

BC Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research Network

Terms of Reference

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SECTION 1: NETWORK OVERVIEW

1.1. Background

The British Columbia (BC) Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research Network (ACARN) was initiated in December of 2015 to improve linkages and collaboration among agricultural researchers, industry groups, specialists and policy-makers from across the province. The aim of this collaboration is to develop an effective network approach to address climate adaptation research needs in the BC agriculture industry by enhancing provincial research, promoting interdisciplinary projects, and improving the efficient use of climate adaptation resources. Moreover, the establishment of a centralized research network, which promotes stronger linkages between industry groups and researchers, could enhance the strategic development of research projects which address industry priorities.

Funding granted by anonymous donors has provided the resources to operate ACARN in its early stages and the network was officially launched in May of 2017.

1.2. Mission

Enhance climate change adaptation research for the BC agriculture industry by coordinating the sharing of research information, expertise, and resources in the province.

1.3. Vision

ACARN is a provincial hub that fosters a collaborative approach for agricultural climate change adaptation research and extension strategies in British Columbia.

1.4. Near-term Objectives

ACARN has outlined five primary near-term objectives which are outlined below.

- Maintain a provincial network of researchers
- Promote the sharing of research information and expertise
- Coordinate network research projects
- Enhance the accessibility of applied research outcomes
- Train future researchers and outreach specialist

The **ACARN Strategic Plan 2019-2023** provides more information on specific activities associated with each objective.

1.5. Scope

ACARN promotes a network approach to agricultural climate change adaptation in BC by connecting researchers and other provincial experts and providing them with tools and resources to enhance collaboration so that network outcomes are greater than the sum of their parts.

ACARN:

- Hosts events and develops tools to connect agriculture researchers involved with climate change adaptation in the BC agriculture industry.
- Collaborates with partner organizations to identify strategic priorities for climate change adaptation research in the British Columbia agriculture sector.
- Promotes the establishment of applied climate change adaptation research projects which are either provincial (or regional) in scope, interdisciplinary, cross-commodity and/or multi-institutional.
- Is primarily focused on climate adaptation research, but integrates knowledge transfer and student/specialist training as a key component of the research process.
- Is not an extension provider in itself, but works closely with the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative and other partner organizations to 1) develop extension tools for researchers, 2) enhance extension initiatives, and 3) provide knowledge transfer opportunities for researchers.

1.6 Network Partner Organizations

ACARN is a collaboration between several BC organizations/institutions which provide representation on the network Steering Committee. These organizations can be placed into three broad groups:

1) **Government:**

- BC Ministry of Agriculture
- Agriculture and Agri-food Canada

2) **Industry:**

- BC Agriculture Council
- BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation
- BC Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative

3) **Universities:**

- University of British Columbia (Vancouver & Okanagan)
- University of the Fraser Valley
- Thompson Rivers University
- University of Northern British Columbia
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Simon Fraser University

1.6.1. ACARN and the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative (CAI)

The BC Agriculture & Food Action Initiative (CAI) and ACARN are committed to working together to achieve shared objectives that support climate adaptation research and knowledge transfer. This relationship is further defined below to help clarify roles and enhance collaboration between the organizations.

Primary Shared Objectives

- Establish strategies to coordinate research projects that address industry priorities.
- Enhance knowledge transfer between agricultural researchers and producers.

Collaboration

CAI and ACARN collaborate and work jointly to:

- Define climate adaptation research priorities and projects.
- Strengthen linkages between researchers and sector partners.
- Develop joint extension tools, resources and events

Specific Roles for Climate Adaptation Research and Extension

CAI:

- Works with stakeholders to determine industry research priorities and shares this information with ACARN.
- Delivers climate adaptation extension activities with the industry.

ACARN:

- Hosts events and develops tools to connect agriculture and climate adaptation researchers from across the province.
- Shares research information, documents, extension strategies with ACARN members.
- Coordinates network research projects and establishes research extension tools for researchers.

Formal Linkages

- CAI will participate on the ACARN Steering Committee and subcommittees.
- The ACARN Network Coordinator will provide monthly updates to CAI and to the CAI advisory committee as needed.

1.7. Network Structure

ACARN is structured around three participant groups, which include:

- Steering Committee Members
- A Network Coordinator
- Members

The following section provides detailed information on the appointment, roles and responsibilities of each participant group.

SECTION 2: NETWORK PARTICIPANT: ROLES, APPOINTMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. Steering Committee

2.1.1. Steering Committee

Steering Committee Appointment

- The Steering Committee will be comprised of one or two representative(s) from each partner organization (See section 1.6).
- Members should be selected based on their ability to represent their respective organization/institution, and ability to help resolve issues that the network, network projects, and network activities may face.
- Steering Committee members will be asked to renew their involvement on an annual basis at the beginning of the fiscal year (April). There is no maximum length of consecutive service as a Steering Committee member.
- Outgoing steering committee members are responsible for nominating a replacement from their own institution.
- Approval of nominations will be determined by vote.
- An updated list of current Steering Committee members may be found in Table 1.

Role of the Steering Committee

- Ensure network activities are aligned with stated objectives and that ACARN makes good use of assets.
- Approve the annual ACARN Work Plan and budget.
- Approve or reject changes to ACARN activities that have a high impact on timelines and budget.
- Assist with resolving strategic level issues and risks.
- Provide knowledge and expertise to assist the network in achieving its outcomes.
- Provide advice and guidance on issues facing the network.
- Review and approve the Network Coordinator deliverables.
- Approve member's proposed projects for inclusion as network activities

Steering Committee Responsibilities

- Understand the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes of the network.
- Understand and represent the interests of ACARN stakeholders.
- Review network documents and provide input verbally or by email in a timely manner.

- Provide a verbal or email vote on network decisions in a timely manner.
- Actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of minutes, papers and other Steering Committee documents.
- Support open discussion and debate, and encourage fellow Steering Committee members to voice their insights.

2.1.2. Steering Committee Chair

Steering Committee Chair Appointment

- Appointment will be made at/or following the annual workshop.
- The appointment is for a 1 year term.
- Following the completion of the term, the Steering Committee will either appoint a new Chair or opt to maintain the current Chair.
- The Steering Committee Chair may serve for a maximum of 3 years.

Role of the Steering Committee Chair

In addition to the Steering Committee roles, the Steering Committee Chair will:

- Chair Steering Committee meetings
- Provide guidance to the Network Coordinator on ACARN activities
- Provide direct supervision to the Network Coordinator
- Provide support for the annual ACARN workshop
- Approve minor changes to the annual Work Plan and budget (anything under 10% variance)

Steering Committee Chair Responsibilities

In addition to the Steering committee responsibilities, the Steering Committee Chair will:

- Facilitate steering committee meetings to ensure broad participation and timeliness.
- Ensure that membership of the steering committee is representative of each participating institution.
- Meet with the Network Coordinator on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to guide ACARN activities.
- Participate in planning and hosting of the annual ACARN workshop.
- Moderate network decision making process (e.g. calling for and tallying votes)

2.1.3. Steering Committee Meetings

Meetings will be held periodically to update the Steering Committee and to allow the Steering Committee with the opportunity to guide the direction of ACARN activities. At least two meetings a year will be held, one before the start of the fiscal year (April 1) and one at the annual ACARN workshop.

These meetings will include the Steering Committee and the Network Coordinator but are open to other participants when needed.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held to coincide with key milestones in the ACARN Work Plan. A meeting schedule will be set for each six-month period. Additional sub-Committee meetings may occur on an as needed basis to address specific areas of ACARN activities.

Agenda, Minutes, and Decision Papers

A package will be sent to members three to five business days in advance of a Steering Committee meeting. This package will include the following:

- Agenda for the upcoming meeting
- Minutes of previous meetings
- Decision papers
- Any other documents/information to be considered at the meeting

Proxies

- Members of the Steering Committee can only send proxies to meetings if they have specifically identified an alternate who is being kept informed of Steering Committee activities. Alternates are entitled to participate in discussion and are allowed a role in decision-making.
- The Steering Committee members will inform the Steering Committee Chair as soon as possible if they intend to send an alternate to a meeting and no less than two business days before the scheduled meeting.

Quorum and decision-making

This section outlines how the Steering Committee will make decisions and the minimum number of members (or quorum) required for a decision to be valid.

Quorum

A minimum number of 75% of Steering Committee members are required for decision-making purposes. The quorum must also include a minimum of **50%** of each of the key partner groups (identified above).

Decision-making process

While consensus is viewed as the most desirable approach to Steering Committee decisions, in cases where agreement cannot be reached, the Committee will utilize the 2/3 majority model. For some decisions, online participation may be used instead and requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ response rate.

- 2/3 Majority decision-making: a course of action requires support from 2/3 of the members who attend the meeting if there is quorum
- Consensus: a majority approve a given course of action, but that the minority agrees to go along with the course of action, potentially with some modifications.

Table 1. Current ACARN Steering Committee members

Sector organizations	Reg Ens	BC Agriculture Council /BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation
	Allen James	BC Agriculture Council /BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation
	Emily MacNair	BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative
Government agencies	Jason Lussier	BC Ministry of Agriculture
	Willow Minnaker	BC Ministry of Agriculture
	Shabtai Bittman	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada–Agassiz
	Gary Telford	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada–Agassiz
	Kirsten Hannam	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada– Summerland
Universities	Kent Mullinix	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
	Lauchlan Fraser	Thompson Rivers University
	Tom Pypker	Thompson Rivers University
	Lenore Newman	University of the Fraser Valley
	Lisa Powell	University of the Fraser Valley
	John Janmaat	University of British Columbia–Okanagan
	Louise Nelson	University of British Columbia–Okanagan
	Andrew Black	University of British Columbia– Vancouver
	Sean Smukler (CHAIR)	University of British Columbia– Vancouver
	Serena Black	University of Northern British Columbia
	Jenny Cory	Simon Fraser University

2.2. Network Coordinator

Network Coordinator Appointment

- The Network Coordinator will be appointed by an ACARN hiring sub-committee for a specified term.
- The contract of the Network Coordinator may be re-negotiated following this term.

Role of Network Coordinator

The Network Coordinator reports to the Steering Committee Chair, Steering Committee and/ Subcommittees members. The general role of the Network Coordinator is as follows:

- Plan, coordinate and execute ACARN activities.
- Liaise with partner organizations to determine climate adaptation priorities and assist in the development of research projects which address these priorities.
- Work with partner organizations to enhance knowledge transfer between ACARN members and the industry.
- Provide progress reports or presentations to the Network Steering Committee, stakeholders, funders and partner organizations.
- Participate in outreach events to promote ACARN and share information on the network activities.

Responsibilities of the Network Coordinator

- Represent ACARN at meetings, workshops, and conferences and build relationships with partner organizations associated with climate adaptation research in the BC agriculture sector.
- Coordinate the development and delivery of network research projects.
- Coordinate the development of tools, resources and events which allow ACARN members to share information related to climate adaptation research.
- Coordinate the development of tools, resources, and events to enhance knowledge transfer between ACARN members and the industry.
- Coordinate the development of a climate adaptation curricula and tools designed to help train future climate adaptation specialists.
- Develop an operational ACARN budget and track funding opportunities for the network.
- Organize Steering Committee meetings and deliver supporting materials to members one week in advance of meetings.

The performance of the Network Coordinator will be reviewed regularly by the Steering Committee and an annual review will be provided by the Steering Committee Chair.

2.3. Members

Member appointments

ACARN membership is inclusive and includes researchers, students, policy-makers, industry specialists and producers from across the province who are involved with agriculture and climate change adaptation research in BC. ACARN members will complete the Membership Registration form to join the network and this information will be shared publicly on the ACARN website.

Role of Members

May include any or all of the following:

- Lead or assist in the development of network research projects and extension initiatives.
- Participate on sub-committees related to network research, extension, education and outreach.
- Engage in the development and delivery of ACARN related research projects and extension initiatives.
- Contribute to a collaborative environment for climate adaptation research and extension in the BC agriculture sector.
- Share agriculture and climate change adaptation research information with other network members.
- Provide input on the direction of network activities and share ACARN information with others who are interested in agriculture and climate change adaptation research.

Responsibilities of Members

- Confirm their ACARN membership on an annual basis.
- Inform the Network Coordinator of any plans to withdraw their involvement with ACARN.
- Provide current contact information and description of expertise for the network website.

Benefits Membership

ACARN members will have the opportunity to:

- Connect with a diverse group of agricultural and climate change researchers from across the province.
- Stay up to date on climate adaptation research projects and funding opportunities.
- Get involved in provincial and interdisciplinary agricultural climate adaptation research projects.
- Engage in research extension activities and training sessions.
- Contribute to strengthening linkages between academic, government, and industry groups in the BC agriculture sector.