

Blog: Can Training Enable Indigenous Participation in Monitoring?

Technical capacity can be a limiting factor to Indigenous participation in environmental monitoring. To address this, an Environmental Monitoring Technician Training Program Pilot for First Nations and Métis communities in the oil sands region of Alberta was initiated in 2015. The training program was designed with cultural sensitivity and accessibility as guiding principles. The objectives were to enable Indigenous participation in field monitoring within communities, with industry or government, to provide technical competence in the field in surface water quality monitoring, wildlife monitoring and safety, and to provide an opportunity for scientists and Indigenous communities to build connections to enable productive relationships.

Fifteen participants from eight First Nation and Métis communities successfully completed the five-week training program. The training program demonstrated that our experiential learning approach in Indigenous communities is feasible and can contribute to increased participation by communities in environmental monitoring. Outcomes of the training program were:

Awareness and relationship building between communities and environmental monitoring staff from several organisations.

New opportunities to work together were identified and pursued, such as increased water quality monitoring within communities, project proposal development, job opportunities and further experiential learning.

Participants from the 2015/2016 cohort became the first members of the Aboriginal Environmental Services Network. The goal of the Network is to be a hub for management, communication, resource sharing and promotion of Indigenous participation in the delivery of environmental services. Continued engagement with trainees will occur through this Network.

The full poster is available [here](#).