

Activation Plan: Strategy Overview

Sector: *Working Lands & Water: Agricultural Production, Ag Tech, Bio Economy & Food Processing*

(Regional Plan Part 2, Chapter 3A Target Sector Strategies - Agriculture pages 70-80; and Chapter 3C Additional Regional & Community Development Strategies - Water pp. 133-134) <https://www.kccd.edu/kern-coalition/resources.html>

Topic	Sub-topic
<p>Target Sector Strategy - Brief Overview</p> <p>(Regional Plan Part 2 Ch 3A pp. 70-72)</p>	<p><i>a. Describe the proposed target sector strategy. Regions may have already included this information in their Regional Plan Part 2 submission. If so, please summarize that content here.</i></p> <p>i. Agriculture remains Kern County's largest employment sector and a foundation of its economy. The strategy for agriculture focuses on modernizing the sector through the adoption of Ag Technology innovations, expanding value-added processing, addressing workforce challenges, and ensuring environmental sustainability. By integrating advanced technologies and addressing climate-related risks, Kern County can maintain its competitive advantage while improving economic opportunities for local residents, especially in disinvested communities.</p> <p><i>b. Explain why this sector was prioritized for immediate action.</i></p> <p>i. Agriculture is the backbone of Kern County's economy and identity. However, the sector faces challenges such as climate change, regulatory pressures, and workforce shortages. Modernizing agriculture through value-added processing, sustainable practices, and workforce development will not only ensure its long-term viability but also create pathways for equitable economic growth in the region.</p> <p><i>c. Provide an overview of tactics (minimum of 5) to focus implementation over 12-18 months (to be detailed in the "Tactical work plan template")</i></p> <p>i. Tactics include expanding entrepreneurship opportunities in Ag Technology, convene industry and governance leaders for agriculture, develop training programs for agriculture workforce needs, strengthen community engagement in agriculture initiatives, secure funding for agriculture modernization, and provide technical assistance to agriculture stakeholders.</p>
<p>Operating Structure to Organize and Execute</p> <p>See organizational structure at:</p>	<p><i>a. Describe the organizational model for executing the sector strategy (including staff roles, operations, and governance model)</i></p> <p>i. Individual Entities serving as Regional Convenors may elect to serve as a Sector Investment Coordinator role subject to approval by consensus or majority vote of</p>

<p>https://www.kccd.edu/kern-coalition/index.html</p>	<p>regional convenors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Regional Convenor / Sector Investment Coordinators' will utilize their existing organizational model (staff and operations), and will report to the Kern Coalition, Subregional Collaborative, and Governance Council) in this new role. iii. Regional Convenors / Sector Investment Coordinators' will assign or contract with individuals or entities with the requisite expertise in each industry sector and/or sector strategy to ensure timely and effective strategy implementation. <p><i>b. Identify regional partners for implementing tactics (including their roles and existing engagement with California Jobs First)</i></p> <p><i>Existing Partners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Kern EDC, B3K, KCCD ii. The Ravi & Naina Patel Foundation Regenerative Garden located at KCCD's Bakersfield College Delano Educational Center, in partnership with the Bakersfield College Agriculture Dept., White Buffalo Foundation & TomKat Ranch iii. California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL), a department within Kern CCD iv. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) v. UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography (UCSD SIO) partnering with Kern CCD regarding climate change, water, and agriculture data management tools vi. Existing Kern Coalition CJF communities & members and other CBO groups in the region. <p><i>New or Potential Partners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vii. Kern County Farm Bureau, KC SGMA, UC Cooperative Extension Office
<p>Resourcing Across the Strategy</p> <p><i>Kern Coalition is in the process of identifying funding opportunities in alignment with Regional Plan Part 2 strategies.</i></p>	<p>Regional Convenor / Sector Investment Coordinator or Industry Sector Consultant to determine Resourcing Across the Strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. Summarize total costs required to support strategy execution.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Upgrade: Transition worker to higher-skilled jobs ii. Expand: Bring in new high-quality jobs in technology & value-added food products iii. Regenerate: leverage expertise to incorporate regenerative practices <i>b. Describe existing financing awarded/approved and associated sources, including utilization of Regional Investment Initiative Catalyst and Sector Coordination resources.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Upgrade: Federal and state education workforce funding (US DOE, US ED, & CCCCCO) ii. Expand: (unknown / TBD) private financing iii. Regenerate: (unknown / TBD) federal and private funding to provide technical assistance and to support the formation of co-ops.

	<p><i>c. Describe remaining funding required, potential sources that have been identified, and the general approach to securing investment</i></p> <p>i. Potential funding sources: US DOE, US DOL, CCCCO, USDA, private funding and financing to Upgrade: workforce skills, Expand: the number of high quality value-added food / ag tech jobs; and Regenerate: provide technical assistance to incorporate regenerative practices and form regenerative farming co-ops.</p>
<p>Goals and Metrics Across the Strategy</p> <p>(Regional Plan Part 2, Ch. 3A, pp 72-74; and Ch. 3D, pp. 133-134)</p>	<p><i>a. Identify measures for sector-level outcomes expected from interventions over the next 5-10 years (e.g., increases in target sector employment and number of quality jobs)</i></p> <p>i. Regenerate: Establish Kern County as a leader in regenerative practices and agriculture technology (Ag #3)</p> <p>ii. Expand: Increase in high-quality jobs in agriculture technology and value added food processing (Ag #2)</p> <p>iii. Upgrade - transition workers to higher-skill jobs in Ag Industry (Ag #1)</p> <p><i>b. Identify measures to track shorter-term progress towards desired sector-level outcomes (do not include measures linked to individual tactics, as those can be included in the tactical work plan template below)</i></p> <p>i. Develop infrastructure to support the adoption of precision agriculture, regenerative farming practices, and ag tech. (Ag #3a)</p> <p>ii. Foster new co-ops dedicated to sustainable farming methods (Ag #3b)</p> <p>iii. Educate & support the adoption of precision agriculture, regenerative farming practices, and ag tech (Ag #2a&b)</p> <p>iv. Incentives to shift to value-added processes or increase ag tech (Ag #2c)</p> <p>v. Increase awareness of existing and emerging skilled jobs (Ag #1a)</p> <p>vi. Provide entry- and incumbent worker training in ag tech, climate change data tools: evapo-transpiration, water management, etc. (Ag #1b)</p> <p>vii. Provide financial support for ag tech training (Ag #1c)</p> <p>viii. Reduce water usage through regenerative and precision agriculture practices and alternative irrigation methods (Ch 3A Ag #2; Ch 3D).</p> <p><i>c. Describe expectations for reporting progress on measures</i></p> <p>i. Kern Coalition and/or its subcommittees will determine funding and reporting priorities.</p> <p>ii. Kern Coalition funded projects will provide project-specific reporting aligned with the CJF goals and objectives.</p>

<p>Dependencies and Challenges</p> <p><i>Kern Coalition is in the process of identifying dependencies, challenges, and mitigation strategies.</i></p>	<p>a. <i>Describe key dependencies and risks to tactical work plan execution and how the strategy addresses them</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Dependencies & Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Insufficient infrastructure for water management (Ch 3D), transportation (p. 70), and energy reliability (food processing Ch 3A p. 70) b) Climate change impacts, such as extreme weather, drought, and groundwater shortages, pose significant threats to agriculture (Ch 3A, p. 76) c) Persistent disparities in high quality jobs among historically disinvested community members (Ch 3A, p. 75) d) Training programs for non-English speaking agricultural workers in low-paying occupations for higher paying jobs (Ch 3A, p. 75) ii. Mitigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improved water management infrastructure (Ch 3D, p. 133-134) Improved transportation infrastructure (Ch 3A, p. 70) Improved energy reliability for food processing facilities (Ch 3A, p. 52) b) Improved K18 climate change training (UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography) regarding impacts on the agriculture industry and data management tools c) Engage with industry and job placement entities to ensure qualified under-represented community members have access to high quality jobs (Ch 3A, p. 75) d) Engage the K-18 education institutions to ensure that workforce training for high quality jobs is available for non-English speaking incumbent agricultural workers (Ch 3A Ag #1b & 1c, p. 73)
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Activation Plan: Tactical Work Plan Template**Reference:** Regional Plan Part 2 pp 70-80 and pp 133-134.

Tactic & Overview	Tasks	Responsible Party	Timeline
<p>1. Tactic 1: Expanding Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Ag-Tech</p> <p>a. Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Support small businesses and startups in developing innovative agricultural solutions, with a focus on addressing water usage, labor shortages, and climate challenges. <p>b. Program Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Establish an agriculture-focused innovation hub offering shared workspaces, prototyping equipment, and access to mentorship.ii. Provide tailored support for startups working on water management, precision agriculture, and climate resilience technologies. <p>c. Team: Who will be leading the tactic and what partners will be involved in implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Lead: BHC, CAPKii. Partners: B3K, KCCD, KIMCLC <p>d. Cost: Operating (space, staff, equipment, etc.) and program-specific costs, including potential funding sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The costs to implement the tactic are still being determined. As outlined in the Activation Plan, the Regional Convenor / Sector Investment	<p>Task 1: Host small business resource fairs in five subregions to share information about Ag-tech entrepreneurship programs/startups.</p>	<p>Leads: BHC, CAPK, B3K</p>	<p>August 202</p>
	<p>Task 2: Organize Ag-Tech startup entrepreneur groups to showcase their innovative farming solutions to local farmers and potential investors, encouraging connections and adoption of new technologies.</p>	<p>Leads: BHC, CAPK</p> <p>Partners: B3K</p>	<p>June 2025</p>

<p>Coordinator will work with an Industry Sector Consultant to determine resourcing across the strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances.</p> <p>e. Potential Metrics: Measures to assess progress toward the tactic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of ag-tech startups supported. ii. Funding raised by businesses. iii. Jobs created in the ag-tech sector. 	<p>Task 3: Share available resources regarding small businesses/entrepreneurship programs</p>	<p>Lead: BHC, CAPK</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
<p>2. Tactic 2: Convening Industry and Government Leaders</p> <p>a. Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Foster collaboration between agricultural stakeholders to address shared challenges and align on sustainability goals. <p>b. Program Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Host Agriculture Roundtables to align on issues like water usage, labor regulations, and climate resilience. ii. Publish an annual roadmap identifying key policy recommendations and regional investment priorities. <p>c. Team: Who will be leading the tactic and what partners will be involved in implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lead: BHC, CAPK ii. Partners: B3K, KIMCLC, KCCD, KEDC, KC Farm Bureau <p>d. Cost: Operating (space, staff, equipment, etc.) and program-specific costs, including potential funding sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The costs to implement the tactic are 	<p>Task 1: Organize meetings / roundtables with policymakers, industry leaders, ag tech developers, community stakeholders and representatives from area farmers, vendors, and food processors to align local priorities.</p>	<p>Leads: BHC, CAPK</p> <p>Co-Leads: KIMCLC, B3K, KCCD</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
	<p>Task 2: Establish a working group to explore water-use efficiency and alternative irrigation methods.</p>	<p>Leads: KIMCLC, BHC</p> <p>Co-Leads: CAPK, BHC, KCCD</p>	<p>April 2025</p>
	<p>Task 3: Publish a roadmap for advancing sustainable agriculture and value-added processing.</p>	<p>Leads: KIMCLC, B3K, KCCD</p>	<p>February 2026</p>

<p>still being determined. As outlined in the Activation Plan, the Regional Convenor / Sector Investment Coordinator will work with an Industry Sector Consultant to determine resourcing across the strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances.</p> <p>e. Potential Metrics: Measures to assess progress toward the tactic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of convenings hosted ii. Number of policy recommendations adopted 			
<p>3. Tactic 3:Developing Training Programs for Agricultural Workforce Needs</p> <p>a. Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Equip the workforce with skills to meet the demands of modern agriculture, including ag-tech and sustainable practices. <p>b. Program Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Partner with local colleges to develop training programs in irrigation technology, value-added processing, and farm management. ii. Launch bilingual training programs to expand accessibility. BHC iii. Partners: KHSO, KCSOS, KEDC, KCFarm Bureau <p>c. Cost:Operating (space, staff, equipment, etc.) and program-specific costs, including potential funding sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The costs to implement the tactic are still being determined. As outlined in the Activation Plan, the Regional 	Task 1: Identify workforce gaps in sustainable farming and ag-tech.	Leads: KCCD, KIM CLC	February 2026
	Task 2: Develop 1-2 pilot training programs focusing Ag-tech occupations (e.g. precision ag, irrigation, etc.)	Leads:KCCD, KIM CLC, BHC	September 2025
	Task 3: Develop paid internship opportunities with Ag-tech employers for program participants.	Leads: KCCD, KIM CLC	September 2025

<p>Convenor / Sector Investment Coordinator will work with an Industry Sector Consultant to determine resourcing across the strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances.</p> <p>d. Potential Metrics: Measures to assess progress toward the tactic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of participants trained. ii. Certifications awarded. iii. Job placement rate. 			
<p>4. Tactic 4: Community Engagement</p> <p>a. Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure agricultural advancements benefit all Kern County residents, especially those in disinvested communities. <p>b. Program Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Host bilingual workshops to educate residents about career opportunities and new farming practices. ii. Partner with nonprofits for targeted outreach in rural areas. iii. Develop tailored outreach strategies for rural and underserved areas. <p>c. Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lead: BHC & CAPK ii. Partners: Local non-profits <p>d. Cost: Operating (space, staff, equipment, etc.) and program-specific costs, including potential funding sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The costs to implement the tactic are still being determined. As outlined in the Activation Plan, the Regional Convenor / Sector Investment 	<p>Task 1: Develop a toolkit to help nonprofits and other community stakeholder groups educate communities about ag-tech careers.</p>	<p>Leads: BHC, CAPK</p>	<p>August 2025</p>
	<p>Task 2: Host bilingual community meetings in all five subregions to gather community input and promote ag-tech opportunities and provide pathways to involvement.</p>	<p>Leads: BHC, CAPK</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
	<p>Task 3: Develop community newsletters to provide updates on progress and a digital platform to crowdsource ideas (Monthly or Quarterly)</p>	<p>Leads: BHC, CAPK</p>	<p>April 2025</p>

<p>Coordinator will work with an Industry Sector Consultant to determine resourcing across the strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances.</p> <p>e. Potential Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of residents engaged. ii. Satisfaction scores from participants. 			
<p>5. Tactic 5: Resource Development</p> <p>a. Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Secure and attract state, federal, local and private funding to support sustainable farming, water conservation, and climate resilience. <p>b. Program Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify state, federal, and private funding opportunities for manufacturing projects. ii. Build partnerships with private investors for infrastructure projects. iii. Convene potential partners for investment discussions. <p>c. Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lead: CAPK & KCCD ii. Partner: <p>d. Cost: Operating (space, staff, equipment, etc.) and program-specific costs, including potential funding sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The costs to implement the tactic are still being determined. As outlined in the Activation Plan, the Regional Convenor / Sector Investment Coordinator will work with an Industry Sector Consultant to determine 	<p>Task 1: Identify grant opportunities and partners to collaborate and apply for federal / state grants to expand / implement clean energy projects</p>	<p>Leads: CAPK, KCCD</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
	<p>Task 2: Host a webinar for investors / funders to showcase clean energy opportunities in Kern County</p>	<p>Leads: B3K, KCCD</p> <p>Partners: CAPK, KIM CLC, BHC</p>	<p>September 2025</p>
	<p>Task 3: Form a public / private partnership with investors to fund clean energy projects.</p>	<p>Leads: B3K, KCCD</p> <p>Partners: CAPK, KIM CLC, BHC</p>	<p>TBD</p>

<p>resourcing across the strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances.</p> <p>e. Potential Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Total funding secured. ii. Number of funded projects. 			
<p>6. Tactic 6: Technical Assistance</p> <p>a. Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Help farmers adopt new technologies, improve efficiency, and meet sustainability standards. <p>b. Program Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Offer workshops on ag-tech adoption and meeting environmental regulations. ii. Conduct assessments to identify resource and infrastructure gaps. <p>c. Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lead: KIMCLC ii. Partners: KEDC, KCCD, B3K <p>d. Cost: Operating (space, staff, equipment, etc.) and program-specific costs, including potential funding sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The costs to implement the tactic are still being determined. As outlined in the Activation Plan, the Regional Convenor / Sector Investment Coordinator will work with an Industry Sector Consultant to determine resourcing across the strategy funding sources, priorities, totals, and remaining balances. <p>e. Potential Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of businesses and stakeholders receiving technical 	<p>Task 1: Develop a values guide to drive decision-making and ensure ag-tech project proposals align with equity and sustainability principles.</p>	<p>Leads: CAPK, BHC</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
	<p>Task 2: Perform a regional assessment of infrastructure and resource gaps that hinder the adoption and growth of agricultural technologies.</p>	<p>Leads:,KIMCLC, KCCD, B3K</p>	<p>February 2026</p>

<p>assistance.</p> <p>ii. Workforce gaps identified and addressed.</p> <p>iii. Number of reports and analyses completed.</p>	<p>Task 3: Conduct a comprehensive workforce supply-demand analysis to identify skills gaps and opportunities in ag-tech industries.</p>	<p>Leads: KCCD, KIMCLC</p>	<p>February 2026</p>
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