

Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

Q2 Progress Report for 2024 (April 1 to June 30)

Background

In early 2023, a coordinated effort to address leadership challenges and improve collaboration among industry organizations representing tree fruits and wine grapes was established by industry, with support from the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food and funding provided from the Stabilization Fund. The Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project (CCLSP), a 3-year pilot, was launched in late August 2023 to provide the framework for industry to assume responsibility for key projects of the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan and work on new cross-commodity initiatives deemed important by industry. Ultimately, the CCLSP will evolve into a long-term leadership structure to action cross-sector initiatives and continue collaboration. The Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program is administering the CCLSP, and the Partners Table¹ is providing overall guidance and accountability.

Key Accomplishments

Significant progress was made in the second quarter of 2024. Key accomplishments include:

- Successfully transitioned leadership of ongoing stabilization work from MAF to industry (CCLSP),
- Signed an MOU with IAF that delegates responsibility to CCLSP staff to help industry with project ideas, applications, and reporting for the stabilization fund,
- Launched the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council and approved the first project (BC Access to Plant Materials) submitted to the council to recommend for stabilization funding,
- Finalized and launched the new CCLSP website and integrated the [common events calendar](#) on 3/5 Partner websites,
- Hosted three lunch and learn sessions for producers focused on financial supports and mental health,
- Held well-attended and productive meetings with the cross-commodity committees (extension, domestic labour, and innovation & technology).

Reflections and Lessons Learned

We are making great strides in our cross-commodity efforts. The appropriate stabilization plan recommendations and projects have seamlessly transitioned to industry leadership under the CCLSP, while ministry staff continue to provide important support. Growers are facing overwhelming and insurmountable challenges right now but are still showing up to support the CCLSP. The successful launch of the industry-led Cross-Commodity Advisory Council, and the well-attended meetings of the three cross-

¹ Partners Table member organizations are the BC Fruit Growers' Association, BC Grapegrowers' Association, BC Wine Grape Council, BC Cherry Association, and Okanagan Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program.

commodity committees demonstrate their willingness and eagerness to work together and support each other. Approximately 45 people are participating on one of more of the groups – contributing their knowledge and expertise, learning from others, and building relationships with people outside of their usual networks. CCLSP staff are leading efforts to identify more projects suitable for stabilization funding and anticipate bringing several applications forward to the Advisory Council and IAF in the next quarter. Industry partners are reaching out when they need help and CCLSP staff are fulfilling requests quickly. Examples include the quick organization of three lunch and learn sessions requested by the partners and the timely transfer of the Labour Supply Research Project to the CCLSP to free up capacity at the BCGA, among others. The CCLSP strategic plan is complete, and 20 performance indicators are being tracked to show progress and demonstrate the value of cross-commodity collaboration.

We have a long break before our next scheduled advisory council and committee meetings in November. This is by design because it is busy season for everyone. That said, we can't lose our momentum on the cross-commodity efforts. CCLSP staff will continue to work hard behind the scenes and engage as needed to plan projects for the fall (e.g. local government and agriculture forums), gather advice on stabilization funding applications we will be writing, and obtain Advisory Council approval of the applications when they are ready.

Description of Progress

Details of progress made are provided in the table below.

Work category	Description of progress
Leadership transition	<p>Finished all actions outlined in the Leadership Transition Plan and successfully transitioned leadership for the stabilization plan current and future work to industry.</p> <p>Worked with the Investment Agriculture Foundation to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding that delegates responsibly to the CCLSP (under the administration of OKSIR) to work with industry partners to identify projects for the TFISP fund, assist with funding applications and progress/final reports, and provide project administration and management support for approved projects.</p>
Partners Table and Cross-Commodity Advisory Council	<p>Provided the CCLSP Strategic Plan to the Partners Table for review and approval. The plan includes five strategic goals and 20 performance indicators for our cross-commodity work.</p> <p>Held a brief Partners Table meeting in June and began planning September meeting.</p> <p>Launched the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council and held meetings in April and June.</p>

Work category	Description of progress
Domestic labour	<p>Held committee meetings in April and June.</p> <p>Completed website updates and translated materials for BC Fruit Works. Launched a social media campaign and finalized the initial batch of HR materials for producers. The BCFW Project Lead remains focused on enhancing the job matching strategy.</p> <p>Successfully transitioned management of the Labour Supply Research Project to CCLSP and launched the project. The project aims to better understand the domestic seasonal labour market to identify policies, actions, and strategies for addressing labour shortages. It is being completed in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University.</p> <p>Continued to explore how domestic and foreign labour portfolios can be better integrated to bring a more holistic approach to labour to the industry.</p>
Extension	<p>Held committee meetings in April and June.</p> <p>Met with extension committee industry co-chair, Evan Esch, to discuss potential project ideas.</p> <p>Assist in planning the BCWGC and BCGA Grower Day to be held on August 7.</p>
Innovation & Technology	<p>Held committee meetings in April and June. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference and Karen Yeung, a leader in the wine grape industry, was elected as the industry co-chair. The committee worked together to outline project priorities.</p> <p>Attended the BCWGC KTT & RD meeting in April.</p> <p>Participated in discussions regarding the future of BC DAS and the possibility of expanding it to wine grapes.</p>
New varieties	<p>Submitted a new project application from the BCFGa, entitled BC Access to Plant Material, to IAF for consideration for stabilization funding. The project was approved by Cross-Commodity Advisory Council at their June meeting.</p> <p>Continued to work with the subcommittee and contractor on the Global Club Variety Access project.</p>
Local government	<p>Attended the RDCO Planning Lab focused on agriculture on June 18.</p> <p>Drafted a project plan for local government and agriculture forums to be held in fall 2024, one in North/Central Okanagan and the other in South Okanagan/Similkameen. The forums will focus on relationship building and engagement to identify current gaps and misconceptions. A subcommittee will be formed to assist CCLSP staff with planning the events.</p>

Work category	Description of progress
Communications and relationship-building	<p>Attended relevant events to enhance knowledge of industry needs and opportunities and build relationships, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OKSIR Board Meeting in April, • Bi-weekly meetings of the Thompson Okanagan Region Drought Response Team, • Wildfire Solutions Symposium hosted by the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus, • Lake Country Farmers’ Institute Spring Fling, • Drought Stakeholder Working Group meetings hosted by the Regional District of North Okanagan, and • June meeting of the Water Stewardship Council, hosted by the Okanagan Basin Water Board. <p>Launched the new CCLSP website in WordPress format. Updated the collaborative extension calendar to increase functionality for growers and practitioners. Worked with CCLSP partners to integrate the calendar on the BCCA, BCWGC, and OKSIR websites, with efforts underway to feature it on the BCFGA and BCGA websites soon.</p> <p>Successfully hosted three lunch and learn sessions for producers. Two sessions, conducted with Ag Credit Corporation and Farm Credit Canada, focused on financial options for producers facing challenging times. The third session, held in partnership with AgSafe and the Canadian Mental Health Association, addressed mental health and resilience in agriculture. All three sessions were recorded, distributed via partner newsletters, and have been posted on the BCFGA YouTube channel.</p>

Report on Performance Metrics

Twenty indicators are being tracked by CCLSP staff and a full report on our performance in 2024 will be provided in our Q4 progress report.

Report on Expenditures

A statement of financial activity from April 1 to June 30, 2024, is outlined in the table below.

CCLSP General Operating Expenses

	Expenses				
	2024 Budget	Q1	Q2	To Date	Remaining
Communications	\$4,500	\$175	\$1,391	\$1,567	\$2,933
Meetings & Travel	\$7,500	\$2,040	\$1,498	\$3,538	\$3,962
Employee Expenses	\$207,550	\$46,083	\$56,409	\$102,492	\$105,058
Supplies, Software, Subscriptions	\$5,500	\$2,985	\$724	\$3,709	\$1,791
Rent	\$2,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,600
Contract Services	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
Contract Admin (SIR 8.5%)	\$20,200	\$4,359	\$5,102	\$9,461	\$10,739
TOTAL	\$257,850	\$55,642	\$65,125	\$120,767	\$137,083

Administered Projects Operating Expenses

	Expenses				
	2024 Budget	Q1	Q2	To Date	Remaining
BC Fruit Works	\$162,540	\$3,620	\$39,483	\$43,103	\$119,437
Labour Supply Research	\$115,000	\$0	\$25,463	\$25,463	\$89,537
Global Club Variety Access	\$48,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$48,000
TOTAL	\$325,540	\$3,620	\$64,946	\$68,566	\$256,974

Project Funding (Revenue)

	Total Funding Expected	Received to Date	Remaining
CCLSP	\$855,658	\$374,730	\$480,928
BC Fruit Works	\$162,540	\$90,000	\$72,540
Labour Supply Research	\$115,000	\$58,000	\$57,000
Global Club Variety Access	\$48,000	\$40,000	\$8,000
TOTAL	\$1,181,198	\$562,730	\$618,468

Looking Ahead to Next Quarter

CCLSP staff will focus on the following tasks in the third quarter of 2024.

- Host forums that bring together local government staff and tree fruit and wine grape producers to build relationships, discuss challenges, and find opportunities to work together.
- Continue identifying projects for the stabilization fund and submit multiple applications to the Advisory Council for approval and recommendation to IAF,
 - Project ideas being considered include the forums mentioned above, working with BC Food Web to translate agricultural research into briefs, continuing operations of BC DAS, developing a project plan for expanding BC DAS to winegrapes, hosting another practitioners' extension conference in 2025, developing rootstock education and outreach materials, and sponsoring trials and demos of drone and other technology on farms.
- Continue to support producers with their labour and human resource needs through BC Fruit Works and explore how CCLSP can help move the needle on housing for farmworkers.
- Plan a series of winter lunch and learns focused on business management, succession planning, labour, mental health, data management, and other topics.
- Send frequent communications out to media and industry partners via articles that highlight successes of the cross-commodity work and showcase the people involved.