

ICE Network CoLab Summary:

Clean Energy Projects for Rural and Remote Communities

Event date: Wednesday, June 12th at 13:00 EDT

Background

NRCan's Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities (CERRC) has supported new projects from across Canada, and as these projects get underway, ICE has coordinated this project spotlight event to look at some of the unique and interesting projects that are happening in the demonstration streams of the program.

CoLab Resources

- CoLab Host: Sam Minde, President and CEO Neyaskweyahk Group of Companies Inc.
- 3 Nations Energy Phase II Solar Project: Calvin Waquan, President of 3NE
- Xení Gwet'in Solar Projects: George Colgate, Community Project Manager
- Haida Gwaii Clean Energy Projects: Chief Councillor Billy Yovanovich of Old Masset Village Council, and Shivani Chotalia of NRStor Inc. (*absent was Chief Councillor Duffy Edgars of Skidegate Band Council*)
- Hazelton BioEnergy Projects: Rick Connors, President and CEO of Gitxsan Development Corporation, and Jessica Tait, Project Champion for the Gitanmaxx Gas Bar & Car Wash Project
- Wiikwemkoong Biomass Heating: David Assinawai, Energy Planner, Wikwemikong Development Commission
- Oujé Bougoumou Biomass District Heating Refurbishment & Expansion: Freddy Bosun, Director of Public Works in Oujé Bougoumou; Michael Wiggin, District Heating Specialist; Paul Wertman, Community Advisor

Diverse Range of Projects with Common Themes and Learnings

Communities are demonstrating through these projects that they are:

Determined and motivated to reduce Diesel consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Engaged with projects and interested in building skills so that they can be involved in the projects.

Open to developing new infrastructure in the community when the project is designed to respect the land and culture of the people.

Embracing and growing Indigenous leadership in projects being developed in their communities.

Engaged and motivated to collaborate and form partnerships with other Indigenous communities and consultants.

Active in understanding and assessing power storage solutions that can increase fossil fuel offsets.

... in addition to a wide scope of unique accomplishments and strengths that they are using to drive their projects towards completion. The leadership on these projects is led by Indigenous people who are each using the support from the CERRC program to advance their projects to establish a more sustainable future for their communities.

Three of the four funding streams from the CERRC program were represented in the CoLab presentations, with a rain-check for an overview of the work led by Francois Boivin and the remote First Nation and Metis communities of Québec. These projects spanned most renewable technology types, including solar PV, bioheat, hydropower, and district heating. Here are some of the key pieces of advice and learning from our presenters:

Calvin Waquan, on building strong relationships:

Engage with your community and the municipalities, territories and federal partners often and openly. The time you put into this whenever you have the opportunity will pay off when you are ready to do a project or solve a problem.

Advice from George Colgate:

When we started looking at solar back in the 90's, things were different then and the cost was unrealistic for what we wanted to do. But things have changed and now we can do these kinds of projects. You need to keep looking at the options, so that as the costs change, you can see these opportunities come into the realm of possibility.

Chief Councillor Billy Yovanovich on collaborations:

"Together we will find the best solution" is the closing of the joint statement of the Chief Councillors in Old Masset Village Council and Skidegate Band Council. Where you have two communities working together, you can gain the skills and resources of the other, and together be stronger than each on their own.

David Assinawai, on strategies to develop bioheating projects with ship-in feedstock:

You want to avoid getting too big too fast – you need to make sure that you have a good supplier with prices and quality that you will be happy with before you get too committed to feeding a big demand

Strong words from Sam Minde:

"As Indigenous people, we need to think like a nation, not like a reservation"

Lessons learned for project development, shared by Rick Connors:

Identify your community champion then engage your community early and often; and hire local labour as much as possible, but make sure that experience is part of your selection criteria.

Lessons learned about district heating design from Michael Wiggins:

Work with the systems operations team during the design of the project so that the features and operations can be well-understood and to avoid problems not being resolved in operation because of counter-intuitive design.

CoLab Attendees

Raed Arab, , Don Ball, Darrell Beaulieu, Jan Belzile, Ketan Bhalla, Heather Bishop, Jeff Blais, Stephan Bowman, Stephan Bowman, Susan Brewer, Mariah Byers, Shivani Chotalia, Moah Christensen, Rob Cooke, David Crombie, Rachelle Delaney, Vincent Desormeaux, Alina Dewani, Ryan Dick, Tom Du, Leila Durante, Eryn Fitzgerald, Kevin Force, Tracey Ford, Andre Gagne, Barb Gray, Ryan Hanson, Neil Hawkes, Dylan Heerema, Chris Henderson, Scott Henderson, Darryl Hill, Robin Hutcheson, Carl Jackson, Lavy Khoushinsky, Gary Kissack, Jordan Kruhlak, Morice Labossiere, Leanna Lachowsky, Charlotte Lafleur, Renée Lazarowich, Martha Lenio, Sheena Li, Andreane Lussier, Laura MacTaggart, Sarah Macri, Lindsay Maitland, Corey Mattie, Jason McCullough, Melissa McDonald, Courtney , McLeod, Dennis Michaelson, Tom Molinski, Katie Montour, Kim Nash-McKinley, Aaron Nelson, Mitchell Niles, Viktoria Orizzonte, Etienne Patenaude, Kam Pooyeh, Julien Roberge, Julia Rutledge, Katarina Savic, Connor Scheu, Minoo Shariat-zadeh, Mark Shewfelt, Carlie Smith, John Stewart, Jay Storfer, Peter Su, Michael Tilson, Chad Townsend, Suneet Tuli, Tim Tutcho, David Vandermeer, Chad Walker, Niki Westman, Ian Wilson, Tracey Woods, Cherie Brant, Pieter van Gils, Miranda Zhang