



Ray Schultz
Assistant Deputy Minister - Mountain Pine Beetle Response
Ministry of Community Development
390 - 546 St. Paul Street
Kamloops BC V2C 5T1

April 27, 2009

Delivered via email Ray.Schultz@gov.bc.ca

RE: 2009 SIX MONTH 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. From its inception, this was a bold and innovative experiment in inter-government relationship building and action and, we appreciate the provincial government's leadership. Members of the Coalition are already deriving benefits from the capacity that this initiative has built in our region. We understand that the Coalition's work is also already enhancing provincial government politicians and senior staff understanding of where the needs and opportunities are in our region. We believe that the best is yet to come for all levels of government and our partners in building a more resilient future in the OBAC region.

Please find attached the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) 2009 Six Month Business Plan submitted to support OBAC's work for a six month operating period April 1 2009 to September 30 2009. This Six Month Business Plan follows on the 2008-2009 Business Plan approved by government in April 2008. OBAC has met all of the commitments set out in that 2008-2009 business plan. Please find included in the submission attached a section entitled *2008-2009 Year in Review*, which presents a report on the progress made during the 2008-2009 operating year.

Consistent with the commitments in the 2008-2009 Business Plan, OBAC has:

- Scoped all of the original strategy topics (determined in 2006), completed strategies for 6 of these topics by December 2008, assessed the remaining topics and determined that of the original 12 topics, 10 of them require full stand alone strategies. OBAC expects to have the 10 priority topic strategies completed by July 2009.
- Completed Actions Plans for all 6 completed strategies and in some cases, completed tactical plans and begun building implementation partnerships for specific high priority project opportunities.



- Begun to develop a proposal including principles and options for the implementation phase of OBAC and supported external organizations and member communities to begin working on ‘on-the-ground’ projects, to the best of the ability of OBAC given the limited resources and mandate for implementation activities.
- Witnessed a significant number of provincial announcements across a range of topics since the beginning of 2009 that are completely consistent with the recommendations and advice presented in the OBAC strategies.
- Continued to build strong alliances and relationships among member communities and between community leaders and, continued to work with interested First Nations leaders and with First Nations initiatives to work together on topics of mutual concern and interest.
- Used the strategy development process to actively 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.
- Built strong alliances with partner initiatives and organizations that can contribute to the understanding, diversification planning and promotion of sustainable development here including many prospective strategy implementers.

OBAC looks forward to building upon the success and momentum of the work that we have done since the Coalition’s inception in late 2005. Thank you again for your continued interest in and support for OBAC, we look forward to working with you to finish the strategies and the Diversification Plan and to begin working on implementing the good ideas that have been developed.

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 2008-2009 Year in Review and 2009 Six Month Business Plan, the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) will demonstrate the ongoing need to support the Coalition's work to complete the strategies and Diversification Plan and move to an implementation phase, to ensure sustainable development and resiliency for the OBAC region.

This business plan submission includes two parts, Part I is the 2008-2009 Year in Review and Part II is the 2009 Six Month Business Plan. Part I will report on OBAC's accomplishments in the 2008-2009 operating year. Part II will set out the Coalition's planned objectives and activities for the six months beginning April 1st 2009 and going to September 30th 2009. The 2009 Six Month Business Plan 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 and Diversification Plan preparation to the finish line. OBAC looks forward to building upon the success and momentum of the work that we have done since the Coalition's inception in late 2005. The 2009 Six Month Business Plan focus and energy are largely devoted towards (in order of priority):

- Completing the remaining strategies with associated Action Plans and select tactical plans for high priority opportunities
- Preparing and presenting a Diversification Plan including the proposal of options for an implementation phase for OBAC
- Continuing to use the strategy development process to build capacity within and external to the region to implement the recommendations collaboratively with the provincial government and other levels of government and other interested parties
- Being opportunistic to provide informed advice about the regions opportunities and needs and, facilitating the building of implementation partnerships as OBAC resources and time allow.

This year's workplan 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 the next six months 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.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition – A Brief Introduction.....	5
The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition – Purpose and Commitments	6
Part I – 2008-2009 Year in Review: Preparing for the Future	7
Financial Management and Governance.....	7
2008-2009 Focus Areas and Select Accomplishments	8
2008-2009 Focus Areas 1 and 2.....	10
2008-2009 Focus Area 3	14
2008-2009 Focus Areas 4 and 5.....	20
Part II – 2009 Year Ahead Workplan: The Start of Something Big.....	23
Figure 1 – 2009 Six Month Strategy Completion Gant Chart	24
Focus Areas.....	25
2009 Six Month Focus Area 1	25
2009 Six Month Focus Area 2	25
2009 Six Month Focus Area 3	25
Six Month Workplan	25
Figure 2 – Select Objectives and Tactical Plan Items from OBAC 2008-2009 Workplan ..	26
Transition Activities	28



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 who are contributors to the region's economy and whose economic and cultural well being are closely tied to the region's land and resources. The OBAC region includes a land base of about 18 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. Over 80% of the region's pine stands are expected to be killed by the Mountain Pine Beetle by the time the beetle epidemic has run its course in the not-too-distant future.



The beetle epidemic is an unplanned event with potential for serious economic, social and environmental implications over the medium and long. 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. The global economic meltdown and resulting global recession is having significant impacts on the resource



dependent communities of the OBAC region, leading to an even more compelling imperative to build resilience and capacity in the region to respond and to diversify the economy.

OBAC communities are already experiencing adverse social, economic and environmental consequences of this perfect storm 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 is 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 – 2008-2009 Year in Review: Preparing for the Future

In its 2008-2009 workplan, OBAC focused on “Preparing for the Future”. OBAC is pleased to report that the Coalition has largely completed its initial strategy development and has in some cases already begun to take action on the opportunities and challenges that are emerging from the strategy recommendations.

Financial Management and Governance

OBAC’s 2007-2008 audit to March 31st 2008 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 and there is money available to be used towards funding the 2009 Six Month Workplan

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 2008-2009 and 2009 Six Month workplan continues 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 and policies, 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. The General Manager continues to manage the day to day operations of the initiative and the Office Manager and a Strategy Coordinator work with the General Manager to that end.

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 2009 Six Month workplan.

2008-2009 Focus Areas and Select Accomplishments

The 2008-2009 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 that were proposed for 2008-2009 moved the Coalition entirely into the strategy development phase.

A significant amount of time and effort was devoted towards integrating across the strategies, positioning OBAC to be able to present an overarching Diversification Plan later in 2009. OBAC also devoted 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. The 2008- 2009 workplan also focused efforts on determining needs and opportunities to build an organization that can take the OBAC strategies and diversification plan into a new phase in 2009 and beyond – the implementation phase.

Consistent with the commitments in the 2008-2009 Business Plan, OBAC has:

- Scoped all priority strategy topics, completed strategies on 6 of the final 10 topics and, expects to have all 10 strategies completed by July 2009.
- Completed Actions Plans for all 6 completed strategies and in some cases, completed Tactical Plans and begun building implementation partnerships for specific high priority project opportunities.
- Begun to develop a proposal including principles and options for the implementation phase of OBAC and supported external organizations and member communities to begin working on 'on-the-ground' projects, to the best of the ability of OBAC given the limited resources and mandate for implementation activities.
- Witnessed a significant number of provincial announcements across a range of topics since the beginning of 2009 that are completely consistent with the recommendations and advice presented in the OBAC strategies.



In addition to these key accomplishments, OBAC has also:

- Worked hard to continue to build strong alliances and relationships among member communities and between community leaders, with a particular focus on helping newly elected Local Government leaders to benefit from this work. Multiple orientation sessions held with member local governments, the October AGM and Board meeting and the January '09 Thank You and Social followed by the January Board meeting are examples of successes in this area.
- Used the strategy development process, strategy working groups and Summit Days to their fullest potential to actively 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. This has also been the opportunity to build strong alliances with partner initiatives and organizations that can contribute to the understanding, diversification planning and promotion of sustainable development here including many prospective strategy implementers in the planning and enable strategy participants who are also implementers to make commitments to implementation. Examples such as the partnership with COTA on the Tourism Strategy and UNBC on the Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy illustrate successes in this area.
- Participated in a number of key events in the region and beyond and sought out local level opportunities to build positive and productive relationships with First Nations leaders and with First Nations initiatives to work together on topics of mutual concern and interest. Supporting and contributing to the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative "Getting in the Game" session, attending and speaking at the ABSN conference, meeting with First Nations organizations in the region, supporting community leaders' efforts to work with First Nations in the region and doing the scoping in preparation for developing the Regional Community Relationships Strategy are examples of successes in this area.
- Witnessed active and enthusiastic participation from many OBAC Directors in Strategy Working Groups, working meetings with senior government officials and politicians and delivery of presentations on OBAC by Directors at conferences and events.

Selected key accomplishments are presented below alongside of the five focus areas for the 2008-2009 workplan to illustrate OBAC's progress on the four focus areas and a selection of objectives that were included in the 2008-2009 workplan.



2008-2009 Focus Areas 1 and 2

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.

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

Under these two focus areas, OBAC would like to highlight select achievements under 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 work together on topics of mutual concern and interest.

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

Objective 2(b) Be recognized as the focal point for understanding and representing the interests of local/regional governments on the MPB epidemic.

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 updated and implemented its communications plan, continued to produce monthly newsletters (Project 1.3), partnered with the College of New Caledonia to travel the Red and Blue Art Exhibit through the region and presented a mobile information display and distributed brochures on the MPB epidemic and economic diversification activities alongside of the Red and Blue Art Exhibit (Project 1.14), hosted a number of topical 'Summit Days' as part of the strategy development process and held a forward planning session for member community staff and Directors alongside of the annual general meeting.

OBAC's main focus in the 2008-2009 was to complete the scoping on all of the strategy topics and largely complete the strategy development. OBAC's work towards this end under these two focus areas included activities that enabled OBAC staff and Directors to speak with and learn from sector representatives at conferences and events, and to partner with organizations that were working on projects or gathering knowledge that could inform OBAC strategy work. This to a much greater degree than in previous years' included OBAC's involvement with and support for



activities enabling a better understanding of where shared opportunities with First Nations may exist to work together to achieve common goals.

Select projects that illustrate OBAC's activities in achieving the objectives presented above include:

Project #1.3 Monthly Newsletters

OBAC continued to prepare and distribute electronically an almost monthly newsletter to a growing list of over 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 continued to be a critical communications tool for OBAC – people on our distribution list occasionally commented on specific stories thanking us for keeping them in the loop or asking for additional information. Our audience reports that it keeps OBAC top of mind for them and also informs them of what is going on. They also comment that the newsletter proactively points to opportunities to work together on things with OBAC as well as other organizations mentioned in the newsletter stories. The newsletters will continue to be a critical ongoing project in the next workplan.

Project #1.14 Regional Tour continued for MPB Art Exhibit

In the previous year's workplan, OBAC contributed to a project that the College of New Caledonia undertook to enable artists in the region to present ideas and commentary about the MPB epidemic through different media. The project was a fabulous success and, OBAC's continued interest in this project was to ensure that the exhibit toured through the region to expand awareness, increase appreciation, and inform discussion about the challenges and opportunities of the mountain pine beetle epidemic. OBAC also produced a stand up display presenting basic information about the MPB epidemic and the impacts on communities and the need to diversify the region's economy and, a brochure that people could take home. By supporting this art exhibit and touring it through our region, OBAC relied upon an expanded set of tools to convey information and encourage understanding and dialogue about the beetle epidemic and exploring solutions. Artists, musicians and writers often have a unique way of looking at things, and through their work they provide food for thought to the public. The College of New Caledonia planning team did an excellent job and we have appreciated seeing the very positive and appreciative feedback that visitors to the art exhibit submitted on their comment cards at the exhibit as it has moved through the region.

Project #1.4 – 1.10 Drive the roll out communications plan for each Strategy

A considerable amount of effort was focused on making sure that communications materials were prepared and briefings were conducted in advance of the release of the 6 strategies that



were completed during the 2008-2009 workplan. Senior government politicians, community leaders, government agencies senior staff, industry leaders and many others were included in the briefings and consultations leading up to the release of strategies. These same people along with many other interested organizations and individuals were also included in the strategy release events, attracting encouraging feedback on the initiative and the strategies and, positive coverage of the strategies and their recommendations in the media.

Project #2.3 RDBN Asset Mapping Phase II

As part of our 2007 workplan, OBAC contributed to Phase I of this project. This Phase I Asset Mapping information has helped inform the development of our strategies and will continue to inform our understanding of the current circumstances in our region or the “what is”. Phase II of this project – analysis of the Asset Mapping results and the development of an Economic Development Action Plan – got underway in September 2008 and OBAC contributed to this second phase of work – a body of work that OBAC has subsequently relied upon to inform our understanding of where we can move to in the future or the “what could be”. The RDBN has recently released their economic development action plan which charts a way forward for the RDBN to follow up on priority opportunities and also, helps OBAC to know where opportunities to partner with the RDBN will lie at the implementation phase of OBAC.

Project #2.7 Attend sector conferences in and external to the region

OBAC staff and Directors attended a number of conferences both as participants and speakers to learn more about sectors and also opportunities to partner with external organizations on strategy development and implementation. These included (but were not limited to):

- Minerals North – Smithers April 2008. In particular, attending the pre-conference workshop "Working Together for a Better Future" on engagement between First Nations and others in the pursuit of sustainable and regionally appropriate minerals and mining.
- Public Forestry Forum – Burns Lake April 2008. Presentation on community innovation and diversification opportunities in the forest sector.
- Nechako Kitimaat Development Fund AGM – May 2008. By invitation presentation to the Board on partnership opportunities
- Burns Lake Native Development Corporation – Burns Lake June 2008. By invitation presentation to the Board on partnership and engagement opportunities
- Forest and Resources Expo 2008 – Prince George June 2008. Met with several international trade delegations at their request to talk about alternative energy strategy.
- Mountain Pine Beetle: From lessons learned to community-based solutions – Prince George (UNBC) June 2008.
- UBCM 2008 – Penticton September 2008. Directors attended Cabinet Minister meetings to brief them on strategy development.
- Rural Revitalization Conference – Prince George October 2008.
- First Nations Leadership Council Mining Summit – Prince George October 2008
- RDBN Economic development forum – Burns Lake October 2008.



- ABSN Strategic Conversations Presentation – Vancouver November 2008. Presented on a panel to the Aboriginal Business Services Network and stayed on for presentations by other speakers.
- “Getting in the Game” Natural Resource Forum – Prince George January 2009. FNMPBI and OBAC hosted a speaker and meal.
- Premier's Northern Economic Summit – Prince George January 2009.
- AMEBC Cordilleran Roundup – Vancouver January 2009

Project #2.8 Regularly brief politicians, industry leaders and First Nations leaders

Prior to the release of each of the six strategies, the relevant provincial Cabinet Ministers and their senior staff were briefed either individually, or in some cases as part of a group briefing to alert them to what would be presented in the strategies and to invite questions and feedback. Pre released briefings were also done with MLA's and MP's of the region. Individual Directors undertook to brief neighbouring community First Nations leaders and in some cases, this has led to follow up with individual First Nations on points of mutual interest in the strategies.

Project #2.9 Contribute in-kind and financially to projects in partnerships that deliver value back to the OBAC priorities, strategies and diversification planning

In many cases, these contributions have been in kind by contributing information or knowledge gained through our strategy development, or by offering to connect people with the “knowledge network” that OBAC has built through strategy development. In other cases, OBAC has made partnership contributions to projects that either inform strategy development or, will enhance our ability to implement ideas that have been proposed in a strategy. Select examples of these partnership projects include:

Waste to Energy Project

OBAC partnered with the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako to learn from the Waste to Energy Feasibility Assessment to enhance our Agriculture Strategy and also as an implementation piece of our Alternative Energy Strategy Action Plan. The Waste to Energy Feasibility Assessment takes a look at the sources and nature of waste generated within the RD and assesses the opportunities to use this as an energy asset rather than continuing to be burdened by it as a waste liability.

Summit Days – Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Summit Day

OBAC has presented in most cases, a “Summit Day” as part of the process for developing the sector strategies. In the case of the Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy, OBAC partnered with UNBC's Community Development to host a comprehensive Summit Day. This partnership and project effectively supported an enhanced second phase of the three-phase development of this strategy, involving the CDI's background research and then, facilitation of an expert dialogue on future forest and fibre use opportunities in the region and to test some of the ideas emerging from the strategy development discussion. The forum effectively engaged a number of speakers who are experts in forest products, markets, and exports issues as well as invited people with



expertise in our regional circumstances to join in the discussion. As planned, the audience included 50 or so invited community and industry leaders and decision makers. We were delighted with the range of different perspectives that the audience brought to the discussion. By all accounts the Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Summit that you facilitated on September 19th exceeded participants' and our participating Directors' expectations.

Transition Toolkit

OBAC partnered with the Ministry of Community Development and the University of Northern BC's Community Development Institute to develop a "Transition Toolkit" – a tool that several Directors pointed to as an immediate need. The community transition toolkit provides OBAC and its individual communities with a gap analysis of local preparedness for transition, and needed community and social supports/services, which can feed directly into OBAC's strategic planning processes. The community transition toolkit includes:

- A 'best practices' toolkit respecting community transition processes and actions in response to changes in local resource industries and local economies. This toolkit will draw upon the CDI's experience in northern BC, a recent Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research (ICURR) Report which included participation from the 'municipal affairs' ministries in a number of Canadian provinces, input from academic, policy, and community practitioner literatures, consultation with community development practitioners and service providers, as well as the experiences of individual communities across northern BC; and,
- A systematic process that enables community leaders and staff to use the transition toolkit to assess the social and community supports and services available within individual communities that can assist with transition planning exercises and the recruitment/retention of people and economic opportunities.

Project 2.14 Regional Industrial Land Inventory/Profile

OBAC is particularly interested in enabling both OBAC member regional districts to identify existing and prospective industrial land as a key element of the Regional Integrated Infrastructure Strategy. One of the key ingredients for diversification that we have heard about from experts across sectors will be our region's ability to offer well serviced and appropriately zoned industrial land. It will be important to identify where that exists in the region or where more work will need to be done to make it available.

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.

In the 2008-2009 workplan OBAC committed to "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. OBAC also committed to “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”.

Under this focus area, OBAC would like to highlight select achievements under the following objectives:

Objective 3(b) Develop sector/solution strategies with the studies and information gained in the first two commitments.

Objective 3(c) Knit together the strategies and communicate them to help people understand what needs to be done.

Objective 3(d) Ensure that there is opportunity for meaningful involvement from the OBAC Directors.

Objective 3(e) During strategy development, encourage the Strategy Working Groups to be a vehicle for exchanging information and knowledge across community representatives and practitioners and government and industry staff to increase collective capacity and understanding.

For several of the strategies, in particular the Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy, OBAC completed impact analysis on key strategy recommendations to ensure that the recommendations could really make a difference if they are implemented. OBAC focused most of its energies on running the strategy development process on all strategies identified for completion – this included reassessing the relevance and import of several of the topics, leaving OBAC with ten priority topics for strategy completion down from the original twelve. In addition to the completion of six strategies the start of an additional four strategies, OBAC has also prepared action plans and in some cases tactical plans that position OBAC in an ‘implementation ready’ position on a number of high priority opportunities to take action. This action planning work has enhanced OBAC’s reach in encouraging allied organizations to begin work on opportunities. Directors have actively participated in each of the working groups and, working group members have reported that they have appreciated the opportunity to learn and network through their participation in the process. Through a variety of venues, most importantly the strategy working groups but also, through interaction with experts and practitioners at conferences and events, OBAC invited input from community leaders, staff and sector experts on changing/emerging needs and opportunities. OBAC also began in October 2008, to prepare the integrated Diversification Plan for the region based upon the strategy work to date.

The following is a special report on the accomplishments under Project 3.5 of the 2008-2009 Workplan – Strategy Development. Consistent with the objectives in the 2008-2009 business plan, OBAC has exceeded strategy development expectations by scoping all of the priority topics with the cumulative completion and release of six strategies as of December 2008 with another 3 strategies and 1 project (small scale strategy) expected by July 2009.



Strategies Completed and Currently Under Development
Minerals & Mining Strategy – May 2008*
Alternative Energy Strategy – June 2008*
Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy – November 2008*
Future Forest Products & Fibre Use Strategy – November 2008*
Retention & Attraction Strategy – December 2008*
Social/Community Services and Supports Strategy – December 2008*
Tourism Strategy – June 2009**
Regional Emergency Preparedness & Response Project – June 2009**
Agriculture Strategy – July 2009**
Regional Community Relationships Strategy – July 2009**

* Released

** Scheduled Completion

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

The Final Draft Strategy was released in May 2008 and an Action Plan has been developed and endorsed with one tactical plan also developed and ready to go for this strategy.



Alternative Energy Strategy

The Final Draft Strategy was released in June 2008 and an Action Plan has been developed and endorsed with one tactical plan also developed and ready to go for this strategy.

Future Forest Products and Fibre Use Strategy

The Final Draft Strategy was released in November 2008 and an Action Plan has been developed and endorsed. Already OBAC is working with the provincial government to take action one of the proposed actions to have “greater engagement with Community Leaders on major forest management decisions”.

Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy

The Final Draft Strategy was released in November 2008 and a detailed Action Plan has been developed and endorsed. Tactical plans will be a smooth next step relying upon the detailed Action Plan.

Community Services and Social Supports Strategy & Retention and Attraction Strategy

These two Final Draft Strategies were released together as the “Social Development Strategies” in December 2008 and an Action Plan has been developed and endorsed for each strategy. Tactical plans are currently under development for several of the proposed actions and implementation partners are already stepping forward to assist in the implementation. OBAC has already released a project that was called for in this strategy – the Transition Toolkit – in partnership with the Ministry of Community Development and UNBC’s Community Development Institute.

Tourism Strategy

A lot of work has been done on tourism development in various different ways and communities across the region. This strategy will be turning to the wealth of existing work already done and strive to find where additional work can be done at a regional scale to create values and opportunities across the region. OBAC has partnered with the Council of Tourism Associations (COTA) to support the development of this strategy and, OBAC has retained Chemistry Consulting Group Inc. to facilitate the development of the OBAC Tourism Strategy. We will also be working closely with the Northern BC Tourism Association. The consultants have worked through existing strategies and documents and prepared a Backgrounder to describe the tourism sector in the OBAC region. Two Working Group meetings have been convened as of March 31st 2009. Plans for a Tourism Summit Day are currently underway.

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
Tourism												

The Final Draft Strategy is expected to be completed in June 2009.



Agriculture Strategy

A lot of work has also been done on agriculture development in our region and communities. As with the Tourism Strategy, the Agriculture Strategy will also be turning to the work already done and, will be striving to find where additional work can be done at a regional scale to create value and opportunities across the region in agricultural development. OBAC has retained a small consulting group under the leadership of Don Cameron of Don Cameron Associates to facilitate the development of this strategy. The consultants have worked through existing strategies, documents and strategies and have been conducting phone interviews with producers across the region and other community level experts in the sector to prepare a Backgrounder to describe the agriculture sector in the OBAC region. OBAC and the consultants have also been working closely with regional Ministry of Agriculture Staff. The first working group meeting is expected to be convened in early May 2009.

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
Agriculture												

The Final Draft Strategy is expected to be completed in July 2009.

Regional Community Relationships Strategy

OBAC has already presented a number of recommendations and proposed actions in existing strategies that focus on relationship and capacity building at the local and regional scale as a foundation for building a diversified economy specifically and resilience more generally in the region. The Regional Community Relationships Strategy will focus in more detail on what is the status of relationships currently across communities in the region and will reflect on what are some of the ways in which these relationships can be strengthened so that we can continue to work together into the future. The community relationships strategy will aim to enable First Nations and Local Government community leaders across the region to take collaborative action on building community resilience across the region. This will include enabling community leaders to support business development and social development.

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
Regional Community Relationships												

The Final Draft Strategy is expected to be completed in July 2009.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Project

Under the Provincial Emergency Program, local governments have developed comprehensive and detailed emergency plans. Additional work supported by UBCM has also added to local scale emergency planning. The First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative has worked with



MPB impacted First Nations communities to prepare emergency response plans. The Ministry of Forests and Range has enhanced its hazard assessment and response prioritization tools. In addition to these initiatives, there are a number of other initiatives that have been undertaken by communities and by external organizations that support emergency preparedness and response.

With all of the work in place, one might think that this topic is well covered, but an initial scan and discussions with experts indicates that there are gaps that OBAC, as a regional body, could be uniquely positioned to make specific recommendations to address. These include but are not limited to:

- Increased personal preparedness
- Increased coordination, knowledge sharing and access to resources between communities and across the region, including First Nations communities.
- Additional training and exercises to test preparedness and response.
- Increased preparedness and response for large scale regional emergencies that might impact more than one community at a time, including wildfire and severe ice storms.
- Enhanced coordinated effort to monitoring and data collection so that we can better forecast and prepare for events such large scale flooding.

As such, OBAC will be doing an “Emergency Preparedness and Response Project” where we will assess opportunities and gaps in regional scale emergency preparedness and response and will prepare recommendations that focus on these needs and opportunities.

The Regional Diversification Plan

OBAC is also preparing the overall Regional Economic Diversification Plan. As part of this, a set of options for an implementation phase as well as a transition plan to take OBAC from strategy development to implementation will be presented.

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
Diversification Plan												

A working draft (for discussion purposes) of the overall Diversification Plan is expected to be completed in July 2009.

Other topics that were in the first list of 12 topics from 2006:

Regional Cohesion and Branding: While there may be benefit to branding and profiling the region, it is premature at this time for OBAC to undertake a broad program of branding and profiling for the OBAC region. As such, the Board has chosen not to develop a stand alone Branding and Profiling Strategy at this time. It’s important to note the sector specific needs and opportunities that have been identified in several of the completed strategies and are emerging in



several new strategies currently under development. OBAC will promote taking action on these sector specific needs and opportunities as part of the implementation of these strategies. Also, the Regional Cohesion aspects of this topic will now be addressed under the Regional Community Relationships strategy.

Conventional Energy Strategy: In the short term, development of the petroleum industry in the OBAC region is not expected because lower cost and more mature opportunities for petroleum development are available elsewhere. The major barriers in the OBAC region to this sector's development include the complex geology of the Nechako and Bowser basins and the lack of infrastructure to collect and distribute the resource. In the long term oil and gas development may occur in the region if these barriers are overcome and demand continues as projected. In the medium term though, the OBAC region has an opportunity to increase its role in supplying goods, services and labour to the petroleum industry in North-east BC. This is a focused potential opportunity and as such, does not lend itself to the development of a full strategy similar to other OBAC strategies. While OBAC will not be developing a stand alone Conventional Energy Strategy, we will be pursuing opportunities to familiarize community leaders with the focused opportunity that may exist in the medium term.

2008-2009 Focus Areas 4 and 5

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".

Under all commitments and throughout and alongside of the entire work plan prepare for strategy implementation and organizational transition in 2009.

Under these two focus areas, OBAC would like to highlight select achievements under 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(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.

Objective 4(d) Actively communicate the recommendations coming out of the strategies and build momentum around the collaborative implementation of those recommendations.

Objective 5(b) Stay on track with changing circumstances

OBAC updated and implemented its communications plan, continued to produce monthly newsletters (Project 1.3), partnered with the College of New Caledonia to travel the Red and



Blue Art Exhibit through the region and presented a mobile information display and distributed brochures on the MPB epidemic and economic diversification activities alongside of the Red and Blue Art Exhibit (Project 1.14), hosted a number of topical 'Summit Days' as part of the strategy development process and held a forward planning session for member community staff and Directors alongside of the annual general meeting.

OBAC's main focus in the 2008-2009 was to complete the scoping on all of the strategy topics and largely complete the strategy development. OBAC's work towards this end under these two focus areas included activities that enabled OBAC staff and Directors to speak with and learn from sector representatives at conferences and events, and to partner with organizations that were working on projects or gathering knowledge that could inform OBAC strategy work. This to a much greater degree than in previous years' included OBAC's involvement with and support for activities enabling a better understanding of where shared opportunities with First Nations may exist to work together to achieve common goals.

Select projects that illustrate OBAC's activities in achieving the objectives presented above include:

Project #4.1 Monitor regional media outlets and sign up for e-newsletters & publications that will inform the OBAC on changing circumstances that the OBAC may need to respond to or may lead to opportunities.

OBAC subscribes to all of the region's local newspapers and OBAC's communications coordinator tracks emerging events, opportunities and issues to bring to staff and Directors' attention or for OBAC to take action on or include in a strategy. This has proven to be a very robust way to keep track of things going on the region. OBAC also receives the provincial government news release feed as well as receiving industry association's newsletters and news distributions to keep abreast of emerging things in sectors. OBAC passes along information and alerts to OBAC Directors, CAO's and EDO's to keep them apprised of emerging opportunities and challenges.

Project #4.2 OBAC Directors and staff 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.

Already reported under Project #2.7, OBAC staff and Directors attended a great number of conferences both as participants and speakers to learn more about sectors and also opportunities to partner with external organizations on strategy development and implementation.

Project #4.4 Prepare and implement a focused communications plan for the roll-out of each strategy

Already reported in part under Projects #1.4 through 1.10, a considerable amount of effort has been focused on making sure that communications materials were prepared and briefings were conducted in advance of the release of the 6 strategies that were completed during the 2008-2009 workplan. Senior government politicians, community leaders, government agencies senior staff,



industry leaders and many others were included in the briefings and consultations leading up to the release of strategies. These same people along with many other interested organizations and individuals were also included in the strategy release events, attracting encouraging feedback on the initiative and the strategies and, positive coverage of the strategies and their recommendations in the media.

Project #5.1 Monitor decision-makers responses to the OBAC strategic plans and planning

OBAC staff and the communications coordinator work together to monitor media outlets and also, OBAC staff and Directors periodically check in with MLA's and MP's and key Cabinet Ministers both formally and informally to ensure that there is an open line of communication. Senior government politicians have repeatedly said they appreciate being briefed in person on the strategies and activities of OBAC and have positively reinforced the recommendations and actions that are proposed in the strategies. At UBCM in September 2008, Premier Gordon Campbell responded favourably to OBAC's request for meetings with senior staff within Ministries to begin the work of identifying priorities for joint implementation by asking Minister Pat Bell to follow up on this. A first meeting with Assistant Deputy Ministers on land and resource portfolios was a great success and we are looking forward to a similar meeting with social development portfolio ADM's in May or June 2009. Additionally, MLA's and Cabinet Ministers have spoke favourably at OBAC strategy release events, further reinforcing that OBAC is on the right track in building a positive and collaborative relationship with the provincial government.



Part II – 2009 Year Ahead Workplan: The Start of Something Big

The 2009 Six Month workplan has been built to meet OBAC’s five Commitments and to take the strategy development and the preparation of the OBAC Diversification Plan to the finish line in preparation for implementation. Completing the priority topic strategies and the Diversification Plan is the prime directive of this six month workplan. This includes working with senior governments, local governments and implementation partners to build an approach that can take the OBAC strategies and diversification plan into a new phase – implementation.



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 2009 Six Month Business Plan is submitted to support OBAC’s work for a six month operating period April 1 2009 to September 30 2009. This work will be undertaken using the remaining funds from OBAC’s previous Contribution Agreement.

As of March 31st 2009 OBAC has completed scoping all of the priority topics with the cumulative completion and release of six strategies with another 3 strategies and 1 project (small scale strategy) expected by July 2009. This will come to a total of 10 completed stand alone strategies with the remaining three topics that were listed as priorities covered at different places within these strategies or eliminated as a result of changing priorities and needs. This will mean that strategy work and recommendations will have been completed on the final 10 priority topics.



- Minerals & Mining Strategy – May 2008*
- Alternative Energy Strategy – June 2008*
- Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy – November 2008*
- Future Forest Products & Fibre Use Strategy – November 2008*
- Retention & Attraction Strategy – December 2008*
- Social/Community Services and Supports Strategy – December 2008*
- Tourism Strategy – June 2009**
- Regional Emergency Preparedness & Response Project – June 2009**
- Agriculture Strategy – July 2009**
- Regional Community Relationships Strategy – July 2009**

* Released

** Scheduled Completion

OBAC has mapped out in a Gant chart with the timing of each of the strategies' development so our audiences and the two senior governments will know when the remaining OBAC strategies and their associated recommendations are scheduled to be available for launch and implementation as well as the Diversification Plan discussion draft. The 2009 Six Month Gant Chart is included below in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – 2009 Six Month Strategy Completion Gant Chart

Strategy	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09 +
Agriculture							
Tourism							
Regional Community Relationships							
Regional Emergency Response							
Diversification Plan discussion draft							



Focus Areas

In the 2009 Six Month workplan, OBAC proposes to pursue the following five focus areas:

2009 Six Month Focus Area 1

Continue to actively communicate, share and gather credible information and through this, build enduring implementation partnerships.

2009 Six Month Focus Area 2

Continue to enable Local Government leaders and First Nations leaders in the region to explore opportunities to work together at the local scale at the same time as adding to and informing action on regional opportunities through OBNAC implementation.

2009 Six Month Focus Area 3

Finish the strategies and diversification plan. Work with the senior governments and implementation partners to establish a mechanism, approach and process for implementation.

Six Month Workplan

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. 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Strategy – Implement the communications strategy. • Undertake Strategy specific communications as each strategy becomes available so that the recommendations are clearly presented and communicated with the identified audiences. • 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. • Support community specific discussions between First Nations and non First Nations communities where an interest is identified. Where common/shared topics of interest and priority are identified, enable local efforts to work together on them between. • Undertake collaborative work on topics of common interest and joint communications on this work across First Nations and non First Nations communities. • Introduce activities under the development and implementation of the new Community Relationships Strategy.
<p>2b. Build strong alliances with partner initiatives and organizations that can contribute to the understanding, diversification planning and promotion of sustainable development here.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do scoping on the remaining identified priority topics. • Undertake and partner on projects that inform strategy work and regional transition/diversification efforts. • Convene or participate in forums for discussion on strategy development and implementation with government decision makers and allied organizations. • Attend sector conferences in and external to the region • Regularly brief politicians, industry leaders and First Nations leaders • Contribute in-kind and financially to projects in partnerships that deliver value back to the OBAC priorities and diversification planning.



Select Objectives From Workplan	Select Outputs and Activities From Workplan
<p>3a. Respond to immediate opportunities and requests for input so that the region’s interests are represented in a timely way. 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>3e. During strategy development, encourage the Strategy Working Groups to be a vehicle for exchanging information and knowledge across community representatives and practitioners and government and industry staff to increase collective capacity and understanding.</p> <p>3f. Prepare and present to government the Diversification Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare input on immediate policy shift and funding access opportunities – be opportunistic. • Complete all strategies for identified priority topics as stand alone strategies and work towards cross-strategy integration to prepare the Diversification Plan. • Run the strategy process on all remaining strategies identified for completion. • Support First Nations participation in and contribution to Summit days and strategy working groups. • 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”. • Invite input from communities and sectors on regional scale needs and opportunities and changing/emerging needs and opportunities • Prepare and present the integrated Diversification Plan for the region based upon the completed strategies.
<p>4a. Involve all implementers in the planning and enable strategy participants who are also implementers to make commitments to implementation.</p> <p>4b. 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.</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>	<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. • Present in the Diversification Plan and proposal for organizational transition in 2009 and beyond. • 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.



Transition Activities

In the 2009 Six Month workplan, OBAC has established a section in the budget called “Transition”. This money has been allocated for the purposes of undertaking activities that will support OBAC moving from strategy development to strategy implementation – or Phase I to Phase II.

The activities that are contemplated in this area of the workplan and budget could include (but are not limited to): project work that enables implementation of strategy recommendations and actions or, partnering with an implementation partner to this end; office, staff and administrative transition; diversification plan development and refinement including communications and briefings; and, other activities determined by the Board to be of importance to the transition process. These activities may be initiated at any point during the 6 month workplan at the discretion of the Board.