

# Community Excellence Awards

## 2021 Application Form

Please complete and return the application form by May 14, 2021. All questions are required to be answered by typing directly in this form. If you have any questions, contact [awards@ubcm.ca](mailto:awards@ubcm.ca).

<b>SECTION 1: Applicant Information</b>	AP- <span style="float: right;"><i>(For administrative use only)</i></span>
Local Government or First Nation: RDCO - Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission	Complete Mailing Address: 1450 K.L.O. Rd, Kelowna, BC V1W 3Z4
Contact Person: Krista Mallory	Position: Manager, Economic Development
Phone: 250-469-6283	E-mail: <a href="mailto:krista.mallory@rdco.com">krista.mallory@rdco.com</a>

<b>SECTION 2: Category.</b> Please select one:
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Excellence in Governance.</b> <i>Governance processes or policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long term thinking.</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Excellence in Service Delivery.</b> <i>Projects/programs that provide effective services in a proactive manner, demonstrate benefit to the community, and utilize performance measures, benchmarks and standards to ensure sustainable service delivery.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Excellence in Asset Management.</b> <i>Projects/programs that demonstrate a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Excellence in Sustainability.</b> <i>Projects/programs that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering cultural, social, economic and environmental issues in planning, policy and practice.</i>

<b>SECTION 3: Project/Program Details</b>
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**1. Name of the Project/Program:**

OKGo Regional Sector Marketing Partnership

**2. Project/Program Summary.** Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less.

With the common interest of increasing awareness of the region's economic and tourism opportunities, the RDCO's EDC (COEDC) partnered with regional stakeholders, Accelerate Okanagan (the Region's tech accelerator) and Tourism Kelowna (destination marketing organization), and recognized a shared objective of marketing the region as a thriving hub for innovative growth in five key growth sectors: advanced manufacturing and aerospace; agriculture and viticulture; animation, film and digital media; health; and, information communications technology.

The objective of the campaign is to attract business events, talent, entrepreneurs and investment to the Central Okanagan on behalf of partner municipalities and regional stakeholders. The OKGo campaign has leveraged the resources of all three partners, as well as matched funding received from Global Affairs Canada and the networks of Destination Canada, to create a marketing impact beyond what each organization would be able to achieve individually.

**3. Demonstrating Excellence.** Please describe how your project/program demonstrates excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC and provides promising practices for others to follow.

In 2019 the COEDC, Accelerate Okanagan, and Tourism Kelowna combined resources and partnered with one another to create and launch the OKGo campaign, which showcases the innovative and entrepreneurial industries that are driving the economy in the Central Okanagan. The objective of the campaign is to attract talent, events, future business, and investment to the region, which will assist in post-pandemic economic recovery across all key growth sectors and can provide a successful model for best practices in municipal and stakeholder collaboration.

The three organizations involved in this project have always worked alongside each other with the objective of raising awareness for the Central Okanagan's economic and tourism opportunities. The OKGo campaign has created an opportunity for the COEDC and its regional partners to combine human, political, and financial resources to promote the region as a knowledge centre that is supporting entrepreneurs and continued innovation in major sectors.

2020 was immensely difficult for many in the region due to the pandemic and the local economy is in need of ongoing support. Our project partners, and local government, see this collaborative project as an additional tool in the long-term economic recovery of the region and one that will allow us to successfully position ourselves for new economic opportunities when the time is right and the economy opens.

The campaign communicates the region's supportive business environment, competitive tax climate, access to major centres, outdoor lifestyle, entrepreneurial resources and collaborative spirit through the creation of various digital marketing assets. The campaign targets event planners, prospective business investors, labour talent, and

entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the regional stories shared through the campaign will encourage executives, employees, and entrepreneurs in our target markets to consider the Central Okanagan as a place to start a business, make an investment, relocate, or host an event or conference.

The campaign will:

- Create leads to generate event and conference bookings in the Central Okanagan; and,
- Attract talent and expand major business investments within the region's key growth sectors.

The industry sectors featured in the campaign are also in line with those key sectors identified by our federal and provincial governments (i.e. Destination Canada's Economic Sector Strategy, Global Affairs Canada's Priority Sectors and Trade and Invest BC's Key Industry Sectors) which allows the region to leverage federal programs like CanExport Community Investments and provincial initiatives that encourage investment and economic recovery in BC.

#### **4. Category Criteria.**

**A.** Please describe how your project/program meets the objectives of the category you have applied under. Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide.

The mandate of the COEDC is to work in partnership with regional stakeholders to encourage new investment by utilizing best practices in economic development and strategic planning.

The OKGo campaign highlights some of the marketing strategies that the COEDC is using in order to provide effective community services to the region as a whole; This project highlights our organization's ability to leverage partnerships with community stakeholders and align objectives with others who are rooted in the success of our local economy.

In 2019, the COEDC launched the Moving Forward to 2025 strategy, identifying four strategic pillars to guide our activities:

- Growing Sustainably;
- Competing Globally;
- Inviting Top Talent; and,
- Building Business.

Five key growth sectors were also identified:

- Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace;
- Agriculture and Viticulture;
- Animation. Film & Digital Media;
- Health; and,
- Information Communications Technology (ICT).

The Moving Forward to 2025 strategic plan assisted in guiding our organization in the development of the OKGo campaign, which was a proactive means of providing the

community with a focused marketing strategy that will ultimately benefit the entire region as the economy begins to open up following the pandemic.

The OKGo campaign included the creation of the following assets: print magazine, ok-go.ca website, videography and photography assets, and digital ads that the COEDC, Tourism Kelowna and Accelerate Okanagan currently use to tell a cohesive regional story that showcases our regional expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship.

The multi-year marketing campaign includes targeted digital campaigns in key markets including the Pacific Northwest and major Canadian cities. Central Okanagan residents, businesses and organizations have been recruited to share the OKGo stories through their local, national and international networks. All elements of the campaign will be shared through each partner's social channels and has leveraged ongoing relationships with organizations like Destination Canada, Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, Trade and Investment BC, and Innovate BC.

**B.** In many cases projects may meet the criteria of more than one category. If applicable, please describe how your project meets the criteria of one or more other categories.

n/a

#### **SECTION 4: Program Criteria**

**5. Leadership.** Describe the extent to which your local government acted as a local or regional leader in the development or implementation of the project/program.

While all levels of government have done extraordinarily well in managing the economic impacts of the pandemic, the COEDC continues to be an exemplary model of facilitating stakeholder partnerships and continued collaboration throughout the Central Okanagan. The OKGo campaign has proven the positive impacts realized when community partners work together on shared objectives and generate continued economic opportunities for a single region.

It is our belief that the approach taken for this project involved extensive collaboration and cooperation that could be recognized as a best practice for those to model in the future.

The project has received many accolades from elected officials and various stakeholders that have been involved in the outreach portion of the campaign, realizing the true value that the campaign is providing to the Central Okanagan region.

**6. Financial management and planning.** Describe the degree to which the project and/or organization has implemented financial best practices that support long-term financial planning, value for money, financial sustainability and/or economic development.

Our organization brings together member municipalities and Electoral Areas to plan for the future by identifying shared needs and opportunities, and by delivering cost effective services to the Central Okanagan region. Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan that was completed and endorsed by our board of directors (consisting of the region's elected officials) in 2019, informs the decisions of our Regional Board and assists in guiding

ongoing service delivery. Every year our organization completes an Economic Base Analysis which allows us to fully understand the Central Okanagan economy and informs the direction of our working plan through the identification of challenges and opportunities.

As a medium sized economic development department with finite resources, the COEDC recognizes best practices and leverages both financial and human capital resources through successful federal, provincial and community partnerships. The COEDC has active partnerships with over 45 community organizations working to promote common goals and collaborating to develop regional priorities. These partnerships and our collaborative approach ensure no duplication of services occur and contribute to a streamlined strategic plan for the region.

**7. Partnerships and collaboration.** Describe the breadth and depth of community and/or regional partnerships that supported the project/program and the extent to which internal and/or external collaboration was evident.

The partners and participants of the project were:

- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission;
- Tourism Kelowna;
- Accelerate Okanagan; and
- CREW Marketing

The COEDC has taken on a leadership role both in coordinating the partnership and conducting the RFP process where CREW Marketing was then chosen as the agency to create the campaign's marketing assets that continue to be used to deliver the campaign's message to target audiences.

Tourism Kelowna and Accelerate Okanagan were instrumental in providing guidance and input in the creation and creative direction of the campaign; These organizations have a breadth of knowledge in each of their respective industries, which proved to be extremely helpful in the delivery of the campaign.

Tourism Kelowna is a not-for-profit society that is governed by tourism industry stakeholders through an elected Board of Directors. Their knowledge and expertise in the tourism and marketing sector was instrumental. Their mission is to support and market the region as a tourism destination in a sustainable manner that strengthens the local economy and enriches the quality of life for those that live in the Central Okanagan.

Accelerate Okanagan is a not-for-profit organization that supports entrepreneurs in the technology sector; whether it's connecting them with mentors, coaches, services, business partners or various other resources, AO can assist people in growing their tech business in various different ways depending on their needs.

The agency that delivered the marketing assets for the campaign was, CREW Marketing. CREW has worked with all of our partners before, including the COEDC, and proved to be instrumental in creating the digital assets that continue to be utilized as a result of the project. CREW also helped to guide the creative direction of the project to ensure that all partners were pleased with the marketing assets that were created.

**8. Innovation and promising practices.** Describe the degree to which the project/program demonstrated creativity and innovation, and contributed to increased efficiency or effectiveness.

The development of the OKGo campaign has enhanced collaboration efforts among all regional partners and has allowed us to realize our shared objectives and align them through the common goal of promoting the Central Okanagan; We have done this through the OKGo campaign by sharing the stories of the companies that call the Central Okanagan home. As we put the campaign together, we acknowledged that the most powerful recognition and celebration of the region's competitive advantages, when it comes to business, comes from our own businesses and entrepreneurs; They are the ones that choose to be here everyday and can promote the region to other investors, entrepreneurs and talent.

As the region continues to experience significant growth, a regional approach with unified messaging and assets allows the region to effectively direct inquiries in an efficient way. Enhanced assets also allow us to equip our counterparts at the provincial and federal level with helpful resources to understand the region's competitive advantages and value proposition and thus better direct inquiries from site selectors, event planners, investors and entrepreneurs.

**9. Public engagement and communications.** Describe the extent to which public engagement was foundational to the success of the project/program, including the use of communication tools such as social media.

The OKGo campaign included the creation of the following assets: print magazine, ok-go.ca website, videography and photography assets, and digital ads that the COEDC, Tourism Kelowna and Accelerate Okanagan currently use to tell a cohesive regional story that showcases our regional expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship.

The OKGo campaign also includes targeted digital campaigns in key markets including the Pacific Northwest and major Canadian cities. Central Okanagan residents, businesses and organizations have been recruited to share the OKGo stories through their local, national and international networks. All elements of the campaign will be shared through each partner's social channels and has leveraged ongoing relationships with organizations like Destination Canada, Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, Trade and Investment BC, and Innovate BC.

Our digital promotions strategy was created by a marketing agency that specializes in the development of successful marketing campaigns and ensured our project was implemented using best practices and made a measurable impact.

**10. Transferability.** Describe the degree to which the process or outcomes of the project, or other learnings, could be conveyed to other UBCM members.

The OKGo campaign can be replicated and is easily transferable to any community. All elements of the campaign – website, magazine, videography, photography, digital advertising – can be adapted to suit each community's needs, style and message.

The ability to highlight each community's key industry sectors, have local entrepreneurs open up and tell their own story in their own words, share the benefits of growing a business in the community and highlight the economic factors driving their success provides any campaign with a powerful message.

The Central Okanagan is well known for its collaborative nature among government, industry, post-secondary institutions and business support organizations which has proven key to the success of the campaign.

The most important lessons learned on this project have been the importance of having a supportive, collaborative ecosystem in your community that allows businesses to grow and organizations to find common ground to work on projects like this, along with identifying a common goal of promoting the development of the region and finding the right entrepreneurs to share their story and carry the message.

## **SECTION 5: Additional Information**

**11.** Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

The partner organizations will be delivering phase one of the OKGo campaign as follows:

- 1) Targeted outreach to individuals and organizations in the target markets of the US Pacific Northwest and major Canadian cities through the three partner organization's networks. An example of this is through Trade and Invest BC Representatives and Canadian Trade Commissioners in strategic markets, who can direct connectivity with industry and accelerator networks.
- 2) Promotion in target markets through industry channels, including Destination Canada, as well as direct advertising and targeted social media buying
- 3) When the time is right, we plan to share the stories through in-person events and meetings, including tradeshows and conferences.

More information about the OKGo campaign, including a promotional video of the region, a digital copy of a high-end magazine that showcases the stories of some of the region's local companies and a media kit, can be found on the campaign's website [ok-go.ca](http://ok-go.ca).

A recording of the launch session for the OKGo campaign, which included participation from Destination Canada representatives, can be found through the following link: <https://youtu.be/BHgUPidu2HE>

## **SECTION 6: Required Attachments**

- Council, Board or Band Council resolution indicating support for the project to be considered for a 2021 Community Excellence Award.
- Five representative photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files at a resolution suitable for display.
- Optional: Links to any publicly available videos related to the project.

Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files. Submit applications to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities.

E-mail: [awards@ubcm.ca](mailto:awards@ubcm.ca)

**SECTION 7: Signature**

Applications are required to be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.

Name: Corie Griffiths

Title: Director, Economic Development

Signature:



Date: May 20, 2021