

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:
ORGANIC VALUE CHAIN ROUNDTABLE
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION WORKING GROUP**

The Organic Value Chain Roundtable (OVCRT) reserves the right to create working groups to pursue the priorities outlined and approved at full OVCRT meetings. Working groups, which will report back to the full OVCRT to inform the membership on progress achieved, to gain agreement on proposed activities and to solicit direction for future work, shall be chaired by a full member of the OVCRT. Working group membership may be comprised of both OVCRT members and other stakeholders who are in a position to contribute value to the subject work.

Mandate

The Research and Innovation Working Group (RIWG) will work together to:

1. Provide a national forum for exchange of information and scientific advice about research priorities;
2. Identify where research can support policy;
3. Work in close consultation with other Organic Value Chain Roundtable (OVCRT) working groups (WG's), as appropriate;
4. Collaborate with stakeholder groups involved in organic agriculture, and with public institutions and private organizations to address identified needs of the organic agriculture research sector;
5. Provide input on regulations, marketing and planning in organic agriculture, in the context of national and international standards for organic agriculture, sustainable production, food safety and consumer acceptance;
6. Present proposed initiatives to the OVCRT for approval, and present an update on activities and recommendations for action at each OVCRT meeting;
7. Schedule meetings at regular intervals throughout the year (via teleconference or face to face meetings when appropriate); and
8. Regularly review its mandate to adjust to changing priorities in order to maintain its relevance.

Composition

Leadership

The Chairperson and Secretary of the RIWG will be elected by RIWG Members. The RIWG will also elect an alternate Chair and an alternate Secretary to substitute for the Chairperson and Secretary if they cannot attend a meeting.

Membership

Membership of the RIWG consists of fifteen members representing stakeholder groups from across Canada. The RIWG will accept recommendations from stakeholder groups

and appoint members to 3 year terms, as required. As terms expire, new members will be appointed for 3 year terms such that about one third of the membership terms are renewed each year. Members may be appointed for subsequent terms. Members' terms shall begin in January.

The stakeholder groups will include:

- 5 producers and/or certifier members (a minimum of three must be producers and at least one grower from each of eastern and western Canada)
- 3 researchers (at least one from the west and one from the east; and at least one from AAFC and one from academia). These criteria may overlap, thus only 3 researchers are required.
- 2 extension personnel (at least one from each of eastern and western Canada)
- 2 representatives of organic processing and/or wholesale and/or retail and/or distribution companies (at least one from each of eastern and western Canada)
- 1 representative from the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC)
- 1 representative of Canada Research Chair in Organic Agriculture
- 1 representative from AAFC, Market and Industry Services Branch

Each member may select a designated alternate to represent their interests in the event they are unable to attend meetings. The Chair and Secretary will be notified in advance of a meeting about Alternate member participation in that meeting.

The RIWG may be expanded, modified, restricted or terminated at the direction of the full OVCRT.

A new member or any person designated for appointment as a new member is to be afforded the fullest measure of courtesy and cooperation by other members. The RIWG shall make every effort to assist each new member to become fully informed about RIWG functions, policies and procedures. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Chairperson/Secretary shall coordinate the solicitation, screening and RIWG election of a person to fill the vacancy after considering nominations from the RIWG or other OVCRT WG's.

Acceptance of membership indicates that a member shall make every effort to participate in each meeting.

Sub-committees

The RIWG may establish sub-committees or appoint *ad hoc* committees as required to help carry out its responsibilities. Sub-committees shall be chaired by a member of the RIWG and may include members of other OVCRT WG's. The RIWG committees may not speak or act for the RIWG except when given formal authority for specific and time limited purposes.

Meetings

Frequency/Duration

One Annual Meeting of the RIWG will be a face-to-face meeting (unless otherwise agreed upon) arranged to accommodate the travel needs of members. As well, the RIWG will meet two or more times a year by conference call.

Notice of meetings will be given at least one month in advance of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the Chair/Secretary to notify all members. Notice will primarily be by email. Special meetings may be convened by order of the Chair and Secretary.

Business of the RIWG

Forty percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every effort will be made by the secretary to ensure that a quorum will be present at the meeting. If a quorum is not likely to be achieved the meeting will be deferred. Meetings shall be called to order within fifteen minutes of the stated time in the agenda. If there is not a quorum, the members present shall determine an alternate date and will continue informally to discuss issues but not to conduct official business. Decisions shall be by majority vote and the Chair's ruling will prevail in the event of a tied vote.

The Chair and Secretary are responsible for preparation and circulation of the tentative agenda, prior to each meeting. The RIWG will consider additions to the agenda at the beginning of each meeting. The agenda will set the order of business

The RIWG will approve and keep written minutes of all its meetings. The minutes shall include the date, time and place of the meeting, members participating, a record of any decisions made, and action items. The secretary shall prepare and distribute draft minutes to members prior to the meeting, at which the minutes are to be approved. Draft minutes shall be approved or amended at the next regular meeting with a quorum. The minutes shall become permanent records of the RIWG and shall be in the custody of the Chair, Secretary and VCRT Secretariat.

Re-imbursement of expenses

Roundtable meetings

AAFC will reimburse up to 50% of reasonable and appropriate travel and accommodation costs (as determined by relevant Treasury Board policies and directives) that are directly related to a member's participation in a roundtable meeting.

AAFC will reimburse up to 100% of reasonable and appropriate travel and accommodation costs (as determined by relevant Treasury Board policies and directives) that are directly related to the OVCRT chairperson's participation in a roundtable meeting.

RIWG meetings

AAFC will reimburse up to 50% of reasonable and appropriate travel and accommodation costs (as determined by relevant Treasury Board policies and directives) that are directly related to a member's participation in the annual face-to-face meeting.

AAFC will reimburse up to 100% of reasonable and appropriate travel and accommodation costs (as determined by relevant Treasury Board policies and directives) that are directly related to the RIWG chairperson's and the OVCRT chairperson's participation in the annual face-to-face meeting.