

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ENABLING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT IN BASIN-
BOUNDARY COMMUNITIES



PURPOSE

To measure the Basin-Boundary's progress on economic development efforts using indicators. Indicators are helpful for informing residents, organizations, and governments regarding key trends in economic development, facilitating understanding of complex issues, evaluating the effectiveness of various economic development measures, and motivating change.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What economic development actions are currently being undertaken in Basin-Boundary communities and how is progress being tracked?

Deliverables: Content analysis of economic development strategies/plans, inventory of existing initiatives and indicators (including related methodologies)

2. What indicators are best positioned to measure economic development progress overtime, what related data gaps exist, and what level of research support is required to address research-related capacity constraints?

Deliverables: State of Economic Development (SoED) in the Basin-Boundary indicator suite developed, action plan for addressing identified data and support needs

3. Are Basin-Boundary communities making progress on their economic development efforts?

Deliverables: Complete SoED assessments for pilot communities (and other communities if the project progresses beyond the pilot phase), individual community data sets and reports, regional data sets and reports

KEY PARTNERS AND ADVISORS

Pilot communities (to be identified)

Businesses

Columbia Basin-Boundary Economic Development Practitioners Network

Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments

Imagine Kootenay

Innovation Councils

Columbia Basin Trust

Chambers of Commerce

Destination Marketing Organizations and Kootenay Rockies

Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Citizen Services

Economic Development Association of BC, Economic Development Association of Canada

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Phase 1:

- Assemble project working group and confirm pilot communities
- Establish community-specific steering committees
- Develop the State of Economic Development indicator suite¹ and identify data gaps
- Secure required data from provincial and national data providers as needed
- Implement local level data collection and consolidation strategies - Engage students or local research assistants to provide direct, on site data collection and management support to pilot communities as needed
- Implement pilots by collecting data, establishing data-management systems, analyzing data, reporting on results and recording challenges experienced during the process
- Research and report on options for actions that could address areas of need as identified by assessment results
- Share results of assessments with pilot communities
- Evaluate implementation process and assess feasibility of expanding implementation to additional communities
- Based on results of evaluation, determine whether to continue with second phase of project

Phase 2:

- Using evaluation results, revise SoED suite to enhance potential for wide-scale uptake
- Develop guidance resources to support implementation and use of assessment results
- Promote availability and utility of SoED to Basin-Boundary communities
- Engage additional students / RAs to support implementation at Phase 2 communities
- Track project success metrics, including uptake of SoED suite, use of guidance materials, and impact on action planning and implementation
- Contingent on completion of a sufficient number of assessments, complete a series of regional reports focused on: 1) compiling results 2) documenting the experiences of a rural region in measuring economic development and taking related action.

TIMELINE AND POSSIBLE FUNDERS

1 year to develop, pilot and evaluate the SoED suite and related methodologies. Depending on the results of the initial phase, another 1-2 years could be spent refining the SoED suite and rolling out the projects to individual communities as they express interest in participating, and documenting results at the scale of the region. The approach would be similar to that used for the Business Retention and Expansion project and the State of Climate Adaptation and Resilience in the Basin project. The Province of BC 'Rural Dividends' funding stream funds efforts to diversify rural economies. The first intake is expected in the Spring / Summer 2016.

¹ While it is anticipated a standardized suite of indicators will be developed and implemented, additional community-specific indicators may also be added to ensure local priorities are captured and measured