



June 20, 2019

**ADDENDUM No. 1**

**Invitation to Quote DS-19-01  
ROBSON VALLEY REGION  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING PROGRAM REVIEW**

*The addendum is being issued prior to the closing of the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) to provide further information, make changes to, or to clarify the ITQ Documents and is to be read, interpreted and coordinated with all other parts of the ITQ Documents. In the case of a conflict with the balance of the documents, this Addendum shall govern. **Proponents shall attach a signed copy of this addendum to their quote submission, failure to do so may result in a non-compliant bid.** This addendum shall form part of the Contract Documents.*

This addendum is being provided in clarification to ITQ DS-19-01 released June 11, 2019.

**QUESTION:** Does the \$50,000 annual budget for the program apply to the '3-year proposed marketing strategy and budget' to be developed? (i.e. should the contractor develop a 3-year proposed marketing strategy based on a budget of around \$50,000/year?)

**ANSWER:** Yes, this assumption is correct.

**QUESTION:** Has any previous research or review of the Robson Valley Region and specifically the Economic Development Marketing Program been carried before? If so, would it be possible to share any of such information at this point in time? As this would be highly beneficial in strengthening our understanding of the project and will help us devise an appropriate proposed work plan that is suitable for the region and aligned with project goals.

**ANSWER:** The two Regional District documents listed in the ITQ are examples of previous work done. The Robson-Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan can be found here: <http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/uploads/748/RobsonCanoeEcOppPlan.pdf>

**A copy of the Robson Valley Region Investment Attractions Marketing Strategy is attached to this addendum.**

**QUESTION:** Just to confirm, the contractor will only be responsible for the activities listed out in 2.1 Project Scope (i.e. review of the Marketing program and the development of a 3-year proposed marketing strategy and budget), but will not be responsible for the implementation of the proposed strategy itself?

**ANSWER:** The contractor will have to fulfill activities listed in both 2.1 and 2.2. It is an expectation that part of the 3-year proposed marketing strategy and budget will be identifying resources required for implementation.

**QUESTION:** Will the implementation phase be carried out in-house or by another contractor, and should our proposal take this into consideration (e.g. will there be opportunities/instances where we may have to dedicate resources to collaborate with other contractors, such as for planning out the implementation phase)?

**ANSWER:** Implementation of the 3-year marketing strategy will be determined at a later date.

**QUESTION:** Does the Regional District have a proposal evaluation weighting structure that can be provided for reference? (e.g. how much will be weighted on pricing, experience, etc.)



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**ANSWER: The proposal evaluation weighting structure is as follows: Contractor Personnel Experience and Qualifications: 10%, Relevant Professional Experience 40%, Price 50%.**

QUESTION: Does the Regional District have a preference for local contractors in the Robson Valley/Prince George area?

**ANSWER: Preference will be to those that can perform all requirements of the ITQ.**

QUESTION: Lastly, we were also wondering if you're able to share how many people have expressed interest for this opportunity so far?

**ANSWER: The Regional District has not been tracking expression of interest for this ITQ.**

QUESTION: And if this information can be shared, will Splash Media Group – the agency that did the original branding and website for the Robson Valley Marketing program – be a proponent for this ITQ?

**ANSWER: The Regional District cannot comment on individual company interests.**

I/We hereby verify that we have considered this addendum in our quote submission.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Submitter's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

All inquiries relating to ITQ DS-19-01 must be emailed to:  
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# Robson Valley Region

Investment Attraction Marketing Strategy

March 2013

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# 1 Overview of the Marketing Strategy

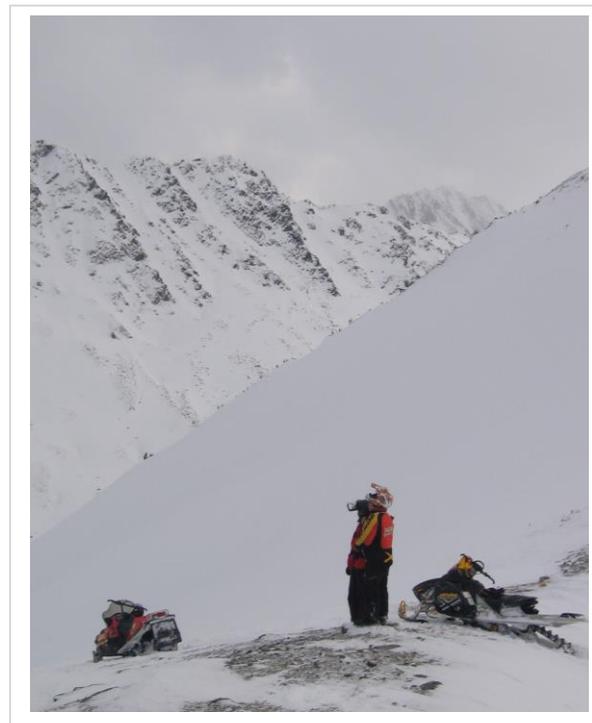
The communities and rural areas of the Robson Valley Region are coming together through this investment attraction strategy to attract new business investment and inspire existing businesses to invest in diversifying the regional economy and create more sustainable communities. The Robson Valley is surrounded by stunning mountainous landscapes and recreational opportunities that enrich the lives of residents, workers and business owners. The valley also has a strong sense of community that make it an attractive place for families and adventurous entrepreneurs. It's time to take advantage of these natural and community assets and turn them into economic strengths by sharing them with the world.

People invest in the place they want to live, when that place can support their chosen work.

The strategy recommends concrete low cost steps designed to marshal the RVR's resources, including the contributions of community groups, individuals, local business and municipalities, and direct the enthusiasm of these partners to support business and community development. These strategic recommendations are based on research into local and regional economic trends, community engagement activities, including interviews with local and non-local business investors and current best practices in economic development marketing.

The investment attraction marketing strategy defines and targets businesses that are most likely to locate in the Robson Valley Region because of its economic conditions and crafts marketing messages that appeal to the interests of decision makers. The strategy understands that most business investment is local investment, and there are strategies to encourage local pride and local entrepreneurship as well as new business location.

The research suggests that the target investor most likely to be attracted to the area is an individual or a family that owns or manages a business in the following target sectors; forestry, agriculture, tourism and/or lone eagles (independent professionals). The target business investors share common values with the communities in the area, they appreciate the fresh air, independence and community of rural life and the beautiful mountain scenery that the Robson Valley Region offers.





The research suggests that these potential investors are likely to be found in the lower mainland of British Columbia, and the Capital Region of Alberta. There are also a number of European migrants in the Robson Valley Region which may present opportunities for foreign investment. Often investors will be friends, friends of friends, tourists, or relatives of current residents. The individuals that are targeted include young adults starting a career or a second career after some financial success, early retirees who are interested in building their dream business, and agricultural families that may be interested in the agricultural conditions and competitive land costs in the Robson Valley. More information on target markets is outlined by sector in the body of the report.

The purpose of this marketing strategy is to pinpoint how the economic development partners in the Robson Valley Region (RVR) can maximize use of their resources in pursuit of business investment from these individuals. Actions are designed to deliver maximum value at a minimal cost by engaging grassroots partnerships with the business community and community organizations in the target sectors, building local community pride in the brand before going to market, and using public relations strategies.

*People invest in the place they want to live, when that place can support their chosen work*



The marketing strategy and implementation plan include the following:

- Marketing briefs that outline competitive advantages and disadvantages for each of the five target sectors
- Common traits and preferred media between each of the five target sectors
- Marketing strategy that offers recommendations on tactics, messaging and resource requirements
- Protocol for handling investment leads, which are potential investors which have contacted the Robson Valley Region.

Regional programs are well served by a protocol to ensure that potential investors are informed of opportunities throughout the Robson Valley Region and each area has a fair chance of attracting investment.

The marketing strategy builds on the *2010 Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan* which identified five target markets that are considered the area's high priority investment targets: agriculture, forestry, government services, lone eagle investors and tourism.



## 2 Marketing Briefs for Target Sectors

Each of the following Marketing Briefs provides a detailed summary of Robson Valley Region's investment opportunities in the five target sectors: agriculture, forestry, government services, lone eagle investors and tourism. The following sections are included for each sector, providing a standard structure for the analysis.

- **Situational Analysis Update:** This analysis identifies the degree to which the Robson Valley Region is ready to attract investment in each of the target sectors. It also includes an indication of Robson Valley Region's competitive advantages (to be used as key messages in promotions) and the competitive disadvantages (to be managed in communications and improved over time).
- **Investment Mix Priorities:** The investment mix indicates where in the investment life cycle Robson Valley Region should be focusing its efforts for each of sector. The investment cycle includes the following categories; Further Investigation, Partnership Development, Product Development and Promotion. The section concludes with a statement on the overall objective for this sector within the investment attraction marketing strategy.
- **Market Segment Profiles:** The profiles of the high priority target markets help us understand who future investors in the Robson Valley Region are. The descriptions include a demographic and economic profile, organizations, government agencies and institutions that are related to the target markets, as well as other key qualities that may influence their investment preferences and preferred media channels
- **Sector Marketing Direction:** The strategic direction begins with a five year vision for the sector, and key messages to be directed at the target market. Each sector contains SMART marketing goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound), a summary of the optimal promotional mix and examples of marketing activities that appeal to the target market.



## 2.1 Lone Eagle Investors Marketing Brief

The marketing plan for Lone Eagle Investors is presented first because this target sector overlaps with those of most of the other high priority sectors. Small business investors in the agriculture, forestry and tourism sectors are often Lone Eagles and may share the traits and interests outlined here.

### 2.1.1 Situational Analysis Update

The Robson Valley Region fares well when compared with the chief factors that Lone Eagle Investors use to determine whether or not the region is a good location for their business on a full-time, year-round basis. Figure 1 is an update of an analysis completed in the 2010 Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan, as are each of the situational analysis updates<sup>1</sup>.

The local performance column evaluates how well the RVR currently performs with respect to each critical location factor. The same definitions are used throughout the report.

-  Performance is very positive and may present a competitive advantage
-  Performance is positive
-  Performance is positive in some ways and negative in others
-  Performance could improve for this location factor
-  Performance is creating a competitive disadvantage

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<sup>1</sup> Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan, Regional District of Fraser Fort George, 2010



FIGURE 1: ROBSON VALLEY REGION INVESTMENT READINESS FOR LONE EAGLE INVESTORS

Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Local Opportunities for Business Growth</b>		
<b>Population Change</b>		RVR's resident population has been largely stagnant or declining over the last decade.
<b>Natural Surroundings</b>		The RVR is a beautiful place to live and to visit, with mountainous scenery and outdoor recreational opportunities that match some of the most beautiful locations in the world.
<b>Tourist Economy</b>		RVR's busiest tourism season is the winter because the area is popular with snowmobilers. Summer is slower, particularly in McBride where the highway corridor is not as well travelled. However, summer is when many travel to British Columbia and places like Jasper are busy. Opportunity beckons for developing year-round tourism.
<b>Business Community</b>		On a positive note, over the last few years many of the largest employers have had steady employment (e.g. Northern Health) and some have even seen increases (e.g. CNR). The tourism sector has also experienced investment. On a negative note, it has been difficult to grow larger businesses in the forestry sector and in agriculture, where the majority of local farmers are engaged in small scale farming.
<b>Transportation and Distribution</b>		
<b>Proximity to Highways &amp; Markets</b>		The region is bisected by two major provincial highways; however, the communities are far from markets of any significant size such as Prince George (2.5 - 3.5 hours), Kamloops (4-5 hours) and Edmonton (5-6 hours).
<b>Proximity to Airports</b>		The closest airport with scheduled service is in Prince George, a 200-300 km drive. WestJet and Air Canada offer scheduled service to Vancouver. A small number of sun destinations can be reached from Prince George in the winter. Edmonton and Calgary airports are 4-5 hours away.
<b>Utilities</b>		
<b>Telecommunications</b>		Broadband service is strong enough for most applications that Lone Eagles will require, although rural internet connectivity may not be consistent, a common issue across Canada that needs continued work. The recent introduction of digital x-ray equipment through Northern Health speaks to the robustness of the current network. Telus is installing a number of towers in the next two years to improve cellular coverage along highway corridors.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Property Availability and Cost</b>		
<b>Availability of Commercial Buildings and Land</b>	 	It is reported that there is office or commercial space available in either McBride or Valemount. However, the quality varies with most spaces in average condition and requiring upgrades.
<b>Education and Training</b>		
<b>Elementary and Secondary Schools</b>		The perceived sustainability of local schools and quality of instruction is an ongoing challenge in RVR. Lone Eagle Investors with families may be concerned about this.
<b>Colleges and Universities</b>		There is no post-secondary programming available in RVR except accessed through correspondence.
<b>Local Employment/ Training Services</b>		The local CFDC offers business counselling services. The RDFFG, as well as the municipalities, have made efforts at expanding business services and economic development programs. The supply of business services is good considering the size of the communities.
<b>Quality of Life</b>		
<b>Health Care Facilities</b>		Health services in the RVR are good. Valemount has a health centre and McBride has a hospital offering full patient care except some speciality services. Seniors housing is available throughout the area, but more home care and extended care will be required as the population ages.
<b>Emergency Services</b>		The area has local fire and emergency services, with region-wide enhanced 911.
<b>Recreation and Cultural Facilities</b>		For communities of this size, the region has a tremendous outdoor recreational offering. Organized recreational programs are available although limited to the size of the communities. There are local museums in McBride and Valemount as well as an art gallery in Valemount. Recommendations from a recently-completed Cultural Plan are moving forward which shows this area is a priority for RDFFG.
<b>Sense of Community</b>	 	Two check marks in this location factor symbolize the strength of community. There is an undeniable feeling that the people of the RVR rally around one another when there is a need. The stories of the people who call RVR home are diverse and interesting, which gives the community a special dynamic.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Housing Availability and Cost</b>	 	The average cost of housing in RVR is lower than that of the province and surrounding areas. Existing housing stock may require repairs and renovation. While housing prices are increasing in some areas, such as for newly built recreational properties, they are still considered affordable in general. Lone Eagle Investors that are seeking prestige property, with a view for example, can find property in the area.
<b>Marketing/Promotions/Information</b>		
<b>Sector-Specific Website Promotions</b>	 	Information found on the internet has strong potential to influence the decisions of Lone Eagle Investors. While there are statements about wanting to attract investment on local websites, there is no focus on attracting this sector in current content.
<b>Investment Attraction and Retention</b>		There is local interest in attracting investment, however much of the actions tend to be reactive and rely on a combination of community economic development officers and RDFFG staff. Currently these businesses are serviced on a reactive basis.

When a Lone Eagle Investor decides to move to a rural community, they have a tremendous number of choices. This is because their business is not highly dependent on the local population and they are flexible with respect to the business that they can run. The following statement of competitive advantages and competitive disadvantages aims to identify how Robson Valley Region is positioned against the vast numbers of communities that will welcome their investment.

### Competitive Advantages

- Sense of community - pride of place is important to the Lone Eagle Investor
- Natural beauty – scenery but also associated with high calibre outdoor recreation
- Property - available at competitive prices

### Competitive Disadvantages

- Remoteness - particularly from a major international airport
- Program budgets - economic development and community-led projects are limited
- Education - sustainability of schools and lack of post-secondary may be a concern for lone eagles with families



## 2.1.2 Investment Mix Priorities

The following figure indicates where in the investment life cycle the Robson Valley Region should be focusing its efforts with respect to Lone Eagle investors. The investment cycle includes the following categories:

- Further Investigation – degree to which the sector opportunity needs refining before ready for full-scale promotion
- Partnership Development – importance of identifying partnership to help bring success
- Product Development – necessity of investing time and money in improving product
- Promotion – what the effectiveness of a promotional campaign would be if it were to start today

**FIGURE 2: THE INVESTMENT MIX FOR LONE EAGLE INVESTORS**

Further Investigation	Partnership Development	Product Development	Promotion
There is no need for further investigation. RVR has been receiving this type of investment for decades. Members of the community are generally agreeable to this type of investment.	Given the importance of community to these investors and the number of “ordinary people with extraordinary stories” in RVR, it would be beneficial to include community members directly in the attraction effort.	The competitive disadvantages are somewhat out of the communities’ control. While the communities should push to ensure social, recreational and health services remain and are improved, they are not necessary to be successful.	This area of activity should be the main emphasis of the initiative. These investors have been coming “by chance” for years. Now is the time to boost the number of investors through a concerted promotional campaign.

### Overall Objective and Approach

**The Robson Valley Region is ready to go out and get this investment! The only thing holding back progress is agreement on a marketing action plan and ensuring that mechanisms are in place to close deals.**



### 2.1.3 Market Segment Profile

Lone Eagle Investors often migrate from an urban centre and are seeking a place to invest savings from a professional career, the sale of a city home and/or a successful business venture. Beyond a solid investment they value a calm, clean, natural environment and strength of community. Not many of the Lone Eagles that have located in the Robson Valley Region in the last number of years have brought children and this target market should not be expected to flood the playgrounds with youngsters.

While Lone Eagle Investors have moved to the Robson Valley Region from across Canada and from Europe, research has shown a pattern of origin. Most Lone Eagle Investors are coming from either just east of the Rockies (e.g. Edmonton and Alberta's Capital Region) or the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

The Lone Eagle Investor can be European and there are currently entrepreneurs of European descent living in the RVR. This is not expected to be a large source of investment, but is certainly worth monitoring. In particular, friends and family of current residents who may be interested in moving to Canada are potential Lone Eagle Investors.

Their search for a new home can be in-depth and may begin with researching large numbers of communities in the Rockies and on both sides of the B.C./Alberta border. Often, the list of communities is focused based on previous experiences that Lone Eagle Investors may have had as tourists, travelling business people or previous residents in a similarly rural community. The initial research is overwhelmingly done by internet. Future investors tend to focus on real estate websites such as MLS.ca or talk with a real estate agent because finding the right property is very important to the investment.

Business people will be most successful as Lone Eagles when they cater to external markets by either selling products or services outside of the Robson Valley Region or providing goods and services to tourists. While developing their business plans, entrepreneurs need to consider how to attract visitor traffic or the logistics of broadening their market.

#### Demographic and Economic Profile

- Empty nesters who want to stay in touch with their young grandchildren who are current residents
- Successful professionals with a minimum of 10 years in the workforce, more likely 20 or 30
- Healthy recreationalists who love the outdoors, mountains, and travelling
- Independent thinkers that enjoy the belonging of a close knit community



## Important Private, Public and Non-profit Contacts in the Market

There are few 'one stop' places to find Lone Eagle Investors. Sometimes it is best to reach them through groups representing sub-sectors in agriculture, forestry and tourism that are located in the target geographies. Here are a few suggestions.

- Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- Recreational groups and events
- Local farmer's markets
- Tourists visiting RVR
- Friends and relatives of current residents

## Characteristics of Target

- Coming from an urban centre
- Looking for a good investment opportunity and may own a recreational property in the RVR
- In search of rural charms such as calm, clean environment and strength of community
- Expects urban amenities such as quality products and groceries, unique shopping, and cultural events
- Current residents of communities east of the Rockies (Edmonton) or lower mainland British Columbia, on a smaller scale, Europe
- Conducts in-depth research on potential locations including sector specific qualities and real estate by internet, and then visits the community, often more than once
- Appreciates economic development assistance, especially first time business investors

## Preferred Channels for Information

- National publications such as *Zoomer* and *50Plus*
- Urban centre newspapers and publications in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton
- Internet channels
  - Email distribution lists (community alumni, tourists, website sign up, etc...)
  - Local websites, Wikipedia and business rating sites like Trip Advisor
  - Public relations are vital.
- Local business community (real estate community, tourism attractions, accommodations, etc...)



## 2.1.4 Lone Eagles Sector Marketing Direction

### Five Year Vision for the Sector

Lone Eagle Investors will be appreciated as adding a special commercial and social dynamic to Robson Valley Region.

### Key Messages to be Directed at the Target Market

It was confirmed through consultation that many of the messages contained in the 2010 Opportunity Sheet for this sector are effective and are still relevant. Here are some of these messages as well as a few new ideas:

- We are vibrant communities full of ordinary people with extraordinary stories
- Independent professionals run successful businesses from the Robson Valley Region
- Live in the mountains close to nature and be active in every season
- Know your neighbours and enjoy a family-friendly small community
- The Robson Valley Region welcomes newcomers and it is easy to become involved in community life
- High quality property is available at a reasonable cost
- The “live large” message can be applied in the sense of a beautiful clean mountain environment and a place that allows you to be independent and free from the rush of the city, with all the amenities

### Marketing Goals

The marketing goal for Lone Eagle Investors is to be involved in attracting an average of 5 new investors or business investments from local residents every year for years 2-5 of the strategy.



## Optimal Promotional Mix and Activities

- A Robson Valley Region website is a critical investment attraction tool. Prince Edward County's [www.buildanewlife.ca](http://www.buildanewlife.ca) can serve as a general guide, however the website needs to be simple to use with limited internet access and suited to mobile devices. The look and feel of the website and its messages should be attuned to a more rural lifestyle and display a connection to the natural landscape that characterizes the Robson Valley Region.
- Lone Eagle Investor success stories and testimonials. Emphasize the contribution that every person makes to building a strong community and describe their success in business. The brand "Living Large" can say "we are ordinary people with extraordinary stories".
- Email distribution lists of people who are connected to the RVR or are interested in the RVR such as existing citizens and business owners, graduated high school students, people who once worked in the community (e.g. RCMP, health care, schools) and use this list to support public relations activities
- Social media campaigns using social/interactive media, networking, email distribution, website postings, and newspaper/radio/television appearances.
- Familiarization tours for writers of target publications including time spent with Lone Eagles and community champions



## 2.2 Tourism Investors Marketing Brief

### 2.2.1 Situational Analysis Update

The following figure indicates how Robson Valley Region fares when it comes to the factors that tourism operators use to determine whether or not the area is a good location for their business. It is an update of a similar analysis completed in the 2010 Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan.

The Robson Valley Region is likely to see new investment from this sector given the volume of recreational tourists who currently visit the area. The greatest challenge the RVR faces is encouraging upgrading of accommodations and the attraction of new accommodations to service the high volume of tourists at peak times. In addition, developing product that will expand tourism to the shoulder seasons is an important priority.

**FIGURE 3: INVESTMENT READINESS FOR TOURISM**

Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Labour Force Characteristics</b>		
<b>Unemployment/ Employment Rate</b>	 	The unemployment rate for the valley has decreased since 2001. Tourism businesses certainly need staff but can manage with a limited employment pool.
<b>Language Skills</b>		Major tourism visitors are from the United States and Canada with a variety of secondary sources including Europe. Language skills are currently not a major concern.
<b>Local Industry</b>		
<b>Local Industry Cluster</b>	 	There are clusters in outdoor adventure activities including snowmobiling and heli-skiing. However, there is a need to expand and diversify tourism and culture-related businesses and provide more activities for niche markets like families and non-winter seasons.
<b>Transportation and Distribution</b>		
<b>Proximity to Customers</b>		The area is located mid-way between Vancouver and Edmonton on a well-used route, and in close proximity to Jasper National Park and Mount Robson Provincial Park.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Proximity to Highways/Airports</b>	 	McBride is 200km and Valemount is 300 km from the nearest major airport with regularly scheduled service (Prince George) – a significant distance and can inhibit destination tourism. The area is served by Highways 16 and 5, which provides good road access.
<b>Utilities</b>		
<b>Telecommunications</b>	 	Broadband service is strong enough for most tourism applications although rural internet connectivity may not be consistent, a common issue across Canada that needs continued work. Telus is installing a number of towers in the next two years to improve cellular coverage along highway corridors.
<b>Local Business Environment</b>		
<b>Economic Development involvement in local business</b>	 	Consultations indicate that the municipal officials and development staff are helpful and business-oriented. There could be more coordinated messaging for the area around tourism and more cooperation between the major centres of McBride and Valemount to establish the region as an attraction.
<b>Cost/Speed of Permit and Development Process</b>		The municipalities and RDFFG are competitive with respect to development charges and servicing costs.
<b>Property Availability and Cost</b>		
<b>Commercial Building/ Land Availability</b>	 	In the towns there are properties available for commercial development downtown and a few areas for larger projects, but overall a lack of commercial land. In the rural areas there are more options for tourism businesses.
<b>Cost of Land/Lease Rates</b>	 	Commercial land costs are considered high especially in McBride where options along the highway are limited. Overall, land costs are described as low across the RVR.
<b>Incentives/Support Programs</b>		
<b>Business Support</b>		There are CFDC centres in both Valemount and McBride with major program delivery coming from Prince George as well as Economic Development Officers in each community.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Education and Training</b>		
<b>Local Employment/ Training Services</b>		There are no tourism specific training opportunities being offered in the RVR.
<b>Quality of Life</b>		
<b>Health Care Facilities</b>		Valemount has a health centre and McBride has a hospital offering full patient care with the exception of some speciality services.
<b>Emergency Services</b>		Local fire and emergency services with region-wide enhanced 911.
<b>Crime Rate</b>		The RVR has low crime rates compared to the province and has police detachments in McBride and Valemount, with a Crime Stoppers and assault hotline.
<b>Recreation and Cultural Facilities</b>		Canoe Valley Recreation Centre and the Robson Valley Recreation Centre are hubs of tourism and culture activities for RVR, with diverse recreational opportunities.
<b>Marketing/Promotions/Information</b>		
<b>Visitor Marketing Initiatives</b>	 	Information is available online and in print copy but there is great variation between the marketing of Valemount and McBride and the rural areas of the RVR due to the funding available for tourism marketing and the excellent coordination of stakeholders in Valemount.
<b>Tourism Product Development Initiatives</b>		<p>Considerable volunteer effort and private sector investment has been put into tourism development in the RVR. Specifically, heli-skiing and snowmobiling have the potential to be world class product.</p> <p>More investment is needed in accommodations and tourism product associated with; Crescent Spur, outdoor adventure, agri-tourism attractions as well as managed ATV tourism. These areas may present business investment opportunities</p>



The tourism investor is seeking a location like the RVR with its stunning natural environment, unique experiences, accommodations and restaurants, as well as accessibility both in and out of the RVR. The RVR is in a good position to attract tourism investment.

### **Competitive Advantages**

- Existing tourism visitation and tourism businesses
- Mountain landscape and outdoor recreation opportunities
- Quality of life factors

### **Competitive Disadvantages**

- Remoteness – particularly from an international airport
- Valemount and McBride are not currently collaborating with respect to tourism marketing
- Lack of data about the tourism industry, such as occupancy rates, to quantify the RVR opportunity



## 2.2.2 Investment Mix Priorities

The following figure indicates where in the investment life cycle Robson Valley Region should be focusing its efforts; the investment cycle includes:

- Further Investigation – degree to which the sector opportunity needs refining before ready for full-scale promotion
- Partnership Development – importance of identifying partnership to help bring success
- Product Development – necessity of investing time and money in improving RVR tourism product
- Promotion – what the effectiveness of a promotional campaign would be if it were to start today

**FIGURE 4: THE INVESTMENT MIX FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE SECTOR**

Further Investigation	Partnership Development	Product Development	Promotion
Continuing to focus on tourism product development and marketing initiatives that appeal to Lone Eagles, existing residents, and tourists.	Partnerships between Valemount, McBride and tourism businesses/ organizations in the RVR are not well developed and coordination as well as regional sources of funding need development.  Promotion at a RVR level needs to be supported by other levels of government when looking at international markets.	There is enough demand to support further development of accommodations and the quality of tourism product.  There is a need to focus on non-winter activities to round out the sector. For example, attracting snowmobilers in the summer through managed ATV initiatives, agricultural tourism and family activities.	Tourism product opportunities need to be quantified and marketed, including occupancy rates and business succession opportunities.  Quality of life messaging highlighting recreational assets and the opportunities associated with the agricultural community are a high priority.  Regional and local initiatives are both important vehicles for investment attraction marketing.

### Overall Objective and Approach

**There is already enough to be excited about and encouraging business expansion and new business development in tourism through investment attraction initiatives is a high priority across the Robson Valley Region. Product development is a high priority to make the tourism industry more robust and diverse.**



### 2.2.3 Tourism Market Segment Profile

There are two key targets for investment attraction, recreational tourists and agri-tourism businesses. The individuals who are included in each of these target markets are interested in a tourism business associated with the product development opportunities identified here. Tourism investors enjoy the lifestyle afforded by the Robson Valley Region.

The target individuals may or may not currently own a business related to tourism, but will have an interest in an area such as local food and gardening, horseback riding and ranching, outdoor recreation or adventure tourism and touring/accommodations management.

In the case of agri-tourism businesses, a key target group includes participants in the Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF) and recent college graduates. These individuals may not have much funding to start a business and will be looking for rent to own arrangements and other supports to help them purchase property.

Working families selling agricultural land in other areas, such as the lower mainland of British Columbia, may have funds but will require support to identify properties for sale, and sources of machinery, equipment, supplies and business services including construction and renovation. Early retirees will have similar requirements regarding the need for local intelligence and will have funds to invest once they understand the lay of the land.

Recreational tourists will likely be current tourists, particularly snowmobilers, hikers, and travellers through rural British Columbia. This group is quite varied in their characteristics although many tourism investors, even the more eco-adventure oriented ones, may come from the Capital Region of Alberta and areas north of the Capital Region.

The first step for many investors in this sector may be to purchase property for personal recreational use. For these reason individuals who own recreational property are the core of the target market, in addition to current tourists. According to local intelligence these individuals tend to be snowmobilers and hunters. They tend to be male and in their 20's and 30's. The ideal candidate for business investment is someone who lives their sport and may be interested in financing a tourism business with money that they are saving from their current employment in Alberta.



## Demographic and Economic Profile

- Agri-tourism
  - Youth in their early 20's interested in local agriculture and agri-tourism, likely without start-up capital
  - Young families seeking a place to farm where they can own land, likely with some financing from the sale of a previous business
  - Early retirees seeking a new experience with savings that they are interested in investing
- Recreational Tourists
  - Youth in their 20's and early 30's who are passionate about winter motorized sport, potentially with some financing from current employment, or without start-up capital
  - Early retirees seeking a new experience with savings that they are interested in investing

## Characteristics of Targets

- Dedicated to their sport and/or passionate about the agricultural lifestyle
- Active and enjoy the outdoors
- Adventurous and seeking a new experience

## Preferred Channels for Information

- Websites, and social media sources of information on their area of interest
- Trade shows and events related to healthy living, horseback riding/ranching, and motorized outdoor recreation
- Magazines and newsletters related to areas of interest
- Clubs and sport organizations located in the geographic target areas



## 2.2.4 Tourism Investment Sector Marketing Direction

### Five Year Vision for the Sector

The Robson Valley Region tourism sector is becoming known as a provincial success story, attracting new tourism investment due to an entrepreneurial spirit and increasing tourism visitation through targeted product development.

### Key Messages to be Directed at the Target Market

- Live the mountain life and create your dream business in the Robson Valley Region
- Contribute to a tourism region that has a strong and growing reputation
- Live what you love everyday

### Marketing Goals

Establish a total of three significant tourism businesses or business expansions in the Robson Valley Region over years 2-5 of the strategy.

### Optimal Promotional Mix and Activities

- Create a sense of pride and collective identity within the tourism sector of the Robson Valley Region by creating unique promotional material. The promotional material is provided to public, private and non-profit stakeholders at cost and then sold at a suggested retail price to the public and to tourists.
- A RVR accommodations tax could be explored to provide a source of marketing funds for McBride and the rural areas of the RVR and facilitate regional marketing initiatives. This would even up the allocation of resources across the Robson Valley Region and facilitate more collaboration.
- Regional initiatives designed to encourage current snowmobile tourists to stay in the region longer and spend time touring throughout the RVR and surrounding region can increase the benefits of tourism. Longer stays increase tourism receipts, spread the benefits of tourism more broadly (including business/product development), and create more of a connection between tourists and the RVR.



## 2.3 Agriculture Marketing Brief

### 2.3.1 Situational Analysis Update

The Robson Valley Region has a long history of agricultural production founded on the good growing conditions in the area that support an investment in agriculture. Figure 5 is an update of the analysis completed in the 2010 Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan.

**FIGURE 5: ROBSON VALLEY REGION INVESTMENT READINESS FOR AGRICULTURE**

Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Labour Force Characteristics</b>		
<b>Availability of Workers</b>	 	Agriculture requires seasonal labour which can be difficult to secure. Programs such as Willing Workers On Organic Farms (WWOOF) help, but a low population can lead to challenges in finding sufficient labour to support farms.
<b>Transportation and Distribution</b>		
<b>Proximity to Current/Future Customers</b>	 	The RVR is well positioned to supply regional markets including Jasper and Prince George, however regulations on the sale of foods including restrictions to farm gate and the availability of a federally inspected abattoir are challenges.
<b>Property Quality</b>		
<b>Climate</b>	 	The climate in the RVR is excellent in comparison to surrounding areas, with a long growing season and sufficient rainfall.
<b>Agricultural Land</b>	 	Agricultural land is considered to be affordable and of good quality in many areas, particularly in the central and northern area of the RVR. The development of small farms is reported to be hindered by the large size of land parcels. Best practices in land use planning do not support the division of land parcels, therefore leasing may be a solution for this dilemma.
<b>Utilities</b>		The performance of local utilities is improving, but is not up to the same standard as other areas of the province. Depending on the type of agriculture, this may not be an issue.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Quality of Life</b>		
<b>Community</b>	 	The community of agricultural producers in the RVR is a strong group of farmers who are passionate about their profession, work collaboratively, and welcome newcomers to the RVR.
<b>Markets</b>		
<b>Market for finished products</b>	 	There is a good regional market, including demand for local agricultural products from restaurants and retailers who support local farmers. Organic foods and heritage varieties are particularly popular in the province of British Columbia.
<b>Marketing/Promotions/Information</b>		
<b>Sector-Specific Website Promotions</b>	 	Information found on the internet has the potential to influence the decision of agriculture investors. While there are statements about wanting to attract investment, there is no focus on attracting this sector in current content online.
<b>Overall Investment Attraction Initiative</b>	 	Supporting existing agricultural businesses is a focus for the regional Community Futures which is based in Prince George. The 'Beyond the Market' program offered by the CFDC is well known and well utilized. Local agricultural producers have also organized seminars and support the idea of attracting more farmers to the area.  However, there are no organized initiatives to specifically support investment attraction in the sector.



The agricultural sector in British Columbia is a competitive environment, and the quality of growing conditions in the Robson Valley Region positions the communities to benefit from the growing popular interest in local food. The following statement of competitive advantages and disadvantages identifies how the Robson Valley Region is positioned to attract business investment for agriculture.

### **Competitive Advantages**

- Community of farmers is supportive, family oriented, willing to share knowledge and work collaboratively
- Land and climate are conducive to successful cultivation and livestock rearing
- Natural beauty of the RVR, its scenery and outdoor recreational activities attract healthy active people

### **Competitive Disadvantages**

- Distance to markets can be a barrier for producers hoping to reach beyond the surrounding region
- Restrictive regulatory environment governing the sale of meat and processed goods
- Availability of workers to support a successful farm is a challenge for expansion
- Small land parcels suitable for market gardening and agri-tourism businesses are lacking and leasing can discourage substantial investment



### 2.3.2 Investment Mix Priorities

The following figure indicates where in the investment life cycle Robson Valley Region should be focusing its efforts with respect to the agricultural sector. The investment cycle includes the following categories:

- Further Investigation – degree to which the sector opportunity needs refining before ready for full-scale promotion
- Partnership Development – importance of identifying partnership to help bring success
- Product Development – necessity of investing time and money in improving the area’s product
- Promotion – what the effectiveness of a promotional campaign would be if it were to start today

**FIGURE 6: THE INVESTMENT MIX FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

Further Investigation	Partnership Development	Product Development	Promotion
<p>As the number of businesses in this space expands, new opportunities for collaboration and cooperative businesses may become possible.</p> <p>Non-traditional forestry products such as blueberries may present new opportunities.</p>	<p>The Community Futures is leading initiatives based on the agriculture sector.</p> <p>Grassroots organizations that support local farmers are important allies in the development of the sector.</p>	<p>Addition of an abattoir proposed in RVR would open up opportunities.</p> <p>Storage facilities or climate controlled transportation could open up new markets.</p> <p>Developing farm gate sales, improving farmer’s markets and a more robust local food brand.</p>	<p>Current and potential future farmers can be reached by creating a stronger connection between farmers and those who purchase RVR agricultural products.</p> <p>Farmers in other areas of BC can be reached through public relations activities and a strong internet presence.</p>

#### Overall Objective and Approach

**There has been a local renaissance in this industry led by farmers who are focused on smaller plots of high value crops, and ranching has a long legacy in the Robson Valley Region. Regardless of differences in ideologies (local vs. organic vs. natural), there is a significant opportunity for the RVR to attract more agricultural investment. Those who may be attracted to the RVR understand food systems and enjoy community. Couples and families who are currently farming in British Columbia but being pressured by urban encroachment are an important group to consider in addition to urbanites seeking a more natural lifestyle.**



### 2.3.3 Market Segment Profile

Agriculture has a long history in the Robson Valley Region. Current farming includes livestock operations and on a smaller scale, the production of vegetables such as root crops and market gardens. The growing season in the RVR is longer than the surrounding area and land is relatively affordable with good soils, particularly in northern and central areas.

There is a strong local food movement in the Robson Valley Region and organic farms, local food, natural farming techniques as well as heritage varieties are championed. There are strong differences in the philosophies of farmers. For example, some farmers are certified organic while others farm organically without pursuing certification.

The agricultural sector in the Robson Valley Region appeals to several different types of businesses, including professionals who are interested in moving to the country and starting up a farm and young people, potentially with families, that are passionate about the farming lifestyle. For each group, the Robson Valley Region can provide a relatively affordable place to start a farm, with good soils and good growing conditions.

Both groups may be interested in the organic, heritage and local food movements, which means they may purchase food that is currently produced in the Robson Valley Region. Connecting consumers with the Robson Valley Region brand, the romance of the rural lifestyle and the quality of agricultural products is the central tactic of the marketing strategy proposed for this sector.

The Beyond the Market program is an ongoing CFDC initiative that seeks to support local farmers in the region to expand their farming operations. The role of the Investment Attraction Marketing Strategy is to attract more interested entrants into the RVR, while the role of the Beyond the Market program is to support the early years of their investment once they have made the decision to join the RVR's agricultural community.



## Demographic and Economic Profile

- Families who are currently farming in the province of British Columbia and interested in selling their land for a profit and purchase land in a good growing area
- Farming families may also relocate from further afield, such as from Europe or other countries.
- The second career farmer is entering farming after having a successful career or investments in other areas, and may be in their mid 40's or early 50's. Often they are investing as a couple with a shared interest in the outdoors, the rural lifestyle, and enjoy farming. Often these individuals have an empty nest, either because their children have grown or because they do not have children.
- Ideally, the target agriculturalist has some business experience and/or funds to invest in processing, packaging and marketing local produce

## Characteristics of Targets

- Care about food systems and community
- Independent and adventurous
- Physically healthy, enjoy the outdoors, and physical labour
- May have experience in farming

## Preferred Media Channels

- Reach out to current clients of local farmers through point of sale marketing, the point of sale is when a product is purchased and money changes hands
- Website presence outlining product available in the RVR and the stories of its farmers, designed to complement to online directory created by Beyond the Market
- Encourage professional writers to visit local farms and profile the stories, techniques, ethics and passion of current producers
- Community champions interested in sharing interesting content through social media including farming tips and tricks and the daily challenges of a farming life would add an attractive personal dimension to the profile of local producers



## 2.3.4 Agriculture Sector Marketing Direction

### Five Year Vision for the Sector

The Robson Valley Region is known throughout western Canada for its charismatic farmers, the quality of their products, and their principles. New farmers have established themselves and the concentration of producers is increasing.

### Key Messages to be Directed at the Target Market

- Own your own farm in beautiful surroundings, good air, soil, climate and a long growing season
- Independent living, according to your beliefs
- Back to our roots, growing our own food and living with family in a healthy sustainable way
- Land is available at a reasonable cost to support a farming family

### Marketing Goals

Attract five new farms or agricultural business expansions to the Robson Valley Region in years 2-5 of the strategy.

### Optimal Promotional Mix and Activities

- Website development and the development of an online community sharing tips on rural farming
- Encourage the advertisement of available agricultural properties online, if possible with the support of real estate agents
- Create a way for the RVR's quality agricultural products to be better recognized, through point of sale marketing
- Connect leads who may be interested in moving to the region to volunteers working in agriculture who are willing to show them around and answer their questions



## 2.4 Forestry Products Marketing Brief

### 2.4.1 Situational Analysis Update

There are positive signs that the forestry sector is recovering in British Columbia and some local operators are adjusting successfully to new economic realities. The Robson Valley Region is in a good position to attract forestry investment should conditions continue to improve. Figure 7 is an update of the analysis completed in the 2010 Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan.

FIGURE 7: INVESTMENT READINESS FOR THE FORESTRY SECTOR

Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Labour Force Characteristics</b>		
<b>Availability of Skilled Workers</b>	 	There is an available and experienced workforce in the forestry sector. However, this workforce is becoming smaller due to recent contractions in the forestry sector.
<b>Transportation and Distribution</b>		
<b>Market for finished products</b>	 	There is a good shipping network for finished, container ready products and access to both Asian and Albertan markets. The proximity to these markets is low, which is an issue for bulk shipping of lower value forestry products.
<b>Utilities</b>		
<b>Power Availability and Cost</b>	 	There is a lack of stable power, although progress is being made to resolve this issue. The RVR is also located at end of the power distribution line.
<b>Property Quality</b>		
<b>Industrial Building/ Land Availability</b>	 	Land is available in the RVR, although fully serviced land with buildings may be more difficult to locate depending on the needs of a particular business. The Regional District maintains an inventory of industrial properties that are available for purchase.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Wood Supply</b>		
<b>Supply of wood fibre</b>	 	Local Community Forests in Valemount, McBride and in Dunster provide a guaranteed supply of wood fibre in the RVR. The recent pine beetle infestation may still create fluctuations in the available wood supply.
<b>Marketing/Promotions/Information</b>		
<b>Sector-Specific Website Promotions</b>	 	Information found on the internet has the potential to influence the decision of forestry investors, but less so than other sectors. While there are statements about wanting to attract investment, there is no focus on attracting this sector in current online content.
<b>Overall Investment Attraction Initiative</b>		McBride's economic development website reflects a desire to attract new business and investment by providing links for site selectors, business resources, and a NW Corridor Manufacturing Strategy. Valemount's website is in need of revisions and additions regarding investment attraction in forestry. Both communities have economic development officers that are available to support investment attraction.

### Competitive Advantages

- Local community forests have the ability to supply wood fibre to local businesses
- Available and experienced workforce

### Competitive Disadvantages

- Distance to market
- Reliability of the power supply



## 2.4.2 Investment Mix Priorities

The following figure indicates where in the investment life cycle Robson Valley Region should be focusing its efforts; the investment cycle includes:

- Further Investigation – degree to which the sector opportunity needs refining before ready for full-scale promotion
- Partnership Development – importance of identifying partnership to help bring success
- Product Development – necessity of investing time and money in improving the area’s forestry businesses
- Promotion – what the effectiveness of a promotional campaign would be if it were to start today

**FIGURE 8: THE INVESTMENT MIX FOR THE FORESTRY SECTOR**

Further Investigation	Partnership Development	Product Development	Promotion
<p>Retention initiatives that identify and support new business opportunities for existing companies are worth further investigation.</p> <p>Debate is still circulating on the merits of various alternative energy ideas and other uses for residual wood and fibre.</p> <p>Clear business plans are required for many potential investments in the bio-energy sphere.</p>	<p>Partnerships between the communities and their respective Community Forests are important to develop a shared image and investment strategies for the RVR.</p> <p>Provincial and Federal legislators need to be onside for important changes that will have positive local impacts.</p>	<p>The variety of forestry producers that operate in the RVR demonstrate that new products and businesses could develop that will utilize the specific supply of wood available.</p>	<p>Reaching out to forestry workers or forestry business who may be interested in new business opportunities may be the best approach to attracting new businesses.</p> <p>An online promotion program advertising available fibre to small forestry businesses in other areas of the province, businesses that are connected through the forestry supply chain businesses located within the surrounding region.</p> <p>This would be best organized with the support and involvement of Community Forests who have excellent knowledge of the sector.</p>



### Overall Objective and Approach

**The development of business in this sector will still be accomplished one business and community project at a time. There are fewer opportunities to develop new businesses in the forestry sector than there have been in the past, due to consolidation and other sector trends. However, there are still opportunities to secure new investments in this sector, and the prospects for these investments are currently on the rise.**

### 2.4.3 Market Segment Profile

The variety of forestry businesses in the Robson Valley Region and the niche products that they produce should be highlighted and their stories shared with the world to attract more independent operators. The longstanding contributions that residents of the Region have made to the forestry industry as members of its labour force can also be profiled to identify the hardworking culture of the community which is attractive to potential investors. The RVR's reputation as a creative region and a hardworking region that supports a strong mix of forestry businesses can be translated into further business investment.

The recommended approach for business development is to continue to support the needs of community forests, to engage in business retention activities and to attract one new operator at a time while continuing to pursue a community wide bio-energy project to absorb underutilized by-products of existing industries.

Key sub-sectors that are a part of the target market include:

- Businesses that can utilize wood with a small diameter, as well as scrap and waste wood such as Bio-energy electricity generation or pellet manufacturing
- Specialty wood products that use large diameter wood
- Value-added-wood product manufacturing such as Cedar rails/shingles,
- Specialty woodcrafts such as luthiers and artists
- Log home building or modular home manufacturing
- Integrated bio-mass production
- Veneer manufacturing & exporting

The most important organizations to include in the investment attraction effort are community forests. The community forest managers are the most significant sources of intelligence on the trends in the sector and will be one of the first contacts for any potential investors.



## Demographic and Economic Profile

- Businesses are often led by individual entrepreneurs or family owned businesses, with employees who may or may not include future successors, such as children of owners or longstanding employees.
- Both men and women own and/or operate forestry businesses, however the profession tends to be male dominated.
- Alberta based residential and recreational construction companies and/or specialized wood distribution companies located close to the BC Coast
- Owners of existing forestry businesses in British Columbia are often individuals that have worked in the forestry sector for many years and may be nearing retirement. More promising opportunities would entrepreneurs with a younger demographic in their 30's or 40's, however both age groups are targets

## Characteristics of Targets

The characteristics of target businesses include:

- Supply limitations in current location
- Labour force of less than 20 people which is expected to expand over time
- Small businesses that are owner operated
- Newly established business, or business that is expected to be transferred to a new owner in 5-10 years
- Located in BC or Alberta and familiar with the marketplace
- Business plan that is connected with availabilities in the local wood supply
- Independent and entrepreneurial, with a variety of interests
- Understanding of the forestry industry

## Preferred Media Channels

- Connected with the community forest communication network
- Word of mouth
- Specialty news publications focused on the sector
- Trade shows, conferences and association meetings



## 2.4.4 Forestry Sector Marketing Direction

### Five Year Vision for the Sector

The Robson Valley Region is known for the variety of forestry businesses and the products that they produce; new small and medium sized forestry businesses are established and positioned for growth

### Key Messages to be Directed at the Target Market

- Availability of wood supply and commitment to support local business through the community forest system
- Independence and the ability to own land, affordability
- Recreational and lifestyle opportunities in the Robson Valley Region

### Marketing Goals

The marketing goal for the forestry sector is to secure two new forestry businesses or expansions in the sector in the RVR within years 2-5 of the strategy.

### Optimal Promotional Mix and Activities

- Develop a reputation among foresters as an area of opportunity for forestry business
- Share specific information to target markets about wood and property availability
- Availability of specific wood types as well as quantities
- Tell the story of the diversity of forestry businesses that are established in the region, including the larger players in the forestry industry as well as hobbyists.
- Highlight the diversity of forestry products that are produced by local businesses and end up in exotic locations such as Alberta and Asia
- Images of construction products, works of art and musical instruments are worth sharing in conjunction with images of the mountain forests that indicate the attractive quality of life in the RVR
- Discuss if an email list to communicate with forestry business owners could be collected by local community forests
- Familiarization tours with sector media to tell the story of forestry in the Robson Valley Region
- Website shared jointly by local community forests advertising wood available in the Robson Valley Region



## 2.5 Government Services Marketing Brief

### 2.5.1 Situational Analysis Update

The following figure indicates the factors that determine where Government Services are likely to be located, and how the Robson Valley Region rates. It is an update of a similar analysis completed in the 2010 Robson and Canoe Valleys Economic Opportunities Plan. Relative to the other investment opportunities identified in this report, Robson Valley Region is likely to see less new investment from this sector depending on larger economic trends. Unique opportunities may arise and communities need to be prepared to react.

**FIGURE 9: ROBSON VALLEY REGION INVESTMENT READINESS FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Labour Force Characteristics</b>		
<b>Availability of Skilled Workers</b>		Local populations are small as is expected in a rural area. The levels of educational attainment in the RVR are, on average, lower than that of the province.
<b>Transportation and Distribution</b>		
<b>Proximity to Current/Future Customers</b>		Prince George is the home to most government services in Fraser-Fort George because it is a hub for the rural areas. RVR has a small population and the probability of attracting employment in services for more than the local communities is uncertain.
<b>Utilities</b>		
<b>Telecommunications</b>		Broadband service is strong enough for most applications that residents require.
<b>Property Availability and Cost</b>		
<b>Commercial Building/Land Availability</b>	 	Land is available along the main highways in some areas. Valemount is in a better position than McBride in this regard. Existing facilities for lease are variable in quality and will require renovation.



Critical Location Factor	Local Performance	Explanation
<b>Quality of Life</b>		
<b>Perception to Attract Employees</b>	 	Though the quality of life is reported as high within RVR, regional centres are less remote. Job vacancies for some positions (e.g. Northern Health) have existed for a long time. The main problem seems to be for spouses finding suitable employment.
<b>Marketing/Promotions/Information</b>		
<b>Sector-Specific Fact Sheets</b>	 	Information that is critical to Government Services is available on a one page piece that was completed in 2010.
<b>Overall Investment Retention Initiative</b>		The Villages appear to have good relations with local government services and have been able support bids for expanded services or fight if services are under threat. Some government services report to Councils, or their Committees, on a regular basis.

**Competitive Advantages**

- Quality of life and outdoor recreation opportunities for personnel recruitment
- Positive political and administrative relationships

**Competitive Disadvantages**

- Employment for spouse
- Remoteness relative to regional centres



## 2.5.2 Investment Mix Priorities

The following figure indicates where in the investment life cycle Robson Valley Region should be focusing its efforts; the investment cycle includes:

- Further Investigation – degree to which the sector opportunity needs refining before ready for full-scale promotion
- Partnership Development – importance of identifying partnership to help bring success
- Product Development – necessity of investing time and money in improving product
- Promotion – what the effectiveness of a promotional campaign would be if it were to start today

**FIGURE 10: THE INVESTMENT MIX FOR THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES SECTOR**

Further Investigation	Partnership Development	Product Development	Promotion
<p>None required for retention because targets are clearly defined.</p> <p>Government services that could be attracted are not immediately evident so research needs to be done.</p>	<p>Relationships with political representatives are critical to identifying opportunities and potential negative developments.</p>	<p>Success in attracting new government initiatives will depend on identifying a niche and putting a business case together.</p>	<p>Focused on one-to-one contact with key decision makers is the best strategy to retain and attract new services.</p>

### Overall Objective and Approach

**Continue to leverage political and management-level relationships to retain as much of the existing government services as possible. Investment attraction is still possible but the opportunities are less clear. An opportunity does exist to help government agencies with personnel recruitment. The Robson Valley Region should be prepared to react to opportunities that present themselves.**



### 2.5.3 Market Segment Profile

There are three key targets that are in a position to make decisions about government services:

1. Elected members of the provincial legislature and federal parliament
2. Managers of provincial and federal departments
3. Employees who are needed to fill job vacancies in Robson Valley Region

Oftentimes, success in retaining and attracting government services is based on personal relationships with decision makers as well as on evidence of need. Relationships are critical at a politician-to-politician level as well as a manager-to-manager level.

Elected members of the provincial legislature and federal parliament, both local representatives and ministers, need to have confidence that the investments they make will be implemented without delay once direction has been given and the money is in hand. It is beneficial if the projects fit with a provincial/federal strategy, specific mandate and/or program. These targets are highly influenced by positive media because they want to be associated with achievements, even if only remotely related to the initiative under consideration. Politicians appreciate communication from other politicians so it is most appropriate for the political representatives of Robson Valley Region (Councillors, Mayors and Regional District Directors) to be the main communicator.

In many ways, the management-level target has similar goals. Government managers want to be associated with an achieving community and once they receive the go ahead to move ahead with a project they want to be confident it will be implemented without problem.

It was mentioned that some job vacancies at government agencies are persisting for long periods of time. This is a lost opportunity for the communities. The prospects for these jobs are considering moves from markets that are consistent with Lone Eagle Investors and sometimes further afield. A positive online profile and advertising employment opportunities aggressively through social media and local networks is one strategy to help fill vacancies that is aligned with the other activities being undertaken in the strategy.



## **Demographic and Economic Profile**

- Potential employees are well educated and have the potential to be high salary earners, they may be 40-65 years of age and interested in a rural lifestyle
- Some positions may be filled by new graduates in their 20's seeking work experience and adventures

## **Characteristics of Targets**

- Most concerned about successful implementation and potential for positive public profile
- Values work life balance
- Potential employees are looking for a location that will satisfy their career objectives but that also meet personal needs which are similar to Lone Eagle Investors
- Retention can be a challenge and welcoming strategies are helpful to integrate new employees in the community

## **Preferred Channels for Information**

- Personal connections are key to success in employee recruitment
- Public relations can provide strong support to building personal relationships
- Robson Valley Region and local municipal websites are critical to convey positive messages about the communities; decision makers in this sector as well as potential employees will be doing online research



## 2.5.4 Government Services Sector Marketing Direction

### Five Year Vision for the Sector

There will be no long-standing employment vacancies amongst the public sector organizations in the RVR. The communities have retained or replaced government services that are currently in the communities.

### Key Messages to be Directed at the Target Market

- The Robson Valley Region is made up of vibrant and sustainable communities
- Our citizens and municipalities are active volunteers and fundraisers; we have shown in the past that government services are a respected part of the local fabric of the community
- Due to the small size of the communities, public service jobs are diverse, and involve a variety of responsibilities compared with similar jobs in urban areas

### Marketing Goals

Over the five year time period of the strategy, government services in the region have been maintained or expanded and staff vacancies have been filled. New government services staff are being retained.

### Optimal Promotional Mix and Activities

- Create a Robson Valley Region website as the main employment recruitment tool as identified for Lone Eagle Investors.
- Establish a “welcome wagon” to ensure that new residents feel welcome and are aware of business opportunities and employment opportunities for spouses in the RVR.
- The public relations plan is critical and includes one-on-one meetings and targeted messages of success stories to decision makers.
- Complete visits with all local senior government services. A two pronged approach is required – economic development staff speaking at the staff level and political representatives (e.g. Mayor, Council) speaking at a political level.



- Identifying opportunities for health services such as additional hospital care and long term care for the aged is important to serve the RVR's aging population. A common front with all parts of the communities working together on the initiative is essential.
- Concentrate resources on identifying opportunities in the non-government organization sector such as social and health organizations that need space for regional offices. Tap into the community's network of people participating in Boards of Directors.



## 3 Commonalities between the Target Markets

The sector specific Marketing Briefs are important because they offer a detailed understanding of the specific interests and requirements for each of Robson Valley Region's investment opportunities. To create a comprehensive strategy that will make effective use of the resources available for implementation, these ideas will now be brought together into one Marketing Strategy to create a comprehensive approach to implementation.

What has become clear in completing the Marketing Briefs is that there is consistency in the promotional mix to be used to reach the target markets. The marketing mediums identified as most significant for Robson Valley Region are the following:

### 3.1 Common Mediums

#### Website Development

The internet is a very popular tool to seek out information prior to a business investment. An attractive website can provide inspiration, information and success stories to a potential investor. Advertising the website through social media projects, collaborating with community based social media, continually optimizing its search capabilities and linking the site to organizations that are of interest to target audiences are success strategies. The bottom line for online marketing is that maintaining a successful website is not a passive activity or a solitary one. A social media strategy and social media policy as well as multiple trainings for business and community leaders are recommended as good first steps to help the RVR get online and become more visible to target audiences.

The tools required to get started are a website, a series of profiles, videos and photos highlighting entrepreneurs in their place of business. After that, locating grassroots leaders to champion social media initiatives and further content development are important; a guest blog might be a good example of this. Partnering with local media and sharing an occasional story with appropriate credit is another good content strategy should local media be interested in partnership.

Social media is an important way to market the website, particularly when combined with public relations and point of sale strategies. In this case, the RDFFG may employ social media identities such as Facebook and Twitter, but local groups, such as the Robson Valley Growers or the local museums can also do this to support the distribution of content and build bigger audiences for that content.



## Public Relations

Public relations activities will help to establish a positive reputation for the RVR and will also cultivate relationships with key contacts. The activities required to manage public relations include identifying and training spokespeople, networking tools such as pins and other communications material. Appearances on radio/television and other media channels will help share the message. Valemount has just established a community station which may support this effort, if the station can also share select content in the form of online video that will broaden its audience. New communications templates may need to be developed (newsletters, etc.) and new standard content may need to be developed such as a place description (who we are). Distribution lists and contact databases are shared between stakeholders and continually being worked on. Familiarization tours for media are effective ways of encouraging stories in popular magazines, and have high credibility in the eyes of the public. 'Fam-tours' are a very important activity for RVR to highlight its unique qualities to the world.

## Point of Sale

Building recognition of the Robson Valley Region brand through the entrepreneurs that operate businesses in the area will lead to increasing the number of people who want to relocate. Marketing tools that can be displayed at the point of sale include attractive business profiles with photos of agricultural producers or small cards that can be used to price produce at a market or grocery store where they are available. Small displays can be provided for restaurants for placement at their tills to share their dedication to the local food producers with consumers even outside of RVR, in Prince George and Jasper or farther afield, for example. As previously mentioned, consumers who enjoy the products of the Robson Valley Region have the potential to become future investors. The point of sale strategy is critical to make the connection between a positive purchasing experience and the RVR, and a key marketing tool to direct people to the website.

The challenges of the point of sale strategy, particularly in agriculture, are in collaboration between businesses. The marketing profiles will be most efficient when they are used by a number of sectors. The opportunity to create entrepreneur profiles needs to be widely available to prevent preferential treatment of particular businesses.

In particular, because producers in the RVR have diverse values, deciding on the values that agricultural point of sale material represents can be challenging. Continual work will be required with the agricultural community and local farming organizations to identify what point of sale marketing tools will work best for a wide variety of producers. Some suggestions that may also apply to other sectors include:

- Displays for farmer's markets (also restaurant, gas station, municipal, and gift shop customer service counters)
- Packaging such as bags for produce (or gifts)



- Price tags or cards to be included in bags with purchases
- Welcome kits for visitors located in hotel or B&B room or in packages for new residents
- And many other ideas... be creative!

To distribute the branding materials it is recommended that they be sold at cost (depending on the item – some may be complementary), and/or distributed through farming and business organizations as part of membership fees. Every effort should be made to keep the materials competitively priced, as this will be critical to the success of the initiative.

### **Investment Response Team**

Most potential investors or leads / prospects will visit a community, often more than once, before making the final decision to invest. A protocol to welcome these prospects is critical to establishing a much-needed positive first impression. Investment visits are organized by identifying who will be the main liaison, which individuals should be included in a tour and who will coordinate and organize the tour. Marketing tools associated with investment tours include tour materials, folders, simple maps and templates for letters. Real estate agents are key partners to engage in the investment response team concept, as they are often the first point of contact for potential investors. This consideration is so important that it is discussed in much greater detail in the following section 4.

### **Traditional Marketing**

Once a strong foundation has been established for an Investment Attraction Marketing Program, more traditional avenues of marketing may become more valuable. Although print advertisements tend to have a low return on investment, and are not recommended as a core strategy, they can be useful on specific occasions, such as when a magazine prints a feature article on the community or in areas where there is very limited internet access. Pamphlets on the other hand can be useful, either placed in hotel rooms or in waiting areas. Content should be oriented on the personality of business and community leaders and ideally include content that makes the material useful and interesting, such as a map, coupon, recipe or useful websites (real estate, economic development contacts, etc..).

Other tactics such as attendance at trade shows and conferences, the development of highway billboards (on major arteries in the target geographies) or presentations to key audiences are recommended as part of an expansion campaign in years four and five of the strategy.

Creating merchandise is a better tactic because people value merchandise and will continue to use it. In order to engage the public in the strategy, the creation of RVR promotional material is recommended. The RDFFG can order and sell the material at cost to communities and businesses, simultaneously with point of sale items. The materials, sold at the suggested retail price, will generate income for these organizations as well as market the brand and website.



## 3.2 Common Marketing Messages

While there are some subtleties in the sector-specific messages they are marketing messages that consistently apply to all targets. As is shown in Figure 11, there is significant overlap between the messages that are aimed at Lone Eagle Investors and the messages for other sectors.

FIGURE 11: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MARKETING MESSAGES IN ALL SECTORS





## 4 Providing Service to Prospects – Defining a Lead Protocol

### 4.1 Considerations in Defining a Lead Protocol

As part of the development of a Lead Protocol, the partners involved in this project (Fraser-Fort George, McBride and Valemount) and the consulting team discussed a number of possible approaches. The following summary describes the consensus that was generated.

The project partners were presented with two methods of handling investment inquiries:

1. by having a Robson Valley Region resource as the point of contact until such a time that the prospect is ready to speak more specifically about the communities; at which time the two local EDOs each take ownership of the prospect
2. by having Valemount and McBride EDOs as the point of contact immediately and each taking ownership of the prospect but respecting the regional nature of the initiative.

The partners have expressed interest in option number one, which is intended to avoid downloading the responsibility of implementation too heavily on the EDOs, who will already have responsibilities as important implementation partners.

Investment attraction involves spending time and money to promote the RVR as a location for new business development. However to be successful it is critical to provide top-notch service to those who show interest. Because Robson Valley Region is a new concept, the partners need to organize to provide great service to these prospects. A clearly defined mechanism for follow-up, a “Lead Protocol” will provide this organization and define responsibilities.

In resolving this challenge, it is best to examine the situation from the prospect’s, rather than the economic development partner’s point-of-view. There are a few challenges with a collaborative approach to investment attraction:

- Any success in establishing a unified image of “Robson Valley Region” is in danger of becoming confused by competing messages should partnerships falter.
- In most cases, prospects are not aware that multiple communities will be following-up which can create confusion
- Prospects may get frustrated detailing their plans to multiple people

A regional contact will help address the challenges, but ongoing participation from all partners is required for success.



## 4.2 Lead Protocol Recommendation: A Regional Representative

After a lead or prospect is identified, the first step is to initiate a process of “qualifying” the prospect. This qualifying will include determining as much as possible about the investors’ business interests, assembling a response and conducting follow-up. Individual communities that are of interest to the investor will be kept informed through their economic development department and will be involved should the project progress. In this manner, the prospect will decide when individual communities will be involved. To be effective, the regional point of contact must have the full confidence of the partners.

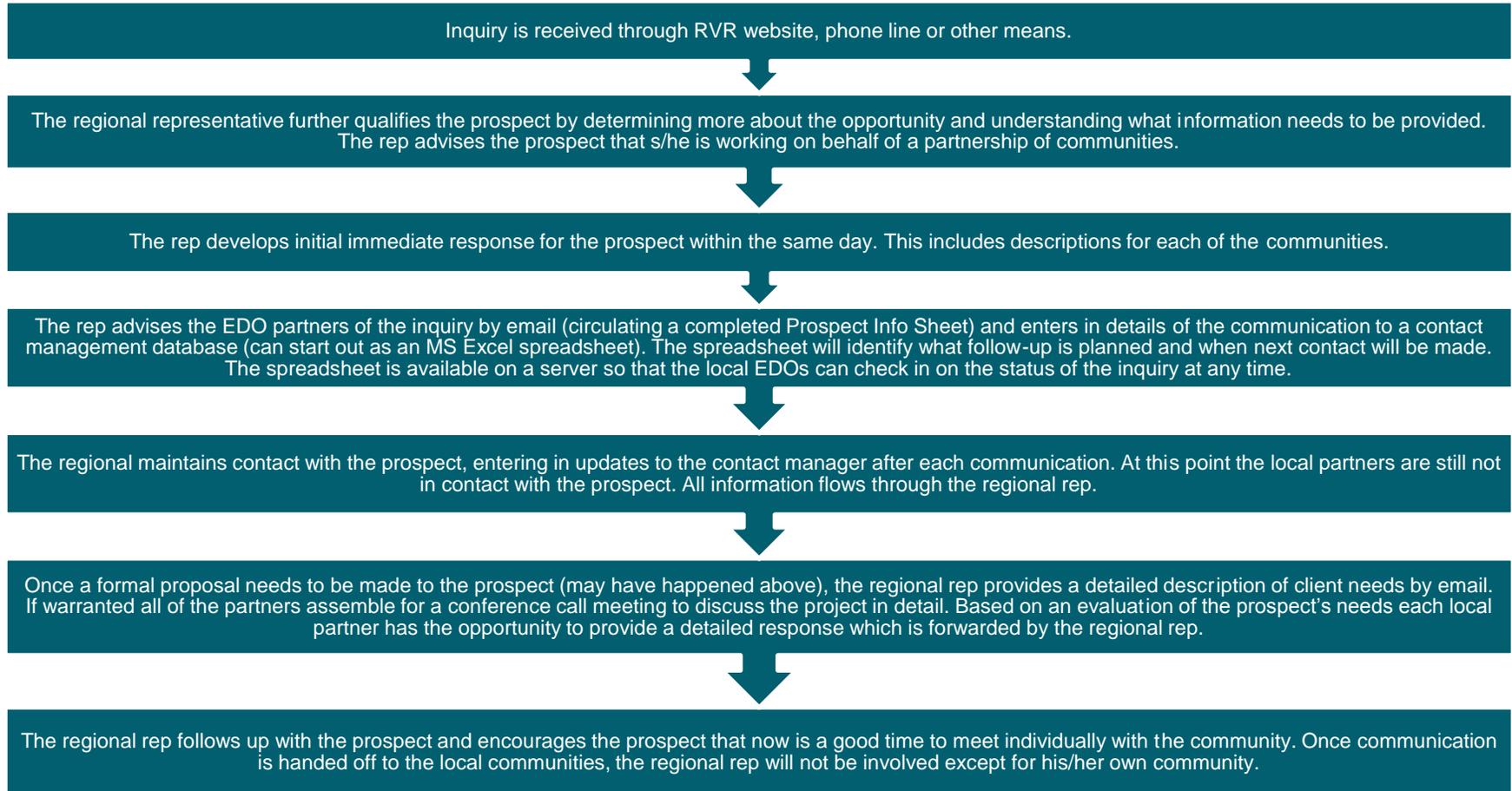
To quicken the process, a standardized inventory of key information or community profile information will be maintained by the partners. This will alleviate time looking for information later that is required quickly. The focus of this information will be what is required around each of the key sectors.

In this situation, the regional representative is identified as the contact on all promotional materials including websites, radio, television and printed publications.

The following is a specific example of how lead handling will work, while noting that every situation is different and these types of practices are difficult to standardize. It should also be noted that the time required to complete this process varies widely. In some cases it could take less than an hour (not including any formalized team responses) or it could take many months.



**FIGURE 12: LEAD PROTOCOL FOR A REACTIVE SITUATION WITH A REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**



If a prospect is uncovered through a proactive means such as a meeting, trade show, etc. where more than one member of the partnership is involved, the regional rep will be identified at the conclusion of the meeting. The partners who have made contact with the prospect will advise the prospect of the system in place and that their priority is to ensure top-notch customer service and clear lines of communication.

Regular meetings will be held to review the prospect situation with all members of the partnership.



# 5 Marketing Strategy Implementation

FIGURE 13: MARKETING ACTIVITIES FOR YEARS 1-5

Action	Timeframe	Estimated Costs	Estimated Staff Time	Responsible
<b>1. Internal Marketing Campaign</b>				
1.1. Visual Identity / Brand Development & Standards Guide	Year 1	\$7,000	n/a	RDFFG
1.2. Strategy Launch including community meeting to introduce study; accompanying news release	Year 1	\$500	1 week	RDFFG
1.3. Community Engagement: Including business outreach, meetings with various community groups on next steps, gathering first order of merchandise at a promotional rate	Year 1-5	\$500 (samples)	4 weeks annually	RVR communities, RDFFG
<b>2. Website Development</b>				
2.1. Develop photography and video content	Year 1	\$7,500	1 week	RDFFG
2.2. Develop website structure and content including the capacity to view on mobile devices	Year 1	\$12,000	2 weeks	RDFFG
2.3. Update RVR community websites to reflect regional brand (ongoing content updates and annual clean up)	Year 2	\$5,000	3 weeks	RVR communities
2.4. Create a policy to govern/guide community and volunteer-driven social media	Year 2	\$1-3,000	2 weeks	RVR communities, RDFFG
2.5. Establish and cultivate community champions to spearhead social media content creation	Year 2-5	\$0	2 weeks annually	RVR communities
2.6. Monitor RVR online profile and ensure website and social media content is well integrated, search engine optimized, linked and connected to relevant provincial, regional, and sector websites	Ongoing	\$0	1 week annually	RVR communities and RDFFG



<b>3. Public Relations</b>				
3.1. Update/develop regional marketing and promotional material including: business cards, pamphlets, community profile, etc. to incorporate new branding and messaging	Year 1	\$2,000	n/a	RDFFG
3.2. Encourage the updating regional communities' and community organizations' marketing and promotional material	Year 2	\$5-10,000	6 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
3.3. Train media spokespeople on media relations	Year 2	\$3,000	2 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
3.4. Develop a comprehensive media contact list and begin developing a rapport with relevant media contacts	Year 1-5	\$0	2 weeks annually	RVR communities
3.5. Create stories that profile local entrepreneurs and other community stories on a quarterly basis, budget is for a professional photography session annually	Year 2-5	\$5,000/year	3 weeks annually	RVR communities
<b>4. Point of Sale</b>				
4.1. Develop simple point of sale branding material (doubles as Marketing Lure for the website and "Welcome Kit") and distribute to local producers and tourism establishments – monitor demand	Year 1-3	\$5,000	n/a	RDFFG
4.2. Create line of merchandise to cultivate local buy-in for the brand, provide a revenue source for local businesses and reach target markets when they visit RVR – monitor demand	Year 1-3	\$4,000	1 week annually	RDFFG
4.3. Work closely with the farming community to reach agreement on next steps for agricultural products grown and created in Robson Valley to use the regional brand, including the development of a quality standard and a brand usage agreement	Year 2	\$0	3 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
4.4. Implement agriculture branding program based on community recommendations and the brand usage agreement	Year 3-5	\$50,000	9 weeks total	RVR communities & RDFFG



4.5.	Host a forum to discuss and garner feedback from Tourism and Agriculture about the point of sale program including challenges and further opportunities	Year 4	\$1-3,000	2 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
<b>5. Investment Response Team</b>					
5.1.	Recruit community champions in each of the sectors to lead investment response team for that particular business community	Year 1	\$0	2 weeks	RVR communities
5.2.	Create an internal working group within Municipal staff and regional representatives, including the EDO, to discuss and problem solve around potential investment opportunities on a quarterly basis	Year 1	\$0	2 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
5.3.	Develop training materials from prior initiatives done across the country and hold a training session for volunteers	Year 1-2	\$10,000	2 weeks annually	RDFFG
5.4.	Create a contact list of all volunteers and refer interested entrepreneurs and potential investors to the relevant investment response team, debrief with the team after each experience and implement improvements	Year 2-5	\$2,000 (meals & expenses)	3 weeks annually	RVR communities
<b>6. Marketing Campaign</b>					
6.1.	Create a Marketing Campaign Strategy, including a review of the success of the first 4 years of implementation, lessons learned, the status of barriers identified in the strategy, and a detailed outline of marketing activities and current costs. The planning cost should be included with 6.2 & 6.3 in one project budget.	Year 4	\$30,000	3 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
6.2.	Lower Mainland Agriculturalists –Marketing tactics may include; rural billboards, pin up posters in agricultural supply stores, contests, presentations for interest groups and agriculture colleges	Year 4-5	\$100,000*	6 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG
6.3.	Edmonton Recreationalists – Marketing tactics may include reaching ranchers, mobile business professionals, and forestry supply chain businesses through trade shows, rodeos, presentation and contests for recreational organizations and snowmobile retailers	Year 4-5	\$100,000*	6 weeks	RVR communities & RDFFG

\* Budget estimate based on projects of similar scope



**FIGURE 14: SUMMARY OF YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND BUDGET**

Year 1 Action	Estimated Costs	Estimated Staff Time
1.1 Visual Identity / Brand Development & Standards Guide	\$7,000	n/a
1.2 Strategy Launch including community meeting to introduce study... news release	\$500	1 week
1.3 Community Engagement: Including business outreach, meetings with various community groups on next steps, gathering first order of merchandise at a promotional rate.	\$500	4 weeks
2.1 Develop photography and video content	\$7,500	1 week
2.2 Develop website structure and content including the capacity for viewing on mobile devices.	\$12,000	2 weeks
2.6 Monitor RVR online profile and ensure website and social media content is well integrated, search engine optimized, linked and connected to relevant websites	\$0	1 week
3.1 Update/develop regional marketing and promotional material including: business cards, pamphlets, community profile, etc. to incorporate new branding and messaging	\$2,000	n/a
3.4 Develop a comprehensive media contact list and begin developing a rapport with relevant media contacts	\$0	2 weeks
4.1 Develop simple point of sale branding material (doubles as Marketing Lure for the website and "Welcome Kit") and distribute to local producers and tourism establishments – monitor demand	\$2,000	n/a
4.2 Create line of merchandise to cultivate local buy-in for the brand, provide a revenue source for local businesses and reach target markets when they visit RVR – monitor demand on an annual basis to review effectiveness	\$3,000	n/a
5.1 Recruit community champions in each of the sectors to lead investment response team for that particular business community	\$0	2 weeks
5.2 Create an internal working group within Municipal staff and regional representatives, including the EDO quarterly	\$0	2 weeks
5.3 Develop training materials from prior initiatives done across the country and hold a training session for volunteers	\$3,000	2 weeks
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$37,500</b>	<b>17 weeks</b>



**FIGURE 15: SUMMARY OF YEAR 2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND BUDGET**

Year 2 Action	Estimated Costs	Estimated Staff Time
2.3 Update RVR community websites to reflect regional brand (ongoing content updates and annual clean up)	\$5,000	3 weeks
2.4 Create a policy to govern/guide community and volunteer-driven social media	\$2,000	2 weeks
2.5 Establish and cultivate community champions to spearhead social media content creation	\$0	2 weeks
2.6 Monitor RVR online profile and ensure website and social media content is well integrated, search engine optimized, linked and connected to relevant websites	\$0	1 week
3.2 Update RVR community marketing and promotional material	\$8,000	6 weeks
3.3 Train media spokespeople on media relations	\$3,000	2 weeks
3.4 Enhance the media contact list and begin developing a rapport with relevant media contacts	\$0	2 weeks
3.5 Create stories that profile local entrepreneurs and other community stories on a quarterly basis, budget is for a professional photography session annually	\$5,000	3 weeks
4.1 Develop simple point of sale branding material (doubles as Marketing Lure for the website and "Welcome Kit") and distribute– monitor demand	\$2,000	n/a
4.2 Create line of merchandise to cultivate local buy-in for the brand, provide a revenue source for local businesses and reach target markets when they visit RVR – monitor demand	\$1,000	1 week
4.3 Work closely with the farming community to reach agreement on next steps for agricultural products grown and created in Robson Valley to use the regional brand, including the development of a quality standard and a brand usage agreement	\$0	3 weeks
5.3 Develop training materials from prior initiatives done across the country and hold a training session for volunteers	\$7,000	2 weeks
5.4 Create a contact list of all volunteers and refer interested entrepreneurs and potential investors to the relevant investment response team, debrief with the team after each	\$2,000	3 weeks
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>30 weeks</b>