



**COASTAL
FIRST NATIONS**
GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE

Collaborative Development of Indigenous-Centered Oil Spill Response Decision Support Tools

**Pacific States – British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force Annual Meeting
November 5, 2025**

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Nuka Research**



**Project funding provided by NRCan's Multi-Partner Research Initiative (MPRI)
Indigenous-led Research Stream**

CONTEXT - Reconciliation

[Resources](#) >

**PM AND NORTH AND CENTRAL
COAST NATIONS WELCOME
AGREEMENT FOR OCEAN
PROTECTION**



KEY OUTCOMES



BRAIDING KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

To understand oil spill threats and impacts through Indigenous lens



COLLATING KNOWLEDGE

Identify best practices for compiling knowledge and data before, during, and after oil spill incidents



CAPACITY-BUILDING

Enhancing First Nations role in collaborative impact assessments and trade-off decision-making

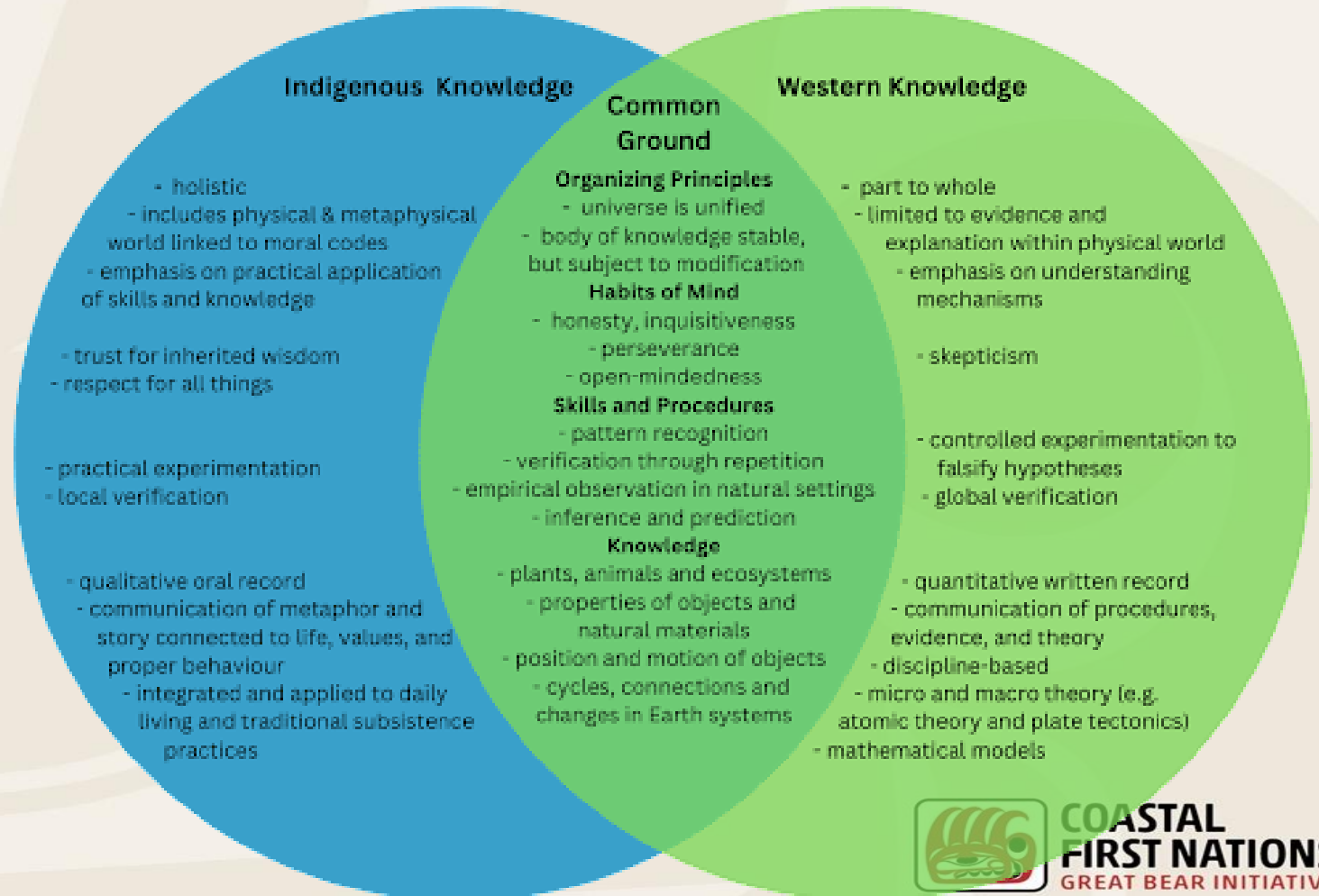
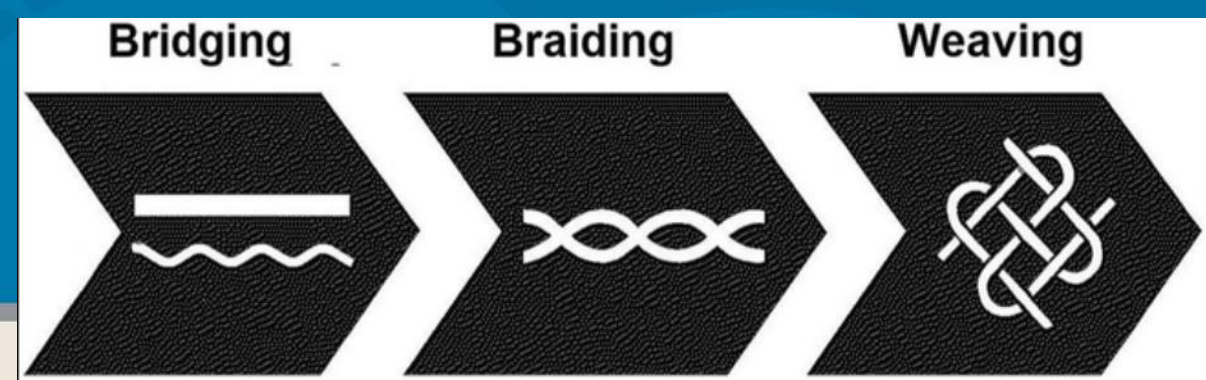


CO-DEVELOPING TOOLS

Decision support tools (DST) must be inclusive of Indigenous values and viewpoints, transparent in how inputs influence outputs, and fit-for-purpose to enhance collaborative decision-making

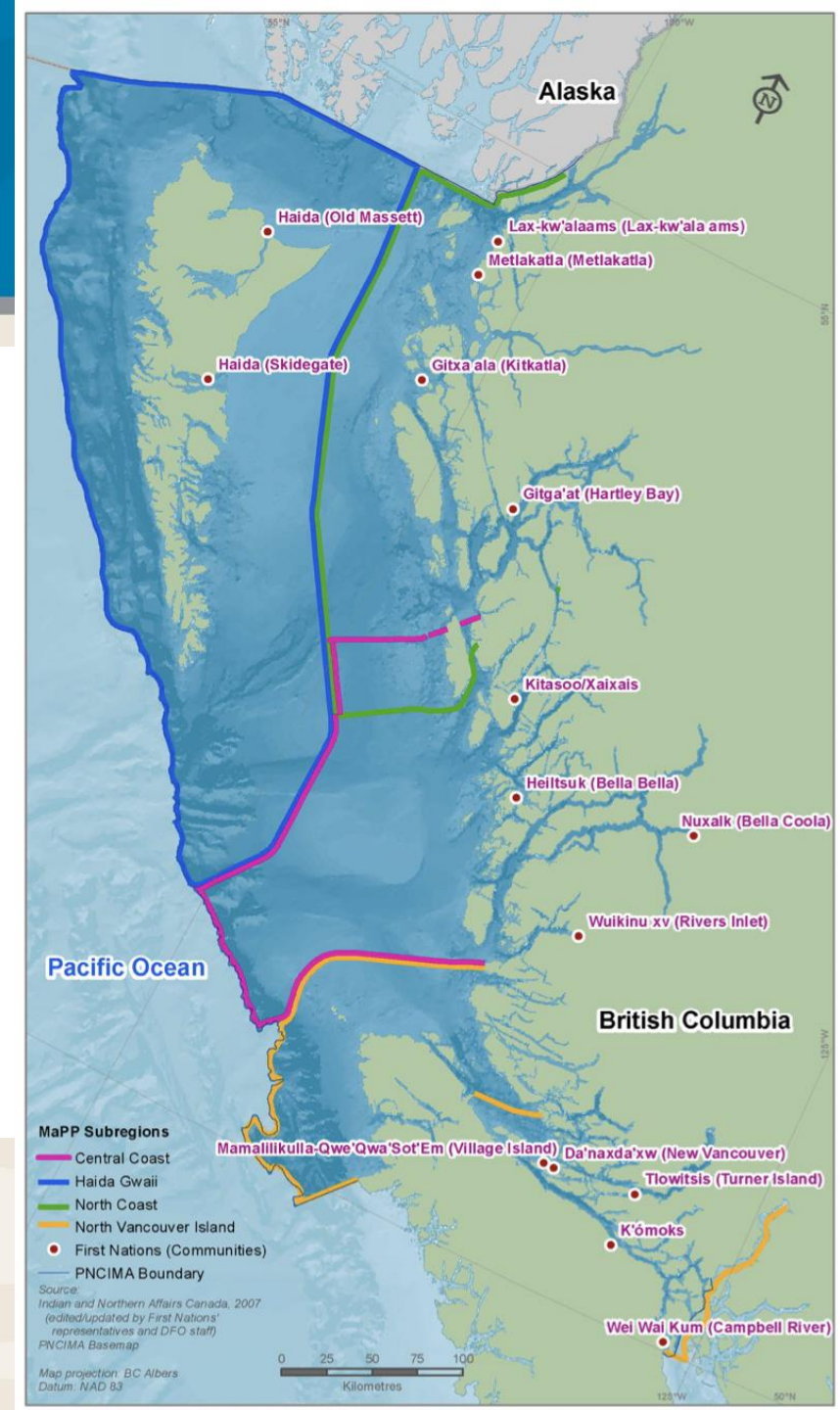
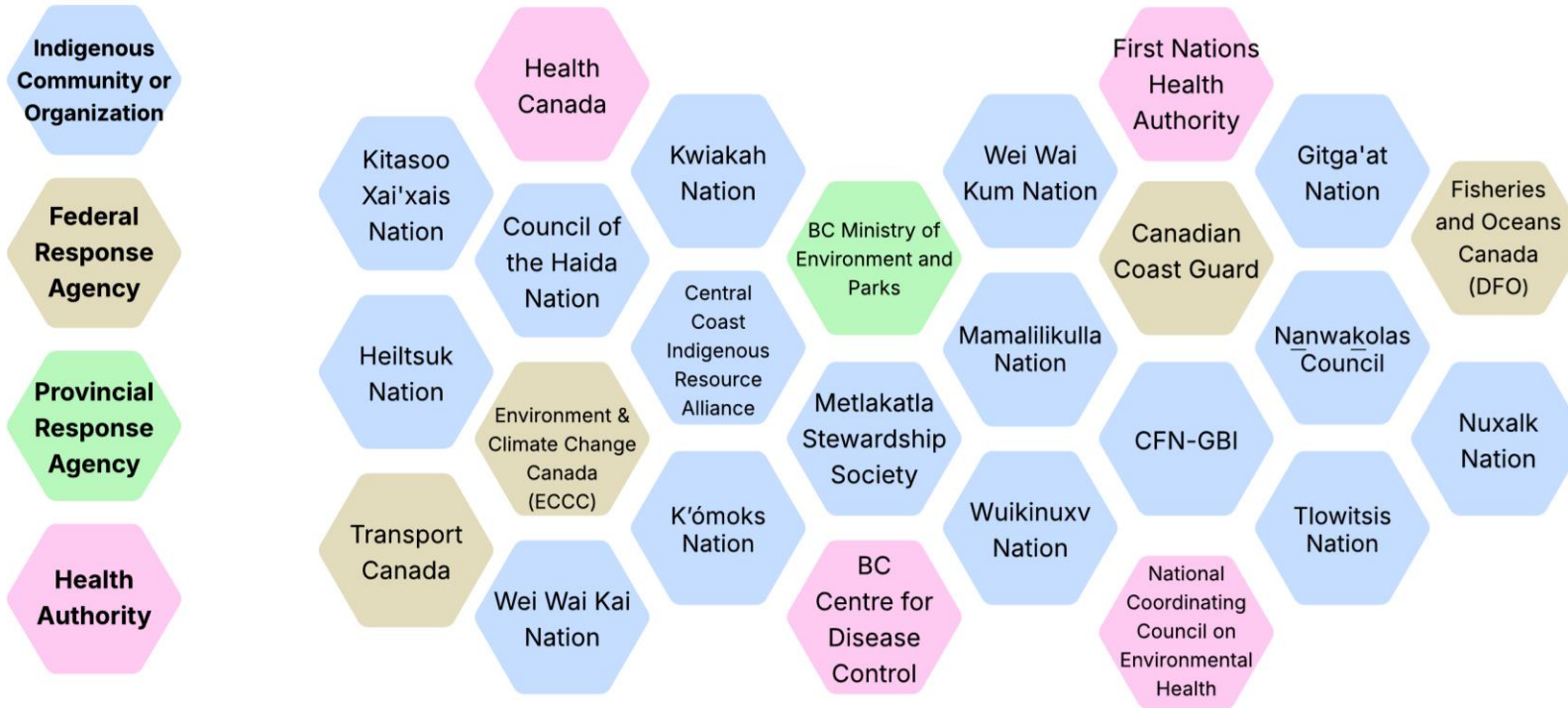
PROJECT MILESTONES

- Form Steering Committee
- Convene monthly meetings
- Develop Needs Assessment
- Host workshop #1
- Develop draft DST
- Host workshop #2
- Refine and finalize DST
- Share at workshop/conference
- Submit article for publication



2024-2027

PARTICIPATION TO DATE



NEEDS AND GAP ASSESSMENT: FOCUS AREAS

NSB First Nation Priorities



**RE-CENTERING
RISK
ASSESSMENT TO
INDIGENOUS
PERSPECTIVES**



**UNDERSTANDING
CAPABILITIES
AND LIMITATIONS
OF EXISTING
TOOLS AND
MODELS**



**INTEGRATION OF
DSTS INTO ICS
STRUCTURES AND
PROCESSES**



**DATA SHARING
AND
SOVEREIGNTY**

Needs and Gap Assessment for Oil Spill Response and Recovery Decision-support Tools that Incorporate BC First Nations Knowledge, Traditions, Laws, and Priorities



DRAFT REPORT
September 2025



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WORKSHOP #1: October 22-23, 2025 (Vancouver, BC)



Multi-Partner Research Initiative Workshop

Building Indigenous-Centered
Oil Spill Response Decision Support Tools

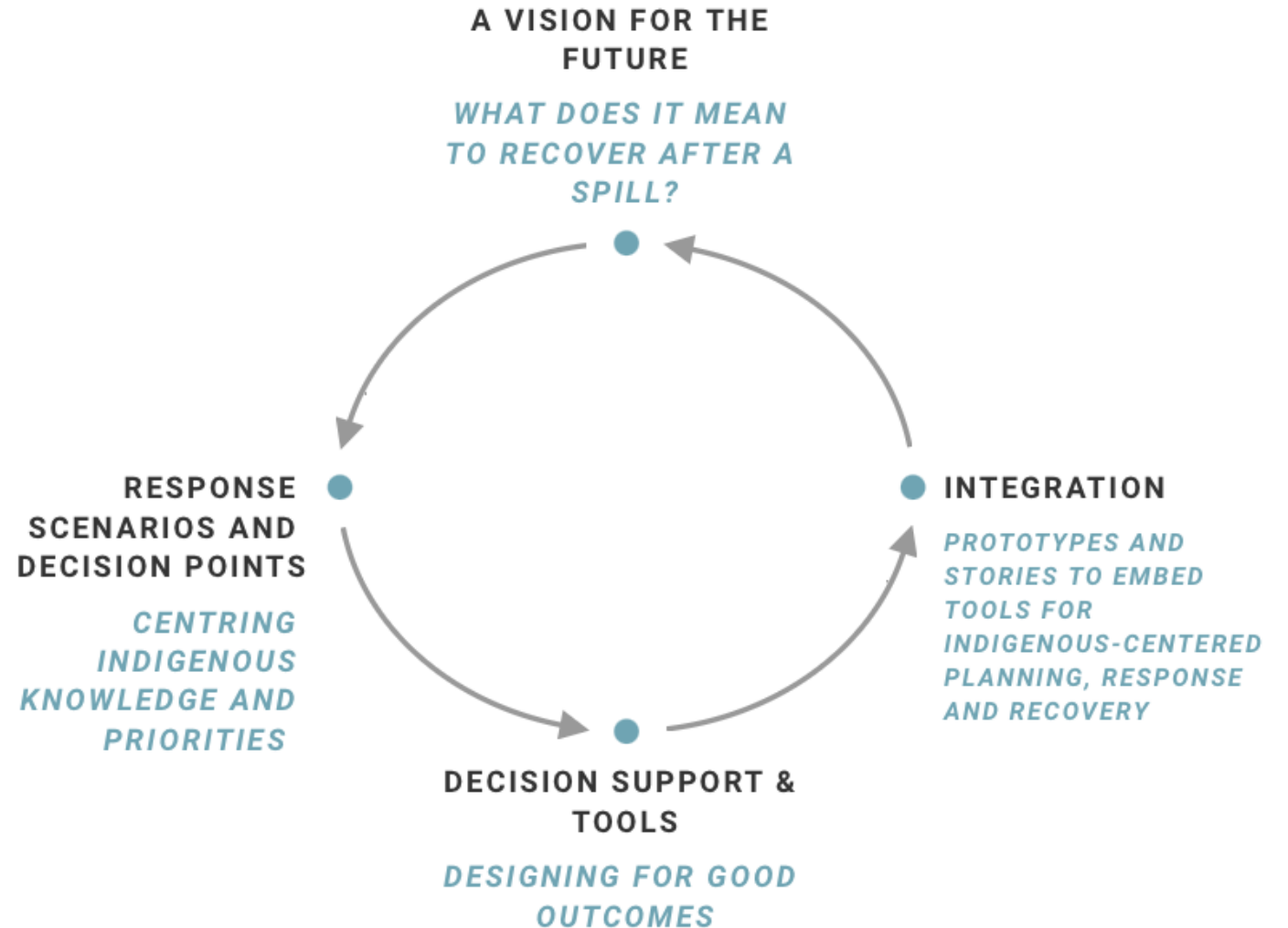
Kick-off workshop October 22nd and 23rd

This is a multi-year project to improve oil spill response tools and techniques and inform decisions that minimize the impacts of oil spills in marine and coastal environments. The first in a series of three workshops will be held on **October 22 and 23, 2025, at the YWCA Hotel in Vancouver.**

The workshop will focus on reviewing the state of knowledge and data on Indigenous community and human health impacts from oil spills, as well as current policies for incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into decision-making. Findings have been compiled in a Needs and Gaps Assessment report, which will guide workshop discussions on setting priorities for developing decision-support tools.

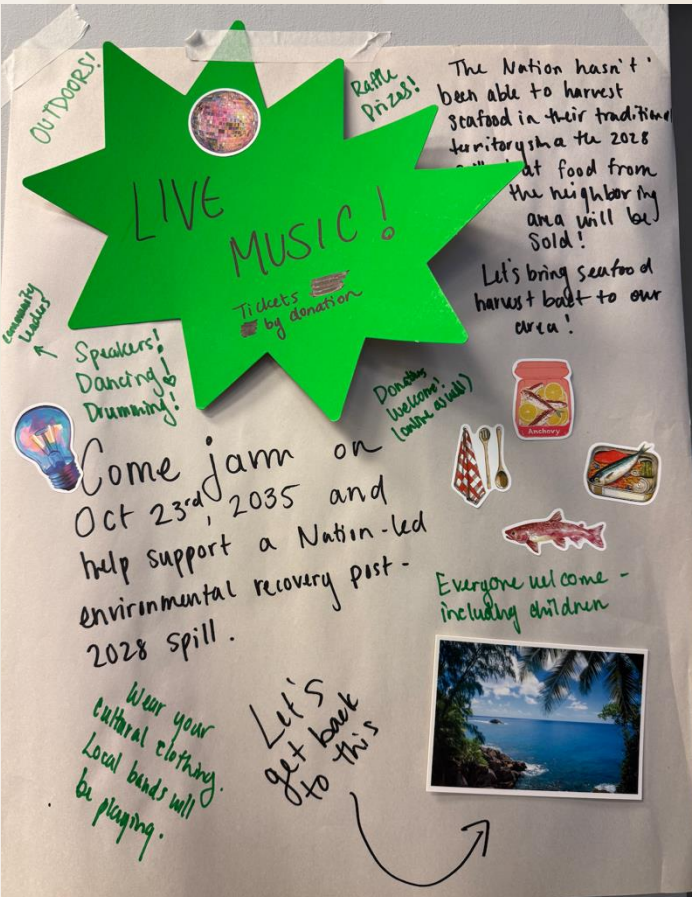
Who should attend the workshop?

- **First Nations' Leadership, Knowledge Holders, community members, and technical staff** are encouraged to attend and share their knowledge, insights, and experiences about how to enhance oil spill response decision-making to support Indigenous community priorities.
- **Spill response, science, and community health experts** from federal and provincial governments, as well as academia, are also encouraged to attend to learn from and collaborate with First Nations partners.
- **Funding is available** to cover travel expenses for First Nation participants.



WORKSHOP #1: Highlights & Outcomes

THE GATHERING 2035: 7 years after the spill



MOVING FORWARD IN A GOOD WAY

STAGNATION AND STATUS QUO

The uptake of collaborative governance and planning for marine emergencies/oil spills has been uneven, with some successes, some failures, and a lot of stalling.

MOVING BACKWARDS, LOSING GROUND

Collaborative governance and planning structures and processes have fallen apart and the commitments in the Reconciliation Framework Agreement are not being realized.



WORKSHOP #1:

Highlights & Outcomes

Scenario Challenge: Indigenous Viewpoint on DSTs

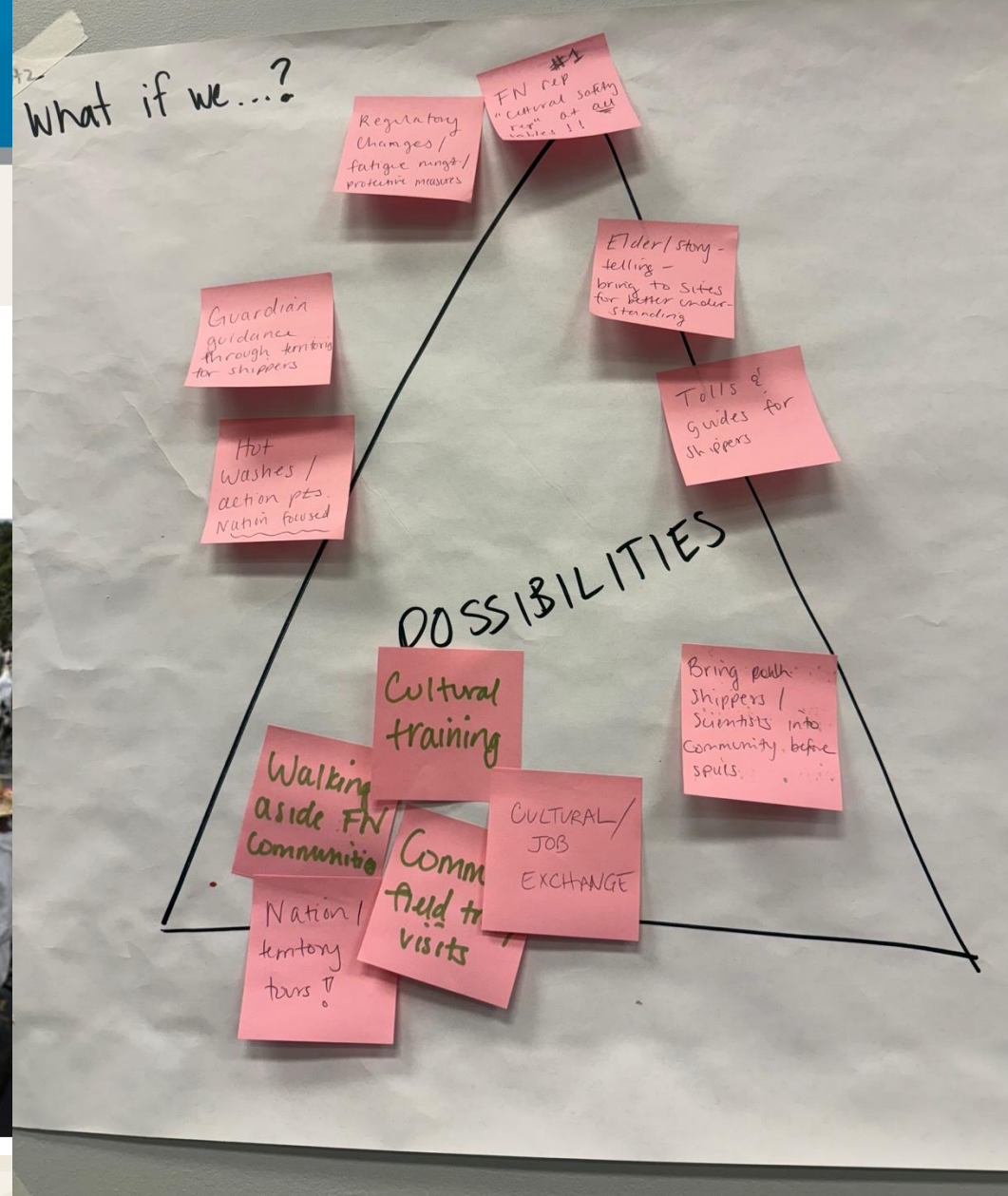
EXAMPLE SCENARIO

RESPONSE PHASE:

Spill Cleanup

SCENARIO PROMPT:

You are representing your First Nation in the Environmental Unit. A diesel spill has impacted shorelines in your territory. You are working with your colleagues from other organizations to prioritize beaches to send Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique (SCAT) Teams to conduct surveys to assess impacts and recommend treatment options for oiled beaches.



WORKSHOP #1: Highlights & Outcomes

Design Challenge: From Possibility to DST

Principles & foundations



Seeds for design



SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS: Inspiration in the room & beyond

PEOPLE

PROCESSES

Integrating Indigenous laws, protocols, and decision-making processes into tool development and application

TOOLS

Designing decision support tools that are transparent, adaptable, and centered on Indigenous priorities and values

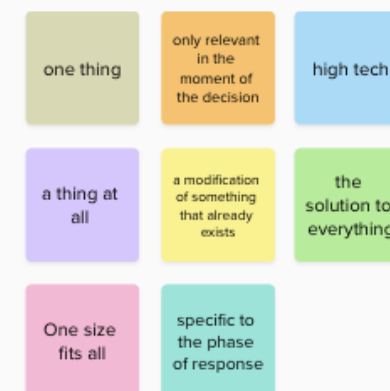
INITIATIVES

Collaborating on pilot projects, training programs, and community-based monitoring to build capacity and empower Indigenous-led responses

What could an
Indigenous-centered
DST look like?



An Indigenous-centered DST doesn't have to be...



But it can be some or
part of these...

WORKSHOP #1: Design Challenge Knowledge Fair

What is the challenge or opportunity your decision support tool will address?

Where does the information or approach come from? How is it honoured and protected?

HOW DOES THIS TOOL / APPROACH CENTRE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE / VALUES?

How does the use of this tool support recovery?

How and by whom is this tool used?

How are outputs and outcomes shared?

How or does it weave in or improve existing knowledge or tools?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RISKS?

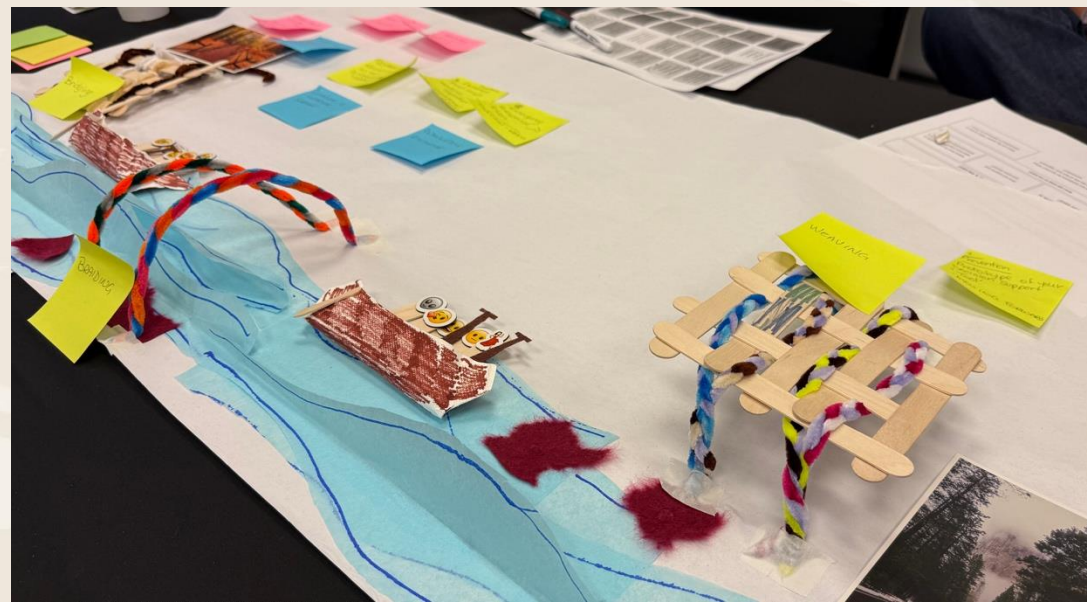
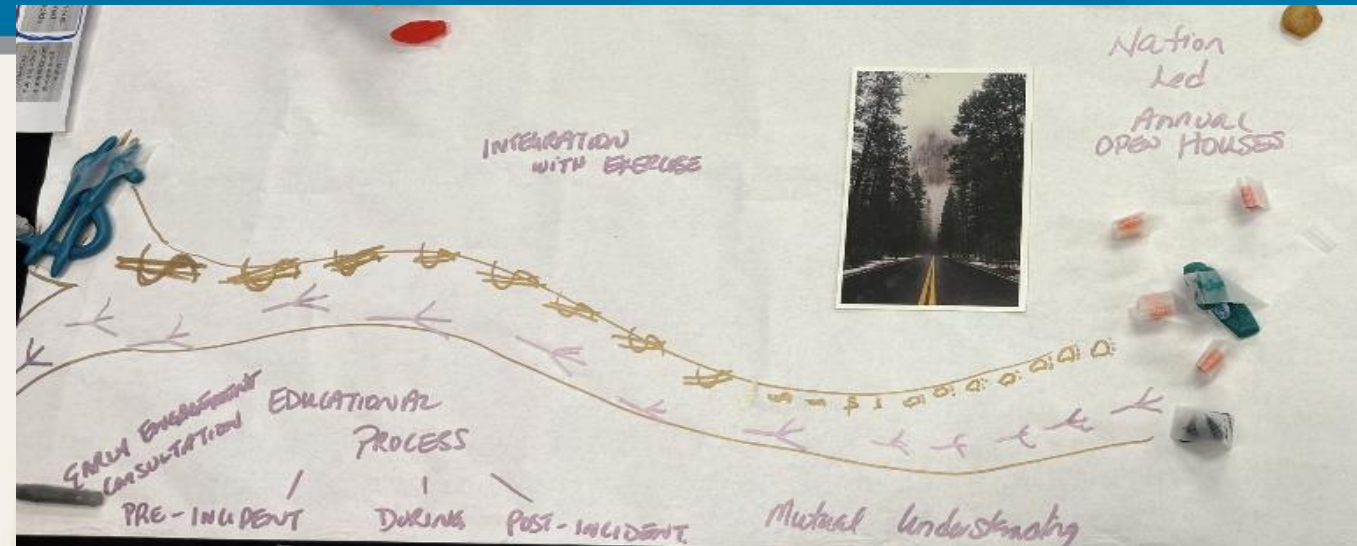
How does the application of the tool overcome challenges / barriers?

What are conditions for success? What makes the use of this tool / approach successful?

What are the inputs? What kinds of information or queries go in? How?



WORKSHOP #1: Design Challenge Outcomes & Recognition



NEXT STEPS



**WORKSHOP REPORT WITH
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
ADVANCING DESIGNS**



**STEERING COMMITTEE
REVIEWS AND REFINES
DESIGN CONCEPTS**



**3-4 DESIGN CONCEPTS
BROUGHT FORWARD AS
PROTOTYPES**



**SPECIAL SESSION DURING
2026 INTERNATIONAL OIL
SPILL SCIENCE CONFERENCE
(MONTREAL - OCTOBER)**



**WORKSHOP #2 - TEST
DECISION SUPPORT
TOOLS (SPRING '26)**

THANK YOU!

PROTECTING OUR COAST. BUILDING OUR ECONOMY.

A unique alliance of First Nations working together to protect our coast and improve the quality of life in our communities.

Screenshot

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