

## **B.C.- Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA)**

### **Project Proposal – Project C16-2009**

**A. Title of project:** Project C16 – Survey of Social Enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia

**B. With which BALTA SERC is this project associated? Or is it a cross cutting project?**

SERC 3 – Analysis, Evaluation and Infrastructure

**C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:**

Dr. Peter Hall, Simon Fraser University [pvhall@sfu.ca](mailto:pvhall@sfu.ca)

Dr. Peter Elson, Mount Royal College [pelson@mtroyal.ca](mailto:pelson@mtroyal.ca)

**D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved:**

(to be confirmed and supplemented)

Enterprising Non-Profits

Volunteer Alberta

United Way of Calgary

Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship

**E. Description of project, including objectives, outputs and intended outcomes:**

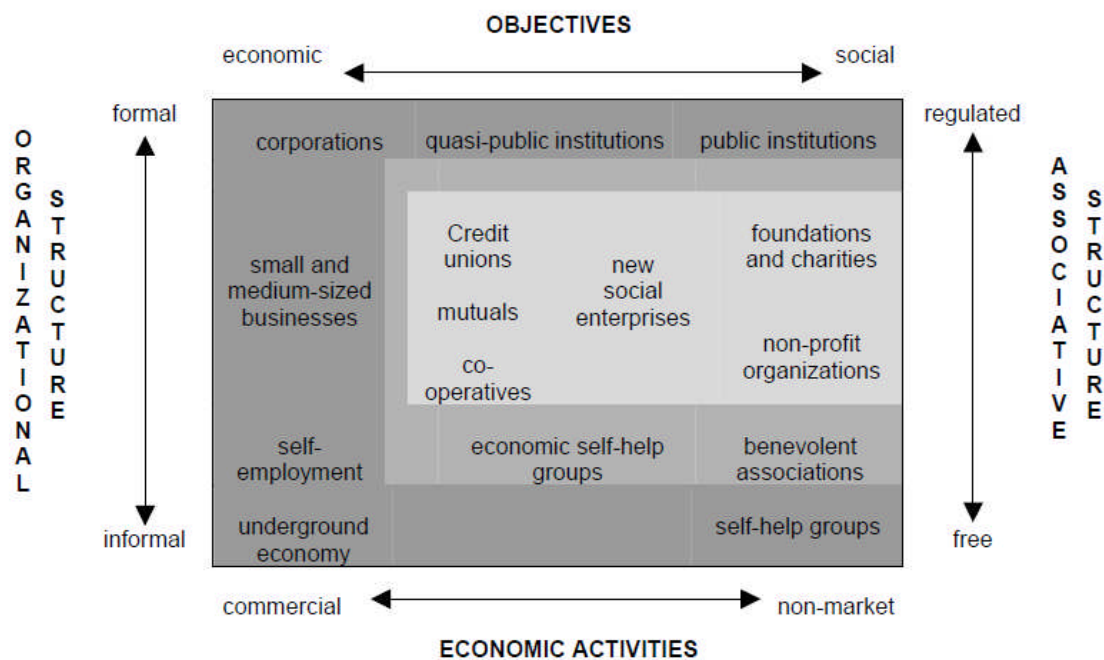
This project will survey social enterprises in British Columbia and Alberta with the goal of developing clear indicators of their nature, scope and socio-economic contribution. Indicators of socio-economic contribution include profit, sales/revenue, expenditures, employment, volunteer engagement, and clients served, employed and trained. The project will be implemented in three phases: in phase one, the structure and content of the mapping instrument will be developed and tested. In addition, existing social economy networks will be identified and invited to participate by contributing the names and contact information to the survey sample frame, and in turn, benefiting from its results. In phase two, the survey will be circulated to all social enterprises on the sample frame with the goal of achieving a large and fully representative sample of social enterprises in the two provinces, and collected for data entry and analysis. In phase three, the survey results will be circulated as widely as possible through both participant feedback and de-briefing workshops with social enterprise related networks in both provinces.

The social economy is ill-defined defined in some quarters and ambiguous in others. Various ways of conceptualizing the social economy and locating social enterprises within the continuum of social economy activity have been proposed. Figure 1 below (Ninacs & Toye, 2002) provides an outline of such a continuum. To avoid getting bogged down in definitional debates and duplicating the efforts of the BALTA Mapping Project, this project will use a

clear, but relatively narrow definition of the social enterprise in order to collect a sample from a sample frame (list) that conforms to a well-defined population. We will aim to develop a list of Alberta- and British Columbia-based and known social enterprises, enterprising nonprofits and microenterprises. Any social enterprise that is included in our sample must meet the dual criteria of (1) being a business venture that sells goods and services, and (2) that does so primarily in order to meet its social and/or environmental mission. A further selection criteria is that to be included in our sample frame, the social enterprise (3) must be recognized by one of our study partners (enp, United Way, etc) as being a social enterprise. We regard this as an appropriate way of ensuring that our definition of what constitutes a social enterprise is useful in practice.

Our goal thus will be to collect a representative sample that is large enough for statistical analysis from a list of known social enterprises in BC and Alberta that trade in goods and services in order to meet their social/environmental mission, and that are recognized as such by others in their context of operation.

**Figure 1: The Social Economy Quadrilateral**



**Legend:**

- unequivocal components of the social economy
- uncertain components (case by case analysis)
- not part of the social economy

### **The objectives of Project C16:**

1. To develop and implement a survey instrument which will capture the population of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia;
2. To identify leading proponent networks of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia and link those networks to the BALTA project;
3. To profile the nature, scope and socio-economic contribution of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia and link this profile to community, educational and technical support organizations and institutions to further the potential support for social enterprises.

### **The outputs of Project C16:**

1. A comprehensive list of social enterprises in BC and Alberta;
2. A questionnaire to survey social enterprises;
3. A database of completed survey data from social enterprises in British Columbia and Alberta;
4. A profile of the number, size, activities and socio-economic contribution of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia;
5. A de-briefing of the survey results to leading social enterprise network organizations.
6. Data from social enterprises in BC and Alberta for selected variables that may be added to the database developed by the Mapping Project.

### **The intended outcomes of Project C16:**

1. An improved understanding of the nature, scope and socio-economic contribution of social enterprise activity in British Columbia and Alberta;
2. An improved understanding of the networking of social enterprises, including their relationships with intended support organizations and institutions;
3. The creation of an operational bridge between social enterprise organizational, financial and technical support organizations and social enterprises.
4. The establishment of a basis on which the survey can be replicated in the future.

### **F. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:**

**Research objective 1:** To develop and implement a questionnaire survey of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia;

Research Activities:

1. Building on the existing questionnaire and the questionnaire developed by the BALTA Mapping Project, supplemented by consideration of appropriate literature and key information consultations, refine and test a survey questionnaire for social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia;
2. Develop a list of social enterprises in Alberta and BC that meet agreed definitions, building where possible on the lists compiled by the BALTA Mapping Project.
3. Distribute and collect questionnaires, enter data into database for statistical analysis.

**Research objective 2:** To identify leading proponent networks of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia and link those networks to the BALTA project.

Research Activities:

1. Working with other BALTA members, especially the Mapping Project, identify potential social enterprise networks and social economy networks of which social enterprises are likely to be a part.
2. Identify forums, conferences and workshops associated with social enterprises which have taken place in British Columbia and Alberta in the last year and identify leading proponents, supporters and participants.
3. Identify organizations, networks and institutions which have identified themselves with social enterprises.
4. Contact the aforementioned organizations, networks and institutions and solicit their lists of social enterprises for inclusion in the questionnaire survey.

**Research objective 3:** To profile the nature, scope and socio-economic contribution of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia and link this profile to community, educational and technical support organizations and institutions to further the potential support for social enterprises

Research Activities:

1. Analyze the results of the questionnaire survey in order to create a profile of the size, scope and socio-economic contribution of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia;
2. Provide selected variables for addition to the Mapping Project database.
3. Create a profile of the survey results along with its potential on-going use to track the evolution of social enterprises in British Columbia and Alberta;
4. Conduct post-survey de-briefing workshops with leading social enterprise network, technical support and funding organizations.

## Research timetable

| Research Objective   | Timetable                            |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Research objective 1:</b> To develop and implement a questionnaire survey of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia   | <b>September, 2009 – March, 2010</b> |
| <b>Research objective 2:</b> To identify leading proponent networks of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia and link those networks to the BALTA project   | <b>September, 2009 – March, 2010</b> |
| <b>Research objective 3:</b> To profile the nature, scope and socio-economic contribution of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia and link this profile to community, educational and technical support organizations and institutions to further the potential support for social enterprises | <b>April, 2010 – June, 2010</b>      |

### **G. Purpose and significance of the research, including congruence with the strategic research objectives identified for the SERC and BALTA. Why should this project be approved, given BALTA's limited resources? [Refer to the project criteria in the BALTA Work plans and Project Proposals Policy.]**

The purpose of project is to provide information about the nature, scope and socio-economic contribution of social enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia. The existing mapping data of BALTA provides a valuable profile of all the organizations in the social economy, but does not provide specific statistical indicators of the socio-economic contribution of the social enterprise sector. It is also unknown what universe the sampled population represents.

In Spring 2009, students in Peter Hall's Sustainable Community Development class (SCD 403) successfully surveyed about 50 social enterprises in BC, using a list of 120 organizations provided by Enterprising Non-Profits (for a copy of the student report, see [http://www.sfu.ca/cscd/whatnew/documents/BCSESurvey2009\\_FinalReport.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/cscd/whatnew/documents/BCSESurvey2009_FinalReport.pdf) or <http://www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca/resources/bc-social-enterprise-study-developing-community-capital>).

The student study confirmed that it is possible to collect quantitative information on social enterprises, and provided an initial survey questionnaire on which this study can be based. The student study also identified potentially important trends and issues facing social enterprises, such as the high level of networking activity undertaken by these organizations. This project will build on that study to create a comprehensive statistical portrait of social

enterprises in both Provinces, and providing additional data on selected variables for inclusion in the database compiled by the Mapping Project.

- H. Will the project involve student researchers in a paid or unpaid capacity? If yes, will they need to be recruited or have they already been identified? Briefly describe the roles and responsibilities of students involved in the research project, the skills/experience they will acquire, and how this will complement their academic training. Explain as well how adequate supervision and support of the student will be ensured.**

This project is requesting funding for one full-time research assistant to implement the distribution, collection and data entry of the questionnaire survey. A senior undergraduate student (based at Royal Roads or Simon Fraser University) on a full-time study term will be recruited for this role. Contract period would begin January 2010 to April 2010.

- I. Describe plans for communicating research results within the academic community. Indicate audience and specific output(s) i.e., refereed journal articles, conference presentations or other appropriate channels.**

- 1 refereed journal article
- 2 conference presentations

- J. Describe plans for communicating research results outside the academic community to practitioners, policy makers, and other people for whom the research results could be significant. Indicate audience and specific output(s).**

- Presentation to appropriate social economy professional conferences
- Dissemination of a practical project report to BALTA partners and social economy actors

- K. Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating your research project. Feel free to consult with BALTA's Coordinator on designing possible approaches. (Note that monitoring and evaluation are extremely important both for ensuring the success of the project as well as satisfying reporting to SSHRC.) This project relates directly to the BALTA Objective 3:**

The project will be successful if:

- appropriate partners in proponent networks are recruited;
- a comprehensive list of social enterprises in BC and Alberta is compiled;
- a student is hired, trained and completes the set tasks;
- a representative sample of social enterprises respond to the questionnaire;
- data are analysed and reported;
- selected variables are added to the database of the Mapping project;
- journal publication and conference presentations follow; and
- partners are engaged in post-survey workshops and presentations

The project will be monitored and evaluated for success in three quarterly reports which respectively correspond to the following milestones:

- First quarterly report (December, 2009)
  - appropriate partners in proponent networks have been recruited;
  - questionnaire and sampling method are discussed at BALTA meetings in Calgary; and
  - a comprehensive list of social enterprises in BC and Alberta has been compiled.
  
- Second quarterly report (March, 2010)
  - a student is hired, trained and completes the set tasks to collect and enter data;
  - a representative sample of social enterprises respond to the questionnaire; and
  - student and supervisor complete evaluation reports.
  
- Third and final report (June, 2010)
  - data are analysed and reported;
  - selected variables are added to the database of the Mapping project;
  - journal publication submitted for review;
  - conference presentation abstracts submitted and attendance is planned; and
  - partners have been engaged in post-survey workshops and presentations.

**L. What are the research tools you propose to use in your project?**

**NOTE: If your research involves human subjects, you MUST provide copies of your proposed research tools (as well as your research plan) prior to commencing research. Please see the document “BALTA Ethical Review Process – Simplified” for information about ethical review requirements.**

This project will involve human subjects and an ethical review will be requested for the use of the following data collection tools:

- Survey pre-test feedback
- Post-survey feedback

**M. Budget and Contributions**

Information can be both dollar figures and anecdotal, including in-kind contributions and requests for BALTA support (e.g. staff support for dissemination).

| Category  | Requested of BALTA | Other Contributions |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| Senior Undergraduate Student working fulltime for the Spring 2010 semester (13 weeks, 35 hours per week, at \$16.50 per hour)   | \$7,500            |                     |
| Student benefits/overhead costs (if the student will be a CCCR hire, add 10.5% of the student salaries amount; if the student will be employed by another institution, add the relevant amount) – estimated at Royal Roads rate (7.47%) | \$560              |                     |
| Researcher Release Time   | -                  |                     |
| Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)   | \$1,000            |                     |
| Knowledge Dissemination   | \$500              |                     |

|               |                 |  |
|---------------|-----------------|--|
| Travel        | \$750           |  |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>\$10,310</b> |  |

### **Budget explanation**

Student salaries & benefits – Explained in section H

Researcher release time – N/A

Travel – Student research assistant to travel to BALTA/ survey de-briefing workshop events

Supplies & other – copying and distribution of questionnaires (500 at \$1 each); room booking for debriefing workshops, refreshments, and fees associated with video conferencing equipment (\$500).

Knowledge dissemination – Report design and printing costs

### **References**

Ninacs, W. A., & Toye, M. (2002). *A Review of the Theory and Practice of Social Economy in Canada [Working Paper]* (Report). Ottawa: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.