

The ECHO Network (Environment, Community, Health Observatory): Strengthening intersectoral capacity to understand and respond to health impacts of resource development

Funder(s): Canadian Institutes for Health Research

Project Duration: 2017-2021

Project status: In-process

Project Description: Responding to the health impacts of resource development requires thorough observation and nuanced analysis of the interrelated socioeconomic, ecological, cultural, and political pathways that influence health in regions in which communities and resource development operations coexist. Indeed, the cumulative community, health, and environmental impacts of resource development remain contentious and poorly understood issues. This project brings together university researchers and research partners across Canada and internationally, who have identified a need to better understand and address the health, environment and community impacts of resource development. This project is focused on working together across sectors to take notice of- and respond to- the influence of resource development on health and well-being, with specific emphasis on rural, remote and Indigenous communities and environments. By integrating different kinds of information, strengthening capacity, and building cross-jurisdictional relationships, the ECHO Network project aims to develop more integrative tools and processes to understand and respond to the cumulative impacts of resource development.

The ECHO Network is anchored in four regional cases across Canada actively grappling with the health impacts of resource development, including the New Brunswick Children, Environment and Health Collaborative (New Brunswick), the Battle River Watershed Alliance (Alberta), the First Nations Health Authority (British Columbia), and Northern Health (British Columbia).

Key Deliverables: The ECHO Network will provide a platform to connect people, share information and best practices, and develop effective responses as informed by diverse perspectives and contexts. Overall, this research aims to develop methods for intersectoral responses to the cumulative impacts of resource development.

Role of the CIRC: CIRC staff, in collaboration with Northern Health and ECHO researchers, are delighted to be co-designing and contributing to the development of the northern BC case-study for this project.