

## Vegetation Resources Inventory And FIA Focussed Funding 2008/2009

In 2006 a value for money review was conducted of the Land Base Investment Program to determine the extent to which funding available to LBIP projects were managed with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This review found that most LBIP recipients felt the province was in need of a complete forest inventory and that the LBIP allocation model resulted in management unit funding issues such as:

- Insufficient funding for some of the management units at levels to adequately cover off priority activities requiring a large investment, such as the Vegetation Resources Inventory;
- 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.

The Forest Investment Council concurred with this assessment and agreed to focus funding towards the VRI program starting in 2006/2007, on condition that for this to continue in future years, an investment planning model involving government and the forest industry would be required.

To address the requirement for an investment planning model, a joint government-industry advisory council has been established – the Vegetation Inventory Advisory Council (VIAC) – with a mandate to undertake strategic oversight for the VRI program, by clarifying issues, developing and assessing options, and making recommendations for consideration by the Chief Forester. The VIAC is currently accountable for:

- The submission of recommendations for the allocation of funds for VRI activities;
- Developing an Inventory Strategic Plan and monitoring and reporting the progress in achieving the objectives in that plan;
- Identifying and analyzing issues and opportunities to advance the goals and objectives of the Vegetation Inventory Program.

Within the Inventory Strategic Plan, two key recommendations were to:

- 1) stabilize inventory program funding; and
- 2) establish criteria and a provincial ranking (by management unit) for the replacement or enhancement of forest inventories.

The criteria and ranking for inventory replacement allows for the generation of a list of forest inventory priorities for the province. For the 2008/2009 fiscal year, the criteria and ranking process was one input used to inform investment decisions in those management units conducting VRI activities.

With the provision of FIA focussed funds to support VRI activities, the use of LBIP discretionary funds in the VRI program will be limited. The creation of VRI Strategic Inventory Plans (VSIP) using discretionary funds is still a FIA eligible activity but their development will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. Recipients intending to complete a VSIP must contact PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch (FAIB) before initiating this process. The completion of a VRI Project Implementation Plan (VPIP) will only be eligible where approved funding is in place to complete either the photo interpretation or ground sampling component.

Core VRI functions that are eligible for FIA focussed funding on both TSA and TFL lands include:

- Photo acquisition including supporting activities such as aerial triangulation, softcopy model setups, etc;
- Phase I – photo interpretation, field calibration and digital mapping;
- Phase II – VRI ground sampling, net volume adjustment factor (NVAF) sampling and change monitoring (CMI) sampling;
- VRI analysis and adjustment.

An approved VSIP and VPIP must be in place before the allocation of focussed funds to recipients will be completed. Exceptions to this will be considered by FAIB on a case-by-case basis. If required, for those management units receiving LBIP focused VRI funding, the use of LBIP discretionary funding for the purpose of augmenting (topping-up) the focussed VRI funding will be allowed. Management units that are not receiving LBIP focused VRI funding will not be allowed to use their LBIP discretionary funding to undertake the core VRI functions identified above.