

*Exploring Progressive Solutions:  
Innovating Within the Regional Cannabis Sector*  
**A 3-YEAR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**PRIORITIZED PILOT PROJECTS, GOVERNANCE OPTIONS &  
ACTION PLAN CO-DEVELOPMENT**

*Prepared for licensed producers & processors*

*Breakfast Meeting, June 25, 2025*

*Dr. Tracey Harvey, Selkirk Innovates*



# Agenda

- Meeting Overview & Introductions
- May 30<sup>th</sup> reflections
- Prioritized Pilots & Feedback
- Governance Options Report Highlights

9:30 – 9:40 am 10 min break

- Exercise: Co-develop Action Plans
- Report Back (key themes)
- Wrap-up & Next Steps



# May 30<sup>th</sup> Breakfast meeting survey results

4.5   
average rating



What you told us (8 people responded):

Best part?

- **Getting people together** in the same room united on a project is incredible
- Round table discussion, **hearing everyone's point of view**
- Getting everyone together in a room to **build community, align on core issues and discuss our region's strategy** as business owners

Anything missing?

- I'd like **more time for the growers to have deeper discussions** but overall, the time is managed well
- This was a very clearly presented meeting with **rich informational sharing**. Well organized and easy to participate in the discussion, thank you
- I think the **Kootenay Quality Standard / Appellation / Formal Governance** pilots are really all **aspects of the same conversation** and would require a meeting just on that single topic. It is something everyone wants but **consensus might be tricky**.

# Prioritized Pilots

#1. “Voices of the Kootenays” – Regional Cannabis Storytelling Campaign

Tied for #1. Kootenay Quality Badge Certification

#3. Team Kootenay International Trade Delegation

#4. “Kootenay Grown” Digital Content Hub

#5. Formalize Team Kooteany - Governance and Funding Model Exploration

# “Voices of the Kootenays” Regional Cannabis Storytelling Campaign



Image: Tyeson Carmody; Photo from Hightide Mfg website

## **Purpose:**

Establish a regional identity for Kootenay cannabis through compelling storytelling. Includes video and written content celebrating the region's legacy, resilience, culture, community & values

## **Deliverables:**

- 5-part docuseries + 2 introductory videos + written pieces (blog?)
- Dissemination plan: roll-out via YouTube, Digital Hub, Instagram, LinkedIn and email campaigns.
- Partner with influencers?
- Host one live storytelling event (or film fest?)

**Timeline:** 12 – 18 months

**Shoestring Budget:** \$30,000–40,000 (simpler production, in-house/web-based) vs **Ideal Budget:** \$50,000–60,000 (higher-quality video production, editing, and outreach)

## **Opportunities:**

- Lots of existing content
- Solid narrative inquiry component for research
- Potential partners: Nelson Museum, Kootenay Coop Radio
- Inclusive; educational; builds authentic connection & helps normalize cannabis tradition; complements many other pilots

## **Challenges:**

- Working within federal promotional restrictions (keep educational tone)

# Kootenay Quality Badge (KQB) Certification

*Concept image by Cactus Genetics*



## **Purpose:**

Create a regional quality assurance badge for Kootenay-grown cannabis, verifying artisanal production methods and unique regional qualities; Signals a commitment to high standards, consistency and trust to retailers and consumers.

## **Deliverables:**

- A grower defined standards document (input types, practices, growing space)
- Official KQB label/logo for compliant producers; badge design + usage guidelines
- Pilot activation with 5 to 7 producers

**Timeline:** 12 months (Sept 2025 – Sept 2026)

**Shoestring Budget:** \$20,000–25,000 (DIY design + fewer producers in pilot) vs **Ideal Budget:** \$40,000–60,000 (legal input, formal audits + more producers)

## **Opportunities:**

- Big advantage in the international market; enhances consumer trust + differentiates products; promotes storytelling and one day, a trail
- Helps support government engagement efforts & can serve as a precursor to a regional appellation

## **Challenges:**

- Voluntary & lacks legal authority: difficult to enforce if not tied to legal designation
- Requires industry-wide buy-in to have impact

# Team Kootenay – International Trade Delegation

DEL CANAMO



ORGANIZAN



SPANNABIS  
CHAMPIONS  
CUP



## Purpose:

Represent Kootenay producers at international trade shows, promoting unity, export opportunities, and networking

## Deliverables:

- Design + buy or rent a regionally branded trade booth
- Shared regional booth at 2 major events (e.g., Spannabis, ICBC, Mary Jane)
- Export-focused media kit
- Co-branded swag?
- Follow-up networking webinar

**Timeline:** 9 months (September 2025 – June 2026)

**Shoestring Budget:** \$25,000–35,000 vs Ideal Budget: \$50,000–60,000 (professional branding, more shows +/- or more growers)

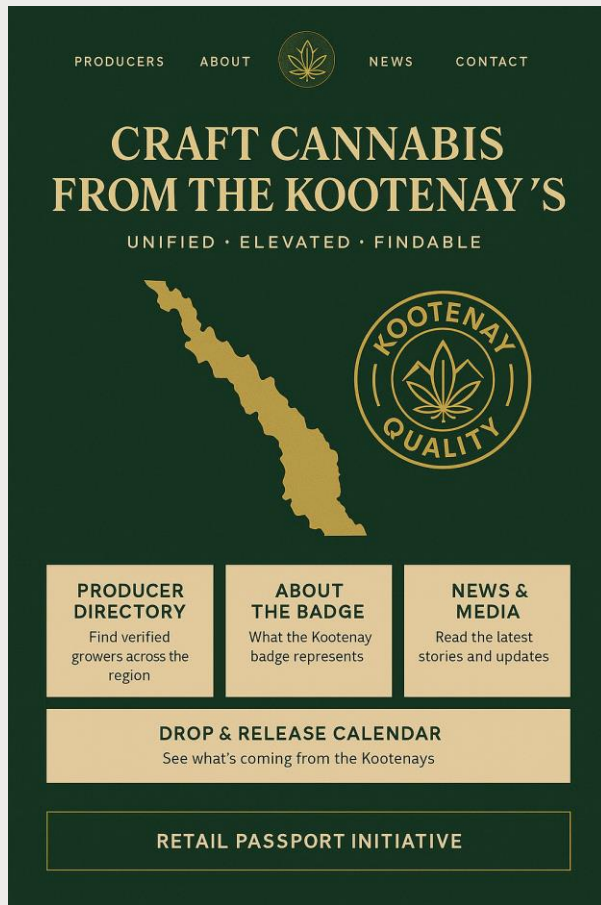
## Opportunities:

- Uses content from Storytelling Campaign in presentations
- Aligns with Quality Badge & (one day) Export Readiness initiatives;
- Global visibility, promotes future B2B partnerships; regional recognition
- Low barrier entry into global markets, momentum builder for regional export strategy

## Challenges:

- High travel costs for participants
- Trade restrictions on international advertising
- THC focused exports may disqualify potential funding

# “Kootenay Grown” Digital Hub



Concept image by Cactus Genetics

## Purpose:

Create shared communication, website and digital infrastructure that supports all pilots — storytelling, badge, trade delegation, governance, and future initiatives

## Deliverables:

- Discord or WhatsApp group
- Robust website** with **built-in audience** + interactive features + mobile responsiveness
- Shared resource hub with export, retail, governance + regional identity materials

**Timeline:** Discord: now; Web hub: 3-12 months (starting Summer 2025)

**Shoestring Budget:** \$10,000 - \$12,000 (design, content, admin + maintenance) vs **Ideal Budget:** \$20,000–35,000 (expanded scope to support many overlapping projects)

## Opportunities:

- Central to all pilots; one-stop resource, enables collaboration
- Long-term legacy platform for region

## Challenges:

- Requires active moderation and funding past pilot phase; maintenance + new materials



## Formalize Team Kootenay - Governance & Funding Model Exploration

Image: Craft Cannabis Association of BC (CCABC) –  
a province wide non-profit industry association



### Purpose:

Explore and pilot a formal structure to carry regional efforts forward (e.g., nonprofit, co-op, alliance)

### Deliverables:

- Options report (+ funding opportunities)
- Stakeholder session
- Draft bylaws and structure; Incorporation (optional)

**Timeline:** Research summer 2025 (2 months); Incorporation summer 2025 – Winter 2026 (9 months)

**Shoestring Budget:** \$8,000 vs Ideal Budget: \$12,000

### Opportunities:

- This is where it starts
- Secures long-term capacity and funding
- Provides backbone for Pilots 1–10; owns IP
- Supports grant eligibility for wish-list initiatives
- Potential local Partners: KAST (business incubator), Community Futures

### Challenges:

- Need buy-in, ongoing admin costs & time – need a champion!

# Who Holds “Team Kootenay”?

## *Governance Options for a Shared Future*

**How should you organize yourselves to move forward together?**

*We're not choosing today — we're exploring what fits your values, capacity, and goals*

**Today is about exploring**

What makes sense? What feels possible?  
What could grow with the industry over time?

#	Option	Purpose in 5 Words
1	<b>Co-op</b>	Shared costs, democratic control
2	<b>Nonprofit Society</b>	Grants, mission first + inclusive
3	<b>Benefit Company</b>	Business mission + social good
4	<b>Industry Association</b>	Policy voice + peer support
5	<b>Marketing Board</b>	Promotion + consumer awareness
6	<b>Umbrella Model</b>	Flexible, lightweight collaboration

# Governance Option 1: Co-operative Association

A democratic business model owned and governed by its members to meet shared economic, social, or cultural needs

## Key Features:

Member-owned (1 member = 1 vote)

Types: Consumer, Producer, Worker, Community Service

Funding is typically through membership fees, services, and reinvested revenue

Suitable for collective marketing, retail, and services



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## Benefits:

- Democratic governance model
- Shared ownership, infrastructure & resources

## Challenges:

- Less access to grants than non-profits
- Public and member misunderstanding of co-op roles
- Requires high commitment and legal setup

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**Estimated Start-up Cost:** ~\$3,300

**Annual Maintenance:** ~\$150–200 (plus volunteer/board labor)

## Examples:

*BC Craft Farmers Co-op* – Advocacy, networking, shared services

*Gabriola Ag Co-op* – Markets, events, community food programming

*BC Eco Seed Co-op* – Seed production, pooled resources, education

# Option 2: BC Registered Society (Non-profit)

A non-profit entity governed by the BC Societies Act. Cannot operate for profit but can pay staff and reinvest in its mission. Enables regional coordination and access to funding

## Key Features:

Must have a defined non-profit purpose; cannot distribute profits to members

Requires at least 3 directors (1 must reside in BC)

Requires constitution, bylaws, and annual reporting

No owners; governed by a member elected board



## Benefits:

- Broad access to public + private grant funding
- Encourages inclusive stakeholder-driven collaboration
- Flexible in scope and project design

## Challenges:

- Requires significant unpaid start-up and leadership time
- Funding may be competitive + cannabis stigma could limit eligibility
- Ongoing administration and strategic planning required

**Estimated Start-up Cost:** \$630–\$3,330

Examples:

**Craft Cannabis Association of BC** → a nonprofit supporting small producers and rural economic diversification

**Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR)** → Sector-building + incubation + collaboration

**Cowichan Wineries Society** → Place-branding + tourism + events

# Option 3: BC Benefit Company

A **for-profit business** in BC that commits to operating in a **responsible, sustainable way** with a legally declared public benefit

## Key Features

Must identify one or more public benefits; operates with a social purpose embedded in its business model

Must report annually on community contributions

Requires a minimum of 3 directors

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## Benefits

- Attracts investment more easily than a nonprofit
- Eligible for small business support programs
- Aligns profit with purpose, appealing to values-driven consumers

## Challenges

- Higher administrative burden (reports, governance requirements)
- Limited access to nonprofit grants + funding
- Less collaborative than co-ops; no built-in stakeholder democracy

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## Key Costs

Name registration: \$30

Incorporation fee: \$350

## Examples

**Buy Social** – Pop-up marketplace for social enterprise products.

**Budgie Box** – Gift boxes that reinvest profits into Vancouver's small businesses; highlights producer stories.



# Option 4: Industry Alliance/Association/Council

An **Industry Alliance** (also called a sector council or trade association) is an organization representing sector-wide interests like advocacy, education, promotion, and coordination

## Key Features

Often formed under the BC Societies Act (as a nonprofit)

Focuses on advocacy + collaboration; provides unified sector voice and collective identity

Often dues-funded; may not qualify for all grants



## Benefits

- Strong platform for industry-wide collaboration and innovation
- Supports sector-specific advocacy and policy influence
- Flexible structure - can handle certifications or trade missions

## Challenges

- Limited grant access; relies on dues, sponsorships + volunteerism
- Requires unpaid leadership commitment from within the industry
- Often: advocacy + market standards; less public storytelling

**Key Costs:** Similar to NPS (\$630 - \$3,300)

Examples

**BC Cannabis Alliance** (informal structure) – amplifying the voice of craft growers in policy + regulatory discussions

**Wine Growers of BC** – Marketing, tourism, and export promotion for 100% BC VQA grape wine

**BC Fruit Growers Association** – Advocating for orchardist economic sustainability, agricultural supports, and fair crop prices

# Option 5: Regional Marketing Board

A promotional (and often) nonprofit typically focused on a geographic area's products or tourism assets

## Key Features

A nonprofit structure dedicated to regional marketing

May facilitate tourism and product awareness

May manage certification marks (e.g., a Kootenay Quality Badge + logos, etc)



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## Benefits

- Coordinates regional brand and identity
- Can be eligible for tourism or economic development grants
- Encourages cross-sector collaboration (e.g., tourism, small biz)

## Challenges

- Requires unpaid leadership + administration
- Lacks formal authority (unlike statutory boards like dairy marketing)
- Typically don't provide governance solutions for entire sectors — their focus is narrower

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## Examples

**Bay of Quinte** – Public-private DMO promoting tourism and local industries across several small towns (craft beer, golf, etc.)

**Dairy Farmers of Canada** – (Legislated) Uses branding (e.g., “blue label”) to market and certify Canadian dairy

**BC Apple Industry Marketing Plan** – Engagement-based approach to revitalize a regional agri-brand

# Option 6: Partnership/Umbrella Organization

Involves collaborating with an existing nonprofit or agency whose goals align with those of the regional cannabis industry, allowing shared delivery of specific projects under their governance structure.

## Key Features

Relies on formal agreement with host  
Avoids forming new legal entity



## Benefits

- Low start-up cost and faster project timelines
- Access to established governance, admin + networks
- Increases collaborative capacity and innovative opportunities

## Challenges

- Reduced autonomy over decisions and implementation
- Relies on trust in partner organization
- Dependent on partner organization's priorities + staffing

## Key Costs

Minimal (mostly related to networking, planning, or shared project costs)

## Examples

**Craft Cannabis Association of BC & Cowichan Business Industry** – Co-developing a cannabis trail

**Citizen-led Economic Development Study** – Community groups lead rural initiatives with support from nonprofit sponsors



# How to Decide?

Consider what **matters most** to you; dimensions to ponder:

Dimension	Why it Matters
Control & Governance	Do producers want direct say (e.g., co-op) or are they okay delegating to a membership elected board (e.g., non-profit)?
Access to Funding	Do producers want to pursue grants, generate revenue, or rely on member dues?
Risk Tolerance & Legal Complexity	How much time, admin, and legal complexity are producers willing to take on?
Revenue Generation & Distribution	Do producers want the ability to pay dividends/share profits (e.g., co-op, benefit corp)?
Branding & Market Coordination	Are producers primarily aiming for regional storytelling, quality assurance, export, tourism?
Stakeholder Inclusion	Should the model include just producers/processors, or also retailers, consumers, or institutions?

# Use-Case Scenarios

Some scenarios to help you imagine which model fits best:

**Scenario A: We need grants and community legitimacy to build sector support**

→ Best fit: Nonprofit Society

**Scenario B: We want shared branding + collective bargaining power**

→ Best fit: Marketing Board, Co-op, or NPS with the right bylaws

**Scenario C: We want flexibility and minimal overhead while we build trust**

→ Best fit: Umbrella or Hybrid

**Scenario D: We want to run a business-like operation and share profits**

→ Best fit: Co-op or Benefit Company

**Scenario E: Our industry has no free time and volunteerism is difficult**

→ Best fit: Umbrella Organization or Benefit Company (with paid staff)

**Scenario F: We want to include all stakeholders—not just producers and processors, but also retailers and ancillary businesses**

→ Best fit: Industry Association or Nonprofit Society (with broad membership design)

9:30 to 9:40

# 10 Minute Break



# Workshop: Action Plan Development

- 5 tables, one for each pilot. Visit all tables, if possible. Rotate as you wish.
- Each station includes:
  - A poster or worksheet with pre-filled scaffolding
  - A facilitator asking:
    - What seems useful/promising or off track?
    - What could you contribute — or what would you need to see for this to work for you?
    - Who should lead / be involved? + Do you want to be involved?
    - What should happen first?
    - What's the biggest risk?
    - How can we tell if it's working? What does success look like?
- **Feedback:** participants have colored markers for quick visual prioritization or agreement points (e.g., green = I support, orange = maybe/I need more info, red/pink = I have a concern)

# Debrief

- Facilitator from each table group reports key feedback (1-2 themes)
- Summary of cross-cutting insights or tensions
- What are your top 1-2 priorities?
- What working groups are you willing to participate on?



# Next Steps

## 1. Finalize Action Plans

Incorporate today's feedback into the 5 pilot project plans

## 2. Develop Workplans

Define tasks, timelines, and people needed to move each pilot forward

## 3. Engage Government Partners

Share our plans that may align on funding, policy, and support

## 4. Support Sector Participation

- Request you review the Governance Options Report
  - Take a short survey
- Request you join pilot working groups

## 5. Prioritize and Launch Key Pilots

Begin execution of 2–3 highest-impact projects with strong support