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Columbia Basin Trust

# Community Initiatives Program Evaluation (CBTCIP07)

## FINAL REPORT

Lochaven Management Consultants Ltd.

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**COMMUNITY INITIATIVES PROGRAM EVALUATION  
(CBTCIP07)  
COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST**

**FINAL REPORT**

Submitted to:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When organizations regularly analyze performance they increase their ability to improve results. Successful organizations, especially those engaged in developmental programming, are characterized by their efforts to constantly seek to evaluate and improve on their performance because they understand that success is not about a single event at a fixed point in time; success is not about just achieving something but rather achieving the right thing; and success does not occur as a consequence of happenstance.

Pursuant to the Request for Proposals issued by the Columbia Basin Trust on November 6, 2006, on March 1, 2007 the consulting team of Lochaven Management Consultants Ltd together with Whalebone Productions Ltd was awarded a contract to broadly review the effectiveness of the Community Initiatives Program and examine its administration including the CBT-Local Government Agreement and in doing so discuss *“options and alternatives for the future of the program beyond the 10-year commitment,”* and provide *“recommendations, including ways to improve the program’s effectiveness, if appropriate.”*

Importantly in discussions with representatives of the Columbia Basin Trust it was further stipulated that: (1) the evaluation should focus upon qualitative versus quantitative assessments; and (2) the breadth of program evaluation should be restricted to an evaluation of the Local Government Initiative Program and exclude an evaluation of specific activities broadly attributed to the Affected Areas Initiative except in those circumstances where such exclusions were impossible to determine.

The project effort extended over the period March 1, 2007 to July 15, 2007. From the very beginning and throughout this assignment the consulting team emphasized an open and active process of formal and informal consultations with key representatives of the Columbia Basin Trust, program administrators, decision makers, advisors, stakeholders and proponents. Within the context of this approach the consultant team endeavored to capture the thoughts and opinions of as many as possible of those interested, affected, and knowledgeable individuals. In aggregate eighty-four (84) “Program Advisors, Decision Makers and other Key Stakeholders” were interviewed and one hundred and sixty-six (166) projects were investigated.

As with any research effort there were a number of assumptions and limitations inherent within the methodology of investigation and by implication the results derived therefrom. Notwithstanding the collective import of these considerations, the observations drawn throughout the report and the recommendations subsequently made remain germane and supportable.

As a first step in the investigation, efforts were expended in developing a matrix of performance criteria (organizational and operational principles) such that a proper and relevant evaluation could take place. These criteria were derived from the Columbia Basin Trust itself as reflected in the corporation’s history, mission, mandate and strategies.

While it was very clear that CBT performance expectations (organizational and operational principles) apply to the activities and efforts of the Board, Management, and Staff in managing, guiding and implementing programs such as the Local Government Initiative Program, it is also very clear that these expectations necessarily extend to those agencies, authorities and/or individuals acting on behalf of CBT and/or those perceived to be acting on behalf of CBT in program delivery.

Identified Performance Criteria

<p>1. <u>Governance</u>  <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision Making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> </ul>
<p>2. <u>Outcomes &amp; Impacts</u>  <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Equity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incrementality</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• Legacy of Self-sufficiency</li> </ul>
<p>3. <u>Cost</u>  <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value for Money</li> </ul>	
<p>4. <u>Access and Awareness</u>  <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Support</li> </ul>

In terms of financial allocations by program area the Community Initiatives Program is far and away the most significant of the Delivery of Benefits Programs. In terms of aggregate financial commitment, the Columbia Basin Trust has designated just over \$12.9 million over 10 years to this program effort. Approximately \$5.5 million has been earmarked under the Affected Areas Initiative; and \$7.4 million has been allocated under the Local Government Initiative. The mandate and focus of the Local Government Initiative Program is reflected in its desired outcomes, specifically:

- *“To give early attention in the CBT Delivery of Benefits Program to those areas within the Basin which were most negatively impacted by the Columbia River Treaty, and*
- *To increase the ability of communities and sub-regions within the Columbia Basin to meet their needs.”*

Local Government Initiative Program partners include: City of Revelstoke and Area B of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District; Town of Golden and Area A of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District; Village of Valemount and Area H of the Fraser–Fort George Regional District, the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council, and the Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, and Kootenay Boundary. The basis of the delivery partnership is the CBT – Local Government Agreement. Local Delivery authorities or contractors are entitled to receive an administration allowance equal to 10% of the total allocation. Subject to the terms of the Contribution Agreement each local government (and by implication each local delivery organization) utilizes their own processes for program delivery.

While there are some commonalities in local delivery, for the most part the local structures and processes are quite dissimilar. In terms of differences what stands out immediately and especially are the differences in overall governance including how local decisions are made and authorized; the role of local/regional Councils, Boards and politicians in the process; the relative simplicity or complexity of local delivery methodologies; the transparency of the application process and evaluation criteria; the degree of public participation and influence; and the relative geographic equity of access to sufficient funds to effect meaningful impacts. This is not to say the observed differences, or similarities for that matter, in the manner and method of local implementation are particularly good things or particularly problematic. Both effects are evident in further observation. Rather the point is whether the manner of local implementation and the structure and spirit of the relationship between the CBT and local authorities are the most effective and what aspects might be contributing/detracting from the effort and what might need to be done, if anything, to enhance delivery and enhance impact.

To better understand the effectiveness of local delivery methodologies and by implication the effectiveness of CBT's Local Government Initiative program a series of interviews were scheduled and undertaken with "local advisors, decision makers, stakeholders and administrators" over the period April 15, 2007 to July 5, 2007. An initial identification of potential interviewees came from the Columbia Basin Trust and local administrators. Subsequent to this, the list was added to/amended based on referrals from interviewees themselves. A total of eighty-four (84) interviews from throughout the study region were undertaken; 76 of which represented individuals not currently nor previously engaged as staff of the CBT. Interviews were designed to broadly capture impressions, thoughts and opinions on the methodology and impact of the Local Government Initiative Program including specific thoughts on local implementation efforts; guiding policies and procedures (the Contribution Agreement); local best practices and challenges; and suggestions relative to how the local community or region and how Columbia Basin Trust might improve/enhance programming. Inasmuch as these individuals were also those who were generally engaged in some aspect of the local delivery process and by implication associated with the relative success of the program's delivery, it needs to be acknowledged that their perspectives might not be completely impartial or unbiased. Thus without diminishing the legitimacy of their comments, there nonetheless needs to be some allowance to reflect this potential bias. This being said, some of the more interesting findings included:

- With but a few notable exceptions, responses were highly supportive of the Local Government Initiative Program and generally positive about local delivery methodologies;
- relative to those policy directives contained within the Contribution Agreement and how the Agreement itself is perceived to facilitate or hinder local delivery, respondents were generally supportive of the agreement and its intent but were especially concerned with its lack of clarity; incompatibility with some local priorities relative to operational costs and in some instances incrementality; and its inattention to compliance;
- relative to local autonomy in program delivery most respondents wanted the same (65%) or more (28%) local flexibility;
- approximately 45 percent of respondents felt there was sufficient public awareness of CBT and the Local Government Initiative Program, though many

- suggested that this only reflected that those in the business of seeking funds are aware and the general public is not that aware;
- in regards to transparency, over 65 percent of respondents indicated that they felt that the local delivery of the Local Government Initiative Program was sufficiently transparent relative to application procedures and decision making;
  - in regards to improving local delivery efforts the majority of respondents identified (1) raising public awareness/profile of LGI impacts and availability; and (2) minimizing political involvement in the decision making process; and,
  - in regards to improving CBT's delivery efforts the majority of respondents focussed their comments on three broad areas: (1) funding – CBT should measurably increase available funding, including establishing a base amount for smaller communities; (2) greater clarity in the Contribution Agreement; and, (3) greater promotion and enhanced awareness of the CBT and the LGI program.

To further assess the effectiveness of local delivery methodologies and by implication the effectiveness of CBT's Local Government Initiative program from the perspective of recipients, one hundred and sixty-six (166) projects were investigated. Some of the more interesting findings included the following:

- During the first few years of the program, proponents indicated they typically received the full amount of funding requested. In more recent years however, as more people have become aware of the program, many groups have noticed that they now more often than not receive only a partial amount;
- in cases where funding was rejected or only partially given some proponents expressed frustration with what they felt was an insufficient or unclear explanation;
- several proponents suggested that, while the application process itself is clearly laid out, the criteria for how decisions are made to fund projects is not;
- most proponents valued the community input into the decision-making process, as they felt it reinforces local ownership and community pride. However, despite the overwhelming popularity of the community meetings, most proponents are unclear about what weight proponent presentations carry in the final decision-making process and whether that weighting is appropriate (i.e. a project should be assessed on its merits not its popularity) and its potential for abuse;
- not surprisingly, most proponents advised that they were familiar with CBT and had some knowledge of the Local Government Initiative Program;
- with the exception of a handful of respondents, nearly all proponents interviewed said they had never been contacted by a representative of the CBT to follow-up on their projects. Formal follow-up by the local delivery authority – either in the form of a telephone call or an on-site visit – also varied; and,
- without exception all proponents affirmed the importance and value of the LGI program and the impact it has had in Columbia Basin communities/regions. .

Within the broader context of the evaluation and while not extensive, a number of key CBT documents were also reviewed and a number of current and former CBT employees were interviewed for the purposes of enabling us to further establish a supportable foundation and perspective for this evaluation.

A summary of observations pertinent to the broad evaluation of the Local Government Initiative Program was prepared from the collective inputs of research, interviews and discussions; and our own interpretations and analyses thereof. These



observations are organized around those broad themes spelled out in the RFP (regarding program effectiveness and program administration) and reflect on what we understand to be the key performance expectations or performance criteria inherent within the program's original design.

**Program Effectiveness:** There are two perspectives from which program effectiveness can be evaluated. On the one hand, most obviously effectiveness is reflected in the aggregate impacts of programming to date. On the other, and conceivably from an organizational perspective the more important of the two, effectiveness is reflected the consistency of these impacts with the original expected outcomes.

(1) Without question the Local Government Initiative Program is having positive and significant impacts within all of the regions and communities of the Columbia Basin. A significant number of programs and projects would simply not have occurred without CIP/LGI funding. The benefits that have accrued through program delivery are diverse in scope and breadth, broadly building or enhancing the capacity of local communities and regions to more effectively address economic, social and environmental issues/concerns.

In terms of building local capacity and instilling local ownership, the Columbia Basin Trust has accomplished what it set out to do.

(2) For the most part communities/regions have understood and maintained the integrity and the values inherent within the original program design. However there are some concerns of note, some of which are significant and serious while others are less so:

Relative to the impacts themselves:

- There is a lack of balance in the observed impacts. Social sector programming seems to represent by far the lion's share of program funding and environmental spending the least.
- For the most part benefits are incremental though there are occasions where incrementality is an obvious issue, and as such, the impact of projects supported might not be adding any greater benefit or value to the region/community.
- The sustainability of some benefits/projects is highly questionable where a culture of dependency seems to have resulted in those instances where supporting the operational costs for selected proponents/projects has become a norm.
- In a number of communities worthwhile projects are not supported because available funds are unduly limited as a consequence of the structure of local delivery, i.e. allocations from regional pools to local/area pools.

Relative to consistency with the program mandate/intent:

- While the exception rather than the rule, there are instances where the quality of program governance (transparency and decision making) is seriously lacking.
- Beyond the contractual obligations relative to program delivery, there are necessarily implied obligations and standards to local contractors that CIP/LGI be represented in a manner and behavior consistent with the standards and best interests of the Columbia Basin Trust. This has not always been the case.
- In some communities/regions the methodology of program implementation (exacerbated perhaps by a lack of transparency) has created a definitive perception that the program lacks equitable access.

**Program Administration:** There is sufficient evidence to affirm that the program has been administered reasonably well. The continuity of successful administrators in a number of the local delivery organizations, together with other positive contributing factors such as support from CBT, in terms of ready access to liaison officers and annual administrator workshops, have obviously served to keep the quality of program administration high.

Of course, there are some exceptions where administrative efforts from both sides (i.e., the contractor and the CBT), have not been especially effective and these exceptions tend to stand out. Certainly the problems that have occurred are not systemic.

For the most part available fees for administrative services have also been sufficient to maintain a quality service.

**Program Promotion:** The Local Government Initiative Program is well advertised as part of the annual Request for Proposals effort. In most cases sufficient recognition is given the Columbia Basin Trust in these announcements and subsequently at the public meeting. Thus in terms of meeting the basic requirements of the contract, there is nothing substantially out of order. Certainly with a good number of key stakeholders there is a high level of awareness of the Columbia Basin Trust and the Local Government Initiative program.

However, if the goal is that of informing and keeping aware the public at large, and not simply keeping those already in the know in the know, then for the most part overall awareness is lacking. This shortfall may be a consequence of insufficient advertising and promotion, including an insufficient on the ground presence from the CBT.

As well, the methodology of program implementation often works against raising the profile of CBT. The very fact of local delivery, local approvals/authorizations, local issuance of cheques and the like all serve to lower the profile of CBT and raise the impression that the program and its benefits are the sole consequence of local actions and local sources.

**Project Identification, Selection, Follow-Up And Public Input:** Though there are some obvious similarities, the process of project identification and selection varies, in some cases quite dramatically amongst the participating regions/communities. In some areas, for example, the selection process is highly transparent with established selection criteria reflecting community priorities; meaningful public input; and apolitical decision making. In these instances the identification and appointment of selection committee members is normally an open process with interested individuals applying for positions and members chosen for their expertise, interest and impartiality. In other cases the process is considerably less transparent and consequently many perceive it as flawed and suspect with some suggesting that program funding is being decided by a group of insiders and funds are being used to support the projects and activities of a hand-picked minority of those of like mind. To the degree that not only must the program be delivered transparently, efficiently and ethically, but it must also be perceived to do so, there appears to be some legitimate cause for concern and ample justification for some change.

The whole matter of the openness and impartiality of the selection process; the selection committee membership and appointments; decision-making; final approvals/authorizations; are in many cases not well understood and in some cases not viewed altogether favourably.

As a rule proponents do not get much feedback on their applications. There are exceptions but the norm is little feedback and little opportunity to appeal.

Few if any local delivery agencies/authorities have any formal follow-up program other than collecting and reviewing proponent financial reports. This lack of due diligence – as in were the monies spent where they were intended to be spent; and/or, did the project proceed as originally envisaged – is a critical missing element in assessing impact and effectiveness. Admittedly in small communities everyone generally knows whether a project proceeded or not but there remains some uncertainty regardless. And that uncertainty is somewhat troubling.

Public awareness and involvement implies inclusiveness and collaboration. The act of simply informing the public is neither inclusive nor collaborative. While some regions and communities have aggressively facilitated and encouraged public involvement, others have not.

**Program Delivery:** The strength of the Local Government Initiative Program is that it is locally driven. As such, despite a few similarities, delivery methodologies at the local level are necessarily different and reflect the uniqueness of each region/community. In this regard, there are some methodologies that seem to be stronger than others, though no single methodology is in and of itself the best practice. In fact, none are entirely perfect but there are certainly a collection of best practices that should/could be shared by all. Consequently, in terms of program effectiveness and efficiency it matters not so much the methodology chosen for delivery, but that the methodology best reflects each region's/community's best interests and those of the Columbia Basin Trust.

While local ownership is the program's greatest strength it might also be its greatest weakness. Local ownership correctly implies devolution of some powers and authorities from CBT to local community's and regions. And, under normal circumstances this devolution of power brings with it certain accountabilities and responsibilities. But in some areas CBT seems to lack a willingness or commitment to ensure compliance with its prescribed policies. This has contributed to some current problems and inefficiencies in delivery.

There are occasions where due to insufficient applications or insufficient funds, funds are held over to future years. In some cases they are held over for several years until such time as there is deemed to be a sufficient amount to make it worthwhile to consider/support applications. Some suggest that the timing of these hold-overs and sudden disbursements tend to coincide with local elections. Whether this happens by accident or design is irrelevant, the end result is the entire process and intention lacks a positive image.

**Program Administration Costs:** Each delivery organization is afforded a sum equivalent to 10% of the grant allowance to cover local program implementation. While, this sum is consistent with programs of this nature and appears to be reasonable, it might not reflect the differing methodologies of delivery or the fixed costs associated with delivery when the total amount of grant funding is particularly small and hence the aggregate allowance for administrative costs is similarly small. Most local delivery authorities however claimed the funding for administration is sufficient, especially when CBT related efforts are incorporated or blended in with other non-CBT efforts that the administrator might be undertaking and being paid for from another source.

**CBT-Local Government Agreement:** The CBT-Local Government Agreement was developed in the early years of the program and has remained relatively unchanged through-out, despite a ten year history of implementation, and numerous interpretations and precedents/rules of thumb in terms of its application.

Significantly CBT guidelines for the Local Government Initiative Program are too vague and thus open to a very liberal interpretation. Not only has this caused considerable confusion on the part of decision-makers relative to exactly what the intent of the guidelines actually are, but as well among proponents in determining the relative merits of applying for funding for particular projects. It is also quite apparent that CBT has not taken a firm position relative to compliance on some specific clauses/aspects by allowing non-complying activities/projects to proceed. As such this lack of firm insistence on compliance has created greater uncertainty.

On a clause by clause basis the most difficulties either in interpretation or intent are the clauses in respect to incrementality (interpretation) and operational costs (intent).

A number of recommendations follow logically from the observations, comments and opinions of stakeholders, decision makers, proponents and the study team. These recommendations are presented for consideration by the CBT in light of their interest in

assessing the relative merits of program implementation to date and where it might go in the future. While there is some interdependence among the proposed recommendations, most are stand alone. Each recommendation is intended to make the program more effective and efficient. Collectively these recommendations can yield significant returns to the CBT and the communities and citizens of the Basin. However, each needs to be assessed and evaluated on its own merits relative to the priorities and interests of the CBT and decisions made accordingly.

**Recommendation 1:** Program Extension With Enhanced Core Funding

The Local Government Initiative Program should be continued for a minimum of five years beyond the end date of the current agreement. As well, additional funds should be allocated from the Columbia Basin Trust to not only sustain the existing level of year over year contributions, but to significantly increase these impacts.

**Recommendation 2:** New Program Funding

Given the relatively small size of the funding allocation available for individual community projects, CBT should consider establishing a special pool of funding that could be devoted to funding larger, more strategic initiatives in order to achieve relatively more significant economic, social and environmental objectives,. As a pre-requisite these initiatives would need to provide benefit to the applying Regional District as a whole (or in the case of Valemount, Golden, Ktunaxa Nation and Revelstoke to the aggregate areas they represent in the LGI). This would encourage communities/regions to work in a more collaborative fashion in examining initiatives that have a broader regional scope and impact.

Similarly, consideration should also be given to providing another pool of funding for larger projects that demonstrate significant impacts across several regions within the Columbia Basin Trust territory. This would enable CBT to support projects that have greater regional impacts, and open up additional possibilities to leverage the support of other funders and in so doing provide even greater benefit to Basin regions and communities.

**Recommendation 3:** Minimum Base of Regional/Community Program Funding

Regardless of the local delivery methodology followed, from the pool of funds allocated to each area/region, each community/electoral area where said funds have been divided up and allocated separately, should receive from that central pool a minimum base amount of funding of not less than \$5,000. This will assist communities/areas that are finding it difficult to fund projects because their share of per capita funding is especially small.

**Recommendation 4:** Training and HRD for Decision Makers

Every three years, CBT should offer a one-day workshop/seminar on the CIP program to all groups involved in delivery of the program (both elected and non-elected). The sessions should be held shortly after municipal elections and invite newly elected as well as re-elected Directors/Committee Members. This would especially allow those new to the process to be properly introduced to the program and its delivery. As well, it would

facilitate the broader sharing of best practices and offer CBT the opportunity to deal with any problems/issues that have arisen over the previous three years.

**Recommendation 5:** Training and HRD for Administrators

CBT should continue its yearly meeting of administrators as an opportunity to share best practices; seek input/support in managing local delivery; and improve program administrative/delivery skills and efforts.

**Recommendation 6:** Training and HRD for Proponents

Local delivery partners should be encouraged (continue) to offer proposal development and writing assistance to those groups who lack the skills/capacity to be effective in accessing CIP funds on their own.

**Recommendation 7:** Program Promotion

While it is understood that some efforts are currently underway, CBT needs to reaffirm its intention to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing/promotion strategy for the CIP Program. The strategy needs to include such things as a requirement that all communication related to the CIP program clearly indicate CBT as the source of funding (conceivably this might include that all forms and cheques come from CBT); that the program is highlighted on the CBT and Regional District/Community web sites; that public announcements appear in the local media relative to who has received CIP project funding, with credit given to the CBT; that photo opportunities are arranged involving CBT Board and/or staff on larger projects; and, at least annually a feature story in the local media about successful CBT funded projects.

**Recommendation 8:** Program Promotion

CBT should coordinate a follow up on the projects that have been funded by CIP/LGI and a report (complete with photos) on what has been achieved. This could be used as material to promote the program and to showcase the value that CBT has provided in the region. Disaggregated by region, local storyboards/display cases could be displayed to enhance these efforts.

**Recommendation 9:** Program Promotion

The Regional Districts and other communities involved in delivering the CIP program should be encouraged to enhance their promotional efforts beyond ads in local newspapers calling for funding submissions. A cost effective means of getting the word out would be to send a broadcast e-mail to all of the community-based organizations in the region, informing them of the call for submissions and providing them with details on the program and how to apply. The organizations could also be encouraged to put notices about the CIP/LGI in their newsletters and other communiqués so that a larger group in the community becomes aware of the funding opportunity.

**Recommendation 10:** Local/Regional Strategies

CBT should encourage local/regional partners to establish a committee of community stakeholders to define clear objectives for the CIP/LGI program within their region where

a definitive local strategy does not already exist. This process should be done annually in advance of the call for proposals.

**Recommendation 11:** Local/Regional Selection Committees

Program guidelines should require that each community/electoral area establish a community advisory committee (selection committee) comprised of no less than seven (7) individuals serving no more than one single three year term (preferably with an overlap). Furthermore, the committee should be representative of a cross-section of stakeholder groups (i.e., local administration, business community, social agencies and authorities, environmental groups, educational organizations, youth, seniors and the like), and include not more than two local politicians. These committees would be responsible for reviewing applications and making funding recommendations. While final approvals should continue to be made by local municipal councils or Regional Districts, any proposed exceptions or modifications to those recommendations presented by the Selection Committee should require an agreement or consensus between the two authorities before proceeding.

**Recommendation 12:** CBT Representation

CBT should consider having representation at each Selection Committee meeting to act as an advisor on such matters related to program guidelines and policies.

**Recommendation 13:** Development of Decision Matrixes

CBT and local contractors should jointly develop decision-matrixes that explicitly reflect the intent of the policy directives contained in the Contribution Agreement. Such decision-matrixes would list the factors/issues that need to be evaluated when proponent applications are being considered, be tools for assisting decision-making, and provide consistency and transparency to the selection process. Furthermore, they should be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect new factors/issues and otherwise ensure they remain relevant.

**Recommendation 14:** Equitable Access

Some consideration should be given to limiting the number of times a group can receive funding in consecutive years (e.g. no more than three consecutive years of CIP funding). This will serve the purpose of opening up access to a limited pool of funds and reassure prospective proponents and the public at large that it isn't always the same groups getting funding.

**Recommendation 15:** Application Formats and Clarity

CBT should promote and support delivery authorities in their efforts to streamline and/or facilitate the application process including encouraging the use of electronic LGI applications with on-line compatibility. Within this context, efforts should be introduced to reduce the complexity of application formats (language); and consideration given the simplification of application formats for small grant requests.

**Recommendation 16:** Sharing Best Practices - Delivery Methodologies

Inasmuch as this is a locally driven program, CBT should assist local regions/communities in their efforts to seek out, review and assess various implementation/administrative methodologies. Various formats should be supported and encouraged where they are preferred by the community and where positive administrative and program impacts are likely to result. Within this context the Community Foundation model has an excellent reputation inasmuch as mandates are complimentary, and the process of granting is particularly attractive for its transparency and apolitical character. However this model is just one model and, while it is an excellent template, it might not be the best overall solution for all regions.

**Recommendation 17:** Project Administration – Fees

In addition to the 10% allowance for administrative costs, CBT should consider apportioning a minimum base amount for project administration regardless of the amount of the allocated pool of funds for grants.

**Recommendation 18:** Disbursement of Funds

CBT should require that each community/electoral area disburse their entire annual allocation to eligible projects. Failing this they should be required to either assign it to another area or return it to CBT.

**Recommendation 19:** Proponent Applications to Multiple Communities

CBT should confirm that applicants are able to apply for funding from more than one community/electoral area. However, they should be required to stipulate on their applications how much they are requesting from each area, with the total amount requested not exceeding total project costs.

**Recommendation 20:** Contribution Agreement Clarity

The Columbia Basin Trust should make the CIP (and by implication the Local Government Initiative Program) guidelines more clear and explicit. As well, changes should be made where changes are required to ensure the program is relevant and effective. Of particular note:

- At the very least operational costs should be considered for funding of start-ups with a realistic sustainable long-term plan.
- While contentious, only legal entities should be eligible to receive CBT funding in order to ensure that proper accountability is maintained. In cases where projects emanate from groups that are not legally constituted, they should be required to have their project sponsored by a legally established organization.
- All successful proponents should be required to clearly acknowledge CBT and report back on what action(s)/activity(ies) they undertook to acknowledge the role of CBT in supporting their efforts.
- Require that any project in which CIP/LGI funds are utilized undergo the same application/public meeting/selection process, regardless of where the application is sourced or who the proponent is.
- Require that funded projects not compete with private sector initiatives.



**Recommendation 21:** Contribution Agreement Compliance

The Columbia Basin Trust should monitor the delivery of the program more closely to ensure that the guidelines are followed.

**Recommendation 22:** Program Evaluation

The CIP (LGI) program should be evaluated, at a minimum, every five years to ensure it is achieving key objectives and is being delivered in a satisfactory manner.

**Recommendation 23:** Public Involvement

Columbia Basin Trust should insist on meaningful (influential) public involvement in local CIP (LGI) Program delivery beyond representation on local Selection Committees and beyond participating in efforts to annually prepare local strategies/priorities for CIP (LGI) programming. While suggestions as to how that might best be accomplished by local communities/regions could be provided (e.g. a percentage of the overall vote in Selection Committee decisions) there should not be any mandated format. This will allow each local delivery authority to organize and arrange for this meaningful involvement in the manner that best fits with local delivery efforts. However, each delivery authority should report to CBT on an annual basis spelling out specifically how the public was afforded an opportunity to provide input and how that input was duly considered in the process of local decision making.

**Recommendation 24:** Due Diligence

At least annually a representative of Columbia Basin Trust together with each local administrator should undertake site visits with a random sample of successful proponents to discuss/view the progress/results of their project.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution"*

**William A. Foster**

So why do organizations need to assess their operational performance in the first place? Certainly it would be easier to simply allow that an acceptable level of performance is achieved if there seems to be some general consensus amongst the staff or amongst key customers and stakeholders that organizational efforts are yielding identifiable and generally positive outcomes and impacts. As in: "things seem to be working" with the usual corollary: "so why not leave well enough alone" or "don't fix it if it ain't broke".

Arguably after nearly ten years one could say that in the case of the Columbia Basin Trust's Community Initiatives Program (CIP) generally, and the Local Government Initiative Program (LGI) in particular, program implementation is yielding real, tangible benefits. In fact if we took the straightforward opinions of a majority of community stakeholders in which program benefits accrue, we would be well assured that the CIP/LGI is providing significant measurable outcomes within Basin communities and regions. And that should be the end of the story.

But the question arises: are these the maximum impacts that could/should be achieved given the resources allocated; and more significantly, are these fully the types of impacts most desired?

It is possible that without regular performance review encompassing feedback and subsequent reworking or even moderate "tweaking" of programming, that an organization may be perpetually operating at its most efficient and most effective. But it is unlikely. The truth of the matter is that regardless of the organization, how committed the staff, and how well it's programs are designed and implemented, experience shows that in the absence of formal and regular program assessments over a period of time

established systems of program delivery eventually lose effectiveness and the impacts of program efforts lose focus and intensity. Where serious questioning does not happen on a regular and formalized basis, there is a very real possibility that the original mandate and expectations will start to get a little fuzzy in terms of intent, understanding and relevance; some wandering of efforts and activities away from these original mandates will doubtless occur; and overall programming, while it might very well be yielding some benefit, will not be achieving its full potential nor fully meeting its desired impacts.

When organizations undertake to regularly analyze performance they increase their ability to improve results. They achieve this by taking what they learn into their planning and decision making. Under this framework they regularly adjust their resource allocation and operations to meet current realities and circumstances, and in doing so position the organization and its programs to achieve better and more focused results.

Successful organizations, especially those engaged in developmental programming, are characterized by their efforts to constantly seek to evaluate and improve on their performance because they understand that success is not about a single event at a fixed point in time; success is not about just achieving something but rather achieving the right thing; and success does not occur as a consequence of happenstance.

It is certainly opportune at this time that the Columbia Basin Trust has moved forward with this evaluative investigation. While as noted there is little doubt that the Community Initiatives Program (CIP) generally and the Local Government Initiative Program (LGI) in particular are creating/facilitating real benefits in Basin communities, there needs to be some greater understanding of the scope and character of the program's impacts; an appreciation of those critical determinants of operational success and an objective assessment of efforts thereto; and firm insights into future programming. This report seeks to address these questions.

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Project Terms of Reference

The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) in its November 6, 2006 call for proposals<sup>1</sup> broadly asserts that the scope of the proposed evaluation of the Community Initiatives Program (CIP) should encompass a comprehensive review of the program's impacts and an articulation of those critical determinants of operational effectiveness. It is emphasized that this evaluative effort should serve to provide guidance and recommendations to the CBT in respect to deciding about the future of the program and to ensuring future programming, if warranted, is focused and effective.

Within the context of the proposed investigative process and subsequent analyses, it was stipulated by the CBT that the evaluation should necessarily be approached via such appropriate investigative methodologies as are required to ensure that the following sub-objectives are fully satisfied:

*“A review of the effectiveness of the program, including an assessment of:*

- 1. The program's impacts in Basin communities, and*
- 2. The consistency of the impacts of the program with the original desired program outcomes.*

*A review of the administration of the program, including an examination of:*

- 1. The process for promoting the program within communities<sup>2</sup>,*
- 2. The process for project identification, selection and follow-up, including the process for public input on projects,*

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<sup>1</sup> See Request for Proposals Community Initiatives Program Evaluation, (CBTCIP07) Columbia Basin Trust, November 6, 2006 and Lochaven Management Consultant's Proposal For The Provision Of Services In Relation To: Community Initiatives Program Evaluation, (CBTCIP07) Columbia Basin Trust, December 15, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> The Community Initiatives Program is delivered within the Basin by the Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, Kootenay Boundary, City of Revelstoke, Town of Golden, Village of Valemount, and the Ktunaxa Nation Council.

3. *The differences in program delivery, and*
4. *Program administration costs.*

*A review of the current CBT- local government agreement for the Community Initiatives Program, including the contractor partnership guidelines established in the agreement.*

*Completion of a final report, which addresses the matters listed above, discusses options and alternatives for the future of the program beyond the 10-year commitment, and makes recommendations, including ways to improve the program's effectiveness, if appropriate."*

Certain clarifications and amendments of project TOR's were specified by CBT representatives during the November 30, 2006 conference call for potential bidders and during a March 1, 2007 meeting with representatives of Lochaven Management Consultants Ltd. These additional points of clarification/amendment included the following:

1. The evaluation should focus predominantly upon qualitative versus quantitative assessments; and
2. The breadth of program evaluation should be restricted to an evaluation of the Local Government Initiative Program and exclude an evaluation of specific activities broadly attributed to the Affected Areas Initiative except in those circumstances where such exclusions are impossible to determine<sup>3</sup>.

Further to the identified priorities, objectives, and methodological pre-requisites stipulated in the RFP and as clarified/modified in subsequent discussions, Lochaven Management Consultants Ltd. (LMC) proposed that the outputs of the investigation would also:

- *"be representative of meaningful stakeholder participation;*
- *reflect the importance of the assignment;*
- *be premised upon solid professional experience and expertise in undertaking similar investigative efforts; and,*

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this investigation there were occasions where CIP and LGI could be differentiated and where separate comments/observations seemed logical and supportable. In most cases however this wasn't possible. Quite frankly the blending of activities in respect to the delivery of the Affected Areas Initiative and the Local Government Initiative are so indistinguishable in so many instances that differentiation is impossible. While there was some consideration that only CIP would be used to denote the subject of our focus throughout or the reverse (LGI), neither approach seemed truly "correct". Consequently we have opted to use the acronyms interchangeably, though as per the RFP the focus is LGI and the observations, comments and recommendations are defensible specifically within the context of LGI.

- *include analyses, assessments and recommendations that are objective, comprehensive, supportable and realistic.”*

Pursuant to the RFP issued by the Columbia Basin Trust on November 6, 2006, the consulting team of Lochaven Management Consultants Ltd together with Whalebone Productions Ltd (the consulting team) was awarded a contract to lead the investigative effort on March 1, 2007.

## **2.2 Methodology of Investigation**

The project effort extended over the period March 1, 2007 to July 15, 2007. The consulting team was comprised of senior representatives of the firms Lochaven Management Consultants Ltd and Whalebone Productions Ltd. Only senior representatives of these firms were engaged in research and analytical efforts.

From the very beginning and throughout this assignment the consulting team emphasized an open and active process of formal and informal consultations with key representatives of the Columbia Basin Trust, program administrators, decision makers, advisors, stakeholders and proponents. Within the context of this approach the consulting team endeavored to capture the thoughts and opinions of interested, affected, and knowledgeable individuals. To this end each community/region was visited on several occasions and numerous follow-up telephone calls were made to ensure that sufficient input could be collected. As much as possible the team sought to ensure that those individuals who wanted to provide input into the deliberations were given ample opportunity to do so.

An essential first step in the investigative effort was a review of documents, reports and media pertaining to the history and mission of the Columbia Basin Trust and the development of selected CBT programming. Concurrent interviews with key officials, administrators and stakeholders supplemented this exercise. The purpose of this effort was to gain a better understanding of why the Columbia Basin Trust was created; why selected programming was conceived; and what implications these foundations might have in evaluating the effectiveness of current programming efforts and how they might impact on future plans.

As noted in the proposal, a proper evaluation of program effectiveness within the context of this assignment necessarily implied an assessment of both effectiveness (the ability to get things done) and efficiency (the ability to do things right). As such one key element in the evaluative process was the development of a Performance Evaluation Framework specifying key factors of effective/efficient performance from which programming implementation and delivery could best be judged. Initially four distinct, though interrelated evaluation criteria, were identified including:

**Identified Performance Criteria**

1. <u>Governance</u> <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Transparency	• Decision Making	• Planning
2. <u>Outcomes &amp; Impacts</u> <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Sustainability	• Incrementality	• Consistency
• Equity	• Responsibility	• Legacy of Self-sufficiency
3. <u>Cost</u> <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Effective	• Value for Money	
4. <u>Access and Awareness</u> <i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Inclusiveness	• Collaboration	• Public Support

These criteria were derived from the Columbia Basin Trust itself as reflected in the corporation’s history, mission, mandate and strategies.

On the basis of these performance evaluation criteria two survey protocols were developed and administered (see Appendix 1: Program Advisors, Decision Makers and other Key Stakeholders Questionnaire; and, Appendix 2: Proponent Questionnaire).

In respect to the Proponent Questionnaire, a listing of successful proponents was compiled and provided by the Columbia Basin Trust. Listings of unsuccessful proponents were obtained from program administrators within the communities/regions. The selection of those proponents for interview was prepared internally and was compiled to reflect a representative sample of each group (successful and unsuccessful) by community/region; sector; year of approval/rejection; and relative size. In respect to

Program Advisors, Decision Makers and other Key Stakeholders an initial listing of potential interviewees was developed from information provided to the consultant by the Columbia Basin Trust and program administrators. This list was modified/added to throughout the study investigation from additional information derived during the interview process and from additional suggestions/recommendations made by CBT. All identified individuals in this category (Program Advisors, Decision Makers and other Key Stakeholders) were targeted for interview. However, while a significant majority of individuals were interviewed, for various reasons beyond the control of the consultant, it was not possible to interview all of those identified.

In aggregate eighty-four (84) "Program Advisors, Decision Makers and other Key Stakeholders" were interviewed and one hundred and sixty-six (166) projects were investigated. Fifty-two (52) "Proponent" and seventy five (75) "Program Advisors, Decision Makers and other Key Stakeholders" questionnaires were administered.

Source Location	Interviews (Questionnaires)					
	Advisors, Stakeholders and Decision Makers <sup>4</sup>		Successful and Unsuccessful Proponents			
	#	%	#	%	Projects	% of Projects Rep.
RD East Kootenay	14	19.0	14	27.0	50	11.0
RD Central Kootenay	15	21.0	11	21.0	43	8.0
RD Kootenay Boundary	9	11.0	5	10.0	9	12.0
Ktunaxa Nation Council <sup>5</sup>	2	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
City of Revelstoke	16	22.0	7	14.0	33	11.0
Town of Golden	7	9.0	11	21.0	23	22.0
Village of Valemout	12	16.0	4	7.0	8	16.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<sup>4</sup> These totals do not include interviews with past or current members of the staff of Columbia Basin Trust, though they do include interviews with members of the Board of Directors where those members also represent specific community and/or regional interests.

<sup>5</sup> Of the 38 total projects that were approved by the Ktunaxa Nation Council during the period 1999 to 2007, eight were for the annual CIP administration fees collected by the Council. In all, 30 projects have received funding to date. Unlike the other delivery partners, however, the Ktunaxa Nation Council distributed the monies to projects internally. That is, with the exception of the Akisqnuq First Nation and St. Mary's Indian Band, there were no individual "proponents" listed nor was there any information provided on the application process that was used. As such, no proponent interviews were conducted for projects funded by the Ktunaxa First Nation.



Pursuant to the totals above, it should be noted for the purposes of gathering additional information or clarification, some individuals were contacted/interviewed more than once and some individuals were interviewed for their inputs without utilizing a questionnaire inasmuch as the format was not particularly appropriate to the discussion. On several occasions key interviews were scheduled but cancelled at the last minute and rescheduled at the request of interviewees. The geographic distribution of all interviews (excluding current staff and/or past members of the Columbia Basin Trust) and the aggregate number of projects investigated is presented in the table above.

Considerable care was taken to ensure a representative sample of interviews and survey questionnaires were administered and collected from all regions/communities and from both survey groups. In terms of the analysis of the collected information, care was taken to ensure that the analysis, conclusions and recommendations were appropriately weighted and/or appropriately disaggregated.

Finally, a review and analysis of the information collected was used as the basis for the preparation of observations, conclusions and recommendations. These observations, conclusions and recommendations were subsequently organized and presented in a manner that best reflected the needs and logic of the RFP.

### **2.3 Assumptions, Limitations and Other Methodological Considerations**

As with any research effort there are a number of assumptions and limitations inherent within the methodology utilized. Some of these might have no adverse impact at all on the overall veracity and value of the analyses, observations made and conclusions drawn. Others may be more serious. To the degree that certain considerations and assumptions have a greater propensity to limit or diminish the value of the research effort and its outputs, we have endeavored to minimize and/or control them. For others, including those beyond our control, it is important that the reader be made aware of them and subsequently be afforded the opportunity to draw his or her own conclusions as to their relative import. Some of the more significant assumptions, considerations and limitations incurred in the preparation of this document include the following:

1. Too often an evaluation is seen as an opportunity to vilify or blame on the one hand or oversell and smooth over on the other despite the fact that a “proper” evaluation is neither of these extremes; i.e. it is all about identifying and understanding equally well both best practices and lessons learned with an eye to solidifying those things done well and correcting or improving those handled less well. In our analyses we have endeavored to balance and minimize certain comments and opinions that are overly biased without losing the legitimacy of what is being said.
2. While one-on-one interviews are an excellent means to gather certain information, there is an a priori assumption that the interviewee understands and is capable of understanding the complexity of the subject being discussed. This may not always be the case, especially in instances where some feedback is requested in respect to certain implementation details of which the interviewee’s knowledge and experience may be limited but not made apparent to the interviewer. While it was exceedingly rare to use the observations of a single individual in respect of any broad statement, the result of inadvertently utilizing these uninformed responses may have resulted in some weaknesses in certain broader assertions made and conclusions drawn.
3. For some of those individuals interviewed it has been several years since they last participated directly in some form or other with the implementation of the Local Government Initiative Program and/or Community Initiatives Program. As such, the information provided by these individuals may be somewhat degraded by poor memories; and/or while there may be quite good recollections and these recollections may seemingly be a valuable source of best practices and lessons learned, because they are dated they may not be as relevant to an evaluation of current circumstances nor valid insights into future programming options.

By way of example, in respect of proponent interviews very few, if any, of the proponents contacted could remember the actual amount of funding

applied for and, in some cases, couldn't recall if they'd received either the full or partial amount. Furthermore while many remembered that they may not have received the full amount applied for, they could not remember the actual dollar amounts.

4. In the beginning of the proponent survey process, an attempt was made to contact project proponents from all years. However, proponents from the period 1999 to 2004 were either difficult to track down – many had moved away or were no longer involved in the organization – or could not remember enough details about the application process to provide any meaningful information.
5. As much as possible we endeavored to interview as many interested/affected individuals as possible throughout the course of the study. Despite best efforts, including going back into communities/regions on several occasions and follow-up telephone calls, there is a possibility that certain key interview subjects may have been missed. Depending upon the importance of the information not captured the subsequent analyses may be deficient.

Unfortunately aggregate inputs from the Ktunaxa Nation are lacking in the analysis. The end result leaves some of the subsequent discussion weaker regardless that this system of delivery is unique and should be viewed independently regardless.

6. Our investigations look at a single point in time and it is not only conceivable that changes will have occurred between the start of the study investigation and the preparation of this report, but quite likely. As such, certain observations and conclusions presented herein may be less/more relevant than when initially posed.
7. Overall this project encompasses a very diverse grouping of communities and regions despite their geographic propinquity. Simply put priorities, activities and efforts in one region are not necessarily the same as those

in counterpart regions. In fact they usually are not. As such, attempts to generalize certain understandings and/or certain conclusions and recommendations are more difficult.

8. Even though this evaluative effort was mandated not to include those activities in respect of the Affected Areas Initiative, in some instances these different program components were neither readily apparent nor distinguishable. Consequently some of the comments collected and insights compiled may not relate strictly to the Local Government Initiative Program (see footnote 3, above).
9. Finally, it should be remembered that this investigation and analysis is focused specifically and solely on the Local Government Initiative Program. As such any observations, conclusions and recommendations compiled and presented herein while supportable from the perspective of the delivery of LGI, may/or may not be relevant or applicable to any other facet or facets of CBT activities and should not be construed to imply otherwise.

Notwithstanding the collective import of these assumptions, limitations and other methodological considerations, we contend that the observations drawn throughout the report and the recommendations made are germane and supportable.

### 3.0 ESTABLISHING A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The first step in the broader task of exploring, evaluating and/or commenting on the Columbia Basin Trust's Community Initiatives Program (CIP) and specifically the Local Government Initiative Program (LGI)<sup>6</sup> is to establish a framework from which that effort can logically proceed. Unlike a more straightforward quantitative assessment of performance, the emphasis here is one of a qualitative review and thus the approach chosen must necessarily be capable of balancing the need for a solid foundation from which supportable observations, conclusions and recommendations can be premised, with the need to gain a broad, subjective and more comprehensive exploration of opinions, ideas and impressions.

It is important to point out qualitative operational evaluations and by implication evaluations of all of those activities associated thereto such as services and programs must be premised on performance criteria that are the most appropriate. Contrary to some thinking this would not normally include the use of generic performance criteria derived from an investigation of how other successful organizations might behave and/or how other successful development services and programs might be conceived and implemented. These generic criteria might provide a useful insight into the workings of other organizations or might more readily apply if we were looking at ways/means in which the organizational model itself might be assessed. However, they would have little value here. In fact a performance evaluation of the Local Government Initiative Program must necessarily be premised on evaluation criteria (organizational and

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<sup>6</sup> From time to time through out the discussion that follows we have used interchangeably the "Community Initiatives Program (CIP)" and the "Local Government Initiative Program (LGI)" when referring to certain aspects of local programming. Admittedly this is confusing in the sense that it is not within the terms of this project to investigate and assess the CIP in its entirety but only to focus on LGI efforts. However, as noted in Section 2.3 Assumptions, Limitations and Other Methodological Considerations, often times programming for the "Affected Areas Initiative" is blended locally with LGI efforts and the two become indistinguishable and as such the observations and comments respecting local implementation are also indistinguishable. Suffice to say, unless referring specifically to the broader CIP program or referring specifically to the Affected Areas Initiative, in which case the context of the discussion will be articulated specifically, any discussions referring to local programming shall be deemed to apply specifically to the Local Government Initiative Program (LGI).

operational principles) that have been derived directly from the character of the Columbia Basin Trust itself.

Therefore, for the purposes of identifying meaningful performance criteria within the context of this evaluation, there are two key areas to look at. Firstly, there is the history of the Columbia Basin Trust, i.e. why was it created, and what are the implications of this history and early expectations to the development and implementation of programming. Secondly and as importantly, there is the matter of how the Columbia Basin Trust currently operates, how it is perceived to operate and why it operates as it does i.e. the culture<sup>7</sup> of the organization. From this collective base of insights and understandings into CBT's history and current culture, meaningful evaluation and performance criteria can be developed from which current and past efforts might be fairly commented on and some inferences to future program design might be drawn.

For the most part much of this historical, organizational and operational information is readily available within the available inventory of published books and reports on CBT's web site. The challenge lies not in gathering sufficient information but in gleaning that specific information that seems to most accurately convey the spirit of the Organization. We have also used anecdotal evidence to supplement these materials and their interpretation. The subsequent derivation of specific criteria attempts to capture the essence of this exercise.

### **3.1 Historical Background<sup>8</sup>**

While historically negotiations date back a decade earlier, including an initial signing in January 1961, it wasn't until 1964 that the Columbia River Treaty as we know it today was formally ratified. Its stated purpose for the duration of its sixty years is to

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<sup>7</sup> Organizational culture is defined as "the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organization. Organizational values are beliefs and ideas about what kinds of goals members of an organization should pursue and ideas about the appropriate kinds or standards of behavior organizational members should use to achieve these goals." It is the culture of the organization that determines how and why selected activities are conceived and how and why they are implemented as they are.

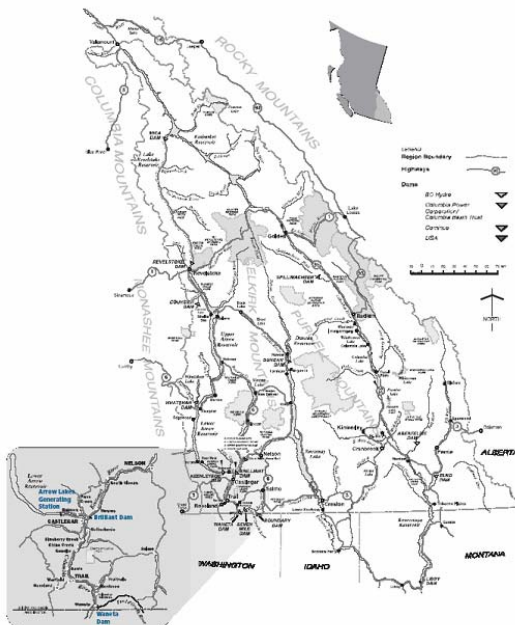
<sup>8</sup> See [www.cbt.org](http://www.cbt.org)

provide the Columbia River Basin area in Canada (British Columbia) and the United States with flood and hydroelectric power.

Pursuant to the Treaty terms, the Province of B.C. owns the “Canadian Entitlement of Downstream Benefits.” The first 30 years of these benefits were sold for \$254 million US. These funds were utilized to build the requisite three storage dams. The subsequent entitlement for the remaining 30 years is currently being received.

The benefits of flood control and a ready and secure supply of electricity accrued to communities and regions within and beyond the Basin. However, the development, construction and operations of the storage dams and hydroelectric sites also created a number of significant and problematic social, economic and environmental consequences. Unlike the accrual of benefits, the impact of these negative externalities accrued almost exclusively within Basin communities and regions. Subsequently, in the

mid 1990's, residents of the Columbia Basin collectively approached the Province of British Columbia seeking formal recognition and accommodation in respect to these accrued negative impacts. This coming together of affected residents provided the foundation from which the formation of the crown corporation: Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) came about in 1995.



Importantly, it was local governments represented by regional districts and tribal councils that took the

leadership role in the consultation process. This is reflected in the makeup of the CBT Board of Directors, i.e. the Board of Directors of CBT is composed of 12<sup>9</sup> residents of the Basin appointed by the provincial government. Six of the appointees are nominated by local governments and six are identified directly by the provincial government. This is

<sup>9</sup> Originally there were 18 Members of the CBT Board, of which 12 were nominated by local government.

also reflected in the programming of activities whereby local governments play a significant part in the implementation/delivery process.

### 3.2 Vision, Mission, Mandate and Values

The Columbia Basin Trust Act is the enabling legislation that in 1995 established the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) as a partnership between local government, First Nations, and the Province of B.C. Developed with input from residents of the Basin, the Columbia Basin Management Plan<sup>10</sup> in turn sets out CBT's mission, vision, mandate, core values as well as the organization's guiding principles, and strategic priorities. These elements of the Management Plan are particularly relevant to the task of evaluating organizational programming in that these foundations represent the framework from which individual programming is premised.

**Vision for the Basin** *The Columbia Basin is a place where social, environmental, and economic well-being is fostered, where collaborative relationships and partnerships exist among stakeholders and form the basis for social and economic activities, and where the economy is diverse, resilient, and energized.*

**Corporate Vision** *The Columbia Basin Trust's investment activities and funding of community-driven projects make this vision [Vision for the Basin] achievable through:*

1. *Successful portfolio of investments;*
2. *A proven track record in delivering benefits;*
3. *Well established and productive working relationships; and,*
4. *Consistent and wide spread public support.*

**Mission** *The Columbia Basin Trust supports efforts by the people of the Basin to create a legacy of social, economic, and environmental well-being and to achieve greater self-sufficiency for present and future generations.*

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<sup>10</sup> The Columbia Basin Management Plan, July 19, 1997 "This document is the first Basin Management Plan approved by the Trust. It was written by the Trust's Board of Directors with the assistance of its Advisory Committee. Members of the Board and the Committee are residents of the region." [www.cbt.org](http://www.cbt.org). Efforts are currently underway reviewing the Plan's strategic priorities. It should also be pointed out that there is a Governance Manual, Summer 2006 sued by the agency to manage and guide the activities of Directors, Committee Members and Staff. Much of what is presented in the Guide appears to directly follow from the Columbia Basin Management Plan, though there are some very minor differences.



<b>Mandate</b>	<i>To manage the assets of the Columbia Basin Trust for the ongoing economic, environmental, and social benefit of the region.</i>
<b>Values</b>	<p><u><i>Inclusiveness:</i></u> <i>CBT includes the people of the Basin in the planning and decision-making process.</i></p> <p><u><i>Collaboration:</i></u> <i>CBT works with community partners on a local and regional level to ensure public input of funding priorities and program delivery.</i></p> <p><u><i>Respect for diversity:</i></u> <i>CBT encourages enhancement of Basin heritage and culture, taking into consideration all Basin residents in extending its wide range of programs.</i></p> <p><u><i>Responsibility:</i></u> <i>CBT is accountable to the expressed wishes of Basin residents for economic, environmental, social, and sustainability values, and works to maximize benefits while minimizing negative impacts.</i></p>

While not stated specifically within the context of organizational values, but nonetheless identified within the Columbia Basin Management Plan, two other concepts assigned as core values in the operational behaviors of Board members and staff, and by implication core organizational values, complement the above noted list, specifically: (1) good governance<sup>11</sup> (“*the Board of Directors is committed to effective and responsible governance*”); and (2) transparency<sup>12</sup> (“*actions and decisions of CBT are transparent and open to Columbia Basin residents*”). As well, while not specifically identified within the context of organizational values but certainly inherent in several therein, is the organization’s emphasis on public involvement<sup>13</sup> as one of the core pillars of program planning and implementation (“*Public involvement is fundamental to CBT’s accountability*”).

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<sup>11</sup> Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance is about how organizations conduct their affairs, manage resources, and realize their vision. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse. Governance in Modern Society: Effects, Change and Formation of Government Institutions, Jacques J. A. Thomassen, Walter Julius Michael Kickert, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows specific rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media. What is Good Governance, UNESC <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>.

<sup>13</sup> The procedures for obtaining and considering the views of the general public in planning and decision-making processes

### 3.3 Spending Programs, Goals and Guiding Principles

Investments and activities within the operations of the Columbia Basin Trust are carried out through three core service areas: (1) investments; (2) delivery of benefits; and, (3) corporate services.

Broadly speaking the Delivery of Benefits Program distributes income earned from CBT's investments. Pursuant to the Columbia Basin Management Plan, the goal of CBT's Delivery of Benefits Service Area is:

*“CBT’s goal is to deliver benefits which serve to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Basin, its residents and communities. These benefits are delivered through CBT’s range of programs, projects and strategic initiatives.”*

In terms of programming activities, and specifically those related to targeted spending of which the Delivery of Benefits Service Area is pre-eminent, eight key goals have been articulated by the Board:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <i>Goal 1</i> | <i>To increase the capacity of Basin communities to identify and meet their own needs.</i>   |
| <i>Goal 2</i> | <i>To maintain healthy ecosystems in a naturally functioning state and to improve the functioning of those that have been altered and degraded.</i>          |
| <i>Goal 3</i> | <i>To promote access to education and training which will help residents adapt to economic changes.</i>  |
| <i>Goal 4</i> | <i>To help address the problems of poverty in the Basin.</i>   |
| <i>Goal 5</i> | <i>To assist in the prevention of social problems.</i>   |
| <i>Goal 6</i> | <i>To help ensure that the management of water issues related to the Columbia River Treaty takes account of the region’s interests in a range of values.</i> |
| <i>Goal 7</i> | <i>To enhance Basin heritage and culture.</i>  |
| <i>Goal 8</i> | <i>Promote learning and make information on the Basin easily accessible.</i>   |

Finally, in respect to so called “Guiding Principles” in the delivery of investment and spending programs the following key principles are identified:

- *Include the people of the Basin in decisions that affect their lives and determine their future.*
- *Respect the rights of others, including the rights of First Nations.*
- *Bring benefits to Basin residents in addition to those they would otherwise enjoy.*
- *Focus on the whole Basin and respect the diversity within it.*
- *Aim for sustainable activities.*
- *Invest responsibly and use the investment revenue within the Basin.*
- *Acknowledge and support those who were affected directly by the Columbia River Treaty, without providing compensation. Play a creative role in positive change.*
- *Seek equitable outcomes from all the Trust's activities.*

### **3.4 Implications to Assessing Performance**

Quite clearly there are no shortage of broad goals, objectives, policies, and principles that have been established by the Columbia Basin Trust, its Board of Directors and Management Team to guide its operational activities. Nonetheless there are some recurring themes or expectations that reflect the fundamental nature of the organization – what it is and what it aspires to be. These consistent core themes or performance expectations, if you will, are evidenced in the design and implementation of all CBT programs and services, though certain themes are emphasized more significantly in some program areas than in others. However, because these performance expectations set the essential preconditions of success they represent the broader framework from which subsequent activities and programs can in turn be properly evaluated.<sup>14</sup>

Importantly, while it is very clear that CBT performance expectations apply to the activities and efforts of the Board, Management, and Staff in managing, guiding and implementing the Local Government Initiative Program, it is also very clear that these expectations necessarily extend to those agencies, authorities and/or individuals acting on behalf of CBT and/or those perceived to be acting on behalf of CBT in LGI program delivery.

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<sup>14</sup> Fundamentally in any performance evaluation there are three basic types of indicators-- those based on outcomes, those based on processes, and those based on structures.

Without limiting the numbers or diversity of all possible performance measures that might be derived from an analysis of the Columbia Basin Trust's goals, objectives, policies, and principles, there are four key performance criteria that seem to be inherent throughout.

Identified Performance Criteria

1. <u>Governance</u>		
<i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Transparency	• Decision Making	• Planning
2. <u>Outcomes &amp; Impacts</u>		
<i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Sustainability	• Incrementality	• Consistency
• Equity	• Responsibility	• Legacy of Self-sufficiency
3. <u>Cost</u>		
<i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Effective	• Value for Money	
4. <u>Access and Awareness</u>		
<i>As indicated by such attributes as:</i>		
• Inclusiveness	• Collaboration	• Public Support

## 4.0 THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES PROGRAM

*“This [the Community Initiatives Program] is one of CBT’s most valuable programs...better than almost any other program in the Province, this program effectively engages and empowers the people of the Basin.”<sup>15</sup>*

*“This [the Community Initiatives Program] is the best program coming out of the Columbia Basin Trust.”*

As defined within the structure and operations of the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) social, environmental and economic initiatives arising pursuant to the “Delivery of Benefits” Service Area are developed in consultation with advisory committees. These committees, comprised of Columbia Basin residents, are charged with the responsibility of assisting the CBT in identifying regional development priorities, as well as priorities related to specific issues within the Basin. Varying in scope, cost and objective, as detailed in the Report to Residents 2006, current activities, programs and projects include the following:

- *“Funding social, economic and environmental projects that demonstrate strong community support, build on a community’s strengths, and encourage growth through the Community Development Program.*
- *Partnering with each of the five Regional Districts in the Columbia Basin and the Ktunaxa Nation Council who use CBT funds to support projects that are identified as priorities within their communities through the Community Initiatives Program.*
- *Ensuring long-term water quality and quantity issues in the Columbia Basin region are addressed according to residents’ values and views.*
- *Providing free and expert counselling to businesses through the Basin Business Advocates Program.*

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<sup>15</sup> This document contains a number of quotes obtained through various interviews with proponents and stakeholders, decision makers, administrators and advisors. In those instances where key quotes capably encapsulate a consensus of opinions we have included them without attribution inasmuch as it is less important who said the exact words and by implication suggesting that the thoughts are indicative only of the interviewee and/or their specific interests (location, sector, position), but more important that these words best conveyed the thoughts and opinions of a number of individuals.

- *Sponsoring tuition and course fees for short-term training that helps people get jobs through the Training Fee Support Program.*
- *Funding for Environmental Initiatives in partnerships with The Land Conservancy of BC, Columbia Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership and the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network.*
- *Protecting ecologically-sensitive land and maintaining it for a range of community values through the Land Conservation Initiative.*
- *Helping Columbia Basin youth become engaged community members by supporting youth-driven and youth-selected projects.*
- *Creating a forum for Columbia Basin youth to connect with one another and exchange information about issues through a magazine and website: [www.scratchonline.ca](http://www.scratchonline.ca)*
- *Helping address Basin literacy issues through the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.*
- *Funding for post-secondary education for high school and college students.*
- *Supporting arts, culture and heritage projects throughout the Basin through the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance.*
- *Supporting the establishment of community foundations in the Basin by contributing towards their endowment.”*

In terms of financial allocations by program area the Community Initiatives Program<sup>16</sup> is far and away the most significant of the Delivery of Benefits Programs. The program itself is geared to broadly fund, facilitate and support

*“... activities communities deem important and support projects that might otherwise not have been undertaken.”*

In terms of aggregate financial commitment, the Columbia Basin Trust has earmarked just over \$12.9 million over 10 years, geographically allocated as follows.

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<sup>16</sup> According to the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Columbia Basin Trust Program, in terms of financial allocation the Community Initiatives Program is the most significant representing 32% of total financial allocations followed by the Community Development Program with 15% of total allocations.

**COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST BUDGET ALLOCATION**  
**Community Initiatives Program**

<b>Impacted (Affected) Communities Initiative</b>	<b>Ten year Allocation (\$)</b>
Town of Golden	584,090
Area A (C/S)	294,400
City of Revelstoke	1,184,518
Area B (C/S)	294,400
Area B (E/K)	534,336
Area C (E/K)	294,400
Village of Nakusp	511,078
Area K (CK)	587,917
Area J (CK)	294,400
Area D (CK)	294,400
Village of Valemount	383,603
Area H (F/FG)	294,400
<b>Total Impacted (Affected) Communities Initiative</b>	<b>\$5,551,500</b>
<b>Local Government Initiative</b>	<b>Ten year Allocation (\$)</b>
Columbia Shuswap RD	736,448
East Kootenay RD	2,598,473
Central Kootenay RD	2,678,364
Fraser Ft. George RD	230,500
Kootenay Boundary RD	945,419
KKTC	230,500
<b>Total Local Government Initiative</b>	<b>\$7,419,703</b>
<b>Total Community Initiatives Program</b>	<b>\$12,971,538</b>

#### 4.1 The Local Government Initiative Program

Of the \$12.9 million allocated to the Community Initiatives Program, as detailed in the table above, approximately \$5.5 million has been earmarked under the Affected Areas Initiative (Impacted Areas) for areas of the Basin most impacted by the flooding; and \$7.4 million has been allocated to communities and/or electoral areas in the region on a per capita basis<sup>17</sup> under the Local Government Initiative.

The mandate and focus of the Local Government Initiative Program is reflected in its desired outcomes, specifically:

<sup>17</sup> Relative to per capita allocations, the CBT Board of Directors at the time decided that these allocations would be fixed for the entire ten year period without allowing for any adjustments accruing as a result of year over year population changes. Further as part of the per capita allocations it was decided that certain population minimums (and hence funding minimums) would be incorporated into the calculations.

- *“To give early attention in the CBT Delivery of Benefits Program to those areas within the Basin which were most negatively impacted by the Columbia River Treaty, and*
- *To increase the ability of communities and sub-regions within the Columbia Basin to meet their needs.”*

In terms of the delivery of the Local Government Initiative Program, the Columbia Basin Trust partners directly with specific local and/or regional governments within the Basin. Currently<sup>18</sup> Local Government Initiative Program partners include: City of Revelstoke and Area B of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District; Town of Golden and Area A of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District; Village of Valemount and Area H of the Fraser–Fort George Regional District, the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council, and the Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, and Kootenay Boundary. The basis of the delivery partnership is the CBT – Local Government Agreement (Contribution Agreement between CBT and Local Government for Community Initiatives Program including as well Schedule A: Management Plan, Schedule B: Financial Contributions and Commitments, and Schedule C: Contractor Partnership Guidelines). This annual agreement, extending over the period April 1 to March 31, spells out in detail the responsibilities and duties of both parties. Local Delivery authorities or contractors are entitled to receive an administration allowance equal to 10% of the total allocation to their respective regions/communities. In some cases not all of this allowance is taken by the contracting authority and the difference in what is allowable versus the amount actually utilized/taken is normally added back into the pool of funds available for local granting.

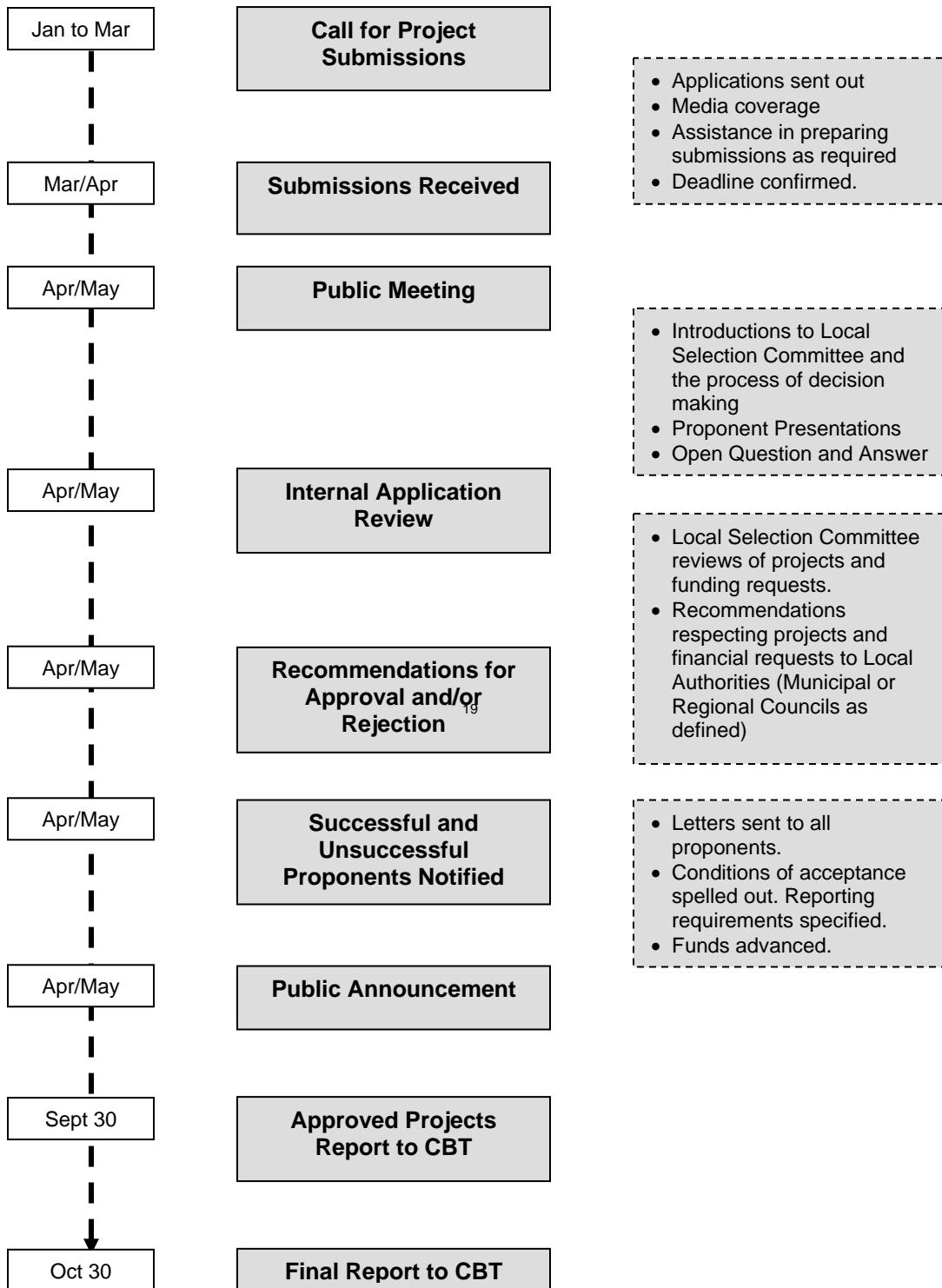
Subject to the terms of the Contribution Agreement each local government (and by implication each local delivery organization) utilizes their own processes for program delivery. On an aggregate basis these processes are quite similar. The typical format of local program delivery is presented in the schematic below.

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<sup>18</sup> When the Local Government Initiative Program was first introduced there were six regional partners including Fraser–Fort George Regional District, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council, and Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay, and Kootenay Boundary. However, shortly after implementation the Fraser Fort George Regional District and the Columbia Shuswap Regional Districts decided to devolve the benefits/responsibilities directly to those communities/sub-regions directly involved, i.e. to City of Revelstoke and Area B; Town of Golden and Area A and Village of Valemount and Area H, respectively.



**Typical Local LGI Delivery Process**



<sup>19</sup> Significantly in the early years of programming, local selections of proponents were forwarded to CBT for final authorization/approval. Currently the practice is for authorizations to be made locally/regionally by the contracting authorities.

While on a general basis community/regional delivery of the Local Government Initiative Program is similar in each area; there are some very notable differences. A brief overview of how local regions are implementing the program follows below.

#### **4.1.1 The Regional District of Central Kootenay**

Including Affected Areas funding, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) receives \$385,508<sup>20</sup> in annual funding for delivery of the Community Initiatives Program. The Local Government Initiative Program is delivered throughout the region by the Regional District (Administrator: Trish Gerald) for a fee of 10% of the annual program funding allocation the Region receives from the Columbia Basin Trust.

Typically proposals are accepted and considered once a year, in the first quarter. The Regional District office runs a “Call for Submissions” ad in all of the local newspapers in the region for a two to three week period. The “Call for Submissions” notice is also posted on the Regional District’s website. Application forms can be picked up at the RDCK office in Nelson, at participating municipal offices in each community, and a supply is also provided to the Regional District Directors who make them available to interested applicants in their respective areas. The application form can also be downloaded from the RDCK website.

Proponents must submit their completed application forms directly to the offices of the Regional District of Central Kootenay by a specified date. This past year the deadline for project submissions was March 19<sup>th</sup>. Upon receipt the regional LGI administrator reviews all submissions to ensure they meet the CBT criteria and that no outstanding payments or reports are due from those reapplying for support. All eligible submissions are then copied and provided to the Directors of the Regional District for decision-making.

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<sup>20</sup> To determine the amount of funding that is earmarked as accruing from the Local Government Initiative envelope versus that of the Affected Areas envelope one needs to refer back to the table, above (Budget Allocation Community Initiatives Program). These amounts are not disaggregated here in that the treatment of the allocations locally is normally as a pooled amount (the exception being Area B and Area C within the Regional District of East Kootenay, see footnote 22, below), i.e. there is no significant differentiation in their use, and as such the value in disaggregating the amounts herein is of little value to this part of the discussion.

The Regional District Board of Directors decided at the outset of their engagement as delivery contractors for the LGI Program that the type and extent of community involvement in the project selection process would be decided upon by each individual Municipal or Electoral Area Director. This has resulted in a widespread variation of approaches throughout the region. Processes range from the minimum required public meeting that is held where applicants make presentations to their local RD Directors who then either alone or with hand picked committees make decisions on who will receive funding, to a more open and inclusive style of public voting.

In general, the range of community involvement processes in the RDCK can be summarized as follows:

- Public Meeting Only – All applicants are invited to make a presentation about their proposed projects at a public meeting held in their local area. Applicants are given up to 10 minutes to provide details about their initiatives.
- Council Meetings Only – With certain RDCK municipalities, the community involvement process has been made to coincide with a regular council meeting. Applicants are invited to attend and are given 5 – 10 minutes to present their projects to council.
- Public Meeting with Vote – A public meeting is held where each applicant is given time to present their projects to other members of the community – many of whom are other applicants. Following the presentations those present are asked to vote for the projects they feel should receive funding. The manner in which the voting is carried out and votes counted varies from one area to the other.
- Open House with Vote – The public is invited to attend an open house where applicants have set up booths or a table to display photos, project information and/or other material of interest relating to their project proposals. Members of the community are encouraged to visit each booth and obtain information about the various proposed projects. The public is then asked to vote for the projects that they feel should be funded.

- Cancelled Meetings – Although rare, it has occurred that the total amount of funds requested by all applicants in some of the smaller areas has been less than the funds available, making it possible to fund all of the proposed projects. In these cases, the projects were screened by the Directors to ensure that the projects met CBT criteria. The applicants were then notified that the public meetings were cancelled and that their projects had been tentatively approved, pending formal approval by the Regional District Board.

Once the public meetings have taken place, the recommended projects are submitted to a Regional District Board meeting for formal approval. Authorizations for successful project applications have included a significant number over \$20,000, though the majority are under \$10,000. In terms of range, amongst the smaller recorded grant authorizations was one for \$200 (Kaslo Community Garden) and amongst the larger recorded grant authorizations was one of \$90,000 (Nelson Sports Field).

#### **4.1.2 The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary**

The Community Initiatives Program, including the LGI Program as implemented within the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary, is available only to those communities in the region that lie within the areas that were deemed to be affected by the Columbia River Treaty, i.e. communities located within the Boundary Area of the Regional District are excluded. The Program is administered by the Regional District (Administrator: Ms. Carolyn Caron) for a fee of just under \$9,500, representing the allowable 10% of the annual grant it receives from the Columbia Basin Trust, leaving \$85,000 available for yearly grant authorizations. Authorizations for successful project applications normally range from a few hundred dollars on up to \$25,000 with an average grant amount being somewhere in the order of \$5,000. Notably on lower requested amounts (\$5,000 and under) the grants authorized usually approximate the total requested while on larger amounts the scrutiny is significantly more intense and in most cases is less than the full amount requested. In total the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary receives roughly 30 applications for funding each year.

Advertisements promoting and inviting applications for funding initially appear during November and December in local papers and on the Regional District's website ([www.rdkb.com](http://www.rdkb.com)). These advertisements provide a basic overview of the program and the application process, where applications can be obtained, and contact information for assistance. The deadline for completed applications is usually the end of February.

Proponents requiring support and guidance in preparing their applications can obtain assistance through the offices of the Program Administrator. This assistance usually takes the form of one-on-one meetings/discussions dealing with clarifications regarding program goals, objectives, selection criteria and eligibility, and the application process itself.

Shortly after the official closing date (end of February), copies of submitted applications are provided to each of the seven members of the Greater Trail Community Services Commission<sup>21</sup> for review. A public meeting is then advertised in appropriate local papers and the District's website. The public meeting serves as the venue where all the applications submitted are to be presented, discussed, evaluated and approved/rejected. At this meeting, which is held about the middle of April, proponents are given seven minutes to present and clarify their proposals, after which time they are given the opportunity to answer specific questions from the Commission. The public may also participate in these discussions, although it has been the experience of past meetings that those attending are somewhat reticent to do so. After the presentations and discussions, Commission members meet to make their final selections. This meeting is open to the public and proponents, though historically it has not been very well attended.

Once the selections have been made by the Commission, these recommendations are forwarded to the Board of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary for ratification. As a rule these recommendations are usually accepted as presented. Following ratification all proponents are contacted. This normally occurs in late April or early May. Funding is typically disbursed for approved projects upon the presentation of receipts; however, in a limited number of special circumstances "up front

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<sup>21</sup> Directors of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary that represent those communities/areas within the region impacted by the Columbia River Treaty are defacto members of the Greater Trail Community Services Commission.

funding” is provided when it is required to “seed or get projects off the ground”. Pursuant to CBT requirements, applicants have certain obligations relative to reporting, and compliance with these conditions is overseen by the Program Administrator.

#### **4.1.3 The Regional District of East Kootenay**

As with its neighboring regional districts (Kootenay Boundary and Central Kootenay) it is the Regional District of East Kootenay that administers the implementation of CBT’s Community Initiatives Program within the region (Administrator: Ms. Shannon Moskal). In total the annual allocation for this initiative from the Columbia Basin Trust is \$342,700. Out of this amount \$25,000 is used for administration fees leaving \$317,700 available for grants. The total grant allocation of \$317,700 is subsequently sub-allocated to each municipality and electoral area on a per capita basis, calculated from the most current census information. In essence, the funding for LGI efforts is broken into fourteen different pools or envelopes and the Affected Areas funds are broken into two separate envelopes (allocated to Area B and Area C, respectively<sup>22</sup>). Of these separate pools the smallest is the Village of Radium Hot Springs with an annual allocation of \$2,494.91 and the largest is the City of Cranbrook with an annual allocation of \$79,066.22.

The process normally begins in early January with the preparation of application forms, guidelines and a schedule of proposed activities. This information is sent to the Regional District Board for an authorization to proceed. Once this authorization is confirmed, the applications and guidelines are sent to representatives within each of the municipalities (CAO’s) and electoral areas (Regional Directors) within the Region; and advertisements announcing the program and inviting interested applicants to submit proposals are placed in various local media throughout the district. These advertisements, which normally appear in mid January provide basic information on the CIP; the location(s) where applications can be obtained; an overview of the application and selection process; as well as contact information for assistance. Experience shows that the majority seeking assistance request help with project budgets.

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<sup>22</sup> Unlike other regions and communities receiving both Affected Areas funding and Local Government Initiative funding where the practice is to pool these funds, in the case of Area B and C in the Regional District of East Kootenay these funds are kept separately and accounted for separately.

The deadline for submitting proponent applications is usually the end of March<sup>23</sup> each year.

Regardless of where applications are acquired from, proponents are required to submit their completed applications to the Regional District Office. Once received at the Regional District office they are reviewed by the Program Administrator to determine whether they meet the basic criteria of the Community Initiatives Program. Once this initial review is completed, applications are copied, and forwarded to the appropriate municipalities and electoral areas for review and consideration (the originals of all applications are kept at the Regional District office.) It is important to note that proponents are required to specify all of the communities and/or regions they are soliciting for funding so that each community and region can receive a copy of the application.

Once municipalities/electoral areas receive the applications from the Regional District, they advertise their own public meetings where proponents make presentations and the public is allowed to participate by discussing, supporting and/or opposing the various project proposals as presented.<sup>24</sup> These public meetings are normally undertaken in April and though within the same time period they do not normally all occur on the same day. The public meetings take a variety of forms from stand-alone meetings where project presentations are made, voted on and selected, to a combination of “public meeting - council meeting” where project presentations are made and discussed following which at the same venue Councilors consider and make final selections.<sup>25</sup> In still other cases Councilors/Directors make final selection decisions at the public meetings themselves.

It should be noted that when a proponent applies for funding from several municipalities/areas, the communities involved will usually consult with each other and negotiate the funding each will respectively allocate to the project. In addition to sharing

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<sup>23</sup> However, in 2007 this deadline was pushed up to March 6<sup>th</sup> allowing more time for preparing and considering proposals to ensure all outstanding CIP funds would be expended during the year.

<sup>24</sup> In some cases not all applications received are taken forward to the public meetings. Some may be pre-screened before being allowed to go forward.

<sup>25</sup> In some cases Directors run their decisions by Advisory Committees for discussion, although the Director retains the final decision.

funding for worthwhile projects that can benefit adjacent communities, this normally ensures that individual proponents do not receive funding greater than the total amounts requested. In fact, some municipalities/areas hold public meetings together where they jointly consider CIP applications for funding.<sup>26</sup>

Proponents, of course, do not always receive the funding they request. The requested amounts are either refused or adjusted due to a variety of reasons including: 1) other projects are deemed to be more worthwhile; 2) proponent budgets are felt to be inflated; 3) opportunities for funding from other sources are felt to exist; and, 4) the total amount requested by all proponents is simply greater than the available funds for distribution. Attempts are made to determine fair and equitable funding distributions and unsuccessful proponents are sometimes directed to other groups that are involved in similar kinds of initiatives or to other sources of funding. There are even reported instances where groups applying for funding withdrew their applications because they felt other proponents had a greater need for funding.

Once selections have been made at local levels recommendations for approval are forwarded to the Regional District for ratification. On average 65 to 90 applications are forwarded for ratification each year ranging in size from a low of \$144 on up to a historic high of \$167,500 (though the norm for higher order grants is usually in the order of \$30,000). Most grants are for \$10,000 or less. The Regional District then sends letters to the successful applicants and provides a corresponding final list of approved proponents to the CBT.

Funding is typically disbursed for approved projects upon the presentation of receipts. Pursuant to CBT requirements applicants have certain obligations relative to reporting and compliance with these conditions are overseen by the Program Administrator.

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<sup>26</sup> In the case of the Columbia Valley the two electoral areas and two communities located therein organize a joint public meeting.



#### 4.1.4 City of Revelstoke and Area B

CBT's LGI Program delivery within the City of Revelstoke and Area B of the Columbia Shuswap RD is currently administered by the City of Revelstoke's Community Economic Development Department (Head: Mr. Allan Mason, Administrator: Ms. Debra Wozniak) for an annual fee of approximately \$19,000 (10% of the annual allocation). From a total allocation of \$188,000, each year \$170,000 is issued in grants with authorizations normally ranging from a few hundred dollars on up to \$25,000 per project.

The process begins with advertisements in late January/early February inviting interested applicants to prepare applications. The advertisement, which is re-issued on a number of occasions over a number of weeks, includes basic information on the program, an overview of the application process, and contact information for assistance/help. The closing date for applications is normally the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of February.

Any applicants requesting assistance are assisted one-on-one in their efforts to prepare their applications. Most that seek assistance have problems with project budgets. In the past workshops were organized for those seeking assistance, however, a general lack of attendance led to the current system of one-on-one support.

After the closing date, there is a public forum/review meeting organized. At this meeting applicants are given three minutes to present their case to the public, though they are also encouraged to organize a display. On average there are 28 to 32 applications received each year and thus 28 to 32 presentations. This public forum is advertised in advance in the local paper. An average of 80-120 citizens attend as well as all "evaluators" (see below). According to administrator Ms. Debra Wozniak local people really get "engaged" in this process. After the presentations, in an effort to counteract the possibility of "stacking" all those in attendance are asked to pick their favorite third of applications (e.g. top 10 out of 30 submissions) that they would like supported. Any vote that does not include the top third, i.e. is less or more, is rejected. Fifteen percent of a project's overall rating is decided at the public meeting.

Almost immediately after the public meeting (one or two days), a formal evaluation of all proposals is undertaken.

Five evaluators are appointed by the Revelstoke City Council plus the one RD Director responsible for Area B. Appointments are made from members of the general public expressing an interest in participating and are for a three year term with one three year renewal/extension permitted. Normally one representative each is appointed to represent economic, social and environmental interests/sectors respectively. The remaining two represent the community/region at large. All evaluators are provided copies of submitted proposals five days in advance of the public hearing. These evaluators are briefed by the Administrator in respect of the LGI program and their roles and responsibilities in the process. Notably over the years (10) there have been in total nine separate appointees to the five openings.

As a first step in the selection process the evaluators, which must all have attended the public hearings, prepare a list of their preferences or 'selections'. Selections are based on: 15% ranking from public hearings; 35% from an evaluation of the proposals relative to: reasonableness of the proposal, reasonableness of the budget; urgency; value; and 50% based on sector preferences: environment; economic; social. The regional sectoral target is 33-33-33 though performance to date is somewhat skewed: 50% social, 30% economic; 20% environment. For the most part evaluators work to find a common consensus on their selections. While there is "no" formal policy in respect of "conflict of interest" or "confidentiality" there is some expectation that the evaluators will follow this implied ethical protocol.

Not all applicants receive the funds they requested. In some cases, due to what the evaluators feel are inflated budgets or good opportunities for other participation (leverage), applicant budgets are reduced. As well, very seldom is a request in excess of \$20,000 to \$25,000 approved.

After evaluation, recommendations from the evaluation team are forwarded to the Revelstoke City Council/one RD Director for input/suggestions and ratification. In the early years any application that received a rating of more than 50% managed to get some funding, though this is no longer the case today. While "generally" no changes are

made at this level, there are some instances in the past where changes/adjustments have been made.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants are advised via letter. A corresponding final list of approved proponents is also provided to the CBT. If the amount requested/approved is less than \$10,000 a cheque in full is sent along with the letter. If more than \$10,000, the funds are broken up into two installments. There is no appeal process for unsuccessful applicants. Successful applicants have certain obligations relative to reporting. These are reviewed once received but not audited. If funds are not expended or projects do not proceed, the funds must be returned by the applicant/client and are applied/utilized in subsequent years by the contractor.

#### **4.1.5 The Town Of Golden and Area A**

While initially the Local Government Initiative Program was delivered directly by the Town of Golden, today (beginning in February 2004) program administration and delivery is sub-contracted in its entirety to the Golden and District Community Foundation (Administrator: Ms. Tamara Dragt). The Town and Area A representatives continue to participate in selections and maintain responsibility for final approvals. Including geographically the Town of Golden and Area H of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, total yearly funding is \$121,377.

Beginning in early January a draft schedule of activities is prepared by the Program Administrator and forwarded to the Community Initiatives Grants Selection Committee for ratification. Once ratified, normally commencing in the first week of February and continuing every second week on through to early April, a "Call for Proposals" is advertised in the local newspaper. This advertisement contains information respecting the application process, deadlines, contact information and the proposed date of the public meeting. Application packages are made available through the Town of Golden offices and the local offices of the Columbia Basin Trust. The deadline for submitting applications (hard copies only) is usually the end of April or early May.

During the Call for Proposals, prospective applicants are assisted one-on-one by the Program Administrator. A one to two hour CBT- Community Initiatives Grant Writing Workshop is also offered to prospective applicants, although attendance of late has been disappointing with some thought that it might be valuable to make attendance compulsory in the future, especially for first time applicants. In justification of this thought, it should be noted that each year the 10 to 15 applications submitted have usually all received some funding. This past year however, four applications of the ten received were so poorly prepared that three were rejected despite a surplus of budgetary funds.

In early May (normally on or around May 7) a public meeting is held, usually attracting 50 or so local stakeholders, applicants, Grants Selection Committee members and the public at large. At the public meeting each applicant is afforded 2 to 3 minutes to make an oral presentation on their proposed project. After the presentations other attendees are given the opportunity to comment and ask questions.

The Grants Selection Committee for the Community Initiatives Program is comprised of the members of the Golden and District Foundation's Grants Selection Committee (drawn from the Foundation membership and appointed for two year terms), plus the Mayor of the Town of Golden (or his/her designate) and the Regional District Director for Area A (or his/her designate).

The selection process occurs on or about May 15. Applications are assessed relative to their compliance with CBT criteria and the needs of the community (as derived from the Community Needs Survey). Approval is normally based on a consensus. Most applicants receive approvals for something less than what they applied for. Importantly the Golden and District Foundation's Grants Selection Committee brings to the table experience/expertise in granting; as well as knowledge and access to other granting sources, including from their own resources. Appropriate conflict of interest provisions are applied.

Once applications are reviewed and "selected" by the Grants Selection Committee, recommendations are forwarded for ratification by a committee comprised of the Town of Golden Council and Area A Director. Again, appropriate conflict of interest

provisions are applied. Generally no changes are made. After ratification applicants are notified by the Program Administrator. (Note there is no “right of appeal” for unsuccessful applicants).

Subsequently, funds are released by the Town of Golden to the Golden and District Community Foundation for payment/granting to successful applicants. Normally applicants receive funding based on “completed project efforts”; though in some cases there is an allowance for advance payments.

Successful applicants have certain obligations relative to reporting. These are reviewed once received but not audited. If funds are not expended or projects do not proceed the funds must be returned by the applicant/client and are applied/utilized in subsequent years by the contractor.

#### **4.1.6 Village of Valemount and Area H**

Within the Regional District of Fraser Fort George the eligible areas for CIP programming include the Village of Valemount and Area H (located south of Swift Creek<sup>27</sup>). Accordingly responsibility for implementation and administration has been devolved to the Village of Valemount (Administrator: Mr. Silvio Gislimberti). From a total Community Initiatives Program allocation of \$90,000 from CBT, \$81,000 is available for grants. Each year 10 to 15 grants are approved with authorizations ranging from approximately \$2,500 up to \$25,000 per project. Most grants are in the order of \$5,000 to \$10,000.

The process begins the end of January or early February each year with a series of “Request for Proposals” advertisements organized by the Village of Valemount. These advertisements appear in the local papers, on the Village of Valemount’s web site, and on Valemount’s local Community TV Channel. Within the context of the RFP potential applicants are provided information relative to the program’s objectives and guidelines; application process, criteria and timeframes; source of applications; and

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<sup>27</sup> Swift Creek is located just north of the Village of Valemount’s northern boundary.

contact information. The closing date for receiving applications is normally mid March to the end of the month.

After the closing date for receiving applications, a public meeting is held near mid April to consider and select projects for CIP funding. Twenty to thirty people typically attend this meeting, which is advertised for two consecutive weeks in the local papers and on the community TV Channel prior to its being held. At the meeting proponents are allowed “to make a case” for their projects, which are discussed and voted on by the public<sup>28</sup> attending.

Approximately one week after the public meeting (late April), the CIP Advisory Committee, (normally totaling ten members and comprised of local politicians and citizens at large) meets to discuss and assess individual applications. Final selections are made taking into account the input from the public at the public meeting; the amount of funding sought; available CIP funds; and anticipated value of the proposed initiative to the community/region. After the meeting the results are submitted to the Village of Valemount Council for ratification. In early May, Council meets to review the recommendations and ratify those that they agree with. Although this is usually a case of confirming the decisions reached at the public meeting, in a few instances Council has changed the selections submitted. This usually has occurred when it was deemed that a particular proposal did not meet program guidelines or when Council received additional information relative to a proposal that was not available at the previously held public meeting.

Once Council has provided its ratification, a list of the selected projects is sent to CBT. This usually occurs in May with the funds from the CBT normally arriving about the end of April/beginning of May. This money is then released as successful proponents submit receipts for expenses incurred for their projects.

As with program implementation in other communities/regions, successful applicants have certain obligations relative to reporting. These are reviewed once received but not audited. If funds are not expended or projects do not proceed the funds

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<sup>28</sup> The public vote, if you will, is more a listing of preferences or rankings of each proposal. This list of priorities is then taken account by the Selection Committee or Advisory Committee in their subsequent deliberations.

must be returned by the applicant/client and are applied/utilized in the following year by the contractor.

#### **4.1.7 Ktunaxa Nation Council**

Within the Ktunaxa Nation the Local Government Initiative Program, representing in aggregate \$23,000 annually, is administered by the Ktunaxa Nation Council<sup>29</sup> and specifically five representatives from each of the bands: Akisqnuq Band, St Mary's Band, Tobacco Plains Band, and Lower Kootenai Band (Administrator: Ms. Rosemary Nicholas). Programming differs significantly from other communities and regions, though importantly it reflects the needs, uniqueness and circumstances of the Ktunaxa Nation.

The process begins each year at the beginning of April when an RFP including application forms, timelines and criteria are sent to the four participating bands. Proposals are received from these bands as well as groups or organizations of local citizens. After closing, applications are reviewed by the Council and evaluated using criteria such as: 1) cost; 2) the number of local citizens that benefit; and, 3) whether the respective Band is supportive. As well, the Nation Council endeavors to ensure that approved applications are evenly distributed among the participating bands.

Once the selections are made an agreement is drawn up with each proponent and 80% of the funding is advanced. The remainder of the grant money is provided only when the proponents submit their reports at the completion of their projects.

The Ktunaxa Nation Council normally provides a preliminary report to CBT on its LGI Program in November. A final report is submitted shortly after the Nation Council's fiscal year the following April.

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<sup>29</sup> Ktunaxa citizenship is comprised of Nation members from seven Bands located throughout traditional Ktunaxa territory. Five Bands are located in British Columbia, Canada and two are in the United States. The Ktunaxa Nation originated in 1970 as the Kootenay Indian District Council to promote the political and social development of the Nation. In 1991 the Council's name was changed to Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council (K/KTC). [www.ktunaxa.org](http://www.ktunaxa.org)

## 4.2 Some Observations on LGI Delivery

*“This program [the Community Initiatives Program] was initially conceived as an envelope of money to support local priorities and local wishes ...*

Since inception the Columbia Basin Trust’s Local Government Initiative Program was envisioned as a locally governed and implemented program that would meet the social, economic and environmental needs and priorities of individual Basin communities and regions. From CBT’s perspective the format or structure of CIP/LGI programming focuses on building local capacity and instilling local ownership. In reviewing the established regional/local structures and methodologies there is little doubt that in terms of building local capacity and instilling local ownership, the Columbia Basin Trust has accomplished what it set out to do.

In terms of social, economic and environmental impacts there is more than ample evidence to suggest that significant positive benefits are accruing as a direct result of Local Government Initiative programming. The aggregate numbers of applications approved, the gross value of grants disbursed, and the depth and breadth of supported initiatives is impressive.

*“This program [the Community Initiatives Program] is providing significant benefit within our community.”*

*“When community ownership works it works very well...when it doesn’t...well that is a totally different matter isn’t it?”*

At first glance there is a definitive semblance of similarity amongst almost all of the local implementations.<sup>30</sup> The most notable characteristics are those pertaining to those broader aspects of process. Arguably these similarities are more a consequence of the defined processes mandated by Columbia Basin Trust in the Contribution Agreement than the convergence of independent local implementations. Rather, it is the

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<sup>30</sup> The notable exception in implementing significantly similar delivery methodologies is, not surprisingly, the Ktunaxa Nation Council. This is not to imply that this lack of similarity is a matter to be concerned with, but rather it re-emphasizes the importance of local ownership and the understanding local people have as to “what works best for them”.



differences that stand out and emphasize the local character of this initiative. In terms of differences what stands out immediately and especially are the differences in overall governance including how local decisions are made and authorized; the role of local/regional Councils, Boards and politicians in the process; the relative simplicity or complexity of local delivery methodologies; the transparency of the application process and the evaluation criteria; the degree of public participation and influence; and the relative geographic equity of access to sufficient funds to effect meaningful impacts.

This is not to say the observed differences (or similarities for that matter) in the manner and method of local implementation are particularly good things or particularly problematic. Both effects are evident in further observation. The important point to note however is that in the broader context this program has yielded positive local benefits and definitively contributed to local capacity building and local ownership.

The subsequent analysis in the latter parts of this report will focus more on whether the manner of local implementation and the structure and spirit of the relationship between the CBT and local authorities are the most effective; and, what aspects might be contributing/detracting from the effort and what might need to be done, if anything, to enhance delivery and enhance impact.

## 5.0 THE PERSPECTIVES OF LOCAL ADVISORS, DECISION MAKERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

### 5.1 Survey Characteristics

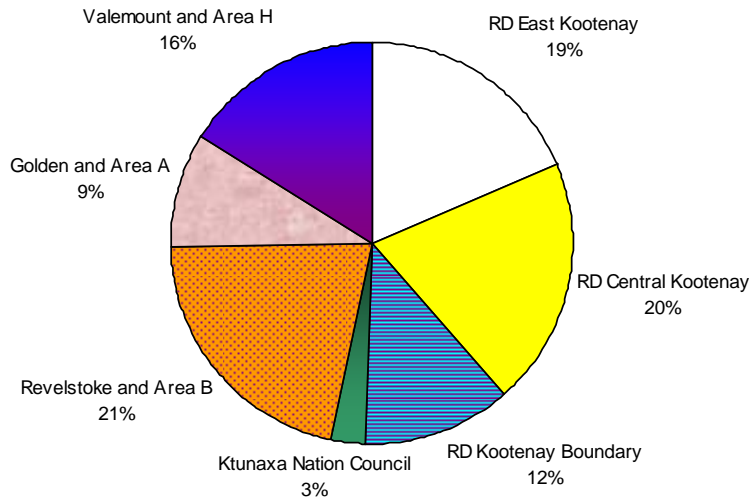
A series of interviews were scheduled and undertaken with “local advisors, decision makers, stakeholders and administrators” over the period April 15, 2007 to June 28, 2007. Initial identification of potential interviewees came from the Columbia Basin Trust and local administrators. Subsequent to this, the list was added to/amended based on referrals from interviewees themselves.

It should be noted up front that this effort specifically sought out those individuals who were generally knowledgeable about the Columbia Basin Trust, the Local Government Initiative Program and local implementation methodologies in order to collect pertinent and detailed information about the program, including local challenges and local successes. Inasmuch as these individuals are also those who are generally engaged in some aspect of the local delivery process, it was expected that their perspectives on such matters as the value of the program and the effectiveness of its delivery might be somewhat or even considerably different from someone not actively so engaged. However, the corollary is that if we were only to focus on gathering input from those not involved and by implication impartial, we have no way of assessing their level of knowledge and no way of assuring the relevance of their impressions and suggestions. Therefore, while we expected respondents to be open and candid (and they were) we need to acknowledge that there was probably some enthusiastic bias in their comments and opinions that cast a more favorable light on program delivery/effectiveness than completely impartial observations would have.

In order to ensure a representative sample of inputs from key “local advisors, stakeholders, decision makers and administrators” was collected, a total of eighty-four (84) interviews from throughout the study region were undertaken; 75 of which represented individuals not currently nor previously engaged as staff of the CBT. The geographic representation of respondents is illustrated in the following chart.

**Source of Interview Data**

Local Advisors, Stakeholders, Decision Makers and Administrators



In all cases attempts were made to undertake in-depth face-to-face interviews. To facilitate this process a number of missions were scheduled into the various regions/communities. However, in a few cases it was necessary to conduct interviews over the phone when schedules could not be coordinated. Each interview subject was assured of the confidentiality of the information collected. Purposely no focus group discussions were undertaken so as to ensure the deliberations were open and frank.

A standardized questionnaire was utilized for the interviews. This questionnaire was designed to broadly capture impressions, thoughts and opinions on the methodology and impact of the Local Government Initiative Program including specific perspectives on local implementation efforts; guiding policies and procedures (the Contribution Agreement); local best practices and challenges; and suggestions relative to how the Columbia Basin Trust might improve/enhance programming. For the most part administering the questionnaire required respondents to provide answers to pre-defined questions. This information was often supplemented with additional discussions beyond the pre-specified questions. A copy of the questionnaire used is provided in Appendix 1.

On average each of the respondents interviewed ranked their own knowledge level quite highly in respect to some or most aspects of LGI delivery<sup>31</sup>. As confirmation forty-two percent indicated they had been involved in the program for over 5 years, while another forty-eight percent stated they had been involved from 1 to 5 years. Furthermore, when asked to rate their level of familiarity on a scale of one to five, with 1 meaning not at all familiar and 5 meaning very familiar, over seventy percent gave themselves a rating of 4 or higher. This collective familiarity with programming exhibited by the interview pool provides some assurance that discussions, comments and opinions compiled are relevant and realistic.<sup>32</sup>

## 5.2 Respondent Perspectives on Operations and Impacts

The first series of interview questions focused on individual comments and opinions in respect to the broad impact and appeal of the Local Government Initiative Program and the methodology of local operations; including comments relative to those specific policies and procedures defined by the CBT-local government agreement (the Contribution Agreement).

### Overall Impressions on LGI:

When viewing implementation of the Local Government Initiative Program in its broadest sense, while a few reservations were initially expressed<sup>33</sup> (and then in only a

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<sup>31</sup> This is not surprising given that the majority of those individuals interviewed were referred to the study team based on their knowledge and understanding of LGI and/or Community Initiatives programming.

<sup>32</sup> Arguably asking an individual to rank his or her own level of knowledge and understanding might be misleading in the sense that some people might feel they understand the program very well but on further examination might not, regardless of the length of time they may/may not have been involved in some aspect of local delivery. As a study team we made no attempt to sort or pre-screen inputs we received from interviewees based on our impressions of the individual's apparent familiarity or lack thereof with the Local Government Initiative Program. This being said, there were no memorable occasions throughout the interview process in which in collecting opinions and perceptions we felt that the comments offered were premised on significant misunderstandings or errors in facts. Certainly there were many occasions where perceptions themselves differed amongst interviewees and differed from what our own perceptions were. But of course differing "perceptions" do not imply a misunderstanding; rather they provide valid insights into programming design and effectiveness.

<sup>33</sup> Reservations in the manner of local delivery became more apparent in subsequent discussions when respondents were asked for their thoughts on how local programming might be improved or enhanced. This is not to say that their overall positive impressions with the program's local implementation were misleading, but rather they generally felt pretty good about how the process was handled in terms of the perceived impacts that were accruing but when pressed for their thoughts on ways in which the process could be improved they became considerably more outspoken.

subtle, restrained manner), most respondent comments revealed a high degree of positive feelings relative to both the local methodologies of delivery and the cumulative impacts accruing there from. Indeed, the Program for many when viewed in its broadest context was a democratic and flexible effort offering facilitative support to small community projects that “*probably never would be accomplished otherwise*” and in so doing giving small groups of local volunteers a sense of pride/worth because the program “*recognizes that these groups are important to the community and the Columbia River Basin*”.

Not surprisingly, in the context of the same general discussion over 85% of respondents stated the objectives of the Local Government Initiative Program are largely consistent with and complement local goals (value added). Moreover, when asked to rate the degree to which the program has contributed to their community’s and region’s abilities to meet local needs, over 80% gave a rating of 4 or 5, where 5 represented significant value and 1 no value.

#### Local Capacities:

A significant number of those interviewed participated in some form or other with local implementation efforts, i.e. as selection committee members, as decision makers, as administrators and as stakeholders. Within these capacities many were quite comfortable with their responsibilities yet almost 65% stated they had not received any training or information relative to the Columbia Basin Trust nor the Local Government Initiative Program prior to taking up their positions nor shortly thereafter<sup>34</sup>. Not surprisingly over 88% of respondents suggested that there would be value in some form of training, particularly for new members.

### **5.2.1 Contribution Agreement (CBT-local government agreement)**

While there seems to be general agreement that the Local Government Initiative Program is markedly assisting communities and regions to meet their needs, the study team undertook a more detailed analysis of the policy directives contained within the

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<sup>34</sup> Of those who stated they had received information/training, a little over 40 percent indicated it was obtained through “self study” with a similar percentage indicating they had only received information from their Local Contractor as a briefing prior to the selection process.

Contribution Agreement to determine how the Agreement itself is perceived to facilitate or hinder that process. The Contribution Agreement, including accompanying schedules and appendices, not only represents the foundation from which CBT sets out the terms and conditions for implementation of the Local Government Initiative Program, but as importantly it represents the “spirit” of that implementation.

The objective in reviewing the Contribution Agreement generally and each of the major clauses/directives in the Agreement specifically with local advisors, stakeholders, decision makers and administrators, was to attempt to determine the degree to which each aspect of the Agreement was perceived to be consistent or inconsistent with: 1) the objectives of the Local Government Initiative Program itself; and, 2) local social, economic and environmental development goals and efforts. In other words, the intent of these series of questions was to try to determine whether the agreement between CBT and local regions/communities as represented by its individual policies was fundamentally a sound premise from which the program could be effectively implemented; i.e. did it truly represent the best interests of CBT as well as the best interests of those communities and regions in which it was being implemented. The policy directives that were the focus of the interview questions and subsequent discussions included those relative to: community involvement, incrementality, and reporting requirements; and those relative to specific project eligibility criteria including operational costs, multi-year funding, leveraging, and private sector proposals.

#### Respondent Familiarity with the Contribution Agreement:

While respondents were fairly comfortable with their knowledge of the Local Government Initiative Program, most respondents stated when asked that they were not at all that familiar with the Contribution Agreement and its relative import to LGI delivery. More precisely, over 55 percent provided a range of responses from “not at all familiar” to “unsure”, meaning less than 44 percent felt confident enough to state they were familiar with the Contribution Agreement and were prepared to comment thereon. Interestingly as the discussions proceeded it became pretty apparent that there was some familiarity by most respondents with certain aspects of the Agreement though it couldn't be said as a rule that the majority of individuals were familiar with all of the conditions or how those conditions applied to local delivery or even the source of the conditions, i.e. local imposed conditions or those of CBT.

Although most felt they had little knowledge of its details and application almost 90 percent of respondents noted initially that they felt that the conditions proscribed in the Contribution Agreement are “about right” to “not at all onerous” relative to local implementation. Without diminishing the importance of the feedback from those individuals who were familiar with the Contribution Agreement and in fact based on this knowledge feel it is a fair and reasonable document, there is no doubt that this aggregate response is somewhat confusing. That is, it is somewhat confusing in the sense that individuals who have expressed their lack of overall knowledge relative to the Contribution Agreement on the one hand, then on the other suggest it’s policies and procedures are not particularly onerous, is likely more a reflection of overall satisfaction with local implementation efforts and results, as in the program seems to be working well so the conditions governing its implementation must be pretty good as well, rather than a direct response based on familiarity and experience.

After the initial lead-in discussions respecting the Contribution Agreement, questions in respect to specific policy guidelines were asked. For the most part the specific clause and/or definition was provided to the respondent and responses as to its applicability and value were asked subsequently.<sup>35</sup>

### 5.2.1.1 Community Involvement

Community Involvement: This policy guideline stipulates that the minimum community involvement process will require that the community 1) is made aware of the CBT’s program via newspaper ads, community newsletters, bulletins and so on, and that 2) at least one meeting be set up to solicit community input on projects brought forward to those who will make recommendations or project decisions.

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<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, while reactions as to the reasonableness of selected policies was solicited and provided, recorded behaviors were not. That is, in some cases respondents noted that they thought a particular clause or policy was quite appropriate and should be a condition of compliance, but subsequently admitted that they didn’t follow it, i.e. incrementality and operational costs in particular were felt to be generally reasonable requirements by the majority of respondents but situations requiring circumventions of same were readily rationalized or legitimized by the same respondents. This contradiction between belief and behavior undoubtedly tends to skew the results of the interviews to some degree though we have tried to covey this somewhat confusing dichotomy of opinions/behaviors in the sectional write ups.

Not surprisingly, all respondents when queried felt this guideline was consistent with the overall objectives of the Local Government Initiative Program, while virtually all (93%) also felt it is consistent with local efforts. In particular, they especially see the requirement to hold community meetings to seek input as being a worthwhile policy requirement.

It should be noted that the small number of negative responses collected were largely limited to those communities where the number of applications for funding is particularly large. Here, it was stated by a number of respondents that the requirement to hold public meetings is unrealistic, as it really does not afford proponents sufficient time to fully explain their projects nor make their case, i.e. it does not provide them or the projects they represent appropriate respect. It was pointed out, as well, that a separate public meeting is essentially duplication, as it could be held in conjunction with “*normal granting processes already in place*”.

In a somewhat confusing tenor of discussion it was asserted that the “community involvement” guideline can be satisfied by the following: “inasmuch as council meetings during which time LGI grant authorizations are being made are public they could/should constitute the public meeting requirement; and inasmuch as local counselors, who have a mandate under Provincial legislation to represent the best interests of their constituents (the public) and they can be voted out of office if the voters do not like the decisions they make relative to grant applications (community influence) then this should/could represent the public input component.”

While this community involvement requirement was noted as a “minimum” only, one or two individuals very vociferously felt that this minimum threshold was insufficient and should be made more significant.<sup>36</sup> The argument here being largely that community involvement as stipulated in the guideline, is more or less only a requirement to inform the public. It is not a requirement to meaningfully involve the public in the decision making process.

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<sup>36</sup> Notable exceptions included the following comment: “The stipulation in respect of community involvement is much too weak! My goodness this objective could pretty much be satisfied by putting an ad in the paper and having a little get together with a few friends. Is that what we want to have happen when it comes to community involvement?”



### 5.2.1.2 Incrementality

Incrementality: This guideline requires the local government contractor to scrutinize projects to ensure that CBT obligations (funds) do not relieve any level of government of its responsibility.

Over 90 percent of respondents indicated this policy guideline is consistent with both the LGI program and local objectives. However, many admitted that they really were not quite sure what it meant in practice and that direction from CBT in this regard was inconsistent at best. Further, while the vast majority felt incrementality was an appropriate policy directive, in the majority of regions and communities respondents pointed to a number of instances of this guideline being contravened either overtly or covertly. Basically, the rationale in those cases of ignoring the policy was that the funding was justified because worthwhile projects would not have been otherwise funded and valuable community programming would have been lost. A further justification was that the funding was essential to supplement programs by other levels of government that were just not willing to provide a sufficient level of funding for the program/service to achieve what it could/should.

### 5.2.1.3 Operational Costs

Operational Costs: In general, this policy guideline prohibits funding projects for which the funding will be used for on-going operational costs.

Far and away this policy directive caused the most overall discomfort for respondents. In total, roughly a third of respondents suggested that the policy was inconsistent with, at the very least the spirit of, overall program objectives; while almost half of all respondents indicated they felt it unduly hampered local efforts to effect positive social, economic and environmental change and development.

The inherent rationale for this guideline was readily apparent to respondents (despite the fact that it was one of the most ignored), as they all seemed to realize that

funding operational costs might inculcate dependency and in doing so discourage sustainability or capacity building of groups and programming. As well, there was a fear that certain groups and organizations would come back for program funding on a constant basis should operational costs be deemed fundable, thereby eroding the opportunity for new initiatives. Nevertheless, it was stated by some of the respondents that *“for many organizations this is the most difficult funding to find”* and supporting applications of this nature, again whether the request be overt or otherwise, is justifiable in special/worthwhile cases, such as with new groups requiring start-up funding; or for essential services where no other avenue for sustainable funding exists.

#### **5.2.1.4 Multi Year Funding**

Multi Year Funding: While it is possible for the local government contractor to commit to funding projects for more than one year, the money cannot be pre-spent. Furthermore, allocations have to be advanced yearly and are subject to annual review by the local government contractor to ensure there are sufficient funds being advanced in order to continue meeting its commitment to the project.

Approximately three quarters of all respondents felt this policy guideline in respect of multiple year funding was consistent with both program and local objectives. It was well recognized that the clause attempts to protect the Columbia Basin Trust and by implication inform local authorities of the potential financial risk(s) that could arise in the event that for some reason or other CBT's LGI programming were interrupted, scaled back or discontinued.<sup>37</sup> Specifically this policy directive serves to inform local communities that there is a risk that the program might not be available in future years and any multi-year commitments so made can not be the responsibility of CBT and, by implication would need to be borne locally. Unfortunately this latter aspect is little appreciated or understood.

For the most part when individuals expressed a problem with the policy directive their concerns were not at all with the concept of risk, but rather a concern that CBT was

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<sup>37</sup> It is important to remember that funding for LGI initiatives depends in large measure on the CBT's return on investments. Should these returns be severely eroded programs such as the Community Initiatives Program and its sub-components would suffer accordingly.

creating uncertainty by not guaranteeing future funding. This perceived uncertainty with confirmed, sustainable funding was quite problematic for many respondents. They noted that this uncertainty was particularly concerning for communities/regions in which funds were very limited and/or where funding for larger projects was being considered with a system of staged funding over a number of years.

#### **5.2.1.5 Leveraging**

Leveraging: This policy guideline stipulates that the CBT and the local government contractor will encourage project proponents to seek funding from other sources

While some suggested making proponents seek leveraging opportunities would make it more time consuming for them and especially “*over the top*” in the case of very small grant requests, over 90 percent agreed that the policy is consistent with program and local objectives. In fact, many stated they always ask proponents whether they have approached other sources of funding as a basic operating principle and in a number of cases provide direction to proponents in this regard. Most respondents acknowledged that in a practical sense this pre-condition of approval allows program funding to be extended to a greater number and greater scope of projects.

#### **5.2.1.6 Private Sector Proposals**

Private Sector Proposals: In general, the allocations made to organizations are for meeting community/public rather than private needs and therefore any private sector proposal must be sponsored by a non-profit community organization and must clearly demonstrate community benefits.

There was almost universal agreement amongst respondents with the policy to disallow private sector proposals except under very special circumstances. In fact, over 95 percent of respondents indicated that this guideline supports the objectives of both the Local Government Initiative Program and local efforts. Fundamentally, they feel the

program should only assist non-profit volunteer rather than for-profit initiatives. However, it should be pointed out that respondents also stated program funding ought not to negatively impact the private sector by supporting projects which compete with the private delivery of goods and services. These respondents viewed such funding as creating an “*unlevel playing field*”.

#### **5.2.1.7 Reporting Requirements**

Reporting Requirements: The local government contractor is required to submit two reports annually – one by the end of September, the other by the end of October – that describe the community involvement process, project contact information, funding allocated to each project, anticipated outcomes, financial account of expenditures compared to allocations and explanation of any variance, administrative costs and any rulings respecting incrementality.

Most respondents admitted that they are not really familiar with program reporting requirements, as this is essentially an administrative task they are not responsible for. Principally, they view it as being necessary for ensuring accountability, as well as potentially a method for monitoring projects.

#### **5.2.1.8 Additional Conditions**

Beyond the focus on existing terms and conditions within the Contribution Agreement, respondents were also asked whether they thought there should be other policies or conditions added. Interestingly however, by far the most frequent response reflected not so much on additional policy directives, but more so that the CBT needed to provide greater clarity on the policy guidelines themselves. The following quote from one of the respondents perhaps best captures this sentiment.

*“Everyone seems to apply their own interpretations of the guidelines regardless of what is contained in the Contribution Agreement. We need more clarity from CBT. It would be helpful as well if the CBT specified the factors one should consider in making judgements on projects in respect to these guidelines...adding weight to the relevance/applicability of the*

*guideline or criteria .... Perhaps a decision matrix of the essential issues and factors that should be considered when looking at incrementality, multi-year funding, leveraging, operating costs and so on.”*

Other notable but less frequent suggestions for policy alternatives/enhancements to the Contribution Agreement included the following:

- As previously noted under “Private Sector Proposals” a policy guideline should be added that stipulates that program funding ought not to negatively impact the private sector by supporting projects that compete with the private delivery of goods and services.
- An explicit guideline should be included that requires groups to give recognition to the CBT and the Local Government Initiative Program through such means as plaques, signage, storyboards, and the like.
- Greater flexibility should be allowed in applying the guidelines for operational costs and multi-year funding. Presumably this would be accommodated within the enhanced clarity referenced in the opening paragraph of this section.
- A condition should be included that states projects must be inspected/attended as a requirement of due diligence.

### **5.2.2 Local Autonomy**

As previously stated respondents generally appreciated and preferred the degree of flexibility afforded local communities and regions in delivering the Local Government Initiative Program<sup>38</sup>. Consequently, when specifically asked whether there should be the flexibility presently allowed or whether the program should be delivered the same in each locality, respondents emphatically indicated their preference by a margin of almost 93 percent in support of local flexibility to 7% against. Within the context of these responses most acknowledged that some level of consistency be applied across all

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<sup>38</sup> As one individual so aptly phrased it: *“No one knows our own community better than our own people.”*

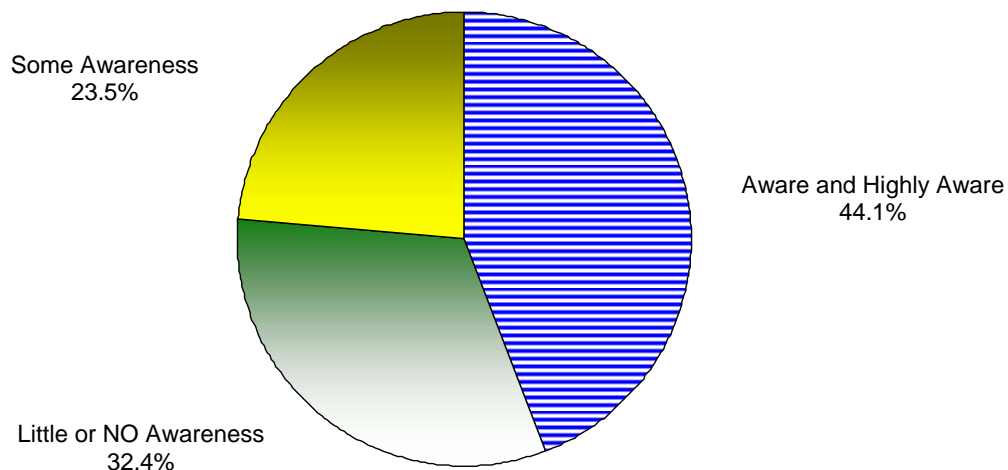
regions/communities but that these aspects of consistency not unduly erode local flexibility.

Of further note, when respondents were asked whether there needs be more, the same, or less local flexibility in delivery, a little under 65 percent opted for the same level (implying positive satisfaction with the way things are) while approximately 28 percent indicated their preference for more flexibility.

### 5.2.3 Public Awareness

Respondents were queried as to whether they felt there is sufficient public awareness of the Columbia Basin Trust and the Local Government Initiative Program relative to the benefits the organization and the program are providing in their respective communities and regions. Specifically, they were asked to indicate their opinion on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented no awareness and 5 represented very aware. The graph below highlights that about one-third feel there is little or no awareness (ratings 1 and 2), with another quarter being unsure (rating 3).

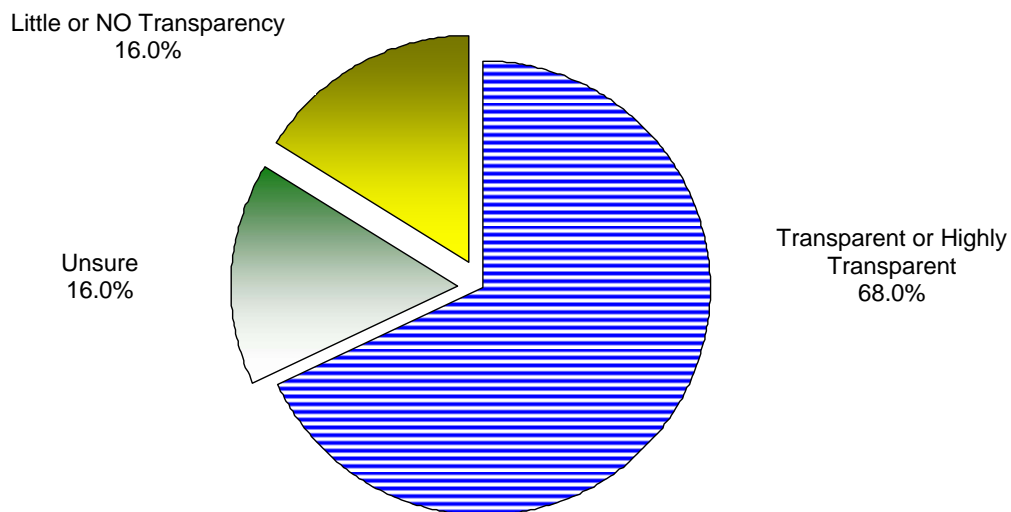
Public Awareness of CBT and Local Government Initiative Program



While it is evident from the above chart that approximately 45 percent feel there is sufficient public awareness of CBT and the Local Government Initiative Program, the study team was often told that this response only reflected that those in the business of seeking funds are aware and the general public is not. As well, some speculated that where there is awareness it is probably greater relative to the Local Government Initiative Program than the CBT itself, and that although some in the public might be aware of the program, they really are not sure of its objectives nor the benefits and certainly not where the money comes from.

In regards to transparency, over 65 percent of respondents indicated that they felt that the local delivery of the Local Government Initiative Program was sufficiently transparent relative to application procedures and decision making. Only about 15 percent indicated there wasn't sufficient transparency with a similar proportion saying they were "unsure".

Perceived Level of Transparency of Process: Local Government Initiative Program



Finally, within the context of the same discussion relative to transparency, 77 percent of respondents stated that they felt there was sufficient opportunity for the public to provide meaningful input into the local design and delivery of the Government Initiatives Program.

### 5.3 Perspectives on Programming Best Practices

When respondents were asked, “what does your community do best in its efforts to design and deliver an effective Local Government Initiative Program”, by far the most common response was the visibility and awareness of the program. They further added that the methods of program promotion, the information provided, and the public meetings all tended to bring not only awareness of the program but more importantly offered an opportunity to engage the public. Quotes from some of the respondents reflecting this sentiment are noted below:

*“Our program engages the public and gives them an opportunity to provide meaningful input into the decision making process...The public votes and these votes are considered in the selection process.”*

*“... our program’s strength lies in the fairness in which decisions for funding projects are made. Our public meetings are inclusive ...there is a comfortable environment for proponents and members of the public ...”*

*“We have been very good at providing information and supporting proponents in their efforts to prepare applications.”*

*“Our decision making process is apolitical. While we value and utilize the inputs of local politicians, decisions are made by a board that reflects the broader interests of the community.”*

*“Our public meetings to consider proposals are very open, transparent and democratic.”*

Other best practices mentioned included the following:

- Utilizing established community needs information/strategies as a means to target/maximize program impacts;
- Connecting proponents to other groups doing similar projects/initiatives to create synergies in delivery.
- Assisting proponents in their efforts to identify and secure additional sources of funding.
- Undertaking joint public meetings with other communities/areas to consider proposals for Local Government Initiative funding.
- Offering a grant writing/application workshop for proponents.



- Utilizing existing community organizations (Foundations) to manage program administration and implementation.
- Providing a community display (i.e., display cabinet) of pictures, mementoes, souvenirs, and letters highlighting projects assisted.

#### **5.4 Perspectives Regarding How Local Areas Could Improve Delivery**

Despite the differences in community structures and local delivery, when asked for their perspectives on “what might your community or any other local contractor do to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Local Government Initiative Program”, there was a convergence of responses from all areas around two broad themes.

Firstly, respondents most frequently mentioned that they felt it was important that their community/region undertake a more effective promotion or awareness effort. Within the context of this comment there were three differing though complimentary perspectives: 1) a desire for more effective promotion locally to increase general public awareness of the benefits the program provides communities; 2) more effective provision of information on the program, its processes and requirements (e.g. where applications can be obtained, the objectives of the program, answering questions on application requirements, better promotion of public meetings, and the like); and finally, 3) more effective promotion of the successes resulting from the program (e.g. display of souvenirs, plaques, mementoes, pictures, storyboards and the like).

Secondly, and only slightly less frequently mentioned than the need for greater promotion/awareness, was the opinion that the Local Government Initiative Program could be measurably improved by minimizing political involvement in the decision making process (or conversely increasing public influence). As an indication of the strong opinions in this regard, although perhaps over stating the depth of feeling of the majority, were the following three: *“this program needs to move away from any political involvement”*; *“we need to keep the program out of the political arena;”* and, *“take the politics out of local delivery”*.

Other common suggestions for improvements in local delivery included the following:

- Ensure successful proponents submit reports on their projects.
- Streamline the application process e.g., electronic applications, mini-grant applications, introduction of pre-screening procedures/criteria.
- Provide documentation clarifying how unique issues/contentious decisions have been handled in the past in order to provide helpful guidelines/precedents for decision makers.

## **5.5 Perspectives Regarding How CBT Could Improve Delivery**

At the end of each interview respondents were queried relative to what they thought the Columbia Basin Trust could do better or differently to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Local Government Initiative Program. Their responses to this question primarily concerned three areas of programming: funding, greater clarity, and promotion.

By far the greatest number of responses related to funding. Quite a few respondents suggested funding levels should be increased, especially since costs for materials and labour have increased considerably over the last ten years. In particular, they felt that after 10 years the funding formula needs to be altered and specifically suggested various alternatives such as increasing the per capita grant or establishing a base amount in addition to an increased per capita grant. Not surprisingly, this last suggestion (i.e., establishing a base amount in addition to an increased per capita grant) was suggested by respondents representing the smaller populated communities and areas, as they expected the amounts provided from larger per capita funding alone would still not alleviate the difficulty some experience in funding the proposals they typically receive.

Comments concerning the need for greater clarity were previously highlighted in section 5.2.1.7. In this regard, there is an inherent perception by many that the current guidelines for the Local Government Initiative Program (as detailed in the Contribution Agreement and accompanying schedules and annexes) are too general and do not

provide sufficient guidance in an increasing number of unique or contentious cases. As noted by a number of respondents: *“this is a very passive program on behalf of the Columbia Basin Trust...”* and *“...there is pretty much a hand’s off policy on behalf of Columbia Basin Trust...”* A significant number of respondents want CBT to re-engage<sup>39</sup> and by doing so to more succinctly and clearly define those key policies and guidelines and if this were to happen it is believed that greater consistency in local implementation would be achieved.

A fairly large number of respondents also indicated that the Columbia Basin Trust should more aggressively promote the LGI program and the role of CBT at local levels. By way of example they suggested that CBT could increase its profile by having a greater presence at local meetings (public meetings and selection committee meetings), and a more visible association with funded projects. In terms of broadly enhancing awareness some suggested that the CBT make more readily available brochures tying CBT efforts directly with LGI implementation; as well as booths/displays to highlight and answer questions from the public at special events in communities.

Other suggested program enhancements included:

- Providing training for new decision makers and administrators. The training, which perhaps could be undertaken every three years to coincide with local elections, would provide background on the CBT as well as information on the Local Government Initiative Program.
- Undertaking more frequent evaluations of the Local Government Initiative Program, perhaps every five years, as a means to provide essential feedback to the communities and as a means to evaluate processes with the thought of improving systems before things get too far down the road.

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<sup>39</sup> Some went so far as to suggest that the CBT Board should get together with Local/Regional Governments and work out a division of powers; one in which CBT would be held more accountable and by implication would require that there be greater engagement and greater responsibility for oversight.

## 6.0 PROPONENT PERSPECTIVES

*“Quality in a service .... is not what you put into it. It is what the client .... gets out of it.”*

**Peter Drucker**

### 6.1 Survey Sample

Considerable effort was expended in collecting and compiling information from both successful and unsuccessful proponents for Local Government Initiative funding. Within each region, applications were grouped by organization and year to better understand the type and scope of projects funded. Where possible, organizations that applied for funding for several projects over the years were considered separate proponents, even though the same person may have been responsible for completing the application process. This was done, as it helped to distinguish between the proponent’s different experiences, especially where they had been both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

A questionnaire was designed and telephone interviews were undertaken to obtain the information. This questionnaire was designed to broadly capture proponent feedback relative to the funding provided, transparency issues, the public input/decision-making process, as well as awareness of CBT and impressions of program benefits. A copy of the questionnaire used is provided in Appendix 2.

It should be noted that it was generally more difficult to gather information from proponents for projects that had not received funding. In most of these cases these respondents had also received funding for other projects through the Program, and could not remember or distinguish between the successful and unsuccessful applications. Interestingly, many of these proponents suggested they “*understood that there wasn’t enough money to go around*” – an explanation that seemed to satisfy them. Others, however, indicated that this explanation did not really provide sufficient information and only contributed to their perception of a lack of transparency and favoritism in program delivery.

A detailed breakdown of the projects funded through the Local Government Initiative Program, as well as the total number of proponents involved by region/community is offered in the table below. As well, the table highlights the number of interviews undertaken and the number of successful and unsuccessful projects/proponents these interviews represented:

Table  
Projects\* And Proponents  
Local Government Initiative Program  
1999 To 2007

Area	Total Successful Projects	Total Successful Proponents	Total Interviews Undertaken	Total Projects /Proponents Represented
Regional District of Central Kootenay	561	313	11	+ 43 (+8%)
Regional District of Kootenay Boundary	76	60	5	9 (12%)
Regional District of East Kootenay	461	215	14	50 (11%)
Revelstoke and Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area "B"	178	60	7	33 (11%)
Golden and Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area "A"	96	54	11	23 (22%)
Valemount	49	24	4	8 (16%)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>166 (12%)</b>
Ktunaxa Nation Council**	30	2	0	0

\*The total number of projects does not include those that were for administration of the Local Government Initiative Program.

\*\*Based on the information we received, LGI funding was distributed directly through the Ktunaxa Nation Council, as they do not include any information on individual applicants. As such, we have not included them in the proponents' survey.

In the beginning of the survey process, an attempt was made to contact project proponents from all years. However, proponents, particularly from the period 1999 to 2004 were either difficult to track down – many had moved away or were no longer involved in the organization – or could not remember enough details about the application process to provide substantively meaningful information.

While the CBT focuses LGI programming on supporting economic, social and environmental initiatives, none of the proponents contacted understood this question and consequently were unclear about the category their project fell in and whether this

attribute was a pre-condition of eligibility. As well, this category was not included in the proponent database developed by the Columbia Basin Trust.

Finally, very few, if any, of the proponents contacted could remember the actual amount of funding applied for and, in some cases, couldn't recall if they had received either full or partial funding. Many remembered that some projects might not have received the full amount they had applied for but couldn't remember the actual dollar amounts. For consistency, the actual amount of money received was used as the amount applied for.

The following provides a summary of the sample survey by region. In reviewing the list of projects that received funding over the years, it appears that administration fees charged by each delivery partner were included as projects. Therefore, in calculating the total number of projects per region, we have removed those that refer to administrative fees to more accurately reflect the number of projects that received funding for social, economic and/or environmental community initiatives.

### **6.1.1 The Regional District of Central Kootenay**

Of the 570 projects that received approval in Central Kootenay during the period 1999 to 2007, nine were for the annual administration fee collected by either the Regional District or several community organizations. In all, 561 projects representing 313 proponents have received funding to date. Interviews were conducted with representatives selected randomly from this pool.

Specifically, information for the study was gathered from interviews with representatives of 11 community organizations representing a total of 43 plus projects receiving funding over the period 1999 to 2007. Importantly, in addition to obtaining information relative to successful project applications, these respondents were also interviewed regarding any unsuccessful applications they submitted under the program. Note: one organization received funding for several projects in 2001 but no exact numbers were provided.

### **6.1.2 The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary**

Of the 83 projects that received approval in the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary during the period 1999 to 2007, seven were for the annual administration fee collected by the Regional District for delivery of the Local Government Initiative Program. In all, 76 projects representing 60 proponents have received funding to date. Interviews were conducted with representatives selected randomly from the pool of 60 proponents.

Interviews were undertaken with representatives of five community organizations representing a total of nine projects receiving funding over the period 1999 to 2007. These proponents were interviewed relative to both successful and unsuccessful applications.

### **6.1.3 The Regional District of East Kootenay**

Of the 464 projects that received approval from the Regional District of East Kootenay during the period 1999 to 2007, three were for annual administration fees collected by the District for administering the Local Government Initiative Program. In total, 461 projects representing 215 proponents have received funding to date. Interviews were conducted with representatives selected randomly from the pool of 215 proponents.

Information for the study was gathered from interviews with representatives of 14 community organizations representing a total of 50 projects receiving funding over the period 1999 to 2007. In addition, these respondents were interviewed relative to any unsuccessful applications they submitted to the Program during the period.

#### **6.1.4 The City of Revelstoke and Area B**

Of the 186 projects that received approval by Revelstoke and Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area “B” during the period 1999 to 2007, eight were for administration fees collected by the City of Revelstoke for the Local Government Initiative Program. In total, 178 projects representing 60 proponents have received funding to date. Interviews were conducted with representatives selected randomly from the pool of 60 proponents.

Information for this study was gathered from interviews with representatives of seven community organizations representing a total of 33 projects receiving funding over the period 1999 to 2007. These representatives were also interviewed regarding any unsuccessful applications they submitted to the Program.

#### **6.1.5 Town of Golden and Area A**

Of the 104 projects that received approval by Golden and Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area “A” during the period 1999 to 2007, eight were for the annual administration fees collected by the Town of Golden and the Golden and District Community Foundation. In all, 96 projects representing 54 proponents have received funding to date. Interviews were conducted with representatives selected randomly from the pool of 54 proponents.

Information for this study was gathered from interviews with representatives of 11 community organizations representing a total of 23 projects that received funding over the period 1999 to 2007. These interviews also collected information relative to any unsuccessful applications these representatives submitted to the Local Government Initiative Program during that period of time.



### **6.1.6 The Village of Valemount and Area H**

Of the 54 total projects that received approval by the Village of Valemount and the Regional District of Fraser Fort George Area “H” during the period 1999 to 2007, five were for the annual administration fees collected by the Village of Valemount for administering the Local Government Initiative Program. In all, 49 projects representing 24 proponents have received funding to date. Interviews were conducted with representatives selected randomly from the pool of 24 proponents.

Information for the study was gathered from interviews with representatives of four community organizations representing a total of 8 projects that received funding over the period 1999 to 2007. As well, these representatives were also interviewed regarding any unsuccessful applications they submitted to the Program.

### **6.1.7 Ktunaxa Nation Council**

Of the 38 projects that were approved by the Ktunaxa Nation Council during the period 1999 to 2007, eight were for annual administration fees collected by the Council for delivering the Local Government Initiative Program. In all, 30 projects have received funding to date.

Unlike other delivery partners, the Ktunaxa Nation Council distributed monies to projects internally. That is, with the exception of the Akisqnuq First Nation and St. Mary’s Indian Band, there were no individual “proponents” listed. As such, no proponent interviews were conducted for projects funded by the Ktunaxa First Nation.

## **6.2 Proponent Feedback on LGI Operations and Impact**

A number of survey questions focused specifically on matters relative to local LGI delivery and operations, as well as proponent efforts to participate in programming.

While a broad and diverse array of opinions respecting the program's operational parameters were collected, certain common themes emerged.

### **6.2.1 Funding Applied for and Funding Received**

During the first few years of the program, proponents indicated they typically received the full amount of funding requested. In more recent years however, as more people have become aware of the program, many groups have noticed that they now more often than not receive only a partial amount. Furthermore, a number of respondents felt some local delivery authorities, especially in areas where the total amount of funding is small, are *"stockpiling funds for a couple of years"* in order to ensure they have enough to fulfill demand from applicants in future years. This has gotten to the point where some proponents are even suggesting it is not worth their while to apply for CBT funds any longer. As one group noted, they have *"given up on going after CBT funding"* and *"have lost faith in the process"* as the amount of money being allocated to each group keeps getting smaller and smaller ... *"not large enough to do anything substantial with"*.

In cases where funding was rejected or only partially given, the majority of proponents couldn't recall if they were given an explanation for the decision. As indicated earlier in the report, they commonly assumed it was because there wasn't enough money to go around, and seemed to be satisfied with this explanation. Additionally, respondents could not recall if there was an appeal process in these instances. Again, they did not seem to be concerned about this, and when probed further, proponents usually stated they would not have appealed anyway. *"You don't look a gift horse in the mouth,"* said one individual.

However, feedback from the Central and East Kootenays were somewhat out of line with the thoughts and impressions from other areas. Specifically some proponents in these Regions expressed frustration about receiving only partial funds without what they felt was sufficient explanation. *"Some projects got lots of money while others didn't get any,"* said one proponent, and the reasons for partially funding some projects while giving others more substantial amounts were not clear. They particularly did not agree

with the practice of giving out smaller amounts – such as \$500 –, as this was viewed as not substantial enough to make a difference to the success of projects (although in one case, a proponent suggested having the smaller amount would have been preferable to no money at all).

Several proponents suggested that, while the application process itself is clearly laid out, the criteria for how decisions are made to fund projects is not. They suggested that CBT consider tightening up the process for determining funding levels and ensure that this information is clear and easy to understand, as well as readily available to proponents. They also felt some attention should be given to the practice of allocating small amounts for projects that require and request more substantial funding in order to succeed.

### **6.2.2 Transparency/Clarity of Process**

There are considerable differences in the perceptions of the process required to apply successfully for Local Government Initiative funding. As expected, larger, well-established organizations with paid staff responsible for fund-raising are more familiar with, and better able to articulate the application process, while smaller, volunteer-run organizations have less experience and more difficulty clearly understanding and satisfying the required procedures.

It should also be noted that when asked about the process for evaluating projects, most proponents initially stated that the process was clear. However, later in the course of the interview or after further probing, many proponents admitted they were not clear about and/or were dissatisfied with how and why certain projects received funding while others did not. For example, most proponents do not understand how much weight, if any, is given to the community voting process in the final selection decisions.

In general proponents find the information about the application process itself – including timeframes, deadlines, dates and locations of public presentations – very clear and straightforward. What is not clear is what factors the selection committee uses in deciding which projects get funding and which do not, and why some projects receive

the full amount requested while others only receive partial funding. As one proponent noted “... *everything seems to change from year to year as to what types of projects are eligible for funding*”. Still another respondent added “*they don’t give a lot of feedback ... they seem to have their own criteria*”.

The process is particularly difficult for those with little experience in fund raising. As one volunteer with no previous experience in filling out grant applications admitted, “*I found the process difficult and confusing... it was hard to find information about the Community Initiatives Program (LGI) on the website, and the instructions seemed very vague ... the objectives and language are confusing for a layperson*” who is not involved in fundraising on a regular basis.

Clearly then, a perception exists amongst the majority of proponents that there are no criteria or that the criteria are either unclear or insufficient. The feeling is that these criteria should be explicit and made available to proponents at the beginning of the application process, possibly by incorporating them into the application process.

Other concerns/improvements expressed by proponents included:

- An interest in having the application form available online so that proponents could submit them electronically rather than having to print out the forms and complete them by hand. As one proponent mentioned, “*manual typewriters are hard to find these days*”.
- The wording of the application form should be reviewed and made user-friendlier for proponents not familiar with the fund-raising process. One suggestion is to circulate the form and instructions amongst non-professionals for their feedback and input.

### **6.2.3 Community Input and Decision-Making Process**

The community input and decision-making process varied considerably from one region to the next and, within those regions, from one community and electoral area to another. Nevertheless, it is clear from interviews with proponents that one of the things

they like best about the Local Government Initiative Program is the opportunity the public has to provide input into the decision-making process, as they felt it reinforces local ownership and community pride. However, despite the overwhelming popularity of the community meetings, most proponents are unclear about what weight proponent presentations carry in the final decision-making process.

In some areas for example, residents are asked to vote or rank their top three, five or ten projects at the public meetings. The selection committee then takes this ranking into consideration in making final selections, although proponents are unclear how much weight the voting process counts towards the final decision. In other areas, proponents are invited to make a presentation to the selection committee. While the meeting is open to the general public and other applicants, participants do not vote on the applications. Again, proponents were unclear how much the public presentations contribute to the final decision.

It should be noted as well, that some expressed concern that the voting process at public meetings left itself wide open to possible abuse, such as proponents stacking meetings with staff members and supporters. *“In one case, one applicant had five staff members at the public meeting ... there’s a danger of swaying the vote.”* Others expressed concern that the decision should be based on the merits of the project rather than on a vote by the community. As one respondent put it *“this isn’t a popularity contest” ... every applicant puts a great deal of effort and detail into their application. It’s not fair to allow someone to vote on a project based simply on a five-minute presentation”*.

Furthermore, in areas where voting occurs, no formal registration is required at the public meetings, nor are participants “screened” relative to their eligibility to vote. Instead, they rely on the honour system to ensure that only residents vote. As one proponent said, *“everyone knows everyone else”*.

It should also be stressed that public meetings and presentations vary from one area to another. In one unique case, for example, the public meetings are similar to trade or consumer shows. Each applicant is invited to set up an information booth at the community hall and talk to people on an individual basis. Interested members of the

public wander through the hall, stopping to visit the projects they are interested in before casting their vote.

In another case, there are only a handful of people at the public meeting – the Regional District Area representative, a couple of staff members, and a few applicants. Elsewhere, another public meeting drew three members of the public and 11 committee members.

Given the popularity of the public meeting process, consideration should be given to ensuring that the public voting process is as transparent and credible as possible in all regions without making it so cumbersome and frustrating that the spirit of resident input and influence is jeopardized.

#### **6.2.4 CBT Awareness**

In general, proponents stated they were aware funding for their projects came from the Columbia Basin Trust through the Regional District in partnership with either local councils or community foundations. Those from the most affected areas recognize the broader political significance of the funding (i.e., as compensation for lands that were flooded during the construction of the dams), while proponents farther away from the most affected areas tended to view the CBT more as a valuable source of local funds rather than as a provider of compensation for losses.

Many proponents noted that they were also aware that the funds are designated specifically for local initiatives and are distinct from funding available through other sector CBT programs. For example, in addition to receiving local initiatives funding for certain projects, some local arts and cultural groups also received separate funding from CBT through a regional sector arts and cultural alliance that they could then use to fund individual artists.

However, almost everyone interviewed commonly referred to the funding as CBT or Columbia Basin Trust funding. No one used the term Local Government Initiative and only with further probing did they recognize the term “local initiatives” or “community

initiatives”. And, while some organizations mentioned they always acknowledged CBT for their contribution to projects, others said that they did not give recognition to CBT because the application process, letter of approval and cheque were all issued by their local delivery authority. In fact, one proponent said that they thought, *“CBT funds are pooled with the city’s funds and are not allocated separately”*.

In addition, with the exception of a handful of respondents, nearly all proponents interviewed said they had never been contacted by a representative of the CBT to follow-up on their projects. Formal follow-up by the local delivery authority – either in the form of a telephone call or an on-site visit – also varied. In many cases, particularly in the smaller, more rural communities, the Regional District Area Representative and administrative staff were well-known in the community and often attended various events involving successful Local Government Initiative projects. Most proponents considered that this informal contact constituted “knowing about the project,” even though the representatives may not have been there in an official capacity. Also, proponents are more familiar with their local Regional District office and/or community foundation because they are in frequent contact with these organizations during the application process.

Based on these observations, consideration should be given to developing a strategy to provide greater recognition of CBT’s role in the Local Government Initiative Program, including:

- Appointing regional area representatives to personally visit communities at key points during the application process and to follow-up on projects. These follow-up visits could be based on the size and scope of the project itself, as well as on the amount of funding received from CBT.
- Ensuring that a CBT representative attends key project launches and events.
- Ensuring that community leaders and decision-makers are familiar with CBT’s role in the Local Government Initiative Program, with special consideration given to the smaller, more rural communities in the most affected areas.

- Ensuring that information about the Local Government Initiative Program is easily available on the CBT's website as well as on partner websites, including participating Regional Districts, municipalities and community foundations.

### 6.2.5 Community Impact and Contribution

The contribution that the Local Government Initiative Program is making on communities within the Columbia River Basin is evident from the following comments made by respondents:

- *“CBT funding demonstrates to our other funders and provincial organizations that we have local support and awareness within our communities, and that we provide a truly valuable service that is not provided elsewhere. Without CBT funding, this group wouldn't have been able to deliver its community education outreach programs.”*
- *“It's really good to have money from the CBT going back into the community, and especially to have some of it going towards the development of our art, culture and heritage projects.”*
- *“I think it's good that CBT is looking at non-profit societies and groups. That's where the money is most needed.”*
- *“The local initiatives funding from Columbia Basin Trust helps us leverage other funds by demonstrating that we have strong local support from our communities.”*
- *“The local meeting is a huge local event. It gives everyone a chance to tell others about what you're doing and learn about what else is happening in the community. Everyone at those town meetings is working hard and really making a difference in the community – volunteers, staff, government representatives – all in one place.”*



- *“The local initiatives funding has much more of an impact on the community than the larger CBT funds. They’re more effective because the decisions are made locally and includes input from the community. They’re also more flexible for smaller projects and organizations.”*
- *“If we couldn’t demonstrate that we had the support of the community, or didn’t have any community partners, then we couldn’t have run the program. The CBT money was critical in building partnerships, adding credibility for community support, and leveraging other funds.*
- *“It’s really good that the town disburses the money. They’re really knowledgeable about what’s important in the community. They know where the gaps are, they know where the struggles are in terms of where the money needs to be spent. It empowers the municipalities and gets the people sitting on town council to become more involved in the community services side of things.”*

## 7.0 SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Simply being good at something doesn't guarantee you success. You must have good direction and purpose....”*

As indicated in the previous four sections of this report, a substantial amount of information was collected for this investigative effort. Most of this information was obtained through formalized interviews and informal discussions with individuals directly involved or affected, and/or specifically interested in the implementation of the Community Initiatives Program generally and the Local Government Initiative Program in particular. While not extensive, a number of key CBT documents were also reviewed and a number of current and former CBT employees were interviewed for the purposes of enabling us to establish a foundation and a perspective for this evaluation. The effort was made easier by the fact that almost without exception the majority of individuals we interviewed or talked with were very candid, very expansive, and occasionally, very vociferous in their comments and opinions.

The following notes broadly summarize our observations. These observations are organized around those broad themes spelled out in the RFP (regarding program effectiveness and program administration) and reflect on what we understand to be the key performance expectations or performance criteria inherent within the program's original design.

From these observations a number of recommendations logically follow. In some cases these recommendations are borne out of the specific circumstances and challenges experienced in individual communities and regions, though they lend themselves to a ready adaptation to other regions and communities. In other cases these recommendations logically follow from the general character of a program that has achieved so much in ten years but is picking up some bad habits or is losing a sense of its original purpose.

To be sure the sheer number of recommendations proposed will undoubtedly suggest that there is a lot to do to ensure the program continues to be one of the best community development programs in Canada, if not the best. But the truth of the matter is that overall there are no surprises nor great changes that are required. Of course there needs to be some new directions and there needs to be certain changes or improvements in some established patterns, and most importantly there needs to be a commitment by CBT and their local partners to make these changes. But collectively these pre-requisites are not unduly daunting.

## **7.1 A Review of Program Effectiveness**

There are two perspectives from which program effectiveness can be evaluated. On the one hand, most obviously effectiveness is reflected in the aggregate impacts of programming to date. On the other, and conceivably from an organizational perspective the more important of the two, effectiveness is reflected the consistency of these impacts with the original expected outcomes.

Relative to aggregate impact, without question few could argue with the observation that the Community Initiatives Program generally and the Local Government Initiative Program in particular is having positive and significant impacts<sup>40</sup> within all of the regions and communities of the Columbia Basin. In fact a significant number of programs and projects would simply not have occurred without CIP/LGI funding. The benefits that have accrued through program delivery are diverse in scope and breadth, broadly building and enhancing the capacity of local communities and regions to more effectively address economic, social and environmental issues/concerns.

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<sup>40</sup> Certainly defining suitable and realistic quantitative criteria and undertaking a quantitative assessment of program impacts would itself be an exceedingly difficult task. However, the absence of a quantitative baseline is somewhat concerning in that while we can very well attest to the fact that certain benefits did accrue to the Columbia Basin and its citizens, the magnitude of these benefits is indeterminate; forever leaving one wondering what exactly are the measurable benefits arising through program implementation; are they the best that can be accomplished given current funding levels and implementation methodologies; what is the value for money; and, are these benefits aggregately increasing/decreasing in impact? All of these questions have implications to how the program is currently delivered and arguably how best to enhance efforts in the future.

On the matter of the consistency of the impacts with the original desired outcomes of the program, for the most part communities/regions have understood and maintained the integrity and the values inherent within the original program design. However there are some concerns of note, some of which are significant and serious while others are less so:

Relative to the impacts themselves:

- There is a lack of balance in the observed impacts. Social sector programming seems to represent by far the lion's share of program funding and environmental spending the least.
- For the most part benefits are incremental though there are occasions where incrementality is an obvious issue, and as such, the impact of projects supported might not be adding any greater benefit or value to the region/community.
- The sustainability of some benefits/projects is highly questionable where a culture of dependency seems to have resulted in those instances where supporting the operational costs for selected proponents/projects has become a norm.
- In a number of communities worthwhile projects are not supported because available funds are unduly limited as a consequence of the structure of local delivery, i.e. allocations from regional pools to local/area pools.

Relative to consistency with the program mandate/intent:

- While the exception rather than the rule, there are instances where the quality of program governance (transparency and decision making) is seriously lacking.
- Beyond the contractual obligations relative to program delivery, there are necessarily implied obligations and standards to local contractors that CIP/LGI be represented in a manner and behavior consistent with the standards and best interests of the Columbia Basin Trust. This has not always been the case.
- In some communities/regions the methodology of program implementation (exacerbated perhaps by a lack of transparency) has created a definitive perception that the program lacks equitable access.

## **7.2 A Review of Program Administration**

Performance or results are a function of implementation and since the program has shown some significant beneficial impacts, we can assume that overall the program has been administered reasonably well. The continuity of successful administrators in a number of the local delivery organizations together with other positive contributing factors such as support from CBT in terms of ready access to liaison officers and annual administrator workshops, have obviously served to keep the quality of program administration high.

Of course, there are some exceptions where administrative efforts from both sides (i.e., the contractor and the CBT), have not been especially effective and these exceptions tend to stand out. Certainly the problems that have occurred are not systemic but rather seem to occur for several reasons; for example, when there is an apparent disconnect between the administrator and CBT; on those occasions where the workload is especially burdensome; or during those times when there is unexpected interventions in day to day activities. These exceptions do not in and of themselves take away from the good things that have been accomplished, but rather they point to areas/matters that require attention and resolution if programming is to continue to yield positive returns for the Columbia Basin Trust and the citizens of the Basin.

For the most part available fees for administrative services have also been sufficient to maintain a quality service.

### **7.2.1 Program Promotion**

As noted previously the Local Government Initiative Program is well advertised as part of the annual Request for Proposals effort. In most cases sufficient recognition is given the Columbia Basin Trust in these announcements and subsequently at the public meeting. Thus in terms of meeting the basic requirements of the contract, there is nothing substantially out of order. Certainly with a good number of key stakeholders (including members of the selection committees, decision makers and proponents) there

is a high level of awareness of the Columbia Basin Trust and the Local Government Initiative program.

However, if the goal is that of informing and keeping aware the public at large, and not simply keeping those already in the know in the know, then for the most part overall awareness is lacking. This shortfall may be a consequence of insufficient advertising and promotion, including an insufficient on the ground presence from the CBT. As well, the methodology of program implementation often works against raising the profile of CBT. The very fact of local delivery, local approvals/authorizations, local issuance of cheques and the like all serve to lower the profile of CBT and raise the impression that the program and its benefits are the sole consequence of local actions and local sources.

### **7.2.2 Project Identification, Selection, Follow-Up and Public Input**

Though there are some obvious similarities, the process of project identification and selection varies, in some cases quite dramatically amongst the participating regions/communities. In some areas, for example, the selection process is highly transparent with established selection criteria reflecting community priorities; meaningful public input; and apolitical decision making. In these instances the identification and appointment of selection committee members is normally an open process with interested individuals applying for positions and members chosen for their expertise, interest and impartiality. In other cases the process is considerably less transparent and consequently many perceive it as flawed and suspect with some suggesting that program funding is being decided by a group of insiders and funds are being used to support the projects and activities of a hand-picked minority of those of like mind. To the degree that not only must the program be delivered transparently, efficiently and ethically, but it must also be perceived to do so, there appears to be some cause for concern and ample justification for some change.

The whole matter of the openness and impartiality of the selection process; the selection committee membership and appointments; decision-making; final

approvals/authorizations; are in many cases not well understood and in some cases not viewed altogether favourably.

As a rule proponents do not get much feedback on their applications – responses either being a notification they were successful and that a cheque is in the mail, or that they are getting less than what they applied for, or their project was not successful. There are exceptions but the norm is little feedback and little opportunity to appeal.

More frequent than not feedback in terms of “we wanted to spread the money around” is the usual rationale that proponents hear when they do not get their project approved or they only receive a portion of that requested. Unfortunately this response is evidence of a lack of strategic selection criteria whereby proposals should be evaluated for the relative value they bring to the community, or simply a lack of serious discussion and decision making than a fair and adequate response to a proponent.

For those proponents receiving less than what they applied for and then accepting what they get, begs the question what did they do differently than what they proposed and does that still constitute or support the initial decision to approve the project.

Notably few if any local delivery agencies/authorities have any formal follow-up program other than collecting and reviewing proponent financial reports. This lack of due diligence – as in were the monies spent where they were intended to be spent; and/or, did the project proceed as originally envisaged – is a critical missing element in assessing impact and effectiveness. Admittedly in small communities everyone generally knows whether a project proceeded or not but there remains some uncertainty regardless. And that uncertainty is somewhat troubling.

Public awareness and involvement implies inclusiveness and collaboration. The act of simply informing the public is neither inclusive not collaborative. While some regions and communities have aggressively facilitated and encouraged public involvement, others have not.

### **7.2.3 Program Delivery**

The strength of the Local Government Initiative Program is that it is locally driven. As such, despite a few similarities delivery methodologies at the local level are necessarily different and reflect the uniqueness of each region/community. In this regard, there are some methodologies that seem to be stronger than others, though no single methodology is in and of itself the best practice. In fact, none are entirely perfect but there are certainly a collection of best practices that should/could be shared by all. Consequently, in terms of program effectiveness and efficiency it matters not so much the methodology chosen for delivery, but that the methodology best reflects each region's/community's best interests and those of the Columbia Basin Trust.

While local ownership is the program's greatest strength it might also be its greatest weakness. Local ownership correctly implies devolution of some powers and authorities from the Columbia Basin Trust to local community's and regions. Under normal circumstances this devolution of power brings with it certain accountabilities and responsibilities. But in some areas CBT seems to lack a willingness or commitment to ensure compliance with its prescribed policies. This has contributed to some current problems and inefficiencies in delivery.

In the same vein, there are occasions where due to insufficient applications or insufficient funds, funds are held over to future years. In fact, in some cases they are held over for several years until such time as there is deemed to be a sufficient amount to make it worthwhile to consider/support applications. Some suggest that the timing of these hold-overs and sudden disbursements tend to coincide with local elections. Whether this happens by accident or design is somewhat irrelevant, the end result is the entire process and intention is perceived to be tainted.

### **7.2.4 Program Administration Costs**

Each delivery organization is afforded a sum equivalent to 10% of the grant allowance to cover local program implementation. While, this sum is consistent with programs of this nature and appears to be reasonable, it might not reflect the differing



methodologies of delivery or the fixed costs associated with delivery when the total amount of grant funding is particularly small and hence the aggregate allowance for administrative costs is similarly small. Most local delivery authorities however claimed the funding for administration is sufficient, especially when CBT related efforts are incorporated or blended in with other non-CBT efforts that the administrator might be undertaking and being paid for from another source.

### **7.2.5 CBT-Local Government Agreement**

The relationship between local partners and the Columbia Basin Trust is governed by the CBT-Local Government Agreement. This agreement was developed in the early years of the program and has remained relatively unchanged through-out, despite a ten year history of implementation, and numerous interpretations and precedents/rules of thumb in terms of its application.

It is significant that a large number of local decision-makers felt CBT guidelines for the Local Government Initiative Program are too vague and thus open to a very liberal interpretation to fit almost any circumstance. Not only has this caused considerable confusion on the part of decision-makers relative to exactly what the intent of the guidelines actually are, but as well among proponents in determining the relative merits of applying for funding for particular projects.

It is also quite apparent that CBT has not taken a firm position relative to compliance on some specific clauses/aspects by allowing non-complying activities/projects to proceed. As such this lack of firm insistence on compliance has created greater uncertainty. Of course there is usually a strong rationale for allowing non-compliance in the sense that the permitted activity is significantly beneficial to the community/region or something similar. The problem though is *“when are the rules the rules?”*

On a clause by clause basis the most difficulties either in interpretation or intent are the clauses in respect to incrementality (interpretation) and operational costs (intent).

### 7.3 Recommendations

A number of recommendations follow logically from the observations, comments and opinions of stakeholders, decision makers, proponents and the study team. These recommendations are presented for consideration by the CBT in light of their interest in assessing the relative merits of program implementation to date and where it might go in the future. While there is some interdependence among the proposed recommendations, most are stand alone. Each recommendation is intended to make the program more effective and efficient. Collectively these recommendations can yield significant returns to the CBT and the communities and citizens of the Basin. However, each needs to be assessed and evaluated on its own merits relative to the priorities and interests of the CBT and decisions made accordingly.

#### **Recommendation 1:**

##### **Program Extension with Enhanced Core Funding**

The Local Government Initiative Program should be continued for a minimum of five years beyond the end date of the current agreement. As well, additional funds should be allocated from the Columbia Basin Trust to not only sustain the existing level of year over year contributions, but to significantly increase these impacts.

#### **Recommendation 2:**

##### **New Program Funding**

Given the relatively small size of the funding allocation available for individual community projects, CBT should consider establishing a special pool of funding that could be devoted to funding larger, more strategic initiatives in order to achieve relatively more significant economic, social and environmental objectives,. As a pre-requisite these initiatives would need to provide benefit to the applying Regional District as a whole (or in the case of Valemount, Golden, Ktunaxa Nation and Revelstoke to the aggregate areas they represent in the LGI). This would encourage communities/regions to work in a more collaborative fashion in examining initiatives that have a broader regional scope and impact.

Similarly, consideration should also be given to providing another pool of funding for larger projects that demonstrate significant impacts across several regions within the Columbia Basin Trust territory. This would enable CBT to support projects that have greater regional impacts, and open up additional possibilities to leverage the support of other funders and in so doing provide even greater benefit to Basin regions and communities.

### **Recommendation 3:**

#### **Minimum Base of Regional/Community Program Funding**

Regardless of the local delivery methodology followed, from the pool of funds allocated to each area/region, each community/electoral area where said funds have been divided up and allocated separately, should receive from that central pool a minimum base amount of funding of not less than \$5,000. This will assist communities/areas that are finding it difficult to fund projects because their share of per capita funding is especially small.

### **Recommendation 4:**

#### **Training and HRD for Decision Makers**

Every three years, CBT should offer a one-day workshop/seminar on the CIP program to all groups involved in delivery of the program (both elected and non-elected). The sessions should be held shortly after municipal elections and invite newly elected as well as re-elected Directors/Committee Members. This would especially allow those new to the process to be properly introduced to the program and its delivery. As well, it would facilitate the broader sharing of best practices and offer CBT the opportunity to deal with any problems/issues that have arisen over the previous three years.

**Recommendation 5:****Training and HRD for Administrators**

CBT should continue its yearly meeting of administrators as an opportunity to share best practices; seek input/support in managing local delivery; and improve program administrative/delivery skills and efforts.

**Recommendation 6:****Training and HRD for Proponents**

Local delivery partners should be encouraged (continue) to offer proposal development and writing assistance to those groups who lack the skills/capacity to be effective in accessing CIP funds on their own.

**Recommendation 7:****Program Promotion**

While it is understood that some efforts are currently underway, CBT needs to reaffirm its intention to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing/promotion strategy for the CIP Program. The strategy needs to include such things as a requirement that all communication related to the CIP program clearly indicate CBT as the source of funding (conceivably this might include that all forms and cheques come from CBT); that the program is highlighted on the CBT and Regional District/Community web sites; that public announcements appear in the local media relative to who has received CIP project funding, with credit given to the CBT; that photo opportunities are arranged involving CBT Board and/or staff on larger projects; and, at least annually a feature story in the local media about successful CBT funded projects.

**Recommendation 8:****Program Promotion**

CBT should coordinate a follow up on the projects that have been funded by CIP/LGI and a report (complete with photos) on what has been achieved. This could be used as material to promote the program and to showcase the value that CBT has provided in

the region. Disaggregated by region, local storyboards/display cases could be displayed to enhance these efforts.

**Recommendation 9:**

**Program Promotion**

The Regional Districts and other communities involved in delivering the CIP/LGI program should be encouraged to enhance their promotional efforts beyond ads in local newspapers calling for funding submissions. A cost effective means of getting the word out would be to send a broadcast e-mail to all of the community-based organizations in the region, informing them of the call for submissions and providing them with details on the program and how to apply. The organizations could also be encouraged to put notices about the CIP in their newsletters and other communiqués so that a larger group in the community becomes aware of the funding opportunity.

**Recommendation 10:**

**Local/Regional Strategies**

CBT should encourage local/regional partners to establish a committee of community stakeholders to define clear objectives for the CIP/LGI program within their region where a definitive local strategy does not already exist. This process should be done annually in advance of the call for proposals.

**Recommendation 11:**

**Local/Regional Selection Committees**

Program guidelines should require that each community/electoral area establish a community advisory committee (selection committee) comprised of no less than seven (7) individuals serving no more than one single three year term (preferably with an overlap). Furthermore, the committee should be representative of a cross-section of stakeholder groups (i.e., local administration, business community, social agencies and authorities, environmental groups, educational organizations, youth, seniors and the like), and include not more than two local politicians. These committees would be responsible for reviewing applications and making funding recommendations. While

final approvals should continue to be made by local municipal councils or Regional Districts, any proposed exceptions or modifications to those recommendations presented by the Selection Committee should require an agreement or consensus between the two authorities before proceeding.

**Recommendation 12:**

**CBT Representation**

CBT should consider having representation at each Selection Committee meeting to act as an advisor on such matters related to program guidelines and policies.

**Recommendation 13:**

**Development of Decision Matrixes**

CBT and local contractors should jointly develop decision-matrixes that explicitly reflect the intent of the policy directives contained in the Contribution Agreement. Such decision-matrixes would list the factors/issues that need to be evaluated when proponent applications are being considered, be tools for assisting decision-making, and provide consistency and transparency to the selection process. Furthermore, they should be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect new factors/issues and otherwise ensure they remain relevant.

**Recommendation 14:**

**Equitable Access**

Some consideration should be given to limiting the number of times a group can receive funding in consecutive years (e.g. no more than three consecutive years of CIP funding). This will serve the purpose of opening up access to a limited pool of funds and reassure prospective proponents and the public at large that it isn't always the same groups getting funding.

**Recommendation 15:****Application Formats and Clarity**

CBT should promote and support delivery authorities in their efforts to streamline and/or facilitate the application process including encouraging the use of electronic LGI applications with on-line compatibility. Within this context, efforts should be introduced to reduce the complexity of application formats (language); and consideration given the simplification of application formats for small grant requests.

**Recommendation 16:****Sharing Best Practices – Delivery Methodologies**

Inasmuch as this is a locally driven program, CBT should assist local regions/communities in their efforts to seek out, review and assess various implementation/administrative methodologies. Various formats should be supported and encouraged where they are preferred by the community and where positive administrative and program impacts are likely to result. Within this context the Community Foundation model has an excellent reputation inasmuch as mandates are complimentary, and the process of granting is particularly attractive for its transparency and apolitical character. However this model is just one model and, while it is an excellent template, it might not be the best overall solution for all regions.

**Recommendation 17:****Project Administration – Fees**

In addition to the 10% allowance for administrative costs, CBT should consider apportioning a minimum base amount for project administration regardless of the amount of the allocated pool of funds for grants.

**Recommendation 18:****Disbursement of Funds**

CBT should require that each community/electoral area disburse their entire annual allocation to eligible projects. Failing this they should be required to either assign it to another area or return it to CBT.

**Recommendation 19:****Proponent Applications to Multiple Communities**

CBT should confirm that applicants are able to apply for funding from more than one community/electoral area. However, they should be required to stipulate on their applications how much they are requesting from each area, with the total amount requested not exceeding total project costs.

**Recommendation 20:****Contribution Agreement Clarity**

The Columbia Basin Trust should make the CIP (and by implication the Local Government Initiative Program) guidelines more clear and explicit. As well, changes should be made where changes are required to ensure the program is relevant and effective. Of particular note:

- At the very least operational costs should be considered for funding of start-ups with a realistic sustainable long-term plan.
- While contentious, only legal entities should be eligible to receive CBT funding in order to ensure that proper accountability is maintained. In cases where projects emanate from groups that are not legally constituted, they should be required to have their project sponsored by a legally established organization.
- All successful proponents should be required to clearly acknowledge CBT and report back on what action(s)/activity(ies) they undertook to acknowledge the role of CBT in supporting their efforts.
- Require that any project in which CIP/LGI funds are utilized undergo the same application/public meeting/selection process, regardless of where the application is sourced or who the proponent is.
- Require that funded projects not compete with private sector initiatives.

**Recommendation 21:****Contribution Agreement Compliance**

The Columbia Basin Trust should monitor the delivery of the program more closely to ensure that the guidelines are followed.



**Recommendation 22:****Program Evaluation**

The CIP (LGI) program should be evaluated, at a minimum, every five years to ensure it is achieving key objectives and is being delivered in a satisfactory manner.

**Recommendation 23:****Public Involvement**

Columbia Basin Trust should insist on meaningful (influential) public involvement in local CIP (LGI) Program delivery beyond representation on local Selection Committees and beyond participating in efforts to annually prepare local strategies/priorities for CIP (LGI) programming. While suggestions as to how that might best be accomplished by local communities/regions could be provided (e.g. a percentage of the overall vote in Selection Committee decisions) there should not be any mandated format. This will allow each local delivery authority to organize and arrange for this meaningful involvement in the manner that best fits with local delivery efforts. However, each delivery authority should report to CBT on an annual basis spelling out specifically how the public was afforded an opportunity to provide input and how that input was duly considered in the process of local decision making.

**Recommendation 24:****Due Diligence**

At least annually a representative of Columbia Basin Trust together with each local administrator should undertake site visits with a random sample of successful proponents to discuss/view the progress/results of their project.

## APPENDICES

List of Appendices:

**Appendix 1:**

Local Advisors, Decision Makers and Stakeholders Questionnaire

**Appendix 2:**

Proponent Questionnaire

**Appendix 3:**

List of Individuals Consulted During Preparation of Report

**Appendix 4:**

List of Proponents Interviewed