SCRED

2017
STRATEGIC PLAN

With Support from

VANNSTRUTH
CONSULTING GROUP

SCREDO Strategic Plan

FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

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Prepared by:

The Board of the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Organization (SCREDO)

With support from:

VANN STRUTH CONSULTING GROUP INC.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Organization (SCREDO) was incorporated as a non-profit society in 2016 to provide economic development services for the communities of the lower Sunshine Coast.

It has the funding support of all four local governments (shíshálh Nation/Sechelt Indian Government District, Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, Sunshine Coast Regional District), who agreed in a Regional Economic Development Charter in 2015 to cooperate on a new regional economic development venture.

This Strategic Plan for SCREDO builds on the Economic Charter that was agreed by local governments, including an Economic Vision, and establishes the Values, Mission, and Action Plan that will guide the operations of SCREDO during the critical start-up phase and in future years.

The Plan was developed through a series of workshops with the SCREDO Board from August to October, 2016, building on significant work the Board had already completed through their own meetings and sub-committees.

2 ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 Regional Economic Development Charter

In planning how it will operate and focus its resources, the board of the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Organization (SCREDO) accepts as a starting point the Regional Economic Development Charter that was developed by local government elected leaders in 2014-2015.

The content of the Charter is used to guide the creation of this Strategic Plan and specific elements of the Charter will be highlighted throughout this document.

2.2 Recognition of First Nations

This Strategic Plan follows from the Regional Charter in its recognition of First Nations.

> The Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Organization (SCREDO) recognizes and acknowledges the inherent title and rights of First Nations peoples, their role in the use of lands and resources, and the need for government relationships and agreements to be based on recognition.

2.3 Vision

An Economic Vision for the lower Sunshine Coast was articulated in the Charter. It describes a possible future for the region that is aspirational and that SCREDO will strive to bring into existence. It states:

> The Sunshine Coast has a sustainable, thriving and diverse regional economy that is aligned with community values, expands opportunities for all residents and improves overall community wellbeing.

2.4 Mission

The mission statement establishes how SCREDO will pursue the regional Vision:

> Through responsible leadership and collaboration, retain and grow businesses that provide quality careers in a wide range of industries, in a consultative and cost effective manner.

2.5 Values

SCREDO's values define what the organization will stand for and how it will conduct itself in its everyday affairs.

Inclusive

In both our internal operations and the projects that we engage in, we will welcome partnerships and shared responsibility.

Democratic

Our decision making will be democratic.

Transparent

Our decision-making process and research conducted will be publicly available to the extent allowable by law.

Sustainable

Our operations and projects will strive to be triple bottom line sustainable (financial, environmental, social).

Efficient

We will be wise and respectful in the use of all resources.

Diversity

We recognize that diverse systems are more robust and resilient and will strive to enhance diversity in our own operations and projects.

Growth and change

We recognize that growth and change are essential to healthy communities.

3 GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

3.1 Goals and Key Performance Indicators

SCREDO has three Goals that will be pursued over the next 3-5 years, as outlined in the table below. The Goals are inter-related components of achieving the region's economic vision.

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) show how progress toward the Goals will be measured. These are high-level measurements that will be affected by factors beyond local influence, but it is important to SCREDO to be transparent in identifying exactly how it intends to create positive change in the region. The exact specification of the KPIs will be determined over time based on the availability and timeliness of data.

GOAL	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)
1. Increase the number of growing businesses	• Number of businesses on the coast • Number of businesses reporting growth
2. Increase number of quality career opportunities	• Number of businesses reporting increased employment opportunities of living wage jobs.
3. Reduce economic disparity	• BC Stats: Economic Hardship Index

3.2 Action Plan Overview

The SCREDO Action Plan is organized into three Programs that are intended to help achieve one or more of the Goals outlined above. They also encompass all seven activities listed in the Charter under "Roles and Responsibilities."

Activities such as business and investor attraction will be performed within the Business Retention and Expansion program (Making it a BREA program). Targeted resident attraction will be performed within the Workforce Development program.

The description of each Program on the following pages includes the rationale for including it in the plan, a description of the specific first-year and longer-term objectives for the program, as well as the initial set of actions and measurements that will be implemented.

Relative Effort
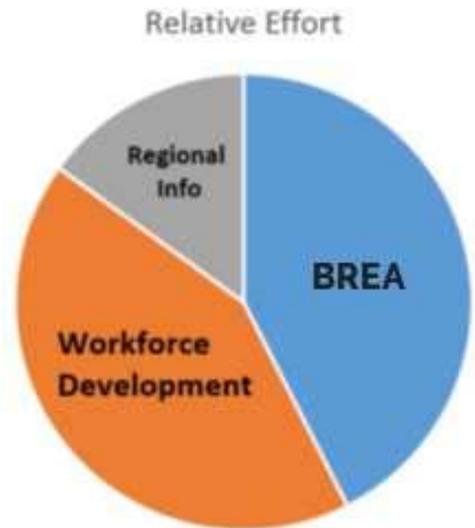
3.3 Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is a challenging topic in economic development due to the difficulty in distinguishing the impact of economic development activities among all the other factors that affect the local economy.

This Plan has three types of measurements:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are high-level, regional-scale measurements that track progress toward achieving SCREDO's Goals.
- Desired Outcomes are specific to each Program and measure progress in achieving the Program's Objectives. Like the KPIs, they are often high-level, regional-scale measurements that are influenced by a variety of factors beyond SCREDO's influence.
- Activity Data are smaller-scale measurements that directly relate to SCREDO activities and outputs.

3.4 Adaptive, Iterative Process

SCREDO will use an adaptive and iterative approach to strategy and execution. This process emphasizes a continual cycle of program deployment, measurement and review, and iteration.

This approach explicitly recognizes the uncertainty of future conditions and program results and will ensure that the organization is continually adapting its activities and programs to best fulfil its mission.

For that reason, the detailed actions and measurements outlined under each Program are generally applicable only for the first year, after which time initial results, new information and changing conditions will feed into the review and adaptation of SCREDO program. The intent is to maintain the current three-program structure and to innovate within this framework.

All proposed projects will be subject to SCREDO's evaluation matrix to ensure that time and financial resources are wisely spent and all projects are consistent with organizational values.

3.5 Programs

PROGRAM 1. BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION (BREA)

Business retention and expansion (BRE) is a traditional economic development program that recognizes existing businesses as the main source of employment growth and prosperity. It involves regular contact with local businesses to monitor economic conditions and to identify growth challenges and opportunities.

Insights gained from BEA activities will be used to inform and shape a targeted business/investor attraction campaign.

The process of gathering information on local companies is only the starting point and can lead to a wide range of follow-up activities that are designed to mitigate business challenges (regarding transportation, land availability, labour supply, etc.) or to capitalize on economic development opportunities.

OBJECTIVES (First Year)	DESIRED OUTCOMES
• Create a comprehensive business database and set of interview results • Identify businesses that want to grow • Identify barriers to growth • Foster a healthy and productive business culture	• Insight into business community characteristics • List of priority issues to address moving forward • More capable businesses leaders • A business culture that encourages innovation and new entrants

OBJECTIVES (Looking ahead)
• Develop programs to remove barriers to business growth • Develop a targeted business/investor attraction campaign • Encourage new business start-ups

ACTIVITIES (First Year)	ACTIVITY DATA
• Partner with business associations to complete a comprehensive business database and collect BRE survey data	• Various database metrics (e.g., number of businesses in total, by industry, by employee range, by location, by facility type, etc.) • Various BRE survey results on satisfaction with and importance of business climate factors, past and expected growth in employment and land/buildings, exporting status, managerial skill gaps, etc.
• Partner with business associations to deliver professional development training and networking opportunities to business owners and other activities supportive of a growth-oriented business culture	• Business social and professional development participation rates (attendance/engagement) • Satisfaction survey • Change in BRE results for targeted issues (e.g., reduction in skill gap in response to training)

PROGRAM 2.   WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION (WDA)

Workforce Development includes various activities aimed at building and leveraging the region's human resources and helping to realize their full potential.

Improving the education, skills, abilities and creativity of the region's workforce is a benefit to the workers themselves, who will be able to secure better-paying and more interesting employment, as well as businesses, investors and consumers in the region who will benefit from a more productive workforce.

Working with our partners we will identify gaps in the regions workforce so that we may develop or attract workers with the required skills.

OBJECTIVES (First Year)	DESIRED OUTCOMES
• Increase the number of employers investing in training • Establish a technology and innovation hub.	• Higher-skilled and higher-paid workforce • Expanded workforce with relevant skills and abilities for local industries • Expanded opportunities for workers of all skill levels

OBJECTIVES (Looking ahead)
• Work with existing agencies on assisting residents with barriers to entering the workforce and help build ladders for others to climb out of low wage employment. (place based) • Identify other sectors for cluster development. (Eg. Outdoor rec., Agriculture and food) • Expand the number and variety of post-secondary education and training opportunities available locally • Use successful Workforce Development projects and identified workforce characteristics as inputs into Business and Resident Attraction initiatives

ACTIVITIES (First Year)	ACTIVITY DATA
• Help businesses apply for and receive training grants and subsidies, and encourage continuous training behavior in the business community	• Number of grants written and won • Number of employees attending, and employers supporting, third-party training
• Help establish a technology and innovation centre and support activities of the TechHub and other tech groups	• Participation rates
• Work with partners to increase trade skill training opportunities	• Number of trade programs available

PROGRAM 3.   REGIONAL INFORMATION COORDINATION (RIC)

Regional Information Coordination is an important function that links directly to other SCREDO activities, such as retaining and attracting business and supporting worker skills acquisition, and will support the information needs of other organizations in the region.

It includes the identification, collection, cataloguing and distribution of existing statistical and other data on the region, and may include partnerships and/or direct efforts by SCREDO to collect additional data that is not currently available and has high value for the community.

Aggregating and disseminating regional information is one of the suggested Roles for SCREDO in the Regional Economic Charter.

OBJECTIVES (First Year)	DESIRED OUTCOMES
• Create an indexed inventory of regional information sources • Establish regional data standards for economic and community information • Aggregate selected information sources to produce added value.	• Existing reports and data sources are more accessible to community decision makers • Improved regional insight leading to better decisions

OBJECTIVES (Looking ahead)
• Serve as a data management resource and repository

ACTIVITIES (First Year)	ACTIVITY DATA
• Create a comprehensive Coast Calendar of events and activities, based on open standards and a creative commons license, that is un-branded and can be published and shared by all.	• Number of calendars managed by volunteers/groups • Number of sites embedding calendar • Number of users of the calendar • User Satisfaction Surveys
• Create inventory of regional information sources	• Data sources inventoried • Requests received to provide data
• Document and publish regional data standards	• Number of data sources adopting standards
• Work with regional business groups to adopt data standards	• Number of groups adopting standards

4 OTHER OPERATING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Staffing

The SCREDO Board is a working board that will remain actively involved in the management and oversight of projects and the strategic evolution of the organization.

The implementation of SCREDO programs requires a dedicated staff presence and SCREDO intends to hire a full-time Executive Director to fill this role.

Other organizations in the region will be engaged in partnerships and contract arrangements, and various support services will be contracted as needed.

4.2 Collaboration

SCREDO will establish working committees for each of its three Programs that include members of other local agencies as full participants. These committees will help design and recommend projects and other program activities.

4.3 Reporting to Funders

SCREDO will adopt an open and collaborative working relationship with local governments. It will provide a full report of activities on at least an annual basis, including a summary of activities completed, KPIs and other measurements and financial results, as well as proposed activities and spending plans for the following year. Other updates to local Councils, Boards and staff will be provided on a formal or informal basis, as requested.

4.4 Public Relations

In addition to its relationship with local government funders, SCREDO will also have communications objectives for the public, peer/partner organizations, other economic development organizations and government agencies outside the Sunshine Coast, and the local business community.

These objectives include the building of trust and the recognition of SCREDO as a well-organized group acting for the good of the Coast, the celebration of good news, the sharing of metrics and statistics that support good decision making, and the creation of informal SCREDO ambassadors who open doors to partnerships and opportunities.

Specific activities will include the SCREDO website (scredo.ca), formal press releases for major announcements, networking events, and other activities to be determined.

5 CONCLUSION

SCREDO was created by the local governments of the lower Sunshine Coast as a vehicle for joint action on the local economy.

This Strategic Plan sets the direction for SCREDO's operations and programs, with the express purpose of fulfilling the Regional Economic Vision.

The lower Sunshine Coast has many advantages as a place to live, invest and conduct business, but also challenges that prevent its full potential from being realized. The SCREDO Board believes that this Plan will lead to positive change in the region and looks forward to many successes in the years ahead.