

Checklist: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

This is a simplified guide to help researchers comply with the FPIC and safeguard against extractive practices that exploit Indigenous peoples.

1. PREPARATION PHASE

- ☐ Thoughtfully explore why you want to collaborate with the Indigenous peoples. For whose benefit?
- ☐ Learn and understand their governance systems, decision-making procedures, and cultural protocols.
- ☐ Engage with recognized leaders, elders, or governing bodies to initiate dialogue.
- ☐ Translate all materials (written, visual, or oral) into local languages and dialects.
- ☐ Involve cultural mediators or facilitators who are trusted by the community.

2. FREE

- ☐ Ensure that consent is voluntarily given, without coercion, manipulation, or pressure.
- ☐ Confirm that there are no conditions (financial, legal, or social) that might compromise the freedom of consent.
- ☐ Provide safe and neutral spaces for community members to discuss and decide collectively.

3. PRIOR

- ☐ Provide all relevant information well in advance before any activity begins.
- ☐ Plan for community sufficient time for for sufficient time in your plan for the community to have internal deliberations and consultations.
- ☐ Do not rush the community for consent to meet external project timelines and due dates.

4. INFORMED

- ☐ Clearly explain the purpose, scope, and expected outcomes of the activities.
- ☐ Disclose potential risks, benefits, and long-term impacts to the community.
- ☐ Explain how the data or resources will be used, stored, and possibly shared.
- ☐ Clarify who will benefit from the projects, including any commercial aspects.
- ☐ Answer all questions and allow community members to seek further clarification as needed.
- ☐ Provide this information in accessible formats (e.g., audio, visual, storytelling).

5. CONSENT

- ☐ Ensure community-wide consent is obtained, not just from individual participants.
- ☐ Use culturally appropriate methods to record consent (e.g., oral agreements, witnessed statements, or audio recordings).
- ☐ Offer different levels of consent (e.g., public use, community-restricted, sacred/private).
- ☐ Respect the community's right to say "no" at any point in the process.
- ☐ Provide clear procedures for community members to withdraw consent later.

6. ONGOING CONSENT MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Reconfirm consent regularly, especially when project objectives change or more partners join the collaboration.
- ☐ Schedule periodic review meetings to check in with the community.
- ☐ Provide continuous access to project updates, findings, or uses of the data.
- ☐ Securely organize and store the consent agreements with community oversight.

7. DOCUMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

- ☐ Keep detailed records of all FPIC processes, consultations, and agreements.
- ☐ Share these records with the community in their preferred format.
- ☐ Ensure a grievance or complaint mechanism is in place for the community.
- ☐ Appoint a contact person or liaison within the community for all FPIC-related matters.

Acknowledgement: This checklist was adapted for educational purposes and acknowledges the longstanding work of Indigenous leaders and international agencies in establishing FPIC as a global standard.

For More Information on FPIC: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2016). Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. An Indigenous Peoples' right and a good practice for local communities. FAO. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i6190e>