The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sunset over a large body of water. The sky is filled with vibrant orange, red, and yellow clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. The water in the foreground is dark with small ripples, reflecting the colors of the sky. A dark silhouette of a treeline is visible on the horizon.

**THINK, PLAN, KNOW:**  
**Successful Community-Based  
Environmental Contaminants Projects**

**Proposal Writing Workbook**



**The Manitoba Environmental Contaminants Pathfinder Program  
is funded by the First Nation and Inuit Health Branch**



**CIER • [www.cier.ca](http://www.cier.ca)**

The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) is a national, First Nation-directed environmental non-profit organisation based in Winnipeg. CIER assists First Nations in building capacity to address environmental issues.

CIER is acting as the Manitoba Environmental Contaminants Pathfinder to support Manitoba First Nations in initiating community-based projects on environmental contaminants and human health.

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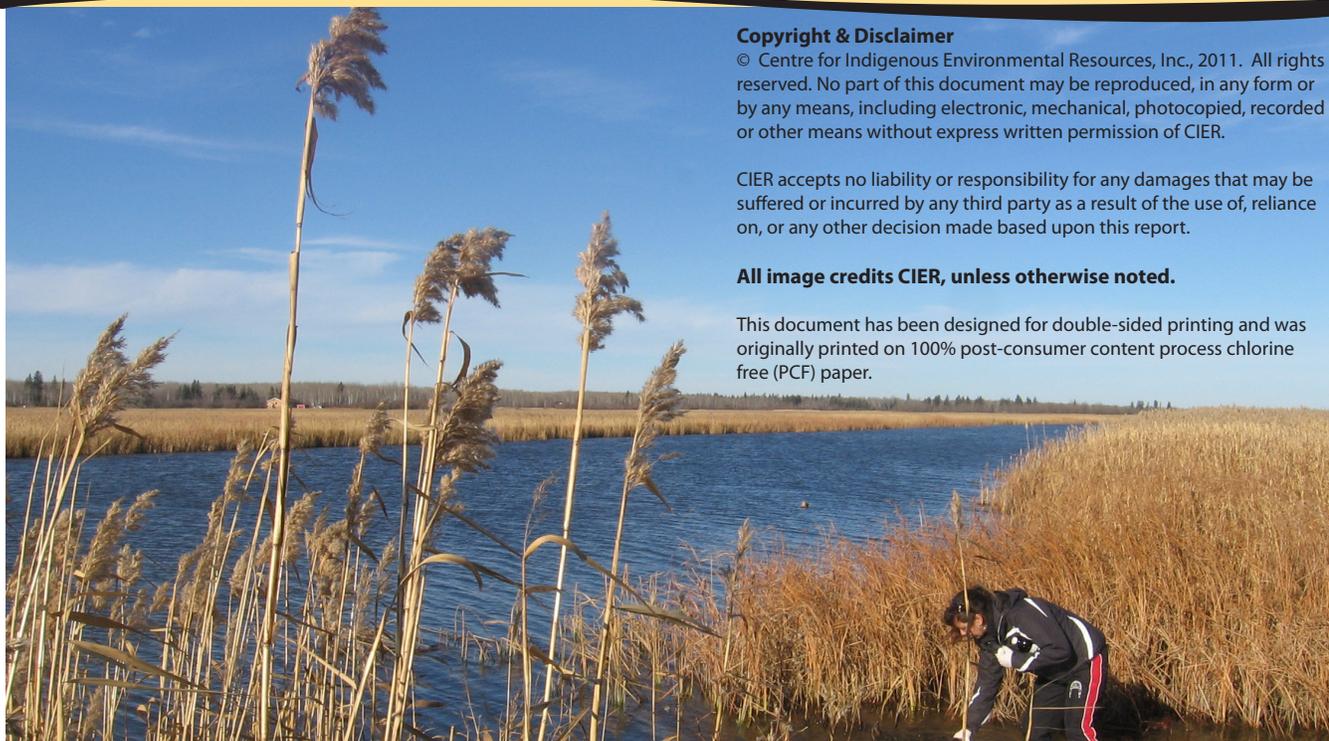
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# THINK, PLAN, KNOW:

## Successful Community-Based Environmental Contaminants Projects

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# About this Guide



Are you interested in getting your community-based environmental contaminants project funded? Are community members concerned about environmental contaminants and their impact on human health? This guide can help you develop your idea, design the project, write the proposal and make the project a reality.

Read through the book, write in it, show it to other community members, and rework it, until you and your community are confident with the ideas you have each put into the book.

There is lots of information about funding, environmental contaminants and project management within the book, but be caution about using this book as your only source of information. Please check with the most recent Call for Proposals, trusted experts and other sources for the most up-to-date information.

This workbook is divided into four parts:

1. *Turning Ideas Into Projects*
2. *Project Design*
3. *Proposal Writing*
4. *Getting the Project Started*

## 1. Turning Ideas Into Projects

This section is useful for developing an idea for a project using a mapping exercise. On a map you can see relationships between important or sacred places and potential sources of contamination. A filled-out map will also be useful in designing the project with details that matter to you.

## 2. Project Design

The project design section picks up from the map exercise by asking about the details needed to make a project work for you and your community. By following the section you cover most of the questions needed to make a successful project. You will likely rely on suggestions from experts in the field before and during the project. Use this section to guide the discussion, by posing the questions that could not be fully answered.

## 3. Proposal Writing

This section walks through an outline set out in the Manitoba Regional First Nation Environmental Contaminants Program (RFNECP) Call for Proposals. Once all the questions have been answered they can be assembled into a nearly complete proposal.



## 4. Getting the Project Started

This section is useful for setting up a plan to implement the project once the proposal funding is in place. Try to complete this section when you are writing the proposal. Then refer back to this section for useful reminders that will get the project started.

### What are Environmental Contaminants?

The presence of contaminants can affect community health and confidence. Environmental contaminants are substances that may be harmful to people, wildlife, plants or the physical environment when introduced into the environment. This introduction can happen accidentally or deliberately. The main contaminants of concern are persistent pollutants and heavy metals.

Some contaminants are natural while others are human-made. They may come from far or near, and may be transported by wildlife, humans, air, or water. Any substance found where it normally is not, or in amounts greater than considered normal for the area, can be considered a contaminant. For example, mercury occurs naturally in the environment but it can reach harmful levels because of human activity, making it a contaminant. Contaminants enter the food chain when plants, fish, birds or animals take them up. Although animals and humans can cope with many toxins, contaminants may accumulate depending on the types and levels of exposure. Environmental contaminants and their impacts can become significant issues for First Nations.



# Project Funding



## The Manitoba First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program

The Manitoba First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (RFNECP) is funded by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada. Funding available through the program assists First Nations to develop community-based projects that explore the link between human health and environmental contaminants. Projects should fall under at least one of the following three categories:

- **Effects** – Research on the effects of environmental contaminants on human health in First Nations
- **Trends in Exposure** – Environmental trends related to human exposure to contaminants in traditional territories
- **Baseline Exposure** – Baseline biomonitoring data on First Nations exposure to persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals

## Eligibility

Manitoba First Nations, Tribal Councils, and registered First Nation organizations are eligible to apply. Proposals must include a signed Band Council Resolution to support the proposed project.

## Selection of Proposals

Projects are selected for funding by Health Canada through a competitive process. Only proposals that meet Health Canada's specific application requirements will be eligible for funding.

## Other Sources of Funding

### Northern Contaminants Program

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nth/ct/ncp/index-eng.asp>

Working to reduce and, wherever possible, eliminate contaminants in traditionally harvested foods, while providing information that assists informed decision making by individuals and communities in their food use.

### National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (NFNECP)

<http://www.environmentalcontaminants.ca>

The NFNECP assists First Nations people to look at their exposure to environmental contaminants and the potential impacts to health and well-being. The Program is inspired by a community-based approach to environmental health research that combines human health research and meaningful community participation.



## Other Resources

Below are some useful resources for First Nations interested in learning more about Environmental Contaminants and writing a community-based project proposal.

### **Alaska Traditional Knowledge and Native Foods Database**

<http://www.nativeknowledge.org/db/explain/aboutproj.html>

The website is a result of the Alaska Native Science Commission, a project focused on building capacity among Alaska Tribes to take effective action to clearly identify and address their contaminant concerns.

### **CIER Library**

<http://www.cier.ca/information-and-resources/cier-library.aspx?id=174>

We have a unique collection of free web-accessible resources: bibliographies, reports, factsheets, newsletters, toolkits and more. Our collection is focused on subjects relating to Aboriginal peoples and the environment.

### **Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE)**

<http://www.mcgill.ca/cine/>

CINE is an independent, multi-disciplinary research and education resource for Indigenous Peoples, created by Canada's Aboriginal leaders. At this website you can find information on CINE's research activities, publications, events, and online resources.

### **Environmental and Workplace Health – Environmental Contaminants**

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/contaminants/index-eng.php>

This website contains current information on issues from environmental contaminants specialists, and access to updated lists of toxic substances.

### **First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network (FNEHIN)**

<http://www.fnehin.ca/>

FNEHIN is a virtual network to link First Nations and environmental health researchers to build capacity within First Nations communities to participate in environmental health research. Sections of the website include research guidelines, funding sources, resources and publications, news and environmental health e-news, and a discussion forum.

### **National First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program**

<http://www.environmentalcontaminants.ca>

The NFNECP website also contains numerous useful resources to get proposals started.

### **National Pollutant Release Inventory**

[http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri/npri\\_about\\_e.cfm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri/npri_about_e.cfm)

Publicly accessible inventory of pollutants released, disposed of and recycled by industrial, institutional and commercial facilities across the country. It is a starting point for identifying and monitoring sources of pollution in Canada.

# Turning Ideas Into Projects



When approaching a community-based environmental contaminants project. You will want to investigate the needs and concerns of the community. Start by thinking about the concerns that you and other community members have about contaminants. We find it helpful to get a map of your community and determine what is in the area, where are the contaminants issues, where are the areas you want to protect. Include other community members and leaders in this exercise. This map will help lay the foundation for the project design and your proposal.

## 1. What are some contaminants issues in your community?

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## 2. What capacity does the community have to investigate these contaminants concerns?

(e.g. People with special skills and knowledge, equipment, relationships with other organisations or other resources)

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# Mapping Exercise

## Background

A community based environmental contaminants project takes plenty of planning and forethought to be successful. Proper planning requires that the project members understand the goals of the project, areas of concern, community values, and the challenges they may face in carrying out their project. All issues that are understood best by looking at the community as it is today. Project planners will want to be thinking about the relationship the community has with local development, historic factors and the natural environment.

The following mapping exercise will help to identify important areas of value, contaminants issues, and important cultural areas in your community. The results of the mapping activity will help to determine how the community is related to the environment, gaps in knowledge, and where to focus priorities in the development of the community-based project.

## Mapping Exercise Instructions

Obtain photographic, topographic, or other large community maps. Place or draw the following symbols where appropriate (print-out found at the end of the workbook).



1. Use a heart symbol to locate the 'heart' of the community and state where this is. Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

Why is this the Heart of the Community?	Why is this area important to you?



2. Use a house symbol to locate the main areas where people live in your community. What is this place(s) called?

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3. Use a sun symbol to identify your favourite places. Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

Favourite Places	Why is this your Favourite Place?



4. Use a cloud symbol to identify what and where the general (not necessarily environmental) issues are in the community. Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

What is the Issue?	Ways to solve this Issue



5. Use a  toxic symbol to show where the environmental or contaminants issues . Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

Environmental Issues	Why is this hotspot important?



6. Use a  or  symbol to locate important cultural (e.g. berry-picking site, trap line, sacred site) or heritage sites. Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

Cultural or heritage site	Why is this site important?



7. Use a  moose,  pickerel or  leaf symbol to list where the important habitats and environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. fish-spawning site, protected forest area) are and explain why these areas are important?

Wildlife habitat	Why is this area important?



8. Use a  recreation symbol to show the recreation areas in the community. Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

Recreational areas	Why is this area important?



9. Use a water symbol to list where the water systems/sources are in your community. Then fill out the table below describing the location of the symbol:

Water systems and sources	Why is this water system /source important?

### Now that the mapping exercise is complete

- Share the map with community members and encourage them to add to the map. Different people such as Elders, youth, resource users, and leadership have different knowledge and perspectives that can give the map more depth.
- Incorporate other symbols or writing on the map to identify other important features that may be of importance.
- Your community may be facing more than one environmental contaminants issue, and the map can be helpful in identifying which areas require immediate attention and which areas will require future action.
- The map can be useful at meetings with community members or leadership to select a contaminants issue to focus on and to discuss and identify project goals.
- You can also use the map to assist with determining details of your project, such as locating places that are important to sample for contaminants. For example, if environmental contaminants issues are identified on the map as being close to areas marked as environmentally sensitive or important cultural areas; these sensitive/important areas may be where you would want to focus your sampling efforts.

# Project Design



Consider your project design as the essential guide to your project from this point on. By determining all the pieces of the project and ensuring that they work together, you will have more success in your project. The design will help you make decisions that keep the project running smoothly and accomplish your goals. By goals, we mean the expected end result of all the hard work that will be put into this project. To determine goals or begin designing any project, you must first come up with a purpose for the project. This is why you or the community will do the work.

## 1. Why does your community want to study environmental contaminants?

The purpose of your community-based project may be similar to one of the examples below:

- So that the community can collect data that will help manage the communities' natural resources and negotiate with industry or government.
- So that the community can protect and preserve your resources for recreation, subsistence, and ceremonial purposes.
- So that the community can address concerns about water, land, and traditional food quality in the area resulting high rates of disease in the community.

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## 2. What kind of contaminants study does your community want to do?

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### Examples of a contaminants related study include:

- Contaminated foods survey
- Baseline contaminants study to find out what types and at what level the contaminants exist in traditional foods
- Develop a tool for analysis of risks to community associated with contaminants;
- Health survey of community
- Develop a database on environmental contaminants for several communities in one area
- Testing of (fish tissue, human blood samples, moose) for contaminants in the area.

## 3. Who in the community will be leading the project?

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## 4. Who in the community can help to complete the project (e.g. the sampling, the coordinating of Elders, etc.)? What are their roles?

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Look to project partners for assistance with project design. Fill out this section together or show them your answers and they can help you with important details.

## 5. Who are the outside partners needed to help the community complete the project?



Working with an outside partner can be beneficial to achieving quality results that will help achieve your objectives by providing guidance with project details, training community members and writing technical reports.

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## 6. Which other First Nations or organisations have undertaken similar projects that you want to do in your community?

If the answer is yes, the lessons learned, methods, and data collected can help your project

Community/ Organisation	Project Title/Description	Project Activities	Lessons Learned

## 7. Who is the main focus of your study?

These are the people in the community who are the subject of the study. They could have a higher risk of exposure to environmental contaminants, or have a health problem that is being investigated by the study. These people are often referred to as the target population.

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## 10. Where is the study taking place?



This area can be specific locations that samples will be taken or a region that will be targeted for health surveys. Take a look at the map from the mapping exercise. Consider areas where people may come in contact with the contaminants. For example, a series of lakes where people are known to fish, but may have been exposed to contaminants from mining or down river industries.

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## 11. When will activities be taking place?

The timeline of your study should be well thought out. A large time frame may be too costly or difficult to fund, but a short time frame may miss important data or have poor quality results. For example, when looking at the contaminants in water spring time will show peaks because of run off that would otherwise be missed. As always consult project partners and experts to determine the best times to perform certain activities.

Activity	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar

## 12. Where will your data be stored upon completion of the project?

Try to find multiple storage locations for physical and digital data that is secure from theft, fire, and flooding. Remember that data may be useful to the next generation, if it is properly stored.

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**13. How will you be communicating the project among project team members and to your community?**

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**14. What are some things that might pose a risk to carrying out a successful contaminants project in your community?**

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# Proposal Writing



A successful proposal itself does not stand alone, it is built up with careful planning, research, and partnerships. Starting as early as possible is highly suggested to give time for these steps, to allow for set backs, and revisions. Read the most recent Call for Proposals to guide you through the process. The following questions can be thought of as an outline to your proposal and include most of the questions you will need to answer when writing the proposal to the RFNECP. Where possible use details from the Project Design and Mapping Exercise sections in this guidebook.

## 1. Which community members should I ask about this proposal?

These are the people that will sign the Chief and Council, administrators, managers and project team members. Consider also the people who will be effected by the project and their role in the project.

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## 2. What is the purpose of the project?

Look to the first question in the project design section. Rewrite that statement here. Consider what the community wants to know about environmental contaminants and why?

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**Don't forget to ask your Chief and Council to pass a Band Council Resolution in support of the project. This is requirement to apply for both the NFNECP and RFNECP.**



**A literature review is an excellent means of determining where your project fits in the greater world, how you can improve upon your methods and even who would make ideal partners in the project. (An excellent resource on literature reviews produced for the NFNECP can be found in the compendium/2009 Resources/ NFNECP\_Lit-Rev 09-10). A literature review means summarizing studies that have already been conducted on your research topic in order to present the status of current knowledge.**

### **3. Write down a brief project Background**

Consider the history of the issue, the effects on the community, and any efforts to address the issue. One way to start is to describe the location of the community, when the community first started to become concerned about the issue, and the source of the issue. Make sure to note and major studies and any actions taken to deal with the issue.

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#### 4. What are the goals of the study?



Another word for goals is objectives. Make sure your goals are SMARTER (see box below) these will be important to the success of the project.

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#### Goals should be SMARTER

**Specific** - The more specific the better. State your goal in as exact of terms as possible.

**Measurable** - What will be the measurement of your goal.

**Accountable** - Who or what are you accountable to for the goal?

**Realistic**- Unrealistic goals will lead to discouragement.

**Time-framed** - Decide your time-table for completion, including dates, and stick to it.

**Exciting** - Goals that are exciting will be met far sooner than boring, bland goals.

**Recorded** - Keep in a place where you can look at them every day.

*Examples:*

- Community researcher obtains 20 samples of pickerel from lake by August 15, 2011.

- Team leader writes a healthy consumption guide about 10 country foods by March 30, 2011.

#### 5. What are the general categories of your research? (circle any that apply)

Refer to the Call for Proposals for the most up-to-date categories. This category should be very clearly written into your proposal. The below categories are from the 2011-2012 Call for Proposals.

- 1. Research on the effects of environmental contaminants on human health in First Nations** (*example: assess the long-term health impacts of PCBs in your community*)
- 2. Environmental trends related to human exposure to contaminants in traditional territories** (*example: determine the change in arsenic concentration from an old mine*)
- 3. Baseline biomonitoring data on First Nations exposure to persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals** (*example: assess the concentration of mercury in fish*)



## 6. How will this study benefit the community?

Think about the purpose of the project (question #2) and any other benefits. For example, the community will learn more about their traditional territory or there is an opportunity for students to get on the land.

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## 7. How will this study incorporate Traditional Knowledge?

Guidance from Elders, land users and fishers may be useful in given a longer term perspective think of ways to include these knowledgeable individuals

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## 8. What are the ways that this project can build capacity for the community?

For example, job training or database creation

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## 9. What activities will you be doing to complete the project?



Complete the list of activities (a-d) and the follow up questions for each activity.

These activities should include all the work needed to complete the project. For example interviewing community members, sampling, laboratory analysis, reporting, and/or community presentation.

**a)** \_\_\_\_\_

*How will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Where will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Who will do the work?* \_\_\_\_\_

*When will it be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

**b)** \_\_\_\_\_

*How will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Where will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Who will do the work?* \_\_\_\_\_

*When will it be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

**c)** \_\_\_\_\_

*How will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Where will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Who will do the work?* \_\_\_\_\_

*When will it be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

**d)** \_\_\_\_\_

*How will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Where will the work be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Who will do the work?* \_\_\_\_\_

*When will it be done?* \_\_\_\_\_

Check with your local Environmental Health Officer to confirm that the project is suitable for funding before you begin writing. Check the Call for Proposals for contact information.



## 10. What are the outcomes of the project?

These are the short and long term benefits that you expect from accomplishing all the goals of the project. This will be linked to the benefits seen in your community, but there may be others as well. Take a look at the project goals (question #4) each should be connected to at least one outcome.

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## 11. What deliverables will be created by the project?

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***Deliverables* are tangible objects produced as a result of the project**

**Some deliverables include:**

- a. Interim and Final Reports**
- b. Manuals or guiding documents**
- c. Posters**
- d. Public reports and articles**
- e. Items used for communicating the results of your project**

## 12. What deliverables will be given to the funder?

From the list of deliverables above (question #11), pick deliverables that should be shared with the funder, such as reports and public documents.

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### 13. Budgeting for your Project



Check the proposal guidelines for definitions and requirements. The following table is based on the 2011-12 Call for Proposals budget outline in Appendix A:

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
<b>Salaries/Wages</b>		
<b>Equipment/ Facilities</b>		
<b>Travel</b>		
<b>Professional Fees (laboratory fees)</b>		
<b>Operating Costs (administration)</b>		
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
<b>Total Project Expenses</b>		
<b>Funding Requested</b>		
<b>Funding From Other Sources</b>		



## 14. How will you evaluate this project?

Consider your goals and outcomes, can you measure them? Outcomes may be less straight-forward than goals (because they are made SMARTER, question #4), and could require follow-up work, such as a survey to evaluate the impact and relevance to the community. A projects are often evaluated for their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and/or impact to the community and the wider-world.

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## 15. How will you communicate the results of the project to the community?

These could include, presentations, formal letters to participants, a radio show or a newsletter.

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## Putting it all together

Your answers in the Proposal Writing section of this workbook forms the basic content of your RFNECP proposal. Below is a table showing the proposal section, the answers that make up the content and how long each section should be according to the Manitoba RFNECP. When writing your proposal leave the Project Summary until the end as it should contain only the key points, without new information, described in other sections and indicate the general category of the research (see page 17 for details). The summary should be done in plain, non-scientific language. Check the Call for Proposal for specific requirements – work through the Call for Proposals and cross out each requirement when completed.

✓	Proposal Section	Answers in the Workbook	Suggested Length
	Project Summary	3, 5, 6, 9, 10	1/2 page
	Project Description	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	1 page
	Activities, Methodology and Timelines	9	1 page
	Outcomes and Deliverables	10, 12	1/2 page
	Budget	13	1 page
	Project Team and Partners	1	1/3 page
	Project Evaluation	14	1/3 page
	Communication	15	1/3 page

## Project Title



Now that the proposal is almost complete make sure to put a descriptive title on it. Consider using one of the primary goals or activities in the project, for example “Building Confidence in the Traditional Foods of (*insert Community name*)” or “Identifying the Relationship of Mercury and Human Health in (*insert Community name*).”

## Proposal Writing Checklists

✓	Writing your proposal
	Read the Call for Proposals
	Community members have been consulted
	Proposal addresses priority research identified in the Call for Proposals
	Proposal idea has been approved by your local Environmental Health Officer
	Proposed project activities will occur between April 1 and March 31 of the next fiscal year
	Project partners have been contacted and consulted
	Budget is complete
	All general and specific requirements outlined in the call for proposals have been met
	Band Council Resolution is signed

✓	Proposal package includes
	Band Council Resolution
	One electronic copy of the proposal in MS Word
	One paper copy of the proposal
	Detailed budget information
	Information about other funding sources



## Role of Manitoba Pathfinder

Until March 2011, CIER can assist your First Nation to:

- Find and access existing information related to your concerns;
- Identify and develop potential project ideas;
- Identify and contact potential project partners
- Research pertaining to the proposal writing
- Technical services, including preliminary mapping

If you decide to undertake an environmental contaminants research project, all phases of the project, including proposal writing, would be an initiative of your First Nation. The pathfinder program is reevaluated on a yearly basis, which could limit our ability to assist your project in the future.

**The goal of the pathfinder is to assist First Nations to secure their own community-based environmental contaminants projects.**

## Role of External Consultant

An external consultant can act to fill knowledge and skill gaps when conducting your project. These partners will more effective if they are involved early in the process.

They could assist your First Nation with:

- Project design and planning
- Training and troubleshooting
- Analysis







**3. What level of training do Project Team Members need?**



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**4. How and when will the training be provided?**

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**5. What are some considerations for collecting and recording the samples and data?**

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**6. What equipment do you need and where can you obtain it?**

benmeadows.com; 800-241-6401  
www.forestry-suppliers.com; 800-647-5368

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## 7. Who will be analysing the samples?

This is usually done with a laboratory that will have specific procedures for taking samples.

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## 8. Who will be analysing the data?

This is the person that will receive the data from the above individual or laboratory.

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## 9. Who will be writing the report?

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## 10. Contact Checklist

Keep a contact list handy of project partners, team members, laboratory representatives, funders and other key persons to contact in order to get the project started.

✓	Contact Name	Phone	Fax	Email

Be sure to contact project partners to clarify the timeline, reporting requirements, payment and any other special considerations before beginning the project work.

