



# Final Report

“Small Scale Food Processors  
Scale Up Support Program”

Submitted by  
Small Scale Food Processor Association

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## **Executive Summary**

The Food Business Refresh Program concluded in 2021; however, it served as a foundational reference for the Scale Up Final Report. The writers research and findings are derived from feedback provided by the program's Cohort members, small scale food processors located throughout the province, who completed the Food Business Refresh Program. The Cohort member feedback provided a comprehensive perspective on the current needs of small scale food processors within the province. This feedback formed the basis for the findings and recommendations contained within this report.

The Small Scale Processors Scale Up Program was initiated to support the growth and development of small scale food processors in British Columbia. Through a comprehensive needs assessment in Phase 1 and a targeted Scale Up Program in Phase 2, the initiative sought to identify key gaps in existing programs and capitalize on opportunities within the small scale processor sector.

The Phase 1 Needs Assessment involved gathering insights from 25 stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The 25 participants were part of a larger group of 74 who previously participated in the Food Business Refresh program in 2021. The Phase 1 process revealed areas of opportunity for small scale processors including the need for coaching with financial literacy, sales and marketing strategies, brokerage and distribution knowledge and food safety guidance.

In the Phase 1 needs assessment, key findings illuminated critical areas requiring attention and action. Through analysis and stakeholder engagement, several pressing needs emerged, ranging from staffing difficulties, food safe compliance, cash flow and financial literacy needs, co-packing challenges and technical and digital sales and marketing coaching needs. Understanding these findings provides a foundational framework for strategic planning and resource allocation, guiding efforts towards targeted interventions and sustainable solutions to address identified needs effectively.

Phase 2 Scale Up Program was designed to provide tailored support to a 19 member, pilot cohort of small scale processors. Activities for the Phase 2 Scale Up Program consisted of three networking sessions, three webinars, one-on-one coaching, and access to industry experts for the cohort members. Phase 2 of the Scale Up Program goal was to enhance participants' knowledge, skills, and networks.

The underlying intention was to identify gaps/opportunities in existing programs/services experienced by small scale processors and create a common theme by drawing upon the insights and expertise of individuals, companies, instructors, industry experts, consultants, and ground truthing.

As a result of the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2, the Small Scale Processors Scale Up Program has yielded the following recommendations:

1. Exploration of a Centralized Grant and Funding Information Platform.
2. Exploration of Equipment Acquisition and Scaling Operations Grant Programs.
3. Exploration of a Financial Literacy Program.
4. Exploration of a Food Science Support Program.
5. Investigate a Sales and Marketing Training Program.
6. Exploration of a Food Safety Certification Assistance Program.
7. Exploration of a Cost Reduction and Business Scaling Program.
8. Investigate an Export Assistance Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors.
9. Exploration of a Labour Attraction and Retention program.
10. Investigate a Co-Packing Assistance Program.

## **Introduction**

In the pursuit of sustainable growth and development within the food processing sector of British Columbia, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food embarked on a comprehensive initiative that entailed a Phase 1 Needs Assessment and a Phase 2 Scale Up Program. This report stands as our commitment to understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by small scale food processing stakeholders and to supporting their growth and success through targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

The food processing landscape of British Columbia is rich and diverse, comprised a wide array of small scale food and beverage processors. Yet, amidst this diversity, lies a common thread of ambition, resilience, and a shared desire to thrive in an ever-evolving industry. The initiative began with a Needs Assessment, designed to delve into the intricacies of the sector, uncovering challenges, opportunities, and untapped potential.

Using past participants from the 2021 Food Business Refresh ("Refresh") program that was delivered by the Small Scale Food Processors Association (SSFPA), the Project assessed the capacity and scaling needs of small scale food processors, including effectiveness of existing programs, training, and services, and to develop pilot training based on the findings to address gaps and build capacity and competitiveness of B.C. small scale processors businesses. The methodology of the Needs Assessment conducted in Phase 1 included surveys, interviews and focus groups. The format of the pilot training, Scale Up Program in Phase 2 was created based on findings from Phase 1 and included three webinars, three networking sessions, one-on-one coaching, and access to experts for the selected 19 cohort members.

The results of the Project are intended to update industry intelligence to help guide current and future programming and advocacy for small scale food processors, particularly identifying training and other capacity building gaps.

In the Phase 1 assessment, through a series of data collection methods including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and stakeholder consultations, we engaged with small scale processors, seeking to understand their needs, challenges, satisfaction, and recommendations. This process allowed us to gain invaluable insights into the challenges, opportunities and industry barriers including market access barriers encountered by small scale processors.

Based on the findings of the Needs Assessment in Phase 1, a Phase 2 Scale Up Program pilot training program was developed to provide a Cohort of 18 members, as one member closed their business, with the resources required to scale their business. Phase 2, the Scale Up Program, aimed to translate the insights gleaned from the Phase 1 Needs Assessment into tangible action, providing targeted support and resources to small scale processor businesses poised for growth and expansion. Through networking sessions, webinars, one-on-one coaching, and access to industry experts, participants were provided the knowledge, skills, and networks to support scaling their operations and seize new opportunities.

In the subsequent sections of this report, we will highlight the findings and recommendations stemming from the Phase 1 Needs Assessment and provide a summary of the Phase 2 Scale Up Program activities, outcomes, and recommendations.

**From two of the Scale Up Program Cohort participants:**

*“The Scale Up Program has delivered tremendous value to Not Too Sweet craft sodas. Gaining access to knowledgeable experts on issues affecting our scaling business, would be nearly impossible to source on our own. The program facilitated learnings that will highly impact our financing and sales strategies. We’re glad to have participated in the program!”*

Thanks,  
Elaine Van  
CEO  
Not Too Sweet Craft Sodas

*“One of the big challenges of small food businesses like ourselves is having the time and resources to network with strategic people within the industry. Jody Marshall of Sustainable Results Group offered us valuable connections with excellent key experts experienced in their fields through the Scale Up webinars. It is these networking resources that we value the most in our journey of growth and development as a startup BC based food business.”*

Cheers,  
Mandy  
THE BOG  
Riverside Cranberry Farm

## **Phase 1 Needs Assessment**

### **Overview**

Phase 1 of the initiative entailed engaging small scale food processors through a data collection process, encompassing surveys, interviews and a value add working group. This collaborative approach facilitated an understanding of the current challenges faced by small scale processors, including market access barriers and operational constraints.

Phase 1, the Needs Assessment component, entailed surveying the cohort from the 2021 Refresh program, conducting interviews with 25 participants (see appendix A for participant list – as a note, Queen B Kettle Korn has since closed their business) from the previous Food Business Refresh program, all of whom are active small scale food and beverage processors within the food processing sector. This phase was instrumental in obtaining an understanding of the challenges, aspirations, and operational opportunities experienced by small scale food processors in their day-to-day business endeavors.

### **Methodology:**

The Phase 1 Needs Assessment aimed to understand the experiences, challenges, and needs of small scale food processors within the food and beverage processing industry. The assessment methodology involved a combination of surveys with multiple-choice and short-answer questions, followed by one-on-one interviews and then a value add working group to delve deeper into participants' responses to the survey questions.

Throughout the project, the Project Management Team, which included representatives from the Ministry, collaborated by providing feedback on the approach and methodology for Phase 1. Their insights were integral in ensuring important perspectives, including those from the Ministry, were considered and incorporated into the project's planning and execution.

The following methodology was utilized for Phase 1:

1. Survey Design
2. Participant Selection
3. Survey Administration
4. Data Collection and Analysis
5. One-on-One Interviews
6. Creation of a Value Add Working Group
6. Data Integration and Synthesis
7. Insights and Recommendations



By employing this methodology, the Phase 1 Needs Assessment aimed to provide a foundation for understanding the unique context and requirements of small scale food processors, providing a foundation for the Phase 2 program development process.

During Phase 1, 25 participants engaged in an assessment of existing programs and services covering three crucial areas:

1. **Benefits Realized from the Food Business Refresh Program and other internal to government/external programs or services utilized.**
2. **Current State of Their Business**
3. **Assistance Needed Now to Progress/Scale**

### **Overview of Needs Assessment Survey:**

The Needs Assessment Survey served as a valuable tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the Food Business Refresh Program and other internal to government and external programs and services and identifying what the areas small scale food processors need assistance with currently. The survey provided insights into various aspects of the program's impact and effect. Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences and outcomes from the program, allowing for an assessment of the benefits, skills acquired, and knowledge gained. Through structured questions, the survey also captured participants' perceptions of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and suggestions for future enhancements. This feedback mechanism facilitated a deeper understanding of the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of participants.

### **Survey Summary:**

Multiple Choice Responses.

- 87% of respondents reported a positive impact on their businesses because of the Food Business Refresh Program.
- 52.8% of respondents expressed they were satisfied with the program, while 46.5% indicated they were very satisfied.
- A vast majority, 99% of respondents, found the topics covered and the delivery methods employed in the program to be valuable.
- All participants, 100%, highlighted the benefits of being part of a cohort within the program.

## Survey Written Responses

Survey Question – Since starting your business, in which topic areas have you most needed to develop your skills and knowledge as a business?

- Sales and Marketing
- Operations and Efficiency
- Finance and Accounting
- Manufacturing and Production Scaling
- Technology and Data utilization
- Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance

## Synopsis Of Survey Questions

**Shift from Operations to Sales/Marketing:** Initially, many businesses focused on improving operations and manufacturing. Over time, the focus shifted to enhancing sales and marketing skills. **Continued Emphasis on Finance:** The need for financial management skills remained constant, though the specific challenges evolved with business growth and market changes.

**Increasing Importance of Technology:** The growing importance of understanding and utilizing technology, social media and data for business growth was evident.

Respondents indicated accessing the following programs beyond the Food Business Refresh program:

- Export Navigator
- Canadian Digital Adoption Program
- Futurpreneur
- BuyBC (Packaging funding)
- Various grants offered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Business Development Workshop delivered by Farm Food Drink
- Women Entrepreneurs BC (WeBC) Peer Mentoring
- Lean Marketing Program delivered by Farm Food Drink
- Export/Trade Missions through the Trade Commissioner
- CanExport Innovation Program
- Community Futures (Financing)
- National Research Council Canada (Financing)
- Northern Development Initiative (Financing)
- Traceability Program
- On-Farm and Post-Farm Programs
- Launch Online Grant
- Kimberley Food Recovery Depot
- Columbia Basin Trust (Equity Investments)
- Venture Park Labs Accelerator Program

- Young Agrarians

The survey also intended to specifically address what the participants required now for assistance and expertise by asking the following question:

What other resources, programs, coaching, etc. would help your business expand and grow?

- Professional development and coaching
- Operational efficiency and technology
- Marketing and distribution support
- Financial support and access to capital
- Programs for scaling their business
- Mentorship and networking
- Access to resources for start-ups and small business

Survey Key Take-Away; Lack of Suitable Programs for Some Businesses: Some respondents expressed they have not found effective programs for their specific needs, specifically for export opportunities. This indicates a potential gap in the availability or awareness of suitable market readiness programs.

## **One-on-One Interviews**

As part of the Phase 1, one-on-one interviews were conducted with each of the 25 participants who were selected for the Needs Assessment. A complete set of questions for the one-on-one interviews is provided in Appendix B.

### **Summarized One-on-One Interviews:**

#### **Current Business State:**

##### **1. Product Development and Innovation:**

Many businesses developed new products (e.g., canned/carbonated wine, freeze-dried products, low-alcohol options, frozen Oyster Rockefeller) and changed their packaging (e.g., from glass to cans, label changes).

##### **2. Market Position and Sales Strategy:**

A shift towards direct-to-consumer sales was noted, with an emphasis on local and farmgate sales. Businesses preferred this model due to the high costs associated with wholesaling and the lack of co-packing capacity/co-packers. Some businesses experienced significant growth in retail presence, scaling up to larger grocery chains.

##### **3. Operational Changes and Challenges:**

Investments in new equipment and facilities, such as freeze dryers and commercial kitchen spaces, were made to enhance production capabilities. Several businesses faced challenges like unused equipment, compliance with food safety needs, and difficulties in packaging and labeling.

#### **4. Business Planning and Management:**

Improved understanding and implementation of business plans and marketing strategies were common. Setting sales targets, financial forecasting, and measuring progress were key aspects of this improvement. Utilization of coaching and mentorship provided in the various programs for practical business applications and digital support was highly valued.

#### **5. Financial Impact:**

Revenue growth and increased sales figures were reported by many businesses. Some experienced a substantial increase in their annual revenue. Cost-related changes, like reducing the cost of goods sold and managing expenses better, were also noted.

#### **6. Challenges and Future Outlook:**

Businesses faced various challenges, such as the lack of co-packing opportunities, staffing issues, space limitations, and meeting regulatory requirements like HACCP. There is a forward-looking approach with plans for further expansion, new product lines, and continued improvement.

#### **Key Challenges Faced Now:**

##### **1. Compliance with Food Safety Regulations:**

Many businesses mentioned challenges related to understanding and adapting to food safety requirements, and other regulations. This includes the cost of compliance and the need for additional equipment and staffing.

##### **2. Economic Pressures and Cash Flow Issues:**

The recession and economic uncertainty have impacted sales, particularly for luxury items like wine. Businesses are also facing challenges in managing cash flow, with some needing equipment to increase production efficiency but struggling with the associated costs.

##### **3. Operational Challenges:** Several responses highlighted issues with scaling up operations, such as insufficient equipment and labour, the significant lack of co-packing capacity and services in the province, and the complexities of managing a small team. This includes balancing the need for increased production with the cost of labour and equipment.

##### **4. Staffing Difficulties:** A common theme was the difficulty in sourcing, training, and retaining staff. Seasonal fluctuations in business, like closing for winter or varying product demand, exacerbate this issue. Higher labour costs and finding people with the right skills are also concerns.

5. **Market Adaptation and Sales Strategy:** Businesses are trying to adapt to new market realities, which include shifting focus from certain product lines, like frozen foods, to others like freeze-dried products. The need to improve online sales presence and marketing efforts, including social media and website optimization, was mentioned.
6. **Supply Chain and Production Issues:** Supply chain disruptions are affecting the availability and cost of ingredients and packaging materials. Some businesses are also facing challenges with processing capacity, such as space limitations, the lack of co-packers, and the need for more efficient equipment.
7. **Regulatory Challenges:** New or changing regulations, are creating additional hurdles. These include meeting the requirements of government inspections and adapting to new farmgate regulations.

In conclusion, the participant surveys, interviews, and focus/working group conducted in Phase 1 of the Needs Assessment Program offered valuable insights into the challenges faced by the small scale food processors in the sector. The survey, interviews and focus/working group provided a platform for various perspectives and insights into the small scale food processor industry dynamics. This groundwork facilitated efforts in Phase 2 of the program to support the growth and success of food processing businesses.

## **Phase 2**

### **Curriculum Design**

Building upon the findings of the Phase 1 Needs Assessment, targeted training programs tailored to the needs identified, were developed. Phase 2, known as the Scale Up Program, translated these insights into actionable strategies, providing participants with access to three webinars, three networking sessions, one-on-one coaching sessions and access to industry experts. These initiatives aimed to enhance and elevate participants knowledge, skills, and networks to assist with the scaling of their operations and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

### **Methodology Overview for Curriculum Development in Phase 2:**

#### **1. Data Analysis from Phase 1:**

We conducted a thorough analysis of the Phase 1 data, including a survey, insights from one-on-one interviews and a focus/working group. This analysis helped identify prevalent themes and priorities among participants.

## **2. Identifying Key Themes and Priorities:**

The analysis identified several recurring themes that emerged from the Phase 1 data collection. These included challenges related to food safety and regulatory compliance, lack of financial literacy, growth, and scaling, as it relates to brokerage and distribution, and implementing effective sales marketing strategies. These themes were prioritized based on their frequency of response and significance in addressing the needs of participants.

## **3. Curriculum Design:**

Based on the identified themes and participant feedback, a comprehensive curriculum for Phase 2 of the program was developed. This curriculum framework consisted of networking sessions, webinars/workshops, and coaching sessions, designed to address the specific needs and priorities identified in Phase 1.

In summary, the development of the Phase 2 curriculum was a collaborative and iterative process guided by insights from the needs assessment, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing evaluation. By leveraging the expertise of subject matter experts, incorporating stakeholder feedback, and prioritizing participant needs, the curriculum was tailored to address the unique challenges and aspirations of program participants. The resulting curriculum served as a valuable resource for empowering small scale processors with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to thrive in a dynamic and volatile business environment.

## **Cohort Selection and Development**

### **Overview of Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort Selection and Development**

The Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort selection and development process was a multifaceted endeavour aimed at identifying and cultivating a diverse group of participants poised for growth and success within the food processing sector. This process involved planning, outreach, and evaluation to ensure that the cohort composition was reflective of the program's objectives and aligned with the needs and aspirations of the participants.

Below is the overview of how the Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort was selected and developed:

### **Methodology for Phase 2 Cohort Selection and Formation:**

#### **1. Needs Assessment Analysis:**

- We conducted a thorough analysis of Phase 1 Needs Assessment findings to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by small scale food processors. Insights from this analysis, detailed in the needs assessment report, guided the development of criteria for selecting cohort members.

#### **2. Define Selection Criteria:**

- Based on the insights gleaned from the needs assessment, we established criteria to ensure a well-rounded and diverse cohort. These criteria included considerations such as business size, growth potential, market niche, industry experience, and readiness for scaling.

#### **3. Evaluation:**

- Each participant underwent an evaluation process to assess their business's viability, growth potential, and alignment with program goals. This evaluation assisted us to identify businesses that were best positioned to benefit from the program and contribute positively to the cohort dynamic.

#### **4. Cohort Development:**

- Upon completion of the evaluation process, selected participants were invited to join the Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort. Onboarding was provided to the cohort, which familiarized participants with program expectations, networking, and webinar dates, one-on-one and access to expert coaching opportunities available to them.

In summary, the selection and development of the Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort involved an approach to identify, recruit, and support a group of small scale food processors ready for growth. By using insights from the Needs Assessment Phase, setting selection criteria, conducting recruitment, and offering customized support and resources, the process ensured that participants were prepared to capitalize opportunities and address challenges, as they scaled their businesses in the food processing sector.

## Phase 2 Curriculum

### Overview of Curriculum for Phase 2 Scale Up Program

The curriculum for the Phase 2 Scale Up Program was created to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to scale their small scale food processing businesses effectively. Structured around a series of webinars, and networking opportunities, the curriculum was designed to provide participants with comprehensive insights into key areas critical for business growth and success within the food processing sector. Below is an overview of the curriculum components:

1. **Initial Networking Session:** The program kicked off with an initial networking session aimed at fostering connections, building rapport, and setting the stage for collaborative learning. Participants had the opportunity to introduce themselves and their businesses, share their business backgrounds, and establish connections with fellow cohort members. Icebreaking activities and group discussions facilitated meaningful interactions, laying the foundation for a supportive and collaborative learning community.
2. **Webinar #1:** Based on the participant feedback from Phase 1, a financial literacy webinar was created for participants, presented by Andrew Gregson, author of two books, *Pricing Strategies for Small Business* and *The Dark Art of Pricing*, and a respected consultant. The webinar focused on financial literacy, providing participants with essential knowledge and skills to effectively manage their business finances. Topics covered included budgeting, cash flow management, pricing, financial business planning, tax implications, and accessing financing options. Andrew Gregson shared practical insights, best practices, and tools to help participants make informed financial decisions and optimize their business operations.
3. **Networking Session 2:** Throughout phase 1, participants expressed a lack of understanding as to how the brokerage and distribution aspect of the industry works. Kaylan Wiebe from Salud Brand Management, a renowned firm specializing in brokerage and distribution within the food industry was the guest speaker for networking session 2. The session focused on what services brokers and distributors provide, strategies for optimizing brokerage and distribution channels, navigating supply chain challenges, and expanding market reach. Participants had the opportunity to engage in interactive discussions, ask questions, and glean insights from the guest speaker's expertise and experiences.



4. Webinar #2: With the ever changing technology and social media platforms available to small scale food processors in today's world, participants expressed a genuine lack of knowledge and understanding on the sales and marketing aspect of their business. Caleb West, a leading Sales and Marketing entrepreneur created a Sales and Marketing webinar for the Cohort. The Sales and Marketing webinar delved into sales and marketing strategies tailored to the unique needs of small scale food processors. Topics covered included branding, market positioning, customer segmentation, digital marketing, social media strategies, and e-commerce solutions. Caleb West shared practical tips, case studies, and success stories to help participants enhance their sales and marketing efforts, attract customers, and drive business growth.
5. Networking Session 3: The third networking session provided participants with an opportunity to engage in peer-to-peer networking, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. Participants exchanged experiences, insights, and challenges related to scaling their food processing businesses, fostering a supportive and dynamic learning community. The session also identified potential connections with industry experts, mentors, and potential collaborators, enabling participants to leverage external resources and expertise to support their growth journey.
6. Webinar #3: Findings from Phase 1 clearly indicated a need for cohort members to better understand their options, costs and timelines associated with pursuing a food safety certification. Margaret Daskis from Fresh Ideas and Solutions and Nancy Ross from Ross Food Consulting created and delivered the content for the Food Safety webinar. Topics covered included food safety regulations, types of food safety certifications, HACCP principles, quality control measures, food safety certification requirements, and best practices for ensuring product safety and integrity.
7. One-on-One Coaching Sessions: The one-on-one sessions provided cohort members with personalized coaching and support tailored to their specific business needs. These sessions allowed participants to delve deeper into challenges, explore growth opportunities, and receive expert advice from program mentors.

In summary, the Phase 2 Scale Up Program curriculum was designed to provide participants with a holistic understanding of key business areas essential for scaling their small scale food processing businesses. Through a combination of interactive sessions, expert-led webinars, and networking opportunities, participants gained practical insights, actionable strategies, and valuable connections to support their growth and success within the food processing sector.

## **Phase 2 Cohort Attendance**

### **Overview of Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort Attendance**

The Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort, comprised of eighteen members (Queen B Kettle Korn closed her business during the Scale Up portion of the Program), engaged in various Scale Up Program components. The below analysis of attendance highlights the level of participation by cohort members throughout the program.

#### **Networking Sessions:**

- Networking Session #1 (Welcome and Cohort Kick-Off): A total of 11 of 18 participants attended the initial networking session, representing a 62% attendance rate.
- Networking #2 (Brokerage and Distribution): Attendance in the second networking session consisted of 9 of 18 participants present, representing a 50% attendance rate.
- Networking #3 (Open Networking Session): The third networking session saw participation from 9 of 18 participants, achieving a 50 % attendance rate.
- Webinar #1 (Financial Literacy): An attendance rate of 50% was recorded for the financial literacy webinar, with 9 of 18 participants attending.
- Webinar #2 (Sales and Marketing): The sales and marketing webinar garnered 8 of 18 participants, representing an 45% attendance rate.
- Webinar #3 (Food Safety): A total of 9 of 18 participants attended the food safety webinar, achieving a 50% attendance rate.

#### **One-on-One Sessions:**

- A total of 10 of the 18 participants chose to participate in the one-on-one sessions, a 56% attendance rate. The one-on-one sessions provided cohort members with personalized coaching and support tailored to their specific business needs. These sessions allowed participants to delve deeper into challenges, explore growth opportunities, and receive expert advice from program mentors.

### **Access to Experts:**

- A total of 4 of 18 participants, a 23% attendance rate, chose to participate in the sessions with industry experts, where they had the opportunity to gain insights, seek guidance, and leverage external resources to support their business growth initiatives.

Overall, given a deeper dive into the topics of concern identified by the target audience, the Phase 2 Scale Up Program Cohort demonstrated a respectable level of engagement and commitment to their business and professional development journey. Through active participation in networking sessions, webinars, one-on-one sessions, and access to expert resources, cohort members may have been able to enhance their skills, expand their networks, and position themselves for success in the food processing sector.

### **Issues & Opportunities**

The timing of the Small Food Processors Phase 1 Needs Assessment significantly impacted participation rates and subsequent outcomes. From Mid-October to Mid-January is the busiest and most opportunistic sales time for most small scale food processors. Conducting the assessment during the peak operational season for small scale food and beverage processors posed notable challenges. This period is characterized by heightened production demands, increased customer activity, and a primary focus on meeting market demands, leaving limited bandwidth for additional activities. Consequently, participants had limited availability and low interest in engaging in assessment tasks, surveys, and feedback processes. To enhance future initiatives, it is strongly recommended to avoid program scheduling during the Christmas season (Mid-October to Mid-January).

To accommodate the busy schedules of participants, alternative timing options, including evenings and weekends, were offered for participation. Additionally, various communication channels, such as emails, text messages, and voicemails, were utilized to encourage participation. Despite these efforts, the Small Scale Food Processors Needs Assessment encountered low participation rates and potentially restricted insights. The time constraints of participants may have impeded the depth and breadth of feedback, including nuanced insights and detailed perspectives from participants. Although the assessment provided valuable insights, it underscored the necessity of scheduling assessments in alignment with the operational rhythms of small scale processors businesses to optimize engagement and feedback quality.

## Phase 2 Attendance Summary

Cohort Participation in Phase 2 of the Scale Up Program encountered challenges possibly due to the particularly challenging and unpredictable nature of the current food and beverage processing industry in British Columbia. Various external factors, such as Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) loan repayments, supply chain disruptions, and labour issues added to the uncertainties experienced by small scale food processors. Participants were continually communicated with via email, phone calls and meeting invites in attempts to increase the Phase 2 attendance. Although participants had indicated they planned to attend the Phase 2 sessions, through various channels of communication, participants expressed several reasons for not being able to attend the sessions. Below is an overview of these reasons:

1. **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) Loan Repayments:** Many small scale processors relied on the CERB to sustain their workforce during the pandemic. However, the obligation to repay CERB loans introduced financial strain and uncertainty. Repayment schedules and associated costs added to the financial burden, possibly diverting resources that could have been allocated to Scale Up Program.
2. **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Global supply chain disruptions, such as shortages of raw materials, packaging materials, and ingredients, has severely impacted small scale processors. Delays in shipments, increased costs, and limited availability of essential inputs disrupted production schedules and procurement processes. Procurement uncertainties likely made it challenging for processors to commit to the Scale Up Program.
3. **Labour Challenges:** The food and beverage processing industry, like all other industries, is facing acute labour shortages and retention issues. Difficulty in recruiting and retaining skilled labourers, coupled with competition for talent, strained current operational capacity. Labour shortages have resulted in production inefficiencies, delays, and increased operational costs, possibly hindering processors' ability to participate in the Scale Up Program.
4. **Economic Volatility:** Economic instability, marked by fluctuating market conditions and inflationary pressures, added to the uncertainty faced by small scale processors. Uncertain economic outlooks, coupled with rising input costs and operational expenses, strained financial resources and undermined confidence in scaling of the food processors businesses.

The combination of these external factors led to concerns and hesitations among small scale processors regarding their participation in Phase 2 of the Scale Up Program. Participants were focused on the health and survival of the business. The various challenges presented by CERB loan repayments, supply chain disruptions, labour shortages, and economic instability highlighted the difficulties that processors face in navigating the small scale processing industry environment.

## **Cohort Participant Final Survey**

### **Overview:**

The Small Scale Processors, Scale Up Program survey was designed to gather feedback from the 18 cohort participants. The survey covered several topics, including content relevance, delivery methods, support, and overall satisfaction. Participants shared their experiences, challenges, and ideas for future programs. The final survey was crafted collaboratively, with the Ministry playing an active role in reviewing the survey questions. The Ministry also contributed by suggesting additional questions that were incorporated into the final survey.

The survey aimed to improve the program by collecting feedback that may assist the Small Scale Food Processor Association and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Foods to make informed decisions. It was an opportunity for participants to shape the future of the programs to better meet the needs of small scale processors in the food and beverage industry.

### **Final Survey Results.**

The Final Survey was conducted to gather input and feedback from eighteen cohort participants. Unfortunately, after numerous attempts through various communication modes to encourage cohort participants to complete the survey, only four of the eighteen participants completed the survey.

The limited response may be attributed to the recent challenges faced by the small scale food processor industry. These challenges include labour shortages, supply chain disruptions, economic/inflation volatility, and other operational constraints. These challenges likely impacted participants' availability to complete the survey.

Despite the limited response rate, the feedback from the four participants who completed the survey provided valuable insight into the Scale Up Program. Their input helps analyze Phase 2 strengths and weaknesses, possibly guiding targeted enhancements and optimizations for subsequent programs. By examining the survey responses, we may gain actionable insights to better tailor future program offerings to the needs and preferences of small scale food processors.

The Final Survey questions and participant responses are contained in Appendix E.

## Recommendations

Considering the timing of Phase 1 and the seasonal challenges posed by the Christmas season, the limited opportunity for companies to engage in the program likely played a role in the low participation rate. Additionally, insights gleaned from surveys, interviews, on-site assessments, ground truthing and input from consultants and the SSFPA, were carefully considered in formulating the following recommendations.

Throughout Phase 2, participants expressed interest in key themes such as access to funding, innovation, and regulatory compliance. The recommendations presented in this section are a result of collaborative efforts, reflecting the shared vision of participants, industry stakeholders, and experts. The recommendations suggest the needs of small scale food processors, to assist them in overcoming market barriers and achieving sustainable success.

Note - The below recommendations are in no order of importance.

### **Recommendation #1:**

#### **Exploration of a Centralized Grant and Funding Information Platform for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Participants expressed little knowledge of a resource that lists all, or most of the grant opportunities available, either internal to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Food or grant/funding opportunities through external agencies.

Introduction: Accessing grants and funding opportunities is pivotal for the growth and sustenance of the small scale food processor industry. However, the scattered nature of available resources across multiple platforms may pose challenges for processors in identifying and accessing relevant funding. To alleviate these barriers and foster a conducive environment for industry growth, establishing a centralized depository website or platform may be beneficial for small scale food processors. This platform could serve as a comprehensive resource hub, consolidating information on both internal programs offered by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food and external funding opportunities from various external program providers. By centralizing this information, processors could streamline their search process, optimize resource allocation, and enhance their prospects of securing essential funding for their projects and initiatives.

Recommendation: Explore establishing a centralized grant and funding information platform. This platform could gather internal and external funding opportunities, provide access to resources, and promote community engagement. The platform could also foster collective empowerment, prosperity, and sustainability within the small scale food processor industry.

**Recommendation # 2:****Exploration of Grant Programs for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors to Facilitate Equipment Acquisition and Scaling Operations**

Overview: Information from the Food Business Refresh Program suggests the positive impact funding had on participants ability to purchase new equipment for their businesses. In Phase 2, participants continued to suggest the need for assistance to purchase equipment to automate processes, improve efficiency and address labour shortages, to remain competitive and sustainable.

Introduction: Small Scale Processors often face significant challenges when it comes to scaling their operations, particularly in acquiring the necessary equipment and infrastructure to meet growing demand and expand market reach. To address these challenges and unlock the full potential of small scale food processors, the development of comprehensive grant programs, specifically tailored to support equipment acquisition and scaling initiatives may be beneficial for small scale food processors.

Recommendation: Explore developing comprehensive grant programs focused on equipment acquisition and scaling initiatives. These programs could offer targeted funding support, technical assistance, and incentives for innovation and sustainability.

**Recommendation # 3:****Exploration of Financial Literacy Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Surveys, one-on-one interviews, networking sessions and webinars suggest the participants needs for a basic understanding of the financial aspects of their business. The lack of participants knowledge includes financial statements, pricing basics, margin calculations, Cost of Goods Sold, cash flow, debt ratios, gross versus net margin, etc.

Introduction: Many processors indicate they face challenges in managing their businesses due to limited financial skills. This lack of knowledge appears to affect budgeting, forecasting, and decision-making.

Recommendation: Explore developing a financial literacy program tailored to the small scale food processors specific needs. The program may provide the essential skills to empower processors to better manage their finances, possibly contributing to the sustainability of BC's small scale food processing industry.

**Recommendation # 4:****Exploration of a Food Science Support Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Participants conveyed a lack of knowledge on how to possibly adapt or innovate their existing products or how to develop new products.

Introduction: Ground truthing suggest small scale food and beverage processors in British Columbia face numerous challenges with product development, shelf life, cost effective formulation, and quality assurance. Access to expert guidance and support from food scientists may play a role in overcoming these challenges and ensuring the success and competitiveness of their products in the market.

Recommendation: Explore establishing a Food Science Support Program that may offer expert consultation, technical assistance, and resources to assist processors in product development, quality assurance, and regulatory compliance. The program may empower processors to innovate, improve product quality, and thrive in a competitive marketplace.

**Recommendation # 5:****Investigate a Sales and Marketing Training Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: In Phase 1 of the Needs Assessment and subsequently supported by feedback from the Sales and Marketing Webinar conducted by Caleb West, cohort participants suggested the need to better understand and develop a strategy for how to sell and market in todays social media and technology driven environment.

Introduction: Ground truthing suggests many small scale processors face challenges in knowing how to effectively market and sell their products to consumers, retailers, and distributors. A sales and marketing training program tailored specifically to their needs may provide the skills and knowledge they need to better market and sell their products.

Recommendation: Explore how a training program focused on equipping processors with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote and sell their products may benefit small scale food processors.



**Recommendation # 6:****Exploration of an Applicable User Friendly Food Safety Educational Resource for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Only a few participants expressed they possessed a food safety certification (beyond a Safe Food for Canadians License). Most participants expressed they had limited knowledge or understanding of what food safety certifications are available to them, the associated costs and time requirements to implement these programs, and the value a food safety certification would be to their business. There may also be an opportunity for small scale food processors to better understand government requirements versus industry requirements for food safety.

Introduction: Many processors appear to face challenges in navigating and understanding the complexities of food safety certification processes and the associated costs with these certifications. To address this possible gap and support small scale processors in achieving and maintaining food safety certifications, creating an assistance program may be beneficial to small scale food processors.

Recommendation: Explore providing food safety mentoring, training, financial assistance, and ongoing support for small scale food processors that may assist them in achieving and maintaining food safety certifications. This may also enhance their market competitiveness, reach, and safeguard public health.

**Recommendation # 7:****Exploration of Cost Reduction and Business Scaling Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Participants expressed a lack of knowledge and understanding on strategies to reduce costs, and how to attract and retain employees.

Introduction: Ground truthing suggests small scale food processors lack knowledge and skills on how to reduce costs, optimizing efficiency, and scaling their businesses to meet growing demand and expand market reach. To address these needs and support the long-term success and sustainability of small scale food processors, the implementation of a comprehensive program focused on ingredient/material and process efficiency cost reduction strategies and techniques, as well as business scaling strategies tailored specifically to their needs may be beneficial.

The Lean for Food and Beverage Processors Program is a great offering for some food processing businesses. However, this program may not provide the more basic skills needed for small scale processors who may be in the initial years of business or who do not qualify for the Lean program.

Recommendation: Explore a program that may equip small scale food processors with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and scale their businesses effectively. Providing guidance, training, and expert consultation may provide small scale food processors with the skills necessary to create a resilient and thriving businesses within the small scale food and beverage sector.

#### **Recommendation # 8:**

##### **Investigate an Export Assistance Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Throughout the phases of the Program, participants expressed their limited knowledge of what is required to market their products beyond British Columbia provincial borders, and for some small scale food processors, beyond Canadian borders.

Introduction: Many processors appear to face challenges with understanding the intricacies of exporting out of province, including accessing markets, navigating regulatory requirements, and understanding export processes. Exploring an Export Assistance program, tailored specifically to the needs of small scale food processors may be beneficial for processors within the province.

Recommendation: The Export Navigator program offers support in this area for small scale processors. Funding, timing, and eligibility may present challenges for interested processors. Explore how an Export Assistance program may provide guidance, resources, and support to processors wanting to enter national and international markets. By equipping processors with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to navigate export processes regulatory requirements effectively, small scale food processors could potentially scale their businesses. The writer recommends additional support to promote external program offerings such as Export Navigator and other targeted programs offered by the Small Scale Food Processor Association and industry.

#### **Recommendation #9:**

##### **Explore a Labour Attraction and Retention Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Program, participants expressed their challenges with labour issues. Challenges such as shortages of skilled workers, difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, and managing labour costs may be contributing to small scale food processors ability to expand, scale operations and innovate.

Participants also expressed their current labour challenges and lack of skilled employees, may have contributed to their inability to participate the Program fully.

Introduction: Participants from the Program indicate they are facing significant challenges in attracting, retaining, and motivating skilled labour amidst the ongoing labour shortage and increasing competition for talent across industries in the province. To address these workforce challenges and support the long-term success and sustainability of small scale processors, implementation of a comprehensive program focused on labour attraction, retention, and employee motivation may be beneficial for small scale food processors.

Recommendation: Explore how a comprehensive labour attraction, retention, and employee motivation program may benefit small scale food processors in the sector. Providing guidance, resources, and support to small scale food processors in recruiting, retaining, and motivating their workforce, may enable them to overcome existing labour challenges and drive sustainable growth and success within the businesses.

### **Recommendation# 10:**

#### **Investigate a Co-Packing Assistance Program for Small Scale Food and Beverage Processors**

Overview: Participants in Phase 1 and Phase 2 conveyed most co-packing facilities within the province appear to be operating at full capacity, with no capacity to take on new clients.

Introduction: With limited or no access to co-packing services, small scale processors may be struggling with options to scale production, meet fluctuating demand, and diversify their product lines. This limited co-packer capacity may be limiting the small scale food processors ability to produce goods efficiently and cost-effectively, which may also impact their competitiveness and growth prospects within the food and beverage processing sector.

Recommendation: BC Food Connection does offer support with co-packer listings. However, most small scale processors indicated they are still having difficulty sourcing co-packers who have capacity either through BC Food Connection or through trying to source co-packing capacity on their own. Exploration of a Co-Packing Assistance program to provide guidance, support, and incentives for processors seeking to collaborate with co-packing facilities may be beneficial for the small scale food processor sector. Facilitating access to co-packing resources, promoting industry collaboration, and overcoming barriers to market expansion may empower small scale processors to scale their production, enhance their competitiveness, and achieve long-term success within the food and beverage sector.

**Conclusion:**

The findings and outcomes of the Small Scale Processors Scale Up Program suggest the targeted initiatives were significant in addressing the unique needs and challenges encountered by small scale food and beverage processors across British Columbia. Through a collaborative and inclusive approach, the program has provided participants with valuable coaching, insights, resources, and support mechanisms that may help them to navigate the intricate landscape of the industry and enhance their operational capacities.

Throughout the program, participants exhibited dedication, resilience, and adaptability in confronting obstacles and capitalizing on growth opportunities. From the initial networking sessions to the diverse array of webinars, one-on-one sessions and access to experts activities, the program fostered an environment conducive to meaningful dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among participants.

Looking ahead, sustaining the momentum generated by the Scale Up Program is key, as well continuing to prioritize the needs and aspirations of small scale food processors. By embracing a spirit of continuous improvement, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing, stakeholders can work together to overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and possibly build a resilient and thriving small scale food processing industry in British Columbia.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the Scale Up Program, the journey towards industry advancement is ongoing and requires ongoing commitment, dedication, and collective action by all of us. By leveraging the insights gained and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, we may lay the groundwork for a more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for small scale food processors and the broader community alike.

The Recommendations section should serve as a pivotal component, offering strategic insights and actionable suggestions drawn from the analysis conducted throughout the report. With a focus on addressing identified challenges and leveraging opportunities, the Recommendations are instrumental in guiding stakeholders towards enhancing the effectiveness and impact of the Small Scale Food Processors Scale Up Program. By outlining specific initiatives and interventions, the Recommendations provide a clear roadmap for stakeholders to navigate through complex issues such as labour shortages, supply chain disruptions, and inflationary pressures.

Moreover, the Recommendations emphasize the importance of fostering collaboration, encouraging innovation, and promoting continuous improvement to ensure any future program's long-term success and sustainability. Through proactive implementation of these Recommendations, stakeholders may work towards achieving tangible outcomes that benefit both the small scale processors and the broader small scale food processing sector, thereby advancing towards the shared goals of growth, resilience, and competitiveness.

## Appendix A

### 25 companies who participated in Phase 1

Queen B Kettle Korn Ltd.	Johanna	Faccini	<a href="mailto:johanna@queen-b.ca">johanna@queen-b.ca</a>	250-215-0105
Not So Sweet	Elaine	Van	<a href="mailto:evan@canoecola.ca">evan@canoecola.ca</a>	778-793-8883
Mountain Range Gourmet Prepared Foods	Rhonda	Turner	<a href="mailto:contactus@themountainrange.ca">contactus@themountainrange.ca</a>	250-422-9257
The Bog Riverside Cranberry Farm	Mandy & Brian	Dewit	<a href="mailto:riversidecranberries@gmail.com">riversidecranberries@gmail.com</a>	604-418-1543
Seaside Pearl Farmgate Winery	Allison	Zimmerman	<a href="mailto:allison.s.zimmerman@gmail.com">allison.s.zimmerman@gmail.com</a>	604-727-4492
Christopher Norman Chocolates	John	Down	<a href="mailto:johncndown@gmail.com">johncndown@gmail.com</a>	604-989-6709
Umami Consulting	Alexander	McNaughton	<a href="mailto:alexander.mcnaughton@gmail.com">alexander.mcnaughton@gmail.com</a>	778-971-6625
As You Like It	Laura	Agnew	<a href="mailto:chefagnew@telus.net">chefagnew@telus.net</a>	250-703-3828
Effingham Oysters Inc.	Mica/Victoria	Verbrugge	<a href="mailto:effinghamoyster@gmail.com">effinghamoyster@gmail.com</a>	250-661-9528
Tilly's Galley	Kathryn	Dykstra	<a href="mailto:info@tillysgalley.ca">info@tillysgalley.ca</a>	250-800-1621
Okanagan Epicurean Enterprises O/A Howling Moon Craft Cider	Kate	Durisek	<a href="mailto:kate@howlingmoon.ca">kate@howlingmoon.ca</a>	604-771-8436
Our Ecovillage Cooperative	Brandy	Gallagher	<a href="mailto:info@ourecovillage.org">info@ourecovillage.org</a>	250-888-7798
The Roasted Chickpea	Kayla	Hedde	<a href="mailto:theroastedchickpea@gmail.com">theroastedchickpea@gmail.com</a>	250-304-9474
ABC Poultry Processing	Judith	Tjosvold/Alayne	<a href="mailto:cutepuppies70@gmail.com">cutepuppies70@gmail.com</a>	778-267-9350
Bee Kind Honey	Kirsten	Brolin	<a href="mailto:kirsten@beekind.ca">kirsten@beekind.ca</a>	778-668-1158
Fernie Catering	Barrie	Rebecka-Elliot	<a href="mailto:info@ferniecateringco.com">info@ferniecateringco.com</a>	250-531-0905
NPK Wild Foods	Dafne	Romero	<a href="mailto:northpacficckelp@gmail.com">northpacficckelp@gmail.com</a>	250-637-1489
Kickin Joes.	Joe	Roth	<a href="mailto:kickinjoes@gmail.com">kickinjoes@gmail.com</a>	250-402-8738
Culturealive Fermented Foods	Melanie	Ferman	<a href="mailto:culturealivefoods@yahoo.com">culturealivefoods@yahoo.com</a>	250-653-4626
Hibiscus Foods	Brian	McConnel	<a href="mailto:hibiscusfoods@gmail.com">hibiscusfoods@gmail.com</a>	778-387-2062

Karuna Vihara Gourmet	Melissa	White	<a href="mailto:Karuna.vihara.gourmet@gmail.com">Karuna.vihara.gourmet@gmail.com</a>	250-228-0759
Windeberry Farms	Lin		<a href="mailto:lin@windeberry.ca">lin@windeberry.ca</a>	250-342-7472
Authentic Mexican Foods	Andrea	Blendl	<a href="mailto:andrea@authenticmexicanfoods.ca">andrea@authenticmexicanfoods.ca</a>	778-223-5484
Teyybeh Foods	Nihal	Elwan	<a href="mailto:tayybwh.syrian@gmail.com">tayybwh.syrian@gmail.com</a>	778-960-6755
Fresh Valley Farms	Annelise	Grube-Cavers	<a href="mailto:armstrongartisanmeats@gmail.com">armstrongartisanmeats@gmail.com</a>	250-546-1101

## Appendix B

### Phase 1 Survey Questions

**Questions 1: Program Impact** - Overall, how did the Food Business Refresh Program impact your business?

**Question 2: Program Satisfaction** - Overall, how satisfied were you with the Food Business Refresh Program?

**Question 3: Topics and Delivery** – Overall, were the Food Business Refresh Program topics and delivery methods valuable for your business?

**Question 4: Cohort Participation** - Was being part of a Cohort for the Food Business Refresh program beneficial for your business?

**Question 5: Time Commitment** – What was the time commitment for you and your business for the Food Business Refresh Program?

**Question 6:** What motivated your business to select certain programs or services offered?

**Question 7: Business Needs** – Since starting your business in which topic areas have you most needed to develop your skills and knowledge as a business (i.e., operations, sales, finance, etc.). How has this changed over time?

**Question 8: Learning Utilization** – What services/programs etc. have been effective at helping your business apply tools and knowledge to advance opportunities (for example scale up operations, improving operational efficiency, entering new markets, accessing new market opportunities etc.)?

**Question 9: Programs Accessed** – What formal programs, services, training, and other services has your business accessed (i.e. Food Business Refresh, BC Lean for Food Processors, Agri-Business Planning Program, Two-Day Business Planning Workshop, Small Business BC, Export Navigator, Small Scale Food Processor Association Programs, BC Food and Beverage Training, Good to Grow Training or other grant/government-funded programs).

**Question 10: Operational Challenges** – What services, programs, etc. have been effective at helping your business apply tools and knowledge to address operational challenges?

**Question 11: Business Growth** – What services/programs etc. have been effective in helping your business grow? Why and How?

**Question 12: Additional Resources** – What other resources and materials have you or your business accessed to increase capacity and productivity (i.e. informal networks, courses, books, etc.)?

**Question 13: Opportunities** – What other resources, programs, coaching, etc. would help your business expand and grow?

**Question 14: Market Readiness** – What services/programs have been effective at helping your business meet market readiness requirements for domestic or export markets?

**Question 15: Food Business Refresh Growth** – If your business experience growth due to the Food Business Refresh Program, what training services would be helpful now to support your continued growth? Why? In which format?

**Question 16: Food Business Refresh No Growth** – If your business experienced no to little growth, due to the Food Business Refresh Program, what training services would have been helpful to contribute to your growth? Why? In which format?

**Question 17: Competitiveness and Productivity** – what services/programs have been effective at helping your business improve its competitiveness and or improve production?

**Question 18: Program Value** – What was most valuable about the Food Business Refresh Program?



## Appendix C

### Phase 1 - One-on-One Interview Questions

**1. Current Business Status:**

- How has your food or beverage business evolved since the completion of the Food Business Refresh program?
- Can you provide an overview of your current operations and market position?
- What specific changes or improvements have you seen in your business since implementing strategies from the program?

**2. Successes and Achievements:**

- What achievements or milestones has your food business attained following the strategies suggested in the Food Business Refresh program?
- Can you highlight any significant successes or growth areas that resulted from the implemented strategies?

**3. Challenges Faced Now:**

- What are the main challenges or obstacles your food business is currently encountering?
- Have any new challenges emerged since the implementation of strategies suggested in the program, and if so, what are they?

**4. Assessment of Implemented Strategies:**

- Reflecting on the strategies you have applied post-program, which ones have proven most effective in sustaining or enhancing your business?
- Are there any strategies that did not yield the expected results, and what insights have you gained from those experiences?

**5. Resource Needs and Assistance Required:**

- What specific areas or aspects of your food business do you feel require further assistance or support at this stage?
- Are there any resources, skills, or expertise that you currently lack and would benefit from to further advance your business?

**6. Growth and Expansion Opportunities:**

- Are there any potential growth opportunities or new directions you are considering for your food business at this stage?
- How do you plan to capitalize on these opportunities, and what support might you need to pursue them?

**7. Measuring Impact and Future Goals:**

- How do you measure the impact of the strategies implemented since the program ended?
- What are your current goals for the business, and how do you plan to achieve them considering the lessons learned from the program?

**8. Technology and Innovation:**

- Have there been any technological advancements or innovations you have integrated into your business post-program? If so, how have they impacted your operations?
- Are there any additional technological upgrades or innovations you believe could benefit your business now?

**9. Market Trends and Adaptability:**

- How closely are you monitoring market trends and consumer behavior in your industry now?
- Have there been any shifts or changes in customer preferences or market demands that you are currently responding to?

**10. Future Needs**

- Looking ahead, do you anticipate the need for ongoing support or guidance for your food business? If so, in what specific areas would you appreciate continued assistance?

## Appendix D – Phase 2 Cohort Members

Following is the list of the 19 Cohort members for Phase two of the Scale Up Project.

Business Name	Contact Name	Email	Phone
Not So Sweet Cola	Cam & Elaine	van@nottoosweetdrinks.ca	778-793-8883
Umami Consulting	Alex	alexander.mcnaughton@gmail.com	778-971-6625
Christopher Norman Chocolates	John	johncndown@gmail.com	604-989-6709
Seaside Pearl Farmgate Winery	Allison	allison.s.zimmerman@gmail.com	604-727-4492
The BOG Riverside Cranberry Farm	Mandy	riversidecranberries@gmail.com	604-418-1543
Winderberry Farms	Lin Egan	lin@winderberry.ca	250-342-7472
Effingham Oysters Inc.	Mica/Victoria	effinghamoyster@gmail.com	250-661-9528
Tilly's Galley	Kathryn Dykstra	admin@tillysgalley.ca	250-800-1621
Authentic Mexican Foods Ltd	Andrea Blendl	andrea@authenticmexicanfoods.ca	778-223-5484
The Roasted Chickpea	Kayla Heddle	theroastedchickpea@gmail.com	1-250-304-9474
ABC Poultry Processing	Judith Tjosvold	cutepuppies70@gmail.com	778-267-9350
Bee Kind Honey	Kirsten Brolin	kirsten@beekind.ca	778-668-1158
Fernie Catering Company	Barrie	info@ferniecateringco.com	250-531-0905

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Our Ecovillage Coop	Brandy	info@ourecovillage.org	250-888-7798
Howling Moon Craft Cidery	Kate	kate@howlingmoon.ca	604.771.8436
As you Like It	Laura	chefagnew@telus.net	250-703-3828
Mountain Range Gourmet Prepared Foods	Rhonda Turner	contactus@themountainrange.ca	250-422-9257
Queen B Kettle Korn Ltd.	Closed Business During Scale Up Program	N/A	N/A
NPK Wild Foods Inc	Dafne Romero	northpacifickelp@gmail.com	250-637-1489

## Appendix E

### Final Survey Questions and Results

#### Question 1

Program Attendance: If you did NOT attend any of the webinars or Networking sessions, please provide your feedback as to why you were unable to attend:

#### Responses

1. Not applicable
2. While we would have really liked to participate in person, unfortunately the timing didn't work for us. The program came together very quickly and by the time it was organized we already had commitments on most of the days of the webinars.
3. Work schedule prohibited attendance to the workshop.

#### Question 2

How would you rate the effectiveness of the Scale Up Program in supporting the growth of your food processing business?

Choice	Total Responses
1 - Excellent	1
2 - Good	2
3 - Fair	1
4 – Poor	0

#### Question 3

Which specific aspects of the program did you find most valuable in assisting you with scaling up your operations (participants could select multiple choices)?

Choice	Total
Mentorship and coaching (1-on-1 and experts)	3
Access to and information on funding opportunities	1
Training and workshops	0
Networking opportunities	1

#### Question 4

In what ways, if any, do you believe the Scale Up Program could be improved for future participants (participants could select multiple choices)?

<b>Choice</b>	<b>Total</b>
More focused training sessions	1
Increased networking events	1
Enhanced mentorship opportunities	3
Greater emphasis on access to funding	2

#### Question 5

Which areas of the program did you find most beneficial for your business growth and development (participants could select multiple choices)?

<b>Choice</b>	<b>Total</b>
Financial literacy	3
Marketing and sales strategies	2
Food Safety	0
Brokerage and distribution	1

#### Question 6

Did you have sufficient time in the networking, webinar, one-on-one and access to expert sessions, to get all your questions answered?

#### Responses

1. I had the opportunity to ask questions that arose during the sessions. However, more pertinent questions tend to arise when applying the knowledge at a later time. So having networking contacts with these resources is more valuable in a practical sense.
2. Yes. Would've preferred more expert sessions. Would've preferred less networking. It seems most of the businesses in the cohort do not share the vision of scaling to become a national brand like we are. So this part of the program didn't provide as much value for us as the expert sessions.
3. Yes

**Question 7**

Any other comments for the program?

**Responses**

1. It felt a bit condensed in the timeframe, which is understandable from a delivery perspective but harder to make an actionable impact on practical application for our business.
  2. N/A
  3. No
-