

*Exploring Progressive Solutions:
Innovating Within the Regional Cannabis Sector*
A 3-YEAR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

A PRESENTATION OF POTENTIAL PILOT PROJECTS

*Prepared for licensed producers & processors
Breakfast Meeting, May 30, 2025
Dr. Tracey Harvey, Selkirk Innovates*



Agenda


- Meeting Overview & Introductions
- April 23rd reflections
- Potential Pilots & Feedback

10 min break

- Exercise: How would you allocate funds?
 - Open Discussion
- Wrap-up & Next Steps



April 23 Breakfast meeting survey results

4.9 
average rating



What you told us (9 people responded):

Best part?

- “**Collaboration** and **cooperation**. Sharing of insights as to the current market. Having most the local cultivations in the same room is priceless”
- “**Connecting** with producers who have the same objectives and listening to their ideas and concerns”
- “Good to get everyone in the same room together”
- “Having everyone in the same room to really try and get traction on what’s most important “

Anything missing?

- “Seemed like folks were eager to do some **brainstorming** so maybe some dedicated time for that would've helped”
- “It may be a good idea to have **government representatives** attend, specifically; BC/Kootenay Tourism Associations, BCLDB and Local BC MLAs and MPs or representatives of same”
- “Possibly more **retail** voices”

Ten Potential Pilots (an overview)

Storytelling, Tourism & Market Differentiation Pilots

1. “Voices of the Kootenays” – Regional Cannabis Storytelling Campaign
2. Building the Kootenay Cannabis Trail
3. Kootenay Quality Badge Certification

Trade, Export & Geographic Indications

4. Team Kootenay International Trade Delegation
5. Export Readiness Accelerator Program and Shared Export Administration Pilot (2 Phases)
6. Kootenay Cannabis Appellation Strategy (VQA Model) (2 Phases)

Governance, Knowledge Sharing, Government Relations & Community Building

7. Formalize Team Kootenay - Governance and Funding Model Exploration
8. Budtender & Retail Education Series - Voices of the Kootenays in Stores
9. Policy & Government Engagement Toolkit + Tours
10. “Kootenay Grown” Digital Content Hub

Pilot 1:

“Voices of the Kootenays” Regional Cannabis Storytelling Campaign



Image: Tyeson Carmody; Photo from Hightide Mfg website

Purpose:

Establish a regional identity for Kootenay cannabis through compelling storytelling. Includes video and written content celebrating the region's legacy, resilience, community & values

Deliverables:

- 5-part docuseries + 2 introductory videos + written pieces
- Integrated rollout via YouTube, Digital Hub, Instagram, LinkedIn and email campaigns
- Host one live storytelling event

Timeline: 12 months

Shoestring Budget: \$30,000–40,000 (simpler production, in-house/web-based) vs **Ideal Budget:** \$50,000–60,000 (higher-quality video production, editing, and outreach)

Opportunities:

- Solid narrative inquiry component for research
- Potential partners: Nelson Museum, Kootenay Coop Radio
- Inclusive; educational; builds authentic connection & helps normalize cannabis tradition; complements many other pilots

Challenges:

- Working within federal promotional restrictions (keep educational tone)

Pilot 2: Building the Kootenay Cannabis Trail

Purpose:

Develop a cannabis trail implementation plan connecting licensed producers, licensed retailers, consumption spaces, and cannabis-friendly events, modeled after the BC Ale Trail

Deliverables:

- 10 producer profiles
- A digital map & website
- Digital and print trail vision pieces with sample profiles
- A roadmap to operationalize the Trail

Timeline: 12 months (July 2025 – July 2026)

Shoestring Budget: \$20,000 - \$25,000 vs Ideal Budget: \$30,000-45,000 (includes branding, design, professional tourism strategy, and digital assets)

Opportunities:

- Potential partners: Kootenay Rockies Tourism, Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism, Arrow Slokan Tourism, Destination BC
- Could be developed in parallel with Craft Cannabis Association of BC's REDIP funded **Building Cowichan Cannabis Trail**

Challenges:

- Local regulations/political concern around cannabis consumption spaces
- Ensuring enough licensed operators want to participate

Image: Cannabis tourism tour in Denver



Pilot 3: Kootenay Quality Badge (KQB) Certification

Concept image by Cactus Genetics



Purpose:

Create a regional quality assurance badge for Kootenay-grown cannabis, verifying artisanal production methods and unique regional qualities; Signals a commitment to high standards, consistency and trust to retailers and consumers.

Deliverables:

- A grower defined standards document (input types, practices, growing space)
- Official KQB label/logo for compliant producers; badge design + usage guidelines
- Pilot activation with 5 to 7 producers

Timeline: 10 months (Sept 2025 – June 2026)

Shoestring Budget: \$20,000–25,000 (DIY design + fewer producers in pilot) vs **Ideal Budget:** \$40,000–60,000 (legal input, formal audits + more producers)

Opportunities:

- Enhances consumer trust and differentiates products for export (Pilot 5) & retail (pilot 9); promotes trail (Pilot 2) and storytelling (Pilot 1)
- Helps support government engagement efforts (Pilot 8)
- Can serve as a precursor to a regional appellation (Pilot 6)

Challenges:

- Voluntary & lacks legal authority: difficult to enforce if not tied to legal designation
- Requires industry-wide buy-in to have impact

10 minute Discussion on Pilots 1 to 3:

Let's chat about Storytelling, Tourism & Market Differentiation Pilots:

Pilot 1: "Voices of the Kootenays" – Regional Cannabis Storytelling Campaign

Pilot 2: Building the Kootenay Cannabis Trail

Pilot 3: Kootenay Quality Badge (KQB) Certification

1.Gut Check: Of these three, which feels most valuable or urgent to you and why? (3mins)

2.Clarity & Missing pieces: Thinking about your top choice, is anything missing from the description? (3mins)

3.Real World Fit: Would you personally participate in any of these pilots? What would make it easier for you to participate? (3mins)

Pilot 4: Team Kootenay – International Trade Delegation



ORGANIZAN



Purpose:

Represent Kootenay producers at international trade shows, promoting unity, export opportunities, and networking

Deliverables:

- Design and buy or rent a regionally branded trade booth
- Shared regional booth at 2 major events (e.g., Spannabis, ICBC, Mary Jane)
- Export-focused media kit
- Follow-up networking webinar

Timeline: 9 months (September 2025 – June 2026)

Shoestring Budget: \$25,000–35,000 vs **Ideal Budget:** \$50,000–60,000 (professional branding, more shows +/- or more growers)

Opportunities:

- Uses content from Voices of the Kootenays (Pilot 1) in presentations
- Aligns with Quality Badge (Pilot 3) & Export Readiness initiatives (Pilot 5);
- Global visibility, promotes future B2B partnerships; regional recognition
- Low barrier entry into global markets, momentum builder for regional export strategy

Challenges:

- High travel costs for participants
- Trade restrictions on international advertising
- THC focused exports may disqualify potential funding

Pilot 5: Export Readiness Accelerator Program + Shared Export Administration Pilot



Purpose:

Phase 1: Equip small producers with the tools & knowledge to pursue international medical cannabis markets; Phase 2: Reduce individual producer burden by piloting shared services for documentation, compliance, and export logistics

Deliverables:

- **Phase 1:** Workshops/webinars on GACP, EU-GMP certifications & compliance, logistics, export-readiness workbook; group training, Q&A + follow up resources
- **Phase 2:** 3-5 producers trial a shared export admin service; share common tools, participation framework

Timeline: Phase 1: 3-4 months (Sept 2025 to Dec 2025), Phase 2: 12 months (December 2025 – December 2026)

Shoestring Budget phase 1: \$20,000–25,000 AND **Shoestring Budget phase 2:** \$35,000–50,000

Opportunities:

- Direct feeders for Trade Delegation (Pilot 4); Leverages Digital Hub (Pilot 10) for training content; shared infrastructure
- Phase 1: Accessible for all producers, regardless of readiness level; reusable digital content; builds baseline understanding for Phase 2.
- Phase 2: cost-efficient, scalable, strengthens sector credibility

Challenges:

- Phase 1: no individualized support, may require follow up for producers
- Phase 2: varying levels of readiness; producers need to be export-licensed already for Phase 2

Pilot 6: Kootenay Appellation Strategy

Image: Slocan Lake, Kootenay Region



Purpose:

Protect and differentiate Kootenay cannabis through a terroir-based designation or certification standard — similar to VQA (wine), AOC (France), or GIs (EU)

Deliverables:

- **Phase 1:** legal + policy feasibility review, community-informed quality standards framework, consultations, summary report & framework
- **Phase 2:** test pilot with growers, produce branding, compliance and education materials, workshops, gather feedback for full-scale roll-out

Timeline: Phase 1: 6 months (November 2025 to April 2026), Phase 2: 18-24 months

Budget: \$10,000–\$16,000 Phase 1 for research, and Phase 2 for testing pilot \$40,000 - \$60,000

Opportunities:

- Sets up strategic regional differentiation + international recognition
- Potential partnerships with wine industry advisors, BC agri-food

Challenges:

- Canada lacks legal framework; long path to legal recognition
- A legal designation requires federal/provincial engagement and coordination among producers

10 minute Discussion on Pilots 4 to 6:

Let's chat about International Trade, Export & Geographic Indicators:

Pilot 4: Team Kootenay – International Trade Delegation

Pilot 5: Export Accelerator Program + Shared Export Admin Pilot

Pilot 6: Kootenay Appellation Strategy (CQA)

1. **Gut Check:** Of these three, which feels most valuable or urgent to you and why? (3mins)
2. **Clarity & Missing pieces:** Thinking about your top choice, is anything missing from the description? (3mins)
3. **Real World Fit:** Would you personally participate in any of these pilots? What would make it easier for you to participate? (3mins)

Pilot 7: Formalize Team Kootenay - Governance & Funding Model Exploration

Image: Craft Cannabis Association of BC (CCABC) –
a province wide non-profit industry association



Purpose:

Explore and pilot a formal structure to carry regional efforts forward (e.g., nonprofit, co-op, alliance)

Deliverables:

- Options report (with funding opportunities)
- Stakeholder session
- Draft bylaws and structure; Incorporation (optional)

Timeline: Research June – July 2025 (1-2 months); Incorporation August –Dec 2025 (5 months)

Shoestring Budget: Research: \$2,500 & Launch: \$5,500 = \$8,000 vs Ideal Budget: \$12,000

Opportunities:

- Secures long-term capacity and funding
- Provides backbone for Pilots 1–10; owns IP
- Supports grant eligibility for wish-list initiatives
- Potential local Partners: KAST (business incubator), Community Futures

Challenges:

- Need buy-in, ongoing admin costs & time – need a champion!

Pilot 8: Policy & Government Engagement Toolkit + Tours

Image: Minister Mike Farnworth who previously oversaw public safety and cannabis; Honorable Garry Begg is current Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General



Purpose:

Build an engagement toolkit & host tours to engage government on key policy issues & share the economic importance of the regional sector. Identify what levers government can pull to support industry; seek regional representation at BC cannabis stores

Deliverables:

- 3 to 5 one-page "asks" for most regionally important policy issues & Fact Sheets
- 1 to 2 farm tours for government officials
- Presentations (AKBLG, UBCM) sharing research data for policymakers
- *Wish list: an accessible + clear pathway to farmgate or similar retail*

Timeline: 8-12 months (Sept 2025 – Sept 2026)

Shoestring Budget: \$10,000 - \$12,000 (leverage student writers) vs Ideal Budget: \$20,000 (travel, legal review, and event costs)

Opportunities:

- Can use Cannabis Trail (Pilot 2) for farm tours
- Supports Trade Delegation (Pilot 4) by improving national reputation
- Plan timing with other local events for MLAs, MPs, Health Canada, Cannabis Secretariat participation

Challenges:

- Government reluctance to support cannabis sector; stigma; provincial and federal gov't difficult to engage

Pilot 9 Budtender & Retail Education – Voices of the Kootenays in Stores

Dutch Love Cannabis Retail Store, Lake Country



Purpose:

Empower budtenders to tell compelling stories about Kootenay-grown cannabis, improving regional positioning and consumer awareness; legacy to legal knowledge transfer

Deliverables:

- Digital toolkit (adapted videos, mini-stories, talking points, educational decks/posters)
- Pilot decks in 5–7 diverse stores (urban, rural, chain, independent)
- *optional: pop-up storytelling educational booth at retail stores in Vancouver

Timeline: 8–10 months (September 2025 to July 2026)

Shoestring Budget: \$10,000 vs Ideal Budget: \$15,000–20,000 (includes travel for pop-ups outside BC)

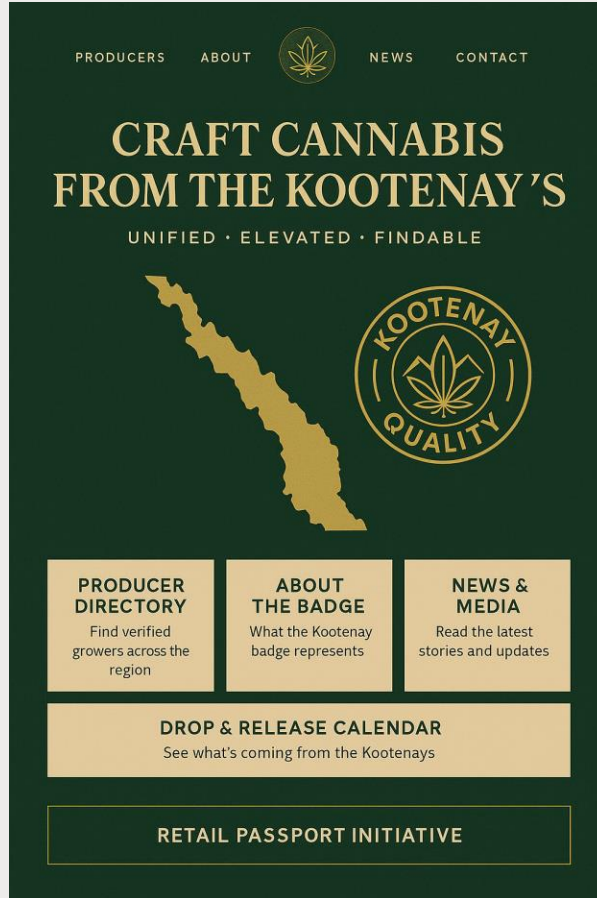
Opportunities:

- Educate retailers as influencers; strengthens regional messaging; humanizes work

Challenges:

- promotion rules require non-branded, fact-based/educational messaging; retailer turnover; sustained impact requires follow-up
- consumer indifference (cheap product + high THC)

Pilot 10: “Kootenay Grown” Digital Hub



Concept image by Cactus Genetics

Purpose:

Create shared communication, website and digital infrastructure that supports multiple pilots — storytelling, trail, badge, delegation, gov't engagement, budtender education, and more

Deliverables:

- Discord or WhatsApp group
- Website with interactive features and mobile responsiveness
- Shared resource hub with export, retail, government relations materials, and regional identity materials

Timeline: Discord: now; Web hub: 3-12 months (starting July 2025)

Shoestring Budget: \$10,000 - \$12,000 (design, content, admin + maintenance) vs Ideal Budget: \$20,000–35,000 (expanded scope to support many overlapping projects)

Opportunities:

- Central to Pilots 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and more; one-stop resource, enables collaboration
- Long-term legacy platform for region

Challenges:

- Requires active moderation and funding past pilot phase; maintenance + new materials

10 minute Discussion on Pilots 7 to 10:

Let's chat about Governance, Knowledge Sharing, Government Relations & Community Building:

Pilot 7: Formalizing Team Kootenay – Governance & Funding Model Exploration

Pilot 8: Policy & Government Engagement Toolkit + Tours

Pilot 9: Budtender & Retail Education – “Voices of the Kootenays in Stores”

Pilot 10: “Kootenay Grown” Digital Knowledge Hub

1.Gut Check: Of these three, which feels most valuable or urgent to you and why? (3mins)

2.Clarity & Missing pieces: Thinking about your top choice, is anything missing from the description? (3mins)

3.Real World Fit: Would you personally participate in any of these pilots? What would make it easier for you to participate? (3mins)

10:15 to 10:25

10 Minute Break



Potential Pilot Summary

Pilot Project	Shoestring Budget (Lower End)	Ideal Budget (High-End)	Synergies & Potential Partnerships
1. Storytelling Campaign	\$30,000	\$60,000	Supports Trail, Badge, Digital Hub, Government Engagement, Budtender Education, Delegation; potential collab with Nelson Museum, filmmakers, local creatives & media, tourism organizations
2. The Kootenay Cannabis Trail	\$20,000	\$45,000	Aligns with Storytelling, Badge, Government Engagement, Digital Hub. Potential partners: KRT, Destination BC, NKL Tourism
3. Kootenay Quality Badge	\$20,000	\$60,000	Links to Government Engagement (adds legitimacy). Synergy with Storytelling (content), Trail (visitor confidence), Education, Appellation; needs producers, marketing/branding, QA experts
4. International Trade Delegation	\$25,000	\$60,000	Reinforces Export Admin/Accelerator and Digital Hub. Boosted by Quality Badge, Storytelling (market narrative); Export consultants, potential for federal funding
5. Accelerator & Export Admin	\$20,000 (accelerator)	\$35,000 (admin)	Aligns with Trade Delegation and Governance pilots; aligns with policy and certification discussions
6. Appellation Strategy	\$10,000 (strategy only)	\$40,000 (incl. pilot)	Connects with Quality Badge (standards), Government Engagement, Trail (regional identity); requires legal, academic input
7. Formalize Team Kootenay	\$8,000	\$12,000	Governance backbone for all pilots, and especially Badge, Trail, Appellation; needed for regional identity, grants, IP; partner with legal and governance advisors
8. Policy Toolkit & Gov't Engagement	\$10,000	\$20,000	Intersects with Badge (credibility), Appellation (legal framework), Storytelling (reframing narratives), supports Trade Delegations by boosting national image
9. Budtender & Retail Education	\$10,000	\$20,000	Enhance Trail (visitor knowledge), Badge (trust in product), and Storytelling (brand literacy) & translates into front line support; Selkirk, retailers, producers
10. Sharing & Digital Hub	\$10,000	\$35,000	Central platform for all pilots; for internal communications and outward marketing

Budget Allocation Task

Your task: Imagine you have **\$100,000** to invest in advancing the Kootenay cannabis sector. You'll allocate this across **10 potential pilot projects** based on what you believe will have the greatest impact.

You have **two steps**:

1. **Rank** the potential projects from 1 (**top priority**) to 10 (**lowest priority**)
2. **Allocate your \$100,000** to the potential projects
 - You can allocate it all to one project or spread it across several
 - Totals must equal **\$100,000**

Why This Matters - This exercise helps us:

- See what **each individual** values most
- Identify **consensus or divergence** across the group
- Prioritize pilots for further development and funding
- Develop a **data-driven collective roadmap**

Who should have a say? - We're still deciding:

- We think pilot prioritization should be limited to **licensed producers and processors** – let us know if you feel differently
- We plan to allow **online/remote prioritization** for those unable to attend in person. What do you think?

Next Steps

1. Identify regional pilot priorities
2. Incorporate today's feedback into selected pilot descriptions
3. Share selected pilots with potential timelines, KPIs, costs
 - Email correspondence
4. Potential Action Plan co-development (third breakfast meeting?)
 - Key tasks and participatory needs
 - Proposed for Wednesday June 25th or Friday July 4th
5. Execute top priorities
 - Hire additional team members (short term contracts)
 - Monitor KPIs, enable feedback loops, report on progress quarterly