

FGC Streamlining Subcommittee: Report and Recommendations

October 10, 2017

Background

On March 14, 2017, FGC struck a subcommittee to review its TACs and business planning processes, and to provide streamlining recommendations. The subcommittee consisted of Pat Martin, Annette van Niejenhuis, Dan Peterson, Margot Spence, Darrell Wood and Brian Barber.

The scope of the review was

- FGC Subprograms and Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)
- FGC governance structure – Bylaws, TAC membership
- Annual Business Plan – budget preparation, meetings, format and contents
- Ministry's financial policies and procedures – call for proposals, contracts

The goals of the subcommittee were to identify opportunities to

1. Reduce the number of committees, meetings and resources required to develop FGC's priorities and annual budget.
2. Improve synchronization with Ministry's annual budget planning cycle.
3. Establish a robust, accountable, and durable process that clarifies roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.
4. Maintain interest and opportunities for stakeholder involvement and collaboration.
5. Improve ability for FGC to achieve its goals and objectives.

Evaluation Process

The subcommittee developed a backgrounder and work plan to guide the evaluation process. These were shared with FGC and persons invited to participate in a short on-line survey conducted in August. A summary of the fourteen responses from a cross-section of FGC and TACs is included in Appendix 1.

The subcommittee met on August 30 and October 4 to discuss the survey results and identify streamlining options. It engaged key personnel to develop streamlining options within and between the Operational Tree Improvement Program (OTIP) and Pest Management TAC (PMTAC) Cone and Seed Pest Management subprogram. This group consisted of Alana Philips, Annette van Niejenhuis, Brian Barber, Darrell Wood, Gary Giampa, Kori Vernier, Stephen Joyce and Tia Wagner. The OTIP/PMTAC group met on Sept 22 and provided options and recommendations to the subcommittee.

Streamlining Options

The subcommittee, drawing from survey responses and the OTIP/PMTAC group's report, identified options to reduce or streamline administration, the annual business planning process, and FGC TACs. Options were further sorted based on effort (easy vs difficult) and pay-off (little vs big gain). Ideas that were out of scope or did not fit the above categories and require further discussion by FGC were moved to "Parking".

The more significant ideas are summarized below.

Administration Ideas

1. Develop schedule of administrative deadlines
2. Better define roles and of TAC chairs & members, FIRM staff and FGC Program support

3. Simplify OTIP process: use on-line applications, multi-year contracts for tech. projects

Budget and Business Planning Ideas

1. Start business planning cycle earlier, hold FGC budget meeting to better align with ministry budget cycle.
2. Link budget and TACs to FGC goals and performance measures
3. Allocate proportion of funding to each FGC goal (e.g. 10% to Conservation goal, etc.), top down budget

TAC Streamlining Ideas

1. Combine or drop TACs, including various combinations thereof.
2. Seek external funding for some projects, such as CC modelling with Forest Enhancement Society.
3. Incorporate extension and knowledge transfer into each TAC, supported by FGC communications plan.

Parking

4. FLNR to create 5-year breeding plans, review species priorities matrix (ranking) in consideration of CBST
5. Update seed planning forecasts and species plans in consideration of CBST
6. Consider including B seed in scope of FGC mandate and business plans
7. Use Forest Genetics Society and/or SelectSeed for additional administrative support.

Proposed Streamlined Business Planning and Governance Model

The subcommittee evaluated all ideas submitted, including recommendations from the OTIP/PMTAC working group, in preparing the following proposed streamlined business planning and governance model.

1. Align FGC programs, budgets and TACs with FGC's goals for Conservation, Value and Resilience.
2. Allocate a percentage of the total budget to each FGC objective and performance measure (#1-5) and their supporting respective programs.
3. Maintain four programs: Conservation, Resilience, Breeding and OTIP.
4. Maintain only three TACs: Genetic Conservation (GCTAC), Coastal (CTAC) and Interior (ITAC) to review and recommend budgets for the above four programs.
5. Move Cone and Seed Pest Management activities under OTIP, and disband PMTAC.
6. Move Genecology and Seed Transfer activities under ITAC and CTAC, and disband STTAC.
7. Include decision support and extension and communication activities in all programs, and disband DCTAC.

See Figure 1 for graphic representation of the proposed model and to compare with existing structure (see figure in Appendix 2).

The proposed model achieves the goals of the subcommittee, and includes the following advantages

1. FGC can better track progress towards its performance measures and re-allocate resources between programs as required to achieve the desired outcomes.
2. Reduces the number of TACs (6 to 3), committees, meetings, and resources required to develop plans and budget proposals without unduly compromising the collaboration and involvement of stakeholders.
3. Increases importance of 5-year plans to guide annual business plans and proposals within each program.

There are no significant changes to the Genetic Conservation TAC recommended. However, it is recommended GCTAC be chaired by a member of FGC (same as ITAC and CTAC) to improve standing and connectivity with FGC.

The new model increases the importance and relevance of CTAC and ITAC business meetings (and species committees), as both tree breeding, seed transfer and genecology budget proposals will be reviewed at these respective meetings. This recognizes ministry staff have previously presented their breeding and genecology projects at CTAC, ITAC and STTAC. Funding for externally delivered projects (e.g. CoAdapTree) will also be vetted through CTAC and ITAC, and must demonstrate relevance and contribution to FGC goals to be considered for funding.

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Process	FGC Strategic Plan 2015-2020				
Goals	Conservation	Resilience	Value		
Objective # and Performance Measure	1. Adequately conserve genetic diversity of all tree species...	2. by 2020 selection and transfer of all tree seed guided by CBST	3. Increase select seed use to 75% of total sown by 2020	4. Increase avg. genetic gain of select seed to 20% by 2020.	5. Increase use of seed with genetic gain for pest resistance to 50% of select seed sown by 2035.
Programs	1. Conservation	2. Resilience	3. Tree Breeding	4. Operational Tree Improvement (OTIP)	
Plans	2017-2022 Conservation Strategy	Genecology 5- year plan including AMAT	1. Species Breeding Priority Ranking and Matrix 2. 5-year Breeding Plans by Species or Spp. groups 3. Species Plans – included in annual business plans (seed supply and demand; orchard production targets)		
Budget lines within Program (examples)	Conserv. Catalogue Ex situ collections Whitebark Pine Extension	Provenance trials by spp. (Coast/Interior) AMAT, CBST , CoAdapTree Ext. & Dec. Support	Progeny trials by spp. - Coast and Interior OTIP Projects – Coast and Interior Extension and Decision support		
Governance	Forest Genetics Council of BC (FGC)				
TACs	Genetic Conservation (GCTAC)	Coastal and Interior TACs (CTAC & ITAC)			
Subcommittees		Species Committees	1. Species committees – coast and interior 2. OTIP review committee – provincial		

Figure 1. Proposed New FGC Business Planning Process and Governance Model

It is also recommended that the ITAC & CTAC extension meetings attended by seed users precede their annual business (budget) meetings, and that ITAC and CTAC chairs review their membership for business meetings annually and in consideration of the new business model. FGC can also nominate members to TACs.

OTIP’s coast and interior committees and call for proposals are proposed to be merged under one provincial call. This program will continue to support projects that increase the quantity and quality of select seed. It will also support technical projects, which can be multi-year and include those previously considered under the cone and seed pest management program (PMTAC). All OTIP projects require the sponsorship of a seed orchard manager to avoid receipt of proposals not directly linked to operational seed production issues and FGC goals. The OTIP call for proposals can be issued by November 1 with close date of December 8. Proposal reviews and budget recommendations can therefore be completed prior to FGC budget meeting in late February.

Decision-support and extension & communications are to be incorporated into each program, and considered by TACs in developing annual budget recommendations. It is recommended that FGC develop a 5-year Extension and Communication Plan to guide FGC program activities and identify provincial-level needs (e.g. website, reports etc.)

Proposed Funding Allocations

To assist TACs with preparing their budget recommendations, it is recommended that FGC allocate a target amount of funding to each program in advance. The total or percentage allocated to each program could be based on historic averages, needs or emphasis and total anticipated budget. See table 1 for example....

Providing an annual budget target for each program will allow TACs to prepare a slate of proposed activities and budget. Flexibility and adjustments within and between programs could subsequently still be made by FGC in consideration of priorities and needs.

Project proposals and estimated budgets could also be aligned with a specific performance measure. This will allow FGC to re-assign resources to achieve its targets. If a project supports more than one performance measure (PM), a percentage of the project funding could be assigned to each PM for tracking and reporting purposes. Funding and expenditures can also continue to be tracked by coast vs interior and species, as applicable.

Table 1. Example of potential LBIS \$ allocation to FGC’s programs and goals.

Program	Example Percent	FGC Goals			Total
		Conservation	Resilience	Value	
Genetic Conservation	10%	\$ 250,000			\$ 250,000
Resilience	20%		500,000		\$ 500,000
Tree Breeding	47%			\$ 1,175,000	\$1,175,000
Operational Tree Improvement	23%			\$ 575,000	\$ 575,000
Total	100%	\$ 250,000	\$ 500,000	\$1,750,000	\$2,500,000

Annual Business Planning Process Timelines

Sept/Oct	FGC fall meeting – followed by instructions to TAC Chairs OTIP committee reviews eligibility criteria
Nov	OTIP Call for Proposals issued
Dec	OTIP Call for Proposals closes FGC quarterly conference call
Jan	ITAC and CTAC Extension and Business Meetings OTIP Proposals reviewed
Feb/Mar	Program budgets finalized FGC Budget Meeting FGC Budget recommendations to CF and LBIS

Summary of Recommendations to FGC

1. Adopt the proposed governance and business planning process model (Figure 1).
2. Implement changes for 2018/19 business planning process.
3. Allocate a target budget to each program area.
4. Nominate FGC member to chair GCTAC.
5. Adjust and improve model based on experience with 2018/19 business planning cycle.
6. Update FGC Bylaws to reflect new governance model, and roles and responsibilities.
7. Develop a 5-year Communication and Extension Plan.

The subcommittee acknowledges that additional procedural details need to be worked out. This should not however preclude FGC from implementing the recommended changes.

Proposed Next Steps

1. Co-chairs to communicate new model and changes to TAC chairs and members.
2. ITAC/CTAC chairs to work with Ministry and FGC Program Manager to complete and issue OTIP call for proposals.
3. Solicit interest from FGC members to chair GCTAC.
4. Review historical and current allocations to programs and activities, set targets for each program at FGC’s December conference call.
5. Set date for FGC budget planning meeting end of February or early March; align TAC meeting and budget preparation with this date.
6. Review new model and update FGC Bylaws following 2018/19 budget submission – spring 2018.
7. Initiate processes to develop an FGC Communication and Extension plan –2018/19.

Appendix 1. Summary of FGC Streamlining Survey

General

- 14 responses received; all agreed with purpose of review and survey
- Respondents represent a cross section of FGC and TAC members
- Several organizational problems or issues identified – largely known (e.g. need for stable funding, work and timing assoc. with contracts/\$, conflicts), and some alternatives offered.
- Variable understanding of current organization and process (e.g. FIRM sections identified as FGC subprograms).
- Both recommendations for and cautions against changes re combining TACs – e.g. some believe OTIP is “pretty efficient”, others propose changes.
- Streamlining ideas included those previously identified in Appendix to workplan and others.

Streamlining ideas (and others) from Survey

FGC Direction and Admin

- Allocate \$ to each Goal; set \$ for each TAC
- Set business priorities in the fall; Priorities already established during strategic plan
- Set goals and targets for each TAC
- Request TACs provide 3 proposed budgets with deliverables
- Set administrative deadlines
- Est. multi-year agreements;
- Issue one-call for proposals for all programs; on-line form applications.
- Remove funding for Ministry base activities, and Climate WNA from TAC review/approval process
- Make use of BC Forest Genetics Society and SelectSeed for delivery; caution using PWC (\$).

TACs

- Keep CTAC and ITAC separate; Combine CTAC, ITAC and PMAC; combine OTIP and PMTAC
- Combine DSTAC and Seed Transfer (Genecology); breeding and genecology; DSTAC and CBST working group.
- Create a Seed Supply TAC
- Est. one TAC for each FGC goal – value, resilience and conservation
- Reduce duplication – extension and business plans (breeding plans)
- Focus resources on priorities – e.g. high value SPU (breeding) and conservation strategy catalogue
- Assign one (ministry) manager to each TAC

Other

- Provide feedback to proponents
- Review accomplishments from previous year, feedback loop, return on investment (\$ spent), project reports
- Rotate TAC chair more frequently
- TACs should hold at least one face to face meeting a year
- More extension and communications - with LBIS, others - website
- Improve species plans, TACs/spp. committees to review in advance of publication

Appendix 2. Current Governance and Business Planning Model

Blue Lines = TAC oversight of subprograms & budgets

