



Annual Priorities

Q4 2025 PROGRESS REPORT



Economic Reconciliation

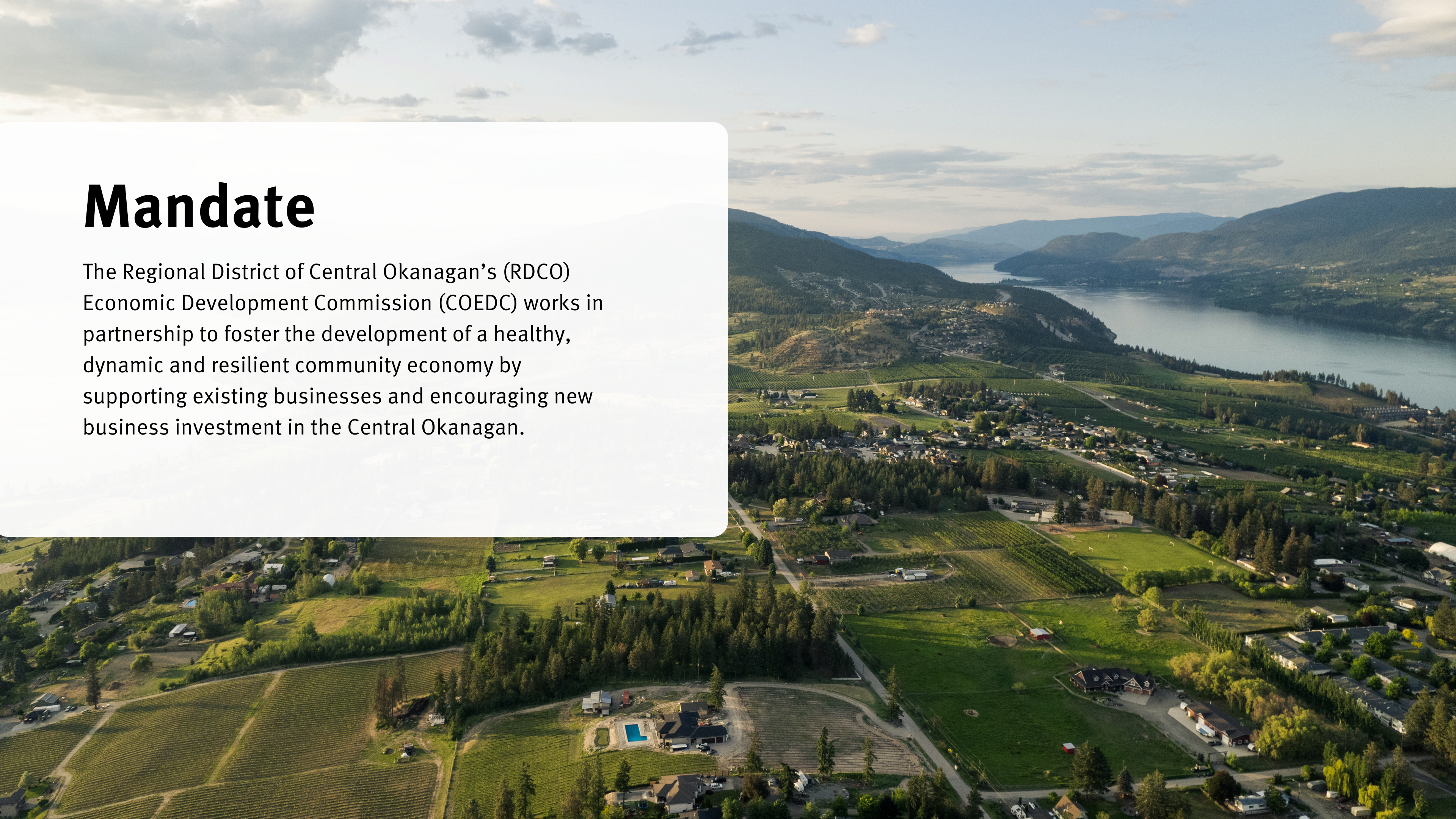
We acknowledge our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tḡxʷúlaʔxʷ (land) of the syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial. We recognize, honour, and respect the syilx / Okanagan lands upon which we live, work, and play.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan's Economic Development Commission is committed to fostering economic reconciliation. The COEDC Strategy 2025 to 2030 will be implemented in alignment with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. The priorities and actions outlined in this strategy are deeply rooted in collaboration with the syilx/Okanagan people and will be implemented collaboratively to support economic independence and reconciliation.



Mandate

The Regional District of Central Okanagan's (RDCO) Economic Development Commission (COEDC) works in partnership to foster the development of a healthy, dynamic and resilient community economy by supporting existing businesses and encouraging new business investment in the Central Okanagan.



Meet Our Team



Krista Mallory
Manager



Eva Weston
Economic Development Officer



Sascha Lesack
Business Development Officer



Brianne Ververda
Business Development Officer



Mohana Rambe
Research and Marketing
Coordinator



Jen Walraven
Administrative Assistant



Victoria Miller
Contractor:
Connector Program Specialist



Myrna Stark Leader
Contractor:
Agriculture Program Specialist

Advisory Committee

Executive Committee 2025



Sharon Hughes-Geekie
Chair



Paula Quinn
Vice Chair



Janice Larson
Past Chair



Angela Nagy



Ryan Malcolm

Industry Sector Representatives

Alexandra Carnio

Produckivity Co-Founder & CEO
Education

Carla Berrie

Vitalis | VP of Revenue
Clean Tech

Mark Burleigh

Northside Industries | President
Manufacturing

Alan Gatzke

Gatzke Orchards | Owner
Agriculture

Garrett Jones

Delphi | Vice President
Professional Services/Sustainability

Jeremy Dawn

SNFLWR Investment Corporation | CEO
Construction/Development

Sharon Hughes-Geekie

JumpStart Communications
Health Care

Christina Ferreira

Impact Events and Brand Management
Arts & Culture

Janice Larson

Muse&Effect Consulting
Professional Services/Life Sciences

Ryan Malcolm

Emil Anderson Properties | Director
Construction/Development

Angela Nagy

GreenStep Solutions Inc.
Clean Tech/Environmental Services

David Metvedt

Swift Aerial Surveys | CEO
Tech/Agriculture

Paula Quinn

Consultant
Aerospace

Sepideh Rezaia

Unrooz Solutions | Owner
Technology & Professional Services

Robert Selby

TigerCat Industries | District Manager
Manufacturing

Rich Threlfall

Housing Okanagan Foundation | CEO
Construction/Development

Joanna Schlosser

Niche Wine Company | Co-Founder & CEO
Viticulture

Roger Wong

Intrigues Wines | Owner
Viticulture

Dr. Mike Wolf

Wolf Medical Clinic | Physician
Health Care

Chantel Popoff

Consultant
Cannabis & Manufacturing



Advisory Committee

Government Elected Officials and Staff Liaisons

- District of Lake Country | Mayor Blair Ireland
- City of Kelowna | Councillor Gord Lovegrove
- Westbank First Nation | Councillor Andrea Alexander
- City of West Kelowna | Councillor Jason Friesen
- District of Peachland | Councillor Dave Collins
- Regional District of Central Okanagan | Mayor Tom Dyas
- BC Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation | Myles Bruns

Partner Organizations

- Accelerate Okanagan
- Business Development Bank of Canada
- Canadian Home Builders Association
- Community Futures of the Central Okanagan
- Economic Trust of the Southern Interior
- Greater Westside Board of Trade
- Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
- Kelowna International Airport
- Lake Country Chamber of Commerce
- Okanagan College
- Peachland Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Kelowna
- University of British Columbia Okanagan
- WeBC

Strategic Directions

The COEDC Strategy 2025 to 2030 provides an overall framework to guide COEDC's operational annual priorities. The strategic directions build on regional strengths to support a thriving business environment and promote investment in the region.

Four updated economic development strategic directions emerged for their potential to drive sustainable growth and position the Central Okanagan as a major economy in Western Canada.

For more information visit:
[COEDC Strategy 2025 to 2030](#)



Drive Economic Resilience



Build a Skilled Workforce



Promote Innovation



Grow Export-Focused Industries





Core Services

Core Services include the day-to-day activities that the COEDC team does each year to stay connected to and support businesses in our community.

CORE SERVICES

Business Retention & Enhancement

These services include direct business outreach and support through site visitation, 1 on 1 support, referrals and e-introductions, economic climate presentations, and tailored resource and support services.

Annual Goals

60

Site Visits

Target: 100

Conducted 60 site visits to gather direct insights into regional business needs and opportunities



186

1:1 Support

Target: 125

Provided tailored support to 186 businesses



75

Referrals

Target: 50

Provided 75 personalized referrals and e-introductions



40

Presentations

Target: 20

Provided 40 regional economic climate presentations



CORE SERVICES

Connections

Connecting with the regional economy is vital in supporting local businesses and the workforce. Some of the ways we stay connected include attending community events, hosting OYP meetups, connector program referrals, COEDC advisory committee meetings, and collaborating on regional partnerships.



Annual Goals

\$136k
 Target: \$76K
 Through partner and grant funding

60
 Target: 52
 Community events supported

12
 Target: 10
 OYP meetups

31
 Target: 30
 Connector program connections

8
 Target: 8
 Advisory committee meetings

26
 Engagements, committee, & board meetings with regional business support organizations

CORE SERVICES

Data & Communications

We recognize the importance of data in informing business, workforce, life, and investment decisions. Some of the ways we provide access to information are through quarterly economic updates, curating and distributing business resources, and connecting with our audience through various communication channels.

To ensure our services, resources, and investment attraction messages reach our audience, we focus on increasing website traffic, newsletter open rates, and social media followers and impressions.

Annual Goals

4

Target: 4
Quarterly economic updates

50K

InvestKelowna.com
Website Visitors

44.2%

Newsletter open rate
for Invest Kelowna
& OYP newsletters

+4.5%

New followers
Across all platforms,
LinkedIn, Facebook,
Instagram





2025

Annual Priorities

Annual Priorities are developed in alignment with the COEDC Strategy 2025 to 2030 and build on regional strengths to support a thriving business environment and promote investment in the region.

Workforce

Gain understanding of region's current and future workforce needs through collaboration and regional analysis, and develop workforce strategy.

Assess current workforce supply and demand, training and education landscape, analyze workforce shortages to develop regional workforce strategy.



Business Innovation and Support

Support business innovation by providing technology adoption tools and resources.

Support businesses in adapting to a changing landscape to drive regional economic resiliency and promote innovation to boost labor productivity and resource efficiency.



Partnerships and Investment Attraction

Foster and build partnerships regionally, provincially, and federally and align investment attraction initiatives.

Strengthen partnerships and target investment attraction in high-potential sectors like aerospace, agriculture, and clean technology to drive regional economic growth.



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Workforce

Objective:

Gain understanding of region's current and future workforce needs through collaboration and regional analysis, and develop a regional workforce strategy.

Projects and KPIs



- Connector Program & U.S. Physician Recruitment
 - Supported professional integration for newcomers and young professionals by matching **31 participants** with experienced community Connectors.
 - Established a new partnership with the Central Okanagan Divisions of Family Practice to help recruit physicians by offering specialized Connector services to their relocating spouses and families.
 - Provided settlement and community integration support to **three physician families** relocating from the United States.

"Through our partnership with the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, the Central Okanagan Divisions of Family Practice has been able to better support physicians and their families by helping connect trailing spouses with employment opportunities across the region's key industries. This collaboration plays a meaningful role in attraction, recruitment, and retention of physicians in the Central Okanagan."

*-Beth Whalley, Executive Director,
Central Okanagan Divisions of Family Practice*



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Workforce

Objective:

Gain understanding of region's current and future workforce needs through collaboration and regional analysis, and develop a regional workforce strategy.

Projects and KPIs



- Workforce Profile & Strategy
 - Launched a regional Workforce Profile and Strategy project to assess current and future labour needs across seven key sectors and develop action plan: aerospace, agriculture (Including fruit and wine growers), construction and development, digital technology, healthcare, manufacturing and tourism.
 - Secured project funding from Global Affairs Canada, the University of British Columbia Okanagan and Okanagan College.
 - Project completion expected in Q2 2026.



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Workforce

Objective:

Gain understanding of region's current and future workforce needs through collaboration and regional analysis, and develop a regional workforce strategy.

Projects and KPIs



- Okanagan Young Professionals (OYP) Collective
 - **668** attendees at networking events held across Lake Country, Kelowna, West Kelowna, and Westbank First Nation.
 - **2,407** views of OYP webpages.
 - **1,995** active OYP newsletter subscribers.

“The OYP networking events have been a meaningful way for me to connect to the community. They create an easy, low-pressure way to meet other young professionals, have meaningful conversations, and build connections, which has made it easier for me to picture staying here long-term”.

*Landon Rentz, Business Development,
SFY Information Technology*



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Business Innovation and Support

Objective:

Support business innovation by providing technology adoption tools and resources.

Projects and KPIs



- Manufacturing Sector Support
 - Created the **Okanagan Manufacturing Database** in response to regional supply-chain vulnerabilities. The tool provides a valley-wide directory of manufacturers from Salmon Arm to Osoyoos, with detailed, searchable information not typically available on company websites.
 - Increased database awareness through digital marketing and partner outreach, generating **1.9 million impressions and 7,900 unique users**.
 - Secured funding to enable the launch of the Okanagan Manufacturing Network, strengthening business connections and sector resilience.

“The database has a tangible impact for our team. We’re actively using it to source specialized services like powder coating and welding, and it’s helping us identify local providers for services we previously looked to source internationally. Beyond sourcing, it’s also greatly improved visibility, with more manufacturers engaging and updating their capabilities.”

— Taylor Wylie, COO, Anodyne Electronics Manufacturing



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Business Innovation and Support

Objective:

Support business innovation by providing technology adoption tools and resources.

Projects and KPIs



- Navigating Trade Challenges
 - Published a new trade and tariff-related resources on the COEDC website to give regional businesses a reliable source of up-to-date information.
 - Hosted the *Navigating Trade Challenges* Roundtable and Panel:
 - **45** participants registered for the Industry Roundtable and **82** for the Panel.
 - Participants engaged directly with experts from the Trade Commissioner Service, Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada's senior economist.



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Business Innovation and Support

Objective:

Support business innovation by providing technology adoption tools and resources.

Projects and KPIs

- AI-Powered Business Resource Hub    
 - Began development of an enhanced Business Resource Hub that organizes regional programs and tools into easy-to-navigate collections.
 - Incorporated AI-enabled features to keep resources current and relevant for both new and established businesses.
 - **Estimated launch:** April 2026.
- Scaling Food Manufacturers Pilot
 - Started a pilot program to help small food manufacturers expand their sales into other provinces.
 - Led a delegation to **Grocery Innovations Canada**, the country's largest grocery tradeshow, in Toronto from October 27–29, 2025, enabling local companies to meet buyers from Eastern Canada.

“Participating in Grocery Innovations Canada as part of the Okanagan Pavilion was highly valuable. We made strong buyer and distributor connections, gained market insight, and built momentum for future retail growth.”

— Andrew Toncini, CEO, Toncini Modern Italian



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Partnerships and Investment Attraction

Objective:

Foster and build partnerships regionally, provincially, and federally and align investment attraction initiatives.

Projects and KPIs



- In-Person Promotion
 - Actively promoted the Central Okanagan at national and international industry events, including:
 - **Agri-Tech Innovation and Future Food Summit, San Francisco**
 - Hosted an Okanagan-focused event attended by **80+** agri-tech entrepreneurs, investors, and trade representatives.
 - **Web Summit, Vancouver**
 - Presented at the BC Regional Showcase to **100+** international investors and trade representatives.
 - **Woodrise, Vancouver**
 - **Globe Food Forum, Calgary**
 - **Southern Interior Horticultural Show, Penticton**



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Partnerships and Investment Attraction

Objective:

Foster and build partnerships regionally, provincially, and federally and align investment attraction initiatives.

Projects and KPIs



- Federal and Provincial Partnership
 - Shared the region's strengths and industry priorities through ongoing meetings and presentations with the Federal Trade Commission Service, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Invest in Canada and the BC Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth.
 - Partnered to host incoming delegations to highlight regional opportunities:
 - **Cherry Buyers Delegation** - in partnership with Trade and Invest BC, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the BC Cherry Association; welcomed **15 buyers** representing major Chinese grocery chains.
 - **BC Trade and Invest Delegation** - hosted **12 investors** from the Asian market representing manufacturing, tourism and the wine industry.



ANNUAL PRIORITY

Partnerships and Investment Attraction

Objective:

Foster and build partnerships regionally, provincially, and federally and align investment attraction initiatives.

Projects and KPIs



- Digital Marketing
 - Ran a multi-platform digital marketing campaign across LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Youtube.
 - Targeted business leaders and executives in major Canadian cities and the U.S. Pacific Northwest.
 - Achieved **1.9 million impressions** and **25,000 clicks**.



INVEST KELOWNA

Reach out to our team, we're ready to help!

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