StewardshipWorks! Strengthening Stewardship

Final Report

Stewardship Centre for BC

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 About Stewardship Works! And the Stewardship Centre for BC

Stewardship Works!(SW!) is a capacity building initiative of the Stewardship Centre for BC focused on conservation organizations in BC. This project is in the final phase of a three-year pilot project focusing on distributing core funds to stewardship organizations, evaluating the impacts of this funding and delivering capacity building programs, including the Capacity Building resource directory and the Benchmarking Tool, to the stewardship community. More information on all the Stewardship Centre programs and videos profiling the *Stewardship Works!* project can be found on their website: www.StewardshipCentre.bc.ca.

1.2 About the Strengthening Stewardship Project

The Stewardship Centre for BC (SCBC) is working to build capacity within individual stewardship organizations and across the sector as a whole. In 2009, SCBC led a team of consultants and advisors who designed an eight-part framework for building capacity in BC's environmental stewardship community. The *Capacity Building Framework* provides the stewardship community with a common platform for discussing eight aspects of capacity building. In 2010-201, this project created tools and resources to for the eight parts of the framework.

Capacity building is the *systematic strengthening of the capabilities of an organization to perform more effectively*. Stewardship groups from across BC recognize the potential benefits of strengthening their organizations through capacity building. Twenty-one stewardship groups were interviewed in 2009. Some, like the Maple Creek Streamkeepers are small community-based groups with annual budgets less than $10,000; others like the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation manage large budgets or the Georgia Strait Alliance and the East Kootenay Conservation Program who are active regionally and provincially. Fourteen groups identified capacity building as essential for their organization; as one interviewee said she "hoped it would provide focus and take the group out of survival mode". However, many of the groups interviewed did not know where to start or how to access assistance with capacity building. Recognizing that stewardship groups need help to build their capacity, the Stewardship Centre led the development of the *Capacity Building Framework for Strengthening Stewardship in BC*.

The *Capacity Building Framework* provides the stewardship community with a common platform for discussing eight aspects of capacity building. In 2010-2011, the project results included the development of a capacity building web-based benchmarking tool based on a dedicated website (linked to the SCBC site), a collaborative workshop to gather feedback and deliver resources, development of a data-base of resources and tools for capacity building and best practices. Together, these support the BC stewardship community to effectively fulfil their mandates.

Project Objectives:

- To collect and share new capacity building knowledge within environmental stewardship audiences
- To increase the capacity of stewardship organizations to deliver environmental and social benefits in their communities and across BC
- To engage diverse stakeholders in collaboratively growing, maintaining, and delivering resources that build capacity in the environmental stewardship sector.

Strengthening Stewardship Final Report

2. Project Description and Outcomes

To meet the above project objectives project activities centred around communications work, development of capacity building tools, resources and best practices, and development of a web-based platform to engage diverse stakeholders in the stewardship community.

2.1 Communications

2.1.1 Communications and user feedback

A StewardshipWorks! Strategic and Communications Plan was developed early in the project. The Plan's goals and objectives were identified as:

Goals:

- To find partners and funding to extend and expand the Stewardship Works! Program
- To Increase the capacity of stewardship organizations.

Objectives:

- Explore potential funding models for Stewardship Works!
- Identify potential funders for Stewardship Works!
- Align the Stewardship Works! model with the Capacity Building Framework and Benchmarking Tool in order to build the capacity of stewardship organizations in British Columbia
- Expand the awareness of and credibility of SCBC
- Establish a strong reputation for SCBC/Stewardship Works! with provincial and federal governments;
- Establish SCBC as the capacity building hub for British Columbia/Cascadia.

Background research was completed and potential StewardshipWorks! funding models were explored. Meetings with potential partners and key stakeholders helped to identify potential SW! Funding Models. These included:

- Partnering With Other Organizations

It is important to recognize that building capacity in the sector will not be successful with just one organization; it will take long-term partnerships with key organizations that also have a vested interest in empowering stewardship groups to engage citizenry and foster healthy ecosystems. These partnerships will yield inspiration, strategies, and funding. Key partners could include governments (federal and provincial), granting agencies and foundations.

- Corporations and Businesses

According to an Imagine Canada survey, 56% of Canadian corporations have shifted from philanthropic giving to sponsorship. Sponsorship differs from a donation in that in a sponsorship a business pays for the cost of an event, publication, or program, usually in exchange for advertising or some kind of notoriety. Some models to explore include the United Way and the on-line marketplace event used by Wildlife Habitat Canada in Ontario.

- Micro-credit Model

A model for SW! based on the micro-credit model and targeting either corporations and/or individuals has been suggested. This model would target corporations/individuals rather than various funds that tend to be currently oversubscribed as nonprofits scramble to find funds to survive since the economic turndown. This model will require time to develop and manage the outreach strategy and website, if it is to be effective. Some examples of the micro-credit model include Give Green Canada: www.givegreencanada.ca and Kiva: www.kiva.org

The complete StewardshipWorks! Strategic Communication Plan may be found in the Appendices.

Other communications included input from stewards and was collected through the collaborative workshop (see below) and a comments section on the Benchmarking Tool. These methods were deemed to be the most useful due to the developmental status of the tool and were formative (rather than evaluative) in nature. The use of a full survey tool on the Benchmarking website will be useful for future improvements of the tool and website.

2.1.2 Collaborative Workshop

A workshop was held in November 2011 with stewardship group representatives, businesses and funding agencies. The gathering of 37 participants was held in Vancouver to learn about the StewardshipWorks! pilot project and to discuss how to address core funding issues for conservation and stewardship organizations in BC. After a selection of presentations and intense discussions, the group developed several ideas for activities to raise awareness about the need for core funding, while actively pursuing core funding opportunities.

Key activities identified by the participants include two immediate steps to be led by the Stewardship Centre for BC. SCBC was requested to convene a working group of interested individuals who can develop an action plan, based on the items suggested during the discussion period and continue to move this initiative forward. In addition, the group recommended that marketing and communications material should be immediately created to form a common message that all organizations could use within their own regions and audiences.

In order to make the workshop available to out-of-town participants and to reduce the carbon footprint attributable to the event, SCBC contracted Evolve Multimedia to provide webcasting services. Using the webinar service, DimDim, the presentations were streamed live over the internet to participants who could watch the events online and ask questions via a online chat feature, which was monitored by an Evolve Multimedia representative. In total, only three additional participants were able to participate using this technology, and they reported that participating remotely was difficult. Two additional participants attempted to participate, but experienced technological difficulties.

In addition, in order to accommodate the online participants, presenters were required to remain close to the podium to enable the camera and microphone to capture their presentations. The main issues or requirements for online meetings for users are access and ability to load flash or other video software for the video and audio component, bandwidth and an independent connection to the internet so that the user is not cycled on and off the system and loses connection and audio and video feed or must deal with delays that make a conference or conversation difficult to follow.

The complete *StewardshipWorks! Funding for Success Workshop Report* is found in the appendices.

Strengthening Stewardship Final Report
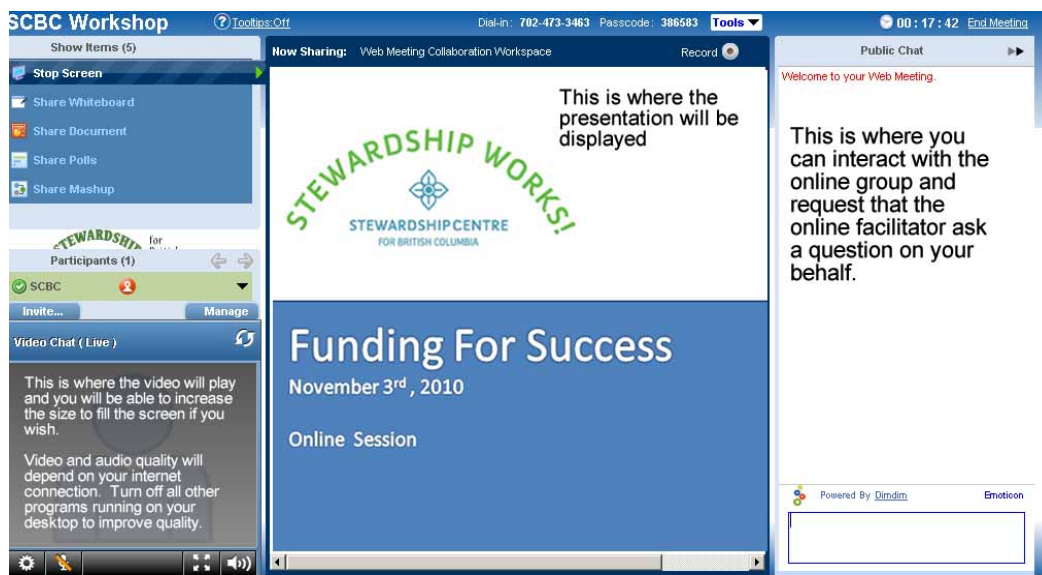
2.2 Capacity Building Tools, Resources, and Best Practices

Research was completed to compile a listing on Capacity Building Resources available to support the BC Stewardship Sector. The listing provides insight into the range and scope of capacity building opportunities that could be included in a resource database for the Stewardship Community.

The resources are organized alphabetically and can be scanned in the table of contents; many have hyperlinks which will take the reader to the organization's site or resource. These resources are available at the SCBC Benchmarking Tool website and are searchable by the Capacity Building Framework organizers, i.e. Foundation, The People, Leadership & Teambuilding, Fundraising & Financial, Communication & Marketing, Advocacy, Relationships & Networks, Organizational Design & Management. Approximately 75 listings are provided and are searchable by area or key words and include capacity building organizations, consultants, and universities and colleges.

You can find the complete listing of resources on the database at www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca/Capacity

2.3 Interactive Strengthening Stewardship Hub

A review of background literature, meetings with key players helped to establish the existing and future needs and priorities for the new hub based website. The overall site design was derived from documents such as the communications plan, and meetings and interviews with key stakeholders. The site priorities were organized into four categories: education; design and function; outreach; and community and funder engagement. A graphic of this hub may be seen in Figure 1.

The Capacity Benchmarking tool has been created and is available for review at:
www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca/Capacity

The online tool incorporates the best practices and common processes identified in the report presented by the communications consultant. This ground-breaking tool walks stewards through a step by step process designed to develop organizational capacity in user friendly manner and is available across the stewardship sector. It is hoped this tool may be made available across Canada in the future. The layout of the online hub is similar to the layout of Capacity Building Benchmarking Tool Report (see Appendices) and is based on the recommendations of the consultant and discussions with executive and board members from SCBC.

The best practices and common processes have been categorized into eight main sections. The eight sections are Foundation, Organization, People, Leadership, Financial, Communication, Networks, and Advocacy. These sections are presented online and each section has a page and a series of questions where the user can select the best answer and upon completing the section, review their total score.

The following graphic is an image taken from the on-line Benchmarking Tool:

Foundation

This section focuses on the Foundation of your organization. It is divided into a series of subsections and there is a set of questions for each. Go through the series of questions and select one option for each subsection.

At the end of each section you will be asked to Submit your answer so that you may move on to the next section. At the end of each subsections, you will be given your score for each subsection and your overall score for the foundation section

For more information on Foundations, please read this **document**.

You are on Step 1 of 7

Step 1. Mission Statement

Level	Description
○ Level 1 What's Capacity?	When you look at this section you think "What is a Mission Statement?"
○ Level 2 Some level of capacity	You may have a mission statement but are unclear of its content or focus. Your mission is written down somewhere but it is buried in a file and is not immediately accessible.
○ Level 3 Moderate Level	We have a mission statement. Most staff/board have a good sense of it. Sometimes we even discuss it when making decisions.
○ Level 4 High Level	The mission statement is reviewed regularly and updated as needed. All decision-making members have a good understanding of the mission and decision-making is based on the mission.
○ Level 5	There is a clear understanding of the purpose of communications

Benchmarking tools
Foundation
Organization
People
Leadership
Financial
Communication
Networks
Advocacy

Helpful Links
Instructions
Resources

The total score or ranking for the section is an indication of the group's capacity for this section. If groups find that their scores are low, they can search the database by section title to find a list of resources and tools which will help them to improve their capacity. Once they complete a section, they will be able to print their results, provide feedback on the tool and share their experience and thoughts on the Benchmarking tool.

A separate resource page exists where users can directly access the resource database and search for resources by section. The site also includes information about the tool, instructions on how to use it and PDF documents that provide a more comprehensive review of each section.

Figure 1: Capacity Building Bench Marking Tool Priorities

Graphic 5) Capacity Building Project Priorities
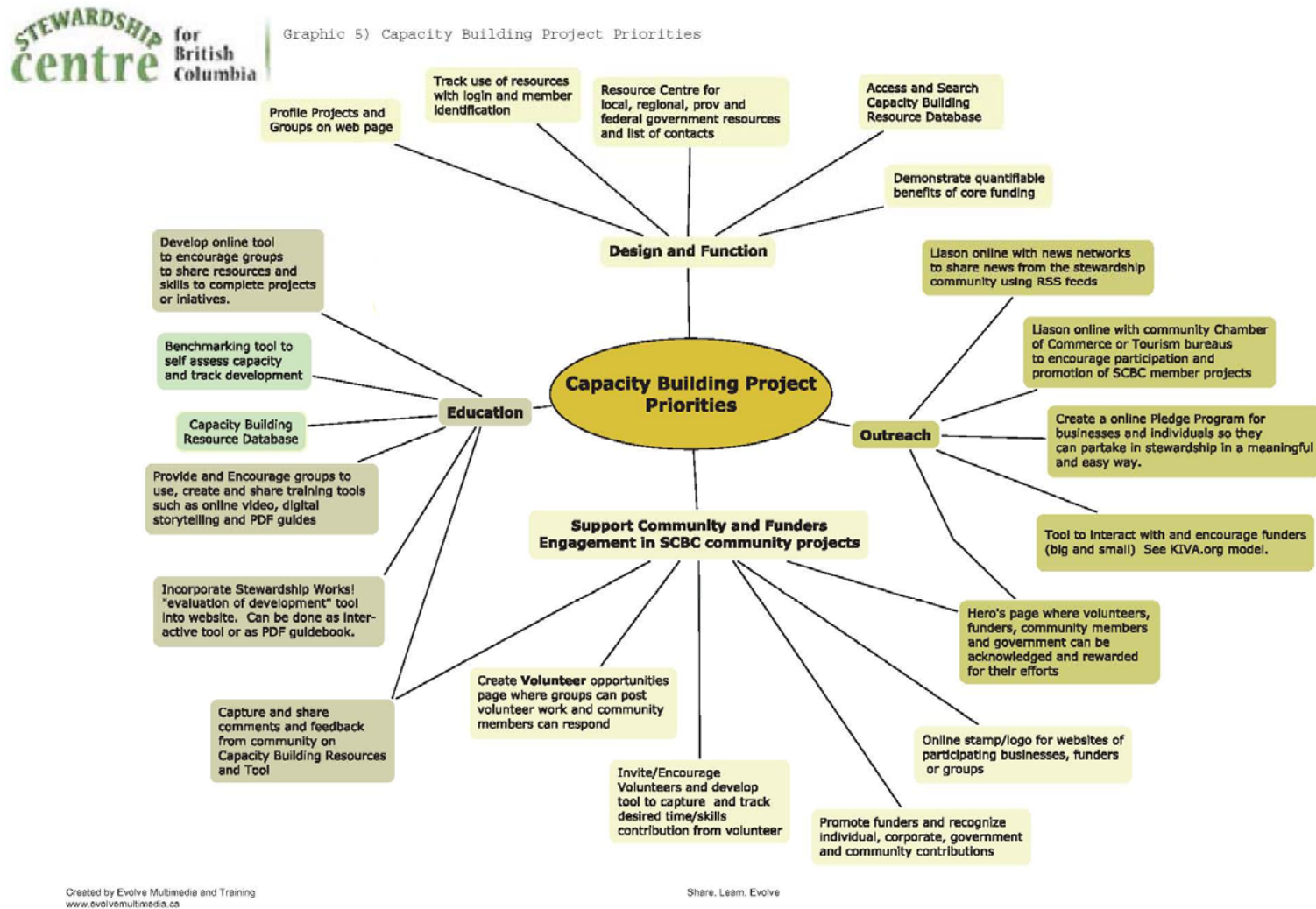
3.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

3.1 Benchmarking Tool
The next stage of development for the Benchmarking tool includes the following features and additions:

- Login access
- Profile page for user groups
- History of activity including comments, benchmarking tool results and access.

Login access will allow stewardship organisations to them to maintain a profile page, keep a record of notes and a history or log of their benchmarking tool results. For the user, this will allow them to track their progress, maintain a current profile page which will keep the SCBC records up to date. This information will be shared with the SCN server and this will ensure that the stewardship organization list on the national site is current.

The SCBC will be able to track how groups use the tool, receive feedback from user groups and use the information maintained in the database to interact and develop the tool to meet the needs and requests from the stewardship community.

3.2 Working with Stewardship Organizations
The next step in this process is to assist stewardship organizations to work through the benchmarking tool and to assist them to create a strategy to further increase their organization's capabilities. It is recommended that a facilitator work directly with stewardship organizations to assess their organizational capacity using a newly developed Capacity Building Benchmarking Tool. Following assessment the organizations would work with the facilitator to develop a customized action plan to help guide them through future capacity development activities. This will result in a stable, effective, and efficient stewardship sector, better able to achieve their organizational objectives.

4.0 Appendix

1. *StewardshipWorks! Strategic Communication Plan*
2. *Capacity Building Benchmarking Tool Report*
3. *StewardshipWorks! Funding for Success Workshop Report*