

Stretching Our Horizons

Strategic Plan for the BC Certified Organic Sector – 2013-18

Co-developed by representatives of the BC certified organic sector and allies

Convenor/coordinator:
Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC)

Celebrating
20 years together



Certified Organic Associations of BC

Funding Provided by



Abbreviations

2013+ = will start in 2013 and continue
AAFC = Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
AG = Agriculture
BCAC = BC Agriculture Council
BCAFM = BC Association of Farmers' Markets
BCMA = BC Ministry of Agriculture
BCCOP = BC Certified Organic Program
BCFSN = BC Food Systems Network
BCOG = BC Organic Grower
BCOSR = BC Organic Sector Roundtable
BCOVCRT = BC Organic Value Chain Roundtable
CB = Certification Body
CED = Community economic development
CFIA = Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CHFA = Canadian Health Food Association
COABC = Certified Organic Associations of BC
COABC AB = COABC Accreditation Board
COG = Canadian Organic Growers Inc.
COR = Canadian Organic Regime
COTA = Canadian Organic Trade Association
CSA = Community Supported Agriculture
FBQ = Filière biologique du Québec
FF/CF = Farm Folk/City Folk
FI = Farmers Institute
GE = Genetic engineering
GF2 = Growing Forward 2
GMO = Genetically modified organism
IAF = Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC
KPA = Key Performance Area
OACC = Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada
OFC = Organic Federation of Canada
OFIBC = Organic Farming Institute of BC
OPR = Organic Products Regulations
ORTK = Organic Resource Tool Kits
OSDP = Organic Sector Development Program
OVCRT = Organic Value Chain Roundtable
OW = Organic Week
VO = Verification Officer
WED = Western Economic Diversification

Contents

1. Preface and Acknowledgements	4
2. Introduction	6
3. Background	7
4. Planning Process	8
<i>Questions of Key Informants.....</i>	<i>8</i>
5. Context.....	9
6. Key Performance Areas.....	15
<i>KPA #1: Unity of the BC Certified Organic Sector.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>KPA #2: Branding and Education</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>KPA #3: Advocacy and Alliances.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>KPA #4: Capacity Building.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>KPA #5: Standards</i>	<i>37</i>
7. Next Steps	40
Appendix A: Key Informants.....	42
Appendix B: Background for the Vision Statement.....	42
Appendix D: Resources.....	45
Appendix E: Areas of potential partnership with COTA.....	46

1. Preface and Acknowledgements

The Board of Directors of the Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) is pleased to offer this strategic plan as a tool for growing and strengthening the certified organic sector in British Columbia.

Funding for this planning process has been provided by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, Emerging Sectors Initiative, a provincial trust funded from money under the former federal-provincial safety nets framework.

The COABC Board of Directors also thanks Choices Markets, Thrifty Foods, Pro Organics, and Urban Harvest Organic Delivery for their generous financial sponsorship of the planning process, and gratefully acknowledges in-kind support (delicious organic food) from Choices Markets, Discovery Organics, Forstbauer Family Natural Food Farm, Kazy Farm Organics, Klipper's Organic Acres, Pro Organics, Thomas Reid Farms, Thrifty Foods, and Urban Harvest Organic Delivery.

The Board of Directors acknowledges how significantly this plan has benefited and been shaped by members of the sector who attended a November 2012 planning session, and others who gave willingly of their time and knowledge through emails and interviews.

Participants in the BC Certified Organic Sector Strategic Planning process include members of the COABC Board** and staff^, 16 representatives of the wider sector (retailers, sister organizations, government staff) who attended the planning meeting (see below) and 12 key informants who gave input during the research phase about either the sector or the wider context (e.g. institutional procurement, interface with municipalities, and developments in Ontario, etc. (See Appendix A).

** Corey Brown, Director

** Kris Chand, Vice President

** Paddy Doherty, Alternate Director
(and OSDP)

** Mary Forstbauer, President

** Michael Hale, Director

** Annamarie Klippenstein, Director

** Rob Horricks, Treasurer

** Annie Moss, Co-Secretary

** Randy Pearson, Alternate Director

** Susan Snow, Director

^ Jen Gamble, Administrator

Hermann Bruns, OFC

Fiona Cubitt, BCAGRI

Rochelle Eisen, Oregon Tilth

Reg Ens, BCAC

Miriam Esquitín, IAF

France Gravel, FBQ (Skype)

Dennis LaPierre, BCAC

Lisa McIntosh, Urban Harvest

Emily MacKenzie, AAFC

Anne Macey, COABC AB

Michael Mockler, Thrifty Foods

David Reid, Thomas Reid Farms

Susan Smith, BCAGRI

Gunta Vitins, OVCRT

Stephanie Wells, COTA

David Wilson, Choices Markets

The planning process was facilitated by Kate Sutherland, and this strategic plan was prepared by Kate Sutherland & Associates under contract to COABC. This is a living document, ever changing and growing! Please share your comments, further input, and enquiries by sending a message to admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

2. Introduction

Welcome!

We invite you to join us in our vision of *sustainable organic food production that supports healthy communities and a healthy environment in BC.*

Our proposed plan for the BC certified organic sector is ambitious. In fact, it is daunting if only a few are involved. It is game-changing, though, when the whole sector works together in different synergistic combinations of farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, policy makers, partner organizations and consumers.

A planning process for and by the sector, from farm to fork, has identified five strategic leverage points:

1. **Unity of the BC Certified Organic Sector** -- to unite different segments of the BC certified organic sector.
2. **Branding and Education** -- so all stakeholders, with a special focus on consumers and policy makers, understand the meaning of and value added by the certified organic brand.
3. **Advocacy and Alliances** -- so the BC organic sector has a powerful, high profile, united voice and excellent working relationships with key stakeholders.
4. **Capacity Building** -- to help producers, processors, distributors and retailers work together to meet growing provincial, national and international demand for BC organic produce and products.
5. **Standards** -- to maintain and add value to certified organic standards by continuing to work with national and international partners to keep the standards on the leading edge.

In combination, these five “key performance areas” tap the exciting potential of the main driver for the sector: the continued growth of consumer demand for certified organic produce and products. Concern about GMOs (genetically modified organisms) is further boosting demand. This growth is robust, supported by growing awareness of the importance of sustainable food systems and looming crises (energy, climate, degenerative diseases, environment...)

The very success of the certified organic sector has created new challenges, including:

- a dynamic premium-price market has attracted some players who label their products “organic” without meeting the standards of organic certification;
- consumer, policy maker and retailer confusion about “local”, “natural” and “certified organic”
- imports of certified organic produce from other jurisdictions where labour costs are lower.

The Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. This milestone is thanks to the dedication and passion of hundreds of pioneer farmers, distributors, producers and retailers whose care for the land and livestock, soil and communities has included developing clear and professionally administered certification processes.

While collaboration up and down the supply chain is not new, this plan reflects a new level of inclusivity in the COABC’s strategic planning process: bringing together COABC Directors with retailers, distributors, and processors as well as representatives of the agricultural sector as a whole. The result is certified organic sector **2.0**. The key difference is a shift from doing the work itself, to seeing its work as convening and leveraging the “power for good” of you and the many other individuals and system players who value healthy communities and a healthy environment in BC.

Please see this plan as living document and a call to action. If something calls to you, join in. If nothing calls to you, what would?

3. Background

COABC has been appointed by the Province to administer the certified organic scheme (farm to fork) in BC. This includes the core work of accrediting the certification bodies in BC that, in turn, certify the majority of the organic businesses (predominantly farms) in BC.¹ (Other organic businesses in BC, including some of the largest ones, are certified by certification bodies based in the US or other parts of Canada.)

Historically, COABC has played a leadership role nationally in the definition of “certified organic” standards and in promoting sustainable agriculture.

COABC’s organizational mandate also includes representing the sector’s interests in policy and program consultations with the BC government. The

¹ In 2012, COABC-accredited CBs certified a total of 611 operators, including 83% of certified farm operations and 66% of the certified processing and handling operations in the province.

provincial act which created the COABC in 1993² makes it uniquely placed to advance the interests of certified organic farmers, processors, retailers, consumers and others.

As society comes face to face with multiple and compounding crises (climate, energy, environment...), there is significant potential for the COABC to support concerted collaborative action for sustainable agriculture, healthy environments and healthy communities.

4. Planning Process

To set direction for the next five years (2013-2018), COABC gathered wide sector input into shaping strategic priorities.

Guided by a steering committee composed of members of the COABC Executive, the consultant's first step was a series of key informant interviews. Appendix A lists those interviewed, including retailers, processors, distributors, as well as leaders in the field who are active in BC, other provinces, and at the national level.

Questions of Key Informants

- What are the significant changes, trends, emerging issues, and challenges in the certified organic sector that are relevant to COABC as it plans for the next five years?
- What are strategic high-impact places to make change that COABC is best placed to spearhead? And how might related initiatives be resourced? Who are key potential partners/allies?
- Are there simple actions COABC or its members could take that would make a big difference for the certified organic sector?
- What three "Asks" of the provincial government re the certified organic sector in BC do you see as having the most potential impact/traction?
- Should working at the national level be a priority for COABC, and if so, what issues do you see as most strategic?

The input from the interviews informed the design of a three day strategic planning session on November 2-4, 2012 attended by directors of the COABC, and by representatives from the whole certified organic sector, sister organizations, BCAC, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture.

² The act was originally called the *Food Choice and Disclosure Act*, and is now called the *Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act*.

While in previous years COABC has convened planning related meetings with retailers, processors and distributors, the 2013-2018 strategic planning process was the first time the COABC Directors and leading representatives from the whole supply chain met face-to-face to develop the BC certified organic sector's strategic plan. Initially the idea was to have non-COABC participants join the session for Friday afternoon only. In the end, the COABC opened up to others for almost the entire planning session. The very planning process is thus an expression of a deeper commitment to whole-sector ways of working.

The planning meetings included the following steps:

- Map the big picture (Where have we come from? and Where are we now? See pages 9-10 below)
- Invite everyone's perspectives on "Where do we want to go from here?", including gathering ideas for
 - high-impact strategies
 - simple measures that will make a big difference to you
 - strategic asks of all levels of government
 - possible roles at the national level
- Distill all the ideas into five Key Performance Areas (KPAs)
- Within each KPA, identify goals, outcomes, measures and action plan, including framing potential projects.
- Form a "good enough" statement of the vision, mission and guiding principles for work in the BC certified organic sector.

In November/December, 2012, the consultant distilled input from the planning session into a draft plan, circulated first to COABC Directors and then to everyone who was consulted in the planning process. Further comments and feedback informed a second draft which was presented for comment at the annual conference of the COABC, on February 22-24, 2013. Others, including certifying bodies operating in BC, were also invited to comment on the second draft, and the resulting further input is reflected in this current, now public, version. The intention is that the sector's strategic plan will continue to be a living document -- responsive to changing conditions while anchored in the sector's best thinking about strategic ways forward that support coherent and leveraged collaborative action.

5. Context

When setting strategic direction, it is important to step back and look at the big picture of where we have come from and where we are now. The Big Picture table below was co-created by session participants. It looks at the supply chain for certified organics, from "Farm" and "Processing" through to "Distribution",

“Retail”, “Fork”, and the sector as a whole. The table lists “Key Developments/Highlights”, “Opportunities”, “Challenges” and “Key Players”, and offers an excellent overview of the current context for strategic action in the BC certified organic sector.

Big Picture

	Farm	Processing	Distribution	Retail	Fork	Whole sector
Key dev'ts/High lights		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-GMO is a mandatory part of the definition of "certified organic" in BC and Canada - COABC to streamline market messaging and value of "certified organic" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - certified organic is better defined now than 5 years ago, nationally - Growth of certified organic delivery services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certified organic sector has grown every year -- is now a legitimate category. - Consumption and growth in certified organic are up -- supply not keeping up with demand - farmers markets on the rise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumers strong interest in local food and LF systems - Anti-GMO means consumers seeking certified organic - Certified organic is established, no longer just trendy - institutional procurement -- E.g. Univ of Victoria - Agri tourism, winery and restaurants - urban farming and home gardening on the rise - institutions buying more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growth of consumer demand!! - Growth of number of farmers is stagnating after exponential growth

	Farm	Processing	Distribution	Retail	Fork	Whole sector
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities to sell to retail stores (demand for local food) - Growth of winter farmers markets - CSAs - Marketing Cooperative - Greater efficiencies - Support for transition (some Provinces) - interest in certified organic farming by young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Off-grade product cullage with organization (Big Opportunity) - Primary processing (e.g. peeled and cubed frozen squash) for emerging demand for certified organic secondary food processing -- e.g. inputs to soups 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutional procurement - fast food restaurants - farm gate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BC School fruit and veg program - More and more restaurants using all certified organic or some certified organic - extending through the supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - industry-wide advocacy - Canada is the only developed country without Federal level of support for maintenance for standards. - Coordination of national players - Education for potential farmers, greening of AG -- best practices - Carbon footprint for certified organic - Anti-dumping for certified organic

	Farm	Processing	Distribution	Retail	Fork	Whole sector
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of certified organic extension support - high price of land - lack of definition (regulation) of term "organic" - Local food movement -- people want to buy local, and need to distinguish the benefits of local certified organic. - need volumes to access retail markets - losing imported AG input products because relatively small BC market means registration fee is too expensive - Lack of labour standards in organic certification - Low level GMO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for better post harvest handling - Lack of primary product at competitive wholesale prices - lack of primary and secondary processing for wholesale market - room on labels for all the info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encroaching multi-national demand limits supply to independents - need for better post harvest handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - educating consumers re cost of BC certified organic - large retailer moving in may not support industry philosophy - Consumers fail to value BC growers enough - BC price points are a challenge - Lack of BC produce -- berries, storage crops, cranberries and niche products - BC certified organic growers demand higher prices than other provinces - BC government does not provide enough support -- why buy BC? - Imported options + conventional often much cheaper than local certified organic - labeling not clear -- what is "organic" - Consistent supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disconnect between consumer expectations of "organic" and reality - availability of certified organics and expectations -- what, when - Prices not consistent, and often perceived as too expensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GMO and GE - Incomplete education -- (local is enough -- don't see need for certified organic) - Who is "the sector" - Branding -- clarity of certified organic label, e.g. animal welfare. - Information and stats are needed - Mandatory regulation of the use of "organic" - Need to update standards nationally - Add more value to certified organic label, e.g. labour standards - managing risk re the media - What does the certified organic label mean? Pastured, organic, grass-fed, unsprayed.... - Certified organic versus non-certified organic versus local, natural = confusion for producers and consumers - proliferation of standards, e.g. cotton, rainforest alliance, local food plus ... - climate change = less water - Integrity + consumer confidence - Gap in access for restaurant consumers

	Farm	Processing	Distribution	Retail	Fork	Whole sector
Key Players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban home delivery (Box programs) - certified organic distribution companies (Discovery Organics, Pro Organics, etc.) - Local Food Movement - Farmers' Markets 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big players, BC, nationally and multi-nationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key players are blasé about growth - Industry support by industry wide advocacy (BCAC) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COABC - OFC - COG - Politicians -- all levels - Conference Board of Canada - Cdn Food Strategy - COTA - OVCRT - OACC - CHFA

If there are points you would like to add to the Big Picture, or to naming the current context, please pass them on to admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

Planning participants noted that many of the challenges and opportunities for the certified organic sector are common to all of agriculture. This is an important point, as it opens strategic opportunities for collaborating with organizations like the BC Agriculture Council on such issues as:

- Access to land given the high cost of land in BC
- Aging farmers
- Apprenticeship programs, and
- Infrastructure to support primary processing

Other ways the plan reflects the sector's wider horizons are a new interest in:

- More accessible organic certification classifications, e.g. for micro and/or urban farms
- Access to the Check Mark logo for non-COABC certifiers³
- Collaboration with other certification bodies (SPCA, Salmon Safe, Environmental Farm Plan)
- Greater collaboration with national and international organic sector organizations

³ This will require a change in the regulations governing use of the Check Mark logo.

These expanded horizons signal a significant shift in the “internal” context of the BC certified organic sector. The sector is secure enough in its identity, and mature enough in its leadership to be able to enter new, more complex territories.

When entering new territory, it is helpful to have clear statements of identity and purpose. Participants at the planning session reviewed and renewed statements for the COABC’s vision and mission, and articulated six guiding principles. These statements offer important touchstones for evaluating both the plan, and how the plan is implemented. Please see if they capture what matters to you.

Vision: Sustainable certified organic food production supports healthy communities and a healthy environment in BC.

(Work in progress. See Appendix B for more info.)

Mission: To lead, support and enhance the certified organic food system in BC.

Principles (named to date):

- Promote BC agriculture from farm to fork with a focus on certified organics.
- Be respectful of all players in the food system.
- Be inclusive of all stakeholders in the organic food system.
- Lead by example, growing a sustainable tomorrow.
- Foster innovation.
- Maximize the use of external resources that meet the COABC Mission.

6. Key Performance Areas

The planning process has identified expected outcomes, selected performance measures, and proposes strategies and related actions grouped in the tables below under five main headings or Key Performance Areas:

1. **Unity of the BC Certified Organic Sector** -- to unite different elements of the BC certified organic sector.
2. **Branding and Education** -- so all stakeholders, with a special focus on consumers and policy makers, understand the meaning of and value added by the certified organic brand.
3. **Advocacy and Alliances** -- so the BC organic sector has a powerful, high profile, united voice and excellent working relationships with key stakeholders.

4. **Capacity Building** -- to help producers, processors, distributors and retailers work together to meet growing provincial, national and international demand for BC organic produce and products.
5. **Standards** -- to maintain, and add value to, certified organic standards -- to keep them on the leading edge.

If you see gaps or have suggestions for improving the plan below, please send your input to admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca.

KPA #1: Unity of the BC Certified Organic Sector

GOAL:

To unite different segments of the BC certified organic sector.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- New structure for COABC exists that supports the core function of accreditation while facilitating activity on the advocacy, education and celebration aspects of COABC's mandate.
- Greater unity between certifying bodies in BC at both the director and administrator levels (less fragmentation and ideological division, more communication and collaborative action based on shared interests);
- more rapid and cohesive response to emerging challenges and opportunities;
- clarity and uniformity around certified organics' labels;
- unified message when speaking to media, government, retailers, and other stakeholders;
- better use of resources through working together;
- more resources available thanks to the clarity and unity of the sector;
- more certifying bodies are members of COABC;
- more organic farmers opt to be certified;
- stronger relationships between different elements of the certified organic food system (e.g. farmers and processors).

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- The new structure for COABC
 - includes all CB's operating in BC in some way within COABC membership,

- supports greater use of the BCCO logo as the main identifier for BC certified organic products.
- 500 new farmers certified through COABC by year 5
- Urban farmers are included in COABC through its membership (see outcomes for the Small Scale Certification Project, currently in progress)
- Streamlined co-ordination of verification. Coordinated effort to use multi-certified VO's and CB's. (i.e. inspectors able to do multiple verifications such as BCSPCA and Food Safe are sent to operations needing multiple certifications).
- Annual face to face meetings of BC certifying body directors by 2018 at the COABC conference
- Annual face to face meetings of BC certifying body administrators by 2018 at the COABC conference
- Sustainable sector development is financed 25% by sector members (including consumers), 25% by donations/other grants, and 50% by IAF, Growing Forward, and other government funding (grants)

Table 1 -- UNITY

STRATEGIES	RELATED ACTIONS	COST FACTORS	POSSIBLE RESOURCES
Restructure COABC	<p>YEAR ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Preliminary research into precedents for an organizational structure that could include advocacy without disturbing COABC's core (accreditation) -- e.g. MOGFA, Wine Institute, Soil Association, OVCRT, Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network, and Saskatchewan Organic Directorate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share results at COABC AGM (Feb 2014) and gather initial feedback from members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSDP • Info from BCMA (Link: Fiona Cubitt) • IAF (for sector dev't aspects, not org dev't)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research issues and propose models of certification and sector development to support inclusion of more players e.g. urban farmers, graduated entry, consumers, non-COABC certifiers, processors, retailers, and other stakeholders. Develop proposal. Consult with stakeholders, including BCMA re regulatory implications. Finalize proposal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research options to facilitate other CBs to have access to the BCCO logo (Checkmark) • Research options to facilitate membership by non-COABC certifiers. • Research options for a sector development funding model based on % of sales. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research other sectors to develop the model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSDP • BCMA for info support • IAF (for sector dev't, not org dev't) • Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)
	YEAR ONE-TWO		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement revised COABC structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit advisors/directors as per chosen structure. • Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Communicate changes to existing members and outreach to new potential members • Create effective membership recruitment campaign/materials. • Update website to reflect changes in structure • PROJECT: Implement sector development funding model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and staff • consultant • consultant • Staff • consultant, Board & Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a partnership with a communications firm passionate about certified organics
Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (See Branding and Education) Mentioned here because the Communications Plan has important links with sector unity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAF (for sector dev't aspects, not org dev't)
Relationship building and outreach	<p>YEARS ONE-FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help regional CBs (at both director and admin levels) to link with each other and with COABC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing and new conferences and meetings to build relationships between different certifying bodies (e.g. the COABC Conference) • Outreach by COABC Directors to engage their CBs to in turn communicate out to their CB membership. • Help find synergies between regional CBs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board & Staff 	
	<p>YEARS TWO-FIVE</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link different segments of the BC food system with a focus on certified organics -- e.g. linking with the BCAC, Farmers' Institutes, Agriculture Advisory Committees, First Nations, urban farmers, BCFSN ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANNUAL PROJECTS: e.g. leverage annual conference, or convene a new forum or other joint initiatives that call for multi-stakeholder cooperation. • Participate in sector related meetings -- BCAC, AACs, FIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector funded and sponsorships

KPA #2: Branding and Education

GOAL:

All stakeholders, with a special focus on consumers and policy makers, understand the meaning of, and the added value of, the certified organic brand.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Consumers, non-certified growers, retailers, policy makers and other key stakeholders have greater clarity about what “organic” vs. “certified organic” means and the value it brings;
- COABC and sector partners respond rapidly and with consistent messaging when media misrepresent the certified organic sector and to opportunities to promote the certified organic sector;
- Staff in retail stores can explain the difference between certified organic, natural and local foods.

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Development of a unified, consistent sector brand/message, customizable for different levels that helps people understand the meaning and value of certified organic, and helps people to differentiate certified organic from the rest in 3 seconds, or the “blink of an eye”.
- Branding campaign exists⁴ and is being implemented;
- Clear concise slogan exists and is being used;
- Communications plan exists and is being implemented -- including both story telling and social media components;
- National Organic Week package exists that is usable year round, including templates, how tos, and also web-based components such as a Countdown to Organic Week.
- 100% compliance for:
 - certified organic claims by producers, retailers, farmers’ markets, and distributors
 - segregation
 - branding, and
 - country of origin;

⁴ A branding campaign for the Canadian organic sector has been developed by OVCRT. COABC and the other provincial certified organic associations will be invited to endorse the campaign, and to adapt its templates and key messages to provincial circumstances. The campaign will be officially launched at OW 2013. In February 2013, the OVCRT will provide a document outlining the brand strategy and communications plan and seek feedback from COABC for the brand guide. Core elements of the brand include the key message: *Think before you eat.*

- Increase of 20-30% in consumer awareness of the certified organic brand;
- 90% of natural food consumers and 5% of overall population understands distinctions between organic, certified organic, natural, and local food.
- Demand for certified organic produce/products goes up 10-15% in three years;
- 10 excellent relationships with regional or provincial journalists and commentators who cover food, agriculture, “localism” and sustainability -- e.g. Randy Shore (Vancouver Sun);
- Reliable enforcement of BC certified organic standard.

Table 2 -- BRANDING & EDUCATION

STRATEGIES	RELATED ACTIONS	COST FACTORS	POSSIBLE RESOURCES
Organic Week	<p>YEARS ONE-FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate BC certified organics year round leading up to Organic Week (Organic Month!) • Promote Organic Week in the media (mainstream and social media) well in advance • Build on tools and templates created at the national level • Develop a COABC booth, YEAR TWO (once messaging is refined. (See Market Research project to research drivers) • Partner with farmers markets through BCAFm • Raise profile of Checkmark logo • Include regional logo branding of BC checkmark as per Comox Valley region. • Leverage profile from OW to promote key messages and key relationships. • work with existing events (e.g. Organic Okanagan Festival) to increase awareness of OW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant, directors, and staff coordination • Possibly HRSDC funded intern, especially one with expertise in web and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Shop Local funding (BCMA) • IAF • Partner with producers, retailers, processors, chefs and chef's associations, BCAFm, BCAC, COTA, COG, OVCRT, CED orgs, FarmFolk/City Folk, consumers and others • Engage politicians at all levels. • Seek sponsorships from sector stakeholders
Market research	<p>YEAR ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research purchase drivers for consumers who do not buy certified organics to support target messaging. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate categories of consumers based on their knowledge and purchase drivers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also differentiate BCCO from certified organic products coming across national or provincial borders. • Understand the value propositions that drive consumers' decision making (decision tree) • Basis for branding campaign and messaging in other education work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with COTA's major market research project, announced in January 2013 • Partner with progressive communications firm (In-kind contribtn)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research base lines for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consumer awareness about distinctions between organic, certified organic, natural, and local food level of consumer awareness of the BC certified organic brand; Demand for certified organic produce/products purchasing habits, attitudes towards organic and origin labels, and the demographics of key consumer groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COTA study, see line above Growing Forward Federal funding
Branding campaign	<p>YEAR ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research to differentiate the value of BC certified organics in a positive manner, not denigrating other products, and including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A concise, compelling slogan Templates for signage that can be adapted to different contexts (Retailers will not use same signage as other retailers) Simple clear rules for use of the brand Ability for retailers to customize the brand Information about benefits -- including environment and health Promote use of the BC Checkmark, and the Canadian logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OVCRT IAF, possibly Buy Local funding
Communications	<p>YEAR ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Develop strategic communications plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications strategy for informing and linking key whole sector stakeholders that includes a social media component Communications strategy for educating and informing consumers that includes a social media component As part of the above two points, expand and refurbish BCOG to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> include consumers' section expand scope to include the whole supply chain and wider pool of contributors (e.g. distributors, retailers, consumers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultant, and staff coordn Possibly HRSDC funded intern, especially one with expertise in web and social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with UBC or SFU Communications Possibly in-kind contribution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Update "What is organic?" booklet and use it more widely. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> version for whole supply chain separate version for consumers Consider making individual pages/sections available on the website as separate PDFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultant, and staff coordn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UBC or SFU Communications Possibly part of Organic Resource Tool Kit project

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Overhaul the COABC website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultant, and staff coordn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In kind, as per BCAFm precedent
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Risk reduction strategies -- developing key messages for hot issues, e.g. GMO position paper work with other certified organic groups and gather information to consolidate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicatn s firm partnership COTA, OFC, OVCRT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Media training for COABC staff and directors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COTA IAF (Buy Local)
YEARS ONE-FIVE			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short annual survey of members, directors and sector partners to develop and maintain a database of BC journalists who cover food, sustainability, health, localism etc; 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with UBC or SFU Communicatn s
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Outreach and follow up to journalists and main stream media re regularly including local organic food stories in mainstream media, and sharing the story of certified organics in BC; 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Annual outreach to consultants and activists working on food system related initiatives to ensure they understand the brand and benefits of certified organics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop database of consultants and activists, categorized by key interests and drivers 		
YEAR TWO			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Create a COABC booth (informed by communications plan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One version aimed at consumers A second version for agriculture industry (new farmers, converting farmers.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time & materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$\$\$
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Social media component 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant Possibly HRSDC funded intern, especially ones with expertise in web and social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University partnership?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research and develop materials outlining "what's in it" for retailers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Outreach to consultants and activists working on food system related initiatives to ensure they understand the brand and benefits of certified organic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include information about gaps in BCCO offerings to attract businesses able to fill those gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector link with BCFSN
	YEAR THREE		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT App -- certified organic food finding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop App (needs to be interactive and outstanding to go viral) Promote App <p>Another possible resource is the market exchange sites/tools from AgriFood BC. E.g. a "find your product" for the Cariboo has been developed, see http://www.marketplacebc.ca/. Contact person: Mario Anda (BCMA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant and youth interns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University and/or social enterprise partnership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: BC Certified Organic Sector Youtube channel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating links to excellent existing resources on certified organics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant and youth interns Possibly HRSDC funded intern, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University and/or social enterprise partnership
	YEARS THREE-FIVE		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Producing and disseminating 1-2 special reports each year on issues of concern to the certified organic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant and youth interns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAF
Education Resources	YEAR ONE		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research and develop retail staff training resources so staff better understand distinctions between organic, certified organic, natural and local <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an emphasis on BCCO 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Create a consumer fact sheet to clarify price issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible tag lines that aim to start a dialogue: What is your food worth? OR What are you paying for good food? OR Are you paying enough for good food. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$\$\$ Environment Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable food systems 		
	YEAR TWO		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Gather existing educational resources to create a toolbox for school programs -- e.g. including Ag in the classroom. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Education of youth Phase ONE -- develop messages and resources for youth (future consumers) that are palatable to retailers, and that capture new consumers' interest immediately. Identify and work collaboratively with youth advisors and potential youth-focused organizational partners such as Check Your Head, the Pearson Seminar on Youth Leadership, Be The Change Earth Alliance, the Red Cross Symposium on Global Issues, and School Board youth-led social responsibilities programs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partner with Young Agrarians and their project to consolidate resources
	YEAR THREE		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Education of Youth Phase TWO -- Work with partners to develop youth appropriate and ideally youth-driven ways to get out the messages and resources. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Public Outreach Phase ONE -- Identify and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop materials and resources adaptable for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School nutrition programs Healthy living programs Social media channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibly HRSDC funded intern, especially one with expertise in web and social media 	
	YEARS FOUR-FIVE		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Public Outreach Phase TWO -- work with partners and stakeholders to adapt and embed use of materials and resources in school nutrition programs, healthy living programs, family nutrition programs and social media channels. 		

Other potential partners for branding and education:

- Government and industry funding
- Vancity
- Buy local funding (project-based)

KPA #3: Advocacy and Alliances

GOAL:

BC certified organic sector has a powerful, high profile, united voice and excellent working relationships with key stakeholders.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Mandatory regulation of use of the term “organic” in BC by 2018;
- Progress towards GMO labeling;
- Progressive water policy as it relates to agriculture;
- Federal government financial support to update standards to ensure consumer protection/confidence;
- Policy and program support for farmers to transition to certified organic practices;
- Regional economic development support to bridge gaps (e.g. post harvest handling, and primary processing of key input crops (potatoes, carrots, squash) in the BC food system including a specific focus on certified organics);
- More sustainable and stronger communities;
- Reduced health care and environmental costs.

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Policy changes noted above exist.
- Greater understanding of the added value of certified organics by consumers, politicians, government policy makers, the agriculture industry and others;
- Create RSS feed with 5000 subscribers in 5 years for consumers interested in receiving information updates and action alerts relating to BC certified organic sector issues;
- More alliances formed with industry councils, committees and institutes;
- More partnerships and projects with the agriculture industry for issues of common concern;
- Strategic local land use and planning process[es] includes active certifying body representatives;
- Certified organic farming embedded in ten local land use plans by 2018.

Table 3 -- ADVOCACY & ALLIANCES

STRATEGIES	RELATED ACTIONS	COST FACTORS	POSSIBLE RESOURCES
Financial and Staff Capacity	<p>YEAR ONE (and ongoing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing reserves to hire a half-time high level Executive Director with a mandate to implement this Strategic Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time ED to work strategically to support the long term sustainability of a full time ED position • ED to develop relationships with key government and industry stakeholders. • ED to increase the flow of communication and the strength of relationships between COABC and organizations working at the national level: COTA, COG, OVCRT, OACC, etc. • ED to initiate projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25,000 - \$40,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COABC reserves for the first 6 months.
Research	<p>YEAR ONE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Work with OFC, COTA and other national and international sector organizations to develop position papers that support the BC organic sector to have strong and consistent policy and key messaging about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genetic engineering • pesticide use • mandatory regulation • etc • Collaborate to have position papers available to membership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFC (taking the lead?) • • OSDP? • Partner with COTA, COG, OVCRT, & OACC • Liaise and partner with SOANN (Sustainable Organic Agriculture Action Network) • Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)

	<p>YEAR TWO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research the business case for mandatory organics -- how much money the sector brings in, how many jobs, how much economic benefit is lost due to imports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with Sauder or other business school COTA Project Kwantlen (See above)
	<p>YEARS TWO-FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT track business case numbers (See above) over time to identify trends. PROJECT: Annually research one-two key sector issues to inform development of position papers/policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cont'd (see above) OFC (Lead?)
	<p>YEAR TWO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research options to achieve BC regulatory alignment with the OPR in relation to making it mandatory for any operator using the word "organic" to be certified under either BCCO or COR standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research to identify issues that conventional and certified organics elements of the BC food system have in common that can be the base for strong strategic alliances -- e.g. land use, water, and primary processing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCAC? Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)
Government Liaison & Citizen Engagement	<p>YEAR ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create information package for members to use at public meetings outlining key areas of concern for certified organic sector. E.g. for the May 2013 Provincial election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with COTA, COG, OVCRT, OACC
	<p>YEARS ONE-FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with policy makers to promote the sustainability and health of BC communities with a special focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory regulation of the term "organic" (reference: Quebec) Budgetary support for capacity building and extension in the certified organic sector Long-term funding support for the legally required national review of certified organic standards (work with OFC) Access to land Policy support for carbon reduction in the Ag sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OFC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with the BC Government's Committee on Agriculture and the Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED & Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek recognition of the benefits of certified organics when governments are working on new policies (health, environment, agriculture, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED & Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
	<p>YEAR TWO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Engage stakeholders interested in supporting BC certified organics and a strong local food system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research options for engaging stakeholders Develop mechanisms to rapidly communicate with interested consumers, retailers, restaurants and others in the food system who care about certified organics and a strong local food system -- e.g. action alerts, social media campaigns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database of citizens for action alerts Develop/strengthen alliances with Local Food Plus, FarmFolk/CityFolk, BCFSN, Vancity, LeadNow, Slow Money and other sister organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant, database, ED (re liaison) Possibly HRSDC funded intern, especially one with expertise in web and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with OFC, provincial sector organizations, COTA. Partner with communications firm
	<p>YEAR THREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a BC Certified Organic Roundtable on the certified organic supply chain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively with COTA and OVCRT to bring the BC voice to national conversations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant & ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAF?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Organize and liaise to make certified organic production an integral part of local area planning (land use planning) in 10 communities in BC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Be a clearinghouse for BC producers and processors interested in specific export markets in order to feed to COTA and other national bodies involved in negotiating equivalency agreements with the Federal Government. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information about which markets are the priorities for BC operators who are export-ready. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COTA OFC Sector funding??

Media and Public Relations	<p>YEAR THREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Develop a quick response capacity to developments reported in the media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media training for staff and directors Key messages (elevator pitches) on priority issues that are short, direct and punchy (Links to Communications Plan) Database of allies for sector messages -- Slow Money, Village Vancouver, BCFSN, Transition Town chapters, Farm/Folk/CityFolk, Board of Change, Cdn Centre for Policy Alternatives, David Suzuki Fdtn... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant and database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COTA Partner with Sauder or other business school
	<p>YEAR THREE+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Social media training for farmers (ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing training provider, adapted to certified organic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Bodner at a COABC Conference 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research and develop tools/info that retailers can pass along to consumers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with retailers to develop the tools/info 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAF partnerships with retailers Possibly part of ORTK Project

KPA #4: Capacity Building

GOAL: Producers, processors, distributors and retailers work together to meet growing provincial, national and international demand for BC certified organic produce and products.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Growth in supply and demand for BC certified organic produce and products, provincially, nationally and internationally
- BC distributors, processors, retailers and institutions have reliable access to high quality BC certified organic produce for more months of the year
- More acres in certified organic production on BC
- Higher average BC certified organic farmer incomes

- Improved soil fertility and water conservation as more BC farms go certified organic.
- Greater diversity of crops and products grown/produced in BC

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Growth in the value of BC certified organic supply and demand by 2018 of 25% for livestock, 25% for crops, and 50% for processed goods.
- 25% growth in acres of BC land farmed using certified organic practices
- 25% growth in the number of organic farms in BC
- 25% growth in number of farmers under 40 in BC who are growing certified organics
- Significant provincial and national funding and staff support for extension services and information for the agriculture sector as a whole.

Table 4 -- CAPACITY BUILDING

STRATEGIES	RELATED ACTIONS	COST FACTORS	POSSIBLE RESOURCES
<p>Convene BC certified organic sector stakeholders</p>	<p>YEARS ONE (and ongoing if successful)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Facilitate information sharing and contracts between producers and buyers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COABC to convene “meet and greet” sessions (e.g. at the Pacific Ag Show) to facilitate conversations and contracts between producers and buyers/distributors/processors/restaurants/retailers and institutional buyers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pair “meet and greet” sessions with post harvest handling workshops for farmers. • (FFCF, Rodale) web-based food hub -- producers meeting buyers (IAF funding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chefs' associations • trade shows • FF/CF re Shared Harvest online tool
<p>Increase amount and quality of local supply (i.e. displace imports with local certified organic produce and products.)</p>	<p>YEARS ONE-FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Provide information and support to improve post harvest handling (cooling, sizing, packaging, storage) Seminars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available through COABC website • BC Organic Grower • OFIBC has identified development of a post harvest handling education module in its most recent 5 year action plan. Funding is the only restriction in moving forward. We have already had informal conversations with a suitable contractor 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COABC annual conference • OFIBC
	<p>YEAR TWO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Conduct research and facilitate access to capital to support innovation to adapt existing large scale post harvest handling technologies to the BC context (COMMON CAUSE with all of agriculture.) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAF • BCAC • Universities • Vancity? • Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Facilitate development of primary processing capacity to meet the demand from the growing secondary processing market (COMMON CAUSE with all of agriculture.) [Happy Planet wants to buy chopped (or otherwise pre-processed) potatoes, carrots, squash, garlic, broccoli, etc. for its rapidly growing production of soups and savoury food.] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BCAC WED**s network of Community Futures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Link BC certified organic growers to institutional buyers as per the pilot project currently underway in Ontario (GreenBelt Fund). The Ontario project uses regional aggregators (distributors) capable of “just in time” delivery, paired with mainstream broad line distributors like Sysco to supply locally grown produce to Ontario institutions. Possible contact: Rob Cinkant, Partner in Sysco Corp, and from Sysco Victoria Inc. (Lisa McIntosh) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFCF?
	<p>YEARS TWO-FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Support farmers to transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> innovate certification models (See UNITY) articulate the business case for certified organic farming market research to identify and quantify (both volume and pricing) gaps in BC certified organic production/processing and publicize those opportunities in the BCOG and beyond (conventional publications, trade shows, conferences) as a way of attracting new entrants into the sector. facilitate attracting conventional growers to convert to certified organic to fill BC certified organic production/processing gaps and displace imports. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vancity OFIBC (e.g. So You Want To Go Organic webinars/ sessions etc).
	<p>YEAR THREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce barriers to animal products production -- e.g. infrastructure development for local abattoirs, better availability of (and better prices for) certified organic feed, marketing boards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster development of animal producer supply co-ops (feed) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support for capitalization for new farmers (COMMON CAUSE with all of agriculture.) 		

Research	YEAR ONE		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research study to establish statistical base line data for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value of supply and demand for BC certified organic meat products, crops, and a sample of processed goods. • # of acres of BC land farmed using certified organic practices • # of organic farms in BC • # of farmers under 40 in BC who are growing certified organics • Enforcement of certified organic claim 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with COG for data re the 2nd and 3rd bullet points (Link with Anne Macey) • IAF • Partner with university or with Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Liaise with COR to develop a system that requires all certified organic operations to report acreage and number of farms on an annual basis. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Macey as a resource person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research to develop an inventory of resources that can support existing and new certified organic farmers, processors, distributors and retailers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on work done to date by Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, COABC (Cyberhelp), COG, OFIBC, FarmFolk/CityFolk, Farm Management Canada, Linking Land & Future Farmers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly partner with Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Survey members of the certified organic food system about their research needs 		
	YEAR TWO		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research options and solutions for barriers to growth and research needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Organic Cluster • Link with farmer educational institutions and others to share results, e.g. OFIBC, COTA, OFC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCAC • Possibly partner with Kwantlen ISH, see above.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research to identify which certified organic crops and products offer the most benefits per dollar of institutional procurement by universities and health authorities, and then developing a compelling business case for institutional procurement of certified organic produce and products. (Ontario is leading with dairy products.) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly partner with Kwantlen ISH, see above.

	<p>YEAR THREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research market opportunities for BC certified organic products -- Which aspects of the continental and global certified organic produce markets is BC best able to fill? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NB: Business planning for organic farming is the next course OFIBC has committed to in its 2013 Action Plan. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WED, and regional economic development commissions • GF2 • First Nations Agricultural and Business development bodies
	<p>YEAR FIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research study to establish impact data for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value of supply and demand for BC certified organic meat products, crops, and a sample of processed goods. • # of acres of BC land farmed using certified organic practices • # of organic farms in BC • # of farmers under 40 in BC who are growing certified organics • Enforcement of certified organic claim 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAF • Partner with university? • Partner with COG • Possibly partner with Kwantlen ISH, see above.
<p>Training, mentoring & knowledge sharing for new and existing certified organic farmers</p>	<p>YEAR ONE and ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Foster apprenticeships in certified organic farming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship information and tips on the COABC website • Outreach to certified organic farmers through [annual] articles in The BC Organic Grower magazine • Work with educational institutions (e.g. Kwantlen) and other programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register farmers as apprentice hosts. • Foster employment programs for agricultural labour in the certified organic sector 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with SOIL, which currently has an OSDP project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Workshops to improve post harvest handling. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COABC Conference • OFIBC course in post harvest handling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Develop information resources to upload onto the COABC website, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share link through BC Agriculture Council and others Post harvest handling for different crops links to OFIBC training programs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be part of the Organic Resources Tool Kit Project
	<p>YEAR TWO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PROJECT: Research and liaison to expand extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension expanded to include fostering mentorships between experienced and new farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced farmers as mentors (volunteer or paid) for new farmers, linked by Extension workers. Possibly research feasibility of having BCCO standards inspectors also do extension 		<p>Possibly partner with Kwantlen Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (Kent Mullinix)</p> <p>With the right funding OFIBC would be more than interested in delivering extension services.</p>
Infrastructure development	<p>YEAR THREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential PROJECT: convene conversations and partnerships to facilitate development of infrastructure, e.g. for post harvest handling and primary processing. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAF

Other potential partners for capacity building:

- Union of BC Municipalities
- BC Agriculture Council
- Agriculture Advisory Committees

KPA #5: Standards

GOAL:

To maintain and add value to certified organic standards by continuing to work with national and international partners to keep the standards on the leading edge.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Standards are clear and workable;

- Standards reflect changes in societal values (e.g. emerging water and climate change issues);
- Consumers have confidence in certified organic standards;
- Wider agriculture and food system practices improve thanks to leadership by the certified organic sector.

SELECTED PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- National and BC certified organic standards are revised as per international legal and regulatory necessity
- Standards are expanded to include new products (e.g. dog food, health and body products)
- Standards include components to facilitate certification of urban farms and graduated entry for micro farmers transitioning to certified organics
- Standards are expanded to address:
 - climate change -- “climate smart”
 - water conservation
 - labour standards

Table 5 -- STANDARDS

STRATEGIES	RELATED ACTIONS	COST FACTORS	POSSIBLE RESOURCES
Standards Review Process	YEAR ONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of a BC Standards Review Coordinator to improve two-way communication between the national and provincial levels about certified organic standards-related issues 		
	YEAR TWO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization of a COABC Standards Review Committee to liaise with partners working on national certified organic standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs? • Staff coordinatn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector funding
Feasibility study	YEAR ONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Support OFC to ensure the legally required five-year review of Canadian certified organic standards takes place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. Federal funding, removal from the Canadian General Standards Board, cost sharing with industry/government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultant & ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFC • Partner with COTA, etc.
Research	YEAR ONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research and compile BC stakeholders' recommended changes for the national certified organic standards 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly partner with Kwantlen ISH, see above.
	YEAR THREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Document the environmental impact of certified organic farming through surveys and research to demonstrate the added value and to help stakeholders prepare for the next trend which is "carbon footprint labelling". • PROJECT: If viable options exist, implement process for having certified organic standards inspectors also do extension. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAF • Possibly partner with Kwantlen ISH, see above.
	YEAR FOUR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROJECT: Research to expand standards to include new products, e.g. pet food, health and body products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with other standards bodies

Partnerships with other standards bodies	YEAR ONE PROJECT: Research options for greater coordination between different certifications such as SPCA, Salmon Safe, Carbon Credits, and Environmental Farm Plan. E.g. Implications for application forms, certifier accreditation, fees, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSDP • IAF
---	---	--	---

7. Next Steps

This is a bold plan! It is based on the groundswell of consumer interest in certified organic food. The plan also builds on the strong foundation of organizational infrastructure, knowledge, policy, regulations, branding, etc. created by the hundreds of people active in the sector in BC, nationally and internationally.

The spirit of this plan is visionary: to help the sector to grow and diversify in ways that support healthy communities and a healthy environment in BC.

It is expected that the Board of Directors of the COABC will meet annually to review progress on the plan and to confirm priorities for the coming twelve months. Central to the COABC's work will be greater emphasis on partnerships and collaborations:

- between CBs
- along the whole supply chain from farm to fork,
- with national and international organic sector organizations
- the agriculture sector as a whole
- with individuals and organizations dedicated to sustainable food systems, healthy environments and healthy communities.

Everything set out above is in a five year timeframe. As new developments call on the sector to change course, some of the tasks may be done earlier than has been laid out while others may be pushed into the next five years. By aiming high, the intent is to foster significant growth and development in the organic sector.

Finally, as noted in the Introduction, this plan is a living document and a call to action. If something calls to you, join in. If nothing calls to you, what would?

“Objectives are not fate; they are direction. They are not commands; they are commitments. They do not determine the future; they are means to mobilize the resources and energies of the business for the making of the future.”

– Peter Drucker

“Do one thing every day that scares you.” **– Eleanor Roosevelt**

Appendix A: Key Informants

The following people were interviewed as part of the research phase prior to the November 2-4, 2012 strategic planning session.

1. Dag Falck -- Nature's Path (Processor)
2. John Benedetti -- Pro Organics (Distributor)
3. Wally Hamm -- Pro-Cert (Non-COABC Certifier)
4. Dave Wilson -- Choices Markets (Retailer)
5. Matt Holmes -- COTA
6. Stephanie Wells -- Western Rep -- COTA
7. Peter von Stolk -- SPUD (Urban delivery service)
8. Claire Gram -- Policy Analyst, Vancouver Coastal Health, Healthy Communities and Food Security
9. Kevin Damaskie -- Sustainability Coordinator, Whistler 2020
10. Deepthi Jayatilaka -- Provincial Health Services Authority, re their work on institutional procurement and food security
11. Gunta Vitins -- OVCRT
12. Franco Naccarato -- Program Manager, Greenbelt Fund, re precedents in Ontario for advancing the certified organic sector.

After the planning meeting, a thirteenth and previously contacted key informant offered further input from the processor perspective:

13. Nancy Korva -- Happy Planet (Processor)

Appendix B: Background for the Vision Statement

The vision for the BC certified organic sector offers an important touchstone to help keep implementation of the plan on track. The statement below is a work in progress, being one of the statements planning participants came up with in the time available.

- Sustainable organic food production supports healthy communities and a healthy environment.

Given the importance of the vision statement, here are other versions considered by the working group:

- Sustainable organic food production to support healthy communities and a healthy environment.
- Healthy food, healthy communities, healthy environment.
- Viable and resilient farms, healthy and accessible food, healthy environment, and healthy communities.
- A sustainable relationship between the people and our planet.

To help you reflect on these statements, here are the aspects of a desired future brainstormed by the working group:

- Sustain production of food by natural processes
- Honesty in marketing
- Maintaining soil
- Production of food on a sustainable basis for the maintenance of healthy communities
- Soil improvement
- Seeking a balance with natural processes
- Growing healthy soil to support healthy sustainable communities
- Caring for the earth to produce food that will support healthy communities
- Healthy communities
- Promoting soil health and sustainable production.
- Healthy soil

Comments or suggested rewording are welcome!

Appendix C: Possible Future Projects

These two projects are considered beyond the scope of the current plan, but are noted here in case the sector's capacity grows faster than anticipated, and as possible input to a future strategic plan.

Branding and Education

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROJECT: Demos Phase ONE -- Identify and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop and document turn-key process for mounting a variety of engaging demos for career orientation days<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools• Events• Retail settings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROJECT: Demos Phase TWO -- Recruit and train a corps of volunteers to mount demos. Monitor results and fine tune demo design. |

Appendix D: Resources

The following documents were mentioned as helpful resources in planning process.

- BC Certified Organic Standards
- *Organic Value Chain Roundtable Strategic Plan, 2013-2018*. OVCRT has completed a five year strategic plan to increase the competitiveness of the organic sector. [Feb 2013 status: Close to being finalized.]
- *British Columbia Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families*, BC Ministry of Agriculture.
- *Lynch, D. 2009. Environmental impacts of organic agriculture: A Canadian perspective. Can. J. Plant Sci. 89: 621-628.*

Appendix E: Areas of potential partnership with COTA

In response to the draft plan, here is part of the feedback from Stephanie Wells, outlining areas of potential partnership between the BC Certified Organic Sector, and COTA.

“COTA wants to thank you for inviting me [Stephanie Wells] to your strategic planning retreat and including COTA in the feedback loop.

We are aligned with the challenges and ambitious goals you have identified. In particular, COTA shares key concerns around:

- Maintenance of organic standards
- Branding and education
- Marketing opportunities
- Infrastructure to support primary processing
- Capacity building throughout the supply chain, addressing:
 - * Need for extension services and apprenticeship programs
 - * Access to land, given land prices and limited access to capital
 - * Aging farmers and mentorship

We are particularly pleased to see the various areas where you have identified COTA as a partner. We look forward to building our relationship in these areas. Please know that we will take these ideas forward to our own board of directors. We have scheduled a strategic planning meeting for April [2013] and will keep these roles with COABC in mind as the board lays out the goals and plans for COTA.”