

BUILDING, NAVIGATING AND MAINTAINING YOUR SYNERGY GROUP



A Synergy Alberta
GUIDEBOOK

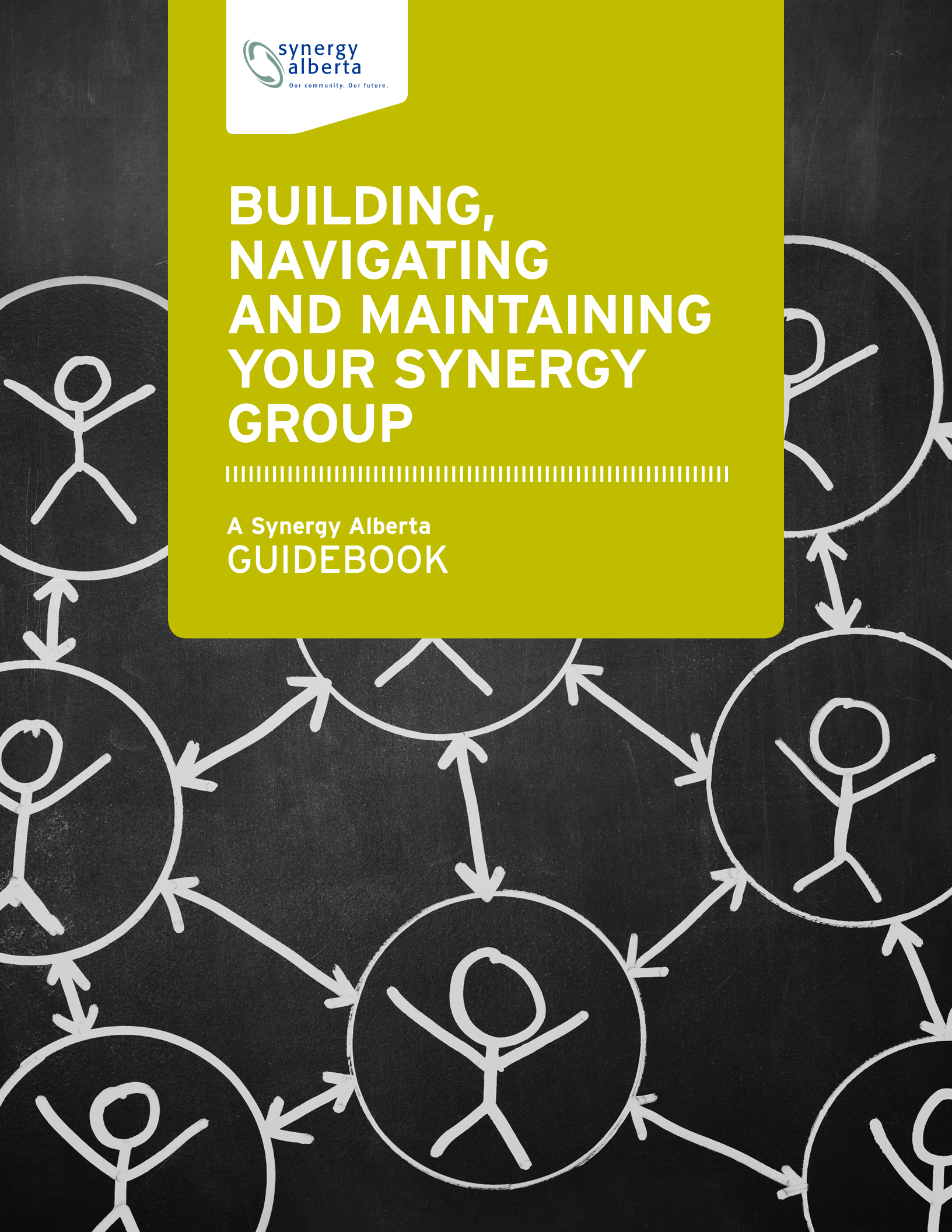


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FORWARD



Synergy groups are **community-based, multi-stakeholder groups addressing the pressures of resource development**. This means representatives from each stakeholder group are given an opportunity to connect directly with energy companies, government departments and regulators, to learn about active and potential developments, share community issues and discuss how to avoid or mitigate potential impacts.

To be effectively engaged, people need easy access to credible information. Synergy groups strive to ensure communities that are facing new or increasing pressures can learn about industry developments and ensure that any and all questions are answered in a timely manner. Behind all of this is the fundamental principle of 'respect'. We believe strongly that respect can go a long way in shaping how all stakeholders can work effectively together.

The synergy concept arose simultaneously within several communities across Alberta, each facing development-related pressures, and in the early 2000s they came together in a series of gatherings entitled 'synergy conferences'. The name, and the concept, gained traction and in 2006, Synergy Alberta was formed.

Today, Synergy Alberta is guided by a Board of Directors that includes perspectives from community (four Directors), industry (three Directors) and Government/Regulator (three Directors). We are a collaborative, multi-stakeholder organization that believes in respectful dialogue and open information sharing to ensure community needs are met. There are several processes beyond synergy to resolve substantive disputes and address broader regulatory issues, but as a model for on-going engagement amongst stakeholders, the synergy model developed in Alberta has been recognized across Canada and beyond, as a winning approach. It provides an opportunity for communities to have a voice.

About this book...

This book was designed to address the needs of both emerging and existing groups. Many groups have existed for years without such a guidebook with effective and lasting results, however this book is a compilation of ideas, methods and tips that are tried and true and meant to provide a resource for those involved or who may wish to become involved with a synergy group.

This book is a **guide** to provide direction, structure and support throughout the lifecycle of any synergy group. It is not a complete reference. This book will refer you to outside resources, such as websites, documentation and books, and provide you with sample materials where appropriate.

You will find information on:

- Identifying who should participate in your synergy group
- Developing Terms of Reference – the group's purpose, mission and structure
- External and Internal communications
- Best management practices
- Building group capacity
- Awards and Recognition

It's important to remember that all synergy groups are unique, just like the community in which they reside. There is no cookie-cutter approach. Synergy Alberta is tapped into dozens of groups around the province, and is happy to assist you wherever your group needs a hand.

If, at any time, you require resources or have any questions, contact Synergy Alberta representatives at www.synergyalberta.ca or dial 780.461.1323 (local) or 1.877.461.1323 (toll free).

GARY REDMOND | Executive Director Synergy Alberta

PART

1



GETTING STARTED WITH SYNERGY

A. INTRODUCTION TO SYNERGY AND SYNERGY ALBERTA

Synergy groups are...

community-based, multi-stakeholder groups addressing the pressures of resource development.

Synergy groups are not...

counted on to make decisions on developments, or give regulatory approval, but they can influence how the energy industry operates within communities.

What is the synergy process?

The term 'synergy process' has been used for many years without having been defined. It is often used to describe a situation where various stakeholders come together to discuss or resolve issues.

From a recent study conducted by Synergy Alberta on synergy groups within Alberta, the two most common uses of the term 'synergy process' refer to the steps taken to form a synergy group, or the steps to resolve issues. A synergy process to form a group or to resolve an issue generally includes; identifying the issues, assessing the issues, engaging affected stakeholders and action.

THE SYNERGY PROCESS



We will refer to the synergy process throughout the guidebook, highlighting various sections throughout.

What are the benefits of a group becoming a member of Synergy Alberta?

Synergy Alberta has several levels of membership. For a synergy group, this membership is for the entire group, regardless of how many people are in the group. Think of Synergy Alberta as a foundation of support for synergy groups across the province. By being part of Synergy Alberta, your group becomes part of a larger network that provides access to learning opportunities, such as speakers and training, best practices, and learning from other groups' experiences. Synergy itself is about people working together. Synergy Alberta is about synergy groups working together, growing a pool of knowledge, tools and resources for all groups to tap into.

The next section provides more detail on participating in a synergy group.

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What is required for a group to be part of Synergy Alberta?

Synergy Alberta has eight 'expectations' required of member synergy groups, as follows:

1. Meet the Synergy Group Criteria and follow the Synergy Principles.

CRITERIA:

Synergy groups include active participation from community, industry and government/regulatory bodies.

Synergy groups work collaboratively to resolve local pressures related to energy and resource development.

Synergy groups promote mutual understanding through education and dialogue.

PRINCIPLES:

Respect

Transparency

Responsiveness

Accountability

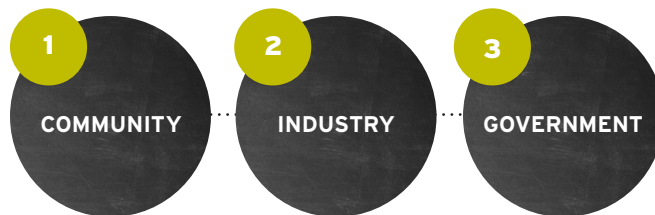
- 2. Pay Annual Membership dues, currently \$50/year.**
- 3. Provide representation at the Annual General Meeting, usually held in conjunction with the annual conference.**
- 4. Develop and maintain a Terms of Reference, and provide a copy to Synergy Alberta.**
- 5. Communicate information about Synergy Alberta to group participants.**
- 6. Maintain a web presence, either independently or through Synergy Alberta (more about this in the Communications section).**
- 7. Establish a budget and clear accountability for the use of funds.**
- 8. Provide to Synergy Alberta an annual update on the activities and accomplishments of the group.**

Synergy Alberta recognizes that in smaller or emerging groups, resources will be limited. As such, these expectations are fully supported by Synergy Alberta, and assistance will be provided in any area your group may need.

B. ROLES, OBLIGATIONS AND BENEFITS OF SYNERGY GROUP PARTICIPATION

THE THREE PILLARS OF SYNERGY

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Who should be part of a synergy group?

To function fully and efficiently, all synergy groups require representation from the three main pillars of synergy – community, industry, and government/regulators. For the synergy process to have true value, it must represent all of the affected stakeholders – a multi-stakeholder group.

By Synergy Alberta’s definition, a synergy group is, “a community-based, multi-stakeholder group addressing the pressures of local resource development.”

What are the roles, obligations and benefits of participating in a synergy group?

Whenever a synergy group forms, the question usually arises – why should I participate in synergy? What are the benefits for me? While a simple response such as, “To build a better community” does ring true, the benefits of synergy participation go much deeper. It is truly a mutually advantageous process.

It is also important to recognize that every individual participating has a role and responsibilities that contribute to the synergy process. These are outlined in the chart below.

PILLARS

COMMUNITY

Roles and Obligations

- Education on uniqueness of the area
- Issues identification
- Active listening
- Brainstorming on mitigation

INDUSTRY

Roles and Obligations

- Education on specific details of plans and operations
- Active listening
- Brainstorming on mitigation
- Commitment to Best Practices or Performance Measures

GOVERNMENT AND REGULATOR

Roles and Obligations

- Education on what specific regulations apply
- Active listenings
- Brainstorming on mitigation



What is Active Listening?

Active listening can be best described in a few words: Seek first to understand. It is a communication technique used in counseling, training and conflict resolution, which requires the listener to feed back what they hear to the speaker, by way of re-stating or paraphrasing what they have heard in their own words, to confirm what they have heard and moreover, to confirm the understanding of both parties.

– WIKIPEDIA

The benefits of participation...

As a community member...

Synergy provides a means to communicate with operators and organizations that work in your community. It allows information to be shared among groups and neighbours, and addresses community-wide issues. For individuals with specific issues, synergy groups and Synergy Alberta can provide resources and contact with the appropriate organizations. Benefits for community members include:

- Opportunity to learn about energy development
- Opportunity to provide advice and suggest options to reduce the negative impact of industry development and to increase the benefits to the community
- Facilitates pro-active community development (short and long term)
- Builds constructive and lasting relationships with mutual interests rather than creating adversaries
- Builds trust, understanding, honesty and respect
- Affect change where and when necessary
- Being kept apprised as industry plans change and evolve in a specific area

As an industry member...

By practicing open communication with community and landowners, there will be a decrease in issues and improved relationships. Known as 'social license', authentic participation in synergy allows a broader community understanding and acceptance of industry. Synergy is a conduit to get your organization's information to the involved stakeholders, and build a respectful and trusting relationship with people living and working in the community in which you operate. Benefits for industry members include:

- Opportunity to quickly and efficiently focus on and respond to community concerns
- Opportunity to discuss options and receive valuable feedback
- Opportunity to achieve a workable option brought forward that might not have been achieved through another process
- A solution derived from a multi-stakeholder process has community buy-in and may actually improve a project.
- Competitive advantage
- Avoidance of costly delays and legal issues
- Opportunity to be part of the community and understand from their perspective what is unique about their community – local intelligence.
- Valuable input to assist in the regulator's application process.

As a government or regulatory representative...

Participating in synergy groups allows you to keep in touch with the community issues, needs, and conflict. It allows you to be part of the solution and provide input. Benefits for government/regulatory representatives include:

- Opportunity to clarify the regulatory role to stakeholders Opportunity to understand issues and options for resource development and community development
- Reduces stress and adverse relations associated with difficult consultations, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and hearings
- Establishes long-term relationships of trust, honesty and respect building confidence in the government and regulator
- Establishes and understanding of a project prior to the application phase

C. FORMING A SYNERGY GROUP

When is it appropriate to form a synergy group?

Since 2002, many individuals involved in the three pillars of synergy (community, industry and government/regulators) have discussed and debated this very question. Generally, if you have a community impacted by an issue related to resource development, and representatives from all three pillars are willing to come to the table, it is appropriate to form a synergy group.

Groups are formed for a variety of reasons – it may be community-driven, to seek better information or demonstrate opposition or community concerns for an issue, or it may be industry-driven, to proactively share information or gather input. The purpose is the same, no matter what the driving force is; synergy groups connect people and organizations and facilitate information sharing, allowing for input on projects or issues by all stakeholders. It gives everyone a voice and a vehicle for working collaboratively.

Where do we start?

Your first step is contacting Synergy Alberta. They will be able to provide you with information about groups that exist in your area and their boundaries, as well as companies active in your area, and regulatory representatives.

Who starts a synergy group and plans the initial meeting?

Experience shows that forming a small steering committee that believes in collaborative problem solving is the most effective approach to get the ball rolling. Rather than just one or two landowners taking this on, the ideal steering committee is comprised of one or two landowners and representation from the regulator(s) and at least one industry representative.

This steering committee is the group that defines the process for moving forward. There is a role for a third party facilitator here as well, if the resources are available.

How do we invite people to the group and initial meeting?

Now the legwork begins! There are several ways to get the word out and invite people to attend the initial meeting:

Word of mouth

Get out and tell people! Word of mouth is an excellent way to get people out to a first organizational meeting and follow up meetings/events. It gives you a chance to explain the importance and answer questions.

Neighbouring synergy groups, community groups and organizations

Check with groups you share borders with, for industry member contacts who might also operate in your area, as well as community people who live near the boundary. You can also ask other groups what they've found works well (or not) in communicating with the community in your area. Other organizations to contact may include other multi-stakeholder groups that may be operating in the area such as airsheds and watersheds. Contact other local community groups such as the Agricultural Society, Chamber of Commerce, and the local community hall association to let them know about your group. The County offices may also know of local community groups you can tap into. Don't be afraid to ask!

Newsletters and E-newsletters

These can be mass distributed through the Canada Post system. If you have collected a group of emails or addresses, info can be sent directly, or use non-addressed 'admail', which uses postal codes to target a specific region with advertisement and informational mail. Sometimes you need permission to contact individuals. For an overview of our privacy laws, give Synergy Alberta a call.

Media/Press Releases

Using the media to help spread your group's message doesn't have to cost money. Community papers are especially interested in something new going on in their region, coming events etc. You can often get free coverage anywhere from the Coming Events/Community Events sections to news stories. (See **Appendix A** for a sample press release outline)

Operators' Groups

Operators' groups can provide contact information on which members of an industry are active in your area or they can send out the information to their members on your behalf.

Industry Contacts

Companies should use their Emergency Response Plans or landowner lists to invite their most impacted residents.



When gathering individual names and contact information, be sure to have permission to use their information for your purposes.

Be very clear what the list will be used for, and that it will not be shared beyond the group administration. When emailing, you can use blind carbon-copy (BCC) to list addresses so that they are kept confidential.

Municipalities

Talk to your local elected officials about synergy and your vision for the group, and invite them to participate. Don't forget to let them know their participation is vital to the group. Ask them to invite people who have previously contacted them with issues or concerns.

Your initial synergy group meeting will:

- Determine if the right people are invited to your group and collect names of other organizations or individuals
- Identify, frame and prioritize issues for the group to handle
- Start to develop the group Terms of Reference
- Determine if the group has a desire to move forward

How are synergy groups resourced?

Synergy Groups choose to cover their operating expenses in a variety of ways. **Most groups simply collect funds into a pool (from industry members) to pay for meetings, open houses and events, facilitation and administration costs.** The reason that the financial burden is upon the participating companies is primarily because they are creating the impact. Other stakeholders contribute to the group in other ways, through time effort, and in-kind donations.

Some of the ways that synergy groups are resources, as shared with Synergy Alberta, are listed below.

- Membership fees charged to industry participants only, based on each company's activity levels in the group's area.
- Flat rate for all companies active in the group.
- Participating companies covering expenses on a rotational basis. This can include two companies sharing expenses of larger events such as public information events, which cost more than regular group/planning meetings.
- Applying for grants, such as Muttart Foundation and Wild Rose Foundation grants.
- Municipalities or other interested parties supporting activities such as free use of meeting space in a county building, or a college facility to host larger events.

Each group will determine what structure works for them. If your group is unsure of which model will work best, Synergy Alberta can help guide you through the process and provide recommendations based on your unique community needs.



When planning the timing of your meetings, think about the time constraints and lifestyle of your membership. You can't make it work for everyone 100%, but sometimes a change in time or day of the week can help ensure more inclusive engagement. Remember to ask your potential attendees for their preferences.

What is required in a budget?

Some synergy groups are registered societies and have more sophisticated financial management processes, but most collect funds into a pool (from industry members) to pay for meetings, open houses and events, facilitation and administration costs.

It is important for all members to clearly understand where the dollars collected are being spent. A simple, yet functional budget can include:

BUDGET SUMMARY

Revenue total

Expenses total

Balance total

REVENUE DETAILED

Organizations and contributions

Total Revenue

EXPENSES DETAILED

Meeting room

Meeting meals

Open House costs

Speaker fees

Facilitator fees

Administrator fees

Webpage fee

Synergy Alberta membership fee

Subtotal of Expenses

Add small contingency

Total expenses

See Appendix B for a sample budget.

“THE REGULATOR GRANTS PERMITS. THE PUBLIC GRANTS PERMISSION.”

– JIM SHAW, SYNERGY GROUP PARTICIPANT

Do synergy groups have a regulatory role?

No, synergy groups are not regulators. Groups may develop best practices in conjunction with their member companies and participating regulatory bodies, however legislation and regulations are developed by organizations like the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), the National Energy Board (NEB) and the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC), Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resources Development (ESRD).

The synergy process is proactive engagement that allows collaborative problem solving. One synergy participant said that synergy groups help fill the gap between regulation and expectation. Even where no easy resolution exists, the conversation is invaluable.

D. DEVELOPING TERMS OF REFERENCE: THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR SYNERGY GROUP

What are Terms of Reference (TOR)?

This is a document that outlines the synergy group's purpose and structure, providing details on membership, responsibilities and operations. It's the foundation a group is built upon.

Terms of reference define:

- vision and mission
- goals
- structure, including membership, governance and decision-making
- available resources
- timelines

Why are they important?

All synergy groups will benefit by staying focused and having guidelines to run effectively. By developing a TOR for your synergy group, you will establish a shared understanding of what the group is about and what they aim to accomplish and how to go about it. TOR's are also important tools when inviting other stakeholders to participate in your group. It is a short, concise description of the activity, time commitment, and expectations of members.

How do we develop our TOR?

Every TOR has a few required elements. Below is an outline of a basic TOR document. Using this outline, your group will need to dedicate time to discussing each item. Your group might want to form a smaller sub-committee to take away the larger groups thoughts and draft the TOR. They can then bring the draft to the next meeting to ensure they have captured the essence of each item within the document.

Synergy Alberta is available to provide coaching and assistance in developing your group's TOR.

1. Background

Include a brief history of the group and why it was formed.

2. Purpose/Goal

Provide the mission, vision and goals of the group. Give a general description of the type of issues that will be discussed and which issues won't be discussed. Identify the group's minimum level of engagement – inform, consult, involve or collaborate. List any group principles or values. A valuable resource is the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). IAP2 has a long history in supporting public participation and has established values and resources that you can access. Visit their Canadian Website for more information www.iap2canada.ca.

3. Membership/Participation

Identify the geographic boundaries for the group. Determine whether membership and participation will be open or limited. Remember that not all groups need to have a set membership. Outline who can be members or participants, how they will be recruited or selected and whether there is a limit to the length of time someone can be involved. Discuss any policies about attendance, sending alternate representatives or allowing observers at the meetings.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Outline expectations for the group and its members. Identify any leadership positions and the responsibilities of these roles. Discuss the group's responsibility and relationship to the broader community.

5. Operations

Provide details on meetings – time of day, location, length and frequency. List the group's Ground Rules and how the meetings will be facilitated or chaired. Outline the group's structure and committees and the decision-making process to be used. Indicate how the group will be funded and any policies about financial management.

6. Communication & Documentation

Describe how the meetings will be documented and how this information will be distributed. Provide details on how the group will communicate with the broader community, Synergy Alberta and other synergy groups and organizations.

See **Appendix C** for examples of two Terms of Reference, one basic and one more advanced. You can find additional examples on the Synergy Alberta website.



Developing the Terms of Reference is an excellent time to hire a third party facilitator. A facilitator can help the larger group share and form their thoughts on each item in the TOR, ensure everyone's voice is heard, and keep the conversation flowing.

E. IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING AND PRIORITIZING THE ISSUES

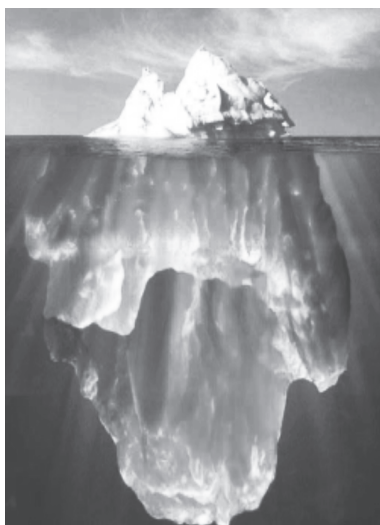
It is paramount that a synergy group has a clear understanding of the issues that are appropriate to address within the group.

Synergy groups have typically formed because of oil and gas development in and around their community, however there are other types of development that a synergy group can also address, such as agriculture, renewable energy and gravel pits.

A key role of the synergy group is to lead a fair and engaging process that identifies and neutrally defines an issue. This is the essence of collaboration itself.

POSITIONS VS. INTERESTS

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◀ Positions

◀ Interests

◀ Values

◀ Needs

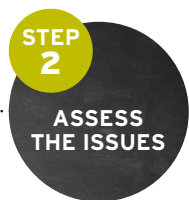
Courtesy of John Curtis,
Mediator, Lawyer and Conflict Coach
www.johncurtis.ca

DEFINING THE ISSUES: WHAT IS THE PROCESS



A roundtable discussion

As a group, discuss all of the issues and challenges that impact lives within the community or boundaries. The key to this step is the listening. Community members must feel like their concerns are completely known and understood. There should be no debate, defensiveness or quick answers. This step is to 'seek first to understand'. Government, industry and community participants all need to practice the same approach.



Distinguish Interests, positions and issues

During the roundtable, interests and positions will likely crop up.

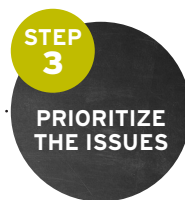
Interests are the motivation for individuals to enter into negotiation. They are subjective and vary in meaning from person to person. A good example of interest is "I need more respect from an organization." This statement doesn't address what respect or disrespect means.

Positions are solutions to an issue that addresses one's own needs or wants.

Although interests and positions play a part in any decision making process, they do not define the issue.

To help refine your brainstorming list, ask some 'filtering questions', such as:

- Does this issue impact lives in our area?
- Is this issue currently being addressed by another organization and/or the appropriate regulator?
- Is this a community-wide issue (as opposed to an issue affecting one specific individual)?
- Is there an opportunity for mutual learning?



In areas with many issues, you may need to prioritize which ones are addressed first. Look at your filtered issues list and ask the following questions:

Which issues require immediate resolution?

- Eg. Dust control or specific incident

Which issues require information and education?

- Eg. Community members want more information on how drilling fluids are used in their area

Which issues impact the most people?

- Eg. Emergency response planning or mutual aid

Which issues might be less complex to resolve?

- Eg. Landowners identify a company that consistently leaves gates open

Based on the answers to your questions, your group will adapt upcoming agendas to best address the issues in your community. Going forward, as issues arise, your group will need to use the same process in order to identify and prioritize them accordingly.



Assessing the Issues

Often synergy group addresses issues that have a community-wide impact, such as, but not limited to:

- Dust control
- Road conditions
- Traffic volume
- Noise and odour
- Water use
- Facility siting
- Emergency response planning

Other synergy groups focus only on one kind of development or specific project. This specific focus can also be handled by a sub-committee of a larger group which would report back to the main group.

It's also important to note that some synergy groups exist without serious issues – they exist to build a better community and to provide a safe and functional place for discussion. Your group might form in order to address specific issues, but continue in order to keep improving your community!

Issues may go beyond the scope of the synergy group to resolve, but that does not mean that the group can't help individuals contact the right people to help them reach resolution. Conversations and information sharing are a vital part of the synergy group's role!

PART

2



COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

A. COMMUNICATION WITHIN A SYNERGY GROUP

How do we set and use an agenda?

Every meeting requires an agenda. Agendas have three main functions:

- To prepare participants for discussion
- To keep the meeting organized and focused
- To table issues or discussions for a subsequent meeting

A good agenda will be prepared and distributed (usually via email) prior to the meeting. Usually, agenda items for the following meeting are gathered at the end of each meeting. You might consider a 'call for agenda items' 10 days to two weeks prior to your meeting, to capture any new or current issues.

A good agenda will include:

- Updates on action items from the previous meeting
- Issues that may require a presentation or information that is not yet available
- New issues for discussion
- Learning opportunities (e.g. presentations on specific topics)
- A roundtable that addresses activities, planned activities and community updates
- A discussion about the date and time of the next meeting and any agenda items for that meeting



Email saturation is a growing issue, with people receiving e-newsletters, updates and marketing from many organizations. Try to minimize your communication through email and double-up on the purpose of your email, wherever possible. Typically, you will email to your distribution list:

- Meeting Reminder and call for Agenda items
- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting notes
- E-newsletters, when appropriate or on an established schedule (eg: quarterly)



If you are communicating in an area where access to the internet is difficult, make sure you are using other ways of communicating. Sometimes the tried and true methods like hand-delivery of important information or phone calls may be required, or some unique methods, like publishing minutes in the local newspaper. You might also want to find out if the local library or county office provides internet access and share that information at your meeting.



To keep your distribution list current, remember to modify your distribution list with any bounce-back or 'change of email' notifications you might receive.

What is the best way to record discussion and outcomes at the meeting?

Having a dedicated person record the main points and outcomes at each meeting is best. It doesn't necessarily have to be the same person. If you have a facilitator, you can expect them to keep record of the meeting outcomes and discussion.

Meeting notes should include action items and follow-ups that are required. Don't forget to assign someone specifically to each action item! Don't be afraid to ask for a volunteer if no one steps forward immediately.

What is the role of a facilitator?

A facilitator is:

- A manager of meetings and the synergy process.
- A **neutral and impartial** person able to help a group work through challenging issues, identify goals, select activities and stay on track (both during meetings and throughout its existence.)
- Someone who can help balance participation between outgoing and quieter group members and make sure everyone hears and is heard and help groups work through contentious and often emotional issues.
- Trained in facilitation skills and dealing effectively with conflict and can be key to a group formed in response to a contentious issue moving forward effectively while continuing to build relationships between members.
- Helps group members to stay on track and work through agenda items in a timely fashion. Keeping meetings effective is an important way to keep the entire group effective and maintain the members' interest.



Facilitation Checklist:

- ✓ Complete the Synergy Group Self-Assessment as a group (on Synergy Alberta website)
- ✓ Review the list of Alberta facilitators. Contact the Synergy Alberta office if there are any questions concerning the facilitator selection process.
- ✓ Select 2 - 5 facilitators from the list who fulfill some or all of your group's requirements.
- ✓ Contact references and other synergy groups (if available) that each selected facilitator has worked with in the past. Ask specific questions to determine if this facilitator will add value to your group.
- ✓ Interview facilitators and negotiate rates.
- ✓ Select facilitator.
- ✓ Provide feedback to your facilitator and Synergy Alberta on a regular basis, using the Evaluation Form on the Synergy Alberta website.

What are the benefits of hiring a facilitator?

One of the key benefits of hiring a facilitator is that they are unbiased and have no stake in the outcomes of the synergy process. Their interest is supporting the synergy process.

Synergy groups often hire facilitators that set and uphold the agenda, take and distribute meeting notes, and help plan any events that the group holds. They may also take a role in helping groups form best practices and performance measures.

Some groups hire a facilitator to work with them continually throughout their synergy processes (regular meetings, public events, etc.), while others hire a facilitator for specific projects such as creating a vision and mission, strategic planning, public input on new developments or for large public events.

Synergy Alberta maintains a roster of facilitators in Alberta and can assist in selecting a facilitator that is suited to your group. They also have online tools such as:

- Facilitation Checklist (below) – recommended steps for choosing a facilitator
- Synergy Group Self Assessment – a tool to help determine your group's specific facilitation requirements
- Facilitation Evaluation Form – to provide feedback to a facilitator
- Sample Job Postings
- Hiring Tips

How do I plan an Education Session?

When a group has a specific topic of interest or an issue that they require more information on, an education session is a great way to share information. These can be done within your regular synergy group meetings, or as a special meeting.

When exploring an issue, it's important to bring in more than one perspective on the matter. For example, if your group is concerned about drilling fluids, you might want to ask a company active in the area to discuss how they use drilling fluids, and a representative from the AER to discuss the policies and regulation around drilling fluids. Other experts on subject matter may be brought in.

Education sessions should be well prepared, with a review of presentations in advance of the session, and information should be presented in a factual, plain language and non-confrontational way. A good education session will promote discussion and provide mutual learning.

Synergy Alberta is a resource for your education sessions, and can give you ideas and guidance on speakers for a given topic. Don't be afraid to use them as a resource for your Education Session.

When is an open house appropriate?

Many synergy groups host Open Houses or Information Nights to share information with members of the public in their communities. There are several formats for these events, including an informal 'trade show' where group members set up booths or displays for attendees, formal presentations or a combination of both.

How do I organize an open house?

Synergy Alberta has a number of useful tools online that can help you determine themes or topics, as well as sample invitations, sign in sheets and evaluation forms. Below are general guidelines and timelines for planning your synergy group's open house:

Eight-twelve weeks in advance:

- ✓ Choose date and theme
- ✓ Book guest speakers or organizations setting up booths
- ✓ Book venue
- ✓ Book catering with approximate number of attendees

Four-five weeks in advance:

- ✓ Plan marketing strategy (media, flyers, e-newsletters)
- ✓ Design necessary materials, such as posters, flyers and newsletters

Two-four weeks in advance:

- ✓ Print and distribute flyers, place ads in local papers or radio stations, send e-news, announce on social media
- ✓ Confirm speakers and their presentation materials, AV needs



Open houses are an example of a great time to hire a facilitator. They can moderate question and answer periods, help promote discussion and provide an evaluation report on your event.

B. COMMUNICATING BEYOND YOUR SYNERGY GROUP

Why should our group have a web presence?

Having a simple, clear web presence helps direct new members to your group, provides contact information to the public about your group, allows you to be part of the greater province-wide synergy network and provides some transparency to all the stakeholders.

Synergy groups don't need to develop and host their own website, unless they have the resources and desire to do so. Synergy Alberta provides each synergy group with a webpage that resides on the Synergy Alberta website, for a nominal fee. This page is fully searchable by the name of each synergy group, and can house documents such as meeting notes, agendas, best management practices (BMPs), as well as relevant information on your group. Updates are made by Synergy Alberta's webmaster – all you need to provide is the information you want updated.

If you think of your synergy group's webpage as the information 'hub', then all of your communications materials should reside on it. As well, all of your communications, electronic, hard copy or otherwise, should point back to your site.

Your website or webpage should include:

- ✓ Synergy group name and boundaries
- ✓ Contact information (either the chair of the group, facilitator or administrator)
- ✓ Terms of Reference
- ✓ Upcoming meeting or event information
- ✓ Meeting minutes or notes from past meetings
- ✓ Best Management Practices



Tips and Techniques for effective communication

- Always use plain language – stay away from acronyms or technical jargon.
- Use an agenda for each meeting and ask for agenda items for the next meeting in advance.
- Write notes during each meeting and distribute to the group – you can also post your meeting notes online (Synergy Alberta can provide your group with a webpage) so everyone has access to them.
- Assign 'Action Items' to individuals where appropriate.
- Remember to tell the group participants what the process will be – when they can expect minutes, agendas, where they can access them, etc.
- Consider a facilitator to help you get the group going or on an ongoing basis, to ensure meetings are effective and productive.
- Don't over-email your group. Group information wherever you can, for example, send the meeting notes with the call for agenda items.
- Make a list and check it twice – and at every meeting. Distribution lists need to be constantly maintained. Consider designating a member or your group administrator/facilitator to maintain your distribution list.
- Reach out to neighbouring synergy groups – find out what they are doing, when they are holding special events or even regular meetings. Consider sharing your group's best practices with them and invite them to your meetings! While each group is unique, a lot can be learned from talking to other groups.

What about Social Media?

Many of you will be familiar with some form of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. If you aren't involved yourself, perhaps your family members, coworkers or organization are involved. Although it might seem daunting or out of place to use this medium as a tool for communication, the fact is that it has become a mainstream communicating method.

That is not to say that the more tried and true forms of communication, such as radio and newspaper, are obsolete – not at all! However, to reach the widest demographic possible, all current forms of communication should be used.

Typically, the designated person who provides updates to the website/webpage, such as your facilitator, designated administrator, or an interested group member, will also handle a Facebook and/or Twitter account on behalf of your group. Remember that your website/webpage is your information 'hub', so any updates or tweets can be kept simple, and point back to your site. Examples of content updates and tweets include:

- Upcoming meeting dates.
- Meeting notes, posted in your webpage, with a link.
- Call for meeting agenda items.
- Neighbouring synergy group events and activities of interest.
- Synergy Alberta information, events and tweets (retweeting their tweets about synergy within the province).

If your group isn't quite ready to jump into social media, consider starting with just a Facebook page. Facebook is easy to update, and is more like a group bulletin board.



Get in the habit of going directly to your social media sites (Twitter, Facebook) right after any webpage update. Remember to use your webpage as your group's information 'hub', and point your tweets or updates back to the updated information – agendas, minutes, events, newsletters – whatever your group has on the go! Spread the word!

What are best practices for sending e-newsletters and emails?

In a world where the average person receives dozens of emails a week, there is a real danger that important information gets ignored, filed without reading, or winds up in the junk file.

To increase the odds of readership, keep your newsletters web-based, housed on your website or webpage. Then, send an email to your membership with the highlights of the news only with a link to the newsletter. This allows readers to see what's in the newsletter in the Coles' Notes version, and click in if they want to learn more.

Be as sparing as possible when sending emails. As much as possible, send out emails infrequently, with as much bundled information as you can. For example, when your meeting notes are ready for distribution, have the next meeting date set so you can provide members with both pieces of information in one email.

Should we produce hard copy newsletters?

A considerable amount of time and resources is involved with producing hard copy newsletters. That said, there are many folks who still prefer to hold a paper in their hand, or who might have limited internet access.

You may want to consider producing one or two hard copy newsletters per year, rather than every time you relay information to the group. Hard copy newsletters can be a compilation of highlights from your e-newsletters and updates.

Distribution can involve a postal mailout, or you can have some on-hand to distribute at your meeting, conferences and events, or to leave at local restaurants, shops or post offices.



Make the best use of your email 'subject line' by adding specifics details. For example, write "CMAG»Minutes, Next meeting September 26". This helps readers when they are searching for emails later on, and also gives them a reason to open your email!



Canada Post offers non-addressed admail services for a great price! This is very useful when sending out postcard sized event notices or invitations to meetings. The Canada Post website or hotline can walk you through the process of identifying the postal codes in your area, preparing your mail and locating the drop off zone.

PART

3

**GOVERNING
AND BUILDING
CAPACITY**

A. IDENTIFYING, ASSESSING AND PRIORITIZING THE ISSUES

As discussed in Part 1, there is a three-step process for issues identification, assessment and prioritization. When identifying the issues, the key is the listening, so everyone knows their concerns are heard and understood.

Ask the 'filtering questions' when assessing issues:

- Does this issue impact lives in our area?
- Is this issue currently being addressed by another organization and/or the appropriate regulator?
- Is this a community-wide issue (as opposed to an issue affecting one specific individual)?
- Is there an opportunity for mutual learning?

Then, prioritize these issues according to which issues require immediate resolution, which issues require information and education, and which issues impact the most people.

The next step in the process is resolving the issue(s).

The synergy process and public participation

Synergy groups work collaboratively to resolve issues and make decisions. But what does 'working collaboratively' really mean?

The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has spent many years researching and developing a tool that can be used to help determine and guide how a group engages stakeholders. The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation outlines five levels of participation: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower.

Generally, the synergy process should take a group beyond Inform, into the Consult category, where all stakeholders have a voice and provide input. However, as the level of impact on stakeholders increases, a synergy group may move to Involve, Collaborate, and even Empower.

This is a great tool to refer to as your group begins addressing and resolving issues. Be sure to understand what level of participation your synergy group members expect. While some members might be content with updates and information sharing, others may want to be more deeply involved in the decision-making process.

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



Increasing impact on the decision

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IAP2)

B. DECISION MAKING: WORKING TOWARD CONSENSUS

How can our synergy group work toward consensus for recommendations and actions?

When it comes to decision-making and determining group direction, synergy groups generally don't use a 'majority rules' approach. This is because the foundation of synergy is working collaboratively to find common ground for all stakeholders, rather than going with what the largest group wants.

Consensus decision-making is a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement between members. Instead of simply voting on an issue, a group working toward consensus is committed to finding solutions that everyone actively supports, or at least, can live with.

It is important to understand that consensus is not compromise or unanimity – it takes everyone's best ideas and key concerns into consideration, a process that often results in creative solutions.

There are many ways to reach consensus. For a group of about 15-25, the size of a typical synergy group meeting, there are some typical steps that work quite well, below. A facilitator can help the consensus process move forward, however it is also possible for a group to use these steps without a professional facilitator.

Steps in the consensus problem-solving process are:

1. Introduce and clarify the issue(s).

- Share any relevant information.
- Determine key questions and concerns.
- Ensure everyone understands the issue from a technical perspective, including regulations and requirements.
- Provide a clear agenda so everyone understands the process.

2. Explore the issue and look for 'interests'.

- Gather initial thoughts and reactions to the issue.
- Identify individual and shared interests.
- Probe the group with open questions.
- Collect ideas for solving the problem – no idea is a bad idea!

3. Look for emerging solutions that address 'interests'.

- Evaluate options against individual and group interests.
- Look for options that weave together the best elements of ideas garnered, and address key concerns.

4. Discuss, clarify and modify, twice if you have to.

- Once one or two viable solutions have emerged, initiate a discussion around them to ensure that it reflects the best ideas and key concerns.
- If necessary, modify and massage the preferred solution – there's nothing wrong with a few versions of the same solution before taking action.

What challenges may arise during this process?

It is normal and expected that forming a synergy group and working collaboratively through tough issues will not always be a smooth process. There are some typical challenges that may arise along the way.

When a group of people with diverse interests, positions and situations come together, some conflict will naturally exist. The very process of identifying issues can be a challenge.

When you come across a difficult situation or find your group stalled, here are a few steps you can take to get moving forward again:

- ✓ Pull an issue back to the 'filtering questions' stage – is this an individual issue or a community issue? Is this the right forum to address the issue?
- ✓ If you are having difficulty developing solutions or reaching consensus, take a step back and re-think the key concerns and ideas around the issue.
- ✓ Make sure the group members are "listening" not just "hearing"! Listening makes a psychological connection with the other person to process and understand their meaning. Ask participants to paraphrase what the other person is saying, to ensure mutual understanding.
- ✓ Consider bringing in a facilitator to ensure that everyone's voice is heard and key concerns are shared.



Consider laying out 'ground rules' before you get started! A great way to do this is to list them verbally, then ask anyone who does **not** agree to the ground rules to discuss why they cannot abide by them. Once they have been agreed upon, list them and post them in the room where they are visible at each meeting. Examples of ground rules are:

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- No ideas are bad ideas.
- Share discussion time with other participants to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.
- Respect others' opinions and ideas – we are here to work together.

What are Best Management Practices?

Best Management Practices (BMPs) also known as Best Practices, Beneficial Management Practices or Recommended Practices, are designed to guide industry activity in the area the synergy group represents. They are meant to address specific issues in a given community, and may vary depending on what activity is in the area and what the needs and wants of the community are.

Performance measures take BMPs a step further. They are company specific commitments that the community can audit and the company can use to evaluate its own performance.

Several synergy groups in Alberta have produced BMPs specific to their area. Topics that have been covered include, but are not limited to:

- Land surveying
- Working with land agents
- Land spraying
- Traffic and Road Use
- Drilling and completions

It's a good idea to review existing BMPs, found on the Synergy Alberta website, as a starting point for developing your own. Your group may be able to glean or adapt information and practices that already exist. Synergy Alberta can put you in contact with the authors of any BMP on their website if you require more information or have questions about how they developed their BMPs.

How can Synergy Alberta help us develop our Best/Beneficial Management Practices?

Synergy Alberta has a large breadth of ideas and network throughout Alberta, and is tapped into many kinds of synergy groups. They can help you determine the best model and examples for your specific community. What might be a great set of BMPs for one group, might not work in another group.

Synergy Alberta's mandate and role is to support the formation of new groups as a central source. Think of it as free consulting advice! All you have to do is call!

C. BUILDING CAPACITY AND GROWING YOUR GROUP

What training opportunities are available for synergy group members?

Part of building capacity within your synergy group is developing key skills in-house. This may include bringing in a speaker or trainer to a meeting or during an Education Session in key areas such as running effective meetings, conflict resolution training and risk communication training.

Synergy Alberta has a network of trainers and schedule of courses that your group can benefit from, even if you have a group facilitator and/or administrator.

What are some facilitation skills that a group might need?

There are several structures that may be applied to a synergy group. Some have a facilitator at each meeting, some have a chair, some have both a chair and a facilitator.

Even if you have a group facilitator, it may be helpful to send a designated person (or two) to a training session or bring in a trainer to present to interested people on the topic of interest based negotiations and or facilitation within your group – this is a great way to build capacity within your group members.

Key facilitation skills:

- Understanding issues, positions and interests:
 - Interests: the collection of needs, wants, fears, concerns and hopes that cause people to take a position.
 - Position: Solutions to an issue that meet one's own needs.
 - Issues: The subject matter of the conversation that requires resolution.
- Finding common ground: Moving from positions to consensus.
 - Using the process outlined above to help the group find solutions and move forward, on common ground.
- Listening skills and paraphrasing.
 - Listening, rather than just hearing.
 - Paraphrasing, or 'playing back', what you understand the person to have said using your own words – not repeating theirs.
 - Paraphrasing well is key, as this lets the other person know that you heard AND understood them. It also helps the whole group be clear about what was said.
 - Having empathy, the ability and willingness to understand another person and treat them with compassion and respect. Empathy is NOT sympathy, but is the genuine desire to appreciate what someone is experiencing. Empathy, combined with paraphrasing, is a great way of communicating, particularly in a conflict situation.
- Ask purposeful and powerful questions.
 - Open ended questions are a means of stimulating thought and reflection, and gathering information. They help build a common understanding.
 - Identify and clarify assumptions.
 - Encourage openness and discussion by asking open-ended questions (what, how, when, tell me about...)
 - Be careful with using 'why', as it can be perceived as a challenge.
 - Ask questions that probe to understand interests, and also for group discussion.

When is it appropriate to form subcommittees or task groups?

As a synergy group advances, events or initiatives often present themselves as opportunities for a smaller group to handle. In groups of more than 25 participants, it is easier to form a team of three or four members focused on a specific area or project, than a larger group.

Depending on the size and scope of your group, some subcommittees will be permanent, while others will exist only for a short time. Some examples of possible subcommittees are:

- Education Session planning.
- Open House or large event planning.
- Best Management Practices, where all or each topic can be drafted by a smaller team and brought to the membership for input.
- Communications committee, responsible for writing or developing materials such as newsletters, emails, invitations, managing social media accounts.
- Financial committee, responsible for managing the group budget and reporting back to the membership.
- Mutual aid committee.
- Outreach committee, responsible for communicating with neighbouring synergy groups.

Who should participate in subcommittees or task groups?

Most often, committee and subcommittee members are volunteers from within a synergy group. If the conversation arises in a meeting, you can ask for volunteers there. You can also use email, e-newsletters, and social media to ask for volunteers. You might find community members who are not usually part of your group come forward for project-specific committees.

Four to six people is typically a good size for a committee, though the numbers needed may depend on the task at hand. Keeping them a little smaller tends to make communication and division of tasks more simplified.

What is the difference between a group Chairperson and a Facilitator?

The Chair and the Facilitator each have different and distinct responsibilities. The Chair is the appointed head of the group. The Chair is responsible for the meeting's outcomes and work product.

The facilitator is responsible for the process of the meeting(s). This includes making sure that the ground rules are being followed, the agenda is being followed and the participants are engaged and on-task. It is often good practice to separate the jobs of Chair and Facilitator.

A group Chair might also take on a facilitation role when:

- The group is experienced in working together
- The purpose of the meeting is clearly defined
- The agenda contains little chance for conflict or complicated processes

It makes sense to hire a third party facilitator when:

- The group is newly forming and/or trying to determine their purpose
- There is a complicated agenda item
- The possibility of conflict is relatively high

Should our synergy group incorporate?

Synergy groups are not required to incorporate. Groups that are not incorporated may open a bank account, invoice for fees, develop terms of reference, create a structure (such as a chair and co-chair), hire a facilitator or administrator, and be members of Synergy Alberta.

However, larger, more complex groups may be interested in incorporation. There are some advantages to incorporation – it makes the group more formal and perceived as being more permanent. It allows the group to advance to a more formal organization. It does require some financial and human resources to incorporate and maintain incorporation, however.

Before you incorporate, here are a few things to consider:

- Does your group have significant funds?
- Does your group have a need to enter into a contract?
- Does your group have the resources to create by-laws and documents necessary to file with the government annually?
- Does your group have a large enough membership to have a board of directors?
- Do you anticipate your group will not dissolve in the near term?

If you're still unsure, give Synergy Alberta a call. They can discuss how incorporation has worked, or not worked, in other groups, and help you get a better feel for whether your group should proceed or not.

D. CELEBRATING SYNERGY: AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Every year, Synergy Alberta takes time to celebrate outstanding achievements and special initiatives from synergy groups around the province. The Award of Excellence is part of the annual conference, which takes place in autumn. This program is self-nominated and open to all member synergy groups.

The process is very simple! Groups can self-nominate by simply filling out a brief form including name and contact information, the title of your initiative or program (it has to be fairly concise) and a brief description. Photos are welcome as well.

Synergy Alberta only allows one submission per group per year, however groups can nominate themselves each consecutive year.

GO OUT AND STRUT YOUR SYNERGY STUFF!

Past winners include:

Fort Assiniboine and Area Multi-Stakeholder Alliance

Presentation Series

Provides education to stakeholders on a wide range of topics, from pipelines to fish habitat, sustainable agriculture, communications technology, and cumulative effects.

Lakeland Industry & Community Association (LICA)

Landowner's Handbook

When landowners and resource development meet, there is sometimes a lack of understanding on both sides. To help landowners and others understand resource development better, LICA has developed a Landowner's Handbook on Resource Development. It's full of information and suggestions to help create awareness of what is involved, share knowledge, and make stakeholder interaction as positive as possible. It is LICA's belief that whatever your role is in resource development you will find our Handbook useful.

Sundre Petroleum Operators Group

SPOG's Annual Neighbours' Day Event

SPOG has just held its 16th Annual Neighbours' Day event whereby they host an industry open house to showcase the oil & gas producers in the area as well as the service companies working within SPOG's boundaries. The local community has an opportunity to network and build relationships with our industry members and proactively seek out answers to operational questions and development plans.

West Central Stakeholders

West Country Project

In 2011, nearly 200 people attended a WCS public meeting to provide input on addressing increasing pressures and conflicting uses in the West Country.

Communication and education were identified as priorities. WCS ran ads in Central Alberta papers and distributed thousands of copies of a brochure highlighting some of the most urgent concerns. Discussions continue among WCS participants and many other users of the West Country, including Clearwater County which recently launched a program called 'Sasquatch: Welcome to Our Backyard'.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE BUDGET

YOUR SYNERGY GROUP

Draft Budget

January 1 – December 31, 2014

BUDGET SUMMARY

Revenue	\$7,500
Expenses	\$7,000
Balance	\$500

REVENUE DETAILED

Company A	\$1,500
Company B	\$1,500
Company C	\$1,500
Company D	\$1,500
Company E	\$1,500
Total revenue	\$7,500

EXPENSES DETAILED

Information Night	\$2,500
Meeting expenses	\$1,000
Facilitation	\$2,500
Administration	\$1,000
Total expenses	\$7,000

APPENDIX B: TERMS OF REFERENCE, BASIC

1. Background:

Brief context about operation in the region.

2. Vision:

The ABC Synergy Group will be an effective multi-stakeholder forum committed to broad discussion of appropriate options and solutions related to energy company names development and operational plans and impact in the region.

3. Mission:

The ABC Synergy Group is a multi-stakeholder group established to ensure that the xxxx field is developed in a manner that balances social, environmental, and economic benefits for the community and region.

4. Purpose:

The ABC Synergy Group was created to support early multi-stakeholder input into the companies project development processes and to facilitate communication among stakeholders and the operators on important issues. Subjects for discussion could include but are not limited to: specific project proposals (seismic activities, well sites, access roads, pipelines, and facilities, etc.), long-term development plans, and on-going operational issues.

5. Authority:

ABC Synergy Group will, through open dialogue and discussion, collaborate with companies in their planning and decision-making processes related to development and operations in the region. Companies will demonstrate how the group's input has been considered and used in project plans.

The companies will include input from ABC Synergy Group in the record of public consultation that forms part of regulatory applications submitted to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER). To the extent that there is disagreement within the group, or among the group and the companies, regarding the project being applied for, those issues and differing views will be recorded in the AER application.

6. Membership:

The committee will be comprised of representatives from the companies and a cross-section of community interests, to be reviewed from time-to-time, according to the resources and experience deemed to be in the interests of the group's vision, mission, and purpose.

The committee will also include representatives from the AER, Alberta Sustainable Resources and Development, the Municipal District of _____, and the Town of _____.

Participation in the ABC Synergy Group by community members does not imply support for the companies.

Company representatives will consult with individuals outside the ABC Synergy Group and will continue to consult individually with affected stakeholders. The establishment of ABC Synergy Group is to supplement, not replace companies' obligations to consult individually with affected stakeholders under the AER's Directive 56.

7. Documentation:

Notes will be kept as a record of proceedings. The notes are not a verbatim record, but will capture the essence of discussion.

The notes will be distributed to the Group and to others upon approval of the ABC Synergy Group. Notes will not be formally approved; any concerns with meeting notes should be raised to the facilitator by the concerned party. The notes from the previous meeting will be distributed to the group prior to the next meeting.

8. Operation of the Group:

Group meetings will be facilitated. The agenda will be created by the facilitator with input from the group.

Members will participate with openness, honesty, and respect for each other and the group process.

Members will:

- Listen generously as a way to acknowledge and support others.
- Speak straight in order to help others understand your message.
- Provide constructive input to build on ideas.
- Be inclusive by recognizing that everyone participates and has something to offer.
- Look for common ground among member views.
- Discuss topics with a view to finding a collaborative solution.

The facilitator will:

- Act as a neutral unbiased third-party.
- Ensure that everyone gets a fair opportunity to be heard.
- Keep the group on agenda and on time.
- Ensure that all questions are heard by the group and that they are addressed.

APPENDIX C: TERMS OF REFERENCE, ADVANCED

1. Type of Committee: Standing Committee

2. General Purpose:

- a. To be a liaison between Community, Industry and Regulators.
- b. To update each other on ongoing activities.
- c. To be an avenue to express issues of concern between community and industry and to encourage the use of the 3 key processes of information and education, complaint handling and new development.
- d. To provide an opportunity to learn and understand our different stakeholders.
- e. To invite and encourage participation from surrounding communities.

3. Key Duties and Responsibilities:

- a. **Level of Authority:** The committee investigated, reports and suggest action to the board of directors.
- b. **Reporting Relationship:** The chair of the committee reports back to the board of directors in regards to its operations, budget, activities, issues, priorities and events.

4. Appointments:

Chair and vice-chair positions are appointed by the Officers of the Board. The committee present nominations for the chair and vice-chair positions to the Officers of the Board and the committee looks to have representatives from both industry and community.

5. Compositions of Community Affairs:

- a. Each industry member has a seat on the Community Affairs Committee.
- b. Affiliate members can be representatives from each of the surrounding communities and the five surrounding Municipalities and regulators:
 - i. Bearberry
 - ii. Bergen
 - iii. Burnstick Lake
 - iv. Gwendale
 - v. Crammond
 - vi. Eagle Hill
 - vii. Eagle Valley
 - viii. Grazing Lease
 - ix. Harmattan
 - x. James River
 - xi. McDougal Flats
 - xii. Westward Ho
 - xiii. Red Deer County
 - xiv. The Town of Sundre
 - xv. Village of Caroline
 - xvi. Clearwater County
 - xvii. Mountainview County
- c. Members of the general public from the SPOG area are also welcome to attend.

6. Meetings:

- a. Meetings are regularly held once a month on the 2nd Wednesday unless otherwise stated, locations can vary. There are no meetings in December.
- b. The Chairperson confirms the agenda for each meeting.
- c. The Agenda and Minutes will be sent out to members prior to meeting.
- d. Decisions are made through motions, with a seconder and a majority vote of members in attendance. Numbers in favor and opposed are recorded.

7. Resources:

- a. Financial – The Chair manages the budget.

8. Staff:

The Committee utilizes the contract staff through the SPOG office to organize the meetings, take and distribute minutes and provide budget information. Company and Community people can participate in sub-committees.

9. Specific Annual Objectives:

Review with the committee what their objectives regarding the General Purposes are for each year.

10. Reports and Target Dates:

Provide regular agendas, minutes, budget, and regular industry, regulator and community members reports at each meeting. Annually review SPOG survey results.

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE AGENDA AND MINUTES OUTLINE

YOUR GROUP NAME

Meeting Minutes (or Agenda)

Date, Time, Location

Attendees: (for minutes only)

Name: Community

Name: Organization

Name: Government representation

Name: Regulator

1. Review last meeting notes

- Review old **action items**, get status updates

2. Review tabled issues and action items:

3. New and emerging issues

- Issue – straightforward or requiring filtering questions and prioritization
Action item: Who will take a lead, provide more information, take action, etc.

4. Roundtable updates

- Each company provides an update, using plain English
- Each community member can provide an update

5. Subcommittee or Task group updates

6. Communications

- Is an e-newsletter, email, social media update required?
- Is it time for a hard copy newsletter?
Action item: Who is following through, by what date?

7. Next meeting date, time, location

- If relevant, who is hosting/funding the meeting
Action item: who is providing speaker or info on topic, if relevant

FOLLOW YOUR SYNERGY GROUP!



twitter@yoursynergygroup



www.facebook.com/yoursynergygroup

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

June 5, 2014

THE CENTRAL MOUNTAINVIEW ACTION GROUP

(CMAG) invites the public to its spring **2014 Open House and Information Session**

BACK TO BASICS – SYNERGY ALBERTA 101 AND ALBERTA ENERGY REGULATOR (AER) OVERVIEW

Synergy Alberta Executive Director, Gary Redmond, will discuss what a synergy group is, how they work, and why you should get involved your local group. Representatives from the AER will provide an overview of the new organization structure, followed by a Question and Answer period.

A BBQ, sponsored by **CMAG** industry participants, will take place after the presentation and Q&A.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2013

Mountain View County office (south of Olds on Hwy 2A)

Doors: 4 p.m.

Presentations: 5 p.m.

BBQ to follow. Door prizes will also be available.

Open House participants include: **Synergy Alberta, Community Groups, the Alberta Energy Regulator, Mountain View County** and many of CMAG's oil and gas member companies.

For more information please visit **www.cmag.synergyalberta.ca** or call Paula at **403.862.0019**.

CMAG is a synergy group with community members and oil and gas industry representatives working to provide information and address concerns related to oil and gas development in the Mountain View County region.

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Paula Kupchak Hall, Writer

David Hill, Contributor

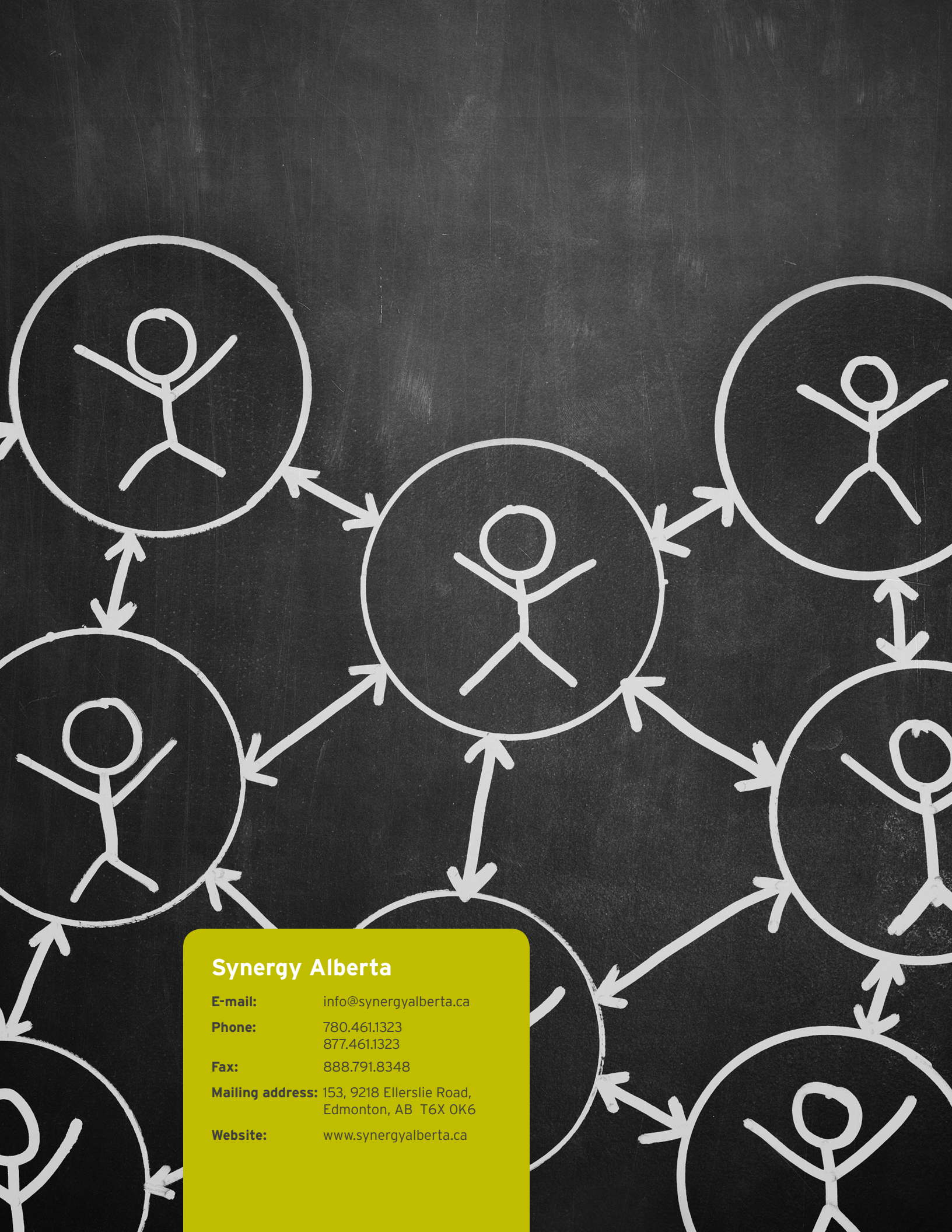
Alice Murray, Contributor

Gary Redmond, Contributor

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