

# Vegetation Inventory Advisory Council

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **BACKGROUND**

At the request of the Ministry of Forests and Range (MoFR), the Ministry of Finance Internal Audit and Advisory Services (IAAS) conducted an audit in 2005/06 of the Land Base Investment Program (LBIP) to determine the extent to which resources available to LBIP projects were managed with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Some of the key findings from the review revealed:

- A majority of LBIP recipients advised that the province was in need of a complete land and resource inventory.
- The LBIP allocation model resulted in management unit funding issues such as:
  - insufficient funding for some of the management unit/recipient levels to adequately cover off priority activities requiring a large investment (such as the Vegetation Resources Inventory [VRI]);
  - the inability to adequately plan for projects requiring multi years to complete and;
  - a dependency in some management units for cooperation (co-funding) between LBIP funding recipients to complete high priority large investment activities.

While the Audit conclusions have resulted in this initiative, where the noted constraints did not apply or were overcome by LBIP Funding Recipients, VRI projects have been implemented successfully under the existing investment model.

Funding directed to VRI had been reduced over the past few years from over \$5 million to \$1.3 million in 2005/06 while less than 50% of the Crown owned forests in BC have been inventoried to VRI standards since the VRI was introduced in the mid 1990's.

The Forest Investment Council (FIC) concurred that this situation was not in the best interests of the sector and advised that \$5 – 8 million in funding would be focused on VRI for the 2006/07 fiscal year but that for this to continue in future years, an investment planning model involving government and the forest industry would be required.

At the same time as the discussion was taking place at FIC, an Inventory Program Review was initiated at the request for the Chief Forester with the outputs to include an Inventory Program Strategy and Business Plan.

Recently, the Chief Forester has published his Stewardship Vision and Framework. The framework is intended to guide forest managers toward strategies which ensure long term forest ecosystem resilience. Such strategies will require a robust and relevant vegetation inventory to support their implementation and therefore will provide some insight / guidance to the vegetation inventory program.

One of the recommendations emerging from the Inventory Program Review is that an advisory council charged with overseeing the implementation of the program may be beneficial to ensuring the desired future state of forest vegetation knowledge is realized.

### **Goal**

A respected and effective governance model providing LBIP funding investment advice that is consistent with the Chief Forester's Vision provides a framework that considers local, regional and provincial priorities and optimizes the return on investment leading to a well-managed and sustainable Vegetation Resources Inventory program in BC.

### **Mandate**

To undertake strategic program oversight, by clarifying issues, developing and assessing options, and making recommendations for consideration by the Chief Forester regarding all aspects of the Vegetation Resource Inventory Program.

### **Accountabilities:**

1. Submission of recommendations for the strategic allocation of funds (business plan);
2. Monitoring and reporting progress in achieving the objectives of the VRI Strategy;
3. Identifying and analyzing issues and opportunities to advance the goals and objectives of the program;
4. Provision of recommendations to the Chief Forester regarding revisions to the Governance Model, VRI Strategy and/or Business Plan to ensure they remain relevant as results are assessed and as resources or business needs change.

### **Reporting Structure**

The Council is sponsored by the Chief Forester. The Chief Forester determines the Council's membership, budget and Terms of Reference.

### **Activities and Outputs**

The Council will undertake its responsibilities by:

1. Assessing current program attributes (scope, scale, strengths and weaknesses);
2. Identifying and assessing risks and opportunities;
3. Monitoring program performance;
4. Providing the Chief Forester with reports and recommendation relative to the Vegetation Inventory Program's Strategic and Business Plans;
5. Establishing technical working groups and engaging other expertise to define opportunities for program improvement and to develop business cases regarding those opportunities.

### **Membership**

The Council will initially include government representatives from MoFR, MoE, ILMB and forest industry representatives from the Coast, Northern Interior and Southern Interior Regions as well as BCTS.

Additional members may be added at the discretion of the Chief Forester.

Councilors unable to attend meetings may send observers in their place. The Chair will determine the level of involvement an observer will be permitted with due consideration of the agenda, time and fairness.

Refer to Appendix 1 for list of current Council members.

### ***Decision-Making***

In making decisions or recommendations with respect to substantive issues arising out of or related to the Mandate, Council shall strive to do so by consensus of the members. In the event a consensus cannot be achieved, the degree of alignment shall be assessed by the Chair and at their discretion, a course of action to overcome the disagreement will be chosen. Those actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Further discussion by Council;
- Striking of a working group to undertake further analysis and report back to Council;
- Drafting of a decision note for the Chief Forester to consider.

Consensus shall be defined as no substantial disagreement on an issue. Consensus may be in the form of a document that describes the different points of view on an issue. Consensus shall be determined by the Chair.

Quorum: for an action of Council to be undertaken, a quorum must be present. The minimum representation to form a quorum will consist of:

1. The Chair
2. 3 industry members\*
3. 3 other government members

\*For the purpose of forming a quorum for the Council, BCTS is considered to be “industry”.

Council members will be provided with reasonable notification of meetings which may result in a Council action.

Proxy representation: Members unable to attend a meeting may notify the Chair in advance that they transfer their decision or opinion to another member for the purpose of determining consensus.

Observers are permitted at Council meetings. The Chair is to be advised in advance of the meeting should any observers be attending. Observers are not to be included in the determination of consensus of the members.

### ***Principles***

- This Council is to operate in a manner that transcends funding sources.
- Regarding the Land Base Investment Program:
  - Council may not make recommendations regarding the “LBIP discretionary funding”.
  - The inclusion of “discretionary” funding in the Program Business Plan is at the discretion of the individual recipients.
- Recommendations made by the Council must be accompanied by business cases.
- The Council, in carrying out its responsibilities, must act in a manner consistent with existing government policies and processes unless first receiving the authority to do otherwise from the Chief Forester.

### ***Meetings***

The Council will meet 4 times per year in a manner and at a time that suits the business needs of Council. Additional meetings (or conference calls) may be called at the discretion of the Chair.

### ***Minutes***

Meetings of the Council shall be recorded in minutes, which briefly summarize the matters discussed, any decisions made and any actions to be undertaken as well as contain copies of any supporting documents or presentations. The minutes shall not attribute specific points of view to individual specific members unless a member specifically requests recording of a dissenting opinion.

### ***Reporting to the Chief Forester***

The Council:

- May submit ad hoc reports with recommendations at any time.
- Will include its budget related activities within the Program Business Plan and must report against the Plan each quarter.
- Will report their annual assessment of the program no later than July 1 each year.
- Will submit recommendations regarding the 3-year Business Plan no later than November 30 of each year.

### ***Communications***

The Council may create communication materials and utilize communication tools needed to ensure effective program implementation. The Council will only make public recommendations and reports to the Chief Forester after the Chief Forester has considered them.

### ***Resources***

Council operations will be subject to an annual operating budget approved by the Chief Forester and administered by the Council Chair. Council may consider shared funding opportunities with other interested parties.



Appendix I  
Council Members

Chair: Melanie Boyce, Director, Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch;

Councilors:

Dan Battistella, Weyerhaeuser Company, Kamloops

Rick Brand, Manager Forest Sector Initiatives, Strategic Policy and Planning Branch

Patrick Bryant, Western Forest Products, Campbell River

Denis Collins, Research, Inventory and Growth & Yield Manager, Coast Forest Region

Dave Gill, Planning Officer, BC Timber Sales, Vernon

Deidre Haight, Planning Officer, BC Timber Sales, Port McNeill

Kevin Johnston, Team Leader – Stewardship, Southern Interior Forest Region

Evert Kenk, Executive Director, Chief Resource Information Office, Integrated Land Management Bureau

Steve Kozuki, Council of Forest Industries

Wayne Martin, Regional Staff Manager – Stewardship, Northern Interior Forest Region

John Rowe, Canadian Forest Products, Fort St. John

Gerry Sommers, International Forest Products, Burnaby

Art Tautz, Manager Research and Development, Ministry of Environment

Support:

Laurence Bowdige, Inventory Program, Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch

Don Gosnell, Assistant Director, Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch