

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

Project Proposal – Project C17-2009

A. Title of project:

Building a Supportive Environment for Social Enterprise: Synthesis of SERC 3 Research Findings.

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

This project will be associated with SERC 3.

C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:

This project will have two lead researchers:

David LePage, Enterprising Non-Profits, David_LePage@vancity.com

Jorge Sousa, University of Alberta, sousa@ualberta.ca

D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved:

As this is a project to begin analysis and synthesis of SERC 3 research findings across projects, other SERC 3 members and project leads will be consulted at relevant steps in the process and will be invited to comment on draft findings.

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

To date there has been 12 research projects associated with SERC 3 that have either completed or are close to being completed. Members of SERC 3 have identified the necessity of beginning to review and synthesize key findings from those projects. The purpose of the synthesis is to build on or apply the key findings in order to establish strategic directions that are based on evidence from the 14 projects.

Based on the direction determined at the 2009/2010 SERC 3 planning meeting, the objective of this project will be to identify key components from existing research that can lead to establishing a supportive environment for social enterprises. Therefore, in this project we will review the existing projects for the purpose of identifying key learnings grounded in evidence collected through the BALTA research agenda that can meet that objective.

In order to make sense of the information we have decided to base the analytic framework on the key outcome from the BC Social Enterprise Summit (BCSES). The BCSES established a framework intended to lead towards a series of strategic actions of what is required to provide a framework for creating a supportive environment for social enterprise. According to the framework, there are four integrated components.

1. Encourage Awareness and Demonstrate the Value of Social Enterprise;
2. Enhance Enterprise Skills;
3. Ensure Access to Capital and Investment; and
4. Expand Market Opportunities.

While we feel that the four components can help guide the review of the research, we anticipate additional learnings that can contribute to the supportive environment for other facets of the Social Economy. The anticipated outcomes from this project include the following:

1. Identify key findings from BALTA research that apply to social enterprises;
2. Test the existing framework developed by BCSES;
3. Make recommendations intended to extend the BCSES framework for it to apply to CED initiatives and to the Social Economy; and
4. Develop a proposal for a Phase 2 of this project, for an analytic framework that will synthesize the research findings from all the BALTA projects.

F. 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 Workplans and Project Proposals Policy.]

The social enterprise sector, including practitioners, funders and intermediaries in BC and Alberta, is working collectively to create a more supportive environment for social enterprise. This effort includes better understanding of the sector's value; increasing business skills; access to capital; and increased markets. The proposed research is a compilation and cross-project analysis that will be applied to the social enterprise sector and complement existing efforts by the sector in the following ways:

1. Directly contribute to social enterprise capacity building;
2. Provide guidance on policy priorities;
3. Provide practical tools and enhance current initiatives; and
4. Support the growing collaboration and networks among the social enterprise sector partners.

There are multiple potential legacy impacts that can be developed from an assessment of the social enterprise policy and practical application options that are contained within the completed BALTA SERC 3 project and applied to this sector development framework.

G. 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.

The project will fund a Master's level student researcher from the University of Alberta. The student has been identified through his work with project C9, so he has a good grasp of some of the policy issues related to the Social Economy and CED.

H. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:

This project is intended to begin immediately following approval by the steering committee. Since this is a review and synthesis of the existing research there will be very little time required to collect primary information. The project is expected to take place over seven months (June 2009 to December 2009). The following is a list of the research activities and timetable.

1. June 2009 to July 2009 – Review and synthesis of the research findings
2. August to September – Follow-up with authors of the reports or newly completed projects. For projects almost completed we will request either summaries or conduct interviews with the principal investigator.
3. October to December – Writing the final report and key summaries.
4. January 2010 – Begin communication and dissemination to those identified in section J below.

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.

This project will result in two refereed journal articles (one on the framework and the other on the project's outcomes) and two 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).

This includes practitioners, funders, government and others

- The final report will be posted on the Enterprising Non-profits website in the resources section.
- A summary of the report will be included in the Enterprising Non-profits newsletter (1400+ subscribers), including a link to the full report.
- The final report will inform the policy forum at the 3rd Canadian Conference on Social Enterprise - Toronto, Nov 18 and 19.
- Paper will be distributed to the Alberta CED Coop membership.
- Paper will be distributed to BCSES participants.

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.)

The status of project will be evaluated bi-weekly as well as at the middle of each research activity phase (see section H above). In addition, the following will be done:

- a. An end of project evaluation with SERC 3 members will assess the extent to which project objectives, outputs and outcomes have been realized

- b. Project final report to SERC 3 and BALTA confirming results
- c. Student evaluations by both the student and supervisor using BALTA approved formats

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 make use of the action framework created from the BC Social Enterprise Summit, as the analytical lens that will help us review all the material created to date. The action framework appears in the document, “*Working framework and action plan for moving forward from the BC Social Enterprise Summit 2008*”

M. Budget and Contributions

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

Category	Requested of BALTA	Other Contributions
Student salaries	\$3,000	\$2,500 from BCSES
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)	\$578	
In-kind Contribution		\$12,000 Jorge Sousa, 15 Days @ \$800 per day \$6,000 David LePage, 7.5 Days @ \$800 per day
Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)	\$250 for printing costs	\$250 from the University of Alberta for copying costs
Knowledge Dissemination		
Travel		
TOTALS	\$3,828	\$20,750

Budget explanation

The total cost for this project will be \$24,578. The following

Student salaries & benefits–

Funding is allocated for one master's student for one term. The BCSES will be providing partial funding of this project.

In- Kind Contribution: \$12,000 Jorge Sousa, 15 Days @ \$800 per day, project research and analysis work and student supervision

\$6,000 David LePage, 7.5 Days @ \$800 per day, project research and analysis work

Supplies & other –

The BALTA funds are intended to cover printing toner and any copying required in this project will be provided in-kind by the University of Alberta.

Knowledge dissemination