

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Cross-Commodity Advisory Council** held hybrid in the RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom, Kelowna BC, and via MS Teams on April 30, 2024.

PRESENT

Adrian Arts	BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food (Virtual)
Beth Cavers	BC Cherry Association
Boyd Tyerman	BC Tree Fruits Cooperative (Virtual)
Gord Morrison	Consolidated Fruit Packers
Jesse MacDonald	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
Kate Durisek	BC Wine Grape Council
Laurel Van Dam	BC Tree Fruits Cooperative
Madeleine van Roechoudt	Grower at Large (Virtual)
Melissa Tesche	BC Fruit Growers' Association
Michelle Cook	Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program
Nikki Callaway	BC Wine Grape Council
Ryan Ostertag	Consolidated Fruit Packers
Sukhpaul Bal (CO-CHAIR)	BC Cherry Association
Tyrion Miskell	BC Grapegrowers' Association (Virtual)
Walter Makepeace	Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program

REGRETS

None

GUESTS

Derek Sturko	Inner Harbour Consulting Inc. (Virtual)
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STAFF

Kellie Garcia (CO-CHAIR)	CCLSP Project Director
Shamore Watson	CCLSP Domestic Labour Lead
Tanya Littley	OKSIR Office Manager

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

Kellie Garcia, CCLSP Project Director, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Kellie respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

1.2 Round Table Introductions

Members introduced themselves and stated whether they are new to the stabilization planning process or returning participants.

2. ELECTION OF CO-CHAIRS

Kellie explained that the Advisory Council will begin under a co-chair structure with herself being one of the chairs.

She will run the meetings for now but would like to see the Council eventually move towards having co-chairs from tree fruits and wine grapes that alternate running the meetings, with lots of support from her.

Kellie requested nominations for co-chair. Laurel Van Dam nominated Sukhpaul Bal. Sukhpaul accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Sukhpaul was elected co-chair.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by: Beth Cavers

Seconded by: Laurel Van Dam

“THAT the April 30, 2024, meeting agenda be approved as presented.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 No minutes to adopt.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

5.1 Terms of Reference for Advisory Council

Kellie provided an overview of the stabilization plan and the CCLSP as an orientation for those who are new to the process. She then reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Council.

Melissa and Madeleine stated concerns about the new clause in the Terms of Reference that applicants must leave the room when the Council is making the final decision on their application. Kellie explained that the Council is acting as a review committee and if we endorse the application, it will be funded by IAF, in most if not all cases. It is highly unusual for an applicant to be present when their application is being reviewed and approved for funding. This new process will make sure we are not open to criticism of perceived conflicts of interest. The applicant can still be present for the discussion to make sure the case is made for the application and all questions and concerns are addressed before the resolution of support is brought forward.

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Project Director

Kellie told the Council that she has been working with the Partners Table to prepare a Strategic Plan for the CCLSP that includes five goals and several performance metrics for each goal. CCLSP staff are already tracking many of the performance metrics and will report out annually. She explained that this continual evaluation will help CCLSP staff and partners measure success, identify and fix shortcomings, track progress, and measure outcomes. Sharing this information broadly with industry will establish accountability and transparency and help build buy-in from the industry.

Kellie then explained that the CCLSP has committed to releasing quarterly progress reports in addition to the annual progress report required by IAF. She referred to the 2023 Q4 and 2024 Q1 reports included in the agenda package, which highlight the significant progress made on administration and project management, leadership transition, domestic labour, extension, innovation and technology, new varieties, local government engagement, and communications and relationship-building. Statements of financial activities are also included for each quarter.

With respect to Council membership, Kellie explained her decision not to invite local governments to join the Council yet. She would first like to engage with local government staff and spend more time researching their agricultural plans and policies and then decide how best to include them in the Council's work. The CCLSP could organize a workshop for November or December that brings together local government and producers.

6.2 Administration & Communications Manager

Kellie gave the report in Shelby's absence. She told the Council that the CCLSP is running three committees:

Extension, Domestic Labour, and Innovation and Technology. Each committee has a Terms of Reference and broad membership that includes tree fruit and wine grape producers, winemakers, industry association staff, provincial and federal government staff, and others. The committees meet quarterly and will be vital to identifying and carrying out new projects and activities that will benefit industry and providing advice on current initiatives like BC Fruit Works and the labour supply access research project.

Other communications activities Shelby has worked on since she started in her role include organizing the Building Bridges conference in February, developing a website for the CCLSP, launching a common online calendar for industry events, and creating an infographic to illustrate TFISP's progress over the last three years and introduce the CCLSP. Shelby also helped write a letter to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada outlining local research needs for apples, cherries, and wine grapes on behalf of CCLSP partners.

6.3 Domestic Labour Lead

Shamore started by giving a quick background on BC Fruit Works for the benefit of the new members. She explained that the project is in its third year and the objective is to facilitate connections between tree fruit and wine grape growers in the BC Interior and domestic farm workers and provide HR support and resources to orchards and vineyards. In previous seasons the project used the CrewDriver platform to facilitate job matching. We are pausing that partnership this year and moving to a service-driven approach focused on relationship-building.

Shamore told the Council she is currently updating the BC Fruit Works website, launching the marketing campaign, determining the best job matching strategy, reviewing human resources materials, and communicating with partners and producers.

Sukhpaul requested that Shamore share the marketing materials with him before distribution.

Sukhpaul told the Council about the foreign labour committee that has been managed under the BC Fruit Growers' Association and suggested it be consolidated with the domestic labour committee, so we have just one group. Melissa responded that she has had preliminary discussions about this with Kellie and Shamore and will continue to consider how to better integrate work on foreign and domestic labour. She reminded the Council that Shamore's current position is temporary and that there is a need for year-round support so we should think about how that could be funded.

7. REGULAR BUSINESS

7.1 Stabilization Fund: Roles & Responsibilities for Application Review and Project Administration

Kellie walked the Council through the new process for reviewing and recommending applications for the stabilization fund. She explained that the CCLSP will be taking on some of the responsibilities that were previously carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture. The CCLSP will be the overall coordinator on stabilization fund projects on behalf of industry. Duties will include helping to identify projects and prepare applications, bringing applications forward to the Advisory Council for review and endorsement, liaising with IAF and the Ministry, and helping recipients prepare progress and final reports. The CCLSP can also provide administration and project management services if required by recipients.

Next, Kellie went through the draft Due Diligence and Review Template included in the agenda package. She explained that she will do the initial review of the application using the template before bringing it to the Advisory Council. But Council members will need to read the application in order to make the final decision on whether the application should be recommended for funding.

Melissa asked for clarification about who can apply for the fund. She stated that traditionally it has been only industry associations that can apply. Kellie said that the applicant eligibility assessment states "Legal agricultural industry association or entity" so she will need to clarify with IAF and the ministry who could qualify as an "entity."

Michelle asked Kellie to better explain the stabilization fund for those who are new to the process. Kellie explained that the former TFISP steering committee allocated “buckets” of funding to specific recommendations in the plan, but the Advisory Council can likely move those allocations around. She will verify the exact amount still available, but she thinks it is in the ballpark of 1.5 million. She will engage with IAF and the Ministry and present more accurate information at the next Advisory Council meeting.

7.2 Stabilization Fund: Updates on Current Projects

a) Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

Kellie presented the CCLSP progress report and financial summary that will be submitted to IAF to receive a second payment. The Advisory Council must provide a recommendation for payment via resolution.

Moved by: Melissa Tesche

Seconded by: Walter Makepeace

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project progress report and financial summary be approved and that a recommendation for release of payment in the amount of \$225,000 be provided to the Investment Agriculture Foundation.”

CARRIED

b) Extension Practitioners Conference

This update was provided under agenda item 6.2.

c) BC Fruit Works

This update was provided under agenda item 6.3.

d) Global Club Access for BC Growers

Madeleine provided an update on the variety access project. She said that the committee met once and discussed what type of entity they would want to form – for-profit or not-for-profit. The project deliverables are checklists to decide what is needed in a grower, a marketer, a packer, etc.

7.3 Stabilization Fund: New Applications

a) Mapping of Climatic Suitability of Grape Varieties (BCWGC)

Kate told the Council that she is working on an application with Dr. Elizabeth Wolkovich from the University of British Columbia. Using a combination of existing climate models and some new models, the project team would map the suitability of the top planted white and red grape varieties to their optimal growing regions as defined by the BCVQA regions. The maps would help producers with their decision making, particularly when it comes to replanting. The application is for approximately \$30K and is part of a bigger 5-year project that they are breaking into smaller pieces. Kate also explained that she is awaiting feedback from the Ministry of Agriculture on whether the project will fit under the Wine Grape Task Force funding. If it does, she will apply for funding there instead.

Melissa agreed that the project is timely because growers will need to make decisions on replanting soon.

Tyrion asked Kate to clarify what she is asking for - whether it is full or partial funding. Kate responded that it would be full funding but at this point she is just bringing the idea forward to the Council to see if it is a project they would support. The application is still under development.

Kellie commented that while the research is commodity-specific, the goal will be to use the outcomes to begin expanding DAS (which is a cross-commodity tool) to winegrapes.

Sukhpaul also agreed that the project is needed, and he would support it being funded under stabilization if the Task Force will not fund it.

Madeline stated that she is very supportive of DAS and thinks bringing wine grapes into that tool would be a great decision.

b) BC Access to Plan Material (BCFGA)

Melissa told the Council about an application she is working on with Lindsay King at the Ministry of Agriculture. The project focuses on creating a systems approach to manage oriental fruit moth during production of nursery stock in hopes of finding a solution to CFIA's trade restriction limiting the movement of fruit tree nursery stock into BC. The application will most likely come to the Advisory Council via email soon.

7.4 Discussion of Other Cross-Commodity Issues and Opportunities

Melissa stated that she has attended recent drought meetings held by the province and is concerned about what is coming this year. She would like the Advisory Council to consider how the CCLSP can help with communications and action around this topic.

Kellie told the Advisory Council that she has been a member of the Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Team since 2016 and will continue participating in her new CCLSP role. While she cannot be the voice of agriculture, she can make sure all relevant information discussed at the meetings is transferred to industry associations. She can also help prepare newsletter articles and other communications materials and point farmers to relevant resources.

Melissa stated that it is very important that we work together to shed light on potential impacts of drought on our growers and work on solutions.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Update on Labour Supply Access Research Project

Kellie informed the Advisory Council that the funding applications to IAF (through their Workforce Analysis and Planning Program) and Mitacs were successful, and the labour supply access research project will launch soon. Administration for the project is currently being transferred from the BCGA to the CCLSP in collaboration with Kwantlen Polytechnic University as a research partner. Kellie told the Council that she will provide a better update about the project at the next meeting. Members of the domestic labour committee and Partners Table will be important advisors for the project, among others.

8.2 Update on long-term strategy for the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program

Michelle told the Advisory Council that she recently came on as the General Manager for OKSIR, taking the place of Melissa who moved to the BCFGAs. She is continuing with the business development work that is focused on increasing moth sales to Washington so OKSIR will remain viable as acreage in the Okanagan reduces.

8.3 Update on Orderly Marketing Commission

Melissa stated that work on the orderly marketing commission is ongoing. The BCFGAs is neutral and is responsible for bringing information to growers. Even if the industry votes yes, it is up to the Ministry of Agriculture to put the commission in place. There is a draft for the proposed scheme of the commission.

Sukhpaul asked who will coordinate the voting process. Melissa responded that contractors will be hired.

8.4 Update on BC Government data strategy

No update.

9. MEETING SCHEDULE

9.1 Determine meeting schedule for 2024 and 2025

Kellie referenced the proposed meeting schedule – from 9:00-12:00 on June 25 and November 26, 2024, and January 14, April 8, June 24, and November 25, 2025.

Some members expressed concern about the June date because it is a busy time for cherries.

Kellie explained that the proposed quarterly schedule considers when the various committees meet, CCLSP staff availability, board room availability, vacation/down time (e.g. Christmas, summer), and demands for some members during the growing season. It appeared that most people agreed on the next meeting date for June 25, 2024, and so scheduling will proceed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Derek shared that this was his last meeting and wished everyone the best. The Advisory Council thanked Derek for his dedication to the stabilization work.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

The next Cross-Commodity Advisory Council meeting will be held on June 25, 2024.