

BCVMC

BC VEGETABLE MARKETING COMMISSION

Strategic Plan 2024-2027



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Context and Background

BCVMC and Strategic Planning

The BC regulated vegetable industry is organized under the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act* and the British Columbia Vegetable Scheme (the Scheme).

The overall purpose of regulated marketing is to provide a framework for producer economic stability and to satisfy other related public interests. It is intended to benefit producers, the sector's value chain, and the public.

The BC Vegetable Marketing Commission (BCVMC) is the first instance regulator and acts by the authority delegated through the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act* and its Regulations. It is responsible for administering the Scheme and ensuring orderly marketing in British Columbia (BC). Orderly marketing is achieved through the promotion, control, and regulation of production, transportation, packing, storage, and marketing of BC grown vegetables.

The Commission fulfills its first instance regulatory responsibilities through the General Orders, which provide the regulatory framework and compliance standards for all regulated entities. The Commission addresses topics such as delivery and production allocations, the licensing of producers, agencies, and other entities involved in the supply chain to ensure orderly marketing and stable grower returns.

In delivering its responsibilities, the Commission considers the economic stability of the industry and encourages growth of vegetable production in strategic areas. While the Commission's mandate is provided through legislation, its Strategic Plan helps contextualize the regulatory requirements into the market and sector realities. The Plan provides a roadmap for how BCVMC will regulate the industry in the face of current and emerging challenges and opportunities.

Recent Accomplishments

The BCVMC has made several key accomplishments under each of the four priorities that were either established in the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan or arose because of emerging/important issues:

Priority 1: Rebuild Trust in the System

- Appointed two independent Commissioners.
- Revised election policy.
- Re-established and engaged Advisory Committees on strategic topics.

Priority 2: Regulatory Improvements

- Developed the Agency Accountability Framework (implementation began January 1, 2024).
- Developed the Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Procedures Manual (implementation began January 1, 2024).
- Completed the first phase of the modernization of the Consolidated General Orders.
- Expanded the Commission's regulatory oversight to the full province.

Priority 3: Cultural Shift

- Held town hall meetings in conjunction with Annual General Meeting.
- Distributed regular bulletins to industry stakeholders to provide updates on Commission activities.
- Developed the roles and further engaged the Governance and Finance Committees.

Priority 4: Continuity and Consistency of Board and Management

- Developed new Commissioner onboarding program.
- Filled all open Commissioner positions through established appointment and election processes.
- Hired a Licensing and Compliance Manager, replaced Administrative Assistant and Market Analyst.

In addition to the progress against the Strategic Priorities, the Commission also improved its financial stability through a new service fee and levy schedule.

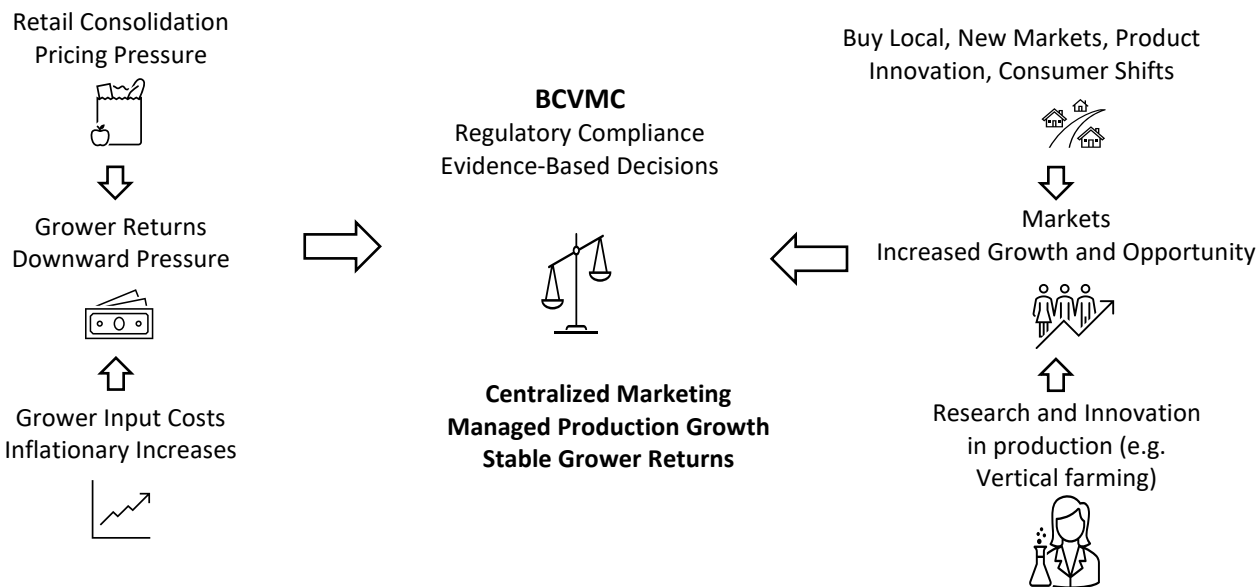
Assessment of the Industry

To assess the state of the BC vegetable industry and ensure discussions were reflective of the industry’s reality, the BCVMC analyzed current market conditions, reviewed responses to an industry survey, and utilized Commissioner experience.

Trends Affecting the Industry

The Commission identified several key trends within the BC vegetable industry that it needs to take into consideration when developing and enforcing regulations. These include inflationary pressure that is driving up input and production costs for producers while, at the same time, agencies are dealing with retail consolidation which is putting downward pressure on prices. The impact of these trends is continued downward pressure on producer returns. There is however also market opportunity for agencies through Buy Local campaigns, new markets, product innovation, and shifting consumer preferences. Producers can also help capitalize on market opportunities through research and innovation that increase yields and mitigate disease pressures and by adopting new production technologies.

These trends require the Commission to balance the needs of producers and the market by ensuring regulatory compliance and timely evidence-based decisions. By doing this, the Commission will support the regulatory framework by protecting orderly marketing, stabilizing grower returns and managing production growth.



Other identified trends which may or may not directly impact the Commission’s decisions and operations:

- Food Security
- Water Restrictions
- Access to Labour
- Urban Pressures
- First Nations / Reconciliation
- International Issues

Stakeholder Analysis

It is important for the Commission to outline in its regulations the responsibilities placed on different regulated entities and partner groups. Regulation should be strategic and effective in understanding and addressing the evolving needs of the industry. The value chain that BCVMC operates within includes several. The following table outlines the responsibilities of Regulated Entities and the role the Commission plays in regulated marketing.

		Regulated Entity Category					Commission
		Producers	Producer Shipper	Agencies	Commission Salesperson	Wholesalers	
Responsibilities	Production Planning	X	X	X			X
	Food Safety	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Stable Returns		X	X			X
	Collaboration	X	X	X			X
	Market Stability			X			X
	Market Access		X	X	X	X	X
	Adaptable Planning	X	X	X	X	X	
	Marketing Strategies			X	X	X	
	Distribution			X	X	X	

Assessment of the Commission

The Commission assessed its performance and role in the industry by reviewing the industry survey and the Commissioner/Chair survey administered by the BC Council of Marketing Boards (COMB). The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were identified by the Commission:

Strengths

- Good breadth of experience, knowledge, and skills amongst Commissioners.
- Momentum from achievements under the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan.
- Advisory Groups are well-established and poised to continue providing the Commission with input and feedback on key initiatives and priorities.

Weaknesses

- Timely decision-making.
- Potential inability to fill elected Commissioner seats.

Opportunities

- Build communication initiatives (e.g., newsletters, town halls, etc.).
- Shift the Commission’s approach from operational to strategic.
- Streamline internal processes.
- Establish service standards.

Threats

- Inconsistency in monitoring of Regulated Entities.
- The risk of a lack of enforcement of the new Agency Accountability Framework and other regulations.
- Efforts by the BC Greenhouse Growers Association to establish a new regulatory authority for the greenhouse sector.
- Resistance to change within the industry.

Key Success Factors

Key Success Factors (KSFs) are traits, characteristics, and results required to demonstrate the Commission's achievement of its vision, mission, priorities, and objectives. The Commission has identified the following KSFs in that regard:

- **Leadership** – strategic leadership of the Commission for the betterment of the industry.
- **Industry Relationship Management** – meaningful engagement and consultation with partner groups.
- **Operational Effectiveness** – having the right people, with the right expertise, in the right positions, at the right time to meet industry challenges.
- **Informed decision-making** - decisions are based on evidence and made with relevant data, information, and expertise.

These KSFs are assessed and evaluated through employee performance reviews, the annual Chair and Commissioner Evaluation self-assessments and occasional industry surveys.

Strategic Framework

Values

Values are fundamental principles and beliefs that serve as implicit criteria guiding all decisions. The BCVMC has identified five key values:

- **Accountable** – We are responsible for the impact of Commission decisions on the industry and strive for informed and objective decisions.
- **Committed** – We are committed to the success and stable growth of the BC vegetable industry.
- **Fair** – We ensure equal access for our members and address issues within our jurisdiction with open dialogue.
- **Outcome Oriented** – We make decisions that provide for the industry's economic stability and enable BC growers to produce a world class product.
- **Transparent** – We ensure all Commission activities are conducted in an open and transparent manner.

Vision

A healthy, prosperous, and sustainable BC vegetable industry

Mission

To provide strategic leadership and effective regulation for BC's vegetable industry

Strategic Priorities

From an analysis of the environment, four strategic priorities were identified by the Commission for focused action over the next 36 months:

1. Regulatory Compliance

- 1.1 Implement the Agency Accountability Framework, including the associated Compliance and Enforcement policies and procedures by December 31, 2024.
- 1.2 Report on regulatory compliance progress to BCFIRB and industry partners.
- 1.3 Complete the modernization of the Consolidated General Orders.

2. Organizational Sustainability

- 2.1 Maintain operational and financial stability.
- 2.2 Implement selective partial cost-recovery fees for certain services rendered by BCVMC.
- 2.3 Recruit qualified Commissioners.
- 2.4 Recruit and retain qualified staff.

3. Operational Excellence

- 3.1 Establish service standards.
- 3.2 Streamline and simplify processes.
- 3.3 Ensure timely decision making based on evidence.

4. Effective Communication

- 4.1 Communicate relevant information to industry partners in a timely manner.
- 4.2 Provide opportunities for industry input on issues.

Implementation Plan (2024-2026)

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Actions	
1. Regulatory Compliance	1.1. Implement the Agency Accountability Framework (AAF) including associated Compliance and Enforcement policies and procedures by December 31, 2024.	a) Initial meetings with Agencies to discuss AAF requirements and identify and action any immediate focus areas b) Establish and implement Agency audit guidelines and timelines for different levels of agency reviews c) Set up and implement AAF Monitoring and Reporting system to track and communicate Agency performance and AAF effectiveness to Commission and others d) Create and implement follow up and communications protocols for Agencies in breach of requirements, including required enforcement procedures for non-compliant agencies. e) Develop and implement an Agency Score Card to measure performance, focus attention and ensure agency compliance f) Develop network of experts to provide support with audits and data interpretation	
	1.2 Report on regulatory compliance progress to BCFIRB and industry partners	a) Review key performance metrics for the Commission with BCFIRB and create a periodic reporting schedule	
	1.3 Complete the Modernization of the General Orders	a) Phase 2 Review and Update of the General Orders, including Delivery and Production Allocation b) Phase 3 Review and Update the remainder of the General Orders	
	2. Organizational Sustainability	2.1. Maintain operational and financial stability	a) Finance Committee quarterly review and reporting of financial statements to the Commission b) Incorporate budgeting process into the Strategic Plan to ensure adequate resources and funding
		2.2 Implement selective partial cost-recovery models for services rendered by BCVMC.	a) Create or update application forms for cost recovery processes b) Implement annual review process of all user Fees and Levies collected by the Commission

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Actions
	2.3 Recruit qualified Commissioners	a) Create Commissioner skills matrix, identify skill gaps, establish development plan, and assess the impact of election policy on the Commission's ability to recruit Commissioners. (Annual Review)
		b) Develop and implement strategy to create producer interest and identify possible candidates to serve on the Commission.
		c) Implement performance and succession plan for Commissioners
	2.4 Recruit and retain qualified staff	a) Analyze Commission skills and capabilities against strategic requirements and identify gaps
		b) Build Human Resources strategy and implement plan to address gaps and needs
		c) Implement comprehensive Staff Performance Management Program
3. Operational Excellence	3.1 Establish Service Standards	a) Establish and implement integrated dates and deadlines for all license applications, renewals, allocation requests, etc. ensuring adequate time for Commission review
		b) Establish and implement tracking and monitoring system for all licenses that show license status and allows for proactive communication with licensees
		c) Review and update licensing processes for all regulated entities with a focus on standardizing, simplifying, and automating these processes
		d) Set up and implement monitoring and feedback process to understand and evaluate whether Commission is meeting partner expectations
		e) Establish and implement service standards and timelines for new license applications, allocation requests, complaints, and other information requests
	3.2 Streamline and Simplify Processes.	a) Complete implementation of File-hold management software.
		b) Complete the Operations Policy and Procedures Manual (Review Annually)
		c) Complete the Governance Policy and Procedures Manual (Review Annually)
		d) Complete the Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual (Review Annually)
		e) Identify and address operational and administrative processes to be improved, automated, or simplified to improve organizational efficiencies
		f) Better utilize the database by collecting and storing relevant data that can be used to streamline and automate processes

Strategic Priority	Objectives	Actions
	3.3 Ensure timely decision making based on evidence.	<p>a) Identify and establish timelines for different types of Commission decisions (e.g.: Agency Applications, Allocations, etc.)</p> <p>b) Identify and implement information required to make effective decisions on agency applications, delivery and production allocations, pricing and other Commission matters</p> <p>c) Establish processes and methodologies to source, update, store, retrieve, and present information that can be used by Commissioners, panels, and others in decision-making and by staff in day-to-day operations</p>
4. Effective Communication	4.1 Communicate relevant information to industry partners in a timely manner through a variety of channels.	<p>a) Identify organizations / entities to be informed of BCVMC activities</p> <p>b) Establish and implement a BCVMC Communications Strategy that supports operational excellence and provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations, requirements of, and areas of concern regarding licensed entities (e.g.: agency accountability) • Ongoing revisions of the General Orders (including the fee schedule, changes in policy and/or procedures, etc.) • Changes related to the Commission’s activities (including strategic issues, the role of advisory committees, etc.)
	4.2 Provide opportunities for industry input on issues.	a) Maintain proactive engagement with advisory committees through regular meetings with substantive and relevant topics.
		b) Continue to hold at least one townhall session per year
		c) Implement Annual Stakeholder survey to receive feedback on Commission performance