Business Retention and Expansion

IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL FOR COLUMBIA BASIN BOUNDARY COMMUNITIES

· FALL 2013

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The RDI and Support for Regional Rural Development

The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) is a regional centre of excellence in applied research and information provision focused on strengthening rural communities in the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region. The RDI supports the collection and use of social, cultural, environmental and economic indicator research, provides ongoing analysis of related trends and connects indicators to plans and planning processes, supports the efforts of economic development groups through the provision of relevant and timely research, and best practice tools and processes, engages in applied rural revitalization research in partnership with regional, provincial and national networks, assists in regional economic diversification through the promotion of innovation and knowledge transfer, supports informed decision-making through ongoing research based on regional priorities, and builds capacity through collaborative working partnerships with existing organizations, networks and experts.

Business retention and expansion (BRE) has been identified as a regional priority through consultations with key economic development stakeholders and local businesses. The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) recognizes the need to support the 'process' of BRE initiatives drawing on best practices, the need to standardize data collection and analysis, the need for local level training to build capacity, and the importance of linking research with economic development plans and follow-up actions.

In an effort to support rural communities across the Columbia Basin Boundary Region, the RDI has formed a BRE regional advisory group, has conducted best practices research on rural BRE implementation, has piloted a one-day BRE researcher training session, has supported implementation efforts in two pilot communities and one regional sector specific initiative (lead by innovation councils), and has developed additional tools to support community-level BRE implementation (i.e. this manual, survey instrument, reporting framework).

This manual is designed to provide Local Steering Committee members with the information they need to guide BRE efforts in their communities. The objectives of this manual are to allow BRE organizers to:

- Become familiar with major program elements
- Understand the resources needed to support successful implementation
- Assess the community's readiness to undertake a BRE project
- Understand how to guide and support a successful BRE project

What is Business Retention & Expansion?

Business Retention & Expansion programs (BRE) help to build a **positive** business environment for the **success** of local **businesses,** and ultimately the success of the **community.** This is accomplished by taking the pulse of the businesses in the community, determining if there are any problems or issues, and then taking positive action to improve the health of individual businesses and the overall business climate of the community.

The goals of BRE are to:
- **Accurately assess** the needs of businesses;
- **Provide assistance** to business that will help them to survive economic difficulties and assist them with expansions that add new jobs; and
- **Build cooperation** and consensus among local government, economic development organizations and businesses and support collective action focused on improving the local and regional business climate.

Business development and job creation are key factors in developing healthy and vibrant communities. Depending on the characteristics of a community's economy, anywhere from 40 to 90 per cent of new jobs come from existing businesses. BRE is an action-oriented and community-based approach to business and economic development. It promotes job growth by helping communities learn about issues and concerns of, as well as opportunities for, local businesses and sets priorities for projects to address these needs. Ultimately, communities will have greater success in attracting new business if existing businesses are content with local economic conditions and community support. The overall goal of visiting community businesses is to better understand the conditions that enable businesses to retain or create jobs. BRE provides a number of additional benefits, including:
- citizen support for the recommendations and actions they helped create
- increased citizen awareness of business concerns and broader economic development issues; and
- increased community capacity and enthusiasm to take on future economic development projects,

Short-term BR+E objectives include:
- Provide community support for local business and improve profitability;
- Identify and address immediate concerns of individual business;
- Let local businesses know how much they are valued in the community; and
- Establish and implement a strategic action plan to improve the business climate of the community;

Long-term BR+E objectives include:
- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses; and
- Promote business development and job creation.

Most BRE programs use surveys, conversations and meetings with individuals involved in running businesses in the community, asking a series of standardized questions

related to challenges and opportunities for future growth. This process helps to determine the most critical issues for business support organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Community Futures, economic development organizations, local, provincial and federal government, post-secondary institutions) to focus on. It also identifies businesses that may be considering relocating, closing or laying off staff. Often, local business support organizations can help find solutions to issues identified by the business (e.g. locating another nearby location, staffing, changing bylaws that are affecting a business, matching expertise to a business).

> "A BR&E program is any local development effort that endeavours to assist and encourage existing local businesses to grow. At its most basic level a
> BR&E attempts to help the community better understand the structural changes occurring within its economic base and help businesses in those sectors become more competitive.
> The actual means of doing this are many
> and varied, but the three key characteristics of almost all programs are:
> • locally-based;
> • visitation program; and
> • focused on the involvement and support of targeted firms."
>
> *Business Retention & Expansion Program Manual*
> *Economic Development Association of BC*

Success in BRE programs vary from community to community and are often determined by the commitment to follow-through and the application of resources to identified issues. Examples of follow up actions include:
- buy local campaign
- a focus on changing by-laws to be more business-friendly
- creation of new courses & training to meet the needs of businesses (succession planning, productivity workshops, etc.)
- redesigned development process - establish early decision points and relay cost information earlier in the process, enable online applications
- banker's forum
- development of employee recruitment packages
- compilation of a land and facility inventory

In sum, successful BRE programs:
- Visibly demonstrate the importance of local businesses
- Accurately assess the needs of business
- Identify businesses at risk of closing or leaving the community
- Build networks in the community and brings the community together
- Build capacity of those involved in organizing and for the businesses themselves (asking questions that are important to consider)
- Identify new volunteers & champions
- Respond to business needs and get results

Roles & Responsibilities

It is recommended the following key stakeholder groups are in place to support implementation and follow through:

LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE and LOCAL BRE LEAD

A small group of community members form a local BRE steering committee with representation from key stakeholder groups (business, economic development, business support providers). It is recommended this group meet four times over the 6-month implementation period and meet at least twice a year during the follow-up phase. Members of the Local Steering Committee might also form visitation teams of two to conduct interviews of identified priority businesses. It is recommended that one person from a key organization be designated as the BRE lead (i.e. EDO, Chamber Manager, Community Futures Manager). This person will have access to company level data on the e-pulse system and will be responsible for follow up actions and referrals, including Red Flag issues.

The responsibilities of the steering committee include:
- Overall planning and strategy
- Acquiring necessary resources (human and financial)
- Public relations
- Interviews with businesses via visitation teams
- Follow-up actions (immediate 'red flag', short and long-term)

BRE RESEARCH COORDINATOR

A BRE Research Coordinator should be hired to support research, implementation and planning. The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) is currently developing a one-day BRE Training Workshop. Interested community members and consultants will be invited to attend workshops to be held in the East and West Kootenays. The RDI will then be able to provide a list of qualified BRE Research Coordinators to interested communities.

The responsibilities of the BRE Research Coordinator include some or all of the following:
- Coordination of all aspects of the initiative during the implementation phase (organizing committee meetings, community meetings, communications, scheduling interviews)
- Research support to the steering committee (sampling, research methodology, training to visitation teams if applicable, e-pulse training to community lead partner)
- Data collection (interviews with businesses) and data input
- Referral of immediate 'red flag' and short-term actions to local BRE Lead

COLUMBIA BASIN RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) provides research support to BRE communities in the form of implementation tools (this manual), training (through local colleges), and analysis of findings (final report including recommendations). The RDI is also working with a BRE regional advisory group in order to develop and refine a regional implementation framework (i.e. regional and sub-regional analysis, formation of a regional BRE support network, identification of additional required supports for communities).

The responsibilities of the RDI include:
- Management of BR+E data (regional e-pulse license, data sharing agreements, confidentiality policy and related forms)
- Coordination of Regional BRE advisory group
- Information presentations to interested communities
- Development and refinement of support tools (manual, training)
- Customization of surveys (regional & community specific questions, development of a small rural business survey)
- Data analysis and reporting

Organizational Structure

BRE Regional Advisory Group &
BRE Support Network

Rural Development
Institute

REGIONAL

Local Steering Commitee

Local BRE Lead

BRE
Researcher /
Coordinator

LOCAL
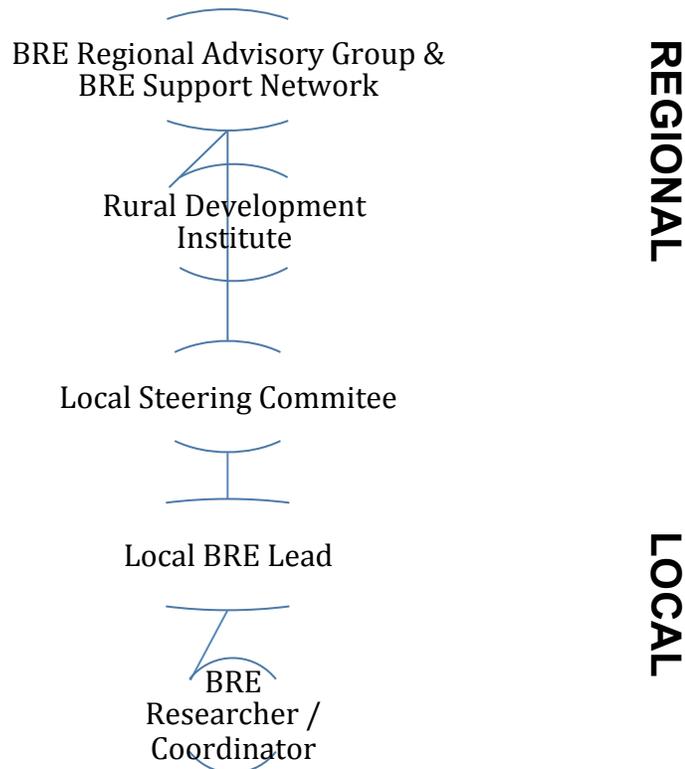
Timeline

Successful BRE programs are ongoing or continuous. Knowing what the issues are for businesses is an ongoing process for business and economic support organizations.

Below is a sample timeline for a standard BRE program. Notice there are a couple of months devoted to getting ready – assessing readiness, bringing the community up to speed, and gaining support for the program – before businesses are actually surveyed. The implementation phase takes approximately 6 months.

Prior to implementation, consideration must be given to the human and financial supports that will be required for effective follow up actions and links to economic development planning. This includes follow-up on immediate 'red flag' issues in addition to short and long terms action plans.

The follow-up phase is ongoing and includes links to economic development planning and follow-up actions. It is recommended that communities enter back into implementation every three years.

Assessing Readiness and Getting Ready (2 months)

- Find champion(s)
- Contact Selkirk College RDI
- Orientation presentation by RDI to key stakeholders
- Assess BRE readiness
- Steering committee formed (with terms of reference and clear roles)
- Establish goals, objectives and expectations
- Review manual
- Finalize timelines and critical dates
- Secure resources as necessary
- Hire BRE Research Coordinator (from list of certified BRE researchers)
- Draft Public relations plan
- Training of visitation teams (if applicable)
- Select sample for surveying, generate excel spreadsheet of selected businesses and provide to RDI to input into e-pulse system (drawn from business license database if available)
- Review and modify survey as local and regional issues and needs require
- Finalize methodology (i.e. face to face structured interviews, online survey, phone interviews, and/or onsite meeting)
- Implement public relations plan starting with kick-off press release
- Letters & surveys to businesses
- Begin scheduling interviews

Implementation (2 months)

- Continue scheduling interviews
- Ongoing data collection and data input
- Red Flags and immediate follow up actions
- Review and resolve initial problems or issues

Data Analysis, Reporting and Follow Up (2 months)

- Last minute data collection and input
- Analysis (RDI)
- DRAFT report (RDI)
- Themes, Recommendations & Findings to Steering Committee for input
- Short and long-term recommended actions strategized & finalized
- Final report (RDI)
- RDI assists resource network as needed to support prioritized actions
- Secure resources for actions
- Presentation to council, business community & community
- Press release with results & actions
- Thank you letters to business community with summary report and news of actions and how businesses can be involved
- Short and long-term actions implemented
- BRE integrated into economic development and community planning
- Public relations for follow-up & ongoing efforts
- Evaluation

Research Considerations

The BRE Survey

The Columbia Basin RDI, located at Selkirk College has a licence agreement with the provincial Economic Development Association of BC for BC Business Counts, an online BRE survey, contact management, and reporting system (see ePulse section). ePulse is a sophisticated, but easy-to-use system, that allows for easy data entry, and some customization of survey questions at the community level.

The Basin Boundary BRE survey is aligned with the provincial BC Business Counts survey allowing for the data collected to be analyzed at a community, sub-regional, regional and provincial level. Based on feedback from the BRE regional advisory group, region-specific questions have been incorporated into the BRE survey. In addition, a condensed survey has been created to ensure applicability in smaller communities and to ensure relevance for smaller rural businesses.

Survey questions in both long and short surveys have been further refined based on feedback from pilot communities, workshop attendees at the 2012 BC Rural Summit, and workshop attendees at the 2012 Provincial Community Futures Conference.

A number of sector-specific 'add-on' surveys are also available, including: retail, professional services, technology, manufacturing and agriculture. It is recommended that researchers determine the NAICS code in advance of the interview to determine which sector specific add on survey should be included, if any. Sector-specific data will ultimately support the development of regional sector development plans and related strategic actions.

Sampling

The process of sampling is simply the method by which businesses or respondents are selected to be included or invited to participate in the survey. Sample selection is an important aspect of BRE. It is often not feasible, too time consuming or expensive to survey every business in your community nor is it feasible to survey a statistically significant sample. For example, if you survey only the businesses that you know have a positive relationship with local government, you might not identify some issues that require attention.

It is important for the Local Steering Committee to decide what information is being sought. Most BRE programs look to have a portion of businesses surveyed that offer a representation of the opinions of the whole business community. If you are concerned about manufacturing or retail, you might decide only to survey businesses in those sectors.

Options to consider include:

- Business climate in general
- Businesses or sectors with the most growth potential
- Major employers (or at least those with employees)
- Sector-specific info (e.g. manufacturing, construction)

If understanding the business climate in general is the focus, random sampling is the most effective approach.

Data Collection

There are a variety of ways to administer a survey:

- face-to-face interviews (the most rich information but most time-consuming)
- phone interviews (effective at addressing distance and / or scheduling challenges, less effective at relationship building)
- online or mail in survey (the least rich in information, the least likely to get a response, ineffective at relationship building, the least expensive)

In addition, there are different approaches to choosing who should administer the survey:

- BRE volunteers (builds community capacity, requires training, often not as reliable as paid help, some businesses afraid to give sensitive information)
- Business and economic development service providers (builds relationships among businesses and business/economic support organizations, some businesses afraid to give sensitive information)
- Certified BRE Research Coordinators
- Outside Consultants (does not build relationships, businesses more likely to provide good information)

There is no right or wrong methodology. Communities should assess their goals (e.g. building relationships) and their resources prior to deciding. Currently the RDI in collaboration with the College of the Rockies and Selkirk College are exploring a certification course for interested research consultants from across the region. The goal is to have a pool of certified BRE Research Coordinators. Communities would be encouraged to hire one of these certified researchers to support the implementation of their local BRE project. This approach would ensure integrity of data collection and implementation processes.

Red Flag Responses

It is important to identify businesses that might be in danger of:
- Closing
- Relocating (outside of the region)
- Laying off
- Experiencing problems with expansion plans (e.g. cannot find a suitable location to lease or buy)

This might also be businesses that simply need information urgently. Communities need a standardized process for following up on these "red flag" issues after visitation. It is important that interviewers not feel obligated to solve the issues raised during the interview. This manual provides a "Red Flag" Follow-up form that should be filled out immediately after the interview. (Please see appendices). The researcher will complete the Red Flag form and submit it to the Local BRE Lead (i.e. EDO, Chair of the Economic Development Organization) upon receiving approval to do so by the businesses. It is vitally important that confidentiality be maintained through this process.

BC Business Counts & Executive Pulse

Selkirk College's RDI holds a BC Business Counts licence agreement with the Economic Development Association of BC. BC Business Counts includes Executive Pulse (ePulse), a BRE survey and contact management system. ePulse is a sophisticated, but easy-to-use system, that allows for easy data entry, and some customization of survey questions at the community level.

With roughly 6,500 active users, ExecutivePulse Business Intelligence System is the most widely used database system for business retention and expansion in North America. The database systems house more than 250,000 business retention and expansion profiles alone.

The RDI's regional license allows Columbia Basin and Boundary communities to use ePulse's database and business intelligence system.

ePulse:

- Works with a variety of Internet capable devices and all major web browsers
- Does not require any specific hardware or software
- Provides a variety of user-level access options, based on geography, task and even confidentiality
- User-friendly interface featuring streamlined and consistent features/ functions, navigation, icons and tips
- Easy to understand Portfolios that provide for immediate one-click access to current and historical intelligence on companies, users, contacts and mailing lists

- Powerful outcome and process-based reporting and forensic functions for managers
- Provides for hundreds of pre-defined (one click) reports and almost limitless user-defined queries that quickly turns data into knowledge and intelligence
- Integration with most mainstay e-mail packages and clients
- Integration with Microsoft and Adobe office software
- Extensive action item and journal entry capabilities
- Document management for a variety of different text, spreadsheet, PDF and even image and audio files
- Mail merge and listserv communication capabilities
- Fully integrated "smart tutorial" that dynamically correlates to content
- "Plug and play" module options that greatly expand features and functions of the system

Training is available for communities wishing to undertake the BRE program and utilize ePulse.

Data Entry, Analysis and Reporting

Surveys should be entered into the ePulse system as they arrive. If those involved with data entry are different than the researchers they can clarify answers with researchers while the information is still top of mind.

It is also important to have an immediate feedback mechanism for data entry and for analysis so that any issues requiring immediate attention are remedied right away.

Upon completion of data entry, the local BRE Lead can print out some key findings using the ePulse system. The RDI is available to provide analysis of findings and present results and recommendations in a report and follow up presentation to communities.

In order to ensure clear linkages to economic development planning it is recommended that communities secure facilitation support and host a planning session. Many BRE initiatives organize a retreat so that the local steering committee (and in some cases a broader cross-section of businesses) work with a facilitator to consider and prioritize recommendations presented in the BRE report.

Some questions for the Local Steering Committee to consider before going into a retreat with a preliminary report would be:

- Which findings stand out?
- Which findings suggest opportunities for meeting local goals?
- What are some key themes?
- What are specific actions we can undertake? Short term? Long term?
- What are the most important actions?

- How should these presented to the business community and the public (e.g. a public meeting)?

Once the report has been commented upon and finalized by the Local Organizing Committee, thought should be given to presenting it to the business community and the public. Some BRE initiatives send an e-mail link to the report or a summary report. Most BRE initiatives provide a public report back to the business community, often specifically inviting partners and those surveyed.

As in the case of BRE, this should be looked upon as another important opportunity to harness the ideas of the community.

Organizers might consider three parts to the meeting:
- Explaining the BRE process
- Thanking businesses and volunteers
- Presenting findings and possible opportunities for action

Short-Term Actions

Many BRE programs ensure that actions occur almost immediately. This builds credibility, a sense of success and momentum to carry out long-term actions.

Successful BRE programs pick short-term actions that:
- Can be completed in 6 months or less
- Are visible projects
- Are Low-hanging fruit

Ensure people know about your successes. Report back to businesses in a variety of ways (see also Communications Plan in Appendices).

Long-Term Actions

Many BRE actions take the form of long-term initiatives or programs (e.g. Buy Local Program), ongoing plans and policies. Patience and a commitment to success over the long-term is critical. BRE should be implemented at a process as opposed to a one-time project. BRE results can form the backbone of a community's economic development strategy. BRE results can sometimes be integrated into the Official Community Plan (OCP).

Some communities form committees or action groups around the themes or action areas identified in the BRE report to ensure success in implementation. Again, it is important to recognize that each community is different and will have a different organizational structure to ensure success. Check with Selkirk's RDI for links to resources to implement long-term actions.

Evaluation (Assessing Results)

The BRE program should be measured against the objectives and factors for success set out by the organizing committee in the beginning. Start planning with the end in mind.

Here are some questions to consider in evaluating your BRE:

- To what extent was the BRE initiative effective in retaining and/or expanding business in our community?
- What changes occurred in the community as a result of BRE? Why?
- What statistics or stories (e.g. a business did not relocate because of the program) can we report back to the community on?
- What objectives were not achieved? Why not?
- What challenges or opportunities did the BRE organizers experience in terms of implementing the project?

Communications Considerations

Before a BRE program is launched, a community should have a communications strategy and public relations goals.

It is important to create awareness and support from:
- Business support organizations
- Municipal Council
- Businesses
- The broader community

Possible milestones to profile through a strategy are:
- Launch
- Surveys
- Public Report of finding and recommendations
- Follow-up on Actions
- Ongoing communication and support to businesses

Secrets to Success

BRE has been most successful in communities where the following factors have been present:

- Strong & committed local leadership
- Partnerships – need local government and businesses on side
- Readiness of community
- Adequate human & financial resources

- Adequate time
- Champions to lead process and inspire others
- Good data analysis leading to informed decisions
- Short-term successes are demonstrated. This allows for momentum to ensure long-term commitment to the process and successful long-term actions (initiatives, programs, policies, plans)
- Commitment over long term (business appreciation events, follow-up and on-going technical assistance)

Appendix A. BRE FAQ

What is BRE?
- Surveying existing businesses in order to take the pulse of the business climate and identify business needs
- Builds a **positive** business environment for the **success** of local **businesses** and ultimately the success of the **community**
- Goals of BRE are to:
  - **Accurately assess** the needs of business
  - **Provide assistance** to business that will help them to survive economic difficulties and assist them with expansions that add new jobs
  - **Build cooperation** and consensus among local government, economic development organizations and businesses

Why BRE?
- BRE is one of the most effective economic development tools (50-90% of jobs come from pre-existing business
- Results in targeted support to local businesses & strengthens broader economic climate
- Regional approach helps identify issues that require a collective response

How long does it take?
- 6 months for implementation phase:
  - 2 months for getting ready, training and acquiring resources
  - 2 months for implementation and surveying
  - 2 months for analysis, report writing, determining actions, reporting to community, links to planning and follow-up
- Follow-up phase is ongoing post-implementation
- Revisiting implementation phase every 3 years is recommended

Who is involved?
- Local government, Community Futures, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Organization - supports implementation and follow up, supports communication efforts
- Local Organizing Committee - guides implementation and follow up, some members may also form visitation teams, act as Champions of BRE and supports communications
- Local BRE Lead – acts as point person for referrals and Red Flag issues, engages in follow up with businesses, may also interview 'priority' businesses
- Certified BRE Research Coordinator – coordinates all aspects of implementation, trains visitation teams, interviews businesses, inputs data, identifies Red Flags
- The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute – provides orientation presentations, provides data analysis and reporting support, supports the development of a regional BRE program in collaboration with regional advisory group, supports the development of training materials and curriculum

Considering BRE Readiness
- Community must provide resources for overall coordination and commit to following through on short-term and long-term actions (e.g. commit to changing municipal by-laws and planning processes if needed)
- Requires collaboration from municipality, business community and economic development organizations

Appendix B. Guidelines for Sampling and Selecting a Business

1. In order to make an appropriate selection it is important to know what the community's business world looks like. In other words, a geographical border that defines the area from which you can pull a sample must be established.

2. Next, businesses within the area in terms of type and size of business are quantified. Statistics Canada employs a numerical coding system that categorizes all types of businesses. It is recommended that this North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) be used.

3. Next, develop an outline of the business universe. Note: Percentaging base for all cells should be the TOTAL NUMBER of businesses.

COMPANY SIZE

Type	Small		Medium		Large		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Agriculture/farming								
Mines/minerals								
Forestry								
Manufacturing								
Accommodation and Food Services								
Retail								

4. The chart above, once completed, will give a census of the businesses in the area or community (or at least of the types that have been selected to be included in the survey). This chart will guide how the completed interviews should be distributed across type and size of business.

5. If it is not possible to get size-of-business information by type of business, each piece of information can be used independently to design the sample plan. The chart would then appear like this:

Type	Total	
	#	%
Agriculture/farming		
Mines/minerals		
Forestry		
Manufacturing		
Accommodation and Food Services		
Retail		

6. Some communities or areas will have many types of businesses while others will have few. Given that most communities will complete 100 or fewer interviews it may not be possible to address each type, and it is advisable to combine any business types that may be similar and small in numbers.

7. The next step is to decide how many businesses are to be invited to participate from each of the business type and size groups. The following plan shows an example distribution of 60 interviews.

The numbers across the bottom and in the far-right column are the most important. These numbers are determined by applying the distribution from your world to the total number of business interviews planned.

COMPANY SIZE

Type	Small		Medium		Large		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Agriculture/farming	18	30%	4	7%			22	37%
Mines/minerals			1	2%	4	7%	5	8%
Forestry					1	2%	1	2%
Manufacturing			5	8%	4	7%	9	15%
Accommodation and Food Services	3	5%			1	2%	4	7%
Retail	8	13%	6	10%	5	8%	19	32%

8. Once a plan has been set, businesses should be selected (in as random a manner as possible) to complete the plan.

9. It is quite likely that as the appointment making and the interviewing process progresses some businesses will refuse or be unable to participate in the time set aside for interviewing. In each case care should be taken to replace the selected business with one that fills the same criteria in terms of size and type of business.

10. If the businesses are selected to reflect something very close to the distribution of businesses in the universe, when the results are consulted they can be reported as a group that roughly represents what the real world (your universe) looks like.

Appendix C. BRE Readiness Checklist

Not all communities will be ready to undertake a full BRE program. Consideration should be given to the following:

☐ There is a community champion(s) with the organizational and leadership skills with the time to lead the project

☐ There are key community organizations collaborating in the planning and implementation of BRE, possibly through an organizing committee (e.g. municipal council and staff, Chamber of Commerce, other business and economic development orgs., key businesses in the community)

☐ We have a track record of success in this community with planning, implementing and following through on projects and plans

☐ The goals, objectives AND expectations of the BRE project are clear to all stakeholders (e.g. stakeholders are clear on what success would look like in a number of key areas – number of businesses surveyed, identification of key businesses or sectors to be surveyed, time to be completed, how follow-up might be conducted, roles of key players, public relations outcomes, etc.)

☐ The community has dedicated resources to the planning, implementation and follow-up actions related to the project
- o Human resources
- o Financial resources
- o Adequate time

☐ The timing for BRE seems good. It will not interfere with other initiatives and events (e.g. municipal elections, other economic development projects, etc.)

☐ The municipality and key community organizations are ready to learn from and make planning decisions based on BRE findings (e.g. commitment to follow-up and making changes where necessary - economic development strategy, by-laws, other plans, etc.)

Other Considerations Before Undertaking BRE

☐ There is an understanding of the goals and objectives AND support for BRE within the business community

☐ A public relations strategy has been developed to ensure businesses, the public and key organizations are engaged and informed before, during and after BRE (e.g. kick-off press release, survey in advance to businesses, results to businesses, public presentation(s) to community and businesses, etc.)

☐ There is co-ordination through Selkirk College's RDI (e.g. survey, manual, resources and assistance where necessary)

☐ Training for key individuals has been undertaken (e.g. organizing committee, BRE co-ordinator, interviewers, other key BRE stakeholders)

☐ Thought has been given to unique community or region-specific issues that might be incorporated into the Selkirk College RDI BRE survey

Appendix D. BRE Checklist for Business Interview

☐ Two blank surveys
  - survey for interviewee
  - survey for recorder

☐ Blank Follow-up Suggestion sheet

☐ One pager with BRE background, list of those involved in BRE project, contact info & phone #s with future questions or concerns

☐ Pen

☐ Consent Form

☐ Copy of your confidentiality contract

OPTIONAL

☐ Addressed envelope (for returning completed survey and follow-up suggestion sheet for BRE Co-ordinator)

☐ Copies of local brochures, fact sheets to be distributed during visits

☐ One Pager with info on local business and economic development organizations, etc.

☐ Names and numbers to contact for specific inquiries (e.g. tourism - Chamber of Commerce)

☐ Other

☐ Interview tips & guidelines

Appendix E. Red Flag Follow-up Sheet

Remember, do not discuss the information obtained in the interview with anyone except the Local BRE Lead.

Business ID: _____ Date of Review: _____

1. Rank the urgency of a follow-up on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most urgent. "Red-flag" issues require immediate attention (5) while a business with no concerns or requests could be ranked low (1).

Urgency of follow-up: _____

2. List any urgent issues that require immediate attention, such as relocation, closing, employee layoffs, or problems with expansion.

Review entire survey for "red flags" that need urgent attention.

RED FLAGS	What is the problem? How urgent is it? What is your suggestion for handling it?	Which official or agency should look into it? Which BRE Advisory Committee member should take charge of this issue?*
Moving/Closing Can anything change this?		
Expansion Can the BRE group remove any bottlenecks?		
Other (e.g. labour, public services, other)		
Information Requests		
Other Concerns		

3. List the key concerns or requests of the business not considered urgent.

Your Name: _____

Appendix F. Business Retention and Expansion Business Consent Form

[insert community name] is implementing a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program as a key step in supporting local businesses and building a strong relationship between business and the front line providers of economic and business development programs and services in the region. This program allows for the exchange of information that leads to real understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing local businesses.

We ask that you consent to participation in this program and to the use and/or sharing of information as set out below. In order to best satisfy your needs, and to assist in our being able to deliver a high level of quality services on a timely basis we ask for your cooperation and consent in the following areas:

A) Questionnaire: The Local BRE Lead and BRE Researchers consider your individual answers to this questionnaire to be confidential and will be kept confidential as outlined in the researcher confidentiality agreement. All researchers with access to individual or aggregated company information have signed a confidentiality agreement.

B) Database: **[insert community name]** is working alongside the Selkirk College Rural Development Institute toward the compilation of a regional database using the questionnaire, which will show summary data for statistical reporting purposes, and will not be specific to your Company. This database will not include any proprietary information. Access to the database, and its background information, will require an undertaking that any specific information will be kept confidential, as outlined in the confidentiality agreement. The information collected will be aggregated into a provincial database for statistical reporting purposes. This initiative, part of the BC Business Counts program, uses the Executive Pulse web-based data and referral management system to store data. Executive Pulse is a U.S. company located and is subject to U.S. laws. In particular, the US Patriot Act which allows authorities access to the records of Internet service providers.

C) Referrals: During the course of the BRE consultation a specific business issue, opportunity or challenge may be identified that may require further action and service from one or more partner organizations to respond to the identified business need. **With your written approval** below, referrals will be forwarded to appropriate partners for follow up. This may entail the sharing of certain business information with appropriate service providers as deemed necessary. If you chose not to authorize referrals at this time, the BRE Lead will contact you as referral opportunities arise to seek your approval.

_____   _____
Signature – BRE Researcher   Print Name – BRE Researcher

_____   _____
Signature – Person Interviewed   Print Name – Person interviewed

_____   _____
Company Name   Date

_____
Signature – Person Interviewed: Referrals Approved at discretion of your community's BRE Lead

Appendix G. Business Retention and Expansion Researcher Confidentiality Agreement

This Confidentiality Agreement (the "Agreement") is made this ___ day of _____ 20____

between _____ (here for to be known as the "Researcher")

and _____ (here to be know as the "Community").

Introduction
The Researcher intends to conduct business interviews and other activities as a part of the Community's Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Program during the course of which the Researcher may create, have access to or receive information on existing employers including, but not limited to, information relating to products or administrative, marketing, financial or manufacturing activities of the businesses. All such information, including any material embodying such information, whether disclosed orally or otherwise, shall be considered by the Researcher as proprietary and confidential ("the Proprietary Information").

Non-Disclosure
As consideration for having access to or receiving any Proprietary Information, the Researcher agrees to protect the confidentiality of the Proprietary Information, and shall not disclose or disseminate, or permit any employee or associate to disclose or disseminate the Proprietary Information to any third party other than the Community without the existing business's written consent. In no event shall the Researcher or Community use the Proprietary Information for its benefit or the benefit of any additional third parties.

Miscellaneous Provision
This agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the parties and integrates all prior discussions between them related to the subject matter hereof. No amendment to this Agreement shall be valid unless it is in writing and signed by both parties. This Agreement shall be binding upon the respective heirs, successors and assigns of the parties hereto. No delay or omission by either party in exercising any right under this Agreement shall operate as a waiver of that or any other right. In the event any provision of this Agreement shall be held invalid or unenforceable for any reasons, such invalidity or unenforceability shall attach only to such provision and shall not affect or render invalid any other provision of this Agreement. The termination of any discussions, relationship, understanding or agreement between the parties for whatever reason shall not relieve the Researcher from its obligations hereunder.

_____The Researcher

_____Community (BRE Lead)

Appendix H. Business Retention and Expansion Data Sharing Agreement between Community and RDI

This agreement is made between _____ (*name of community), referred to below as the Community, and the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute referred to below as the RDI.*

The *Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute* has requested the use of data from *the community* that contains confidential company information. It is understood that the data will be uploaded by the RDI into the Economic Development Association of B.C.'s (EDABC) executive pulse database. The EDABC Executive Director and the RDI Lead Researcher will have full access to all company level data. The database is backed up on a server which is hosted in the USA and as such is subject to U.S. laws. In particular, the US Patriot Act which allows authorities access to the records.

The RDI understands and promises to abide by the following terms and conditions:

1. The RDI will be given company level data in a form in which the company can be identified by the RDI Lead Researcher: Dr. Terri MacDonald and EDABC Executive Director: Dale Wheeldon.

2. Before disclosing company information to RDI research assistants, the RDI will enter into a confidentiality agreement with the RDI researcher to ensure that they will not disclose it to any other person.

3. The RDI and the EDABC will not contact any company, directly or indirectly, without the prior written authority of the community.

4. The RDI will ensure that no company information will be used or disclosed in a form in which the company that it relates to can be identified without the written authority of the community.

5. The community will notify the RDI in writing immediately upon becoming aware that any of the conditions set out in this agreement have been breached.

In Witness thereof the parties hereto have duly executed this agreement as of the

_____ day of _____ 2012

Signed and delivered on behalf of Selkirk College

_____
Terri MacDonald
Regional Innovation Chair, Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, Selkirk College

Signed and delivered on behalf of the Community

_____

Appendix I. BRE DRAFT Communications Plan for Communities

Primary Audience* – business owners
Secondary Audience – residents of community

* It is assumed that municipal government and key business support organizations are already informed and involved

Possible Goals and Messages to Increase Awareness and Support
- Increase visibility and understanding of BRE
- Communicate importance of BRE program
- Communicate importance of confidentiality
- Increase survey numbers
- Correct common misconception that BRE is "just another survey" – relevance to current business needs to be established
- Demonstrate municipal support
- Demonstrate commitment to take action to create better business environment
- Communicate results, key themes and possible actions
- Communicate recommendations
- Communicate successful Red Flag, short-term and long-term actions
- Highlight partnerships
- Communicate how to participate
    - As volunteer
    - As a business
- Increase visibility of ongoing or new local economic and business development initiatives
- Thank volunteers for participating
- Thank businesses for participating

Communications Goals in Stages

Phase 1 - BRE Kick Off/ Launch
- Boost visibility of BRE survey
- Increase familiarity with work of local economic & business development organizations
- Build enthusiasm for the project in order to increase participation
- Inform audiences about BRE and why it is important.

Phase 2 – BRE mid-point
- Let people know that survey is ongoing
- Share some overall impressions of results
- Thank people for their participation
- Encourage more businesses to participate
- Inform audiences about BRE is and why it is important.

Phase 3 - Immediate actions
- Thank businesses for participating
- Communicate immediate action priorities
- Communicate work of immediate action team members.

- Generate more interest from other businesses in participating
- Validate participation of volunteers and others

Phase 4 – BRE Results
- Communicate findings
- Communicate immediate action successes
- Action Teams – priorities and long term strategy
- How BRE results will be used
- Increase familiarity with work of the local economic & business development organizations

Phase 5 – BRE Long-term
- Communicate long-term actions
- Thank volunteers and organizations (&/or individuals) that have been behind BRE
- Communicate long-term action successes

Possible Methods of Communication
- Business networks
- Press release
- E-Blast (newsletter and/or e-mail)
- Business/Community meetings (for Results)
- Web-site (Survey/ General info/ How to get involved/Results/ Actions)
- LinkedIn/ FaceBook Pages
- Other methods used by municipal government and other BRE partners (e.g. back page of local newspaper)
- Radio ads/ radio interviews (What is BRE/Importance of participating/ Results/Immediate Actions/Long-term Actions)

Appendix J. Sample Press Release

[Community] Demonstrates a Commitment to Local Businesses with the Launch of the [Community] Business Retention & Expansion Project

Instructions: *Fill in names of local leaders, communities, etc. Revise as necessary.*

[Community] is planning a community economic development project, according to **[name]**, representative of **[sponsoring organization]**. The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) project is designed to stimulate economic development and growth by assisting existing businesses. **[Organizations A, B, & C]** are working in partnership to implement the **[Community]** BRE.

"Helping our existing businesses is the primary objective of the project. Other communities have had very good results with BRE projects," said [**sponsoring organization contact**]. "Before considering this project we talked to community leaders in several other Columbia Basin and Boundary communities that have used this approach to business retention and expansion. They were very positive about the results," said **[member of BRE Team]**.

For example, in **[name of community]** the BR+E project led to: [**outline the specific example of success based on the telephone interviews**]. Another example of the benefits of this approach was given by leaders in **[name of community or area]**. One of their successes was **[outline the success]**. Before a community can assist existing businesses it must identify the businesses' needs, concerns, and growth opportunities. Through the BRE project, trained researchers visit businesses and gather information. The local leaders running this program then work to address identified issues and opportunities.

Selkirk College's Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) is supporting communities in BRE implementation through the provision of training for BRE researchers, implementation support materials (BRE manual, confidentiality forms and processes, etc.), access to the online regional e-pulse data management and referral system, and data analysis and report writing support. "The RDI's mandate is to support informed decision making through the provision of timely and relevant information and applied research." said Dr. Terri MacDonald, RDI Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development. "With the valuable information collected through community-driven BRE projects in hand, decision makers and economic development practitioners in the region will be well positioned to provide targeted support to our local businesses and to take collection action to improve the overall business climate in our region.

"A key aspect of this project is confidentiality," according to **[Community's]** Local BRE Lead **[insert name]**. "We do not publish information on individual businesses. The project is very careful about this confidentiality issue." The information gathered from the visits is compiled and analyzed by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute. The Local BRE Lead and Steering Committee review key findings and recommendations and set into motion a plan for follow up action. "One of the reasons for the popularity of the BRE project is that it not only supports long range planning for the community but also yields some short-range tangible results," said **[key BRE Lead]**.

Appendix K. Sample Introductory Letter for Businesses

Date

Manager/Owner/Ceo
Business Name
Address

Dear {Name},

The economic well-being of our community is based upon our existing businesses. In recognition of this, positive action is being taken to identify and meet the needs of these businesses. **[insert sponsoring organizations]** is spearheading an economic development project with the support of Selkirk College's Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI).

The **[insert community]** Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) project is a community-driven effort focused on identifying the needs of our existing businesses through **[insert methodology i.e. one-on-one interviews and online surveys]**. Specifically, the objectives of the project are to:

1. Identify the needs, concerns, and opportunities of existing local businesses in order that, where appropriate, local action can be taken to respond to the businesses' needs or development opportunities.
2. Learn of the future plans of the region's local businesses with respect to expansion, relocation and /or retention and follow-up where assistance can be provided.
3. Demonstrate the community's pro-business attitude and develop an effective means of communication with local businesses.
4. Encourage the business community's active involvement in economic development.

Resulting BRE data will indicate the future plans/needs of local businesses and how businesses view the community's overall business climate. In turn, this information will be used to respond to individual business needs and to plan future economic development initiatives.

Initial data will be reviewed immediately for any "red-flag" issues or requests for information. "Red-flag" issues are areas where the local BR&E Lead **[insert name]** may assist you with a concern or opportunity.

I respectfully invite you to participate in the BR&E survey. Your input will be a valued addition to the project, and your responses to the survey questions will be kept confidential. All BR&E researchers sign a "Confidentiality Contract" and are committed to this principle. A summary of the research findings and recommendations for future development efforts will be announced at a Public Meeting at the end of the project. NO businesses will be identified individually.

Should you have any concerns about the project or the research process, please contact me either via email at [insert email] or by phone [insert phone]. I will be contacting you in the next week to schedule an appointment for the BRE interview. The interview usually lasts approximately one hour. I would greatly appreciate your cooperation with this regional effort.

Sincerely Yours,

[insert name & organization]

Appendix L. Sample Thank You Letter for Businesses

Date

Manager/Owner/Ceo
Business Name
Address

Dear {Name},

Thank you for meeting with me for the **[insert community]** Business Retention & Expansion project. Your participation has been instrumental to the success of this economic development project.

The information gathered from the [insert number] businesses who participated in our community-driven BRE project was analyzed by Selkirk College's Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute. Findings and recommendations are presented in the **[insert community]** Business Retention and Expansion Report and can be accessed at www.cbrdi.ca/[insert community]. To date, a total of [insert number] of businesses have received direct follow up support from either [insert name], Local BRE Lead or from another business support provider through a referral process.

Key findings and recommendations are also being presented at a public meeting on [insert date and time] at [insert location]. I hope you can attend this public meeting where further discussion will be facilitated with a focus on moving forward with actions to improve the overall business climate of our community.

Thank you for your cooperation and time. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require additional information or direct follow-up, have questions, or would like to provide feedback on this project.

Sincerely Yours,

(insert name and contact information)

Appendix M. Reality Check for Public Meeting

This simple tool will help you to measure commitment, resources, leadership and whether timing is right to undertake an action.

Reality Check	
Name of Action	
Action Group Members:	

Question	Answer
Result—Describe what the successful action might look like.	
Purpose – What is the main goal of this action?	
Commitment – Can we get commitment and energy from the town and community to undertake this? If not, what do we have to do?	
Leadership – Who has the skills to lead (organizations, individuals)? Who else do we need to involve to ensure success who isn't in the room right now?	
Time Frame – How long will it take to accomplish? Are there any political, economic or funding factors which might hurt/help the timing?	
Finances/ Resources – What, if any, financial resources do we need to tap into? Are there any organizations that can assist this action? Any other resources?	
Your recommendation	
Next Steps	

Appendix N. Recommended BRE Resources

- Business Retention and Expansion International – the pre-eminent organization for BRE training and resources: http://www.brei.org/

- Ontario BR+E Resource Manual
  - o This is the manual prepared by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and should be considered a primary guide: http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/pdf/3609787_bre_resource_manual.pdf

- Is It for Our Community?
  - o This is the first of the five BRE booklets by Loveridge and Morse mentioned below: http://msucares.com/crd/business/bre_brochure.pdf

- The University of Minnesota Extension Department has a number of resources including a question bank: http://www1.extension.umn.edu/community/business-retention/

- BRE Guidebook from the University of Arkansas: http://www.slideshare.net/senkale/business-retention-expansionguidebook

- Characteristics of Successful BRE Programs by Henry Cothran at the University of Florida: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fe653

- Nelson BRE Report The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program took the pulse of businesses in Nelson & area during the Summer and early Fall of 2010. The Nelson and Area Economic Development Partnership received feedback from more than 200 Nelson & area businesses through in-person and on-line surveys. This report provides information on the background, key themes, results and recommendations of the 2010 BRE program. It also compares results, where possible, to a similar BRE survey undertaken in 2000: http://www.discovernelson.com/images/BRE%20Nelson%20Final%20Report.pdf

Scott Loveridge and George Morse did the state-of-the-art thinking on BRE in 1990s at the Northeast Centre for Rural Development at the University of Pennsylvania. They published five booklets in 1997, the first of which is available online:

- Is It for Our Community?
- Initiator's Manual for Starting New BR&E Visitation Programs
- Visitation Co-ordinator Manual
- Local Leadership Team Manual
- Using the Video to Introduce the Program and Train the Volunteers

This material has been used or adapted by many other programs including BREI International and there is really no other competing model. There is no research that is more recent. The Ontario BR+E Resource Manual is largely based on it. A good synthesis of all this material can be found in the OMAFRA manual from the Government of Ontario.

Appendix O – Interview Guide

For number of visits, it is the number of times you have visited this business

Economic Region: City and 'Neighbourhood' as defined by your community's BR+E Lead

Business Life Cycle (Q4): if staying the same, select 'maturing'

Functions at this facility (Q10): if not included in selection, record 'other' and describe

'Current' business plan (Q25): updated in the last 5 years

'Skilled' Employees (Q36): has some special skill, knowledge or ability in their work, may have attended college, university or technical school, may also have learned their skills on the job

'Semi-skilled' Employees (Q36): are partly skilled or trained but not sufficiently so to perform specialized work

_____

- Collect company background information including NAICS Code prior to interview, seek confirmation as needed

- If business is retail, manufacturing, professional services, or agricultural please administer the relevant 'sector-specific' survey (which is between 1-3 pages long) **please note any repetitious questions between main survey and 'sector-specific' surveys and forward a note to the RDI (tmacdonald@selkirk.ca)

- Before visiting the business, highlight Q20 on survey so you don't ask this question, also highlight any non-relevant questions (i.e. those related to parent company for small / medium sized businesses)

- For small / medium sized businesses you may chose to replace 'facility' with either 'company' or 'business'

- Use an additional notes page – for longer responses to open-ended questions, and concluding comments / reflections of interviewer.

- Replace 'BC Hydro Power Smart' resources with 'energy efficiency' in Q70, and 'Hydro provider' in Q74

- If using the recommended RDI provided survey (as opposed to downloading from the e-pulse site), please note regional 'add on' questions are embedded in the survey as opposed to on a separate survey – they are highlighted in bold – related data can be entered at the end of the input section for each survey in the e-pulse system

- Add survey ID in bottom right corner – code as first three letters of your community and survey number (i.e. for 75th survey administered in Trail it would be TRA-075), after data is entered into the database, remove cover page and store in a locked area separate from the rest of the survey.

- If you are using surveys downloaded from the e-pulse system (as opposed to base survey provided by RDI), please be sure to also download 'RDI community questions' survey (these are the regional 'add on' questions)

- Review the "Skip It" Rule with business – If there is a question that you can't or don't want to answer, we can skip it. There is no need to explain your reasons; just let us know.

- Review Confidentiality agreement and consent form, have respondent sign consent form

Appendix P – BRE Survey Cover Page

Business Name: _____

NAICS Code: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person Interviewed: _____

Business Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____ Fax:_____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Preferred Contact: _____

Confidentiality Reviewed and Consent Form Signed: yes ☐   no ☐

Appendix Q – BRE Long Survey

<div style="border:1px solid; background:#c3d59b; text-align:center; padding:8px;">

COMPANY INFORMATION

</div>

1.   What are the main products / services provided at this location?

_____

_____

_____

2.   Who are your main competitors (indicate if local, regional, national, international)?

_____

_____

3.   a) What are the factors that make your company successful here?

_____

_____

_____

b) Looking forward to the next five years, please indicate how important each of these factors will be in ensuring that this business will remain competitive. Specify 'other'. (Q7)

'Competitive' Factors	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Not applicable
New product research and development	○	○	○	○	○
New market development locally	○	○	○	○	○
New market development outside of region	○	○	○	○	○
Access to exporting and international markets	○	○	○	○	○
Add or change in business, products or services	○	○	○	○	○
Strategic alliances (joining with other businesses to provide products / services)	○	○	○	○	○
Improving worker productivity	○	○	○	○	○
Expansion of workforce employees	○	○	○	○	○
Workplace health and safety	○	○	○	○	○

Workforce skill development	○	○	○	○	○
Energy costs	○	○	○	○	○
Water/sewer availability	○	○	○	○	○
Water/sewer costs	○	○	○	○	○
Reliable air transportation	○	○	○	○	○
Affordable shipping / freight	○	○	○	○	○
Improvement of customer services	○	○	○	○	○
Available telecommunications infrastructure & services	○	○	○	○	○
Exchange rate for Canadian dollar	○	○	○	○	○
Accessing capital	○	○	○	○	○
Improve business management	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○

4. At what stage in the business lifecycle is this company?
   ○ Emerging   ○ Growing   ○ Maturing (status quo)   ○ Declining

5. What is the company's ownership status?
   ○ Privately owned   ○ Publically owned

6. What is this company's legal status?
   ○ Sole Proprietorship
   ○ Partnership
   ○ Corporation
   ○ Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)
   ○ Non-Profit
   ○ Other (specify, i.e. cooperative) _____

7. How long has your business been in operation? (Q8 in Business Counts survey)
   ○ less than 1 yr.   ○ 1-4 yrs.   ○ 5-9 yrs.   ○ 10-19 yrs.   ○ more than 20 yrs.

QUESTIONS 8-12 ONLY FOR BUSINESSES WITH A PARENT COMPANY – SKIP TO Q13 IF NOT APPLICABLE

8. Where are the business headquarters located? (formerly Q7 in Business Counts survey)
   ○ British Columbia
   ○ Elsewhere in Canada
   ○ Outside of Canada

9. What is the name of the parent company, if different? _____

10. What functions are located at this facility?
    ☐ distribution ☐ engineering/RD ☐ headquarters ☐ manufacturing
    ☐ services ☐ warehousing ☐ other _____

11. Does this company have another Canadian location that provides a similar product/service as the local operation?
    ⭕ Yes ⭕ No

    If yes, please explain.

    _____

    _____

12. Does this company have another location elsewhere in the world that provides a similar project/service as the local operation?
    ⭕ Yes ⭕ No If yes, please explain.

    _____

    _____

13. Has the owner changed at this business / at this location in the past 5 years?

    ⭕ Yes ⭕ No **IF NO → GO TO Q15**

14. If yes, please describe the local impact of the change in ownership.
    ⭕ Positive ⭕ Neutral ⭕ Negative

15. Has the management changed at this business / at this location in the past 5 years?

    ⭕ Yes ⭕ No **IF NO → GO TO Q17**

16. If yes, please describe the local impact of the change in management.
    ⭕ Positive ⭕ Neutral ⭕ Negative

17. Is an ownership change pending for this business / location?

    ⭕ Yes ⭕ No **IF NO → GO TO Q20**

18. If yes, what is the anticipated time frame?
    ○ 1 yr. or less ○ 2 yrs. ○ 3-5 yrs. ○ 5-10 yrs. ○ more than 10 yrs.

19. If yes, how do you intend to exit the business?
    ○ sell/transfer to family member ○ sell/transfer to non-family member
    ○ sell to another company ○ close the business ○ other _____

20. **DON'T ASK!** Estimate age of respondent.
    ○ over 65yrs ○ 60-65 yrs. ○ 54-59 yrs. ○ 50-54 yrs. ○ 45-49 yrs. ○ 44 & under

21. a) Have you identified a successor for your business?
    ○ Yes   ○ No

22. Is there a formal succession plan in place?
    ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Not applicable

23. If yes, have you been assisted in the preparation of a succession plan?

    ○ Yes   ○ No   **IF NO → GO TO Q25**

24. If yes, by whom?
    ○ accountant   ○ banker   ○ business partner
    ○ lawyer   ○ online resources ○ financial planner
    ○ spouse   ○ other _____

25. Does this business have a current business plan (within the last 5 years)?
    ○ Yes   ○ No

26. Additional Comments related to 'Company Information'.

    _____

    _____

    _____

LOCAL WORKFORCE

27. a) Please indicate the total number of employees (at this location).

Full-time: _____   Part-time: _____   Temporary: _____   Total: _____

b) In general terms, what percent of your workforce lives in the: (Q4)

_____ community (%)

_____ region (%) – includes entire Columbia Basin-Boundary region

_____ outside of region (%)

28. Over the last 10 years has the total number of employees:
O Increased   O Stayed the same   O Declined

29. How many employees do you expect to have in 1 year?   Total: _____

30. How many employees do you expect to have in 3 years?   Total: _____

31. How did the number of staff change, if at all over the **last 3 years**?

Full Time:	O Increased	O Stayed the same	O Decreased
Part Time:	O Increased	O Stayed the same	O Decreased
Temporary:	O Increased	O Stayed the same	O Decreased

32. How did you expect the number of staff change, if at all over the **next 3 years**?

Full Time:	O Increase	O Stay the same	O Decrease
Part Time:	O Increase	O Stay the same	O Decrease
Temporary:	O Increase	O Stay the same	O Decrease

33. Is the number of unfilled positions:
O Increasing   O Staying the same   O Decreasing

34. Does the company provide a training budget in order to upgrade employee's skills?
O Yes   O No

35. a) Where does this business attract the majority of its workforce from?
O Locally   O Regionally   O Nationally   O Internationally

b) **If applicable, please describe any recruitment activities or strategies you have undertaken to attract employees. (Q1)**

_____

36. Please indicate the skill level of your workforce.

    Skilled: _____%   Semi-Skilled _____%   Entry-Level _____%

37. Please indicate the average hourly wage for each skill level.

    Skilled: $_____   Semi-Skilled: $_____   Entry-Level: $_____

38. Do you pay more, the same or less than other businesses within the region?
    ◯ Greater than   ◯ Same as   ◯ Lower than

39. How old are the majority of your essential employees?
    ◯ Less than 25 yrs.   ◯ 26-34 yrs.   ◯ 35-49 yrs.   ◯ 50 yrs. or older

40. a) Do you have challenges retaining employees?
    ◯ Yes   ◯ No
    b) If yes, please explain why?

    _____

    _____

    c) **Please indicate which issues you believe are critical to your employees? (Q2)**
    ☐ housing ☐ transportation ☐ child care ☐ cost of living ☐ other (list)

    _____

    _____

    d) If applicable, please describe any efforts you have undertaken to retain employees. (Q3)

    _____

    _____

    _____

41. Is your business experiencing recruitment challenges with any employees positions or skills?
    ◯ Yes   ◯ No

b) If yes, please indicate in which areas?   ●   **DON'T READ OUT CATEGORIES**

☐ admin/clerical   ☐ graphics arts/printing   ☐ mechanics
☐ advanced mfg workers   ☐ healthcare professionals   ☐ plant managers/operators
☐ agriculture/ farming   ☐ hospitality service   ☐ prof/info tech/programming
☐ assember/line workers   ☐ machine operators   ☐ professional other
☐ CDL drivers   ☐ machinists   ☐ professional technical
☐ construction/contractors   ☐ maintenance   ☐ sales/retail
☐ electrical/electronics   ☐ manufacturing other   ☐ sales service
☐ food/beverage service   ☐ marketing   ☐ other _____
☐ general labourer   ☐ material/fabricators   ☐ other _____

'Other' notes _____

_____

42.   Do you anticipate future recruiting difficulties (i.e. in 3-5 years)?

☐ admin/clerical   ☐ graphics arts/printing   ☐ mechanics
☐ advanced mfg workers   ☐ healthcare professionals   ☐ plant managers/operators
☐ agriculture/ farming   ☐ hospitality service   ☐ prof/info tech/programming
☐ assember/line workers   ☐ machine operators   ☐ professional other
☐ CDL drivers   ☐ machinists   ☐ professional technical
☐ construction/contractors   ☐ maintenance   ☐ sales/retail
☐ electrical/electronics   ☐ manufacturing other   ☐ sales service
☐ food/beverage service   ☐ marketing   ☐ other _____
☐ general labourer   ☐ material/fabricators   ☐ other _____

'Other' notes _____

_____

43.   Does this business have union status?
      ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Not applicable

44.   If yes, what is the status of labour-market relations?
      ○ Excellent   ○ Good   ○ Fair   ○ Poor

45.   a) Is there any areas of training or professional development that would be of benefit to you or
      your employees?
      ○ Yes   ○ No

b) If yes, please explain why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

46. When you do attend training / certification, where do you usually access the training?
   O Local   O Regional   O British Columbia   O Rest of Canada   O United States

47. What modes of education / training work best for you?
   ☐ classroom ☐ individual coaching ☐ online/webinar training ☐ other _____

48. a) Are you aware of any anticipated trends, technologies, significant changes that will be occurring in your industry that will require new skills?
   O Yes   O No

   b) If yes, please identify. (for data entry - add to additional notes below)

   _____

   _____

   _____

49. Additional Comments related to 'Local Workforce'.

   _____

   _____

   _____

SALES

50. Please indicate your annual sales. $_____   ☐ annual sales are private

51. Is the market for your product?   O increasing   O stable   O decreasing

52. Compared to your competitors, is your market share?
    ○ increasing ○ stable ○ decreasing

53. What is your business' projected sales growth in the next year?
    ○ greater/ equal to 100%   ○ 50-99%   ○ 25-49%   ○ 10-24%
    ○ 1-9%   ○ 0%   ○ declining

54. Please indicate your sales trend over the last 10 years.

    This location: ○ Increasing   ○ the same   ○ Decreasing   ○ N/A
    Parent company: ○ Increasing   ○ the same   ○ Decreasing   ○ N/A
    This industry: ○ Increasing   ○ the same   ○ Decreasing   ○ N/A

55. Additional notes related to sales trends.

    _____

    _____

56. What percentage of total sales is generated by your top 3 customers?
    ○ 76-100%   ○ 51-75%   ○ 26-50%   ○ 10-25%   ○ 1-9%

57. Do you engage in government procurement?
    ○ Yes   ○ No

58. Please identify the source of your sales by percentage and location.

    Regional __% Provincial ___% National___ % U.S. ___% International ____%

59. a) Please identify the source of your supplies by percentage and location.

    Regional __% Provincial ___% National___ % U.S. ___% International ____%

    b) What products or services, if any, are you purchasing from outside the area for which you would like to have a local supplier? (Q5)

    _____

    _____

    _____

c) If majority of products / services are being purchased from outside of the area, why are they NOT being purchased from within the area? (Q6)

☐ Product not available here
☐ Unaware of local venders
☐ Higher costs locally
☐ No control, head office decision
☐ Quality of available products
☐ Long term contract with outside supplier
☐ Loyalty to current supplier
☐ Not applicable to this business
☐ Other? (specify) _____

60. Please indicate your business' international trade status:
☐ Import   ☐ Export   ☐ None   ☐ N/A

61. Please indicate your business' export sales trend over the last 10 years.
○ Increasing   ○ the same   ○ Decreasing   ○ N/A

62. Additional Comments related to 'Sales'.

_____

_____

FACILITY / EQUIPMENT

63. What is the square footage of your facility? _____ sq/ft

64. a) Is your facility owned or leased?

○ Leased   ○ Owned   🔴   **IF OWNED → GO TO Q66**

b) If **leased**, what is the length of the term remaining?
○ less than 1 yr.   ○ 1-2 yrs.   ○ 3-5 yrs.   ○ more than 5 yrs.

65. a) Are you planning on renewing your current lease?
○ Yes   ○ No
b) If no, why not? _____

66. Please rate the condition of your facility and equipment.

FACILITY:	○ Excellent	○ Good	○ Fair	○ Poor	○ N/A
EQUIPMENT:	○ Excellent	○ Good	○ Fair	○ Poor	○ N/A

67. Please describe the operations at this location.
    ○ One shift   ○ Two shifts   ○ 24 hours

68. Please indicate your investment trends over the last 18 months.
    FACILITY: ○ Increasing   ○ the same   ○ Declining   ○ N/A
    LOCATION: ○ Increasing   ○ the same   ○ Declining   ○ N/A

69. Is there room for expansion at this site?
    ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Maybe

70. Are you aware of energy efficiency resources that are available to you? (i.e. Fortis, BC Hydro)
    ○ Yes   ○ No

71. Does the company plan to expand in the next 3 years?   ○ Yes   ○ No
    Will it be in this community?   ○ Yes   ○ No
    Is your current site adequate for the proposed expansion?   ○ Yes   ○ No

    $_____ Estimated Total Investment

    _____ Approximate Percentage equipment/technology

    _____ Approximate percentage real estate

    _____ Estimated facility size increase (sq/ft)
    Estimated time frame for expansion?   ○ < 1 yr.   ○ 1-3 yrs.   ○ > 3yrs.

72. What, if any, are the major constraints on your expansion?
    ☐ broadband access   ☐ energy costs
    ☐ energy reliability   ☐ financing
    ☐ identifying/accessing new markets   ☐ lack of skilled staff
    ☐ lack of suitable premises   ☐ local regulations (e.g. zoning)
    ☐ problems with development approvals ☐ roads
    ☐ transport/freight   ☐ warehousing

    ☐ other _____

73. Have you approached anybody in local/provincial/federal government or business
    development organizations to discuss your expansion plans?
    ○ Yes   ○ No

74. If yes, which have you approached?
    ☐ Hydro Provider (eg. Fortis, BC Hydro)   ☐ BC Ministry (Jobs, Tourism, Innovation)
    ☐ Chamber of Commerce   ☐ Community Futures

☐ Local Council / Regional District   ☐ Local Economic Development Office

☐ other _____

75. Have you factored improvements in energy efficiency in your expansion plans?
     ○ Yes   ○ No

76. Additional Comments related to 'Facilities/Equipment'.

_____

_____

_____

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

77. Please rate the following.
     1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Average; 4=Fair; 5=Poor

Services	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Access to airport facilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Access to highways/roadways	○	○	○	○	○	○
Access to markets	○	○	○	○	○	○
Access to suppliers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Availability of road transport services	○	○	○	○	○	○
Availability of rail transport	○	○	○	○	○	○
Availability of warehousing	○	○	○	○	○	○
Disposal of waste material	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recycling	○	○	○	○	○	○
Inspections (e.g. licensing)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Development approval process	○	○	○	○	○	○
Telecommunications (tel, Internet, cell)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Availability of buildings for lease or purchase	○	○	○	○	○	○
Availability of appropriately zoned land	○	○	○	○	○	○
Water and sewerage supply	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○	○

78. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve any of the services and infrastructure listed above?

   ○ Yes   ○ No

   If yes, how? _____

   _____

79. Additional Comments related to 'Government Services'.

   _____

   _____

   _____

BUSINESS CLIMATE

80. a) Please rate the following factors related to the business climate of the area.
    1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Fair; 4=Poor; 5=No Opinion

Business Climate Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Workforce quality	○	○	○	○	○
Workforce availability	○	○	○	○	○
Workforce stability	○	○	○	○	○
Local government	○	○	○	○	○
Local tax structure	○	○	○	○	○
Provincial tax structure	○	○	○	○	○
Workers compensation rates	○	○	○	○	○
Economic development	○	○	○	○	○
Cultural/recreational amenities	○	○	○	○	○
Housing	○	○	○	○	○
K-12 education	○	○	○	○	○
Colleges / universities	○	○	○	○	○
Technical training	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○

b) Please indicate which economic drivers have the greatest potential for growth in the region over the next 5 to 10 years (please pick top 3). (Q8)

- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Technology-based businesses
- ☐ Arts, culture and creative businesses
- ☐ Health & wellness
- ☐ Relocation of people from urban centres
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Green or environmental businesses
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Other niche service businesses (e.g. services to seniors)
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

81. Notes on business climate rankings:

   _____

   _____

82. Please rate the local business climate: ○ Excellent   ○ Good   ○ Fair   ○ Poor

83. What are the community's strengths as a place to do business?

   _____

   _____

84. What are the community's weaknesses as a place to do business?

   _____

   _____

85. Are there any barriers to growth in this community?
   ○ Yes   ○ No

If yes, what are they?

_____

86. Are there suppliers you think could locate in this region?
   ○ Yes   ○ No
   If yes, please list. _____

_____

87. Are there customers that we should attract to this region?
   ○ Yes   ○ No
   If yes, please list.

_____

_____

88. Please compare the local business climate today versus 5 years ago?
   ○ Better today   ○ No change   ○ Worse today   ○ No opinion

   If worse today, why?_____ _____

_____

89. Please forecast the condition of the local business climate 5 years from today:
   ○ Will be better   ○ No change   ○ Will be worse   ○ No opinion

90. Additional Comments related to 'Business Climate'.

_____

_____

_____

ASSESSMENT

91. a) Please rate the following:
1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Fair; 4=Poor, 5=Not Applicable

	1	2	3	4	5
Business' overall health	O	O	O	O	O
Overall health of the parent company	O	O	O	O	O
Local management's attitude toward community	O	O	O	O	O
Parent company's attitude toward community	O	O	O	O	O

b) Please rate the following productivity drivers as they relate to your business. (Q9)
1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Fair; 4=Poor, 5=N/A

	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership and management capacity	O	O	O	O	O
Productive workplace culture	O	O	O	O	O
Innovation & the use of technology	O	O	O	O	O
Investing in people and skills	O	O	O	O	O
Organizing work (structures & processes)	O	O	O	O	O
Networking and collaboration with other businesses	O	O	O	O	O
Measuring impact of productivity efforts/ investments	O	O	O	O	O

92. Please rate the risk:
1=Low; 2=Moderate, 3=High

	1	2	3
Business closing in next 1-3 years	O	O	O
Business downsizing in next 1-3 years	O	O	O
Business relocating in next 1-3 years	O	O	O

93. Are there any local expansion plans in the next 12-18 months?
O   Yes   O   No

94. Additional Comments related to 'Assessment'.

_____

_____

_____

ADDITIONAL NOTES

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMPANY INFORMATION

1. What are the main products / services provided at this location? (Q1)

   _____

   _____

2. At what stage in the business lifecycle is this company? (Q4)
   ○ Emerging   ○ Growing   ○ Maturing (status quo)   ○ Declining

3. What is this company's legal status? (Q6)
   ○ Sole Proprietorship   ○ Partnership   ○ Corporation
   ○ Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)   ○ Non-Profit
   ○ Other (specify, i.e. cooperative) _____

4. How long has your business been in operation? (Q7)
   ○ less than 1 yr.   ○ 1-4 yrs.   ○ 5-9 yrs.   ○ 10-19 yrs.   ○ more than 20 yrs.

5. a) Is an ownership change pending within the next 10 years for this business / location? (Q17)
   ○ Yes   ○ No   🔴 **IF NO → GO TO Q6**

   b) If yes, what is the anticipated time frame? (Q18)
   ○ 1 yr. or less   ○ 2 yrs.   ○ 3-5 yrs.   ○ 5-10 yrs.   ○ more than 10 yrs.

   c) If yes, how do you intend to exit the business? (Q19)
   ○ sell/transfer to family member   ○ sell/transfer to non-family member
   ○ sell to another company   ○ close the business   ○ other _____

   d) Have you identified a successor for your business? (Q21)
   ○ Yes   ○ No

   e) Is there a formal succession plan in place? (Q22)
   ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Not applicable

   f) If you have been assisted in the development of a succession plan, who has assisted? (Q24)
   ○ accountant   ○ banker   ○ business partner
   ○ lawyer   ○ online resources ○ financial planner
   ○ spouse   ○ other _____

LOCAL WORKFORCE

8. a) Please indicate the total number of employees (at this location). (Q27)
    Full-time: _____ Part-time: _____ Temporary: _____ Total: _____

    b) How many employees do you expect to have in 3 years?(Q30)   Total: _____

    c) Over the last 10 years has the total number of employees: (Q28)
       O Increased   O Stayed the same   O Declined

9.   In general terms, what percent of your workforce lives in the: (RDI Q4)

       _____ **community (%)**

       _____ **region (%) – includes entire Columbia Basin-Boundary region**

       _____ **outside of region (%)**

10. How old are the majority of your essential employees? (Q39)
    O Less than 25 yrs.   O 26-34 yrs.   O 35-49 yrs.   O 50 yrs. or older

11. a) Do you have challenges retaining employees? (Q40)   O Yes   O No
    b) If yes, please explain why?

    _____

    _____

    d) Please indicate which issues you believe are critical to your employees? (RDI Q2)
    ☐ **housing** ☐ **transportation** ☐ **child care** ☐ **cost of living** ☐ **other (list)**

    _____

    _____

12. a) Are there any areas of training or professional development that would be of benefit to you or
    your employees?(Q45)   O Yes   O No
    b) If yes, please explain.

    _____

    _____

53

13. Is your business experiencing recruitment challenges with any employees' positions or skills? (Q41)

   ○ Yes   ○ No

   b) If yes, please indicate in which areas?   🟡   **DON'T READ OUT CATEGORIES**

☐ admin/clerical	☐ graphics arts/printing	☐ mechanics
☐ advanced mfg workers	☐ healthcare professionals	☐ plant managers/operators
☐ agriculture/ farming	☐ hospitality service	☐ prof/info tech/programming
☐ assember/line workers	☐ machine operators	☐ professional other
☐ CDL drivers	☐ machinists	☐ professional technical
☐ construction/contractors	☐ maintenance	☐ sales/retail
☐ electrical/electronics	☐ manufacturing other	☐ sales service
☐ food/beverage service	☐ marketing	☐ other _____
☐ general labourer	☐ material/fabricators	☐ other _____

   'Other' notes _____

   _____

14. Do you anticipate future recruiting difficulties (i.e. in 3-5 years)? (Q42)

☐ admin/clerical	☐ graphics arts/printing	☐ mechanics
☐ advanced mfg workers	☐ healthcare professionals	☐ plant managers/operators
☐ agriculture/ farming	☐ hospitality service	☐ prof/info tech/programming
☐ assember/line workers	☐ machine operators	☐ professional other
☐ CDL drivers	☐ machinists	☐ professional technical
☐ construction/contractors	☐ maintenance	☐ sales/retail
☐ electrical/electronics	☐ manufacturing other	☐ sales service
☐ food/beverage service	☐ marketing	☐ other _____
☐ general labourer	☐ material/fabricators	☐ other _____

   'Other' notes _____

   _____

SALES

---

15. Is the market for your product? (Q51)   ○ increasing   ○ stable   ○ decreasing

16. What is your business' projected sales growth in the next year? (Q53)

   ○ greater/ equal to 100%   ○ 50-99%   ○ 25-49%   ○ 10-24%

   ○ 1-9%   ○ 0%   ○ declining

17. What percentage of total sales is generated by your top 3 customers? (Q56)
    ○ 76-100%   ○ 51-75%   ○ 26-50%   ○ 10-25%   ○ 1-9%

18. Please identify the source of your sales by percentage and location. (Q58)

    Regional ___% Provincial ____% National____ % U.S. ____% International ____%

19. a) Please identify the source of your supplies by percentage and location. (Q59)

    Regional ___% Provincial ____% National____ % U.S. ____% International ____%

    b) If majority of products / services are being purchased from outside of the area, why are they NOT being purchased from within the area?(RDI 6)

    ☐ **Product not available here**
    ☐ **Unaware of local venders**
    ☐ **Higher costs locally**
    ☐ **No control, head office decision**
    ☐ **Quality of available products**
    ☐ **Long term contract with outside supplier**
    ☐ **Loyalty to current supplier**
    ☐ **Not applicable to this business**
    ☐ **Other? (specify)** _____

FACILITY / EQUIPMENT

20. Please rate the condition of your facility and equipment. (Q66)
    FACILITY: ○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor ○ N/A
    EQUIPMENT: ○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor ○ N/A

21. a) Do you plan to expand in the next 3 years? (Q71)   ○ Yes   ○ No

    b) Will it be in this community?   ○ Yes   ○ No

    c) Is your current site adequate for the proposed expansion?   ○ Yes   ○ No

    d) What is your estimated time frame for expansion?   ○< 1 yr. ○ 1-3 yrs. ○ > 3yrs.

    e) If you plan to expand, what, if any, are the major constraints on your expansion?(Q72)
    ☐ broadband access   ☐ energy costs
    ☐ energy reliability   ☐ financing
    ☐ identifying/accessing new markets   ☐ lack of skilled staff

☐ lack of suitable premises   ☐ local regulations (e.g. zoning)
☐ problems with development approvals   ☐ roads
☐ transport/freight   ☐ warehousing

☐ other _____

f) If you approached anybody in local/provincial/federal government or business development organizations to discuss your expansion plans please indicate who. (Q74)

☐ Hydro Provider (eg. Fortis, BC Hydro)   ☐ BC Ministry (Jobs, Tourism, Innovation)
☐ Chamber of Commerce   ☐ Community Futures
☐ Local Council / Regional District   ☐ Local Economic Development Office

☐ other _____

g) What type of information or support, if any, could be provided to support your expansion? (Q76)

_____

_____

_____

22. a) Please rate the following. (Q77)
     1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Average; 4=Fair; 5=Poor

Services	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Access to airport facilities	O	O	O	O	O	O
Access to highways/roadways	O	O	O	O	O	O
Access to markets	O	O	O	O	O	O
Access to suppliers	O	O	O	O	O	O
Availability of road transport services	O	O	O	O	O	O
Availability of rail transport	O	O	O	O	O	O
Availability of warehousing	O	O	O	O	O	O
Disposal of waste material	O	O	O	O	O	O
Recycling	O	O	O	O	O	O
Inspections (e.g. licensing)	O	O	O	O	O	O
Development approval process	O	O	O	O	O	O
Telecommunications (tel, Internet, cell)	O	O	O	O	O	O
Availability of buildings for lease or purchase	O	O	O	O	O	O
Availability of appropriately zoned land	O	O	O	O	O	O
Water and sewerage supply	O	O	O	O	O	O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O	O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O	O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O	O

b) Do you have any suggestions on how to improve any of the services and infrastructure listed above? (Q78)

_____ _____

_____

_____

BUSINESS CLIMATE & BUSINESS HEALTH

23. a) Please rate the following factors related to the business climate of the area. (Q80)
1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Fair; 4=Poor; 5=No Opinion

Business Climate Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Workforce quality	○	○	○	○	○
Workforce availability	○	○	○	○	○
Workforce stability	○	○	○	○	○
Local government	○	○	○	○	○
Local tax structure	○	○	○	○	○
Provincial tax structure	○	○	○	○	○
Workers compensation rates	○	○	○	○	○
Economic development	○	○	○	○	○
Cultural/recreational amenities	○	○	○	○	○
Housing	○	○	○	○	○
K-12 education	○	○	○	○	○
Colleges / universities	○	○	○	○	○
Technical training	○	○	○	○	○
Other _____	○	○	○	○	○

b) Please indicate which economic drivers have the greatest potential for growth in the region over the next 5 to 10 years (please pick top 3). (RDI Q8)

☐ **Forestry**
☐ **Manufacturing**
☐ **Education**
☐ **Tourism**
☐ **Technology-based businesses**
☐ **Arts, culture and creative businesses**
☐ **Health & wellness**
☐ **Relocation of people from urban centres**
☐ **Government**
☐ **Green or environmental businesses**
☐ **Finance**
☐ **Construction**
☐ **Other niche service businesses (e.g. services to seniors)**
☐ **Agriculture**
☐ **Other (specify)** _____

24. Please rate the local business climate: (Q82) ○ Excellent   ○ Good   ○ Fair   ○ Poor

25. Are there any barriers to growth in this community? (Q85)
    ○ Yes   ○ No
    If yes, what are they?_____

    _____

    _____

26. Please compare the local business climate today versus 5 years ago? (Q88)
    ○ Better today   ○ No change   ○ Worse today   ○ No opinion
    If worse today, why?_____

    _____

    _____

27. Please forecast the condition of the local business climate 5 years from today: (Q89)
    ○ Will be better   ○ No change   ○ Will be worse   ○ No opinion

28. a) Please rate the following productivity drivers as they relate to your business(RDIQ9)
1=Excellent; 2=Good, 3=Fair; 4=Poor, 5=Not Applicable

	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership and management capacity	○	○	○	○	○
Productive workplace culture	○	○	○	○	○
Innovation & the use of technology	○	○	○	○	○
Investing in people and skills	○	○	○	○	○
Organizing work (structures & processes)	○	○	○	○	○
Networking and collaboration with other businesses	○	○	○	○	○
Measuring impact of productivity efforts/ investments	○	○	○	○	○
Business' overall health	○	○	○	○	○

29. Please rate the risk: (Q92)
1=Low; 2=Moderate, 3=High

	1	2	3
Business closing in next 1-3 years	○	○	○
Business downsizing in next 1-3 years	○	○	○
Business relocating in next 1-3 years	○	○	○

30. **Looking forward to the next five years, please indicate how important each of these factors will be in ensuring that this business will remain competitive. Specify 'other'. (RDIQ7)**

'Competitive' Factors	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Not applicable
New product research and development	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
New market development locally	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
New market development outside of region	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Access to exporting and international markets	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Add or change in business, products or services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Strategic alliances (joining with other businesses to provide products / services)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Improving worker productivity	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Expansion of workforce employees	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Workplace health and safety	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Workforce skill development	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Energy costs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Water/sewer availability	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Water/sewer costs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reliable air transportation	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Affordable shipping / freight	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Improvement of customer services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Available telecommunications infrastructure & services	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Exchange rate for Canadian dollar	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Accessing capital	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Improve business management	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other _____	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other _____	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other _____	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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