Indigenous Knowledge Systems Initiative (IKSI) - Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is IKSI?

The Indigenous Knowledge Systems Initiative (IKSI) was initiated in 2023 as part2 of the Envision Resilience Challenge Design Studio curriculum to respectfully acknowledge Indigenous historical and contemporary ties to the sites of study. IKSI resources include the Envision Resilience Tribal Land Acknowledgement, the *IKSI Tribal Land Acknowledgement Syllabus* and the *IKSI Working Syllabus* for each Challenge site. IKSI supports Indigenous knowledge and Native science, alongside western resources, as a vital body of knowledge and partners with Indigenous designers in the fields of architecture and landscape architecture.

Q2: Why does including the Indigenous history and contemporary context matter?

Acknowledging the inherent relationship tribes have with their landbase and understanding the current tribal context, including the ongoing ramifications of Challenge sites' colonial history, actively supports tribal sovereignty. As Indigenous peoples have sustained these lands for time immemorial, Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous experiences of place pre-date America. As architects, planners, designers and visionaries of built environments, it is contextually relevant and imperative to include the Indigenous peoples' history with sites of built and unbuilt projects. Understanding the Indigenous and colonial heritage of the Envision Resilience Challenge sites restores and enriches sites' identity and further informs designers to create site-specific solutions reflective of its community, history and land. Reflecting on our own contributions is to further understand the way we create, facilitate and shape the places, communities and history for the next generation.

Q3: How does IKSI work?

IKSI supports the Envision Resilience Challenge Design Studio curriculum by curating resources to respectfully acknowledge Indigenous historical and contemporary ties to the Envision Resilience Challenge sites. As a place-based, multidisciplinary and multiuniversity design studio, the needs for each semester evolve. The IKSI syllabi are updated with analyzed resources and case studies to support each Challenge site. For example, if you're interested in learning about whose traditional territory the Challenge Site belongs to and what tribes surround the site today, go to the *Tribal Land Acknowledgement Syllabus* organized by Envision Resilience Challenge sites to date. If you're looking for regional tribal climate action plans and frameworks, or ecological practices to inform your design project, refer to the *IKSI Working Syllabus* and look under the "Indigenous Knowledge" section. Envision Resilience Advisor, Anjelica S. Gallegos, is available for Challenge student office hours to provide guidance to those interested in learning more about respectfully incorporating Indigenous knowledge into studio work. Current student and faculty participants should refer to the Studio miro board for office hours and contact information for Anjelica.

Q4: How does IKSI support tribal sovereignty?

IKSI recognizes the inherent right and self-governance of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities and understands Indigenous peoples have sustained the Challenge sites for time immemorial. We support Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous experiences of place. As a dedicated initiative within Envision Resilience, IKSI highlights tribal histories of Challenge sites, Indigenous sustainable design practices and builds relationships with grassroots community organizations, nonprofits, municipalities, leaders and visionaries in design, to support positive climate futures for all communities, including tribal communities.

Q5: What is the IKSI Working Syllabus and the Tribal Land Acknowledgement Syllabus?

The *IKSI Working Syllabus* and *IKSI Tribal Land Acknowledgement Syllabus* provide foundational resources, principles and case studies focused on Indigenous sustainability within architecture, planning and design, inclusive of landscape architecture and environmental design.

Both syllabi outline publicly available electronic, analogue and archival resources on critical Indigenous knowledge systems, narratives of uncommon experiences of place, tribal land acknowledgement and site histories. Resources to learn about Challenge sites' current Indigenous communities, including organizations, initiatives, community projects, articles, documents and books related to sustainability and spatial practices are listed. Also included are historical and contemporary tribal territory information, as a method to bolster climate justice. To learn more about IKSI's sourcing, please refer to the "Note on IKSI Approach and Resources" section on page 3 of the syllabi.

Q6: How is the tribal land acknowledgement effective?

The Envision Resilience tribal land acknowledgement and (IKSI) bring awareness to ancestral tribal land relationships by elevating tribal histories and partnering with contemporary Indigenous organizations, practitioners and individuals in the curation and curriculum of the Challenge.

Q7: What tribal community engagement and/or tribal consultation has Envision Resilience conducted?

As a young ally (non-Indigenous) led organization, the Envision Resilience IKSI team is informed by Federal recommendations and guides, including from the Department of the Interior, and by Indigenous-led organization recommendations in working with Indigenous communities. Relationship building and being up to date on Indigenous affairs and Indigenous thought leadership is a priority for the Envision Resilience IKSI team. While IKSI has not partnered with a tribal government directly, Envision Resilience builds relationships with Indigenous community members, practitioners, and tribal organizations. Local tribal and international Indigenous organizations, programs and Indigenous practitioners have been invited to contribute and collaborate with the Challenge programming as jury reviewers, lecturers for the speaker series and as IKSI partners.