

Evaluation FRAMEWORK

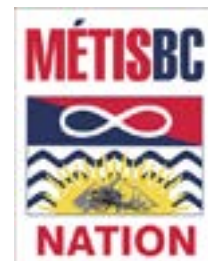


A **Supportive** Environment
for Indigenous-Led Health Research

Introduction

The British Columbia Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research (BC NEIHR) is a supportive environment for Indigenous-led health research; one which is woven from the values, knowledge systems, priorities and leadership of ICCOs (Indigenous communities, collectives and organizations), Indigenous academic researchers and students in British Columbia (BC). Through our extensive network of experienced and dedicated members and partners, the BC NEIHR will facilitate a provincial (and national) Indigenous health research agenda. Ultimately, the BC NEIHR will contribute to the improved health, wellbeing and strength of Indigenous Peoples by supporting transformative research.

Authorship Statement: Tara Erb (PhD Candidate SFU & Network Coordinator BC NEIHR) led the authorship of this document in collaboration with Charlotte Loppie (Professor, UVic) and the BC NEIHR Evaluation Committee. The BC NEIHR operates under the guidance and values of our Indigenous-led Governing Council. Copyright Statement (2022): This document is copyrighted by the BC NEIHR. All of its content may be used without permission provided the authors are fully acknowledged.



BCAIFC | BC Association of
Aboriginal Friendship Centres



Canadian Institutes of
Health Research
Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

Woven from
VALUES & KNOWLEDGE



Leading Research **ACROSS BC**

The BC NEIHR is led by key Indigenous-governed, community-led organizations that are leading research across BC. These three partners are:

The First Nations Health Authority

The First Nations Health Authority's vision is healthy, self-determining and vibrant First Nations children, families and communities in BC. The FNHA also aims to reform the way health care is delivered and reduce health disparities.

FNHA works with BC First Nations, government partners and others to improve health outcomes for BC First Nations people and provide trauma-informed care.

FNHA supports data sovereignty and self-determination in the area of health research and is committed to system-wide change, as well as supports a collective health systems' goal of culturally safe research and health services for First Nations and Indigenous people in BC.

<https://www.fnha.ca>

Métis Nation British Columbia

Métis Nation British Columbia develops and enhances opportunities for Métis Chartered Communities and Métis people in British Columbia by providing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services.

MNBC is the official governing body of the Métis in BC, representing almost 90,000 self-identified Métis people in British Columbia; of that, almost 17,000 are provincially registered Métis Citizens with MNBC.

The MNBC Ministry of Health & Wellness is committed to enhancing Métis wellness that is informed by Métis Chartered Communities through community consultation processes.

<https://www.mnbc.ca>

British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres provides umbrella services and provincial supports to the 25 Friendship Centres in British Columbia. Friendship Centres provide services to Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) living in urban settings and hold space for all members of the community to celebrate culture, share knowledge, and connect with others.

With a focus on health and wellness, one of the BCAAFC's goals is to help people create a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle by building a supportive network of health and wellness initiatives that acknowledge the diverse needs of the population.

<https://www.bcaafc.com>

The Objectives

The goal of the BC NEIHR is to increase and enhance Indigenous-led health research in BC and Canada through the following objectives:

- 1 Develop **infrastructure** (i.e., space, resources, programs, administrative and organizational structures), which supports Indigenous communities, collectives and organizations (ICCO)-based health research.
- 2 Facilitate and support Indigenous Peoples in **leading** health research and Knowledge Sharing and Mobilization (KSM) that reflects their **values, priorities and approaches**.
- 3 Provide **funding** to support ICCOs, researchers and students to undertake Indigenous health research and KSM in BC.
- 4 Develop, facilitate and support meaningful and constructive **capacity bridging** initiatives for ICCOs, researchers, students and institutions.
- 5 Enhance **awareness and relevance** of Indigenous health research among ICCOs, researchers, students and institutions.
- 6 Facilitate and support **ethical and culturally safe research partnerships** between ICCOs and academic researchers and students as well as with diverse policy and organizational partners at local, regional, national and international levels.
- 7 Engage in provincial, national and international **partnerships** in order to advance the objectives and ensure the **sustainability** of the BC NEIHR.



Increase & Enhance
INDIGENOUS-LED HEALTH

Environmental Evaluation Approach

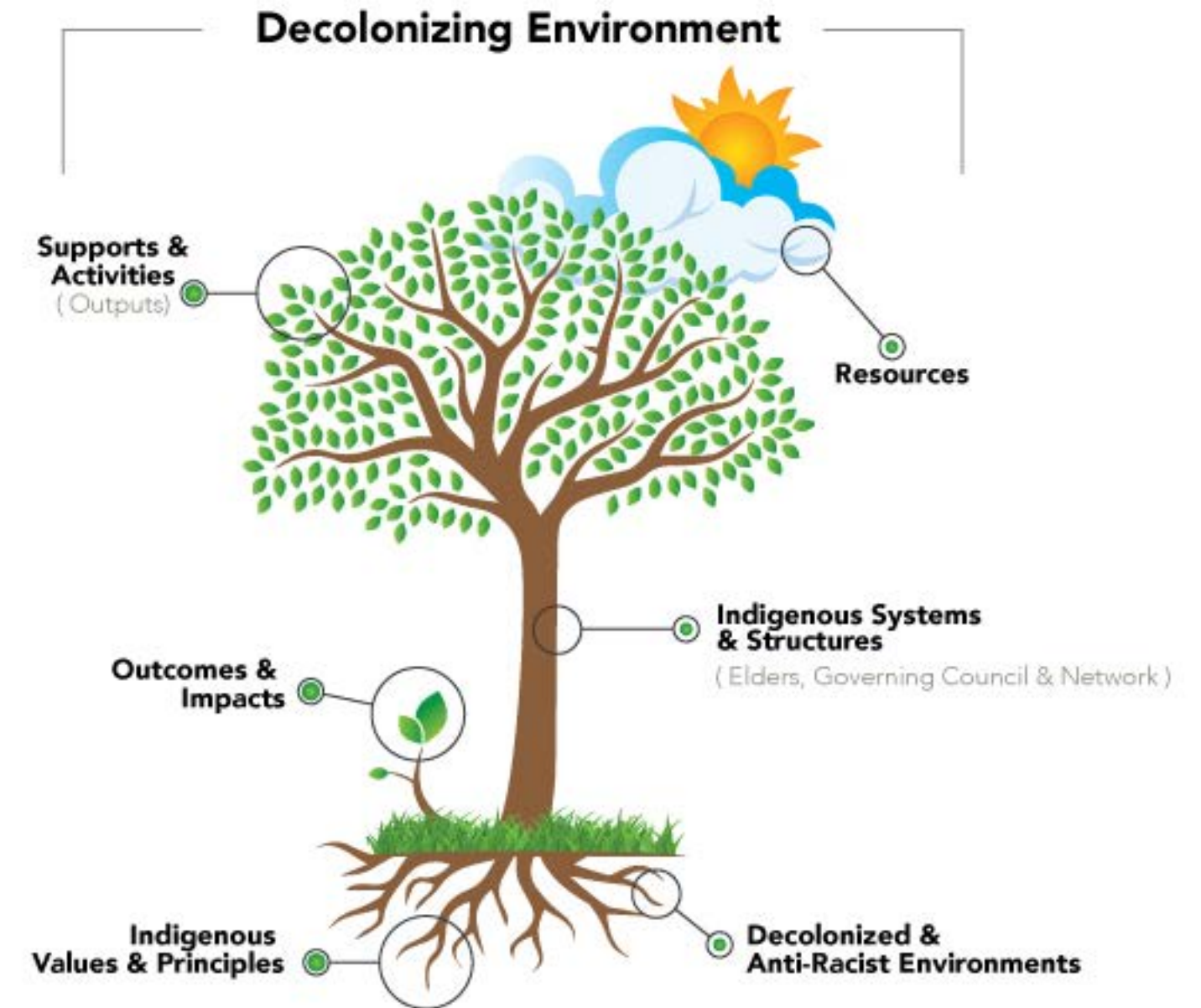
The BC NEIHR is guided by Indigenous values emerging from many culturally and geographically diverse communities in BC; these values are the foundation of our work.

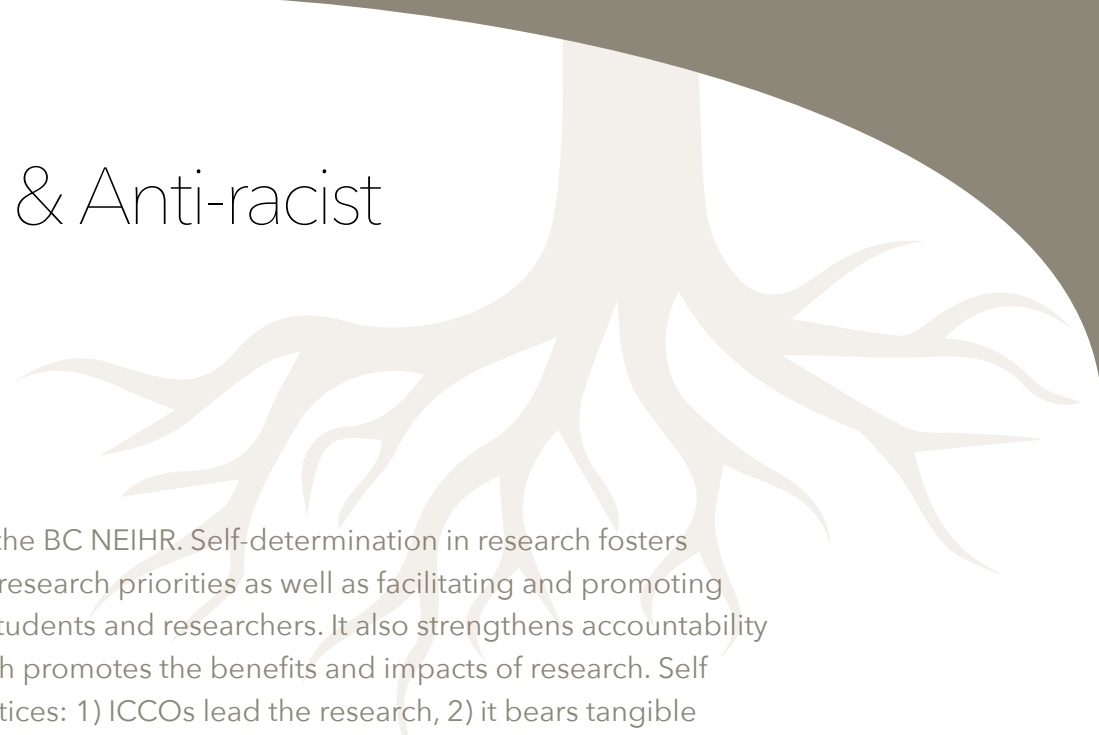
The research activities undertaken by ICCOs and students in our network, which are supported by funding and other resources, will ultimately help to revitalize Indigenous research and wellness. We assert that evaluation must be holistic, strength-based, community-led, relational, story-based, visual, cyclical/circular, inclusive and balanced.

Through an environmental framework, we focus on root, core and stem environments, emerging from decolonized soil. Our metaphor begins with the nourishing power of the sun and water, which represent external resources that enrich the decolonizing and anti-racist environment (soil), into which we have chosen to embed the BC NEIHR. Yet, we are mindful of colonial political, social, and economic environments that can introduce contaminants and so, we must regularly “till and clear the soil”; spreading nutrients and removing harms.

Our roots emerge from Indigenous values, principles, knowledge systems and ways of being. From these roots, our infrastructure forms a strong core (trunk) of Indigenous Elders and leaders, who guide resources to our stem environment - to capacity bridging and cultural safety initiatives, collaborative partnerships, community engagement, as well as Indigenous led-research and knowledge mobilization (outputs).

Future generations (seedlings) will be nurtured by the BC NEIHR root, core and stems as well as the enriched environment into which our influence will spread (outcomes). In this way, we see the promise of transformation in research environments; of growth over time and sustainability of Indigenous-led research.





Environment: Decolonizing & Anti-racist ROOT: Values & Principles

Self Determination in Research

The principle of self-determination in research is foundational to the BC NEIHR. Self-determination in research fosters the right of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples to set their own research priorities as well as facilitating and promoting equitable access to funding and support for ICCOs, Indigenous students and researchers. It also strengthens accountability and respect for Indigenous ethics and protocols in research, which promotes the benefits and impacts of research. Self determination in research is premised on three fundamental practices: 1) ICCOs lead the research, 2) it bears tangible benefits for ICCOs, and 3) it is guided by locally/contextually relevant teachings, traditions and protocols (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2004).

Indigenous Knowledge

In directing funds and control to ICCOs, the BC NEIHR will entrench culturally appropriate Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in all network endeavors. This principle will also be enacted through our structure, with Elders and Knowledge Holders guiding the Governing Council, and with traditional teachings that ground us in core values but also plant seeds for innovation. As well, local and culturally appropriate knowledge will continue to guide the development of BC NEIHR funding and capacity bridging programs.

Wholistic Health & Wellness

We promote wholistic frameworks, which provide a foundation for understanding how the wellness of Indigenous individuals, communities and nations is shaped by dynamic interactions at interpersonal, organizational, cultural, spiritual, community, and socio-political levels. Building on the health indicators established in the Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan, the BC NEIHR supports the inclusion of the 15 new indicators: social, cultural, and economic environments; health systems, land, family, nations, and community; mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellness; as well as health and wellness outcomes (First Nations Health Authority, BC Ministry of Health, & Indigenous Services Canada, 2019).

Indigenous and/or Decolonizing Methodologies

Indigenous and decolonizing (ID) research approaches not only emphasize Indigenous knowledge systems, they construct research plans that are responsive to Indigenous contexts. Indigenous approaches to research “can be defined as research by and for Indigenous Peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions and knowledges of those people” (Evan, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson, & Sookraj, 2009, p. 894). The BC NEIHR models and promotes the use of ID methodologies, which are grounded in local contexts, enhance Indigenous research leadership, and generate findings that benefit Indigenous Peoples.

Ethics, Equity, Transparency & Indigenous Cultural Safety

Ethical codes of conduct for research involving Indigenous communities are clearly stated in chapter nine of the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2014) and the CIHR Guidelines for Research Involving Aboriginal People (2007). Indigenous concepts of research ethics are also outlined in the Principles of OCAP®, which are promoted, protected and advanced by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC, 2019) as well as the Principles of Ethical Métis Research (n.d.). The BC NEIHR strives to ensure that research involving Indigenous Peoples in BC is ethical by both Indigenous and western standards. Furthermore, the principles of equity, transparency and Indigenous cultural safety are paramount to the work of the BC NEIHR, to ensure that investments in Indigenous health leadership and capacity bridging are accountably managed, that resources are equitably distributed, and that decision-making processes are transparent.

CORE: Indigenous Systems

Role of Elders

Elders are individuals who are respected and honoured by their communities for their wisdom, traditional knowledge, healing, spirituality, life experience and leadership. In privileging Indigenous voices and lived experience, as well as centering cultural knowledge, Council Elders are actively involved in decision making regarding all BC NEIHR policies, programs and activities. Acting as teachers and role models, Elders guide the conveyance of core Indigenous values and principles into the programs and supports within our stem environment. They generously nurture and protect the growth and development of the entire BC NEIHR structure.

The Governing Council

The Governing Council (GC) includes a gender balanced representation of First Nations, Métis and, when possible, Inuit, including community, organizational, academic and geographic representation. The GC also includes representation from each of the three leading partners (First Nations Health Authority, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and Métis Nation BC), as well as Elders, community members and Indigenous graduate students. Through a consensus based decision-making process, the GC is tasked with advising the BC NEIHR and its team on key research priorities and strategic policies related primarily to a) network membership, b) funding programs, c) capacity bridging/strengthening programs, d) partnerships and e) future funding.

Not only will the Governing Council ensure that the BC NEIHR is led by Indigenous values and practices, but that Indigenous health research leaders will be represented at the national NEIHR table, where they will have a voice in influencing national and international Indigenous health research policies and programs.

The Network

Our membership includes Indigenous academics and professionals, ICCOs (Indigenous communities, collectives and organizations), Indigenous students/trainees as well as allied academics and professionals. Members' network activities vary and include: 1) applying for BC NEIHR funding (graduate, postdoctoral or ICCO); 2) reviewing graduate or post-doc funding applications; 3) reviewing ICCO funding applications; 4) developing resources; 5) facilitating and/or participating in training initiatives; 6) partnering on BC NEIHR initiatives, 7) working committees; and 8) international engagement.



Healing, Spirituality
& **LEADERSHIP**



Culturally Safe RESEARCH

STEM: Supports & Activities

Overview

- 1 Culturally safe research relationships between ICCOs/Indigenous trainees and organizations, academics, network members, and other groups.
 - 2 Dedicated funding for ICCO-led Research Development projects and Knowledge Sharing and Mobilization (KSM) projects.
 - 3 Annual scholarships and fellowships for Indigenous trainees.
 - 4 Research capacity development opportunities for researchers, ICCOs and Indigenous students/trainees.
 - 5 Support for early career Indigenous researchers (pilot projects)
 - 6 Research staff positions for Indigenous people in BC.
 - 7 Collaborative research partnerships.
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STEM: Supports & Activities

Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) in Research

We will develop guidelines and processes that ensure meaningful and culturally safe plans and practices in Indigenous health research relationships and projects. Working closely with interested network members, we will develop, pilot and offer ICS transformative learning opportunities for research funders, peer reviewers, REBs, researchers and students in BC.

Research Development

We will direct funding toward ICCO research development activities, including but not limited to: health research priority setting, health research partnership development, and health research application development. This represents a critical support for increased submission of ICCO/researcher applications to CIHR competitions or other funding agencies, and improving the competitiveness of NEIHR-affiliated ICCOs and researchers.

Indigenous Knowledge Sharing & Mobilization (KSM)

In addition to creating opportunities for research development outcomes to be shared, each year we will allocate funds to support teams who have completed ICCO-led research and wish to undertake KSM projects. These projects must be ICCO-led and focus on sharing ICCO-relevant research findings in widely accessible venues (e.g., First Nation, Métis, Inuit or urban Indigenous community spaces) and/or formats (e.g., oral presentations, stories, arts-based, etc.).

Pilot Projects

We will provide annual Pilot Project Grants for Indigenous early career researchers to cover costs associated with the following types of activities: planning and executing pilot projects or feasibility studies to generate proof of concept and/or preliminary data; development and/or validation of new Indigenous tools, methodologies, protocols, theoretical models or frameworks.

Graduate Scholarships and Postdoctoral Fellowships

We launch annual competitions for Master's and Doctoral scholarships as well as biennial (every two years) Post-Doctoral fellowships. We will ensure that applicants have appropriate mentorship in the preparation of their submissions by offering on-site and on-line seminars on how to apply for BC NEIHR scholarships and fellowships.

Indigenous Health Research Facilitators (IHRFs)

We fund and support five Indigenous Research Trainee Facilitators, one for each health region in BC (i.e., Vancouver Island, Northern, Interior, Coastal Vancouver, and Fraser Valley). We fund and support five Indigenous Health Research Facilitators. The IHRFs' facilitative role will be integral to developing and promoting Indigenous-led health research within BC and building ICCO success in major funding applications to external agencies.

Learning and Sharing Circles

We will host an annual, two-day Learning and Sharing Circle to allow BC NEIHR-funded Indigenous students and ICCOs to participate in networking and co-learning.

Collaborative Research Partnerships

We will pursue active and meaningful engagement with multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary partners to engage in activities such as: co-funding and coordinating networking and capacity bridging opportunities; funding Indigenous student scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships; communicating BC NEIHR opportunities and initiatives through partner networks to facilitate networking and funding applications; connecting students, researchers and ICCOs with partner networks to facilitate future relationships; inviting BC NEIHR members to join planning committees for local, regional, or provincial conferences, gatherings, events relevant to Indigenous health research; partner and/or provide letters of support and collaboration for external grants in addition to assisting with grants crafting as requested.



Culturally Relevant **RESEARCH**

SEEDLINGS: Outcomes & Impacts

By supporting culturally relevant and community-led research activities, at the end of the first five-year cycle, the BC NEIHR will have:

- Funded ~42 research development projects for ICCOs that wish to apply for provincial and/or national research funding that addresses their health priorities;
- Funded ~50 ICCO KSM projects;
- Engaged hundreds of researchers, students and ICCO members in co-learning activities that will strengthen their capacity for Indigenous health research;
- Connected hundreds of researchers, students and ICCOs across BC to engage in meaningful research partnership;
- Supported 25 Indigenous researchers to pilot test promising health projects with ICCO partners;
- Supported 45 Indigenous students to complete a Master's degree focused on ICCO-based Indigenous health research;
- Supported 15 Indigenous students to complete a Doctorate degree focused on ICCO-based Indigenous health research;
- Supported 3-4 Post-Doctoral Fellows engaged in ICCO-based health research;
- Created, mentored and supported 7 research staff positions for Indigenous people in BC;
- Strengthened existing and supported the creation of many new, collaborative research partnerships by linking with existing grants, engaging new team members and working closely with other networks and like-minded research groups, communities, policy makers and practitioners;
- Attracted, trained and mentored outstanding researchers across diverse disciplines, career stages and communities through funding and capacity strengthening programs designed to facilitate and support long-term research relationships;
- Facilitated and supported culturally and contextually appropriate translation, communication and mobilization of new knowledge about innovative research led by Indigenous peoples in BC;
- Increased collaborations across disciplines and regions with national and international Indigenous and Allied research partners, organizations, policy advisory bodies and ICCOs.

EVALUATIONS: Process, Indicators & Gathering Tools

Evaluation Process

The BC NEIHR Elders and Governing Council (GC) will have final approval of evaluation processes and methods. We will regularly consult with Elders and Knowledge Holders; adhere to equity and Indigenous cultural safety; address deeper, complex and systemic issues that impact individuals and ICCOs; and follow local/contextual specific protocols and/or cultural activities (e.g., gifting, smudging, etc.) when appropriate.

In 2020, the BC NEIHR created an Evaluation Committee (EC) that was tasked with creating the BC NEIHR Evaluation Framework. Membership includes Indigenous and allied academics and professionals: Rob Hancock (UVic), Robline Davey (SFU), Pat Camp (UBC) and Bev Pomeroy (BC SUPPORT Unit - Fraser), as well as Charlotte Loppie and Tara Erb from the BC NEIHR Operational Team. The EC met monthly to discuss the evaluation and followed a talking circle format that is iterative and collaborative. No decisions are made in isolation.

As we engage with emerging evaluation findings, our hope is to identify data that are useful to the improvement and community relevance of the BC NEIHR. Evaluation processes will prioritize Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies, including the use of story-telling and arts-based methods of documentation. Furthermore, we will engage in action-based reporting, which means we will share findings and have discussions with community and other stakeholders as we receive data, and not just at the time of final reporting. We strive to take the time to know and understand what matters to ICCOs as well as Indigenous students and researchers and how the NEIHR program can grow over time to better serve them.

Our data gathering tools are action-oriented, including multiple viewpoints and self-reflection. As we report on our activities, we will ensure that we share all relevant findings with ICCOs in diverse venues (e.g., urban and reserve spaces) and formats (e.g., oral presentation, arts-based, etc.) and avoid the use of jargon and instead use accessible words, terms and concepts.

Outcomes & Indicators

The goal of Indigenous evaluation is to trigger ongoing, self-sustaining change that moves in a cyclical pattern of positive transformation; as well, indicators should reflect Indigenous approaches and capture elements of justice and action - i.e., the act of doing rather than what has been done (Johnston Research Inc., 2016). A primary focus of the BC NEIHR evaluation strategy is the creation of indicators that are relevant to our stakeholders and members. A key challenge for our network is the diversity of our members (First Nations, Métis, Inuit, on/off reserve, geography, etc.). How do we appropriately address the priorities of such diverse ICCOs? We believe it begins with flexibility in the indicators we use to measure success. Moreover, indicators must be based on a wholistic and interconnected understanding of the world (Johnston Research Inc., 2016).



BC NEIHR
EVALUATIONS

Our Eight Anticipated Outcomes Include:

- 1 Development of partnerships (mainstream organizations and institutions, ICCOs, Indigenous students / trainees, etc.)
- 2 Increased funding for research programs/projects (ICCO research development and KSM, early career research pilot projects, graduate and PDF awards, etc.)
- 3 Increased access to learning resources and supports (In-person and online resources, annual Learning and Sharing Circles, etc.)
- 4 Increased ethics and Indigenous Cultural Safety in research and partnerships
- 5 Indigenous-led governance and management (Governing Council, Sub-committees and working groups, Elders and leadership roles, etc.)
- 6 Effective communications
- 7 Inclusion of Indigenous Sex and Gender (ISG) in governance and activities
- 8 IHRF (Indigenous Health Research Facilitator positions) engage in training and relationships with ICCOs

*To the right is a visual example of our anticipated outcome Increased Ethics and ICS, which includes: quantitative indicator, quantitative methods, qualitative indicator and qualitative methods.





Community Based **RESEARCH**

Visual and Story-telling Data Gathering Tools

There are many examples of visual and story-telling data gathering tools, such as the Waawiyeyaa Evaluation Tool created by Johnston Research Inc. (2016). This visual data gathering tool allows participants to tell their own story and document their journey on parts of a tree branch. All branches (i.e., BC NEIHR supports and activities) are linked and supported by the tree trunk (i.e., BC NEIHR Indigenous systems and structures).

This explanatory tool is wholistic, relational and honours participants' right to tell their own stories. The Waawiyeyaa Evaluation Tool tool allows one to collect stories in a systematic manner. We can utilize data from the tree branch stories to evaluate the effect of our programs by documenting the participant(s) experiences over time.

We will make meaning of the branch stories through thematic analysis, which will be summarized in narrative reports that include visually network experiences.

Photovoice

Photovoice is a visual, arts-based qualitative data gathering tool that is commonly used in community-based participatory research to document, via photos, the experiences of participants. This tool is engaging, empowering and flexible for participants. Budig, Diez, Conde, Sastre, Hernán and Franco (2018), found that photo-voice led to positive changes including: 1) participants acquired new knowledge and developed critical awareness of their community; 2) the social recognition participants received transformed their self-perception; and 3) the project allowed them to expand their social networks.

The BC NEIHR will accept pictures from participants (individuals and ICCOs), and with permission, include them in the final report as an effective way to communicate experiences and learnings within the program.

Other Evaluation Tools

In addition to the tree branch and Photovoice methods, we will use other evaluation tools such as an email string spreadsheet, governance structure rubric, email embedded poll questions, generic post-event survey, three-minute interview guide, etc. New members will be asked to complete a registration form, providing information to assist us in, not only reporting on membership, but also in facilitating relationships as well as finding expertise in developing resources and supports. Funded ICCOs, students and researchers will be asked to complete an annual electronic update about their research relationships and activities as well as the progress and products of their work. Mini surveys will be used to engage BC NEIHR members and partners in an exploration of our activities and events. Annual Self-Reflection Questionnaires will be provided to GC members, so they can reflect on how well the GC is functioning in its role and to identify areas for improvement. At their request, each of the major Indigenous partners (FNHA, BCAAFC, and MNBC) will receive annual funds to undertake evaluations with their populations.

With regular updates from network members, the Network Coordinator will keep careful track of the nature and outcome of new and enhanced relationships (between members and/or between the BC NEIHR and local, provincial/territorial, national and international partners). Using a document review framework, we will consider: network updates/newsblasts, email strings, institutional or organizational memoranda of understanding, Twitter feeds, Facebook postings, strategic plans, communication materials, etc. Three-Minute Interviews will be undertaken with participants of the Learning and Sharing Circles to gather reflections on the quality, timeliness, cultural relevance/appropriateness, and usefulness of network activities.

During year four, we will dedicate one of our Master's scholarship for a student to work with FNHA, BCAAFC and MNBC to collate their evaluation materials. In addition to contributing to their thesis, with the assistance of the Network Coordinator, this project will inform a full report of processes, products, impacts, and outcomes as well as a sustainability plan for the BC NEIHR. This report will be made available to all members, partners, relevant stakeholders and will be included in our submission for continued CIHR funding. Papers and presentations about the formation, relationships, processes and outcomes of the BC NEIHR will be co-developed by academic/ICCO dyads or groups and submitted to local, provincial/territorial, national and international academic, community and professional audiences.



Our Evaluation
TOOLS



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