

A COMMUNITY'S RIGHT TO DECIDE

Around the world, investors are seeking land for large-scale oil, gas, mining and agricultural projects. Often these can have negative impacts on local communities. Involving communities in the right way can achieve lasting and positive outcomes.

When a developer wants access to a community's land and natural resources, there are seven important steps the community should take...



1 FIND OUT WHO IS DEVELOPING THE PROJECT

- Governments?
- Private companies?
- Banks or financial institutions?



2 REQUEST DETAILED INFORMATION FROM THE PROJECT DEVELOPERS

- The project developer must provide the information in the community's preferred language.
- Project details may be available from government departments.



3 HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- Involve the whole community, including women, men and young people, for a complete perspective.
- Work with other communities affected by the project to discuss project terms and impacts.

FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a collective right for indigenous peoples under international law. It is becoming recognised as best practice for safeguarding the human rights of all communities.

Free means communities must be allowed to decide whether or not to consent without manipulation or force.

Prior means that communities need to be given time to decide, and no project activities should be started before the decision has been made.

Informed means that communities must be given accurate, easily understandable information about the project.

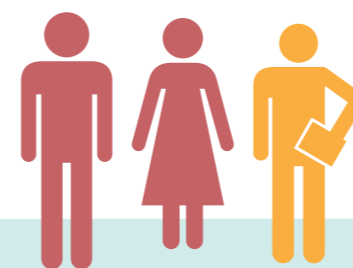
It is important that all community members are involved throughout the process, including women, men and young people.

Adapted from Oxfam's training materials on Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Visit www.oxfam.org/en/fpic-guides-and-training-manuals to download these resources in a wide range of languages.



4 NEGOTIATE WITH PROJECT DEVELOPERS

- Project developers are required to consult and negotiate with communities.
- Developers must gain an indigenous community's Free, Prior and Informed Consent at each stage of the project.



5 SEEK INDEPENDENT ADVICE

- Affected communities have the right to seek independent legal and technical advice to reach an informed decision.



6 MAKE DECISIONS AS A COMMUNITY

- Communities should make decisions according to traditional decision-making processes.
- Final decisions and agreements should be made in writing.



7 CONTINUE COMMUNICATING WITH THE PROJECT DEVELOPERS

- Projects may impact a community for many years.
- Permanent forums can provide an effective means for ongoing consultation and negotiations.