

# Operational Plan

## 2024- 2025



Prepared by Peter Casurella, Executive Director  
March 2023 for the SouthGrow Management Board.

## OPERATIONAL PLAN 2024 / 2025

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These are actionable projects within each Strategic Pillar that we build one-year timelines for. Each tactic is fleshed out with a SMARTER goal, desired outcomes, measures of success, specific targets, and a three-year work-plan broken down by quarter to allow the organization to remain flexible yet on-pace.

These projects are proposed. Due to board approvals and other possible extenuating circumstances, we may not initiate all projects in the 2024-2025 year, however all Government of Alberta funding will be spent on programs and operations listed in this operational plan.

Finally, the Executive Committee has recommended a number of projects for potential implementation subject to funding availability. These are listed under section 6, Targets of Opportunity. Staff and Board members will look for opportunities throughout the year to pivot and address items on this list. This provides us with a suite of ready to go project ideas in case funding becomes available or in case a project on our active list becomes infeasible.



## **Pillar I: Strategic Collaboration**

- I. Member Engagement**
  - A. Annual Council Presentations
  - B. Regional Training
  - C. Government Relations
  - D. Economic Development Summit
  - E. SouthGrow Strategic Review
  
- II. Build and Sustain Collaborations**
  - A. Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership
  - B. Southern Alberta Investment and Trade Initiative
  - C. Canada's Premier Food Corridor and Canada's Western Gateway
  - D. Southern Alberta Tourism Collaboration
  - E. Highway 3 Twinning Development Association
  - F. REDA Collaboration
  - G. Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta
  
- III. Sustain or Expand Membership**
  - A. Sustain Membership
  - B. Expand Associate Memberships

## **Pillar II: Marketing & Communications**

- I. Regional Promotion**
  - A. Website Improvements
  
- II. Internal Communications**
  - A. Newsletters
  - B. Regional Sponsorships

## **Pillar III: Economic Development & Innovation**

- I. Ag-Tech Market Development**
  - A. Agri-food Scholarship Program
  - B. Agri-food Conference Representation
  
- II. Labour Market Solutions**
  - A.** Implementation of Regional Grad Retention Strategy
  - B.** Immigrant Retention Study
  
- III. Community Supports**
  - A.** Housing Needs Assessments
  - B.** Grant Advice Hot Line
  
- IV. Special Projects**
  - A. Zero Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Project (Final Year)
  - B. EV Bus Project
  - C. Supply Chain Opportunity Identification Project (Final Year)



D. Blackfoot Language Signage (Year 2)

v. **Flagship Project**

A. SouthGrow Power Project

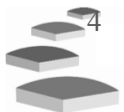
vi. **Targets of Opportunity**

A. Local Waste Solutions Study

B. Farm and Crop Conference

C. Labour Attraction Marketing

D. Energy Innovation Pilot Project with FortisAlberta



# PART II: TACTICAL PLAN

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## PILLAR I: STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

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### I. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

#### Annual Council Presentations

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	The Executive Director will endeavor to deliver a direct report to council to 40% of our members on an annual basis. (12) Staff will also provide a monthly updates to councils in the form of Mayors and Reeves reports which track progress on our operational plan.
OUTCOME	40% of the SouthGrow members receive a report directly to council. All members receive monthly operational reports.
MEASURE	Numbers of councils that receive reports on an annual basis.
TARGET	40% of councils are visited within the year. A recorded report goes to all members and associate members.
WORKPLAN	Book visits to councils in July after release of the annual report and attend councils in August through November.
Budget	Administrative work.

#### Regional Training

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow hosts at least 6 training webinars across the calendar year to provide high-quality information on topics of the day to councilors, staff, and other interested parties.
OUTCOME	Staff and councilors across the region have access to high-quality information on topics of the day to help them advance their progress on local initiatives.
MEASURE	Did training session (s) occur. How many occurred. How many people attended.

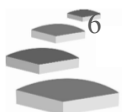


TARGET	6 sessions held throughout the operational year. Minimum of 20 attendees per session.
WORKPLAN	Brainstorm appropriate topics with staff, Executive Find appropriate date and venue, book trainer, advertise event and fill up attendance, secure catering and value-added elements, host training, report.
Budget	\$1000

### Government Relations

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow will work to secure multi-year funding for SouthGrow (at or above current funding levels), to retain the promise of a 10-year commitment to twinning all of Highway 3, to retain the core elements of the present rural economic development strategy, and to secure other regional priorities that only partnerships with other levels of governments can bring. We will do this by proactively communicating the value of our priorities to all personalities involved that we can in a politically neutral fashion and by providing them with data that substantiates our claims.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow has met with the Ministers responsible for economic development, agriculture, transportation, and other files as they become important. SouthGrow has met with the beaurocrats in these ministries as well. SouthGrow makes tangible progress on its relationship building efforts on key files.
MEASURE	Did the meetings occur? How many meetings were held? What were the narrative outcomes of the meetings? Did the REDA funding get extended?
TARGET	Favorable communications are re-established with Government of Alberta Ministers and staffs for the extension of the REDA partnership and the retention of core priorities listed above.
WORKPLAN	Organize meetings, prepare notes, brief officials, follow ups, consistent messaging. Prepare briefing notes for councillors for AB Munis and RMA Conferences. Have representatives attend these conferences and discuss issues with key Ministers. Recruit champion ministers to advance issues within government.
Budget	\$3000 (Specifically sourced from Membership dollars)

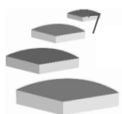
### Economic Development Summit



EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow hosts a regional Economic Development Summit in 2024 that provides stakeholders with access to speakers and engagement on important economic development topics, trends, and issues that affect our region. We continue to include active partnerships with stakeholders in the region with the intent of growing the event into a pan southern-Alberta partnership.
OUTCOME	The summit is held in a member community with local hosts and excellent attendance as measured against previous years. (2023-24 - est 100 people)
MEASURE	Was the event held? Attendance levels? Feedback from attendees. Were partnerships expanded? How much money was leveraged from other sources?
TARGET	Greater than 100 attendees from member communities, partners, and stakeholders.
WORKPLAN	Reach out to members to secure host community. Secure venue in member community. Develop list of speakers and agenda. Develop invites and issue to members, especially new council members. Secure catering for event. Host event.
Budget	\$5000

### SouthGrow Strategic Review

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow hosts a strategic review session by Q3 of the operational year to review the strategic framework for the organization, renew our mandate for another three years, and discuss the operational future of the organization.
OUTCOME	The Board approves an updated strategic framework for the organization and meaningfully explores the long-term sustainability of the organization in the event that the Government of Alberta exits as a partner.
MEASURE	Did the session occur? Was the strategic framework updated? Were there decisive decisions taken on long-term planning?



TARGET	The strategic framework is renewed by the end of Q3 of the 2024/25 operational year.
WORKPLAN	Facilitator is secured through Jobs, Economy, and Trade to facilitate Session is booked and held at appropriate venue Facilitator runs session and produces recommendations. Updated strategic framework is presented to Board at December Quarterly Meeting (2024) Framework is approved.
Budget	2000

## II. BUILD OR SUSTAIN COLLABORATIONS

### Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership

EDRAP Alignment	Economic Development-Enabling Infrastructure
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow sustains the work of SAAEP by leading the partnership through another operational year. The partners look for funding opportunities to a.) rework the website to provide a tighter focus on investment attraction, b.) to identify geographical investment zones in the partnership region under the new regulations, and c.) to host an investment opportunity workshop once that project is done. Funding is identified and applied for within the operational year, with the hope of initiating a large identification study early 2025.
OUTCOME	The SAAEP partners pivot back to investment attraction and work together to fund a large investment identification opportunity project. The website is updated to focus stronger on investment attraction.
MEASURE	Did the partnership remain active and working together on a plan? Was the website updated? Was a funding stream for the projects identified? Was the application submitted? Were we successful? Is there a path forward to implement?
TARGET	The partnership agrees to a scope of work in 2024. The website is updated. Funding is identified for the identification study and investor workshop. The project is advanced towards implementation.
WORKPLAN	Plan with SAAEP Partners Assign website audit and upgrades internally Do Website upgrades and test





	Discuss larger projects with potential funders Prepare applications and submit.
Budget	Target of Opportunity Budget

### Southern Alberta Investment and Trade Initiative

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	<p>SouthGrow maintains its participation and leadership in the Southern Alberta Investment and Trade Initiative, pursuing meaningful projects under its umbrella.</p> <p>The website is audited and improved by Q2 of 2024.</p> <p>A lead generation pipeline is setup to respond meaningfully to leads coming in through saiti.ca</p> <p>A representative is sent on a trade mission with Invest Alberta to an event in our target market region.</p> <p>6 new video ads are created for SAITI.</p> <p>The global marketing program runs through till the end of the year and metrics are tracked.</p>
OUTCOME	SAITI continues to grow its direct marketing program and develops a lead-generation pipeline while marketing our regional advantages to North America and Europe.
MEASURE	<p>Partnership is active and has ongoing projects.</p> <p>Was the website upgraded?</p> <p>Was a lead generation pipeline built?</p> <p>Did a trade mission occur?</p> <p>Were the videos created?</p> <p>Was the marketing maintained?</p> <p>What were the marketing metrics?</p>
TARGET	<p>The partnership has an active slate of work.</p> <p>The website is upgraded.</p> <p>The lead generation pipeline produces 6 active leads.</p> <p>6 videos are produced and put into the marketing rotation.</p> <p>Marketing is maintained.</p> <p>Metrics for marketing exceed 10 million views across all platforms.</p>
WORKPLAN	<p>Meet with partners to establish work plan</p> <p>Source out website audit to Lethbridge County</p> <p>Source out trade mission to EDL</p> <p>Develop pipeline together with EDL</p> <p>Commission video production from Output Media</p> <p>Maintain marketing program internally and track metrics.</p>



Budget	CanExport Grant and Partner funding. \$10,000 internally.
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### Canada's Premier Food Corridor and Canada's Western Gateway

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow supports the growth of sub-regional collaborations that promote industry clusters by convening them when necessary, hosting meetings, providing advisor services, connecting them with resources, and by actively using those brands in our own communications efforts. This support is ongoing and continual.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow is home to active sub-regional marketing brands that independently invest additional money in Initiatives that raise the profile of the region.
MEASURE	Do the brands have marketing projects underway? Are they being Independently managed by their members? Are they investing money in their own initiative?
TARGET	CPFC and CWG remain active and managed by their own membership.
WORKPLAN	Attend meetings of both groups. Invite them to participate in SouthGrow initiatives. Check in with managing partners periodically to stay apprised of their efforts. Send opportunities to both brands as opportunity allows.
Budget	Administrative work.

### Southern Alberta Tourism Collaboration

EDRAP Alignment	Marketing and Promoting Rural Tourism
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow's will partner with Tourism Lethbridge to enable digital marketing of regional tour routes that are under development or have been developed through previous partnerships and will ensure that marketing is run for the region within the operational year.
OUTCOME	A funded digital marketing project is launched by SouthGrow with support from Tourism Lethbridge which promotes regional tours to tourists in the Calgary - Edmonton corridor
MEASURE	Partnership dollars leveraged, ad campaigns created, ad metrics and impact.
TARGET	Double our contribution through partner leveraging

	Baseline year-1 ad metrics to establish future campaign targets. Tourism Lethbridge contributes matching dollars to a campaign run by SouthGrow.
WORKPLAN	Solicit and secure partnership. Participate in ad campaign planning Participate on steering committee Run ads directly Collect metrics.
Budget	\$10,000

### Highway 3 Twinning Development Association

EDRAP Alignment	Economic Development-enabling Infrastructure
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow supports the Highway 3 Twinning Development Association towards its goals by providing matching funding, board representation, In-kind support, and by helping to continually secure regional buy-in from our membership. SouthGrow ensures that the H3TDA remains a vibrant, active, and impactful organization.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow gives up to \$3000 in matching funding to Highway 3 and the association remains active and achieving its own goals.
MEASURE	Money Spent Annual Report on H3TDA operations (Are they making progress?). Evaluation of retention of Highway 3 Twinning promises
TARGET	H3TDA maintains a slate of work advancing the goal H3TDA appears to be on track to accomplish their strategic goals.
WORKPLAN	Participate In board meetings Contribute funding upon request and review.
Budget	\$3000 available for matching

### REDA Collaboration

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow collaborates with the other Regional Economic Development Alliances to promote the value of regional partnerships, encourage government interaction with, and leveraging of, the REDAs, and helps to position the REDAs as key players in the provincial Economic Development ecosystem. Within 2024, at least one meeting of the Chairs is held and one meeting is held between the Chairs and the Minister in charge of the provincial Economic Development portfolio.

OUTCOME	SouthGrow and the REDAs achieve their own internally defined goals on this file with respect to communication, relationship building and advancement of our multi-year efforts.
MEASURE	Collaborative efforts undertaken Extension of Government partnerships Government partnership activities achieved.
TARGET	The REDA Chairs meet with the Minister of JET to discuss collaboration goals. The REDAs attend both the AB Munis and RMA conferences. The REDAs partner to sponsor the Economic Developers Alberta Conference. The REDAs contribute to the Invest Alberta Magazine. The REDA Chairs meet to discuss provincial collaboration.
WORKPLAN	Help arrange REDA chairs meeting and attend. Contribute to both RMA and AB Munis conferences Contribute representatives to one of the RMA or AB Munis conferences Contribute funding to EDA sponsorship Have representatives attend all three identified events in some capacity or another.
Budget	\$5000 available for matching

## RINSA

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow continues to serve on the RINSA board and support the work of the organization, sharing their initiatives with the region, providing a regional perspective to their work, ensuring that their initiatives provide value to rural Alberta, and referring relevant clients in to their programs.
OUTCOME	RINSA maintains its work in the region and covers the needs of our rural stakeholders.

MEASURE	Programming available to rural stakeholders List of partners engaged in RINSA
TARGET	A SouthGrow representative actively participates on the Board of RINSA SouthGrow shares out RINSA programs with our membership, both through newsletters, emails, and social media.
WORKPLAN	Attend Board Meetings Supply Newsletter and Social Media with RINSA content
Budget	Administrative Budget

### III. SUSTAIN OR EXPAND MEMBERSHIP

#### Sustain Membership

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow sustains its paying membership within 10% of its current membership income levels (+ or - \$10,000).
OUTCOME	Membership remains relative stable despite rapidly changing fiscal environment.
MEASURE	Municipalities that paid their memberships. Amount of money received vs amount of money invoiced.
TARGET	Retention of membership dollars within 10% of expected income level.
WORKPLAN	Issue Annual Report Issue Invoices Provide council presentations Follow up with any councils seeking to exit and provide value proposition. Leverage board members for Individual conversations.
Budget	Administrative work.

#### Expand Associate Memberships to Industry and Institutions

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow retains at least 6 existing associate members and adds 2 more for a total end of year of no fewer than 8 associate members. (Current 12)
OUTCOME	SouthGrow has a growing number of associate memberships who care about

	the success of our initiatives and see value in giving of their time and expertise to further regional opportunities.
MEASURE	Numbers of industry or institutional members recruited.
TARGET	Associate memberships are sustained at 8 members for the current year. (current 12)
WORKPLAN	Consult with existing associate members to retain all who can be retained. Brainstorm target prospects in the spring of 2024 Draft recruitment letter and 'sales sheet' Discuss special arrangements with Executive Committee, such as reciprocal memberships, special pricing for institutions, or other issues that arise. Present in person to interested prospects by the fall of 2022. Welcome representatives of these members to the Board as associate members by March 2024 at the latest.
Budget	Administrative work.

## PILLAR II: MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

### I. REGIONAL PROMOTION

#### Website Improvements

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow updates its website toolkit with additional resources for our communities and enhances the content on our website to host information for site selectors looking at the region. This site selector information is also plugged into our other core websites (SAITI, SAAEP) and is provided to our partner brands or municipalities for their use.

OUTCOME	SouthGrow’s websites are kept fresh and current, with functioning links, more resources, and are useful tools for the region and beyond. The website has content specific to providing site selectors with the information they need for the region to fill out their decision matrix’. Our other websites and partner websites have access to this information.
MEASURE	Website traffic Links clicked. Websites supported.
TARGET	Website is refreshed by end of August 2024 with opportunities for additional improvements throughout the year.
WORKPLAN	Allocate staff resources, review toolkits and update with new content, remove out of date content, review full site for updates and functionality, secure Local Intel tools, set up plugins and arrange on southgrow.com, saaep.ca, saiti.ca, and others. Ensure partners have access.
Budget	\$4000 for local intel plus administrative work.

**II. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**Newsletters**

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow keeps its internal members and stakeholders well-advised of trends, opportunities, threats, and events that impact community and regional economic development. We also keep them well informed of Provincial Government initiatives.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow members are well-advised on these topics through our newsletters

MEASURE	Numbers of newsletters issued. Number of subscribers Open rate vs. past
TARGET	Newsletters are issued bi-weekly to a distribution list of anyone who wants it. Board members receive a daily Government Relations newsletter forwarded from the SouthGrow office.
WORKPLAN	Maintain production and distribution of newsletters.
Budget	\$2400 for newsletters

### Regional Sponsorships

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow supports stakeholder or partner initiatives with sponsorships to help enable their success. Sponsorships are selected on a case by case basis. Requests that provide benefits in the economic sphere to as many of our member communities as possible are prioritized. The sponsorships will not go any organizations that exist outside of member communities.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow sponsors important stakeholder or partner events to help them succeed.
MEASURE	Number of sponsorships given reported outcomes of those initiatives.
TARGET	SouthGrow spends its entire sponsorship budget on appropriate initiatives.
WORKPLAN	Inform stakeholders of existence of sponsorship budget. Bring requests before the Board as they arrive.
Budget	\$2000

## PILLAR III: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION

### I. AG-TECH MARKET DEVELOPMENT

#### A. Ag-Tech Scholarship/Incentive Program

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow actively supports youth engagement in the Hi-Tech Ag sector by partnering with educational organizations in the region to deliver 3



	scholarships to students attending Lethbridge College or the University of Lethbridge or Red Crow College who plan to build a career in agri-food in southern Alberta.
OUTCOME	Young people in the region have a growing awareness of hi-tech ag as a viable industry in which to pursue a profession.
MEASURE	Numbers of applications to the scholarship program measured against previous years. Amount of money provided to students. Stretch Goal: Number of scholarships, or number of scholarships increased by member or partner donations.
TARGET	3 scholarships worth \$2500 each are awarded in the fall of 2024.
WORKPLAN	Convene committee to clearly hammer out scholarship details and guidelines. Identify target sponsors to increase scholarship program by early spring of 2024. Draft sponsorship request letter and send to target sponsors with request for partnership. Evaluate results of sponsorship drive in June 2024 and set targets for scholarship program. Send out call for applications by beginning of July 2024. Promote on Social media acknowledging sponsors. Evaluate scholarship applicants with sponsor(s) included. Award scholarships by September 2024.
Budget	\$2500

### B. Agri-food Conference Representation

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow represents southern Alberta at one global agri-food convention or trade show to build relationships and increase awareness of opportunities within the region. Furthermore, we collaborate with our partners to divide up conference attendance so that we have the maximum reach possible.
OUTCOME	There is increased awareness of opportunities in agri-food in southern Alberta by attendees at the conferences or trade shows we visit.
MEASURE	Was an event attended. Number of attendees at convention. Number of conversations developed.
TARGET	One convention attended. 5 conversations started that lead to local introductions.

WORKPLAN	Review conference list with partners. Review costs and scheduling Consult with partners to avoid overlap Attend conference Process introductions and leads Submit narrative report to Board on conference.
Budget	\$5000

### III. LABOUR MARKET SOLUTIONS

#### Grad Retention Strategy Implementation

EDRAP Alignment	Support for labour force and skills development
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow communicates relevant strategies arising out of the regional grad retention study to stakeholders in the region with specific recommendations for implementation by Q2 of 2024.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow leads on the implementation of strategies arising out of the regional grad retention study. SouthGrow evaluates recommendations and communicates action items out to stakeholders across the region, and provides follow up presentations on the study where possible.
MEASURE	How recommendations were issued? Who where they issued to? Was any follow up action taken? How many presentations were delivered?
TARGET	All recommendations in the study are assigned to stakeholders and letters are issued.
WORKPLAN	Evaluate recommendations Assign to stakeholders and strategize actions Draft recommendations Get reviewed by committee Finalize letters and send Respond to requests for follow up. Follow up with stakeholders in Q4 to inquire if any actions were taken.
Budget	Administrative Budget

#### Immigrant Retention Study

EDRAP Alignment	Support for labour force and skills development
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SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow works to fund a regional immigrant retention study for implementation within the operational year that will study best practices for retention of newcomers in rural communities. The project may deliver a final report within the next operational year if timelines are too restrictive for delivery in 2024/25.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow leads on the funding and implementation of a study to retain immigrants in our rural communities.
MEASURE	Was a consultant identified? Was a proposal built and funding applied for? Was the funding successful? Was the project implemented? How many partners joined us in the work?
TARGET	A project is fully constructed, funded, and sourced out within the operational year.
WORKPLAN	Build project plan Recruit partners Apply for funding Secure contractor Initiate project.
Budget	\$5000

#### IV. COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

##### **Housing Needs Assessment**

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow staff provide on-demand support to up to 6 member communities within the operational year to help them complete a housing needs assessment so that they can eligibly apply for grant funding programs.
OUTCOME	Members are supported with the completion of Housing Needs Assessments.
MEASURE	How many assessments were completed?
TARGET	6 Communities are supported and have housing needs assessments completed.
WORKPLAN	Share opportunity with members and profile the free template. Respond to requests, and assist or engage in work as needed to help

	members to completion.
Budget	Administrative Budget

**Grant Advice Hot Line**

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow staff provide on-demand support to our member communities, businesses, and non-profits to advise them on where to find appropriate grants to help their needs, and how to properly leverage additional funding, stacking options, and more in order to reach goals.
OUTCOME	Members have experts they can call for free advice.
MEASURE	How many members or other organizations were helped?
TARGET	10 clients are assisted to find the right grant or strategy for pursuing funding.
WORKPLAN	Share opportunity with members. Put a CTA on the website. Advertise the service through our social media. Respond to requests, and assist or engage in work as needed to help members or other organizations as needed.
Budget	Administrative Budget

**V. SPECIAL PROJECTS**

**Zero Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Project (2-year)**

EDRAP Alignment	Economic Development-enabling infrastructure
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow manages the disbursement of ZEVIP funding from NRCAN to fund a wide array of charging infrastructure in the region. This project is completed in 2024 and involves an active partnership with the MCCAC allowing many of our member municipalities to get fully subsidized infrastructure, and institutions and businesses to get 46% matching funding for their projects. The full amount is successfully spent by project end in 2024.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow provides members and regional stakeholders with privileged access to significant amounts of money to deploy electric vehicle chargers throughout the region.
MEASURE	Operational plan is on-track for completion in 2024.

TARGET	Est 1.7 million dollars in spend on infrastructure in the region. 2024 Target. Funding is secured, Project Manager hired, operational plan is on-schedule for completion.
WORKPLAN	Work Plan finalized with the MCCAC in April 2022. Process core applications between SouthGrow and the MCCAC. Distribute Marketing and push applicants to the funnel. Submit claims and disburse funds as claims are received and processed. Provide oversight to efforts of MCCAC on our behalf. Proactively promote the program to businesses in our own region in the 3 month head start period.
Budget	\$22,950 (NRED Grant)

### EV Bus Pilot Project

EDRAP Alignment	Economic Development-enabling infrastructure
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow completes multi-year application process to get EV bus for highway 4 corridor funded, with funding landed within 2022 and bus purchased and operational in-region by end of 2024
OUTCOME	Highway 4 EV bus pilot is funded by the FCM and moves forward to implementation.
MEASURE	Was the bus purchased and delivered? Was the pilot initiated? Is the pilot underway with metrics being tracked?
TARGET	Bus is purchased and delivered by fall of 2024.
WORKPLAN	Apply to NRCAN for additional funding to complete project. Find conversion facility for McNab to complete commission through. Facilitate delivery of vehicle and payment of invoices. Lay out project expectations and tracking for Society and launch program.
Budget	Administrative Work and pass through grant funding.

### Supply Chain Opportunity Identification Project (Import Replacement Project)

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
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SMARTER GOAL	Together with Economic Development Lethbridge, SouthGrow launches a 2-year Supply Chain Identification project that profiles regional inputs and outputs from our 200 largest industrials, investment opportunities, red flags, and more, and captures that information in a database to begin matchmaking and the sharing of opportunities. This project is underway by summer of 2022 with a contractor hired and implementing the deliverables. Project moves into phase 2 by summer of 2023 for completion in 2024.
OUTCOME	Supply Chain Identification project is underway with contractor in place. Database is set up and in use. Over 100 stakeholders have been fully profiled, introductions have begun, and investments and red flags have been discussed by project committee.
MEASURE	Number of stakeholders contacted. Number of stakeholders that have shared metrics. Number of connections made. Number of investment opportunities identified. Number of red flags identified.
TARGET	200 stakeholders contacted.  100 share their information 10 introductions made 10 red flags identified 10 business opportunities or investments identified.
WORKPLAN	Sign funding agreements. Develop and issue RFP or job listing. Hire for position, plan program, initialize Monitor consultant/employee progress. Provide support. Manage finances. Report on outcomes.
Budget	\$10,000 (out of \$20,000 two-year contribution for a total project cost of \$162,000)

**Blackfoot Language Signage Deployment Year 2**

EDRAP Alignment	Marketing and promoting rural tourism
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow, Community Futures Lethbridge Region, and Tourism Lethbridge lead a partnership that includes the Blood Tribe with the intent of leveraging partner contributions against grant funding to assemble a pool of money used to fund the deployment of Blackfoot language place signage across south-western Alberta. This project will pursue the assemblage of a significant

	funding package for Q2 of 2024 for a continuation of the successful program. Funding will be given in the form of micro-grants to applicants with the Blood Tribe informing the language on the sign. The partners will utilize the already developed common brand for the program.
OUTCOME	Blackfoot language signage is deployed for locations across southern Alberta such as municipalities, institutions or tourism locations. Reconciliation is advanced by the inclusion of visual Blackfoot language markers on the landscape. Tourism is advanced by the enrichment of the landscape with signs of its heritage.
MEASURE	How much money was contributed by the partners? How much money was leveraged? Was the program funded in time to implement? If so, how many applications were received? What is the potential for continuation into future years?
TARGET	\$70,000 assembled by Q2 of 2024 and project resumes under the admin of one of the partners in Q3 of 2024
WORKPLAN	Identify lead partner for continuation of project (likely Community Futures) Secure partner contributions Secure matching grant funding Re-open intake, and serve on steering committee. Work with partners to market and profile the opportunity to fully subscribe program.
Budget	\$5000

## VI. FLAGSHIP PROJECT

### SouthGrow Power Project

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow continues to work on the implementation of a < 5MW solar installation that will be owned and operated by SouthGrow the intent of funding the organization. Within the operational year, we will reevaluate the business case under the new regulations to determine if there is still a viable path forward. If there is, we will re-engage NRCAN and attempt to secure up to \$1 million in capital investment from the GOC. If this is successful, the project will be ready to go. We will also re-engage Lethbridge County to inform them of our position and secure their commitment to allowing us to proceed if we are successful.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow re-evaluates the business case and is in a position to continue with the project, or recommend cancellation as determined.

MEASURE	Is there still a business case? Was any seed funding identified? Can the project still achieve what it set out to do? Was the Board able to make a go-no-go decision?
TARGET	All the information is available for the Board to make a fully informed go-no-go decision.
WORKPLAN	Evaluate new regulatory and price environment. Update modelling. Determine feasibility Apply for NRCAN funding. Take final decisions to the Board.
Budget	\$51,250 set aside for permitting.

## VII. TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY

### Local / Regional Waste Solutions Study

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	If SAEWA is unable to deliver on their goals of creating a thermal waste solution as envisioned, SouthGrow will convene a coalition of the interested in Southern Alberta to discuss alternative approaches to implementing a waste solution in our region. SouthGrow continues to solicit feedback from SAEWA on their progress with Hitachi, and brings forward the topic to each quarterly board meeting throughout the year for review and discussion.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow closely follows the development of thermal solutions in southern Alberta and is prepared to participate in the conversation if existing solutions fall through.
MEASURE	Was SAEWA successful in securing a advantageous deal with Hitachi? Do they have an alternative plan? What direction does the board want to go?
TARGET	Continuous evaluation and action when directed.
WORKPLAN	Monthly check-ins with SAEWA Quarterly conversations on the issue with the board
Budget	Target of Opportunity

### Farm and Crop Conference



EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow continues to explore the possibility of hosting a Farm and Crop conference in the region in collaboration with other stakeholders. This event would be directly focused on providing thought and industry content to producers. By the end of the operational year, SouthGrow should know if there is an opportunity to pursue event creation here or not.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow is positioned to pursue the hosting of a Farm and Crop Conference in Lethbridge in collaboration with partners if the right situations align.
MEASURE	Is there a demand? Would a conference be a duplication of services? Are other organizations interested? Is there a partner we can support to host one instead?
TARGET	Determine need and/or demand within the operational year and pursue if opportunity allows.
WORKPLAN	Discuss project with interested stakeholders. Support or partner if possible.
Budget	Target of Opportunity

### Labour Attraction Marketing

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow will explore funding opportunities which could enable a Labour Market Attraction Marketing Campaign, focused on profiling opportunities for relocation to Southern Alberta in target markets, which will include economically depressed regions of Canada. If a funding avenue is identified, we will pursue it.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow identifies a funding stream to leverage to do Labour Market Attraction Marketing.
MEASURE	Was funding identified? Was it applied for? Were any partners recruited? Is there a viable project here?
TARGET	Completion by Q4 of 2024
WORKPLAN	Watch funding streams and discuss project with potential funders. Look for inclusion in 2025 NRED intake.
Budget	Target of Opportunity

## Energy Innovation Pilot Projects - FortisAlberta

EDRAP Alignment	Rural Economic Development Capacity Building
SMARTER GOAL	SouthGrow will watch for opportunities and funding with which to continue partnering with FortisAlberta on pilot projects in our member municipalities.
OUTCOME	SouthGrow and FortisAlberta keep alive their ongoing pilot project partnership initiatives with a relevant project.
MEASURE	Was a project identified? Is there funding available? Was funding secured? Is there a viable project here?
TARGET	Completion by Q4 of 2024
WORKPLAN	Research possible projects with partners Discuss funding implementation Apply for funding and recruit partners Initiate a project if possible.
Budget	Target of Opportunity

# BUDGET

## INCOME

	Partner Funding	External Funding	Total	Notes
Membership Fees	92,000.00		92,000.00	From Membership per-Capita
Associate Memberships	1,600.00		1,600.00	From Associate Members
JET Operational Grant	125,000.00		125,000.00	GoA Operating Grant
Registrations, Sponsorships, Other Fees	32,000.00		32,000.00	Various expected contributions to projects
H3TDA Support	2,275.00		2,275.00	Annual Contract with Highway 3 Group
Interest	0.00		0.00	No Interest Expected b/c no investments
CanExport Grant		19,500.00	19,500.00	Secured Grant
CanExport Contributions	11,000.00		11,000.00	Secured Contributions
GST Recovered	16,000.00		16,000.00	Approx expected GST return
Local Intel Matching	6,000.00		6,000.00	Partner Contributions to annual fee
ZEVIP Admin		30,000.00	30,000.00	Expected reimbursement
ZEVIP Pass Through		649,377.00	649,377.00	Expected pass-through
Supply Chain Contribution (Confirmed)	5,000.00		5,000.00	Expected contribution from Partner
Prairies Canada Grant (Confirmed)		30,652.00	30,652.00	Expected Reimbursement from GoC
NRED (Confirmed)		22,950.00	22,950.00	Confirmed NRED Grant
Scholarship Contributions		5,500.00	5,500.00	Expected contributions from partners
Tourism Matching (Unconfirmed)	10,000.00		10,000.00	Expected contributions from partners
NRED Solar Project Liability (Carried Forward)		21,250.00	21,250.00	Carried forward liability
FortisAlberta Solar Project Sponsorship		30,000.00	30,000.00	Promised Donation
Handibus EV Funding		300,000.00	300,000.00	Expected Pass through funding on project
	<b>300,875.00</b>	<b>1,109,229.00</b>	<b>1,410,104.00</b>	

## STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS

	Internal Spend	External Spend	Total	
Develop and Build Partnerships	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	General Meetings and Engagement
Board Development	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	To send Board members to EDA Conference
Economic Development Summit	5,000.00	22,000.00	27,000.00	Our Annual Event
Regional Tourism Collaboration	10,000.00	10,000.00	20,000.00	Partnership Project with Tourism Lethbridge
H3TDA Support	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	Matching funding for the Highway 3 Group
REDA Collaboration	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	Strategic Planning for all 9 REDAs
Regional Training Events	500.00	0.00	500.00	6x webinars
Sponsorships	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	For Regional Events
Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership	0.00	0.00	0.00	For Partner Projects (Target of Opportunity)
Government Relations	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	For Engaging with Government
SouthGrow Strategic Review	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	This is Due this year
	<b>34,000.00</b>	<b>32,000.00</b>	<b>66,000.00</b>	

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

	Internal Spend	External Spend	Total	
Advertising/Subscriptions	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	Increased by \$500. Expecting more spend
Travel - Regional	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	Stayed the same
Newsletters	2,400.00	0.00	2,400.00	Stayed the same
Websites	750.00	0.00	750.00	Small increase. Costs going up
AGM / Other Events & Meetings	5,500.00	0.00	5,500.00	Four Quarterly Meetings. Increased \$500
SAETI Global Marketing and Investment Attraction	10,000.00	30,500.00	40,500.00	Confirmed Project
Local Intel Subscription	4,000.00	6,000.00	10,000.00	Expected cost for annual subscription
Agri-food Conference Attendance	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Annual Trip to an Agrifood Show
Farm and Crop Conference	0.00	0.00	0.00	Target of Opportunity
	32,150.00	36,500.00	68,650.00	

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	Internal Spend	External Spend	Total	
Scholarships	2,500.00	5,500.00	8,000.00	Annual Scholarship program
Supply Chain Identification	13,598.00	23,152.00	36,750.00	Program nearing completion. Final costs
ZEVIP Program Admin	0.00	22,500.00	22,500.00	Final Costs, to be funded by NRED grant
ZEVIP Reimbursement Passthrough	0.00	649,377.00	649,377.00	Pass through reimbursements
Blackfoot Language Signage	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Our Contribution to partner-led program
IEDC Accreditation	6,000.00	0.00	6,000.00	Fee and Costs for Site Visit
SouthGrow Power Project	0.00	51,250.00	51,250.00	*Dependent on policy environment*
Immigrant Retention Project	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Is currently being applied for. (\$55,000 project)
FCM Rural EV Handibus Pilot Project	0.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	Money to pass through to Milk River
Fortis Pilot Project	0.00	0.00	0.00	Pending Project for Energy
Housing Needs Assessments (6x)	0.00	0.00	0.00	Can be provided completely through staff work
Local Waste Solutions Study	0.00	0.00	0.00	*Dependent on outcome of SAEWA conversations
	32,098.00	1,051,779.00	1,083,877.00	

## ADMINISTRATION

Manager / Staffing Support (1.5x FTEs)	115,500.00	Contract Fee
Annual Operational Reserve	2,000.00	
Executive Honorarium/Mileage	1,800.00	Board Travel
Bookkeeping	2,000.00	Bookkeeping (Quickbooks and Reviews)
Professional Fees	5,000.00	Audit
Insurance	2,700.00	RMA Insurance
Telephone and Internet	1,800.00	Google and Telephone
Office Supplies	800.00	Misc. Office supplies, not including Printer and ink
Postage Courier Freight	800.00	Misc Mailings and post office box
Meetings and Hosting	1,000.00	Various meetings for staff and Exec.
Miscellaneous	0.00	
GST	15,000.00	Estimated GST to be incurred. (recoverable)
	<b>148,400.00</b>	

## SUMMARY



**Economic Development | Government Relations**

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**About SouthGrow Regional Initiative**

SouthGrow is an economic development alliance of twenty-eight south central Alberta communities committed to working together to achieve prosperity for the region. Representing over 180,000 people, SouthGrow is committed to assisting communities, organizations, businesses, and people in the region to further their economic development goals and to maintain the high quality of life.

	<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Income	300,875.00	1,109,229.00	1,410,104.00
Spend	246,648.00	1,120,279.00	1,366,927.00
Recoverable Reserves			30,000
		Difference	13,177.00