

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Date:	November 26, 2024
Time:	9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (lunch to follow)
Location:	In person: RDCO's Woodhaven Boardroom, 1450 KLO Rd, Kelowna Virtual: Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 286 106 249 120 Passcode: hLJ6dH

MEETING AGENDA

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Recommended Motion

"THAT the November 26, 2024, meeting agenda be adopted as presented."

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (Page 3)

Recommended Motion

"THAT the September 5, 2024, meeting minutes be adopted as presented."

4. **ROUND TABLE UPDATES FROM MEMBERS**

5. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

5.1 CCLSP Committees and Communications (Page 7)

5.2 Stabilization Fund: Financial Update (Page 8)

5.3 Stabilization Fund: Current Projects

a) Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project (Page 9)

b) BC Access to Plant Material (BCFGA) – (Attachment 1)

Recommended Motion

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC Access to Plant Material Project Progress Report submitted by the BC Fruit Growers' Association and recommends the first payment of \$14,017."

c) BC Fruit Works (Page 11)

d) Global Club Access for BC Growers (verbal update)

e) Local Government & Ag Tour (Page 15)

Recommended Motion

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the project expense report for the Local Government and Agriculture Tours submitted by the Okanagan Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends the interim payment of \$6,911."

f) BC DAS Operations (verbal update)

- g) BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes (verbal update)
- h) Extension Conference 2025 (covered in agenda item 5.1)
- i) Research Briefs (covered in agenda item 5.1)

5.4 Stabilization Fund: New Applications

No new applications.

5.5 Discussion of other Cross-Commodity Issues and Opportunities

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Labour Supply Research Project (*Page 16*)

6.2 Proposed 2025 Meeting Dates

- a) January 23, 2025
- b) April 24, 2025
- c) June 24, 2025
- d) November 26, 2025

7. ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting will be held on January 23, 2025

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
November 26, 2024
Agenda No. 3

Minutes of the **Cross-Commodity Advisory Council** held virtually via MS Teams on September 5, 2024.

PRESENT

Angela Boss
Jesse MacDonald
Kate Durisek
Madeleine van Roechoudt
Melissa Tesche
Michelle Cook
Sukhpaul Bal
Tyrion Miskell
Walter Makepeace

BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
BC Wine Grape Council
Grower at Large
BC Fruit Growers' Association
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program
BC Cherry Association
BC Grapegrowers' Association
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program

REGRETS

Adrian Arts
Beth Cavers
Gord Morrison
Nikki Callaway
Ryan Ostertag

BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food
BC Cherry Association
Consolidated Fruit Packers
BC Wine Grape Council
Consolidated Fruit Packers

GUESTS

None

STAFF

Kellie Garcia
Shamore Watson
Shelby Austen

CCLSP Project Director
CCLSP Domestic Labour Lead
CCLSP Administration & Communications Manager

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Kellie Garcia, CCLSP Project Director, called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by: Walter Makepeace

"THAT the September 5, 2024, meeting agenda be approved as presented."

Seconded by: Kate Durisek

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by: Michelle Cook

"THAT the June 25, 2024, meeting minutes be adopted as presented."

Seconded by: Walter Makepeace

CARRIED

4. REGULAR BUSINESS

4.1 STABILIZATION FUND STATUS

Kellie provided a detailed update on the fund, noting a current balance of approximately \$1.79M, including accrued interest from the past three years. At the November 26 meeting, the Council will review and update the table of notional allocations previously developed by the steering committee.

4.2 STABILIZATION FUND: CURRENT PROJECTS

a) CROSS-COMMODITY LEADERSHIP SUPPORT PROJECT

The 2024 Q2 progress report for the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project was provided to the Council. The report has also been posted on the CCLSP website.

b) BC FRUIT WORKS

Shamore briefed the Council on the project's achievements, challenges, and next steps, with a detailed report provided separately. Key milestones include hiring a project lead, updating the website, translating materials, preparing HR resources, and hiring a marketing firm for a social media campaign. Ongoing efforts focus on marketing, job matching, evaluating strategies, and domestic labour research. Challenges include industry difficulties, communication issues, overcoming past perceptions, limited collaboration, and candidate quality. Looking ahead, Shamore aims to maintain outreach, strengthen partnerships, educate growers, collaborate on labour research, and define a long-term strategy.

Moved by: Madeleine van Roechoudt

Seconded by: Michelle Cook

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC Fruit Works Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends the second payment of \$50,000."

CARRIED

Angela and Jesse abstained from voting on the motion.

4.3 STABILIZATION FUND: NEW APPLICATIONS

a) LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURE TOURS

Kellie walked the Council through the project application and due diligence checklist, explaining that one tour will be held in the North and Central Okanagan, and another in the Okanagan-Similkameen. Both tours will bring planning staff and producers together to discuss common agricultural issues.

Melissa added that a similar tour hosted by SIR in 2017 was well received and expressed strong support for the project.

Moved by: Melissa Tesche

Seconded by: Tyrion Miskell

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Local Government and Agriculture Tours TFISP application submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program with a maximum funding contribution of \$14,595, and a project timeline of September 15, 2024, to November 30, 2024."

CARRIED

Angela and Jesse abstained from voting on the motion.

b) BUILDING BRIDGES EXTENSION CONFERENCE 2025

Kellie walked the Council through the project application and due diligence checklist, highlighting the value the conference provides to extension practitioners.

Kate, Jesse, and Tyrion emphasized how the conference roadmaps, which outline key industry issues, have been invaluable for decision-making and planning this year. They also stressed the importance of the professional development opportunities.

Madeleine mentioned that, since she has not attended the conference, she finds it difficult to fully grasp its benefits. Kate explained that in addition to the roadmaps, it also fosters collaborations, such as those between MAF, BCWGC, and BCIA, who are now working together to update the grapes Best Practice Guide.

Sukhpaul asked about a cost-share model for participants. Kellie clarified that the intention is to have the conference fully grant-funded this year, but the model could change next year. Kate supported keeping it accessible to ensure the right audience. Melissa agreed, noting that a cost-share might limit attendance, especially for veterans whose expertise is crucial.

The Council agreed to revisit the cost-share model next year.

Moved by: Tyrion Miskell

Seconded by: Madeleine van Roechooldt

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Building Bridges Extension Conference 2025 TFISP application submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program, with a maximum funding contribution of \$35,385, and a project timeline of September 15, 2024, to March 31, 2025."

CARRIED

Angela and Jesse abstained from voting on the motion.

c) BC DAS OPERATIONS

Kellie walked the Council through the project application and due diligence checklist. Michelle explained that the funding application will support two years of operations and the development of a long-term strategy and financial plan for the platform. BC DAS has proven very useful to many growers and field staff and its continuation is vital to the industry.

Moved by: Melissa Tesche

Seconded by: Walter Makepeace

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC Decision Aid System TFISP application submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program, with a maximum funding contribution of \$300,545, and a project timeline of September 15, 2024, to December 31, 2026."

CARRIED

Angela, Jesse, and Michelle abstained from voting on the motion.

d) BC DAS EXPANSION TO WINE GRAPES

Kellie walked the Council through the project application and due diligence checklist, outlining a phased approach with phase one including a needs assessment and go/no go process and phase two focusing on integrating one to three of the most beneficial wine grape models into the current BC DAS platform.

Sukhpaul asked about the consultant selection process, and Kellie explained that she would collaborate with industry partners to find someone to do the work.

Kate emphasized the importance of the phased approach, noting that its timing aligns well with BCWGC's collaborative research efforts, which can provide peripheral support.

Moved by: Kate Durisek

Seconded by: Sukhpaul Bal

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Expanding BC DAS to Wine Grapes TFISP application submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program, with a maximum funding contribution of \$115,500, and a project timeline of September 15, 2024, to December 31, 2026."

CARRIED

Angela and Jesse abstained from voting on the motion.

e) RESEARCH BRIEFS AND VIDEOS

Kellie walked the Council through the project application and due diligence checklist, highlighting the collaboration with the BC Agricultural Climate Action Research Network and BC Food Web.

Kate expressed her support, noting that while BCWGC has long supported research, their biggest challenge is knowledge transfer. Madeleine emphasized the need to translate research into simple terms for better accessibility.

Jesse added that this partnership will help researchers more easily communicate their findings and meet their knowledge and technology transfer (KTT) requirements.

Moved by: Kate Durisek

Seconded by: Michelle Cook

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Improving Access to Research for Tree Fruits and Wine Grapes TFISP application submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program, with a maximum funding contribution of \$143,850, and a project timeline of April 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026."

CARRIED

Angela and Jesse abstained from voting on the motion.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

6. ADJOURNMENT

The next Cross-Commodity Advisory Council meeting will be held on November 26, 2024, from 9 am to 12 pm.

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council November 18, 2024

From: Shelby Austen, CCLSP Admin. & Comms. Manager

Subject: Update on CCLSP Committees and Communications

Committees:

Extension

The Extension Committee met on November 14, with 17 attendees, including three new members: Love-Ese Chile, Program Manager for the BC Agricultural Climate Action Research Network; Juliana Cao, Coordinator for BC Food Web; and Isabella Rivero, Communications and Membership Coordinator for the BC Wine Grape Council. The meeting focused on sharing roundtable updates after a busy season and beginning to plan the 2025 Extension Practitioners Conference. Suggested ideas included hosting a grower panel to explore the extension supports growers value and currently use, presenting early-stage research updates, and organizing workshops on peer-to-peer learning to foster greater engagement. The conference will be held on February 27 and 28 in Penticton.

Domestic Labour

The committee is set to meet on November 22. I will provide a verbal update at the Advisory Council meeting.

Innovation & Technology

The committee is set to meet on November 20. I will provide a verbal update at the Advisory Council meeting.

Communications:

Significant updates have been made to the CCLSP website, including the addition of a “News and Updates” section and improvements to the “Our Work” page. As part of this, we created “Project Spotlights,” concise one-page summaries that clearly outline the objectives, deliverables, and budgets for each CCLSP project. We also drafted a news article highlighting the successes of the Advisory Council; however, unforeseen industry changes prevented its release.

We conducted an agricultural bus tour in Lake Country on November 6, to connect local government planners with producers to discuss challenges and opportunities surrounding agricultural policies and regulations. A comprehensive summary report is being developed, which will capture key findings, insights from participants, and actionable recommendations to support improved collaboration.

Lastly, we have been actively engaging in relationship-building and networking by attending key industry events such as the BCGA/BCWGC Grower Day, BCFG regional meetings, RDCO Regional Planning Labs, and others.

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

November 18, 2024

From: Kellie Garcia, Project Director

Subject: Financial Update on Stabilization Fund

The following table provides the current commitments and balance of the stabilization fund.

I would like permission from the Advisory Council to move the remaining \$43,413 for “Steering Committee Farmer Remuneration” to general projects. The CCLSP has a sufficient meeting costs budget to cover this remuneration. We also have \$4,481 left over from the 2024 Extension Practitioners Conference that can be moved back to general projects.

If the above two suggestions are moved forward, we would have a balance of \$639,222 remaining in the fund. I'd like direction from the Advisory Council about whether you would like to allocate certain amounts to “buckets” – e.g. extension, innovation & technology, domestic labour, etc. – or if we can allocate to whatever worthwhile projects are brought forward to the Advisory Council.

TFISP Balance as at November 2024				
Balance provided by IAF on Aug 1, 2024 (does not include marketing council funds)				\$ 2,562,156
Project Commitments				
Project Number	Project Title	Allocated	Paid	O/S
IAF-202403-09994 - OKSIR (formerly TFC030)	Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project	\$ 855,658	\$ 374,730	(480,928)
IAF-202403-09993 - OKSIR	Global Club Access for BC Growers	\$ 48,000	\$ 40,000	(8,000)
IAF-202403-09988 - OKSIR	Domestic Labour - BC Fruit Works 2024	\$ 162,540	\$ 140,000	(22,540)
IAF-202403-09984 - OKSIR	2024 Extension Practitioners Conference	\$ 36,750	\$ 32,269	(4,481)
IAF-202507-12969 - BCFGGA	BC Access to Plant Material	\$ 33,000	\$ -	(33,000)
IAF-202509-13793 - OKSIR	BC DAS Operations	\$ 300,545	\$ 120,218	(180,327)
IAF-202509-13792 - OKSIR	2025 Extension Practitioners Conference	\$ 35,385	\$ -	(35,385)
IAF-202509-13791 - OKSIR	Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,595	\$ -	(14,595)
IAF-202509-13794 - OKSIR	BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ 46,200	(69,300)
IAF-202509-13795 - OKSIR	Research Briefs & Videos	\$ 143,850	\$ -	(143,850)
Other Commitments				
Steering Committee Farmer Remuneration		\$ 100,000	\$ 56,587	(43,413)
Administration Fees				
IAF Admin Fees (estimated)		\$ 125,000	\$ -	(125,000)
Total commitments		\$ 1,970,823	\$ 810,004	\$ (1,160,819)
Funds Remaining (not contracted)				\$ 591,333

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
November 26, 2024
Agenda No. 5.3a

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

November 18, 2024

From: Kellie Garcia, Project Director

Subject: Update on Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

Background:

The [Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project](#) (CCLSP) is a 3-year pilot funded by the Government of B.C. through the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Initiative delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. It is providing the framework for the tree fruit and wine grape sectors to assume responsibility for key projects of the [Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan](#), delve into other common issues and opportunities, and develop a long-term leadership structure to action cross-sector initiatives and support continued collaboration. The Partners Table, which includes senior staff from the BC Cherry Association, BC Grapegrowers' Association, BC Fruit Growers' Association, BC Wine Grape Council, and Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program, is providing overall guidance and accountability for the CCLSP.

Report on Progress:

CCLSP staff prepare quarterly progress reports to keep things on track and promote transparency of our work and how the stabilization funding is being spent. Progress reports for 2024 Q1 and Q2 are available at <https://crosscommodity.org/our-work/>. The progress report for 2024 Q3 is almost complete and will be posted on our website when finished.

In addition to delivering the approved stabilization fund projects, CCLSP staff have been busy working on project development. We have about 10 project ideas that we're exploring with the Partners Table, our cross-commodity committees, and others. The aim is to have new applications ready for review and endorsement at the January Advisory Council meeting.

Report on Budget to September 30, 2024:

CCLSP General Operating Expenses

	2024 Projected Budget	Q1 (Jan to Mar)	Q2 (April to June)	Q3 (Jul to Sep)	To Date	Budget Remaining
Communications	\$ 4,500	\$ 175	\$ 1,391	\$ 52	\$ 1,618	\$ 2,882
Meetings & Travel	\$ 7,500	\$ 2,040	\$ 1,498	\$ 212	\$ 3,751	\$ 3,749
Employee Expenses	\$ 207,550	\$ 46,083	\$ 56,409	\$ 38,220	\$ 140,712	\$ 66,838
Supplies, Software & Subscriptions	\$ 5,500	\$ 2,985	\$ 724	\$ 461	\$ 4,170	\$ 1,330
Rent	\$ 2,600	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,600
Contract Services	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Contract Admin (SIR 8.5 %)	\$ 20,200	\$ 4,359	\$ 5,102	\$ 3,310	\$ 12,771	\$ 7,429
TOTAL	\$ 257,850	\$ 55,642	\$ 65,125	\$ 42,255	\$ 163,023	\$ 94,828

Administered Projects

		2024 Expenses				
	Budget	Q1 (Jan to Mar)	Q2 (April to June)	Q3 (Jul to Sep)	To Date	Budget Remaining
Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,595	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,595
BC DAS Operations	\$ 300,545	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300,545
BC DAS to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 115,500
BC Fruit Works	\$ 162,540	\$ 3,620	\$ 44,433	\$ 27,707	\$ 75,760	\$ 86,780
2025 Extension Conference	\$ 35,385	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,385
Labour Supply Research	\$ 115,000	\$ -	\$ 25,463	\$ 38,800	\$ 64,263	\$ 50,737
Global Club Variety Access	\$ 48,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,143	\$ 17,143	\$ 30,857
Research Briefs	\$ 143,850	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 143,850
TOTAL	\$ 935,415	\$ 3,620	\$ 69,896	\$ 83,650	\$ 157,166	\$ 778,250

Project Funding

	Total Revenue Expected	Received to date	Remaining
CCLSP	\$ 855,658	\$ 374,730	\$ 480,928
Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,595	\$ -	\$ 14,595
BC DAS	\$ 300,545	\$ -	\$ 300,545
BC DAS to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ -	\$ 115,500
BC Fruit Works	\$ 162,540	\$ 140,000	\$ 22,540
Extension Conference	\$ 35,385	\$ -	\$ 35,385
Labour Supply Research	\$ 115,000	\$ 58,000	\$ 57,000
Global Club Variety Access	\$ 48,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 8,000
Research Briefs	\$ 143,850	\$ -	\$ 143,850
TOTAL	\$ 1,791,073	\$ 612,730	\$ 1,178,343

Update on Advisory Council Membership:

We would like to extend a warm welcome to BCWGC's new representative, Karen Yeung, and say thank you to outgoing rep Nikki Callaway. We are still working to secure representatives from the BC Grapegrowers' Association and the BC Fruit Growers' Association. The Advisory Council could also benefit from adding "grower members at large," so please let me know who I could approach.

MEMORANDUM

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
November 26, 2024
Agenda No. 5.3c

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

November 18, 2024

From: Shamore Watson, Labour Project Lead

Subject: Update on BC Fruit Works

This report provides an update on the deliverables outlined in our stabilization fund application: 1. Project Lead, 2. BC Fruit Works Website, 3. Human Resources Materials on Website, 4. Marketing Campaign, 5. Job Matching, 6. Producer Education and Engagement, 7. Industry Engagement, and 8. Long-term Strategy for BC Fruit Works. All deliverables are complete except 6 and 8. We are under budget for the project so have extended the completion date to March 31, 2025, to complete additional work that will benefit the industry. The Project Lead has agreed to stay on for the extra 3-months and is currently preparing a work plan with the CCLSP Project Director.

1. Project Lead – COMPLETE

Purpose:

Hire a contractor to coordinate the BC Fruit Works project (reporting to the CCLSP Project Director). Duties will include informing and signing up producers and workers for job matching, collaborating with industry stakeholders, helping producers understand and participate in existing domestic labour programs and funding opportunities, overseeing website content development and social media, marketing the project, tracking performance measures, and reporting on the project to funders and industry (among other activities).

Description of Performance:

A Project Lead was hired on March 6, 2024, and has since been actively working on the project's objectives and deliverables.

2. BC Fruit Works Website – COMPLETE

Purpose:

Update and build on website content so it's accurate and ready for the season. Build-out website to include other languages commonly used by domestic labourers.

Description of Performance:

The website has been completely reviewed with updates made to formatting, page content, and translation requirements. References to specific harvest years were removed, keeping the information applicable for current and future seasons. Initially concentrated on recruitment for workers, the site has been reorganized to serve both job seekers and growers/employers, with content tailored to each audience for better usability. A translation plugin now enables visitors to access information in French and Punjabi.

3. Human Resources Materials on Website – COMPLETE

Purpose:

Continue to develop and add HR resources and links to the website.

Description of Performance:

All HR materials have been revised and updated. Additionally, a new HR section has been added to the BC Fruit Works website, providing growers with a [link](#) to resources such as templates for letters, policies, tax forms, checklists, and important links.

4. Marketing Campaign – COMPLETE**Purpose:**

Hire a marketing firm to run a recruitment campaign in Quebec and B.C.

Description of Performance:

T2 Marketing and Magnolia Marketing were considered as potential partners and we selected T2 for their industry experience and budget alignment, though Magnolia offered more creative ideas to engage younger audiences.

To standardize terminology, we replaced "Branch Hand" with "Farm Worker" based on feedback from the domestic labour committee. The marketing plan began with outreach to producers to raise awareness and encourage sign-ups through emails to partners, associations, and past BC Fruit Works participants. Early emails saw limited response, and our planned promotional videos were cancelled due to a lack of participants.

The Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approved our materials, and the campaign launched, running from August to October 11. Campaign results indicated positive engagement, with over 5,847 new website users, a 662% increase. 70% of the traffic to the site was driven by paid media. Most visitors accessed the grower tab; however, these visits did not convert to any significant number of registrations. Seventy-one users accessed the French translation option, but the Punjabi option was unused. The HR resources tab also had 22 visits.

For social media, the worker advertisement reached over 93,990 people with a 2.6% click-through rate and 13% converting to registration. The grower advertisement reached 308,593, with a 2% click-through rate and 0.01% conversion. As expected, engagement tapered as the harvest season concluded.

5. Job Matching – COMPLETE**Purpose:**

Research existing job matching processes such as WorkBC and other job boards, social media, BCCA employment directory, and BCLNA Grow Your Future. Identify ways to leverage, adapt, or support those processes to improve job matching opportunities. Determine the potential role BCFW could have in job matching in 2024 given the existing approaches.

Description of Performance:

We initially aimed to develop an automated job-matching tool that would be both effective and user-friendly. However, after consulting with developers, we found that creating the algorithm would take 6-8 weeks, which would further delay the project. Additionally, the uncertainty around growers' labour needs for harvest steered us to choose a manual matching process, managed by the Project Lead, to prioritize relationship-building and service quality. Matching was based on location, availability, and work type.

The simplified process allowed growers and workers to express interest via website sign-up forms, text, email, or by calling the Project Lead. This approach aimed to drive registrations in a season where many growers faced low or no harvests. Growers were also encouraged to register regardless of their

immediate labour needs and to explore the Human Resources tools on the website.

Seventeen growers registered, six in June, three in July, one in August, and seven in September. Five of these had no current labour needs. Over 300 workers registered, but around 40% were disqualified as they wanted to work outside the Okanagan. We confirmed six successful hires across five employers from over 50 workers being referred. Some growers did not respond to follow-ups, experienced changing labour needs, or were unable to reach the referred workers. In September, 85% of growers requested same-day labour, creating a tight timeline that limited our ability to match workers effectively. Additionally, many registered workers were difficult to reach post-registration.

6. Producer Education and Engagement – ONGOING

Purpose:

Recruit producers to participate in BC Fruit Works. Work with partners who have mandates related to labour to improve producer knowledge and understanding of employment regulations and standards. Prepare videos highlighting producer observations and panel discussions on best practices for labour management and health and safety.

Description of Performance:

Efforts to engage producers and assess their needs are ongoing. These include emails, cold calls to boost sign-ups, and updates in association newsletters. We also requested promotional videos from employers to showcase the industry but did not receive responses.

Outreach messaging underlined the importance of registering even without confirmed labour needs. Some producers provided feedback, expressing a preference for temporary foreign workers, citing concerns about domestic workers' inconsistency and reliability.

A meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture team highlighted that the labour file is a relatively new focus for them, with around 95% of their resources dedicated to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). They shared the broader vision of BC Fruit Works, aiming to eventually expand to other commodities beyond tree fruits.

We reached out to the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) earlier in the project for potential collaboration on labour initiatives. Their initial response pointed us to the AgriHR Toolkit. However, we are pursuing a partnership once more to create a tree fruits and wine grapes module for the CAHRC's Welcome to Canadian Agriculture eLearning course, as one does not currently exist for our sector.

We hosted a webinar on November 13 to educate employers on employment standards. Only 6 of the 20 people registered attended. The session was recorded and will be available on the BC Fruit Works website, shared with associations, and featured in their newsletters. To review the recording, [click here](#).

T2 Marketing was given the content and concept to produce some mini videos covering various aspects of working in the industry. Once complete, these will be stored on the website and available for use in future industry promotions.

7. Industry Engagement – COMPLETE

Purpose:

Meetings with the domestic labour committee, presentations to industry partner boards and committees, reporting to CCLSP committee, etc. Host a booth at the Southern Interior Horticulture Conference. Inform

industry partners about the project and obtain input on goals and deliverables and get assistance in promoting BCFW and recruitment and labour requirements.

Description of Performance:

The Project Lead has attended and provided project updates at all cross-commodity Domestic Labour Committee, Advisory Council, and Extension Committee meetings. Feedback was solicited from partners at these meetings to help guide the project's direction.

Partners were unable to confirm the labour requirements for growers in their respective associations as growers were still assessing their fruit yields up to our last meeting in August. We were informed that grapes had no harvest, cherries had approximately 20% of the usual harvest, and apples seemed to be on track for a typical harvest later in the fall.

The Project Lead is actively involved in the domestic labour research project being completed in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University, aiding with participant recruitment, managing incentives for participants, and attending interviews. Additionally, the Project Lead attended the Lake Country Farmer's BBQ to network with growers.

The Project Lead completed the AgLife Network Connector Training to support mental wellness within BC's agricultural industry. She also attended the CCLSP agriculture bus tour and the BCFGA town hall in Oliver to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges facing growers and the industry.

We did not host a booth at the Southern Interior Horticulture Conference in 2024 as the Project Lead had not yet been hired at the time of the event. However, it is our intention to be in attendance for 2025.

8. Long-term Strategy for BC Fruit Works – ONGOING

Purpose:

Survey participants to determine if resources developed created value to producers in increased efficiencies and effectiveness attracting and retaining domestic labour. Use the feedback and the results from the labour research project to guide discussions around a long-term strategy for BC Fruit Works. Prepare a written strategy that outlines the goals and objectives, activities, budgets, and timelines required to support the long-term viability and use of BC Fruit Works.

Description of Performance:

Given the challenges facing the industry and low participation in BC Fruit Works this season, we've integrated our survey questions about the project into the labour research study conducted in collaboration with KPU. This approach leverages shared recruitment efforts to gather wider feedback, including from those who did not participate in BC Fruit Works. These interviews are ongoing and expected to conclude in December. The data, along with insights from the project, will inform our recommendations for BC Fruit Works in the final report.

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

November 19, 2024

From: Kellie Garcia, CCLSP Project Director

Subject: Update on CCLSP bus tour and request for endorsement of interim payment

Background:

On November 6, 2024, the CCLSP hosted the "Agriculture in Action: Bridging Policy & Practice" bus tour in Lake Country, BC. This event connected local government and First Nations planning staff with tree fruit and wine grape producers to build relationships and a mutual understanding of the challenges involved in navigating local regulations. Participants visited four sites—Royal Fruit Packers, Jealous Fruits (dormitory), Dorenberg Orchards, and Intrigue Wines—each highlighting real-world issues affecting the agriculture sector. Feedback from the tour was overwhelmingly positive, with key themes emerging:

- **Simplify Regulatory Processes:** Participants emphasized the need for clearer, more consistent guidelines and faster permitting for water use, wastewater discharge, and land use to reduce delays and support agricultural operations.
- **Encourage Balanced Dialogue:** Future events should promote collaborative discussions, allowing both producers and government representatives to share challenges and co-develop solutions.
- **Improve Public Education and Engagement:** Address public misconceptions about agricultural practices, such as worker housing and ALR land use, through targeted education. Broader stakeholder involvement in the tour, including engineers and provincial representatives, would improve problem-solving efforts.

Budget:

The approved budget included funding for two agriculture tours: one in Lake Country and one in Oliver. However, the Oliver tour was canceled due to low engagement from local government staff and logistical challenges. The remaining budget will be held for a tour in the spring; target audiences and location to be determined.

The following expense table will be submitted to IAF in early December along with receipts and a summary report of the tour. We would like the Advisory Council's endorsement for an interim payment to cover costs associated with this tour rather than waiting for a full payment after the spring tour.

	Budgeted Value	Actual Value	Variance
Tour Buses	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,794	\$ 3,206
Venue	\$ -	\$ 768	(\$ 768)
Catering	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,570	\$ 1,430
Stipends/Gifts (Speakers & Hosts)	\$ 5,500	\$ 2,213	\$ 3,287
Misc Supplies	\$ 400	\$ 238	\$ 162
Administration (5%)	\$ 695	\$ 329	\$ 366
TOTAL	\$ 14,595	\$ 6,911	\$ 7,684

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council November 18, 2024

From: Shamore Watson, Labour Project Lead

Subject: Update on Domestic Labour Supply Research Project

The Domestic Labour Supply Research Project began in earnest in the spring of 2024 and seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing domestic labour in the Okanagan tree fruit and wine grape sectors. The project combines interviews with growers and workers in the industry with secondary data analysis. KPU's Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) was contracted to lead the research, and ISFS researchers are overseeing a pair of Mitacs-funded research interns throughout the project.

As of mid-November, the research team has conducted a literature review and preliminary analysis of available census data and requested custom data from Statistics Canada. As of November 22, the team will have completed approximately 20 grower interviews and 8 worker interviews (with a target of 20 each). Grower interviews ask about experiences, challenges and recommendations around hiring domestic workers. Worker interviews ask about the worker experience, and ways that work could be made more appealing. In both cases, interviews also ask about the subject's participation in the BC Fruit Works program. While interviews and recruitment (with a particular focus on workers) are ongoing, the team is also completing transcription cleaning and coding of interviews as a precursor to data analysis. Interviews will be completed in December, with the winter and spring dedicated to analysis and reporting of results.

On the grower side, challenges with recruitment, retention and reliability of domestic workers and competition from other sectors, have emerged as key themes, although it's worthwhile noting that these are not experienced across the board and seem to vary with the scale of operation, and the employment values and philosophy of the grower. On the worker side, the physical challenges of the job, difficulties finding adequate safe housing, competition from undocumented illegal workers, and poor wages have emerged as key challenges. Several policy recommendations and potential initiatives will emerge from the findings, but it is too premature to outline these at this stage while data is still being collected and analysis has not yet started in earnest.

The team looks forward to beginning the analysis and uncovering further themes and recommendations through the winter and is grateful to all who have participated in the project to date.