

B.C.- Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA)
Project Proposal D6 – 2009-2010 Program Year

A. Title of project: D6 – Foundations for the Social Economy

B. With which BALTA SERC is this project associated? This is a cross-cutting project

C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:

Mike Lewis, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, Lead Investigator in BALTA

D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved:

Patrick Conaty, Research Fellow, New Economics Foundation, London, England

E. Description of project, including objectives, outputs and intended outcomes:

Objective

1. To define strategic pathways relevant to our current economic and ecological crisis that reconfigure CED and Social Economy approaches to meet contemporary challenges.

Outputs

1. A short report or pamphlet for BALTA and extended circulation in the field (between 20 and 25 pages)

Outcomes

1. An enabling framework to guide ways and means to integrate separate social economy and CED initiatives within a more powerful strategy;
2. An examination of the findings in outcome 1 for their relevance as a contribution to building a capacity to synthesize the research results flowing out of BALTA

F. Purpose and significance of the research, including congruence with the strategic research objectives identified for the SERC and BALTA. Why should this project be approved, given BALTA's limited resources? [Refer to the project criteria in the BALTA Workplans and Project Proposals Policy.]

Work by EF Schumacher pointed to the scope for a new theory to meet community economic needs on a sustainable basis.. He saw wide scope for future solutions through new locally focused systems to harness dynamically the key economic factors of production: land, labour and capital.

Schumacher examined these relationships in his research investigations into intermediate and appropriate technology. His colleagues, Bob Swann, George Benello and Shann Turnbull developed this conceptual framework further in their book, *Building Sustainable Communities*.

The authors of the book pointed to new forms of land reform, local capital mobilization and co-operative institution building as the key foundations for a new social and ecological society. The research team was led by the late Bob Swann, then Executive Director of the Institute for Community Economics.

The research project was an international one and the book was published in 1989 on behalf of The Other Economics Summit (TOES) – an international network supported by social economy organizations, academic researchers and NGOs in Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, USA and Japan. TOES were two to three day events running simultaneously with the G7 summits each year. The first TOES was in London in 1984 and the policy papers were published in a seminal book on the social economy, *The Living Economy*, edited by Paul Ekins, the Executive Director of the New Economics Foundation. The TOES events were rotated from country to country annually from 1988 and ran for 11 years including two international events in Canada and three in Britain. *Building Sustainable Communities* was published by TOES North America in the wake of the second TOES event in Toronto in 1988 and as a reader for the TOES held in the USA in 1990.

Since the publication of *Building Sustainable Communities*, many of these new approaches have been successfully developed internationally including Community Land Trusts, community development loan funds, community venture capital funds, and new dynamic models for social and co-operative enterprise. However there has been no recent work to explore how strategically these approaches could become mutually re-enforcing within an ambitious strategic approach to community economic development.

At present the strategies and tools employed by the social economy in most countries are diffuse as is the policy frameworks that either support or constrain them. BALTA research has identified 62 Federal and Provincial policies in western Canada plus 104 programmes operating currently. Unfortunately there is no integrated narrative to bring together the small parts to form a more cohesive whole. This project will review the success of emergent systemic approaches and their scope in order to better delineate the implications for providing a strong infrastructure for a new social and ecological economy at the sub-regional level. The investigation and report will distil key findings and produce a new conceptual framework for understanding the need for putting in place foundations for a more strategic approach by social economy actors. The project is timely as banking reform and affordable housing solutions are of growing interest in the wake of credit crunch and the developing recession. The project will appraise recurrent needs for social enterprises including: equitable access to land & premises, patient capital and enabling legal structures.

BALTA has a fundamental interest in understanding the core foundations of the social economy and in exploring ways to integrate more effectively social economy initiatives. The project outlined here can be expected to increase BALTA capacity for deliberate and fruitful discourse by drawing on the research and intellectual capital of Patrick Conaty (who has been a key international researcher in the aforementioned fields) and applying his specialist knowledge to this strategic interest of BALTA.

Additionally, we expect that the conceptual clarification yielded from this project will provide an important new vantage point from which to critically examine current research and to better inform and develop the work being undertaken by the SERCs.

G. Will the project involve student researchers in a paid or unpaid capacity? If yes, will they need to be recruited or have they already been identified? Briefly describe the roles and responsibilities of students involved in the research project, the skills/experience they will acquire, and how this will complement their academic training. Explain as well how adequate supervision and support of the student will be ensured.

We would like a student, preferably a PHD or senior Masters student with a relevant thesis interest, to do literature research in support of what Mike and Pat already have in hand. We request \$2000 but only to be drawn down if we can find the right student in a timely way.

Pat Conaty and Mike Lewis will jointly guide the student's efforts through joint conference calls and e-mail.

H. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:

Mike Lewis and Patrick Conaty will create the initial design of the paper by early April 2009. They will meet for 8 days of discussion, analysis and writing in mid-April. The results will be tested with a number of key researchers and practitioners in Luxembourg during the course of the 4th meeting of the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Solidarity Economy in late April. The paper will be completed in draft form in May 2008. The final paper will be completed by the end of June 2008. It will be distributed in advance of the 2009 BALTA symposium to SERC members.

I. Describe plans for communicating research results within the academic community. Indicate audience and specific output(s) i.e., refereed journal articles, conference presentations or other appropriate channels.

This is a think piece at this juncture, although as indicated, it will begin to be tested at the outline form in Lux 2009. We will assess possible adaptation of the paper for academic audiences later. However it will be distributed proactively on a targeted basis.. Its first presentation will likely be to the fall symposium of BALTA. Also, it will be distributed through BALTA and the National Hub to all researchers involved in the CSERP.

J. Describe plans for communicating research results outside the academic community to practitioners, policy makers, and other people for whom the research results could be significant. Indicate audience and specific output(s).

It will be placed on the BALTA website and on the website of New Economics Foundation in Britain. It will also be sent directly to a series of practitioners in the CED, Community Development and Co-operative fields as well as key researchers involved in these fields. Making Waves will be asked to review it for possible publication. It will be advertised in a special issue of Making Waves on Development Finance in the fall of 2009. The US Solidarity Economy Network will be asked to place it on their web-site.

K. Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating your research project. Feel free to consult with BALTA's Coordinator on designing possible approaches. (Note that

monitoring and evaluation are extremely important both for ensuring the success of the project as well as satisfying reporting to SSHRC.)

The two researchers will be actively inviting response to this project. It will feed into a book currently being designed by the two authors for which funding will be sought from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in England. A range of people in Britain associated with the Green New Deal and the New Economics Foundation and leading researchers and practitioners in Canada and the US will be asked to provide direct feedback which in turn will help shape the final approach to completing the book design which will then be submitted to publishers in Canada, the US, the U.K and possibly Australia.

L. What are the research tools you propose to use in your project?

NOTE: If your research involves human subjects, you MUST provide copies of your proposed research tools (as well as your research plan) prior to commencing research. Please see the document “BALTA Ethical Review Process – Simplified” for information about ethical review requirements.

This is primarily a think piece.

M. Budget and Contributions

Category	Requested of BALTA	Other Contributions
Student salaries	\$1,810	
Student benefits/overhead costs (if the student will be a CCCR hire, add 10.5% of the student salaries amount; if the student will be employed by another institution, add the relevant amount)	\$190	
Researcher Release Time	17 days of M Lewis release time	Cash Contribution of \$6400 from Canadian Centre for Community Renewal to be paid to Pat Conaty for his Participation
Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)	\$300 for Conference Calls	
Knowledge Dissemination		
Travel	\$1800 for face to face working session in April & Testing in Luxembourg in late April	In-Kind Contributions valued at \$1600 for accommodation and meals for 9 days in U.K
TOTALS	\$4,100	\$8,000

Budget explanation

Student – PHD or Masters level to provide literature search and review support. It will only be used if an appropriate student can be found in a timely way

Travel: One trip to the UK and Luxembourg in April 2009 to work on the analysis portion and on the report.

Knowledge dissemination: not yet determined beyond BALTA but to be worked out with the New Economics Foundation