

Questions that run through my head when non-Indigenous people/organizations ask me to participate in something, a threaaaaaadddd:
[Tweeted by @melgiskaast 12:09 PM - 20 Oct 2017; edited to remove abbreviations.]

1. Who are you? What do you want to do? Why do you want to do it?
2. At what stage in the project are you? Have you involved Indigenous people right from the start? Was this project your idea or their idea?
3. Have you asked Indigenous people what they want? Are you listening to them?
4. What background learning have you done? Are you prepared to put work into learning or do you expect you/your team/your institution to be spoonfed?
5. How will this project benefit you and your institution now/in the future? How will this benefit others?
6. How will this project benefit my community and Indigenous people now/in the future? (not just a product; e.g., also training, experience)
7. Will the project and its results be accessible, relevant and meaningful to my community/to Indigenous people? How will it be communicated?
8. Do you realize Indigenous peoples are diverse? Am I expected to provide the "Indigenesness"? Are there other Indigenous people involved? How?
9. Are you paying Indigenous people the same as you are non-Indigenous? Are you adequately compensating them for their time, knowledge & experience?
10. Does this seem like a checkbox exercise? e.g., to show that you're doing "reconciliation." Does it seem like you're expecting cookies?
11. Do you seem prepared to do what Indigenous people say? (i.e., not thinking "consultation" is enough, then going off & doing whatever you want)
12. What have you done in the past? What has your institution done in the past? What is your institution doing now?
13. Does it seem like you're the person designated to deal with Indigenous "stuff," and the rest of your institution doesn't care about us?
14. What other resources does this project have? Is there evidence that your institution values this project?
15. Who do I know who's worked with you? What was their experience? What's expected of me? How much work is expected of me vs. of other people?
16. What are your timelines? How flexible are they? How did you come up with them? Do I have the time to meaningfully participate in this?
17. What negative consequences might there be for my community/Indigenous peoples/me? How will these be mitigated?
18. Does it seem like you're mainly interested in using the reputation and contacts of my organization or myself?
19. At what level (hierarchically) are Indigenous people involved in this project/in your organization? Do they have any decision-making power?
20. When you're looking to involve Indigenous people, are you only looking to some types (e.g., university educated, men)?
21. Are the people who will be most impacted by the project actually involved in the project?
22. Will I and my community see you again? Do I and my community seem valued, or do I feel like we're a means to an end?
23. Do you realize you're dealing with real people with real lived experiences, or does it seem that this is more of an intellectual exercise?
24. Will this project likely go somewhere? e.g., if it's making recommendations, will they be acted on & that resources will be there for them?

So, if you're approaching an Indigenous person/org to work on something, you better have thought about this b/c we certainly are.