

Communications Policy

Coast Funds

INTRODUCTION

Coast Funds communicates regularly with participating First Nations and their regional groups, and with Members, Funders, supporters, and public audiences. This policy document provides guidance to Coast Funds' leadership team, communications and program staff, and contractors on the organization's expectations for internal, community, and external communications.

In accordance with this policy, communications staff will work with leadership to maintain a strategic communications plan and develop annual communications and project work plans.

DEFINITIONS

Communications Lead: Senior staff member responsible for managing Coast Funds' external, community, and crisis communications.

Community Communications: Communications between Coast Funds staff and participating First Nations, which may relate to project financing, services, or significant events.

Crisis: An event that could cause real or perceived harm (including reputational damage) to Coast Funds, its board and staff teams, or to its ability to serve participating First Nations.

External Communications: Communication with individuals, groups, or organizations outside of Coast Funds, including news media, Members, Funders and supporters, government, other organizations, and the public.

Internal Communications: Communication through official channels between Coast Funds staff members, board of directors, and contractors.

Knowledge Sharing: Collection and sharing of knowledge between Coast Funds, participating First Nations, Indigenous Nations in Canada and other countries, and strategic partners. Knowledge sharing is a form of strategic external communication and engagement.

News Media: Organizations and platforms that deliver news to the general public, including traditional and digital news agencies, publications, radio and television networks, and supporting channels (e.g. podcasts, social media content, blogs.)

Participating First Nations: First Nations that have access to financing and services through Coast Funds, as defined by their participation in the Great Bear Rainforest or Great Bear Sea project finance for permanence initiatives, or through other service agreements.

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COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

Through our communications strategies, plans, and materials, Coast Funds aims to:

- **Uplift First Nations' successes**. Use stories and data to demonstrate the positive outcomes of stewardship and economic development work being led by the First Nations we serve.
- **Tell our story**. As Coast Funds evolves, we will clearly communicate changes to our mandate, priorities, and financing, while also honouring our roots and the relationships we've built over the last 15 years.
- Facilitate respectful knowledge exchange. Support learning and knowledge exchange between the First Nations we serve and with partners, funders, and public audiences in BC, Canada, and elsewhere.
- **Open the door to future opportunities**. As Coast Funds transitions its operating model, our communications will highlight First Nations' investments in economic development and sustainable energy, while supporting engagement on future opportunities.
- **Support First Nation-led stewardship planning and fundraising**. Work with First Nations and their partners to develop materials and resources that help Nations access funding to realize their visions.
- Support smooth delivery of financing, services, and information. Continue to improve processes and products so that audiences can find information, access funding opportunities, connect with staff members, and work with Coast Funds towards shared goals.

VALUES AND POLICY STATEMENTS

Respect and Good Relations

- 1. Coast Funds will centre and uplift participating First Nations and their achievements in its communications plans and products.
- 2. In responding to requests from media and partners, Coast Funds will not speak on behalf of participating First Nations or regional groups (unless requested to do so.)
- 3. As an organization that depends on high-trust relationships, Coast Funds will share significant news concerning the organization and its programs with internal and community audiences (e.g. board of directors, participating First Nations, Members, select supporters) at least one day before sharing publicly.
- 4. Coast Funds will work in partnership with participating First Nations on communications and knowledge sharing materials concerning Nations' projects, investments, and achievements. Prior to publication, Coast Funds will obtain approval (informed consent) from a suitable Nation representative (e.g. a project lead, senior staff member, Hereditary Chief, or elected council member, depending on the nature of the project.) Following publication, Coast Funds will make every effort to honour reasonable requests for changes and updates to previously approved work.
- 5. Upon request and in cooperation with community partners, Coast Funds will use Indigenous and traditional names for people, places, and concepts, with supporting translations to English.

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Integrity

- 6. Coast Funds is responsible for the accuracy of the information it shares with internal, community, and external audiences and will exercise care in checking facts and attributing sources.
- 7. In preparing communications materials, Coast Funds staff members and contractors will use tools and technologies responsibly and in accordance with the organization's privacy policy, code of conduct, values, ethical obligations, and applicable legislation and regulations.
- 8. Coast Funds staff and contractors may use emerging technologies (such as generative AI) to assist in administrative and routine work. In using these tools, staff and contractors maintain responsibility for the quality and accuracy of finished work.
- 9. Coast Funds will not knowingly use Al-generated images, video, or substantive text to replace human creative effort in its communications materials.
- 10. Coast Funds will not publish content that would constitute discrimination or harassment of any kind, defamation and threats, profanity and similarly inappropriate language, or content that violates copyright and trademark law, or promotes illegal activity.
- 11. In the event of a crisis, the Communications Lead will work closely with the CEO, Communications Committee, and the board of directors, as needed, to confirm facts and provide timely information to participating First Nations, Members, donors, partners, media, and other public audiences. To prevent the spread of misinformation, board and staff members are asked to avoid sharing or spreading information that does not come through official channels.

Collaboration and Reliability

- 12. Coast Funds' communications work with First Nations will be carried out in the spirit of reciprocity, with shared benefits. When producing project stories and publications, communications staff and contractors will make recordings and drafts available to collaborating partners and will share usage rights for published work and any photos or videos commissioned or produced during the course of the project.
- 13. Coast Funds will honour reasonable requests from participating First Nations and other partners who wish to reuse, adapt, and republish communications materials and policies. In granting these permissions, Coast Funds will obtain or facilitate appropriate consent from partners involved in the creation of these works.
- 14. In accordance with the *Copyright Act*, Coast Funds owns the copyright for original works (including written materials, publications, multimedia content) created through the course of an employee's work. Employees wishing to retain copyright over selected creative works may propose an alternate arrangement, subject to agreement by the CEO.
- 15. Coast Funds will maintain and adhere to its visual and writing style guidelines to reinforce its brand identity and help audiences recognize official communications. To maintain consistency in branding and messaging, communications team members will review all materials (e.g. presentations, publications) prepared for external audiences.

Adaptability and Responsiveness

16. Coast Funds will adapt its messaging and communications materials to meet the needs and preferences of different audiences. In preparing materials, communications team members will make

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reasonable efforts to apply plain language principles and accessibility standards to better serve all audiences.

- 17. Coast Funds staff members will acknowledge requests from participating First Nations, news media, and partners in a timely manner (typically, within one business day) and will provide a full response within one week. For requests from news media concerning the organization, Coast Funds staff and board members will forward these inquiries to the Communications Lead for a response.
- 18. Coast Funds' Communications Lead is expected to maintain a current understanding of legal, policy, and technology trends that impact communications and to adapt strategies and processes, as needed.

Transparency and Accountability

- 19. Coast Funds' CEO acts as the organization's spokesperson when speaking with news media and government. The CEO may request support on a case-by-case basis from the board Chair or Communications Committee Chair, or may delegate the responsibility to senior staff members.
- 20. Coast Funds will provide credit, whenever possible, to photographers, videographers, designers, and other creative partners that contribute to its communications materials.
- 21. Coast Funds will make its governing documents and policies available on its website for external review and download.
- 22. Coast Funds will post its annual report and audited financial statements on its website by no later than April 30 of the following calendar year.
- 23. Coast Funds staff will collect metrics on the performance of its communications and knowledge sharing activities, and share relevant findings and insights with senior management and board members.

ROLES

Board of Directors: The board develops three-year strategic plans, setting the overall direction for the organization's communications strategies and plans, and approves the organization's annual report, published strategic plan, and operating budget.

Communications Committee: The Communications Committee reviews the communications policy, annual report, and published strategic plan, and provides a recommendation to the board for their approval. The Committee also reviews the strategic communications plan, ensuring alignment with the overall strategic plan. The Committee will provide regular updates to the board, summarizing business arising from its meetings. From time to time, the board or CEO may request the Committee's review and input on important communications plans and products.

Chief Executive Officer: The CEO reviews and approves the strategic communications plan, annual work plans, and external communications materials, including media releases, publications, videos, and project stories.

Communications Lead: The Communications Lead develops the organization's strategic communications plan, annual work plans, and communications budget. The Lead provides day-to-day direction for

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communications activities, prepares a quarterly report for the board, and acts as the main point of contact for news media requests.

Communications Team: Staff members and contractors, under the direction of the CEO and Communications Lead, prepare and update communications materials, in accordance with the communications policy, strategic communications plan, and annual work plans.

APPROVALS

The board of directors reviews and approves the published strategic plan, annual report, and operating budget.

The CEO reviews and approves the strategic communications plans and all other external and substantive communications materials, including media releases, publications, videos, and project stories. The CEO may delegate approval authority, on a case-by-case basis, to the Communications Lead or another senior staff member.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF POLICY

The Communications Committee will review the communications policy at least once each year and recommend to the board any changes the Committee feels are necessary.

RELATED POLICIES

Coast Conservation Endowment Fund Foundation & Coastal Indigenous Prosperity Society:

- Communications Policy: Guidelines for Use of Social Media
- Gift Acceptance and Ethical Fundraising Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Procedure: Response to Harassment of Staff by Clients

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RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS

Province of British Columbia:

• Personal Information Protection Act

Government of Canada:

- Canada Anti-Spam Legislation
- Copyright Act
- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act

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