

# RDI RESEARCH PRIORITIES

2014-2015



The RDI leads various applied regional research projects each year that are aligned with the RDI Strategic Plan, informed by consultations processes, discussions with the RDI and CBT staff, the RDI Governance Committee and the RDI Advisory Committee, and evaluated based on a set of criteria and informed by end user groups that will use the research. Some applied research priorities may require substantial effort and may span several years depending on project scope. Depending on ongoing research projects and RDI capacity, the RDI may lead up to 4 applied research projects. The number of research projects depends upon RDI capacity, work plan, and focus in that year. The audience for RDI projects may vary depending on the nature of the applied research and data/information products. Information on previous applied research projects and outcomes can be viewed [here](#).

The RDI has finalized the research agenda for 2014/15. Projects include:

- Business Retention and Expansion in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region: Exploring Business Needs and Opportunities and the Regions' Ability to Respond
- Columbia Basin-Boundary Food System: Identifying Opportunities to Increase Food Production and Improve Food Security
- Collaboration in the Non-Profit Social Sector: Exploring Networks and Rural Development in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region
- Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development: Facilitating Informed Decision-Making, Understanding Networks and Piloting Best Practices

The Business Retention and Expansion in the Columbia-Basin Boundary research project is focused on better understanding 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 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. Project Contact: Jonathan Buttle ([jbuttle@selkirk.ca](mailto:jbuttle@selkirk.ca)).

The Columbia Basin-Boundary Food System research project is focused on better understanding existing agricultural networks and research, agricultural land supply and optimization, priority product supply chains, and opportunities and challenges within our 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. Project Contact: Adrian Leslie ([aleslie@selkirk.ca](mailto:aleslie@selkirk.ca)).

The Collaboration in the Non-Profit Social Sector research project is focused on exploring 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. funders) are better positioned to support future efforts aimed at strengthening the sector, and the sector is better positioned to understand how to best continue to work together to address regional needs and opportunities. Project Contact: Nadine Reynolds ([nraynolds@selkirk.ca](mailto:nraynolds@selkirk.ca)).

The Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development research project is focused on better understanding 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. Project Contact: Terri MacDonald ([tmacdonald@selkirk.ca](mailto:tmacdonald@selkirk.ca)).