

- there is mutual understanding and respect between the company, the indigenous community and other relevant stakeholders regarding their respective roles, responsibilities, rights, challenges and decision-making processes
- indigenous aspirations and concerns are taken into account in project planning so that people have ownership of, and participate fully in decisions about, community development programs and initiatives¹⁰
- the company has worked to obtain the broad, ongoing support of the community including, where applicable, their FPIC (see Section 2.5)
- the voices of all in the community are heard, that is, engagement processes are inclusive.

Companies should refer to **TOOL 1** for guidance on how to apply these principles in practice.

2.3 Making initial contact

The quality of initial contact between mining company personnel and local community members in a prospective mining area can set the tone for the whole project. If exploration, project or mining staff and contractors are well prepared, sensitive to Indigenous Peoples' culture, and respectful and open in their approach, this can provide the foundation for a solid and productive relationship. Difficulties are likely to arise if companies:

- enter into a specific area without first seeking permission to do so
- do not engage broadly and fail to adequately explain what they are doing and why
- do not allow sufficient time for the community to consider a request/proposal or make a decision
- disregard, or are ignorant of, local customs.

Companies can avoid many of these problems if they:

- confer with the community at the outset on how they wish to be engaged
- understand and respect local entry protocols as they relate to permission to enter a community and access traditional lands
- commit to open and transparent communication and engagement from the beginning and have a considered approach in place
- conduct an initial risk analysis and impact assessment prior to entering the area and implement controls to mitigate key risks
- ensure that all representatives of the company (including third party subcontractors and agents of the company) are well briefed on local customs, history and legal status, and understand the need for cultural and spiritual/religious sensitivity
- regularly monitor performance in engagement
- so far as possible, strive for consistency of approach and employment longevity of representatives of the company so that relationships can be built and trust maintained
- enlist the services of reputable advisers with good local knowledge.

It is a good idea for senior company managers to be present at initial meetings wherever possible and to meet with the traditional heads of communities, as this demonstrates respect and sets the scene for building long-term trust and relationships with communities.

¹⁰ One approach that is gaining favour as a means of ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have their perspective taken into account is "ethnodevelopment". According to a World Bank study, this approach "builds on the positive qualities of indigenous culture and societies to promote local employment and growth".
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2000/01/1631749/defining-ethnodevelopment-operational-terms-lessons-ecuador-indigenous-afro-ecuadoran-peoples-development-project>

