

Five-Year Strategic Business Plan Template

Designated Recipient: Regional District Kootenay Boundary
Community Name: Boundary Country
Date Prepared: 12 December 2022
MRDT Term Expiry Date: June 30, 2023
Five Year Period: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2028

Section 1: Five-Year Strategic Overview
Vision and Mission

The 2040 vision of the Regional District Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) is to work towards being recognized for the following:

- The best place to work / play / live
- Environmental leaders
- Affordable
- Prepared / resilient / safe
- Sustainable
- Adaptable / nimble
- Food secure / self-sustaining
- Informed and respectful, engaged public processes

RDKB’s mission is “to provide a professional level of governance and advocacy both responsive and accountable to the needs of our regional community.”

From a tourism perspective, the Boundary Country’s **vision** is to evolve over time to appeal to our target audiences year-round, expanding from a predominantly summer destination, with growth potential in spring, fall and winter, and to adapt to the changing environment. This need for adaptation and an “explore local” focus due to the pandemic of 2020 into 2021 will further influence this vision for the subsequent years of the plan.

Additional elements of the RDKB strategic planning includes the following key elements:

- Product and destination development will be balanced against our core values and sustainable best practices, and to align with the Provincial direction of wellness and sustainability.
- Tourism Management is conducted in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation amongst local stakeholders, communities, and regional partnerships
- Industry development and best practices in tourism marketing and development will be the cornerstone of our success
- Plans are developed with industry consultation and supported through

	<p>research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brand Adoption of <i>Boundary Country – Adventure Unlimited</i> will unite us as a region and be recognized in our key markets. ● Strategic alignment of regional, provincial, and national plans will leverage our success.
Strategic Context	<p>Strategic Overview:</p> <p>A destination that has healthy and sustainable shoulder seasons with communities that collaborate across the (Boundary Country) region to market and grow tourism.</p> <p>To increase the length of the tourist season in Boundary Country and to improve the overall sustainability of the tourism sector.</p> <p>Current Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boom and bust summer cycle ● Minimal regional collaboration on marketing efforts ● Some "race to the bottom" pricing among accommodators ● The eastern part of the region is more well-known and developed. However, in 2020 Rock Creek opened their visitor centre and hired an economic developer that has increased traffic and amenities in the western part of the region ● Major employers are Interior Health, SD51, Interfor, Roxul, and nurseries ● Highway 3 is one of three major east-west transportation routes in BC and with the Hwy 3 Alliance and Crowsnest Scenic 3 more attention is being turned to it as a scenic road-tripping destination. In 2020, Boundary Country alongside Destination Osoyoos and Similkameen Valley Planning Society (SVPS) and Similkameen Independent Wine Growers Assn (SIW) created the cooperative Crowsnest Scenic 3 that collaborate to promote Hwy 3 as an alternative route for touring and exploring by showcasing four experience-based themes throughout the microsite, blogs, social posts, and campaign messaging. 2022 makes the third year of the cooperative and 2023 welcomes a new partner, Tourism Hope. ● Boundary Country has 3 Ski Resorts: Big White, Mount Baldy and Phoenix Mountain ● Tourism is based on outdoor recreation including the TransCanada Trail, a fairly well-developed mountain bike trail system, the Kettle River,

	<p>Christina Lake, Conkle lake, Willgress Lake, Jewel Lake, golf courses, hunting/fishing, and camping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During the pandemic, many sought to leave large cities and find affordable rural homes to work remotely from. The Thompson Okanagan and Boundary Country saw a significant spike in migration from both the Lower Mainland and Alberta. This provided a somewhat “balance” between older businesses closing and new residents opening. In Greenwood, for example, the 2019-2020 winter saw the closing of all restaurants and very few businesses open regularly downtown. Yet in Dec 2022, there are 3 new restaurants, new retail businesses, markets, apartments, restoration of the Windsor Hotel and more from new residents collaborating and seeing potential <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of affordable housing and renting which limits hiring/employment opportunities ● Overall low economic climate, especially in western rural areas ● Aging population and outmigration of youth ● Boom and bust summer cycle ● Lack of cohesion in signage across the region. Boundary Country Tourism, since its creation, has greatly contributed to tourism product development including signage on the highways. However, signage on trails (such as kiosks) and how it matches wayfinding in communities still need improvement ● Limited coordination between tourism operators ● Limited tour operators in the area, even though there is demand ● Limited digital capacity. Boundary Country Tourism has tackled this by providing free directory and event listings on the website for those lacking in skills or their own websites, which has proven successful since its creation. However, there are still boundaries to digital communication, especially with more rural stakeholders. ● Majority of businesses (especially in the western part of the region) are closed in the winter season <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relatively untapped history in the region. There is regular engagement in Greenwood and Grand Forks related to mining, rail trails, Japanese
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internment and Doukhobors. The Kettle Valley, Greenwood and Boundary Museums are popular in the summer. However, history in the region lacks promotion and an online/marketing presence

- Potential for more accommodations and amenities to continue growing in the western part of the region
- Creating export-ready tourism products from the natural assets
- Greater collaboration between areas and tourism operators
- Highway 3 as a touring route
- Fall 2021 saw major success in digital marketing campaigns which provides positive encouragement for developing the shoulder seasons

Reflection on the Pandemic

- Boundary Country collection of the MRDT commenced on July 1, 2018. Therefore, the 2020 year was supposed to be the first full year of operations as 2019 was a start-up year. However, 2020 receipts declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 16% decrease from 2019 as at September 30, 2020 collection reported. The year 2020 did finish at 14% more revenue than 2019 (\$84K vs \$73K) due to a high volume during the summer months.

Boundary Country MRDT RDKB Collection Period Payment Transfer Comparisons:													
2019		2020		Variance YOY		2021		Variance YOY		2022		Variance YOY	
Jan-19	\$ 1,945.49	Jan-20	\$ 3,110.91	\$ 1,165.42	60%	Jan 2021	\$2,932.28	-\$178.63	-6%	Jan 2022	\$7,194.80	\$4,262.32	145%
Feb-19	\$ 1,859.70	Feb-20	\$ 2,537.27	\$ 677.57	36%	Feb 2021	\$3,530.62	\$993.35	39%	Feb 2022	\$3,214.98	-\$315.64	-9%
Mar-19	\$ 4,682.26	Mar-20	\$ 1,689.93	\$ (2,992.33)	-64%	Mar 2021	\$4,772.15	\$3,082.22	182%	Mar 2022	\$5,751.46	\$979.31	21%
Apr-19	\$ 3,668.63	Apr-20	\$ 2,087.63	\$ (1,581.00)	-43%	Apr 2021	\$3,597.12	\$1,509.49	72%	Apr 2022	\$6,805.63	\$3,208.51	89%
May-19	\$ 6,431.86	May-20	\$ 2,203.57	\$ (4,228.29)	-66%	May 2021	\$6,804.41	\$4,600.84	209%	May 2022	\$8,779.59	\$1,975.18	29%
Jun-19	\$ 10,155.11	Jun-20	\$ 5,925.75	\$ (4,229.36)	-42%	June 2021	\$11,614.40	\$5,688.65	96%	Jun 2022	\$25,273.30	\$13,658.90	218%
Jul-19	\$ 14,114.33	Jul-20	\$ 7,126.54	\$ (6,987.79)	-50%	July 2021	\$18,743.88	\$11,617.34	163%	Jul 2022	\$19,139.65	\$395.77	2%
Aug-19	\$ 8,342.54	Aug-20	\$ 21,709.10	\$ 13,366.56	160%	Aug 2021	\$16,241.07	-\$5,468.03	-25%	Aug 2022	\$16,535.67	\$294.60	2%
Sep-19	\$ 7,068.01	Sep-20	\$ 15,411.43	\$ 8,343.42	118%	Sept 2021	\$21,545.41	\$6,133.98	40%	Sept 22			
Oct-19	\$ 5,487.04	Oct-20	\$ 11,076.19	\$ 5,589.15	102%	Oct 2021	\$6,476.36	-\$4,599.83	-42%	Oct 2022			
Nov-19	\$ 2,871.80	Nov-20	\$ 2,395.54	\$ (476.26)	-17%	Nov 2021	\$6,541.34	\$4,145.80	173%	Nov 2022			
Dec-19	\$ 6,735.53	Dec-20	\$ 8,703.38	\$ 1,967.85	29%	Dec 2021	\$14,288.65	\$5,585.27	64%	Dec 22			
	\$ 73,362.30		\$ 83,977.24	\$ 10,614.94	14%		\$117,087.69	\$33,110.45	39%		\$92,694.88		

As you can see from above, MRDT remittances since 2019 have steadily shown growth, even through the pandemic. The 2021 remittances continued to climb from 2020 by 39% with over \$117,000 collected. The 2022 numbers to date, with funds accounted for through to and including June, show significant increases over 2021. MRDT revenues through June accounted for \$57,000. When compared to the next highest year of 2021 where January through June remittances were just over \$33,000, the increase in 2022 to date reflects a 72% increase.

This consistent growth during a time that brought other destinations to their knees supports the research that Boundary Country is perfectly located between the major population centres of Vancouver and Calgary and is a beautiful area that enables people to enjoy nature without crowds. The increase in MRDT revenues also strongly supports the assessments that the ongoing targeted marketing is working..

These increases have occurred despite COVID-19 pandemic bringing the world to a halt, greatly altering the tourism industry and the way it operates. It is important to keep the pandemic in mind when analyzing results for the efforts of the Boundary Country website and social media accounts. Our channels are garnering different traffic than previous reporting periods as our targets have shifted in accordance with travel guidelines and health regulations.

Key COVID-19 Dates:

- March 17, 2020 - BC State of Emergency Declared
 - Social Media Activity Suspended
 - Accounts remain monitored
- June 4, 2020 - Social Media Activity Reinstated
- July 17, 2020 - Social Ad Spend Reinstated
- November 19, 2020- Provincial Health Officer of B.C. introduces new COVID-19 guidelines which include urging British Columbians to avoid non-essential travel
 - General social ad spend paused
- April 23, 2021 - The Emergency Program Act (EPA) combined BC's 5 health authorities into 3 regions of the province and prohibited non-essential travel between these regions.
- May 25, 2021 - Recreational travel within travel regions allowed. Earliest date for travel within all of BC is set for June 15th
- June 16, 2021 - Recreational travel within all of BC is allowed
 - General social ad spend reinstated to regular levels aimed at BC residents in target markets
- July 1, 2021 - Canada-wide recreational travel is allowed
- August 9, 2021 - US citizens allowed to travel BC for recreational purposes
- September 1, 2021 - International citizens allowed to travel to BC for recreational purposes

Key learnings/conclusions carried over and put into practice were to continue to hold a reserve of funds for cash flow management and contingency and this has been successfully done with reserves available going into 2022 and planned for 2023.

- As of last year, incremental marketing activities resulted from some

MRDT funds supporting the partnership application by Boundary Country Tourism (Regional District Kootenay Boundary) to the Destination BC Co-operative Marketing Program partnership with Big White Ski Resort. These funds were utilized to support incremental activities demonstrating leveraging of resources, including regular summer marketing campaigns to promote rail trail use, events and outdoor adventure. Examples of this collaboration include the 2021 Trail Map and the “Capture Boundary Country” photo challenge, which was part of the summer campaign where visitors were encouraged to photograph the boundary’s highlights, including Big White, and share their photos on social media with the #captureboundary hashtag. Big White contributed by sharing media, posting the event online and on-site, and providing a prize for the winners. Even though wildfire smoke deterred visitors from activities, the campaign saw over 100 submissions and 2,641,427 impressions.

Key learning / Conclusion is to continue to partner with our local and regional areas to amplify the Boundary Country brand message through strategic partnerships.

- Boundary Country tourism continues to suffer from the effects of the pandemic and, in the summer of 2021, wildfire smoke also plagued the tourism industry. Government funding is supporting some destination and product development initiatives. For destination marketing messages, we continue to monitor businesses as they reopen. As of July 2021, we were able to reactivate messaging for our primary domestic markets - British Columbia and Alberta - and endeavoured to extend the summer season into fall with an additional advertising campaign. The campaign was our most successful to date and performed incredibly well in Alberta with our top cities by Landing Page Visitors being Calgary (5,867) and Edmonton (3,061).
- In 2022, during continued COVID closures, we had excellent results in our spring programmatic campaign. From April 26 to May 25, Boundary Country engaged in a spring digital marketing campaign, hosted by the marketing agency, War Room. Our goal for this campaign was to reach and inspire residents of Boundary Country to explore their home region and support local tourism businesses while travel restrictions were in

place.

Here are the key results of the campaign:

- 2,364,677 impressions
- 42,941 ad clicks
- 49,701 landing page visitors
- 480 button clicks

Campaign Highlights include:

- We saw 317% growth in ad clicks and 448% growth in Landing Page Visitors in comparison to the Spring 2021 campaign.
- Our average time-on-site almost doubled from the previous year, increasing from 2:23 minutes in 2021 to an average of 5:35 minutes in 2022. We are seeing a more engaged and higher-intent audience interacting with the website.
- Between BC and Alberta, most of our traffic came from Alberta this year (66%), which is opposite to what we saw last year, where BC demonstrated more interest in 2021.

Key learning / Conclusion is to continue to monitor Public Health guidelines and Destination BC messaging guidance while also continuing to build brand awareness and promote visitation through Fall, Winter and Spring.

- We have been working in partnership with our regional tourism organizations, Thompson Okanagan Tourism (TOTA) and Kootenay Rockies Tourism (KRT), in alignment with our local representatives to provide the tourism expertise needed, while staying connected to local issues, concerns and opportunities.
- The management model that administers tourism funds is led by the Regional DMO TOTA via a contracted project manager, Symphony Tourism Services and a local knowledge expert in the role of Stakeholder Liaison. Additionally, coordination with CDMOs and community groups involved in tourism within Boundary has led to additional cohesiveness and brand strengthening.

Key learning / Conclusion this combination has proven a great model to combine tourism leadership with local expertise.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRDT Funds have supported both industry and product development education as well as research-based destination marketing activities. Key activities focused on digital marketing, including the launch of the website that was redesigned in 2020 and targeting social media, while there was a continued pause on travel shows. Digital marketing has proven successful at increasing market awareness of Boundary Country, and we found particular success with the addition of a fall campaign launched mid-Aug through mid-Sept in 2021. In 2021, a major focus was on the development and launch and promotion of the trail map and Boundary’s extensive trail system. Each of the summer and fall campaigns focused on the trails, and a virtual event - photo challenge - was promoted to visitors and locals alike, advertised digitally and in local newspapers throughout July and August. <p><i>Key learning / Conclusion The industry supports the destination marketing approach and was very happy with the trail map publication and rollout. They would like to see signage as a priority. The upcoming year will focus on this.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research data for visitors to the area including visitor counts, overnight visitation, visitor segmentation information and the ability to apply that research knowledge to our strategy, experience design, content, target marketing, campaign planning and execution has proven particularly useful for doing targeted digital campaigns. <p><i>Key learning / Conclusion – Research-based planning results in efficient use of resources and provides essential insights to operators who can benefit from this information.</i></p>
Overall Goals, Objectives and Targets	<p><i>Destination Marketing</i></p> <p>Goal #1: Grow awareness of Boundary Country as multi-night touring destination via Highway 33/Highway 3 corridors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase MRDT by 20% annually Increase overnight stays by 20% annually, especially in the growth potential months of May-June and September-October Increase social media engagement by 10% annually Increase consumer website referrals and click throughs to operators by 5% annually

	<p><i>Industry Development</i></p> <p>Goal #2: Build industry knowledge and skills and maximize stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Execute two industry networking/ FAM/ professional development events annually● Engage Boundary Steering Committee up to four times per year● Host annual stakeholder update and input forum● Increase list of stakeholders subscribed to the e-newsletter by 20-30 annually● Increase open rate of industry e-newsletter by 5% annually● Increase business referrals and click throughs to the website directory by 5% annually <p><i>Destination & Product Management</i></p> <p>Goal #3: Actively engage in destination and product experience development to support the continued enhancement of the overall visitor experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and implement updates to key areas of improvement for trail and community kiosks across the Boundary Country Region● Support local events with promotion and where possible sponsorship to increase visitation to events by at least 20% annually● Invest in the digitisation of the Boundary Country Trails aiming at the end of 5 years to have the webpage of digitised trails be one of the top 5 most visited pages● Continue investing in visitor analytics and market segmentation to guide marketing tactics and targets across the region
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Section 1: Five-Year Strategic Overview
**Strategies - Key
Actions**

The following are the strategies and key actions planned for reaching the goals and objectives:

- Utilize market research to understand current visitors and target our greatest market potential to support planning, marketing promotion and experience design
- Maintain an integrated research-based marketing plan uniting Boundary Country Stakeholders as a region, including both traditional and digital media
- Focus on recovery periods when natural occurrences interrupt visitation
- Monitor recovery efforts and promote market-ready product/experiences
- Continue development of partnerships to leverage resources and expand market reach
- Supplement Destination BC industry development workshops, and online resources with local needs-adapted options
- Support industry through professional development, familiarization, partnership, and networking options for stakeholders
- Increase the quality of tourism products on offer

Key Actions - Year 1 – 2023

Destination Marketing

- Purchase and reflect on 2022 visitor analytics and market segmentation to guide marketing tactics and targets.
- Continue providing up-to-date digital resources on the Website pages, directory and events calendar as well as Smug Mug database of photography via continuing to contract Photographers on retainer
- Print the Visitor Experience guide earlier than previous years (before March) to prepare for spring trade shows in Partnership with Black Press media
- Plan and implement at least 2 marketing campaigns aiming to strengthen the summer season, but also lengthening visitation to shoulder seasons around Road Touring
- Gather information on feature experiences in each community and highlight them on the website pages and/or events calendar
- Continue to attend trade shows and tourism events as required

Industry Development

- Hold at least four meetings of the Steering Committee and when possible, add more members from new accommodators in the region (currently at 4 members, end of year aim for 6-9 members)
- Plan and implement two networking/ FAM/ professional development

events for tourism operators

- Increase brand recognition for tourism operators through word of mouth via the steering committee members
- Reach out to new and existing tourism operators to continue to engage them in tourism awareness and growth across the region
- Continue regular engagement with stakeholders via the News Centre and monthly newsletters

Destination & Product Management

- Reflect on 2022 visitor analytics and market segmentation to guide marketing tactics and targets
- Source a committee of trail ambassadors and hire a Digital Asset Specialist to collect inventory of trail data and mapping in the region for future digitisation of the Boundary Country Trails
- Identify and implement updates to key areas of improvement for trail and community kiosks across the Boundary Country Region
- Support local events with promotion and where possible sponsorship that not only strengthens the Boundary Country brand, and attracts key visitors but ensures these events continue

Key Actions – Years 2 to 5 – 2024 to 2027

Destination Marketing

- Continue to purchase and reflect on visitor analytics and market segmentation to guide marketing tactics and targets.
- Continue providing up-to-date digital resources on the Website pages, directory and events calendar as well as Smug Mug database of photography via continuing to contract Photographers on retainer
- Continue to plan and implement marketing campaigns around Highway 3 and Boundary Country as a touring destination
- Print the Visitor Experience guide in Partnership with Black Press media
- Gather information on feature experiences in each community and highlight them on the website pages and/or events calendar
- Continue to attend trade shows and tourism events as required

Industry Development

- Hold at least four meeting of the Steering Committee and when possible, add more members from new accommodators in the region (increasing each year by at least 1 + any new accommodators)
- Review the effectiveness of the two networking/ FAM/ professional developments in the previous year via engagement with visitor centres and business organisations (such as the Board of Trade, or Boundary Country Chamber) if tourism operators and businesses saw positive responses. Then either adjust or re-host.
- Increase brand recognition for tourism operators through word of mouth

	<p>via the steering committee members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to new and existing tourism operators to continue to engage them in tourism awareness and growth across the region • Continue regular engagement with stakeholders via the News Centre and monthly newsletters <p>Destination & Product Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on previous year’s visitor analytics and market segmentation and purchase for the coming year • Utilise the committee of trail ambassadors and Digital Asset Specialist to review inventory of trail data and mapping in the region. For years 2-5 focus on transferring trail data online in partnership with TOTA and Backroads maps for an embedded on the website and an offline -available app. • Identify and implement updates to key areas of improvement for trail and community kiosks across the Boundary Country Region • Support local events with promotion and where possible sponsorship that not only strengthens the Boundary Country brand, and attracts key visitors but ensures these events continue • Plan and implement necessary updates to print resources such as the Visitor Experiences Guide and Trail Map <p>Approximate resource allocation between major categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing: 40% - Destination and product management: 30% - Industry and stakeholder development/engagement: 30%
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Stakeholder Engagement Includes:</p> <p>Stakeholder Liaison (contract position)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly outreach to stakeholders through various forms of communications: phone, email, and 1:1 meetings • Meet with 20+ accommodators no less than once per year • Minimum 4x year phone call check ins <p>Committee representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Advisory Committee (representation from all stakeholder sector organisations as well as individuals) • Tourism Steering Committee (MRDT collection group) meet quarterly over zoom to coordinate and brainstorm activities. • E-Newsletter (1x per month, with occasional updates when needed) – 260+ list includes all tourism businesses in the Boundary Country area • Contact list database (Mailchimp) for newsletters and surveys (Survey Monkey) – Maintained on an ongoing basis • Boundary News Centre (online, industry info, all topics) – Updated as required. Link to the webpage from newsletter

	<p><i>Note: see covering letter detailing stakeholder engagement as part of the RDKB Boundary Country MRDT renewal process.</i></p>
Brand Positioning	<p><i>Boundary Country - Adventure Unlimited</i></p> <p>The brand positioning begun in 2018 will be continued. This position reflects the outdoor recreation opportunities that power the tourism sector throughout the region while also representing the rural character</p>
Target Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor data is processed by Symphony Tourism Services through the Environics Analytics license provided by the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat which includes Destination Canada’s EQ traveller types as well as the more granular PRIZM market segments that we can now get at the community level. This partnership program supports both the destination and local operators. • Leisure travellers, who travel frequently and have an interest in touring, exploring and outdoor adventure who enjoy multiple areas along route or corridor • EQ targets include Authentic Experiencers, Rejuvenators and Cultural Explorers in both the family and boomer segments. History, culture and outdoor recreation pursuits will be the focus when speaking to these target groups. • While Boundary Country has an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities the following three themes will continue to showcase the region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails throughout the Boundary including the iconic Kettle Valley Rail Trail (Spring, Summer and Fall with some Winter emphasis) • River and Lake activities (Summer) • Heritage, arts and culture (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) • Winter activities emphasized in 2021 and to continue in 2022 to increase seasonal dispersion • Primary target market areas are the Lower Mainland of BC, Okanagan Corridor and Alberta. Washington State would be a secondary market based on current visitation which is low. • Traveller types vary by season. Based on current visitation key market segmentation targets include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring and Winter Travellers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rejuvenators in Vancouver Lower Mainland ○ Gentle Explorers in Kelowna ○ Rejuvenators in Calgary and Edmonton Summer and Fall Travellers in all markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cycle / Hike enthusiasts (especially on the Rail Trails) ○ Free Spirits ○ Rejuvenators ○ Authentic Experiencers

	<p>Note: The number one market for visitors to Boundary Country (excluding residents of the Thompson Okanagan region) is the Highway 3 East corridor area with Rejuvenators dominating all seasons. Great potential is seen here for this corridor and a joint DBC Co-op Program application was approved in 2020 for a Crowsnest Scenic 3 branding and campaign effort via the Crowsnest Tourism Alliance (Boundary Country Tourism, Destination Osoyoos Development Society, Similkameen Valley Planning Society (SVPS) and Similkameen Independent Wine Growers Assn (SIW) and in 2023 the addition of Tourism Hope). A microsite was created to establish and promote the Scenic Highway 3 and the partnership plans to continue in 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Composition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC 70% - Alberta 20%, Washington State 10% = 100% BC: Spring 30% Summer 30% Fall 30% Winter 10% AB: Summer 20% Washington: Summer 10%
Management, Governance, and Administration	<p>The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) will continue to receive and govern the funds. The management model that administers funds and manages activities is led by the regional DMO Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) via a contracted project manager from TOTA's subsidiary Symphony Tourism Services. The project manager works alongside local knowledge experts in the role of Stakeholder Liaison. The Steering Committee currently in place will continue to provide direction and guidance. Additionally, coordination with CDMOs and community groups involved in tourism within Boundary has led to additional cohesiveness and brand strengthening.</p>

Sources of Funding	Current sources of tourism marketing funding are MRDT and the Boundary Country - Big White Open-Pool-Coop-Program (of which funding sources are also the RDKB Boundary Economic Development Committee, Big White Ski resort and Private Sector Businesses)
Affordable Housing (if applicable)	N/A

Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with Performance Measures

<p>Major Category: Destination and Product Experience Development</p>
<p>Activity Title: Industry Development</p>
<p>Tactics: Destination BC and TOTA Programs and networking opportunities supported by online resources and in-person workshops</p>
<p>Implementation Plan:</p> <p>Short Description: Stakeholders have indicated a continuous need for professional development and networking. In 2023, we will be doing seasonal familiarization trips for front-line staff. We will review opportunities for online or in-person sessions including promotion of available Destination BC workshops, TOTA and BCRTS webinars, as well as online group coaching via Zoom. A thematic area of focus will be on understanding market research tools and how to apply them effectively. Adding to this will be frontline training in the form of familiarization (FAM) trips at the beginning of the summer season (pre-May long weekend) and in late November for winter. The objective is to have maximum cross-selling throughout the full Boundary, ensuring that visitors in one centre understand what is offered and have a firsthand experience fueling their recommendations. Ultimately this will drive extended stays with visitors having a richer experience.</p> <p>Quantifiable Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A minimum of 15 participants for the summer FAM, and 10 for the winter FAM 2. A minimum of 15 stakeholders welcoming the frontline staff to their businesses 3. Optional Zoom training for those unable to attend, or to add further insights with additional businesses beyond those on the FAMs. One online training per summer and winter. <p>Rationale: The Boundary stretches almost 100 kilometres following the border from Christina Lake through to Rock Creek, and also stretches up just over 100 kilometres heading north, incorporating Beaverdell and Big White Ski Resort. The dimensions of the area create a challenge for long-term staff to understand and be able to promote experiences in other parts of the Boundary. When new staff members are added, it's difficult for them to have an understanding of the community they work in, let alone appreciating the accessibility and opportunities that lie in other areas of the Boundary.</p> <p>Action Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue promotion and expressions of interest from local stakeholders for frontline training 2. Plan annual stakeholder update and input session (Spring 2023) 3. Continue to promote various activities found in all areas of the Boundary on boundarybc.com 4. Plan FAM trip and share with stakeholders via calls, e-newsletter, socail media, and the News Centre on the Boundarybc.com website 5. Execute FAM trip in Summer and follow up within 2 weeks about satisfaction and resource use 6. Execute FAM trip in Winter and follow up within 2 weeks about satisfaction and resource use

Potential Partnerships:

1. All communities in Boundary Country, Visitor Centres, Community Futures Boundary, Big White, Boundary Chamber of Commerce, TOTA, DBC, BCRTS

Resources:

1. Destination BC Workshop Programs and Learning Centre
2. Destination BC Industry Resources
3. Go2HR – SuperHost
4. Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association – Tourism Resiliency Program

Sources of Funding:

MRDT Funds, Coop Funds, RDKB partner investments

Timeframe:

1. Summer familiarization trip(s) and Zoom training:
Spring: Create a working committee representing 4 centres through the Boundary
 - Begin itinerary creation and identify key experiences.
 - Decide if the FAM could be self-drive or if buses are required
 - If buses are required, book now
 - Send invitation to all businesses to sign-up their frontline staff
Active FAM in Summer
 - Within 5 days after FAM: Zoom FAM trip
- 2.. Winter familiarization trip and/or Zoom training:
Fall: Create working group including key winter activity locations
 - Decide if winter conditions are conducive to self-drive, or if buses are required or Zoom training only.
 - Booked buses, if required
 - Send invitation to all businesses to sign-up their frontline staff
Winter Activate fam
 - Within 5 days after FAM (if operating in person): have Zoom FAM trip

Budget:

Summer FAM trip and Zoom Training including transportation \$2000

Winter FAM trip and Zoom Training including transportation \$2000

Total: \$4000

Performance Measures:**Outputs:**

- All tourism operators in the Boundary Country are contacted
- A business role model or professional leader is involved/speaks at the FAM

- Tourism Operators receive regular communications and follow up about Boundary Country

Outcomes:

- Tourism Operators increase their commitment and see an increase in front line worker satisfaction
- The Boundary Country brand is more recognised and used more by tourism operators
- Number of participants attended report utilizing online resources
- Stakeholder satisfaction score of 80+

Major Category: Marketing
Activity Title: <i>Marketing Campaigns around Road Touring</i>
Tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate seasonally with tourism operators for current information on establishments/events - Reach out to tourism operators to engage in coordination and partnerships for digital marketing - Gather information on feature road touring experiences and promote their exposure on social media and the website
Implementation Plan: <p>Short Description: Continue the current integrated Boundary Country promotional strategy to drive awareness and interest in select markets. Marketing tactics include traditional and digital media, continuing to promote and utilize the website blog posts, plus 2-3 seasonal digital campaigns.</p> <p>Quantifiable Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase overnight visitation, length of stay and spend to the Boundary Country area with the focus on May/June and September/October to extend the summer season ● Increase tourism revenues at least 10% compared with the 2022 baseline ● Increase positive word-of-mouth and traveller advocacy ● Increase website users by 40% (increase time on site, page views and click throughs to operators) ● Increase social media engagement (comments, shares etc.) at least 20% more than 2021 spring and fall campaigns ● Increase Highway 3 imagery of Boundary Country via contracted photographers on retainer <p>Rationale: With easy access to outdoor adventures, just a step off the beaten track, Boundary Country is a unique asset of British Columbia. Highway 3, which stretches the entirety of the region, is a relaxed, scenic route that is a perfect way to engage our “Road less Travelled” visitors. Road Touring Boundary BC continues to be our focus as it grows in demand and popularity. We have increased visitation over the last 3 years for several reasons, including space/open air. However, growth has been mainly influenced by the appeal of stepping away from the busy Highway 1 (Trans Canada) but still having the ability to enjoy charming towns, nature and history.</p> <p>The geographic areas include Highway 3 corridor from Rock Creek to Christina Lake and between Highway 33 and 3 to Big White. Boundary Country includes the communities and hamlets of Big White, Mount Baldy, Christian Valley, Beaverdell, Westbridge and connecting to Highway 3 Bridesville, Rock Creek, Kettle Valley, Greenwood, Midway, Phoenix Mountain, Grand Forks and</p>

Christina Lake.

Action Steps:

- Identify key highlights/experiences
- Paid Social Media on Instagram and Facebook
- Digital Advertising (image and video)
- Plan and execute digital campaigns in March/April and Jun/July and Aug/Sept, post campaign evaluation and recommendations for future campaigns
- Reach out for guest bloggers/influencers in May for Summer

Potential Partnerships:

All communities in Boundary Country, Visitor Centres, Community Futures Boundary, Big White, Boundary Chamber of Commerce, Discover Grand Forks

Resources:

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Destination BC

Sources of Funding:

MRDT Funds, Coop Funds, RDKB partner investments

Timeframe:

To increase visitation and engagement in shoulder seasons, the first campaign will be in Spring, the second in Summer to utilize already prevalent engagement in the region, and to extend the shoulder seasons of Fall, the third campaign will be in Aug/Sept (the same time as our most successful campaign in 2021). Guest bloggers will attend summer festivities and share how Highway 3 is versatile and a great road touring destination. Photography retainer renews in May and is ongoing for 12 months.

Budget:

Spring, Summer and Fall Digital Campaigns: \$2,000 each = \$6,000

Guest Bloggers/influencers for Summer: \$3,000

Photography retainer: \$6,500

Total: \$15,500

Performance Measures:**Outputs:**

- Tourism operators are in regular contact sharing key highlights/experiences
- 3 digital campaigns (engagement rates/Click throughs to website with at least 5% increase from previous year)
- Weekly social media posting and boosting in collaboration with other Hwy 3 corridor communities
- Number of media placements (to be determined)

- 20+ photos per month added to the content hub from photography retainer to be utilised in weekly social media posting, website updates and campaign resources

Outcomes:

- 10% Increase in click through rate and social media engagement
- Engagement with Hwy 3 as a destination/touring route via social media and digital presence, measured by use of the Crowsnest Scenic 3 and Boundary Country hashtags

Major Category: Destination and Product Experience Development**Activity Title: Visitor and Market Research****Tactics:**

- Visitor and Market Profiles, statistics from specific communities and destinations within Boundary Country

Implementation Plan:**Short Description:**

The BCRTS Community Research Program provides baseline visitor data, market segmentation custom reports and targets at the postal code level for strategy planning, experience design, target marketing and campaign planning.

The platform available from Environics Analytics called MobileScapes allows us to geo-fence an area of five million square feet (or multiple locations that make up this total) and get visitor information on that very pinpointed area. By analysing several areas of this size within Boundary, we will be able to obtain key analytics that will support local operators in understanding their customers and how to attract more like them, but without them having to do extra work to provide us information, which is especially helpful during such a turbulent time. We will use this information immediately in 2023 campaigns.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Visitor counts and corresponding market profiles by domestic origin and segmentation types
- Seasonal year-over-year comparisons 2021/2022 to show us trends pre- COVID compared to present.

Rationale:

Destination marketers and local operators need to understand current visitors and market potential. Boundary Country now has quantifiable visitor and market profile research that can serve as a baseline for trend analysis over time. This research provides benefits for destination marketing, experience development and for use by the operators. Research content will need to be included in the workshops, industry events or where there is any opportunity to disseminate the information. This currently includes online sources to ensure small rural operators have access.

Action Steps:

- MobileScapes data analysis program plan, set-up, process data and reports, incorporate key findings in operator professional development
- Review and sharing of current research key findings
- Ongoing communication to stakeholders including development of materials to help operators understand what the data is telling them and how it can be used to improve visitation.
- Apply research to market planning, strategy, content, experience design, marketing, evaluation and planning - share via How to Guides for businesses and training workshop

Potential Partnerships:

N/A

Resources:

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Environics Analytics, BCRTS, Destination BC, Destination Canada

Sources of Funding:

MRDT Funds, Coop Funds, RDKB partner investments

Timeframe:

Mobilescares project including 2 time queries and market segmentation: \$3,700

Performance Measures:**Outputs:**

- Research reports
- Updates to stakeholders

Outcomes:

- Increased number of operators utilizing the reports for their strategic marketing
- Increased number of stakeholders utilizing the data for planning and communication purposes
- Increased number of stakeholders reaching out for more information

Major Category: Destination and Product Experiences Management
Activity Title: Trail and Community Kiosk updates
Tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communicate with tourism operators- Gather information on feature road touring experiences- Gather information on signs in the area- Gather information on condition of signs- Work with the community to efficiently update signs- Access/utalize connections to fund the best graphics design artist
Implementation Plan: <p>Short Description: Our goal is to elevate and update signs and kiosks that are outdated/worn out within The Boundary community regions, especially those in key visitor areas that will not only enhance the experience but provide a centre for information about the region and the community.</p> <p>Quantifiable Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Replace damaged signage● Update outdated kiosks/signs● Repair worn out signs/kiosks <p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The majority of signs and kiosks in the surrounding communities areas are very outdated and/or have been damaged. Stakeholders identified key needs through a survey and in recent workshops what kiosks in the area are a priority and what updates should be made to outdated/damaged signage and kiosks.- These kiosks provides two key opportunities:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strengthening the relationships, branding and partnerships between Boundary Country and its respective communities2. Making information and resources more accessible for visitors. For example, updated kiosks can house the Boundary Country Trail Map as well as information about safe trail practices, invasive species, where to find more information (the boudnarybc.com and Hello.bc, know before you go websites) and emergency contact information. <p>Action Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Build on the already established “Top 5” list from stakeholders● Reach out to communities about collaboration in early spring● Prioritize the most damaged/outdated signs first

- Work with local designers to update signs/kiosks designs
- Work with local crews to remove old/damaged signs
- Replace with new signs/kiosks as availability presents itself but last updates will be made by Oct at the latest

Potential Partnerships:

All communities in Boundary Country, Visitor Centres, Community Futures Boundary, Big White, Boundary Chamber of Commerce, Discover Grand Forks.

Resources:

Social Media, Community outreach, Website, connections, stakeholder engagement

Sources of Funding:

MRDT Funds, Individual Community investments

Timeframe:

1-5 year time frame. As the project continues, more signs will be updated while budget is allocated.

Budget:

2022 carry over: \$10,000

2023 updates: \$10,000

Total: \$20,000

**note we expect partnerships with the communities on these updates to also provide financial and resource assistance, however we can only estimate the costs associated with the activity now. Any savings/money not spent from what is budgeted will be carried over to 2024 for this same activity.*

Performance Measures:**Outputs:**

- Increased number of new and updated kiosks and signs. For example: Greenwood city campground Kiosk that sits, not only in the city park, but at the trailhead for the KVR and on Highway 3; and a kiosk between Christina Lake, Grand Forks and the USA border is also the trailhead for the Columbia and Western Rail Trail.

Outcomes:

- Increased visitor volume to communities and trails (when the 2022 research is reviewed, it will be used as a baseline to compare with 2023 data)
- Increased engagement by visitors with online maps and resources (using a QR code on the kiosks and signage, we can measure the click through rate to resources)

<p>Major Category: Mobile Apps</p>
<p>Activity Title: Digitization of Boundary Country Major Trails</p>
<p>Tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate with tourism operators - Gather information on feature road touring experiences - Gather information on trail traffic and experiences - Gather information on trail signs in the area - Work with the community to efficiently implement features - Access/utilize connections to fund the best programmer(s)
<p>Implementation Plan:</p> <p>Short Description: Digitizing existing physical and online trail maps into application form for future promotion and ease of access and use.</p> <p>Quantifiable Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Year one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transfer physical map data and local insights into digital data ○ Transfer digital map data into usable line data for map developers ○ Gather required experts via a Trail Digitisation Committee ○ Engage stakeholders in the process with regular updates ○ Work with stakeholders on creative and logical ideas to improve maps and trail data ● In the future (to keep in mind): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embed finished product in Boundary Website and partner with TOTA & Backroads Maps to include trail data in an offline-friendly app. <p>Rationale: The online and physical copies of the trail maps are heavily used by stakeholders and the community. As per the 2022 survey and stakeholder workshops, the community expressed a high interest in digitizing the trail maps into a more user-friendly app form that includes many features. In The Boundary, the rail trails are among the most used adventure features within the region.</p> <p>Action Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Year one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Source a digitisation committee to identify and collect key trails - Hire a Digital Asset Specialist to collect inventory of trail data and mapping in the region - Collaborate with communities and stakeholders on features they would like to see

- In the future (to keep in mind):
 - Forward data to digital developers
 - Generate fundamental app developments
 - Install basic/necessary features
 - Send out drafts for approval
 - Release beta version
 - Release public version
 - Continue to improve product as time/budget allows

Potential Partnerships:

All communities in Boundary Country, Visitor Centres, Community Futures Boundary, Big White, Boundary Chamber of Commerce, Discover Grand Forks.

Resources:

Social Media, Community outreach, Website, connections, stakeholder engagement, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Destination BC, Backroads Maps

Sources of Funding:

MRDT Funds, Coop Funds, RDKB partner investments

Timeframe:

Begin immediately in year 1 and continue on through the 5 year course.

- Digitisation committee established in Spring with at least 3 following meetings throughout the Summer and Fall seasons (increased as necessary) and a final wrap-up in Nov for end of year review of the data collected
- After initial ideas are established with the committee, a Digital Asset Specialist will be hired before the start of summer/peak season so they are able to take full advantage of seasonality, and the contract will aim to continue to winter to also cover winter trails

Budget:

Carry-over from 2022 that will cover the costs of a Digital Asset Specialist: \$10,000

Engagement with the committee and stakeholders, collection of resources, cost of contracting the Stakeholder Liaison to meet with the committee in person, and edits to the "Trails" webpage as the project goes along: \$2,000

Total: \$12,000

Performance Measures:**Outputs:**

- Stakeholder and community engagement with the project
- Increase by 5% visitors to the "Trails" webpage on the Boundarybc.com website
- 4+ Meetings with the Digitisation Committee

- Collection of trail data including locations, visitation volume, upkeep, amenities and usage

Outcomes:

- Increased use of trails
- Visitors indicating a greater comfort and ease navigating the trails because of digitized maps
- Increased stakeholder engagement in Boundary Country promotional activities (measured by interest and participation in the Digitisation Committee)

Major Category: Destination and Product Experiences Management
Activity Title: Support Local Events with Promotion
Tactics:

- Using digital media to attract younger audiences to events

Implementation Plan:
Short Description:

With many of the communities excited to emerge from the pandemic and join in community- and region- wide events, stakeholders have expressed interest in and need of support for promoting their events to the right visitors. Boundary Country has the resources available to assist these key events in appealing to a younger demographic.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Increase by 15% the average number of participants at major annual events compared to previous year(s)
- Increase by 25% the average number of youth participants at select annual events

Rationale:

The “Boundary Youth Challenge” event concept was discussed with the MRDT committee in 2021, but due to the ongoing pandemic and event cancellations, the group decided to look at virtual events as a potential way to engage locals and visitors alike, while not holding events where people would gather.

Stakeholders continue to see a need for engaging with youth, and the best means we can provide is in digital exposure (social media, website, groups, reels, etc.) as well as utilising our recognisable and bold branding to support local and regional events already underway.

Action Steps:

- Communicate with the “Tourism Groups” committee about upcoming events in the year and how to best cross-promote
- Regularly promote and engage with local tourism focused events across the region using digital resourced like social media and the Boundarybc.com event calendar
- Identify areas to strengthen currently events by providing sponsorship or the Boundary Country

presence

Potential Partnerships:

City of Grand Forks, Discover Grand Forks, Riverside Rock Creek Co-op, Greenwood Museum, Boundary Chamber, Christina Lake Tourism, Kettle River Museum, Local Businesses, Visitor Centres, Ski Resorts

Resources:

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association, Destination BC, Destination Canada

Sources of Funding:

MRDT Funds

Timeframe:

The tactic will begin in Jan 2023 and ongoing until the end of the year as there is a great variety of events throughout the year

Budget:

Expenses for marketing strategies and resources as well as possible sponsorship/involvement = \$6000

Performance Measures:**Outputs:**

- Regularly post on the events calendar of the website (large, and small public events focused towards tourism)
- Engage with 3 major tourism events in the Boundary via sponsorship, attendance, or marketing
- Digitally engage via social media with at least 20 events across the Boundary in 2023

Outcomes:

- Increase of 15% visitation to Event Calendar on the Boundarybc.com website
- Increase of 5% (average) in all Boundary Country social media metrics: Reach, event link clicks, CTR, Impressions, landing page views, time on site
- Average increase of 15% in number of participants in each event compared to previous years
- Increase of 25% number of youth participants in select events