



BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative

An Initiative under the Agri-Food Futures Fund



An Overview of the Initiative

The BC Agriculture Labour Market and Skills Development Initiative (ALMSDI) falls under the auspices of the Agri-Food Futures Fund (AFFF). The AFFF is a cost-sharing industry development fund whose goals are the development and sustainability of the agri-food industry in British Columbia. As all agriculture industries depend to varying degrees on labour, this initiative and the issues it addresses are truly cross-sectoral and are fundamental to sustainability of BC's agri-food industry. This initiative outlines a proactive, responsive approach to achieving long-term agriculture labour market stability. It outlines goals and actions which focus in an integrated manner on the key attributes of the labour market, thereby achieving a balanced approach and laying out a roadmap to stability. This balance is necessary not only to meet the objective of long-term sustainability of the agri-food industry, but also to maintain and enhance BC's competitive ability within the national and international marketplaces.

Initiative funding is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries through the Agri-Food Futures Fund. The Fund is administered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia.

Initiative Vision

In the future, agriculture producers will be able to recruit and employ enough workers with the right skills to meet their production goals, all workers will have rewarding careers within the sector, and new entrants, including youth, will seek out jobs in the agriculture sector.

Initiative Mission

Partners of the Agriculture Labour Partnership Committee will identify barriers that prevent agriculture producers from finding sufficient workers, and develop options that will help ensure that the labour market in this sector reaches a balance.

Guiding Principles of the Initiative

- Approach labour market issues as a partnership between industry and all orders of government.
- Take action on labour market issues, which include but are not limited to addressing labour supply issues, enhancing the image of agriculture and building a skills development culture to help assure the future of agriculture in British Columbia.
- Recognize that human resources are an input that needs to be treated differently than other agricultural inputs.
- Recognize that there are underlying public health, food and personal safety concerns in agricultural production.
- Encourage employers and workers to uphold their responsibilities and rights under legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure that solutions are identified and implemented in a timely manner.
- Employee input and participation will be sought via subcommittees, surveys or other processes.



The Framework

To address the labour market and skills development concerns associated with BC agriculture, five key areas have been identified. Goals and specific action items have been further developed to address key gaps within each area. Addressing critical skills and labour shortages within the industry are first order priorities. However, in order to achieve long-term labour stability other dimensions of labour market interactions must be addressed. The five key areas provide a framework for identifying and addressing all priorities. The vision will be achieved through identification of gaps and actions in five key areas over the next three years. These key areas are:

1. The sector must have an **adequate supply of workers**
2. The sector must have **workers with the right skills**
3. Employers in the sector must recognize the importance of both monetary and non-monetary incentives – individual workers make choices based on **more than just wages**.
4. Competitiveness of the sector – ensuring there is **healthy demand for labour**
5. **Matching labour supply and demand** – workers and employers need to be able to find each other efficiently.

The initiative strives for a balanced approach to achieving long-term labour market stability in the agriculture sector. Achieving this stability can only be done by developing actions and measures that focus on all aspects of interactions in the labour market. Focussing on one area to the exclusion of others may address short-term problems, but will not aid the sector to address the goals of long-term stability. For example, focussing only on training will leave the seasonal needs for unskilled and semi-skilled harvest workers unresolved.

Strategic Goals

1. Ensure there are enough workers to meet growers' production goals. (35% of the initiative)
2. Ensure the pool of available workers in the agriculture sector has the necessary skill sets and competencies to meet the growers' production goals. (15% of the initiative)
3. Ensure that growers are aware that a range of factors – not just wages – influence individuals' decisions about work, and that those factors are incorporated into production models. (15% of the initiative)
4. Ensure there are viable employment opportunities in the agriculture sector, and that those opportunities provide clear signals to attract potential workers into the sector. (25% of the initiative)
5. Ensure that growers with job vacancies in the agriculture sector can find an adequate number of workers and are able to fill job vacancies such that production is not compromised. (10% of the initiative)

The ALMSDI's Management Committee

The ALMSDI's Management Committee will have oversight responsibility for approving and funding projects conducted through this initiative. It is comprised of industry representatives with the mandate to manage the ALMSDI funds and projects. It falls under the authority of the Agriculture Labour Partnership Committee. Vision and direction are provided by the ALPC as a whole. The Management Committee has the final authority on all strategic decisions including the approval of all projects subject to compliance with the terms of funding established by the

Investment Agriculture Foundation and the ALPC. The committee, through its annual plan, establishes program priorities. There is ex-officio representation within the Management Committee.

The initial Management Committee will be:

Mary Hof	BCAC Board Liaison & Dairy sector	Duncan
Michel Benoit	Greenhouse, nursery, floriculture	Delta
Ranbir Kambo	Tree Fruits	Oliver
Rhonda Driediger	Berries and Vegetables	Langley
Lucille Dempsey	Cattle sector	Kamloops
IAF	Ex-officio – Bob McCoubrey	
BCMAFF	Ex-officio –Christine Koch	
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Ex-officio – Philip Bergen	

Input and advice will be provided by technical advisory committees and appropriate other partner agencies and the Agriculture Labour Partnership Committee.

Employee input will be provided through representation from the Agriculture Labour Pools Services and directly by employees where appropriate.

Agriculture Labour Partnership Committee

A key mechanism to identify sector priorities and provide the structures to implement a number of projects will be the Agriculture Labour Partnership Committee. The ALPC will help the Management Committee ensure its priorities and goals reflect the needs of the industry. Creating a linkage between the ALPC and the Management Committee will also help ensure that the specific needs of specific commodity sectors are also heard and addressed by ALMSDI initiatives.

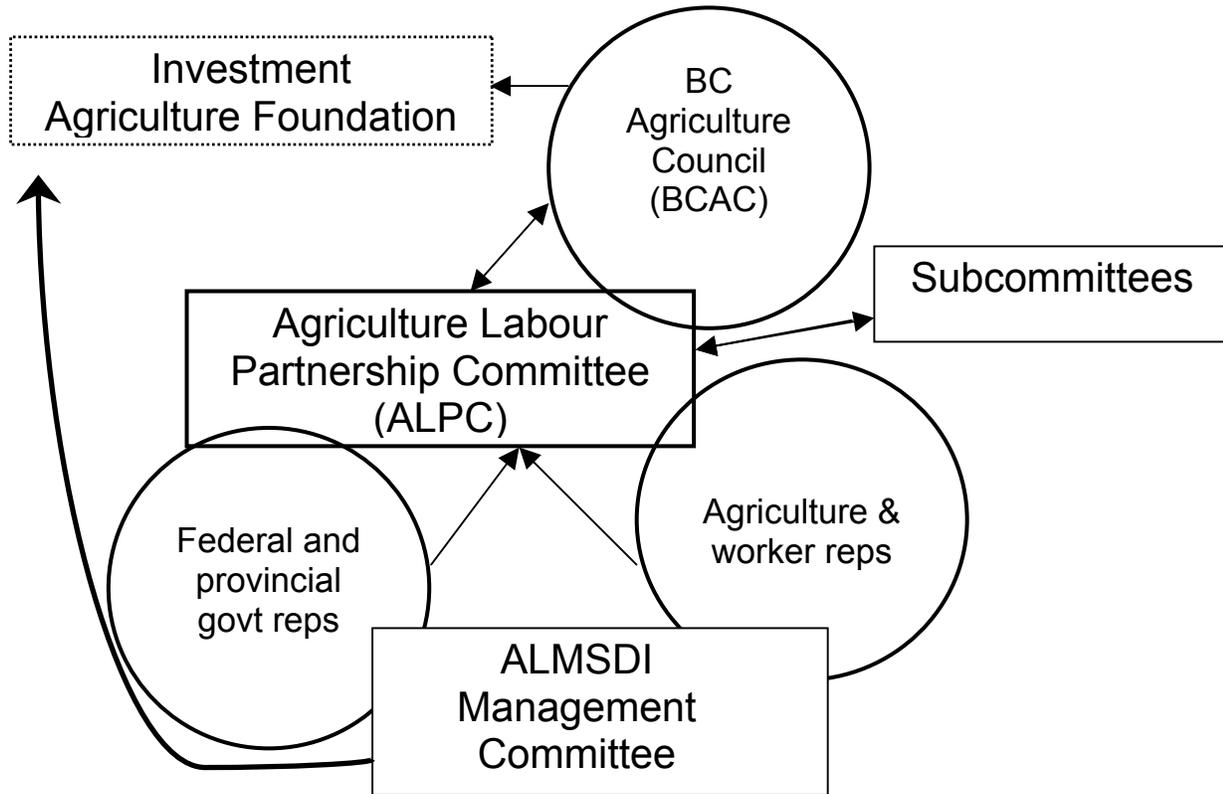
Signatories include:

- British Columbia Agriculture Council
- British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- British Columbia Ministry of Skills Development and Labour
- British Columbia Ministry of Human Resources
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

ALMSDI's Relationship to Other Organizations

The schematic below illustrates the various committees and stakeholder groups, and their relationship to one another. Note: arrows represent reporting and accountability.

Figure 1. Schematic of ALMSDI, ALPC and BCAC Relationship



Proposed Expenditures

The ALMSDI is based on a three-year strategic plan. Table 1 outlines the details of the proposed three-year budget. Since this initiative outlines a proactive, responsive approach to achieving long-term agriculture labour market stability, these allocations are guidelines to be used in effecting the actions outlined within each goal. Thus, as labour market issues or concerns arise and shift within the term of the strategic plan, projects to address those changes will be allocated appropriately within the goal framework. The overall cost sharing between industry and the ALMSDI is 50 percent each. However, variation will be allowed on a project by project basis dependent upon the projected needs. The overall 50:50 balance will be achieved over the term of the initiative. The budget is based on a three-year allocation of \$500,000 from the AFFF and 50:50 cost sharing between the AFFF and industry.

Table 1. Proposed Three Year Budget

Key Priority Area	Funding Source	Year 1 Approval to Dec. 31 2005	Year 2 2006	Year 3 2007	Total
1. Adequate Supply of Labour <i>(35% of initiative)</i>	Industry	\$43,750	\$87,500	\$43,750	\$175,000
	Program	43,750	87,500	43,750	175,000
2. Workers with the Right Skills <i>(15% of initiative)</i>	Industry	18,750	37,500	18,750	75,000
	Program	18,750	37,500	18,750	75,000
3. More than Just Wages <i>(15% of initiative)</i>	Industry	18,750	37,500	18,750	75,000
	Program	18,750	37,500	18,750	75,000
4. Healthy Demand for Labour <i>(15% of initiative)</i>	Industry	31,250	62,500	31,250	125,000
	Program	31,250	62,500	31,250	125,000
5. Matching Labour Supply and Demand <i>(10% of initiative)</i>	Industry	12,500	25,000	12,500	50,000
	Program	12,500	25,000	12,500	50,000
Total	Industry	125,000	250,000	125,000	500,000
	Program	125,000	250,000	125,000	500,000

Program Administrator

A program administrator has been appointed and will be under the direction of the Management Committee. This person will have the responsibility for day-to-day administration of the program.

Duties include:

- Developing and distributing materials to communicate the purpose and goal of the program;
- Handling public enquiries;
- Co-ordinating the preparation of applications for presentation to the management committee;
- Contract management;
- Program planning and reporting.

The BCAC will have overall responsibility of the initiative and will be in charge of its administration. BCAC will be the signatory to the IAF funding agreement. The BCAC will be eligible to claim up to 10% for project administration for eligible expenses as per the AFFF's policy.

How to Apply

Individuals or organizations interested in applying for project funding may contact:

BC Agriculture Council
102-1482 Springfield Road
Kelowna, BC, V1Y 5V3
Phone: (250) 763-9790
Fax: (250) 762-2997
E-mail: bcac@bcagcouncil.com
www.bcac.bc.ca

Prospective applicants are advised to review the ALMSDI Strategic Plan and Business Plan and prepare an application or letter of intent for a project. Proposals will be evaluated based on how the project meets:

- one or more of the Initiative's five strategic goals;
- funding principles;
- funding criteria

An application package may be obtained by mail or downloaded from the BC Agriculture Council website (click on 'Programs' to link to the ALMSDI webpage). Several information documents are available to assist in preparing a successful proposal, these include:

- *ALMSDI Three Year Strategic Plan*
- *ALMSDI 2004/2005 Preliminary Business Plan*
- *Guide to Applicants*
 - The guide details:
 - funding principles
 - eligibility requirements
 - optional letter of intent
 - application review process
 - a guide for completing the funding application form
- *Letter of Intent Guidelines*
- *Funding Criteria Guidelines*
- *Frequently Asked Questions*

Application Deadlines

For each calendar year, deadlines for applications and letters of intent are established to provide the necessary time for an effective evaluation process. These deadlines are as follows:

- **September 15, 2004**
- **December 15, 2004**
- **March 15, 2005**
- **June 15, 2005**