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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

CANADIAN FOREST SERVICE FOREST COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources Canada is planning to launch a new **Forest Communities Program** (FCP) beginning in April 2007. This new program will appeal to existing or newly constituted community-level organizations across Canada interested in assisting resource-based communities in the development of innovative approaches to meet the challenges of forest sector transition and forest resource sustainability. The Program is seeking proposals from interested not-for-profit organizations that are, or wish to become, community-based sites and participate in the achievement of the Forest Communities Program's vision and objectives. The program is intended to facilitate the development and sharing of knowledge, tools and practices to empower forest-based communities to participate in informed decision-making on the forest land base, allowing communities to sustain and grow forest resource benefits while capitalizing on emerging forest-based opportunities.

Background

The Forest Communities Program will work with local community organizations, Aboriginal organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), federal, provincial and municipal governments, resource industries and other key stakeholders to address the challenges being faced by forest-based communities where forest companies and other resource users are rationalizing operations and making other transitions in response to current economic and environmental realities. The program will take a broad, landscape level approach to addressing these transition challenges and is seeking to involve as wide a cross-section of natural resource managers and stakeholders as possible.

General program information

Subject to Treasury Board approval of funding and spending authority, it is expected that the new Forest Communities Program would be funded for a five-year period from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2012. It is anticipated that six to ten sites would be selected and would receive core funding up to a maximum of \$400,000 per year for the five-year period under the program. The amount of base funding received will be based on the proponent's demonstration of matched funding, as a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. More detail on matching requirements is provided in Section 1.3.

Submitting a proposal

Interested parties are asked to submit a proposal for consideration to become a FCP site. Successful sites will be selected according to pre-determined eligibility requirements (see Section 2.3) and selection criteria (see Section 4.1). The complete details and guidelines for the development of proposals are provided in this document. If you have questions or require further clarification, please contact the Forest Communities Program Manager at Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS).

Applicants are asked to submit an expression of interest to NRCan-CFS that is postmarked or courier stamped no later than midnight, Friday, September 15, 2006.

Full submitted proposals for FCP funding must be postmarked or courier stamped by midnight, Tuesday, October 31, 2006.

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1 FOREST COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

1.1 Current context and challenges

Rural areas play a vital role in Canada's economy and in its environmental and stewardship commitments. Many of the country's major industries – agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining, and energy – rely on rural communities. Natural resource sectors contribute more than 13 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product; of that, approximately one-quarter is produced by the forest sector and supports hundreds of forest-dependent rural communities across Canada. (Source: www.nrcan.gc.ca/statistics)

Today, rural communities face multiple challenges to their viability as they are affected by such factors as globalization and industry rationalization, over-dependence on a single industry, climate change, and limited existing capacity to access new and diverse opportunities. The challenge for federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments is to demonstrate leadership on rural issues by supporting

communities' efforts to manage the changes and challenges they face, and to develop the capacity to build on their strengths, identify opportunities and take effective action.

Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service is responding to the needs and experiences of forest-dependent communities through the development of new policies and programs. Issues of importance to forest-dependent communities cross ecological, social, political and industry sector boundaries, and land use issues are becoming increasingly complex. No single sector or agency can resolve these issues alone, and in many cases governments, communities and industry must find approaches to manage these issues in a collaborative manner. NRCan-CFS recognizes the need for flexible programming that engages other federal agencies, along with provincial and municipal governments and the private sector. It also recognizes the need to engage and capitalize on the experience and enthusiasm present in resource-dependent communities across Canada. Communities are closest to forest issues and are the first to be impacted by local, national and international shifts in circumstances affecting the resource sectors. As such, they are in the best position to develop ideas and implement partnership initiatives that will have the greatest likelihood of long-term success and social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS) is responding to current challenges facing forest-based communities through the launch of the **Forest Communities Program**. This new program is designed to assist forest-based communities develop into environmentally sustainable entities with diverse and robust economies. The program will address the transition and development challenges faced by rural communities through the establishment of sites where integrated, landscape-level approaches to community revitalization are created and implemented "on-the-ground". The program is designed so that activities are developed and implemented by the communities themselves, and results shared with other communities across Canada and around the world.

1.2 Program vision, goal and objectives

The **vision** for the Forest Communities Program (FCP) is

Resource-based rural communities that are equipped and empowered to be innovative in meeting the opportunities and challenges of a healthy forest and a changing forest sector.

The **goal** of the FCP is to foster strong forest-based communities that have been provided with the knowledge and ability to effectively meet forest sector transition challenges and have healthy economies bolstered by new forest-based opportunities, a sustainable forest resource providing a growing range of community benefits, better informed stakeholders and more inclusive governance options and practices.

To address this vision and goal, participants in the FCP will be expected to meet the following program **objectives**:

1. To pilot ideas, conduct experiments and develop models that assist forest-based communities to build capacity and meet the opportunities and challenges of a forest sector in transition.
2. To develop and share integrated, multi-sector approaches, based on science and innovation, to address community transition that involves new and existing natural resource stakeholders.
3. To work with industry and other community-level stakeholders to develop new forest-based opportunities for rural Canada.
4. To develop and share sustainable forest management knowledge, practices, tools and experiences with international forest-based communities and their Model Forests, in keeping with Canada's international forest agenda.

1.3 Program funding

The Forest Communities Program would be funded, subject to Treasury Board approval, for a five-year period from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2012. Sites funded through the FCP will be selected through an open competitive process. It is expected that six to ten sites will be selected and will receive core funding

up to a maximum of \$400,000 per year for the five-year period. Successful applicants are expected to commence operations in April 2007.

In addition to the core funding, sites funded through the FCP may have access to additional funding for joint or strategic projects. This additional funding would be allocated to national projects that contribute to NRCan-CFS policy development and research priorities. The amount of funding allocated to each site will depend on their ability to develop and deliver on projects that address the priorities identified by the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) each year.

The amount of core funding received from CFS-NRCan must be matched or exceeded annually by participating organizations, with cash contributions comprising at least 50% of matched funding. Other eligible direct contributions can also constitute the total matched funding.

While core funding provided to FCP sites will remain constant throughout the five-year phase of the program, the portion of this funding that may be used for site administration and overhead will decrease, i.e., maximum of 60% in years one and two, 50% in years three and four, and 40% in year five. Conversely, the proportion of funding available for projects will increase over time as the CFS contributions to administration and overhead decrease.

Sites funded through the FCP will also be required to respect Government of Canada requirements for maximum levels (stacking limit) of total government assistance on an annual basis. While subject to final designation by the Treasury Board, it is estimated that if the Forest Communities Program is approved by the Treasury Board that the maximum level of total government assistance (all levels of government) for any site must not exceed 90% of eligible expenses. If total government assistance exceeds this stacking limit, an adjustment to the CFS contribution will be required.

1.4 Eligible contributions

Eligible direct contributions are those contributions that have been committed specifically to a particular activity, and that the applicant would normally have budgeted for in the absence of this support. Direct contributions may be cash or eligible in-kind assistance.

Eligible expenses include all reasonable and proper expenses incurred by an applicant for the performance of activities, but do not include capital acquisition of land or buildings; construction costs; intangible assets such as goodwill; depreciation or amortization expenses; costs related to litigation; or opportunity costs, unless approved in writing by CFS-NRCan.

Eligible in-kind assistance is cash-equivalent contributions in the form of goods; services; facilities; staff time; discounts; use of, donation of or access to equipment or special materials; or other commodities for which no cash is exchanged, but which are necessary for the completion of activities. In-kind contributions must be such that they can be assigned a fair market value. In-kind contributions are those that are central to the activity and would have to be purchased on the open market if they were not provided by the applicant or other participant.

1.5 Program administration

The Canadian Forest Service will administer the Forest Communities Program. Subject to Treasury Board approval, it is proposed that five-year contribution agreements would be established between chosen sites and the regional CFS Forestry Centre as appropriate. Contribution agreements will detail requirements that sites must meet each year, including, but not limited to, eligible expenditures, leveraging requirements, reporting requirements, work planning and evaluation tools. For example, each site will be required to:

- prepare mid-year progress reports and annual reports
- present annual audited financial statements

- submit for approval annual work plans (in a standardized format) that outline the planned activities for the coming year. These work plans shall detail how other participating organizations are contributing to the projects that are to be undertaken.
- develop an evaluation framework that will support periodic evaluations and serve as a management tool for the organization (see Appendix A)

CFS representatives will work closely with FCP sites to ensure that program priorities and cooperation opportunities are known and incorporated into site level program delivery. Regular CFS involvement will ensure compliance with planning, reporting and financial requirements and ensure consistency in these activities across the program as a whole.

1.6 Site administration

Contribution agreements will only be established with legally incorporated, not-for-profit organizations (see eligibility requirements in Section 2.3). Each site selected to take part in the FCP will therefore be required to establish decision-making structures in accordance with the laws of incorporation of the province or territory in which they are located, as well as the overall philosophy of their organization. To ensure that the activities at each site address local needs along with regional and national priorities, the CFS expects that each site will be governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a broad cross-section of representatives drawn from local/regional forest community stakeholders and various levels of government. The Board of Directors for each FCP site would be expected to provide leadership and direction for the executive arm (manager and staff) charged with running the day-to-day operations of the organization. The governance structure and capacity of each site will form part of the selection criteria for all proposals (see Section 4.1).

1.7 Participation in the Canadian Model Forest Network

All sites funded through the FCP will be designated as members of the existing [Canadian Model Forest Network](#) (CMFN) and the International Model Forest Network. As such, these sites will be required to participate fully in the activities and governance structure of the CMFN through network level planning, projects and activities including representation on committees and the CMFN Board of Directors. All applicants should take these responsibilities into account when developing and submitting their proposal for the FCP.

1.8 International cooperation

In addition to participation in the CMFN, as members of the [International Model Forest Network](#) (IMFN) sites funded through the FCP will be expected to contribute to the goals and activities of the IMFN by actively looking for opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange with other Model Forest sites around the world.

1.9 Compliance with the Federal Identity Program

All sites funded through the FCP will be required to adhere to the requirements of the Federal Identity Program (FIP). The FIP enables the public to recognize the involvement of the Government of Canada in federal programming and initiatives. Detailed requirements for using the FIP will be communicated to sites participating in the FCP, but as a general rule the FIP will be applied to all products or publications that are created for public information purposes.

2 INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

2.1 Expression of interest

Applicants are asked to submit a written expression of interest, postmarked or courier stamped no later than **midnight, Friday, September 15, 2006**. The expression of interest must not exceed 2 pages in length, and is to provide the following information:

- contact information;
- a brief description of how your proposal fits with FCP objectives;
- the location/geographic area of the prospective community site; and
- an attached collection of “letters of support” from key participating organizations.

The expression of interest must be submitted in writing to:

Program Manager
Forest Communities Program
Canadian Forest Service
Science and Programs Branch
Natural Resources Canada
580 Booth Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4

Expressions of interest will not be evaluated or ranked. They will be used for planning purposes to measure the extent of interest by potential site proponents and will be used to obtain contact information for the purpose of disseminating information and updates as required.

2.2 Question and answer forum

All interested organizations will have access to an electronic forum where questions and answers related to the Call for Proposals will be posted anonymously for viewing by all applicants. The Canadian Forest Service (CFS) is committed to ensuring that all interested parties have access to the same information.

2.3 Eligibility

An applicant must meet **all** of the following eligibility requirements:

- **be legally incorporated in a Canadian province or territory or under the laws of Canada as a not-for-profit organization¹;**
- **provide evidence of commitment from a broad base of community-level organizations, representing a wide range of key stakeholders in resource management, through letters of support or testimonials from these organizations;**
- **provide evidence of demonstrated capacity to work with a broad cross-section of organizations;**
- **declare defined bio-physical/geographic boundary(ies) within which it will carry out its principal activities; and**
- **confirm that the organization is able to match or exceed the core annual funding provided by the CFS.**

¹ If not incorporated prior to submitting a successful proposal, an organization must attain incorporated status prior to participation in the program. Contribution agreements will not be established with unincorporated entities.

Proposals meeting these eligibility requirements will be subject to review and assessment against the selection criteria presented in Section 4.1. Proposals failing to meet the above eligibility requirements will not advance further in the selection process.

3 SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

The following guidelines will assist proponents in developing their proposal submissions. Proposals must adhere to the outline presented in Section 3.7 to facilitate the review and selection process.

3.1 Format

The proposal document should not exceed 50 pages in letter format (8.5 X 11”), excluding maps and letters of support. Proposals must be prepared in a 12-point TrueType font (e.g., Times or a similar font), with single (1.0) spaced, letter-quality print.

3.2 Number of copies

Each proponent must submit three (3) complete proposal documents in writing and one (1) electronic copy on CD or DVD in Portable Document Format (pdf).

3.3 Deadline and mailing address

Complete proposal packages must be postmarked or courier stamped by midnight, Tuesday, October 31, 2006.

The complete package of proposal documents is to be sent to the attention of:

Program Manager
Forest Communities Program
Canadian Forest Service
Science and Programs Branch
Natural Resources Canada
580 Booth Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4

3.4 Official languages

The program will operate in both official languages for the benefit of all Canadians. The proposal documents may be submitted in either English or French. However, the proponent is required to indicate how they plan to respect Canada’s Official Languages Policy in their activities at both the site and network levels.

3.5 Units of measure

The International System (i.e., metric system) is to be used throughout the proposal.

3.6 Confidentiality

The CFS will treat all submissions as confidential. Documentation that becomes part of a Contribution Agreement with the CFS will be considered public information.

3.7 Proposal outline

Applicants must submit their proposal following the general outline provided below. As described above, proposals should not exceed 50 pages in length, excluding maps and letters of support.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Potential content</i>
a) Proposal Summary	e.g., applicant's officially incorporated name and contact information, corresponding author, list of participating organizations, abstract, etc.
b) Site Description	e.g., site description, total area, tenure and settlement patterns, biophysical information, parks and protected areas, road access and transportation, natural resource industries, socio-economic considerations, demographics, etc.
c) Goals and Objectives	e.g., overall philosophy of the applicant organization, strategic vision, how applicant is relevant to FCP objectives, how applicant will address current challenges facing local communities, objectives and implementation strategy for the applicant for 2007-2012, etc.
d) Participating Organizations and Governance	e.g., introduction to the participating organizations, role of participating organizations, processes for engaging participating organizations and renewing these relationships, organizational charts, role of various committees and working groups, processes for making decisions and resolving conflicts, structure of the Board of Directors, role of Board members, ratio of staff to volunteers, etc.
e) Activities, Deliverables and Outcomes	e.g., overall plan of activity for 2007-2012, deliverables and outcomes over various time scales (short, medium and long-term), measuring and reporting results, use of innovative techniques and technologies, links and collaboration with scientists and centres of expertise, etc.
f) Communications, Outreach and Networking	e.g., communications strategy, communications capacity, target audiences, how results will be transferred within and beyond the site, science extension, skills and knowledge transfer, contributions to Canadian Model Forest Network communications and reporting, language capacity for communicating to target audiences
g) Administration and Finances	e.g., organizational capacity, staffing levels and job titles, office facilities, support from participating organizations and others (cash and other eligible contributions – see Section 1.4), potential for leveraging funds from other sources, budget and five-year financial plan, planning and reporting tools, etc.

4 SELECTION PROCESS

4.1 Selection criteria

Applicants must submit their proposal following the outline provided above. If the Forest Communities Program is approved by the Treasury Board, proposals will be assessed by the Proposal Review Team against the following criteria, with a total maximum score of 100 points. The relative weighting for the selection criteria is provided below.

Selection Criteria	Points
<i>i. Goals and Objectives</i>	20
\$ Vision, goals and objectives of the applicant	
\$ Relevance of the proposal to the stated objectives of the Forest Communities Program and demonstrated capacity to address these objectives and the mission of the Canadian Forest	

<p>Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Management philosophy and approach \$ Links to local landscape(s) and transferability of knowledge and results beyond this target area 	
<p><i>ii. Participating Organizations and Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Involvement of pertinent landowner stakeholders, which typically includes the province, resource-based industries, municipalities/and or regional municipalities, First Nations and Métis communities, federal agencies, community organizations, NGOs, and universities/colleges. \$ Framework for decision-making and resolution of conflicts or grievances \$ Processes for encouraging engagement of participating organizations, as well as recruitment of new participants \$ Level of commitment of participating organizations, e.g. timeframe, type of support \$ Description and role of boards, committees and working groups \$ Approach to networking, information sharing and technology transfer \$ Links to existing expertise and research capacity \$ Support for, and planned involvement in, the Canadian Model Forest Network 	20
<p><i>iii. Activities, Deliverables and Outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-year plan (2007-2012) that describes the applicant's activities, outputs and deliverables • Short, medium and long-term outcomes of the projects and other work that will be completed over the next five years • Links and collaboration with participating organizations and other expertise that will help to deliver on the planned activities • Methods of measuring success and reporting results • Impacts of activities "on-the-ground" and transferability of these results to other locations • Strengths and particular expertise of the applicant organization and how these relate to program goals and objectives 	30
<p><i>iv. Communications, Outreach and Networking</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Identification of target audiences \$ Strategy for reaching out to participating organizations, stakeholders, interested parties and the general public, both within the local area and beyond \$ Transfer of skills and knowledge (extension) \$ Contributions to Canadian Model Forest Network reporting and communications \$ Degree of capacity to communicate in both official languages 	20
<p><i>v. Administration and Finances (10 points)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ Demonstration of the ability to match CFS core funding through leveraged funds from other sources \$ Breakdown of cash and in-kind contributions \$ Five-year financial plan, with clear and well-developed budget allocations \$ Strategy for diversifying sources of administrative funding and increasing the financial sustainability of the organization over the five-year period \$ Organizational capacity, including staffing levels, office facilities and technological capabilities \$ Tools and approaches for financial planning and reporting 	10
Total	100

4.2 Review process

Proposals will be reviewed by an arm's length, multi-disciplinary committee. The terms of reference of this committee will be clearly defined and publicly available. The Proposal Review Team will not include CFS staff or those currently engaged in Model Forests. Proposals that are deemed eligible for further

review will then be evaluated against the full suite of selection criteria. The involvement of the Proposal Review Team will conclude once they present their recommendations for successful proposals to CFS Senior Management at Natural Resources Canada

4.3 Decision and notification

Decisions on successful applications will take into account the recommendations of the Proposal Review Team and the needs and priorities of the Government of Canada. The review process will ensure that the highest calibre of activities is achieved and objectives are fully met within the program. The final decision on successful proposals will be made by Senior Management of Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service. It is expected that all applicants will be notified of the status of their application by mid-December, 2006. Successful applicants will be requested to respect CFS communications strategies and plans regarding the launch of the new program and announcement of the participating sites. The call for proposals and review process does not obligate NRCan to enter into a contribution agreement with any given applicant. The CFS will negotiate contribution agreements with successful applicants.

5 CONTACT US

All inquiries and other communications related to this Call for Proposals should be directed in writing, preferably by e-mail, to:

Program Manager
Forest Communities Program
Canadian Forest Service
Science and Programs Branch
Natural Resources Canada
580 Booth Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4

Email: fcp-pcf@nrcan.gc.ca

APPENDIX A: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION

NRCan-CFS is committed to demonstrating results to Canadians for the money invested in the Forest Communities Program. Therefore, processes for monitoring progress and appropriate use of funds, as well as for measuring performance and evaluating the success of the program must be established. As a result, any sites receiving funding through the FCP must:

- contribute to the monitoring, review and evaluation of the FCP, by collecting information that measures performance; participating in evaluation studies, surveys or workshops; and providing data or reports as required for the purpose of collecting information to assess progress and results.
- encourage staff, participating organizations and other project collaborators to participate in the monitoring, review and evaluation of the FCP as required.

Any evaluation of the FCP will examine the following evaluation issues:

- *relevance* – does the program continue to be consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities and does it realistically address an actual need?
- *success* – is the program effective in meeting its objectives, within budget and without unwanted outcomes?
- *cost-effectiveness* – are the most appropriate and efficient means being used to achieve objectives, relative to alternative design and delivery approaches?

The following table is intended to further clarify program objectives by linking them to expected outcomes. This information will form the basis of a full “results-based management and accountability framework” (RMAF) for the FCP. Please note that this is an early version of an evaluation framework, and is provided here as an example of the types of links to be expected between program objectives, outcomes and indicators. This table will be superseded by the full RMAF once it has been completed and if it is approved by Treasury Board. Each site that participates in the program will be required to report on the progress they are making towards achieving outcomes, in keeping with CFS evaluation and accountability requirements.

Program Objective	Desired Outcome	Potential Indicators of Success (provided as examples only – to be finalized at a later date)
To pilot ideas, conduct experiments and develop models that assist forest-based communities to build capacity and meet the opportunities and challenges of a forest sector in transition.	Increased capacity within forest-based communities to respond to the ongoing changes and challenges of the forest sector and other natural resource sectors.	Number of pilot projects, experiments and models implemented by FCP sites
		Satisfaction levels of local residents
		Demographic trends
		Measures of aspects of community health
To develop and share integrated, multi-sector approaches, based on science and innovation, to address community transition that involves new and existing natural resource stakeholders.	More integrated landscape-level decision-making that engages a variety of resource sectors and ensures sustainability of forest resources.	Number and type of natural resource sector organizations participating in FCP sites
		Number of integrated management plans developed through FCP sites
		Cross-section of provincial and federal departments represented as participating organizations
To work with industry and other	New forest-based opportunities	Joint projects initiated by

community-level stakeholders to develop new forest-based opportunities for rural Canada.	and economic growth in rural Canada.	communities and industry
		New and enhanced forest-based products
		New forest-based enterprises
To develop and share sustainable forest management knowledge, practices, tools and experiences with international forest-based communities and their Model Forests, in keeping with Canada's international forest agenda.	Canada's approach to sustainable forest management is recognized internationally.	Comprehensive plan to share sustainable forest management expertise
		Creation of stable and long-term mechanisms that advance sustainable forest management in Canada and abroad
		Regular and free-flowing exchange of information
		Domestic recognition of foreign expertise