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Environmental agreements, EIA follow-up and aboriginal participation in environmental management: The Canadian experience

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Abstract

During the last decade a number of environmental agreements (EAs) have been negotiated in Canada involving industry, government and Aboriginal peoples. This article draws on the Canadian experience to consider the potential of such negotiated agreements to address two issues widely recognised in academic and policy debates on environmental impact assessment (EIA) and environmental management. The first relates to the need to secure indigenous participation in environmental management of major projects that affect indigenous peoples. The second and broader issue involves the necessity for specific initiatives to ensure effective follow-up of EIA. The Canadian experience indicates that negotiated environmental agreements have considerable potential to address both issues. However, if this potential is to be realized, greater

potential to address both issues. However, if this potential is to be realized, greater effort must be made to develop structures and processes specifically designed to encourage Aboriginal participation; and EAs must themselves provide the financial and other resource required to support EIA follow-up and Aboriginal participation.



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Keywords

EIA follow-up; Environmental assessment; Aboriginal; Participation; Canada; Adaptive management

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Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh is a Professor of Politics and Public Policy at Griffith University. His research focuses on the inter-relationship between Aboriginal peoples and resource development, and he is currently completing a comparative study of commercial negotiations between mining companies and Aboriginal peoples in Australia and Canada.

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