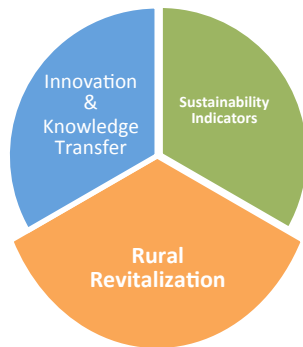
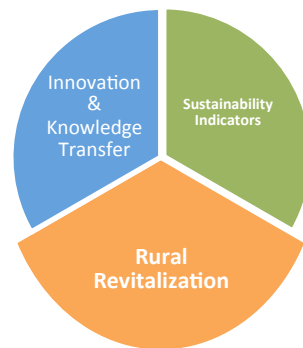


# Research Focus Areas: Supporting Regional Rural Revitalization in Partnership



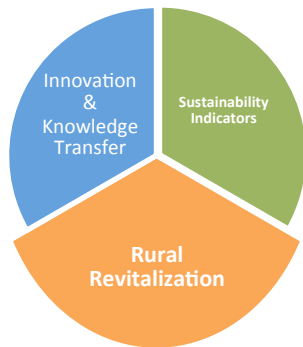
## **BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION**

Business retention and expansion (BR+E) has been identified as a regional priority through consultations with key economic development stakeholders and local businesses. The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) recognizes the need to support the 'process' of BR+E based on best practices, the need to standardize data collection and analysis, the need for local level training to build capacity, and the importance of linking research with economic development plans and follow-up actions. The RDI is supporting communities and innovation councils in their BR+E implementation efforts through the provision of training, best practice tools and research support. With funding from the Columbia Basin Trust, the RDI has acquired a regional license for the BC Business Counts program. Communities can access this license, including the BR+E web-based application that supports analysis at the local, regional and provincial levels. In addition to providing communities with research and training support, the RDI will engage in applied research focused on better understanding business assets, gaps and opportunities at the regional and sub-regional levels. Research will also explore the use of best practice tools in the context of rural communities with varying levels of economic development capacity. Indicators for the State of the Basin Initiative will also be developed from this rich data set.



## **PRODUCTIVITY INITIATIVE**

The Productivity Initiative focuses on how business support organizations can help address the issue of productivity and innovation in the region's small and medium sized businesses. Led by the region's Community Futures Development Corporations, this initiative includes background research on productivity and innovation, the development of a rural, small business focused diagnostic tool, the development of productivity plans for up to 30 businesses, and the provision of identified support focused on increasing productivity. The RDI is supporting this initiative through the provision of ongoing research support. Data from this project is also expected to inform RDI's development of productivity indicators.



## **MANUFACTURING & TECHNOLOGY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The Manufacturing and Technology Sector Initiative (MATS) is a two-year Columbia Basin Trust initiative supporting economic diversification and development in the Columbia Basin, with a focus on the manufacturing and technology sectors. Delivered in partnership by Kootenay Association for Science and Technology (KAST) and Kootenay Rockies Innovation Council (KRIC), MATS focuses on the development, retention and expansion of Basin manufacturing and technology businesses. MATS activities include: conferences, workshops and networking events; business retention and expansion (BRE): a business survey aimed at shedding light on current sector strategies for the retention and expansion of Basin Businesses; virtual incubator where businesses can find mentors and track their progress through business development in an online setting; and peer mentoring groups designed to help entrepreneurs address the issues and barriers they experience in building their businesses. The RDI is supporting this initiative through the provision of ongoing research support, including BRE specific training and research support.