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- Our mandate includes Aboriginal recipient organizations, and our objective is to support Aboriginal communities.
- Our Treaties Unit keeps advised of any developments that might have implications, represents Canada's federal interests, aspects of cultural property, maintenance of official languages, etc.
- Aboriginal groups remain eligible so long as they meet the application criteria.
- Band council resolutions can exert control over research.
- We must incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into the 150th Anniversary of Canada celebrations.
- Coordination of North Warning System is handled through a contractor, and is expensive, totalling \$900 million over 10 years, a big deal for the North. This project is almost complete, everything is in place for follow up.
- Many sites are on treaty land, so it's essential to engage with land claim agreement holders (LCAs) across the north.
- Good communications were critical. We had to listen to what the LCAs were saying, their concerns and issues. The objective was to get to root level issues and objectives that Inuit had. We were very methodical about reflecting back their wishes to them.
- The initial contract was awarded to a joint venture half-owned by Inuit interests, then the subsequent work put out for competition.
- The existing contract with the joint venture put a lot of emphasis on Aboriginal employment and training. We felt that we'd made a lot of progress, wanted to avoid slipping backwards on anything. Two key questions we asked: How much money is flowing into northern communities; how many northerners are benefitting directly?
- Regarding Inuit ownership, we met their concerns except one: Inuit role in corporate leadership.
- GOC response was creative, a good team of folks helping, came up with creative solutions, including cash incentives to the contractor to grow the benefits to Inuit. One example: if the contractor fails to meet objectives they have to pay into Inuit social programs.
- There was a transparent engagement process, letting them know what to expect, when things were changing.
- HR and training are the biggest elements of what they had. The program has been extended, with new, higher targets. Another creative measure: the Aboriginal employment target was organized by percentage of payroll to encourage high level jobs.
- Re summer work, Inuit companies were having difficulty bidding, so we injected an incentive for workshops to northern companies to increase percentage of subcontracts let to Inuit-owned companies.
- Inuit are happy with contract as it is now and would like it to continue.
- We have thoroughly enjoyed the consultation process.