

Management, Staffing, and Capacity Building

Indigenous Greenhouse Factsheets



Project sponsor: the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF)



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Introduction

The successful operation of a greenhouse requires strong people support for a range of roles and responsibilities. This Factsheet covers some of the considerations in building up your human resources and structure.

Leadership and organization structure

Having defined leadership roles and organizational structure amongst those involved in a greenhouse project can greatly reduce management issues and uncertainty amongst employees, supporters and volunteers. Clearly defining roles in decision-making and responsibility of tasks assists everyone involved to have a clear idea of what needs to be done and who is responsible for doing what.

Training and capacity building

Indigenous communities are often small and remote, and community capacity can be a primary barrier to greenhouse project success. A dependency on consultants and specialists from outside the community can quickly run-up budgets. Furthermore, these scenarios can lead to knowledge being treated as proprietary to create an ongoing dependency cycle. It is highly advantageous if all the skills and specialized knowledge needed to run any greenhouse project are held collectively by the community members running the project. If bringing in outside specialists, be sure the primary objective is to train community members with all the necessary skills to run the greenhouse.

Developing standardized greenhouse operation protocols is essential. These protocols should be updated regularly and stored in an easily accessible format. These steps will ensure that community members are empowered to successfully run the greenhouse independently and greatly assist with succession planning.

If ongoing technical training and support is needed, it can be advantageous to work on establishing partnerships with established greenhouses or neighboring farms in order to work together and share knowledge. Indigenous-led farming and job skills training is currently available through the Indigenous Foodlands Employment and Apprenticeship Skills Training ([I-FEAST](#)) program offered at Tea Creek in Kitwanga, BC and Amisk Farm in Moberly Lake, BC. These short-term training programs might be an option to help potential greenhouse employees or managers gain hands-on experience in a culturally relevant context.

Community engagement

Gathering input from community members can foster a sense of ownership and personal investment that could lead to inspiring community members to get involved with a greenhouse project. Community engagement can also ensure that projects are going to best serve real community needs and lead to more successful outcomes.



Figure 1. Community members gathering at an Amisk Farm veggie giveaway