

Strategic Plan **Organic Food Council of Manitoba** **October 2008**

Introduction

The Organic Food Council of Manitoba (OFCM-COG) is a chapter of the Canadian Organic Growers (COG). Although COG has a national strategic plan, this Strategic Plan has been prepared considering the unique situation and strategic issues found in Manitoba.

Vision

The OFCM-COG's vision is that in the future,

- All food will be grown in an organic or more sustainable manner,
- All people will have access to such food, and
- Farmers will make a decent return on their investment.

Mission

Canadian Organic Growers' mission is to lead local and national communities towards sustainable organic stewardship of land, food and fibre while respecting nature, upholding social justice and protecting natural resources.

The more specific OFCM-COG mission for Manitoba is *to promote the growth and accessibility of local organic food.*

Goals

Our overarching long term goal is to increase awareness of the benefits of growing and eating locally produced organic foods, resulting in an increase in the production and consumption of organic food in MB.

Objectives

The objectives we have chosen to help us achieve our goal and our mission are outlined below:

- Encourage organic food production for local consumption as a way to mitigate climate change, conserve energy and water, and take steps towards local food security.
- Encourage consumption of locally produced organic food for its health benefits, contribution to food security, and to increase marketing opportunities for organic growers..
- Increase the accessibility of locally produced organic foods, as well as access to information for marginalized groups, especially new residents of Manitoba, disadvantaged families, and children.

- Increase the amount of locally grown organic food consumed in local institutions through initiatives such as the Growing Up Organic project
- Increase opportunities for organic producers in Manitoba and subsequently the overall number of organic producers and the overall organic acreage in the province through such initiatives as the Farm Mentorship Program.
- Work with organizational partners to initiate/support the development of a simplified organic certification system with the needs of small-scale organic producers in mind;
 - Support the development of organic standards and related federal and provincial policies and programs, and be a voice for Manitoba's organic sector with regard to regulatory issues
- Encourage and carry out initiatives which positively affect rural communities and residents
- Assist growers, consumers, retailers and processors through education and demonstration to increase organic food production and consumption
- Endorse research and practices which promote long-term soil fertility, organic material recycling, the conservation of non-renewable resources, and the reduction of pollution and global warming
- Foster the goals of a decentralized food system, which promotes greater regional food self-reliance and improved rural/urban relationships, and to participate in consultations and inquiries into sustainable food systems and concerns about food safety
- Provide information and networking opportunities through conferences, workshops, seminars, and on-farm demonstrations for organic food systems
- Promote career opportunities in the organic food sector.

Strategic Issues

Section A: Organizational Development

Organizational development is strategically integral to achieving our goals and objectives. Focusing on **internal development** and **fundraising and sustainability** will ensure a solid foundation of leadership and support for OFCM-COG projects. **Public outreach** is necessary to increase awareness of these projects and of the organization itself, and contributes to the sustainability of the organization through membership and donations.

A. 1. Internal Development:

1. Expansion of OFCM-COG Executive Committee (EC), and updating of Governance and Policy Handbook

Why? This activity will result in a diverse EC that is dedicated to providing administrative oversight, making decisions, and steering the organization towards its overarching goals. It will also provide clarity for director roles and responsibilities and OFCM-COG policies through the handbook.

Goals:

- i. Expand and more clearly define the role of the OFCM-COG Executive Committee
- ii. Clearly define the administrative-financial relationship between COG and OFCM-COG.

Strategies:

Expand and more clearly define the role of the OFCM-COG Executive Committee

- a. Develop Executive Committee positions beyond Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Chapter Representative (i.e. Certification Representative, Government, Other)
- b. Define length of EC Director terms
- c. Update OFCM-COG Governance and Policy Handbook, detailing EC roles/responsibilities, governance policies, and contracts and templates used for contracting

Clearly define the administrative-financial relationship between COG and OFCM-COG.

- a. Dialogue with COG regarding financial record-keeping, reporting requirements, and other administrative issues identified by COG or OFCM-COG
- b. Update OFCM-COG policies as necessary

Timeline:

1. Develop director positions and clarify the roles/responsibilities – Spring 2008
2. Define length of terms of EC directors – October 20/08
3. Update of Governance and Policy Handbook – September 30/08 (ongoing)
4. Dialogue w/COG and updates to OFCM-COG policies by September 30, 2009 (ongoing)

Status: *Timeline #1, 2, 3 complete by Oct. 20/08*

Budget Considerations:

Under Year 1 Capacity Building and general operational activities (i.e. OFCM-COG/COG conference call)

2. Seek a central base for OFCM-COG activities

Why? OFCM-COG project managers are paid on a contract basis and work out of their own homes. With OFCM-COG activities gearing up, the need to manage an increasing number of contractors and volunteers, and increased materials and supplies in general, there may be a benefit of having office space outside of project managers' homes. Such office space would likely result in filing, storage, and organizational efficiencies as well as allow OFCM-COG the opportunity to provide more of a professional face to the community – a fixed postal address, a location for meetings, and storage space for printed promotional and other materials.

Goals:

- i. Rent an office/work space for OFCM-COG activities

Strategies:

- a. Identify office space requirements and look into options for centrally located office space. Dialogue with like-minded organizations about sharing a space (Manitoba Eco Network, MB Food Charter, Beyond Factory Farming)
- b. Incorporate work space rent costs into upcoming funding proposals

Timeline:

1. Research/dialogue to begin in spring 2008.
2. Four funding applications to be submitted (for office space and other expenses) between April 30 and September 30, 2008

Budget Considerations:

Research/dialogue to begin, as well as grant applications to be submitted to Honda Canada Foundation, Western Economic Development, and Mountain Equipment Coop before September 30/08 under Year 1 Capacity Building (CB).

3. Development of volunteer program and volunteer base

Why? A volunteer program that clearly describes volunteer activities, and an increased volunteer base to carry out day to day activities will make OFCM-COG more efficient and better able to handle the increased work load brought about by increased capacity and funding.

Goals:

- i. Design a volunteer program that includes a promotional outreach campaign
- ii. Increase the OFCM-COG volunteer base to ~ 8 volunteers by the end of September 2009

Strategies:

Design a volunteer program that includes a promotional outreach campaign

- a. Develop a list of current and future volunteer activities, including Executive Committee support, and education/training required for these activities
- b. Develop a budget and a timeline for the volunteer program
- c. Develop a promotional campaign to target volunteers for priority activities. Include list of volunteer agencies to target and outreach plan
- d. Seek funding for a volunteer coordinator and program expenses as part of Capacity Building Year 2

Increase and sustain the OFCM-COG volunteer base of 8 volunteers by the end of September 2009

- a. Develop promotional materials as per plan above
- b. Conduct outreach to potential volunteers through tabling and targeted outreach to seniors bureau and other volunteer agencies identified in promotional campaign
- c. Coordinate the volunteers and volunteer program

Timeline:

1. All activities for the design of the volunteer program – by September 30/08.
2. All activities for increasing and sustaining the volunteer base – October 1/08 to September 30/09 (and ongoing).

Budget Considerations:

Design volunteer program and promotion campaign under Capacity Building Year 1

Development of promotional materials and outreach/coordination under Capacity Building Year 2

Need to consider honorariums/travel expenses/thank you's to dedicated volunteers. These expenses are incorporated in CB Year 2 but should be incorporated on a continuing basis into operating expenses for each project.

4. Networking and collaboration with like-minded organizations and groups

Why? Networking and collaboration in a multi-faceted way will ensure we are maximizing opportunities for all like-minded organizations while reducing duplication across the sector(s), as well as increasing public exposure for all groups.

Goals:

- i. Plan and implement collaborative projects with like-minded organizations and groups; have implemented or begun implementing 3 – 5 collaborative projects or events by the end of September 2009
- ii. Increase networking opportunities with all levels of government and private organizations.

Strategies:

Plan and implement collaborative projects with like-minded organizations and groups; have implemented or begun implementing 3 – 5 collaborative projects or events by the end of September 2009

- a. Define with which groups and organizations OFCM-COG would like to partner.
- b. Invite these groups and organizations (or members of), to become members of OFCM-COG
- c. Invite OFCM-COG executive and members to become members/liaisons of these groups and organizations to create positive relationships. Submit memberships
- d. Develop 6 – 10 project ideas with which to approach these groups and organizations. Currently on the radar – Farm tour(s) (OPAM), summer/fall 2008; Feast of Fields (Assiniboine Conservatory), August 2009; Loco for Local #2 (Harvest Moon Society), fall 2008; Calendar (Tall Grass Bakery), fall 2008
- e. Begin dialogue re: projects/events, develop work plans, budgets, timing
- f. Seek project coordinators and funding to carry out projects/events

Timeline:

1. Strategies a – f above to begin in 2008, to be completed by September 2009 for Capacity Building deliverables (but will be ongoing)

Budget Considerations:

Defining networking partners, invitations to OFCM membership, project development and dialogue (work plans, budgets, timing) included in Capacity Building Year 1 and Year 2

Funds for OFCM members to submit memberships to other groups included in Capacity Building Year 2

Funding for project coordinators and event expenses requires strategizing. Funding will be sought for each project as required.

Increase networking opportunities with all levels of government

- a. Continue dialogue with Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI), and the Manitoba Organic Coalition (MOC) regarding the needs and opportunities for the organic sector in Manitoba
- b. Conduct outreach and meetings, in collaboration with MAFRI and MOC to various groups (to provide information on new standards and regulations and other identified needs; encouraging local organic value chains and producer cooperatives, alternative organic certification, etc)
- c. Delineate OFCM/OPAM/MOC activities to minimize duplication, and seek operating/core funding from provincial government and other funders to carry out OFCM activities
- d. Partner with OPAM or other local certifier and submit a funding proposal to Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives to conduct research into needs and costs of alternative organic certification.
- e. Continue involvement with the Canadian Organic Office through Janine's seat on the Organic Federation of Canada/Federation Biologique du Canada (OFC-FBC) Board of Directors

Timeline:

1. Dialogue, outreach, meetings, and delineation of activities with MAFRI and MOC beginning in Feb 2008 through the end of 2008, ongoing
2. Seek operating/core funding in 2008 and 2009 for 3 – 5 year period
3. Dialogue with OPAM re: submission of funding proposal for local certification beginning in June/July 2008
4. Local certification research funding proposal to be submitted in Dec. 2008 or early 2009 – project to be carried out in 2009/10
5. Ongoing involvement with OFC-FBC

Budget Considerations:

OFC-FBC funding may be used to organize meetings with MAFRI, MOC, OPAM, and others involved in the organic sector in MB

Opportunity may exist for future funding from OFC-FBC

OFC-FBC and core/operational funding (if received) may provide support to local certification research project and continued involvement with MAFRI and MOC

Consider Western Economic Diversification, Heifer Canada, Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, MAFRI, Winnipeg Foundation, OFC-FBC for operational support.

Capacity Building Year 2 can also support continued involvement and outreach with MAFRI as part of networking component.

A. 2. Fundraising and Sustainability

1. Development of OFCM-COG Fundraising and Sustainability Plan

Why? Critical to the success of the strategic plan is an updated operational budget and a sustainability plan.

Goals:

- i. Create a short term operational budget and fundraising plan (1 – 3 years) and a medium to long term organization sustainability plan (3 – 5 years and beyond)
- ii. Implement the fundraising and sustainability plans
- iii. Develop and launch a 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 Sponsorship Campaign, with a goal of reaching \$20,000 in sponsorship funds for the 2008-09 campaign, and maintaining that amount for 2009-10

Strategies:

Create a short term operational budget and fundraising plan (1 – 3 years) and a medium to long term organization sustainability plan (3 – 5 years and beyond)

- a. Define organizational needs and expenses
- b. Define OFCM-COG revenue stream
- c. Develop budget that indicates which organizational expenses can be sustained through OFCM-COG revenue stream and which ones require outside funding
- d. Research operational/core funders, develop relationships with funding organizations and individuals who specialize in larger funding proposals

Timeline:

1. Organizational needs and revenue stream for 2 – 3 years defined by October, 2008
2. Fundraising/sustainability plan to be developed by October 2008
3. Research into operational/core funders to begin in 2008, ongoing

Budget Considerations:

Strategies a – d incorporated into Capacity Building Year 1.

Ongoing research into operational/core funders should be incorporated into operational budget and capacity building year 2

Implement the fundraising and sustainability plans

- a. Develop and submit multi-year operational funding proposals for organizational needs not sustained through OFCM-COG revenue
- b. Develop and submit multi-year proposals for priority projects (GUO, Mentorship)

- c. Implement Public Outreach Strategies (below) to increase membership base and revenue
- d. Develop and implement/increase activities that will increase revenue stream

Timeline:

- 1. Strategies a – d above to be completed in 2008 and 2009 (through Capacity Building)
- 2. Strategies will need to be re-visited in 3 – 5 years, as multi-year funding ends.

Budget Considerations:

Strategies a – d above incorporated into Capacity Building Year 1 and 2 budgets

Re-visiting these strategies should be incorporated into multi-year funding proposals

Develop and launch a 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 Sponsorship Campaign, with a goal of reaching \$20,000 in sponsorship funds for the 2008-09 campaign and maintaining that revenue in 2009-10.

- a. Develop sponsor benefits and sponsorship categories
- b. Develop sponsorship package
- c. Define businesses, organizations, and individuals to approach for sponsorship each year.
- d. Hire a Fundraiser to approach businesses, organizations, and individuals
- e. Launch sponsorship campaign
- f. Re-visit sponsorship campaign goal for 2009-2010
- g. Repeat a – e for 2009-2010 campaign

Timeline:

- 1. Strategies a – f to be implemented by October 2008
- 2. Strategies a – f for 2009-2010 to be implemented by October 2009

Budget considerations:

2008/09 campaign under Capacity Building Year 1

2009/10 campaign under Capacity Building Year 2

A.3. Public Outreach

1. Increasing OFCM-COG visibility

Why? Increasing OFCM-COG's visibility will increase awareness about our projects thereby targeting participants and support for the programs. It will also increase public

interest, attendance at events, and support through memberships, donations, and volunteering and these, in turn, will contribute to organizational sustainability.

Goals:

- i. Increase tabling opportunities and events attended to at least 8 events per year by September 2008
- ii. Develop an advertising campaign and launch by September 2009

Strategies:

Increase tabling opportunities and events attended to at least 8 events per year by September 2008

- a. Seek events at which to table and accept invitations to table and present through Capacity Building activities.
- b. Conduct tabling and presentations through GUO – to parents at open-houses, parent-teachers, meetings and presentations to school boards, teachers associations, other institution boards, committees, etc (i.e. health, government)
- c. Conduct tabling and presentations through GUO/Mentorship – i.e. to junior high and high schools through assemblies, class presentations, school boards, teachers (same as above), to youth groups, church groups, university and colleges, presentations, tabling at open houses, during environmental/sustainability weeks
- d. Conduct tabling through collaboration with other organizations – speaker series, conferences, and other events
- e. Conduct tabling at local businesses (Organza, Vita Health, Eat It, Seven Oaks Wellness Centre)
- f. Consider tabling at summer markets – invest in a table at St. Norbert or other Farmers Market for 4-6 Saturdays (contact through Farmers' Markets Association of Manitoba)
- g. Conduct tabling at expos and conferences (health and wellness expo, local conferences within sustainable agriculture sphere and outside (health care)

Timeline:

1. Strategies a, d, and e above began in October 2007 through Capacity Building and will continue to 2009 and beyond
2. GUO presentations/tabling ongoing
3. Mentorship presentations to begin in spring and summer 2008 and continue through Heifer pilot/post-pilot project to 2013 and beyond
4. Strategies f and g can be incorporated into Capacity Building Year 2, beginning October 2008

Budget considerations:

Tabling/presentation hours incorporated into Capacity Building Year 1 and 2, GUO budget, and Farm Mentorship Development and Pilot/Post-pilot project budgets. Volunteer hours also required.

Costs for tabling at summer markets, expos, and conferences incorporated into office expenses in Capacity Building Year 2 budget

Tabling/presentation hours and costs for tabling should be incorporated into Capacity Building Year 3 and/or multi-year project/operational funding proposals

Develop an advertising campaign and launch by September 2009

- a. Develop ad campaign plan, including budget and timelines
- b. Seek funding to launch campaign
- c. Hire Graphic Designer to develop advertising
- d. Launch, under Capacity Building Year 2
- e. Repeat for 2010

Timelines:

1. Standard ad to be developed by October 2008 – completed summer 2008
2. Advertising campaign plan developed and launched by September 2009
3. New campaign developed and launched by September 2010

Budget Considerations:

Standard ad to be developed under Capacity Building Year 1

Campaign 2009 developed and launched under Capacity Building Year 2

Campaign 2010 developed and launched under CB Year 3 and/or multi-year operational funding

2. Increasing OFCM-COG Membership

Why? Increasing OFCM-COG membership is crucial to the ongoing success of OFCM-COG. Membership fees are split 60/40 between Canadian Organic Growers and OFCM-COG. Increased membership also means greater attendance at events and workshops, more personal donations, and is an indication of the overall health of the organization. Increasing youth involvement specifically will introduce more young people to organics and help provide future generations of organic producers and consumers. Youth input and feedback will also help OFCM-COG to keep up with the needs and interests of the younger generation.

Goals:

- i. Increase OFCM-COG membership by 100% by December 31, 2011
- ii. Increase youth involvement in OFCM-COG by 30% by December 31, 2011
(based on membership numbers from October 2007)

Strategies:

Increase OFCM-COG membership by 100% by December 31, 2011

- a. Re-define OFCM-COG membership benefits
- b. Develop new organizational materials (brochure, binder, banner, table display)
- c. Increase tabling at events, particularly bridging into new sectors with an organic appeal (see Increasing OFCM-COG Visibility, above)
- d. Develop and print membership card and arrange discounts at local businesses
- e. Develop and launch advertising campaign (see Increasing OFCM-COG Visibility, above)
- f. Write media releases and articles highlighting OFCM-COG and our activities

Timeline:

1. Re-defining membership benefits and developing new organizational materials to be completed by October 2008
2. Internal membership benefits (discounts at OFCM-COG events) to be implemented in 2008. External benefits to be implemented by October 2009 (see #4)
3. Increasing tabling is ongoing
4. Membership card, advertising campaign, and media releases/articles to be completed by October 2009 (and ongoing)

Budget considerations:

All strategies above incorporated into Capacity Building Year 1 and 2 budgets

Sustaining these activities should be incorporated into CB Year 3 and/or multi-year operational and project related budgets

Increase youth involvement in OFCM-COG by 30% by December 31, 2011

- a. Conduct research to find out what youth want/need from the organic sector, and an organic educational/service provider (i.e. OFCM-COG). Develop survey for our website and distribute when tabling.
- b. Incorporate needs/wants into advertising campaign and educational materials
- c. Conduct tabling/presentations directed to youth at schools, church groups, etc (see Public Outreach above)
- d. Develop and launch Farm Mentorship Program (see page 13)
- e. Plan and hold events specifically for youth
- f. Develop social networking area/blog on the OFCM-COG website (or develop pages on other sites, i.e. Blogger, Facebook, MySpace, Hi-5, etc)

Timeline:

1. Development of plan to increase youth involvement (considering the above strategies) to begin by October 2008

2. Implementation of plan to increase youth involvement to begin by October 2009, continue through Capacity Building to December 2011

Budget Considerations:

Development and implementation of youth involvement plan incorporated in Capacity Building Year 1 and 2

Survey capabilities and social networking area/blog incorporated into Capacity Building Year 2 or 3/multi-year operational funding, depending on cost and priorities

Farm Mentorship Program developed and piloted through funding from Heifer/MRAC (or other funding agencies)

Event planning under Capacity Building, Mentorship. Event budgets require separate strategizing.

Section B: Projects and Initiatives

OFCM-COG is currently working on a number of related projects and initiatives. Crucial to achieving our overarching goals is a plan that outlines how these projects complement each other and fulfill our mandates. What follows is a brief description of each project and initiative that OFCM-COG is currently working on or will work on in the short term (as of June 1, 2008), and strategies to achieve our goals:

Growing Up Organic:

- Increases demand for local organic food in institutions like child care facilities by offering educational materials to consumers and services to assist institutions to transition to sourcing local organic foods
- Offers resources to producers to transition to organic agriculture and producing for the local market to simultaneously increase local organic supply
- Develops relationships with and between producers, buyers, processors, distributors, etc. to encourage producer cooperatives and local value chains to service supply and demand

The Manitoba Farm Mentorship Program:

- Offers an experiential learning program for aspiring producers and one on one mentorship opportunities for transitioning producers with a land base. Goals include increasing the number of organic and environmentally sustainable producers in MB and the number of organic acres in MB.
- Develops and offers educational materials, educational activities (workshops, farm tours, etc) a resource guide, land-link listings, and social events to all participants and the general public, all aimed at increasing local producers' knowledge and access to local markets, extension services, and land, and encouraging the development of relationships and networks
- Encourages and develops new markets by seeking and encouraging partnerships for food producers, and new retail, restaurant, institutional and individual buyers, in partnership with the GUO program and others

OFC-FBC Communications Project:

- Work with organic sector groups and individuals to determine needs of, particularly, the smaller grower, processor, and distributor sector, and develop and implement cohesive activities that benefit all players

Needs assessment and research into MB-made organic crackers and bakery products through Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) funding:

- Research into the needs of local institutions (child care facilities in part) for whole grain crackers and bakery products, with a goal of informing producers, processors, and bakeries of the market potential for these items

Research into organic certification alternatives – currently a volunteer effort. Funding to be sought from MAFRI and others:

- Research a variety of models for alternative certification
- Outreach regarding impending organic regulations to MAFRI and OPAM and/or other certification bodies for partnership on the initiative

Development of a local farmer co-op – currently under discussion and incorporated into GUO work plan:

- Needs assessment and development of strategic plan (under GUO)
- Facilitation of meetings with farmers, processors, buyers, and others
- Support provided to producers for formation of co-op, navigation of certification options, and exploration of markets
- Opportunities through GUO, Farm Mentorship Program, OFC activities, CWB research results, and alternative certification research

Down to Earth Guide, online and print versions – project to be developed

- Searchable database online of local organic (certified and non-certified) foods in Manitoba
- Printed directory for sale
- Promotes local players in the organic sector, and connects producers, processors, and distributors with local consumers, increasing opportunities for producers/processors/distributors, and access to local organic food for consumers.

Goals for above projects and initiatives:

- i. Indicate how all current OFCM-COG projects and initiatives are cohesive, and how they will help fulfill the COG and OFCM-COG Mission, and work towards achieving OFCM-COG's overarching goals, objectives, and results.
- ii. Put a system into place that ensures that future projects and initiatives are developed with OFCM-COG's overarching goals and strategic plan in mind.

Strategies:

Indicate how all current OFCM-COG projects and initiatives are cohesive, and how they will help fulfill the COG and OFCM-COG Mission, and work towards achieving OFCM-COG's overarching goals, objectives, and results.

- a. Develop a work plan for each program/project (multi-year where appropriate) that indicates specific activities that will achieve organizational goals, and how they will do so
- b. Develop a working document for each project that outlines significant project activities and goals and how they speak to our Mission and overarching goals, objectives, and results – this can be used for grant and proposal-writing, public outreach, media outreach, sponsorship solicitation, networking, etc.

Timeline:

1. Project work plans have been drafted/finalized for GUO, Mentorship, CWB research study, and OFC communications project (projects which speak directly to our overarching goals)
2. Work plans for alternative certification, farmer co-op, and Down to Earth projects will be developed when projects are undertaken
3. Development of working document for each project to be built into project deliverables for projects going forward

Budget Considerations:

Project work plans incorporated into project budgets

Outline of significant projects, activities, goals, and how they speak to our Mission and overarching goals, objectives, and results has been completed for existing projects in this section of the strategic plan (pg. 12-14). Outlines for future projects incorporated into project budgets.

Put a system into place that ensures that future projects and initiatives are developed with OFCM-COG's overarching goals and strategic plan in mind

- a. OFCM-COG executive committee to hold internal visioning sessions at least once per year to develop project ideas that fit into our Mission and work towards achieving our overarching goals, objectives, and results
- b. Indicate OFCM-COG's Mission and overarching goals, objectives and results to be achieved, in our Proposal Preparation Guidelines and require project proposals to indicate how the project fits within these parameters
- c. Set up a proposal review committee to review incoming proposals and ensure compliance with OFCM-COG requirements

Timeline:

1. Next internal visioning session – late 2008 or early 2009
2. Proposal Preparation Guidelines document revision by end of October 2008

3. Proposal Review Committee in place by April 2009

Budget Considerations:

Visioning session can be incorporated into Capacity Building year 2 as one of the regular meetings

Proposal Preparation Guidelines revision incorporated into Capacity Building year 1 (Organizational Development)

Proposal Review Committee setup completed as part of general OFCM-COG operations (i.e. during EC conference call)

Review/revision of strategic plan to occur by October 2009

Appendix A

Summary of the External Environmental Analysis and Internal SWOT Analysis

External Environmental Analysis:

- National Organic Regulation and Manitoba legislation require producers to be certified organic to market “organic” products inter-provincially, as well as within Manitoba. There is a need to provide education around this issue.
- Alternative organic certification issues – opportunity to become a leader in furthering organic certification alternatives for locally-based producers, providing educational materials on the topic, mediation, networking resources for producers and consumers – threats due to red tape, regulations, exclusivity of the term organic
- Growth of mainstream organics shown by the expansion of several shops; Organza Market, Eat It, Fresh Option, and Blue Earth Organics in Winnipeg – influx of interest in organic, more consumers will need more educational resources – excellent time to be building capacity and making OFCM-COG more visible
- Growth of interest in local foods provides greater opportunities for networking
- Climate change requires reduction in fossil fuel and energy use, and more responsible use of water and soil. Provides an opportunity for organic, sustainable and small scale farming as these will both help reduce emissions as well as better handle climate changes. Also, as public shifts towards a more sustainable way of life, the demand for organic, environmentally sustainable and locally produced food will increase.
- Climate change threatens farming and food production in general due to temperature extremes, drought, flooding, etc.
- Coming of Peak Oil and increasing oil, gas, fertilizer and chemical prices may encourage farmers to downsize, or transition to organic farming and production for local markets.
- Climate change initiatives and impending peak oil may result in greater public and private support (financial donations, in-kind support, etc) of organic initiatives, as well as government funding increases
- Current global financial crisis is likely to affect funding agencies and businesses’ sponsorship dollars. Funding may become more difficult to access or secure

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

OFCM-COG is unique in Manitoba because it is presently the only organization that offers services and support to all players in the local organic sector; producers and consumers, as well as processors, distributors, retailers, and other organic service providers. Specific strengths are as follows:

- Hard working volunteer executive and contracted staff
- Strong working knowledge of certification issues
- Recent collaborations and funding support – Winnipeg Foundation, Federal and Provincial Departments, Organic Federation of Canada/Federation Biologique du Canada, COG for Growing Up Organic, Heifer for Mentorship, Beyond Factory Farming for Loco for Local!, Organic Producers Association of Manitoba for farm tours and alternative certification research
- Passionate, long term understanding and perspective from local producers
- Recent influx of funding and ability to hire more contracted staff
- Ability to accomplish a variety of initiatives simultaneously
- Diversity of membership – farmers, consumers, certifiers, environmentalists, distributors, and others
- Consistency of involvement and successes in the local and national organic movement

Weaknesses:

- Limited volunteer base
- Limited operating funds requiring volunteer directors of the OFCM-COG Executive Committee to carry out a number of day-to-day activities
- Tendency to operate on a project-to-project basis, requiring extensive resources to be channeled to fundraising/grantwriting
- Need for office space
- Need for more regular meetings/conference calls (to be remedied through Capacity Building)
- Overall membership holding steady at lower levels than previously
- Limited public awareness of OFCM-COG (to be addressed through CB)

Opportunities:

- Current OFC/FBC funding and support
- Provincial involvement (potential funding) in alternative certification research, expansion of the organic sectors in MB, opportunities to collaborate with other organic organizations and determine the needs of the sector
- Mentorship Program
- Expansion of GUO
- Capacity Building – Winnipeg Foundation, Honda Foundation Canada, Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Operating grants and core funding
- Partnerships and therefore ability to reach larger and alternative audiences. i.e. Harvest Moon Society, Manitoba Food Charter, Manitoba EcoNetwork, Heifer International Canada, Organic Producers Association of Manitoba

Threats:

- Ability to weather rapid expansion (sufficient funds, staff, communication with variety of stakeholders)
- Funder “burnout” – lots of projects, require lots of funds, smaller funders will start to get tapped out, need to find loyal funders with ability to provide larger amounts
- Risk of duplication of efforts and spreading too thin of resources for organic sector as new organizations develop.
- Current financial crisis causing funding to dry up
- Disinterest from MB government to support OFCM-COG

OFCM-COG’s Stakeholders

Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

OFCM-COG members

OFCM-COG partners, funders, and sponsors

Organic producers, processors, distributors, and retailers

Consumers of organic food

The provincial organic office of Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives

Local organic certification bodies; OPAM, OCIA, Pro-Cert

Local organizations with a related focus; Heifer International, 100 Mile Manitoba, the Manitoba Food Charter, the Harvest Moon Society, Farmers’ Markets Association of Manitoba, etc