

Graduate Internship Opportunity

Summer 2025

PROJECT TITLE

Just Transition Guide 2.0 - Exploring Indigenous-led pathways to equitable climate resiliency and solutions.

ORGANIZATION

Sacred Earth Solar

Project Background

Since 2015, Sacred Earth Solar (SES) has worked on Just Transition projects, energy literacy, climate justice advocacy, Indigenous sovereignty, and healing justice initiatives in communities, as well as advocating for progressive and robust climate policy regionally, nationally and internationally. Our work is led by an Indigenous women, two-spirit, and gender diverse team, and we aim to reflect our lived experiences in all that we do.

As a part of our energy literacy and training work, SES created the [Just Transition Guide](#) (“the Guide”) in collaboration with Indigenous Climate Action (ICA), Power to the People, and the David Suzuki Foundation. Our Just Transition Guide is an offering and resource for Indigenous communities, as well as all who are looking for pathways towards implementing an equitable energy transition. The solutions shared in the Guide support the protection and revitalization of Indigenous cultures, languages, and knowledge to create community resilience in the face of the climate crisis. The Guide contains valuable success stories, real life examples, and important technical information, which together outline the ways communities can move forward through a Just Transition.

The Guide takes you on a journey into the lived experiences of Indigenous communities across Turtle Island who have faced centuries of colonial oppression yet continue to act as leaders in the protection of Mother Earth. The Guide includes chapters on the energy and electricity sector of so-called Canada, followed by an overview of the types of renewable energy projects Indigenous Nations are taking on - including solar, wind, microhydro, geo-exchange, and small-scale biomass. Initiatives beyond renewable

energy are included - including energy conservation and efficiency, Indigenous food sovereignty, eco-housing, and cultural revitalization. Resources and examples are also provided to support Indigenous communities aiming to design, implement, and construct their own renewable energy solutions. The Guide also explores, critiques, and reimagines how energy policies in so-called Canada have the potential to facilitate a Just Transition in Indigenous communities.

Project Background

The Just Transition Guide is considered a living document that will continue to grow as we identify topics that are relevant to the lived experiences of the communities we work with and reflect new developments in our understanding of what a Just Transition entails.

SES has identified knowledge gaps in the current Just Transition Guide and hopes to conduct interviews with subject matter experts to include more content that reflects the lived experiences of Métis, Inuit, and Northern communities, as well as more in-depth information about critical minerals; food sovereignty; the Land Back movement; cross-movement solidarity, and federal energy policy from 2021 onwards. Our continuation of the Just Transition Guide research supports our living document in being up-to-date with the most recent information for communities accessing the resource.

Our new research focuses are guided by the needs of communities, and directly impact Just Transition implementation. For us to continue to support communities, we must continue providing community-centered knowledge and education. The research conducted through the Sustainability Scholars Program will primarily focus on the critical minerals and food sovereignty components of our content updates.

SES has also received numerous Just Transition training requests from Indigenous communities and organizations. SES will be creating in-person and virtual training curricula to offer to Indigenous communities and organizations across Turtle Island. If time allows, our Scholars may also contribute to the creation of educational materials that directly support our Just Transition training offerings.

Scope of Work

1. **Updates to the Just Transition Guide:** SES will include more content to reflect the lived experiences of Métis, Inuit, and Northern communities, as well as more in-depth content about critical minerals; food sovereignty; the Land Back movement; cross-movement solidarity; and federal energy policy from 2021

onwards. This deliverable will include both desktop research and up to five interviews with subject matter experts.

Scholars will be asked to research, analyze, and report their findings on critical minerals (as they relate to a Just Transition and renewable energy infrastructure) as well as food sovereignty initiatives that Indigenous communities are implementing across so-called Canada. We would like to develop additional chapters in the Just Transition Guide outlining Indigenous perspectives on the connection between critical minerals and renewable energy implementation, as well as Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives that support a Just transition beyond renewable energy.

Key questions the scholars will be researching:

- What is the status of critical mineral mining as it relates to a Just Transition? (For example, the copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and other minerals used in renewable energy infrastructure) Is there any political or scientific momentum on making critical mineral mining more just and sustainable? What are potential pathways forward?
- How are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across so-called Canada implementing food sovereignty initiatives? What challenges, needs, and strengths are communities observing as they implement these initiatives?

2. **Educational Materials:** SES will develop and offer educational materials (such as pamphlets) to communities taking part in our training sessions. These materials will provide summaries of key topics that are accessible for a diverse audience. These materials may also be given to participants at conferences and other SES events.

If time permits, Scholars may support SES in the drafting of these educational materials - providing an opportunity to build their science and/or policy communication skills. Topics may include an overview of an Indigenous-led Just Transition; renewable energy implementation steps; and a summary of energy policy in so-called Canada. Scholars will summarize key information from the Just Transition Guide and contribute towards the design of the educational materials.

Key Deliverables

1. Indigenous Perspectives on critical minerals chapter for the Just Transition Guide
 - a. Our main deliverable will be completing a chapter on Indigenous perspectives on critical minerals (key discourse for the Just Transition). This deliverable will be approximately 5-10 pages.

2. Expansion of the “Beyond Renewable Energy” section of the Just Transition Guide, specifically focusing on Indigenous Food sovereignty initiatives.
 - a. Research case studies around Indigenous food sovereignty to support a thematic section around different initiatives communities can take. This deliverable will be approximately 5 pages.
3. Educational Materials

If time permits, Scholars may draft educational materials (such as a pamphlet or paper handout) that will be given to community participants of SES’s Just Transition training programs. Scholars will summarize key information from the Just Transition Guide to create a 1-page deliverable. Topics may include an overview of an Indigenous-led Just Transition; renewable energy implementation steps; and a summary of energy policy in so-called Canada.

Time Commitment

- Part-Time (15 hours) per week from May 1, 2025 - August 15, 2025, to complete 250 hours.
- Hours worked Monday-Thursday with weekly to bi-weekly meetings with supervisors.

Preferred Skills & Background

- Excellent research and writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in sustainability
- Community engagement experience
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Project management and organizational skills

Additional Project Requirements

*Prior experience working with Indigenous Peoples

Experience and fluency with Google Docs, Google Sheets, Zoom

Program Information

Dates: May 1—August 15, 2025

Compensation: Scholars are paid approximately \$31.80/hr for 250 hours of work (based on UVic Research Assistant pay rate)

Application Deadline: January 31, 2025

Contact: Laurel Currie (sustainability-scholars@uvic.ca)

[Visit our website](#) to learn more about eligibility and application requirements.