

RDI APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS UPDATE

OVERVIEW OF PURPOSE, RATIONALE, GUIDING QUESTIONS & STATUS



CURRENT PROJECTS

EMPLOYMENT LANDS: UNDERSTANDING SUPPLY, DEMAND, USAGE & CONSTRAINTS ON WEALTH GENERATING LANDS IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION

The purpose of this research project was to better understand supply, demand, usage and constraints on wealth generating lands in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region of BC. With an improved understanding of the region's stock of 'employment lands', the region will be in a better position to make informed land use decisions and attract and retain business and investment.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. *What assets and gaps exist in our region's employment lands inventory?*
2. *Can the employment lands inventory accommodate investment and business growth?*
3. *Where, if any, are there underutilized lands in the employment lands inventory?*
4. *Where might existing lands be constrained and why?*

Status: Community-Level Reports (released: Summer 2014), Final Regional Project Report (to be released: Fall 2014)

Contact: Jonathan Buttle (jbuttle@selkirk.ca)

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE) IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION: EXPLORING BUSINESS NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES AND THE REGION'S ABILITY TO RESPOND

The purpose of this research project is to better understand the retention and expansion needs of businesses in the region and the ability of local and regional actors to respond to identified needs and opportunities. With an improved understanding of business needs, economic development stakeholders (Community Futures, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development / Business Development Officers, local government officials and staff, Colleges, skills and training centres) can best tailor their response to individual businesses and ensure related plans and initiatives¹ are based on timely and relevant research. With a better understanding of capacity limitations related to the regions' ability to respond to individual and collective business needs, the region can also best shape efforts aimed at improving the regional economic development landscape and capacity.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. *What retention and expansion challenges and opportunities are the region's businesses experiencing?*
2. *How have economic development practitioners and business support providers responded to these needs and what challenges have they faced?*
3. *In what ways can locally collected data on businesses inform local and regional level planning?*

Status: Spring 2013 - Boundary, Lower Columbia, Regional Manufacturing & Technology; Fall 2013 - Nakusp, Golden; Winter 2014 - Slocan Valley; Fall 2014 - Kimberley, Sparwood; Winter 2015 - Kaslo, Regional and Corridor Topic Specific reports; Spring 2015 - Final Project Report

Contact: Jonathan Buttle (jbuttle@selkirk.ca)

¹ i.e. economic development plans, regional workforce development plan, regional investment strategy

PROJECTS LAUNCHING OCTOBER 2014

WORKFORCE INNOVATION IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (WIRED): FACILITATING INFORMED DECISION-MAKING, UNDERSTANDING NETWORKS AND PILOTING BEST PRACTICES

The purpose of this research project is to better understand innovation in workforce development by facilitating informed decision-making, benchmarking and weaving related networks, and piloting best practice approaches to regional workforce development. With evidence in hand, purposeful workforce-economic development networks in place, and customized best practice interventions, the region is well positioned to address workforce challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. *What types of information and knowledge mobilization approaches best support informed workforce development decision-making in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region?*
2. *What is the nature and extent of workforce and economic development linkages and networks in the region and how can these networks be strengthened to support workforce development outcomes?*
3. *How can best practices in workforce development most effectively be applied in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region?*

Status: Approved by Governance Committee, \$15,000 from SIBAC pending

Timeline: October 2014-October 2017

Contact: Terri MacDonald (tmacdonald@selkirk.ca)

THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY FOOD SYSTEM: IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION AND IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY

The purpose of this proposed project is to better understand the region's agricultural lands inventory and identify opportunities to improve the regional food system. Bringing together food system actors and existing and new research at a regional scale will allow for the identification of collective regional challenges and opportunities and provide the foundation for future related strategies and collective action.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. *What assets and gaps exist in the regions' food systems landscape?*
2. *How can the region's agricultural lands be better utilized?*
3. *What opportunities exist to improve the regions' food system?*

Status: Approved by Governance Committee, \$50,000 from BC Real Estate Foundation secured

Timeline: October 2014-December 2015

Contact: Adrian Leslie (aleslie@selkirk.ca)

COLLABORATION IN THE NON-PROFIT SOCIAL SECTOR: EXPLORING NETWORKS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN-BOUNDARY REGION

The purpose of this proposed research project is to explore the landscape of non-profit social sector collaboration, the contribution that network relationships make to rural development, and the role network weaving can have in advancing regional rural development goals. With an enhanced understanding of regional social sector collaboration, including the key actors and their successes and challenges, related support providers (i.e. CBT, social sector funders, colleges) are better positioned to support future efforts aimed at strengthening the sector, and the sector is better positioned to understand how to work together to address regional needs and opportunities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. *How is the non-profit social sector currently collaborating and what opportunities exist for improvement?*
2. *How have interactions within the non-profit social sector contributed to local and regional rural development initiatives and outcomes?*
3. *How can collaborative networks and their contributions be enhanced through network analysis and facilitation?*

Status: Approved by Governance Committee, \$25,000 from Max Bell Foundation pending

Timeline: October 2014-December 2015

Contact: Nadine Raynolds (nraynolds@selkirk.ca)