

# Terms of Reference

First drafted: April 2005  
Last updated: November 2006

## Mission, Objectives and Guiding Principles

### Mission

The mission of the BC Social Economy Roundtable (BCSER) is to create an enabling environment for the social economy in British Columbia.

### Vision

For the BCSER, an enabling environment for the social economy would have the following characteristics:

- Appropriate mix of resources is available – not only access to financing and funding instruments, but also intellectual, informational and operational resources;
- Practitioners and stakeholders are connected and informed;
- Strong capital and consumer markets exist;
- Risk taking is possible;
- Regulatory policies exist that enable the development and growth of social economy enterprises and their ability to compete equally in the marketplace;
- Opportunities exist for all parts of the market (public, private and social) to engage in dialogue; and
- Appropriate measures are in place to track impacts, growth and successes.

### Guiding Principles

- To take a systemic approach in BCSER support, creating a space for local initiatives to flourish;
- To be nimble and responsive;
- To be collaborative;
- To be inclusive of the various viewpoints, participants, stakeholders and communities (of geography and of interest) in the BC social economy;
- To be nonpartisan;
- To leverage the assets at the Roundtable (and throughout the province) instead of competing or duplicating; and
- To build on previous Roundtable work as appropriate.

## Participation

The Roundtable is not an incorporated organization, but more of a common forum where active participants and leaders from the various component of the social economy gather and take a systemic approach to supporting and nurturing the social economy in BC.

The Roundtable is made up of active representatives from a group of participating organizations that are committed to the social economy. The size limit of the Roundtable is currently set at 17 participants, in order for the BCSER to be large enough to reflect the diversity of the BC social economy while maintaining a manageable size to stay nimble and work effectively with every participant being active. This size limit will be revisited as required.

Any persons or group who believe that their interests are not represented by the Roundtable can join the Roundtable as a participating organization. To become a participating organization, an individual who would be participating on behalf of the interested party should contact the BCSER Secretariat to coordinate the following two actions:

1. Contact a current BCSER participant for their support of the request to join (the current participant would bring forward the request for participation to the next Roundtable meeting); and
2. Make a written request to join the Roundtable, addressed to the next Roundtable meeting chair. The letter should:
  - a. Include the name of the organization or group wanting to participate on the BCSER and the name of the person who will be participating on behalf of the applying organization; and
  - b. Identify the interest or geography that the applying organization will represent.

When a request for participation has been received, an in camera discussion (without the applicant present and with notes not on public record) will take place at the next Roundtable meeting. The applying organization will be informed of the decision shortly after the meeting.

## How the Roundtable Operates

### Meetings

The Roundtable meets once every two months, with other meetings called as required. Meetings are typically scheduled for the afternoon (usually 1pm to 4pm) on the third Tuesday of the month and take place mainly in the Greater Vancouver area.

There is a commitment of strategically scheduled meetings to coincide with other meetings that may bring representatives of BCSER organizations to the Lower Mainland (such as conferences), to help facilitate participation from outside of the Lower Mainland.

### Chair

There is no official Chair for the Roundtable. The Meeting Chair rotates amongst the participating organizations and at the end of each Roundtable meeting, the chair for the next meeting is chosen.

The Meeting Chair is responsible for:

- a. Hosting the meeting at their office space (or finding a location to physically host the meeting);

- b. Work with the Roundtable Secretariat to frame an agenda for the meeting;
- c. Handle the coordination and cost for meeting refreshments; and
- d. Run the meeting as chair.

### **Making Decisions**

The BCSER is made up of independent organizations and coalitions that view the social economy with a variety of lenses. Therefore, the decision making process on BCSER, especially around activities such as policy development, is a large part of how the Roundtable operates. Here are some guiding principles that BCSER organizations use when making decisions:

- The objective is to strive for consensus at the Roundtable;
- Consensus will be defined as general agreement on a conclusion, or conversely, no substantial disagreement with that conclusion. The parties involved may not agree with every aspect, but taken as a whole, a decision based on consensus satisfies the major interest and concerns to the extent that the BCSER participating organizations can all support it;
- If anyone wants to revisit an issue, then the participant needs to bring that forward at the earliest opportunity. They will provide a written description of the interests that are not accommodated, including suggestions to meet both participant and group needs. This document will be part of the public record; and
- To move forward on an issue where consensus has not been reached, 2/3 support of the entire Roundtable is required (if required, voting can take place via email, in-between Roundtable meetings).

### **Projects and Initiatives**

Doing projects and initiatives is not a priority for the Roundtable. However, when opportunities arise, the Roundtable will:

- Ensure the information about the opportunity is distributed amongst the networks represented at the Roundtable;
- Assist wherever and whenever possible the application for project funding by a Roundtable participating organization(s);
- When appropriate, support the application for project funding by organizations not part of the BCSER: and
- Be open to competing for province-wide project opportunities if BCSER organizations agree it is appropriate. If so, then the Roundtable will:
  - a. Look for appropriate partner organization(s) (either within the Roundtable or outside of it) to lead the project;
  - b. Have the Roundtable Secretariat coordinate the application and have the application officially submitted by the Secretariat host organization;
  - c. If successful, have the Secretariat support the project and the project lead organization as appropriate and as required; and
  - d. Along with the project lead organization (and any sub-contractors), develop project material that is the property of the Roundtable partnership. Any partner to the Roundtable may use these materials, internally and externally, and may co-brand (use their own logo along with the BCSER logo) for internal communication purposes. Otherwise, the BCSER logo will be used alone, or in association with the logos of all funders playing a role in the Roundtable partnership, as well as the logo of the partner organization(s) that is leading the project. Stories of Roundtable work/projects are the property of all Roundtable organizations and no organization (and/or sub-contractor) can take exclusive

credit, whether positive or negative. Roundtable organizations are encouraged to utilize stories, anecdotes and lessons learned to improve the awareness of the Social Economy within their organizations, networks, and movements.

*\* The Roundtable acknowledges the support of the Enterprising Non-Profits (enp) program in the development of these branding guidelines.*

## Roundtable Resources

### **Secretariat**

The Roundtable is made up of leadership individuals of the participating organizations. These individuals hold on-going professional responsibilities and positions, and consequently are not able to provide the time required for all Roundtable functions. The Secretariat position ensures that Roundtable affairs are managed in a timely and productive manner and enables Roundtable participants to participate effectively. Generally, the Secretariat:

- Reports to the Roundtable;
- Coordinates BCSER meetings;
- Makes summary notes of meetings, records decisions made, and follows up on action items; and
- Handles the overall communications requirements for the Roundtable.

A review may be held once a year to update the Secretariat's job description, or anytime upon request from the Secretariat or Roundtable.

### **Resources**

A guiding principle of the BCSER is to be nimble, responsive, and to leverage the assets available at the Roundtable. Here are some notes about BCSER resources:

- Currently, the BCSER Secretariat is a funded (through grants) contract position.
- The BCSER Secretariat is hosted by a Roundtable participating organization and that organization provides, when available, the financial oversight of grants and monies secured to finance the position, as well as provides in-kind support for the Secretariat function as required. Currently, the United Community Services Co-op hosts the Secretariat.
- Technical/facilitator/contractor/budgetary support will be accessed by the Roundtable when necessary to support the work of the Roundtable, through in-kind membership support and/or public/private funding.
- Roundtable participants are expected to finance their participation, including travel expenses such as mileage and staff time used for participation;
- Participating organizations who are chairing a Roundtable meeting are responsible for the costs of hosting the meeting, including refreshments and teleconferencing capabilities.

## Changes to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and updated as required by Roundtable participants.