



Developing a Community Food Production Project



Workbook and Guide

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ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT
REGIONAL DISTRICT



clayoquot
BIOSPHERE TRUST

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How to Use This Document

Developing clear and comprehensive plans for Community Food Production Projects is both an art form and a skill.

You're attempting to weave your dreams and imagination to your available resources and best guesses at costs, timelines, and labour availability. It's not uncommon to be overwhelmed with ideas while at the same time struggling to determine workable first steps for moving forward.

We hope this workbook will guide you to define 12 key elements of your project's design, and that the resultant plan will support you in achieving your goals and securing needed resources and partnerships.

To work through this guide: Jot down your initial ideas about each of the 12 Key Elements as you come to them. Complete the activities, working with others wherever possible. They'll help you to further define each Key Element. Finally, adapt and complete the templates for your budget and timelines.

Good Luck! Don't forget to reach out for support if you need it.

Tips for Success:

- Let the ideas flow! No judgement! Be Wild!
- Jot things down in a journal or within this document to keep track
- Work with others where possible - bouncing ideas back and forth really helps!
- Don't expect to get it right the first time. Your plans will change throughout the process. It's ok to go back and redefine.

Tips for subsequently applying for grants:

Grants often have a maximum word count, and it can be challenging to stay within it. Keep your answers as brief, but comprehensive, as possible. Practice brevity! You can sometimes include additional info as an attachment.

Make sure you understand the selection criteria and what the grantor is hoping to support with their funding. You can often tailor your project to meet funder objectives - it may not be the exact project you had in mind, but a successful funding application will at least start you down the road towards project initiation.

Partners! The more collaborative and inclusive your application, the better. Partners can also contribute additional resources and ideas. In-kind (non-cash) contributions are valuable!

12 Key Elements of Project Design

1. Mission

Your mission statement drives the project. It is what you intend to do - the core purpose of the project - and will drive development of your strategic goals and objectives. Your mission statement will also shape your project's culture. Mission statement questions look like:

- What do we do?
- Whom do we serve?
- How do we serve them?

e.g. Our mission is to function as a steering group for the community garden, providing education, resources, and support for those that use the garden as well as the broader community of gardeners.

Your ideas here...

2. Vision

Your vision statement gives the project direction. It is the future of the project/business, which then provides the purpose. The vision statement is about what you want to become. It highlights aspirations for the future. Things you can ask yourself when crafting this Vision Statement:

- What are our hopes and dreams? What do we want to be?
- What problem are we solving for the greater good?

e.g. Our vision for this project is that we provide safe, healthy and culturally appropriate food for our community members, in a way that cares for the lands, waters and animals in where we live.

Your ideas here...

3. Values

Your values as an organization are useful to outline from the start, to help guide the intention behind your work.

- What do you believe in?
- What types of things are important to you in this work?

e.g. Our values are aligned with employing only organic methods to the gardens, so that we can ensure a healthy system, for both people and the environment.

Your idea here...

Activity 1: “Brainstorming” (Mission, Vision, and Values)

Step 1:

If possible, **get together with your team**, or with a group of interested partners or participants (online or in-person). This will be an initial brainstorming session or “ideation” exercise, to garner ideas for your food production project.

Step 2:

When you start out brainstorming, it’s best to **let the ideas FLOW**. You may find that you and the others in your group have ideas that are flowing in all sorts of directions – this is called “divergent thinking”, and we want to let this happen! We can have the tendency to want to go ‘straight to the solution or goal’, but that is not what we are working towards initially.

Here are some good brainstorming principles to follow:

- 1) Withhold Judgement: All ideas are potentially good ones. Write them ALL down. Judging takes up valuable brain power that could be used for idea generation instead.
- 2) Encourage ‘Wild Ideas’: It’s much easier to adjust “wild ideas” than to immediately think of a valid one.
- 3) Quantity Not Quality: If you generate a large list of ideas, there has to be at least one good one. Go for speed – think fast, reflect later.

- 4) **Build On Other's Ideas:** No one owns an idea. Work together. The most creative people are also really good listeners. Listen actively for opportunities to build and elaborate (use "Yes, and..." statements!).
- 5) **Everyone's Ideas Are of Equal Value and Worth:** Each idea presented belongs to the group. It is therefore the group's responsibility to make sure everyone feels able to contribute freely and confidently

Step 3:

Find your key questions: Choose some questions that your group will "ideate" around. These may be either broad or specific, depending on where you are at so far with your project. For example, some of your questions may look like:

- *How will we help create more food secure systems in our community?*
- *How can we create the best agriculture project for our particular situation?*
- *How can we make our agriculture venture the best it can be?*
- *How can we make our current agriculture-related activities into a more viable business?*

It may take some time to find the right question for you. "The key question" should be an open, clear and engaging one that seeks a solution to a compelling problem or need.

Step 4:

With the question or questions clear, **have your group ideate around the question.** There are a few ways you could do this – I would suggest using some of the following tools to help get things going. Give your group enough time so there is a natural flow of ideas, but keep it bounded to a time limit so there is some pressure.

- **Association:** Using random words or random images, ideate in your groups using association. Pull a random word or image and generate ideas for two minutes around it, then pull a new one and have another go.
- **Negative Brainstorming:** Flip the key question to its negative form and ideate around that. For example, how could you create the world's worst agriculture project? After brainstorming the negative ideas, explore what happens when they are inverted.
- **Other Perspectives:** Explore the focus question from the perspective of specific users. What would it look like for a teenager? For an Elder? For a customer? For an employee? For a family? Etc. Some of these may be more relevant than others.
- **Mash-up:** Use the "Mash-up approach" by brainstorming a cluster of agriculture-related items and a cluster of things related to your focus question. Then, mix-and-match different elements and see what emerges.

Step 5:

Cluster & Narrow: After the ideation phase, have your group cluster and organize your ideas. This involves grouping common themes and similar ideas. You should remove duplicates and give each cluster a title. This can be done using a table top and sticky notes, a shared Google Doc, an electronic chart, or a simple drawing.

Step 6:

Once your group has clustered and organized their ideas, ***select one or several ideas to move forward with***. It may be helpful to choose a set of selection criteria, for example: ideas should be selected based on the three criteria of relevance, feasibility, and creativity. With criteria set, you can find a way to narrow down your best ideas.

Step 7:

Develop it! The final step is to further develop the most promising idea identified in the above step. Here, participants develop the ideas further, exploring the details of the concept, functionality, feasibility, and business model, etc.

After completing this Brainstorming Activity, go back to your Mission, Vision and Values, and use the ideas generated to help flesh them out.

You may find that you have to go back and “tweak” things later in the project development process, as you refine and develop the other Key Elements. That’s OK!

12 Key Elements, Continued...

4. Goals

What are your broad strategic goals? These will guide where your energy and resources are directed and help you to stay on track. Goals can be long and short term. They focus on ‘what’ you want to achieve, not ‘how’. Try to outline your goals in succinct, and concise sentences. For example:

- We aim to increase the amount of space in our community where people can grow food.
- We want to develop and run programs that teach people food gardening skills.
- We want to increase the amount of local produce at the weekly public market.

Your ideas here...

5. Objectives

Objectives are tangible and concrete targets that you can work towards in pursuit of your larger goals. They are often described as needing to be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. You can have 1 or more; just make sure they are SMART! For example:

- To create a community garden space with 30 beds by the end of March
- To create a seating area for 20 people in the community garden, where workshops and knowledge exchange can occur next summer
- To have an annual, fall celebratory event in the garden space to raise awareness, raise funds, and bring community together
- To create a summer market stand where gardeners can collectively sell their produce

Your ideas here...

6. Strategies/Tactics

Strategies define the action plans you will take to reach your objectives, and Tactics are the specific actions you will take. What, specifically, do you need to do to meet your objectives? For example:

- Bring stakeholders together to discuss the project (Send out a Doodle poll, set up a Zoom meeting, draft a meeting Agenda)
- Raise money for lumber for the garden beds (Enlist “person X,Y,Z” to help secure funding through “grant X,Y,Z”)
- Secure labour to build the seating/garden beds/market stand display (Set a date for a work party, call “carpenter X, Y, Z”, put out a call for volunteers on Facebook)

Your ideas here...

Activity 2: “Future Thinking” (Goals, Objectives, Strategies)

The purpose of this activity is to help you understand your vision of the near future, then define the action steps required to reach it.

Step 1:

Visioning

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes, with notebooks and pens at hand.
2. Imagine it is 6 months from now and you have accomplished everything you have set out to accomplish.
3. What have you done over the past six months? What was the work like, what were your relationships like, what was making you happy? (in relation to the project)
4. Open your eyes. Draw your vision of the future on the right-hand side of your paper, or use a whole sheet for this. If you are uncomfortable drawing, use a diagram or symbols - try and use few words. It doesn't need to be pretty. Stick to 4-5 themes that make up this vision. This vision could be likened to your broad goals and/or objectives.
5. If you are in a group, discuss your respective visions then see if you can define a shared group vision. Alternately, you can work individually and find similarities or ways to combine visions at the end.

Step 2:

Notice the helpful factors

At the top of your page, or on a separate page, write down at least 5 *helpful* factors that will help you to realize your vision. Think of these as “things you need”. Helpful factors are those which will directly impact and help you realize your vision. For example, you may need employees to do the work itself or a building to process food in. These relate to your objectives and/or strategies, as potential targets to help you reach your goals.

If you are in a group, discuss these helpful factors and try to arrive at a consensus before moving on.

Step 3:

Notice the supporting factors

At the top of your page, or on a separate page, write down at least 5 *supporting* factors that will support you to realize your vision. These will support the “helpful factors” outlined in the step above, or just be supportive in general. For example, in order to get your needs met, you may need funding or outside expertise, etc. These will also relate to your objectives and/or strategies, as potential targets to help you reach your goals.

If you are in a group, discuss these and try to arrive at a consensus before moving on.

Step 4:

Define the action steps

Draw three boxes connecting the left side of the paper to the vision on the right. These will hold the three big action steps needed to take to reach your vision. If you are working as individuals then get into pairs to discuss the steps. If you are in groups already, then you can discuss the steps as you have been doing.

Write a step in each box, concisely, but with as much detail as you need to make it clear to yourself and others. These boxes will help define your strategies and tactics.

Step 5:

Commit to action

To close the session, ask everyone in the group to state their vision and one (or all three) action steps. Ask each person: *What is the first thing you are going to do either today/tomorrow/this week to support this project?*

After completing this “Future Thinking” Activity, go back to your Goals, Objectives, and Strategies, and use the ideas generated to help define them.

You may find that you have to go back and “tweak” things later in the project development process, as you refine and develop the other Key Elements. That’s OK!

12 Key Elements, Continued...

7. Performance Indicators

You will develop a framework for evaluation a bit later in the project development process, but it’s a good idea to start thinking about performance indicators early on.

- *How will you know you have succeeded?*
- *What are the indicators of success for your project?*

Your ideas here...

8. Current Resources/Resource mapping

A “mind map” will help you to think through the resources that you already have to support you in this project. This may guide your project’s direction as well as any initial or easy implementation steps. Get creative, draw this out on paper! Resources to include could include:

- Expertise, labour, funds, partnerships, community champions, skills training and education opportunities, public will and interests, and others.

Your ideas here...

9. Needs

What are you lacking, and what do you still have to secure somehow? You may have many needs, but prioritization can start *after* brainstorming. You may want to organize needs into subheadings such as:

- Participants and Labour
- Additional expertise
- Materials

Your ideas here...

Activity 3: Community Engagement (Performance Indicators, Resources, and Needs)

While you probably have some ideas/answers to help define key project elements, your project will benefit immensely from checking in with different community partners/stakeholders. Arguably, this is one of the most important parts of a project – if no one wants a project except you and your team, it may not be a something you should pursue!

Developing processes for community engagement is key to a project's success – community input often leads to a more exciting, richer project that is more relevant to the community at large. While there are a few suggestions below, the type of tools that you use to engage community will depend on your particular project.

Interview with Strategic Stakeholder(s)

Identify and interview strategic stakeholders, including those with with an interest and familiarity with the project site. Questions you could ask include:

- Who currently uses the space and how is it currently used?
- What are the main goals / vision that the stakeholder has for this site?
- What types of activities does the stakeholder envision taking place on the site?
- What are the limitations or barriers faced to achieving this vision?
- What concerns does the stakeholder have about the space?
- What does the stakeholder think is working and not working for the space in its current state?
- Which elements of the current layout does the stakeholder want to keep or enhance? Which elements of the current layout does the stakeholder dislike, want to change or get rid of?
- Are there features of the site layout that the stakeholder is unsure about what to do with?
- What other stakeholders have an interest in the site? What contributions might they make?
- Does the stakeholder have access to maps or other useful documentation related to the space?

Current Policies or Institutional Parameters

Identify any current policies or institutional parameters that you need to consider when proceeding with your vision for the site or project? How will these enhance or impede the vision?

For example, if you want to include chickens in your project, what are the by-laws around number of chickens? If you want to have a fence around your garden, what are the height restrictions or other requirements of fencing in your area? Are there municipal or institutional by-laws you need to be researching in order to proceed? Explicitly stating the bylaws within your project plan will help potential partners to understand the context and parameters, and hopefully, it will help them to see how it fits in with existing mandates and values.

Intercept Surveys or Short Questionnaires

It can be useful to **conduct intercept surveys or short questionnaires** at a place where you know “interested stakeholders” would be hanging out. An intercept survey is usually a survey that is done when you just randomly “intercept” someone as they are spending time in or near the area where you will be initiating your project (this could include related online ‘hangouts’). It is sometimes surprising to find out who uses a space, or has an opinion of a space, until you spend time in that space and observe who is interacting with it!

Some examples for questions (in no particular order):

1. What is your relationship to this space or project?
2. What sorts of things would you like to see in this space or as part of this project?
3. What sorts of things would you like to see growing here?
4. Do you like the idea of a community garden?
5. Where do you think this produce could eventually be used?
6. Do you think this space would be a useful teaching tool for the University?
7. Are there any concerns that you have?
8. Are there issues with safety or accessibility of this area or project?
9. Would you be interested in attending community events here?
10. What specific skills or knowledge could you potentially contribute?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Longer Questionnaires

Longer questionnaires can be distributed, including those from beyond the design space or project itself. It is important that you have a clear understanding of what you are trying to learn from the participants while you are crafting your questions. Make sure that your questions are structured to have a logical flow.

Prior to starting the questionnaire, explain to the participants who you are, the purpose of the survey, and how the information will be used. It should take up to a maximum of 30 minutes, and be structured with more “open-ended” questions than the intercept surveys.

Pilot the questionnaire with a minimum of 3 people beforehand to make sure that it is an appropriate length and to ensure your questions are clearly worded. Once finalized, survey as many respondents as possible. Remember to ask each participant the same questions. It may be that the participant wants to share more with you than is covered by the questionnaire, and they may be interested in participating in an interview instead.

Examples of Questions, for all types of engagement:

There are **many different ways that you can ask your questions**. Try and keep things similar and streamlined, so you can more easily analyze your results at the end. If you have too many different styles of questions, things can become confusing for both you and the respondent!

1. Using 'likert' scales:

For example:

1 = (strongly disagree)	or	1 = (never or very rarely true)
2 = (disagree)		2 = (rarely true)
3 = (neutral)		3 = (sometimes true)
4 = (agree)		4 = (often true)
5 = (very often or always true)		5 = (strongly agree)

Sample question:

1. *How do you feel about having a food garden in this location?*
(strongly disagree) 1 ----- 2----- 3----- 4----- 5 (strongly agree)

2. Multiple Choice:

Sample Question:

1. How often do you visit this location? (please circle best answer)

Daily
Weekly
Monthly
A couple of times a year
Every few years
Never

4. Questions that are based on a "rating" system.

Sample Question:

1. For you, what are the most important aspects of a garden? (number these aspects in order of importance from 1-6, with the number 1 being the most important)
- Connection to Nature
Aesthetics
Gaining knowledge about the environment
Access to locally-grown food and medicine
Wildlife habitat
Other: _____

5. Open-Ended Questions

Leaving more open-ended questions to the end of the questionnaire is usually a good idea.

Sample Questions:

1. How does this space make you feel?
2. Do you see others using this space? If so, how?
3. What would make you want to hang out in this space more often?
4. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

12 Key Elements, Continued...

10. Timeline

A timeline may shift and change as you move forward, but it's a very useful tool, not just to keep you on track, but to help you think through the "step-by-step" execution of the project. Usually, as you lay out your timeline, you gain insight into things you may have missed.

Jot down your key activities and ask yourself, "What needs to happen first? What can we do quickly, easily, and at the outset? What are later or more complex steps?"

- **Use the spreadsheet template to draft your timeline**

Your ideas here...

11. Budget

Once you've thought through the elements above, you can start to construct your budget. Price out everything as closely as you can, confirm estimates where possible. It is usually helpful to keep things in the categories that you've already started to work with (i.e. Labour, materials, etc.) and to use a spreadsheet.

- Some contributions may be considered "In Kind", for example: volunteer labour or donations. Document these, both as leverage and so donors are appropriately acknowledged in future.
- Working on a timeline and budget go hand-in-hand. Often when you think of items you need to pay for, you realize you've forgotten to add them to your time line!
- **Use the spreadsheet template to draft your budget**

Your ideas here...

12. Evaluation

It is essential to refer back to your “performance indicators” throughout the project and record the results of this evaluation. A midway check-in can be used to see if you are on track to meeting these indicators, and other evaluation measures can be carried out all along the way. At the end of the project, go through an evaluation process to see if your expectations have been met, exceeded, or fallen short. This allows you to show where you have done well, where you need to improve, and what future steps could be.

- Funders will expect to have an established framework for project evaluation.
- Evaluation can be qualitative (stories, feedback) or quantitative (data and numbers). A combination approach is best.
- Some examples of evaluation criteria and measurement are provided with the templates

Your ideas here...

Templates and Examples

See next three pages for templates and ideas for budgets, timelines, and evaluation.

See You in the Field!

Project funding courtesy of Clayoquot Biosphere Trust's Vital Grants program



Budget Sample/Template

STAFF				
role	task	Jen	anticipated hours and rate	
role	task	Bob	anticipated hours and rate	
role	task	Sarah	anticipated hours and rate	
role	task	Betty	anticipated hours and rate	
GARDEN				
tools	rake			
	shovel			
	wheelbarrow			
Seeds	vegetable seeds	West Coast seeds	30 packets x \$5.00	\$ 150.00
materials	soil	Garden Shop	\$60/yard x 10	\$ 600.00
	compost	Garden Shop	\$100/yard x 5	\$ 500.00
	lumber	Lumber World	10 garden beds	\$ 1,000.00
	hardware	Home Hardware	galvanized screws	\$ 50.00
OPERATIONS				
Gas	distributing harvest	\$0.58cents/km	100km	\$ 58.00
COMMUNITY GATHERING				
bbq rental	two bbqs	BBQ world	day rate \$100/day X 2	\$200
food				
door prizes				
Tables and chairs				
etc. etc. etc.				
In Kind	Borrowed tools	Drill and chop saw	10hrs@\$20/hr	\$ 200.00
	Accounting advice	Bob's aunt	3hrs@\$100/hr	\$ 300.00
	Volunteer hours	Harvest/distribute 1	30hrs@\$16/hr	\$ 480.00
		Harvest/distribute 2	50hrs@\$16/hr	\$ 800.00
		Community Event	30hrs@\$16/hr	\$ 480.00
	Printing for posters	Posters and More Inc.		\$ 150.00

Timeline Sample/Template

single person											
group activity											
	Year one - February 2021 to October 2021										Key Person/Lead
Activities	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	
First official Meeting with stakeholders											Jen, Bob take notes
Assign Tasks											Bob
Plan dates for community events											Sarah
Order garden supplies											Jen
Coordinate volunteers											Betty
First garden plantings											Jen, Bob and Sarah
Harvesting and Distribution											Jen, Bob, Sarah, Betty and volunteers
Second meeting with stakeholders, provide update on project progress											Jen
Harvesting and Distribution											Jen, Bob, Sarah, Betty and volunteers
Third meeting with stakeholders, provide updates on project progress											Jen, updates from Betty and Sarah, Bob take notes
Community Harvest Event											Everyone, further breakdown of tasks needed (Bob)
Fourth and final meeting with stakeholders											Jen, updates from Betty and Sarah, Bob take notes
Complete final project report											Jen and Bob

Measurement and Evaluation, Examples

Questionnaires

These should be asked in alignment to your vision, mission and goals - you want to see if you have achieved these, and one way is through framing questions with this in mind.

For project team

1. What do you think we did successfully overall during this program?
2. What was our most successful day/event/time during this program? Why?
2. Where were the areas that we most struggled developing this program?
3. Where were the areas that we most struggled in running/executing this program?
4. What are key things that you think we managed to accomplish in this program?
5. What tasks did we not accomplish during this program?
6. What did we learn from the areas where we struggled or didn't meet our goals in this program?
7. What changes did we make during the program that improved our success?
8. What changes should we have made during the program to improve our success?
9. What defines "success" for you in this program?
10. Did we stick to our mission, vision and goals in this program? Why or why not? Do we need to change these?

For Volunteers or Participants

1. What did you most appreciate about this program?
2. What did you wish we had done more of in this program, i.e. what would you like to see more of?
3. What did you dislike about this program?
4. How did you participate in this program?
5. Would you continue to participate in this program? In what ways?

At Events

1. Set up a raffle where participants have to say what they like/don't like about the event, or outline how it is contributing to their life/well-being/nutrition etc. Make sure to align the questions you ask with your goals and visions of the project.
2. Put up sheets of paper on the wall, along with a roll of stickers or markers. People can easily answer questions by placing stickers/marks in the right columns. For example: One sheet of paper can have the heading "This event strengthened my understanding of community food security". If the participant agrees, they can place a sticker, or a mark with a marker, on this sheet as a way to signify their "voting" in agreement with this statement.

Keeping Track of Participation and Numbers

1. Make note of how many participants attend project events, volunteer days.
2. Make note of contributions to the project by various participants, in all forms (donations, hours, etc.)
3. Follow up with participants - if distributing food from a garden, you can say a condition to accepting the food is that they have to fill out a questionnaire at the end.
4. If you are producing food, try and weigh (or estimate the weight) of the food you produced.
5. If you are distributing food, keep track of how many people received this food.