

JUST TRANSITION GUIDE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Just Transition Guide is a testament to Indigenous communities' commitment to creating a sustainable future while upholding our values through hundreds of years of colonial oppression. This comprehensive guide serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to learn from these communities' experiences and begin their journey towards a just and sustainable future.

This path forward requires deep, systemic changes in energy policy and beyond. Join us as we learn directly from the Wisdom of Communities about the need for Indigenous self-determination, inclusion, and the protection of Indigenous rights, knowledge, sovereignty and leadership for a "Just" Transition.

"We are in the midst of the transition, and Indigenous nations and communities are the ones leading it.

The Just Transition Guide was made possible by way of a partnership between Sacred Earth Solar (SES), Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) in collaboration with Power to the People and the David Suzuki Foundation. Of course, without the inspiring work of the communities involved, this Guide would not exist. This Guide is intended as a collective resource that ultimately makes it easier for communities to both share and build upon renewable energy knowledge. It is my hope that the Just Transition Guide will inspire and support the implementation of more climate solutions across Turtle Island in the years to come."

- **Melina Laboucan-Massimo**
Founder, Sacred Earth Solar
Co-Founder, Indigenous Climate Action



KEY LESSONS

The Just Transition Guide goes in depth into each of the following key lessons:

1. Colonialism, extractivism, and capitalism cause climate change and social injustice. Indigenous sovereignty, rights, and leadership create key solutions.
2. The Just Transition offers a constructive path forward.
3. Energy conservation and efficiency are an important first step. Understanding your community's energy use and ways of reducing energy demand is key.
4. It's worth becoming better acquainted with the key phases of renewable energy projects.
5. Community engagement and relationships are vital.
6. Capacity building leads to energy sovereignty.
7. The Just Transition also encompasses our food systems, land, and homes.
8. Indigenous voices must be meaningfully included in energy policy decision-making.
9. Energy policy must be equitable and reflect the lived realities faced by Indigenous communities.
10. Our communities are actively leading the way.

IMPACT

COMMUNITY

Those looking for insights on the best practices for implementing a project in their community, Nation or territory can look to the Pîtâpan Solar Project Case Study. The study outlines the process followed by the Lubicon Cree First Nation and Melina Laboucan-Massimo that prioritized community visioning and input in each step of the way, ultimately leading to a successful project that the Nation is proud of.

Similarly, the Wisdom from Communities reflections woven throughout the Guide offers more insights and learnings from Indigenous communities that have led and implemented their own climate solutions. We encourage you to learn from the Indigenous communities themselves on what an Indigenous-led Just Transition can and should look like.

“This Guide is an offering and a resource for Indigenous Peoples and all who are looking for pathways towards implementing an equitable transition. It contains valuable success stories, real life examples, and important technical information, which together outline the ways communities can move forward through a Just Transition.”

- Melina Laboucan-Massimo
Founder, Sacred Earth Solar
Co-Founder, Indigenous Climate Action





BEYOND / POLICY

This Guide has also included a critical lens, reviewing “The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly” sides to energy and current colonial government policies regarding climate and renewable energy.

As Indigenous peoples, we recognize that Indigenous peoples all around the world hold vital relationships with their territories. In order to maintain the “just” in a “Just Transition”, this guide positions Indigenous rights at the centre of the discussion. Explore the Sustainability Considerations sections to learn more about the environmental and cultural impacts on Indigenous communities inside and outside of so-called Canada.

The guide reviews how previous colonial policies have allowed ongoing fossil fuel extraction and fell short in engaging with Indigenous communities. The lessons of the guide highlight the notable gaps in the federal government’s current approach to a Just Transition, including Bill C-50, the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act, which just passed second reading in parliament in October 2023.

The Sustainable Jobs framing chosen by the government is narrowly focused on solely jobs and does not include the need for entire communities, municipalities, and provinces to transition, missing the opportunity to solve much more than our climate problems. The principles and strategies of the Just Transition extends beyond our energy systems, as we also advocate for just relationships with one another and with the natural world.

These recommendations are explored deeper in the guide as calls to action for policymakers and industry partners to move towards a Just Transition with Indigenous communities:

1. Relationships - Building Partnerships and Enhancing Collaboration
2. Capacity Building - Supporting Sovereignty and Self-Sufficiency
3. Equity-Oriented Policy - Creating Fair and Just Energy Solutions
4. Procurement Approaches - Cultivating Democratized Energy Systems
5. Interrupt the Status Quo - Decolonizing and Decentralizing Energy Systems

We encourage you to explore with us the need for significant policy shifts at all colonial government levels to prioritizing a proactive approach that includes Indigenous perspectives and contributions to climate solutions. We deserve a just and equitable transition, responsive and proactive policy measures, and the prioritization of Indigenous voices in decision-making.
