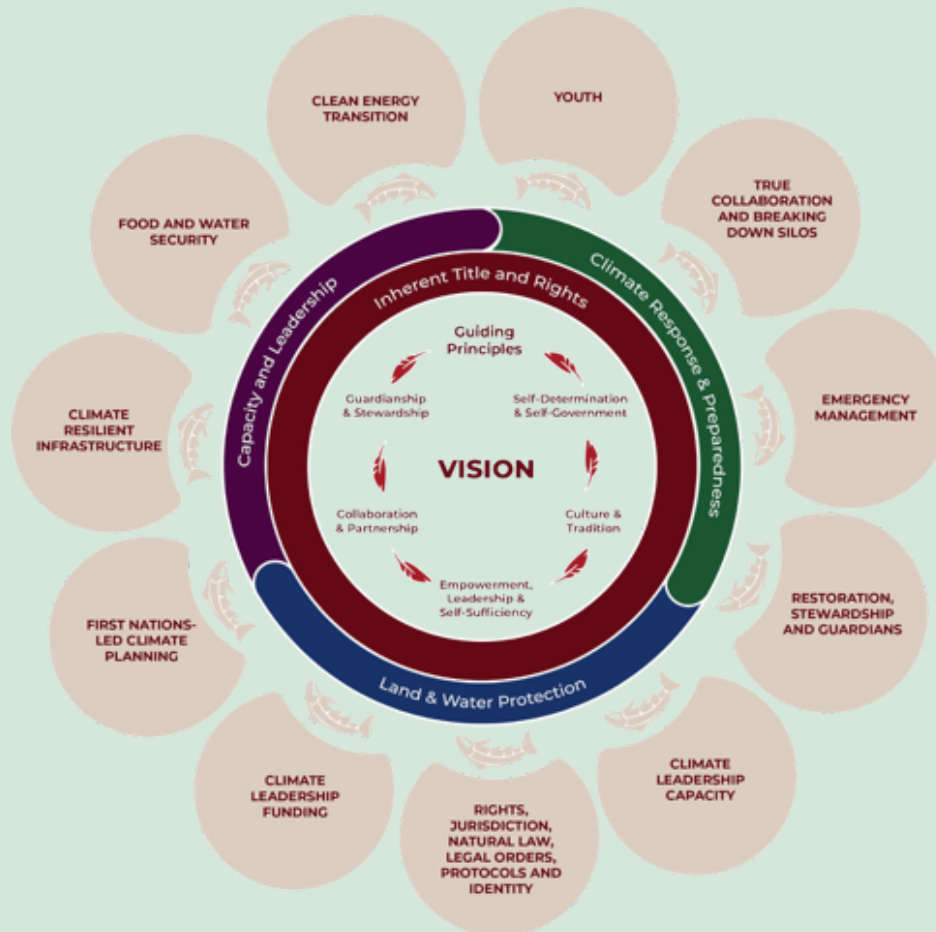


Figure 2. BCFNCS and the BC First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda: The centre and the concentric circles of the graphic represent the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan's "Vision, Principles, and the Four Pathways for Climate Action." The circles surrounding this graphic are the 11 key themes identified in the BC FNCL Agenda. This visually presents the interconnectedness of the BC FNCL with the Strategy.

These discussions revealed the incredible diversity of research and initiatives underway at each university and provided a start to mapping research activities and capacity to the BCFNCS Pathways and Themes. The mapping exercise led to robust small group conversations and helped with considering gaps and areas of synergy. To make the activity more dynamic, participants were invited to use sticky notes to physically place their research topics on a poster. The conversations followed an open-circle format and were guided by FNLC and PICS staff.



WORKSHOP: ACTIVITY 2. RESEARCH IN A GOOD WAY AND REFLECTIONS

For the second workshop activity, small group discussions about doing ‘research in a good way’ brought forward questions, challenges, and examples around co-designed and collaborative research. A diagram (Figure 3) and a set of questions were provided for starting the discussions.

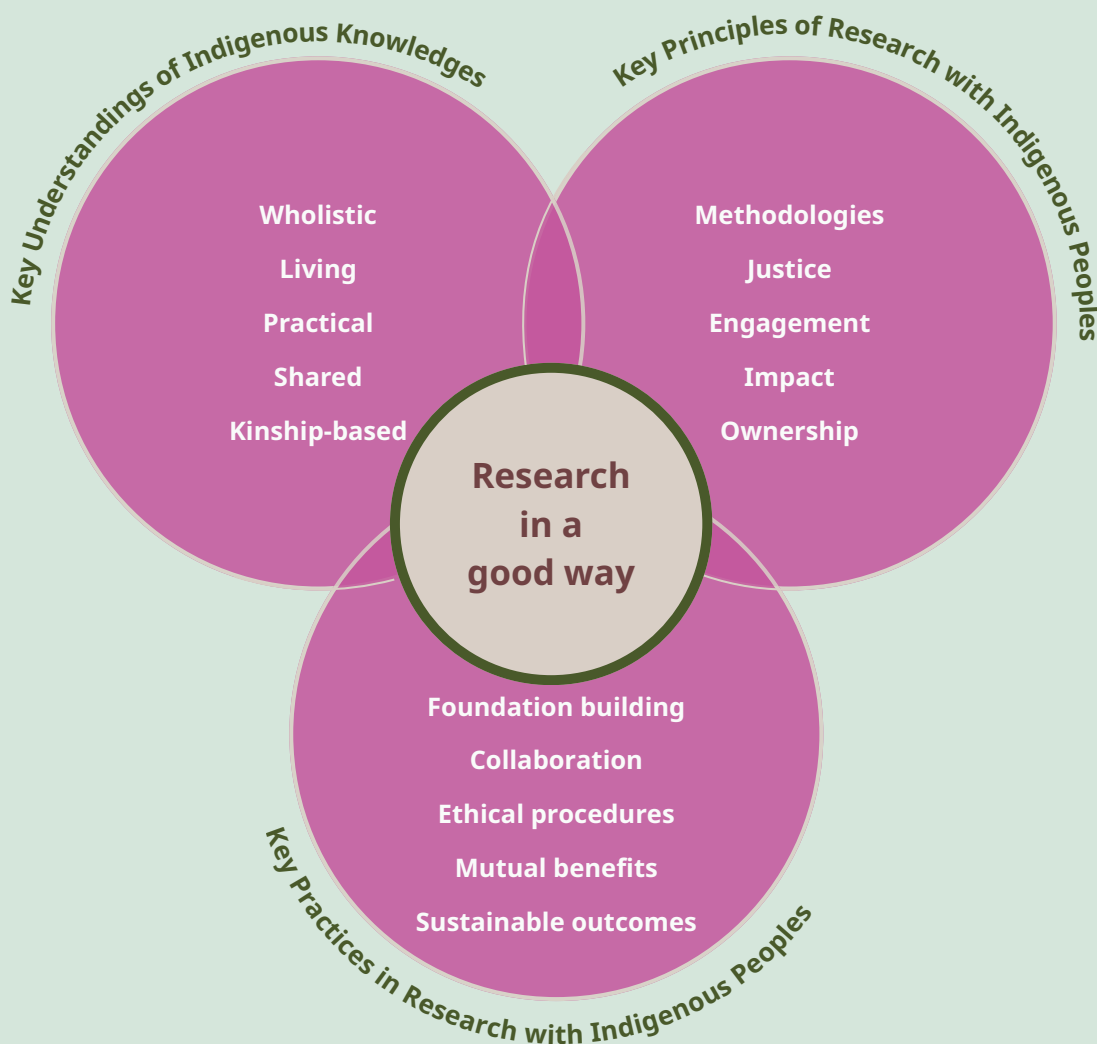


Figure 3. Research in a Good Way Diagram (Gordon & Around Him, 2025)

Some of the guiding questions included:

- For research to be truly collaborative and co-designed to serve communities, how do we do research in a good way?
- How can research more directly support community objectives?
- Practically speaking, what does it mean to show up with humility within research?
- What are examples of successful community co-design, and what are some of the key factors in making it a success?



Many participants shared their perspectives around good or useful practices and identified barriers as well as opportunities for research to better serve communities. The activity offered a valuable way to support discussion between researchers with deep experience and early career researchers or those less familiar with codesign or collaborative research.

PARTICIPATION

A total of 106 participants from the PICS partner universities attended the workshops (Figure 4).

As Figure 5 shows, a variety of professionals contributed to the events, many of them described themselves as scholars (Assistant, Associate, Full Professor) and students (PhD Candidates, MSc Students, Research Assistants). Additional academic roles were grouped together (as “Other”), including:

- Professors
- Advisors
- Post-Doctoral Fellows
- Independent Researchers
- Laboratory Technicians
- Knowledge translators

The diversity of participation shows the relevance of the workshop topics across different institutional roles and knowledge mobilization pathways.

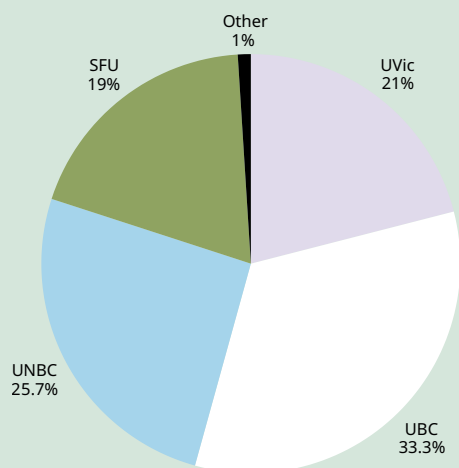


Figure 4. Distribution of workshop attendees by PICS partner universities

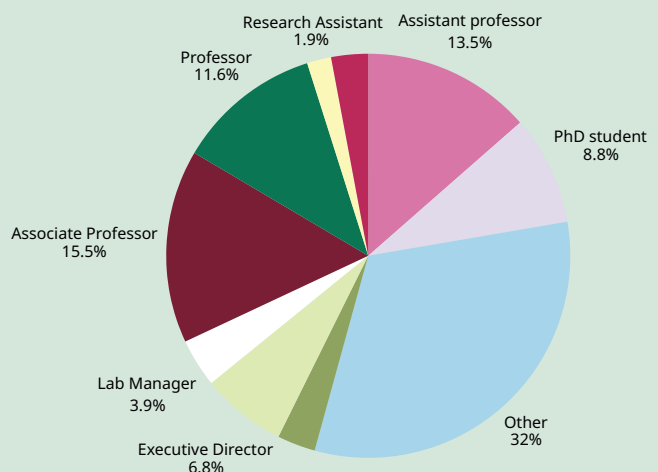


Figure 5. Workshop attendees by academic role or position



RESEARCH PATHWAYS

In addition to describing their roles, participants were asked to indicate which of the four BC First Nations Climate Strategy pathways best aligned with their research projects and initiatives.

A total of 160 projects and initiatives were identified during the workshops. The most selected pathways of primary focus were (Figure 6):

- Climate Response and Preparedness (59 mentions)
- Capacity and Leadership (52 mentions)
- Land and Water Protection (34 mentions)
- Inherent Rights and Title (15 mentions).

These selections indicate relatively strong thematic alignment with climate preparedness and capacity-building efforts, pointing out less expertise and focus on Indigenous self-determination and self-governance.

Furthermore, Figures 7-10, illustrate participant identification of co-occurrence of pathways in their projects. Each diagram represents participants' categorization of their projects including two strategy pathways as primary and secondary focus, highlighting the number of projects selected as having overlapping pathways. While some areas are strongly interconnected in practice, others remain more distinct or specialized.

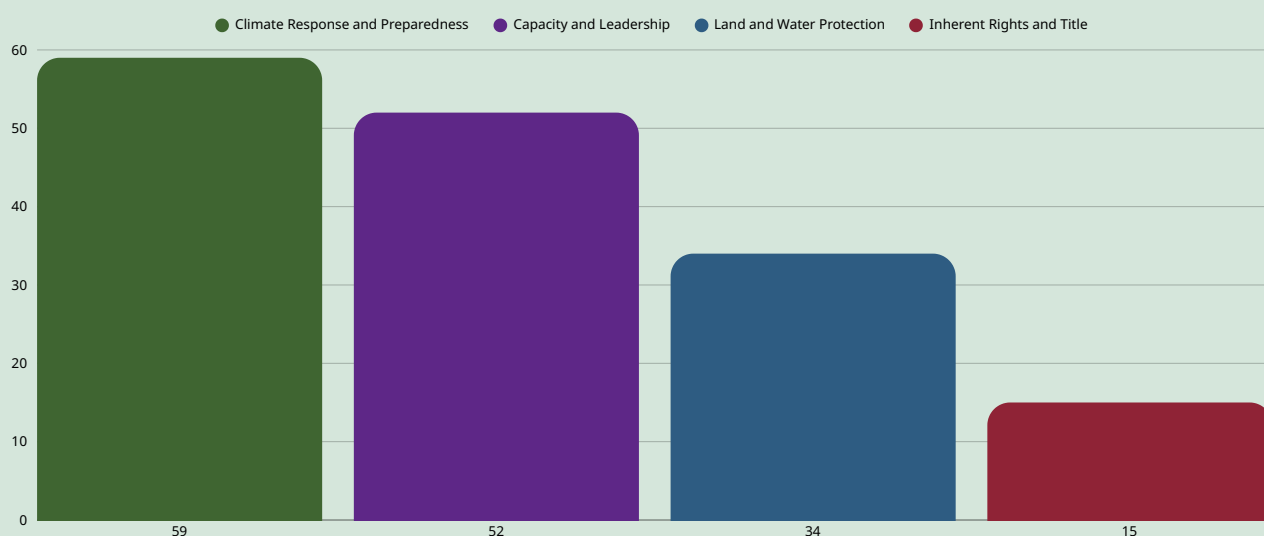


Figure 6. Primary focus areas identified by participants across 160 projects and initiatives, aligned with the four BC First Nations Climate Strategy pathways.



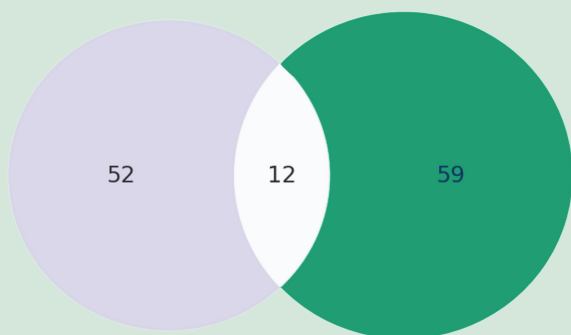


Figure 7. The most significant overlap occurred between Capacity and Leadership (primary focus) and Climate Response and Preparedness (secondary focus), with 12 projects identified in both priority areas.

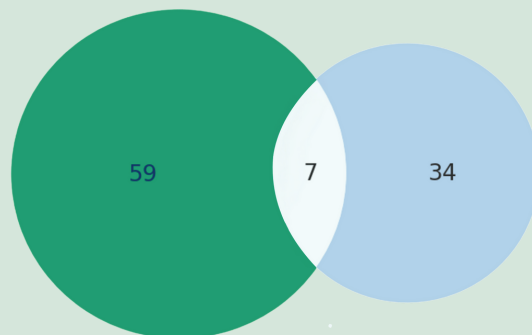


Figure 8. A significant overlap was also observed between Climate Response and Preparedness (primary focus) Land and Water Protection (secondary focus), with 7 projects addressing both priorities.

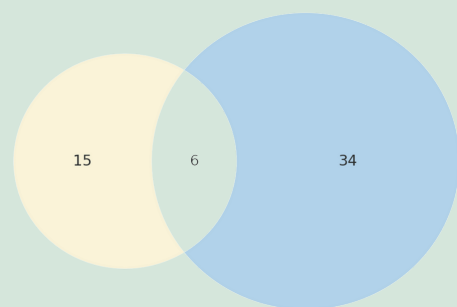


Figure 9. An overlap between Inherent Rights and Titles and (primary focus) and Land and Water Protection (secondary focus), was identified with 6 projects addressing both areas.

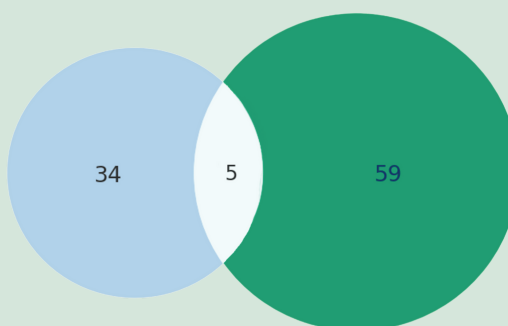


Figure 10. A total of 5 projects focused on Land and Water Protection (primary focus) and Climate Response and Preparedness (secondary focus).

INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

During the workshops, many researchers demonstrated a strong understanding of their institutions' ongoing initiatives and shared valuable insights on how their projects align with the pathways in the [BCFNCS](#). Most identified connections and potential collaborations with peers, while others were surprised by the overlaps, commonalities, and indirect links between their work. At the same time, participants highlighted key gaps and areas for improvement. The following section summarizes the research strengths and assets that emerged in each university's discussions, while reflections on broader challenges are covered in the 'Overarching Structural Challenges' section. These highlights represent only a portion of the rich research shared during the workshops. Several researchers involved in highly relevant work were unable to attend the workshops. This is only a partial representation and not a comprehensive account of the rich and diverse related activity within each institution. Figures 11–14 illustrate



participants' classification of their projects in relation to the BCFNCS priorities during Activity 1: Mapping Research and Reflections. Each diagram highlights the distribution of projects across the Strategy's four core pathways, showcasing the areas of emphasis at each institution based on the data collected through the activity worksheets.

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

At the University of Victoria (UVIC), participants identified a strong alignment between ongoing research and the *Climate Response and Preparedness and Capacity Building* priorities outlined in the First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

Key areas of focus include:

- Energy transition
- Biodiversity conservation
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Capacity-building
- Community-engaged research.

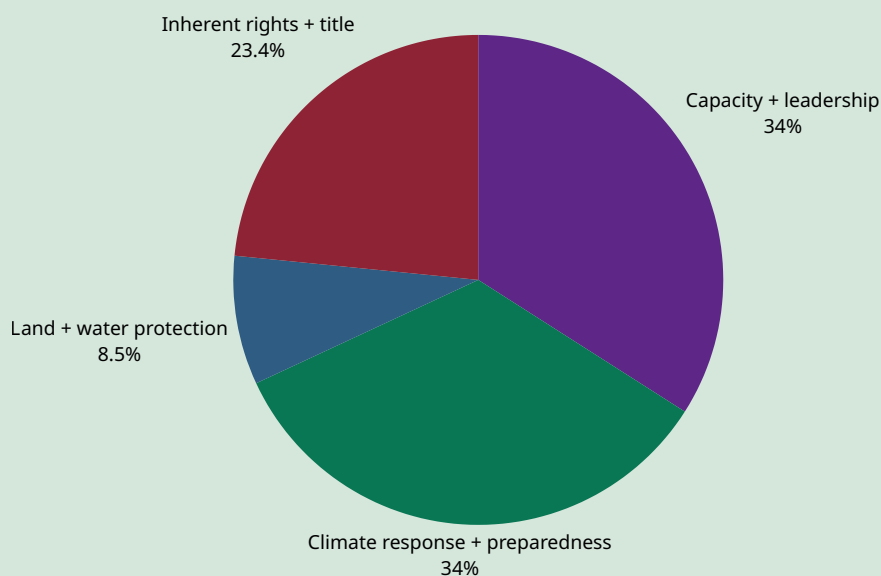


Figure 11. Strategic pathways: University of Victoria. At UVic participants classified their projects primarily under Capacity and Leadership and Climate Response and Preparedness (34% each), followed by Inherent Rights and Title (23.4%) and Land and Water Protection (8.5%).

Several initiatives highlight UVIC's meaningful partnerships with First Nations, integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in efforts related to ecosystem restoration, renewable energy, environmental law, and Indigenous Protection Areas. Participants also noted the foundational role of First Peoples House and the Indigenous Cultural Acumen Training (ICAT) program in supporting ethical research practices and fostering student engagement.





The University of Victoria aligns with research initiatives on Climate Response & Preparedness and Capacity-Building priorities, emphasizing energy transition, capacity building, and interdisciplinary collaboration—reflecting commitments to ecology, clean energy and community-led action.

Strengths and Assets

- **Cultural Acumen Training (ICAT):** UVic offers a basic two-hour cultural acumen training through the First Peoples House.
- **Existing Research Relationships:** Faculty members have long-standing relationships with communities.
- **Curricular Innovations:** There are efforts to fold Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into student coursework.
- **Interdisciplinary and Innovative Research Areas:** Graduate students are involved in projects with interdisciplinary teams. UVic is also researching on biodiversity finance, marine biology, ecology, and energy transition.
- **Community Engaged Research Coordination:** There is a staff role focused on community-engaged research indicating UVic's structural attention to this area.

Examples

- **Environmental Law Centre:** The ELC provides free legal assistance to communities and organizes co-learning sessions for lawyers involved in public interest environmental law.
- **Projects around Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), water and land protection.**
- **Efforts around cultural, linguistic, and ecological revitalization,** using traditional ecological knowledge.
- **Clean energy transitions and ecosystem restoration** projects developed in partnership with First Nations (e.g., *Accelerating Community Energy Transformation's* work on energy and community planning).
- **Dinner Dialogue Series** (in partnership with VCC), where participants gather over food to discuss topics such as food sovereignty and Indigenous land stewardship.
- **Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU):** The ILRU is an academic research institute dedicated to the revitalization of Indigenous law and governance. The project collaborates with Indigenous communities on research projects by invitation, and on their own terms.



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

During the workshop held at Simon Fraser University (SFU), Vancouver Campus, participants shared a strong commitment on Climate Response and Preparedness. This was reflected in the discussions through initiatives that work with First Nations in urban contexts, where big research labs and hubs are the basis for these projects.

Key areas of focus include:

- Climate adaptation
- Professional training on climate action
- Hubs for collaboration
- Environmental planning

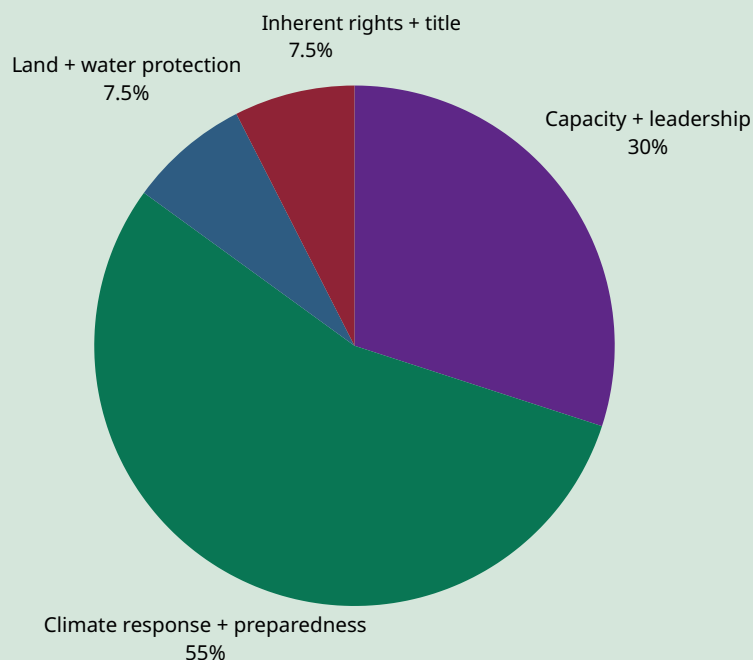


Figure 12. Strategic pathways: Simon Fraser University. At SFU, participants classified most projects under Climate Response and Preparedness (55%), followed by Capacity and Leadership (30%). Smaller shares were linked to Inherent Rights and Title (7.5%) and Land and Water Protection (7.5%).

Participants noted ongoing efforts to build clusters around climate resilience, advance interdisciplinary research, and include Indigenous leadership in emerging research networks. These efforts reflect SFU's commitment to bridging academic expertise with community-driven priorities, while recognizing the complexity and urgency of climate action in densely populated urban regions.



Simon Fraser University aligns with Climate Response and Preparedness priorities through interdisciplinary research on urban resilience, nature-based solutions, and coastal ecosystems—reflecting commitments to urban-Indigenous collaboration, environmental management, and community-engaged scholarship.

Strengths and Assets

- **Urban-Facing Indigenous Climate Research:** Innovative projects that integrate Indigenous knowledge into environmental planning and climate adaptation, particularly in urban and peri-urban contexts.
- **Research Clusters and Collaborative Hubs:** Several thematic labs and collaborative hubs that serve as entry points for interdisciplinary research and community connection, particularly around land-water systems and sustainability planning.
- **Reconciliation and Professional Training:** SFU's growing efforts in designing courses that reflect reconciliation goals and professional education and climate adaptation training.

Examples

- **Nature-based rural and Indigenous Infrastructure Solutions (School of Resource Environmental Management, REM):** A nature-based and community-led approach in partnership with the Squamish First Nation, the City of Vancouver, and the City of Nelson that integrates Indigenous knowledge into municipal climate planning and training.
- **SFU Climate Innovation program:** A research cluster on climate resilience that includes Indigenous leadership.
- **Aquatic Research Cooperative Institute, Watershed Futures Initiative, SFU Clean Hydrogen Hub:** All reflect SFU's ongoing efforts for collaboration and training around ecosystems and sustainability planning.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

At the workshop held at The University of British Columbia (UBC), researchers shared a rich and dynamic variety of initiatives related to Land and Water Protection, Capacity and Leadership, as well as Climate Response and Preparedness. The projects address efforts around ecosystems, food sovereignty, cultural fire, and innovative programs on legal frameworks.

Key areas of focus include:

- Fire Stewardship
- Indigenous governance, land stewardship and law
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Ecological restoration and conservation

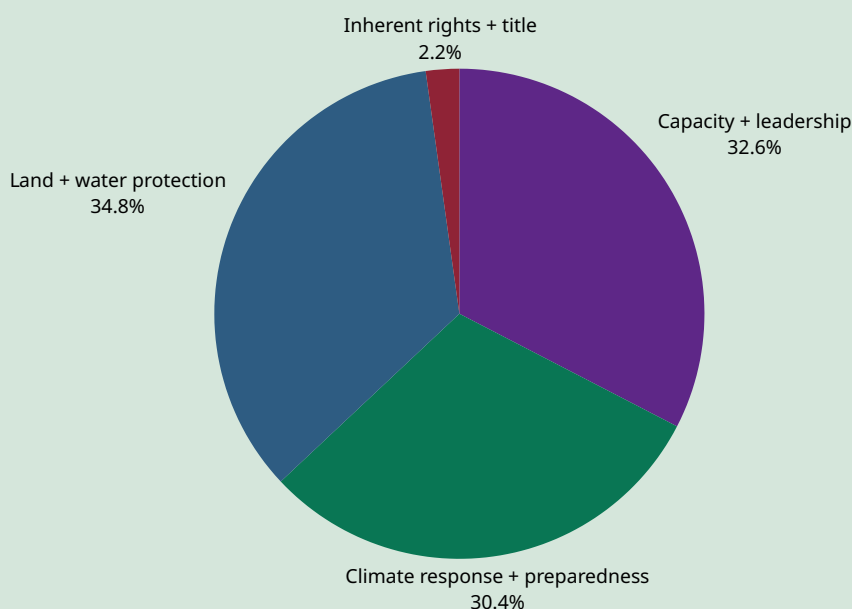


Figure 13. Strategic Pathways: University of British Columbia. At UBC, participants classified their projects across Land and Water Protection (34.8%), Capacity and Leadership (32.6%), and Climate Response and Preparedness (30.4%), with a smaller share in Inherent Rights and Title (2.2%).

Participants emphasized the ongoing projects around Indigenous laws, stewardship and knowledge to address the complex intersections of ecology, climate, and jurisdiction. These initiatives reflect UBC's growing strength in community-engaged research that is dynamic, innovative and supportive of Indigenous governance and self-determination in environmental contexts.





The University of British Columbia aligns with Land and Water Protection, Capacity and Leadership, and Climate Response and Preparedness priorities through research on dense ecosystems, food sovereignty, cultural fire stewardship, and legal innovation—highlighting commitments to ecological restoration, Indigenous legal revitalization, and community-based climate action.

Strengths and Assets

- **Dense and dynamic ecosystem:** Initiatives grounded in Indigenous land and water governance, cultural fire stewardship, food sovereignty, and legal pluralism.
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration:** Across faculties researchers are engaging in community-led work that reflects a growing commitment to respecting Indigenous governance, non-human relations, and intersectional collaboration.
- **Community-driven initiatives and partnerships:** Some initiatives show relational and cultural solutions grounded in respect for all relations, including more-than-human kin.
- **Innovation in complex conversations:** Legal scholars are advancing conversations around complex themes like inherent title, jurisdictional overlap, agriculture and conservation policy, and even non-human rights for Indigenous climate governance and conservation.

Examples

- **Climate Solutions Collective, Sustainability Hub “Living Lab”:** Internal initiatives for collaboration within UBC researchers to reflect and provide knowledge exchange spaces aimed for authentic engagement, social learning and transformational change.
- **Bachelor of Indigenous Land Stewardship:** This is the first four-year undergraduate degree of its kind, co-developed by a team of First Nations natural resource and governance experts and the Faculty of Forestry at UBC.
- **Fire stewardship, emergency management programs and restoring efforts** based on Indigenous or cultural practices.
- **Research Forests and the Respect for All Relations Project:** Initiatives that have strong partnerships with First Nations communities, exploring Indigenous + settler laws, relationships between humans + more-than-human beings, and environmental stewardship or conservation.



UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

At the University of British Columbia (UNBC), researchers demonstrated connections with Land and Water Protection, as well as Capacity and Leadership. The conversations highlighted a collaborative culture within the peers and the institution, strong student-driven research, and support from the university's Indigenous Initiatives Office (IIO) to match researchers with communities, recognizing the importance of equitable relationships from the outset.

Key areas of focus include:

- Northern Communities
- Silviculture and Ecology
- Wildfire and food systems
- Equity and data governance

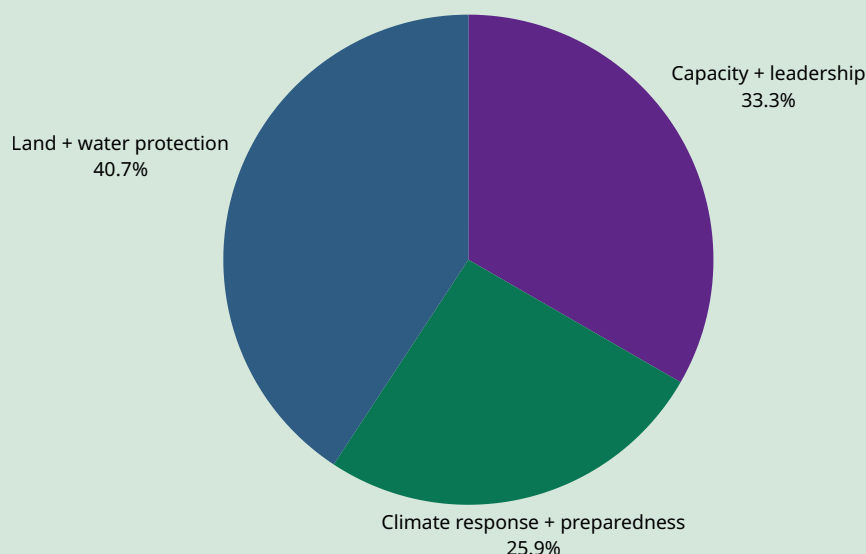


Figure 13. Strategic Pathways: University of Northern British Columbia. At UNBC, participants classified their projects mainly under Land and Water Protection (40.7%) and Capacity and Leadership (33.3%), with the remainder in Climate Response and Preparedness (25.9%). No projects were identified under Inherent Rights and Title.

Participants also noted the value of equitable partnerships and relational accountability through equity and data governance efforts to facilitate meaningful connections between researchers and First Nations. The discussions at UNBC reflected a strong emphasis on community-driven research in Northern contexts, where researchers are actively responding to climate impacts through applied projects in sustainable and ecological practices.



The University of Northern British Columbia matches Land and Water Protection, as well as Capacity and Leadership priorities through a collaborative research culture, student-led initiatives, and strong support from the office of Indigenous Initiatives—demonstrating commitments to data governance, localized energy and food systems, and community-based research in Northern contexts.

Strengths and Assets

- **Geographic and relational connection to Northern and rural communities:** The university's geographical location offers proximity and support into environmental, infrastructural, and governance challenges of Indigenous Nations in this region.
- **Land-based projects:** Faculty and students are engaged in research on cultural fire stewardship, energy sovereignty, local food systems, and watershed health—often in close collaboration with First Nations and community partners.
- **Institutional collaborative culture:** Researchers feel supported by their peers and research offices in pursuing community relationships. These efforts help to build both academic and community capacity.
- **Youth mentorship and intergenerational learning:** Initiatives bring young researchers into the projects and support them into building relationships with the communities.

Examples

- **Indigenous Initiatives Office (IIO):** The IIO is actively building a database to match researchers with communities, recognizing the importance of equitable relationships from the outset.
- **John Prince Research Forest:** Longstanding collaboratively managed project with Tl'azt'en Nation and UNBC, on approximately 17,000 ha of forest lands with Tl'azt'en traditional territory.
- Research expertise around forestry/ silviculture/ ecology/ wildfire/ drought.
- **Northern Regional Energy Dialogues (NRED):** A project to amplify northern voices and aims to strengthen community resilience, support community energy systems, and enhance long-term economic stability throughout the region.
- **Count Us In:** Working with the Privacy Office + Project Advisory group includes First Nations Centre/IIO to develop data governance policies. This will inform larger policy across campus and beyond the project.



Institutional Summary

Across the four institutions (UBC, UVic, UNBC, and SFU), participants described a landscape rich with Indigenous-led and community-driven climate research, much of which aligns closely with the FNLC Climate Strategy's core priority areas: **Inherent Rights and Title, Climate Preparedness and Response, Land and Water Stewardship, and Capacity Building**. While each university brings different strengths to the table, the workshops also revealed systemic gaps, shared challenges, and significant opportunities for institutional growth and collaboration.

One of the most notable gaps identified across institutions was the limited engagement with projects directly addressing **Inherent Rights and Title**. While many researchers are deeply involved in climate adaptation, environmental monitoring, and governance work, few projects discussed at the workshops were situated within legal or jurisdictional frameworks that address inherent title, sovereignty, or Indigenous legal orders. Although some projects within UBC, UVic, and SFU stand out with a few exceptions in this regard— faculty in law, forestry, and conservation are exploring the complex intersections of federal, provincial, and Indigenous governance systems, particularly around land use, wildfire policy, and agricultural regulation. Additionally, researchers are beginning to ask critical questions about how Indigenous title is being acknowledged or sidelined in provincial and federal government systems, and how legal pluralism might be more meaningfully incorporated institutionally.

The strongest alignment is **Climate Response and Preparedness** at multiple universities. For instance, at SFU and UVIC, dedicated climate resilience research clusters are engaging with municipalities and First Nations on issues like wildfire adaptation and nature-based solutions. These efforts reflect a collaborative, systems oriented approach and draw on strong connections to urban Indigenous communities and policy environments. The UNBC plays a complementary role by supporting Indigenous-led environmental monitoring and land-based response strategies in northern and rural territories. Additionally, most of the projects in this category are highly localized and community-prioritized on wildfire, flooding, and cultural burning practices, and emphasize the importance of restoring Indigenous guardianship over emergency response and land management. However, researchers also noted challenges in sustaining these efforts due to short-term funding cycles, academic timelines, and limited institutional flexibility.

Nearly every university reported projects tied to **Land and Water Protection** through ecosystem restoration, watershed governance, and land stewardship. At UBC, work on cultural fire stewardship, marine habitat restoration, and planting of culturally significant species was noted as particularly robust, often integrating Indigenous



knowledge systems and governance priorities. UVic and UNBC are also actively engaged in land-based learning and research. However, some participants cautioned that stewardship must be understood not only as ecological work but as a continuation of governance, law, and relationships to land.

Among all four FNLC priority areas, **Capacity Building and Leadership** was the most consistently emphasized across institutions. Every university reported multiple initiatives aimed at supporting students, youth mentorship, community researchers, and cross-institutional learning. However, participants described the need for a clear shift toward training and relational development, rather than simply technical skill-building. A few projects with mentorship of youth in land and energy stewardship, training opportunities for community members, and undergraduate programs were all highlighted as impactful examples and recommendations.



WHAT WE HEARD

“Solving this crisis doesn’t start in science, it starts in our hearts. Relationship building and taking responsibility are needed. Our ancestors knew how to be in a relationship with Mother Earth. They had their ways of doing that, and we must bring that forward.”

- Dr. Robert Joseph, BCAFN Knowledge Keeper



OVERARCHING STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

During the workshops, participants spoke candidly about the structural barriers that they experience when conducting community-driven research. A central concern was the persistent tension between institutional timelines and the time required to build meaningful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.

Participants also described the emotional and logistical strain of trying to uphold commitments to slow, place-based work while navigating systems designed around short-term deliverables, siloed departments, and rigid funding structures. Despite a desire to engage in good ways, researchers often lack the guidance, resources, and institutional flexibility needed to do so, leaving many unsure of how to begin, and afraid of doing harm.

Short-term timelines vs. Long-term relationships: Across all institutions, participants echoed the same pressing truth: the systems that govern academic research are poorly designed for the kind of deep, relationship-based, and community-guided work that ethical Indigenous collaboration requires. One of the most widely shared tensions was between short-term timelines and long-term relationships. Research and funding often prioritize deliverables and deadlines, the need to publish vs. doing service research, while meaningful partnerships with Indigenous Nations require patience, reciprocity, and trust—qualities that cannot be rushed. As one participant bluntly put it:

“There is no funding for developing relationships. They want you to have an Indigenous partner... They will then go to people who have those partnerships. There is not exploratory money to co-develop the project, the questions, the follow through, but you can’t do that in this space.”

Fragmentation and siloing: Even within universities, faculties, departments, and researchers often operate in isolation, making it difficult to coordinate efforts or share knowledge. Cross-university collaboration is rare, and cross-sectoral partnerships (e.g., between policymakers, communities, NGOs, and researchers) are often stifled by administrative complexity. This lack of connectivity leads to redundancy, miscommunication, and a loss of momentum on issues like climate resilience where time is critical. One hopeful intervention that emerged was the creation of “circles of practice”—intentional networks to share learning and reduce duplication.



Capacity constraints: Both community and academic institutions also face capacity constraints. From community partners with overburdened staff to academic researchers managing teaching, service, and grant responsibilities, there is simply not enough time, infrastructure, or personnel to support ethical co-designed research. Graduate student turnover was cited as a significant barrier to relationship continuity. These positions, often precarious and short-term, mean that community collaborations can be abandoned or delayed as soon as a student graduates. Many participants also noted that the burden of transformation continues to fall disproportionately on Indigenous scholars and junior faculty. These individuals are often expected to lead reconciliation efforts while also publishing, teaching, and mentoring—work that is rarely recognized in tenure and promotion systems. While some staff may support administrative processes, additional resourcing is needed across multiple research areas.

Ethics protocols: University Research Ethics Boards (REBs) are often designed to protect institutions more than to serve communities, and they rarely reflect Indigenous values or protocols. Multiple participants recounted experiences where community-defined ethics clashed with REB requirements—some even chose to bypass the institutional process entirely. While pilot projects to improve Indigenous research ethics are underway (e.g., at UBC), many researchers are left navigating these tensions alone.

Extractive research practices: The structural legacy of extractive research practices continues to haunt many communities. Despite best intentions, the absence of clear pathways for giving back, sharing data, or involving community voices in authorship results in projects that feel like academic exercises rather than reciprocal relationships. Participants emphasized the need to reflect deeper to reimagine research as a gift exchange, not a transaction. Additionally, there was also a concern that settler scholars and institutions often fail to take on the full burden of decolonizing work. This means there is still a lack of clarity and action around what meaningful settler responsibility entails, both at the institutional and individual level.

Funding structures and eligibility barriers: Many programs require pre-established partnerships and clearly defined deliverables at the proposal stage—excluding early-stage, exploratory, or community-driven work. This undermines the potential for new researchers or communities without existing connections to participate. One participant noted:

“You have to be half-truthful with funders. Undefined research questions aren’t acceptable—but you need time to develop them with communities.”



Some participants also noted that standardized financial systems and funding structures make it difficult to compensate or provide honoraria to Indigenous knowledge holders in ways that are appropriate and dignified. Inflexible funding mechanisms and criteria limit the ability to support the relational, reciprocal practices that ethical research demands.

Scarcity of institutional guidance: Despite a growing number of researchers wanting to engage in a good way, there are very few supports to help them learn how. Early career researchers especially fear doing it wrong—worrying they'll offend, overstep, or be a burden. Without specialized training in relational accountability, Indigenous history, or research governance, many are paralyzed by inaction. Furthermore, while some institutions host a number of strong knowledge exchange initiatives, participants noted the need to have a shared platform to connect projects, opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, etc. As one researcher reflected:

"We need more examples [of good work]. It's hard to be the first to do this work."

Limited jurisdictional literacy: Although some legal scholars are advancing important work in this area, participants noted a persistent lack of understanding around the intersections of federal, provincial, and Indigenous law—particularly in applied fields such as forestry, conservation, and agriculture. This gap in legal literacy leads to oversimplified approaches that disregard Indigenous governance or default to colonial legal frameworks. Participants emphasized the need for more comprehensive training that foregrounds Indigenous legal orders and equips researchers and practitioners to navigate jurisdictional complexity in respectful and informed ways.

Rural vs. Urban contexts: Some researchers reflected on the barriers rural students, institutions and communities face in accessing training and education in science, particularly in remote or northern communities. Despite interest and motivation, the infrastructure to support learning, mentorship, or applied experience is often lacking. Challenges in recruiting Indigenous students, research assistants, and faculty were also emphasized, with barriers varying significantly based on the geographic location of each university. While some strategies are well-intentioned, they often fall short for rural and northern communities, leaving significant gaps in climate policy implementation and research support.

Despite these challenges, there is a strong current of hope. Researchers across institutions are pushing for systems change, advocating for a new model where relationship-building is funded, ethics are redefined, knowledge is shared in accessible



ways, and community leadership is prioritized. Participants spoke to the importance of fostering long-term positions within communities, creating spaces for shared learning, and reconfiguring institutional incentives to support care, reciprocity, and slow, place-based work. As one participant said:

“We need to become more than the sum of our parts.”

BEST PRACTICES FOR INDIGENOUS-ENGAGED RESEARCH

In the second portion of the workshops, participants were invited to reflect on what it means to do research “in a good way” and how such practices could be meaningfully implemented at the community level. These conversations emphasized that good intentions are not enough, researchers must be prepared to follow community guidance, honour protocols, and build relationships that extend beyond the lifespan of a project.

Participants shared practical strategies for embedding ethical engagement into research processes, from prioritizing local timelines to ensuring that outputs are accessible and useful. The emphasis was not only on what research looks like, but how it is carried out with care, accountability, and respect.

1. Co-designed and community-led approaches

Participants repeatedly returned to the idea that “good research” is mainly relational; relationship quality, trustworthiness, and community benefit matter more than conventional academic outputs. Research must be approached as a form of gift exchange—where the sharing of knowledge is accompanied by mutual care, cultural protocols, and material reciprocity. Codesign, rather than consultation, was highlighted as foundational research developed with communities, grounded in their priorities and needs and not simply conducted about them. Participants highlighted that good research often emerges from **“ongoing conversations and community priorities”**.

Listening: This collaborative spirit requires deep listening, openness to change, and a willingness to follow the community’s lead. As one participant noted:



"A big part of good research is about listening and building relationships. Listening to the community's values and priorities and respecting them by introducing them to the work. Communities may have questions, and we should be able to answer them."

Patience and intentionality: Patience and intentionality were cited as core to doing the work in a good way, even if timelines imposed by academic institutions or funding agencies often do not align with the pace of community engagement.

Visiting and being present: Researchers need to take the time to visit and build those connections with the community.

"Relationship building takes a lot of time and within that, visiting is essential to yourself and the community."

Flexibility: Researchers reflected on the ways their projects evolved over time through conversation and shared reflection. Being flexible was seen as essential for collaboration, as one graduate student shared:

"The project that I went in with, is not the project that I have now. Humility-wise - it is being super open to change."

Humility: Good research is often about stepping back, revising assumptions, and co-creating something unexpected. As one participant reflected:

"Good research is about not thinking you know—coming with humility—here are the skills but plans are developed in relationship."

Reciprocity and giving back: Many spoke about research as a form of service or gift-giving. This meant offering something of value—whether that be time, skills, media tools, or ceremony, and acknowledging the knowledge and labour communities bring to the process. Offering of honoraria, co-authorship, youth training, and community-defined outputs, were cited as important practices.

"You have to approach it as a ceremony, and the ceremony should be guided by the knowledge keepers from the community. You need to think about research in a different way."

2. Collaborative infrastructure and institutional support

Participants emphasized that research cannot be sustained without strong institutional scaffolding. Collaborative infrastructure—such as Indigenous research offices, community coordinators, and long-term support roles—was



described as essential to bridging academic and community priorities. These supports help reduce the burden placed on individual researchers and communities, especially when relationships are new or capacity is limited.

Institutional investments: Participants pointed to the importance of intermediary and support structures, such as Indigenous research offices or community coordinators, that can help connect researchers with communities in respectful and informed ways. These roles must go beyond one-time referrals or occasional workshops.

Training and Mentorship: Researchers highlighted the value of training and mentorship. Many felt that the burden of "figuring it out alone" discouraged new or early-career scholars. Several participants described a need for structured, standardized training on Indigenous research protocols, ethics, and relationship-building.

"There are so many training opportunities for researchers, the challenge is how does the university ensure they happen when they need to [and] people can access them."

Sustainability and Community-based support: Researchers also highlighted the importance of funding for community-based staff positions, such as climate action or disaster risk coordinators. These roles ensure there is someone in the community to build relationships, support coordination, and sustain projects over time.

"Having internal capacity to collaborate effectively with partners and governments is an essential first step for research."

3. Ethics, data, and accountability

There was strong agreement about grounding ethics processes in community-defined protocols, not just institutional ones. Researchers cited examples where institutional requirements clashed with community values. In some cases, ethics forms required legal sign-off from external parties unfamiliar with the communities involved. Others described bypassing some institutional processes in order to respect community processes.

Data governance: Participants emphasized the importance of upholding Indigenous data sovereignty. This includes recognizing community ownership of both data and process. OCAP principles were widely cited, but many participants noted the need for university-wide structures that make these principles easier to



implement, as well as the need to respect and implement the community's own ethics protocols:

“Ownership is really key – define it really broadly. Not just ideas, but ownership of the data.”

Accessible and culturally relevant outputs: Participants stressed the importance of sharing research results in accessible and culturally relevant formats. Academic publications were described as inaccessible or irrelevant to communities. Instead, participants highlighted formats such as lay summaries, videos, comics, workshops, and collaborative storytelling as preferred formats for sharing knowledge.

Accountability: Maintaining open lines of communication, managing expectations, explaining methods, and being transparent about limitations were identified as essential aspects of community-driven research. Accountability is not just a principle, but a practice. Researchers emphasized that communication was key throughout the project, not just at the beginning or end.

4. Knowledge sharing and decolonial practices

Participants shared a rich array of approaches to knowledge sharing that reflect both decolonial and practical commitments. These include the use of Indigenous languages, youth capacity building, art, circle work, and community-based reports. Knowledge mobilization was described not just as a deliverable but as an ethical obligation.

Language: Participants emphasized the importance of using Indigenous languages to reconnect with land, history, and ecological knowledge. The living nature of language must be acknowledged in research. As one participant noted:

“Language is intrinsically connected to place and traditional ecological knowledge.”

Decolonial thinking: Participants called for more relational and reciprocal ways of working, including showing up in community, participating in ceremony, and spending time with people informally. Researchers need to redefine how they talk about nature and culture and learn to valorize and integrate the community's values within themselves.

“Research in a good way is trying to find ways that are not extractive, and [where] people's time is valued. To move outside of typical academic expectations.”



Ultimately, participants expressed a collective call to transform institutional cultures and recognize the legitimacy of research that is slow, relational, and community-led. As one speaker summarized:

“The framing that has stuck with me, is the sense of responsibility. No matter what is going on in the world. We need to paddle in the same direction.”

NEEDS AND SUPPORTS FOR STRENGTHENING INDIGENOUS-ENGAGED RESEARCH

During the workshop discussions, participants reflected on the need for relationship building within universities, as well as new training opportunities. There was interest in cross-university guides and training for co-design—building their skills and knowledge on ‘How To Do Research in a Good Way’. This could bridge the gap between institutions, academia, and communities, to support meaningful and collaborative climate action. Particularly, researchers with no experience expressed a desire for assistance or support.

Invest in relationship-centered infrastructure: Participants emphasized the importance of investing and supporting relationship-building. Universities and funders can support by providing funding streams and planning grants specifically for partnership development. This would allow researchers and communities to co-develop questions, roles and expectations before launching a project.

Create cross-universities training and mentorship: To build capacity for ethical, co-designed research participants suggested sharing existing resources, guidebooks or building frameworks and training on Indigenous-engaged methodologies and “good practices”, especially for early-career scholars. These could include mentorship programs and learning circles across institutions and disciplines.

Expand institutional support roles: Participants recommended the hiring of specialized staff—such as Indigenous research advisors, community and project coordinators—to support relationships and ethics consultations that reflect Indigenous values. These roles could support administrative burdens and strengthen the implementation of Indigenous values in research.



Develop Nation-informed ethics protocols: Standardized university ethics processes were often described as misaligned with Indigenous protocols. Participants reported that institutional REBs should focus more on community-defined values or timelines. Many advocated for ethics frameworks that are Nation-informed, flexible, and capable of recognizing Indigenous laws and protocols as valid ethical authorities.

Funding local capacity: A recurring theme was the necessity of resourcing communities, not just researchers. This includes funding for local coordinators, hiring community research assistants, and other Nation-defined research positions. Empowering communities to lead and shape the work on their terms will foster more sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Build tools for communication and networking: Participants suggested creating tools such as shared research directories or mapping platforms to help identify existing relationships, avoid duplication, and build upon aligned efforts. These tools would help researchers, communities, and funders see what work is underway, where relationships exist, and how efforts can be aligned more effectively.

THE ROLE OF PICS IN BRIDGING GAPS

After some of the discussions, participants envisioned a stronger role for the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) as a connector and enabler in this space. The following suggestions intersect with PICS role as a potential backbone organization that could support connections between researchers and across institutions or communities:

Making the work visible: PICS could help illuminate the existing “web of work” by mapping current projects and partnerships across campuses. This visibility would enable researchers to identify synergies, learn from each other, and reduce redundancy. It would also support community partners in locating researchers whose work aligns with their priorities.

Circle of Practice (CoP): Participants expressed strong interest in a PICS-hosted Circle of Practice—an intentional space to explore what it means to do research in a good way. Such a platform could offer shared ethics training, co-design templates, mentorship opportunities, and facilitated cross-institutional dialogue. Participants emphasized that a Circle of Practice should not be a static of resources, but a dynamic, evolving space where researchers and community partners can reflect on challenges, share success stories, and co-develop guiding principles. This kind of sustained engagement was seen as critical for



cultivating shared understandings and supporting a culture of mutual accountability.

Investing in relationship infrastructure: Several participants emphasized that one of the most impactful roles PICS could play is in supporting the infrastructure that enables relationship-building. This includes funding for exploratory or pre-engagement phases of research, hiring third-party relationship coordinators who are embedded in both academic and community contexts, and facilitating introductions between Nations and researchers. Many saw this work as filling a critical gap—one that is often overlooked or under-resourced in existing grant programs.

Matchmaking aligned with FNLC Priorities: Participants also envisioned PICS as a strategic connector, one that could help link researcher expertise with the evolving priorities of the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC). This matchmaking role was seen as particularly valuable for supporting work in areas such as Indigenous data governance, cultural and language revitalization, and place-based climate curriculum development. These were not seen as supplemental to climate work—but rather, essential to climate leadership rooted in Indigenous self-determination.

Supporting Indigenous-Led research visibility: Participants spoke to the importance of “daylighting” Indigenous-led climate research—making it more visible and influential within institutional and policy arenas. PICS was encouraged to support this visibility by amplifying successful case studies, supporting the professional development of non-academic partners, and hosting cross-sector convenings that center Indigenous voices.

Together, these reflections underscore the need to rethink how research is funded, supported, and practiced. Strengthening Indigenous-engaged requires more than filling gaps in training or infrastructure, it is about transforming the relationships, values, and systems that shape knowledge production. Meaningful change will require shared commitment, intentional design, and long-term reciprocity.

NEXT STEPS

As we move forward, PICS is committed to turning these insights into action. Our next steps will involve helping reimagine research, supporting and strengthening relationship-building, and recognizing Indigenous laws and governance in research. Looking forward, PICS is committed to building infrastructure that enables long-term, respectful, and effective partnerships. This includes investing in case studies that support communities, amplifying Indigenous-led models of climate governance, and ensuring that every step forward is shaped by collective guidance and shared responsibility.



WELCOMING CHIEF FRANK BROWN



Hereditary Chief Frank Brown, láłíyá sila—translated as “preparing for the largest potlatch”.

The Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) is entering a new chapter of its Indigenous Climate Fellowship initiative with the naming of Haítzaqv (Heiltsuk) Hereditary Chief Frank Brown, láłíyá sila—translated as “preparing for the largest potlatch”—as the next Indigenous Climate Fellow at the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions. Frank Brown brings decades of experience in climate resilience, Indigenous governance, and community leadership, and his fellowship will guide the next phase of building transformative, reciprocal, and community-led climate solutions across British Columbia. His leadership is expected to deepen the practice of relationship-based climate work and foreground Indigenous laws, governance structures, and cultural protocols as central to climate action.

UPLIFTING RECIPROCAL RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP PILOT PROGRAM

As part of a broader vision to realign academic practices with community priorities, the Uplifting Reciprocal Research Scholarship Pilot Program is launching to support graduate students working in alignment with the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan. This program will offer financial resources to students to support them as they undertake codesigned collaborative research. A strong emphasis will be



placed on the foundational importance of research that centres reciprocity, long-term collaboration, and community-defined outcomes.

Awardees will develop case study knowledge highlights from their research to identify best practices for breaking down silos and facilitating collaboration; and provide practical recommendations for enhancing research and partnerships. The awardees will also be able to participate in future PICS events and connect with other researchers working on similar projects, fostering collaboration and offering opportunities to share knowledge, lessons learned, and experiences.

With consent from their families, The Uplifting Reciprocal Research Scholarship Program is dedicated to two distinguished matriarchs from the Heiltsuk Nation, Leona and Valerie Humchitt. Leona and Valerie were sisters-in-law, and both had a deep passion for Indigenous-led education and changemaking.



Leona and Valerie Humchitt. Source: FACEBOOK

BASELINE REPORT

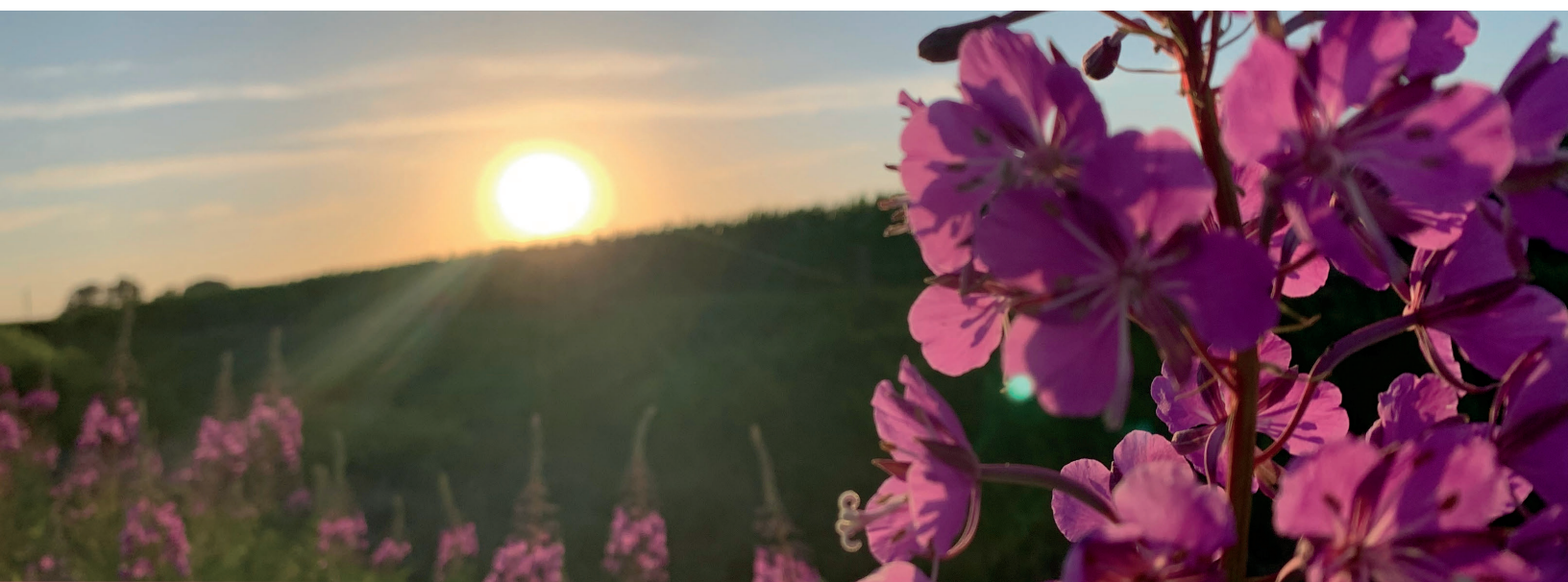
Currently in development, the Baseline Report will serve as a foundational mapping of existing climate-related research, projects, and partnerships across the PICS universities. This includes projects in forest management, fire stewardship, marine energy, Indigenous data governance, and mental health in climate contexts. The report will identify where research aligns with FNLC climate priorities, such as rights and title, land and water protection, disaster preparedness, and community capacity-building and will also help to highlight gaps where further relationship-building, co-development, or funding is needed.

More detailed case studies for codesigned and collaborative research will be shared as part of the report, along with resources and tools to support codesigned/community-led research. This effort addresses a persistent theme: the need to "daylight" existing work, break down institutional silos, and foster a clearer landscape of who is doing what, where, and with whom. The database will also help tackle the issue of short academic timelines and student churn, offering continuity and institutional memory that supports more sustained community engagement.



CIRCLES OF PRACTICE (COP)

In response to overwhelming interest from participants across the four universities, PICS is also supporting the creation of a Circle of Practice. Over time, this initiative is intended to offer a space for researchers at all stages—especially early career and graduate students—to access mentorship, tools, and peer support for engaging in Indigenous-led climate research. It will also serve as a platform for shared training (e.g., cultural safety, Indigenous research ethics), cross-university connections, and collective learning from both success and failure. This network will include regular webinars, circulation of existing and emerging resources, as well as opportunities for building connections and co-reflection.



CONCLUSION

The Bridging Knowledge for Climate Action workshops were a first step orienting researchers to the BC First Nations Climate Strategy Action Plan and building a sense of connection and relationship within academic institutions and Indigenous climate leadership in British Columbia. Across all four campuses, participants brought insight, humility, and a shared commitment to doing research in a good way—work that is grounded in trust, community priorities, and long-term collaboration.

To ensure that the process remained accountable and reflective, an online survey was circulated following the workshops (Appendix B). While not all attendees participated, 32 responses were received, offering valuable feedback on the experience. The results were overwhelmingly positive:



- 77% of respondents agreed that the event ran smoothly and was well-facilitated
- 84% felt that the workshops were collaborative and inclusive
- 80% reported feeling that their knowledge and perspectives were meaningfully included
- 74% said they made new professional connections
- 84% felt their time and efforts were appreciated

Importantly, 76% expressed a willingness to continue the conversation and work with the PICS team to contribute to implementation of the Relationship Protocol. These numbers reinforce a strong appetite for ongoing dialogue and systems change. This feedback affirms the energy and potential generated by these workshops. It also underscores the importance of continuing to create spaces where researchers and communities can meet on shared terms—spaces that honor different ways of knowing, support meaningful partnerships, and help shape a more ethical and connected climate research landscape.

Through these open and reflective conversations, we were able to establish stronger connections between our research partners, many of whom were meeting for the first time, and the work within the PICS-FNLC *Relationship Protocol*. These initial exchanges also helped foster cross-campus awareness among researchers working on related themes, laying early groundwork for future initiatives. Importantly, this effort represents the beginning of the forthcoming Circle of Practice (CoP)—an emerging network of researchers, practitioners, and community members committed to advancing Indigenous-led climate research and capacity-building.

With the BCFNCS as our guiding framework, PICS and the FNLC are well-positioned to support codesigned climate research and action that is grounded in relational, reciprocal, and rights-based approaches. These efforts also mark a step toward upholding and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the climate context. While climate research has not always been centred on reconciliation, these workshops mark a shift toward embedding reconciliation and co-designed collaboration at the core of our collective work. Looking ahead, PICS remains committed to advancing this work—by coordinating tools, resources, and convenings that center Indigenous leadership and community priorities. This report is not the end of the conversation, but a step toward a more reciprocal and accountable path forward.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP AGENDA

BRIDGING KNOWLEDGES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Foundations for collaboration workshop



Meeting agenda

9:00 AM

OPENING WELCOME

- Opening welcome and territories acknowledgement
- Introduction circle

9:35 AM

PRESENTATIONS

First Nations Leadership Council and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions

- Introduction to the Relationship Protocol, First Nations climate action plans, implementation and support

10:00 AM

GUIDED ACTIVITY

Mapping research to the First Nations Leadership Council climate and disaster action plans

10:55 AM

REFRESHMENT BREAK

11:10 AM

GUIDED DISCUSSION

How to do research in a good way

12:30 PM

CLOSING CIRCLE

12:45 PM

LUNCH TOGETHER

1:30 PM

OPEN SPACE

Space for casual conversation and connection (optional)



APPENDIX B: FEEDBACK SHEET AND RESPONSES

Bridging Knowledges for Climate Action - Feedback

1. Which workshop did you participate in?

- ☐ UVIC
- ☐ SFU
- ☐ UBC Vancouver
- ☐ UNBC
- ☐ UBC Okanagan

2. Overall, how satisfied are you with the workshop?



3. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Completely agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Completely disagree
The event ran smoothly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I made a new connection(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to contribute my perspectives & knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workshop activities were collaborative & inclusive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt my time & efforts were appreciated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



4. What aspect of the workshop did you find most valuable?

Enter your answer

5. In your opinion, is there anything about the workshop that could have been better?

Enter your answer

6. Are there specific topics, speakers, or formats you'd recommend for future events hosted by PICS and FNLC?

Enter your answer

7. Do you have suggestions for **existing** resources or supports that uplift collaborative and co-designed research that supports the Relationship Protocol with FNLC?

Enter your answer

8. Do you have suggestions for resources or supports that **could be developed** to uplift collaborative and co-designed research?

Enter your answer

9. Would you be willing to speak more with the PICS team about your research and how it can contribute to the Relationship Protocol implementation, and the development of a shared report?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Please provide your name and contact information so PICS staff can follow up with you.

Enter your answer

11. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Enter your answer



Comments and themes about the workshop

Most valuable aspects of the workshop

- One of the most frequently mentioned themes in participants' feedback on the workshop was the value of **connection and relationship-building**.
- Others highlighted the richness of **interdisciplinary conversations** and the chance to learn about work beyond their own areas.
- Another frequently mentioned strength of the workshop was the **time and space for open dialogue**.
- Several respondents also valued the **opportunity to learn about the FNLC and the broader landscape of Indigenous-led climate action**.

- *“Solidarity, being together, loving the work PICS is doing”*
- *“Meeting new people from different disciplines and learning about their projects”*
- *“Lots of time for discussions, mixing up tables”*
- *“Learning about the PICS-FNLC collaboration... now my guiding document for my work”*

What could have been improved

- The most common theme in participant feedback was the desire for **more time for discussion and a clearer structure** to guide conversations.
- A second theme was the need for **clearer communication and coordination**.
- Some participants also offered **logistical and facilitation suggestions** to support more inclusive participation.

- *“A little more time for discussions would be great, but I recognize time constraints are always a challenge”.*
- *“A slightly more concrete framework for discussion would have helped”*
- *“Opening and closing circles: get us to stand and circle!”*



<i>Suggestions for future events</i> ➤ A widely shared suggestion was to feature more examples of successful research partnerships. ➤ Many participants also stressed the need to center Indigenous-led climate solutions, including those beyond academia. ➤ There was also enthusiasm for formats that support deeper relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities. ➤ Participants expressed interest in hearing from diverse sectors and partners, including health and government and centering Indigenous voices and protocols.	● <i>“I would like to hear more about effective climate collaborations to date”</i> ● <i>“Events to help connect and start building relationships between researchers and First Nations communities”</i> ● <i>“More opportunity to have direct connections with knowledge keepers and Elders would be fantastic”</i> ● <i>“Events to help connect and start building relationships between researchers and First Nations communities”</i> ● <i>“Speakers to talk about health, maybe from partnership with FNHA?”</i>
<i>Suggestions of resources and supports</i> ➤ A key suggestion was to leverage existing Indigenous-focused offices and partnerships within universities. ➤ Others suggested networking mechanisms and engagement platforms already active within academic institutions ➤ Several respondents emphasized the need to keep circulating and amplifying current collaborative efforts, seeing this as a support in itself.	● <i>“IRSI at UBC would be an ideal connection so that they are aware of this partnership”</i> ● <i>“At the Sustainability Hub, we have mechanisms for engagement that could be shared—for example, the Sustainability Scholars program and Campus as a Living Lab”</i> ● <i>“More of this type of networking would be wonderful—especially as a new faculty”</i> ● <i>“Establish knowledge hub”</i>

