



April 4, 2008

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RE: 2008-2009 BUSINESS PLAN, OMINECA BEETLE ACTION COALITION

The Coalition appreciates the provincial government's efforts and investment in working with local governments to enable community leaders to work collaboratively with one another, with First Nations, with government agencies and, expert and interested organizations to build a brighter future for our region together. This is a bold and innovative step and we appreciate the provincial government's leadership. We look forward to the work ahead for the Coalition in the short term and the capacity that this initiative will build in our region well into the future.

Please find attached the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) 2008-2009 Business Plan. This business plan follows on the 2007-2008 business plan approved by government in March 2007. The OBAC has met all of the commitments set out in that 2007-2008 business plan. Please find included in the 2008-2009 Business Plan submission attached a section entitled *2007-2008 Year in Review*, a report on the progress made during the 2007-2008 operating year.

Consistent with the commitments in the 2007-2008 business plan, OBAC has exceeded strategy development expectations by scoping 6 of the priority topics with the completion and release of two strategies expected in April 2008 and one more strategy in May 2008. These strategies so that draft policy and investment recommendations and a number of on-the-ground projects are ready to be launched in at least three strategy topic areas.

In addition to these key accomplishments, OBAC has also:

- Built strong alliances and relationships among member communities so OBAC work reflects community needs in the region and includes these in strategic goals and objectives;
- Worked with community leaders, professionals and leaders in their areas of expertise to obtain and interpret the highest quality information, building bridges among those same parties to enable their access to high quality information;
- Built positive and productive relationships with First Nations communities across the region and with First Nations initiatives and work together on topics of mutual concern and interest;



- Gained a concise understanding of MPB impacts on communities (people and their environments, infrastructure, businesses/ industries);
- Built strong alliances with partner initiatives and organizations that can contribute to the understanding, diversification planning and promotion of sustainable development here;
- Involved many prospective strategy implementers in the planning and enable strategy participants who are also implementers to make commitments to implementation;
- Enabled Directors and staff to be involved with initiatives external to the OBAC that lead to the development of partnerships and collaborative relationships to advance the OBAC initiative and sustainable development in the region; and,
- Gathered and shared information that reflects the interests of the region and enables informed policies and decisions that support sustainable development in the region.

OBAC looks forward to building upon the success and momentum of the 2007-2008 operating year with a focus and energy largely devoted towards completing and presenting the remainder of the strategies and building capacity within and external to the region to implement the recommendations. Thank you again for your continued interest in and support for OBAC, we look forward to working with you to complete and begin to work on implementing the Diversification Plan.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Andersen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Elizabeth Andersen
General Manager, Omineca Beetle Action Coalition



Executive Summary

In this business plan, the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) will demonstrate the ongoing need and support for the Coalition's work to ensure sustainable development and resiliency for the OBAC region and our request that the provincial government meet that need with continued financial support for the Coalition's proposed workplan. This business plan submission includes two parts, Part I is the 2007-2008 Year in Review and Part II is the 2008-2009 Workplan. Part I will report on OBAC's accomplishments in the 2007-2008 operating year. Part II will set out the Coalition's planned objectives and activities for the 2008-2009 operating year. The 2008-2009 workplan has been prepared to meet the broader commitments that Coalition members have made to the Provincial government, to our region's communities and to our partners in this endeavour.

The 2008-2009 workplan has been built to meet OBAC's five Commitments and to take the strategy development to the finish line and prepare OBAC for presenting the Diversification Plan. While completing the now 12 strategies is the prime directive of this year's workplan, OBAC will also be devoting time and effort towards integrating across the strategies positioning OBAC to present an overarching Diversification Plan as we go, rather than waiting to complete all of the strategies before beginning the Diversification Planning effort.

OBAC will also be devoting a significant amount of time and resources towards strengthening existing and building new relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations community leaders and also, strengthening the relationships that have been built between OBAC community leaders across the region so that community leaders across the region can work together to create a brighter future together. This year's workplan also contemplates the need for building an organization that can take the OBAC strategies and diversification plan into a new phase – implementation. The objectives and activities proposed for 2008-2009 prepare the Coalition and its member communities and rural areas for the future. The Coalition is also still firmly committed to being opportunistic wherever and whenever possible. Through the strategy development process, the Coalition will seek opportunities to provide input and represent the region's interests as well as deliver immediate value by piloting innovative ideas.

This year's workplan is heavily loaded and will require extra resources from senior governments and extra efforts from local governments not only to complete the strategies but also to lay the important ground work for the smooth and expeditious completion of the Diversification Plan and build the capacity within the region that will be needed to work with senior governments to implement good ideas over the coming decade.



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The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition – A Brief Introduction

The OBAC includes the incorporated communities of Smithers, Telkwa, Granisle, Houston, Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Prince George, Mackenzie, Valemount and McBride and the many rural communities and areas represented by the Regional Districts of Bulkley-Nechako and Fraser-Fort George. There are also over twenty five First Nations communities in the OBAC region economic and cultural sustenance rely upon the region's forests. The OBAC region includes a land base of about 13 million hectares with at least fifty percent of our region's forests in pine (in some management units this is above eighty percent) and thirty-seven percent of the jobs in the OBAC area depend directly on forestry. The Ministry of Forests anticipates that by 2013 over 80% of the region's pine stands will be killed by the Mountain Pine Beetle.



The beetle epidemic is an unplanned event with potential for serious economic, social and environmental implications. The uplifts in annual allowable cut (AAC) introduced as a key strategy in harvesting the affected pine would ordinarily create economic benefits in the forestry dependent communities of the OBAC region but this opportunity has been dampened by external



factors such as reduced demand and low prices for our solid wood products in a sagging US economy and, a high Canadian dollar.

OBAC communities are already experiencing adverse social, economic and environmental consequences and now more than ever, we need to take informed and balanced action to enable our communities to diversify. Given the significant contribution our region makes to the wealth of the province, investments and actions that support the rural communities and the economy of the OBAC region are investments in the future well-being of our province.

The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition – Purpose and Commitments

The Purpose of the OBAC is "to work to ensure sustainable development and resiliency for the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition region". The Coalition has committed to achieving its stated purpose by:

1. Gathering and sharing credible information from and with different people and sources;
2. Serving as a place for senior levels of government and industry to communicate on community interests regarding beetle epidemic and economic diversification issues in this region;
3. Developing positions and advice and influencing decisions that support sustainable development for our region;
4. Following up on decision makers' and senior governments' commitments to this region;
5. Influencing government and corporate policies and decisions that support the aims and objectives of OBAC and support sustainable development for our region.

OBAC will be a coalition that is led by and accountable to local communities, and working in partnership with all sectors and levels of government; works together as a region, effectively blending individual community needs and preferences with our collective interests; recognizes and adapts to the fact that the impacts of the epidemic will not affect our communities equally. OBAC will also encourage and support collaboration between First Nations and other communities on areas of common interest such as jobs, economic diversification and infrastructure, regardless of any differences over land title issues; and, involve stakeholders in a manner that does not inhibit timely decisions and actions.

OBAC knows that the nature and scale of the impacts will be different for each community, as will the timing and as such will understand and adapt to both the immediate and longer-term social and economic impacts of the epidemic, including those arising from increased harvesting and from the later decline; enable communications across sectors and among government agencies at the local and regional level; to the extent possible, uses existing programs, organizations and delivery methods to implement plans; and will maintain a positive business climate and public outlook and seeks opportunities while dealing with adversity.



Part I – 2007-2008 Year in Review: Moving from Planning to Strategy and Action

In its 2005-2006 workplan, OBAC focused on “Identifying the Priorities and Preparing to Address Them”. This was followed by a focus in the 2007-2008 workplan on “Moving from Planning to Strategy and Action”. OBAC is pleased to report that OBAC has moved fully into doing the planning through strategy development and has in some cases already begun to take action on the opportunities and challenges that are emerging through strategy development.

Financial Management and Governance

OBAC’s 2006-2007 audit to March 31st 2007 carried out by Dean Mason and Company of Prince George showed that OBAC’s financial management and operations are consistent with the Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

The Coalition continues to operate according to its approved Contracting and Procurement policy and a Travel Expenditure policy consistent with the Provincial Government’s policies and continues to retain the services of Dean Mason & Company for accounting and financial management. The OBAC Board of Directors has been and will continue to be fully accountable for the expenditures of the funding provided by the Province, using a combination of the existing and subsequent Contribution Agreements and the requirements under BC’s Society’s Act as a registered Society.

The Coalition’s 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 workplans continue to direct funds towards activities that are incremental to current government and industry obligations and will have significant value for money. Expenditures follow clearly established criteria, fit with the Coalition’s defined roles and responsibilities, and are measured against defined desired outcomes.

A clear, inclusive and transparent process has been established for the Coalition’s governance model and the specific roles and responsibilities of the Coalition have been determined in relation to the Province’s mandate and decision-making. The Coalition has clearly separated governing functions (e.g., Board of Directors’ responsibilities, Executive Committee roles and responsibilities, setting policies and setting strategic direction) from the day-to-day operations which have been assigned to professionals accountable to the Board. The Society’s Bylaws along with an Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities policy guide the activities of the Board and a General Manager and Office Manager have been hired to manage the day to day operations of the initiative.

The Coalition will continue to support the implementation of the Province’s Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan and agrees to focus on those objectives of the Province’s Beetle Action Plan



that speak to community interests and economic diversification. The Coalition is still committed to, wherever possible, using existing organizations to implement its business plan and projects to avoid duplication, build synergies and support efficiencies and gaining good value for money. Building partnerships and alliances, doing work collaboratively and leveraging additional value against OBAC's investments is a key ingredient of the proposed workplan for 2007-2008.

2007-2008 Focus Areas and Select Accomplishments

The 2007-2008 workplan was built to meet the priorities that were identified through our consultations and discussions and also, consistent with OBAC's five Commitments. The objectives and activities proposed for 2007-2008 moved the Coalition out of the preparatory phase into the planning and strategizing phase. A focus on communications and knowledge transfer and also strategy work is matched with activities upon which the Coalition will take action. The Coalition is also committed to being opportunistic wherever and whenever possible. The Coalition will seek opportunities to provide input and represent the region's interests as well as deliver immediate value by piloting innovative ideas.

Selected key accomplishments are presented below alongside of the four focus areas for the year's workplan to illustrate OBAC's progress on the four focus areas and a selection of objectives that were included in the 2007-2008 workplan.

The OBAC also expressed genuine hope that on those topics that are of mutual concern and interest, neighboring First Nations and non First Nations communities in our region would be able to work together and that OBAC would be able to support these discussions and also coordinate efforts at the initiative level with First Nations. At the beginning of the 2007-2008 workplan year OBAC had only begun exploring with First Nations communities and the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative shared needs and opportunities. OBAC members were interested and committed to working with First Nations community leaders and initiatives in the future.

2007-2008 Focus Area 1

“Under Commitment #1, focus on communications and knowledge transfer activities and delivering value to our members and partners. This will include continuing to update and check in with communities, First Nations and other partners to anticipate new challenges and opportunities that may lead to new priority topics that require strategy work.”

Under this focus area, OBAC would like to highlight the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective 1(a) Build strong alliances and relationships among member communities so OBAC work reflects community needs in the region and includes these in strategic goals and objectives.



Objective 1(b) Work with community leaders, professionals and leaders in their areas of expertise to obtain and interpret the highest quality information, building bridges among those same parties to enable their access to high quality information.

Objective 1(c) Build positive and productive relationships with First Nations communities across the region and with First Nations initiatives and work together on topics of mutual concern and interest.

OBAC developed and implemented a communications plan and produce monthly newsletters (Project 1.3), developed and presented a mobile regional OBAC information display on topics of interest (Project 1.8), hosted an information speaker series for communities (Project 1.13) and held a strategy scoping sessions for planners/ practitioners (Project 1.15).

Project 1.3 Monthly newsletters were prepared and distributed electronically to the almost 300 recipients on the OBAC email distribution list across a variety of interests including but not limited to industry, provincial and federal government agencies, community groups and local governments, community residents and, knowledge and research organizations. Several hundred additional copies were distributed in hard copy at events and through member communities' front desks. The newsletters provide important updates on OBAC activities as well as reporting on the activities of external and allied organizations of interest to our audience, sharing knowledge and information, providing links to additional information. This has been a critical communications tool for OBAC – many people comment that they welcome the newsletter and look forward to receiving it. Our audience reports that it keeps OBAC top of mind for them and also informs them of what is going on and points to opportunities to work together on things with OBAC as well as other organizations mentioned in the newsletter stories. The newsletters will be a critical ongoing project in the 2008-2009 workplan.

Project 1.8 OBAC retained Indigo Design to develop an OBAC mobile display unit with information about OBAC and then a complementary add on information panel with more specific information on the mountain pine beetle and its impacts on OBAC communities. This project is complete but will require updates in 08-09. This unit has recently been utilized in the travelling Red & Blue (Mountain Pine Beetle) Art Exhibit that was featured in Fort St. James in November 2007, Fraser Lake in January and at the Prince George Art Gallery in February 2008. The unit will also be utilized at local and regional future workshops, speakers' series and/or events that OBAC may facilitate or attend. This has been an invaluable communications tool because it offers information to the audience about OBAC, OBAC communities and also about the mountain pine beetle and its impact on communities and the region's economy in a way that the reader can voluntarily take in as much or as little information as he/she chooses and it can also be set up without needing a person nearby or can enhance a presentation or presence. The display panel was set up at AMEBC's Mineral Exploration Roundup and many people stopped to read the panel and then followed up with questions.

Project 1.13 OBAC presented the Alternative Energy–Bioenergy Communities Tour and Speaker Series in June to meet communities request for more insight on opportunities and



challenges and supporting decision making on bioenergy developments at the community level. A number of requests have been made for new topic area speaker series and so, this will be an ongoing and expanding role for OBAC in the 2008-2009 workplan. The Alternate Energy speaker series has also provided an invaluable backgrounder and insight into community needs and issues for the Alternative Energy Strategy that is currently underway and slated for completion by March 2008.

Project 1.15 OBAC hosted a forward planning session for members' Economic Development Officers as part of the OBAC AGM in November 2007. This strategy session included forward thinking planning for OBAC to consider in their workplan(s) items and issues such as social support services for communities in need; communities working collaboratively together towards regional projects; continuity and capacity building between communities and First Nations organizations; transitional services and retraining; provincial policy changes; and enhanced labour pool opportunities. Participants welcomed the opportunity to think innovatively about what the future can include and what we need to do to take action now to build that future. It was also an important opportunity for OBAC to gather input from member communities' staff – the people who will be helping to shape OBAC communities' futures.

2007-2008 Focus Area 2

“Under Commitment #2 perform baseline assessments and/or consolidate existing knowledge so that we know what we have to work with. Also under this commitment, take a look at emerging trends, projections and opportunities at a global scale so that we can link with known and hidden opportunities.”

Under this focus area, OBAC would like to highlight the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective 2(a) Gain a concise understanding of MPB impacts on communities (people and their environments, infrastructure, businesses/ industries).

Objective 2(c) Build strong alliances with partner initiatives and organizations that can contribute to the understanding, diversification planning and promotion of sustainable development here.

OBAC partnered in the Real Estate Foundation/ CPAWS/ Min ED Amenity Migration Project (Project 2.1), began to work with First Nations communities and initiatives to build a comprehensive understanding of the region's MPB situation (Project 2.6) and regularly briefed politicians, industry leaders and First Nations leaders (Project 2.8).

Project 2.1 OBAC undertook an Amenity Migration project in partnership with the Real Estate Foundation, CPAWS and a small team of academics professionals assesses the relative importance of community amenities as attractions to prospective migrants. This assists OBAC in understanding the economic benefits of the inflow of migrants into smaller communities within



British Columbia and, more specifically, within the communities in the OBAC region. This fits closely with OBAC's overall mandate and more specifically, delivering on our commitments to "Gather and share credible information from and with different people and sources" and, "Develop positions and advice and influence decisions that support sustainable development for our region". This is also a significant contribution to the background and scoping of the Retention and Attraction Strategy, This project is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2008.

Project 2.6 OBAC supported and participated in First Nations MPB Initiative events: the day-long session on sustainable economy in October; A First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative (FNMBPI) Planning Session held in Prince George attracted 34 participants from First Nations communities and organizations, government, industry and OBAC. The FNMPBI in consultation with the First Nations Forestry Council (visit their web site at www.fnmpb.ca) determined that Community Protection should be their first priority as many First Nations communities feel vulnerable and unprepared to defend against large wildfires. OBAC also agreed to financial and advertising support to host the FNMPBI Prince George Funding Forum – unfortunately the session was postponed by the FNMPBI and we hope to hold this in 2008. The status of this activity is incomplete. OBAC has also participated in several FNMPBI events that have been held to build a more comprehensive understanding of MPB response needs in First Nations communities.

Project 2.8 In February 2007, the Chair met with the Minister of Forests and Range, Hon. Rich Coleman and the Minister of Economic Development, Hon. Colin Hansen to review OBAC progress to date and share the draft 2007-2008 Work Plan. OBAC also met in Victoria with senior provincial government staff turning up a wealth of opportunities for provincial agencies to contribute to OBAC strategy work, knowledge sharing leading to enablement and capacity building for communities. Work on identifying policy needs and opportunities is another area where senior provincial government staff will be assisting OBAC's and our region's efforts to increase the success of the diversification planning and action in the region. During early September OBAC staff met with our region's four Members of the Legislature to update them on OBAC. The MLA's were very supportive and conveyed encouragement and provided excellent input. At the September Board meeting, Members of Parliament Jay Hill and Dick Harris clarified federal funding MPB response programs and the role of the recently appointed Ministers' MPB Advisory Board. The MP's were also very supportive and look forward to increased communication and working together on the recommendations emerging from OBAC work. Also during UBCM, OBAC Directors met with Premier Gordon Campbell and six provincial Cabinet Ministers to give an update on OBAC activities related to their portfolios, received input from the Premier and Ministers and discussed opportunities to work together as OBAC strategies and recommendations emerge over the coming months. OBAC Vice-Chair Councillor Don Bassermann and General Manager Elizabeth Andersen also met with the Government Caucus and Media in Victoria on October 17th to thank the provincial government for recognizing and meeting the need to enable local communities to design and drive our future and to work in partnership with the provincial government to do this; brief them on the challenges and uncertainty and the opportunities that are emerging; and, update the government



on the progress that we have made so far in collectively preparing for and responding to the impacts of the mountain pine beetle epidemic in our communities.

These activities will be carried forward into the 2008-2009 workplan. These activities are also anticipated to become more frequent, consistent with OBAC's commitment to work with the two senior governments, across member local governments and with neighbour First Nations governments to find opportunities and ways to collaborate on shared interests and objectives. OBAC staff also participated in a roundtable meeting convened by the Premier's Technology Council answering questions on 1) What are the main economic drivers/assets in this region? 2) How can technology value add to these drivers? - What are the current obstacles to these opportunities? 3) What differentiates the economic clusters in your region from similar ones in other regions? - How can these clusters be value added to create unique economic development opportunities? - Are there any opportunities which may lead to the creation of a centre of excellence in your region? 4) What actions can government take to facilitate change? - How can we better leverage existing public assets - to improve research, training and access? - How can local institutions collaborate more effectively with industry?

2007-2008 Focus Area 3

“Under Commitment #3 begin scoping on at least 5 of the priority topics and largely complete three of the priority topic strategies so that draft policy and investment recommendations and a number of on-the-ground projects are ready to be launched in at least three strategy topic areas.”

In the 2007-2008 workplan OBAC committed to “Run the strategy process on 5 strategies with 3 strategies to the Recommendation testing phase”. The following is a special report on the accomplishments under Project 3.5 of the 2007-2008 Workplan – Strategy Development. Consistent with the objectives in the 2007-2008 business plan, OBAC has exceeded strategy development expectations by scoping 6 of the priority topics with the completion and release of two strategies expected in April 2008 and one more strategy in May 2008. These strategies clearly set out the region’s vision for development in the topic area, concisely document existing conditions and the current starting point circumstances identifying both challenges and opportunities and then propose clear policy and investment recommendations and actions. While many of the recommendations require collaborative work across all levels of government and the private sector, a number of on-the-ground projects are ready to be launched in at least three strategy topic areas.

The important experience through the development of these strategies has been at the Strategy Working Group. Important relationships between industry and community leaders and interests within our region have been forged and strengthened through the interactions facilitated at our strategy Working Groups. These relationships have led to important knowledge transfer enabling capacity to be built across all participants that we expect will lead to greater opportunities for sectors’ growth and truly informed decision making at the local and regional scale and within



governments agencies and the private sector. The recommendations emerging from each strategy help all of us to understand “Who needs to do What, Where and Why”. The “How” and “When” will come as we move to implementation planning. Important recommendations to the two senior governments on where to remove barriers with shifts in policy, the exploration of the region’s assets as an attraction for the private sector and a roadmap that enables us all to focus activities towards things that will truly help grow the sector are emerging. The strategies will be a roadmap for local and senior governments to work together in concert with private sector, community group, knowledge and research organizations to support sustainable development in the OBAC region.

Mineral Exploration and Mining Strategy

In July OBAC hosted a Minerals Sector introduction evening for community and sector leaders to meet and share thoughts and ideas on growing the sector in the region. In September OBAC welcomed thirty people with expert insight into minerals and mining to a day-long session which featured presentations and initial strategy development work that focused on several key elements including: Education, Training & Retraining for the sector; Public Awareness, Education & Outreach and Community relations; Industry/Sector Outreach; Federal-Provincial Processes and Policies; Land Base Considerations (Geoscience/ Forestry-Exploration Interactions/ Environmental Stewardship). OBAC has retained the firm DPRAC Canada to facilitate the development of the Minerals and Mining Strategy for the OBAC region and several working group meetings have been convened. As of March 31st the 3rd draft of this strategy has been completed and the final draft is being reviewed by the OBAC Board. The Board plans to release this strategy in May.

For Mineral Exploration and Mine Development the communities of the OBAC region envision an active, vibrant and diversified mineral exploration and mining industry as part of their future, offering multiple education opportunities to develop the interest and skills required for mining and exploration activities with innovative and sustainable mining practices being accomplished through effective communication, strong relationships and multiple partnerships. In 10 years time, OBAC communities want to be the home to a robust mineral exploration and mining sector that:

- Is an environmental leader employing best practices for minerals exploration and mining activities.
- Offers multiple mining education opportunities to educate and encourage an active and involved labour force.
- Has at its heart strong relationships and the establishment of multiple partnerships (community, First Nations and governments) to improve the management of the resources and ensure communities are able to participate in decisions affecting their region.
- Improved communications and strengthened relationships between the regions, province, federal government and First Nations to ensure a fair and effective regulation of the resources, whereby regions and affected parties are more involved with decision making relevant to their communities.



OBAC community leaders look forward to working with each other and neighbouring First Nations governments to regain the support of the provincial and federal governments the private building upon the relationships and knowledge gained through the strategy development process to focus activities towards things that will truly help grow the sector.

Final Draft Strategy Completion is scheduled for March-April 2008.

Strategy	Apr-07	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08
Minerals & Mining												

Alternative Energy Strategy

Scoping of the Alternative Energy topic has been undertaken extensively across the region. Micro hydro development is emerging as a prospective opportunity in Granisle; bioenergy development across the region is being assessed at the community level and also energy planning in the wake of the OBAC bioenergy speaker series is underway. A consultant team was retained in November 2008 to facilitate the development of the Alternative Energy Strategy and several working group meetings have been convened. Working drafts of these two strategies will be ready by March 08. The Regional Bioenergy Assessment Project will be contributing the Alternative Energy strategy but with a major focus on grid development needs and opportunities, it will also contribute to the scoping of the Regional Integrated Infrastructure strategy. As of March 31st the 3rd draft of this strategy has been completed and the final draft is being reviewed by the OBAC Board. The Board plans to release this strategy in May.

The OBAC region is committed to Alternative Energy if there are significant benefits to residents and communities and the integrity of the environment is protected. The OBAC region envisions an alternative energy industry that supports regional economic diversification using an integrated approach that compliments its existing industry. Alternative energy must be more than simply generating electricity though. The production of the energy is just the start. The value chain associated with this industry includes research and development, equipment design and manufacture, financial services, energy supply for off-grid communities such as First Nations and rural settlements and residents, energy services, maintenance and, the production of higher value manufactured goods either directly as a result of processes or as a result of cost effective reliable clean energy supply.

Through the production and uptake of alternative energy, the OBAC region can become a sustainable provider of clean energy and can continue to enjoy a healthy living environment for both residents and visitors. Additionally the diversion of wood biomass away from being open burned in the field to being converted to an energy product has the potential to significantly improve air quality in many parts of the OBAC region. Through the implementation of this strategy OBAC wishes to:



- Achieve the highest and best use of wood fibre across a spectrum of forest products including but not limited to bioenergy;
- Support continued employment and the retention of regional expertise in the forest sector by creating a new forest product opportunity in the alternative energy sector;
- Support regional economic diversification;
- Retain more benefits from energy use within the region by using locally available and renewable energy sources; and,
- Reduce particulate and greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

OBAC community leaders look forward to working with each other and neighbouring First Nations governments to again the support of the provincial and federal governments the private building upon the relationships and knowledge gained through the strategy development process to focus activities towards things that will truly help grow the sector.

On January 31st 2008 the BC Government released its Bioenergy Strategy with the aim of: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions; strengthening our long-term competitiveness; and, achieving electricity self-sufficiency. The provincial government' strategy states that "Bioenergy is absolutely critical to achieving B.C.'s climate goals and economic objectives. It turns the challenges of the mountain pine beetle infestation into new opportunities and looks to future bioenergy technologies". The strategy covers all types of bioenergy, including forest residues and dead pine wood, agricultural residues and municipal waste. Some planned actions relevant to this Provincial Strategy include:

- Creating a provincial biomass resource inventory
- Phasing in requirements to capture landfill gas at larger landfills
- Eliminating beehive burners
- Promoting wood pellet production
- Improving access to wood fibre feedstocks
- Reviewing the Safety Standards Act (which requires certified power engineers for both small and larger steam systems) to enable adoption of biomass energy technologies
- Developing new particulate emission standards for biomass energy systems
- Creation bioenergy opportunities for First Nations

The OBAC strategy is completely consistent with and reinforces much of the direction presented in the Provincial Strategy. The OBAC region looks forward to being an active part of the Bioenergy Network and welcoming a portion of the province's planned investment of \$25 million in the pursuit of things like gasification research, development and commercialization at UNBC and other universities, as well as pilot and demonstration projects in key biomass resource areas.

Final Draft Strategy Completion is scheduled for March-April 2008.



Strategy	Apr-07	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08
Alternative Energy												

Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy

A consultant was retained in January 2008 to prepare the backgrounder for the Future Forest Products and Fibre Use strategy. The final draft of the Backgrounder document was received in at the end of March 2008 and is currently being edited and formatted for distribution and use by the Strategy Working Group. This is the first step in the three-phase development of this strategy. The next steps which will be undertaken include convening an expert working group and hosting community dialogues on the topic. The reason for developing this strategy in a three-phase undertaking include: enabling the expert working group and community dialogues to rely upon a well researched backgrounder document that clearly identified challenges and opportunities so that people can focus their discussions on solution-finding; and, enabling interested and informed community members to provide their input to the solution finding as well as inviting input from identified ‘experts’. The strategy will present recommendations that are well informed and interest-based – projecting what a more diverse forest products sector looks like and needs to deliver in the future and what needs to be done on the fibre supply side to meet these future opportunities. A working draft of the strategy is slated for completion in June-July 2008.

The Strategy development process is scheduled as follows:

Phase I (Backgrounder Discussion Document) March-April 2008.

Phase II (Expert dialogue) is expected to run concurrently with

Phase III (Public dialogue and Strategy development) and the final draft of the strategy is anticipated July 2008.

Final Draft Strategy Completion is scheduled for July 2008

Strategy	Apr-07	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08
Phase I Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Backgrounder												
Phase II/III (<i>this is undertaken in the 08-09 workplan</i>)												

Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy

The scoping of the integrated regional transportation strategy revealed that the title and orientation of the strategy needed to be expanded to include all major infrastructure developments. A consulting firm was retained in January 2008 to develop this strategy, the



working group has met twice and a working draft of this strategy is slated for completion in June 2008. OBAC has also contributed to the several connector road discussions that are active in our region including the Mackenzie-Fort St James discussion, the Smithers-Granisle road and following the road development from Wells up to Highway 16 east. OBAC has also supported the Highway 37 electrification initiative. Insights from the NDI NW Manufacturing study will contribute to the background on the integrated regional infrastructure strategy.

The key insight already gained through scoping and working group discussions across all of the strategies begun so far is that hard infrastructure assets (road, rail, airport, telecommunications, power grid) are key ingredients that will make or break all other sector specific growth opportunities. It has become quickly apparent that it was public infrastructure investments such as the WAC Bennett Dam and Highways 16 and 97 that enabled the north to become a powerhouse wealth generator in the 50's and 60's and that a new wave of public investment in infrastructure will spur this region and BC as a whole into the next diversification, development and wealth generating phase.

Completion is scheduled for June 2008.

Strategy	Apr-07	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08
Integrated Regional Infrastructure												

Community Services and Social Supports Strategy & Retention and Attraction Strategy

These two strategies will be developed as separate strategies but will be developed by a single working group and consulting team. The objective of these two strategies combined will be to generate a road map for how the senior governments, local and First Nations governments can work with service provider organizations and others to build healthy, vibrant and resilient communities in the OBAC region. Both strategies will be cross-cutting with a focus on helping communities manage change and uncertainty over the longer term and renew and innovate in the face of rapid transformation or crisis. Ordinarily we convene one working group for each strategy but in this case, early scoping with an expert practitioner group in February 2008 has shown it will be possible to convene one umbrella working group to provide expert advice and input on both of the strategies at the same time.

The Community Social Services and Supports Strategy will identify program and delivery gaps in the region, and with consultation with a working group and other stakeholders, receive input on how to address these identified gaps through recommendations and an action plan. It will be regional in scale although recommended activities may encompass specific communities if there are unique circumstances, for example Prince George is a larger regional centre compared to the more rural communities. Similar to the Community and Social Supports Strategy, the Attraction and Retention Strategy will identify program and delivery gaps in the region, and with



consultation with a working group and other stakeholders, receive input on how to address these identified gaps through recommendations and an action plan. In addition to the above services and supports, the strategy will identify the attributes that help communities, particularly rural, attract and retain people during times of transition. The Real Estate Foundation Amenity Migration Project forms part of the backgrounder and scoping for the Retention and Attraction strategy.

Completion for both of these strategies is scheduled for June-July 2008

Strategy	Apr-07	May-07	Jun-07	Jul-07	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08
Retention and Attraction												
Community Services and Social Supports												

2007-2008 Focus Area 4

“Under Commitments 3, 4 and 5 and throughout the entire work plan, be opportunistic and seek partnerships and opportunities and be ready to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.”

Under this focus area, OBAC would like to highlight the achievement of the following objectives:

Objective 4(a) Involve all implementers in the planning and enable strategy participants who are also implementers to make commitments to implementation.

Objective 4(b) Enable Directors and staff to be involved with initiatives external to the OBAC that lead to the development of partnerships and collaborative relationships to advance the OBAC initiative and sustainable development in the region.

Objective 4(c) Gather and share information that reflects the interests of the region and enables informed policies and decisions that support sustainable development in the region.

This Focus Area ended up being implemented primarily under Commitment #4. OBAC welcomed prospective implementers to contribute to strategy development (Project 3.5), participated in relevant committees, boards, panel discussions and other fora that are external to the OBAC where opportunities are identified to facilitate a two-way exchange (Project 4.2), and prepared to partner on hosting a Rural Policy Workshop and share case studies at the community level (Project 4.3).

To welcome prospective implementers to contribute to strategy development a concerted effort and focus has been devoted to making sure that a cross-section of interests were invited to



participate in strategy development either through direct participation in a Working Group or as part of a broader email draft strategy review group.

Project 4.2 The OBAC Manager and a number of Directors participated as panellists at a number of conferences including: the Natural Resources Forum held mid-January in Prince George; the Council of Forest Industries Annual Convention in April; the UBCM MPB Session in late September and a number of other forums. Many OBAC Directors attended the day-long MPB Forum that opened this year's Union of BC Municipalities convention. The audience heard from key provincial and federal agency representatives about the current status of the epidemic and programs aimed at mitigating the impacts on communities of the epidemic. OBAC Chair Len Fox joined representatives from the province's other Beetle Action Coalitions on a panel to outline how communities are working together to respond. OBAC is also a member of the IRM Partnership of Northern BC (now called Resources North) which was one of 11 programs funded under the federal government's Forest Communities Program. We were involved in the negotiation and development of the proposal and are now a partner of the initiative. This partnership is a broad group of organizations interested in exploring concrete ways to strengthen resource sector-integration to benefit the regional business climate and investment opportunities and, retain and return wealth in local communities. OBAC is pleased to be one of the organizations in this partnership along with: the McGregor Model Forest Association as the interim secretariat ; Council of Forest Industries (Northern Operations); Association for Mining Exploration in BC; Mining Association of BC; Geoscience BC; Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers; Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board; Council of Tourism Associations of BC; Province of British Columbia, Northern Interior Interagency Management Committee; and the University of Northern BC. This area of activity will be ongoing in the 2008-2009 workplan.

Project 4.3 Interest in assessing and strengthening an overarching policy framework to support rural communities and resilience has been growing as new insights are gained into the dynamics that enhance or limit rural communities' opportunities through Beetle Action Coalitions and other organizations' work. A number of events are being planned for 2008 by organizations as diverse as the Rural Secretariat, FORREX and others where an opportunity to host a panel or full workshop on this topic will emerge. This project will be carried forward into the 2008-2009.



Part II – 2008-2009 Year Ahead Workplan: Preparing for the Future

The 2008-2009 workplan has been built to meet OBAC’s five Commitments and to take the strategy development to the finish line and prepare OBAC for presenting the Diversification Plan. While completing the now 12 strategies is the prime directive of this year’s workplan, OBAC will also be devoting time and effort towards integrating across the strategies positioning OBAC to present an overarching Diversification Plan as we go, rather than waiting to complete all of the strategies before beginning the Diversification Planning effort.



OBAC will also be devoting a significant amount of time and resources towards strengthening existing and building new relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations community leaders and also, strengthening the relationships that have been built between OBAC community leaders across the region so that community leaders across the region can work together to create a brighter future together. This year’s workplan also contemplates the need for building an organization that can take the OBAC strategies and diversification plan into a new phase – implementation.

The objectives and activities proposed for 2008-2009 prepare the Coalition and its member communities and rural areas for the future. The Coalition is also still firmly committed to being opportunistic wherever and whenever possible. Through the strategy development process, the Coalition will seek opportunities to provide input and represent the region’s interests as well as deliver immediate value by piloting innovative ideas.

OBAC has also mapped out in a Gant chart, the timing of each of the strategies’ development so that our audiences and the two senior governments will know when OBAC strategies and their



associated recommendations are scheduled to be available for launch and implementation. The 2008-2009 Gant Chart is included below in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – 2008-2009 Strategy Completion Gant Chart

Strategy	Apr-08	May-08	Jun-08	Jul-08	Aug-08	Sep-08	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09 +
Community Services and Social Supports												
Regional Community Relationships												
Agriculture												
Tourism												
* Conventional Energy												
* Regional Cohesion and Branding												
* Regional Emergency Response												

* indicates that the development of this strategy is expected to extend beyond the March 2009 date

In the 2008-2009 workplan, OBAC proposes to pursue the following five focus areas:

2008-2009 Focus Area 1

Under Commitment #1, focus on communications and knowledge transfer activities and delivering value to our members and partners. This will include continuing to update and check in with communities, First Nations and other partners with a special emphasis on facilitating access to opportunities.

2008-2009 Focus Area 2

Under Commitments #1 and #2 enhance existing and create new positive relationships with First Nations as neighbours

2008-2009 Focus Area 3

Under Commitment #2, develop the strategies so that they share new knowledge and enable people to take informed action on the ground.

2008-2009 Focus Area 4

Under Commitment #3, complete the strategies and answer senior government’s and industries’ questions “tell us what you need... tell us what we can do”.



2008-2009 Focus Area 5

Throughout and alongside of the entire work plan prepare for strategy implementation and organizational transition in 2009.

A selection of the objectives and tactics from the work plan are presented below in Figure 2 to illustrate a few of the approaches the Coalition will pursue to deliver on the focus areas described above.

Figure 2 – Select Objectives and Tactical Plan Items from OBAC 2008-2009 Workplan

Select Objectives From Workplan	Select Outputs and Activities From Workplan
<p>1a. Build strong alliances and relationships among member communities so OBAC work reflects community needs in the region and includes these in strategic goals and objectives.</p> <p>1b. Work with community leaders, professionals and leaders in their areas of expertise to obtain and interpret the highest quality information, building bridges among those same parties to enable their access to high quality information.</p> <p>1c. Build positive and productive relationships with First Nations communities across the region and work together on topics of mutual concern and interest.</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy – Implement the communications strategy to address both Objectives a and b and revise the Communications strategy as needed. • As part of the communications strategy as well as part of the development of the Regional Community Relationships Strategy, identify common/shared topics of interest and priority between First Nations/non-First Nations communities across the region. • Where common/shared topics of interest and priority are identified, develop plans to work together on them between First Nations/non-First Nations communities across the region. <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drive the roll out communications plan for each Strategy - Deliver Local gov'n't updates in each OBAC community and hold joint council meetings where interested and possible - Host follow-up Community Dialogues - Host Information Speaker series for communities - Support Regional MPB Art Exhibit - Host Strategy scoping sessions for planners/practitioners - Support community level discussion groups.



Select Objectives From Workplan	Select Outputs and Activities From Workplan
<p>2c. Build strong alliances with partner initiatives and organizations that can contribute to the understanding, diversification planning and promotion of sustainable development here.</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do scoping on the identified priority topics for strategy work • Present speaker information sessions in the communities and convene “Summit Days” to gather and share information and insights in advance of and through the strategy development and to answer pressing practitioner questions in OBAC communities. <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional Industrial Land Inventory/ Profile – Regional airport assessment Project – Regional biomass assessment – Regional transition toolkit project – Contribute in-kind and financially to projects in partnerships that deliver value back to the OBAC priorities and diversification planning
<p>3b. Develop sector/solution strategies with the studies and information gained in the first two commitments.</p> <p>3c. Knit together the strategies and communicate them to help people understand what needs to be done.</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all strategies for identified priority topics as stand alone strategies and work towards cross-strategy integration so that a meaningful Diversification Plan can be prepared for the region. • Build recommendations as the focused output of the strategies so that OBAC community leaders are able to answer senior government’s and industries’ questions “tell us what you need... tell us what we can do”. Give guidance on “who needs to do what, where, when and approximately how much it will cost and to what end”. <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scenario work – analysis on the impacts of the recommendations or activities. – Run the strategy process on all strategies identified for completion by March 2009 – Invite input from communities and sectors on changing/emerging needs and opportunities – Begin to prepare the integrated Diversification Plan for the region based upon the completed strategies.



Select Objectives From Workplan	Select Outputs and Activities From Workplan
<p>4a. Involve all implementers in the planning and enable strategy participants who are also implementers to make commitments to implementation.</p> <p>4c. Gather and share information that reflects the interests of the region and enables informed policies and decisions that support sustainable development in the region.</p> <p>4d. Actively communicate the recommendations coming out of the strategies and build momentum around the collaborative implementation of those recommendations.</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See that OBAC interests are reflected in policies, decisions and program investments where OBAC input has been sought or offered. • Monitor changing circumstances so that OBAC can be opportunistic. • Prepare for strategy presentation and organizational transition in 2009 and beyond. <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Welcome prospective implementers to contribute to strategy development. – Participate in relevant committees, Boards, panel discussions and other fora that are external to the OBAC where opportunities are identified to facilitate a two-way exchange. – Prepare and implement a focused communications plan for the roll-out of each strategy.
<p>5a. Systematically track and confirm activities (i.e. projects, investments) that follow through on commitments made to this region.</p> <p>5b. Stay on track with changing circumstances.</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and support when a decision maker honours a commitment to the region and the initiative. • Work across OBAC communities and, with senior government decision makers to align expectations, objectives and circumstances. <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitor decision-makers responses to the OBAC strategic plans and planning

The Coalition looks forward to undertaking the activities and projects and meeting the objectives and commitments proposed in the 2008-2009 workplan, collaboratively with its many existing and prospective partners to work to ensure sustainable development and resiliency for the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition region.