

DRAFT

COABC Operational Plan for 2005

Introduction

This Operational Plan provides the basis for COABC activities in the coming year. It is offered to the membership for review, comment, amendments, and ratification. Though specific activities are included, it is understood that the society will continue to respond to issues and events as the year evolves.

Strategic Planning

The goals of the COABC are to implement the purposes of the society as provided in the constitution. In the past ten years, there has been constant tension in the COABC between attempting to oversee an organic regulation (being a regulator) and promoting the objectives of the members (being an advocate). In order to provide some basis for managing the COABC, the Strategic Planning process of 2003/2004 clarified the goals of the organisation and divided them into two categories:

1. Core Services:
 - Accreditation under the BC Certified Organic Program
 - Management of the BC Certified Organic Program (standards, manuals, recognitions)
 - Information distribution regarding the BC Certified Organic Program (website and office services)
 - External relations regarding regulatory issues affecting the participants in the BC Certified Organic Program

2. Key Activities
 - Organic promotion including market promotion
 - Organic education
 - Organic research
 - Organic advocacy not directly related to the BC Certified Organic Program

In order to reach the society's goals, several objectives were identified:

1. Ensure long term stability and financial viability of COABC
2. Put COABC on a sound financial footing whereby revenue from membership covers the core services of the organization and those that require a higher level of 'service' pay for it.
3. Fund key activities that support the development of the organic sector in BC by means other than membership fees.
4. Expand the volunteer base to carry out activities that support our mission
5. Engage supporters and consumers to build a stronger political lobby
6. Achieve the above while ensuring that the control of the BC Standard for Organic Production remains in the hands of the farmers

The process culminated in a COABC Business Plan 2004, which suggested that COABC use implementation money from the Strategic Planning grant (BCMAFF) to hire an executive director (business manager). The executive director will be responsible to meet the objectives provided from the strategic planning process.

Executive Director Activities 2004

Kirsten Kane was contracted (part-time) to provide executive director services to COABC on June 1, 2004. In the six months following Kirsten's appointment, the following issues were addressed:

1. Cara Nunn was contracted to provide secretariat to the Standards Review Committee
2. Procedures for COABC Accreditation Board secretariat were developed
3. COABC Accreditation Board Quality Manual developed
4. COG MOU resolved, though not yet implemented
5. Website committee established
6. Vernon Organic Harvest Fair managed and funded outside COABC
7. COABC booth at IPE
8. EFP development
9. OSPD extension
10. Contract delivered for managing the COABC organic conference/AGM
11. COABC position on the BC Agri-Food Trade Council
12. Attended board governance and fundraising seminars
13. Mohawk/Husky loyalty card
14. Continued to oversee office services such as COABC database, website, COABC liability insurance, BC Organic Grower, financial reports

COABC in 2005

Core Services Action Items

The core services of the COABC will continue to be the priority for the organisation in 2005. Proposed activities involving core services:

1. COABC Accreditation Board:

Continue to work closely with the COABC Accreditation Board to strengthen the operation of the BC Certified Organic Program. Develop and implement (in conjunction with BCMAFF) a annual seminar for administrators and develop a procedures manual which is more user friendly than Book 1. In 2005, the internal audit will focus on verifying the conformity of the COABC program with the ISO Guide 17011 that replaced ISO 61 as the Guide for accreditation organizations.

2. Standards Review Committee:

Implement SRC procedures as determined by BOD, and continue to provide support to the SRC--work closely with the chair to remove secretary burden from the SRC. Ensure Brand Name list is current, and readily available on the website.

3. Website:

Upgrading and improving the website will be a special project for 2005--extra resources will be allocated as needed. The website committee will develop policy that will enable COABC staff to manage (and improve) the website without having to continually check with the membership. Special attention will be paid to proposals for revenue generation and collaboration.

Continue to improve the functioning of the COABC website, particularly with respect to core services, such as the operator database, standards and program information and critical policy issues.

4. COABC office:

Maintain the COABC office as the primary contact point for licensees. Information flow from the office will be fully integrated with the website, so that essential information on the website is always current--this will reduce telephone time for office staff.

5. Book keeping, financial planning and reporting.

The COABC will provide the Board with quarterly updates of the financial status of the organisation--**more needed here**

Key Activities

Through the strategic planning process, specific direction has been provided regarding the effort COABC should spend on key activities. For instance, the membership has indicated that COABC should not be engaged in promotion or marketing. Promotion will be approached on a cost recovery basis and marketing is best left to the organic trade.

The COABC will build on the progress made in 2004 towards reducing the amount of staff time spent on non-core or non-revenue generating activity. COABC staff will review all key activities using the following guidelines:

1. Is the program or service directly connected to the value of the BC Certified Organic Program; does it have the potential to increase membership, or build awareness of and support for COABC's role in maintaining the integrity of the BC Certified Organic Program?
2. Can the program or service be created and delivered so that it generates revenue for the COABC?
3. Can the program or service be created and delivered by an outside contractor or organisation without the need for support from COABC staff and/or volunteers?

Key Activity Action Items

1. The COABC will work with COG and whoever is interested to develop the COG-BC (COG Chapter) indicated in the COG MOU. The rationale for COABC staff to be spending time on this project is that COG BC has the potential to take on the work of consumer promotion and education--something COABC has never accomplished, but is continually being asked to undertake. COABC as an organisation is virtually unknown in the public realm so there is little to be lost by working with the Canadian Organic Growers to bring organic consumers into a registered charity that has consumer education and organic promotion in its mandate.
2. COABC will take the experience of the 2005 Organic Conference/AGM towards the development of "The Organic Food Awards" (fall, 2005). COABC will put up seed money to hire a contractor who will develop the project--with profit directed toward COABC.
3. COABC Organic Conference 2005 **more needed**

Organic Sector Development Program

The OSDP has been good for the organic sector and good for the COABC. It provides funding for organic projects, impetus for new ideas, and funding for COABC office staff. There is opportunity to extend the length (and dollar value) of the OSDP provided COABC has a vision for the next phase of the OSDP.

The COABC will (using OSDP funds) undertake a review of the Organic Sector Strategic Plan of 2002. Particular attention will be paid to partnership opportunities for grower education. **More needed from Kirsten--vision for organic training**

OSDP Projects

1. COABC will develop an OSDP project that will result in an investigation of the implications (to organic operators) of the National On-Farm Food-Safety program. The project will determine if a national organic On-Farm Food-Safety program should be initiated.
- 2.

Fundraising

The COABC membership has instructed the executive director to engage in fundraising activities. However, in COABC's context, fundraising cannot be isolated as a line item on a spreadsheet. COABC is an industry organisation, not a charity or public service institution (though organic farming can be seen as a public good) and has always met its needs through membership fees and project work.

Throughout 2005, COABC will continue the successful projects initiated in 2004 and will initiate new projects where there is evidence that they provide service to the members and financial benefits to the society. An On-farm food-safety project, the Organic Conference AGM, an Organic Food Awards event, and further development of the OSDP are examples of projects that have potential to provide service and money to the COABC. No membership fee increases are proposed. The COABC will continue to investigate fundraising opportunities such as the Mohawk/Husky loyalty card program.

Provisional Budget