

**Developing an Evaluation Framework for Public Engagement  
on the Columbia River Treaty**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this study are to develop an evaluation framework for future public engagement evaluation on the Columbia River Treaty and to potentially offer insight into public engagement evaluation for other provincial initiatives in British Columbia. Future public engagement on the Columbia River Treaty is anticipated to occur once the United States issues their recommended approach and negotiations begin between the two countries. British Columbia will continue to have a role to play. This research is also designed to provide value to inform the creation of a public engagement evaluation plan at the beginning of an engagement initiative.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The two methods that were used were a literature review and interviews with people involved in the Columbia River Basin. This report examined literature on public engagement evaluation to inform the questions being asked in the interviews, to create a conceptual framework for understanding the findings and to provide a framework for public engagement evaluation. As informed by this literature review, this report employed two theoretical frameworks to create the evaluation framework for public engagement evaluation. These are the IAPP's levels of engagement and Rowe & Frewer's acceptance criteria model. The five levels of engagement are Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower.

This study examined literature pertinent to public engagement evaluation and interviewed 17 individuals. The methodology for the interviews was qualitative semi-structured conversational interviews. These interviews were exploratory and focused on understanding the various perspectives on what would constitute both effective and ineffective public engagement. The interview questions were prepared and reviewed in advance by the client. The respondents were asked about previous engagements on the Columbia River Treaty conducted by the province if they had attended any. The individuals were selected to include a range of demographic and geographical categories as well as people involved in local government. Respondents were selected from youth, working professionals and retired categories.

The methods of analysis involved deductive and inductive coding to categorize themes. Interview responses were first coded using deductive coding methodology into the main categories of the conceptual framework as derived from the literature review. The interview responses were then analyzed by grouping the data into main themes using inductive coding methodology. The main project limitations are the qualitative nature of this study and the small sample size of 17 respondents. In addition, First Nations views and perspectives were deliberately considered out-of-scope and not considered as part of this study as First Nations engage with the provincial and federal governments on a nation-to-nation approach.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Public engagement evaluation is still an emerging discipline and over the past decade, interest in this topic has increased as a result of the growth in public engagement initiatives. Achieving public support, understanding or acceptance is vital in today's interconnected world. Conducting an evaluation of

engagement initiatives provides an extra challenge and awareness of methods and approaches is not wide-spread in the public sector. Many public engagement practitioners do not conduct evaluations of their engagement initiatives as it could open the process up to scrutiny and is perceived to be onerous. Most engagement evaluations are little more than a satisfaction survey.

This report proposes the using the revised conceptual framework and theme tables as the basis for an evaluation framework on the Columbia River Treaty. The conceptual framework that was derived from the literature review that hypothesized that the acceptance criteria and levels of engagement would be reflected in the respondent interviews. These criteria and categories are the five levels of engagement of Inform, Consult, Collaborate, Involve and Empower, the revised acceptance criteria of Representativeness, Influence and Transparency and the Social, Economic and Environmental Community Values. This element is unique to the Columbia River Treaty and flexibility should be built into developing a framework for public engagement evaluation.

The in-depth interviews found reasonable evidence to conclude that the Levels of Engagement and Acceptance Criteria would be valuable criteria for public engagement evaluation. It is proposed that the themes can be adapted to be used as indicators for evaluation criteria in the development of a public engagement evaluation plan on the future engagement on the Columbia River Treaty. Developing an evaluation plan at the beginning of the engagement is a critical step.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report provides six recommendations to the Columbia River Treaty Review Team to help inform the creation of a public consultation evaluation plan.

### *1. Develop an Evaluation Plan*

For the first recommendation for developing future engagement initiatives on the Columbia River Treaty, it is recommended that the Columbia River Treaty Review team develop an evaluation plan at the beginning of the evaluation. Transparency was a key consideration of respondents and this recommendation addresses this acceptance criterion. The evaluation plan should determine what type of data should be collected and should also collect the data at the beginning, middle and end of the whole process to create a benchmark and track changes.

### *2. Use an Advisory Committee to Evaluate Engagement*

The second recommendation for the Columbia River Treaty Review Team is to use ongoing engagement mechanisms such as an advisory committee to evaluate engagement. Recommendations for the Advisory Committee are for this body to examine technical and environmental aspects as well. Ensuring representativeness on the committee and without local or provincial government staff was advised. This addresses the acceptance criteria of desire for Influence and Representativeness as identified by respondents in the interviews.

### *3. Use Audience Appropriate Engagement Tools*

The third recommendation is to use audience appropriate engagement tools and create materials designed for the audience. Additionally, the Columbia River Treaty Review Team should

Increase opportunities for participants to engage directly with government by increasing the use of digital tools by the engagement team. This is addressing the Levels of Engagement criteria.

#### *4. Engage Youth Early, Often and with Targeted Approaches*

The fourth recommendation is to engage youth early, often and with targeted approaches, materials and innovative events. The Columbia River Treaty Review Team should consider using real-life simulations and role-play for youth education and engagement. Additionally, recommendations for youth engagement are to incorporate education of the Columbia River Treaty into the school curriculum about both environmental and historical aspects of the Columbia River Treaty. Engaging youth is a component of the acceptance criteria of Representativeness.

#### *5. Source Local*

The fifth recommendation is to source local by engaging in local procurement for contractors and catering with local governments and small businesses to achieve community acceptance. A related component of this includes incorporating community values, issues and concerns the community cares about into the content.

#### *6. Educate about Engagement*

The sixth and final recommendation is to educate participants of future engagement initiatives on more collaborative and involved approaches to public engagement. Due to the lower levels of awareness about the Collaborate and Empower Levels of Engagement, this is key to increasing participation and acceptance.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Definition

#### *Problem Definition*

The Columbia River Treaty Review Team, a part of the Ministry of Energy and Mines of the Province of British Columbia, conducted a consultation on the future of the Columbia River Treaty, delivering a recommendation to Cabinet in the fall of 2013. Negotiations on the future of the Columbia River Treaty are anticipated to begin within the 2016 - 2017 timeframe with the United States. Given that the Province of British Columbia does not typically evaluate most public engagement initiatives, there is value in understanding how future consultations could be evaluated.

#### *Project Purpose*

The purpose of this research project is to develop an evaluation framework for public consultation on the Columbia River Treaty in the Kootenay Region of British Columbia. The main objective of this study is to examine how public consultations on natural resource decisions can be evaluated, using as a case study the 2012-2014 Columbia River Treaty consultations. As negotiations with the United States have not yet begun, the future of the Columbia River Treaty will most likely include further public consultation and engagement. Additionally, it is hoped that this research and resulting recommendations can help inform other public consultations and assist the Province of British Columbia ("the Province") in formulating evaluation approaches.

### 1.2 Background

#### *Columbia River Treaty History*

The Columbia River Treaty grew out of a desire in the United States and in Canada to address catastrophic flooding and produce inexpensive hydro-electric power in the post-war period for industrial economic growth and electrification of cities, towns and countryside. As an example of the volatility of flows on the Columbia River, the city of Vanport in Oregon was destroyed in 1948 by massive flooding on the Columbia. Canada and the United States tried to find a solution, and in 1960 when massive flooding occurred again, the two countries were driven to act (Columbia River Treaty, 2012).

As a result of water management, and specifically hydropower, falling under provincial jurisdiction in Canada, the Province took a large role in negotiations. The Premier at the time, W.A.C. Bennett was committed to what he called a "Two River Policy" of electricity production on the Peace and Columbia Rivers with large-scale hydro dams. Bennett created the Crown Corporation of BC Hydro, effectively "nationalizing" most of the electricity producers and providers in British Columbia (Columbia River Treaty, 2012).

In 1963 Canada and British Columbia signed the Canada-British Columbia Agreement, devolving the rights and responsibilities of the Columbia River Treaty to the Province. This is a unique situation for a provincial government, as constitutionally, international treaties fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal

Government and often have limited provincial involvement. The Columbia River Treaty was ratified in 1964 and by 1967 the first dam under the framework of the Columbia River Treaty, the Duncan dam, was completed. Hugh Keenleyside dam was completed in 1968, and Mica and Libby were both completed in 1973. Libby dam is located in the United States, but the Koocanusa Reservoir extends into Canada (*See 11.2 Appendix 2: Project Area Map One* for the reservoirs and dams).

The construction of the dams altered the physical geography of the region and the Province and BC Hydro expropriated many homes and properties. Most homes were located in the arable land in the valley bottoms. The Province of British Columbia also did not consult First Nations communities in this process. It is generally agreed today that in the 1960's the provincial government did not adequately consult the population in general. By the 1990's, the population of the Basin were clamouring for more involvement and for the region to receive more benefits. In response, the Columbia Basin Trust was created, which has invested extensively in the economic, social and environmental well-being of the region. Mitigating the impacts of the Columbia River Treaty has taken many forms, from the creation of wildlife funds to the creation of the Columbia Basin Trust.

#### *Columbia River Treaty Review Team*

In order to be terminated, either the United States or Canada has to give a minimum of ten years' notice. The earliest the Columbia River Treaty could have been terminated was 2024, but only if either the United States or Canada provided notice of termination in 2014 (Columbia River Treaty, 2012). As the Province is in charge of administering the Treaty, per the 1963 Canada-BC Agreement, the government of Canada until now has taken an observer role in consultations with Basin residents. The federal government will take a significantly larger role in the formal negotiations as international treaties are within their jurisdiction. Between 2012 and the present, the Province conducted extensive consultations in multiple rounds, working with the Columbia Basin Trust and local government partners. In addition, the Province conducted separate nation-to-nation First Nations consultations. The United States conducted their own consultation processes and delivered a series of recommendations (Columbia River Treaty, 2012).

Between 2011 and the present, the Columbia River Treaty Review team consulted the population of the Columbia Basin on the future of the Columbia River Treaty on the potential options of continuation, termination or amendment. The Columbia River Treaty can be terminated beginning in 2024, although each party must provide ten years notice. Each of the three options of terminating, continuing, or modifying the Columbia River Treaty require continued consultation and dialogue of some variety with the residents of the Columbia Basin (Columbia River Treaty, 2012).

Most consultation and engagement teams in the provincial government rarely perform any type of evaluation of their work. An evaluation framework is designed to primarily assist the Province in continuing to provide a fulsome process and secondarily it is hoped that it can be used as a guide for other consultations on natural resource decisions. The current status is that the Province released their decision and is waiting on the United States to make a decision on the future of the Columbia River Treaty.

The Columbia River Treaty Review team has completed the process of conducting a public consultation on the future of the Columbia River Treaty to provide a recommendation to the provincial cabinet (See *11.3 Appendix 3: Project Area Map Two* for a map of the area covered in the 2012-2014 consultations). The decision was made to pursue continuation of the Columbia River Treaty and to seek improvements within the existing treaty framework. The consultation process has been extensive and has included consultation sessions to provide the public with an opportunity to provide input, a technical conference, social media engagement, a website, as well as a separate Aboriginal consultation process. Over the course of the consultation many stakeholders have raised the issue of ongoing consultation and as something desired by the population. The client for this project is the Columbia River Treaty Review Team and will use this project to help evaluate future consultations and engagement initiatives.

### *Public Engagement*

Prior to the late twentieth century, government in western democracies generally did not engage in consultation or engagement. During the course of the twentieth century the movements of direct democracy and pluralism challenged the top down managerial system of government (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). Public confidence declined in the managerial form of government, where experts weigh information on a topic and provide elected decision makers with recommendations on a course of action. This resulted in exploration of public engagement as a way to increase confidence in policy and decision-making (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). Public engagement was theorized to benefit policy making by improving the decision making process, trust in decision makers, and overall knowledge (Rowe et al, 2010).

### *Defining Public Engagement*

It is important to define public engagement, as it is a complex subject (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). In the literature however, it appears there is consensus that the term is not well defined (Rowe & Frewer, 2005, Rowe et al, 2010, Chess & Purcell, 1999). The main concepts of public engagement involve including the public in helping shape government policy or making decisions. This can come in the form of a variety of instruments, which range from meetings to deliberative engagement (Rowe & Frewer, 2005). For the purposes of this literature review public engagement will also refer to public participation.

One major area of agreement is viewing public engagement as a continuum or spectrum. On one end, the sponsor provides information to the public in a one-way exchange, and the other end is where the decision-making rests in the hands of the public (The International Association for Public Participation, 2013). Other definitions use three or four levels of engagement (Rowe et al., 2010; Lenihan, 2012). It is important to realize that each successive level of engagement provides different strategies that should be used for different reasons.

### *Purpose of Evaluation*

Evaluations are conducted for a variety of reasons. Some of the main reasons for conducting evaluations of public engagement processes are accountability, assessing how well the engagement process was implemented, discovering if the intended results were achieved, also for moral and ethical reasons.

Conducting evaluations can be done to ensure accountability. According to Abelson and Gauvin, one significant reason for conducting evaluations is to ensure that resources, time and effort are being properly used and not wasted (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006).

Assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of the engagement process and evaluating the intended results are called formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations are primarily concerned with the analysis of program implementation. Summative evaluations deal with whether the program has achieved its intended results or not (McDavid, 2013). There are also ethical reasons for evaluating public participation. Evaluation of the process can establish whether the process was conducted fairly and the views of the participants were accurately represented (Abelson and Gauvin, 2006).

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Purpose of Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of the literature on evaluating public engagement. The first main topic examined in this literature review is public engagement evaluation, which includes evaluation approaches and evaluation criteria. The second main topic is the challenges of evaluation and this includes measurement, process, outcomes and improving outcomes of evaluation.

The main bodies of literature that cover the issue of evaluating public engagement are in the public administration and consulting fields. The field of land and resource planning also provides some insight into evaluating collaborative engagement processes. The public administration literature primarily deals with justifying why governments should engage their citizens and literature from the consulting field presents strategies to engage those citizens. The field of public administration also contains program evaluation, which can also deliver specific strategies. Until recently there has not been much written about the specific topic of evaluating public engagement in any field (Rowe and Frewer, 2004; Rowe *et al.* 2010; Lindquist, 2005).

### 3.2 Public Engagement Evaluation

#### *Evaluation Approaches*

As described by Abelson and Gauvin, the methods for developing an evaluation framework can be divided into user-based methods, theory based methods and goal-free methods. The user-based evaluation method takes into account that each user will have different goals and perspectives (2006). Several authors have put forward proposals for ways in which to approach the evaluation of public engagement. Rowe and Frewer (2004) establish a user-based method for evaluation, which first defines what is meant by effectiveness (or similar terms such as success or quality). Secondly, the instrument such as a survey or interview guide is developed to measure whether the particular public engagement initiative successfully met the required state. The third step is to conduct the evaluation and interpreting results.

One way of developing evaluation criteria is to distinguish between outcome and process based criteria (Chess and Purcell 1999). Mixed methods (utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods) have become the most common approach for conducting program evaluations (McDavid, 2013). The principles of program evaluation as described by Paton, are systematic inquiry, evaluator competence, integrity/honesty, fairness and taking diversity of interests and values into account (Patton, 2002).

#### *Evaluation Criteria*

One attempt to establish universal criteria for evaluating public engagement is the Rowe-Frewer Criteria (2000, as cited in Rowe *et al.* 2010). Rowe and Frewer write “[u]nless there is a clear definition of what it means for a participation exercise to be effective, there will be no theoretical benchmark against which performance may be assessed” (Rowe and Frewer, 2004, 517). Rowe and Frewer (2000) reviewed the academic literature on public engagement and identified a number of recurring themes concerning the necessary requirements for an engagement exercise to be successful as shown in *Figure 1*.

*Acceptance and Process Criteria.* In their framework, these themes were listed in two categories: “Acceptance Criteria,” and “Process Criteria” (Rowe et al, 2010).

Figure 1. *Acceptance and Process Criteria (Adapted from Rowe et al, 2010).*

#	Acceptance Criteria	Process Criteria
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Representativeness:</b> Participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Resource Accessibility:</b> Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to understand the issues prior to the public engagement.</li> </ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Independence:</b> The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cost Effectiveness:</b> The procedure should in some sense be cost effective.</li> </ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Early Involvement:</b> The public should be involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgments become salient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Task Definition:</b> The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.</li> </ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Influence:</b> The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Structured Decision Making:</b> Use and provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.</li> </ul>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Transparency:</b> The process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.</li> </ul>	

According to Lenihan, a successful public engagement process rests on the five indicators of trust, openness, mutual respect, inclusiveness, and personal responsibility (2012). Lenihan’s five indicators mirror some of Rowe and Frewer’s acceptance criteria as shown in *Figure 1. Acceptance and Process Criteria*. Trust is also considered by many sources to be an integral part of a successful public engagement process (Black, Leichter, & Gastil, 2009; Lenihan, 2012). Black et al argue that if participants in public engagement processes perceive public officials to have made up their minds in advance, it is difficult to build trust in a public meeting (Black et al, 2009).

### 2.3 The Challenges of Evaluation

Evaluating a subject area as complex and value-laden as public engagement is invariably going to be difficult. The literature identifies many challenges with evaluating public engagement. The main challenges are in measurement, process and outcomes. A study by Abelson and Gauvin identified internal barriers to evaluation as found in both the federal and provincial public service (2006). The study interviewed practitioners of public engagement and showed that practitioners found that lack of

time, resources and experience were the most common barriers they experienced. Critically, some of the practitioners who were interviewed by Abelson and Gauvin identified a lack of commitment to conduct evaluations from senior management within the organization (Abelson and Gauvin, 2006).

### *Measurement*

A key challenge in evaluating public engagement is that the criteria of what is a successful or effective engagement process depends on who is judging or perceiving the outcome (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006). The views of participants as compared to sponsors may be contradictory with regard to effectiveness. Participants may feel the engagement was effective because they believe in their recommendations, while the sponsoring organization may feel it was ineffective because what was recommended is not possible due to constraints (Rowe & Frewer, 2004).

Additionally, there are no widely held criteria for judging success or failure of public engagement instruments. According to Rosener, there were no agreed-upon evaluation methods and it is almost impossible to create a single instrument of evaluation (Rosener, 1981). Another issue with measuring effectiveness is that participant satisfaction is often used as a measure of success although there are problems associated with interpreting the results. The issue of perceived versus actual impacts is problematic in any evaluation (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006).

### *Process*

A major challenge with evaluating the process of a public consultation is that the public engagement process may be well run according to some criteria but not others (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006). Kelshaw and Gastil argue that individuals attend meetings with preconceived ideas and expectations that affect the outcome of the meeting (2007). Those preconceived ideas must be addressed when a public engagement event is designed or the public engagement may become problematic. Additional measurement challenges are the absence of uniform criteria for judging the success or failure, lack of agreed-upon evaluation methods, and lack of reliable measurement tools (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006).

### *Outcomes*

One main challenge in measuring outcomes is that the end of a public engagement exercise for evaluation purposes is often undetermined and unclear. Measuring the impacts from other factors as well as the outcomes of the decisions taken can take many years. (Abelson and Gauvin, 2006). Despite the issues around measuring effectiveness of public engagement discussed previously, there is abundant literature outlining various techniques for improving public engagement. While research theorizes that public engagement creates positive benefits, researchers and practitioners are challenged with how to measure or demonstrate the effectiveness of the engagement. Rowe *et al* (2010) note that there is little empirical evidence to support the theorized claims that public engagement enhances decision making both by increasing the quality of decisions and making them easier to make, and increasing trust in decision makers.

## **2.4 Review Conclusion**

The field of evaluating public engagement is a relatively new field. That being said, there are overlapping bodies of literature that can provide an understanding of the techniques currently being developed and

employed. The challenges of measuring the effectiveness of public engagement instruments and processes are recognized in recent literature and continue to be debated. As informed by this literature review, this report will employ two evaluation criteria theoretical frameworks to create the evaluation framework for public engagement evaluation. These are the IAPP's levels of engagement and Rowe & Frewer's acceptance criteria model.

## **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Methods**

This section explains the methodology used to conduct this research project. This study examined literature pertinent to public engagement evaluation and interviewed 17 individuals. The methodology for the interviews was qualitative semi-structured conversational interviews. The interviews were exploratory and focused on understanding the various perspectives on the future of the Columbia River Treaty. A set of interview questions were prepared and reviewed by the client.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The interview questions were informed by the literature review. The method of designing the interview questions consisted of creating questions that would incorporate relevant theories into the questions. As a result of the literature review, the researcher identified Rowe and Frewer's Acceptance Criteria and IAPP's Levels of Engagement as the key concepts. There were thirteen interview questions developed in advance of the interviews (Appendix 1). This set of interview questions were reviewed by the client during the preparation phase.

The interview questions were designed to be exploratory in nature and on understanding the various perspectives on public engagement on the Columbia River Treaty. The questions were sent to the participants in advance of the phone interviews. The data sources for this qualitative study have been obtained through interviews with 17 people from the Columbia River Basin from March 20, 2014 to May 30, 2014. The interviews required approval by the University of Victoria Ethics Board. Private and personal information was not recorded and all interviews were anonymous.

### **3.3 Interview Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was used to identify potential interview respondents and there were three groups of respondents sampled. The desired outcome was to achieve a sample that could be a reflection of the people that represent the relevant issues and of different people that offer different perspectives. Great care was taken to ensure anonymity of the respondents.

The first group of individuals were identified with the input and assistance from of a contact in the Basin, who had participated in delivering the 2012-2014 Consultations. This group was the largest, comprising 20 of the 27 who were contacted. This group comprised 14 of the final 17 as the response rate was significantly higher in this group due to the personal connection of the contact. The second group of respondents was identified through reviewing publically available online engagement by the researcher. The third method was the snowball method, which involved asking for additional people to contact from those two groups. Some of the respondents recommended individuals to talk to without the researcher having to ask.

A total of 25 individuals were contacted, with six not returning contact and four individuals declining to be interviewed. Some of these individuals included members of a group of highly engaged stakeholders from the Columbia Basin called the "Sounding Board" formed by the client in the spring of 2013. Out of the Sounding Board, grew the Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee, which has been assisting in

providing input into future treaty negotiations. Nine of the 17 final respondents had been involved in the Sounding Board.

For demographics, nine of the respondents were men and eight of the respondents were women. This was intentional on behalf of the researcher as achieving close to gender parity was a goal of the researcher. Five of the respondents were presumed to be retired and two candidates were identified as youth. Three candidates were self-employed, three were elected local government officials and two respondents were local government staff.

Geographic representation of at least one respondent was sought from each of the reservoirs and river systems: Koocanusa, Duncan, Revelstoke, Kinbasket, Lower Arrow, Upper Arrow, Upper Columbia, Lower Columbia and Kootenay Lake (see Appendix 2: Project Area Map One). Additionally, respondents were selected based upon knowledge of the following topics areas: flood control, ecosystems and salmon, power generation, social values, economic values and youth engagement. The decision was made not to contact professional experts from organizations such as large companies or crown corporations as this study aims to focus on public and not stakeholder engagement. This hampered the topic area of power generation and this could be considered a potential gap.

### **3.4 Interview Approach**

The interviews were conducted using qualitative semi-structured conversational methodology. The researcher was aware of the sensitivity regarding this topic for many of the potential respondents. Given the researcher's previous connection to this topic and involvement in this work, the researcher was aware of the fact that many of the potential respondents had also been in contact with the client. As a result, confidentiality was highly important as well as establishing the independence of the researcher. For some identified potential respondents, the contact in the Basin made an introduction. The interviews were conducted over the phone, with the exception of one in-person interview conducted in Victoria, BC.

The interview approach was exploratory in nature and involved follow-up questions. Probing questions were used to seek out ideas and additional thoughts. These were not structured and were generally of an ad-hoc and conversational nature. The researcher was often asked questions and asked to verify facts by respondents. The questions aimed to develop a rapport with the interview respondent and researcher to provide the respondent with as much opportunity to discuss what they thought was relevant. As a result, the interviews were designed for 30 minutes, although almost all of the interviews were an hour in duration. Approximately a third of the interviews exceeded an hour.

### **3.5 Methods of Analysis**

Interviews were recorded by hand and typed notes. The ideas and thoughts were then themed into categories and care was taken to remove any personal markers or descriptions. For the purposes of analysis, interview responses were coded using deductive coding methodology into the main categories of the conceptual framework as derived from the literature review. The interview responses were then analyzed by grouping the data into main themes using inductive coding methodology. All responses

were first categorized according to the Levels of Engagement categories and then the Acceptance Criteria. The Community Values were categorized according to inductive coding methodology and the key themes emerged. The decision was then made to use the Triple Bottom Line framework to group these significant categories.

Through the course of analyzing the responses, as was expected, not all responses fit within the scope of the conceptual framework. A threshold of five responses for each of the main categories was employed. Below this threshold, the responses were not included in the evaluation framework for the main categories. However, the researcher felt these responses were valuable and as a result, included them in the interview findings to highlight the limitations of the conceptual framework and to provide a representative picture of the interview responses. As shown in *Figure 2. Frequency Legend*, this study has used the terms majority, many, some and a few to describe the frequency of responses within the categories and themes.

*Figure 2. Frequency Legend*

Frequency Legend		
Term	No. of Respondents	Percent
Majority	13-17	75-100%
Many	9-12	50-74%
Some	5-8	25-49%
A few	1-4	1-24%

### 3.6 Project Limitations

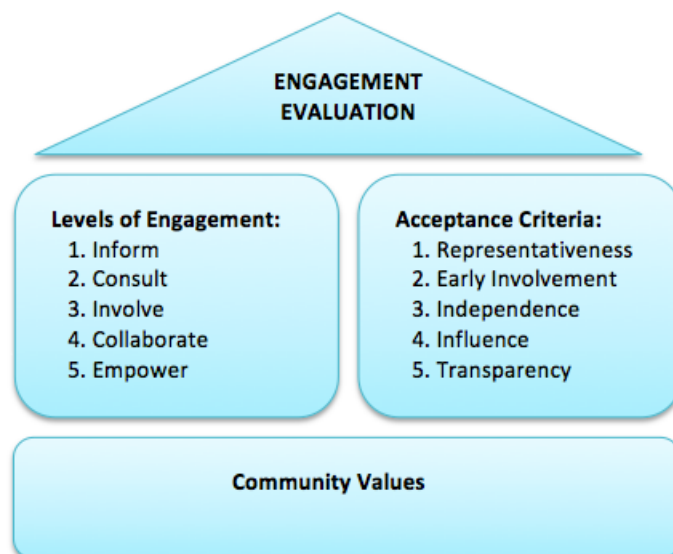
Due to the sample of 17 interview participants, the sample size cannot be considered truly representative of the target population. In addition, as a result of the selection method being based on recommendations and referrals as well as prior involvement, the sample group is not a true cross-section of the population. Although geographic, demographic, gender and age representativeness was attempted, the sample size limits the value. In addition, First Nations views and perspectives were deliberately considered out-of-scope and not considered as part of this study as First Nations engage with the provincial and federal governments on a nation-to-nation approach.

## 4.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework will utilize the IAPP spectrum of public engagement to categorize the levels of engagement, Rowe and Frewer's acceptance criteria and the Triple Bottom Line methodology. It was decided that this approach is an effective way of presenting the complex needs and nature of public consultation. The literature review demonstrated that public consultation evaluation is an emerging discipline and that when evaluating consultations, practitioners can draw from multiple fields. *Figure 3. Proposed Conceptual Framework* outlines the critical elements this researcher believes are integral to conducting an evaluation. Using a stylized house model, this theoretical framework involves one room for Levels of Engagement, another room for Acceptance Criteria, both resting on a foundation of community values. The roof in this model is Engagement Evaluation.

The first element is comprised of levels of engagement, which comes from the IAPP spectrum of public engagement to categorize the types or levels of engagement. These concepts were chosen based on the researcher's assessment of the ability of public engagement practitioners to effectively evaluate these elements. It was also decided that this approach is an effective way of presenting the complex needs and nature of public consultation. The levels of engagement are informing the public by providing information, consulting the public by receiving information, involving the public, collaborating with the public and empowering the public with final decision making power. The IAPP spectrum has five levels. The second element is the Acceptance Criteria, which has been adapted from Rowe and Frewer's 2010 criteria framework in *Figure 1. Acceptance and Process Criteria*. A third element has been added, which is Community Values. The intention behind this is to understand that each issue being consulted as unique and different issues and is designed to provide flexibility and nuance to local and regional conditions.

*Figure 3. Proposed Conceptual Framework*



## 5.0 FINDINGS

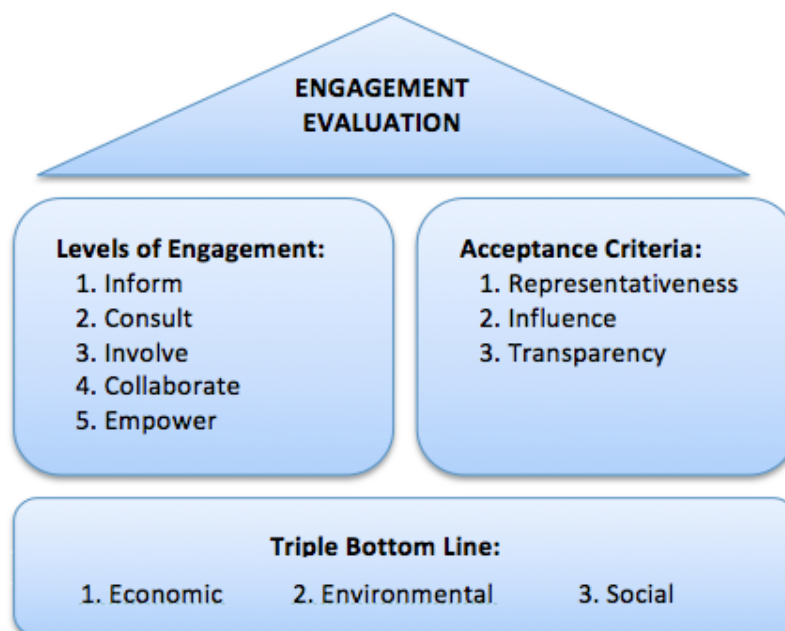
Findings are grouped into the three main themes of levels of engagement, acceptance criteria and the triple bottom line. The findings were analyzed into the broad themes of the conceptual framework using deductive coding methodology. Within these themes inductive coding methodology was then applied to identify which themes emerged. The interview results are displayed throughout this section in table form to show the user-based criteria for public engagement initiatives on the Columbia River Treaty. A total of five respondents mentioning a category was the threshold for inclusion in the findings.

### 5.1 Alignment with the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for evaluating public engagement was devised using the twin pillars of the five Levels of Engagement and the five Acceptance Criteria as shown below in *Figure 3. Revised Conceptual Framework*. Additionally, a section was left for the values of the respondents that would be identified through the interviews. Upon conducting the interviews, the researcher identified that the Community Values expressed by the respondents, aligned with the triple bottom line criteria. For these respondents, consultation would have legitimacy only when addressing these values.

As discovered in the course of the interviews and the resulting analysis, the respondents addressed all levels of engagement (although Empower to a lesser extent). Conversely, respondents did not mention the acceptance criteria of early Involvement or Independence in any significant way. For that reason, the revised conceptual framework includes all Levels of Engagement, but only three of the five acceptance criteria (Representativeness, Influence and Transparency). The additional category of Community Values, as identified through analyzing the interview findings, closely corresponded to categories of the Triple Bottom Line, which is often used in economics and accounting and is comprised of economic, environmental and social aspects (The Economist, 2009). This component is not considered to be universal and is applicable only to the Columbia River Treaty.

*Figure 3. Revised Conceptual Framework*



## 5.2 Levels of Engagement Findings

Table 1: Levels of Engagement Table

Levels of Engagement	Number of Respondents
<b>Inform</b> Fact sheets Web sites Open Houses Forums Education Sessions	17
<b>Consult</b> Public comment Focus groups Surveys	14
<b>Involve</b> Public meetings Workshops Deliberative polling	11
<b>Collaborate</b> Citizen advisory committees Consensus building Participatory decision-making	8
<b>Empower</b> Ballots Delegated decision Citizen Jury	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>17</b>

### Inform

In the category of Inform, respondents stated that information should be provided in multiple ways and by using different platforms. The main themes of Inform are the type of information provided, tools used in providing information, methods for delivering the information, the location of where the information should be provided and the various strategies to best deliver information to the target population. Respondents consistently realized the significance and magnitude of the decision and consequently emphasized the need for in-depth and appropriate levels of engagement.

Table 2: Inform Theme Table

INFORM		
Theme:	Do	Don't
Type of Information	Use audience appropriate information; and	Do not dumb down content;

	provide maps and visual tools	do not provide overly technical information (i.e. engineering jargon); and do not provide too much information
<b>Methods</b>	Use interactive, educational and innovative approaches; take engagement out of the realm of subject matter experts; use local government partnerships; and provide food and refreshments	Do not use un-relatable presenters; do not use too much technical information; and do not deliver long presentations
<b>Tools</b>	See chart for tools and methods; and advertise well	
<b>Tone</b>	Adopt an appropriate tone; and use conscious behaviour and actions to make the participants feel valued	Do not adopt an authoritarian tone; do not conduct a “quick and dirty” consultation; and do not promise action and then not understand the real issues
<b>2012-2014 Consultations</b>	Engage participants in feedback after events	Do not rapidly transfer a large amount of information; and do not manage information to get the result you want

The *Type of Information* that the majority of the respondents explained that materials and content should be provided by the project sponsor should be audience appropriate. A few respondents spoke about the importance of not “dumbing down” the information provided. Conversely, some respondents emphasized that technical information should not be overdone and “talking heads,” to quote one respondent, should be avoided. Two respondents specifically mentioned engineering jargon as being particularly difficult to understand given the technical nature of issues being discussed.

Some respondents cautioned against providing too much information and as a result, people would be less inclined to read or listen to the key messages. One respondent stated that they were “inundated with info.” Respondents expressed that this would potentially drive people away and could result in the message being lost. Some of respondents described the 2011 round of consultations (delivered by CBT) being particularly effective in the use of maps and visual tools. A few respondents stated that they felt the preparation in advance of the consultation inadequately prepared the population for what the consultation was. Conversely, many respondents felt it was very well done and provided the appropriate type of information.

For the theme of *Methods*, respondents generally welcomed interactive, educational and innovative approaches. A few respondents also spoke about a gallery exhibit idea that could tour the region to be shown in art galleries or libraries to provide information and raise awareness. Additionally some

respondents mentioned displaying graphics and advertisements located at visitor's centres, chamber of commerce, libraries and several outlets such as coffee shops.

An ineffective method would be a presentation delivered by un-relatable "city slickers" and "men in suits." On a similar theme, one respondent expressed the desire to take engagement out of the realm of experts and rely on a grass-roots approach. Some respondents felt that the local governments are the "most responsive" of all the players. As a result, some respondents suggested that there could be a strategy for local governments to communicate directly with the public.

Many respondents spoke about providing food and refreshments to participants for engagement events as they said people need an incentive to attend. Some respondents advised a half-day event given the complexity of the issue and type of information, whereas others suggested that it should not be more than two-to-three hours in length.

The theme of *Tools*, as shown in *Table 3. Tools for Inform*, was quite extensive and respondents spoke about what they liked and had numerous ideas. For the theme of *Tools* respondents spoke about tools that had worked well for them from personal experience and suggested additional tools that they felt had been missing. Most respondents mentioned how successful email communications had been for providing them with information and confirmed the value of this medium. In terms of documents, respondents mentioned reports, fact sheets, pamphlets, technical reports and letters.

Respondents suggested tools such as written technical and explanatory documents, television ads, social media, pamphlets, maps and email communication. Respondents emphasized the importance of email communication and providing information for people to inform themselves before they attend events or participate in consultations. One respondent emphasized the importance of a document in paper form, summarizing the previous consultations and main themes as well as providing information on the issues being discussed. Respondents were mixed regarding the use of post cards to provide information with some thinking they were a valuable tool whereas others felt that they were not very effective.

A few respondents suggested that a documentary commissioned by the Province would be a valuable way to educate the population. The issues with this raised by respondents were that it would have to be advertised well, it could potentially be expensive and as one respondent stated "It would have to be done right, otherwise it would tick a lot of people off." For in person meetings, the respondents often mentioned PowerPoint presentations, although not all the mentions were described in a positive light. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the way PowerPoint presentations were delivered and offered suggestions for how to create more engaging presentations by minimizing technical information.

*Table 3. Tools for Inform*

<b>Tools for Inform</b>			
<b>Documents</b>	<b>Electronic</b>	<b>In-Person</b>	<b>Media</b>
Reports	Emails	Group sessions	Television Ads
Fact Sheets	Social Media	Focus Groups/Break-out	Newspaper Ads

		Sessions	
Pamphlets	Websites	Multi-media Presentations	Newspaper Articles
Technical Documents	Videos (YouTube)	Power-Point Presentations	Ads in libraries and coffee shops
Maps and Visual Tools (Info-graphics)	Telephone	Art Gallery Exhibits	Film or Documentary
Post cards	Blogs		
Letters			

Adopting an appropriate *Tone* was a recurrent theme raised by the majority of the respondents interviewed. The respondents described this as involving conscious actions and behaviours on the part of the consultation team or project sponsor to make the participants feel valued. A few respondents mentioned that a negative outcome of a disconnected or authoritarian tone would be alienating the population and a failed process. Some respondents stated that the magnitude of the Columbia River Treaty requires more than a “quick and dirty” consultation, as there are profound impacts and benefits. As an example of a negative tone one respondent stated:

*“The worst thing is for a Yuppie Bureaucrat stating a level of agency to not understand the real issues. There is a historical narrative of rural strength and there is the capacity for memory to be lost. The way the people are in the Kootenays is based on their lived experience. The tone is important.”*

In the theme of *Provincial Consultations*, many respondents felt there the 2012-2014 consultations had done a very good job of educating the population on the issues. Ideally the consultations would influence policy at the highest level. Some respondents felt that the framework was adequate, but mentioned the gap of participants not being engaged in feedback after the in person events. A few respondents thought that there could be no adequate way of giving beneficial feedback. One respondent highlighted that they felt that the Provincial led consultation team “rapidly transferred a large amount of information” about the main points of the Columbia River Treaty, and although it was adequate, the type of information was also managed in such a way to be what the team wanted. This respondent discussed the aspect of consultation where it is hard to separate the outcomes wanted from how the process is undertaken.

Most respondents felt their needs were being met in terms of the type of information being provided to them. Some respondents mentioned other stakeholders such as BC Hydro, Fortis and U.S. stakeholders as being responsive to questions and providing information upon request.

### *Consult*

In the theme of Consult, as displayed in *Table 4. Consult Themes*, respondents emphasized that participants’ views should be gathered at multiple levels and in multiple ways. The two main methods respondents mentioned were in person and online methods of gathering information. Respondents spoke about the value of engaging people in groups in order for participants to share and build upon

ideas. In addition, respondents spoke about the importance of feedback and strategies to achieve positive outcomes.

Table 4. Consult Themes

CONSULT		
Theme:	Do	Don't
<b>In Person Methods and Tools</b>	Use multiple approaches; target different levels of subject matter knowledge, regional and demographic factors; use fun and entertaining approaches; use group sessions, exercises and focus groups; and professional facilitators	Do not pack too much into an agenda; do not allow some voices to be dominated; by louder voices; and do not disregard a clear message
<b>Online Methods and Tools</b>	Online surveys to gather thoughts and feedback; use quantitative and qualitative data; use interactive online tools; and consult the diaspora population online	
<b>Feedback and Evaluation</b>	Gather positive and negative feedback; implement an ongoing feedback mechanism; and allow for follow-up sessions	

For the theme of *In-Person Tools and Methods*, most respondents advised that there should be multiple approaches used to gather the most representative and engaged views and perspectives. Some respondents delved into the reasons why this would be of value, stating that different approaches could be used to target different levels of knowledge about the subject matter as well as demographic and regional factors. Some respondents discussed the merits of fun and entertaining approaches. One respondent cited an event hosted by CBT that was geared towards youth, for young leaders included a scavenger's hunt.

Many respondents felt that group sessions were the most valuable in gathering the views of residents, including interactive exercises and focus groups. Respondents felt that input should be gathered in a group environment to get the group perspective so that people can hear what other people are saying and build on ideas. Many respondents spoke about the value of group brainstorming. Small group

discussions, a combination of big and small sessions, professional facilitators, a log or record and having an online survey. This approach can generate in depth questions and is very valuable.

The three most common answers to the question of what would result in an ineffective result were:

- A clear message given and it was not integrated into future work
- Some voices would dominate and others would not be heard
- Too much would be packed into an agenda.

With the theme of *Online Methods and Tools*, some respondents explained that the best approach to gathering participants' input would be online surveys, such as survey monkey. The reason for this is that qualitative and quantitative data can be compiled as not everyone who had an interest or stake in this decision were always able to attend events. The geographic dispersal of the relatively small population over a vast region featured in the responses.

Many respondents mentioned using videos, YouTube, presentations, group facilitation techniques, web-based discussions and telephone surveys to gather a wide range of views and perspectives. Some respondents acknowledged the challenges and difficulties of lack of knowledge and awareness in being able to gather views in this manner.

A few respondents spoke about interactive ways of online engagement such as "thoughtstream.online, which is a tool CBT used to gather input from residents in 2013. Close to 1,400 residents participated in CBT's Thoughtstream and answered six questions about economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Over 10,000 thoughts were generated and grouped under main ideas. Participants then assigned stars to those ideas, identifying over 1,800 priorities in total.

A few respondents suggested gathering the views of the "diaspora" population of the Columbia River Basin as many youth leave the area to attend university or college as well as for work. One respondent stated that this population, especially the youth, return regularly and have a stake in the issues. This would most likely have to be conducted through online engagement, which the respondents recognized.

Within the theme of *Feedback and Evaluation* some respondents felt it was very important to have the opportunity to express positive and negative feedback. The two options provided were a feedback survey and one-on-one interviews. One respondent said that it was healthy to rant. The respondent felt that there should be a consultation process that could support a feedback mechanism and feedback loop. The respondents also thought there should be information sharing to and from the Province – to give and receive information. If this was widespread it would be strongly supported they felt. Some respondents thought there should be follow-up sessions explaining what was heard as well as regional differences.

### *Involve*

For the category of *Involve*, the main themes respondents spoke about, as shown in *Table 5. Involve Themes*, were mostly how to get the target population to participate in consultations and events as well

as what to avoid and what strategies they thought could be effective.

*Table 5. Involve Themes*

<b>INVOLVE</b>		
<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
<b>Results</b>	Make interim results publically available; show that time has not been wasted; and show a paper trail	Do not allow for long periods of time between results; do not mischaracterize or manipulate results; do not be discouraged by frustration; and do not be in conflict with local events
<b>Events</b>	Find times that work for the communities; allow individual voices to be heard; use high profile content experts who are engaging speakers; balance technical and general information; breakout sessions should be small groups; use shorter rather than longer timeframes; offer stipends for travel and transportation; avoid too much detail (for presentations, do not use multiple charts and skip through); take time to explain content; encourage ranting; and use what has worked well in the past globally	Do not allow the agenda to be perceived as pre-determined; and do not use a lecture format
<b>Buy and Source Local</b>	Use local consultants, staff, resources and partners to help facilitate events or provide catering; and spend locally to invest economically in the wellbeing of the region	
<b>Achieving Results</b>	Examine the possibility of financial compensation for loss of property; and	Do not hold sessions too little, too late or in a short time-span

Look at what participants can get out of events
---

For the theme of *Results*, some respondents stated in order to have effective consultation, it is important for the participants to see the results, such as in an interim-document or draft summary. Aspects of this are to show that it has been recorded, posted online, handed out in brochures explaining the process, mail out physical copies of reports, and make copies available at libraries (chambers of commerce or economic development offices). They felt that it is important to show that information has not been manipulated and that time has not been wasted after the consultation and before the results.

Further to this topic, one respondent stated that things should not disappear into a “black hole” and emphasized the importance of showing a paper trail. The respondent explained that when no information is provided back to the public, this is an example of a negative message. Also a statement purely saying, “we are applying the work” is not sufficient. Some respondents felt that it would be problematic, as it would appear the consultation team was not valuing of the community. Additionally, if there was a blatant mischaracterization of what was said as if these were held as the official results.

Some respondents thought a negative and ineffective process would be a meeting where too much was packed into an agenda. Some respondents spoke about how it is important for the sponsor not to be dissuaded by frustration or ranting from the public as these show an engaged public. One respondent noted in joking fashion that the number of “ranty letters” should be used as a measure of engagement.

*Table 6. Key Elements of Workshops and Group Sessions*

<b>Key Elements of Workshops and Group Sessions:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use high profile content experts who are engaging speakers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance technical and general information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakout sessions should be small groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use shorter rather than longer timeframes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer stipends for travel and transportation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid too much detail (for presentations, do not use multiple charts and skip through)</li> </ul>

- Take time to explain content
- Encourage ranting
- Use what has worked well in the past globally

Within the theme of *Events*, respondents spoke about how it is very important to not be in conflict with local events. For the population, it demonstrates a lack of understanding of the community and will result in lower turnout. Respondents mostly felt that early evenings are the best time for most people, however a few stated that events during the day (such as weekends) were better suited to their needs.

Some respondents expressed the concern that if meetings and workshops were too structured, and agendas were not agreed to in advance by all participants then participants could feel that the outcome was pre-determined. One respondent warned about the perception of “loaded dice” and that participants would be reluctant to fully engage if they got the impression of a process driven by an agenda. Some respondents said that meetings and workshops would be best run during the day, not at night and would be a combination of interactive and providing information, but not in a lecture format. For breakout sessions, some respondents preferred smaller sessions. Having a large session with the opportunity to have individual voices heard was also mentioned.

A reoccurring theme within the category of *Involve* was to *Buy and Source Local*. Purchasing or using local consultants, staff, resources and partners to help facilitate events or provide catering was strongly encouraged by a significant number of respondents. When asked what would contribute to a negative outcome a few respondents felt that not using local consultants or support would be the most significant factor. Many respondents praised the most recent round of consultations for hiring local consultants and contractors to help facilitate the events or provide support. The respondents strongly emphasized that using the local partner of CBT gave legitimacy to the consultations. They felt that spending locally was welcomed and was thoughtful. Some respondents raised the negative consequences of not so in that by not hiring local consultants it would seem as if the project sponsor was not invested in the economic wellbeing of the region. Youth involvement was noted, however some respondents who attended engagement events with less youth present, felt that more youth should have been included.

Another theme was *Achieving Results*, which many respondents mentioned the meetings and workshops that were held during the Province-led consultations and generally thought they were run well or didn't criticize them directly. Conversely, a few respondents thought that there was an agenda and pre-determined result. These respondents also felt that the unspoken goal of the consultations was to get a recommendation on the future of the Columbia River Treaty and this did not allow for addressing critical issues. In addition, some respondents felt that the main problem is the meetings (2012-2014 Provincial consultations) were too little, too late and were conducted in a short time span.

Some respondents stated that a positive result would have to include diverse range of public consultation types and establish a deep connection with the population. Some respondents spoke about the value in educating residents of the Basin to make everyone an expert on the topic. Some respondents felt that people who were directly affected and impacted should receive some form of financial compensation for the dislocation and loss of property. These respondents thought that it would be too little and too late. One respondent said that the organizers should look at it from the perspective of people who are participating and ask themselves what the people who are participating can get out of it.

*Collaborate*

The category of Collaborate covers the suggestions and ideas respondents had pertaining to how to achieve a collaborative engagement process. The key themes that emerged from this topic were ongoing engagement, a formalized process and achieving solutions.

Table 7. Collaborate Findings

COLLABORATE		
Theme:	Do	Don't
<b>Ongoing Engagement</b>	Create an advisory committee; and Create a joint U.S. – Canadian public engagement opportunity	
<b>Formalized Process</b>	Establish a permanent engagement mechanism such as an advisory committee; and create an advisory committee comprised of non-politicians	Do not have an advisory committee with government or politicians
<b>Achieving Solutions</b>	Achieve common ground as first step; and Sounding Board/advisory committee should play a role in consultation evaluation	

In the theme of *Ongoing Engagement*, most respondents enthusiastically supported the idea of ongoing engagement. When asked about continued participation and involvement, all respondents agreed that they would like to be involved in on-going engagement, such as future consultations. Some respondents spoke about participating in an advisory committee and deeper levels of engagement than just participating in consultations. A few respondents suggested having the US and Canadian public from both sides and engage in dialogue from both sides.

A theme of desiring a *Formalized Process* was discovered in analyzing the interview results. Many respondents thought there should be an advisory committee to advise on technical treaty aspects as

well as provide engagement advice. Some respondents thought that these negotiations were most important opportunity to make an environmental change. A few respondents spoke about the composition of this advisory committee. One respondent thought that the same people were always consulted and new and different people should be the ones offering advice. Similarly, another respondent thought that for “a board, agency or committee to be truly effective and representative, it should be comprised of non-politicians - not even local-government.”

*Achieving Solutions* was a theme in the category of Collaborate where respondents spoke about how they desired for residents to have impact and influence on decision-making. In order to achieve solutions, some of these respondents mentioned the importance of achieving common ground as a first step. Some respondents said that the way to encourage people to participate is if they think that they can have an impact on the outcome of the process and if they can perform an integral role. People will be discouraged if they think they will have no impact on the final outcome. One respondent spoke about how the Sounding Board had been ambassadorial and could play a part in evaluating future consultations.

*Empower*

For the category of Empower, not as many of the respondents spoke about this level of engagement as other levels and methods, but the ones that did strongly emphasized the value of public decision-making. A few mentioned the sounding board as a potential vehicle for this type of decision-making.

Table 8. Empower Findings

EMPOWER		
Theme:	Do	Don't
Decision Making	Provide the public with the opportunity to decide with: a) A referendum b) A decision making panel	Do not have a pre-determined perspective

Within the category of Empower, the main theme was *Decision Making* where respondents who spoke about public empowerment were generally dissatisfied with the Provincial public consultation process. These respondents were in the minority, but the ones that did expressed the thought that the Provincial consultation was an example of a case of engagement that was not responsive and fell flat. As to aspects of what did not work well in the process, this group of respondents said that it seemed like the Province had a pre-determined perspective, which was to keep the Columbia River Treaty and negotiate with the United States. These respondents stated that they wanted the population to decide and specifically spoke about the public having decision making power in the form of a referendum and a decision making panel.

This theme of dissatisfaction was centered around the desire to change the current hydro-dam water levels and the impacts on the environment. This group of respondents generally felt that environmental

values were taking a back seat to power generation and flood control. A few these respondents felt that the Province had a pre-determined result in mind and BC Hydro had financial motivations. One of the respondents stated “people who think they will have an impact on the outcome are sorely mistaken” and “the Province is not prepared to listen and that is the problem.”

### 5.3 Acceptance Criteria Findings

Table 9. Acceptance Criteria Findings

Acceptance Criteria	
Representativeness	12
Influence	7
Transparency	5

#### Representativeness

The main themes of the acceptance criterion of *Representativeness* are inclusiveness, involving age a range of age groups including youth, geographic representativeness. For age and demographic groups people spoke about the inclusion of youth and a representative sample across all ages. For geography, respondents spoke about the importance of including the different regions within the Columbia Basin. Respondents emphasized the value of a variety of topic areas and also mentioned the value of not having some voices drown out others.

Table 10. Representativeness Themes

REPRESENTATIVENESS		
Theme:	Do	Don't
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	Use multiple methods to reach; different groups and audiences; ensure different groups are represented; and have more events to have more people represented	
<b>Geography</b>	Ensure geographic equity; provide travel allowance; include diaspora population; and use video conferencing at events	
<b>Age</b>	Ensure all ages represented; use surveys to weight by age group; hold events in the evening	
<b>Youth</b>	Engage youth early;	Do not educate youth as an afterthought;

	produce materials targeted for youth; use educators to help educate youth; use diverse methods; integrate the Columbia River Treaty into the curriculum for both environment and history; use social media; mobilize young leaders as champions; use simulations for youth education and engagement; Involve youth in workshop facilitation; and get younger councillors to present at events	do not use dense materials; and do not make youth feel patronized
<b>Content</b>	Balance types of content (Environment and History); acknowledge loss; target specific content at different groups; and explain the big picture	Do not allow participants to be discouraged by complexity

The theme of *Inclusiveness* received a fair amount of attention where respondents were concerned about all voices being heard. The concern was that the more vocal and passionate members in a public consultation event would drown some voices out. Respondents also spoke about the importance of using different methods and approaches of public engagement in order to reach different groups and audiences. Some respondents spoke about how it was the responsibility of the Province and the CBT to ensure the diversity of perspectives and include as many as perspectives as possible. A few respondents discussed how they felt that more consultations and events allowed for more representation of the population. A few respondents spoke about how they wished people who were from the area, but did not live there at the moment (students, natural resource workers etc.), could have been included.

A few respondents spoke about how they did not like the way the First Nations consultation was conducted, in isolation from the public consultations. These respondents suggested including First Nations and representatives of First Nations in consultations, engagement and organizations. Some of these respondents cited the value of hearing First Nations perspectives as part of the broader public engagement.

In the theme of *Geography* regional differences were brought up with regularity where respondents

contrasted the East and West Kootenays as well as unique aspects of individual communities. One main theme on this topic from the interviews was the distances between communities and the difficulty in reaching the population. Given the distance from most other parts of the Basin, some respondents mentioned video conferencing as a valuable way to connect with respondent said that possible video conferencing if needed. Another solution that was mentioned was providing travel stipends or subsidizing travel expenses. A few respondents recommended including the US and Canadian public in a joint-consultation event to engage in dialogue from both sides.

A few respondents thought that the results of public engagement should be weighted to account for different participation rates in the East and West Kootenays. The rationale behind this is that it would help balance the difference in participation rates between the East and West Kootenays. One respondent said they attended sessions in both the East and West Kootenays and found that there was significantly more involvement in the West as a result of the more significant impacts to land and property.

For the theme of *Age*, respondents spoke generally about the importance of including a representative sample of the population according to age. Some respondents spoke about the value of a survey as an engagement tool because it can be age and demographic aspects can be sampled with specificity. To be truly representative in public consultation sessions, some respondents thought that there would have to be a minimum number of older age ranges as well as representative sub-groupings of age ranges. Some respondents spoke about how the 2012-2014 public consultation attracted people who had the Columbia River Treaty as a “personal backdrop” in their younger years while it was being negotiated and the dams built. Some respondents felt that the 2012-2014 consultation process did not attract young people or professionals either. One respondent said that they felt there were too many “grey heads.” Some respondents spoke about the best time to hold workshops and events to attract a representative range of different age and demographics. Most respondents thought that holding workshops and events in the evening would be the best time to appeal to different demographics.

Given the fact that all respondents were directly asked by the researcher what they felt could be done to include and engage youth, the theme of the theme of *Youth* was very prominent and all respondents spoke about this topic. Many people expressed passion and frustration about the inclusion of youth in public engagement as well as the challenges facing youth in general in the Kootenay region.

Almost all respondents placed a high value on providing youth with age appropriate information so they could be informed and engaged and to build as a foundation for participation. Some respondents emphasized the importance of engaging youth early and not including them in the process of informing and educating them as an afterthought. Some respondents also spoke about the value in providing visual elements and well-written summaries targeted to youth. Most respondents who spoke about youth felt that diverse ways of engagement was the best approach. Many respondents thought the Columbia River Treaty should be integrated into the curriculum in both environment and history. Respondents thought that educators could play a role in engaging youth.

All respondents emphasised integrated young people and youth into the engagement and consultations as a high priority. For youth engagement, the overwhelmingly most prevalent tool for engagement that was suggested was social media. Respondents also thought that educators in schools and colleges also have a role to play.

Respondents thought that the best way to engage youth is to mobilize the young leaders as champions and conveners to engage more youth themselves. One respondent suggested that the best approach is conduct simulations, such as workshop that allow youth to mimic roles. These roles would include the Province, BC Hydro and various other players and stakeholders.

Some respondents thought that in the consultation process, young people had a challenging time entering into the conversation. The amount of information was very high and the type was dense. All participants were expected to know a very large amount. Different opinions were expressed on the matter of holding separate youth consultations or if youth should be included and welcomed into the main sessions. Many respondents spoke about the importance of motivating youth and helping them feel that they can make a difference. Other respondents mentioned that youth would not want to contribute if they feel patronized.

A small grouping of respondents specifically mentioned the “Young Leaders” youth event hosted by CBT in Rossland and thought that the age division resulted in the younger demographic being sidelined by the older group. In addition, some respondents mentioned that the older youth demographic should not be forgotten either. Some respondents thought that using youth champions would be an effective way to engage more youth. Another suggestion was involving youth in the facilitation of workshops or breakout sessions and having younger local government counsellors present at engagement sessions.

Many respondents spoke about the importance of specific types of *Content* that should be provided. Almost all respondents mentioned the environmental impacts of the Columbia River Treaty in some way, however some respondents put a major focus on environmental aspects while a minority cautioned that the information should focus less on the environment, and to quote one respondent, should not have too much “environmental spin.”

Acknowledging the past and the history of the Columbia River Treaty was talked about by many of the respondents. A few respondents spoke about personal loss of family property. Additionally, some respondents spoke about the physical impacts on the landscape. Some respondents noted that content should be targeted messaging at specific groups and demographics. Respondents also spoke about the importance of explaining the “big picture” to target demographics. Respondents said that people are discouraged by the feeling of complexity and are confused by the trans-boundary nature of the issue as well as the social and economic implications.

### *Influence*

The acceptance criterion of Influence is very similar to the level of engagement category of Empower in many respects. The main theme was that respondents wanted their views and the opinions of the target

population to matter and be taken into account. Respondents also spoke about how CBT and local government play a role in giving the Basin influence.

Table 11. Influence Themes

INFLUENCE		
Theme:	Do	Don't
Influence	Enable opportunity to influence; Outline clear outcomes and results up-front; Enable participation on dam and technical operations; Show how participants have influence	Do not discount people's thoughts

Many of the respondents spoke about the value of influencing decision makers through participation. One respondent specifically stated that an indicator of a successful engagement process would be to “influence policy at the highest level.” It is important to note that not all respondents felt that their involvement in the 2012-2014 consultations or future engagements would have any impact or influence. About half of respondents talked about influence and about a quarter each had opposing views on the influence of the 2012-2014 consultation process. Some respondents thought that the decision was made by the provincial government and that people who agreed with the decision would be happy and others who did not agree with the decision would be disappointed. Respondents generally expressed the opinion that amongst youth there is a strong feeling that there is no opportunity to influence the outcome.

An example is how some respondents from the East Kootenays raised that they felt they had no influence was BC Hydro’s operations. They acknowledged part of this was not having a BC Hydro Water Use Plan (WUP). Some respondents spoke about how they felt BC Hydro would not allow any influence to come out of the consultation meetings. Some respondents spoke about how with the Kootenai reservoir and Libby dam, BC Hydro, the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Bonneville Power Corporation present the current operating regime as having no opportunity for change. Some respondents thought that the Province ended up making a decision without fully taking the population’s thoughts into account, even though it wasn’t a bad result in the end. Some respondents stated that for continued and ongoing public consultations there would have to be very clear parameters at public consultations in terms of clear results and outcomes.

*Transparency*

The acceptance criterion of Transparency was a strong theme throughout most of the interviews. Respondents described aspects of what they felt was not transparent and well as positive examples. To many, transparency was both part of the process and an outcome of an effective process.

Table 12. Transparency Themes

TRANSPARENCY		
Theme:	Do	Don't
<b>Transparency</b>	Show results online and in reports; rebuild trust by being transparent after it has been broken; and engage in dialogue	Do not produce a bureaucratic press release; do not allow long periods of silence; prevent low turnout from lack of advertising for consultation events; do not neglect to make information accessible to the public; do not have periods of dormancy on websites; and do not neglect to offer no explanation for actions

Respondents who talked about transparency thought that aspects of a public consultation that would constitute a non-transparent consultation would be a bureaucratic press release, long period of silence, lack of advertising for consultation events and not enough making information accessible to the public.

Many respondents described a lack of transparency would be initial board public appeal for a process or engagement and then long periods of dormancy or as more than one respondent termed it, “disappearing into a black hole.” Respondents also spoke about a consultation team “returning back to Victoria” once an engagement was done with no forthcoming communication or providing a statement saying, “we are applying the work,” respondents thought would not be sufficient. Regarding how decisions were made, one respondent stated “be transparent!” In order to achieve transparency, respondents spoke about how it was important for participants to see the results, either online or distributed throughout additional consultations.

Some respondents spoke about the lack of transparency that had existed in the past and how hard it is to rebuild that trust when it had been broken. The respondents who had mention this also spoke about BC Hydro had not contributed to feeling of transparency and a few cited the dredging of Grohman narrows as an example of a non-transparent process. Some respondents stated directly that they thought the Provincial consultation team had been trying to be open and transparent.

Most respondents thought that the 2012-2014 consultation process had been overall very positive and thought that the consultation team had done a very good job of building trust and being transparent. Some respondents also were pleased that money had been put into the engagement process. The respondents who spoke about the issue of transparency also spoke about being transparent as a way to build trust. Some respondents felt that the first step in this process was dialogue.

## 5.4 Community Values Findings

Table 13. Community Values – Triple Bottom Line Categories

Triple Bottom Line					
Economic		Environmental		Social	
Compensation	12	Ecological	17	Education	13
Economic Development	8	Wildlife	7	History/Community	9
Agriculture & Fisheries	6	Fish (Salmon)	5		

### Economic

The lack of economic development opportunities was a key concern raised by most respondents interviewed. Respondents also thought that compensation was inadequate and improperly allocated given the financial benefits provided to the Province (specifically to the Lower Mainland) as well as to the United States.

ECONOMIC	
Theme:	Themes:
<b>Compensation</b>	Need for compensation; existing compensation (CBT); Canadian Entitlement; and BC Hydro’s motivations - financial
<b>Economic Development</b>	Economic impacts; forestry industry decline; economic development as a form of compensation; and challenge for youth
<b>Agriculture and Fisheries</b>	Water usage of ranching and agriculture; and fisheries impacts

The theme of the *Canadian Entitlement* was mentioned as an example of a Provincial benefit that a few respondents thought should be shared with the affected areas. Some respondents acknowledged the existing financial compensation, including CBT and its programs. Many respondents spoke about BC Hydro’s motivations as revolving around generation power for financial motivations.

A minor theme mentioned by some respondents was *Economic Development* few respondents from the Arrow Lakes area spoke about the economic impact of the closing of a Mill in the Nakusp area and the 2011 shutdown of the Slocan lumber mill operated by Springer Creek Forest Products. Respondents who spoke about this issue also linked it to the challenged faced by young people in the area to find secure work that was not seasonal or low paying. One respondent mentioned a Provincial investment in geothermal energy as one way to deliver on compensation and fix some of the economic damage that has been done.

*Agriculture and Fisheries* including ranching was a theme and agriculture were industries that were discussed as well in relation to water usage and how ranchers and farmers have a vested interest in the Columbia River Treaty as a result. Some respondents spoke about how they felt that the Americans received a much better deal through the Columbia River Treaty and other related aspects. Two main aspects of this were the flooding that respondents stated were done on behalf of the Americans and prior to the Columbia River Treaty, the loss and sacrifice of the Columbia River Salmon fishery as a result of Grand Coulee Dam also occurred as a result of American actions.

### *Environmental*

All of the respondents mentioned environmental impacts of the Columbia River Treaty in some way. The main aspects of environmental issues people raised related to the treaty were ecological and wildlife impacts. In addition people mentioned the loss of Salmon on the Columbia River, climate change as well as the different views of the importance and focus of environmental issues.

Table 14. Environmental Themes

ENVIRONMENTAL	
Theme:	Themes:
<b>Ecological</b>	Ecological modelling before the consultation process begins; finding the balance between power generation and ecological values; and Impact of water levels on riparian zones and species at risk
<b>Wildlife</b>	Wildlife compensation
<b>Fish</b>	Loss of salmon; impacts on trout; fish ladders for salmon; Addressing dam removal
<b>Climate Change</b>	Impacts of climate change on sensitive ecosystems and on power generation; The significance of climate change modelling results
<b>Differing Views</b>	Not enough openness from BC Hydro on ecological issues and that people wanted to see dams not operated purely for power generation and flood control; Use an advisory committee to advise the Provincial Government on the environmental aspects that could be modified within the existing Columbia River Treaty; and Challenges between environmental and economic values

In the Environmental category, some respondents spoke about *Ecological* issues. Some of these respondents thought that more could have been done up front regarding ecological modelling before the consultation process had begun. Some also thought a significant amount would have to be conducted in the future. People also spoke about finding the balance between power generation and ecological values. Some respondents mentioned the impact of water levels on riparian zones and species at risk.

For the *Ecological* theme, some respondents mentioned compensation for wildlife that were stranded by the reservoirs in the 1960's and 1970's. One respondent raised the collaboration between BC Hydro's Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program and CBT as a positive development for the Koochanusa reservoir.

For the theme of *Fish*, some respondents discussed the theme of the loss of Salmon and impacts on other fish such as trout. Some were aware that the reason had been the building of Grand Coulee Dam, completed in the United States in 1942. A few respondents mentioned the significance of the lost of salmon to the First Nations communities in the Columbia Basin. Some respondents mentioned the use of fish ladders or other innovative methods to return salmon to the Columbia River. A few respondents mentioned dam removal as a theoretical option but realized how unlikely this is to occur.

One theme of the environment was the impact of *Climate Change* on sensitive ecosystems and on power generation. Two respondents mentioned BC Hydro's climate change presentation and thought that more effort could have gone into explaining the significance of the findings.

For the theme of *Differing Views* some respondents thought that there was not enough openness from BC Hydro on ecological issues and that people wanted to see dams not operated purely for power generation and flood control. One recommendation was to use an advisory committee to advise the Provincial Government on the environmental aspects that could be modified within the existing Columbia River Treaty. Another respondent commented directly that input from the environmental community was never publicized and it should have been.

Conversely, a smaller sub-set of respondents expressed frustration how they felt the passionate voices of environmentalists and those who championed environmental issues often drowned out other voices. Some respondents spoke about the difficulty of engaging in one group on topics such as technical environmental issues. One respondent explained that this disparity between the two groups created difficulties in understanding.

### *Social*

Issues that were raised that are counted for the purposes of this study as *Social* issues are history and community and education as shown in *Table 15. Social Themes*, below. The social impacts of the Columbia River Treaty and dams were more pronounced from respondents in the West Kootenays. A few respondents spoke about loss of family owned land as a result of the construction of the Columbia River Treaty dams and flooding of the valleys.

*Table 15. Social Themes*

SOCIAL	
Theme:	Themes
History/Community	Strong cultural heritage of the Kootenay Region; emphasize history in education;

	feelings of disempowerment; rebuild trust; and loss of family owned land
<b>Education</b>	Use education system to educate youth; use schools, college and universities; use CBT's network's; integrate the Columbia River Treaty into the curriculum

Some respondents spoke about the interrelated themes of *History and Community* and these were generally entwined. One respondent spoke about the strong cultural heritage of the Kootenays as a place that was rural, but yet historically had many more cultural amenities than its size would warrant. Some respondents also emphasized the importance of teaching history when educating about the Columbia River Treaty and not just focusing on the environmental aspects. Some respondents thought it should be integrated into the local curriculum. Some respondents also spoke about the shared historical experience of feeling powerless and disempowered by the Province and BC Hydro's actions in the 1960's. They spoke about how resentment lingers and how trust needs to be rebuilt. One respondent shared the opinion that though many people can see the economic and financial benefits from the dam construction, people remember the insult and resentment.

*Education* was a prevalent theme. People spoke about the importance of the education system in educating people about the Columbia River Treaty, but also about the past of their communities as well. Youth can also be connected with this theme in the sense that most of the respondent's comments about education were directed towards building youth capacity for participation and contributions. Respondents talked about CBT's capacity and networks should be utilized as well as local education and the school and college systems. Some respondents felt the Review Team and CBT had done a good job of teaching the issues to youth and to the population as a whole. For education, respondents mentioned both environmental education and treating the Columbia River Treaty as history and educating youth through the lens as well.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION

The first part of this section will explore the key aspects of evaluation that were addressed in the findings section as well as the literature review. The second part of the discussion section will be presented in a similar manner to the findings with the key categories of levels of engagement, acceptance criteria and triple bottom line categories as the main structure. This portion as well as the findings are designed to show what the respondents thought would constitute effective engagement and how this can be the basis for an engagement evaluation.

### 6.1 Evaluation Themes

#### *User and Theory Based Approach*

Based upon the literature review, the researcher examined the merits of creating a theory based, user-based or value-free evaluation framework (Abelson, Gauvin, 2006). The approach favoured by the researcher is to conduct an engagement evaluation is a combination of a theory based and user-based evaluation framework. The conceptual framework (on p. 11 of this report and the revised conceptual framework on p. 12 of this report), proposes a framework for conducting evaluations on public engagement initiatives on the Columbia River Treaty. The merit of conducting evaluations with user-based approaches is that differing goals and perspectives can be taken into account and reflected in the criteria. The user-based evaluation method takes into account that each participant will have different goals and perspectives.

Conducting a preliminary survey or focus group to determine indicators and measures of success as part of a user-based approach can ensure a robust evaluation, however could conceivably be considered risky if not all of the participants' views are reflected in the criteria that are established. In addition, the public engagement practitioners would have to be prepared for the potential of not meeting all of the indicators or measures of success. This could result in project sponsors becoming more reluctant to permit the development of public engagement evaluation in the future. Using pilot projects and testing approaches is strongly encouraged.

#### *Measurement*

As described in the literature review, measurement is a major challenge in evaluating a public engagement process (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006, p. 12). The criteria that have been compiled from the interview findings are helpful in ascertaining what is meaningful and important to the participants of the engagement process. Developing performance measures is substantially easier with quantitative data than with qualitative data. These types of measures are best suited to the numbers of participants at events, which communities were more likely to respond to online surveys or other such quantifiable facts. Satisfaction surveys are much harder to create measures for and can be turned into indicators, but the only thing that can really be measured in this way over time would be the rise or fall in participant satisfaction. One possible way to assessing and evaluate the engagement process would be to use a Likert scale, or modified Likert scale (ranking from agree to disagree) and conduct a survey at multiple times throughout the process.

In the interviews, respondents generally expressed opinion that during the 2012-2014 consultations, respondents did not generally feel that people were engaged in feedback directly after the events in meaningful way. Some respondents did however mention that the Columbia River Action Committee was a useful mechanism for evaluation. Using performance measures for assessing the engagement process is also a challenge in that there is nothing to measure apart from participant satisfaction.

### *Evaluation*

The interview findings show that respondents generally thought the engagement framework for the 2012-2014 consultations was adequate (although there were some dissenting voices), but one gap was that participants were not substantively engaged in feedback after the events. Although an evaluation framework was not implemented, the results of these interview findings show that most respondents were satisfied with the process and it met their needs. For future engagement on the Columbia River Treaty Review, the engagement team should endeavour to replicate many of the successes and seek to improve for future consultations.

For conducting a public engagement evaluation, it is important that an evaluation plan be completed before the engagement process begins. The first element of the engagement evaluation plan is to determine the key questions that need to be answered to measure the success of the engagement process. The fourth aspect that the evaluation plan needs to decide is what type of data should be collected for evaluation. Thirdly, the methods that are to be used to collect the data should be decided in advance and should be appropriate for the question that is being answered. The fourth element of the evaluation plan is to decide when the data should be collected and when it should be evaluated. Data should be collected at the beginning of the process to be used as a benchmark (State Government Victoria).

## **6.2 Levels of Engagement**

One of the most challenging aspects of engagement is deciding what level of engagement is required. When conducting an engagement for the Columbia River Treaty or any other type of engagement process, this is one of the first steps that should be taken using this framework. Given the structure of government, with cabinet decision-making weighing economic, environmental, social and political decisions, it is not always possible to provide the most robust level of engagement.

It is important to scale the engagement to what is appropriate and meets the needs of the population and the client organization. For example, a small change in operations for a hydroelectric facility that has very minimal impacts would result in the appropriate level of engagement being informing the public of this change. If impacts are larger and the population has a stake in the matter, then a more fulsome process is advised. Achieving community acceptance of the appropriate level that is being employed is a key part of achieving the social licence of the engagement process and of the decision in general. It is important to note that each level of engagement would most likely include the previous levels as well.

As the level of engagement deepened, the amount of responses decreased. This can be seen when 17 respondents spoke about methods, tools and concepts relating for Inform, 14 for Consult, 11 for Involve, eight for Collaborate and five for Empower. It is possible to conclude that this is as a result of awareness and knowledge about these types of methods. Government engagement initiatives normally only include the first two or three steps.

### *Inform*

The key themes that respondents spoke about for providing information to them during the Inform level of engagement, were centred around providing audience appropriate information, for the engagement team to be relatable and build trust by being transparent and investing in the wellbeing of the local community. Conducting surveys and focus groups at the beginning of a large-scale evaluation will help determine which methods of information distribution are required.

Given the fact that there is a rural-urban disconnect between the Kootenay region and the lower mainland as well as the provincial capital located in Victoria, coupled with previous disconnect, building trust is vital. One element of the 2012-2014 Columbia River Treaty Review Consultations that respondents spoke about very favourably was the buying and sourcing of local contractors, catering services and other services. Investing in the wellbeing of the community is a way to build trust, respect and is also a way to show transparency of procurement.

### *Consult*

In the theme of *Consult*, the two main methods respondents mentioned were in-person and online methods of gathering information and they also discussed feedback and evaluation. Respondents spoke about the value of engaging people in groups in order for participants to share and build upon ideas. In addition, respondents spoke about the importance of feedback and strategies to achieve positive outcomes. The main recommendations for Consult were to use multiple approaches of in-person methods, target different levels of subject matter knowledge, use fun and entertaining approaches, use group sessions and professional facilitators.

During the 2012-2014 Consultations, the Columbia River Treaty Review team made use of an online message board on the website to provide comments, used Facebook and Twitter to engage residents and interested parties and encouraged Basin residents to contact the team by phone or email (CRT Team Website). For using online methods, respondents suggested implementing online surveys, using qualitative and quantitative data and consulting the diaspora population online. The city of Vancouver's "Talk Vancouver," website, launched in 2013, is useful model (Lee, 2013). Respondents thought an on-going feedback mechanism would be a useful tool for gathering feedback. For respondents, gathering both negative and positive feedback was important and they thought the sponsor should not shy away from negative feedback although it might be tempting to do so.

### *Involve*

In the category of Inform, respondents stated that information should be provided in multiple ways and by using different platforms. The main themes of Inform are the type of information provided, tools used in providing information, methods for delivering the information, the location of where the

information should be provided and the various strategies to best deliver information to the target population. Respondents consistently realized the significance and magnitude of the decision and consequently emphasized the need for in-depth and appropriate levels of engagement. Given a thorough review and the researcher's personal involvement on the Columbia River Treaty Review Team, it is possible to conclude that the level of engagement of the 2012-2014 Consultations was at Involve.

### *Collaborate*

A key recommendation that came out of the interview findings was creating an advisory committee and using this advisory committee to help evaluate consultations. This permanent engagement mechanism in the form of an advisory committee or panel could also provide continuous feedback and evaluation on each engagement initiative. Indicators of success for the engagement level of Collaborate are making this advisory committee be comprised of non-politicians as a way to achieve independence and ensure that the process is free from interference.

### *Empower*

For many large public decisions, this is a very challenging proposition given that there are political, economic, environmental and social implications to the decisions. In our representative democracy cabinet makes these decisions. In the category of Empower, significantly fewer of the respondents discussed this level of engagement or issues relating to this type of engagement. It is possible to conclude, that given the fact that in the past government engagement has typically centred around providing information or gathering information from the public, awareness of these types are not as prevalent. The two main suggestions for the criterion of Empower are provide the public with the opportunity to decide with:

- a. Referenda
- b. Decision making panels

One of the best examples of *Empower* in Canada is British Columbia's Citizen Assembly on Electoral Reform that occurred in 2004 (Citizen Assembly, 2004). Although the referendum on electoral reform in 2005 was ultimately not successful in achieving the 60% threshold, the vote secured 58% of the vote. The engagement of the participants involved was very high and secured public support. This example shows how on issues that capture the public interest, innovative methods of public engagement can achieve public acceptance. It is possible that on a smaller scale this type of method could be used in the context of the Columbia River Treaty.

## **6.3 Acceptance Criteria**

The interview results show that respondents found the issues of representativeness, transparency and influence most important. As mentioned in the findings section, the researcher analyzed the findings according to all Acceptance Criteria including Early Involvement and Independence, and these two criteria were mentioned by respondents less than five times, which was below the threshold. Early Involvement was mentioned in the context of youth engagement and Independence was mentioned by respondents in regards to the make-up of the proposed advisory committee.

### *Representativeness*

Representativeness was a prevalent theme throughout the interview responses and is described in the literature as being one of the key criteria to which effective consultation can be assessed (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006). Effective public engagement reflects the diversity of the population involved (Turnbull & Aucoin, 2006). In the Columbia Basin context, representativeness meant including a diversity of age and demographic groups as well as geographic inclusiveness. Respondents generally thought that the 2012-2014 CRT Consultations did well on achieving this criterion.

According to Rowe and Frewer, one of the key considerations for public engagement practitioners is that in order to achieve representativeness “Participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public” (Rowe & Frewer, 2000, p. 12). It is important to note, however that although representativeness is an important criterion as found in the literature, and as expressed by the respondents interviewed, practical constraints may prevent it from being fully implemented (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

The main themes of the acceptance criterion of Representativeness are inclusiveness, involving age a range of age groups including youth, geographic representativeness. For age and demographic groups people spoke about the inclusion of youth and a representative sample across all ages. For geography, respondents spoke about the importance of including the different regions within the Columbia Basin. Respondents emphasized the value of a variety of topic areas and also mentioned the value of not having some voices drown out others.

Youth engagement was widely considered to be a top priority as part of public engagement on the Columbia River Treaty. As a result of the interview results, some key themes are clear. Interview respondents generally thought there was an urgent need to engage youth and thought that they needed innovative tools, and engaging events to capture their interest. Challenges and lack of employment opportunity, as well as relocation for work were reoccurring themes, all too common in rural areas.

For the acceptance criteria of Early Involvement, youth engagement was the one area that it was brought up by a few respondents. It was not mentioned enough to make it past the threshold of five responses. Respondents thought that early involvement of youth was critical, as they would not be aware of the lifecycle of the initiative and would feel dislocated if brought in later on.

The suggestions and ideas strongly motivated respondents and they were often very passionate about this section. Some key suggestions were to use simulations for youth education and engagement as well as involving youth directly in workshop facilitation and mobilizing youth as champions. Some respondents mentioned introducing the Columbia River Treaty directly into the curriculum at various levels as they thought it was an important element of education of the region.

### *Influence*

With the Acceptance Criteria of Influence, the interview results were decidedly mixed. About half of all respondents mentioned influencing policy decisions as an important issue. Approximately a quarter of

each had opposing views on the ability of participants to influence policy results through the 2012-2014 Consultations. Of the three Acceptance Criteria ultimately chosen, this is the one that had the highest number of respondents thinking that the 2012-2014 Consultations did not meet the criteria. For future engagement on the Columbia River Treaty, this is an area to focus on. Rowe and Frewer make the case that “The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on Policy (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

For respondents, the main aspects of Influence were the opportunity to influence decision-making, outlining clear outcomes and results up-front and showing how participants have influence. In the Columbia River Treaty context, some respondents specifically mentioned enabling participation on dam and technical operations as a key indicator of a successful engagement.

### *Transparency*

The overarching themes identified in the interview results as part of the criterion of *Transparency* are for the engagement team to show results online and in reports, rebuilding trust by being transparent after it has been broken and engaging in dialogue. The interview results indicated that many respondents thought that the Provincial Government and BC Hydro had broken the public’s trust during the development and construction of the Columbia River Treaty and its dams in the 1960’s and 1970’s.

Respondents advised that rebuilding this trust was imperative and many respondents thought that the 2012-2014 Consultations led by the Province had significantly contributed to rebuilding that trust by being transparent and open. This is supported by Rowe and Frewer, who argue that effective engagement is when the process is transparent, enabling the public to see what is going on and how decisions are being made (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Lenihan corroborates this as he considers transparency to be a highly important criterion for assessing public engagement effectiveness (Lenihan, 2012).

Some respondents however, thought the 2012-2014 Consultations did not go far enough and more work was needed. The interview results showed that respondents thought examples of an engagement initiative that is not transparent were bureaucratic press releases, long periods of silence and dormancy on websites, decisions made on low turnouts to events, not making information accessible and offering no explanation for actions.

Some respondents thought that low turnout had occurred in some communities consulted in the 2012-2014 Consultations. These elements should be incorporated into any criteria assessing future engagement initiatives on the Columbia River Treaty. For consultation practitioners, being transparent and opening the process up for scrutiny is an often-daunting task and could result in engagement evaluation being avoided in many cases. It is important for engagement teams to not avoid this potential risk as rewards can be gained through improving the process and gaining public trust.

### **6.4 Triple Bottom Line – Community Values**

Each engagement process has differing values and issues that matter to respondents. This section was created using Rowe and Frewer’s methodology of establishing a user-based method for evaluation by

defining what is meant by effectiveness and success and by using inductive methodology to develop themes that emerged as a result of analyzing the interview data (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). In the Columbia Basin, the respondents spoke about three main topic areas of Economic, Environmental and Social categories that covered the various issues and considerations that respondents thought were integral to dialogue regarding the Columbia River Treaty.

This section will not directly inform the recommendations on evaluating public engagement, however provides value in identifying issues that matter in the context of the Columbia River Treaty and to the residents of the Columbia Basin. The researcher hopes that these issues and considerations could form the basis of criteria for a Columbia River Treaty specific engagement plan. Many of these themes may be of relevance to other engagements in the region on other topics or have similarities to other regions across British Columbia on similar topics.

### *Economic*

The interview results show that about issues that mattered to respondents in relation to the Columbia River Treaty and impacts of the Columbia River Treaty on their lives and their communities. The key themes from the interviews that could be grouped under the Economic category were compensation, economic development and agriculture and fisheries. For compensation, the themes were the need for compensation, the existing compensation from CBT, the Canadian Entitlement and BC Hydro's financial motivations.

Under the theme of Economic Development, the sub-themes were the economic impacts of the Columbia River Treaty, the dams and the reservoirs in particular, the decline of the forest industry, economic development as a form of compensation and the economic and employment related challenges for youth. The third theme under economic development was agriculture and fisheries, which focused on water usage for ranching and agriculture and the impact on recreational fisheries.

### *Environmental*

The interview results showed that key themes that the researcher grouped into the *Environmental* category were ecological, wildlife, fish, climate change and differing views on the environment. The development of criteria or indicators of a successful engagement would need to incorporate discussing and addressing these themes as part of the evaluation. The sub-themes of the ecological theme were ecological modelling before the consultation process begins, finding the balance between power generation and ecological values and the impact of water levels on riparian zones and species at risk.

The interview results also showed that protecting and compensating communities for the loss of wildlife was an important sub-theme. Interview respondents also were concerned about the impact of water levels on riparian zones and species at risk. Another theme that was woven throughout the interview responses was fish and the impacts of the Columbia River Treaty on fish in the rivers, reservoirs and lakes of the Columbia Basin. A major piece of this was the loss of salmon as a result of the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam prior to the Columbia River Treaty in the United States. The theme of climate change and the impacts of climate change on sensitive ecosystems and on power generation were

raised. In addition, the significance of climate change modelling results was an issue respondents thought was important to be addressed.

A key theme on the environmental category was differing views on the environment. Some respondents thought it was of the utmost importance and should become the third “leg” of the “stool” in the Columbia River Treaty next to power generation and flood control. In contrast some respondents thought that the environment was too strong of a factor and expressed frustration with advocates of the environment. Some respondents even suggested that an advisory committee should be used to advise the Provincial Government on the environmental aspects that could be modified within the existing treaty. A major concern from respondents was that BC Hydro was perceived to not be transparent or open on ecological and environmental issues and many respondents spoke about not wanting the dams to be operated purely for power generation.

### *Social*

The two main Social themes are history and community as well as education. Given the deep sense of community and culture of self-reliance the *Social* category is complex and difficult as it is tied to identify and emotion. The social category could include indicators for addressing cultural and community issues such as the expressed feeling of disempowerment as a result of historic actions on behalf of the provincial government. These could include addressing community requests, responsiveness and relying on satisfaction surveys to assess success. Some respondents thought the 2012-2014 Consultations made excellent progress with the communities in this regard. Respondents spoke about the value of history in education and the strong cultural heritage as well as the collective sense of breaking of trust in communities where the provincial government already felt very remote.

Given the lower level of awareness of more intensive and deliberative engagement methods, such as the Collaborate and Empower levels of public engagement, educating about these methods are vital to securing increased engagement and participation. These methods, including simulations of decision making and role-playing are valuable tools for youth education and engagement. In terms of educating on the content of the Columbia River Treaty, respondents primarily suggested using the K-12 education system to educate youth as well as colleges and universities. Respondents spoke favourably about CBT’s network’s as well as other educational organizations throughout the Basin.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following six recommendations are presented for the consideration of the Columbia River Treaty Review Team for evaluating public engagement and the development of future rounds of public engagement. In addition, these recommendations are hoped to have value to the wider BC Public Service for public engagement evaluation.

### **7.1 One: Develop an Evaluation Plan**

Develop an evaluation plan at the beginning of the evaluation. This recommendation seeks to address

the desire for *Transparency* as described by respondents.

- Develop the evaluation plan in advance of the engagement process
- Determine the methods of data collection and analysis (mixed methods is advised)
- Collect data at the beginning, middle and end to create a benchmark and to track changes

## **7.2 Two: Use an Advisory Committee to Evaluate Engagement**

Create ongoing engagement mechanisms such as an advisory committee to evaluate engagement. This addresses the acceptance criteria of desire for Influence and Representativeness as identified by respondents in the interviews.

- Use an advisory committees for evaluating public engagement
- Use an advisory committee to examine technical and environmental aspects
- Ensure representativeness on advisory committees, panels or boards
- Create a representative advisory committee without local or provincial political or government staff

## **7.3 Three: Use Audience Appropriate Engagement Tools**

Use audience appropriate engagement tools and create materials designed for the audience. This is addressing the Levels of Engagement criteria.

- Increase opportunities for participants to engage directly with government by increasing the use of digital tools by the engagement team.

## **7.5 Four: Engage Youth**

Engage youth early, often and with targeted materials and innovative events. Engaging youth is a component of the acceptance criteria of Representativeness.

- Use real-life simulations and role-play for youth education and engagement
- Incorporate education of the Columbia River Treaty in the school curriculum
- Educate youth about environmental and historical aspects

## **7.6 Five: Source Local**

Engage in local procurement for contractors and catering with local governments and small businesses to achieve community acceptance.

- Incorporate community values, issues and concerns the community cares about into the content.

## **7.8 Six: Educate about Engagement**

Educate participants of future engagement initiatives on more collaborative and involved approaches to

public engagement. Due to the lower levels of awareness about the Collaborate and Empower Levels of Engagement, this is key to increasing participation and acceptance.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

This report proposes the revised conceptual framework and theme tables as providing the basis for an evaluation framework on the Columbia River Treaty. The conceptual framework that was derived from the literature review hypothesized that the acceptance criteria and levels of engagement would be reflected in the respondent interviews. After analyzing the interview data, the researcher concluded that the three acceptance criteria of Representativeness, Influence and Transparency were more prevalent than the criteria of Independence and Early Involvement. For this reason, the revised conceptual framework does not include these criteria. The Community Values as represented in *Figure 2. Proposed Conceptual Framework* became the Triple Bottom Line of Economy, Environment and Social categories, representing the issues and concerns that respondents wanted to discuss. This element is unique to the Columbia River Treaty and flexibility should be built into developing a framework for public engagement evaluation.

The in-depth interviews found reasonable evidence to conclude that the Levels of Engagement and Acceptance Criteria would be valuable criteria for public engagement evaluation. The indicators developed as a result of the interviews are hoped to provide the basis for developing an engagement evaluation plan for future public engagement on the Columbia River Treaty. Developing an evaluation plan at the beginning of the engagement is a critical step.

Further attention should be paid by public engagement teams to incorporating evaluation planning into the initial stages of public engagement. Using bodies such as an advisory committee as a tool for deliberative decision-making and evaluation is a key recommendation that should be examined closely for feasibility.

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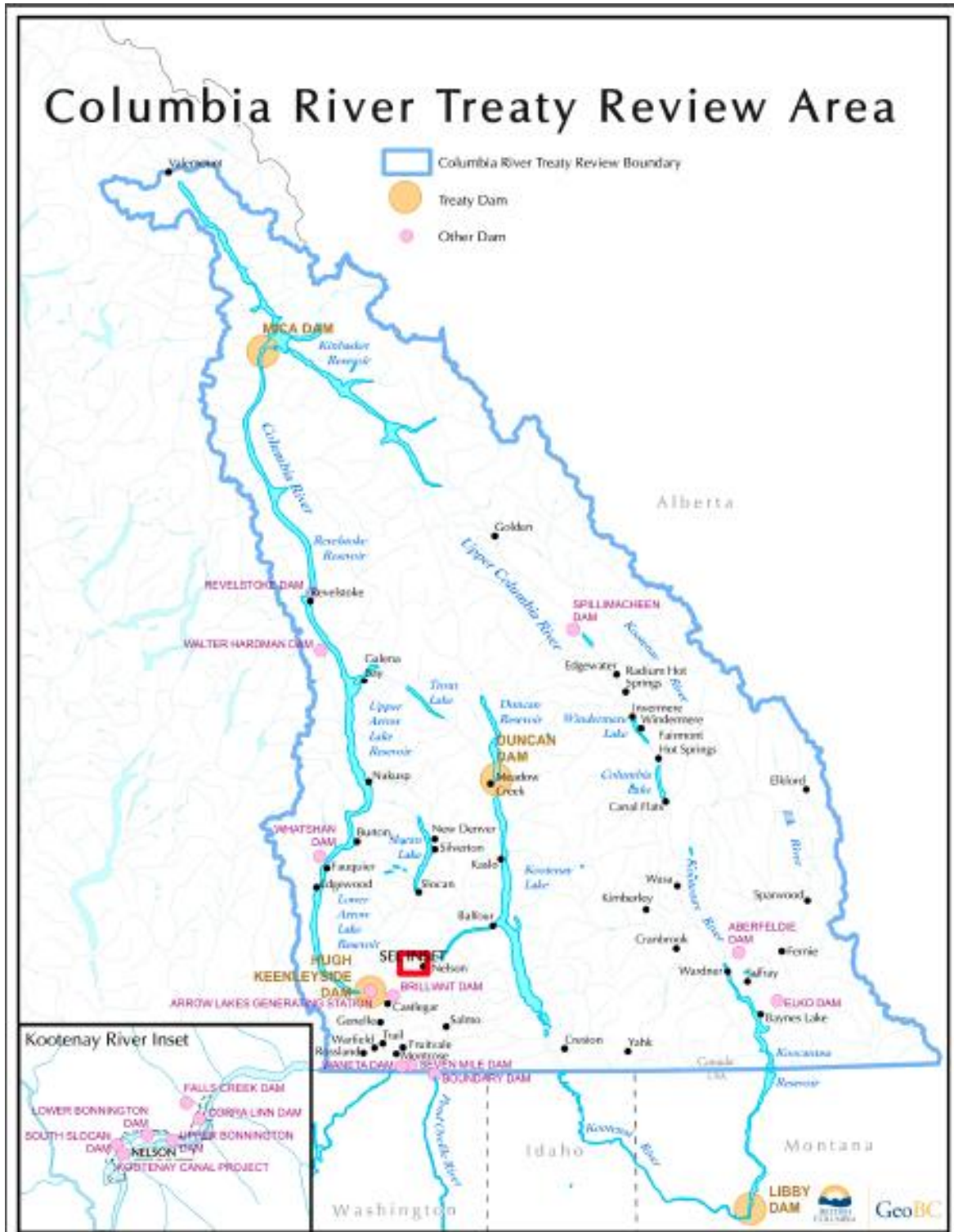
## 11.0 APPENDICES

### 11.1 Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interviews were conducted from the end of March to mid May 2014.

#	Questions (Interviews: from 30 minutes up to one hour in duration)
1.	Could you please tell me about your interest, experience and involvement in the Columbia River Treaty?
2.	If you have participated in a consultation on the Columbia River Treaty in the last two years, what do you think worked well/didn't work well in the process?
3.	What kind of results would a public consultation need to produce in order for you to think it was effective?
4.	What kind of result would show that a public consultation was ineffective or did not work?
5.	What factors do you think motivate people to participate, or discourage them from participating?
6.	What makes you feel like a consultation is effective in terms of your/your neighbour's/community's/Province's needs?
7.	How should information be provided to you to suit your needs?
8.	How should your input be gathered to suit your needs?
9.	How should meetings and workshops be run to suit your needs?
10.	What can be done to engage and include youth?
11.	Do you plan to participate in future consultations regarding the Columbia River Treaty?
12.	Is there anything else you want to tell me about the Columbia River Treaty consultation?
13.	Are there any questions that you feel should have been asked but were not?

### 11.2 Appendix 2: Project Area Map One



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