

# ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

<b>Program Area:</b>	4.0	Community Relations
<b>Sub Program:</b>	4.2	Building and Sustaining Positive Community Relationships
<b>Template:</b>	4.2.8	Sustaining Long-Term Aboriginal Business Relations
<b>Sponsor(s)</b>	<i>TransAlta Corporation</i>	

## Objective

To manage long-term relationships during corporate fluctuations that may influence internal support and priorities for Aboriginal programs.

## Description

Companies may create expectations and commitments that change for a number of reasons; internal business direction, project economics, planning, and corporate change in leadership. TransAlta understands that it is vital to maintain respect and trust to ensure that business plans can be realized. The strategy includes: (a) raise Senior Management awareness of the ripple effect and ramifications of aboriginal interactions (b) written policy and agreements that are well documented to reinforce commitments (c) establish high credibility and reputation with community (d) ongoing communication with Aboriginal leadership and community members, including personal visits with the community leaders such as the Chief, Band Council or Métis Council Settlement members, program administrators, band manager, respected elders, attending social functions and gatherings (e) request flexibility from community and from corporate management during the lulls in capital projects.

## Implementation

Some of the key elements for implementation and management of this program are set out below:

- need to develop the business case and ensure that it is understood internally;
- ongoing reinforcement of internal business case for maintaining positive relationships is required;
- identify Aboriginal communities in proximity to company's area of operations and build a long-term relationship;
- inform the community of any changes that may take place long before they happen.

## Timeframe for Results

Proactively fulfilling commitments produces immediate results in terms of improved relationships. If relationships are not nurtured, then the company will continually be in a

reactive mode. This strategy recognizes the importance of a long-term approach and the difficulty of undoing decisions which undermine trust and commitment.

### **Measurable Criteria**

These include:

- regulatory licensing permits without delays due to interventions from Aboriginal communities;
- positive image in the community as reflected by survey process;
- when there is a lull in business the company still maintains a presence in the community.

### **Budget**

The budget required to maintain the relationships is approximately \$200,000 annually.

### **Sponsors**

TransAlta works with 12 Aboriginal communities in Treaty 6 and 7 areas.

### **Experience with the Program**

TransAlta has used this strategy since 1997 to sustain relationships throughout peaks and lows. The results are generally seen as successful in helping to establish a longer term and more sustainable approach to business relationships with Aboriginal communities.

### **General Applicability**

This program is a model which provides useful guidance to industry on how to sustain and build relationships with Aboriginal communities."

### **Additional Information or Support**

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