



MC³: Meeting the Climate Change Challenge Report to BC Hydro

BC Hydro funded the MC³ research project to lead two workshops for knowledge dissemination / transfer between the research team with community leaders and practitioners across British Columbia. This report describes progress to date against the \$20,000 contract.

A peer-to-peer learning exchange was led by Professor Ann Dale at Royal Roads University's Centre for Dialogue on January 18th, 2013. The purpose of the exchange was first, to bring together leaders and champions from the most innovative case study communities with other communities less well advanced in climate change adaptation and mitigation; second, to share MC³ research outcomes in a co-learning environment about the drivers of climate action and innovation occurring in the province; third, to share knowledge about effective tools for community action; fourth, to explore developing new practitioner networks; and fifth, to evaluate the effectiveness of the exchange for peer-to-peer learning.

Workshop Participants

Forty-three invited participants from government (local, regional and provincial), academic, and NGO sectors were convened. Participants included leaders and key actors in designing and implementing climate innovations in their respective communities, who were identified by the research team, including the 12 research partners. In addition, less advanced municipalities were identified, and although many initially accepted, the majority declined at the last moment, so they were under-represented. The entire MC³ research team and most of the research partners and collaborators also participated in the workshop. The research team members and partners can be found in the *Who's Involved* section of the MC³ website, www.mc-3.ca.

Participants were diverse, ranging in level of position and function, and expertise, which ensured knowledge sharing bridged traditional departmental silos and stovepipes. As well as asymmetries of scale were addressed, as many smaller and rural communities were also represented with larger urban centres. Local government included decision-makers, and advisors, but excluded political staff. The team believed it was crucial to have a 'safe to learn' space for peers and thus, a separate workshop is now being planned between political decision-makers and the research team. Participants ranged from sustainability and climate action managers, engineers, planners, air quality engineers, energy managers and financial managers. NGO participants included leaders from grassroots programs that organize and assist communities in energy reduction strategies, and research partners, BC Healthy Communities and Sustainable Cities International (SCI).

The Exchange

Two interactive panels were led to provide an opportunity for learning about current research and community climate action tools and for posing questions to the research team and partners. Rather than formal presentations, a dynamic question and answer format between the participants and between panel members was actively moderated. The first panel assembled the **MC³ research team** to share key research outcomes. The second panel assembled a diverse group of experts talking about the various tools and techniques communities can use for implementing climate action adaptation and mitigation, including the BC Action Toolkit, community engagement strategies, natural capital accounting and visualization/scenario techniques. The second panel involved Ben Finkelstein (BC Climate Action Secretariat), Isabel Gordon (City of North Vancouver, Director of Finance), Andrew Moore (T'Sou-ke Solar Community Program Manager), and Dr. Stephen Sheppard (UBC).

After panel presentations were delivered, workshop participants met in roundtable discussion groups, and, during their discussions, slideshows featuring MC³ research outcomes and other climate change related facts were displayed to stimulate conversation. The first roundtable discussion took place following the first panel and focused on identifying and discussing three particularly effective climate innovations occurring in BC. The second roundtable discussion took place following the second panel and involved discussion on the drivers of and barriers to innovations, and then a brainstorming session on recommendations for new innovations or policy changes that could effectively contribute to climate change strategies. Roundtable groups reported back on their discussions at the end of workshop.

Data Capture and Outcomes

Emergent ideas produced from the workshop were captured in several ways.

- Expert note-takers were placed at each roundtable to capture the substantive content and outcomes from each roundtable.
- Further note-taking was conducted by the research team during the roundtable reporting back portion of the workshop to capture main ideas from roundtable discussions.
- Panel presentations were recorded through the Royal Roads University's Centre for Dialogue audiovisual system.
- A graphic facilitator created both pictorial and verbal notes for both panel presentations and the roundtable reporting back portions of the workshop.

Data collected through note-taking will be used for a 'state of the science' paper that will summarize the findings and recommendations from the workshop. This paper will take the format of the [two other policy documents](#) produced by the CRC program, and will be distributed through the CRC's wide network of government, academic, practitioner, and NGO contacts for the purposes of informing decision-makers. Audiovisual media and images created by the graphic facilitator will be used to create animations that will be displayed on the [CRC HEAD Talks](#) YouTube channel, as a part of the [MC³ video series](#), and shared through CRC's social media channels (i.e., blogs, YouTube, and Twitter) to disseminate this research to the broader public.

Three key findings from the round tables were: the unanimous agreement that the Climate Action Charter had provided a level playing field for municipalities and government officials present were advised to develop even more stringent targets in any next iteration; the importance of partnerships with quasi-institutional intermediaries like the Fraser Basin and the Columbia Basin Trust and programs such as BC Hydro's Community Energy Manager Program, especially for smaller municipalities; the importance of institutional arrangements that are able to bridge traditional departmental mandates, and for the integration of line functions. Finally, participants explored the idea of creating a new practitioner network that could continue to bridge departmental silos and stovepipes.

Workshop Evaluation

In addition, the effectiveness of the learning exchange process itself was evaluated through [pre-](#) and [post-](#)workshop surveys, administered to all participants, excluding research team members. The response rates were 80% and 60% respectively. Key findings from the survey questions are listed below.

Pre-workshop Survey

- The majority (56%) of respondents ranked their community as ‘above average’ in taking action on climate change, approximately a quarter of respondents (24%) ranked their community as ‘average’, and fewer respondents ranked their community as ‘excellent’ (16%). No respondent indicated his or her community to be ‘below average’ (but one respondent had no response).
- From a list of options (see [survey](#)), government resources (both municipal and provincial) were most frequently identified as primary sources for information on climate change action in respondents’ respective communities. Academic resources were next most frequently identified, and other resources (such as news articles, social media, magazines, radio, etc.) were not frequently noted.
- From a list of options (see [survey](#)), financial resources and strong leadership were indicated to be most important community resources for implementing climate change action, whereas government tools and regulations (i.e., zoning, bylaws) were noted to be least important (although still indicated as significant).
- Responses to an open-ended question on ‘what the barriers to climate action are’ were varied; however, common themes emerged from responses, including lack of funding, societal resistance to change, and lack of public (and institutional) awareness on the imperativeness of the issue.

Post-workshop Survey

- All survey respondents indicated they learned something from the workshop, and responses for amount learned assumed these proportions: ‘a lot’ – 5%, ‘Quite a bit’ – 26%, ‘A moderate amount’ – 37%, ‘A little’ – 31%’.
- The majority of respondents (percentages provided below in parenthesis) indicated they obtained useful knowledge from the workshop in the following areas: technical tools and approaches (63%), MC³ outcomes (74%), community climate innovations (61%), and new ideas and concepts (68%).
- Financial resources and leadership were identified again (consistent with the first survey) to be the most importance resources for implementing climate action in a community.
- In an open-ended question asking for ‘any further comments’, a common theme emerging from the was the importance of networking events such as this workshop and bringing together diverse groups of people working on this issue.

In addition to gathering feedback through surveys, video testimonials from six participants were collected for the purposes of creating a short video on participant impressions of the workshop process. A common theme emerged from these testimonials concerning the power of convening forums, in which researchers and practitioners can connect and dialogue around key issues and identify commonalities. Specifically, one testimonial described forums where the theoretical ideas (academia) and the practical application (practitioner) can connect as where ‘the magic happens’, meaning where viable ideas for innovations can emerge.

Future MC³ Deliverables

The feedback collected through the survey and video testimonials demonstrate that good value exists for continuing to lead peer-to-peer learning exchanges between climate action researchers and diverse practitioners. MC³ will lead another workshop, bringing the research team together, physically and virtually, with elected officials by the end of May 2013, taking into account survey feedback on how to increase the effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning exchanges.