

Indigenous knowledge systems support pathways to stronger food sovereignty and better decision-making: New report

News Release

September 24, 2026 – Ottawa, ON

Governments and institutions increasingly recognize the importance of Indigenous knowledges but struggle to bridge knowledge systems in ways that share authority, support Indigenous self-determination, and produce better social, environmental, and economic outcomes.

A new report from the Council of Canadian Academies examines the challenges of bridging knowledge systems through the lens of Indigenous food sovereignty, a priority that depends on more than access to food; the integrity, continuity, and self-determination of Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) is essential. *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Food Sovereignty* examines how policy and governance can better support these systems by advancing Indigenous priorities and strengthening social, environmental, and economic outcomes for everyone in Canada.

“This report recognizes that Indigenous ways of knowing are diverse, living knowledge systems that have existed since time immemorial,” said Treena Wasonti:io Delormier, chair of the expert panel. “Our hope is that the intentions carefully woven into this work will be carried forward by policy-makers, decision-makers, scholars, knowledge users, and community members as evidence and guidance for bridging Indigenous knowledge systems in ways that value respectful relationships built on reciprocity and shared authority.”

Commissioned by the Government of Canada’s Interdepartmental Indigenous Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (I-STEM) Cluster, the report focuses on Indigenous food sovereignty and food security as an entry point for understanding how Indigenous knowledge systems can be supported in policy and governance. The panel found that current federal mechanisms often treat Indigenous knowledges as information to be considered within existing western decision-making processes. While recognition is an important first step, the report finds that these approaches can remain extractive when they do not share decision-making power or provide reciprocal benefits to the communities that hold and practise these knowledges. Healthy Indigenous knowledge systems cannot be separated from Indigenous rights, sovereignty, governance, and self-determination.

“This report invites governments, institutions, and all people in Canada to think differently about what it means to work with Indigenous knowledge systems,” said Tijs Creutzberg, President and CEO of the CCA.



Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Food Sovereignty examines ways to advance Indigenous food sovereignty and food security through policy and governance that bridge western and Indigenous knowledge systems for broader benefits. The report identifies three phases for bridging knowledge systems in policy and governance: building strong foundations, developing respectful relationships, and co-developing governance approaches that share authority and respond to shared priorities.

Download the report at www.cca-reports.ca.

-30-

Contact:

Heather Ennis
Director of Communications, Council of Canadian Academies
613-851-7723
heather.ennis@cca-reports.ca

For more information about the CCA or its assessments, please visit www.cca-reports.ca.

Follow us on [Bluesky](#).

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#).