



Invest Kootenay Partnership Handbook 2010

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Introduction

The Invest Kootenay Partnership is a regional initiative focused on attracting, retaining and expanding investment in the Kootenay Region. This regional partnership model is based on trust, open communication, shared decision-making and strong local partnerships. Local partners for each participating community include representatives from municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations and Communities Futures. These strong local partnership arrangements form the foundation of the regional partnership model and ensure a coordinated local protocol is in place to welcome new investors and effectively service existing investors. The Invest Kootenay Advisory Group builds on the strengths of these partnerships to guide decision-making with at least one representative from each community attending quarterly meetings. Successful implementation of Invest Kootenay activities continues to rely on the participation of all community partners on an ongoing basis.

Rationale

The Invest Kootenay partnership recognizes some of the most intense effects of globalization can be seen in rural communities. As a result, rural communities are under increasing pressure to diversify their economies and remain competitive in the global market place while maintaining local sustainability. The Partnership also recognizes that our rural communities can be proactive as opposed to reactive; we can shape as opposed to respond to local economic growth. Invest Kootenay outreach presentations to local business networks and community groups highlight the need to attract and retain investment and the proactive role our communities can take. It is also recognized that with limited resources in our individual communities it is necessary to pool these resources in order to remain competitive in this global economy.

History

The Invest Kootenay Partnership began in Nelson and Castlegar in September 2004 with federal and municipal funding support. Research from Phase 1 of the Invest Kootenay Partnership was conducted from September 2004 to March 2005 and was aimed at understanding how to best attract and retain out of area investment locally and regionally.

The research indicated the majority (>70%) of out of area investors /new business people came to the area originally as tourists or to visit family and friends.¹ While the untapped investment opportunities available in the Kootenay region were widely recognized by this pool of potential investors, many did not pursue these opportunities. Interviews with tourism operators targeting high-end clients revealed a number of interested investors were continuing to slip through the cracks simply due to miscommunication or inconsistent, non-existent information. Parallel research also showed that the Internet was being used as the primary source of information on communities whether it was to visit or to potentially invest. This research was the genesis of the Invest Kootenay Partnership.

¹ Detailed findings are presented in the 'CISP Investment Promotion Report' available at www.InvestKootenay.com on the Resources and Supports page.

With this knowledge in hand, a number of local contributors expressed enthusiasm at moving the Invest Kootenay Partnership from research to action, including a willingness to work together to promote investment regionally. The Town of Creston joined Invest Kootenay in 2006 and the Cities of Revelstoke and Grand Forks joined in 2007 alongside continued support from the Cities of Nelson and Castlegar. In 2008, Kootenay Boundary electoral areas C, D, and E joined the partnership in conjunction with Grand Forks to form our first ‘Boundary’ pilot rural delivery model. Under this model, Grand Forks and electoral areas C, D, and E pool their resources under a joint-membership arrangement. It is also important to note that core funding is provided through annual membership fees ensuring long-term sustainability of the Invest Kootenay Partnership.

Strategic Priorities

Regional Marketing – inbound efforts focus on turning the ‘tourist to investor’ and outbound efforts focus on attracting investors based on identified target sectors utilizing ‘where lifestyle meets opportunity’ messaging

Utilizing Internet Technologies – marketing efforts steer interested investors to www.InvestKootenay.com providing easy access to relevant information and resources in addition to generating excitement around investment opportunities in the Kootenay region through the new CONNECT database (linking investors with opportunities)

Partnership Expansion – recognizing strength in numbers and the need to grow our communities in the eyes of investors, Invest Kootenay invites all Kootenay communities to join the partnership through an affordable population-based membership fee successfully leveraged with external funding sources

Engaging Local Networks – by developing and implementing a local protocol for addressing investment inquiries and utilizing local businesses and community ambassadors as advocates, interested investors can take advantage of one-on-one assistance making their investment and / or relocation process as easy and efficient as possible

Investor Outreach – recognizing the need to retain and expand existing investment in our region, Invest Kootenay interviews a sampling of investors annually to better understand the investment climate and investor support needs, recommendations are then communicated back to communities to ensure adequate follow-up support

Research and Development – relevant research is undertaken and updated regularly to ensure interested investors receive the information they need, in addition performance indicators are reported quarterly to ensure Invest Kootenay activities remain relevant and effective

Membership Features

Membership in the Invest Kootenay Partnership provides communities with a cost effective and easy to implement investment attraction, retention and expansion strategy. The Invest Kootenay Partnership should be considered as *one of the tools* in a community's economic development toolbox. With annual membership, you will be provided with community-based planning, outreach and training support, presence on the Invest Kootenay website and CONNECT database, research support to update investor-requested information, and inclusion in inbound and outbound marketing materials and activities.

Outreach

The Invest Kootenay Coordinator will be available to visit your community for a maximum of five days to assist in:

- setting local protocol, and planning outreach and investor support activities;
- recruiting community support through outreach presentations; and
- providing training to Community Connectors and Ambassadors.

Internet Presence and Investor Information

Your presence on the Invest Kootenay website and CONNECT database includes:

- a regularly updated community profile;
- featured community photos;
- local investor success stories;
- relevant community-specific resources and supports;
- a community-specific secure 'contact us' function;
- community-select function within investment opportunities CONNECT database;
- presence on Google Maps interface; and
- featured contact information for your local first point of contact representative.

Regional Branding and Marketing Activities

Inbound and outbound marketing materials and activities include:

- unlimited use of Invest Kootenay logo and related branding materials;
- use of Invest Kootenay banners at special events and conferences;
- outdoor Invest Kootenay signs to feature at high-traffic tourism locations;
- print copies of the Invest Kootenay regional brochure;
- print copies of community-specific inserts to accompany the regional brochure;
- investor package folders and electronic versions of investor package inserts – allows for customizable packages to be printed on an as-requested basis; and
- Invest Kootenay inbound and outbound advertising (i.e. airport signs, press release templates, advertisements in relevant publications, brochures featured at key trade shows)

Membership Benefits

Easy to implement - The program is developed and our consultants will help you roll it out in your community.

Affordable - Your community can join for as little as \$2,500 per year (price dependent on the size of community as detailed in Membership Costs section). By working together we can deliver a quality program for a small annual community contribution. (the original partners invested > \$100,000 in the research and development of the initiative).

Effective and Complimentary- Targets a group that is likely to invest or start a business in your community. The program compliments existing economic development programs or it can be the main focus for communities with limited economic development budgets.

Succession Planning Vehicle – The program supports local succession planning strategies by highlighting businesses for sale through the CONNECT database.

Uses www.InvestKootenay.com - The website feature up-to-date investor-requested information including community profiles, recent news, successor stories, resources and supports, direct links to participating communities, and direct connection of investment opportunities from across the region.

High quality promotional material – Marketing materials are designed to recruit support from Ambassadors and Community Connectors within the region, to target potential investors visiting the region, and to attract out-of-area investors based on geographic and sector targets.

Utilizes already established worldwide brand – Invest Kootenay is part of the “Invest Canada” and “Invest BC” brands and is linked to both www.investcanada.com and www.investbc.com drawing power.

Expands your economic development network – A key component of the program focuses on engaging community members in economic development efforts. Local and regional outreach activities work to build these networks in an effort to effectively welcome new investors.

Community and regional buy-in – Recruiting and engaging local Connectors and Ambassadors translates into increased awareness and support for investment attraction, retention, and expansion efforts in the community and across the broader region.

Success builds success – Featuring existing successful businesses demonstrates to potential investors how they can turn their investment interests into reality.

Leverages other funding opportunities – Many of the current funding programs favour proposals that are regionally focused. Invest Kootenay has received strong federal support and is positioned to receive additional grants to further develop the program. Invest Kootenay received 90% (\$100,000+) already in funding from federal programs. There is also an opportunity to leverage marketing dollars through the pursuit of joint-marketing initiatives, including already established brand, website, and high quality promotional materials

Grow our communities in the eyes of potential investors – The Kootenays are considered a small remote part of the province, our individual communities even smaller. By working together through the Invest Kootenay Partnership our communities will appear to be a more attractive place to do business than any one community can on its own. Bringing business to the region, wherever it is, benefits everyone.

Opportunity to work together – Collective effort is an effective strategy for investment attraction outside of metropolitan centres. Collaboration between partners through other initiatives has proven to be an unexpected side-benefit.

Membership Cost

Population	Annual Contribution
under 2,500	\$2,500
2,500 to 5,000	\$5,000
5,000 to 10,000	\$7,500
over 10,000	\$10,000

* plus set up fee

Quarterly Evaluation and Reporting

The Invest Kootenay Coordinator conducts a quarterly evaluation of the effectiveness of Invest Kootenay activities and presents findings to partner organizations in a quarterly report. The Partnership also plans to begin disseminating an e-newsletter to contributors from across the region.

The following performance indicators are considered:

- monthly website visits (total, by country, by page on website)
- monthly CONNECT database visits (total, by country)
- monthly new investors registered on CONNECT database (total, by province / country, by community of interest)
- monthly new opportunities registered on CONNECT database (total, by community)
- monthly inquiries made from investors to opportunity holders on CONNECT database
- monthly investment opportunities realized through CONNECT database
- number of inquires through website 'contact us' function
- number of in-person / phone inquires through first point of contact representative
- number of inquiries for investment related information by community support organizations
- number of investors meeting with local Invest Kootenay Ambassadors

Key Contributors

Invest Kootenay contributors are critical to ensuring the success of partnership activities by setting strategic priorities and assisting in implementation efforts locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The Invest Kootenay Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and supporting planning and implementation activities.

The Invest Kootenay Advisory Group and Community Partner Organizations

Members of the Advisory Group meet quarterly in order to monitor existing initiatives, ensure effective communication and cooperation across communities and key contributors, and explore future initiatives. The Advisory Group is also collectively responsible for supporting administrative functions, which include strategic planning, reporting, and accountability. Representatives are drawn from municipalities, local and regional economic development agencies, and Chambers of Commerce from participating communities. The Advisory Group is made up of at least one representative from each partner community.

Community partner organizations are responsible alongside the Advisory Group to participate in annual strategic planning. In addition, these representatives from municipalities, local and regional economic development organizations, and Chambers of Commerce support the coordination and implementation of strategic actions both locally and regionally. More specifically, these representatives assist in recruitment of local Connectors and Ambassadors, provide investor-related information as requested, participate in the collection of quarterly evaluation data, ensure local investment protocol is followed, and assist in marketing and promotion efforts, both inbound and outbound.

First Point of Contact Representatives

We utilize existing personnel that are responsible for economic development inquiries in the community and give them another tool to turn potential investors into real investors.

Participating communities are responsible for designating a First Point of Contact Representative (drawing from municipal development staff, the economic development office and / or the Chamber of Commerce). The First Point of Contact Representative(s) in each community will act as the official community contact for interested investors responsible for responding to inquiries, disseminating information and marketing materials, and ensuring interested investors and businesses with development opportunities are connected. The First Point of Contact Representative will also administer the Ambassador Program and support local Connectors, ensure the Advisory Committee is informed of inbound and outbound marketing opportunities (i.e. trade shows, local and regional tourism partnerships), respond to website and database inquiries, and will track investment inquiries resulting from Invest Kootenay efforts.

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Community Connectors

Who better to introduce potential investors to the opportunities that await them in the beautiful Kootenays? In many cases these are the very people that had the same dreams as our potential investors and made their dreams a reality.

Community Connectors are individuals who interact with potential investors. These individuals may be investors themselves, business people (specifically those catering to tourists) and / or community leaders. Connectors are uniquely positioned to promote investment through informal contact, to provide promotional materials (signs, brochures, www.investkootenay.com), and to make accurate referrals to First Point of Contact Representatives in their respective communities. Through everyday interactions, Community Connectors can effectively address the issue of lost opportunities simply by making accurate referrals. No specific expertise is required other than an ability to share their passion for the region and make accurate referrals.

Ambassadors

Who better to showcase all the wonderful attributes of our communities than those who live and experience life in the Kootenay Region? Whether the investor has a recreational, cultural, educational, or a financial question, the welcoming arms of a community member can act as an effective introduction to the Kootenay lifestyle.

The Ambassador Program is a business version of the welcome wagon. Community Ambassadors are partnered with interested investors in order to showcase our region's assets and provide investment-related information. Three types of Ambassadors are available and will be matched according to specific investor interests and information needs. Ambassador categories include Community Ambassadors, Lifestyle Ambassadors and Professional Ambassadors.

Community Ambassadors are responsible to showcase all aspects of community life, including cultural, health, educational, and recreational opportunities.

Lifestyle Ambassadors are responsible for showcasing the unique recreational opportunities available in the region, including golf, fishing, skiing, boating, mountain biking, etc..

*Professional Ambassadors*² are responsible for providing information specific to investor needs.

Financing – Representatives will provide an overview of financing options and considerations.

Regulations – Representatives will provide an overview of municipals and / or Regional District regulations.

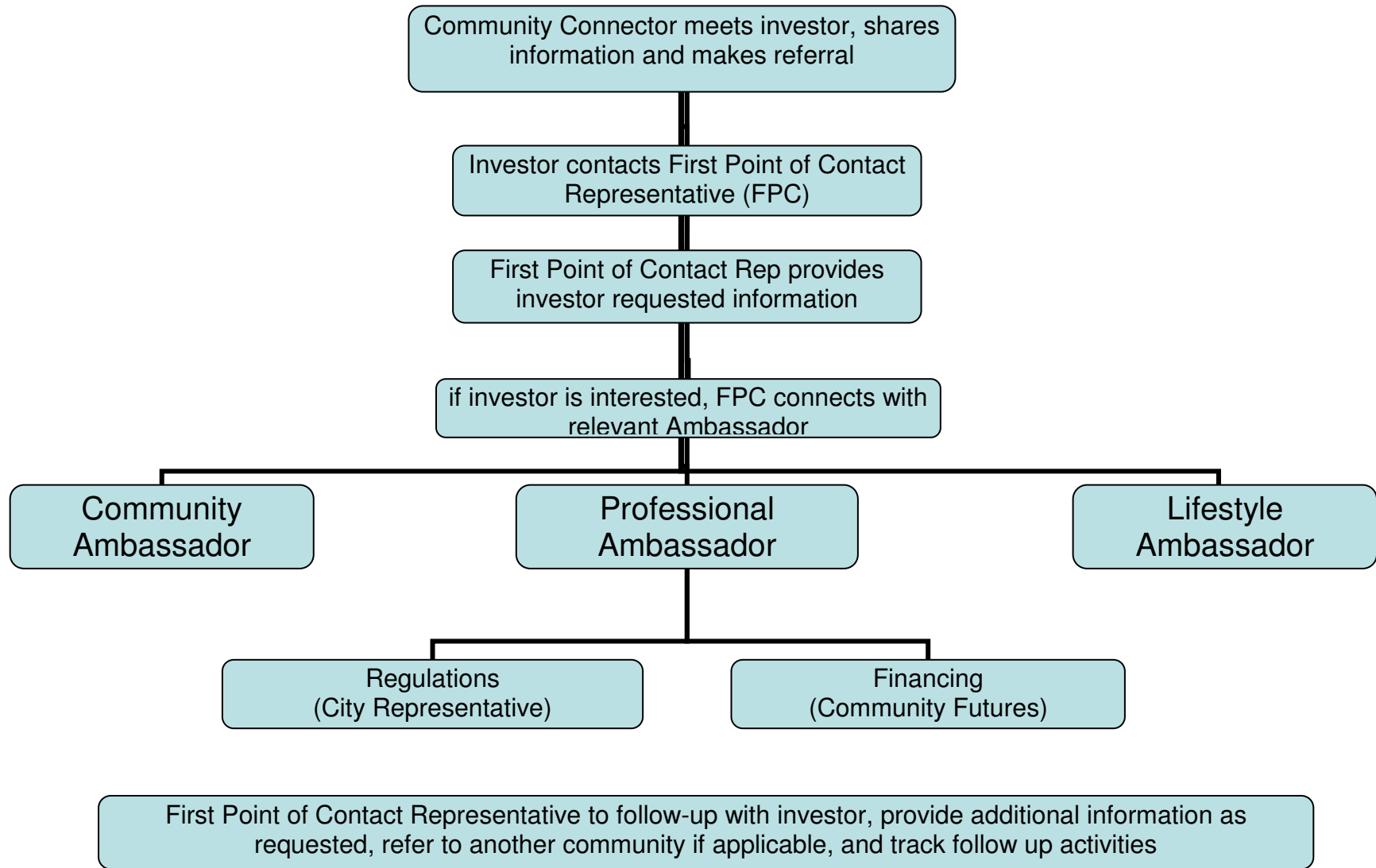
² All Ambassadors will be instructed to only provide information specific to their area of expertise only.

Regional and Local Protocol for Investment Inquiries

Strong local partnerships are in place in each Invest Kootenay community to ensure regional and local protocols are established and effectively followed. Information is shared and investment referrals are made across participating communities on an ongoing basis ensuring investment stays within the region whenever possible. For example, if an investor is seeking available land in a community that cannot meet the request, the First Point of Contact Representative calls their counterpart in another community that may be able to meet the request and refers this investor to him/ her. First Point of Contact representatives are also encouraged to track data related to cross-referrals for inclusion in quarterly reports. This process is also undertaken through the CONNECT database and cross-referrals are tracked through an internal notes and reporting function. This internal notes and reporting function also ensures that responses to investor requests are not replicated across communities. All First Point of Contact Representatives can track investor follow up activities across communities in real time. Regional protocol has ensured partner communities continue to effectively address investor inquiries without overlap.

Local protocol requires coordination and active participation across municipalities, economic development organizations and Chambers of Commerce. A representative from each stakeholder group attends an orientation session with the Invest Kootenay Coordinator upon joining the partnership in order to establish local protocol and set local strategic directions. The group agrees to share information and coordinate at the local level. The Coordinator is available to meet with this local steering group on an as-needed basis to ensure local protocol remains effective.

Protocol for First Point of Contact, Community Connectors and Ambassadors



Process

The following is an example of how the local protocol process works.

John Brown is here in the Kootenays enjoying that ski vacation that he covets each year. He is a high income professional from Big City, USA. It is one of those amazing ski days in the Kootenays, a foot of powder the night before, but the morning breaks into a gorgeous sunny day, the snow sparkles in the air as John heads up the chairlift for the last run of the day. He thinks of how wonderful it is to be able to be here in the Kootenays experiencing the amazing recreational opportunities. His mind suddenly drifts back to what awaits him back in Big City, USA, the traffic, security concerns, the pressure of his job, his children's education opportunities. How I wish I could get away from that all and stay right here forever he dreams..... he envies those around him... how do they do it he wonders... the sacrifices they must make to live here...I could never earn an income here to support my family and my lifestyle....

As he walks into the lodge for the last time of this amazing holiday he notices the ski host who has shown him around the hill... he is invited to sit down for a drink.... John tells the ski host how lucky he is and how he wished he too could live in such a beautiful place.... At the table is one of Invest Kootenay's Community Connectors.... the Connector begins to share a story about how she too had come from a similar background and had a similar experience to John's.... she begins to tell John of how she turned her dream into a reality.... she tells John that she is part of the Invest Kootenay network and her role is to help someone like Jim turn his dream into reality... there are numerous opportunities here in the Kootenays and we have a whole team of people that can help you realize your dream.... Here take this brochure it is full of examples of how others have developed very successful businesses here in the Kootenays.... Jim gives the contact his business card and says he will start to check things out...he thinks maybe there is an opportunity here...seems lots of others have been able to make it work.... Look at the range of new businesses that have started up, from genetics research to adventure tourism, hey there is even a person here that is a nuclear physicist ... that is amazing....

Jim returns to Big City, USA and is quickly immersed in the hustle and bustle of city life.... what the heck did I do with that brochure he thinks.... at home that night he discusses his experience in the Kootenays with his family, they all encourage him to look into it further....

He finds the website and begins to learn more about the Kootenay communities... wow there is a much bigger population base than I thought... and look at all these other businesses that have been successful there.... I am impressed.. there sure is a lot of useful information on this web page.... they seem to know what they are doing.... ah... there is the contact for that Kootenay community I went skiing at... I think I will send him a note and ask for more information...

A seed is sown and John and his family plan another vacation to the Kootenay region, he has an idea for a new business.... the economic development officer has set him up with 3 people in the community.... (a person to show him the community, the cultural venues, the schools, the health facilities – a community ambassador; a person is going to take him golfing – a lifestyle ambassador and finally someone that can discuss the technical aspects of his idea, the financing, regulations etc – a professional ambassador).

The economic development officer (First Point of Contact Representative) meets John and his family at the airport. They have an amazing time in the Kootenay region, they feel so welcomed by the community, and everyone is so helpful, so knowledgeable.

After a week of exploring the region further John and his family are convinced that this is where they want to be and John's business idea looks very solid. A year later John and his family walk into their new home in the Kootenay region a little nervous about the big move but knowing they made the right move.... that night they are greeted by all those that made the dream a reality.

Strategic Directions and Next Steps

The following strategic directions have been identified through annual strategic planning:

Implementation of regional marketing plan

Inbound marketing

- continued 'tourist to investor' strategy
- develop new brochures, community inserts, and investor packages in 2009
- signs at transportation points and high traffic tourism sites and advertising

Outbound marketing

- targeted marketing according to sector and geographic targets
- power point for trade shows, link with other existing outbound efforts
- translation of marketing materials and website

Utilizing Internet technologies

- Continued development of www.InvestKootenay.com including updates to community profiles, success stories, recent news, and revisions related to partnership expansion
- Active promotion of **CONNECT database** connecting investors with opportunity holders including database marketing plan in 2009

Partnership expansion

- open invitation to municipalities
- pursuing funding to offset membership start up costs for smaller communities
- formalizing governance structure

Engaging local & regional networks

- presentations to local business networks
- Ambassador and Connectors training & support, host appreciation events
- coordinating with regional networks and opportunities
- develop and distribute quarterly e-newsletter to contributors

Outreach to existing investors

- identify and service needs of new and existing investors
- tap into networks to identify new investor leads
- recruit support for CONNECT Database

Research & development

- identify, profile and provide coordination support to target sectors
- identify target geographic areas to inform outbound marketing efforts
- articulate our competitive advantage

The Invest Kootenay Coordinator is available to provide a presentation to your municipal council, Chamber of Commerce or economic development organization upon request. For more information, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in the Invest Kootenay Partnership