



Okanagan Partnership

# Flagship & Cluster Follow-up Meetings

Executive Summary

**January 6, 2005**

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# Flagship & Cluster Follow-up Meetings

## Executive Summary

**January 6, 2005**

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# 1. Overview

The Okanagan Partnership completed its first regional collaborative strategy for sustainable prosperity in the June of 2004 and at that point launched implementation. The completion of the strategy and its launch coincides with a unique period of opportunity for the region. This period is one of new growth in economic development potential *and* readiness to collaborate regionally. The citizens of the region's communities, businesses, municipalities, economic development districts, chambers, associations, agencies and institutions are increasingly embracing the fundamental need to think and work regionally to ensure that the Okanagan Valley achieves sustainable prosperity together. And, this readiness is being fostered and reinforced by the profound economic opportunity that corresponds with the designation of the former OUC as a flagship campus of the University of British Columbia. With this exciting period of change as the backdrop, the stage is now set for regional stakeholders to continue to put to work the principles of collaboration with which they are becoming more comfortable. Accomplishing this will not be without difficulty, since continuous learning and change is required across the board. But the prospects are exciting and concentrating on carrying out incremental steps will reap strong near-and longer-term rewards for the Okanagan Valley.

## 2. Flagships

The majority of the regional flagship initiatives have made constructive, incremental progress. There has been a high degree of openness and readiness to collaborate demonstrated, signifying the readiness of the Okanagan to craft its next generation economy—from the expansion of UBC-O to regional growth to rising capital availability for enterprise. Flagships that have advanced have clear leaders and institutional partners. Sustaining this momentum should be also viewed as a fundamental feature of how the region works. There will need to be management support for some Flagships and access to seed funding for others. But the good news is that fundamental principle of “using existing resources in new ways” has been effectively adopted by partners in the collaborative process. A brief summary of the actions and needs of Flagships is provided below.

### 2.1. UBC-O Initiatives

**Activity:** This driver of regional development is bearing fruit already with collaboratively informed actions already being implemented and further actions underway:

- Engineering Program: Started with enrollment started.
- Medical School: A Medical School “Pod” is highly likely, and should offer synergies with the Interior Health Authority and regional health issues in aging.
- Agriculture Integration: Plans to link UBC Agriculture Faculty with PARC and have joint appointments under development which will help build a critical mass of agriculture research capacity.
- Business School: Taking shape now, seeking advisors and a dean.

**Need:** Reinforce and document regional cluster engagement with the UBC-O to support planning and continue to maximize contribution of UBC-O expansion to the regional economy. The formalization of a regional advisory body linking to UBC-O is recommended.

## 2.2. Regional Planning

**Activity:** Across the region there is growing recognition of the need to undertake regional planning—beyond individual community planning. An ongoing effort to improve understanding of regional planning and to engage stakeholders from across the community in regional planning and education is underway. UBC has agreed to lead this effort, focusing on linking a continuum of activities, including simulation of growth alternatives (using the Quest model or alternative), a studio course for design students, and a conference on regional sustainability, linking this region to counterpart regions via the World Urban Forum.

**Need:** Financial support for simulation and planning exercises and participation as a potential “case study or model” in conjunction with the World Urban Forum, but perhaps more important, to actively engage planners and council members from across the region’s communities, including local and regional governments, first nations, federal and provincial crown land agencies in a collaborative regional education and planning exercise to define common agreements on regional land use and design needs, options and directions for better management.

## 2.3. Deal Generator

**Activity:** Three activities are well underway, linking and coordinating capital resources to provide access to:

- **Funding for Start-ups and Expanding firms:** This includes linking the Okanagan Angel Network (and its efforts to form a seed capital fund), the CFDC’s pre-angel fund, the BC Advantage Fund, a new Okanagan Innovation Fund and planned Venture Forum.
- **Business Expertise to Reduce Risks and Improve Deal Quality:** Leveraging OSTEC’s capabilities by exploring the potential for additional services through UBC’s agricultural extension, the Okanagan Institute for Sustainable Development, the CFDC and ONA’s proposed Aboriginal Business Development Liaison.
- **Investor Forums:** Providing a “boot camp” for investors through EDC or CFDC or other partner that will both educate local investors and major investors from outside the Okanagan, including the possibility of screening and showcasing deals, having agreements to proportionally match external investor commitments.
- **A Database of Lenders and Investors:** This is underway and will be expanded to include links to other sources connecting Okanagan enterprises to investors, updated quarterly.

**Needs:** Excellent progress is being made continuing staff support is needed to ensure that the new funds, forums and database can be achieved and sustained on an ongoing basis.

## 2.4. Water Management

**Activity:** A Flagship team has held meetings across the Okanagan Valley focusing on the need to better manage water to avoid the negative scenario (Sunshine Eclipse) provided in the regional strategy. This group is now proposing to improve the capacity of the Okanagan Water Board to address these needs through modifying its letters of patent and changing the Board’s name to the Okanagan Water Management Council. The modified Board would coordinate



basin-wide planning and management on needs from water supply management and licensing to waste water discharge and treatment to fishery and aquatic resource maintenance and restoration, future land and water use and public education and consultation on water stewardship, including an update of water data.

**Needs:** The momentum for improvement in the Water Board structure is strong and the key next step is to ensure that there is optimal representation of key stakeholders in the ongoing process includes water districts, water suppliers, farmers, First Nations, researchers and key provincial and federal agencies (Environment Canada, Industry Canada). Further, support is needed to ensure that a balanced update of water data is carried out to inform this developmental process.

## 2.5. Regional Broadband

**Activity:** The region is at the threshold of important new infrastructure development in broadband infrastructure. The first development is the expansion of ORAN by BC Net to the Okanagan region so that, in addition to UBC-O (Kelowna), the two national laboratories (DRAO and PARC) and Interior Health Authority can be connected. A gap analysis and budget for this is underway. A second opportunity is the expected availability of competitive grants from CANARIE for development of high speed networks. Teams are in place to prepare a white paper and explore options.

**Need:** The key need is to ensure that the ORAN infrastructure is present in all three communities in the Okanagan and that key centers can access CANARIE. Specifically, funding is needed to bring ORAN from Vancouver to Kelowna, for local hub infrastructure to accommodate the high speed line, and a cable from a community hub to outlying centers, (including senior citizen housing projects that have fiber, but are not connected to a network). A consortium of municipalities and agencies may be needed to enable funding the required infrastructure.

## 2.6. First Nations Partnership

**Activity:** This initiative has worked to ensure that First Nations partner are an active part of the overall regional economic strategy process—including Flagships and cluster working groups—and that this continues and is supported through a strong internal Okanagan Nations Alliance (ONA) organizational structure to support economic development. Steps are being taken to build capacity at the local band level as well as the First Nations level to pursue policy, principles, projects and funding for development that will have clear endorsements from the Chiefs and Band Councils. These activities will include strategy, coordination and operations, including efforts on forestry negotiations, capacity building, business development workshops and community economic development, which will include participation of the Okanagan Nation Alliance economic development entity. Near-term activities include an Aboriginal Tourism Conference in late January and ongoing participation in Okanagan Partnership initiatives.

**Need:** Requests for funding of development activities have and are being submitted to provincial and federal agencies. Ongoing needs include building commonalities across the seven bands and preparing a guide for working with First Nations to enhance mutually beneficial development.

## 2.7. Regional Airport Plan

**Activity:** Initial steps have been taken to plan collaborative analysis and marketing of the region's three main airports and associated smaller facilities, in order to position the region's airports as a set of regional assets with complementary specializations and capabilities.

**Needs:** First steps have been taken with this effort to be pursued in conjunction with the activities of the regional aviation cluster. Strong high level commitment of each airport to a collaborative regional view is essential to enabling this to move ahead.

## 2.8. Regional Branding

**Activity:** Stakeholders across the region are building a team to begin to systematically promote the Okanagan region wherever possible, rather than individual communities alone. Individual groups are now adopting an Okanagan theme and this is becoming a "natural" win-win approach for business groups and associations.

**Need:** Economic Development Officers, associations, such as OSTEC and cluster groups should work together to generate a regional "brand" theme that *builds up* from individual cluster identity factors. For example, if each cluster has Okanagan distinctive attributes (such as wine or value-added agriculture or life sciences or forestry, etc) it is their commonalities that should help define the Okanagan brand.

## 2.9. North-South Transportation Corridor

**Activity:** No progress on this to date.

**Need:** The region needs a leader for the initiative that can help build collaboration on planning and investment in North-South transportation.

## 2.10. Okanagan Research Advisory Council

**Activity:** Development of this Council has not progressed as yet. There has been excellent representation of the region by individuals associated with the Okanagan Partnership on the UBC-O Advisory Board.

**Need:** A basic framework for fostering research growth in the region and enabling applied research and technology development to support the region's existing clusters and potential seed clusters is needed. Discussions with members of the Knowledge Services cluster focusing on technology commercialization infrastructure and policies should continue. A regional mechanism for assisting technology commercialization across UBC-O, DRAO and PARC should be developed.

## 2.11. Skills Pipeline

**Activity:** Two co-chairs identified, plan to align efforts with on-going provincial and national skills strategy.

**Need:** Region should organize a permanent "skills pipeline" panel comprising cluster delegates concerned with skills and all educational institutions to provide an "early warning" system on skills issues and trigger collaborative initiatives on skills development when issues arise.

### 3. Cluster Groups

The Okanagan successfully convened six cluster working groups to develop collaborative strategies for competitiveness in 2004. These initial collaborative action initiatives were launched in autumn. Many of the cluster groups are making incremental headway on implementing the first of their action initiatives while others are still refining and developing what they want to do. Both activities are welcome. A fundamental challenge shared by many clusters is the need for a higher level of day-to-day management of their organizational activities. Specifically, there is a need to scale-up efforts to bring cluster stakeholders together to carry out focused activities. Expanding management resources will help clusters pin down who will do what on given actions and communicate results. Further, as is often the case with clusters, there is a need for a competitiveness grant matching fund that to which cluster groups can apply for financing of specific activities that will support implementation. However, the Okanagan is fortunate that many cluster participants are harnessing their respective organization's capabilities to support their efforts—whether in coordination, fund raising or providing in-kind support, which is as it should be. The momentum in clusters should be sustained and will become a normal part of Okanagan life as stakeholders gain experience in learning together, making changes in their own policies and practices and cooperating to raise capital for new investments. The following summarizes the activities and needs of the six clusters:

#### 3.1. Life Sciences

**Activity:** Stakeholders in the Life Sciences cluster have successfully expanded participation of regional stakeholders, such as UBC Okanagan, Provincial Health Ministry and Interior Health Authority, into a growing network, with the goal of fostering growth of innovative health services and research in the region. The cluster is developing proposals in aging-focused research with a community emphasis, for home maintenance for older adults linked to re-employment. The cluster is examining how to expand regional development in bio-products through reviewing other provinces and federal initiatives, leveraging the UBC-O Faculty of Agriculture and PARC integration. There is considerable interest by cluster members in working on nutraceutical development and efficacy testing, emphasizing matching genomically determined individual needs to customization of ingredients. There is also interested in organizing a systematic evidence based program to demonstrate and test techniques to promote wellness, including stress management and healthy eating leveraging the development of new faculty in Health Sciences at UBC-O (e.g., human kinetics).

**Need:** This cluster is, step-by-step, translating its good ideas into proposal teams that will seek support for life sciences actions (working and going beyond their original strategy). There are new teams taking shape on wellness and a bio-products/nutraceuticals initiative. Each of these initiatives each requires project management support to advance the strong multi-stakeholder willingness to collaborate to a formal proposals to key sources of funding. Meanwhile, UBC-O/PARC and UBC-O/IHA connections on building regional capabilities and new programs are naturally taking place, thanks to the Partnership framework. *Aging issues and bio-products/nutraceuticals are Life Science themes where the Okanagan has ideal assets and should aggressively pursue development for economic and quality of life reasons.*

## 3.2. Wine and Beverages

**Activities:** The Wine and Beverages cluster has made progress, but is struggling to achieve even greater engagement of stakeholders on a consistent basis. There are five actions on which the cluster strategy had originally focused and has made progress: Spin-off of a GIS system developed by a PARC scientist (which has not moved forward, but is still being considered); Advocacy on tax and regulatory matters (being pursued through the BC Wine Institute); Integrated wine-tourism marketing (solid meetings between collaborating stakeholders and is moving forward); Regional beautification (this team has been asked to join the Regional Planning Flagship), and; Regional Water Management (this team is represented in the Regional Water Management Flagship). The Wine and Beverages cluster members met with senior PARC scientists on how to harness the potential of the UBC-O Agriculture Faculty/PARC integration to enhance competitiveness. Agreement was reached that a carefully structured, highly collaborative R&D and training initiative, with a “mini-winery” can and should be established through UBC-O and PARC focusing on wine growing and wine making in a very demand responsive, highly interactive way of providing services.

**Need:** Stronger organization of the Wine and Beverages cluster group (to ensure broader and consistent engagement) and *immediate* collaborative work to establish a world class wine growing and wine making R&D center or institute in the Okanagan—through UBC-O and PARC. This entity would encompass testing services (with cost-recovery), pre-competitive research projects (defined by cluster members, with hands on work with wineries), pilot production (at least 2000 liters) both in a dedicated facility and in demonstration vineyards, with strong sharing of results among sponsors, as well as training (coops, extension/continuing education). A preliminary plan for this is being prepared and should serve as an anchor initiative for the Wine and Beverage cluster.

## 3.3. Knowledge Services

**Activities:** This cluster has worked well to develop teams and actions focusing on five cluster objectives: Developing a Faculty of Applied Sciences at UBC-O. This has progressed very well, and UBC-O will be starting an engineering program immediately, with likely cross appointments with NRC researchers from DRAO, for example. Improving access to capital for this cluster has evolved quickly. The array of sources of capital in the region is now rapidly expanding. An Okanagan Business Mentorship Network is being formed to enhance business skills and link entrepreneurs with investors, via the Okanagan Angel Network (which has 20 members and many others ready to participate) and the broader Okanagan Deal Generator Flagship. The abiding issue remains improving the quality of deals for investors. A third initiative is the Okanagan Knowledge Sources Portal, which is designed to market knowledge services (from this cluster). This effort is seeking ways to compile information on regional capabilities and use existing portals to position regional talent. Commercialization of intellectual property is a fourth initiative. A team of knowledge service cluster members have been evaluating models from institutions, such as MIT, Stanford, UBC, SFU, Waterloo and McGill, to determine the policies and guidelines that might be encouraged so that both UBC-O, DRAO, PARC and companies can maximize the recruitment of talent and find a good climate for entrepreneurship. A fifth initiative is focused on recruitment of knowledge service-related companies to the region that will help achieve a critical mass of employment (to attract and retain talent) and business visibility in this regional cluster. This team is canvassing members to define priority firms to contact and exploring how to create a suitable attraction package.

**Needs:** This cluster has made good strides in their work and each of their initiatives could benefit from matching grants. The exploration of technology commercialization policies relates to a broad issue that needs to be addressed systematically: There is no mechanism for managing technology commercialization at any of the region's institutions, nor a bridge between them and the commercial marketplace. While UBC-O may use their UBC-UILO model, this is not the same as having a commercial R&D structure with market-focused technology commercialization objectives. While UBC-O and DRAO may be examining their options, this is a need that should be addressed with strong regional input. Should each institution form their own mechanisms with their own rules? Should there be a regional intermediary or "network", such as an Okanagan Research & Development Corporation that serves UBC-O, DRAO and PARC? Every cluster technology theme has a specific set of commercialization and consultation service requirements, from wine to bio-products and nutraceuticals to information technology ventures.

### 3.4. Aviation Services

**Activities:** The Aviation Services cluster has made progress in building an understanding of shared objectives among its stakeholders and has taken first steps outlined in their strategy. Specifically, the six airport managers are working together to finalize a format for an inventory of respective capabilities for use in both understanding complementary capabilities and developing an image for use in marketing. Finally, the cluster has agreed to support efforts by the Penticton Airport to resolve its ownership issues, the retention of helicopter training and funding of physical improvements. The participants are now ready to begin to consider "joint ventures" on which to work with one another.

**Needs:** This cluster taken important steps towards regional collaboration. Now they need to further build and formalize cluster stakeholder participation among aviation enterprises as well as the airports, focusing on forming, expanding and attracting businesses that leverage their combined or specialized capabilities.

### 3.5. Value-Added Agriculture

**Activities:** The status of this cluster's progress on its strategy implementation was not clear from the follow-up meeting. There was no one able to represent the strategy that had been developed. However, there was considerable interest in the unique opportunity that the integration of UBC Faculty of Agriculture and PARC offers this cluster. PARC's readiness to work with value-added agriculture stakeholders produced substantial interest on the part of producers in several newly identified strategic needs and actions. These were as follows: Systematic development of natural ingredients: Identification of strategic value-added natural ingredients for target markets (screening, growth, assembly, extraction, packaging and marketing). Bio-processing of waste: Meeting the needs of agricultural producers for waste disposal through innovative and cost-effective digester approaches to bio-processing of chicken, cattle, cattle manure, cheese whey, possibly at "convergence centers" (brown field sites). Innovation in field packaging of fruits and vegetables: Understanding these technologies to enable direct delivery to customers is of interest. UBC-O and PARC researchers are ready to work on these issues. There is also need to examine municipal by-laws to see what might be required to enable these future value-added activities on site by regional farmers or at designated locations in the region.

**Needs:** This cluster requires further building of its stakeholder base. The issues and actions proposed make sense, but the coherence of this group is not adequate. By focusing on priorities



where there is a clear relationship to value-added agricultural growth, as these examples certainly do, there should be strong motivation for UBC-O and PARC to team. Managing the realization of these cogent actions will require management and support to plan and align potential partners for development.

### 3.6. Tourism

**Activities:** Tourism cluster team has met with Wine Institute, TOTA, First Nations and Cultural Corridor on how to develop new products and more integrated brochures (e.g., combining wine and tourism). TOTA is willing to have an Okanagan Partnership opening, focusing on the region. Good steps towards establishing the “region” as the product.

**Needs:** Continue steps to building a “regional vocabulary” that will filter into all marketing. Aggressively convene tourism stakeholders to define new tourism products and begin their implementation and marketing.

### 3.7. Forest Products

**Activities:** This cluster had one very good cluster session with predominantly smaller wood products producers and lumber yards and a few majors. The cluster interests in improving access to specific grades of wood and moving up the value-chain in wood products merit further support. Further engagement of the major companies is important.

**Needs:** If the major forest companies are doing well they might be asked to work with the cluster on the objective of enhancing regional value-added as well as on regional growth and water management with and through the Okanagan Partnership (not just on their own).

## 4. Next Steps: Sustaining Implementation

The Okanagan Partnership has achieved a commendable launch of its strategy for sustainable prosperity. The challenge is now to sustain that momentum and enable this valuable vehicle to become a fundamental part of the Okanagan way of life—fostering sustainable prosperity.

The crosscutting Flagship initiatives are making good progress and they are serving as a strong motivator for a diverse array of regional stakeholders to learn about regional collaboration. The outlook for the Flagships is good, for the most part—energized by the UBC-O activities in particular. Some Flagships, though not all will require a source of day-to-day management to fully achieve their goals. Specifically, to achieve completion of detailed business plans, fund raising (where required) and project management. However, quite a few will be able to move along driven by the enthusiasm of their leaders, focusing on achieving changes in current practices and fostering new roles of existing institutions.

The cluster groups have shown good ‘energy’ in many cases. However, as was anticipated, many of them are having difficulty progressing without a source of day-to-day management of their planning and implementation activities. Just the same, they are making headway, particularly where cluster members have retained their focused on priority actions and emphasized doable initiatives. None-the-less, sustaining cluster momentum and managing their growing array of actions will require more than ad hoc volunteer support.

The climate for continued collaborative solutions in the Okanagan is excellent and the prospect for achieving Flagship goals and a reasonable number of cluster actions is good. To sustain this momentum, the following regional capabilities are recommended.

## 4.1. Continue the Partnership

The Okanagan Partnership has awakened regional stakeholders of all kinds to the goal of building a sustainable and prosperous future. The Partnership should be continued as it is an anchor and “conscience” for regional stewardship at many levels. Ideally, the Partnership should become “institutionalized” (as such groups are in other regions). A neutral regional body is essential to catalyzing and enabling diverse regional stakeholders to find common cause and collaborate. For this reason, the Partnership should syndicate annual membership funding from multiple sources that include every major organization that has a stake in the future of this region and its sustainable prosperity. This means securing funding from:

- Municipalities
- Development districts
- Universities and colleges
- Laboratories
- Power utilities
- Telecommunications companies
- The Community Futures Foundation
- Provincial Agencies
- Western Economic Diversification
- Federal agencies (such as Industry Canada and the NRC)
- Larger corporations

## 4.2. Coordinate the Flagships

The momentum that has been developed requires day-to-day oversight to maintain progress. The Okanagan Partnership should continue to provide coordination (planning and logistics for meetings and assistance in recruiting participants), working closely with the co-chairs of each Flagship. To the extent possible, technical assistance to Flagship business planning should be offered, if only to ensure consistency and quality of the initiatives taking shape. Alternatively, planning grants to Flagship groups might be made to enable each proposing team to hire professional services to advance their business proposals. *See the Matching Grant Fund discussion below.* In other regions providing planning grants to Flagships enables them to form their own new organization, if required, or simply submit proposals to appropriate funding agencies. Flagships do best when well tended, with organizational discipline and quality control from the Partnership.

### 4.3. Manage the Cluster Groups

Very rarely do cluster groups remain together without external or internal assistance. Ideally, a cluster organization will take shape, building membership, hiring staff, managing collaborative activities and services. However, unless there is already an association in place to assume responsibilities for managing a cluster, the prospects for continuity will be low. For this reason, the Okanagan Partnership should make a priority of either directly or indirectly providing management support for each regional cluster group—and soon. This can take several different forms. For example, in Ottawa, OCRI became the technology cluster management organization, while other groups managed tourism and business services. In Calgary, Calgary Technology manages the technology clusters while Calgary Economic Development manages non-technology clusters. In the Okanagan there may be ways for the Partnership to work with existing organizations, such as OSTECH to achieve the same objectives—under the appropriate terms and conditions (or perhaps OSTECH could be merged into the Okanagan Partnership). Failure to commit to maintaining and building regional cluster groups may undermine long-term opportunities for the region—losing the bottom-up, market-driven engine that helps provide credibility to regional action. The level of staff required to maintain a cluster is not high, perhaps ½ a full time person or less. For six clusters two to three professionals could provide the needed support for at least the near-term.

### 4.4. Provide Matching Grants to Cluster Actions

Many cluster actions can and should be carried out directly by cluster participants. These participants are, by definition the producers, suppliers and economic input institutions that cause or solve an economic problem or create a solution. However, long-experience shows that, particularly in the early stages of cluster action implementation, that there is a need for available resources to plan or sometimes to purchase services needed advance a solution—to briefly hire a consultant, to buy data, to arrange specific training, to organize or attend a conference, to build a website or advertise, travel to a funding agency or customer. The approach that is increasingly being taken by regional leadership organizations is to establish a matching grant fund that will provide an award to applicant “action teams” who meet well defined criteria for eligibility. Criteria typically include having a clear cluster action objective, matching commitments from cluster members and measurable outcomes. Funding does not go to the applicants themselves but to meet a specific need associated with the cluster action. If the cluster team making the application is well prepared, the grant award will go to the service provider or to an association intermediary who will pay a bill. These “war chests” have been funded by a variety sources, from cities to foundations to agencies, such as Western Economic Diversification. The challenge is to manage the fund effectively so that the money leverages cluster member commitments. In the Okanagan this fund could be run externally from the Partnership, if other partners are willing to offer the program. For example, the Community Futures Foundation, Development Districts or their analog could enter into a strategic agreement with the Partnership to provide matching grants to cluster action teams, under mutually agreed upon terms. The matching grant funds are a vital catalyst that enables volunteers to leverage their often intensive efforts to improve their competitive environment. Matching funds are not intended to be investments, but a lubricant for desired economic actions. These matching grants are not for funding enterprise. Regional pre-seed, angel, seed and venture funds and commercial investors will capitalize any actual investment proposals that meet the test of the marketplace.



## **4.5. Track and Report Progress**

The value of the Okanagan Partnership is already evident. However, rigorous tracking of its qualitative and quantitative outcomes is important to demonstrating and reaffirming the virtue of its operations over time. More and more regional competitiveness initiatives are developing systems for measuring changes in their sustainable prosperity over time. The Okanagan Partnership should consider how best to measure and report progress, drawing from examples and models that are available. By announcing and fulfilling measurement intentions the Okanagan Partnership can protect and build its position as the power generator and anchor for important regional actions as well as individual cluster development. ICF has one system that could be considered, the “Regional Navigator”.

## **4.6. Celebrate Collaborative Entrepreneurs and Communicate Regional Success**

The Okanagan Partnership has accomplished very important objectives and, if able to remain in operation, it will be able to help the region's citizens learn, change and adapt to the challenges of sustainable prosperity. The scale and complexity of activities that the Partnership has energized are substantial and will have many positive secondary consequences. To help consolidate its position the Partnership should have a communications strategy that reports on quarterly meetings of the Partnership and its leaders (stewards and co-chairs) and holds an annual event that celebrates the volunteers who have achieved collaborative solutions. These collaborative entrepreneurs are the real heroes of a high performing economy. They should be acknowledged and rewarded at a suitable event (where there should be plenty of celebration to go around). Moreover, at this annual event the leaders of the Partnership and these collaborative entrepreneurs should report the progress in implementing specific Flagships and cluster actions as well as their outcomes. Regional television, radio and newspapers should be briefed in advance and invited to co-sponsor along with other entities as well as participate. A program of outreach, focusing on the media should be initiated. This outreach should be part of ongoing overarching communications goals of the Partnership, for example, focusing on “building regional collaboration”. A talk show could pick a regional collaboration theme on which regional leaders and citizens could be invited to discuss needs, options and outcomes. Topics could begin with Flagship issues, such as collaboration on regional growth, water management, higher education, innovation, finance, and First Nations, but expand over time so that citizens begin to incorporate collaborative solutions into their view of how the region ordinarily approaches shaping its future. The Okanagan Partnership can use public outreach via various media to effectively renew and expand its mission and grown collaborators on an ongoing basis. Communication is not about the media itself; however, it is about the message.

End

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