



# COAST FUNDS

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### BACKGROUND

1. Coast Funds has the following core communications functions:

- External communications with Participating First Nations community members to keep them informed about and engaged in projects funded by Coast Funds, potential opportunities, successes, and other relevant activities and resource information;
- External communications with Members, Regional Groups, and Funders from time to time about funding approvals, issues related to the governing documents, significant Coast Funds policy decisions, capacity-strengthening and operational activities;
- External communication with key audiences and interested public through Coast Funds' website, social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), Talking Stick (print and electronic), to enhance continuous learning and knowledge sharing around First Nations project investments;
- Occasional contact with media via email, phone, and social media; and
- Internal communications between board members, committees, and staff.

In addition, Coast Funds engages from time to time in communications with third parties (potential partners in various initiatives, for example, and local governments, institutions and businesses).

### COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

#### Goals of Communications

2. The principal goals of Coast Funds' communications include:

- First Nations-driven: Receiving input from Participating First Nations on priorities, process, products, organizational goals and objectives, existing investments and key sectors for investment.
- Member participation: Ensuring Members have access to information on Coast Funds' activities that they need to undertake their roles effectively.
- Project funding:: Effective and efficient support to Participating First Nations in project funding application and reporting process.
- Maximizing First Nations' opportunities: Supporting First Nations' opportunities to maximize allocations and leveraging/access to additional resources options.



# COAST FUNDS

- Capacity-strengthening: Achieving a common understanding with key audience members that Coast Funds' capacity-strengthening work is undertaken through the funding approval process, facilitation of relationships and support for the work of regional groups.
- Proactive, inclusive and transparent process: Clear, consistent, respectful, proactive and timely provision of information, fair consideration of input provided on issues, and meaningful reporting of outcomes of decision-making.
- Building support for organizational goals: Building and maintaining support for economic, environmental and community sustainability in the Great Bear Rainforest and the role of Coast Funds in making progress towards those outcomes.
- Continuous learning and knowledge sharing: Partnering with First Nations to proactively facilitate the sharing of knowledge, lessons learned, strategies, and outcomes resulting from project investments made from both the conservation and economic development funds.

## Key Messages

3. The fundamental approach of Coast Funds is to:
  - a) Make the vital connection between sustainable development projects that embrace conservation values; the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the First Nations communities; and long-term conservation of the region;
  - b) Respond to individual First Nations' based on their stated needs and priorities and their capacity to utilize their Coast Funds' allocations to maximum effect;
  - c) Add substantial value to the funding process through relationship/partnership building, mentoring and applying a high level of rigour to the funding application process, network creation, and knowledge/data gathering and sharing; and
  - d) Adhere to the highest levels of transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

## Approach to Communications

4. General approach to style of communications:
  - a) Clarity, openness, transparency and respect as a core organizational value will be reflected in all communications.
  - b) Story-based, compelling, community-oriented, plain language will be used, avoiding jargon and bureaucratic language.
  - c) Photos, maps and images will be actively used to support communications.
  - d) Coast Funds will communicate with, not just to audiences.



# COAST FUNDS

- e) Coast Funds will actively seek input into key policy decisions, allowing reasonable timelines for consideration, input, and discussion of input, and reporting back on decisions and rationales.
- f) Coast Funds will “walk the talk,” ensuring its messages are consistent with its actions and results.

## Communications Work Plans

- 5. Annual communications work plans will be prepared as part of the annual strategic planning process. In addition, specific strategies and work plans will be developed and implemented to engage key audience members on various issues that arise and to give effect to key decisions from time to time.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- 6. The board is responsible for setting overall communications policy and communications planning as part of its annual strategic planning process. Other communications roles and responsibilities are as follows:
  - a) Communications Committee: As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the Communications Committee is responsible for providing recommendations for annual communications budgets; recommending, approving, and overseeing the implementation of communications policies, procedures, and plans; recommending the management discussion and analysis section of the annual report; and approving the introduction letter of the print edition of Talking Stick.
  - b) External strategic communications: Oversight of strategic external communications is primarily the responsibility of the Communications Manager, with input from the CEO and Communications Committee as the CEO considers necessary or desirable.
  - c) Internal, day-to-day and other communications: Day-to-day operational communications with Participating First Nations and regional groups, development of detailed annual communications work plans, the communications budget, oversight and implementation of internal communications processes, and development of communications materials for third party engagement and public presentations, are primarily the responsibility of the Communications Manager and CEO.
  - d) Media: The board-appointed media spokesperson is the CEO.

## PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

### Annual Work Plans

- 7. Key components of annual communications work plans

Annual communications work plans will be prepared and will include (subject to budgetary requirements and/or limitations):



# COAST FUNDS

## a) General:

- i. A detailed annual report on the previous year's activities and funding approvals;
- ii. Proactive use of the website and other online tools;
- iii. Publication and distribution of Talking Stick;
- iv. Review and update as required of all communications procedures, strategies, and tools; and
- v. Maintenance of a detailed contact list for communities, other organizations, other funding agencies and potential partners.

## b) Engagement with Members:

- i. Annual letter forecasting key upcoming policy decisions and activities;
- ii. Provision of detailed quarterly reports regarding recent board decisions, general activities, and status of funding approvals and allocations; and
- iii. Strategies for engaging effectively with Members on significant policy decisions.

## c) Engagement with other key audience members:

- i. Annual letter to Regional Groups forecasting key upcoming policy decisions and activities;
- ii. Provision of detailed quarterly reports to Funders regarding recent board decisions, general activities, and status of funding approvals and allocations; and
- iii. Strategies for engaging with the Regional Groups and/or Participating First Nations from time to time on significant policy issues or operational activities.

## **Contacting key audiences on significant issues**

### a) Members and Regional Groups

Feedback will be sought from Members (and Regional Group representatives, depending on the issue) on significant policy issues or governing document amendments. This will ensure that they have input into major decisions that will affect the Participating First Nations, such as distribution of excess earnings surpluses or the distribution of the CEDS fund post-2014. The following guidelines will apply as required:



# COAST FUNDS

Contact for input	Procedure
Substantive policy issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Notify Members [and regional group representatives, if applicable] of proposed policy change or development in advance</li><li>▪ Provide reasonable time frame (depending on complexity of issue) for consideration of issue and provision of input</li><li>▪ Offer teleconference or meeting to discuss input if desired</li><li>▪ Report back with policy decision and rationale for decision, and details as to next steps (e.g. governing document amendment).</li><li>▪ Report decision to Participating First Nations immediately if it affects funding approval process, otherwise in Annual Report.</li></ul>
Bylaw amendment (not attached to a policy decision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Notify Members of proposed amendment in advance</li><li>▪ Provide reasonable time frame (depending on complexity of issue) for consideration of rationale for amendment and provision of input</li><li>▪ Offer teleconference or meeting to discuss input if desired</li><li>▪ Report back on rationale for decision with bylaw resolution wording.</li></ul>
Governing document amendment (not attached to a policy decision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Notify Members [and regional group representatives, if applicable] of proposed amendment in advance</li><li>▪ Provide reasonable time frame (depending on complexity of issue) for consideration of rationale for amendment and provision of input</li><li>▪ Offer teleconference or meeting to discuss input if desired</li><li>▪ Report on outcome of consideration of proposed amendment and discussions with other parties to governing documents</li></ul>



# COAST FUNDS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Report amendment to Participating First Nations immediately if it affects funding approval process, otherwise in Annual Report.</li></ul>
Crisis management issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintain up to date contact lists at all times</li><li>▪ Chair to be notified of issues immediately</li><li>▪ All board members to be notified as soon as possible;</li><li>▪ Proposed response to be developed ASAP by ED/ communications staff for Chair/Communications Committee approval</li><li>▪ Members [and regional group representatives, if applicable] to be notified of issue, response and outcomes.</li></ul>

## Media

8. All media inquiries will be responded to immediately. Communications staff will provide background information and schedule interviews with spokespersons as required. Media will be referred to relevant Participating First Nations for direct comment on their projects or activities. The board will be notified of significant media inquiries.

Media reports referring to Coast Funds will be notified to the Communications Committee and board by staff and web links will be included in issues of the newsletter if appropriate. Significant media issues that may impact key audience members and Coast Funds' response to those issues will be reported to key audience members as well as the board in accordance with the crisis management guidelines.