Local Economic Development in B.C.

TOP 12 FINDINGS

British Columbia

Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

UBCM

2018 SURVEY

Introduction & Background

This summary presents the top findings selected from the 2018 B.C. Local Economic Development Survey results and analysis. The goal of the survey is to get a sense of where communities throughout B.C. are in their planning process, what some of the differences can tell us about economic development, and what is important to the people we work with. Through this, and the more detailed complete results, our hope is that people throughout B.C. will use these results to make informed decisions about their communities and the direction of their economic development. Additionally, government will use the findings to help inform our tools, resources and program planning.

Where relevant, we have highlighted differences across community size and geography so that everyone reading this can see some of their own story in the numbers.

The 2018 B.C. Local Economic Development survey is a follow-up to the 2016 survey, conducted by the B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and the BC Economic Development Association, as well as a 2009 survey conducted by UBCM. For 2018, a partnership was established between the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology and the Union of BC Municipalities, to take advantage of expertise within each organization throughout the question development, survey delivery, and presentation of results.

The data were gathered through an online survey, sent by e-mail and offered as a URL on Twitter and LinkedIn to economic development practitioners, local elected officials, chief administrative officers and city managers, tourism and destination management officers, and other individuals involved in economic development work throughout B.C. The full contact list contained 3,415 unique e-mail addresses from lists maintained by the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology, the BC Economic Development Association, and the CivicInfo BC directories maintained by the Union of BC Municipalities. Respondents were also encouraged to forward the survey to their own contacts.

The survey was launched at the annual Union of BC Municipalities Convention in Whistler on September 10, 2018. The initial collection period ran until October 5, 2018 and was extended until October 19, 2018.

In the end, 232 people completed the core questions in the survey. These responses represented 111 of B.C.'s 189 municipalities, and were dispersed through 26 of the province's 28 regional districts and all eight economic development regions.

If you have any questions about the 2018 B.C. Local Economic Development Survey, or if you are interested in further analysis of the data, please e-mail us at economicdevelopment@gov.bc.ca.

232

RESPONDENTS

REPRESENTING

111

OF B.C.'S 189 MUNICIPALITIES

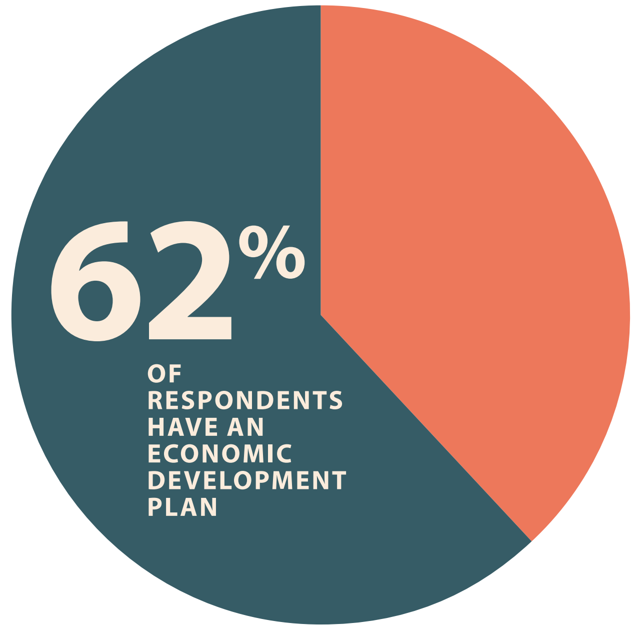
26 OF B.C.'S 28 REGIONAL DISTRICTS

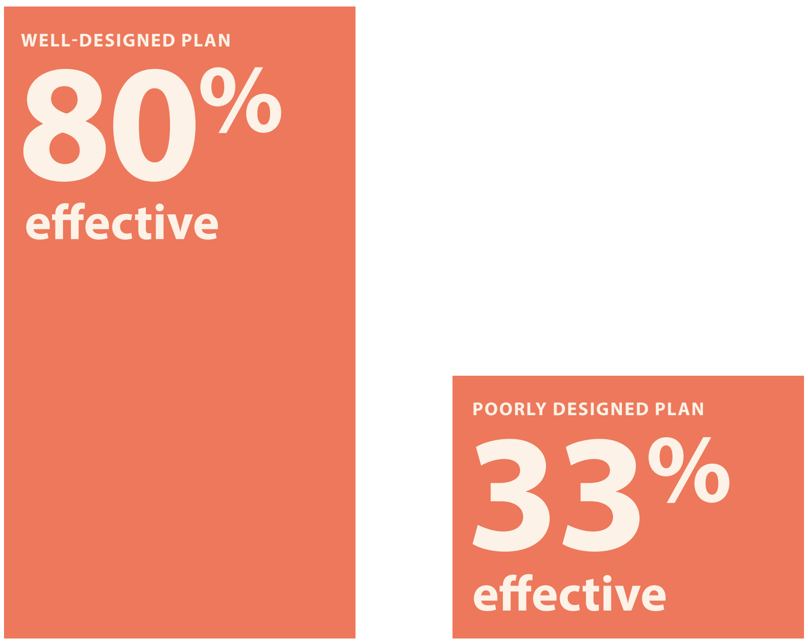
ALL 8 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

For more information, or for the full results, please email us at economicdevelopment@gov.bc.ca

1 Planning

Most respondents in the survey have an economic development plan. However, plans only improve economic development effectiveness when they're good enough that people no longer feel planning or mandates are a barrier. **Having a poorly designed plan is similar to having no plan** at all.





PUT IT INTO ACTION:

Do you believe in your economic development plan?

Is it time to revisit it?

2 Goals

TOP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Among people's top three long-term economic development goals, the two most common are **creating jobs** and improving residents' **quality of life**.

Around **30%** of communities see **sustainability** as a central economic development goal, but **more than 60%** include **sustainability considerations** in their strategic plans.

This shows how more holistic approaches to economic development are starting to complement traditional focuses.

> **PUT IT INTO ACTION:**
>
> What are your **long-term goals** for economic development?
>
> **When** was the last time you revisited them?

3 Approaches

OVERALL:

42% of local governments do economic development themselves

24% do it externally

KOOTENAY:

12% do it themselves

41% do it externally

Economic development services are **delivered by local governments** more often than by external groups.

The **exception** is the **Kootenay** region, which is the only part of the B.C. where external approaches are more common.

PUT IT INTO ACTION:

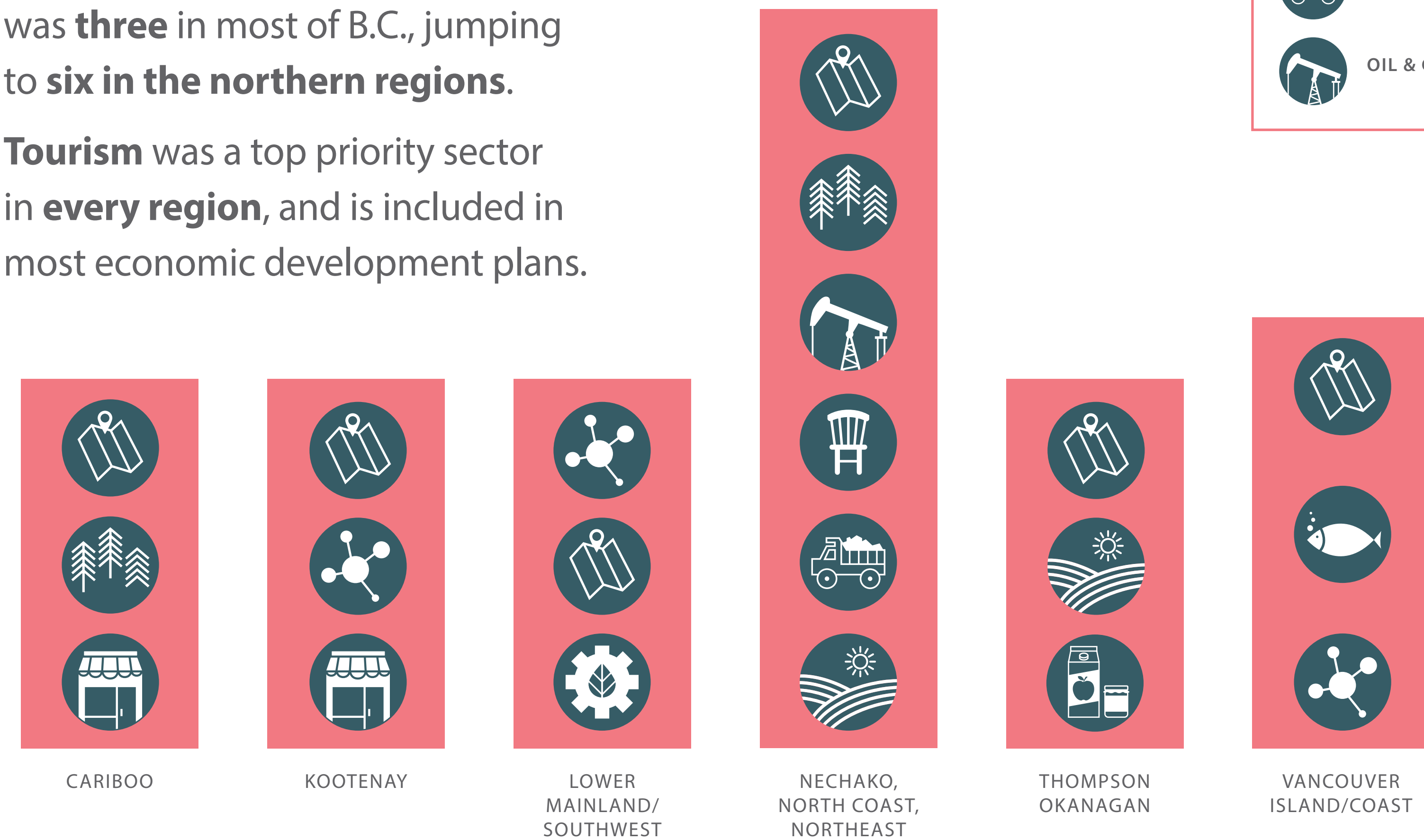
Who does the bulk of economic development in your community?

Why is it set up this way?

4 Sectors

The median number of **priority sectors** for economic development was **three** in most of B.C., jumping to **six in the northern regions**.

Tourism was a top priority sector in **every region**, and is included in most economic development plans.



PUT IT INTO ACTION:

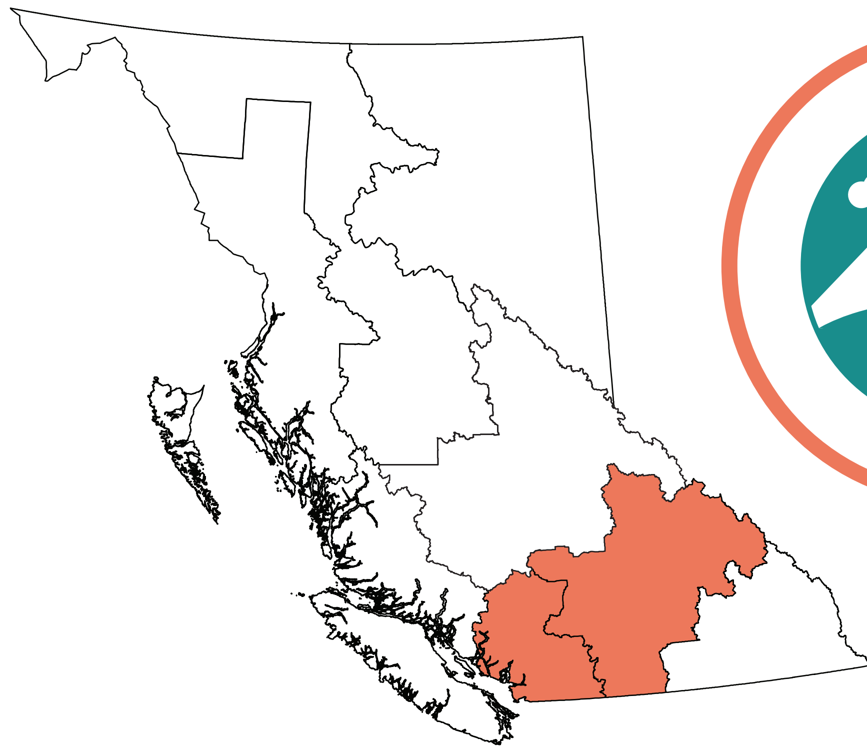
How many priority sectors do you have?

Do you feel like you can **have an impact** on all of them?

5 Land Availability

People in the **Thompson Okanagan** and **Lower Mainland/ Southwest** regions see land availability as an economic development challenge more often than an asset.

This may be driven by **land and affordability pressures** in the Lower Mainland pushing more people and investment towards the Southern Interior.



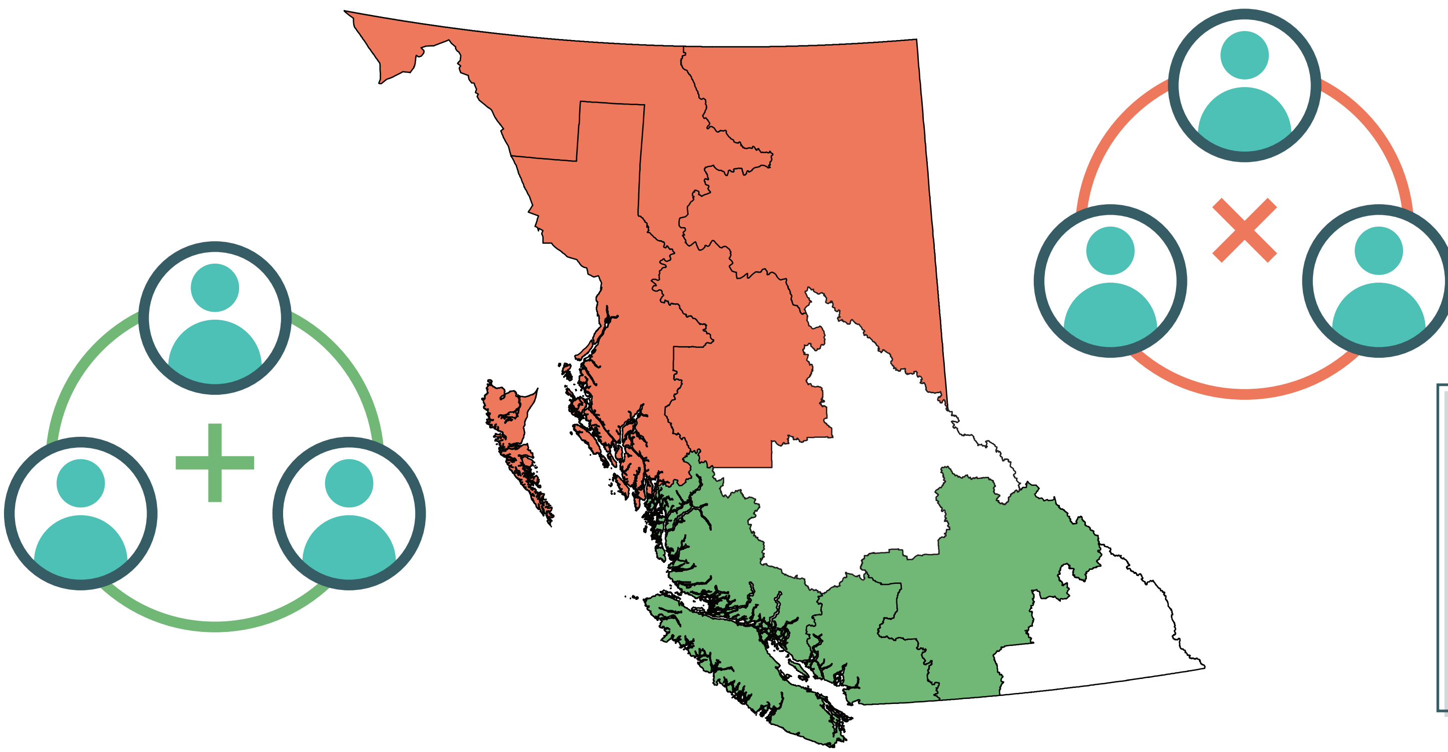
PUT IT INTO ACTION:

How do these **land use pressured** affect economic development in your community?

6 Culture

Community culture is seen more often as an asset than a challenge in the **Lower Mainland/ Southwest**, **Vancouver Island/Coast**, and **Thompson Okanagan** regions.

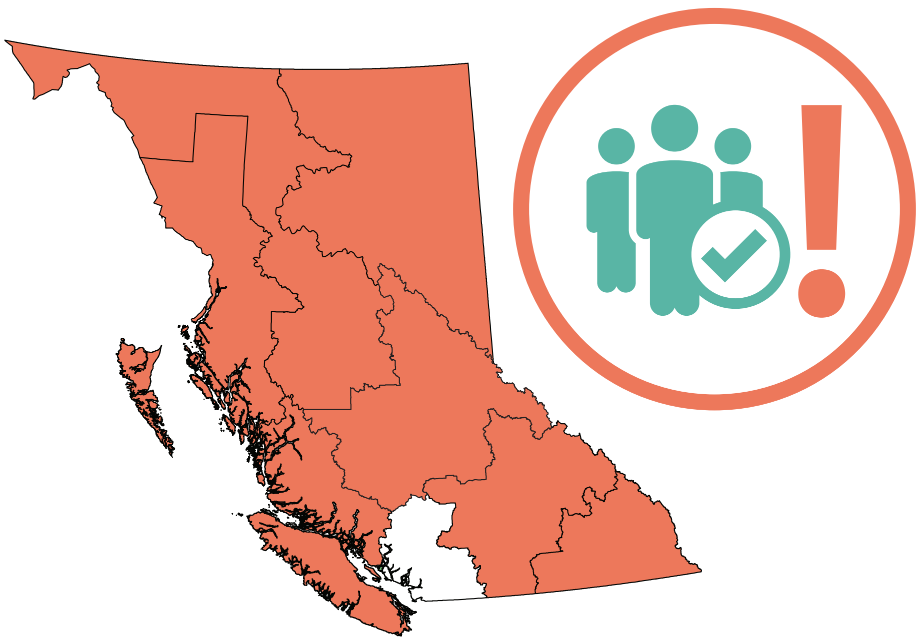
The **northern regions**, by contrast, see community culture as less of an asset than the Island, and as more of a challenge than the Lower Mainland.

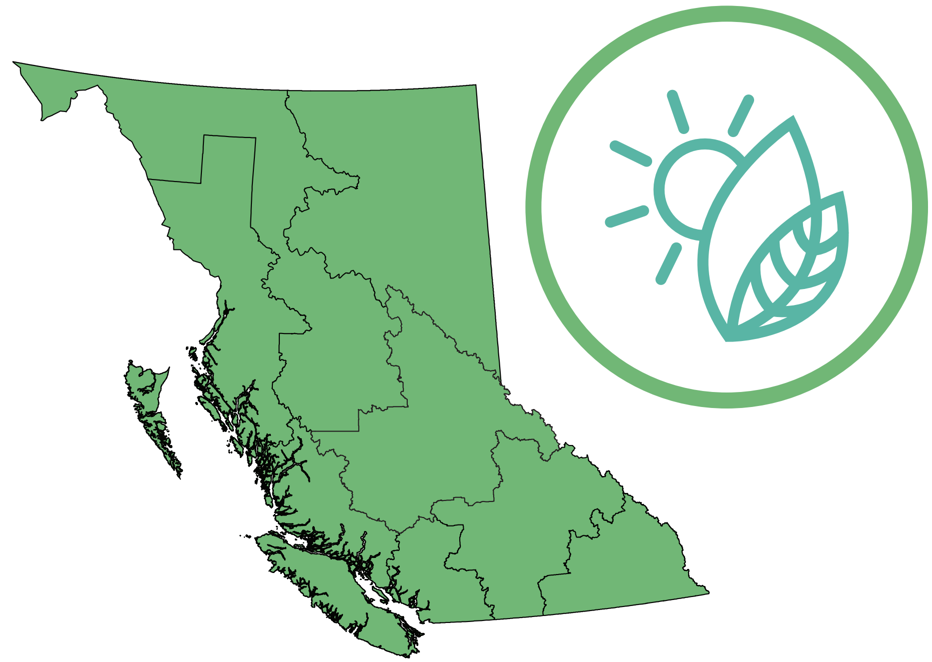


PUT IT INTO ACTION:

How would you describe your **community culture**? What does this mean for your **economic development**?

7 Workforce and Natural Setting





Communities were more likely to see **skills** and **workforce** as a **challenge** than an asset everywhere except the **Lower Mainland/Southwest**.

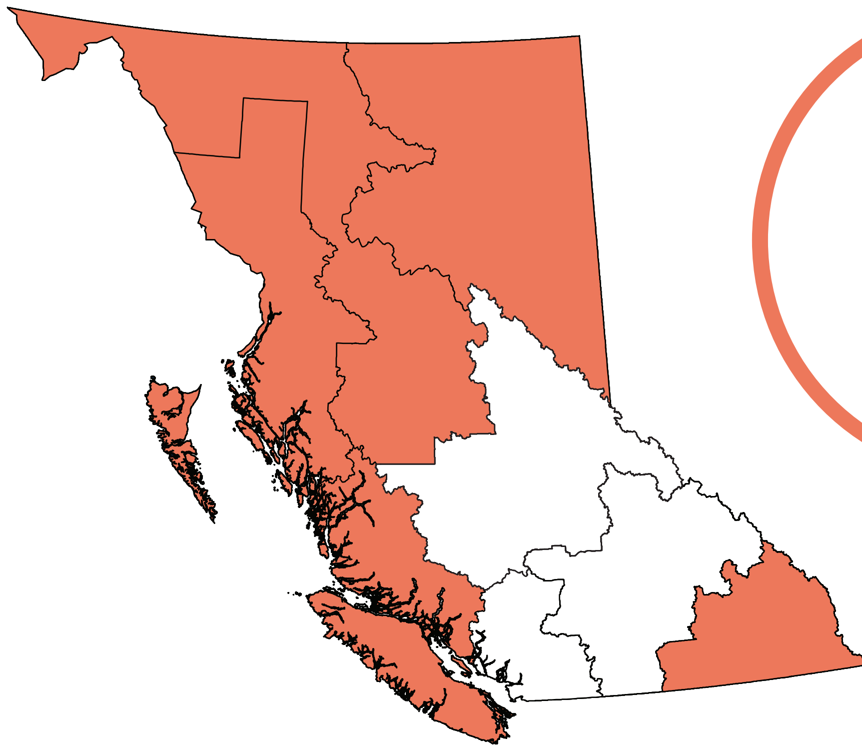
However, **natural setting** was almost **universally** seen as an asset in B.C., which can help with workforce attraction.

PUT IT INTO ACTION:

What types of workers do you need to attract to your community? How can your **natural setting** help?

8 Transportation Connections

The **Kootenay** region, **Vancouver Island/ Coast** region, and **northern regions** are significantly more likely to see **transportation connections** as a challenge rather than an asset.



PUT IT INTO ACTION:

What could you be doing to **improve transportation** in your region?

Are you **partnering** with other communities on this?

9 Staffing, Funding & Leadership

MOST COMMON BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: LACK OF

Throughout the province, the two most common barriers to economic development are **lacks of human and financial resources**.

Over a quarter of respondents also mentioned **lack of leadership** or **priority** given to economic development as one of their top three barriers.

> **PUT IT INTO ACTION:**
> How do your strategies or collaborations account for the **capacity constraints** of your partners?

10 Informal Partnerships

TOP FORMS OF PARTNERSHIP


COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS


PERSONAL CONNECTIONS


FORMAL AGREEMENTS


MEMBERSHIP IN LARGER ORGANIZATIONS


SHARED RESOURCES & STAFF

Over 30% of community priorities have no partnership to address them. This means huge potential for new partnerships.

When creating new partnerships, most people prefer informal channels like **collaborative projects** or **personal connections**.

> **PUT IT INTO ACTION:**
> How can you strengthen your **personal connections** and find new opportunities to **collaborate**?

11 Diverse Partnerships

People with **more diverse partnerships** feel their economic development is **more effective.**

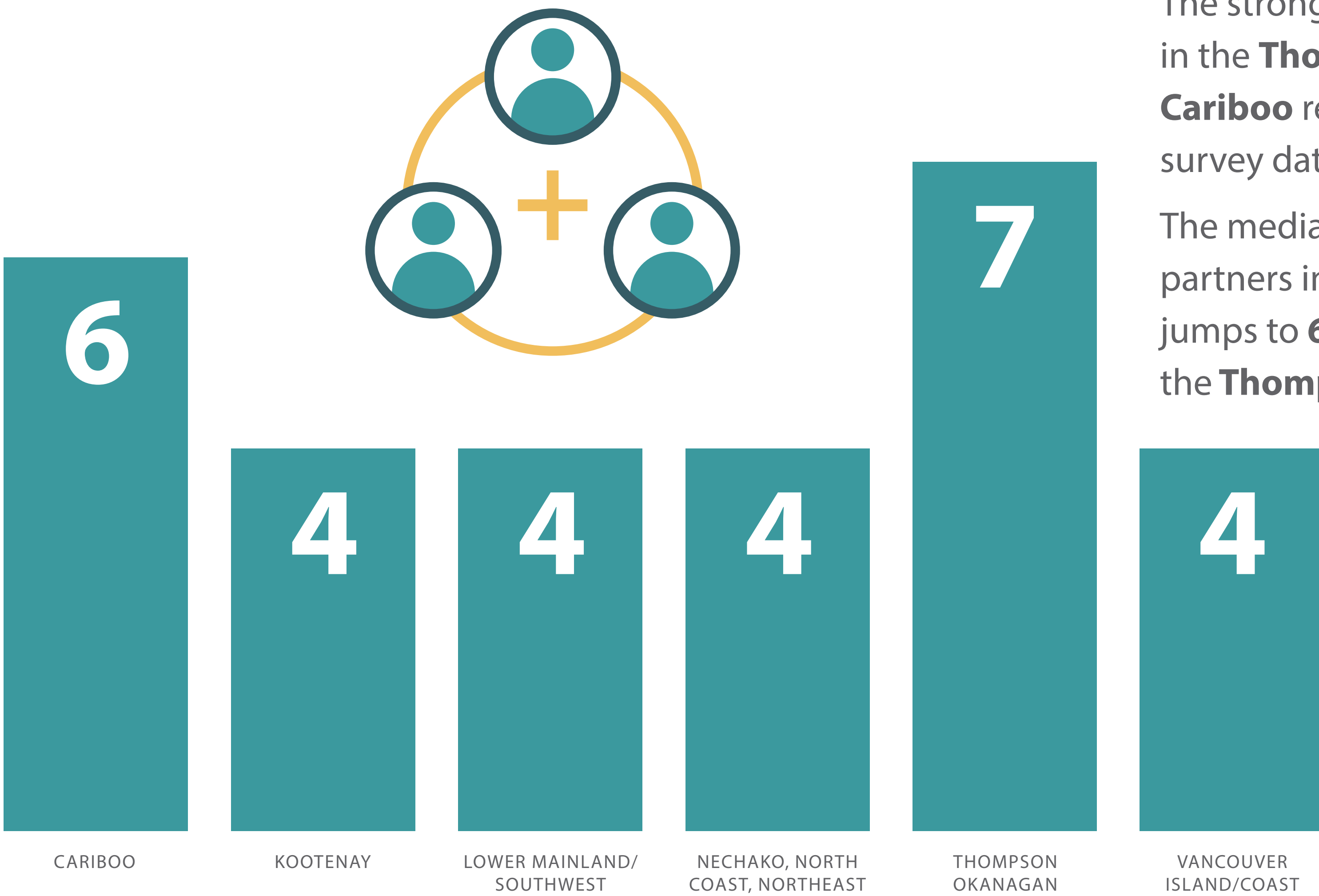
Those with **10 or more types** of partners were **34 percentage points** more likely to feel effective than those with fewer than four types.

PUT IT INTO ACTION:

Are there **new groups** you could be reaching out to and partnering with?

Look outside your usual network!

12 Regional Collaborations



The strong **collaboration culture** in the **Thompson Okanagan** and **Cariboo** regions shows up in the survey data.

The median number of types of partners in most of B.C. is **4**, but jumps to **6** in the **Cariboo** and **7** in the **Thompson Okanagan** region.

PUT IT INTO ACTION:

Would your economic development be more effective if you **diversified your partnerships**?

Thank you

Our sincere thanks to everybody, throughout this great province, who took the time to complete the survey. Your input is critical to supporting evidence-based economic development in British Columbia.

Looking for more tools and resources to help reach your economic development potential?

Visit:
www.gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment

www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/resolutions/policy-areas/community-economic-development.html

Have questions?
economicdevelopment@gov.bc.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

UBCM

Produced by the B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities.
Analysis and writing by Alex Zachernuk